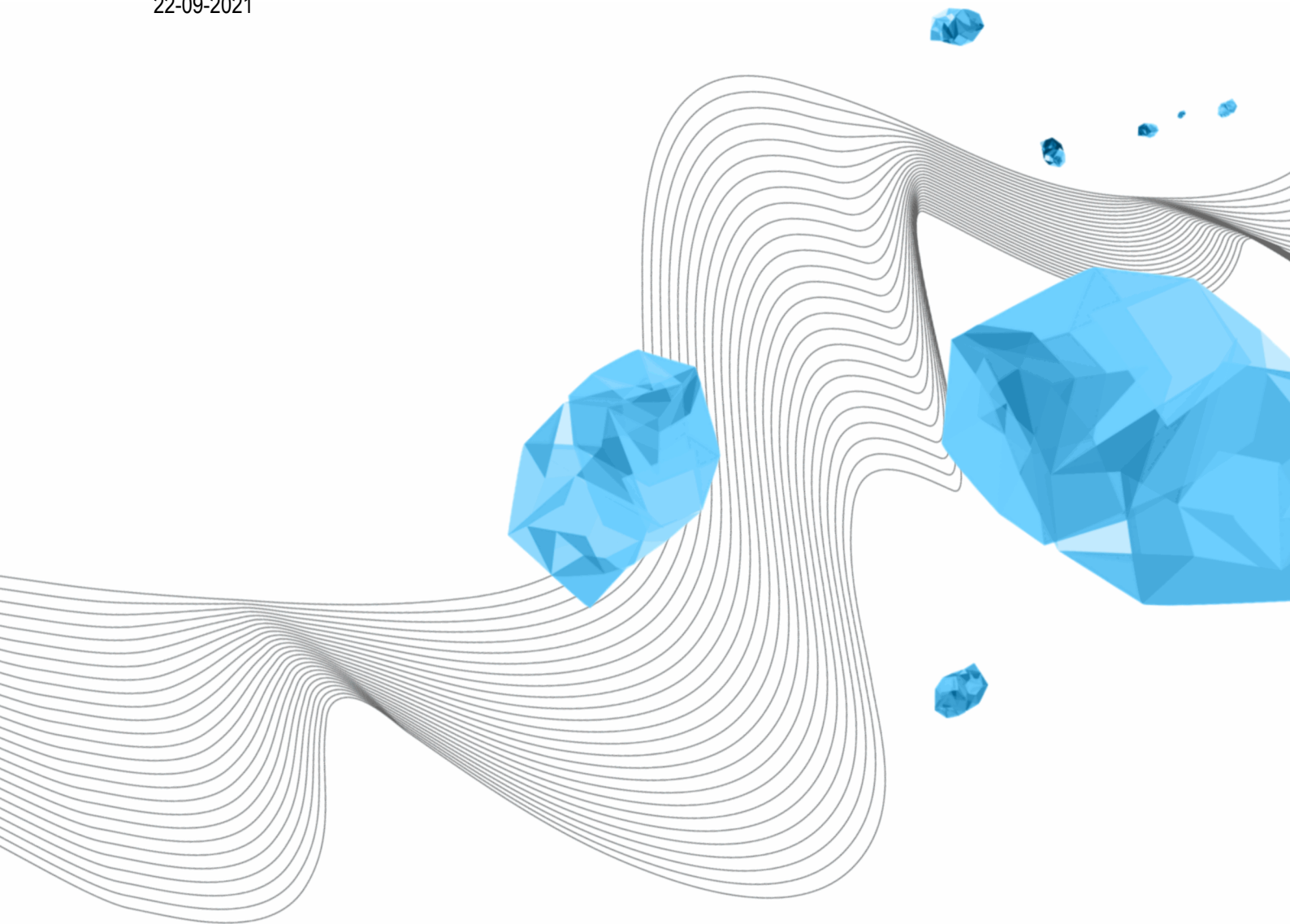# THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE

A WHITE PAPER DESCRIBING AN INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE-FIRST UNIVERSITY IN 2026

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0.4	03-06-2021	Feedback Executive Board, SEG Inclusion and MT S&P incorporated. In particular, it was made explicit where internationalisation leads to balancing different or even conflicting interests.
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1   INTRODUCTION

With Shaping2030, the UT aspires to be the ultimate people-first university of technology. It requires an entrepreneurial, open, inclusive mindset and culture where we choose courage over comfort, the individual over system and community over campus. By shaping society, connections and individuals, we contribute to a fair, digital and sustainable future[1]. It inspires a new look towards the world and the role of the UT in it. The UT has come to understand internationalisation in terms of, e.g. language, exchange, student and staff composition. With Shaping2030, we move towards an integral and inclusive approach to internationalisation, meaning international and intercultural dimensions are natural aspects of all UT activities.

This white paper starts with why and how the UT aims to be a societally relevant and international university for the coming five years and beyond. Then, the white paper outlines the UT's vision on what this means from a student, staff and societal perspective. It integrates and elaborates upon existing vision, strategy and policy documents such as Shaping2030, the UT Quality Agreements, the Research Vision, the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2021-2027 and the ECIU University Programme Plan. What concrete changes we need to make in the coming years to reach the described vision are indicated by (#).

1.1   WHY

The internationalisation of Higher Education has been an ongoing trend for the past several decades. It has advanced from a marginal activity to a strategic agenda due to the globalisation of societies, demands of the knowledge economy and the realisation of the European Higher Education Area[2]. Over time, the notion and rationale for internationalisation have evolved from a competitive, market-oriented approach to a more inclusive, comprehensive approach where intentionality and mutual benefit for universities and society are central[3]. Instead of talking about the movement, the UT chooses to articulate the desired end state of internationalisation. For this, we use the notion of *an international people-first university of technology*.

> As an **international people-first university of technology**, the UT is committed, confirmed through action, to integrate and infuse international and intercultural dimensions and inclusion into our way of working and the outcomes of higher education, scientific research and societal engagement. Our activities intentionally and purposefully seek to benefit and involve the wider community, connecting the global and local. Therefore, it touches the entire higher education enterprise and is embraced by our institutional leadership, all academic service and support units, and our international community.

