

# WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY IN AFRICA



*Addressing gender disparity and fostering equity in higher education*

---

## INTERNATIONALISATION POLICY

---

### 1. PREAMBLE

The Women's University in Africa (WUA) was established in 2002 and was granted a Charter by the Parliament and the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe in 2004 through Statutory Instrument 30 of 2004. The university has three faculties namely: Agricultural Sciences, Management and Entrepreneurial Sciences and Social and Gender Transformative Sciences. Internationalisation is not a new phenomenon at the Women's University in Africa. Since its inception in 2002, the University has always been a diverse and welcoming environment which recognized that it operates in a fast changing, globally interconnected world where knowledge, ideas and people are no longer constrained by national boundaries. This is clearly articulated in WUA's vision statement which highlights the intention to consolidate its status as a leading higher education institution not only in Zimbabwe but also in Africa.

The WUA vision reads: The Women's University in Africa seeks to be the best University in Africa in relation to the promotion of equity and equal opportunities in tertiary education.

### 2. INTERPRETATION (DEFINITION OF TERMS)

- 2.1 **Education 5.0:** A doctrine which views the purpose of universities as: Teaching, Research, Community Service and Innovation which leads to Industrialization. Higher Education: means all learning programmes leading to a qualification that meets the Accreditation requirements of ZIMCHE.
- 2.2 **Internationalisation:** the process of integrating an international, intercultural and/or global dimension into the goals, functions (teaching and learning, research, services) and delivery of higher education (Knight, 2003).
- 2.3 **Internationalisation of curriculum:** the incorporation of international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a programme of study.

**2.4 Joint degree:** refers to a degree awarded through an agreement between WUA and a partnering institution.

**2.5 Memorandum of Understanding:** A formal non-legally binding document signed between WUA and another institution used to initiate a partnership and generally only commits the parties to further talks. It shows willingness of the parties to finally move towards a contract.

**2.6 Memorandum of Agreement:** A legally binding document that allocates responsibility to each of the parties in an agreement. The terms of the agreement will be specific to the area under discussion

**2.7 Staff mobility:** the movement of staff between higher education institutions.

**2.8 Student mobility:** the movement of students between higher education institutions.

**2.9 The University:** means the Women`s University in Africa

## **2 RATIONALE OF THE POLICY**

Internationalisation at WUA will lead to multiple benefits. It will prepare our graduates for leading roles in the global knowledge society, thereby contributing to the prosperity and sustainable development of communities at home and abroad. Internationalisation will support students and staff to be informed, responsible and effective citizens of the world, contribute evidence and innovation to address issues as well as build capacity in areas of global consequence. Internationalisation is often considered an important way to preserve national culture in response to the globalization process. In this sense, the internationalization of WUA will be viewed as a way to ensure cultural and ethnic diversity. Students will experience the university as a place that helps them to develop knowledge and sensitivity towards foreign cultures and their political, social and national environments. Internationalization will enhance the students` global competences to enable them to examine local, global, and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development. Internationalisation of WUA will also bring in the important principle of inclusion, that is, setting up the system to ensure that students and staff who for various reasons cannot travel to placements abroad or whose access to mobility is problematic (e.g. because they have special needs), are also involved in the process of acquiring global competences.

Internationalization of teaching, research, outreach services, innovation and industrialization (Education 5.0) will enable WUA to get increased international networking and increased knowledge transfer. Such best practices give rise to quality education and research which in turn lead to an improved reputation nationally as well as international positioning. Development of strategic partnerships is also enhanced through internationalisation thus gaining access to new sources of funding. Internationalisation of the curricula will be a key part of the internationalization of WUA and can take place through the introduction of foreign languages, development of joint study programmes and the creation of study plans that provide a window for student and staff mobility. Marketisation of WUA internationally can take place

if quality programmes are offered, this will in turn will generate revenue in the form of tuition and other related fees paid by international students in foreign currency.

