



MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

# MALAYSIA HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONALISATION POLICY 2025-2030





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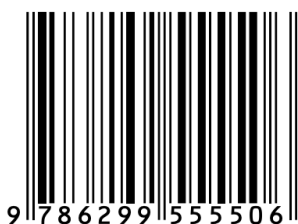
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# Foreword

by the Minister of Higher Education

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In today's interconnected world, the internationalisation of higher education serves as a powerful catalyst for academic excellence, economic growth, and global influence. Nations that embrace cross-border collaboration and cultural exchange position themselves as leaders in innovation, research, and knowledge creation. By fostering a diverse academic community, they cultivate an environment where ideas flourish, perspectives expand, and groundbreaking advancements take shape.

The Malaysia Higher Education Internationalisation Policy (MHEIP) 2025-2030 marks a bold step toward elevating Malaysia's global competitiveness and establishing it as a premier higher education hub. This policy underscores our commitment to attracting a vibrant pool of international students, fostering meaningful global partnerships, and strengthening Malaysia's research and innovation ecosystem. Through enhanced collaboration, knowledge exchange, and specialised expertise, we aim to position Malaysia as a dynamic centre for skills, talent, and discovery.

However, this vision extends beyond student mobility. It is about embedding an international mindset within our institutions, aligning curricula with global industry needs, and creating an ecosystem that supports cutting-edge research. By nurturing strong academia-industry linkages and attracting world-class talent, Malaysia will not only drive educational excellence but also unlock opportunities for foreign investment and economic expansion. The resulting dynamic environment will propel Malaysia's higher education sector to the forefront of global innovation, further solidifying its reputation as a knowledge powerhouse.

As we embark on this transformative journey, Malaysia will strengthen its higher education landscape, reinforce its position in the global academic arena, and drive sustained economic prosperity. Together, let us shape an education ecosystem that reflects our great nation's ingenuity, resilience, and ambition.

**DATO' SERI DIRAJA DR. ZAMBRY ABD KADIR**



# Preface

## by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Higher Education

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The internationalisation of higher education stands as a pivotal force, significantly enhancing the reputation and prestige of the nation's higher education sector. Recognising the increasing importance of global collaboration and cross-cultural exchange, Malaysia aims to attract a diverse community of international students and faculty members to our institutions. Simultaneously, we seek to facilitate the outward-bound movement of our local students and faculty members, fostering a global mindset and a strong international network. This pursuit aims to create a dynamic and vibrant academic milieu that transcends geographical boundaries, weaving a rich cultural tapestry on our campuses. The free flow of ideas, languages, and traditions not only enriches the educational experience for both local and international students but also nurtures mutual understanding and intercultural competence.



The journey towards this vision is marked by inclusivity and collaboration. This approach involving comprehensive policy review, stakeholder consultations, and rigorous validation, underscores our commitment to crafting a plan that stands up to international best practices. The strategic thrusts of Governance and Execution, Talent Attraction, Talent Experience, Talent Development, and Research and Development form a cohesive framework to enhance policy and governance, attract global talent, create a welcoming environment, align curricula with contemporary needs, and revitalise our research and development ecosystem.

The MHEIP 2025-2030 has outlined 10 strategies to be implemented over three phases which are designed to build upon each other in a progressive manner, aligning with the evolving capacity, capabilities, and readiness of Higher Education Institutions. The first phase focuses on quick win enhancements, while the second phase aims to enhance operational adaptability. Phase three intends to introduce fresh interventions to improve KPIs. Many of these cut across various agencies and ministries. Thus, success in implementation rests on guiding principles of promoting collaboration, agility, digital transformation, and an innovative mindset.

Sincere appreciation is extended to all stakeholders for their steadfast support in shaping the MHEIP 2025-2030. The Ministry of Higher Education remains committed to providing strong leadership in advancing the internationalisation of higher education, strengthening Malaysia's position as a premier higher education hub, and accelerating knowledge-driven economic growth.

**DATO' SERI IR. DR. ZAINI BIN UJANG**



As Malaysia continues its commitment to advancing global engagement and academic excellence, the Malaysia Higher Education Internationalisation Policy (MHEIP) 2025-2030 is pivotal. This policy aims to strengthen Malaysia's position as a premier higher education hub, attracting international students, staff, and foreign investment, and contributing significantly to economic development in an ever-evolving global landscape.

The vision of fortifying Malaysia's position as a leading higher education hub encompasses the need to not only impart knowledge, but also strengthen innovation and research while producing talent who can excel in various industries. This involves concentrating specialised knowledge and skills in specific fields, and creating research and innovation clusters to attract top researchers and drive technological advancements.

The development of the MHEIP 2025-2030 was a comprehensive and collaborative effort. A wide range of stakeholders were engaged, using a three-phase approach. The initial phase involved a thorough policy review, evaluating strengths and weaknesses and benchmarking against international best practices. Subsequently, extensive consultations with over 55 stakeholder organisations were held to ensure alignment with national plans and policies. Finally, the strategic thrusts of the policy were refined, emphasising digital aspects for data-driven decision-making and adaptability.




The resulting policy framework comprises five strategic thrusts: Governance and Execution, Talent Attraction, Talent Experience, Talent Development, and Research and Development (R&D). These collectively aim to enhance policy and governance within higher education, attract top-tier global talent, create a welcoming environment for international students and staff, align curriculum with contemporary needs, and revitalise the R&D ecosystem.

Effective implementation of the MHEIP 2025-2030 is underpinned by guiding principles and a comprehensive framework. The guiding principles promote collaboration through a whole-of-Malaysia approach, advocate agility and experimentation, emphasise digital transformation for data-driven decision-making, and encourage an exponential and abundant mindset for innovative solutions. The implementation framework encompasses four components: Mandate, Mechanism, Mastery, and Measures. It provides clear direction, efficient coordination, personnel readiness, and a comprehensive assessment of progress. These elements collectively support Malaysia's ambitious goals for internationalisation of higher education, ultimately creating a dynamic and thriving higher education hub.

# Development Approach

The development of the MHEIP 2025-2030 was a collaborative and inclusive endeavour, engaging a diverse array of stakeholders, both through a formal and more informal methodology. The policy hinges on anticipating current and future trends alongside the needs of the higher education ecosystem to ensure the plan's applicability and sustainability. This is achieved by weaving in digital aspects to leverage technology for data-driven decisions and real-time monitoring, and to enable nimble adjustments as needed.

The formulation of the MHEIP 2025-2030 followed a structured approach divided into three distinct phases:

<p><b>Phase 1</b> Policy Review</p> 	<p>The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) assessed the Internationalisation Policy for Higher Education Malaysia 2011 by conducting primary surveys with local and international students and staff, engaging with public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and reviewing related policies like the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) (MEB (HE)), and the National Industrial Master Plan (NIMP) 2030. This also included analysing international best practices in higher education internationalisation.</p>
<p><b>Phase 2</b> Conceptualisation of the Thrusts</p> 	<p>MOHE collaborated with 55 stakeholder organisations, including experts, university administrators, association representatives, and industry leaders, in order to define five key policy thrusts. Ensuring alignment with existing national plans, particularly the Higher Education Plan 2025-2035, was crucial. Additionally, the policy was designed to support other initiatives, such as those stated in the NIMP 2030.</p>
<p><b>Phase 3</b> Finalisation of the MHEIAP 2025-2030</p> 	<p>In the last phase, MOHE fine-tuned the five strategic thrusts of the MHEIP 2025-2030. This involved various rigorous validation with stakeholder groups to ensure the thrusts were comprehensive and reflective of collective expertise, thus producing a holistic framework for the MHEIP 2025-2030.</p>



Internationalisation of higher education has emerged as a pivotal driver in bolstering the reputation and brand of a country's higher education. The recognised importance of global collaboration and cross-cultural exchange has become an important aspect for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to attract international students to their institutions. This approach creates a conducive and dynamic learning environment that transcends borders, thereby fostering a culture of collaboration HEIs.

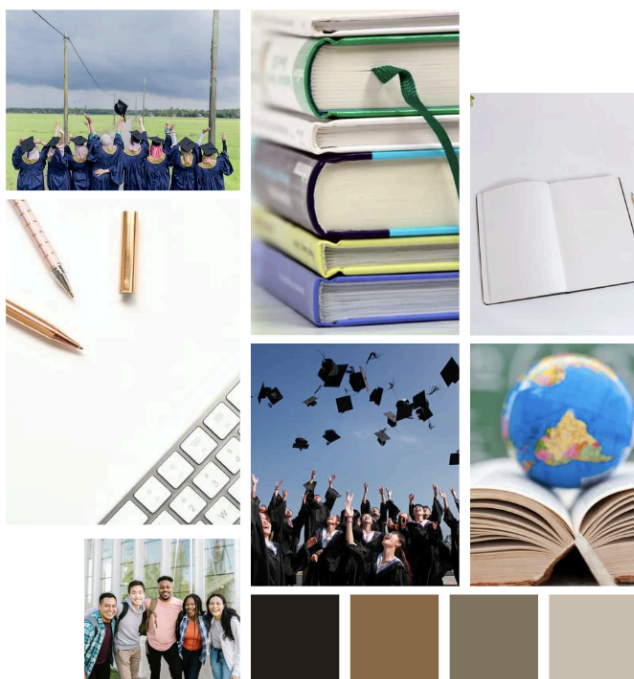
In 2011, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) formulated a comprehensive policy for internationalisation, known as the Internationalisation Policy for Higher Education Malaysia 2011, which aimed to accelerate the inflow of international students to 150,000 by 2015 and 200,000 by 2020. It examined six core aspects of internationalisation: student mobility, staff mobility, academic programmes, Research & Development (R&D), governance and autonomy, as well as social integration and cultural engagement.

To increase global engagement and academic excellence, MOHE is committed to regularly improve the policy. This assessment aims to refine existing strategies, and explore innovative approaches to further bolster the country's appeal as a preferred destination for international students and staff. The need to develop new strategies is driven, in part, by the dynamic changes of global higher education learning, shifting societal and industry expectations, evolving geopolitical scene, and the impact of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

The main goal of developing a new policy for internationalisation of higher education, the MHEIP 2025-2030, is to elevate the country's competitiveness and establish Malaysia as a prominent hub for higher education. The increasing number and collaborations with a diverse pool of cultures of international students can cultivate an academic environment that promotes excellence, innovation and intercultural understanding. Such collaborations will enhance the exchange of knowledge and expertise, and open avenues for cutting-edge research, further bolstering Malaysia's prominence as a centre for skills and knowledge.

Academically, the exposure of diverse cultural perspectives and approaches allows the stimulation of innovation and creativity, therefore, encouraging students and faculty members to think critically and collaboratively on a global scale. This intellectual environment encourages pioneering R&D to develop groundbreaking solutions to address complex global challenges.

Beyond academia empowerment, internationalisation fosters valuable international partnerships, enabling institutions to collaborate on joint research projects, student exchanges, and faculty development programmes. These partnerships strengthen diplomatic ties and create opportunities for collaboration in other sectors, such as trade, industry, tourism, and culture. The ensuing dynamic ecosystem will ultimately attract foreign investors, thereby contributing to the country's economic development.



## The Future Trends and Needs

In 2030, education is not only about acquiring knowledge; it is about embracing an entirely new way of learning, one that is as fluid and dynamic as one's growth. It is an era where the boundaries of what can be learnt and achieved are limited only by imagination and ambition.

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As we step into the educational landscape of 2030, a remarkable transformation would have occurred, revolutionising the way we access and engage with learning content. Imagine a world where acquiring knowledge and skills is as seamless and personalised as streaming one's favourite tunes on Spotify. In this not-so-distant future, educational content will become as accessible as music in a playlist, with the vast repository of materials at your fingertips, courtesy of top-notch providers from around the globe. Similar to selecting a preferred music genre, users can choose from a smorgasbord of personalised learning experiences tailored to their unique interests and goals.

The future of higher education is rapidly evolving, primarily driven by the breakneck pace of technological advancement with industries closely mirroring this unprecedented speed of transformation. This seismic shift in the technological landscape has cascading effects on talent expectations, particularly in the post-pandemic era where the digital proficiency has surged. A study by Ernst & Young shared that more than 85 percent of Gen Y and Gen Z respondents to their survey indicated that the way they use technology had changed during the pandemic, and that 44 percent expected it to remain changed permanently.

Examining the geographical landscape, competition for internationalisation is also intensifying as more countries vie for the attention of international students and staff, offering attractive visa packages, scholarships, and even permanent residence status, alongside other incentives.

This scenario prompts a critical question: How swiftly are Malaysian HEIs adapting? Are their curricula, pedagogical approaches, hiring incentives and policies keeping pace with the relentless change globally? Equally significant, are Malaysian policies and regulations, together with its implementation process, agile enough to support HEIs in their pursuit of academic excellence and global competitiveness? These are the key considerations that will shape the future of internationalisation of higher education in Malaysia.

## Policy Statement

The Malaysia Higher Education Internationalisation Policy (MHEIP) 2025-2030 aims to strengthen Malaysia as a higher education hub that offers exceptional higher education institutions, fosters niche expertise, and cultivates cutting-edge research and innovation.

## Our Vision and Aspirations

The focus of the MHEIP 2025-2030 is on strengthening Malaysia's position as a premier higher education hub which involves creating specialised expertise centres and research clusters through global attraction and engagement to produce innovative talents, catalyse research, and enhance global competitiveness.

The Higher Education Hub is characterised by three key elements:

1. Outstanding higher education institution and training
2. Concentration of niche expertise
3. Leading research and innovation clusters



## Policy Thrusts

### Policy Framework and Thrusts

The internationalisation of higher education is a strategic imperative for Malaysia, guided by a comprehensive policy framework comprising five key thrusts. These thrusts encompass various facets of Malaysia's internationalisation of higher education efforts, collectively aimed at strengthening Malaysia as a global hub for education, talent, and innovation.



Each thrust represents a distinct strategy designed to drive Malaysia's efforts to attract, nurture, and engage with top-tier global talent, foster international collaboration, and strengthen its presence on the global educational and research stage.

1

**Thrust 1** prioritises revisions to current policy and governance framework, aiming to facilitate and bolster the successful implementation of the policy.

2

**Thrust 2** is dedicated to fortifying marketing and branding efforts, including improving immigration practices, with the aim of enhancing Malaysia's position as a premier higher education hub, capable of attracting and retaining top-tier talent.

3

**Thrust 3** is dedicated to implementing processes designed to enhance the overall experience of foreign talent within the country.

4

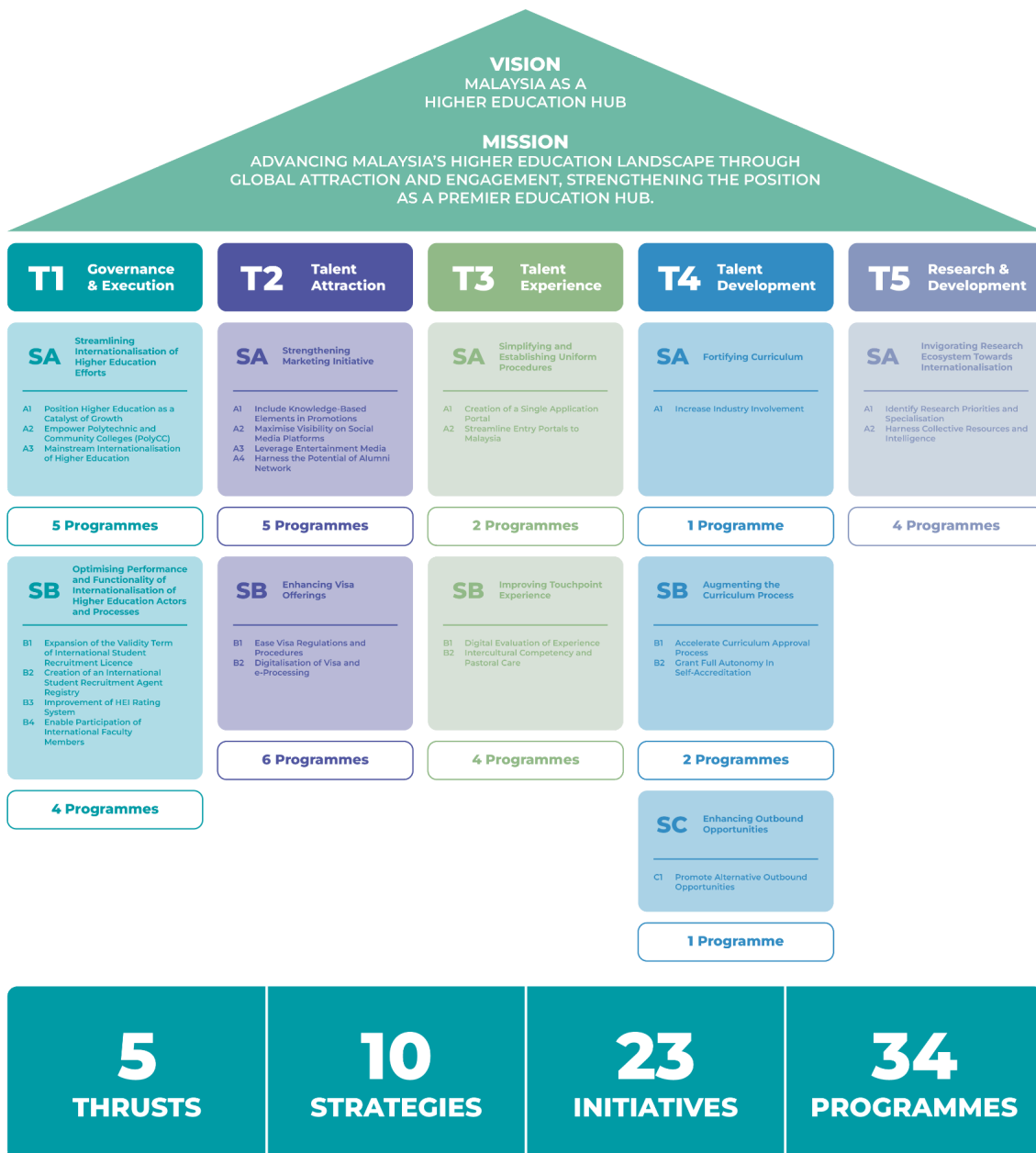
**Thrust 4** revolves around advancing talent development by ensuring that the curriculum aligns with contemporary needs, equipping students and staff to compete effectively on a global scale.

5

**Thrust 5** is dedicated to identifying key drivers that revitalise the R&D ecosystem while amplifying the translation of value, rendering it an enticing hub for collaboration with global partners, and engagement with international researchers.

# Delivering the MHEIP 2025-2030

In an effort to implement the five thrusts outlined above, a comprehensive framework has been developed, comprising 10 overarching strategies, supported by 23 targeted initiatives and 34 specific programmes. These strategies, initiatives, and programmes form a holistic framework aimed at effectively realising the goals of the MHEIP 2025-2030. Together, they provide a roadmap to navigate the complexities of internationalisation of higher education in Malaysia, with the overarching goal of fostering academic excellence, elevating global competitiveness, and catalysing innovation.



## The Impact of This Transformation Journey

The internationalisation of higher education has far-reaching implications that span across various dimensions, all of which converge towards the overarching goal of advancing our nation. These implications are touched upon below.

### Economic

**Economic Growth and Job Creation:** Internationalisation efforts stimulate economic value by attracting international students and their families who contribute to the local economy through spending on various goods and services, including housing, food, transportation, and more. This spending directly generates jobs in sectors like hospitality, transportation, retail and others. Moreover, the growth of international education itself creates employment opportunities within the higher education sector, which may include faculty positions, administrative roles, or support staff. Language schools and related industries also benefit from the increased demand for English language training, fostering additional job opportunities.

**Attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** Internationalisation efforts which involve attracting students, researchers, and faculty from around the world creates a melting pot of diverse skills, knowledge, and perspectives, making it attractive for multinational companies to invest in R&D, taking advantage of the available pool of skilled professionals. These connections can lead to future business partnerships, joint ventures, and investment opportunities, as relationships formed in educational settings translate into professional collaborations, further encouraging FDI inflow.

**Diversified Revenue Stream:** International students typically pay higher tuition fees than local students, and constitute a crucial revenue source for HEIs. Thus, diversifying the student body population through internationalisation is pivotal towards ensuring the long-term sustainability of HEIs. Additionally, HEIs may offer specialised programmes and services tailored to the international students, creating an ancillary revenue stream. Moreover, global connections fostered through internationalisation can lead to research collaborations and partnerships with international institutions, both public and private, providing an additional source of revenue.

## Education

**Drive Quality Improvements:** Collaboration with foreign institutions and exposure to diverse international perspectives raise academic standards and introduce global perspectives. Faculty members who engage in international research collaborations may bring fresh ideas and innovative approaches into the classroom. Moreover, the competition for international students encourages universities to continuously improve the quality of their programmes, facilities, and support services. The pursuit of international accreditation and recognition further motivates institutions to maintain rigorous standards, resulting in a higher quality of education for all students, both local and international.

**Foster a Holistic Educational Experience:** Internationalisation enriches the value for students by offering a holistic educational experience. Studying in an internationalised environment provides exposure to diverse cultures, ideas, and teaching methods, fostering a comprehensive educational journey. This international exposure equips both students and staff with a global mindset and strong cross-cultural communication skills, attributes which are highly valued in today's interconnected world.

