



Erasmus+ - Key Action 2

Capacity Building within the Field of Higher Education

## TIGRIS Project

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***Report on the initial self-assessment of Kurdish HEIs regarding their  
conditions for internationalisation***

Work package	Title
<b>WP1</b>	<b><i>Preparation</i></b>
Activity	Title
<b>WP1.4</b>	<b><i>Identification of conditions for the recruitment of foreign students, PhD students, teachers and researchers at Kurdish HEIs</i></b>
<i>Useful for</i>	<i>All others</i>

<b>ORGANIZATION NAME:</b> KUL/GII/UGOE		<b>AUTHOR:</b> Jef Schrooten, Jakob Hedderich, Uwe Brandenburg	
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Author(s)	Jef Schrooten, KU Leuven (KUL) Jakob Hedderich, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (UGOE) Uwe Brandenburg, Global Impact Institute (GII)	
Contributors	Dr. Shelanah Salih (ChU), Dr. Nawzat Sadiq Ahmed (DPU), Arian Ali (UoH), Bryar Hassan (KISSR), Dr. Mohammed Azeez Saeed (SU), Bakhtiar Sharif (SPU), Araz Mohammed Ismail (UoR), Dr. Karzan Ghafur Khidir (UoS)	
Contact name		
E-mail address	<a href="mailto:jef.schrooten@kuleuven.be">jef.schrooten@kuleuven.be</a> ; <a href="mailto:jakob.hedderich@zvw.uni-goettingen.de">jakob.hedderich@zvw.uni-goettingen.de</a> ; <a href="mailto:uwe.brandenburg@globalimpactinstitute.eu">uwe.brandenburg@globalimpactinstitute.eu</a> ;	
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## Introduction

This report constitutes the formal execution of work package 1.4. It contains the initial self-assessment that analyses the existing conditions and facilities of HEIs to enhance internationalisation as well as, consequently, the identification of the conditions for recruitment of foreign students, PhD students, teachers and researchers in particular at Kurdish HEIs. The criteria were established by KU Leuven, in consultation with other partners and were derived from the IMPI-toolbox. This toolbox is a tool that supports defining indicators for measuring internationalisation and is the result of a project funded by the European Commission.<sup>1</sup>

The report consists of three parts: firstly, a general introduction, in which we specify the context in which the Kurdish HEIs have to conduct their work. Understanding this context is important to understand the trends that we will demonstrate in the second part.

Secondly, an overall analysis of the results across all HEIs. This provides the project with an idea of the diversity or similarities between the project partner HEIs in Kurdistan. It also helps to put the more qualitative information into a quantitative context. The content of this second part builds upon the data that were delivered to us by the Kurdish partners via a questionnaire and an online tool. The answers were verified through several ways (online information, confirmation mails, telephone calls etc.). Despite all efforts, however, the possibility remains that some questions were misunderstood by the partners resulting in erroneous data submitted. Where likely, the existence of such erroneous data has been indicated in the report.

The third part of the report contains the self-assessment reports that were drafted by the partners, in cooperation with KU Leuven, the Global Impact Institute and UGOE.

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<sup>1</sup> More information can be found here: [www.impi-toolbox.eu](http://www.impi-toolbox.eu).

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## Part I: Introduction to the general conditions for and of internationalisation in Kurdistan, Iraq

A study performed in 2012 about the recruitment of foreign students made a distinction between pull and push factors that come into play in case a student decides to go study abroad. Whereas the push factors have a link with the home country of the student (and are therefore less relevant for our project), the pull factors come into play when choosing a destination.<sup>2</sup>

Some factors are independent from the Higher Education Institutions. They are related to the country, or even the region that these HEIs are located. Sometimes, being too close (or too far), having a nice climate, or being an exotic destination can help or hinder HEIs to attract students.

The study mentioned the following factors:

- The availability of information on the country and its higher education institutions, existing cultural / economic / educational / historical / linguistic / religious / strategic linkages, and active promotion or recruitment policies,
- The quality and reputation of education in the country (for instance, but not only, through rankings of institutions within a country), and the level of academic freedom,
- Mutual recognition of degrees/qualifications (by the host country and the domestic country),
- Costs of higher education and living in a country (tuition fee, availability of financial aid, travel expenses, living costs),
- Governance of higher education institutions (public vs. private),
- Safety levels within the country (crime rate, racial discrimination),
- Internationalisation of a country (number of foreign students, availability and diversity of international programmes, stringency of immigration policies),
- The living, study and work environment of a country (climate, research facilities, ambiance, employment and immigration opportunities/regulations during and after study, demographic growth/decline), and
- Social and geographical linkages (friends/relatives living or studying in same country, geographical proximity).

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/publications/find-a-publication/international-student-recruitment.pdf>

BECKER, R. & KOLSTER, R. (2012). *International student recruitment: policies and developments in selected countries*. Den Haag: Nuffic.

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In conclusion: even though it is not part of the self-assessment as such, it is still useful to give a general overview about the factors that are out of control of the Kurdish HEIs, such as the general internationalisation of the region and the safety level.

Even though the situation on the ground may differ from the official advice given by Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Europe, there is still a great concern about traveling to the region, especially for non-essential travel. Some make the distinction between the Kurdish Region and the rest of Iraq, but almost all travel advises are quite negative. Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, Switzerland and the Netherlands have issued negative travel arrangements, or even urged their citizens to 'depart immediately' (Australia).<sup>3</sup> Another indicator is the countries position in the Global Peace Index. Iraq has been amongst the bottom five countries<sup>4</sup> for the past five consecutive years.<sup>5</sup> Violence is not only bad for safety, it is also massively expensive.

According the GPI, the cost of violence is estimated to be 51% of the GDP of Iraq.<sup>6</sup> Participants at the kick-off meeting mentioned that the security situation drained resources away from HEIs. This off course has an impact on day-to-day practices.

To be complete, the situation in Iraq has improved a lot the last year.<sup>7</sup> If this trend continuous, we have good hope that there will be a positive impact on research and education in the HEIs, and that internationalisation will improve.

The internationalisation of a country can be assessed by the KOF Globalization Index, an index developed by the KOF Swiss Economic Institute. It measures globalization along the economic, social and political dimension.<sup>8</sup> We can see that Iraq is staying on the same level of globalization since 1980, while the rest of the world is progressing.

<sup>3</sup> <http://smartraveller.gov.au/Countries/middle-east/Pages/iraq.aspx>.

<sup>4</sup> Being considered as the least peaceful countries.

<sup>5</sup> <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/06/GPI17-Report.pdf>, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2018/06/Global-Peace-Index-2018-2.pdf>, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2018/06/Global-Peace-Index-2018-2.pdf>, p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/bitstream/handle/20.500.11850/238666/KOF\\_Globalisation%20Index\\_Revisited.pdf?sequence=7&isAllowed=y](https://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/bitstream/handle/20.500.11850/238666/KOF_Globalisation%20Index_Revisited.pdf?sequence=7&isAllowed=y), p. 5.

Gygli, Savina, Florian Haelg and Jan-Egbert Sturm (2018): The KOF Globalisation Index – Revisited, KOF Working Paper, No. 439.

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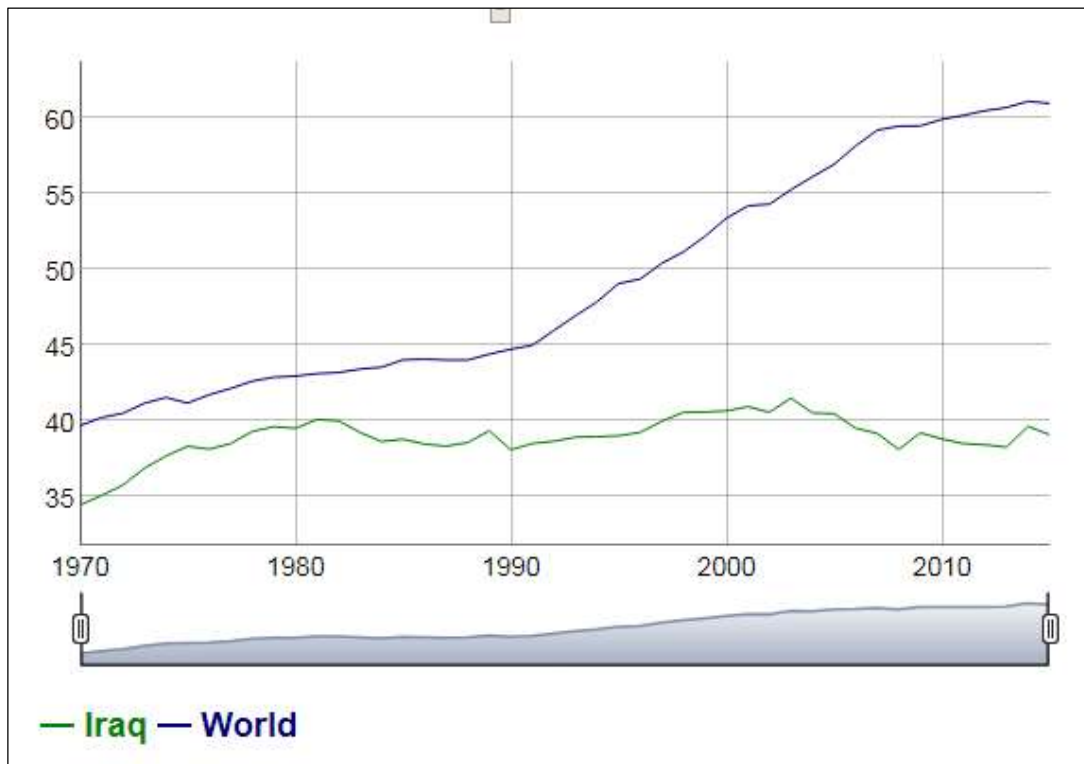


Illustration 1 Globalization of Iraq in comparison to the world according to the KOF Globalization Index<sup>9</sup>

Other factors that are influencing the HEIs in Kurdistan are the growing student enrolment figures (the number of potential students increases), a lack of infrastructure, a decreasing employability of graduates, lack of research and publications, a low level of faculty and student mobility in the region. The HEIs in the Kurdish region suffer from political interference, which has a negative impact on the governance of the HEIs.<sup>10</sup>

To conclude, we can state that the Kurdish HEIs find themselves in a particular challenging situation, making it harder for them than for HEIs in most other regions to attract international visitors. They have a real interest in a more stable environment.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.kof.ethz.ch/en/forecasts-and-indicators/indicators/kof-globalisation-index.html>.

<sup>10</sup> ATRUSHI & WOODFIELD, 2018: The quality of higher education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13530194.2018.1430537>.

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This is not to say that there are not any positive developments in the region. The Erbil International Airport attracts more passengers every year (figures until 2014), from 2006 until 2014, the number of passengers increased by a factor of 10. Since the ISIL-crisis and the closing of the airports in 2017 this number dropped. However, the airports re-opened and the ISIL-crisis is less present in the region, so we can expect an increase once again.

## Part II: Comparative assessment of the conditions for internationalisation at the Kurdish partner HEIs in the TIGRIS project

On the basis of the deliverable 1.3 “List with potential indicators for analysing the quality of internationalisation”, the following aspects were analysed by collecting data through an online survey, questionnaire and interviews:

- Staff mobility, incoming and outgoing
- Student mobility, incoming and outgoing
- International offices
- Budget and Grants
- Research
- Education
- Promotion of the institution

The self-assessment gives a general comparative overview of the conditions for internationalisation of the Kurdish HEIs that participate in TIGRIS. Only when a specific HEI has a very specific situation, this will be highlighted. All data displayed in graphs was taken from the online survey.

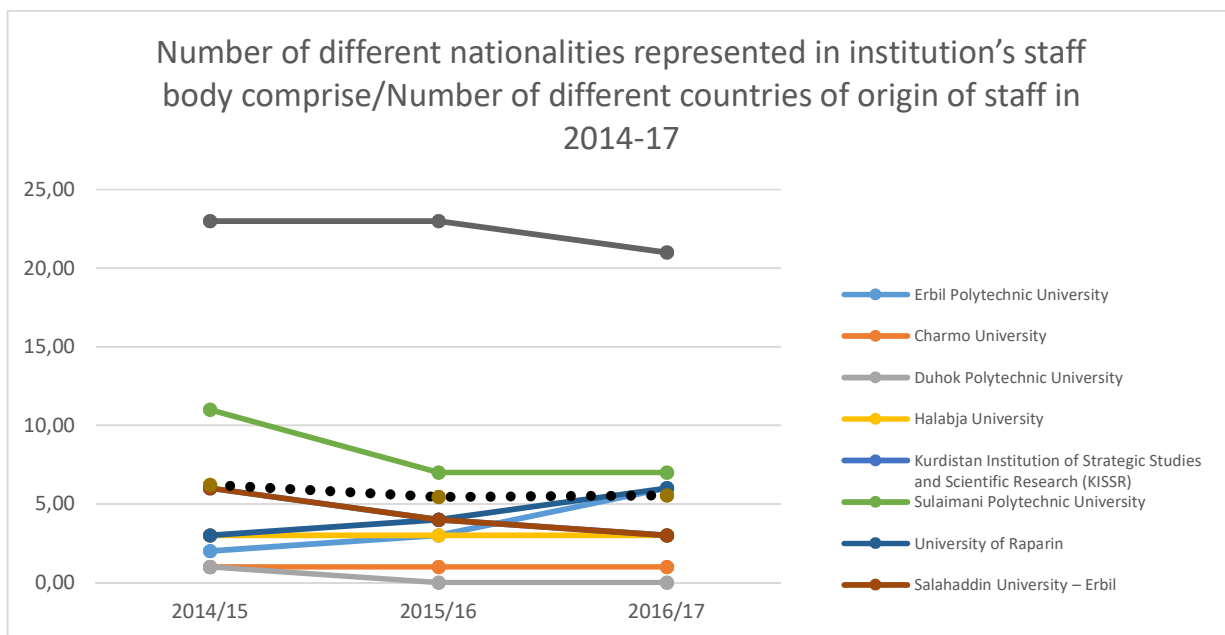
### Staff mobility

7 of the 9 universities (78%) have a strategy for staff mobility in place, however, these are not always very detailed.

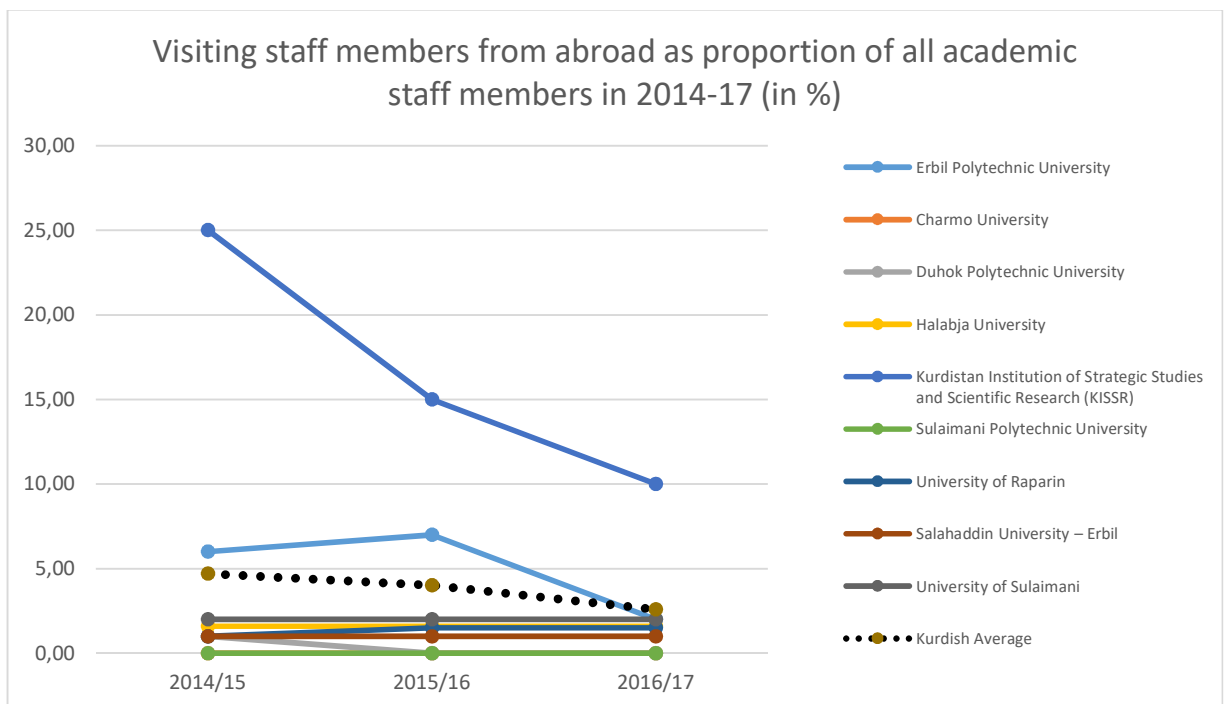
### Incoming staff

In general, we can state that staff mobility is rather weak for incoming staff, while being a bit stronger for outgoing staff. The proportion of visiting staff members from abroad as proportion of all academic staff members in the academic years 2014-2017 differed substantially between the Kurdish HEIs with UoS taking the lead (around 25%) but it is on average not growing but stagnating.

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The share of international staff amongst all staff varies as well with a Kurdish average around 2.6%. The share is decreasing over time, indicating a loss rather than gain in internationalisation.