### **3 SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

The policy applies to and integrates across all areas of the university, especially core activities that pertain to: curriculum content and development, outreach services, research and scholarship, student orientation and experience, staff and staffing, innovation and industrialisation. It applies to all members of the university decision-making bodies. This policy also applies to the WUA New Normal 2021-2025 Transformational Strategy, Research and Consultancy Strategy, WUA Policy on Intellectual Property and other Income Generation Activities. The policy is supported by departmental internationalisation implementation action plans which will identify priorities and specific outcomes, outputs, initiatives, performance indicators and responsibilities for each of the Policy goals.

### **4 PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE POLICY**

**The principles underpinning the policy are:**

#### **4.1 International exposure**

Providing international exposure for the university's core business of teaching and learning, research, community service, innovation and industrialization shall be one of the university's top priorities.

#### **4.2 Benchmarking**

The university's internationalization activities shall be informed by best practice and evidence from other institutions.

#### **4.3 Teamwork**

Internationalisation activities shall be imbedded in all university structures, policies and processes in a coordinated approach that creates a unified sense of direction.

#### **4.4 Legal compliance**

Institutional policies, regulations, strategies and initiatives related to the internationalisation of higher education must adhere to the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Act, other legislation and regulations relevant to higher education in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.5 Mutuality**

There must be mutual benefit to both WUA and its international partner(s) from their relationship.

#### **4.6 Quality Enhancement**

The focus of Internationalisation at WUA is on the quality of the initiatives and activities, and less on quantity for example, the number of international agreements, the

number of international students and staff. Activities related to internationalization must meet the highest quality standards associated with the WUA Quality Assurance policy as well as ZIMCHE ideals of excellence.

#### **4.7 Continuous improvement**

The university's approach to internationalization shall be flexible enough to respond to emerging opportunities

#### **4.8 Value creation**

WUA Internationalisation activities have a focus on creating value for all parties involved, including the development of knowledge, cultural enrichment and the development of global citizenry.

### **5 POLICY PROVISIONS**

The WUA community shares the consensus that global perspectives incorporated into its structures, policies and processes are fundamental to its existence and identity as it ensures that the university can evolve into a highly effective, influential and globally relevant educational institution. To that end, the university's internationalization mission is:

*'To be a diverse and welcoming learning community that integrates elements of global contexts into teaching, learning, research, innovation, professional practice and community service in order to support students and staff to be informed, responsible and effective citizens of the world with the capacity to play leading roles in the global knowledge society'.*

#### **5.1 Goals of the Policy**

**5.1.1** To provide internationally informed curricula which incorporates global perspectives and support students to develop intercultural competencies and employability;

**5.1.2** To encourage joint award of degrees with reputable institutions of higher education;

**5.1.3** To enhance the quality and global impact of WUA's research and enterprise such that it contributes to society and the university's global standing through engagement with international scholars, research centres/institutes and research- active universities;

**5.1.4** To increase the presence of international students and staff at WUA through collaborations, synergies and exchange;

**5.1.5** To facilitate the incorporation of gender perspectives into all internationalisation activities;

**5.1.6** To pursue and facilitate strategic partnerships and active engagements with international networks; and

5.1.7 To ensure that accountability for the implementation of this policy will be vested in the appropriate entities and portfolios within the university.

## **5.2 Intended Outcomes**

Successful implementation and management of this policy will result in outcomes that enhance:

5.2.1 High quality global partnerships in research, joint curriculum development, joint award of degrees and synergistic funding of projects;

5.2.2 Improved participation of WUA in global university networks and organisations;

5.2.3 International mobility of staff and students through collaborations, synergies and exchange programmes;

5.2.4 Students and staff `s high quality international experience which will equip them with knowledge, skills and attributes to be globally employable;