## Government

**Strengthen International Cooperation and Diplomatic Ties:** Universities frequently serve as centres for international students and researchers, facilitating cross-cultural exchanges and collaborations that can cultivate and reinforce bonds. Fostering these international partnerships offers governments the ability to leverage expertise, research, and innovations from various corners of the globe. This exchange of knowledge not only enriches the quality of education, research, and workforce development, it also stimulates innovation, fosters economic growth and enhances soft power and knowledge diplomacy. Educational partnerships additionally serve as a platform for diplomatic engagement, facilitating dialogue and cooperation on various issues beyond academia.

## Public and Society

**Enhanced Diversity and Cultural Enrichment:** Internationalisation translates into increased diversity at HEIs. This diversity enriches the educational experience for local students and staff by exposing them to different cultures, perspectives, and ways of thinking. Graduates and staff who have studied or worked alongside international peers also tend to be more adaptable, culturally aware, and possess strong intercultural communication skills. This not only enhances their employability but also opens up a wider range of job opportunities, both locally and globally.

**Broadened Global Perspective:** Graduates and staff with international exposure bring a global perspective and an understanding of diverse markets and cultures. This expanded perspective is a valuable asset as it equips individuals with the ability to navigate a complex and interconnected world.

**Access to a Broader Talent Pool:** The availability of an expanded international talent pool offers a diverse range of skills and expertise, and fosters innovation and competitiveness within the workforce. By tapping into a diverse array of talents, employers can enhance their ability to meet evolving market demands, drive productivity, and propel organisational growth.

# Conclusion

The MHEIP 2025-2030 is a strategically driven endeavour, rooted in a plethora of compelling motives and a well-defined purpose. It seeks to strengthen Malaysia as a premier higher education hub, reinforcing the nation as a global epicentre for talent. This transformation would cement Malaysia as a premier destination for international talent, characterised by a world-class educational and research landscape, all the while nurturing inclusivity, innovation, and fostering international collaborations.

Malaysia's pursuit of internationalisation of higher education is not merely a policy initiative; it is a visionary pathway towards a future where knowledge transcends borders, where diversity and excellence coexist, and where the nation's talent are prepared to thrive in an interconnected world. It is marked by a commitment to collaboration, innovation, and the welfare and advancement of both Malaysia and the global community. By positioning itself as a premier destination for global talent, Malaysia is not only securing its own future but also contributing to the collective progress of humanity.

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# Chapter

# A

1. Introduction
2. Background to the MHEIP 2025-2030
3. Development Approach
4. Policy Design and Implementation Principles
5. Overview of MHEIP 2025-2030
6. Conclusion

# Introduction

In 2011, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) initiated a comprehensive internationalisation policy for higher education with ambitious targets for attracting international students. This policy was reviewed, leading to the development of new strategies to adapt to evolving global education trends, societal expectations, and geopolitical shifts. The pandemic's impact on financial capabilities is also a significant consideration. Malaysia's goal is to assert its competitiveness and strengthen its position as a leading hub for higher education. By attracting a diverse international student and staff population, and fostering global collaborations, Malaysia seeks to create an academic environment that promotes excellence, innovation, and cultural exchange. These initiatives will facilitate knowledge exchange and cutting-edge research, ultimately driving economic development through increased foreign investment.

# Background to the MHEIP 2025-2030

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In today's interconnected world, the internationalisation of higher education enhances a country's academic reputation and global standing. This approach attracts diverse foreign students and faculty members, creating a dynamic academic environment that enriches the educational experience for all. The exchange of ideas, languages, and traditions fosters mutual understanding and intercultural competence.

Successful internationalisation efforts additionally contribute several positive impacts. Academically, diverse perspectives stimulate innovation and collaboration on a global scale, fostering cutting-edge research and solutions to global challenges. International partnerships will also drive diplomacy and collaboration in various sectors, while cross-cultural interactions nurture globally competent graduates and staff.

In 2011, MOHE formulated a comprehensive policy for internationalisation, known as the Internationalisation Policy for Higher Education Malaysia 2011, aimed at accelerating the inflow of international students. As part of its ongoing commitment to enhance global engagement and academic excellence, the new Malaysia Higher Education Internationalisation Policy (MHEIP) 2025-2030 aims to explore innovative approaches to further bolster the country's appeal, weaving in strategies to adapt to the changing global dynamics, learning paradigms along with shifting societal and industry expectations. This will ultimately elevate Malaysia's competitiveness and strengthen its presence as a hub for higher education, talent, and knowledge.

By attracting international students and staff, and fostering global collaborations, Malaysia can create a thriving academic environment that promotes excellence and innovation. This, in turn, enhances its reputation and attracts foreign investment, contributing to economic development.

# Development Approach

The development of the MHEIP 2025-2030 was a collaborative and inclusive endeavour, engaging a diverse array of stakeholders, both in a formal setting and through more informal interviews. The policy hinges on anticipating future trends and needs of the education industry to ensure the plan's applicability and sustainability, weaving in digital aspects to leverage technology for data-driven decisions and real-time monitoring and to enable nimble adjustments when needed.



The formulation of the MHEIP 2025-2030 followed a structured approach, divided into three distinct phases:

## Phase 1 - Policy Review

MOHE initiated the process by conducting a comprehensive assessment of the current performance and progress of the Internationalisation Policy for Higher Education Malaysia 2011. This phase aimed to establish a solid foundation of insights regarding the policy's strengths and weaknesses. This included primary surveys involving both local and international, students and staff, and engagements of various Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), both public and private. This was additionally complemented by a thorough review of other related policies, such as the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) (MEB (HE)), the National Industrial Master Plan 2030 (NIMP), and others, which may have intersecting points or areas of convergence with the Policy. Furthermore, an analysis of other countries was done to learn best practice and benchmark offerings related to internationalisation of higher education.

## Phase 2 - Conceptualisation of the Thrusts

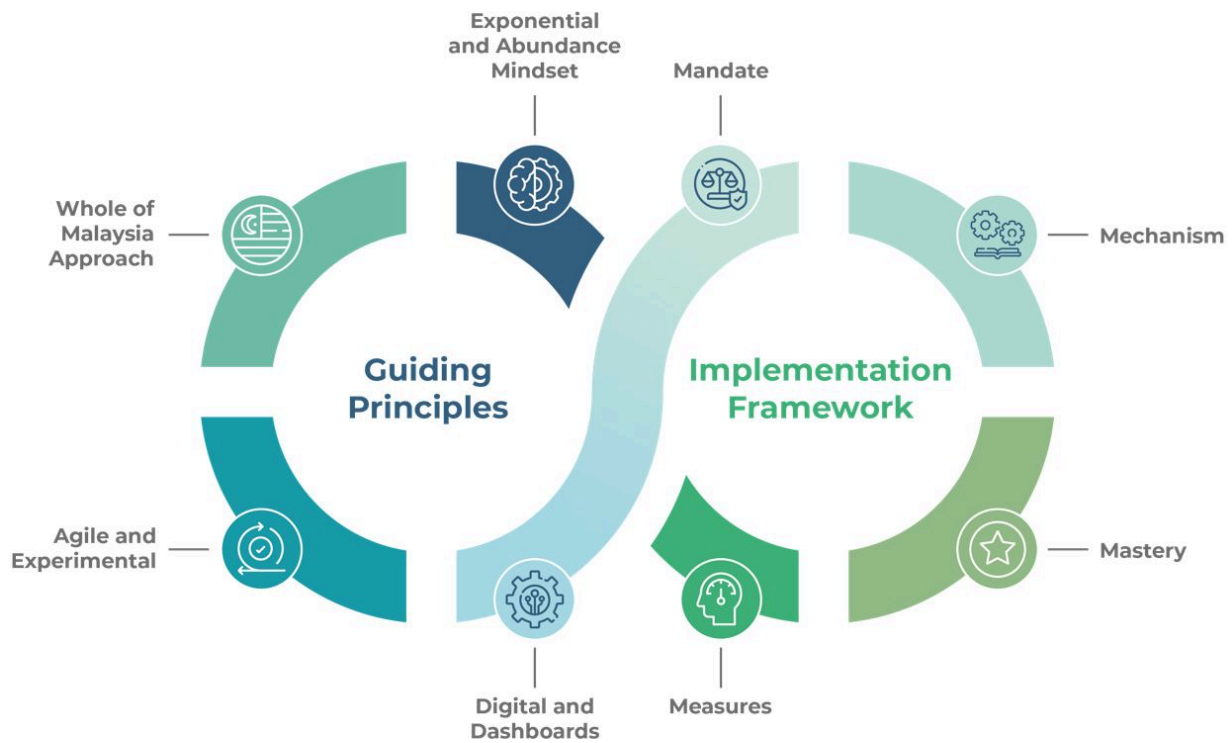
The five strategic thrusts of the Policy were delineated following extensive consultations with over 55 stakeholder organisations, which included both Malaysian and global education experts, university administrators, academic community members, association representatives, MOHE staff, industry leaders, funders and other relevant agencies. A pivotal consideration during this phase was ensuring alignment with existing national plans, particularly the Higher Education Plan 2025-2035, and to ensure that the Policy would be able to support the needs of other Policies like the NIMP 2030.

## **Phase 3 - Finalisation of the MHEIP 2025-2030**

The nuanced specifics of these five strategic thrusts were meticulously honed through a rigorous process of validation by various stakeholder groups to ensure that the MHEIP 2025-2030 was comprehensively informed, well-rounded, and reflective of the collective aspirations and expertise of all parties involved.

# Policy Design and Implementation Principles

The effectiveness of a policy hinges greatly on its successful implementation. Thus, within the policy's core structure, several principles have been intricately integrated to guide the successful implementation of the MHEIP 2025-2030. Complementing these principles is an implementation framework with four key components, designed to provide a comprehensive and systematic guide for the execution of the policy's plans. These components have been woven into the design and approach of the various initiatives, taking into consideration the resource constraint, capability and capacity of the different stakeholders involved.



## Guiding Principles

The guiding principles serve as the foundation for decision-making and actions within the various organisations involved in the internationalisation effort. These are not specific rules but rather broad statements that guide behaviour, clarify purpose, and help establish a shared understanding among stakeholders, particularly when faced with complex and ambiguous situations.

### **Exponential and Abundance Mindset**

To achieve Malaysia's vision for internationalisation, a conventional, linear approach will not suffice. Having an exponential mindset means approaching challenges, growth, and innovation with a different perspective compared to traditional thinking, while embracing exponential attributes, such as finding creative ways to utilise existing assets and shared resources, and actively engaging communities towards a common goal. The abundant mindset complements this outlook by seeking strategies and solutions that can be easily expanded to accommodate growth without proportionally increasing resources or costs.

### **Whole of Malaysia Approach**

Malaysia's pursuit of internationalisation in higher education calls for a unified, comprehensive strategy that mandates collaboration across various government ministries and agencies, fostering both horizontal and vertical integration. This approach seeks to surmount challenges posed by silos, bureaucratic hurdles, and hierarchical constraints, ensuring a harmonised and effective effort.

### **Agile and Experimental**

The challenges faced in internationalisation of higher education are complex and dynamic, and require adopting a flexible, agile, and experimental approach. This entails exploring novel strategies and testing innovative methodologies before solidifying them into new policies. Low-risk, high-impact strategies can be swiftly implemented, while those with greater uncertainty undergo smaller-scale testing before broader adoption. This approach ensures controlled experimentation, hedges against setbacks, and facilitates nuanced learning.

### **Digital and Dashboards**

In this age of unprecedented technological advancement and rapid change, Malaysia must harness the power of innovation and data-driven decision-making. This necessitates the development of comprehensive digital solutions and real-time monitoring mechanisms, to cultivate a culture of transparency and enable agile decision-making processes that are vital for strategic success. Digital dashboards will not only provide critical insights into the progress of internationalisation efforts, but also empower decision makers to adapt swiftly to evolving trends and challenges.

## Implementation Framework

In tandem with these guiding principles, is an implementation framework to broadly guide the systematic execution of these plans. There are four key components which need to be addressed.

### **Mandate**

The mandate is essential to provide a clear and official statement of purpose or direction. This begins with strong and visionary leadership that not only supports the initiative but actively takes on a leadership role. Leadership provides direction, sets priorities and goals which need to be achieved, while communicating a compelling vision and securing consensus from all partners and stakeholders. A clear mandate helps align efforts across different groups or levels of an organisation and ensures that everyone is working toward the same objectives, reducing the risk of conflicting actions or priorities.

### **Mechanism**

This ensures that actions are carried out in a coordinated manner, with a focus on achieving the intended objectives. It entails establishing clear processes, roles and responsibilities, while providing structure for actions to be carried out efficiently. This may involve reviewing existing policies and guidelines to support new initiatives. Frequently, the fear of not having a flawless plan can obstruct progress. Thus the mechanism that can be agile and pivot when needed, respond to emerging challenges, while leveraging new opportunities is essential for success.

### **Mastery**

It is imperative that the personnel involved in the entire value chain of internationalisation are adequately equipped to execute the strategies effectively. This may involve development and training in specific areas such as big data, data analytics, and predictive analytics; utilisation of social media management tools, digital marketing and automation; search engine optimisation (SEO); web analytics; the use of survey and feedback tools; chatbots; and many others.

### **Measures**

To assess progress and impact effectively, it is vital to establish a comprehensive set of measures that encompass Activities, Outputs, and Impact. These measures should consider both short-term and long-term perspectives, along with tangible and intangible outcomes. A well-rounded measurement framework offers a holistic view of the initiative's advancement and permits adjustments when necessary. The integration of digital tools and dashboards at the forefront of the measurement process ensures a high level of transparency.

# Overview of the MHEIP 2025-2030

The subsequent chapters shall further elaborate on crucial elements of internationalisation of higher education in the country.

Chapter B presents the rationale for change and provides an overview of current achievements and existing gaps. It further elaborates on the underlying rationale for the transformations required to achieve the MHEIP 2025-2030 goals.

Chapter C delves into the vision for Malaysia's higher education system and outlines the five thrusts necessary for Malaysia to achieve its vision of becoming a premier destination for education, talent cultivation, and innovation advancement. The five thrusts encompass key domains essential for the evolution of internationalisation within the higher education system. The proposed strategies and initiatives, supported by tracking measures for each thrust are also included.

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# Conclusion

In conclusion, the MHEIP 2025-2030 serves as a strategic roadmap for Malaysia's initiative to strengthen its standing as a premier higher education hub. It is grounded in the recognition that internationalisation is not merely an aspiration but a vital necessity in today's interconnected world. This policy is a testament to Malaysia's commitment to fostering excellence, cross-cultural exchange, and academic vibrancy within its higher education sector.

With this groundwork established, Chapter B will delve into the current landscape of higher education in Malaysia, highlighting the achievements and challenges that necessitate the evolution of internationalisation of higher education efforts. It will lay the foundation for the subsequent chapters that detail the vision, objectives, and strategies to realise the MHEIP 2025-2030 goals, with a focus on strengthening Malaysia's standing as a premier higher education hub.

# Chapter

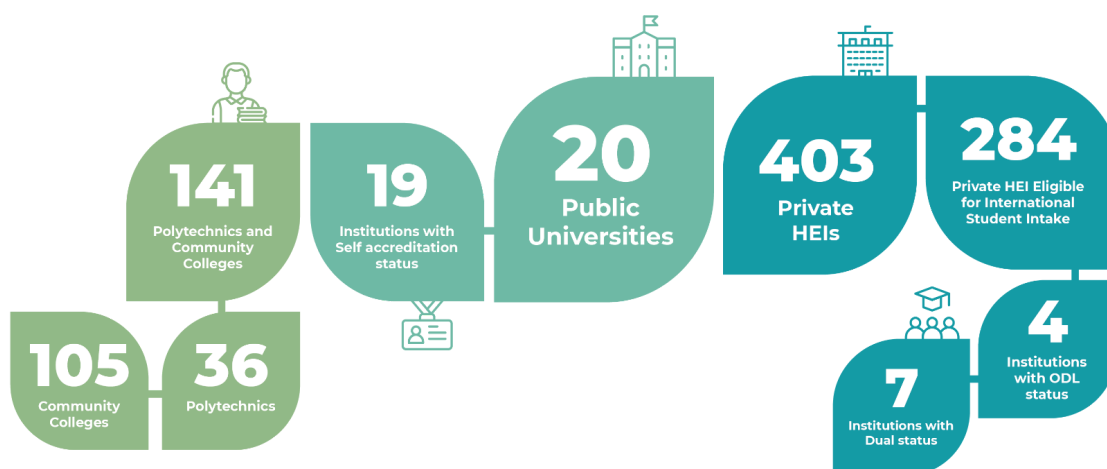
# B

1. Current Landscape
2. Current Structure and Pathways
3. Where We Are Now as a Higher Education Hub
4. Ecosystem Metrics
5. Overview of Challenges
6. Conclusion

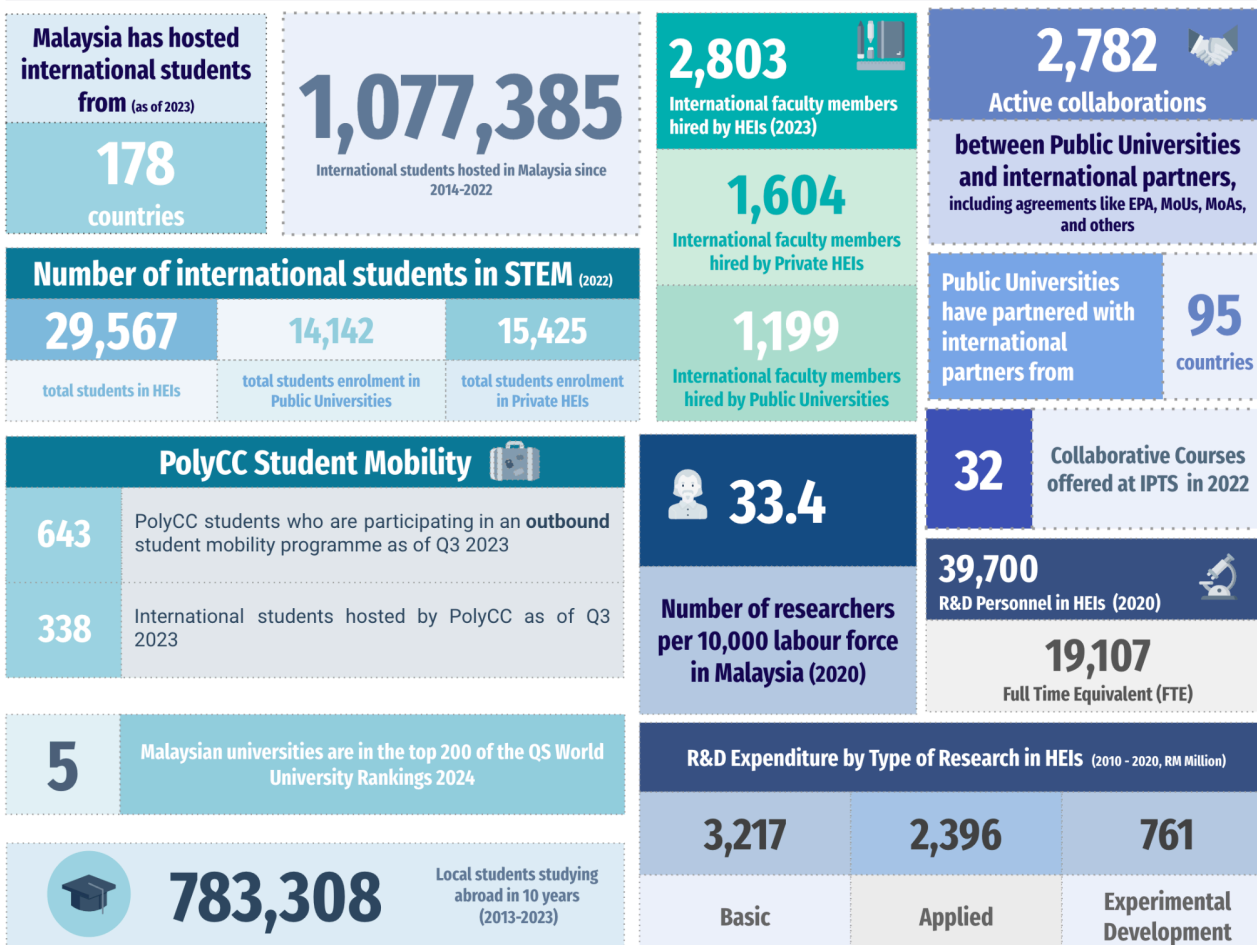
# Current Landscape

Since gaining independence in 1957, Malaysia has actively supported the expansion and development of higher education, making it one of the major exporters of students. However, the economic crises in 1986 and 1997 prompted the Government to reduce the sponsorship of students overseas, and instead encourage local study options. This resulted in a decrease of Malaysian students studying abroad. In the following years, efforts were also made to attract foreign universities to set up campuses within the country. Collectively, this resulted in a significant increase in the enrollment of students in Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), including students from other countries. Over the years, Malaysia has also emerged as a regional and international centre of education excellence.

## Malaysia's HEIs Landscape



### Malaysia Internationalisation of Higher Education Fact Sheet



# Current Structure and Pathways

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Malaysia boasts an impressive record of hosting a wide range of international visitors, particularly students. It has successfully attracted students from 178 different countries, with the top nationalities being China, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nigeria, India, Yemen, Pakistan, and Sudan. Malaysia's appeal to international students is attributed to its unique blend of culture, cost-effectiveness, and relatively straightforward visa processes. Additionally, the presence of overseas campuses from renowned institutions like the University of Nottingham and Heriot-Watt University adds to its allure for students seeking quality education.



