PONDICHERRY UNIVERSITY

INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY

Prepared and submitted by the Committee for preparation of Policy Document for Internationalization Strategy.

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(A policy with a 5-Year horizon)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pondicherry University, a Central University established in 1985 under the Ministry of Education, Government of India, recently celebrated 40 years of academic excellence. Having primarily served national priorities, it now seeks to expand its reach through structured internationalisation.

Rationale and vision

The University recognises internationalisation as a means to enhance stakeholder exposure, strengthen employability, broaden research collaboration and attract international learners. Internationalisation is understood not as a separate activity but as an integrated dimension of academic life that complements the University's domestic mandate.

Strategic priorities

Internationalisation efforts will focus on:
- Inbound/outbound student mobility through exchanges, internships and study tours;
- Recruitment of international students for degree and short-term study;
- Faculty mobility for teaching, research collaboration and academic development;
- Dual, joint and collaborative academic programmes in selected disciplines;
- Thematic immersion programmes and summer/winter schools;
- Curriculum internationalisation following revisions undertaken during the fifth cycle of NAAC accreditation (2025);
- Research collaboration through project-based partnerships and multilateral schemes;
- Memberships in associations of [Commonwealth](#) and [Francophonie](#) Universities

Geographic focus and partnerships

The University will prioritise collaboration with the EU, ASEAN and African regions, complementing India's diplomatic and South-South cooperation priorities. Partnerships may include university agreements, consortia, grant agencies, consular bodies and industry.

Governance and support systems

Internationalisation is supported by a hybrid governance structure combining leadership oversight (Director, Dean and Deputy Dean) with distributed engagement (School-level Internationalisation Coordinators and faculty MoU Coordinators). Operational support includes advising for mobility, admissions assistance, communication channels and campus amenities for international students.

Financing and implementation

Internationalisation will draw on grant-based funding (e.g., Erasmus+), participation of self-funded exchange students admitted under tuition-waiver agreements, fee-paying degree-seeking international students, cost-sharing partnerships and industry or CSR engagement. Implementation will be phased, anchored in selected disciplines and aligned with the regulatory requirements.

Conclusion

Internationalisation marks a natural progression in the University's institutional development as it enters its fifth decade. Through mobility, collaboration and partnership, Pondicherry University seeks to participate more actively in the global higher education landscape.

1. Preamble

Pondicherry University, established in 1985 as a Central University under the Ministry of Education, Government of India, recently marked four decades of academic activity. Over this period the University has primarily focused on its national mandate, serving a pan-Indian student body across undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes, and drawing faculty and staff from diverse regions. This orientation has shaped an institution that has engaged with India's higher education priorities through teaching, research and the provision of access to students from varied social and regional backgrounds.

Internationalisation also aligns with global development frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). With foundational domestic priorities substantially fulfilled and a mature academic ecosystem in place, the University now seeks to expand its global footprint through structured internationalisation. The transition from a primarily national orientation to a national-plus-global orientation represents a logical progression for the next phase of institutional development and is seen as complimentary to national priorities under National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and aligned with the national aspiration of Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047.

2. Global context and rationale

The internationalisation of higher education has evolved significantly over the past two decades. Universities increasingly engage in cross-border teaching, research collaboration, mobility programmes, international curriculum development and global partnerships to enhance student exposure and employability, and integrate into international knowledge networks. National frameworks and multilateral programmes such as Erasmus+ in the European Union, as well as bilateral schemes in Asia and Africa, have supported these developments.

India's NEP 2020 encourages higher education institutions to internationalise their academic ecosystems and to facilitate greater mobility of students and faculty. For Pondicherry University, internationalisation supports multiple objectives: expanding student exposure, attracting international learners, improving employability, developing research networks and contributing to India's global engagement, including South-South cooperation.

3. Vision for internationalisation

The University envisions an academic ecosystem in which cross-border engagement is a structured component of learning, teaching and research. Over the next five years, the University will strengthen its capacity for international collaboration, enable mobility for students and faculty, and attract international learners to study in India, particularly in programmes that align with global demand and national priorities.

Internationalisation is understood not as a separate pillar of activity but as an integrated dimension of academic life that supports programme quality, enhances student outcomes and expands the University's contribution to global knowledge networks.