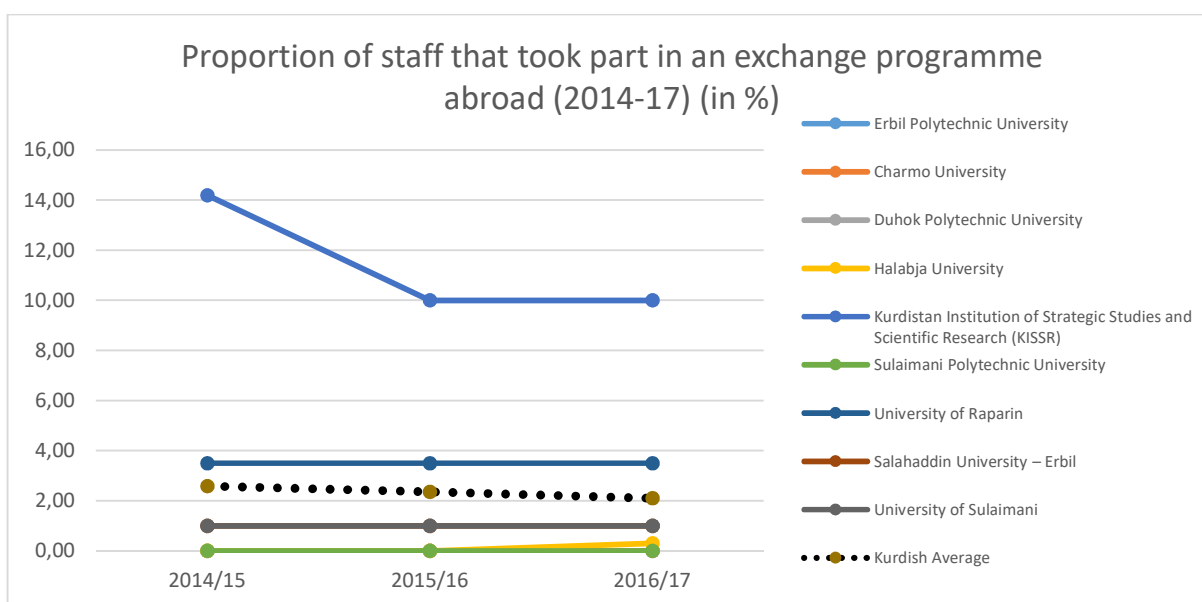
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Incoming nationalities are mostly nearby (Iranian, Egypt, Arabian), but also other nationalities such as British, Canadian, German, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian, American etc. were mentioned, although in low numbers (less than 10).

#### Outgoing staff

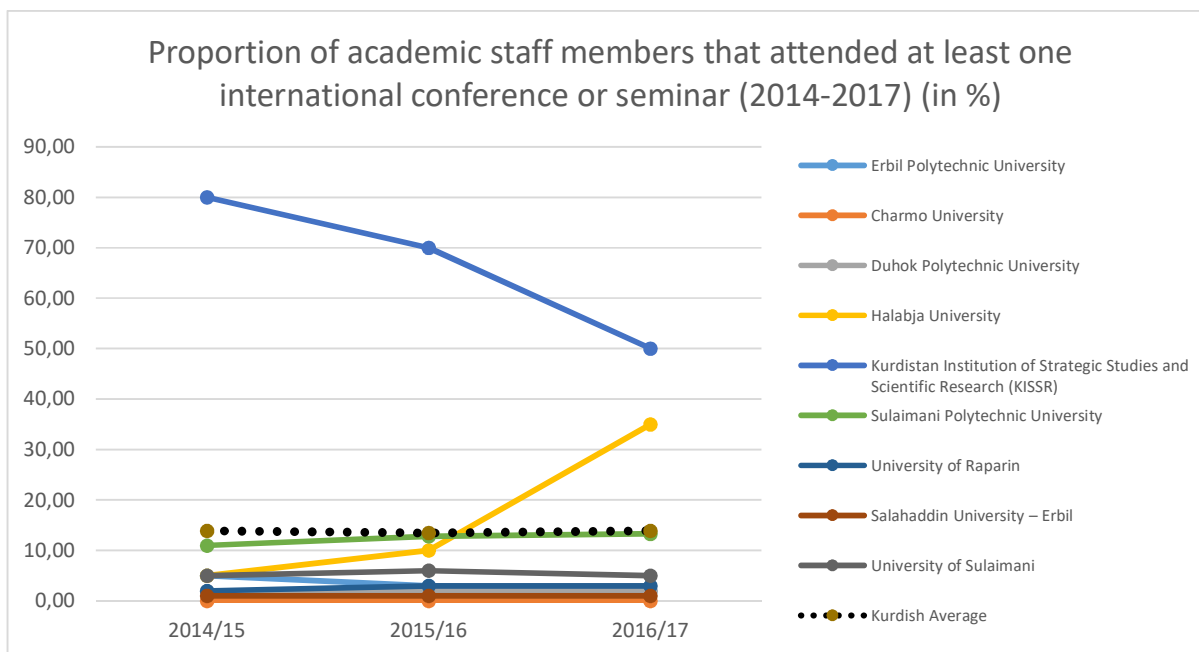
The proportion of staff that took part in an exchange programme abroad was between zero and four percent. KISSR is in a specific situation, its numbers being generally higher (10-14%). Again, we see no increase overall.



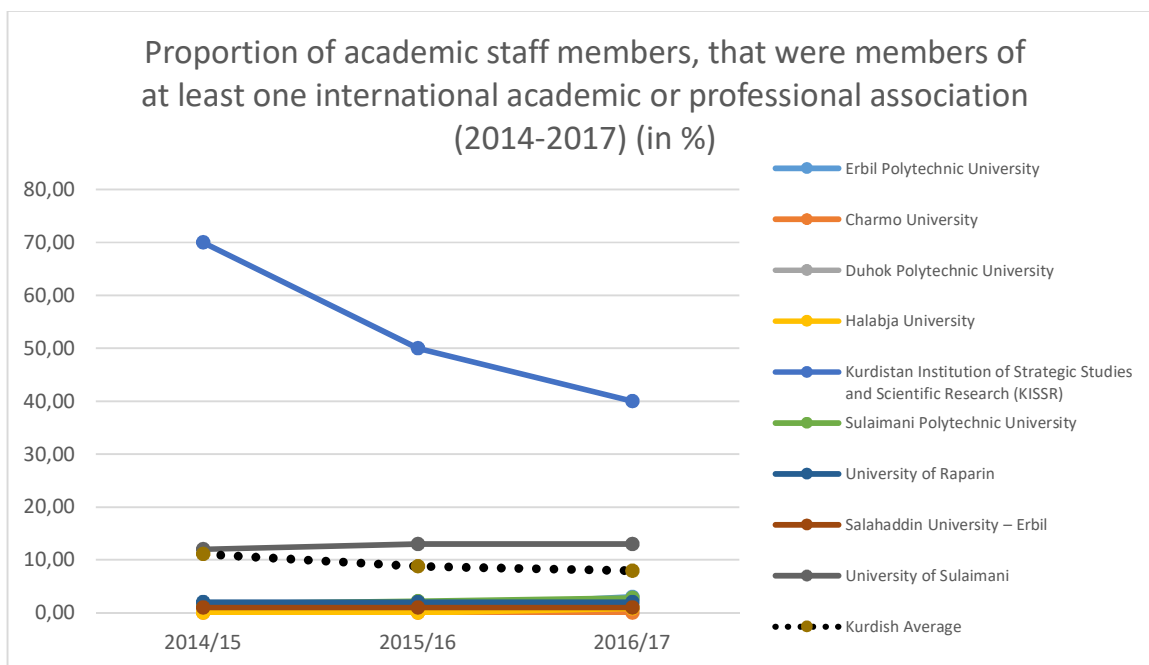
The proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar varies from 1 to 80 percent during the academic years 2014-17.

However, we can see several different trends: there are universities where this kind of activity is the exception (ranging from zero to six percent), universities where a bigger percentage of academic staff takes part, but where this percentages remains rather stable, universities where it was the exception in 2014/15, but is more common in 2016/17 (Halabja: respectively 5 and 35 percent) and KISSR, where the proportion was high, but declines over the years (80% in 2014/15 to 50% in 2016/17). We also see a steep decrease in the case of Erbil Polytechnic University. For the Kurdish average, we again observe stagnation.

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Finally, we have a similar picture regarding membership in associations. The average for Kurdish HEIs is strongly influenced by the outlier Erbil Polytechnic University claiming 50-80% of their staff being members in such associations, all other HEIs show values up to 10%. Only Halabja University managed to substantially increase its share. Again, the average stagnates.



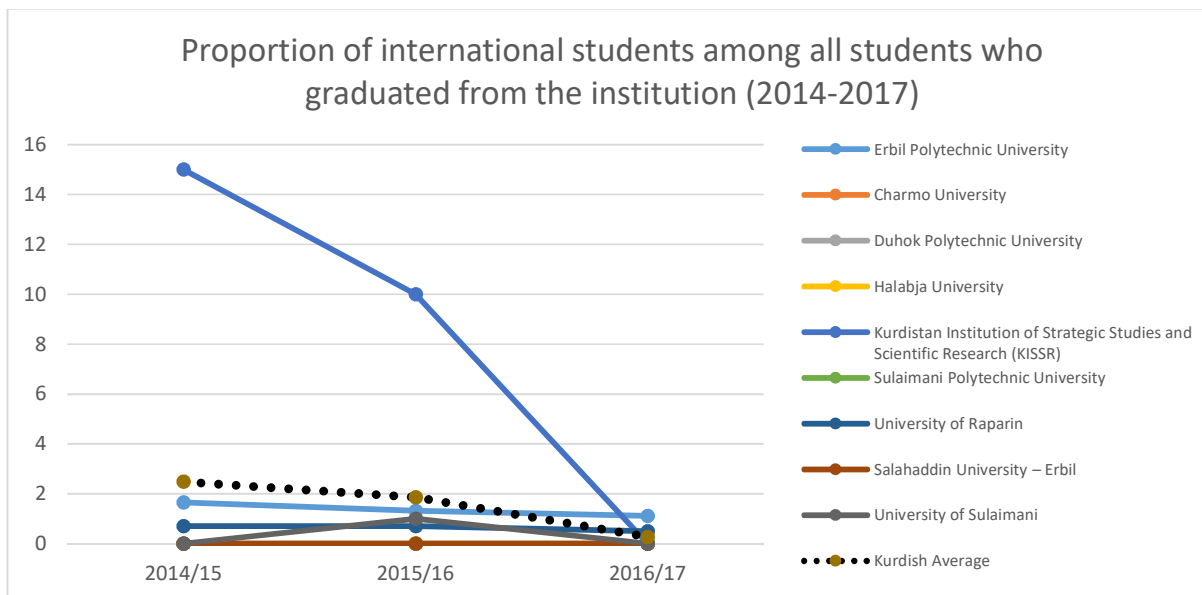
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## Student mobility

### Incoming students

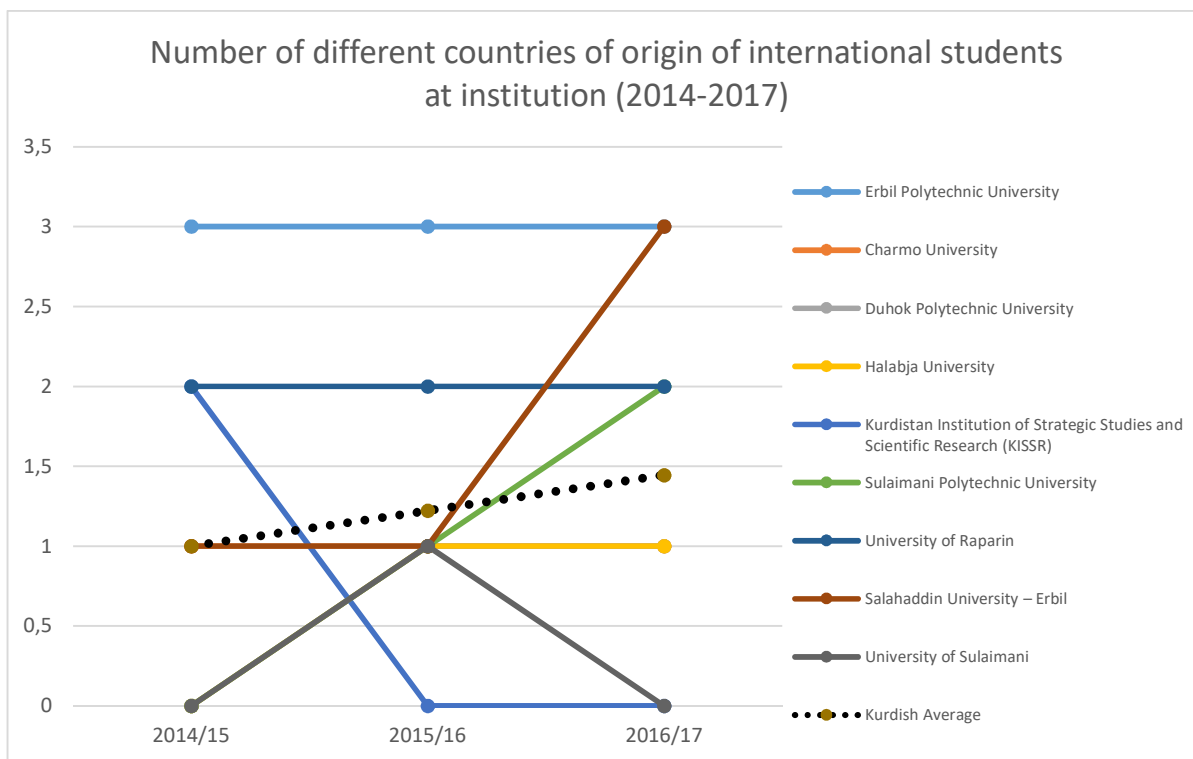
Only 2 HEIs (22%) have an institutional international alumni database, which makes it factually impossible for the others to keep track of their alumni. This is the more deplorable since the numbers are still very low and thus every single graduate from abroad would count.



The proportion of international students is on average around 0.4%, similar to those of the outgoing students (see below). Worse, the share is not increasing but decreasing and none of the HEIs showed a positive development.

The diversity of this small population is also extremely limited since in most HEIs those international students come from one other country.

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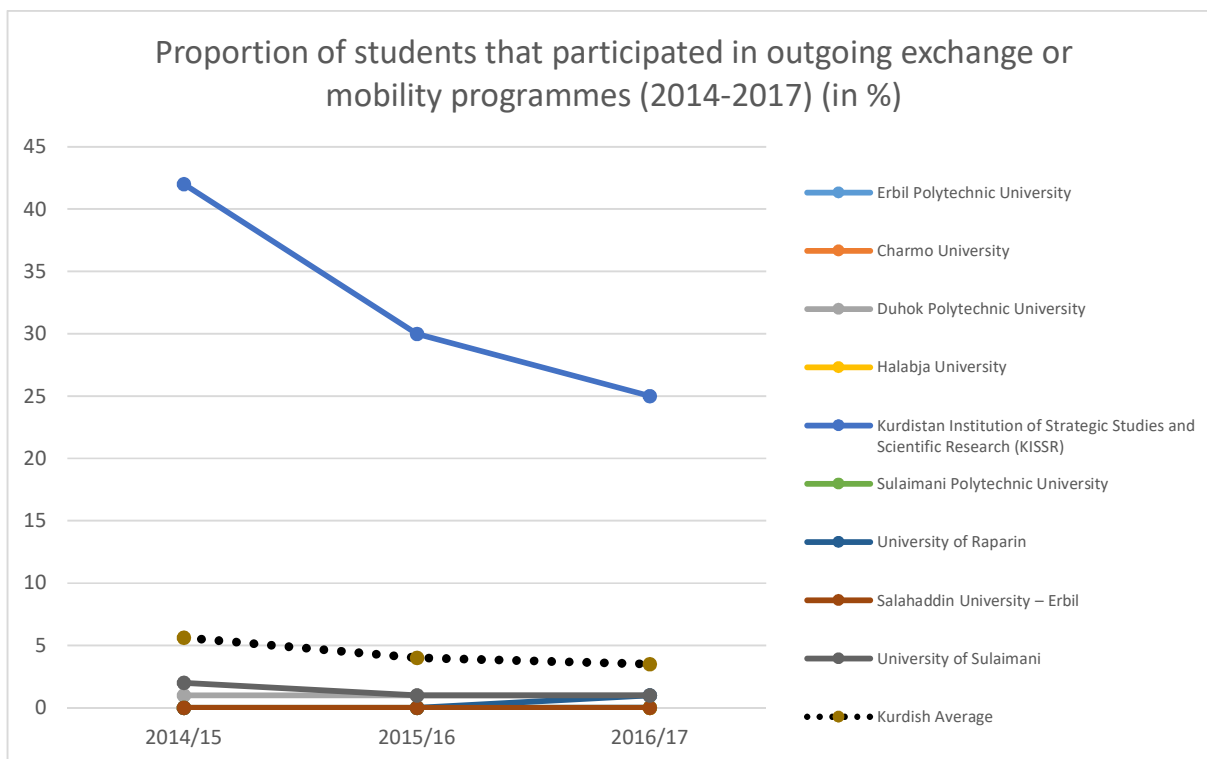


### Outgoing students

Every university gives some kind of advice for students on study abroad opportunities. This includes giving seminars, fellowships, scholarships, publishing leaflets and via websites. However, only 3 (33%) have a real institutional advice structure for students on study abroad opportunities implemented. This seems to be one of the first requirements to be fulfilled in order to be able to increase closer to a global or even European average.

The number students that participates in an exchange programme abroad remains low, ranging from zero to one percent. The Kurdish average stagnates around an extremely low 0.4%, or less than 5% of the European average (8-10%) and around 10% of the US average (app. 4%). Only KISSR has substantial percentages but faces a decrease.

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The institutions give the following reasons for these low numbers:

- The economic crisis
- ISIL-war in Kurdistan region
- Rules and Regulations
- Language issues
- VISA-issues
- Different education systems, especially the ECTS
- Financial reasons
- Limited knowledge about such opportunities available for international students
- Lack of training to make the best of opportunities
- Finding partners abroad is difficult

While it is clear that some of these issues are outside the control of the partners and fall outside the scope of the TIGRIS project, others are crucial to address in TIGRIS, such as ‘Rules and Regulations’ and ‘Different education systems’.