The University of Twente's rationale for committing itself to this is twofold:
1. **The UT aims to deliver high-quality academic contributions to societal challenges in order to help create a fair, sustainable and digital society**. The business of universities is ideas: creating ideas through research and disseminating ideas through education and application. We work toward enhanced opportunities for healthy living and better healthcare, connected communities, and sustaining the environment. This means we direct our knowledge, human capital and research infrastructure to addressing societal challenges related to these domains. Our vibrant campus facilitates this by offering high-quality research infrastructure and space for reflection and a great sense of community. However, these challenges are beyond the capacity of one institution or research team to study, let alone solve them. By embracing international collaboration as an intentional and strategic activity, our students, staff, and partners bring

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[1] University of Twente (2019). *Shaping2030: Mission, Vision and Strategy*. https://www.utwente.nl/en/organisation/about/shaping2030/
[2] H. de Wit & P. G. Altbach (2021) Internationalization in higher education: global trends and recommendations for its future, *Policy Reviews in Higher Education*, *5*(1), 28-46, DOI: 10.1080/23322969.2020.1820898
[3] H. de Wit & F. Hunter (2015). Understanding internationalisation of higher education in the European context. In H. de Wit, E. Egron-Polak, L. Howard, & F. Hunter (Eds.), *Internationalisation of higher education* (pp. 41-58). DOI:10.2861/444393

complementary knowledge and insights from diverse perspectives together. Whether digitally or physically, we actively engage with society leading to new, relevant and far-reaching understanding and innovations.

2. **The UT aims to educate talented learners as Global Citizens [4] with an entrepreneurial, open and inclusive mindset for the local, national and global labour market**. Education should engage students in traditions, culture, practices, values and standards (socialisation), contribute to the development of students into autonomous and independent people in society (personality development) and prepare students for a successful career in the job market (qualification)[5]. At the UT, we go beyond the degree because we consider student activism an essential part of student life. Incorporating international, intercultural and global dimensions into all aspects of our organisation, not just our educational programmes, enhances knowledge, skills, attributes, and careers for graduates (Bachelor, Master, PhD and lifelong learners). It enables them to be influential global citizens who solve societal challenges and public and economic welfare.

1.2   HOW

The University of Twente delivers high-quality academic contributions addressing societal challenges and educate learners as Global Citizens by

1. Being an inclusive[6] organisation that fosters talent development, celebrates diversity in all its forms[7] and ensures equity[8]. The UT creates an academic and social environment in which students and staff feel comfortable, allowing them to grow to their full potential. We nurture our international community of graduates, students and staff members and give explicit attention to intercultural awareness[9].
2. Embracing international collaboration as an intentional and strategic activity. Members of the UT community actively reach out to academic and societal stakeholders at a local, regional and global level to generate and exchange knowledge that inspires global developments.
3. Promoting international and intercultural learning experiences to our staff and students. We attract an internationally diverse student and staff population and create an international classroom[10] and work environment. Students are empowered with the knowledge and skills to address challenges that are central to (inter)national communities.

What this means is next described from a student, staff member and societal perspective.

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[4] A global citizen is someone who is aware of and understands the wider world – and their place in it. He/she understands that the world is increasingly more connected and that many of the challenges we face are global, not local. Global citizens take an active role in their community and work with others to make our planet more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable. Definition is inspired by https://en.unesco.org/themes/gced. To make global citizenship something that can be assessed, one can also speak of a globally competent student whom is taught to investigate the world beyond their immediate environment, recognize the perspective of themselves and others, effectively communicate ideas with diverse audiences, and translate their ideas into progressive action. See: http://sites.asiasociety.org/education/globalcompetence/
[5] Vereniging Samenwerkende Nederlandse Universiteiten & Vereniging Hogescholen (2018), *Internationaliseringsagenda Hoger Onderwijs.* https://www.vsnu.nl/files/documenten/Domeinen/Internationaal/Internationaliseringsagenda%20Hoger%20Onderwijs_2018.pdf
[6] Inclusion then is the focus on making sure we create a community for all its members to come together to fully participate and perform at their best. A community where everybody is welcome and respected and feels a sense of belonging. A place where by valuing, recognizing and rewarding the different outlooks on life and bringing them together, we foster well-being and thrive as a university. Definition taken from UT Plan of Action Diversity & Inclusion.
[7] Celebrating diversity for us means that we recognize that every individual is unique and that society and community life greatly benefit from recognizing, embracing, celebrating and engaging the unique blend of these differences regardless of beliefs, ethnic backgrounds, religion, language, race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, socio-economic status, disabilities (physical and mental), nationality, culture, age and other characteristics or ideologies. Definition taken from UT Plan of Action Diversity & Inclusion.
[8] Equity is the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all, whilst striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. Definition taken from UT Plan of Action Diversity & Inclusion.
[9] Though many different definitions exist, here we use the following: "Intercultural competence is the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behaviour and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions."
D. K. Deardorff (2006) , The Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States, *Journal of Studies in International Education* 10, 241-266.
[10] Here we use international classroom to indicate a learning environment where learners have different cultural backgrounds.

2 THE UT AS AN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROM A **STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE**

Educating tomorrow's global citizens is the guiding philosophy since the launch of Vision 2020[11]. The UT aims for its students to become independent, confident, self-steering, creative, flexible, critical, responsible, and reflective problem solvers, focusing on societal impact, an entrepreneurial attitude, and an international orientation[12]. With Shaping2030, the principle of educating tomorrow's global citizens is being extended from internationality to inclusivity. Therefore, our education is guided by values such as education for a diverse student body (international, multi-cultural, gender, talent mix) and (multi-disciplinary) education focused on solving real-world problems[13].

2.1 WELCOMING

One aspect of the ultimate people-first university is being inclusive and welcoming to all learners, regardless of nationality, socio-economic background, religion, gender, sexuality, personality, disability or ethnicity. We also note diversity in age and previous study background. For example, lifelong learners and also PhD and PDEng candidates are also part of our community of learners. Regardless of what sets people apart, what unites all of these learners at the UT is the desire to contribute to solving today's challenges. They are attracted to the UT for our high quality, English-taught education that combines technology and engineering with behavioural and social sciences. The International Student Barometer 2020 results show that career perspectives and the university ranking also play an important role for international students to choose the UT.