4. Institutional motivations and objectives

The University's motivations for internationalisation include:

1. Enhancing student exposure to international academic environments through credit mobility, internships, exchanges and study tours.

2. Attracting international students for degree programmes, short-term study and immersion formats.

3. Improving student employability and career outcomes in globally connected sectors.

4. Augment faculty competencies and their international engagement by creating opportunities for global academic interaction and professional advancement.

5. Developing research collaborations through joint projects, publications and networks.

6. Offering collaborative academic programmes where dual/joint/twinning models are feasible and academically suitable.

7. Supporting India's broader international engagement, with emphasis on the Global South.

8. Strengthening the academic and cultural environment of the University through international participation.

9. Creating opportunities to share the Indian Knowledge System with international partner institutions.

5. Current landscape and maturity

Pondicherry University maintains a moderate level of international engagement, with collaboration focused primarily on partnership development and mobility. The University has signed more than 50 MOUs with international institutions across multiple regions. Several agreements are operational through exchange, research collaboration, delegation visits and project participation.

Participation in Erasmus+ mobility and capacity-building programmes has enabled both student, faculty and staff exchange, as well as institutional learning. The University also offers a dual-degree programme with a French university, demonstrating the capacity to structure and deliver collaborative academic programmes through internal approval procedures and regulatory alignment.

Student mobility is active in selected disciplines, particularly in management programmes. Faculty mobility for teaching and research is also increasing. Inbound mobility includes self-funded exchange students admitted under tuition-waiver agreements, as well as short-term academic visits. Growth in consular engagement, project invitations and social media (Linkedin) visibility suggests rising recognition of the University among international stakeholders.

At Pondicherry University, internationalisation is supported through faculty-led international academic collaboration. Faculty members serving as MoU coordinators engage directly with international partners, while the International Relations Office provides administrative support. This model provides flexibility but requires strengthened institutional mechanisms for continuity and scalability.

Pondicherry's regional context contributes positively to internationalisation. The city's French heritage, the presence of Auroville and its role as a heritage and international tourism destination create an environment that is receptive to cultural exchange and suitable for hosting international students and short-term programmes.

6. Strategic priority areas for internationalisation

Internationalisation initiatives will be organised around the following strategic priority areas during the five-year period.

6.1 Student mobility (Outbound)

The University will facilitate student access to international academic environments through semester exchanges, credit mobility, internships, study tours and blended mobility models. Mobility will be prioritised in disciplines where international exposure enhances academic relevance and employability. Support mechanisms will include credit transfer processes, academic advising and pre-departure orientation.

6.2 Student mobility and recruitment (Inbound)

The University will attract international students for degree programmes, exchange semesters and short-term study. Programmes with global academic or regional relevance offer opportunities for inbound participation. Admissions, visa support and academic orientation processes will be strengthened to support inbound students.

6.3 Faculty mobility

Faculty mobility supports academic networking, curriculum development and research collaboration. The University will encourage participation in teaching exchanges, research residencies and development programmes abroad, and will seek opportunities to host international faculty for teaching and collaborative activities.

6.4 Joint academic and degree programmes

The University will expand collaborative academic programmes, including dual, joint and twinning models, where appropriate. Such programmes will follow internal approval procedures through the Board of Studies, School Board and Academic Council, in alignment with national regulations. Short-cycle certificates, micro-credentials and blended models will also be explored.

6.5 Short-term immersion and "India in Residence" models

The University intends to host international students for thematic, cultural or academic immersion programmes that may include classroom instruction, field visits and language components. Pondicherry's cultural and heritage context supports the viability of such programmes, which may also serve as entry points for longer-term collaboration.

6.6 Curriculum internationalisation and collaborative pedagogy

The curriculum across multiple programmes incorporate international perspectives, environments and applications where academically appropriate. These revisions were intended to enhance global relevance and support international student engagement. Virtual models such as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) may complement physical mobility and expand participation.

6.7 Research collaboration and project-based partnerships

The University will pursue research collaborations through joint publications, conferences, project proposals and networks. Multilateral/Consortia grant schemes (for mobilities and capacity building), including those in the European Union, provide avenues for collaboration. South-South partnerships with institutions in Africa and Asia align with India's international engagement priorities.