5.2.5 The university`s global standing through engagement with global partnerships; and

5.2.6 Income streams of WUA through international students who pay fees in foreign currency.

## **5.3 Internationalisation Strategies**

In the broad context, this policy proposes generic strategies that will be pursued by the University. However, the strategies contained herein are not exhaustive. As different levels within the University shall engage with the issue, more strategies shall be suggested, discussed and adopted by Senate where necessary. It is also understood that strategies are determined by the existing environment. Areas listed below are the proposed foundations for WUA`s Internationalisation initiatives, directions and priorities:

- i) Student mobility;
- ii) Staff mobility;
- iii) Enhancing an international presence at WUA
- iv) Internationalisation of research;
- v) Internationalisation of curricula.
- vi) Strategic partnerships

### **5.3.1 Student Mobility<sup>1</sup>**

These are in two categories: Inbound and outbound students

#### **Inbound students**

These are students that will be coming to WUA from within the SADC region, Africa and the rest of the world. Students in this group will come to study both undergraduate and

---

<sup>1</sup> This policy draws useful insights from the Policy Framework For The Internationalisation of Higher Education in Zimbabwe (2019)

postgraduate programmes offered by WUA. Inbound students can either be conventional or exchange students.

### **Conventional students**

The following shall apply for Conventional students:

- i) Process their applications from their home countries through online applications facility;
- ii) Adopt minimum threshold for international students' admissions in line with Article 7 of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training;
- iii) Develop agreements regarding credit accumulation and transfer for students as guided by ZIMCATS and National Minimum Bodies of Knowledge;
- iv) WUA to put in place a differentiated fees structure for students from SADC and Non SADC countries;
- v) WUA to develop an integrated approach to international student recruitment, marketing and communication;
- vi) Put in place student and academic support service plan that promotes student retention, academic success and transition, adequate counselling and academic advising services for international students that help them overcome culture shock and adjust to life in an unfamiliar environment; and
- vii) WUA Communication Skills department to develop a Foundational English language programme for students whose primary language is not English.

### **Students Exchange**

This group of students come for one semester or two to WUA. Their aim is to appreciate the cultural and educational experiences in Zimbabwe. To enhance this process, the following needs to be considered in support of internationalization:

- i) WUA to initiate exchange agreements with international universities and agree on credit transfer;
- ii) WUA to establish an Institutional Language Centre for languages such as a Foundational English programme for students whose primary language is not English. Other languages such as Mandarin, Spanish, French, and Portuguese for outbound students can also be taught; and
- iii) Leverage on government level agreements to promote student exchanges.

### **Outbound students**

This relates to WUA students who will be going to universities outside Zimbabwe and are at various stages of their study. Programmes can include exchange for a term or year abroad, fieldwork abroad, research project involvement, practical placements, internships, athletics and cultural tours.

Outbound students desire international exposure to benchmark local practices with global best practice. This process can be initiated by individuals or by WUA. In order to support these students the following can be done:

- i) WUA to enhance orientation for outbound students with appropriate workshops, development of an information handbook and travel registry;
- ii) Funds permitting, WUA can make available improved financial support both through resources that enable students to do their own fund-raising as well as through funds raised by the University; and
- iii) WUA to strengthen career planning services to provide students with a better understanding of how their international experiences are linked to career opportunities.

### **Staff Mobility**

Central to the success of internationalization will be ensuring that an effective staff mobility programme is in place. Globally-minded academic and professional service staff will bring a global outlook into their daily activities thus supporting the growth of WUA's global reputation. Some strategies which can be used to enhance staff mobility include:

- i) As a rule, all WUA academic positions will be advertised internationally;
- ii) Making use of active talent scouting and researchers' international networks;
- iii) Ensuring fast, easy to follow appointment procedures for staff with international background;
- iv) Providing funding for sabbatical and contact leave for staff in order to create international synergies; and
- v) Provision of scholarships for staff to study at international institutions.