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## Strategy / International offices

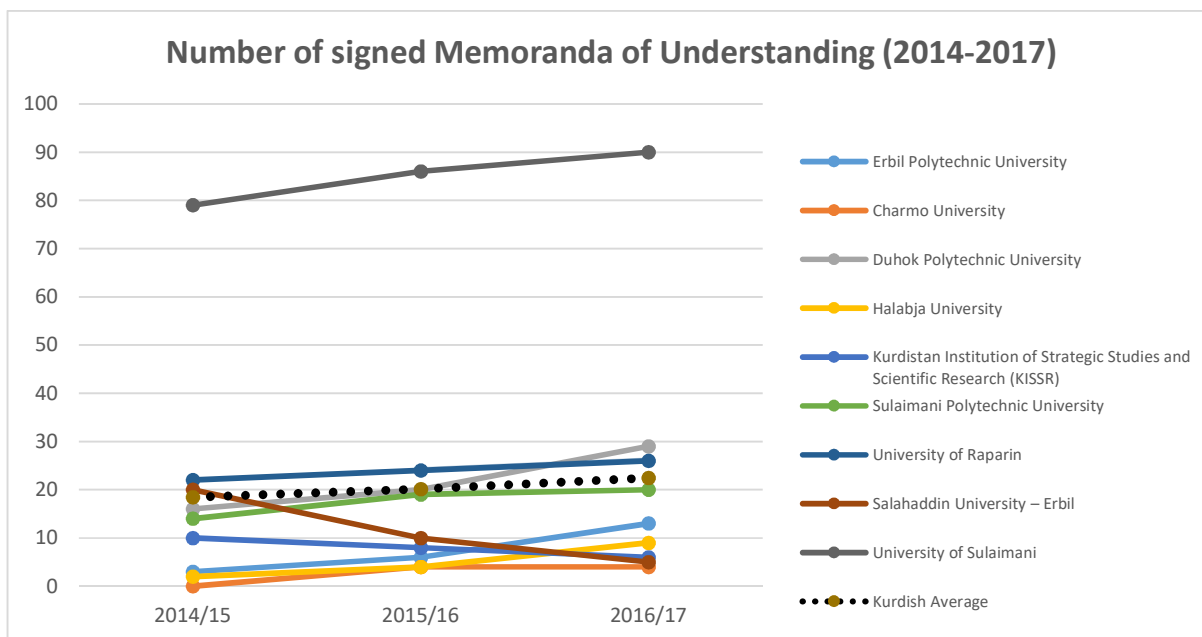
Only 5 HEIs (56%) have a defined internationalisation strategy in place, a fact that emphasises the relevance of WP 3 in this project. Only 4 (44%) have marketing strategies for internationalisation and staff/student recruitment and also only 4 have a specific organisational structure in place to support internationalisation. Since these are basic structures for successful internationalisation, it is highly recommendable to establish such strategies at the earliest convenience.

	Existence of a clearly defined strategy for internationalisation	Existence of marketing strategies for internationalisation and staff/student recruitment	Existence of a specific organisational structure to support internationalisation
Erbil Polytechnic University	no	no	no
Charmo University	yes	yes	yes
Duhok Polytechnic University	yes	yes	yes
Halabja University	yes	yes	yes
Kurdistan Institution of Strategic Studies and Scientific Research (KISSR)	no	no	no
Sulaimani Polytechnic University	yes	yes	yes
University of Raparin	no	no	no
Salahaddin University – Erbil	yes	no	no
University of Sulaimani	no	no	no
Kurdish Average	56%	44%	44%

It is also striking that it is usually an “all-or-nothing” situation: except for Salahaddin, a university has either all those strategies or none of them. However, since we see the results for staff and student mobility, we can conclude that all institutions most likely have to revisit their strategies and adapt them.

6 HEIs claim to have incentives to further/encourage internationalisation activities by institution’s staff members implemented with a varying degree of precision: Charmo University e.g. uses four different incentives (Changing study language to English, implementing the Bologna System, offering Scholarships, doubling the income for staff members) while others support conference participation with limited travel grants Sulaimani Polytechnic University (SPU).

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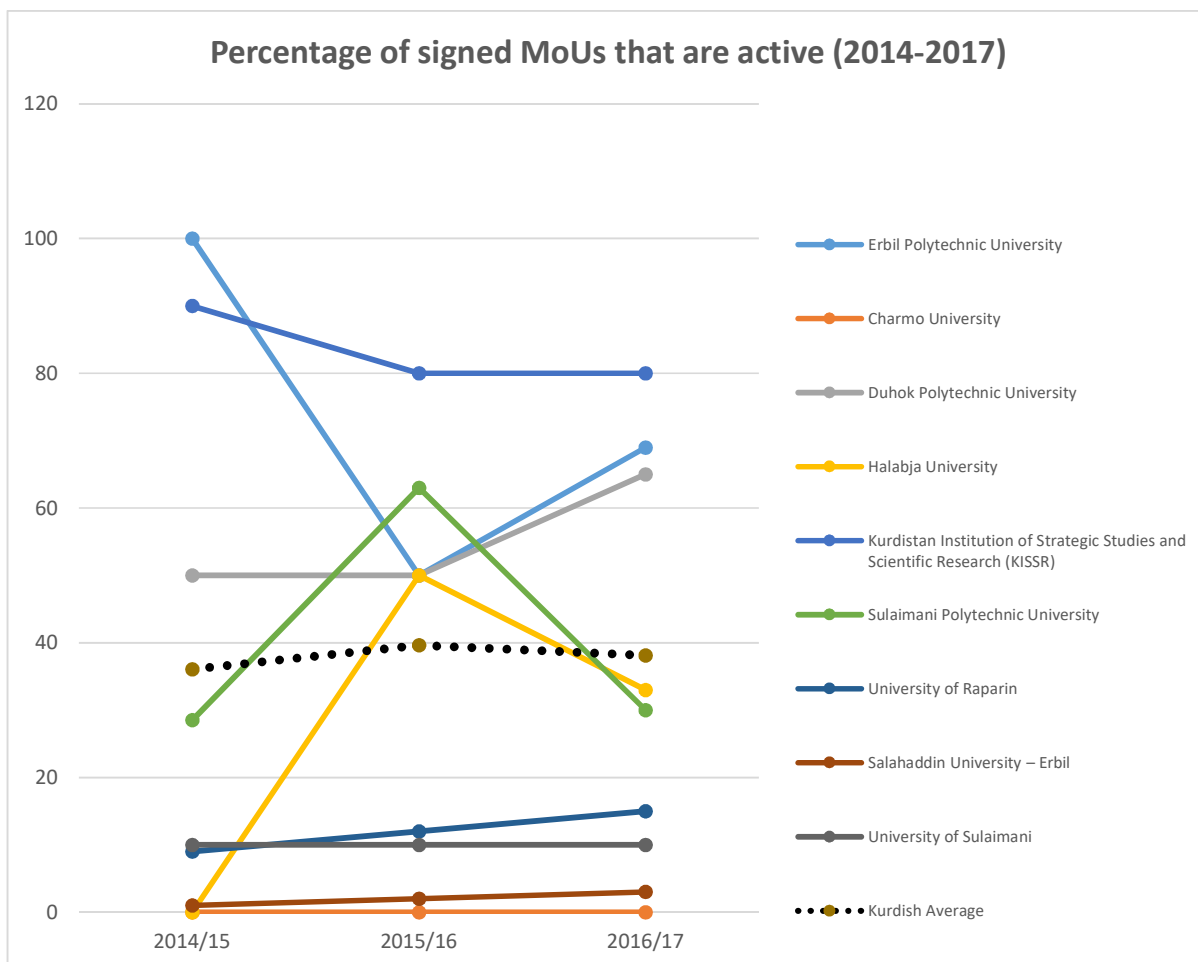


Several universities have numerous signed agreements and Memorandums of Understanding. During the academic years 2014-17, the total number of MoU’s has risen from 166 to 202.

However, it is the University of Sulaimani (UoS) that is responsible for a great share of these MoU’s (90 MoU’s in 2016/17). Some universities have signed less MoU’s in the later years (fe: Salahaddin University, 20 in 2014/15, 10 in 2015/16 and only 5 in 2016/17), although this might be due to a misunderstanding: usually the number is accumulating over the years since few MoUs are cancelled, thus Salahaddin might have understood the question to be asking for newly signed agreements. In that case, they would perform within the Kurdish average which again is stagnating.

Despite the sheer number, the geographical spread is usually confined to the neighbouring countries. Germany, Poland, and Cyprus being exceptions.

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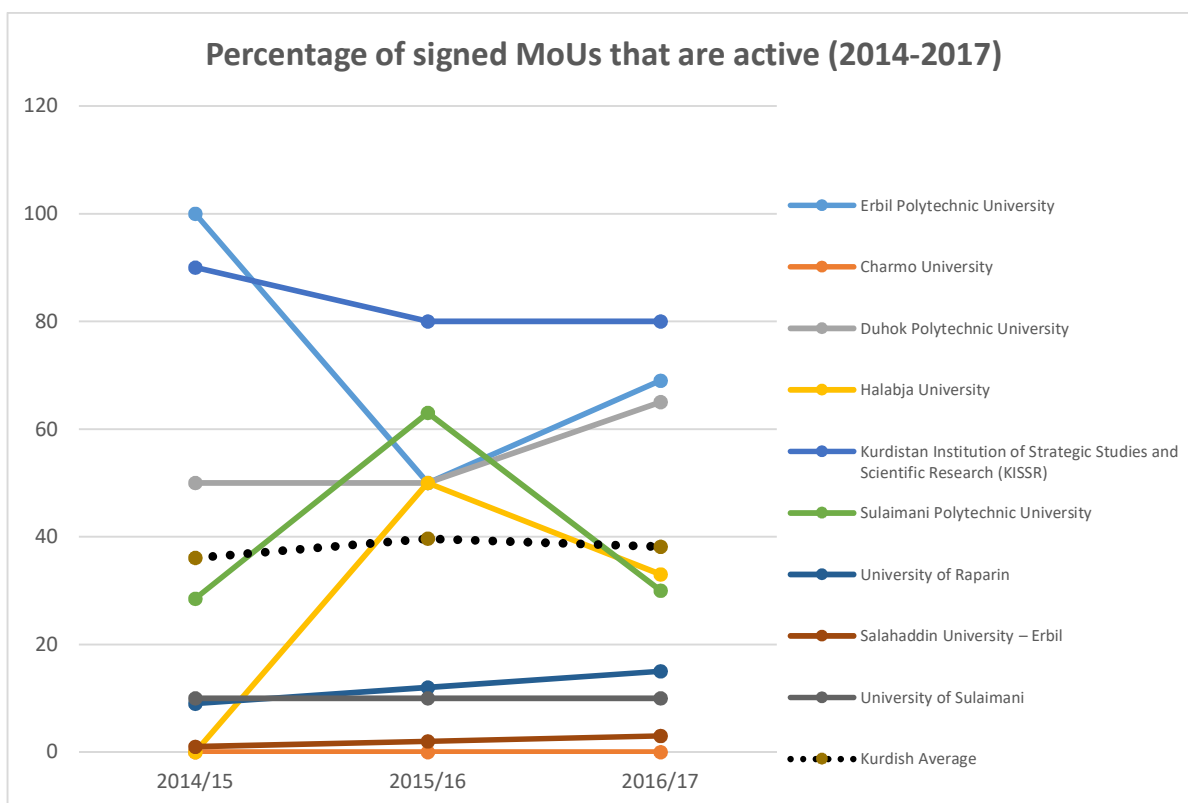


Signing a MoU is one thing, making actual use of these, is another. Not every MoU is active, and some universities prefer to make use of the existing MoU's, rather than to sign as much as possible. In 2016/17, the proportion of active MoU's varied from three percent to 100% of the total number.

*“Culturally, the universities think that MoUs is only about signing a document and taking a picture, yet this is totally misunderstanding from our side as they treat MoUs as a visit and that is it.”*

Self-assessment KISSR.

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However, the Kurdish average around 40% is not bad, considering that all universities globally have to fight with this problem.

Regarding international offices, not every HEIs has one as such. Some HEIs have an office directly linked to the University president, where it has limited autonomy. The functions of those IO's is not uniform, sometimes not even playing a role in the support of internationalisation. At some institutions, the International Office has as the Internationalisation of the institution as number one priority. International offices are limited by budgetary limits, have limited autonomy vis-à-vis the management of the university and by limitations imposed by rules and regulations of the Ministry of Finance of the Kurdish Regional Government.

Where there is no international office, some other parts of university take over the tasks of what an international office would do. These include the organisation of seminars and dissemination of data on international activities, the making of own regulations in terms of internationalisation, the allocation of financial incentives etc.

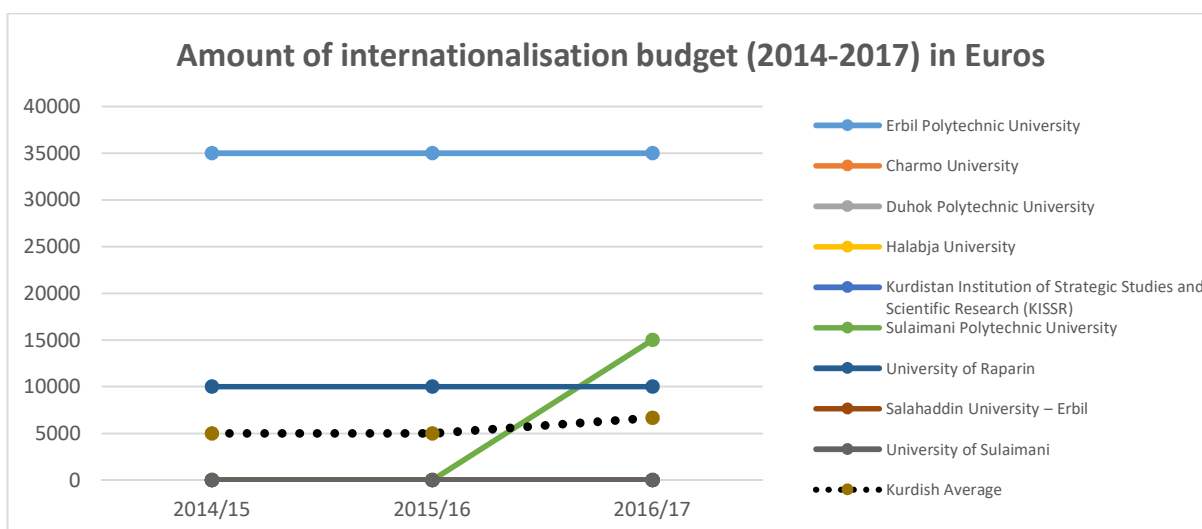
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## Budget

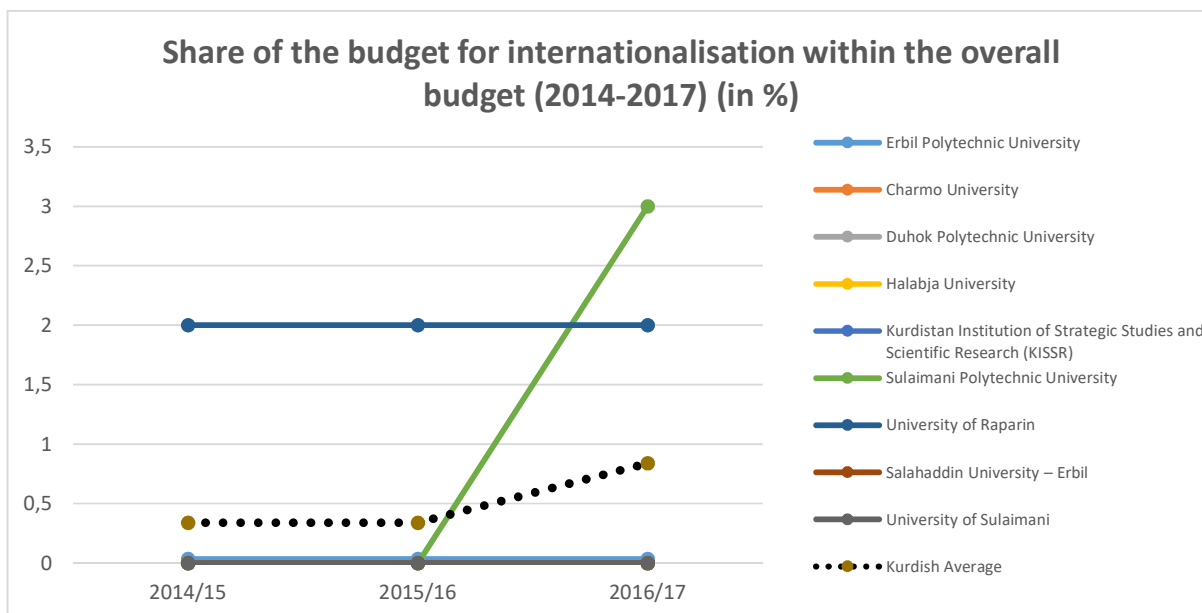
The HEIs all indicate that they are limited in their financial freedom. They must comply with the regulations of the Ministry of Higher Education. These regulations are perceived as quite strict, including the necessity of the Minister's permission for most expenditure. Grants are to be spent based on the rules and regulations of grant givers.

Thus only 3 HEIs have reserved a budget for internationalisation. Strangely, the general answer here does not at all comply with the data provided for such budgets. DPU claims to have a budget but sets its figure at 0 for all years, whereas Raparin claims in the online survey not to have a budget but provides the largest figures, however it does so in the self-assessment report, so might be an input error.



The level of budgets available are between 10,000 and 35,000 €. This can be assessed better if seen as percentage of the overall budget:

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We see that the share varies between values very close to zero and 3% (which would be a rather large share; but this would also in the case of SPU translate into a total university budget of just 500,000 € which seems rather unlikely).

## Research

As one of the basic missions of a university, research (or access to interesting research areas) is perhaps the most important assets that a university has to attract international scholars. The relationship also works in the opposite direction: research collaboration is associated with higher scientific productivity.<sup>11</sup>

As with mobility, the self-assessment is not showing very reassuring results for this area in general. The article by ATRUSHI and WOODFIELD (2018) already stated that Research has not become the priority of HEIs in the Kurdish Region, and overall there is a weak institutional engagement and investment in research, and funding is extremely low for research. The HEIs only have limited access to international research papers and journals, most even don't have access at all. One institution

<sup>11</sup> Lee, S., & Bozeman, B. (2005). The impact of research collaboration on scientific productivity. *Social Studies of Science*, 35(5), 673–702.