6.8 Memberships in 'Network amplifiers'

Membership in Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) strengthens the University's capacity for international collaboration through structured access to institutional networks, mobility schemes, research consortia and South–South cooperation platforms. Pondicherry's geographical and historical asset offers a unique leverage with HEIs in the Francophone regions.

7. Geographic and partnership strategy

International collaboration will be guided by a region-informed approach that recognises academic opportunity and India's diplomatic priorities.

7.1 European Union

Existing collaborations, Erasmus participation and dual-degree experience indicate strong compatibility with EU institutions. Opportunities exist for mobility, capacity-building and thematic immersion programmes.

7.2 ASEAN

Geographic proximity, shared socio-economic interests and growing intra-regional mobility provide scope for academic exchanges, internships and research collaboration.

7.3 Africa

Partnerships with African institutions align with India's South-South cooperation commitments. Demand for capacity building and degree pathways may support inbound flows.

7.4 Other regions

Engagement with East Asia, the Middle East and North America will continue on a project or institutional basis, with selective partner identification.

7.5 Partnership types

Partnerships may include:

- University-to-University Agreements,
- Consortia Participation,
- Joint or Dual Academic Programmes,
- Consular and Diplomatic Engagement,
- Agency and Grant Body Collaboration,
- International Organisations and Networks,
- Industry Partnerships.

8. Governance and enabling mechanisms

The University's internationalisation efforts operate through a hybrid governance model combining leadership oversight with distributed academic engagement.

8.1 Academic approval pathways

Collaborative programmes follow existing internal approval pathways through Boards of Studies, School Boards and the Academic Council, ensuring academic and regulatory compliance.

8.2 Policy alignment and regulatory compliance

International activities will align with frameworks issued by the Ministry of Education, University Grants Commission and NEP 2020. Visa and admissions procedures will be coordinated in accordance with national regulations.

8.3 Faculty engagement and incentives

Faculty participation is central to internationalisation. The University will explore mechanisms to acknowledge international engagement within broader academic responsibilities.

8.4 Data and Information management

Documentation of international activities will support reporting, project applications, partnership evaluation and institutional transparency.

8.5 Hybrid governance structure for internationalisation (Figure-2)

At the leadership level, the Director (Culture and Cultural Relations), Dean and Deputy Dean (International Relations) provide direction, represent the University and coordinate institutional partnerships. Planning and Development, as the nodal section supports the administrative processes. Academic section provides integration with the information system at various stages from enrolment to issue of transcipts. Internationalisation Coordinators within Schools engage faculty and liaise with partners. Faculty MoU Coordinators support academic diplomacy and partnership implementation. Legal Cell and MoU Evaluation Committee vet the MoU proposals and recommend for approval. This model combines institutional coherence with academic autonomy.

9. Operational support systems

For internationalisation to function effectively, support systems must complement academic engagement through student services, communication and logistics.

9.1 Support for Outbound students

Outbound students may require guidance concerning academic planning, credit transfer, visas, accommodation and financial considerations. Structured advising channels will support participation and reduce administrative barriers.

9.2 Support for Inbound students

Inbound international students may require assistance related to admissions, documentation, housing, academic orientation and cultural acclimatisation. Coordination among administrative units will help improve the experience of inbound students.

9.3 Marketing and communication

Communication with international partners, funding bodies and prospective students requires clear, up-to-date information. Institutional web content, professional materials and social media channels will support global engagement.

9.4 Infrastructure and logistics

Hosting international students and faculty necessitates logistical arrangements related to accommodation, campus access, travel and student welfare. The University will assess current facilities and identify areas for enhancement.

9.5 Language and cultural mediation

English-medium instruction supports international participation. Additional language support through the Centre for Foreign Languages and intercultural support may be incorporated for specific programmes and immersion activities.

9.6 Support services and student infrastructure

The University provides several support mechanisms for international students, including dedicated hostels for international students, a buddy system operated by student volunteers for orientation and campus navigation, and a 24×7 health centre for medical assistance. These services complement academic programmes and contribute to the integration and welfare of international students.

10. Financing and resource mobilisation

Internationalisation requires financial planning that accommodates multiple pathways and regulatory considerations.

10.1 Grant-based funding

Participation in international grant schemes such as Erasmus+ supports mobility, capacity-building and research activities. The University will continue to identify and pursue suitable grant opportunities.