Attracting the right student – the one that identifies with our mission, vision and profile – and ensuring a sustainable and diverse inflow of students requires a balanced approach to recruitment. We create continuous awareness and exposure to the UT nationally and internationally while using different instruments to steer the inflow. We need to ensure every student ends up at the right spot while maintaining accessibility to Higher Education. A personalised approach to information proficiency on who we are and what we offer and suitable admission and selection criteria are key. For example, the UT participates in various fairs and organises multiple activities where prospective students can orient and experience what it means to study at the UT, such as the Open Days and Studying for One Day. Additionally, the UT has specific target countries chosen based on market research where we work with agents, who are considered a trusted authority and part of the culture. These agents help create additional brand awareness and match the students' interest with the UT profile while also offering additional support regarding all practical matters involved with studying abroad.

Accessibility to scientific higher education is not a matter of course for all students. For example, in some countries, no VWO equivalent for a high school diploma is available. We enable direct accessibility for high-scoring and motivated students from these areas via the UT Foundation Year. During the Foundation Year, some lacking necessary skills and knowledge are taught, especially regarding math, English language proficiency, study skills and group work. After successful completion, they can directly enter the bachelor's programme.

Increasing access for students from less favourable (socio-economic) circumstances is done by a particular subset of instruments such as waivers and scholarships. These instruments create diversity in socio-economic background, ethnicity and culture in the classroom, which enriches the learning

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[11] University of Twente (2014). *Vision 2020: Scherper Navigeren*.
University of Twente (2015). *2020: Educating the Global Citizen. Internationalisaton visi*on 2015-2020.
[12] University of Twente (2018). *Critical self-evaluation report institutional audit*.
[13] Ibid.

experience: students are exposed to a broad range of backgrounds, customs, and skills that allow them to be better prepared to navigate this outside the classroom.

(1) Faculties and educational programmes explicitly use instruments such as waivers and scholarships to promote access to higher education for qualified students from less favourable circumstances and underrepresented groups[14]. New instruments for this purpose can be developed.

Matching student's interest and possibilities with the UT is merely the first step in ensuring the student's academic success. Next, students are prepared for starting their studies using a well-arranged onboarding programme. A significant component of the warm onboarding of incoming students is the Kick-In. The Kick-In addresses social, cultural and practical introduction to the educational programme, the UT and the wider Twente region. Participation in the Kick-In is considered necessary though not mandatory for students to be fully prepared to enter the first week of lectures and ensure early on community-building, both imperative elements that promote study success. However, organising an introduction that all new students consider interesting and relevant is quite the challenge.

(2) Using, among others, lessons learned from the covid pandemic, we optimise the September and February Kick-In in terms of form (physical, hybrid or virtual), duration and activities in which all incoming students participate[15].

Continuous points of attention for successful onboarding are housing, information provision and a high level of service. Before and while studying, the student receives transparent, clear and relevant information on time. The customer journey approach of the UT towards information supply ensures that information flows regarding, for example, recruitment, admission, study progress, and practical matters are aligned across departments. The Contact Centre [16] functions both physically and digitally as a key point of entry for all questions and problems of prospective and current students and PhD candidates. The back office is aligned across the UT such as CEs and the Twente Graduate School to ensure questions can either be immediately answered or swiftly transferred to the right expert.

(3) The customer journey approach for all information prior to studying is extended to cover the whole student journey up until and including the alumnus phase.

Safe, affordable and sufficient housing is an important boundary condition for attracting students to the UT, for both (inter)national degree students and short-term mobility students such as Exchange students. Therefore, the UT helps any incoming student who needs housing find a suitable offer on and off campus. The housing offer ranges from independent flats to shared student houses. In the latter, it is common practice that residents can choose their new housemates, known as co-optation. It helps establish a safe and comfortable living environment. However, this practice sometimes disadvantages students that do not speak Dutch. Therefore, we strive to ensure that choosing your fellow housemates happens in a non-discriminatory way that does not exclude certain students' access to affordable housing [17].

(4) We increase the accessibility and supply of affordable residential facilities and short stay housing by building new facilities and in cooperation with commercial housing providers.

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[14] University of Twente (2021). *Evaluation Financial Instruments Vision 2020: Profileringsfonds 2015-2020 part scholarship programmes for mobility, and waiver programmes.*

[15] Inspired by: Student Union (2020). *Strategy 2020-2023.* https://su.utwente.nl/en/about-us/whatwedo/documents/strategic-plan/

[16] The Contact Centre was part of the Programme International Projects (which was based on Vision 2020 and 2020: Educating the Global Citizen) and is also part of the Long Term Strategic Housing Plan 2020-2030, see: https://www.utwente.nl/nl/ltsh/

[17] Co-optation is an ongoing point of discussion (some of the many arguments are mentioned in the recent UToday article: https://www.utoday.nl/news/69191/university-council-co-option-must-remain). The formulation of the vision related to co-optation is based on the most recent discussion and compromise, as formulated in the University Council letter (reference UC 21 – 050) and the subsequent discussion on the plan of action for room allocation on campus by Vechtdal Wonen (discussed in May cycle of 2021 followed by University Council response under reference UC 21-103).

2.2   WHILE STUDYING

The UT educates students to become global citizens. Students feel empowered during their studies with knowledge and skills to address challenges relevant to the (international) communities they will be participating in after their studies.

(5)   Each educational programme pays at least explicit attention to intercultural competency and Global Citizenship in the context of the academic discipline and related field of employability, preferably already from the programme's start. At least 7 educational programmes display more intensive forms of embedding international and intercultural dimensions in the curriculum, such as having an International Curriculum or a certificate of Internationalisation (CeQuInt) [18].