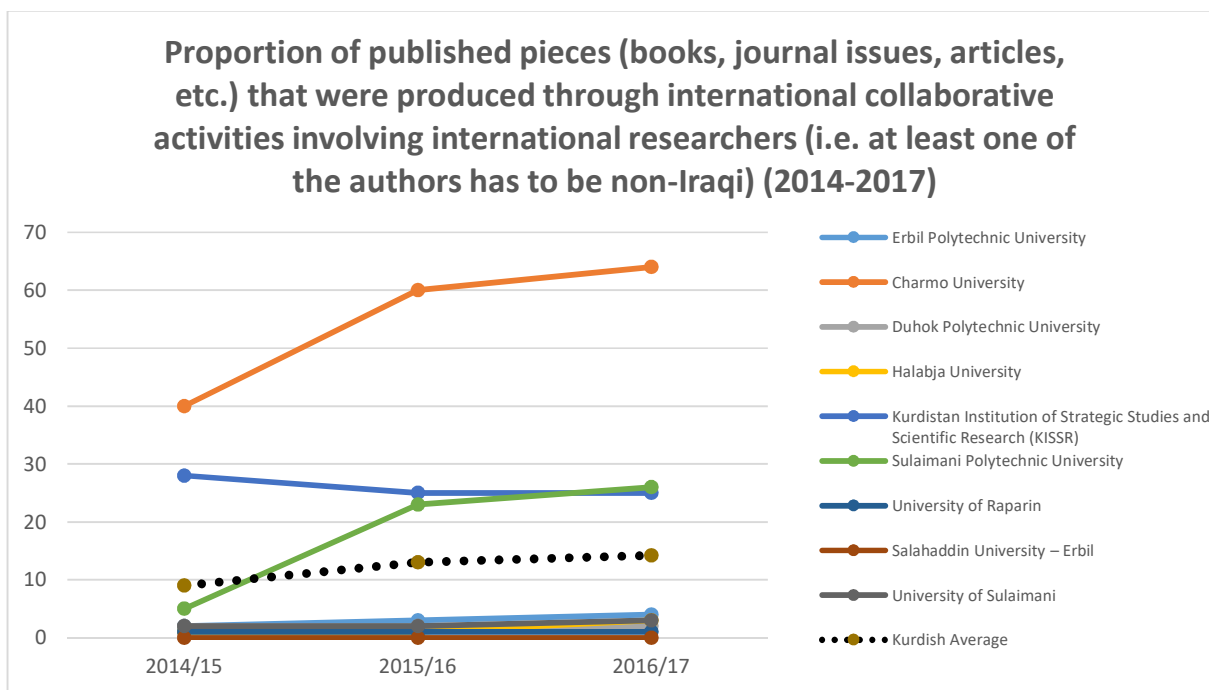
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works around this problem by using online platforms such as Google Scholar and Research Gate and tries to find funds to gain access to high quality research papers.

None of the HEIs offers its researchers access to international research papers and journals, one of the most important first steps to allow researchers to enter the international arena.

On the proportion of published pieces that were produced through international collaborative activities, not every institution keeps track. For those who do, the numbers vary from zero percent to four percent. KISSR and SPU are exceptions, here about one quarter of the published pieces were produced internationally. Charmo University claims to have a share of 40 to 64% which seems unlikely high, even on a global scale of comparison. Even with the outliers, the Kurdish average is low but rose from 9 to 14.3%. However, the data for the outlier Charmo is considered questionable and thus the average might rather stagnate as we see it in most other HEIs except for SPU.

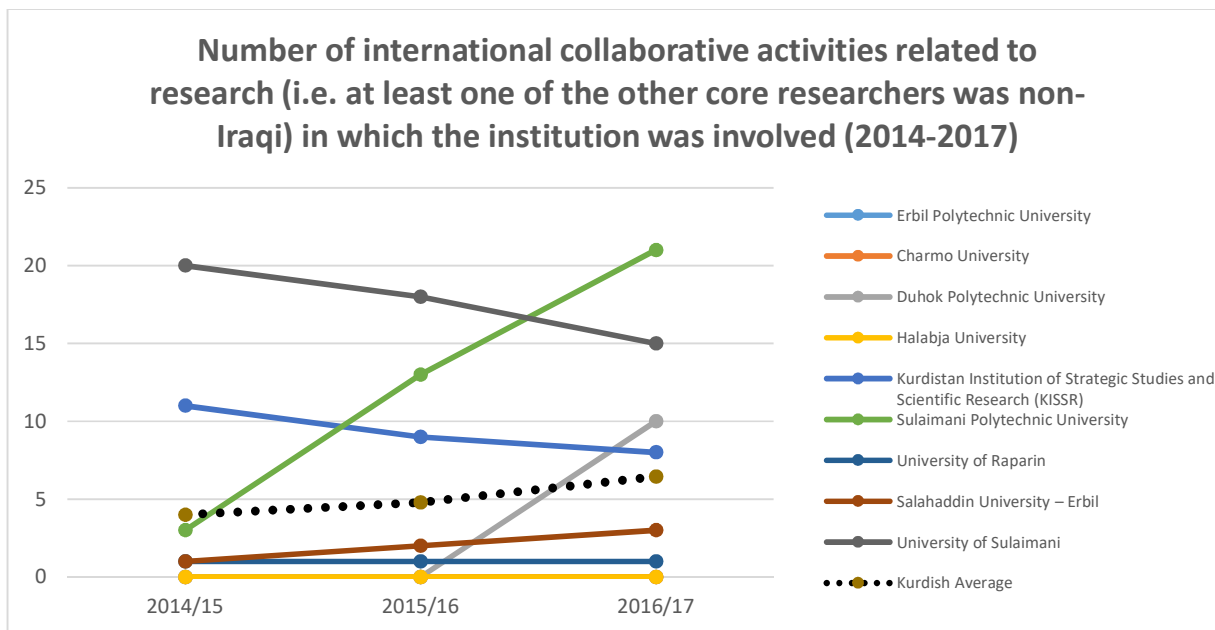


However, every HEIs has been involved in international research activities, leading to a publication or some other kind of output. The numbers are limited, nevertheless (0 to 21 collaborative activities

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per year). Still, this is one of the exceptional indicators that shows a positive development over time for the Kurdish average.



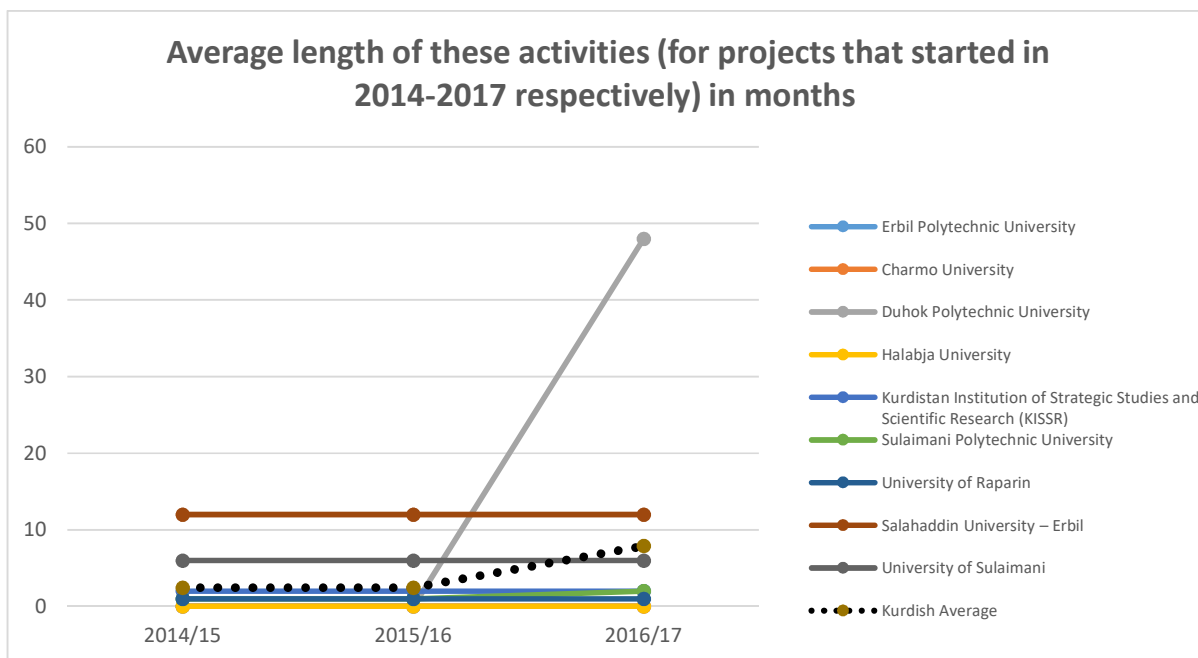
It must be said that the HEIs and ministry undertake action to spread the academic work that is conducted at their institutions, for example via own journals or via their websites. An example is the Kurdistan Journal of Applied Research<sup>12</sup>, an open access journal that publishes peer review research, published in English.

These joint research activities are mostly short-term and without the outlier of DPU who seems to have started a long-term project, the Kurdish average stagnates around 2.5 months which is an extremely short time-span for joint research.

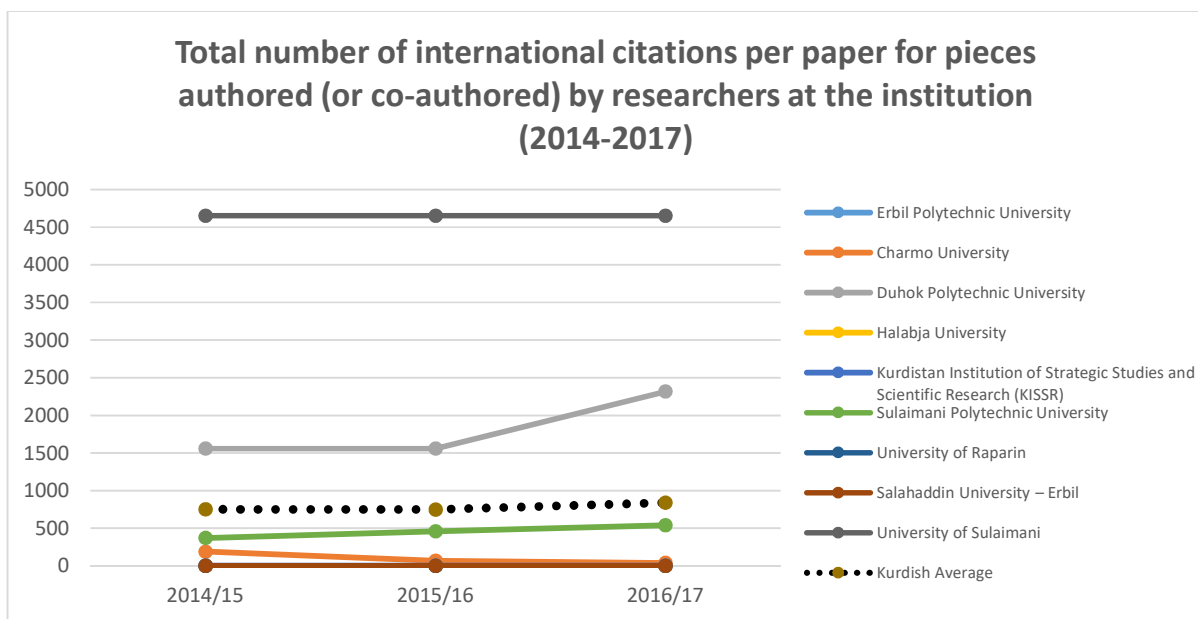
<sup>12</sup> <http://kjar.spu.edu.iq/index.php/kjar>.

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We also asked for data on citations and H-Index but the results cast serious doubt on the reliability of the data provided by some HEIs.

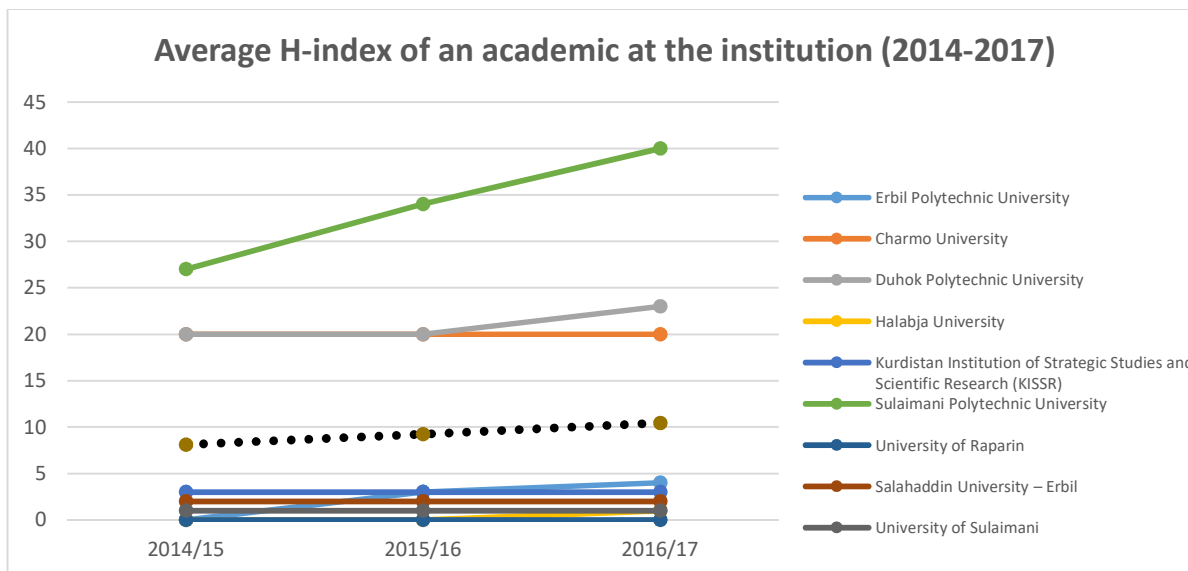


While the Kurdish average and the majority of cases are below 1,000, UoS claims to have a stable exact 4.653 citations per paper average for each of the reported years. This is statistically highly

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unlikely and might be a data error. Only DPU managed to increase its citations in the last year, the average remains stagnating.



The average H-Index<sup>13</sup> is claimed to be around 10. However, while the vast majority claims very low H-Indices, SPU claims an exceptionally high one of currently 40. This would mean that on average EVERY academic at SPU has at least 40 articles which were cited at least 40 times. This is highly unlikely and indicates a data error. Also, the values for Charmo University and DPU seem unduly high. These values might happen for an individual researcher but not an average across all researchers, especially given the small number of papers and generally low number of citations. As an indication, for social sciences the average professor in Europe achieves an H-Index of a meagre 3.5-3.9.

<sup>13</sup> The H-Index measures the highest number of citations for the largest number of articles. If a researcher has 100 publications but only two with at least 10 citations, his H-Index is 2. If he has 5 citations with at least 15 citations, his H-Index is 5, if he has 10 citations with at least 10 citations, the H-Index is 10.

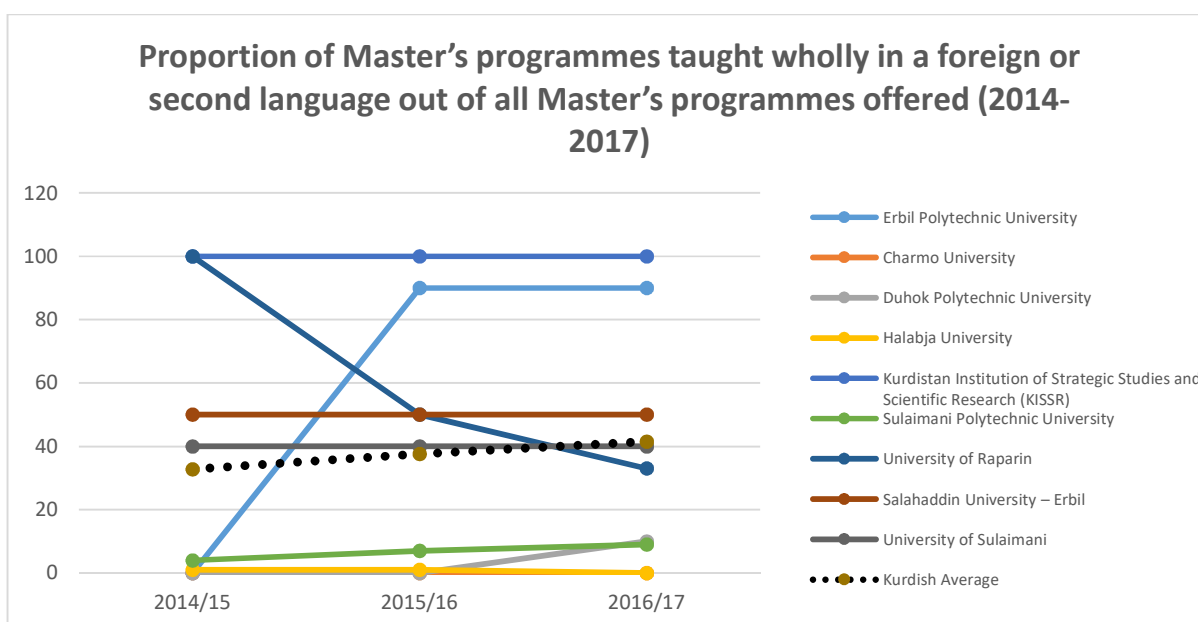
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## Education

In this section, we were looking for answers on three questions, being the use of languages in the educational system, the offer of summer programmes and the aspect of joint/double degrees.

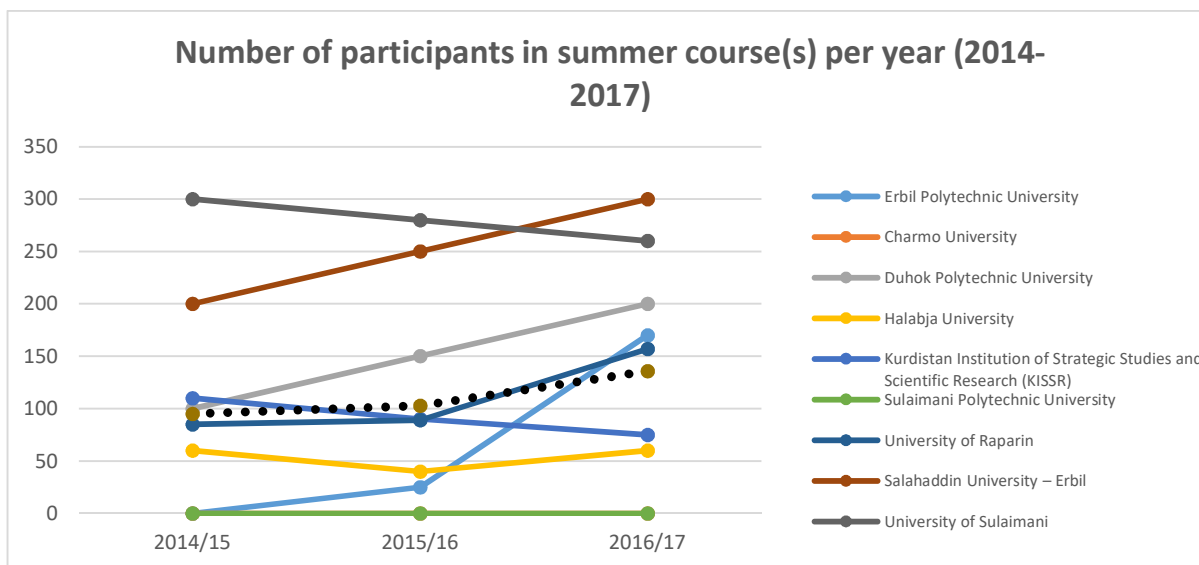
The use of English is widespread, especially for medical colleges, engineering, science and agriculture. Other languages such as Arabic are used in social and humanitarian sciences. Other languages included French, Persian and Turkish. Language courses are organized, including IELTS-test preparations.