10.2 Self-funded exchange students

Self-funded exchange students admitted under tuition-waiver agreements established through MoUs contribute to inbound participation. Tuition waivers maintain reciprocity within the exchange model while enabling access for students.

10.3 Fee-paying Degree-seeking international students

In addition to exchange participation, international students may be admitted to degree programmes. These students contribute to financial sustainability and academic diversity, subject to national regulations governing foreign enrolment in public universities.

10.4 Cost-sharing partnerships

Collaborations may incorporate cost-sharing arrangements with partner institutions for mobility, programme delivery or project participation. Such models support sustainability and distribute financial responsibilities.

10.5 Industry and CSR participation

Partnerships with industry and CSR initiatives may support internships, training programmes, research collaboration and outbound mobility. These partnerships will be explored in alignment with regulatory frameworks.

11. Implementation approach

Implementation of internationalisation will be phased and integrated into existing academic structures.

11.1 Phased development

Early initiatives may include mobility and immersion programmes, with more complex degree structures being developed subsequently.

11.2 Anchoring in selected disciplines

Implementation may initially focus on disciplines already engaged in international collaboration or with global demand, followed by broader participation as systems mature.

11.3 Faculty-centred academic engagement

Faculty members will continue to play a central role in partnership development and programme implementation, supported by institutional coordination.

11.4 Policy harmonisation

Internal policy adjustments relating to credit recognition, mobility and collaborative programmes will support compatibility with international schemes.

11.5 Student preparedness

Orientation and preparatory programmes may be introduced to enhance student readiness for international mobility.

11.6 Administrative coordination

Coordination among administrative units will reduce procedural barriers for inbound and outbound mobility.

11.7 Policy Alignment and Regulatory Compliance

All internationalisation activities of Pondicherry University shall strictly comply with the regulatory, ethical, biosafety, and statutory frameworks prescribed by national and international authorities, wherever applicable. This includes:

11.7.1 National Regulatory Compliance: Foreign collaborations, joint/dual degree programs, and academic partnerships shall adhere to applicable UGC Regulations on Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Educational Institutions.

11.7.2 Ethics, Biosafety, and Research Governance Compliance: Appropriate ethical clearance requires human participants (Institutional Ethics Committee - IEC), animals (Institutional Animal Ethics Committee - IAEC), and recombinant DNA technologies, or infectious agents shall require clearance from the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBSC).

11.7.3 Biodiversity and Environmental Regulatory Compliance: Research involving biological resources, genetic materials, Indian traditional knowledge, or bio-prospecting shall comply with the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) / relevant regulations as applicable.

11.7.4 International transfer of biological materials shall follow Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs) and Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) provisions.

12. Risk and mitigation considerations

Internationalisation involves multiple risk dimensions that require anticipatory planning.

12.1 Regulatory risks

Changes in national or international policies may affect mobility or programme models. Engagement with multiple regions mitigates exposure to policy shifts.

12.2 Academic and operational risks

Credit transfer issues, calendar mismatches or documentation delays may affect participation. Early planning and structured advising reduce operational disruptions.

12.3 Financial risks

Variations in grant availability or inbound enrolment may affect sustainability. A diversified financial model mitigates dependency on a single source.

12.4 Student welfare and safety risks

Mobility exposes students to unfamiliar environments. Pre-departure orientation and coordinated support reduce risks.

13. Conclusion

As Pondicherry University enters its fifth decade, internationalisation represents a timely expansion of its academic mission. Having served domestic higher education priorities through a pan-Indian student and faculty profile, the University is positioned to engage more extensively with the global academic community. Internationalisation supports student exposure, employability, research collaboration and institutional development.

The University will pursue internationalisation through mobility, partnership development, collaborative degree models, research initiatives and the recruitment of international students. These efforts will align with national policies and global higher education trends, while respecting regulatory frameworks and institutional capacity.

Internationalisation at Pondicherry University is a collective academic effort that involves faculty, administrators, students and external partners. The University remains committed to a responsible, transparent, and continuously evolving internationalisation process that enhances academic quality and research impact while safeguarding institutional values.

Pondicherry University welcomes collaboration with global institutions, consular bodies, grant agencies and industry partners as it strengthens its role within the international higher education landscape.

FIGURE-1. ELEMENTS OF INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY

FIGURE-2. INTERNATIONALISATION GOVERNANCE AND ENABLING MECHANISMS