To promote global citizenship, all our students and PhD and PDEng candidates have the opportunity to gain an international learning experience [19]. It provides students with a broader outlook, is associated with better labour market perspectives and correlates to improved openness and mutual understanding [20]. International learning experiences can lead to new contacts, collaborations and insights. We facilitate a wide pallet of options because we understand that what constitutes an international learning experience differs per programme and student. E.g., an international student interning at a local IT consultancy could be considered an international experience, but the same is not true for a Dutch student. Gaining an international experience can be done abroad, for example, through student exchange, an internship, lab research project, graduation assignment, or a study trip. At the UT, we have numerous partners and places across the world for students to visit. We have possibilities within existing networks such as ECIU [21] and GE3 [22] and using the Erasmus+ programme. Regardless of the duration or destination, it remains that physical mobility is not an option for every student. The UT, therefore, employs both virtual and hybrid mobility to create international learning opportunities 'at home', for instance, by the virtual project of Crossing Borders, the CuriousU summer school or through the use of COIL [23] (Collaborative Online International Learning).

(6)   We ensure that gaining an international experience is inclusive and accessible for all students. Using the ECIU University initiative, we expand the range of duration for mobility (anywhere between 3 and 360 days), the modes of mobility (physical, hybrid and virtual) and the type of mobility (challenges and micro-modules) [24].

The UT offers an inclusive learning environment where students are stimulated to explore and develop their talents as part of an international community of students, PhD's, staff, and alumni. A sense of belonging, wellbeing, mutual understanding, acceptance and support characterise it. Looking at what connects people rather than what sets them apart, we support students seeking social connections in various communities. Since its founding, community building has been part of the UT DNA and promotes resilience, wellbeing, and study success. Everyone is part of several communities: e.g. those related to their educational programmes such as a participation body or the study association; a community based on common interest such the Student Teams or a shared hobby; or a community of people with the same nationality as brought together via world associations. Overarching student bodies such as UniTe and the SU connect all these communities to the shared mission and ambitions of the UT.

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[18] University of Twente (2018). *Quality Agreements 2019 – 2024: Plan Of University Of Twente,* p. 35-37.
[19] No agreed upon definition exist yet within the UT. For the purpose of the white paper, an international learning experience is a learning experience that at least implicitly contributes to the development of global citizenship (n 4) and intercultural competence (n 9). These experiences may or may not be paired with course content and no credits need to be associated with the experience.
[20] General Secretariat of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council (2020). *Brain circulation – a driving force for the European Education Area*. https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5512-2020-INIT/en/pdf
[21] European Consortium of Innovative Universities is a network of 13 universities united since 1997 by a common profile of shared beliefs, interests, and mutual trust. More info: https://www.eciu.org/
[22] Global Engineering Education Exchange (GE3) is a consortium-based exchange program for primarily undergraduate engineering students to study abroad and carry out internships worldwide, all while continuing to pay tuition at home.
[23] See for more information e.g.: https://www.eaie.org/blog/coil-acronym.html
[24] Adapted from: University of Twente (2021). *ECIUU@UT Programme Plan*.

Student activism [25] in its many forms is considered a cornerstone of the UT and uniquely part of Dutch university life. Balancing student activism with studying and possibly working is challenging. Hence, sufficient financial compensation is available for students that have study delay due to student activism or personal circumstances. A dilemma here is that the former is based on the statutory tuition fee, whereas non-EEA students pay the institutional tuition fee. Changing this would require significant financial resources, but leaving it means that these students will be more inclined to limit themselves to more minor forms of student activism as study delay is financially speaking not always possible. Hence, we are also continuously looking for ways to incorporate talent development intra-curricular besides extracurricular.

(7) Participation and involvement of students in UT committees, participation bodies, and associations represent the student body's diversity.

(8) Our duty of care towards student wellbeing is clear and explicit[26].

Recognition and location are two aspects that strengthen community building. The very idea of these aspects is for people to feel at home and feel safe. Our beautiful campus facilitates this. The campus is considered a significant and unique asset for the UT staff and students' academic and personal development. We use the campus to promote interactions between students in the classroom, lab, cafeteria, housing, sports, and events. It is a place where different cultural customs and communication styles meet and blend.

(9) The campus reflects the inclusive environment in every way, including signage and food in the cafeteria.

We see our language policy as a powerful tool to bring our community together. English is chosen as the main language of not only education and research but of the whole organisation [27]. It facilitates the exchange of knowledge on a broader scale and helps students communicate and work globally. Students and teachers need to be able to express themselves sufficiently well in English to guarantee the proper quality of education. This requires a minimum level of and continuous attention for English language proficiency. At the same time, we acknowledge that the UT is rooted in the Netherlands and Twente specifically. Students and PhD and PDEng candidates are supported in finding their way into the Dutch surroundings, for instance, by offering optional Dutch language and cultural courses via the UTLC, coaching and counselling via Student Support, and career orientation workshops via the career centre.

(10) Learning, maintaining and improving Dutch and English language proficiency as well as academic language proficiency [28] is promoted and facilitated. All learners are aware of the existing language support offer.

2.3 AFTER GRADUATION

Students who graduated from the University of Twente are well equipped for the local, national and global labour market. Considering that the current generation of students makes study decisions with their future career in mind, good career orientation and preparation are very important to facilitate. Hence, the UT's Career Services department offers support from resume checks to career counselling.

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[25] Student activism is any UT policy refers to students engaging in extra-curricular activities ranging from voluntary board positions in study associations to being a member of a participation body to starting your own company. The common denominator in all these activities is that they contribute to skill development and C.V. building.

[26] A. de Kiewit (2019). *University plan student well-being 2019-2022,* p.30.

[27] University of Twente (2018). *UT Language Policy*. And also: University of Twente (2019). *Code of Conduct Languages*.
https://www.utwente.nl/en/ces/language-centre/translation-editing-services/language-policy/

[28] Ibid. In the UT Code of Conduct Languages we make the explicit distinction between (entry requirements on) Dutch and English language proficiency on the one hand and academic language proficiency on the other hand. The former involves only the formal aspects of language such as spelling and grammar. Academic language proficiency comprises the whole of language knowledge, skills, strategies and attitudes which students must develop to successfully carry out tasks in higher education and in their later profession. Though a threshold level of English language proficiency is needed as a boundary condition for academic success, raising that threshold does not necessary increase success rate. Student effort and academic skills are the main determinants for academic success.