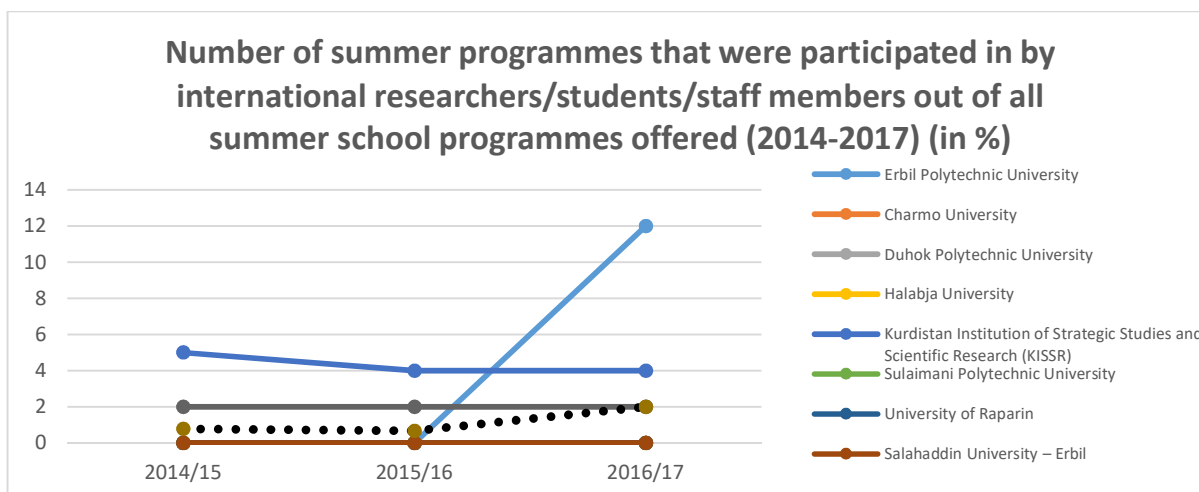
However, the share of English-taught Master's programmes varies substantially. Some such as EPU (having changed substantially after 2014/15) and KISSR achieve 100%, others such as SU and UoS stagnate on levels between 40 and 50%, still very high. Another group still has very low percentages and needs substantial improvement. Strangely, KISSR does not turn these 100% into large shares of international students. However, the Kurdish average is increasing.

Summer school can be a powerful tool to internationalise with rather limited resources needed. Accordingly, only one HEI (SPU) does not offer such courses.

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In general, participation numbers in the summer schools are good and also increasing. Unfortunately, the clientele are exclusively Kurdish participants, 6 HEIs have absolutely no international participants (neither students nor staff) and only EPU managed to increase the share (from 0 to now 12, indicating the start of a new course).



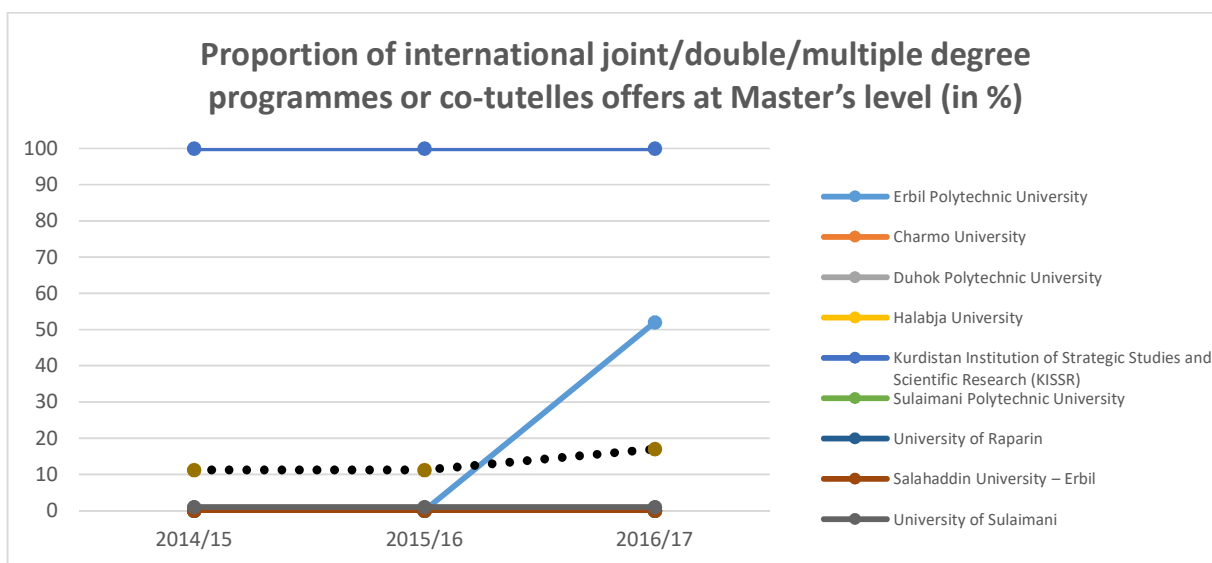
This means that the tool of summer schools is so far not exploited to its potential.

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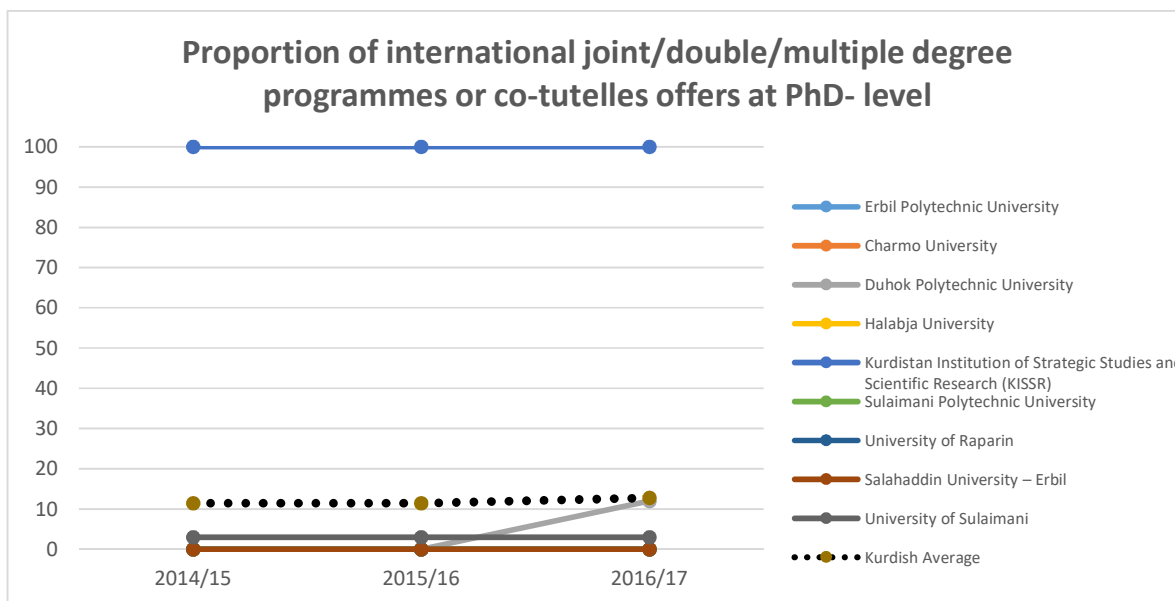
The ECTS-system is also not widely spread in the HEIs, only 2 institutions (Charmo and EPU) claim to have included the Bologna system for specific courses, others are considering including ECTS after or during the TIGRIS project.

Joint/double (split-site) or multiple degrees are also quite rare in the HEIs. Legislation concerning joint/double degree programmes exists, where the universities need to get official permission from the ministry to launch such programmes. 5 out of 9 HEIs claim to have a legislation in place which seems an odd answer considering the described legislative condition. This process is considered as time-consuming and difficult to implement, but not impossible. For more information about this, see work package 1.2.



The average for Kurdistan of 11.2-17% is heavily influenced by the one outlier: KISSR. Here it seems weird that KISSR has 100% of all programmes being joint or multiple or double degrees but virtually no international students enrolled since the concept of such a degree requires students to study at partner institutions, so also a share would have to come to KISSR. It might be that it is a one-way street and only Kurdish students go abroad but no students come.

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6 HEIs do not have any international joint/double/multiple degree programmes on PhD level. KISSR is again outstanding with all its PhD programmes claiming to be in this category. The average for all is stagnating around slightly more than 10%.

### Promotion of the institution

6 universities have a university website, including an English (some also Arabic) part for the international audience. A defined strategy for international communication is present in 5 HEIs. It is only exceptional that there is a webpage directly addressing international students. One institution has developed a promotion strategy, by for example the publication of advertisements and participating at exhibitions and being part of international associations. As before, both aspects are closely related: except for EPU, those universities with a marketing strategy also have website in at least one foreign language, usually English, while those who do not have the one also lack the other.

	Does your institution have a defined strategy for international communication, promotion, and marketing	Does your institution provide webpages for international students in at least one foreign language
Erbil Polytechnic University	no	yes
Charmo University	yes	yes

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Duhok Polytechnic University	yes	yes
Halabja University	yes	yes
Kurdistan Institution of Strategic Studies and Scientific Research (KISSR)	no	no
Sulaimani Polytechnic University	yes	yes
University of Raparin	no	no
Salahaddin University – Erbil	yes	yes
University of Sulaimani	no	no
Kurdish Average	56%	67%

### Other aspects

The HEIs were given the opportunity to express their needs and wants in terms of internationalisation. Several of them answered this question, and the answers were similar, never contradicting themselves. The issues raised in this open question were:

- An ease of legislation
- Financial Support
- Capacity training
- The need for an internationalisation strategy
- Re-organisation of the institutional hierarchy
- Curricula development
- Conducting joint research
- The design of summer courses

These issues will be addressed in some of the upcoming workshops coordinated by the European partners.

### Conclusion

All of the above combined, can lead to no other conclusion that at the moment the position of the Kurdish HEIs concerning internationalisation is rather weak. This in spite of their best efforts to be present at the international academic landscape. Not only are the actual figures low but in 80% of the quantitative indicators, we can also not see a positive development over time regarding the Kurdish average indicating stagnation.

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Several aspects are beyond their influence, but nevertheless are important to understand this position. It can be expected that an improvement of the security situation (or at least an improvement in the perception of this situation) will be positive, both in terms of eliminating traveling concerns and in terms of budget allocation away from security-expenses.

Several aspects are influenced by local legislation, that is perceived by the HEIs are being too strict or is not in line with legislation in other parts of the world, for example with the Bologna system. These aspects will be studied in work package 1.1 and are an integral part of the TIGRIS-project.

The last aspects are those that are under the direct control of the HEIs themselves. The development of programmes, the development of strategies etc. can be done under the current situation, or at least can be prepared for after an improvement of the security situation or after the adaption of more flexible government regulations.

We also see that in many institutions, basic structures and requirements such as strategies for marketing or internationalisation in general need to be established or improved, support structures are lacking (advice for students, access to journals for researchers). In addition, some institutions seem to have substantial structures in place but still fail to benefit from them showing low numbers of international students and staff. These have to revisit their activities and assess how they can make better use of their structures.

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### Part III: Individual self-assessments by the Kurdish Higher Education Institutions

This self-assessment by the HEIs is based on a questionnaire and a follow-up questionnaire. In this report we refer to the first questionnaire as ‘the questionnaire’ and to the second as ‘the online tool’. This because the first was answered in a word-document, while the second was published online. A follow-up discussion took place in Summer 2018. The partners involved reviewed the data that are presented here on accuracy.

The questionnaire was developed by KU Leuven and was already based on previous work on internationalisation, the IMPI Toolbox. This toolbox was developed in an earlier European project and was used to select the indicators for the questionnaire. Accordingly, for the input/output part of the tool, the same indicators have to apply.<sup>14</sup>

However, both the questionnaire and the online tool also identify some impact indicators which are not part of the IMPI toolbox.

The online tool combined quantitative and qualitative indicators. However, the definition is slightly different since the tool was not developed to process procedural information (how?). Thus “quantitative” is used for indicators which can be processed mathematically (e.g. number, percentage) whereas “qualitative” indicators are those that can only be assessed in terms of “yes/no”.

However, such qualitative indicators can also be turned into quantitative indicators by aggregation (e.g. 10 yes/no questions combined might generate quantitative result options: if 2 out of 10 are answered this translates into a 20% achievement). This is also fully in line with the original methodology of the IMPI Toolbox.

Data was collected from 3 academic years separately (so data for 2014/15, 2015/16, and 2016/17). This so that one can assess developments and avoid accidental results from one year.

<sup>14</sup> For more information on the IMPI Toolbox, please visit <http://www.impi-toolbox.eu/index.php>; registration as well as use of the toolbox is free of charge.

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In this report, discuss the existence of a defined strategy for internationalisation, staff- and student mobility (both incoming and outgoing), the organisation of the International Office, aspects of budget, research and education, and more practical issues, such as the promotion of the university, the existence of a webpage in another language etc. Also, the partners were asked to raise issues they see as important in relation to internationalisation.

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## Charmo University (ChU)

This report is written by Dr. Shelanah Salih (Charmo University) and Jef Schrooten (KU Leuven).

### Mobility

#### Staff

#### **International strategy**

ChU has a defined institutional strategy to develop the participation of staff in internationalisation activities. The strategy is fivefold:

- Actively engaging staff in Bologna process
- Establishing collaborative relations with partner institutions abroad
- Opportunities for staff exchange programs
- Supervising international students
- International student recruitment

#### **Incoming staff**

ChU sees the number of different nationalities represented in the institution's staff body remaining stable during the years that are part of this study, being one for every academic year. There were no visiting staff members from abroad as proportion of all academic staff members in the academic years 2014-17. The main reasons for this are:

- Lack of funding that we could offer for incoming staff
- Not nearly having enough staff to cover the subjects taught at ChU

#### **Outgoing staff**

*In this report, three factors are used to describe 'outgoing staff': 1) the proportion of staff that took part in an exchange programme abroad, 2) the proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar and, 3) the proportion of academic staff members that were members of at least one international academic or professional association.*

Staff members did not take part in exchange programmes abroad. This is because of the economic blockade and financial crisis in Kurdistan. Concerning the proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar, the figures are two percent for the academic years 2014/15 and 2015/16, while being zero percent for the academic year 2016/17.

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The proportion of staff that is member of at least one international academic or professional association is declining, going from two percent in 2014/15 to 0.4% in 2016/17.

The reason is that those members in 2014/2015 were PhD students in Europe who after returning could not renew their membership due to the lack of an online payment system in Kurdistan Region i.e. credit cards.

## Students

### Outgoing

ChU does not have an institutional advice structure for students on study abroad opportunities.

There were no students that participated in outgoing exchange or mobility programmes in the Academic Years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17.

In 2014/2015, ChU was a newly established public university and all students were still belonging to Sulaimani University. Hence, there were no mobility plans at that time for the university other than attracting staff to work at ChU. In the following years, the financial crisis facing the region caused a decline in the education level as most of the staff went on strike because no salaries were paid for months.

It is possible that students undertake studies abroad outside an exchange or mobility programme. This was the case at ChU. The proportion rises every academic year, even up to 6.7%.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
1.6		4.2		6.7	

Table 1: Proportion of all students that undertook studies abroad. (2014-2017)

### Incoming

ChU does not have a database at the level of the institution that brings together data about international alumni. There are also no international students.

## Support for internationalisation

*In this part, we investigate some aspects that can support internationalisation. We look into the internationalisation strategy of the institutions, the existence of a specific unit that tackles aspects*

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*of internationalisation, the existing of Memoranda of Understanding, and the budget reserved for internationalisation activities including the evolution of that budget*

ChU encourages staff to conduct joint research with international universities. Internationalisation is further promoted by changing the study language to English, implementing the Bologna system, offering scholarships and doubling the income for the staff members who go abroad.

ChU has a clearly defined strategy for internationalisation, including a marketing strategy for internationalisation and a specific organisational structure to support internationalisation. The marketing strategy is as follows:

- Attracting international students to study at ChU by offering scholarships through the university webpage
- Offline advertising such as banners, posters, and universities journals
- Updating the university website
- Marketing through Facebook and Instagram
- Popularizing courses, programs, and advertisements through short videos and animations
- Possible changes in the organisational structure
- Possible creation of new departments that support internationalisation
- Employing international skilled executives

ChU has signed eight Memoranda of Understanding in the academic years under investigation. Four were signed in 2015/16 and four the year after. Half of the signed MoUs were active in the year 2016/17, double of the MoUs that were active the year before.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
0		4		4	

Table 2: Number of signed Memoranda of Understanding (2014-2017)

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
0		25		50	

Table 3: Percentage of signed MoUs that are active (2014-2017)

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This is a quite significant increase, probably because ChU became more publicly known due to the fact that ChU changed the study language to English and implemented the Bologna system that many universities, mostly from Iran, become interested to have some kind of collaborations with us.

At ChU, there is no reserved budget allocated specifically for internationalisation, nor has there been a budget in the Academic Years 2014 until 2017. The share of this budget in the overall budget is thus zero percent.

## Research

*Being the core of the work that universities undertake, research is one of the aspects that can both be beneficial for internationalisation but can also be a requirement for moving in the international academic domain. This part investigates instruments that are required for research, international collaborations on research, and research outcomes.*

ChU does not have access to international research papers and journals. However, the proportion of published pieces (books, journal issues, articles, etc.) that were produced through international collaborative activities increased every year.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
40		60		64	

Table 4: proportion of published pieces that were produced through international collaborative activities.

Most (95%) of ChU PhD holders were enrolled in a programme of scholarship called “Human Capacity Development Programme” (HCDP) for which they completed their study in Europe. Most of the research now published at ChU are the work of their PhD and part of their thesis. This means the PhD still have contact with their former supervisors and some of them are working to publish a 2<sup>nd</sup> or their 3<sup>rd</sup> paper.

The total number of international citations per paper for pieces authored (or co-authored) by researchers at the institutions has declined over the years, while the average H-index of academics remained stable at 20.

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Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
191		70		40	

Table 5. Total number of international citations per paper for pieces authored by researchers at the institution.