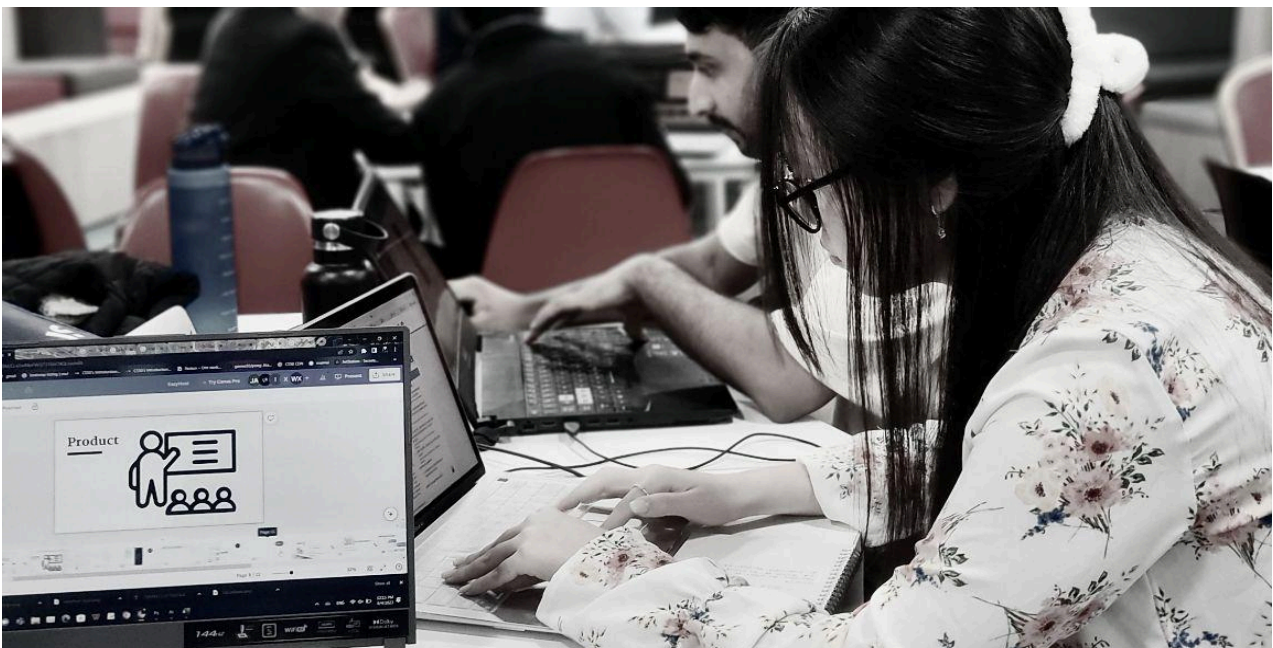
In the initial years, Malaysia had aimed to attract 200,000 international students by 2020, with a subsequent target of 250,000 by 2025. This was, however, inclusive of students who attended international primary and high school in Malaysia. The definition of internationalisation of higher education has since been adapted to align with the established definitions set forth by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to ensure conformity with global standards. Thus, the new goal is to reach 250,000 international tertiary students by 2030.

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# Where We Are Now as a Higher Education Hub

Malaysia's initiative to strengthen its standing as a premier higher education hub on the global stage is underpinned by a multifaceted strategy that extends beyond traditional higher education rankings. To effectively craft a strategy aimed at attracting potential students, funders, and partners, it is imperative to consider a range of diverse indicators. These encompass Malaysia's current strengths in attracting, developing, and retaining talents and partners, as well as its proficiency in generating and applying new knowledge in collaboration with global partners. The final critical indicator pertains to the level of knowledge, diplomacy and soft power that Malaysia may possess by its status as an education hub.

Various global indicators can assess the progress beyond traditional education rankings like QS and Times Higher Education. In evaluating the status as a higher education hub, the Global Talent Competitive Index (GTCI) and IMD World Talent Ranking can be utilised. Additionally, the Global Soft Power Index can provide insights into the country's knowledge diplomacy and soft power. These indicators would collectively illuminate Malaysia's position and its evolving trajectory over time.



# Ecosystem Metrics

The assessment of the strategies' implementation under this policy rely on five essential metrics:

1	<b>International Student Enrolment and Mobility</b> This measures the number of international students which undertake any activity, as part of their higher education, in Malaysia.
2	<b>Students and Staff International Exposure</b> This evaluates the extent to which students and academic staff in Malaysia have international exposure.
3	<b>International Talents Attracted and Integrated</b> This assesses the country's attractiveness to foreign professionals and experts, and measures the number of talents which continue working within the country after graduation.
4	<b>Global Collaborations</b> This metric evaluates the extent of meaningful international partnerships and collaborations established by HEIs.
5	<b>Efficiency and Coordination</b> This pillar quantifies the various optimisations which occur, whether it is improvements in administrative procedures, enhancement of inter-departmental collaboration, or the impact of digital technology adoption.

# 1.

## International Student Enrolment and Mobility

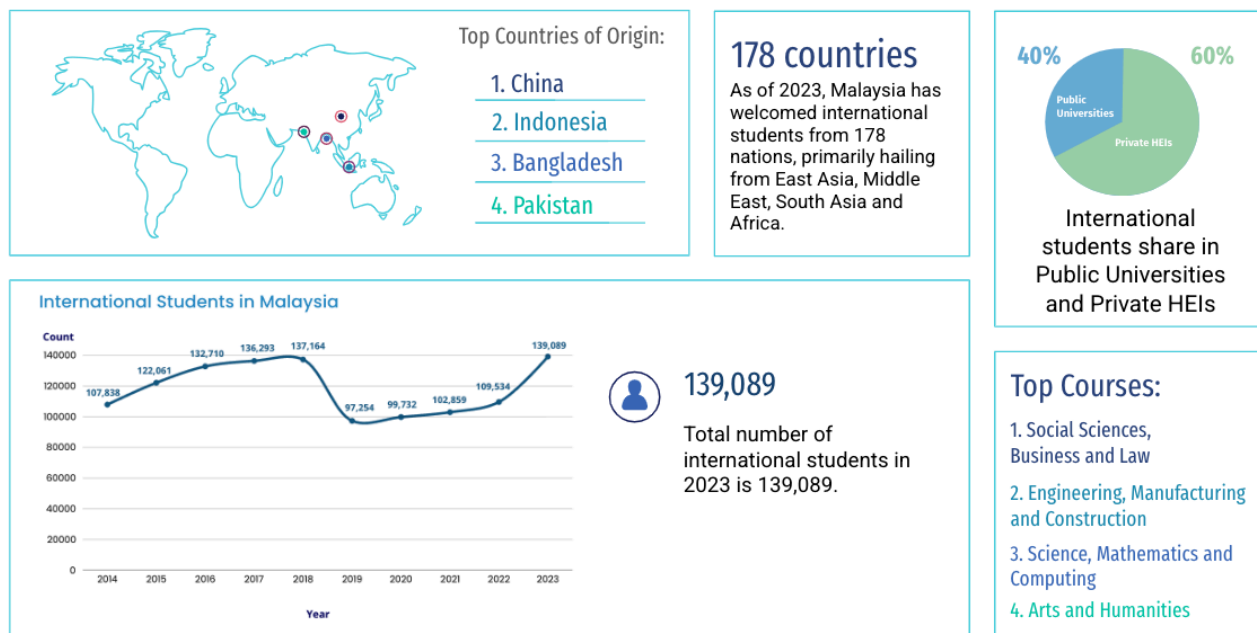
### Overall Performance

Malaysia has a long history of hosting a wide spectrum of international students, who are drawn to the country by a combination of quality of education, a vibrant culture, affordable education options and presence of international campuses from Australia, Japan, China and the United Kingdom (UK). With its harmonious blend of stunning natural landscapes, a medley of cultures, a cost-effective living environment, in addition to the opportunity to obtain globally recognised degrees in a variety of disciplines, Malaysia stands out as an attractive destination for international scholars and learners from around the world.

### Exhibit A1

## Inbound Student Data

2020-2023



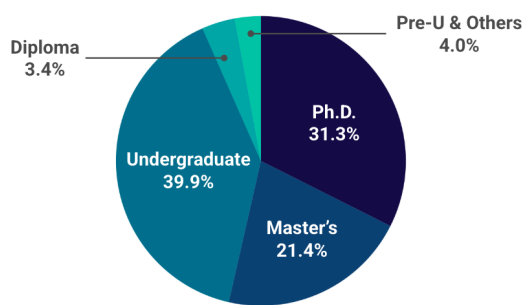
Between 2020-2023, Malaysia has maintained a relatively stable influx of international students to the HEIs. In 2022 it stood at 109,534, and the latest figure, at the end of 2023, stood at 139,089 students. This, however, falls significantly short of the previously set targets of 250,000 students by 2025. As of 2023, Malaysia has welcomed students from a remarkable 178 different nations. The primary countries of origin for these international students include China, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.

Between 2020-2023, 60 percent of students have headed to the private HEIs with 40 percent present in public universities. The most sought-after courses among these students encompass social sciences, business, and law, followed closely by engineering, manufacturing, and construction. Notably, there is also considerable interest in the fields of science, mathematics, and computing, as well as arts and humanities.

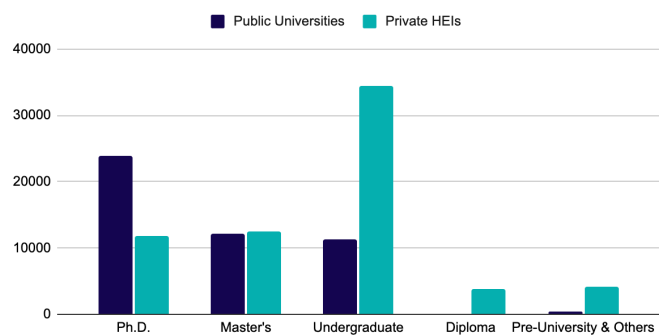
The collected data, notably, does not encompass student mobility activities and industry internships that occur independently of a university's purview. To offer a comprehensive perspective on international student engagements, it becomes imperative to implement measures that encompass all the diverse activities undertaken by international students. This more inclusive approach is vital to provide a more accurate portrayal of the actual inbound student traffic to the country.

### Student Distribution

**Exhibit A2:** Distribution of international students in HEIs in 2023 based on level of study.



**Exhibit A3:** Distribution of international students in 2023 based on types of HEIs and level of study.



Undergraduate programmes host the most number of international students taking up 39.9 percent. Just over 50 percent of the students take up postgraduate programmes, with those undertaking Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) at 31.3 percent and Master's at 21.4 percent. The undergraduate international students are mostly concentrated in private universities while international Ph.D. candidates are concentrated in public universities. There are not many students who are taking up Diploma courses and other pre-university courses. The top 10 public and private institutions hosting the international students for the year 2023 are shown in Exhibit A4.

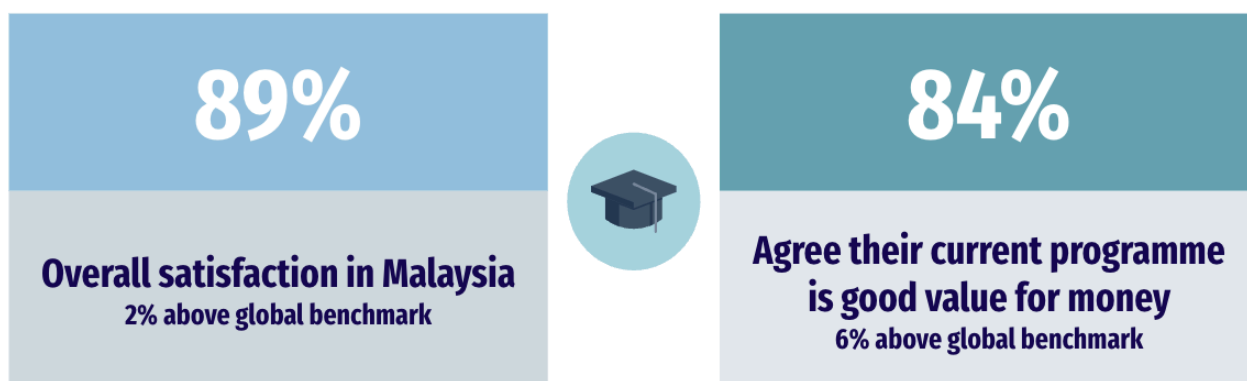
**Exhibit A4:** Enrollment of international students in 2023 at the top 10 HEIs with the highest number of international students.

Public Universities	Number of International Students	Private HEIs	Number of International Students
1. Universiti Sains Malaysia	7,997	1. Taylor's University	6,327
2. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	6,863	2. Asia Pacific University of Technology and Innovation (APU)	5,609
3. Universiti Malaya	6,820	3. Asia E University (AEU)	5,449
4. Universiti Putra Malaysia	6,412	4. UCSI University	3,677
5. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia	4,775	5. SEGI University	3,603
6. Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia	2,658	6. Xiamen University Malaysia	2,910
7. Universiti Utara Malaysia	2,631	7. City University	2,632
8. Universiti Teknologi MARA	2,117	8. Al-Madinah International University (MEDIU)	2,395
9. Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris	1,391	9. Monash University Malaysia	2,330
10. Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia	1,129	10. Lincoln University College	2,248

## Student Satisfaction

Data on the overall level of satisfaction of international students is limited and fragmented, however, a small segment of students from specific institutions who were assessed indicated a notably high level of satisfaction with their overall experience, two percent above the global average level<sup>1</sup>. The same group of students, in this limited study similarly indicated that the programmes offered are of good value for money.

**Exhibit A5:** Survey on international students satisfaction



Conversely, the percentage of those who would actively encourage others to study in Malaysia is below the global average rating. International students have indicated that the country excels in areas like career advice, and expert lecturers, however, these students also cite that there is room for improvement in areas such as accommodation costs, internet access and the ability to earn

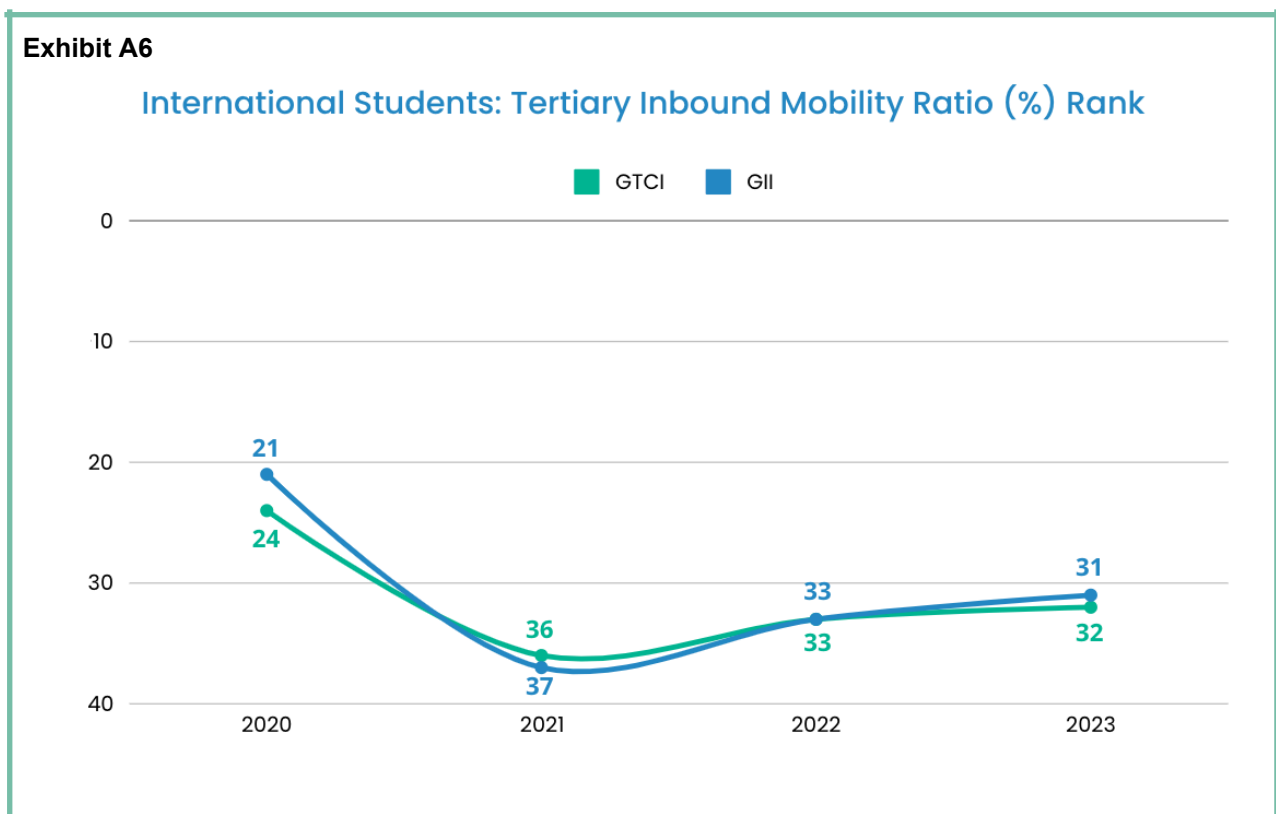
<sup>1</sup> Tribal i-Graduate Regional Webinar - Malaysia. 2022

money while studying. Other studies have additionally indicated that international students are moderately satisfied with the level of social integration and community engagement programmes. They are also moderately satisfied with how they perceive Malaysians' understanding of their religion and culture. All this adds towards a feeling of acceptance within the country.

Data such as these play a pivotal role in identifying areas of strength and those in need of attention in bringing about the transformation in the internationalisation of higher education. Conducting these assessments regularly would facilitate a data-centric approach towards fine-tuning policies, and fuel ongoing efforts to enhance quality. Ultimately, this will further elevate Malaysia's standing as an education hub, attracting a more extensive international student community.

## Country Ranking

Malaysia had previously held the rank of the 9<sup>th</sup> largest destination globally for international students. However, due to the challenges posed by the pandemic, there was a decline in the number of international students, causing Malaysia to drop in the global competitiveness rankings. There are additional global competitiveness rankings which are influenced by the number of international student mobility within their sub pillar. These are the GTCI and the Global Innovation Index (GII). For both the indexes, a smaller ranking reflects a better performance. Both the sub pillars measure the tertiary inbound mobility rate, and both have shown a downward trend over the last couple of years, with a slight improvement seen in 2023. Malaysia's ranking on both these pillars is illustrated in Exhibit A6. While there are other indicators which are being assessed, improving the number of international students into the country would ultimately influence the country's competitiveness ranking.



# 2.

## Students and Staff International Exposure

### Overall Performance

Over the years, Malaysians have actively pursued higher education abroad, a trend that has gained momentum, particularly with the proliferation of twinning programmes, often in partnership with private institutions. These programmes provide students with the opportunity to experience international education without leaving their home country. In tandem with this growing interest, numerous countries have extended scholarships to Malaysians, making international education more accessible. Countries like Japan, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, the United States, and many others have opened doors to Malaysian students by offering financial support. These scholarships not only make studying abroad more affordable but also act as catalysts for cross-cultural exchange and collaboration, creating a more globally interconnected education landscape for Malaysians. In 2013, Malaysia saw 78,936 local students venturing abroad for their educational pursuits. This number reached its zenith in 2016, with 100,528 Malaysian students studying abroad. However, by 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions led to a sharp decline, with only 27,700 students pursuing their studies abroad.

### Exhibit A7

## Outbound Student Data

2023

Types of Sponsorship



### Top Three Destinations for Malaysian Students Abroad



- Australia  
19,523 students
- United Kingdom  
12,139 students
- Egypt  
5,965 students

In 2023 alone, students from Malaysia had embarked on educational journeys spanning 43 different countries, with Australia, the UK, and Egypt emerging as the most sought-after destinations. In total, 56,468 students enrolled in foreign universities. Australia stands as the primary host to a considerable 19,523 Malaysian students, closely followed by the UK with 12,139 students, while Egypt accommodates 5,965 students. Notably, among these students, 46,624 are self-sponsored, displaying their determination and commitment, while 9,844 students enjoy the benefits of sponsorship. The data reflected, however, does not encompass students who cross borders due to intercultural activities or for internships.

## Encouraging Outbound

HEIs have proactively aimed to broaden the international exposure and cross border experience of their students and staff. This encompasses initiatives like international internships, student and staff exchange programmes and international intercultural activities. These have been undertaken through various international collaborations, research attachments, or exposure to global curriculum within their institutions. The benefits have been clear, both for students and staff– the experience fosters a global outlook, increases intercultural competence while equipping them for a global job market by enabling interactions with international peers.