(11) Career orientation and preparation are available to all students when it comes to both centrally organised services, e.g. via Career Services, and services offered within the educational programme, especially when provided by academics who translate the acquired learning to careers advice.

Whatever career path our graduates choose, they remain part of the UT community as alumni via an active alumni organisation. There is a synergetic embedding of our alumni in all our practices by including our alumni in professional advisory boards, consulting alumni in our strategic discussions, and involving alumni in the accreditation of our education programmes. Identifying and investigating opportunities together leads to a strengthened alignment between educational programmes and demands from society and access to a broad network of (possible) partners. The warm relation between the UT and alumni is also beneficial to alumni as they have access to a large community, lifelong learning opportunities, and information and research infrastructure.

(12) We have an active alumni organisation at both the institutional and faculty level.

3 THE UT AS AN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROM A **STAFF MEMBER'S PERSPECTIVE**

At the UT, we are driven by our curiosity towards profound academic and engineering problems and our drive to contribute to solutions for economic and societal challenges. We are committed to recognising everybody's talent, connecting us, distinguishing ourselves as individuals and colour our roles in teams, and enabling continuous improvement across all UT fields of work. It is a call to empowerment for making our science and teaching better, services healthier, careers and opportunities boundless, and our impact in society sustainable [29]. As an internationally renowned research university, we integrate education with pioneering and innovative research. Our staff, be it scientific, teaching or supporting, is known to be Pioneering & Entrepreneurial, International & Inclusive, Engaged & Open, and Responsible & Accountable [30].

3.1 WELCOMING

PhDs and PDEng candidates, staff and guests at the University of Twente are all vibrant individuals, coming from all over the world and having unique stories and backgrounds. For the UT to be an exciting, inspiring work and learning environment, we celebrate this diversity in all its forms and ensure equity and inclusion are completely embedded in all that we do. We pro-actively convey our UT international community culture and make sure prospective staff can assess their fit with the UT. In turn, when recruiting, we consider whether the candidate is appropriate for the position, can provide a valuable contribution to the UT's societal impact and fits with our diverse and inclusive culture.

(13) We have explicit actions and targets that stimulate the diversity of staff (both scientific staff and support staff) at all levels of the university[31].

The University of Twente is a place where everyone feels welcome, supported and well informed[32]. A customer journey approach ensures content is correct, complete, relevant, accessible and easy to find. When it comes to onboarding new staff, we have optimised information flows. We help prepare the new employee to get acquainted with the UT as a work environment, to his/her new job tasks and responsibilities and his/her immediate colleagues. Attention is paid to the social and cultural aspects by introducing relevant PhD, staff, sports and cultural organisations and providing information and context to working in an international community with strong Dutch and regional roots. Practical support related to, for example, visa, housing, or the Dutch language is available. The Contact Centre serves as one clear, findable and visible entry point for these questions and concerns, transferring staff members to the relevant departments when needed.

(14) All new staff have a warm onboarding experience that covers the job-specific introduction as well as general social, cultural and practical information on the UT as a research, teaching and learning environment.

(15) By adding specific HR expertise to the Contact Centre, its services are expanded to also cater to staff and guests, specifically on questions about starting working and living in Twente.

3.2 INTERACTING WITH STUDENTS

The most dominant form of student-staff interactions happens in the classroom. Teaching at the most entrepreneurial university entails a certain innovative and international mindset. Teachers are continuously challenged to experiment with innovative new teaching methods, materials and approaches. The aim is to have engaging, relevant educational programmes that equip students with

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[29] Shaping Expert Group Individuals and Teams (2021). *Shaping Individuals and Teams: Manifesto and guiding principles.*
https://www.utwente.nl/en/organisation/about/shaping2030/documents/manifesto-shaping-individuals-and-teams.pdf
[30] University of Twente (2020). *Research Strategy 2020-2030 University of Twente: The university of technology that puts people first.*
https://www.utwente.nl/en/research/vision/
[31] S. Mkatini (2021). *Plan of Action on Diversity and Inclusion 2020-2022.*
[32] M. Strubbe (2015). *The Most Welcoming University.*

lifelong skills and enable them to be global citizens. A favourable student-teacher ratio ensures there is room for continuous didactical professionalisation of teaching staff[33].

A diverse student population in the classroom is a major asset in creating an international and inspiring learning environment. However, it has become evident from research[34] that exposure to diversity does not automatically lead to intercultural development. Sometimes one can even observe contrary, unintended and undesirable outcomes. For teachers to promote the development of intercultural competency, they need to understand how student behaviour can be affected by a diverse classroom and adjust their teaching, learning & assessment approach accordingly. This especially relevant for group work. Appropriately framing cultural differences in perspectives and classroom experiences will help students understand the intercultural dynamics at play and how engaging with culturally different perspectives can also deepen their subject learning.

(16) Tools and support structures are in place for teachers and educational programme management to construct a learning environment throughout the curriculum that enables students to acquire intercultural competencies and global citizenship skills.

To be able to do this, teachers need to be at least equipped with intercultural competencies. However, intercultural skills are not only crucial for teachers but also for various support staff positions as well. Students also interact with their study advisor, exchange coordinator, student service employees, and more. These staff members also provide valuable student support to a diverse student body. Frankly, being interculturally competent at all staff levels is essential for maintaining an inclusive work and learning environment.

(17) All staff work on their intercultural competencies for which training and (self-)assessment tools are made available. Developing intercultural awareness and competencies receives continuous attention at the individual and/or team level.

3.3   EXPERIMENTING & INNOVATING

In 2030, the University of Twente strives to be known for our leadership in providing integrated perspectives and solutions for the societal domains of Healthy Living & Better Healthcare, Connected Communities and a Sustainable Environment. Our campus offers state-of-the-art infrastructures to articulate challenges and experiment with possible solutions. A challenge-driven approach to education, research and innovation means we actively engage with different partners to co-create solutions. We include industry, government and citizens into the education and research process and the staff member is recognised and rewarded accordingly[35]. We pay explicit attention to scientific integrity and clear agreements on data storage and ownership. This is what it means to the UT to embrace Open Education[36], Open Science[37], FAIR data[38] and Open Innovation[39] as the new approach to research and valorisation.

