



Internationalization Strategy of the Kurdistan Institution for Strategic Studies and Scientific Research (KISSR)

2020-2024



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1. Vision

It is the vision of the Kurdistan Institution for Strategic Studies and Scientific Research (KISSR) to

- become a regionally known and internationally acknowledged research institution that performs high quality study in accordance with global norms;
- become a heavily internationalized organization that promotes a plethora of joint global study initiatives as well as instructional programs;
- contribute to the progress and development of the Kurdistan Region and Iraq by teaching and implementing international standards and technologies to a new generation of universities and researchers.

2. Mission

In order for the Kurdish research community to achieve excellence, KISSR has four main objectives. Firstly, conducting researches at the highest international levels of excellence. Secondly, increasing the overall visibility of Kurdish higher education and research and being a bridge between Kurdish higher education and science and the global academic and scientific community. Thirdly, contributing to the reform and modernization of Kurdish higher education and science by adopting new technologies as well as academic and scientific norms. Last but not least, providing academia, political leaders, the private sector and the public with evidence-based study outcomes.

3. Goals of internationalization

3.1. Increasing the Quality of Education

KISSR is dedicated to offering its students the finest possible education to become highly skilled academics, professionals and researchers who are globally acknowledged for their qualifications and are therefore competitive on the domestic, regional and global labor market.

Improving of the quality of education through internationalization is important since



- it will help in increasing the number of international students and employees enrolled or working at KISSR (by up to 20%);
- it will assist KISSR to obtain valuable knowledge from foreign universities and to develop and implement new/modern norms and global best practices.

To achieve the above goals, KISSR plans to:

- implement Bologna process at KISSR;
- launch dual/joint programs;
- render international languages, such as English, to be the primary language for teaching;
- open English and German language courses;
- increase the visibility of KISSR internationally.

It is expected that implementing the above activities will have the following results:

- By implementing the Bologna process, all study programs at KISSR will be reformed and modernized according to contemporary international standards and practices while the change to a model of education centered on students and based on learning outcomes will improve the general instructional process as well as its results.
- By being Bologna-compatible as well as by launching international cotutelle degree programs, graduates' qualification and degrees will be internationally recognized, thereby greatly enhancing the graduates' international competitiveness. In addition, this will also enhance KISSR's international visibility as a high-quality educational institution.
- Lastly, by internationalizing its study programs and teaching staff as well as increasing language proficiency of students and staff by offering language courses, KISSR will increase their students' and staff's accessibility to international resources and the global academic and scientific community.

The above actions need to be measured through individual indicators such as:

- The percentages of courses that implemented the Bologna process (+20% annually);
- The percentage of cotutelle degree programs implemented at KISSR (+2 programmes annually)
- Share of courses taught in English (+10% annually)



- Share of students in English and German courses (+10% annually)
- Share of staff in English and German courses (+10% annually)
- Share of students that pass international language tests at university entrance levels in the home countries, such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (+10% annually)
- Increase in applications of international students (+10% annually).

3.2. Increasing the Quality of Research

As the leading research institution in Kurdistan Region of Iraq, KISSR is committed to conducting high-quality research. Therefore, KISSR seeks to provide its scientists and researchers with the necessary tools and resources for conducting high quality research and creating an environment where innovation and scientific progress are flourishing. For this, it is important to improve the quality of research through internationalization, since many of the current problems facing the local, regional and international community are of such complexity, that they do not require only a multidisciplinary approach to research, but can only be solved through a concerted effort in the form of high-quality international cooperation in research.

In order to increase the quality of research by internationalization, KISSR will:

- internationalize its staff by contracting with international researchers, engineers and technicians to work at KISSR;
- establish staff exchange with international universities and research centers;
- conduct multidisciplinary and joint international research projects;
- gain addition financial support for joint research through international fund-raising.

It is expected that implementing the above actions will have the following results:

- By increasing the number of international staff working at KISSR as well as by establishing staff exchange with international universities and research centers, KISSR will become a highly internationalized research institution.
- By conducting high-quality research within multidisciplinary international joint projects and supported by increased financing from third parties, KISSR will not only increase its output of internationally recognized research, but will also help the public



solve its present problems. As a research institution primarily financed by the Kurdistan Regional Government, KISSR will place the emphasis on serving the local public in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

The above actions need to be measured through different indicators such as:

- Increase in number of international researchers, engineers and technicians employed at KISSR (+10% annually)
- Increase in outgoing research staff mobility (+10% annually)
- Increase in incoming research staff mobility (+10% annually)
- Increase in international joint research projects (+10% annually)
- Increase in international research funding (+10% annually)
- Positive feedback from regional community to international researcher involvement in local problems (at least a “good” in a survey)
- Increase in ranking positions in global rankings (5-10 positions annually)
- Ratio of published research papers in the international journals among all papers (+10% annually)
- Increase in applications from international staff for research stays (+10% annually).