## Education

*For education, we looked into the proportion of Master's and PhD-programmes taught wholly in a foreign or second language, the organisation of summer courses (including language courses), the implementation of the Bologna system, the existence of joint/double programmes, and promotional strategies.*

The proportion of Master's programmes that were taught wholly in a foreign or second language remained zero percent during the Academic Years under investigation.

ChU organises summer schools, language courses included. Last year, ChU had the first trial English training course, which was only for our staff so no students were involved in it. As the first course was successful, this summer ChU organised a second English course for staff and students of ChU as well as for the public outside the university.

The Bologna system for ECTS in the curriculum programmes is currently in place at ChU. ChU implemented the system for the last year with the same credit system used in Europe (ECTS), but only for undergraduate students (Bachelor). Because ChU just started working with the Bologna system, ChU did not actually include Master or PhD degrees. However, ChU has a plan to include Master or PhD degrees for the next academic year.

ChU has no joint/double/multiple degree programmes or co-tutelles at Master's level and is not aware of the existence of legislation supporting the organisation of joint/double/multiple degree programmes.

There is a defined strategy for international communication, promotion and marketing in place. The university has a specific webpage for international students in at least one foreign language. This website contains information in English. Here, information can be found on the university as a whole, academic programmes, colleges, centres, signed memoranda, etc.

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## Conclusion

ChU is on its path toward internationalisation, in which the TIGRIS project plays a vital role in that it offers guidance in this process. ChU is now applying the Bologna process and the first year of study at ChU is now a foundation year, in which English is the sole language of study - a development that will finally enhance the quality of education at ChU. ChU got 10 scholarship from D8 university in Iran for Master and PhD in different academic disciplines that will further promote internationalisation at ChU.

However, there are still some difficulties facing the internationalisation process at ChU:

The lack of experienced staff working at the international office is one of them. As a solution, ChU considers employing new skilled staffs or engage in capacity building by organising training courses for current staff in order to familiarize them to the work in an international office.

Furthermore, ChU needs to develop mobility programs for student and staff exchange, for which ChU considers allocating funds and offering programs for international students and staff to come and study or teach at ChU.

Finally, insufficient staff capacities for implementing the Bologna system due to limited English language proficiency of some lecturers. As a solution, ChU considers hiring new lectures form other universities as well as organising English courses at ChU for our staff to improve their English language skills.

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## Duhok Polytechnic University (DPU)

This report is written by Dr. Nawzat Sadiq Ahmed and Jef Schrooten (KU Leuven).

### Mobility

#### Staff

#### **International strategy**

DPU has a defined institutional strategy to develop the participation of staff in internationalisation activities. DPU's strategy regarding the internationalisation include:

- Research collaboration by the "Split-Site PhD Programme" with different universities abroad
- Participation in international workshops, conferences and training courses
- Conducting joint research by sabbatical leave and post-doctorate
- Implement English language as study language at DPU

The goal to achieve the aforementioned strategy is signing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with universities from abroad and to further develop and implement the recently started internationalisation process. DPU plans to participate in different international projects as well as to apply the Bologna Process and to seek accreditation for it.

#### **Incoming staff**

At DPU, there was one non-Iraqi nationality represented in the institution's staff body in the academic year 2014/15, while there were none in the years that followed.

Visiting staff members were absent during the academic years 2014-17.

#### **Outgoing staff**

*In this report, three factors are used to describe 'outgoing staff': 1) the proportion of staff that took part in an exchange programme abroad, 2) the proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar and, 3) the proportion of academic staff members that were members of at least one international academic or professional association.*

Staff members almost did not take part in exchange programmes abroad. Only one percent of the members took part in such a programme. Also, the proportion of staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar is low being two percent for every academic year.

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The proportion of staff that is member of at least one international academic or professional association remained stable at just one percent.

#### Students

##### **Outgoing**

DPU does not have an institutional advice structure for students on study abroad opportunities.

There were only few students that participated in outgoing exchange or mobility programmes in the Academic Years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 amounting to one percent for every year in question. This is due to the economic crisis in Kurdistan and limited budget for supporting such programmes.

The same proportion of all students undertook studies abroad.

##### **Incoming**

DPU does not have a database at the level of the institution that brings together data about international alumni. There are also no international students.

#### Support for internationalisation

*In this part, we investigate some aspects that can support internationalisation. We look into the internationalisation strategy of the institutions, the existence of a specific unit that tackles aspects of internationalisation, the existing of Memoranda of Understanding, and the budget reserved for internationalisation activities including the evolution of that budget*

DPU encourages staff to conduct joint research with international universities. It has following measures in place:

- Offer financial support and research facilities to staff in order to publish their research in impact factor international journals
- Establishing international research / publication as one condition for staff promotion / assigning scientific rank to academic staff

DPU has a clearly defined strategy for internationalisation, including a marketing strategy for internationalisation and a specific organisational structure to support internationalisation:

- DPU has advertising online on the university's website in three languages (i.e. English, Arabic and Kurdish)

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- DPU has a strong connection with international and national organizations in Iraq and Kurdistan Region to support academic programmes with foreign students
- DPU has advertising on social media and TVs regarding the student admission systems and training courses.

DPU has signed several Memoranda of Understanding, 65 during the years that we are looking at. In the Academic years 2014/15 and 2015/16, half of them were active. The year after, this proportion increased to 65%.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
16		20		29	

Table 2: Number of signed Memoranda of Understanding (2014-2017)

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
50		50		65	

Table 3: Percentage of signed MoUs that are active (2014-2017)

DPU has a reserved budget allocated specifically for internationalisation, however, the total amount of this budget was zero during the Academic Years we're looking at.

## Research

*Being the core of the work that universities undertake, research is one of the aspects that can both be beneficial for internationalisation but can also be a requirement for moving in the international academic domain. This part investigates instruments that are required for research, international collaborations on research, and research outcomes.*

DPU does not have access to international research papers and journals.

The proportion of published pieces (books, journal issues, articles, etc.) that were produced through international collaborative is relatively low but remains stable.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
2		2		2	

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Table 4: proportion of published pieces that were produced through international collaborative activities.

The number of international collaborative activities related to research was zero during the academic years 2014/15 and 2015/16. In 2016/17, there were ten activities. DPU is a young university due to it has been established only in 2012. According to rules by the MHESR, DPU could not have these kind of activities in 2014/2015 and 2015/2016.

The total number of international citations per paper for pieces authored (or co-authored) by researchers at the institutions was stable during the Academic Years 2014/15 and 2015/16, but increased in the year 2016/17. The average H-index followed this record (see Table 6).

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
1558		1558		2317	

Table 5. Total number of international citations per paper for pieces authored by researchers at the institution.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
20		20		23	

Table 6. Average H-index of an academic at DPU.

## Education

*For education, we looked into the proportion of Master's and PhD-programmes taught wholly in a foreign or second language, the organisation of summer courses (including language courses), the implementation of the Bologna system, the existence of joint/double programmes, and promotional strategies.*

The proportion of Master's programmes that were taught wholly in a foreign or second language was zero percent during the first two Academic Years under investigation. In 2016/17 this became ten percent. This can be explained by the following rule:

- Any new university in Kurdistan has to have graduated students with bachelor degree for one year and later in order to get the permission of having Master programmes according to the Ministry rules.

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DPU organises summer schools, language courses included. These became more popular during the years, inscriptions rose from 100 in 2014/15 to 200 in 2016/17. However, no foreign guests attended the lectures.

The Bologna system for ECTS in the curriculum programmes is currently not in place at DPU. However, DPU plans to apply the ECTS system in the academic year (2018-2019).

DPU has no joint/double/multiple degree programmes or co-tutelles at Master's level but has 12 of these programmes at PhD-level. It is aware that there is legislation supporting the organisation of these kind of programmes, especially for Split-Site programmes.

There is defined strategy for international communication, promotion and marketing in place. The university has a specific webpage for international students in at least one foreign language. This website contains information in English. Here information can be found on the university as a whole (statistics, departments), the quality assurance mechanisms, the academic programmes, the conditions for admissions, etc.

### Conclusion

DPU is in the process of developing the quality of education to achieve an international level. In addition, the university is planning to establish financial support for international collaboration and to applying ECTS in its study programmes. DPU will achieve better results if it works more independently in their regulations regarding the internationalisation.

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## Erbil Polytechnic University (EPU)

*This self-assessment by Erbil Polytechnic University (later: EPU) is based on a questionnaire and a follow-up questionnaire. In this report we refer to the first questionnaire as ‘the questionnaire’ and to the second as ‘the online tool’. This because the first was answered in a word-document, while the second was published online. A follow-up discussion took place in August 2018. EPU reviewed the data that are presented here on accuracy.*

*The report was written by Jef Schrooten (KU Leuven).*

### Mobility

#### Staff

#### **International strategy**

Erbil Polytechnic University has a defined institutional strategy to develop the participation of staff in internationalisation activities. However, no details were provided about the contents of the strategy.

#### **Incoming staff**

EPU sees the number of different nationalities represented in the institution’s staff body increasing lightly during the years that are part of this study. However, the reason for this is unknown.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
2	3	5

Table 1: number of different nationalities represented in the institution’s staff body

There are some visiting staff members from abroad in each year. In the academic year 2015/16, this number rose to 7 percent, but declined the year after. Again, the reason for this is unknown.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
6	7	2

Table 2: Visiting staff members from abroad as proportion of all academic staff members in 2014-17 (in %)

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## Outgoing staff

*In this report, three factors are used to describe 'outgoing staff': 1) the proportion of staff that took part in an exchange programme abroad, 2) the proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar and, 3) the proportion of academic staff members that were members of at least one international academic or professional association.*

No staff members took part in exchange programmes abroad during the academic years 2014-17.

The proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar has declined during the years.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
5	3	2

Table 3: Proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar (2014-17)

The proportion of staff that is member of at least one international academic or professional association was one percent for the first two academic years and three for the following.

## Students

### Outgoing

Erbil Polytechnic University does not have an institutional advice structure for students on study abroad opportunities, but follows the regulations and laws relevant.

There were no students that participated in outgoing exchange or mobility programmes in the Academic Years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17. The proportion of students that undertook studies abroad was less than one percent in these years.

### Incoming

EPU does not have a database at the level of the institution that brings together data about international alumni at the moment. Since April 2018, however, the university has been collecting data from the alumni students and will be introducing a database in March 2019.

An estimation is that there are three different countries of origin of international students at EPU during the academic years 2014-17.

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### Support for internationalisation

*In this part, we investigate some aspects that can support internationalisation. We look into the internationalisation strategy of the institutions, the existence of a specific unit that tackles aspects of internationalisation, the existing of Memoranda of Understanding, and the budget reserved for internationalisation activities including the evolution of that budget*

EPU encourage staff to engage in internationalisation activities by a reduction of teaching hours and extra income.

21 Memoranda of Understanding were signed in the academic years under investigation. Three were signed in 2014/15 and six the year after. A year later, we see this number rising to 13. Not every MoU is active, but more than half are; in the first year, even every MoU was active.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
3	6	13

Table 4: Number of signed Memoranda of Understanding (2014-2017)

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
100	50	69

Table 5: Percentage of signed MoUs that are active (2014-2017)

The university has allocated a small amount of money for internationalisation (0.035% of the total budget). The university has received 62,000 Euro from TIGRIS and the university will match this amount. This means that 124,000 Euro will be allocated specifically to internationalisation.

### Research

*Being the core of the work that universities undertake, research is one of the aspects that can both be beneficial for internationalisation but can also be a requirement for moving in the international academic domain. This part investigates instruments that are required for research, international collaborations on research, and research outcomes.*

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Before 2014, EPU had access to international journals. However, due to financial crisis EPU could not renew the membership. Currently, EPU have allocated 3,500 to buy membership and access to journals.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
2	3	4

Table 6: proportion of published pieces that were produced through international collaborative activities.

The proportion of published pieces (books, journal issues, articles, etc.) that were produced through international collaborative activities involving international researchers (i.e. at least one of the authors has to be non-Iraqi) (2014-2017) remains rather low but increases every year.

The total number of international citations per paper for pieces authored (or co-authored) by researchers at the institutions is low, being one or two during the period under investigation.

#### Education

*For education, we looked into the proportion of Master's and PhD-programmes taught wholly in a foreign or second language, the organisation of summer courses (including language courses), the implementation of the Bologna system, the existence of joint/double programmes, and promotional strategies.*

The proportion of Master's programmes that were taught wholly in a foreign or second language was zero percent in 2014/15 but was ninety in the years 2015/16 and 2016/17. This, however, seems quite unlikely and is probably due to false or incoherent data provided.

The university has a number of summer programmes for national and international students. As member of Arab League Nations universities, EPU accepts and sends student to other Arab universities to participate in summer trainings. The Language Centre of EPU runs various summer courses for staff and students of EPU as well as individuals from the local community. The number of participants has risen from zero to 170 in 2016/17.

The Bologna system for ECTS in the curriculum programmes is currently in not in place in EPU, but the institution is taking steps towards implementation.

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Proportion of international joint/double/multiple degree programmes or co-tutelles offered at Master's level has risen to 52 percent in 2016/17. However, this number seems quite high.

The University first focused on the infrastructure by building a new campus as the university lacked space. The university now is in the process of reforming its curricula and internationalising of its study programmes. The third stage is also ongoing, which concerns establishing a new international office. It is part of the plan to designate staff specifically for the promotion and marketing of the university to enhance its internationalisation. The university's website is available in both Kurdish and English.

### Conclusion

As it stands, EPU faces great challenges when it comes to internationalisation: the numbers of students and staff in regards to mobility, both incoming and outgoing, are low. Accordingly, support and advice structures are not in place. Incentives for staff to engage in internationalisation activities are few and the conditions to engage in international research limited. In addition, the lacking implantation of ECTS point to a structural obstacle that EPU will have to overcome in the near future if it wants to make greater strides in internationalisation of its educational programmes. However, not all indicators seem bleak, e.g. EPU is one of the few Kurdish HEIs that have allocated a special budget for internationalisation activities and the existence of summer programmes points towards an readily available vehicle to promote internationalisation in the future.

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## Halabja University (UoH)

This report is written by Arian Ali (Halabja University) and Jef Schrooten (KU Leuven).

### Mobility

#### Staff

#### **International strategy**

Halabja University has a defined institutional strategy to develop the participation of staff in internationalisation activities. The strategy has 5 different aspects:

- UoH's website supports the university's vision, mission and goals. Here, UoH also publishes articles in Kurdish, English and Arabic languages. This is a strategy to facilitate internationalisation, since the university's website is the first place everyone can reach. Through its website, UoH wants to attract international students and staff.
- UoH offers Persian and English language courses to students, lecturers and employees.
- UoH will select a department to implement the Bologna System
- UoH will reward academics who conduct research. The reward is based on the quality of journal that publishes the research

After establishing UoH, the majority of staff did not have two years of experience therefore they could not participate in exchange programs.

#### **Incoming staff**

UoH sees the number of different nationalities represented in the institution's staff body remaining stable during the years that are part of this study, being three for every academic year. There were few staff members from abroad. 1.6% of all academic staff members in the academic years 2014-17 were visiting staff members from abroad. The three nationalities were Kurd, Arab and Iranian

The main factors that hinder incoming staff in the opinion of UoH are:

- Financial Crisis
- UoH still having an annual system in place, which causes problems for international academics to teach at UoH. However, UoH has a plan to select a department to implement the Bologna System subsequently changing to a semester-based system

As another reason for insufficient incoming staff, UoH see the low number of international students, of which UoH currently has only one, which would render it difficult to attract international staff.

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## Outgoing staff

*In this report, three factors are used to describe 'outgoing staff': 1) the proportion of staff that took part in an exchange programme abroad, 2) the proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar and, 3) the proportion of academic staff members that were members of at least one international academic or professional association.*

Only few staff members took part in exchange programmes abroad, being less than one percent for every year in question.

As one reason for this, UoH states that most of its staff was employed recently and needs at least two years' service or employment in order to be able to participate in exchange programs.

The proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar rises every year, from five percent to 35 percent.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
5		10		35	

Table 1: Proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar (2014-17)

The proportion of staff that is member of at least one international academic or professional association was zero percent for the first two academic years and 0.8% for the year 2016/17.

## Students

### Outgoing

UoH has an institutional advice structure for students on study abroad opportunities. The university encourages students to study abroad by:

- Offering seminars about the benefits of studying abroad
- Providing students with instructions on scholarships on the website
- Encouraging students to participate in the China Cultural Program annually

Despite these efforts, there were no students that participated in outgoing exchange or mobility programmes in the Academic Years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17, nor did any student study abroad. For each academic year, 2015/16 and 2016/17, UoH had one student who participated in China Exchange Cultural Program.

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As impeding factors, UoH mentions, first, the lacking English language proficiency of their students, which limited their possibility to participate in international programmes. Secondly, Kurdish families' currently only have limited financial means at their disposal to send their children to study abroad.

### **Incoming**

UoH has a database at the level of the institution that brings together data about international alumni. However, there are no international students, except for the year 2015/16 were the proportion of international students who graduated from the institution was 0,0003%. In 2015/16 and 2016/17, the number of different countries of origin of international students at UoH was one. This country was Iran.

### [Support for internationalisation](#)

*In this part, we investigate some aspects that can support internationalisation. We look into the internationalisation strategy of the institutions, the existence of a specific unit that tackles aspects of internationalisation, the existing of Memoranda of Understanding, and the budget reserved for internationalisation activities including the evolution of that budget*

UoH does not implement incentives for its staff to engage in internationalisation activities. However, the university has a clearly defined strategy for internationalisation, including a marketing strategy for internationalisation and a specific organisational structure to support internationalisation.

A number of departments at UoH has the Kurdish Parallel Admission System in place, in which students are enrolled but need to pay tuition fees. This is a conducive practice to attract international degree students in the future.

UoH offered Persian and English courses. Persian course were offered to those who have a M.A. in Kurdish language but who did not have a scientific title. English courses were offered to students, lecturers and employees. Besides, Language Centre of UoH will offer English and other language course for those who want to study abroad. Here, half of the financial income will be for UoH. This is generally conducive to internationalisation, since language skill are essential for many internationalisation activities being participation in international projects or mobility.

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UoH has signed 15 Memoranda of Understanding in the academic years under investigation. Two were signed in 2014/15, four in 2015/16 and 9 the year after. The MoUs that are active have a particular evolution. Starting from zero percent, moving up to half and then declining back to 33%. Now, the institution is working on activating all MoUs that were signed before.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
2		4		9	

Table 2: Number of signed Memoranda of Understanding (2014-2017)

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
0		50		33	

Table 3: Percentage of signed MoUs that are active (2014-2017)

At UoH, there is no reserved budget allocated specifically for internationalisation, nor has there been a budget in the Academic Years 2014 until 2017. The share of this budget in the overall budget is thus zero percent.