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[33] Critical Self-Evaluation Report (n 12)
[34] J. Gregersen-Hermans (2015). The Impact of Exposure to Diversity in the International University Environment and the Development of Intercultural Competence in Students. In: A. Curaj, L. Matei, R. Pricopie, J. Salmi, P. Scott (Eds). *The European Higher Education Area*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20877-0_6
[35] Based on the UT Research Strategy (n 30) and related to Recognition and Rewarding initiative lead by the SEG Individuals and Teams.
[36] Open education is a way of carrying out education, often using digital technologies, to make learning accessible, abundant, and customisable for all. See: A. Inamorato Dos Santos, Y. Punie & J. Castaño Muñoz (2016). *Opening up Education: A Support Framework for Higher Education Institutions*. Publications Office of the European Union. DOI: 10.2791/293408
[37] Open Science provides a fundamental transformation of the whole research lifecycle to make it more open and accessible, more credible with increased integrity, more reliable and transparent, more efficient and collaborative, more responsive to societal challenges and closer to citizens. See: https://ec.europa.eu/research/openscience/index.cfm#
[38] Fair, Accesibility, Interoperability and Reusability are the four founding principles proposed to improve the infrastructure supporting the reuse of scholarly data. See: M. Wilkinson, M. Dumontier, I. Aalbersberg, *et al.* (2016). The FAIR Guiding Principles for scientific data management and stewardship. *Sci Data* 3. https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2016.18
[39] Here open refers to the pooling of knowledge for innovative purposes. Open innovation alludes to the shift from the triple to quadruple helix systems where the user and community are included in the government, industry and university relations. In a university-driven open innovation ecosystem selected users from all four groups actively take part in the innovation process. See: https://timreview.ca/article/1004

Collaborations with partners are not without safety risks, especially regarding knowledge safety. Risk analyses and risk management need to be part of the decision-making process when deciding about investments in new facilities, contracts with third parties, or collaboration schemes with various partners. Our risk assessment adopts an integrated perspective by including financial, legal, ethical, and societal aspects.

(18) We develop a comprehensive safety and security scheme to deal with cybersecurity, privacy, facilitation of sharing of data where appropriate and limiting access to data where needed, and proliferation of sensitive knowledge.

3.4   DEVELOPMENT & PERSONAL GROWTH

People in formal leadership positions (e.g., managers) are instrumental to ensuring that individuals and networks at UT can excel. Mentoring is one aspect of that. At the same time, every staff member also employs a form of personal leadership. This personal leadership constitutes being proactive, taking initiatives, taking responsibility, reflecting and effectively collaborating. Due to the dynamics of our work and world, working in teams is becoming more important. Individuals join to share their knowledge, competencies and networks, enabling the team to achieve more impact (for example, securing research grants) [40].

(19) The UT has a fully operational mentoring system for guiding PhD's, postdocs and starting assistant professors in their careers.

Everyone is often part of several teams, networks and communities. Firstly employees are part of networks related to their field of expertise, which is an international community of specialised researchers across the globe. They can also be part of a multi-disciplinary community mobilised by one of three overarching UT research institutes. Then there are communities related to their specific roles in teaching, policy, valorisation and management. Staff are part of participation bodies at the UT, faculty and educational programme levels, where they can actively discuss and secure the interests of those they represent. Lastly, interdisciplinary project teams involve all types of staff to pilot and develop innovative forms of research, teaching, and impact. All of these teams and communities are brought together digitally and physically via shared ideals, goals and facilities. Staff is equipped with digital skills to find and maintain their networks and communities. Embracing that each individual can and should contribute to making the world more sustainable, travelling is not the default for networking.

Given our aim of being an international people-first university of technology with a community skilled in international and intercultural competencies, it is of fundamental importance to be able to express and develop yourself. We ensure our scientific and support staff can gain international learning experiences. It is enriching and inspiring, and it can lead to new contacts, collaborations and insights. Furthermore, all staff members are expected to regularly pay attention to their language proficiency appropriate for their work. This also goes for PhD and PDEng candidates. Training and (self)assessment tools will be available to support this. English language proficiency is included in all new vacancies, ensuring new staff members are aware and able to work in an English-spoken work environment [41].

(20) Managers support and facilitate their team members financially and administratively to obtain international learning experiences within or even outside our current network of partners during their careers.

PhD and PDEng candidates have a complex position as both students and employees when it comes to their role in education and research and the support we wish to provide them. This calls for a university-wide approach and process. The Twente Graduate School (TGS) plays an important role in developing PhD and PDEng policy as well as its operationalisation and quality assessment.

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[40] SEG Individuals & Teams Manifesto (n 29)
[41] UT Language Policy (n 27)

4   THE UT AS AN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROM SOCIETY'S PERSPECTIVE

The UT is a networked university that wishes to play a meaningful role in its ecosystem and contribute valuable solutions to society's challenges. If the covid pandemic made one thing abundantly clear it is that society, science and learning cannot be bound by national borders. Discovery, experimentation and innovation continuously require building bridges, bringing people together and pooling resources. The University of Twente wants to be recognised for our ability to bridge societal and academic challenges in balanced partnerships. We co-develop academic quests into creative, disruptive research insights that can truly improve the long-term wellbeing of society.

4.1   A TRUSTED PARTNER

The UT is a networked university with trusted partners in science and society close to home and across the globe. Such a nurtured ecosystem is vital, as research and education are becoming more internationally competitive. Moreover, it enables an international learning environment, boosts our university's quality in education and research, helps us attract talent from across the globe, enhances the UT's visibility and reputation, and increases the impact we can make as a university. Each partnership has explicit goals to make the desired impact of the collaboration explicit and allow for better monitoring. This way, we can show society the impact we aim to achieve and communicate to our community the possibilities for our staff and students to contribute.