#### **5.3.2 Enhancing an international presence at WUA**

- i) Students who are unable to study or gain experience abroad can be engaged in a range of on-campus international activities to deepen and broaden their knowledge and experience of global and cross-cultural realities through films, performances, celebrations, seminars, public lectures and cultural events that will enrich global learning and sense of world-mindedness in conjunction with embassies and other international organisations.
- ii) Internationalisation is a cross-sectional activity affecting all university operations hence development of professional competences of all staff in the field of internationalization is key. The International office can mount systematic development of competences of academic and administrative staff in that area through workshops and seminars.
- iii) WUA shall develop and innovate infrastructure to international standard so as to be fully prepared for the needs of international staff and students from information systems, state of the art lecture rooms and laboratories as well as accommodation.
- iv) WUA to enhance membership of international universities network, for example International Association of Universities among others.

### **5.3.3 Internationalisation of research**

Expanding research collaboration between WUA and international scholars is of utmost importance to its global standing. Enhancement of research at WUA shall include these mechanisms:

- i) Encouraging the participation of WUA academics in international peer reviewing of research;
- ii) Facilitating the participation of WUA academics in international conferences, international committees, advisory and/or editorial boards;
- iii) Establishing and maintaining international partnerships with agencies and foundations across the world aimed at accessing international research funding opportunities and facilities;
- iv) Keynote addresses at international meetings / conferences;
- v) Leading international projects;
- vi) Each academic staff member to publish at least one publication in an international refereed journal;
- vii) Targeting to have one patent, model, copyright per faculty;
- viii) Promote the Internationalisation of WUA journals by on-boarding international academics on technical committees;
- ix) Co-authorship of research papers;
- x) Align research to industrialisation, modernization and mechanisation;
- xi) Incentivise research, development and innovation outputs;
- xii) Commercialise research, development and innovation outputs; and
- xiii) WUA Research department to develop an MoU template for use by all departments seeking partnerships.

### **5.3.4 Internationalisation of curricula**

- i) Encourage the use of external examination for our modules
- ii) Facilitate the participation of WUA academics in international collaborations in curricula development leading to joint degrees
- iii) Facilitate the participation of international academics in WUA curricula review and evaluation of the mode of teaching, content depth, available resources, achievement of the minimum body of knowledge, assignments, timetabling, marking schemes, examinations moderation, qualifications of lecturers etc.
- iv) Benchmark curricular with international institutions
- v) Curricula shall include an international subject or area or language studies
- vi) Increase international partnerships
- vii) Engage professional bodies and Alumni.

### **5.3.5 Strategic partnerships**

WUA will continue to explore active, vibrant, multifaceted and mutually beneficial partnerships that align with and support its mission for the development of human capital, educational, financial, operational, reputational and intellectual property benefits through:

- i) International alumni networks ;
- ii) International projects;

- iii) Business partnerships;
- iv) Opening of regional offices; and
- v) Networking with other universities( global networks, regional networks)

The development of a Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement template for use across the university is important.

## 6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

| <b>ROLE</b>                        | <b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>The Vice Chancellor</b>         | The Vice Chancellor as the leader of the University shall oversee the implementation of the policy.  |
| <b>Institutional</b>               | There shall be an Internationalisation directorate in the university. The university shall have an Internationalisation Committee which shall be a delegate of Senate. Details of the Directorate, committee are given below.  |
| <b>Faculty</b>                     | The faculty board shall be responsible for all Internationalisation issues as directed by the Internationalisation committee at faculty level. They shall discuss and make recommendations to the committee. All departmental reports from different departments shall be discussed in this committee. |
| <b>Departmental</b>                | The departmental board shall be responsible for all Internationalisation issues as directed by the Internationalisation committee at department level. They shall discuss and make recommendations to the faculty board. This will involve all the Lecturers in a respective department.               |
| <b>Intake Class Representative</b> | Each departmental and faculty board shall be made up of a student representative who shall bring the input from students.  |
| <b>Support Services</b>            | Support services are provided by non-teaching departments and/or units   |