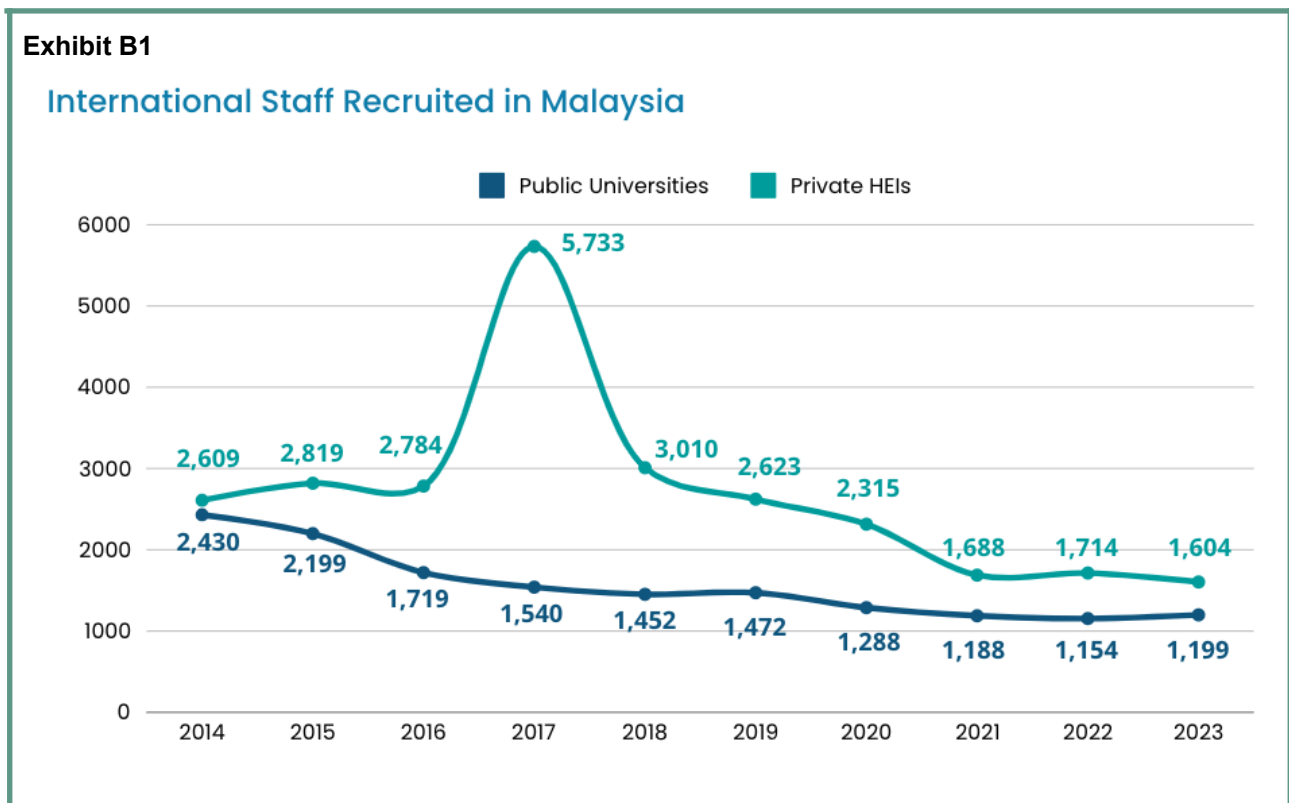
At present, the collection of data for students' and staffs' outbound exposure is fragmented. Clear data points are not available for students enrolled in full-time study programmes abroad or those involved with twinning programmes. Cross border activities apart from academic in nature, are also not well documented. Similarly, data on outbound staff mobility is predominantly captured at an institution level only, resulting in fragmented data at a ministerial level, making it challenging to obtain an accurate figure. Moving forward, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) is dedicated to intensifying its efforts in this regard, implementing closer monitoring, and providing recognition to HEIs that actively contribute to increasing outbound exposure opportunities for students and staff.

# 3.

## International Talents Attracted and Integrated

### Attracting Staff and Researchers

High-quality research and international collaborations play a crucial role in enhancing HEIs' reputation and attractiveness for research partnerships. Factors such as research excellence, ample learning opportunities, and research-related privileges, including access to research grants, are essential for attracting research collaborators. Distinguished professors or researchers specialising in various fields can also act as magnets, drawing both research students and collaborators, while their expertise contributes significantly to fostering international research collaborations.



Currently, the recruitment of full time international faculty members has been on a decline, even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been due to a multitude of reasons ranging from salary packages, complexity of work pass applications and renewals, and alienation of the international staff. Additionally, there is a stiff competition for the talent, as many other countries are offering lucrative work arrangements and employment options.

Furthermore, data on short-term mobility of international faculty members like visiting foreign academics, or Research & Development (R&D) conducted with foreign academic partners resides in different locales and agencies, and are thus challenging to collate.

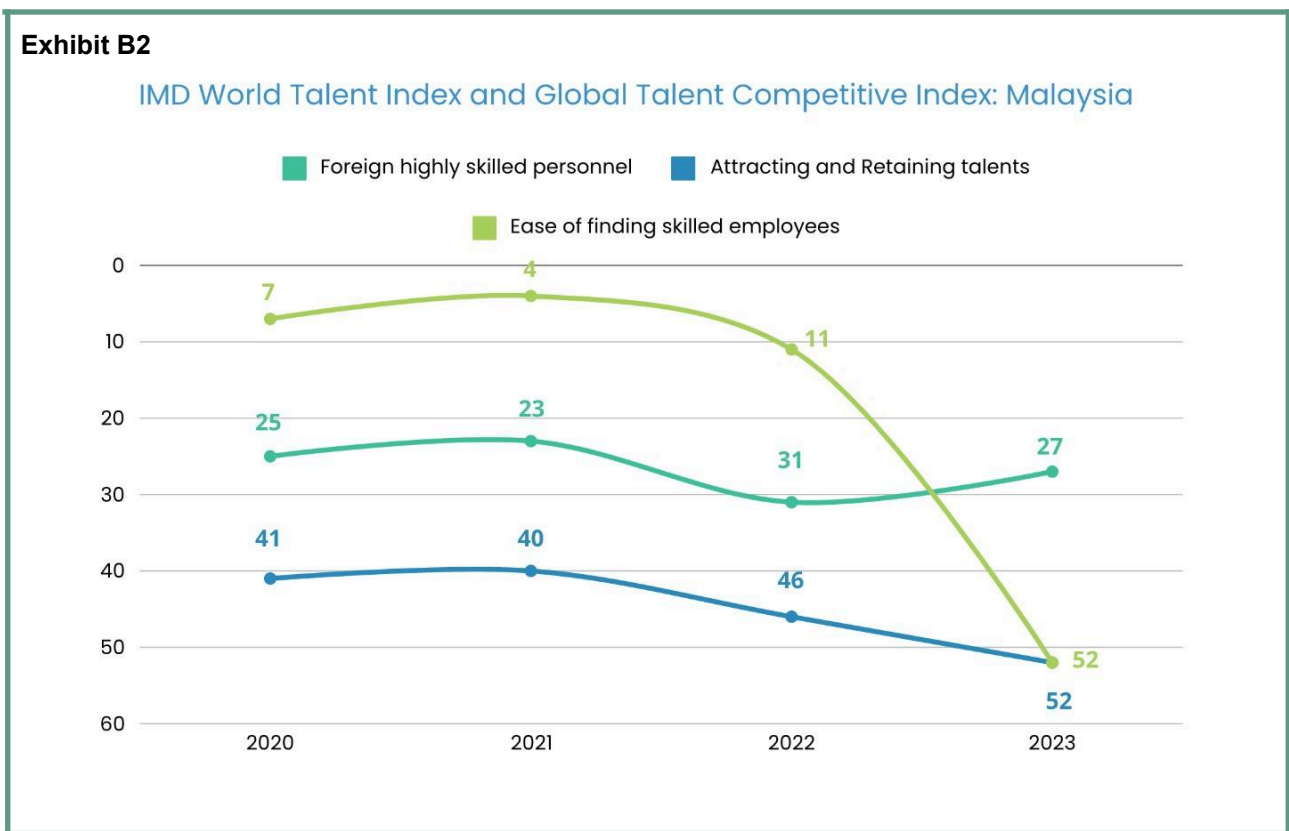
In the forthcoming period, MOHE is dedicated to meticulously document these numbers and proactively identify and engage accomplished researchers, offering them attractive packages and career propositions to be based in Malaysia.

### Attracting and Retaining Talent

Malaysia's initiative to strengthen its standing as a premier higher education hub on the global stage is underpinned by a multifaceted strategy that extends beyond traditional higher education rankings. To effectively craft a strategy aimed at attracting potential students, funders, and partners, it is imperative to consider a range of diverse indicators. These encompass Malaysia's current strengths in attracting, developing, and retaining talents and partners, as well as its proficiency in generating and applying new knowledge in collaboration with global partners.

Isolating three sub pillars, two from the IMD World Talent Index– the number of foreign highly-skilled personnel which are attracted to the country, and whether attracting and retaining talents is a priority in companies, as well as one from the Global Talent Competitiveness Index– which is the ease of finding skilled employees, are used as surrogate indicators on how well the strategies are being implemented.

Malaysia's performance on these three sub pillars are shown in Exhibit B2. The presence of foreign highly-skilled personnel has remained relatively stable over the years, however the ability to attract and retain talent has been on a downward trend. Similarly, the performance on ease of finding skilled employees has significantly dropped, from the seventh rank in 2020 to 52 in 2023.



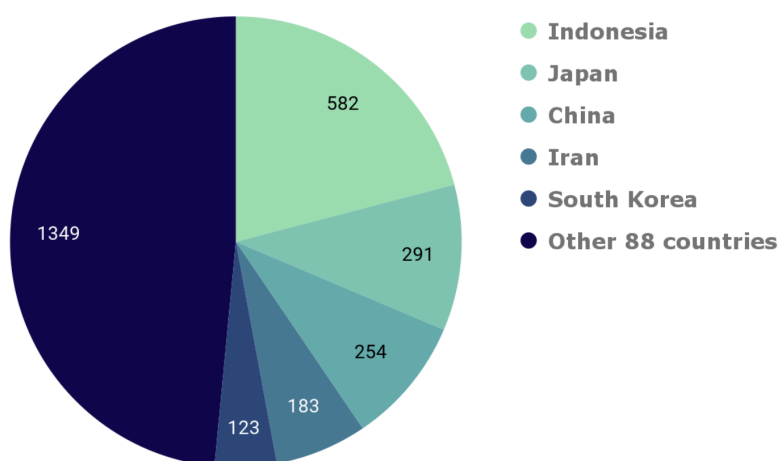
# 4.

## Global Collaborations

### The Collaboration Landscape

Malaysia has made commendable progress in fostering global collaborations within its higher education sector. HEIs in Malaysia have actively sought out meaningful international partnerships and collaborations, moving beyond the realm of Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs), to establish concrete joint programmes, initiatives, and activities with international institutions.

**Exhibit B3:** Top collaborating countries with Malaysia - Public universities

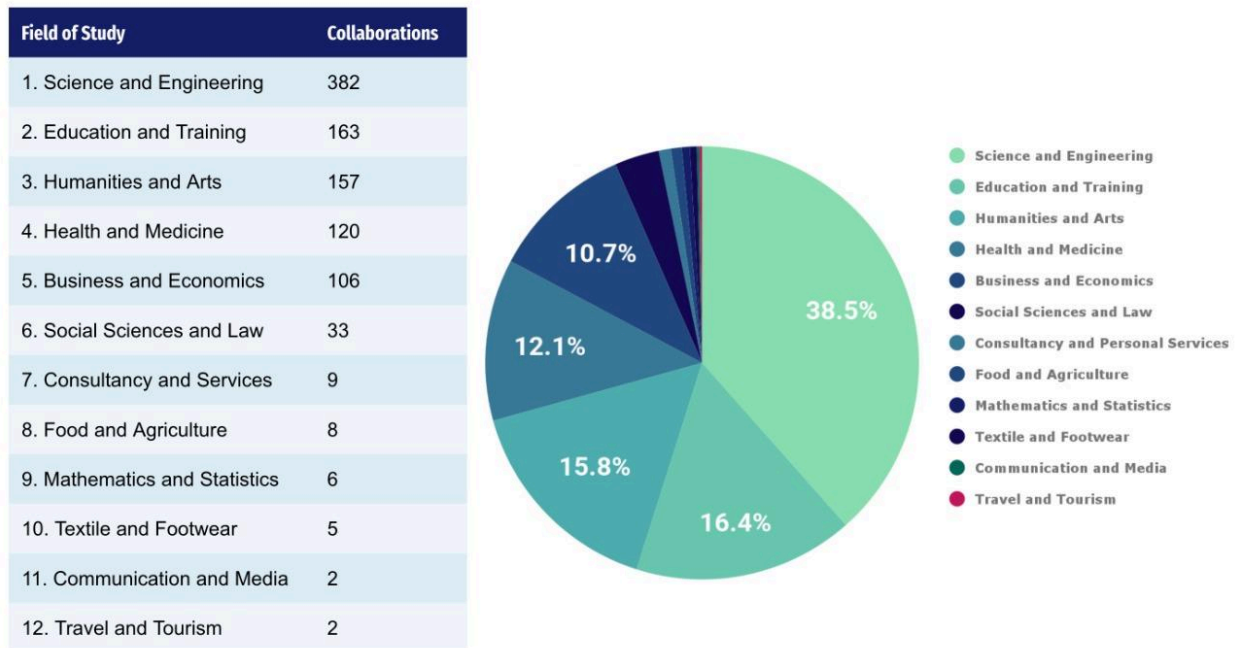


Indonesia has the largest number of collaborations, with 582 collaborations, or 21 percent of the total number of collaborations. This is followed by Japan, China, Iran and South Korea. In total there are 93 countries in which collaborations are present with public universities. These collaborations serve as tangible expressions of the dedicated commitment to robust partnerships between Malaysia and these nations.

These collaborations have significantly enriched the higher education landscape in Malaysia. Malaysian HEIs have been successful in attracting renowned international institutions for joint research projects, faculty exchanges, and student mobility programs. These initiatives have not only enhanced the global exposure of Malaysian students but have also brought in a diverse pool of international students and faculty members to Malaysian campuses.

The collaborations encompass a wide array of domains. Dominating the scene are collaborations in science and engineering, making up almost 39 percent of collaborations. This bodes well for the country as it aims to intensify initiatives and participation in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The other areas, which are almost similar in terms of intensity of collaboration, cover education and training, humanities and arts, health and medicine, and business and economics. All these collectively foster an environment of international cooperation and knowledge exchange besides the exchange of cultural experiences.

**Exhibit B4:** Number of collaborations based on field of study - Public universities



These collaborations are predominantly established with tertiary/post-secondary education providers. The private sector/registered companies make up only 3.8 percent of the total number of collaborations.

**Exhibit B5:** Number of collaborations based on types of partner - Public universities

Types of partner	No. of Collaborations	Percentage
Tertiary/Post Secondary Education Providers	2549	91.62%
Private Sector/Registered Companies	105	3.77%
Research Institute/Agency	47	1.69%
International Organisation/Body	42	1.51%
Governmental Agency (Statutory Bodies/Government Linked-Company)	34	1.22%
Foreign Government (Ministries/Department/Division)	4	0.14%
Individual (Particular Person)	1	0.04%

Amongst the private HEIs, 2022 witnessed the introduction of 32 collaborative courses. These were the result of strategic partnerships with a range of renowned educational institutions and countries. Notably, these alliances extend to countries like the United Kingdom, the United States, Switzerland, and the United Arab Emirates, among several others.

### Genuine Collaborations

While Malaysia has fostered a significant number of active partnerships, the assessment of their impact warrants further consideration. The majority of these collaborations take the form of MoUs, with some initiated without accompanying programmes or substantial outcomes. It is essential to examine and enhance the effectiveness of these collaborations to ensure they yield meaningful results and tangible benefits for all involved parties.

Moving forward, this indicator shall assess collaborations beyond mere MoUs and assess the presence of actual joint programmes, initiatives, and activities that involve international partners. It measures the depth and impact of HEIs' engagement with global partners to enhance the quality of education and research.

# 5.

## Efficiency and Coordination

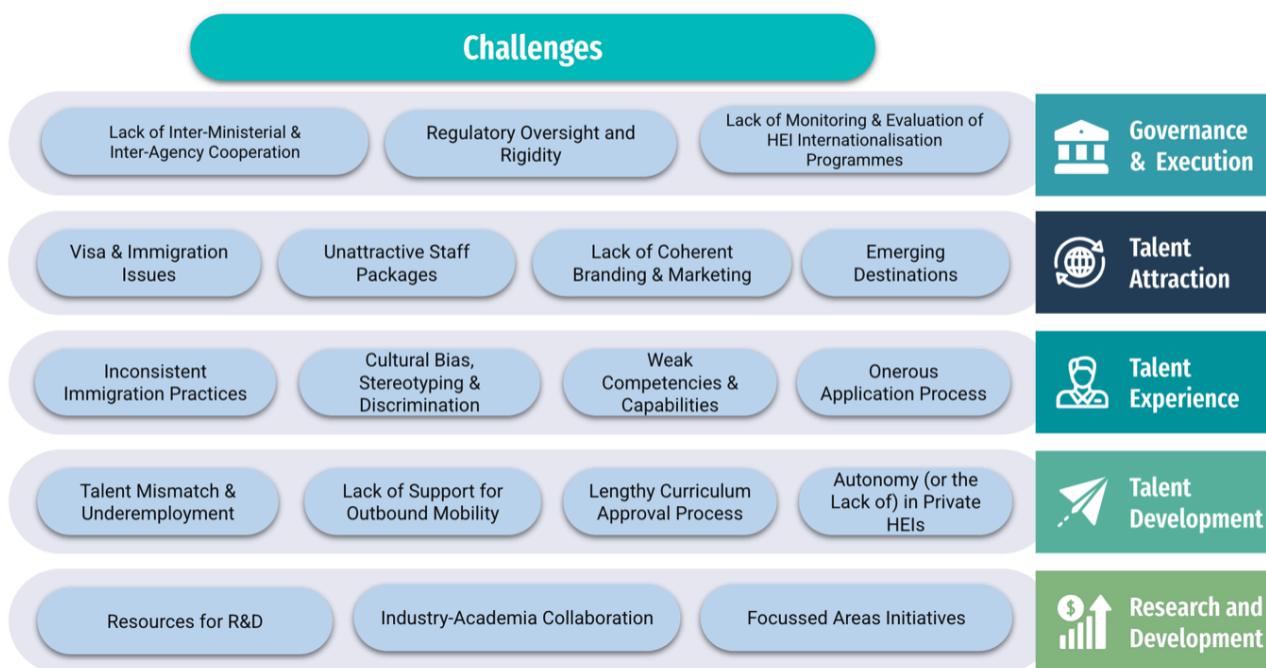
Efficiency and coordination play pivotal roles in the successful execution of the Malaysia Higher Education Internationalisation Policy (MHEIP) 2025-2030. In today's data-driven world, a well-orchestrated approach that harnesses data and analytics is crucial. Being data-driven is non-negotiable. This means that government agencies must be equipped to collect, analyse, and leverage data that is instrumental in making informed decisions. This data-centric approach is not only about collecting numbers; it's about understanding the nuances, patterns, and trends that help anticipate and cater to students' and staff requirements effectively.

Furthermore, the importance of inter-agency collaboration and communication cannot be understated. In an increasingly interconnected world, dismantling bureaucratic silos is paramount. The free exchange of information among various government agencies is a catalyst for streamlining processes, providing international students and staff with a more seamless and welcoming environment. Through this concerted effort, Malaysia can elevate its position as a global hub for education, knowledge and talent, and create a nurturing environment where individuals from around the world feel valued and supported throughout their journey. This, in turn, provides a truly holistic and supportive experience, reinforcing Malaysia's appeal as an international higher education hub.

This indicator shall be apparent through improved efficiency and coordination efforts between the various players relating to internationalisation of higher education. This shall be monitored by a dedicated unit which will be established to oversee all aspects of internationalisation of higher education.

# Overview of Challenges

In the rapidly evolving landscape of higher education, the pursuit of internationalisation has become a pivotal undertaking for nations worldwide, and Malaysia is no exception. However, the endeavour to internationalise higher education in Malaysia is confronted by a diverse array of challenges. These challenges are strategically categorised into five distinct areas:



In the domain of Governance and Execution, there currently lacks a single entity which oversees all internationalisation efforts. Coupled with the silos and bureaucracy present, there is fragmented inter-ministerial and inter-agency cooperation. Differing mandates between ministries and agencies have similarly impeded a seamless execution of internationalisation initiatives. The rigidity and absence of regulatory oversight hinder the flexibility required to adapt to dynamic global trends, while the absence of robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms further complicate the assessment of a HEI's internationalisation progress.





Secondly, in the realm of improving Talent Attraction, the absence of a coherent branding and marketing strategy across various stakeholders undermine efforts to attract global talent. Visa and immigration issues pose significant hurdles, acting as deterrents to potential international students and staff. Additionally, the absence of attractive staff packages hinders the ability to attract qualified personnel to HEIs. Furthermore, the emergence of new destination countries for education further intensifies competition in this arena.

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Thirdly, Talent Experience faces its own set of challenges, including cultural bias, stereotyping, and discrimination, in addition to poor competencies and capabilities to handle international students and staff, along with intercultural issues. This has negatively impacted the overall experience of international students and staff. Additionally, onerous application processes and inconsistent immigration practices add to the international communities' difficulties.

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In the context of Talent Development, challenges such as talent mismatch and underemployment prevail, necessitating strategies to align education and skills with market demands. Additionally, there's a pressing need for support for outbound mobility, as well as streamlining the lengthy curriculum approval process. Private HEIs additionally grapple with issues related to autonomy, which hinder internationalisation efforts.