Partnerships can range from consortia at the institutional level to individual contacts of staff to long-term strategic collaborations. Specifically, we use bilateral collaboration with complementary partners to raise education and research quality. Collaboration in consortia is used to create more international learning opportunities for students and staff. New (digital) partnerships are forged with think tanks and private companies to unlock other forms of societal and economic impact.

A specific subset of partnerships is the international strategic relations (ISRs). We invest significantly in establishing and maintaining ISRs that help achieve the UT's strategic ambitions of educating global citizens and delivering research contributions to answering societal challenges in the domains of Healthy Living & Better Healthcare, Connected Communities, and a Sustainable Environment. With our ISRs, we aim to engage the full quintuple [42] helix. A strategic partnership requires a certain critical mass of activities and resources. Hence, our international strategic partners have both a research, education and valorisation component. The strategic partnership strengthens the excellence, visibility and societal impact of our profiling themes and unique selling points (such as the campus, our people-first approach or entrepreneurship).

(21) We involve our regional ecosystem in all our International Strategic Partnerships, building an ecosystem of institutes, local industry and societal parties to increase the sustainability and impact of the partnership. Moreover, it fosters broader support for the partnership.

The freedom individuals, teams and faculties have in exploring possible partnerships that fit their specific ambitions has increased the amount and complexity of managing our partnerships. It sometimes comes at the cost of effective support and noticeable impact. Moreover, ethical and safety considerations require us to be in control.

(22) To effectively manage and oversee our various partnerships, we have a firm grip on who is and should be part of our ecosystem and a framework to guide future choices on continuation or expansion. This framework pays specific attention to international strategic relations and how to align the partnerships with the UT's ambitions and strategy.

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[42] The quintuple helix model builds on the quadruple helix (university-industry-government-civic society) by adding the natural environment as a fifth helix. The model supports a win-win situation between ecology (sustainability), knowledge and innovation. See:
E. G. Carayannis, T.D. Barth & D. F. Campbell (2012). The Quintuple Helix innovation model: global warming as a challenge and driver for innovation. *J Innov Entrep,* 1(2). https://doi.org/10.1186/2192-5372-1-2

4.2   WITH AND FOR THE REGION

When we talk about the region, we mean not only Twente and the Achterhoek, but also the province of Overijssel. Here, we also include the Euregio [43], which covers parts of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. The whole regional ecosystem, including the UT, is invested in increasing the social and economic prosperity of the region. Therefore, we work together through joint strategies, projects and activities to improve the visibility and attractiveness of the region and influence national and international agenda's. Attracting (and retaining) talented students and staff is an important part of this as well. Together with Kennispark, regional industry, government, educational institutions and civil society, we unlock the local labour market to all UT graduates. Moreover, with our challenge-based approach to learning, research and innovation, we ensure the region has access to scientific knowledge and the opportunity to co-create answers to their questions. The added benefit is that participating in regionally sourced challenges allows all participating students to show their competency to the challenge providers. It can function as an attractive possibility to match the supply and demand of regional employers and students regarding internships, graduation assignments or jobs.

(23) By offering information about the region, promoting opportunities for internships, student jobs, traineeships and graduation assignments, and facilitating networking and matching events, we increase students' awareness of what the regional labour market has to offer.

4.3   AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The Netherlands has a knowledge economy. The core to being a knowledge economy is being able to deal with change. Adaptability requires strong research to open new knowledge and innovation opportunities, robust education to provide highly educated and flexible contributors to society, and entrepreneurship to allow companies to convert innovation opportunities into new products and processes [44]. The Dutch ministry of education (OCW) recognises the need for international collaborations to maintain our high quality of education and research. It grants the Dutch system access to the best people, ideas, facilities and infrastructure. The Dutch government has long since recognised the increased appreciation and need for beta science (physics, chemistry, mathematics and computing science) and engineering (electrical, civil and mechanical engineering). The government has identified focus areas that are unequivocally important considering the challenges society faces and in which the Dutch academic research is internationally recognised. Via the Sector Plans, funding has been made available to the universities to strengthen education, research and valorisation in these areas. Together with the other technical universities of the 4TU alliance, the UT invests these budgets to increase our engineering education and research quality. Via the VU-UT collaboration, we are also tapping into a new pool of possible future engineers.

Geopolitical developments such as Brexit and concerns for knowledge or even national security require a national response. Aided by the Association of Dutch Universities (VSNU), we discuss the challenges we all face and lobby with OCW for continuous attention and resources for higher education. We are competitors in the bid for attracting talented staff and the national market of potential students. However, when attracting international talent and working with international partners, some elements benefit from a coordinated effort by all universities such as legislation, visa procedures, or trade missions.

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[43] See: https://www.euregio.eu/
[44] Centraal Planbureau (2002). *De pijlers onder de kenniseconomie: Opties voor institutionele vernieuwing*.
https://www.cpb.nl/sites/default/files/publicaties/download/de-pijlers-onder-de-kenniseconomie-opties-voor-institutionele-vernieuwing.pdf

4.4 BUILDING TOWARDS A EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

The UT has been awarded the Erasmus Charter For Higher Education 2021-2027 (ECHE), which shows our commitment to building a European Education and Research Area [45]. Continued participation in the Erasmus+ programme and Horizon Europe has been very important in fostering opportunities for mobility, joint education and research.. In the field of education and research, we focus on existing contacts of our researchers across the world and combine these with student interests for exchange destinations and exchange programmes. These contacts form the basis of future cooperation for research as well as for education. Where joint education is concerned, UT aims to offer challenging network programmes that result in internationally recognised joint degrees. Furthermore, we run projects from capacity development perspectives. No matter what we do, we always try to let our education, research, and innovation feed and strengthen each other.

(24) We use the further implementation of the ECHE to ensure we continue to meet the highest quality standards and guarantee the alignment with European guidelines and values.

Of course, our ECIU University initiative cannot be left unmentioned. UT is one of the founding members of The European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU). This consortium is also one of the 17 alliances that has been given the status of a European University. The European Commission and the Council clearly state that they see the European University alliances as 'the future of higher education in Europe'. Digitalisation, the potential of post-COVID-19 austerity, deglobalisation, and the upcoming mid-term and long-term impacts of COVID-19 will inevitably impact higher education, and thus the UT. The UT is one of the founders of the ECIU University with our partner universities that joined since long under the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU) to pilot new and innovative education models, research and innovation. It ensures our resilience to these changes and brings new possibilities and opportunities for the UT. Initiatives under the umbrella of this network help the UT explore a unique position in Europe, effectively using the strengths of a network of similar universities.

