

## **Quality Assuring Transnational Education: The Necessary Evil in Internationalisation**

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Internationalisation of higher education has long been a buzz word worldwide. Countries are developing policies and strategies in promoting internationalisation. There are sufficient examples that show a lack of cohesive internationalisation strategy nationally had retarded the development of internationalisation growth of the universities. A strategic approach to internationalisation is crucial to achieving national prosperity in a globally competitive knowledge economy. International education is now intrinsically linked not only with the nation's foreign policy but with other national policies – such as trade, economic development, immigration, innovation and research. Thus the absence of a national policy will lead to a piece-meal and largely uncoordinated approach to internationalisation of higher education, which is fast becoming the cornerstone for a successful university and international branding.

Internationalisation of the universities in a nutshell concerns staff, student and programme motilities. More often than not, national policies and strategies focus on these from the economic point of view and miss the most crucial element, i.e., the golden thread (to borrow a phrase from the law annals) in higher education, the quality assurance of these manifestations of internationalisation. Quality assurance of internationalisation activities is fundamentally a balancing game; to balance the national need to that of the international partners' needs and to balance quality and profit.

This paper shall look at some of the practical applications of quality assurance of higher education as a challenge in the internationalisation of higher education, particularly to universities in the Islamic World. It starts off with the necessity of internationalisation as a national policy to support universities' internationalisation and ends with why quality assurance of internationalisation at the national level is not an option and that it is first and foremost a national responsibility.

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