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Last but not least Research and Development (R&D) efforts face resource constraints, both in talent and from a financial perspective which impede innovation and progress. Encouraging industry-academia collaboration is a complex task, requiring mechanisms to bridge the gap between these two spheres. The promotion of focus area initiatives is essential for propelling R&D in specific sectors.

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# Conclusion

A comprehensive overview of the current higher education landscape in Malaysia reveals the country's remarkable progress in attracting international students while shedding light on the challenges it faces. Malaysia's initiative to strengthen its standing as a premier education hub are evident, and the pursuit of internationalisation is at the forefront of this strategic vision. The chapter has also underscored the significance of diverse indicators in evaluating Malaysia's progress relating to both the talent and knowledge domains.

As we proceed to the subsequent chapter, the narrative shifts from the present landscape to the future, laying out the vision and aspirations that drive Malaysia's internationalisation efforts. This chapter will delve into the strategic thrusts, objectives, and principles that will guide the implementation of the MHEIP 2025-2030, paving the way for Malaysia's continued evolution as a global higher education leader.



# Chapter

# C

1. Introduction
2. Aspirations for Change
3. Roadmap Implementation
4. Five Thrusts for Internationalisation of Higher Education in Malaysia
5. Conclusion

# Introduction

The Malaysia Higher Education Internationalisation Policy (MHEIP) 2025-2030 sets forth a transformative vision for Malaysia's higher education system, building upon the solid foundations of previous reform efforts. At its core, Malaysia plans to reinforce its position as a premier Higher Education Hub on the global stage.

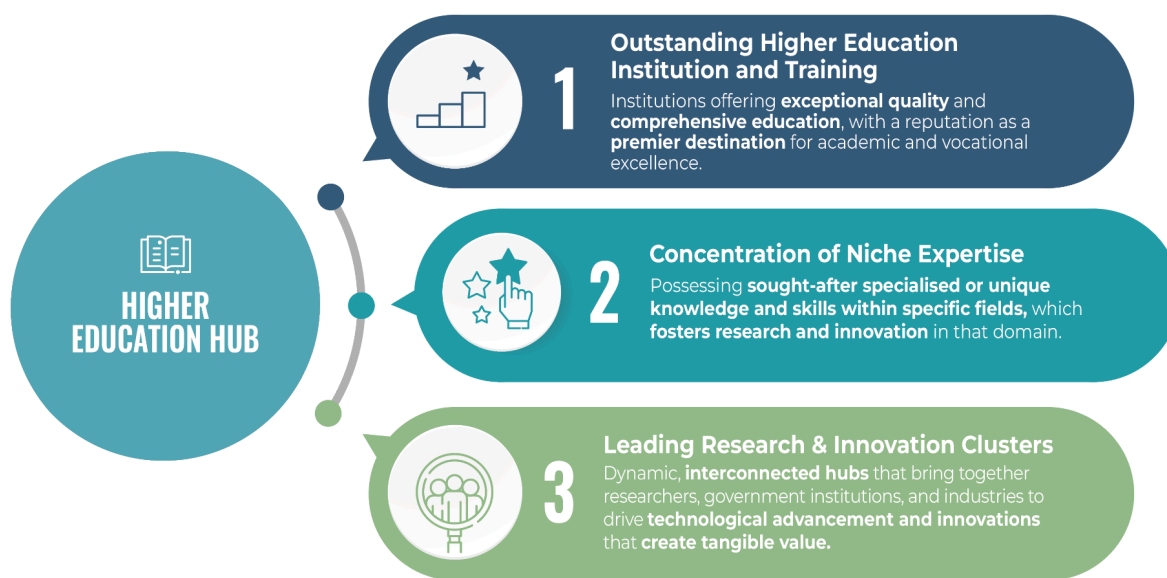
Although Malaysia has made considerable progress, there is a unanimous consensus among stakeholders that substantial further efforts are necessary to align the higher education system with the ambitions and aspirations of the national agenda. The current state of the education system serves as the most accurate indicator of Malaysia's future competitiveness on the global stage.

This chapter elucidates the foundational elements of Malaysia's comprehensive internationalisation vision, outlining three elements of the Higher Education Hub. Furthermore, it introduces the five crucial thrusts essential for realising the MHEIP 2025-2030.

# Aspirations for Change

Malaysia's initiative to strengthen its standing as a premier higher education hub is crucial for maintaining its appeal to international students, staff and experts, ensuring it remains a key player in the global ecosystem. The plan aims to foster the development of innovative talent, drive cutting-edge research, and boost the nation's global competitiveness.

The Higher Education Hub is characterised by three key elements:



## 1. Outstanding Higher Education Institution and Training Hub

The first element focuses on Malaysia's aim to be a global destination known for its exceptional higher education and training institutions. This vision encompasses academic, technical and vocational excellence. The goal is to build a reputation that extends far beyond national borders, making Malaysian higher education institutions (HEIs) synonymous with quality and rigour. By achieving this, Malaysia intends to draw students and staff from diverse backgrounds and cultures, creating a diverse and vibrant academic community.

The impact of this goal is multifaceted. First, it will result in a highly skilled workforce that possesses a deep understanding of various disciplines. These individuals will be well-prepared to meet the demands of a rapidly changing global economy, contributing to Malaysia's economic growth and competitiveness. Second, the influx of international talent will foster cultural exchange and collaboration, enhancing Malaysia's global standing in the field of education and academia.

## 2. Concentration of Niche Expertise

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The second element underscores the significance of specialised knowledge and skills within specific fields. By identifying and nurturing niche competencies, Malaysia can focus its resources and efforts on becoming a world leader in select sectors. This approach benefits local industries by creating a pool of experts who can drive innovation and transformation in selected areas.

By concentrating resources and research efforts in specific domains, Malaysia can build a unique identity and develop a reputation for excellence in these areas, setting it apart on the global stage. This, in turn, attracts investments, talent, and collaborations from around the world. As a result, the country experiences economic growth, fosters innovation, and gains international recognition as a hub for specialised knowledge and skills.

## 3. Leading Research and Innovation Clusters





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In relation to the third element, Malaysia envisions the creation of dynamic, interconnected hubs, comprising academic and government institutions, together with industry players, where cutting-edge research is translated into tangible value. Their collective efforts will push the boundaries of technological advancement and foster a culture of innovation.

The outcomes from these Research & Development (R&D) clusters will have far-reaching impact, driving advancements in science and technology in various industries, making Malaysia a key player in global R&D. By fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing, these clusters will accelerate innovation and help solve complex challenges that transcend borders. This, in turn, will attract investments and partnerships, stimulating economic growth and ensuring Malaysia's position at the forefront of global innovation.

In summary, Malaysia's vision for its future development involves establishing itself as a global leader in education, niche expertise, and research and innovation. These interconnected goals aim to create a highly skilled workforce, drive economic growth, and enhance the country's reputation on the world stage as a hub for excellence and innovation.

**Exhibit B6: Internationalisation of higher education activities**

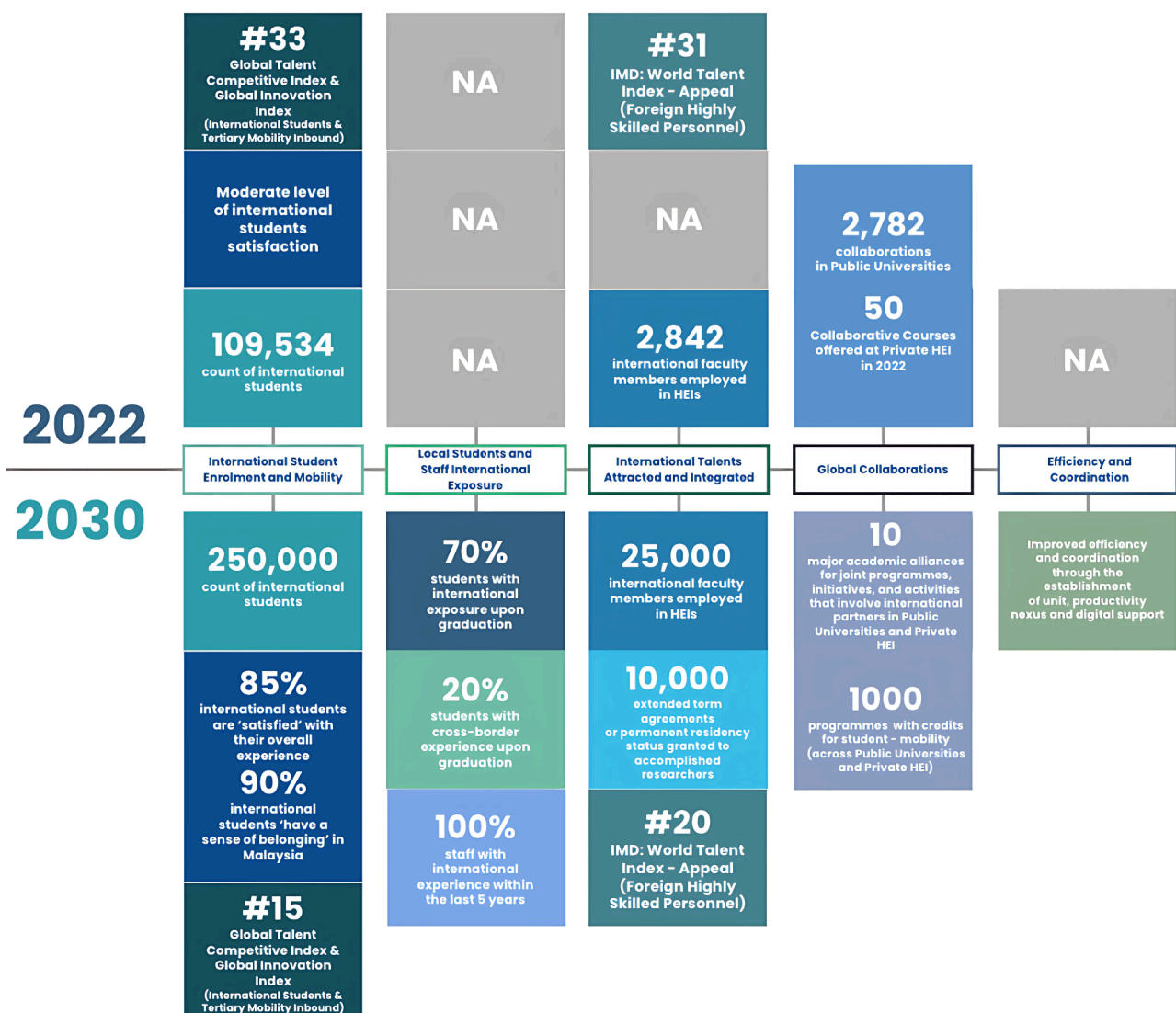
	e-IPTS and MyMoHeS	EMGS	BEM	Not Tracked
 <b>Inbound Students</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enrolment (Full time or Part time)</li> <li>2. Short Term Mobility Programmes (Twinning, Joint, Dual Programs, Semester, Cultural Exchanges, Short Courses, Summer/Winter Programs, Edutourism)</li> <li>3. Internship or Industry Training through HEIs</li> <li>4. Research Collaboration or Attachment at HEIs</li> <li>5. Workshops and Conferences hosted by HEIs</li> <li>6. Global Volunteer Programs in Collaboration with HEIs</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Courses at Language Centres</li> <li>2. Internship with Industry</li> <li>3. Industry Research Attachment</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enrolment (Full time or Part time)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Global Volunteering Initiatives via Nonprofits and NGOs</li> <li>2. Workshops and Conferences by NGOs or Industry</li> <li>3. Self-initiated Upskilling Activities</li> </ol>
 <b>Outbound Students</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enrolment (Full time or Part time)</li> <li>2. Short Term Mobility Programmes (Twinning, Joint, Dual Programs, Semester, Cultural Exchanges, Short Courses, Summer/Winter Programs)</li> <li>3. Internship or Industry Training at HEIs or with Industry</li> <li>4. Research Collaboration or Attachment with HEIs or Industry</li> <li>5. Workshops and Conferences hosted by HEIs</li> <li>6. Global Volunteer Programs in Collaboration with HEIs</li> <li>7. Industry Research Attachment</li> </ol>	-	-	
 <b>Inbound Staff</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employment (Full time or Part time teaching)</li> <li>2. Short Term Employment (Sabbatical, Adjunct Roles, Visiting Professorships, Guest Lectureships)</li> <li>3. Workshops and Conferences hosted by HEIs</li> <li>4. Collaborative Research and Partnerships with HEIs</li> <li>5. Educational Training Programs with HEIs</li> <li>6. Consultancy Projects with HEIs</li> </ol>	-	-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consultancy Projects with Industry (short duration)</li> <li>2. Cooperative Research and Partnerships with the Industry</li> <li>3. Workshops and Conferences hosted by Industry or NGOs</li> </ol>
 <b>Outbound Staff</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Short Term Employment (Sabbatical, Adjunct Roles, Visiting Professorships, Guest Lectureships)</li> <li>2. Workshops and Conferences hosted by HEIs, Organisations or NGOs</li> <li>3. Collaborative Research and Partnerships with HEIs and Industry</li> <li>4. Educational Training Programs with HEIs or Industry</li> <li>5. Consultancy Projects with Industry or HEIs</li> </ol>	-	-	-

All the activities mentioned above, whether conducted physically or virtually, will be considered part of internationalisation, in alignment with the definition from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) and International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC). While the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) will specifically monitor and record activities that involve engagements with HEIs, data collection is anticipated to involve other entities within the ecosystem. It is additionally recognised that some aspects of inbound mobility may not be fully or accurately captured.

## Metrics of Change

The evaluation of the implementation of strategies within the MHEIP 2025-2030 is dependent upon five fundamental metrics:

1. **International Student Enrolment and Mobility:** This measures the number of international students which undertake any activity as part of their higher education in Malaysia.
2. **Student and Staff International Exposure:** This evaluates the extent to which Malaysian students and academic staff have international exposure.
3. **International Talents Employed and Enticed:** This assesses the country's attractiveness to foreign professionals and experts, and measures the number of students which continue working within the country after graduation.
4. **Global Collaborations:** This metric evaluates the extent of meaningful international partnerships and collaborations established by HEIs.
5. **Efficiency and Coordination:** This metric quantifies the various optimisations which occur, whether it is improvements in administrative procedures, enhancement of inter-departmental collaboration, or the impact of digital technology adoption.



# Roadmap Implementation

The envisioned six-year transformation of the internationalisation of the higher education system represents a comprehensive and intricate undertaking. To ensure the system's effectiveness and prevent exhaustion in its implementation, MOHE has scrupulously structured the strategies and initiatives of the five thrusts into three distinct phases. These phases are designed to build upon each other progressively, aligning with the evolving capacity, capabilities, and readiness levels of HEIs.

<b>Phase 1 (2025-2026):</b>	Achieve quick wins and expedite system enhancement.
<b>Phase 2 (2027-2028):</b>	Strive for excellence by enhancing operational adaptability.
<b>Phase 3 (2029-2030):</b>	Assess the current status and introduce fresh interventions to enhance Key Performance Indicator (KPI) performance.

In alignment with the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) (MEB (HE)) and the Higher Education Plan 2025-2035, the Government and MOHE are resolutely committed to adopting novel approaches to achieve substantial, sustainable, and widespread results. This commitment includes:

**Capacity Building:** Invest in developing institutional and human capacity to ensure that HEIs are equipped to execute the strategies. Identify and nurture leadership capabilities within HEIs to ensure continuity and consistency in implementing the strategies.

**Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement:** Actively engage key stakeholders like HEIs, students, industry partners, and international collaborators. Seek their input, gain support and foster partnerships with global entities to promote collaboration and knowledge sharing.

**Performance Measurement and Recognition:** Assess progress toward the various objectives in the MHEIP 2025-2030 to ensure that KPIs are achieved. Additionally, mechanisms to reward strong performance and address underperformance will be implemented, while fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

**Communicating the Change:** Develop an effective communication strategy to keep various stakeholders and the public informed about the progress and outcomes of MHEIP 2025-2030.

**Leadership Commitment:** Increase the commitment from top government and MOHE leadership to offer guidance, regular review, and support during the implementation process.

**Inclusiveness and Sustainability:** Promote inclusivity, making sure that the policy's advantages are accessible to all, create sustainability plans to ensure that the benefits of internationalisation endure, contributing to the long-term growth and advancement of higher education.

**Agile and Adaptability:** Be prepared to adapt and evolve the strategies as circumstances change, and new opportunities and challenges arise.

# Five Thrusts for Internationalisation of Higher Education in Malaysia



## Overview of the Five Thrusts

The internationalisation of higher education is a paramount necessity for Malaysia. It is underpinned by an intricate and comprehensive policy framework, meticulously crafted with five overarching thrusts. These thrusts, in essence, encapsulate the multifaceted dimensions of Malaysia's internationalisation of higher education endeavours. Collectively, they are engineered to propel Malaysia into the echelons of global distinction as a premier destination for education, talent cultivation, and innovation advancement.

Each of these thrusts serves as a distinct yet synergistic strategy. These strategies are the bedrock upon which international collaborations are forged and fortified, laying the groundwork for Malaysia's ascendancy on the global stage of education and cutting-edge research. In essence, these five thrusts chart the course for Malaysia's journey towards becoming a truly global hub, where the worlds of education, talent, and innovation converge harmoniously.

### 1

Thrust 1 focuses on enhancing policy and governance within Malaysia's higher education sector. It aims to streamline existing policies and governance frameworks to facilitate effective policy implementation, ultimately improving the efficiency and coordination of internationalisation of higher education policies. This thrust is critical in aligning higher education with broader educational goals, ensuring that the sector contributes effectively to the nation's advancement. By strengthening governance and execution, it seeks to transform education into a thriving industry, attract international talent, and foster global collaborations for economic growth and innovation. Key initiatives include creating a central coordinating unit, empowering HEIs, including Polytechnic and Community Colleges (PolyCC) to admit international students and staff, and to build in oversight action to maintain the integrity and quality of Malaysia's higher education sector.



Thrust 2 focuses on strengthening marketing and branding efforts, including improving immigration practices to elevate Malaysia's global reputation as a premier higher education hub. This thrust is essential for attracting and retaining top-tier international talent, driving global partnerships with universities and businesses, and projecting Malaysia as a destination for academic and cultural exploration. Key initiatives include enhancing marketing strategies through knowledge-based elements, maximising visibility on social media platforms, and leveraging entertainment media to craft a compelling narrative about Malaysia's academic excellence, cultural richness, and career opportunities. Additionally, streamlining visa regulations and embracing digitalisation aims to simplify entry processes, making Malaysia more welcoming to international students and staff. As a result, these efforts are expected to enhance Malaysia's reputation on the global stage, attracting top talent and fostering a collaborative environment that promotes knowledge exchange and innovation.

## 2



## 3

Thrust 3 is dedicated to enhancing the overall experience of foreign talent coming to Malaysia. It focuses on streamlining processes and creating a welcoming environment that attracts and retains international students and talent. By offering a seamless and enriching experience, Malaysia aims to position itself as a preferred destination for global talent, fostering innovation, cultural diversity, and cross-border collaborations. Key objectives include simplifying procedures and improving touchpoint experiences, achieved through initiatives such as the creation of a single application portal, streamlined entry procedures, digital evaluations, intercultural competency, and enhanced pastoral care. Thrust 3 underscores Malaysia's commitment to becoming an inclusive and supportive hub for international talent, contributing to its growth and development.



Thrust 4 centres on advancing talent development by aligning curriculum and pedagogy with contemporary needs, ensuring learners are prepared to excel globally. This thrust aims to empower learners with the education and skills necessary to thrive in an evolving global landscape, fostering innovation, competitiveness, and success on both national and international levels. This commitment to talent development is essential for driving Malaysia's economic growth, reducing underemployment, and promoting comprehensive societal progress. The objectives include fortifying curricula, augmenting the curriculum development process, and enhancing outbound opportunities. By offering responsive and forward-looking education, Malaysia aims to produce a highly competent and adaptable workforce capable of driving innovation and sustained economic growth.

# 4



# 5

Thrust 5 is focused on revitalising the R&D ecosystem in Malaysia. It aims to enhance the translation of value, making Malaysia an attractive hub for international talent, global collaborations, and engagements with international researchers. The thrust's objective is to position Malaysia as a dynamic destination for R&D, fostering international collaboration and innovation that contributes to the country's global competitiveness. Ultimately, these efforts are expected to elevate Malaysia's reputation as a centre for cutting-edge research, attracting top talent and driving progress in various fields on a global scale. In doing so, Thrust 5 initiatives include elevating the research ecosystem for global engagement, strengthening international research collaboration, and optimising resource utilisation to foster innovation. These strategies and initiatives underscore Malaysia's commitment to becoming a prominent global player in R&D and knowledge exchange.



# Conclusion

Malaysia's vision for the internationalisation of higher education represents a transformative journey that aspires to elevate the nation to new heights of global distinction. With a steadfast commitment to strengthening its status as a premier higher education hub, Malaysia's vision is underpinned by three strategic elements that emphasise excellence in education and training, specialised expertise in specific fields, and the development of leading research and innovation clusters. These elements, in turn, drive the five crucial thrusts, each designed to enhance policy and governance, strengthen marketing and branding, improve the talent experience, advance talent development, and revitalise the R&D ecosystem.