3.3. Preparing Students for a Globalized World

In recognition of the effects of globalization, KISSR is committed to preparing its students for their work in an increasingly globalized and intercultural environment. Therefore, internationalization of the study experience is essential in providing students with the competences and skills needed to succeed in such an setting, , thereby not only increasing their international competitiveness and prospects for employment abroad but also providing adequately qualified employees for local businesses operating abroad as well as international companies and organizations operating in Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

To achieve its goal to better prepare its students for a globalized world, KISSR will:

- increase the number of language and cultural training courses;
- send students abroad via dual/joint programs and summer trainings.

It is expected that implementing the above activities have the following results:



- Improvement of foreign language skills of students.
- Increasing the students' adaptability to a globalized and intercultural work environment and capability to succeed in such an environment.
- Increasing the contribution of internationally trained staff in local embassies and foreign companies.

The above actions need to be measured through different indicators such as:

- Increase in number of language and cultural courses (up to 35%)
- Share of students in dual/joint programs and summer trainings (up to 50%)
- Increase in share of students with college-entry level English (up to 50%)
- Increase in international student enrolments in KISSR courses (+10% annually)
- Increase in share of graduated students to be hired in the embassies at Kurdistan (+10% annually)
- Increase in share of graduated students to be hired in the foreign companies in Kurdistan (+10% annually)
- Increase in adaptability level of graduates by using international personality tests such as the Big Five Inventory of Berkeley (+10% annually).

3.4. International Reputation and Visibility

KISSR is committed to become a regionally renowned and internationally recognized research institution aiming to rank within the group of the top 5.000 international research institutions within the next 20 years. To achieve this and to facilitate the recruitment of international students and staff, it is key that KISSR improves its international reputation and visibility.

In order to achieve international reputation and visibility, KISSR aims to:

- sign Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with international universities;
- offer cotutelle degree programs;
- incentivize the publication of articles in international journals by staff members of KISSR;
- improve E-visibility of KISSR via websites, social media;
- establish an active international public relations office at KISSR.



It is expected that implementing the above activities have the following results:

- Increasing the global rank of KISSR and its visibility.
- Increasing the ratio of published articles in high impact factor journals to increase its visibility.

The above actions need to be measured through different indicators such as:

- Increase in number of MoUs (+20% annually)
- Increase in number of cotutelle programs (+10% annually)
- Increase in share of staff publishing in international journals (+5% annually)
- Increase in views of KISSR websites and other social media content (+20% annually)
- Increase the rank of KISSR in global rankings (into the top 5.000)
- Increase in van Raan impact factor (+10% annually)
- Increase in ratio of articles in international high impact journals (+10% annually)

3.5. The Role of the Internationalization Process in Community Engagements

As a public institution funded by the Kurdish Regional Government, KISSR is committed to serving the local public and contributing to the public good. Internationalization can enhance KISSR's capability to increase its social engagement and to meet its responsibility vis-à-vis the public in contributing to a prospering and peaceful society.

To enhance its capability for community engagement by internationalization, KISSR will:

- collect and extract information regarding the key issues that can be addressed through internationalization. This can be achieved through media, questionnaires, and related organizations and governmental sectors;
- educate members of the local community via conducting scientific events at public places, such as schools, parks, and other venues, especially using international examples or involving international scholars and students;
- set up research teams in international partnership, which initiate proposals, conduct their research, and give feedback to the government and the public on pressing



societal issues (e.g. peace, xenophobia, radicalization, preservation of democracy, environmental concerns etc.).

In turn, it is expected that implementing the above activities will have the following result:

- Better serving the local public by contributing to the solution of its most pressing issues.
- Providing high-quality research into critical government and social issues.
- Improving (the capacity for) knowledge and understanding within the local society of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
- Increasing the awareness of students and scholar regarding societal needs.
- Integrating international students and scholars in KISSR's social engagement activities.

The above actions need to be measured through different indicators such as:

- Establishment of a data collection system for social issues that links to KISSR research (benchmark: "done")
- Increase in "teaching the public" events using international resources (+10% annually)
- Increase in number of international research teams that focus on societal issues (+20% annually)
- Improvement ratio of critical issues in the Kurdish community solved by KISSR. This can be assessed by the Ministry of Planning, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, re-assessing the community issues via conducting more researching in these fields (+10% annually)
- Improvement of knowledge amongst the population on global and societal issues such as peace and environment through survey (+10% annually)
- Improvement regarding changes in attitudes (e.g. towards the Kurdish population and situation) and personality due to the social engagement among international students and academics (survey) (+10% annually)
- Improved perception of integration of international students and scholars in local community (survey amongst students, staff and community) (+10% annually)



4. Linking the Internationalization Strategy with the Institution's Development Plan

In order to ensure its implementation, KISSR will link the internationalization strategy to the institution's development strategy. Therefore, KISSR will officially adopt the strategy's goals, objectives and activities as part of the overall institutional development plan and will allocate substantial resources, both human and financial, to the process of internationalization, thereby rendering internationalization a key driver for the future development of KISSR.

In addition, a dedicated committee will be established for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the strategy. As part of its activities, the committee will regularly report on the status of internationalization to the institution's leadership and governance body. For this, a reporting framework and schedule will be developed.