## Research

*Being the core of the work that universities undertake, research is one of the aspects that can both be beneficial for internationalisation but can also be a requirement for moving in the international academic domain. This part investigates instruments that are required for research, international collaborations on research, and research outcomes.*

UoH does not have access to international research papers and journals. The proportion of published pieces (books, journal issues, articles, etc.) that were produced through international collaborative activities is low, but has increased in the last year.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
0.01		0.01		0.3	

Table 4: proportion of published pieces that were produced through international collaborative activities.

There were no international collaborative activities related to research during the years in question.

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The total number of international citations per paper for pieces authored (or co-authored) by researchers at the institution was zero for the first two years and one for the last year. The calculation of the H-index is thus not relevant.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
0	0	1

Table 5. Total number of international citations per paper for pieces authored by researchers at the institution.

## Education

*For education, we looked into the proportion of Master's and PhD-programmes taught wholly in a foreign or second language, the organisation of summer courses (including language courses), the implementation of the Bologna system, the existence of joint/double programmes, and promotional strategies.*

The proportion of Master's programmes that were taught wholly in a foreign or second language remained one percent during the first two Academic Years under investigation. In the last academic year, there was no such Master's programme remaining, because, according to a ministerial decree, every PhD and MA candidate must get a high score in IELTS and TOEFL IBT and TOFEL PBT. Besides, UoH only has a Master's Degree in Physical Education and since studies are conducted in Kurdish and Arabic, they could not get the required score in English language.

UoH organises summer schools, language courses included. These attract a relatively stable number of students: 60 in 2014/15, 40 in 2015/16 and 60 again in 2016/17. However, there were no international attendees during these years.

The Bologna system for ECTS in the curriculum programmes is currently not in place in the university. Halabja University has no joint/double/multiple degree programmes or co-tutelles at Master's or PhD's level. However, it is aware that the MHESR has regulation to support these programmes.

There is a defined strategy for international communication, promotion and marketing in place. The university has a specific webpage for international students in at least one foreign language. This website contains information in English. Here, information can be found on the university as a whole,

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some announcements etc. However, at the time of writing, the website faced technical problem requiring revision.

### Conclusion

To sum up, UoH as one of the newer universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which was only established in 2011, faces a number of challenges, which concern limited activity of academic and administrative staff, deficiency in English language proficiency, not enough means and incentives to support staff activities as well as financial problems. However, UoH is looking forward to see the great impact of numerous staff who are studying abroad. Finally yet importantly, UoH needs financial and human capital assistances from KR Government and EU partners

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## Kurdish Institution of Strategic Studies and Scientific Research (KISSR)

This report is written by Bryar Hassan (KISSR) and Jef Schrooten (KU Leuven).

### Mobility

#### Staff

#### **International strategy**

KISSR does not have a defined institutional strategy to develop the participation of staff in internationalisation activities. However, as we see later, this does not hinder the institution to be quite active on the international scene in several ways.

#### **Incoming staff**

KISSR sees the number of different nationalities represented in the institution's staff body slowly declining during the years that are part of this study, while there were 6 different nationalities represented in the institutions staff body in 2014/15, there were only 3 remaining in 2016/17. The six nationalities are German, Greek, Spanish, Australian, Iranian, and Canadian, whereas the three nationalities remaining are German, Holland, and Canadian. The number is declining due to the economic crisis in Kurdistan Region and the restriction of hiring staff from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. In addition, the proportion of visiting staff members from abroad declined quite rapidly during these years.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
25		15		10	

Table 1: Visiting staff members from abroad as proportion of all academic staff members in 2014-17.

#### **Outgoing staff**

*In this report, three factors are used to describe 'outgoing staff': 1) the proportion of staff that took part in an exchange programme abroad, 2) the proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar and, 3) the proportion of academic staff members that were members of at least one international academic or professional association.*

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Participating in exchange programmes abroad is not a widespread practice at KISSR (less than one percent for every year).

The proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar also declines every year and quite spectacular so. In 2014/15, eighty percent of the staff members participated in such a conference, in 2016/17, however, only half of the staff members did so. The reasons for this were the economic crisis in Kurdistan Region and the resulting inability of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to fund academic staff to participate in international activities.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
80		70		50	

Table 2: Proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar (2014-17)

Also, the proportion of staff that is member of at least one international academic or professional association has declined during the years.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
70		50		40	

Table 3: Proportion of academic staff members that were member of at least one international academic or professional association (2014-17)

## Students

### Outgoing

KISSR does not have an institutional advice structure for students on study abroad opportunities. Only a small and declining proportion of students participated in outgoing exchange or mobility programmes.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
0.42		0.30		0.25	

Table 3: Proportion of students that participated in outgoing exchange or mobility programmes 2014-17.

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## Incoming

KISSR does not have a database at the level of the institution that brings together data about international alumni. However, there were some international students who graduated from the institution in the academic years 2014/15 (0.15% of the graduates were foreigners) and 2015/16 (0.1% was foreigner). There were no international students graduating at KISSR in 2016/17.

## Support for internationalisation

*In this part, we investigate some aspects that can support internationalisation. We look into the internationalisation strategy of the institutions, the existence of a specific unit that tackles aspects of internationalisation, the existing of Memoranda of Understanding, and the budget reserved for internationalisation activities including the evolution of that budget*

KISSR does not implement incentives to encourage internationalisation activities by its institution's staff members. According to KISSR, this is because the practice of internationalisation needs amended legislation as well as adequate funding, both currently not being in place. In addition, the MHESR also does not have a clearly defined strategy for internationalisation, nor a marketing strategy and no organisational structure in place to support internationalisation.

KISSR signed several Memoranda of Understanding in the academic years under investigation. Most MoUs are also active (80% for 2016/17)

Here, KISSR states several factors effecting the capabilities of Kurdish HEIs to keep MoUs active:

- The lack of financial means: Some MoUs concern the offer of a joint degree which as a precondition needs funding. Due to the economic crisis in Kurdistan, however, this currently cannot be implemented
- The lack of professional staff to manage and maintain inter-university relations impedes the existence of long-term relationships. Therefore, many of the relations are short-term-based
- Cultural misconceptions: Kurdish HEIs think that a MoU is only about signing a document and taking a picture, therefore treating MoUs as a visit and not as a starting point for comprehensive inter-institutional cooperation

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
10		8		6	

Table 4: Number of signed Memoranda of Understanding (2014-2017)

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Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
90		80		80	

Table 5: Percentage of signed MoUs that are active (2014-2017)

KISSR does not have a reserved budget allocated specifically for internationalisation, nor has there been a budget in the Academic Years 2014 until 2017. The share of this budget in the overall budget is thus zero percent.

### Research

*Being the core of the work that universities undertake, research is one of the aspects that can both be beneficial for internationalisation but can also be a requirement for moving in the international academic domain. This part investigates instruments that are required for research, international collaborations on research, and research outcomes.*

KISSR does not have access to international research papers and journals. The proportion of published pieces (books, journal issues, articles, etc.) that were produced through international collaborative activities has remained stable at limited numbers.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
0.28		0.25		0.25	

Table 6: Proportion of published pieces that were produced through international collaborative activities.

On the opposite side, there were some international collaborative activities related to research. These were mainly in the domains of Science, Engineering, and Medicines. The average length was two months.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
11		9		8	

Table 7: Number of international collaborative activities related to research.

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The total number of international citations per paper for pieces authored (or co-authored) by researchers at the institution was five for the first and last academic year and six for the year 2015/16.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
5	6	5

Table 5. Total number of international citations per paper for pieces authored by researchers at the institution.

The average H-index was three for all years.

### Education

*For education, we looked into the proportion of Master's and PhD-programmes taught wholly in a foreign or second language, the organisation of summer courses (including language courses), the implementation of the Bologna system, the existence of joint/double programmes, and promotional strategies.*

At KISSR, every Master's programme is taught wholly in a foreign or second language. In case of KISSR, this language is English.

KISSR does organise summer schools, language courses included. The number of participants is declining. The courses do attract some international visitors; there were five in 2014/15 and four in both 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
110	90	75

Table 6. Number of participants in summer courses per year.

The Bologna system for ECTS in the curriculum programmes is currently not in place in the university.

KISSR only has joint/double/multiple degree programmes or co-tutelles at Master's and PhD's level.

Concerning the legislation, it states that KISSR can offer Master and PhD courses with collaboration of a university.

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There is no defined strategy for international communication, promotion and marketing in place. The institution has a webpage for international students in at least one foreign language, but it is limited to the courses it can offer.

### Conclusion

Due to the economic crisis in Kurdistan Region and the fact that there is no clear strategy in the ministry, the mobility of staff and students are getting very difficult. In addition, there is no any agency (including the government) to allocate money for conducting research. This hinders researchers to have joint research in cooperation with foreign universities. Attracting foreign students and staff such as lecturers, and researchers, needs facilitation by

- Amending legislation
- Financial support from the Ministry
- Defining a strategy for international marketing and communication
- Convincing the international public that Kurdistan Region is safe and secure
- Getting support from the representatives of Kurdistan Regional Government in foreign countries to hire staff for the Kurdish universities.

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## Salahaddin University – Erbil (SU)

This report is written by Dr. Mohammed Azeed Saeed (SU) and Jef Schrooten (KU Leuven).

### Mobility

#### Staff

#### **International strategy**

SU has a defined institutional strategy to develop the participation of staff in internationalisation activities. In this strategy, the university defines the following goals:

- Provide an innovative educational platform, which allows SU to become a world-class university
- Improve research centres for developing staff and student skills
- Develop industry leaders by providing excellent learning programmes
- Build up extensive learning centres using the latest technology
- Advance knowledge to develop the country economically
- Develop academic reputation that stakeholders, faculty and staff can be proud of
- Decentralize the university administratively and financially from the government

The strategy aims to raise the level of study at SU to international standards by:

- Opening doors to international students all over the world regardless of their educational or cultural backgrounds
- Planning to have suitable tuition fees according to the financial capability of the community
- Recruiting international academic staff and professors to work at SU
- Creating opportunities for the existing academic staff to conduct post doctorate research abroad
- Establishing academic and scientific cooperation with international universities and research centres
- Activating and implementing the signed MoUs with international universities and institutions.
- Encouraging and attracting enterprises, research institutes and private sector to invest at Salahaddin University-Erbil.

#### **Incoming staff**

SU sees the number of different nationalities represented in the institution's staff body declining in the year that are part of this study. While there were six different nationalities present in the Academic Year 2014/15, this has declined to only three different nationalities in the Academic Year 2016/17. In the year 2014/15, the nationalities were Iranian, Lebanese, Turkish, Jordan, Yemeni, and

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German. Visiting staff members were both teaching and doing research, but also participated in curriculum and programme development. The domains that were represented were languages (German and French), Physics and Mathematics.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
6	4	3

Table 1: Number of different nationalities represented in institution's staff body comprise/Number of different countries of origin of staff in 2014-17

The percentage of visiting staff members from abroad as a proportion of all academic staff members remains stable but low, being one percent or less for every academic year.

A possible explanation for this is the ISIS –crisis in the region and the war during this period.

### Outgoing staff

*In this report, three factors are used to describe 'outgoing staff': 1) the proportion of staff that took part in an exchange programme abroad, 2) the proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar and, 3) the proportion of academic staff members that were members of at least one international academic or professional association.*

Staff members rarely take part in an exchange programme abroad. For every academic year, this number is one percent or less. This because of the economic blockade and financial crisis in Kurdistan.

Concerning the proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar, the figures are low, being one percent or less for every academic year. However, those who are present at such occasions, always play an active role (like giving lectures or presenting.)

The proportion of staff that is member of at least one international academic or professional association is also one percent or less.

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Students

### Outgoing

SU does not have an institutional advice structure for students on study abroad opportunities. However, the university does advice students on opportunities to study abroad. This is done by the international office, even though this is not their formal task. SU encourages the students by writing announcement letters and via announcement on the universities website. Sometimes, seminars are organised for those who wish to study abroad.

There were no students that participated in outgoing exchange or mobility programmes in the Academic Years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17. Reasons for this are the lack of funds, the lack of skills in other languages and visa-issues. SU considers these factors as the most important reasons why students are not able to go to other countries in an exchange or mobility programme.

It is possible that students undertake studies abroad, outside an exchange or mobility programme. This was also the case at SU. However, the proportion was one percent or lower for the relevant academic years.

### Incoming

SU does not have a database at the level of the institution that brings together data about international alumni. There are also no international students. However, there are students, together with their families, who are displaced because of the ISIS war in the region.

### Support for internationalisation

*In this part, we investigate some aspects that can support internationalisation. We look into the internationalisation strategy of the institutions, the existence of a specific unit that tackles aspects of internationalisation, the existing of Memoranda of Understanding, and the budget reserved for internationalisation activities including the evolution of that budget*

SU encourage staff to conduct joint research with international universities. In the university's annual budget, there is no article for rewarding distinct staff with high impact papers. There is a decision from Baghdad stating that universities must reward 4,000,000.00 Iraqi dinars per distinct

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paper, which is about 3,200 US\$. However, this has never been implemented because of the shortage of budget.

SU does reward staff that is promoted to the position of professor by giving a letter of appreciation and a laptop. The MHESR also rewards them.

SU does not have a marketing strategy for internationalisation and staff/student recruitment in place.

The International Office has been established recently, after the start of the TIGRIS-project.

This, however, does not hinder SU to be active on the international domain. The university signs several Memoranda of Understanding each year. Two trends can be distinguished: the number of new memoranda drops every year, while the MoU's that are active increase every year. The latter stay low compared to the signed memoranda. SU prioritizes the activation of existing MoU's over engaging in new cooperation.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
20		10		5	

Table 2: Number of signed Memoranda of Understanding (2014-2017)

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
1		2		3	

Table 3: Percentage of signed MoUs that are active (2014-2017)

At SU, there is no reserved budget allocated specifically for internationalisation, nor has there been a budget in the Academic Years 2014 until 2017. The share of this budget in the overall budget is thus zero percent.

## Research

*Being the core of the work that universities undertake, research is one of the aspects that can both be beneficial for internationalisation but can also be a requirement for moving in the international*

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*academic domain. This part investigates instruments that are required for research, international collaborations on research, and research outcomes.*

SU does not have access to international research papers and journals. In Baghdad, the MHESR in the past years managed to get access to some international journals and central libraries of some international universities through the US Embassy Baghdad free of charge. These accesses were provided to all Iraqi universities. This cooperation, however, was declined and has almost stopped. Another reason is that online scientific journals are increasingly available nowadays and the subscription by individual staff is easily accessible without institutional interfering. This also might explain the absence of published pieces that were produced through international collaborative activities involving at least one non-Iraqi researcher.

There were, however, international collaborative activities related to research (with at least one non-Iraqi researcher) in which the institution was involved for every academic year. The average length of these activities was one year.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
1	2	3

Table 4: Number of international collaborative activities related to research.

The total number of international citations per paper for pieces authored (or co-authored) by researchers at the institutions was one for every year. The average H-index of academics is not relevant.

## Education

*For education, we looked into the proportion of Master's and PhD-programmes taught wholly in a foreign or second language, the organisation of summer courses (including language courses), the implementation of the Bologna system, the existence of joint/double programmes, and promotional strategies.*

The proportion of Master's programmes that were taught wholly in a foreign or second language remained stable at fifty percent during the Academic Years under investigation. English, French, Persian and Turkish were used in these programmes.

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SU organises summer schools, language courses included. These courses are becoming more popular every year. However, this popularity is only among the own members. None of the summer courses were visited by international researchers, students or staff members.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
200		250		300	

Table 5: number of participants in summer courses per year (2014- 2017)

The Bologna system for ECTS in the curriculum programmes is currently not in place in SU. The only exception being Civil Engineering.

There are no international joint, double or multiple degree programmes or co-tutelles at Master's or PhD-level. SU is not aware of any legislations on such programmes. According to SU, such legislation has not been organized and not put forward as regulations for implementation yet. Here, SU sees the need for the assistance of experienced international universities and organization to implement the legislations.

There is a defined strategy for international communication, promotion and marketing in place. The university has a specific webpage for international students in at least one foreign language. This website contains information in English and describes both practical issues (accommodation, application procedure, etc.) and information about the academic programmes. All the announcements concerning students and staff will be uploaded there.

Online application procedures for new students are uploaded and available on the ministry's webpage. The admission process is centralized. Unfortunately, SU does not have online accommodation reservations so far. This is another step to be taken in the internationalisation process, which is ongoing via the TIGRIS project.

## Conclusion

Generally speaking, SU feels that its current situation in relation to internationalisation can be improved on.

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There is room for improvement, both in general Kurdish context (see general report on work package 1.4), as internal (such as the knowledge of languages, accommodation and participation in international programmes). The numbers included in this report are all low. There is limited mobility, little international cooperation and international students are absent. However, SU is working on a better international profile, where the university authorities have a strong motivation and the academic staff broadly supports their ambitions. A strategy and some aspects of an infrastructure are in place (such as the website in English, accommodation for students, an ECTS-programme in Civil Engineering, etc.).

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## Sulaimani Polytechnic University (SPU)

This report is written by Bakhtiar Sharif (SPU) and Jef Schrooten (KU Leuven).

### Mobility

#### Staff

#### International strategy

SPU has a defined institutional strategy to develop the participation of staff in internationalisation activities.

According to SPU, the strategy includes:

- Allocation of budget by the University Council for international activities
- Assistance for staff to participate in courses within and outside the country in cooperation with other partners.

#### Incoming staff

At SPU, there were several different nationalities represented (with an employment contract) in the institution's staff body, which was international academic staff with Syrian and Iranian nationalities.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
11		7		7	

Table 1: Number of different nationalities represented in the institution's staff body

Visiting staff members (without an employment contract) were absent during the academic years 2014-17.

#### Outgoing staff

*In this report, three factors are used to describe 'outgoing staff': 1) the proportion of staff that took part in an exchange programme abroad, 2) the proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar and, 3) the proportion of academic staff members that were members of at least one international academic or professional association.*

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Due to the financial crisis, not a single staff member took part in an exchange programme abroad. Also, the proportion of staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar is low, being two percent for every academic year.

The proportion of staff that is member of at least one international academic or professional association has increased during the years; more than one out of every eight academic staff members has attended at least one international conference or seminar.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
11	12.8	13.3

Table 2: Proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar.