Together, these thrusts form a comprehensive framework, which will be explored in greater detail in the subsequent section to gain insight into their justifications, objectives, and respective strategies and initiatives which will propel Malaysia toward shaping the direction for its higher education sector.

# THRUST 1

## GOVERNANCE & EXECUTION

### Why it Matters

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#### Accelerate Education as an Engine of Growth

The transformation of education as an engine of growth is pivotal for Malaysia's economic development. Internationalisation not only enhances operational efficiency within educational institutions but also fosters an environment conducive to progress. It generates substantial revenue, attracts international talent, and fosters global collaborations that fuel innovation, knowledge exchange, and financial advancement. This solidifies education as a significant contributor to the nation's economic prosperity.

Additionally, strengthening governance and policy frameworks across the internationalisation value chain underscores Malaysia's commitment to maintaining the integrity and quality of its education offerings. This ensures that international students seeking a reputable and reliable education destination choose Malaysia, bolstering the nation's global competitiveness in the education marketplace. Recognition for institutions that demonstrate a strong commitment towards internationalisation of higher education would reinforce their participation and inspire other institutions to follow suit.

#### Mainstream the Internationalisation of Higher Education Agenda

The establishment of a single coordinating entity is essential to streamline internationalisation of higher education efforts. This central unit ensures cohesive planning and execution across all types of HEIs, harmonises policies, standards, and procedures related to internationalisation, and facilitates communication and collaboration with various stakeholders. This fosters synergy and collective action to advance Malaysia's internationalisation of higher education agenda. A digital approach towards the oversight of internationalisation of higher education would simultaneously enable various stakeholders, from HEIs to the various government agencies and ministries, to access real-time analysis which offers immediate insights into the performance of the various KPIs.

#### Empowering Institutions to Welcome International Students and Staff

Cultivating an international mindset and fostering global experiences are critical to internationalisation efforts. Thus, empowering all types of HEIs to attract international students and staff is essential in advancing this agenda. Allowing PolyCC to admit international students is particularly important. These institutions, known for their practical, skills-based education, significantly enhance the range of options available to international students studying in Malaysia. This move would also strengthen Malaysia's position as a hub for technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Moreover, enabling PolyCCs to establish MoUs with foreign institutions and facilitate staff upskilling would promote greater independence and international collaboration.

Similarly, easing the administrative procedures for engaging international staff both in private and public HEIs, for short- and long-term engagements, as well as for online or physical teaching, is vital. This approach would allow Malaysian HEIs to leverage international expertise, enriching the educational environment.

## Where We Are Now

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Cognisant of the global competition for international talent, the Government is currently intensifying efforts towards internationalisation, enhancing many facets of different initiatives.

### **Cohesive Efforts Towards Internationalisation of Higher Education**

The Government acknowledges that there is an opportunity to strengthen collaboration among stakeholders to advance initiatives within both public and private HEIs. While there are ongoing efforts to champion these initiatives, they are currently fragmented and driven by different stakeholders which are limited to activities within their own capacities. The Government also acknowledges that there is a notable absence of recognition or meaningful consequences for excelling in efforts related to internationalisation of higher education.

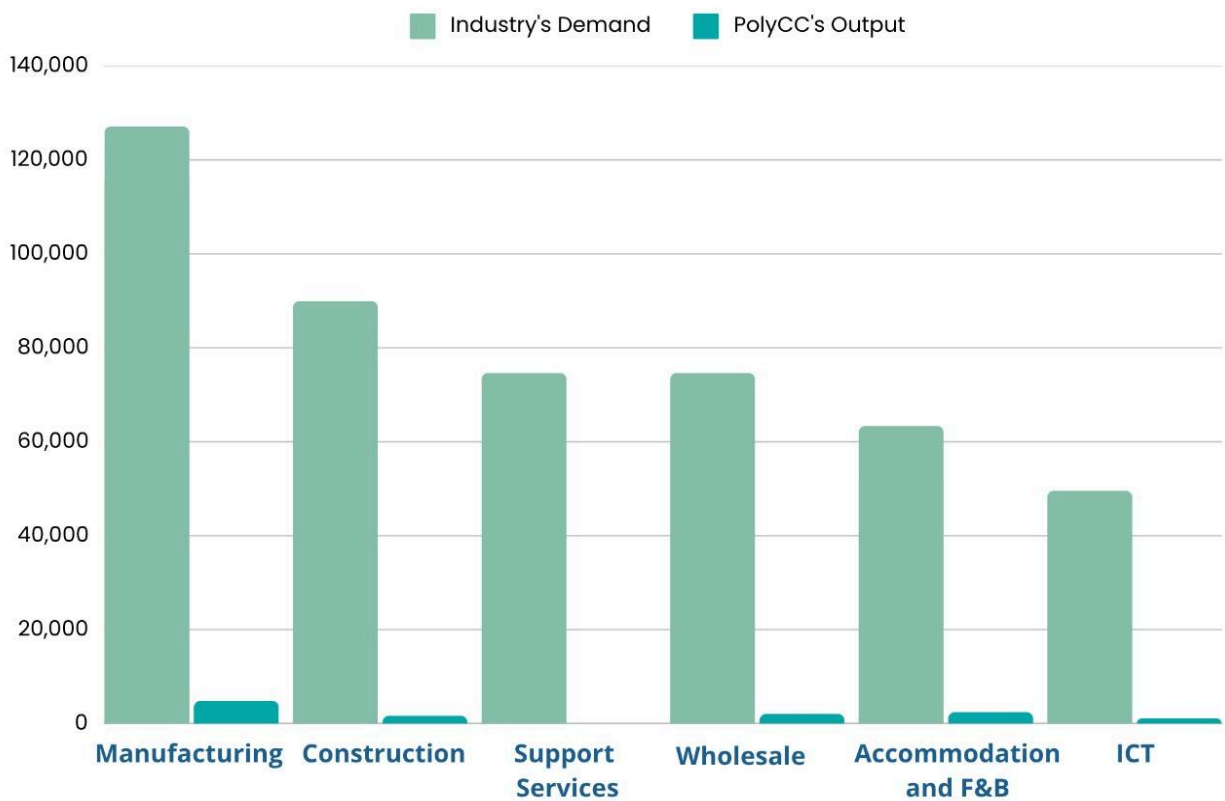
### **Expansion of Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions**

While Malaysia already boasts numerous institutions that welcome international students, there is still room to expand the type of institutions which can host international students. The Government aims to enhance inclusivity by expanding the opportunities for international students who are interested to explore vocational and other skills based courses, which are currently very limited. This would allow a larger cohort of students to be hosted within the country, broadening the offerings for education. This would require changes in policies and guidelines.

The move to expand internationalisation to PolyCC would also assist the Government in meeting the industry's demand for vocational experts, which has significant demand, as shown in Exhibit C1.

### **Exhibit C1**

## Industry's Demand vs PolyCC's Output



## Faculty Members Recruitment

Between 2014 and 2022, there has been a noticeable decline in the employment of international academic staff across various HEIs. In 2014, this stood at 2,430 individuals in the public universities. However by 2023, only 1,199 foreigners were employed. The figures for private HEIs are slightly better, going from 2,609 to 1,604 over the same time period.

Despite this trend, public universities encounter fewer administrative obstacles, and experience a smoother recruitment process to engage international faculty members compared to private HEIs. Narrowing the disparity in administrative procedures between private HEIs and public universities shall promote fairness and equity within the educational sector. The call for streamlining immigration and employment procedures becomes especially pertinent when considering online lectures or courses, which do not require physical presence, allowing for a more diverse curriculum being offered.

## Objectives

### Create an Alliance to Drive Growth

Malaysia aims to establish an Education Productivity Nexus to foster collaboration between public, private HEIs and industries to drive innovation, economic growth, and job creation. This strategic initiative seeks to enhance productivity within HEIs, strengthen academia-industry alignment, and address complex challenges and opportunities, ultimately propelling Malaysia's knowledge economy forward.

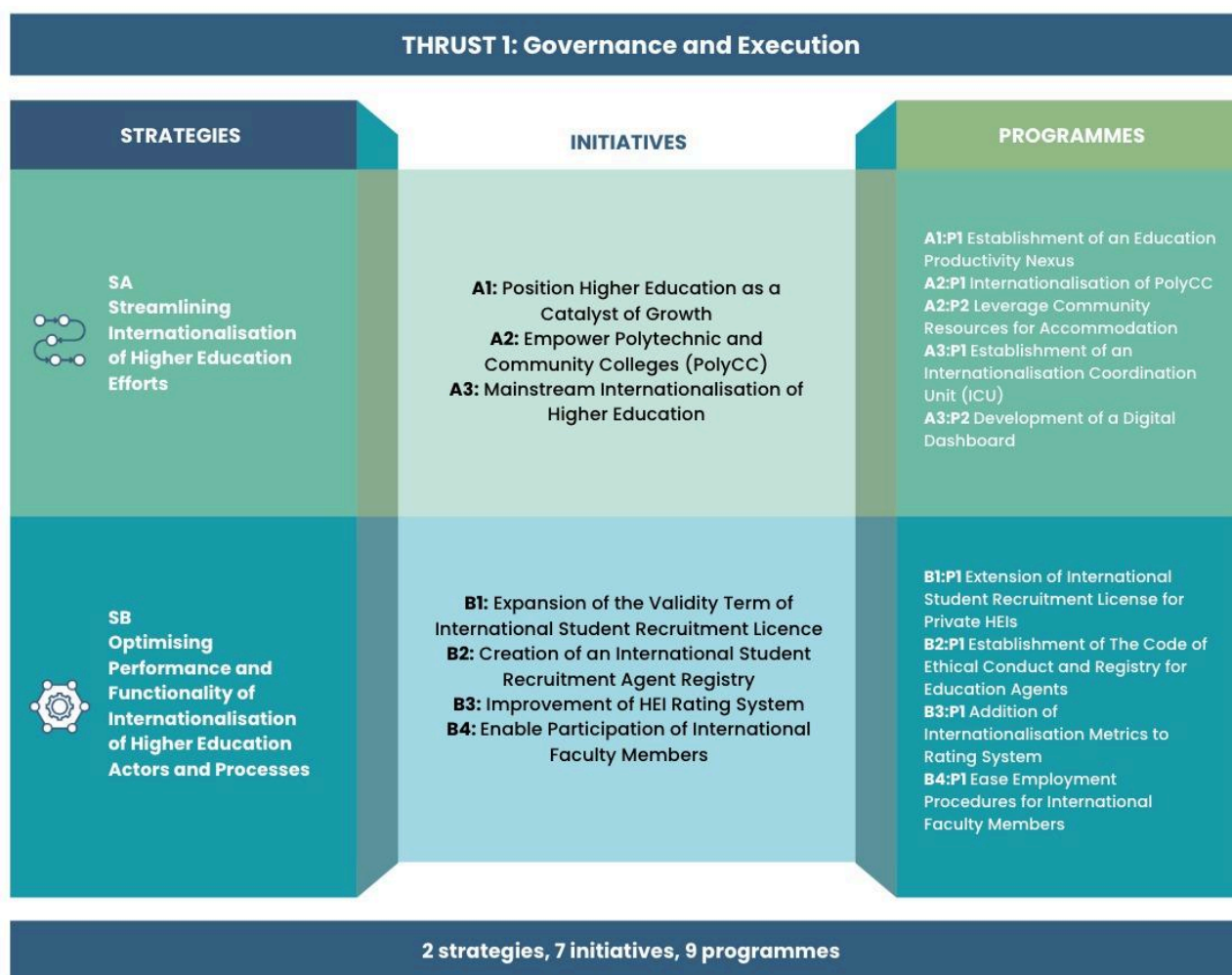
### Enable Levers for Internationalisation

Malaysia plans to extend the validity of international student recruitment licences, streamlining administrative processes to facilitate smoother recruitment. Additionally, the country aims to enable PolyCC to admit international students, broadening higher education offerings and nurturing a pipeline of highly skilled graduates. Furthermore, efforts will focus on easing the engagement of international faculty for private HEIs to enhance academic excellence and global competitiveness.

### Enhance Monitoring Parameters

Malaysia will prioritise proactive supervision of international student recruitment agents to ensure ethical practices and maintain the education sector's reputation. Enhancing quality ratings related to internationalisation parameters through the Rating System for Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia (SETARA) and the Malaysian Quality Evaluation System for Private Colleges (MyQUEST) will encourage HEIs to advance their internationalisation efforts. To improve coordination and accountability, an Internationalisation Coordination Unit (ICU) will be established, supported by a digital dashboard providing real-time insights.

# Strategies and Initiatives



## Strategy A: Streamlining Internationalisation of Higher Education Efforts

With a strategic focus on accelerating internationalisation efforts within the country, this strategy focuses on governance and organisational structure transformation. It seeks to:

- Position education as an engine of growth to drive economic development, foster job creation, and improve living standards for the people of Malaysia;
- Enable PolyCC to partake more extensively in internationalisation efforts; and
- Create an oversight entity and mechanism for internationalisation of higher education.

### List of Initiatives:

<b>Initiative A1</b>	<b>Position Higher Education as a Catalyst of Growth</b>
<b>Initiative A2</b>	<b>Empower Polytechnic and Community Colleges (PolyCC)</b>
<b>Initiative A3</b>	<b>Mainstream Internationalisation of Higher Education</b>

## Strategy B: Optimise Performance and Functionality of Internationalisation of Higher Education Actors and Processes

Strategy B is designed to elevate the performance and functionality of all stakeholders and processes within Malaysia’s internationalisation of higher education landscape. With a commitment to optimising the quality and accessibility of education, this strategy seeks to:

- Expand opportunities for global talent;
- Ensure integrity and transparency in student recruitment practices; and
- Promote excellence through data-driven assessments.

### List of Initiatives:

<b>Initiative B1</b>	<b>Expansion of the Validity Term of International Student Recruitment Licence</b>
<b>Initiative B2</b>	<b>Creation of an International Student Recruitment Agent Registry</b>
<b>Initiative B3</b>	<b>Improvement of HEI Rating System</b>
<b>Initiative B4</b>	<b>Enable Participation of International Faculty Members</b>

## Implementation Roadmap

The implementation roadmap for Thrust 1 represents the blueprint for translating vision into action, governance into practice, and policies into tangible outcomes. It delineates a structured plan that ensures each strategy and initiative is executed efficiently and cohesively, with continuous evaluation of their effectiveness.

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Strategy A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a Higher Education Productivity Nexus;</li> <li>• Establish provisions to allow Polytechnic and Community College Education Department (JPPKK) to exercise additional supervisory role;</li> <li>• Ensure PolyCCs are actively collaborating with international partners and are taking in international students;</li> <li>• JPPKK to set targets for international students and staff mobility;</li> <li>• Selected PolyCCs to prototype collaboration with partners to offer alternative accommodation for international students;</li> <li>• Monitor the satisfaction rate of PolyCCs international students concerning their experience as students at PolyCC;</li> <li>• Establish an Internationalisation Coordination Unit under the International Relations Division (BHA);</li> <li>• Training on data analytics; and</li> <li>• Create buy-in from the diverse group of stakeholders engaged in the process of internationalisation of higher education. Chart out the different data elements that need to be tracked for the digital dashboard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the number of international students, and staff mobility to ensure progress in the internationalisation of PolyCCs.</li> <li>• ICU to oversee the status, progress and impact of this policy implementation, and reports to MOHE periodically;</li> <li>• Development of an IHE digital dashboard, including prototyping and fine-tuning of parameters; and</li> <li>• ICU to outline measures for improvement, supported by data from the digital dashboard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICU to review progress of existing measures, and to introduce new interventions where necessary to further boost efficiency and effectiveness.</li> </ul>
Strategy B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement extended validity of international student recruitment licence upon the next cycle of private HEIs license renewal;</li> <li>• Establish and circulate guidelines for agents in English;</li> <li>• Establish training and directory of trusted agents;</li> <li>• Develop feedback mechanisms on the usefulness of the Agent Registry from HEI's, agent's and student's perspective;</li> <li>• Review and confirm additional measures to reflect internationalisation efforts of HEIs in SETARA and MyQUEST ranking parameters;</li> <li>• Establish clear guidelines and processes for engaging international faculty members virtually; and</li> <li>• 7,500 international faculty members employed in HEIs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore inclusion of lower SETARA and MyQUEST rated institutions for extended validity;</li> <li>• Announce the Top 20 institutions for parameters relating to internationalisation publicly with national recognition to be given to Top 5 institutions; and</li> <li>• 13,500 international faculty members to be employed in various HEIs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announce the Top 20 institutions for parameters relating to internationalisation publicly with national recognition is given to top five institutions; and</li> <li>• 25,000 international faculty members to be employed in various HEIs.</li> </ul>

## Impact Measures

The respective stakeholders will monitor the progress and impact of this Thrust using outcome-based metrics. These metrics are not intended to be exhaustive and may be augmented over time to better reflect the evolving goals of the initiatives.

### THRUST 1: Impact Measures

- Compliance costs for Private HEIs
- International student enrollment for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) courses
- Global Soft Power Index ranking
- Time spent retrieving internationalisation of higher education data
- Total count of international faculty members employed





## Why it Matters

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### Global Partnerships

Malaysia's dedication to forging collaborations with international universities and businesses facilitates academic exchanges, internships, and research collaborations, thus offering international students and staff with diverse and valuable opportunities for experiential learning and professional growth. As these collaborations flourish, they not only enrich the educational landscape but also contribute to the nation's broader global network. The partnerships are further enhanced with more formal and longer term arrangements through the establishment of more offshore programmes, dual degree collaborations and the formation of HEI branches abroad, further solidifying Malaysia's stature as a hub for global academic excellence.

### Improved Strategies to Attract Students and Staff

The promotion of Malaysia as a destination for academic pursuit, cultural immersion, and personal growth not only amplifies the nation's global presence but also aligns with its ambitions to be an educational beacon. Initiatives which showcase Malaysia's prowess in academic achievements together with those which highlight the novelty of our culture and nature will serve as critical pillars in projecting Malaysia as a destination for academic and cultural exploration. These campaigns elevate Malaysia's profile, attracting the attention and interest of potential students and staff worldwide.

### Part-time Employment and Post-study Work

The provision of part-time employment opportunities while studying, and post-study work visas underscores Malaysia's commitment to offering international students practical experience and clear career pathways. Together with the availability of scholarships, these are the most sought after elements that influence students' decision when choosing a location for studies. These opportunities also enhance Malaysia's appeal as a destination that provides tangible career prospects, contributing to its competitiveness on the global stage.

## Digital Visa Processes

The digitalisation of visa application and renewal processes is a testament to Malaysia's progressive approach. By streamlining administrative procedures, reducing entry barriers, and enhancing the convenience of studying in Malaysia, these digital enhancements reflect Malaysia's dedication to providing international students with streamlined processes for a seamless entry experience. This digital transformation aligns with Malaysia's aspiration to be at the forefront of modern, efficient, and student-centric services.

## Where We Are Now

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Malaysia has actively adopted many strategies to promote the country, an endeavour which should be a shared responsibility and one that would do well when collaborative efforts are adopted.

### Effective Marketing Initiatives

Malaysia's remarkable progress in knowledge-based fields such as breast cancer research, cybersecurity, and Islamic finance highlights its academic and innovative strengths. However, these achievements are often unnoticed compared to Malaysia's well-known traits such as affordability and rich cultural heritage. Prioritising more knowledge based strengths can amplify Malaysia's reputation as a hub for knowledge and technology on the global stage.

Financial support for international students has been limited and are mainly offered by individual private institutions. Enhancing this option as a way to attract students in specific fields, and to incentivise HEIs offering financial assistance may increase the attractiveness of the country.

### Support for Alumni Network

Malaysia boasts a prestigious alumni network comprising influential figures worldwide, spanning various sectors. The Government recognises the immense potential of this esteemed group in bolstering diplomatic ties, fostering research collaborations, and promoting Malaysian HEIs globally.

While there are ongoing efforts to engage alumni globally, there is room for additional initiatives that may require less resources. The Government aims to strengthen engagement with alumni, whether affiliated with educational institutions or industry, as they can play a pivotal role in all aspects of internationalisation of higher education.

### Part-time Employment and Post-study Work

Malaysia's policies allow international students to engage in limited hours of part-time employment during semester breaks to enhance their practical skills and experiences. Nonetheless, there is potential for improvement, and the Malaysian Government intends to make regulations more flexible to attract more international students to study in the country.

Malaysia is also actively addressing the challenge of retaining talented international students who have traditionally been compelled to leave upon completing their studies due to visa limitations. Recently, the introduction of post-study work visas for selected countries signals a positive step forward. This initiative not only provides graduates with opportunities to launch their careers in Malaysia, but also contribute to the nation's workforce, and fosters an environment conducive to talent retention.

### **Digital Visa Processes**

Malaysia has taken significant strides in modernising its visa application and renewal procedures through digital transformation and immigration policies. At present, students can utilise Education Malaysia to initiate, monitor, and manage their visa applications, offering a more streamlined approach. While there may be challenges when HEIs are involved as intermediaries, such as potential delays and communication issues, there are opportunities for improvement.

With continued efforts, Malaysia is poised to enhance clarity and efficiency in the overall process to ensure a smoother experience for all involved. The Government is striving for a streamlined approach to reduce administrative burdens and to improve convenience for international students.