### 6.2 The Proposed WUA International office

The WUA International office will provide administrative and advisory support to the university-wide enterprise of Internationalisation. Its mandate, structure and Terms of Reference are as listed below:

#### 6.2.1 Mandate of the International Office

- i) Coordinating the international liaison strategies of WUA in line with the WUA vision and mission;
- ii) Facilitating and processing documentation relating to the application of visas for visiting and foreign academics and students wishing to join WUA from international jurisdictions;

- iii)Overseeing the implementation of the WUA Internationalisation policy and action plans;
- iv)Pursuing new opportunities for international business development with the private sector and other educational institutions in consultation with the Business Development unit;
- v)Marketing and advertising WUA programmes on international platforms in consultation with the marketing and public relations department;
- Vi) Arranging and hosting of international events of stature to further elevate WUA`s global reputation;
- vi) Clearing admitted international students for registration
- vii) viii) Providing liaison services for international students and faculties
- ix)Social integration of international students through orientation and student activities; and
- x)International Student Welfare services in consultation with the Student Affairs office among others.
- xi)Establishing robust ICT infrastructure for supporting international partnerships such as external examiners, research collaborations, joint degree programs and guest lectures
- xii) Providing appropriate ICT based payment systems for enabling electronic fees payments for international students as well as remuneration for workers.
- xiii) Establish state of the art e-learning systems for availing the university`s online programs to international scholars in different regions of the world.

### **6.2.2 Structure of the International Office**

The International Office shall be headed by a Director who shall be assisted by an officer. The Directorate shall add more expertise in line with the needs of a growing university. There shall be an Internationalisation Committee of Senate in the university. It shall be the custodian of all processes of Internationalisation matters by means of policy implementation, review procedures, provision of administrative and advisory support to the university-wide enterprise of Internationalisation as well as reporting periodically to Senate in this regard.

### **6.2.3 Terms and references**

- i) Promoting Internationalisation culture in the university;
- ii) Overseeing the Internationalisation of relevant academic activities; iii)Monitoring Internationalisation standards and practices in the University; and

- iii) Preparing the annual WUA Internationalisation report.

#### 6.2.4 The WUA Internationalisation Committee of Senate

This committee is the custodian of the university's processes of internationalization by means of policy review procedures and reporting periodically to Senate in this regard. The committee shall: .

- i) Report directly to Senate;
- ii) Act as delegated by Senate to carry out its Internationalisation and enhancement interventions;
- iii) Support diversity and variation amongst Faculties/Units where this is beneficial, whilst seeking consistency and common approaches where these are in the best interest of staff and students;
- iv) Identify and agree the ways in which it will interact with other relevant Committees and Units in the University in matters relating to Internationalisation;
- v) And any other functions as delegated by Senate.



#### 6.2.5 Membership of the Internationalisation Committee shall be as follows:

- I) Vice Chancellor (Chair);
- II) Pro Vice Chancellors;
- III) Director of Internationalisation;
- IV) Deans of Faculties;
- V) Registrar;
- VI) Bursar;
- VII) Dean of Students;
- VIII) Director of ICT;
- IX) Director of Marketing, Communication and Public Relations;
- X) Librarian; and
- XI) Two students.

### 7 POLICY REVIEW

This Internationalisation Policy shall be reviewed periodically to ensure adequacy and relevance to all University quality assurance interventions in academic and support services provision. The Policy shall be reviewed at least every five years or more frequently as the need arises.

### 8 DOCUMENT VERSION MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

|                            |   |   |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Document Name              | Women's University In Africa<br>Internationalisation Policy                         | <br><b>WUA</b> |
| Version Reference          | 01  |   |
| Document Owner             | Senate  |   |
| Council Chairperson's Name | Rachel Chibays  |   |
| Date of Approval           |   |   |
| Signature                  |  |   |
| Review Date                |   |   |