These numbers are relatively high because a part of the staff has completed their studies through the “Human Capacity Development Program” of the Kurdistan Regional Government and have membership in international institutions as well as access to external conferences.

The proportion of academic staff members that are member of at least one international academic or professional association is relatively low, but is increasing every year.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
1.7	2.2	2.8

Table 3: Proportion of academic staff members that were members of at least one international academic or professional association, in percentages.

## Students

### Outgoing

SPU does have an advice structure for students on study abroad opportunities, which advises students on studies abroad including via academic agreements with universities abroad. SPU also offers fellowships and scholarships.

There was a significant number of students (up to one fifth) that undertook studies abroad, even though none of them did so in the framework of an outgoing exchange or mobility programme.

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Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
13.4		17		19	

Table 4: Proportion of all students that undertook studies abroad.

## Incoming

SPU has a database at the level of the institution that brings together data about international alumni. However, there were no international students among all students that graduated during the academic years 2014-17. In the academic year 2015/16 there were students from one other country of origin, in 2016/17, there were students from two Syria and Iran.

## Support for internationalisation

*In this part, we investigate some aspects that can support internationalisation. We look into the internationalisation strategy of the institutions, the existence of a specific unit that tackles aspects of internationalisation, the existing of Memoranda of Understanding, and the budget reserved for internationalisation activities including the evolution of that budget*

SPU encourages staff to conduct joint research with international universities and implements several incentives. The university has allocated financial incentives to participate in international events and provides for the payment of travel and two days in the hotel to participate in international activities.

SPU has a clearly defined strategy for internationalisation, including a marketing strategy for internationalisation and a specific organisational structure to support internationalisation. The main goals and methods are:

- Changing the annual system to a semester-based system and using study hours for workload calculation
- Facilitating the use of English as language of instruction
- Holding international scientific conferences
- Recruiting international students
- Facilitate student and staff exchange
- Conducting international exhibition within the university, in which the Student Service Offices and the officials of foreign consulates in the Kurdistan Region are invited to participate
- Engaging in international marketing and promotion activities abroad

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- Granting scholarships to several countries so that our university can be recognized and marketed by our services

SPU has signed several Memoranda of Understanding, which amount to 53 during the years that we are looking at. However, they are not all active. Almost one third were active in the academic year 2014/15 and 2016/17, while six out of ten were active in 2015/16.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
14	19	20

Table 5: Number of signed Memoranda of Understanding (2014-2017)

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
28.5	63	30

Table 6: Percentage of signed MoUs that are active (2014-2017)

Since 2016/17, SPU has a reserved budget allocated specifically for internationalisation. It amounts to 15 000 €, which according to SPU is equivalent to three percent of the overall university budget.

## Research

*Being the core of the work that universities undertake, research is one of the aspects that can both be beneficial for internationalisation but can also be a requirement for moving in the international academic domain. This part investigates instruments that are required for research, international collaborations on research, and research outcomes.*

DPU does not have access to international research papers and journals.

The proportion of published pieces (books, journal issues, articles, etc.) that were produced through international collaborative increases every year and is quite high.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
5	23	26

Table 7: proportion of published pieces that were produced through international collaborative activities.

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The number of international collaborative activities related to research followed the same path. There were 3 in 2014/15, 13 in 2015/16 and 21 in 2016/17. The average length was one year in 2014/15 and 2015/16 and two years in 2016/17.

The total number of international citations per paper for pieces authored (or co-authored) by researchers at the institutions has increased during the years. The average H-index followed this record:

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
372		460		540	

Table 8. Total number of international citations per paper for pieces authored by researchers at the institution.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
27		34		40	

Table 9. Average H-index of an academic at SPU.

## Education

*For education, we looked into the proportion of Master's and PhD-programmes taught wholly in a foreign or second language, the organisation of summer courses (including language courses), the implementation of the Bologna system, the existence of joint/double programmes, and promotional strategies.*

The proportion of Master's programmes that were taught wholly in a foreign or second language has increased every year, going from four percent in 2014/15 to approximately ten percent in 2016/17.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
4		7		9	

Table 10 Proportion of Master's programmes taught wholly in a foreign or second language out of all Master's programmes offered.

SPU does not organise summer schools.

The Bologna system for ECTS in the curriculum programmes is currently not in place at SPU.

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SPU has no joint/double/multiple degree programmes or co-tutelles at Master's level and none at the PhD-level. However, such a programme is currently developed in cooperation with Cyprus International University.

There is a defined strategy for international communication, promotion and marketing in place aiming at publication of advertisements, participation in exhibitions of international universities, and memberships in international associations and institutions.

The university has a specific webpage for international students in at least one foreign language (English). General information can be found there about the university, the several centres, colleges and institutes, as well as about the academic programmes and other facilities, including housing.

### Conclusion

SPU is optimistic about its steps towards internationalisation, because after success in several areas the institution is more focused on internationalisation.

Currently, most of the laws and regulations in force do not support SPU in internationalisation and need changing by Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific.

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## University of Raparin (UoR)

This report is written by Araz Mohammed Ismail (UoR) and Jef Schrooten (KU Leuven).

### Mobility

#### Staff

#### **International strategy**

UoR does not have a defined institutional strategy to develop the participation of staff in internationalisation activities.

#### **Incoming staff**

At UoR, there were several different nationalities represented in the institution's staff body. These included the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, and Iran.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
3		4		6	

Table 1: Number of different nationalities represented in the institution's staff body

The proportion of visiting staff members from abroad remained relatively stable during these years (1-2%).

#### **Outgoing staff**

*In this report, three factors are used to describe 'outgoing staff': 1) the proportion of staff that took part in an exchange programme abroad, 2) the proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar and, 3) the proportion of academic staff members that were members of at least one international academic or professional association.*

Every year, three to four percent of the staff took part in an exchange programme abroad; the same proportion attended at least one international conference or seminar.

The proportion of staff that is member of at least one international academic or professional association remained stable at two percent during the years.

The proportion of academic staff members that are member of at least one international academic or professional association is relatively low, but also stable at two percent every year.

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Students

### Outgoing

UoR does not have an advice structure for students on study abroad opportunities.

In the Academic Years 2014/15 and 2015/16, there were no students that participated in outgoing exchange or mobility programmes. In 2016/17 the proportion was one percent. The proportion that undertook studies abroad is slightly higher: one percent in 2014/15 and 2015/16 and two percent in 2016/17.

### Incoming

UoR does not have an international alumni database. In the academic years 2014/15, the proportion of international students among all students who graduated from the institution was 0.7%. The proportion remained roughly the same the years after (0.7% in 2015/16 and 0.5% in 2016/17).

Students came from Iran and Iraq.

### Support for internationalisation

*In this part, we investigate some aspects that can support internationalisation. We look into the internationalisation strategy of the institutions, the existence of a specific unit that tackles aspects of internationalisation, the existing of Memoranda of Understanding, and the budget reserved for internationalisation activities including the evolution of that budget*

UoR implements limited incentives to encourage staff members to participate in the international domain; the only incentive that is in place is for those who present papers in an international conference, where the university covers all the expenses once the paper is published, namely travel costs, costs of stay and participation fees.

UoR does not have a clearly defined strategy for internationalisation, nor has it a marketing strategy for internationalisation in place. In addition, there is no organisational structure to support internationalisation.

UoR has signed several Memoranda of Understanding, and more were signed every year. These MoUs are becoming more and more active; however, the majority is not.

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Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
22		24		26	

Table 2: Number of signed Memoranda of Understanding (2014-2017)

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
9		12		15	

Table 3: Percentage of signed MoUs that are active (2014-2017)

The University of Raparin has a reserved budget allocated specifically for internationalisation, which remained stable at 10,000 € for every year, being two percent of the overall budget.

### Research

*Being the core of the work that universities undertake, research is one of the aspects that can both be beneficial for internationalisation but can also be a requirement for moving in the international academic domain. This part investigates instruments that are required for research, international collaborations on research, and research outcomes.*

UoR does not have access to international research papers and journals.

The proportion of published pieces (books, journal issues, articles, etc.) that were produced through international collaborative remained stable at one percent every year.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
1		1		1	

Table 4: proportion of published pieces that were produced through international collaborative activities.

The number of international collaborative activities related to research followed was one for every year and the average length of these activities was one month.

The scientists of UoR were not cited during the years, the H-index is thus zero.

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## Education

*For education, we looked into the proportion of Master's and PhD programmes taught wholly in a foreign or second language, the organisation of summer courses (including language courses), the implementation of the Bologna system, the existence of joint/double programmes, and promotional strategies.*

The proportion of Master's programmes that were taught wholly in a foreign or second language has dropped every year. In 2014/15 every programme was taught in a foreign language. In 2016/17 this was the case for only one third. However, these numbers seem quite high, especially for the academic year 2014/15. Therefore, an error in the data provided cannot be excluded.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
100		50		33	

Table 5: Proportion of Master's programmes taught wholly in a foreign or second language out of all Master's programmes offered.

UoR does organise summer schools, with increasing participation every year. There are no international participants in these programmes.

Academic 2014/15	year	Academic 2015/16	year	Academic 2016/17	year
85		89		157	

Table 6: number of participants in summer courses.

The Bologna system for ECTS in the curriculum programmes is currently not in place at the University of Raparin.

UoR has no joint/double/multiple degree programmes or co-tutelles at Master's level and none at the PhD-level.

UoR is aware of the existence of legislation concerning the organisation of joint/double or multiple degree programmes, and describes it as follows: "There is legislation by the MoHE regulating and thus influencing joint and double degree programmes. That is, universities always need to get official permission from the ministry to launch such programs."

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There is no defined strategy for international communication, promotion and marketing in place. The university's website, of course, can be useful for international students. However, as there is no specific domain for international students, one cannot say the university provides enough information on the website for incoming students. The English version of the website is being updated, and improved in terms of content, so that it can be relied on both by students and staff (<http://www.uor.edu.krd/en/>).

### Conclusion

UoR is a fairly new university, established in 2010. Thus, UoR has not been able to attract foreign students and staff members in the numbers desired. However, this is also one of strengths of the university, for it is always easier to internationalise a small rather than big university.

UoR has been able to recruit some foreign staff, but since there is no clear data on when each employment started and ended, it is difficult to track down the progress made in increasing the proportion of our international staff body.

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## University of Sulaimani (UoS)

This report is written by Karzan Ghafur Khidir (UoS) and Jef Schrooten (KU Leuven).

### Mobility

#### Staff

#### **International strategy**

UoS has a defined institutional strategy to develop the participation of staff in internationalisation activities by providing incentives in the form of official appreciation letter and financial rewards for participating, presenting and publishing at international events depending on the significance of the event. It is also mandatory for academic staff members to collect a certain amount of points for their annual Continuous Academic Development (CAD) evaluation. Here, participation in international events is rewarded with a higher evaluation score.

The UoS strategy includes the following goals and methods:

- Developing staff and student skills
- Offer modern educational policy which allows UoS to become a world class university
- Improve research centre and facilities
- Develop industry leaders by providing excellent learning programmes
- Establish modern learning centres using the latest technology
- Prepare generations to develop the country
- Develop academic reputation that stakeholders, faculty and staff can be proud off
- Establish a professional international team
- Allocate adequate funding

The UoS strategy to raise the level of study to international standards involves:

- Opening doors to international students
- Adjust tuition fees according to the financial capability of the community
- Recruiting international academic staff and professors to work at UoS
- Creating opportunities for the existing academic staff to pursue and conduct post doctorate research fellowship abroad
- Establishing academic and scientific cooperation with international universities and research centres
- Activating and implementing the signed MoUs with international universities and institutions
- Encouraging and attracting enterprises, research institutes and private sector to invest at the university
- Increasing university participation at international exchange programs.

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- Continuous curriculum development and programme updating

### Incoming staff

UoS sees the number of different nationalities represented in the institution's staff body remaining stable during the years that are part of this study.

There were 23 foreign staff members with 8 different nationalities in the academic years 2014/15 and 2015/16, while the number declined in the academic year 2016/17 due to the financial crises. The visiting staff members came from Austria, Germany, Iran, United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands, Canada and Norway. The most important task they fulfilled was teaching, but also research.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
8	8	6

Table 1: Number of different nationalities represented in institution's staff body comprise/Number of different countries of origin of staff in 2014-17

The percentage of visiting staff members from abroad as a proportion of all academic staff members also reduced and rather low, being two percent or less for every academic year.

In general, the financial crises made government tighten measures on renewing foreigners' contracts. Before the crisis, the University Presidents had the authority to hire or renew contracts of foreigners. Now, only the minister has this competence.

### Outgoing staff

*In this report, three factors are used to describe 'outgoing staff': 1) the proportion of staff that took part in an exchange programme abroad, 2) the proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar and, 3) the proportion of academic staff members that were members of at least one international academic or professional association.*

In case of UoS, staff members rarely take part in an exchange programme abroad. For every academic year, this number is one percent or less. Concerning the proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar, the figures are stable at

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five to six percent. The proportion of staff that is a member of at least one international academic or professional association is twelve or thirteen percent for these years.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
5	6	6

Table 2: Proportion of academic staff members that attended at least one international conference or seminar (2014-2017) (in %)

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
12	13	13

Table 3: Proportion of academic staff members, that were members of at least one international academic or professional association (2014-2017) (in %)

## Students

### Outgoing

The international office at UoS is the responsible institutional advice structure for students on study abroad opportunities. It provides advice to students willing to undertake studies abroad.

There were some students that participated in outgoing exchange or mobility programmes in the Academic Years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17, although they were the exception being either one or two percent. This low number is due to a lack of international partners willing to include UoS in mobility programmes and sometimes also due to tough visa requirements.

It is possible that students undertake studies abroad outside an exchange or mobility programme. This was the case at UoS, but the numbers were also quite low (between 2 and 3 percent).

### Incoming

The University of Sulaimani does not have a database at the level of the institution that brings together data about international alumni. A reason for this might be the absence of international students.

The proportion of international students among all students who graduated from the institution was zero percent for the academic years 2014/15 and 2016/17, while it was one percent for the academic

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year 2015/16. It is not surprising that for that year, the number of different countries of origin of international students at UoS is one.

This was due to a centralized policy for public universities that does not allow full time degree seeking international students. UoS accepts only few international students through a Kurdish language scholarship scheme.

### Support for internationalisation

*In this part, we investigate some aspects that can support internationalisation. We look into the internationalisation strategy of the institutions, the existence of a specific unit that tackles aspects of internationalisation, the existing of Memoranda of Understanding, and the budget reserved for internationalisation activities including the evolution of that budget*

UoS implements some incentives to encourage internationalisation activities by their staff members. These incentives include the organisation of seminars on international activities, the dissemination of information on this topic as well as the facilitation of academic promotion by participating in international activities. Here, e.g. publishing articles internationally will help facilitating academic promotion.

UoS does not have a marketing strategy for internationalisation and staff/student recruitment into place.

The international office at UoS support internationalisation, which is under direct supervision of the President; however, the office requires some modern technology, funds and staff trainings to further develop and improve.

UoS signs several Memoranda of Understanding each year. Two trends can be distinguish: the number of new memoranda rises every year, while the MoU's that are active remain stable, at around ten percent.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
79	86	90

Table 4: Number of signed Memoranda of Understanding (2014-2017)

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Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
10	9	10

Table 5: Percentage of signed MoUs that are active (2014-2017)

At UoS, there is no reserved budget allocated specifically for internationalisation, nor has there been a budget in the Academic Years 2014 until 2017. The share of this budget in the overall budget is thus zero percent.

### Research

*Being the core of the work that universities undertake, research is one of the aspects that can both be beneficial for internationalisation, but can a requirement for moving in the international academic domain. This part investigates instruments that are required for research, international collaborations on research, and research outcomes.*

UoS does not have access to international research papers and journals. This is a serious handicap, especially in a highly competitive academic environment. However, there were international collaborative activities involving international researchers (i.e. at least one of the authors was non-Iraqi). The proportion of published pieces that were produced through such activities was two or three percent.

There were, however, international collaborative activities related to research (with at least one non-Iraqi researcher) in which the institution was involved for every academic year. The average length of these activities was six months.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
20	18	15

Table 6: Number of international collaborative activities related to research.

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The total number of international citations per paper for pieces authored (or co-authored) by researchers at the institutions was 4653 for academic year 2014. The average H-index of academics at the institution was stable at one for these years.

## Education

*For education, we looked into the proportion of Master's and PhD-programmes taught wholly in a foreign or second language, the organisation of summer courses (including language courses), the implementation of the Bologna system, the existence of joint/double programmes, and promotional strategies.*

The proportion of Master's programmes that were taught wholly in a foreign or second language remained stable at 60% during the Academic Years. Here, English was language of instruction at the medical colleges as well as the colleges for engineering, science and agriculture, while Arabic was used in social sciences and humanities.

UoS organises summer schools, language courses for English, Arabic and Persian included. The attendance for these courses has declined over the years. Most participants are from Iraq/Kurdistan. Only two percent of the attendees were international for every year.

Academic year 2014/15	Academic year 2015/16	Academic year 2016/17
300	280	260

Table 7: number of participants in summer courses per year (2014- 2017)

The Bologna system for ECTS in the curriculum programmes is currently not in place at UoS. The MHESR is attempting to implement the Bologna system at the public universities; however, Kurdistan is still at the beginning of this process.

UoS has a joint/double/multiple degree programme at the Master's level with the University of Cagliari and Almeria.

There is also international joint, double or multiple degree programmes or co-tutelles at PhD-level with Georg-August-Universität Göttingen and Lulea University.

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UoS is aware of the existence of legislation influencing these kind of programmes and reports that it is necessary to obtain the approval of the MHESR in order to organise these programmes.

There is no defined strategy for international communication, promotion and marketing in place. The university does not have a specific webpage for international students in at least one foreign language; however, general information about the university can be found online in English. In addition, some theses in English can be found online.

### Conclusion

UoS is eager and has been trying to improve its internationalisation strategy through various ways such as establishing ties with international universities, joint research and cultural projects and participating at international programmes such Erasmus Mundus, Erasmus+, Mevlana exchange, and Fulbright.

The existing legal framework is on one hand facilitating the internationalisation through encouraging the universities to engage in international projects and programmes, while on the other hand impedes internationalisation e.g. by having a centralized admission system for students in place that hinders the recruitment of full time international students.

In their own assessment, UoS needs

- curricula development for some departments
- equipment and training for international office
- support in developing our website
- programme opportunities for staff and student mobility as well as
- access to international resources and journals.



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