## Objectives

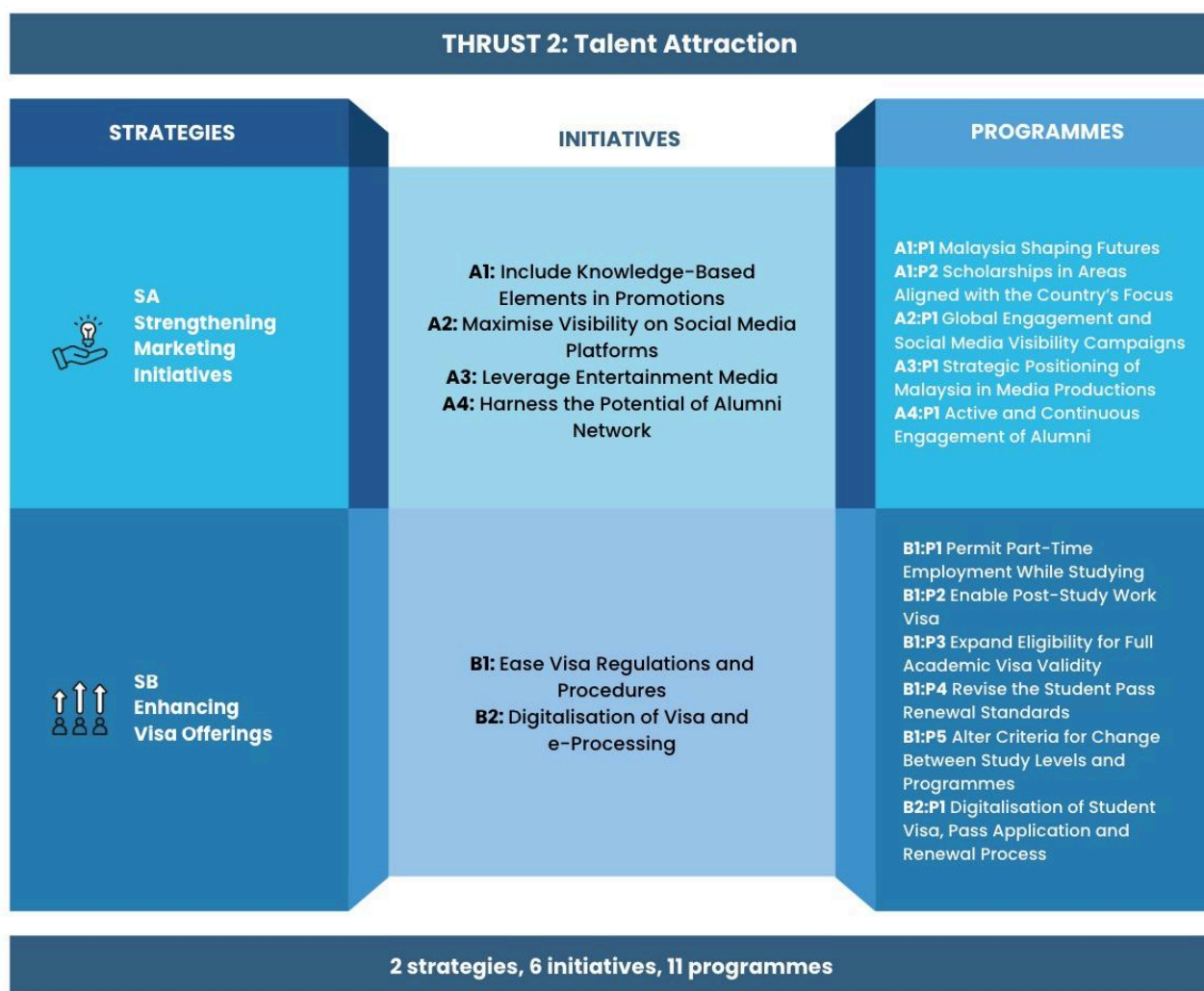
### Boost Marketing Efforts and Outreach

Malaysia seeks to bolster its marketing strategies to position itself as a top-tier destination for international students. This involves incorporating knowledge-based elements, maximising visibility on social media platforms, and harnessing the reach of entertainment media. These efforts will craft a compelling narrative that resonates with global audiences, hence projecting Malaysia as a hub of academic excellence, cultural richness, and promising career opportunities.

### Improve Visa Services and Choices

Recognising the pivotal role of visa regulations and procedures in talent attraction, Malaysia seeks to simplify these processes. Initiatives include streamlining visa regulations and procedures, introducing visa digitalisation and e-processing, and expanding eligibility for full academic visa validity. These enhancements aim to remove entry barriers, to provide flexibility, and to ensure international students feel welcome and supported from the outset of their journey to Malaysia.

## Strategies and Initiatives



### Strategy A: Strengthening Marketing Initiative

The strategy focuses on boosting the institution's visibility on social media and in popular media by employing unconventional methods to attract international mobility for students and staff. It involves collaborating with government agencies and international partners through influencer marketing, offering application guidance, highlighting Malaysia's cultural diversity, and sharing success stories of mobility to position Malaysia as an attractive destination for education and career prospects. This is to be supported by tax incentives as a financial motivation where relevant.

This implies that the actions taken to achieve this goal should be aimed to:

- Increased visibility;
- Tailored messaging to entice prospective students, staff and sponsors; and
- Increase applications from emerging markets and developed nations, particularly in specialised areas.

## List of Initiatives:

Initiative A1	Include Knowledge-Based Elements in Promotions
Initiative A2	Maximise Visibility on Social Media Platforms
Initiative A3	Leverage Entertaining Media
Initiative A4	Harness the Potential of Alumni Network

### Strategy B: Enhancing Visa Offerings

This strategy takes a proactive approach aimed at removing obstacles and improving the overall experience of international students entering Malaysia, by streamlining visa regulations and embracing digitalisation. Ultimately, this will enhance the country's appeal as a destination for international education.

## List of Initiatives:

Initiative B1	Ease Visa Regulations and Procedures
Initiative B2	Digitalisation of Visa and e-Processing

## Implementation Roadmap

The implementation roadmap for Thrust 2 represents the blueprint for translating vision into action, governance into practice, and policies into tangible outcomes. It delineates a structured plan that ensures each strategy and initiative is executed efficiently and cohesively, with continuous evaluation of their effectiveness.

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Strategy A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and incorporate new material highlighting knowledge-based expertise into all campaigns, collaterals and communication;</li> <li>Monitor the increase in the number of international students enrolled in STEM undergraduate and postgraduate programmes;</li> <li>Capture the total number of scholarships awarded to international students enrolled in STEM undergraduate and postgraduate courses;</li> <li>Monitor the number of research grants awarded to international students;</li> <li>Achieve a 30 million reach on social media;</li> <li>Engage in conversations with associations and production houses within the entertainment industry;</li> <li>Compile previous data and build up a new database for alumni. Detail the communication strategy including the frequency and channels of communication; and</li> <li>Create MyAlumni platform, with the upcoming cycle of alumni graduates and staff as the initial cohort of platform members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and report indicators from web analytics to detect and manage visitors;</li> <li>Increase the number of scholarships and grants awarded to international students by 5%;</li> <li>Achieve a 100 million reach on social media;</li> <li>Harness international productions across specific market segments using product placement strategies;</li> <li>Identify specific initiatives to further engage alumni e.g. scholarships or discounts for family members; and</li> <li>Appoint and monitor the number of alumni as Global Ambassadors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve a 200 million reach on social media; and</li> <li>Monitor number of partnerships or collaborations initiated with the entertainment industry to include themes surrounding internationalisation of higher education, or for product placement in specific market segments in media content.</li> </ul>
Strategy B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain the existing allowance of five sectors for international students' part-time work, while adding knowledge-based opportunities;</li> <li>Establish the Post-Study Work Visa, for SETARA 5 and 6 institutions, with the stated eligibility requirements;</li> <li>Extend academic visa validity for entire study period for eligible students;</li> <li>Allow one-time automatic student pass renewal and application for change of programme for SETARA 5 and 6 institutions of all study levels;</li> <li>Explore enhancement of the digital platform for student visa and student pass applications; and</li> <li>Measure the average processing time for student visa and student pass applications and renewals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the impact of part-time employment and broaden the range of eligible sectors for student part-time jobs;</li> <li>Extend conditions to allow SETARA 3 till 6 students and eligibility of Post-Study Work Visa;</li> <li>Explore extending full academic visa for all categories of students; and</li> <li>Allow one-time automatic student pass renewal and change of programme application for all institutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore allowing PolyCC graduates Post-Study Work Visa.</li> </ul>

## Impact Measures

The respective stakeholders will monitor the progress and impact of this Thrust using outcome-based metrics. These metrics are not intended to be exhaustive and may be augmented over time to better reflect the evolving goals of the initiatives.

### THRUST 2: Impact Measures

- Social media campaign reach
- Enrollment of international students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programmes
- Number of international students enrolled from current and new markets
- Scholarships and research grants awarded
- Alumni engagement levels and outcomes
- Interest in new visa offerings and uptake numbers
- Visa application and renewal processing times
- Dropout rates due to financial reasons
- Rankings on Global Talent Competitiveness Index, Global Soft Power Index, IMD World Talent Ranking, and Global Knowledge Index





## Why it Matters

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### **Attracting and Retaining Global Talent**

Thrust 3 seeks to attract and retain top-tier international students, not only as beneficiaries of world-class education, but as potential catalysts for innovation, cultural diversity, and cross-border collaborations. By offering a seamless, supportive, and enriching experience, Malaysia positions itself as a preferred destination, enticing global talent that contributes to the growth of the nation. The positive experiences of these international students and staff resonate widely to their home country, attracting even more exceptional talent from around the world.

### **Creating a Welcoming Environment**

Fostering a welcoming and supportive campus environment is a multifaceted endeavour that goes beyond mere administrative efficiency. It embodies Malaysia's commitment to inclusivity and cultural diversity. An inclusive campus environment not only enhances the academic performance and well-being of international students and staff, but it also enriches the overall campus experience for everyone, thereby creating a diverse and vibrant academic community. A welcoming atmosphere further resonates with prospective international students and staff which enhances Malaysia's reputation as a hospitable and attractive destination.

### **Professional Skill Development**

Thrust 3 aims to provide ample opportunities for international students and staff to develop their professional skills. Malaysia envisions that talent passing through will not only be academically proficient, but also well-prepared for practical success in their future careers. By fostering a supportive environment that encourages the acquisition of practical skills, Malaysia enhances its graduates' employability, contributing to a workforce that is not only highly educated but also industry-ready.

## Where We Are Now

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The Malaysian Government is committed to reviewing and strengthening significant initiatives that shall lead to notable progress in enhancing the experience for international students and staff. These measures are aimed to be strategically crafted to guarantee that international talent receive top-notch education, while enjoying a supportive and enriching campus environment.

### Standardised Entry to HEIs

At present, only one out of four international airports in Peninsular Malaysia offer a dedicated counter for international student arrivals. However, to foster convenience and accessibility, efforts to address this gap are crucial. Streamlining procedures to allow inbound students (and potentially their accompanying family) to enter through any international airport, rather than mandating entry through Kuala Lumpur, could significantly enhance convenience. Moreover, this initiative has the potential to boost tourism concurrently.

### International Student and Staff Management

Current guidelines like the '*Garis Panduan Amalan Terbaik Pengurusan Pelajar Antarabangsa Untuk Institusi Pendidikan Tinggi Malaysia*' focus primarily on administrative aspects for international students. However, Malaysia recognises the need for a more holistic approach. There are presently also no guidelines for managing international staff. Therefore, the Government is committed to initiating a comprehensive review and revision of these guidelines. The updated guidelines will encompass not only administrative procedures, but also include the softer aspects of student and staff management, like wellbeing and support services, as well as guidelines for community building activities. This commitment reflects Malaysia's dedication to fostering a welcoming and nurturing environment for all.

Furthermore, programmes to build intercultural competencies and capabilities for the teaching and support staff would be an added advantage to enhance the overall experience of international students and staff.

## Objectives

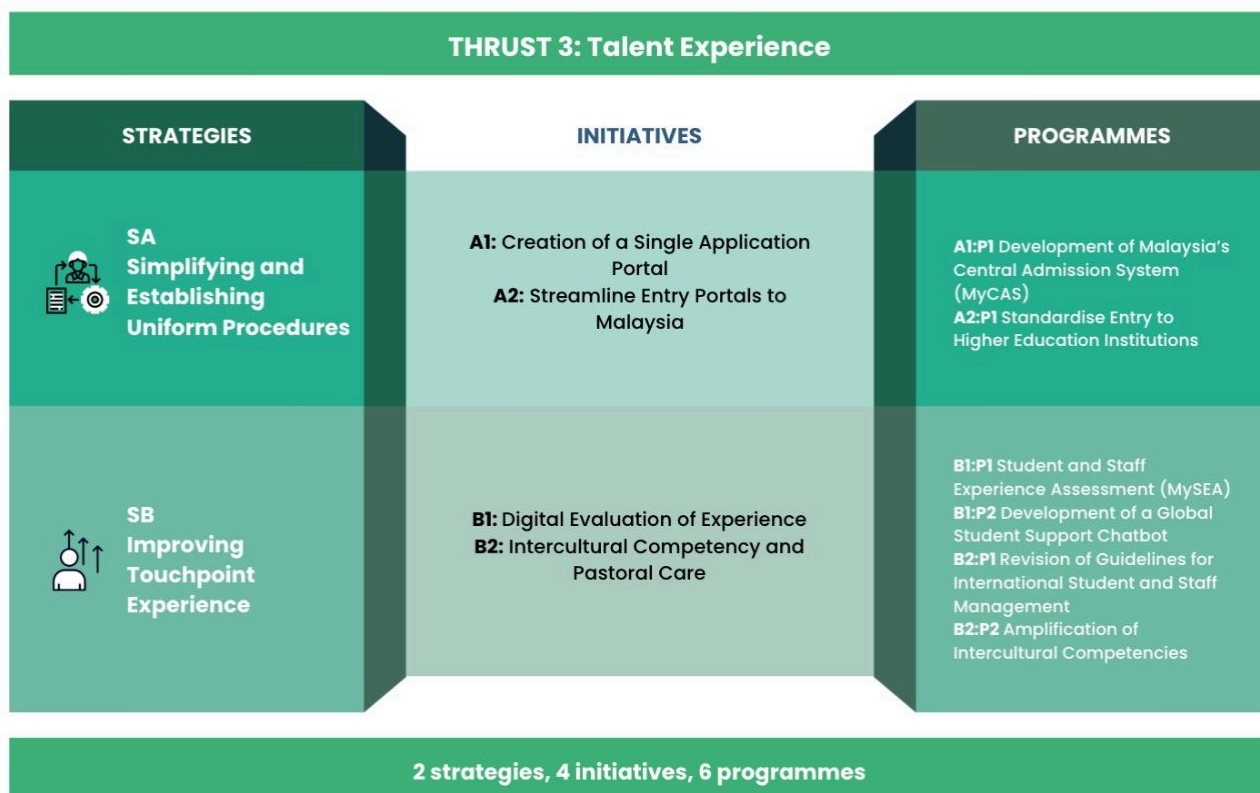
### Harmonise Administrative Processes

The primary objective is to simplify and establish uniform procedures to enhance the international student experience. Malaysia aims to achieve this through the creation of a single application portal and the streamlining of entry portals to the country. This approach simplifies the entire application and admission process, making it more efficient and accessible for prospective international students. By offering a standardised and transparent application system, Malaysia ensures that the journey to studying in Malaysian institutions becomes more straightforward and consistent by eliminating potential barriers and ensuring fairness for all applicants.

### Refine Engagement Experience for Seamless Interaction

This Thrust aims to elevate the overall experience for international students and staff by improving key touchpoints throughout their stay in Malaysia. It involves evaluating their personal journeys, from their arrival to their daily life. In addition, this Thrust focuses on providing automated, interactive assistance for students to navigate Malaysian processes seamlessly. Furthermore, the initiative focuses on strengthening intercultural competencies and enhancing the level of pastoral care to ensure a high-quality experience for both students and staff. For staff, particular attention will be given to ensuring their families are well-integrated and comfortable in their new surroundings. These combined efforts underscore Malaysia's commitment to delivering a comprehensive and exceptional international experience.

## Strategies and Initiatives



### Strategy A: Simplifying and Establishing Uniform Procedures

In order to achieve the above objectives, this strategy will play a crucial component in transforming the higher education landscape in Malaysia. This strategy aims to streamline and standardise various processes relating to international students' experiences in Malaysia's higher education, while ensuring inclusivity across all regions in Malaysia, including Sabah and Sarawak. MOHE intends to create a more attractive and accessible environment for international students, ultimately enhancing Malaysia's reputation as an attractive higher education destination. Furthermore, Strategy A contributes to the broader goals of the internationalisation effort by fostering collaboration between universities, government agencies, and immigration authorities. Thus, critical aspects relating to this effort will include:

- Admission process to Malaysian universities and colleges;
- Entry procedures of international students; and
- Communication between related stakeholders.

#### List of Initiatives:

**Initiative A1**  
**Initiative A2**

**Creation of a Single Application Portal**  
**Streamline Entry Portals to Malaysia**

## Strategy B: Improving Touchpoint Experience

A multifaceted approach is required to enhance the overall experience of international students and staff coming to Malaysia. This strategy recognises the importance of various touch points throughout a student's or staff's journey which can significantly impact their satisfaction and success. The overarching goals of this strategy are to create a welcoming, supportive, and culturally inclusive environment for international students and staff, and to position Malaysia as a top destination of choice.

### List of Initiatives:

- Initiative B1      Digital Evaluation of Experience
- Initiative B2      Intercultural Competency and Pastoral Care

## Implementation Roadmap

The implementation roadmap for thrust 3 represents the blueprint for translating vision into action, governance into practice, and policies into tangible outcomes. It delineates a structured plan that ensures each strategy and initiative is executed efficiently and cohesively, with continuous evaluation of their effectiveness.

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Strategy A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and prototype Malaysia Centralised Application System (MyCAS); and</li> <li>Establish a standardised procedure for the entry of international students at all international airports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalise MyCAS as a single application portal for all HEIs (including PolyCCs).</li> </ul>	-
Strategy B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce the Student and Staff Satisfaction Survey (MySEA);</li> <li>Develop and integrate a chatbot feature into EMGS Hub;</li> <li>Ensure the chatbot can provide real-time support and accurately answer at least 80% of international students' queries;</li> <li>Revise and circulate the updated guidelines for international student management in both Bahasa Malaysia and English; and</li> <li>Initiate certification of personnel (particularly those in International Offices) in diplomatic or international relations training courses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that 70% of international students and staff are generally satisfied with their overall experience;</li> <li>Ensure that 75% of international students and staff have a sense of belonging in Malaysia;</li> <li>Enhance chatbot performance as rated by users;</li> <li>Continuously improve EMGS's chatbot performance, maintaining a user satisfaction rate of 85% or higher based on feedback from international students; and</li> <li>Monitor impact on percentage of reduction in complaints or issues related to staff interactions with international students or staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that 85% of international students and staff are generally satisfied with their overall experience;</li> <li>Ensure that 90% of international students and staff have a sense of belonging in Malaysia; and</li> <li>Publish a publicly accessible list of the "Top 20 HEIs" based on student experience ratings.</li> </ul>

## Impact Measures

The respective stakeholders will monitor the progress and impact of this Thrust using outcome-based metrics. These metrics are not intended to be exhaustive and may be augmented over time to better reflect the evolving goals of the initiatives.

### THRUST 3: Impact Measures

- Number of applications through Malaysia's Central Admission System (MyCAS)
- Level of student and staff satisfaction, number of complaints, and feedback
- Conversion rate from application to enrolment
- Number of intercultural and pastoral care activities
- Ranking on Global Talent Competitiveness Index and IMD World Talent Ranking



## Why it Matters

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### Driving Economic Growth

Malaysia's economic prosperity is intricately tied to the calibre of its workforce. A well-educated and highly skilled labour force is not only more desirable but is, in fact, a critical determinant for attracting foreign investment. Investors are naturally drawn to countries boasting a competent talent pool because it ensures the efficient operation of businesses and paves the way for national economic growth. By investing in talent development, Malaysia positions itself as an attractive destination for foreign investments, thus fostering economic prosperity.

### Reducing Underemployment

Talent development is a powerful solution to underemployment. By providing individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge, they can secure meaningful employment that matches their aspirations. This approach bridges the skills gap, enabling Malaysians to pursue careers that align with their abilities and ambitions. Addressing underemployment not only enhances citizens' lives, but also strengthens the workforce to boost economic productivity and stability.

### Promoting Social Development

Beyond its direct economic influence, talent development plays a crucial role in facilitating holistic individual advancement. Engaging in international experiences contributes significantly to the cultivation of essential global competencies, such as cross-cultural communication skills, adaptability, intercultural sensitivity and having a more expansive worldview, all of which shall help in fostering collaboration across diverse cultural contexts.

Malaysia is currently embarking on a transformative journey aimed at realising the full potential of talent development. Government initiatives and fruitful collaborations with private stakeholders have played a pivotal role in reinforcing the nation's commitment to this crucial endeavour. Nevertheless, there is ample opportunity for enhancement in this venture to yield a more significant long-term impact for the country.

### **Industry Involvement**

Malaysian graduates face challenges in securing employment, with unemployment rates rising to 4.5 percent in 2020, and with the increasing levels of underemployment of 6.9 percent year on year since 2017. Coupled with a brain drain rate of 5.5 percent, which surpasses the global average, addressing this issue is crucial. Recognising this, the Government is committed to fostering greater collaboration and engagement with industries in curriculum development and implementation to ensure that the curricula remain responsive to the evolving job market, with a strong emphasis on practical application and integration of cutting-edge content.