The core of the ECIU University [46] revolves around challenge-based learning, research and innovation, and the organisation of flexible higher education by means of micro-credentials. Once fully operational, the ECIU University will offer challenges (industry, public or research-based) and micro-courses of different lengths and complexity. Teams of diverse learners and researchers (students and professionals) will be formed based on their capability and motivation to work on the challenges. When working on a challenge, the team of learners will be supported by a coach who makes sure a suitable outcome will be produced, and they will have access to experts with whom they can exchange information and ideas. The learners will have access to relevant education and corresponding micro-credentials. All learning (competencies and skills) will be documented in an ECIU European competence passport, or it will be integrated, as far as possible, into existing UT curricula. With this more flexible and personalised educational model, we not only provide a richer offering to our own students, but we also provide education for lifelong learners.

During the pilot phase of the ECIU University, the UT experiments with the challenge-based approaches, (international) quality assurance, lifelong development, micro-modules and quadruple-helix interaction on a European scale. Lessons learned from these pilots feed both the ECIU University and the UT education and research practice. When the ECIU University moves beyond the pilot phase, the UT will act as a contributor and beneficiary. Like the other members, we contribute our expertise, networks, relevant education, and research infrastructure. By combining the best of every member within the ECIU University, our staff and learners gain access to high-quality personalised learning and impactful research opportunities. As a meaningful contribution to the European Education Area, it can improve the position, visibility and reputation of the UT.

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[45] University of Twente (2020) *2021-2027 Erasmus Charter for Higher Education Certificate - signed.pdf* and University of Twnete (2020) *Erasmus Policy Statement.*
[46] ECIUU@UT Programme Plan (n 24) and ECIU (2020). *ECIU University 2030: connects U for life*. https://www.eciu.org/about-eciu

(25) We have a strategic roadmap that details the UT's role in the further development of the ECIU University by superimposing the institutional strategy Shaping2030 with the ECIU University Vision 2030.

4.5   THE UT ACROSS THE GLOBE

As a university, the UT has a significant role in the global brain circulation as we help provide highly skilled graduates. As mentioned before, we educate students to become Global Citizens and ensure they can be globally employed. This seems in conflict with our vision as described in 4.2 and 4.3 where we work on retaining talent for the region and the Netherlands to address the need for highly skilled science and engineering graduates. We emphasise that the UT contributes to brain circulation not only on a regional, national or European scale but on a global scale. Students and staff that have been with the UT and decide to migrate back home or elsewhere allow their new home region to draw upon their skills, know-how and experiences. They retain their academic and social connections from their time at the UT, thus providing continuous opportunities for different forms and types of collaborations.

In a way this contributes to individual capacity development. Capacity building is the process through which individuals, organisations, and societies obtain, strengthen, and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time. Universities have a meaningful role in this. The UT embraces capacity building in domain-specific knowledge, skills, and attitude at the individual and institutional/societal level as part of our mission.

(26) Together with a strategic partner in the Global South, the UT starts working as an institution on capacity development.

For all the importance we give to societal impact, measuring it proves rather difficult. The THE Impact Ranking makes a valuable effort in measuring how universities contribute to addressing the SDGs. These and more traditional rankings such as QS and ARWU are helpful tools to provide insights into how we score relative to other universities and provide possible courses of action to improve. However, rankings have become so important that they affect student recruitment and admission, access to resources, the reputation and legitimacy of higher education institutions, and academic publication practices. Therefore, seeing rankings merely as a tool would disregard their extensive impact on university practice. The most substantial indicators that determine our position in rankings are focused on research performance. Therefore, balancing our desire to be a well-ranked university while at the same time working on 'Recognition and Rewarding' (i.e. decreasing the weight of these traditional indicators in the university practice) will be one of the biggest challenges.

(27) The UT works on remaining highly ranked. Our research, education and innovation achievements, our unique assets like student activism and excellent and state-of-the-art research infrastructure, and our continuous efforts and experimentation with innovative learning and research methodologies should provide great content.

5   CONCLUSION

Internationalisation is an ongoing movement that touches upon education, research, impact, and support. It affects students, teachers, researchers, PhD candidates, managers, secretaries, support officers, and partners. It is not a goal but an intrinsic part of who we are and what we do. This white paper has built upon on existing foundation as provided under the internationalisation strategy '2020: Educate the Global Citizen'. Integrating recent university strategies and policies related to Shaping2030 provides one comprehensive vision of what it means to be an international people-first university of technology.

As an international people-first university, the UT aims to deliver high-quality academic contributions addressing societal challenges and educating talented learners as Global Citizens for the local, national, and global labour markets. We do this by being an inclusive organisation that fosters talent development, diversity & cultural awareness, embracing international collaboration as an intentional and strategic activity, and promoting international and intercultural learning experiences in our staff and students. The white paper has described what this means from a student, staff member and society perspective.

However, merely describing what we are and want to be is one thing; getting there is the real challenge. It requires **university-wide leadership** such as the executive, faculty, department and institute boards who commit, promote and help implement university-wide innovation initiatives that include intercultural and international dimensions. **Individual commitment and ownership** ensure we move forward**.** Efforts are made to engrain international and intercultural dimensions and inclusion in the daily work and culture of the university community. Incentives are needed to promote a positive perception of internationalisation and to transform awareness to individual commitment and ownership. Lastly, **resources and support** follow our strategy and ensure we deliver on our commitment. We need to invest in our people and improve systems and processes so we can continue to improve and innovate.

The white paper describes who we want to be, and we need university-wide leadership, individual commitment and ownership, and resources and support to make the change. A proposal for the initial steps for making this change are separately presented in the Action Plan 2021-2022. But first, we must make a choice to commit ourselves, find the courage and make the change to be an international people-first university of technology.