### **Upholding Curriculum Quality**

Recognising the current hurdles posed by existing procedures, there's a pressing need for an amendment to Act 555 and its transfer to Act 679. This strategic move aims to boost the operational efficiency of private HEIs, streamlining processes, and reducing bureaucratic obstacles. Ultimately, it enables institutions to adapt swiftly to evolving educational needs and industry demands.

Moreover, at present, universities with self-accreditation status enjoy a certain level of autonomy but encounter limitations, such as requiring endorsement before launching new programmes. Introducing an initiative that aims to enhance trust in HEIs, granting them increased autonomy to assess and implement their programmes without external endorsement is seen as critical to foster greater independence and innovation within HEIs.

### **Promotion of Outbound Opportunities**

Over the years, local students have increasingly engaged in outbound study experiences, with the number of outbound students rising from 28,803 in 2011 to 47,635 in 2018. Despite a temporary decline in 2020 due to the pandemic, 56,468 students enrolled in foreign universities in 2023, showcasing a resilient trend. Additionally, local faculty members have actively participated in global conferences, international joint research projects, and similar endeavours, although comprehensive data at the ministerial level is ambiguous.

Acknowledging the substantial value it offers, there is a pressing need to intensify efforts to boost these numbers. HEIs play a crucial role in empowering both students and staff to secure essential financial support through various entrepreneurial activities, among other avenues.

## Objectives

### Enhance Curriculum Quality

Malaysia's foremost objective is to ensure that HEIs deliver curricula that are not only relevant but also highly responsive to the evolving needs of industries, and the dynamic global landscape. This strategy seeks to equip graduates with cutting-edge skills and knowledge that precisely align with the demands of the ever-evolving job market. Through this objective, Malaysia aims to produce a workforce that is not merely competent but exceptional and capable of driving innovation and sustainable economic growth.

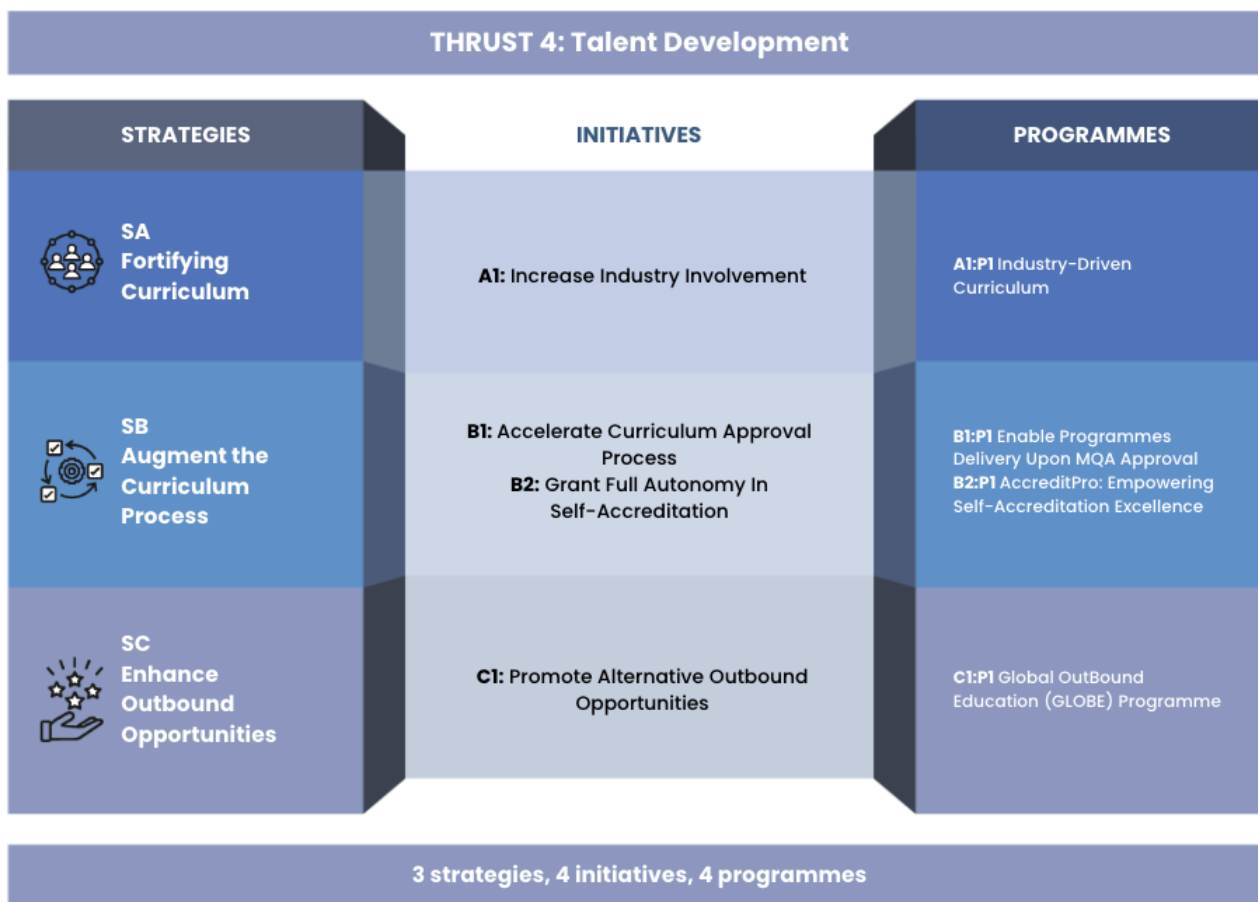
### Improve Processes for Curriculum Implementation

The nation is committed to expediting curriculum development and approval processes. This commitment is anchored in the goal of ensuring that HEIs can swiftly adapt to emerging trends and technologies. A more agile and responsive curriculum development process fosters flexibility and innovation in academic programme delivery, ensuring that graduates are not just well-prepared but exceptionally adaptable to the evolving job market. This objective enhances Malaysia's competitive edge by producing graduates who are not just jobseekers, but future leaders and innovators.

### Broaden Outbound Learning Experiences

Malaysia aims to promote the internationalisation of its higher education sector by actively facilitating outbound opportunities for both students and faculty members. By enabling and encouraging students and educators to engage in meaningful global experiences, this strategy aims to broaden horizons, enrich perspectives, and strengthen international collaborations. Beyond the traditional confines of classrooms and campuses, this initiative positions Malaysia as a global hub for academic and cultural exchange. It fosters a learning environment that transcends borders, nurturing global citizens who are not just academically proficient but culturally enriched and internationally connected.

## Strategies and Initiatives



### Strategy A: Fortifying Curriculum

MOHE takes dynamic steps to enhance the quality and global competitiveness of Malaysian educational institutions through designing curricula with a strong industry focus.

#### List of Initiatives:

**Initiative A1      Increase Industry Involvement**

## **Strategy B: Augmenting the Curriculum Process**

This strategy is a concerted effort to enhance and streamline the approval and accreditation procedures for educational programmes in Malaysia, through initiatives that expedite approval process and empower greater autonomy in curriculum development and delivery. Together, these initiatives aim to make the higher education system more responsive to student and market needs while maintaining high academic standards.

### **List of Initiatives:**

<b>Initiative B1</b>	<b>Accelerate Curriculum Approval Process</b>
<b>Initiative B2</b>	<b>Grant Full Autonomy in Self-Accreditation</b>

## **Strategy C: Enhancing Outbound Opportunities**

MOHE is dedicated to cultivating an international mindset and fostering global experiences among Malaysian students and faculty members. This entails implementing programmes that empower and facilitate outbound opportunities for individuals within the education system.

### **List of Initiative:**

<b>Initiative C1</b>	<b>Promote Alternative Outbound Opportunities</b>
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## Implementation Roadmap

The implementation roadmap for thrust 4 represents the blueprint for translating vision into action, governance into practice, and policies into tangible outcomes. It delineates a structured plan that ensures each strategy and initiative is executed efficiently and cohesively, with continuous evaluation of their effectiveness.

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Strategy A	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measure the employment rate of international student graduates through MyAlumni.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the employment rate by 15% from the baseline.</li> </ul>
Strategy B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Power delegated to Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) to issue curriculum approval letters;</li> <li>Prototype granting full autonomy to institutions that are SETARA 6 rating, and have self-accreditation status; and</li> <li>Ensure these institutions demonstrate at least a 10% improvement in graduate employability in their programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend the Act 555 to eliminate the necessity for curriculum approval by MOHE, with this provision being transferred to Act 679; and</li> <li>Allows the use of AccreditedPro for all institutions with self-accreditation status.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open up AccreditedPro to all SETARA 5 and 6 institutions.</li> </ul>
Strategy C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure 20% of students have international exposure upon graduation;</li> <li>Aim for 5% of students having cross-border experience upon graduation; and</li> <li>Ensure 50% of staff have had international experience within the last five years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure 50% of students have international exposure upon graduation;</li> <li>Aim for 10% of students to have cross-border experience upon graduation; and</li> <li>Ensure 75% of staff have international experience within the last five years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure 70% of students have international experience upon graduation;</li> <li>Aim for 20% of students to have cross-border experience upon graduation; and</li> <li>Ensure 100% of staff have international experience within the last five years.</li> </ul>

## Impact Measures

The respective stakeholders will monitor the progress and impact of this Thrust using outcome-based metrics. These metrics are not intended to be exhaustive and may be augmented over time to better reflect the evolving goals of the initiatives.

### THRUST 4: Impact Measures

- Employability of graduates
- Number of outbound students and staff
- Number of new collaborations and international projects initiated by outbound staff
- Increase in the number of new courses, including physical and online offerings

# THRUST 5 | RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

## Why it Matters

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### Knowledge Exchange and Global Insights

Internationalisation of R&D creates a vibrant academic milieu where the seamless exchange of knowledge and cross-cultural interactions become catalysts for groundbreaking research. As ideas flow freely across borders, they ignite collaborative efforts that transcend the limitations of individual perspectives. This cross-pollination of ideas sparks innovation, fosters interdisciplinary approaches, and fuels the development of globally applicable solutions, which in turn serves as a beacon to attract top talent from around the world to the institutions. In essence, international R&D collaborations serve as powerful engines propelling academic institutions into an era of enriched knowledge exchange and global insights, creating tangible value for both the institution and country.

### Synergising Resources and Expertise

Malaysia's substantial investments in advanced research infrastructure hold the potential to attract foreign talent and drive international research excellence. However, to fully capitalise on these investments, efficient and collaborative asset utilisation is crucial as it would enable private organisations, whether large, medium or small, to access state-of-the-art research facilities, spurring innovation and growth prospects. This symbiotic relationship has the potential to bridge the gap between theory and practice, and nurture robust partnerships between academia and industry, thereby fueling innovation and driving economic growth within the country.

## Where We Are Now

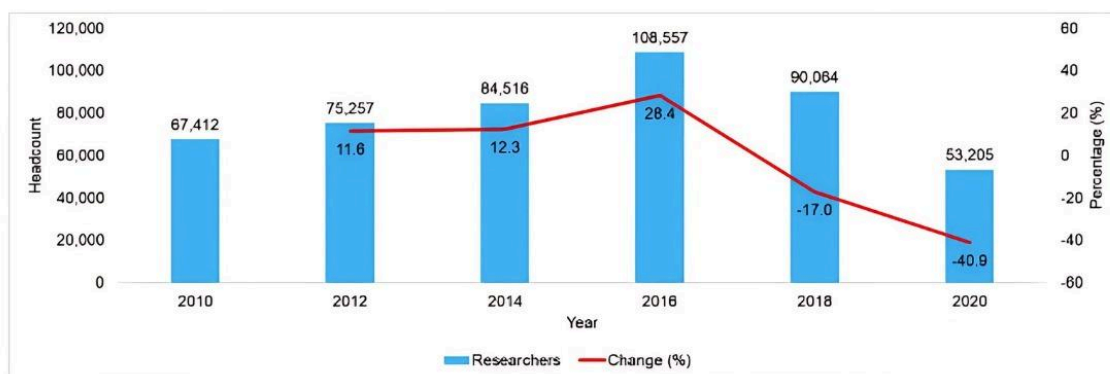
Malaysia's HEIs are actively immersed in international R&D collaborations, marking a progressive commitment to global knowledge exchange, with some having made substantial strides in terms of research output and academic excellence, thus gaining recognition for their contributions to various fields. A more concerted effort towards this would assist the country to excel in particular areas where growth may be accelerated.

### Global Collaborative Research

Malaysia ranks as the 2<sup>nd</sup> most innovative upper middle-income economy worldwide, as per the Global Innovation Index 2023 by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). Among Asian economies, Malaysia holds the 8<sup>th</sup> position as one of the most innovative countries, reflecting its commitment to fostering innovation, research, and technological advancement. The formation of the UK-Malaysia University Consortium, launched in 2022, brought together all 20 of Malaysia's public universities with 16 UK HEIs. In relation to global collaborations, some public universities stand out far above the others. Therefore, efforts to level this playing field would prove to be beneficial to the Malaysian landscape.

In addition, the headcount of researchers in the country has been on a downward trend since 2016, with a reduction to about 50 percent across all types of qualifications (PhD, Masters, Bachelors). This also coincided with a decrease in the number of citations, which drastically dropped since 2016.

**Exhibit C2:** Headcount of researchers in Malaysia, 2010-2020



Source : National Survey of Research and Development (R&D) in Malaysia

Incentivisation to attract talent, complemented by a concerted effort to promote the vibrant ecosystem in the country would be helpful to reinvigorate the R&D ecosystem.

## **Industry-Academia Collaboration**

As a country, the proportion of applied research has been decreasing over the past six years. However, the percentage of experimental development research is on an upward trend, accounting for 45.5 percent of Gross Domestic Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) in 2020, which is close to the target of 50 percent set by the National Policy of Science, Technology, and Innovation (NPSTI) for the period 2021-2030.

Data from the Ministry also highlighted that the majority of collaborations present in public universities are with other tertiary or post secondary education providers, with the number of collaborations with the private sector being only 3.77 percent of the total collaborations. Adoption of a digital strategy and interface would potentially accelerate and scale these collaborations with industry. This will assist to identify challenges faced by industry, or expertise residing in the HEIs which the industry can leverage upon, to accelerate collaboration.

## Objectives

### Elevating the Research Ecosystem for Global Engagement

In the pursuit of internationalisation of higher education, Malaysia seeks to strategically identify key research priorities and areas of specialisation, aligning them with global demands and Malaysian strengths. This laser focus ensures that R&D efforts are channelled effectively toward issues of global significance, thereby maximising their impact. Additionally, the country aims to foster collaboration and resource sharing among institutions, harnessing collective expertise and enhancing the impact of R&D initiatives while fostering a culture of collaboration that transcends borders.

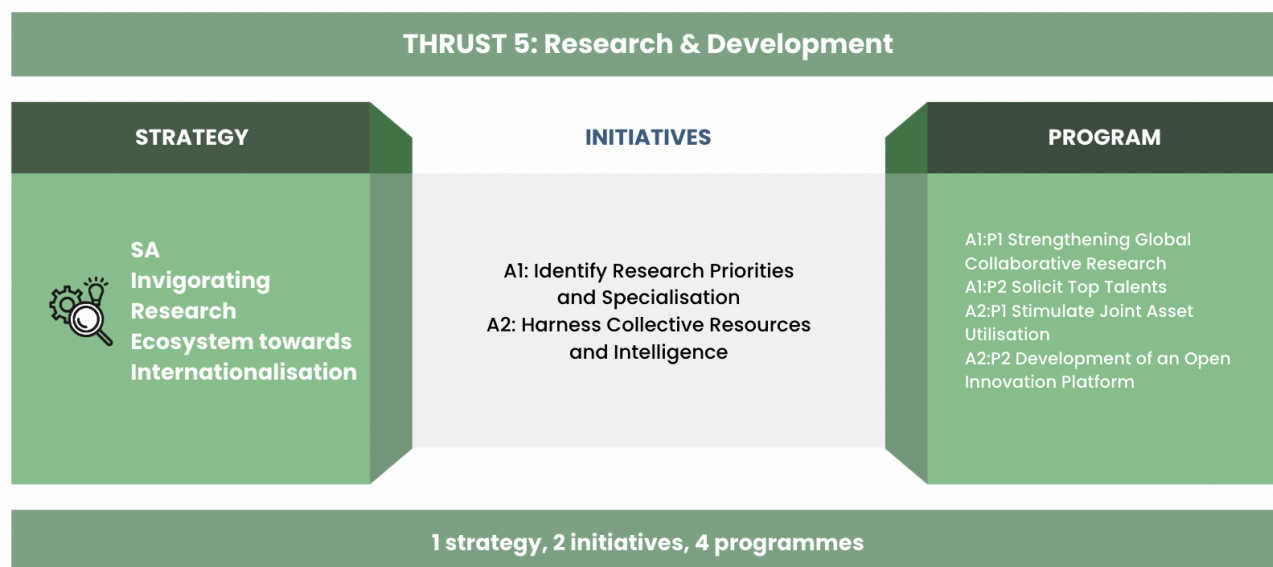
### Strengthening International Research Collaboration

Malaysia aspires to intensify collaborative research efforts with international partners, facilitating knowledge exchange and co-creation of innovative solutions to global challenges to position the nation as a key contributor to global research endeavours. Concurrently, the aim is to become a magnet for top-tier research talent from around the world, nurturing a diverse and dynamic research ecosystem enriched by international expertise. This not only enhances the nation's research capabilities but also elevates its global standing in academia.

### Optimising Resource Utilisation and Foster Innovation

Efficiency and innovation are paramount in the journey towards internationalisation of higher education. Malaysia seeks to stimulate the efficient use of shared research assets and facilities, ensuring their maximum potential is realised while minimising resource duplication. This resource optimisation approach enhances the sustainability and effectiveness of research initiatives. Moreover, Malaysia is committed to establishing an open innovation platform that encourages collaboration among academia, industry, and international partners. This platform expedites the transformation of research findings into practical solutions for global challenges to drive economic growth and societal advancement. In summary, these objectives underscore Malaysia's unwavering commitment to fostering a culture of innovation, knowledge exchange, and global collaboration within its HEIs, positioning the nation as a global leader in R&D.

## Strategies and Initiatives



### Strategy A: Invigorating the Research Ecosystem towards Internationalisation

Strategy A comprises two initiatives that collectively aim to elevate Malaysia's research excellence and global presence. These initiatives propel Malaysia as a global research hub, fostering innovation and international collaboration.

#### List of Initiatives:

<b>Initiative A1</b>	<b>Identify Research Priorities and Specialisation</b>
<b>Initiative A2</b>	<b>Harness Collective Resources and Intelligence</b>

## Implementation Roadmap

The implementation roadmap for thrust 5 represents the blueprint for translating vision into action, governance into practice, and policies into tangible outcomes. It delineates a structured plan that ensures each strategy and initiative is executed efficiently and cohesively, with continuous evaluation of their effectiveness.

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Strategy A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create the Malaysia International Research Fund (MIRF) with a targeted funding goal of RM 500 million over a span of five years;</li> <li>• Achieve three major academic alliances for joint programmes, initiatives, and activities that involve international partners in public and private universities;</li> <li>• Grant 2,500 extended-term (&gt;five years) agreements or permanent residency statuses to accomplished researchers;</li> <li>• Monitor frequency of asset utilisation in research or academic facilities by external organisations;</li> <li>• Establish an Open Innovation Platform;</li> <li>• Measure the number of participating HEIs, industries, and international counterparts at the launch phase of the Open Innovation Platform; and</li> <li>• Track the value which is generated through collaborations initiated via the Open Innovation Platform.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve seven major academic alliances for joint programmes, initiatives, and activities that involve international partners in public and private universities;</li> <li>• Grant 5,000 extended-term (&gt;five years) agreements or permanent residency statuses to accomplished researchers; and</li> <li>• Develop incentives to support institutions which maximise asset utilisation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve ten major academic alliances for joint programmes, initiatives, and activities that involve international partners in public and private universities; and</li> <li>• Grant 10,000 extended-term (&gt;five years) agreements or permanent residency statuses to accomplished researchers.</li> </ul>

## Impact Measures

The respective stakeholders will monitor the progress and impact of this Thrust using outcome-based metrics. These metrics are not intended to be exhaustive and may be augmented over time to better reflect the evolving goals of the initiatives.

### THRUST 5: Impact Measures

- Number of major academic alliances created
- Number of international collaborative research projects
- Number of long-term contracts or permanent residency statuses granted to international high-performance researchers
- Percentage of asset utilisation
- Value generated from academia-industry collaborations
- Rankings on QS, Times Higher Education, Global Innovation Index, and Global Knowledge Index

## Conclusion

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MHEIP 2025-2030 presents a transformative vision, and a well-defined roadmap for the internationalisation of Malaysia's higher education sector spanning from 2025 to 2030. The effective execution of this policy is of paramount importance in preserving Malaysia's global standing in higher education and, in turn, fostering economic growth within the nation.

This policy underscores the imperative need for Malaysia to adapt and innovate in response to global shifts in learning paradigms, evolving societal and industry expectations, and the changing geopolitical landscape. By attracting a diverse array of international students, staff, and fostering global partnerships, Malaysia aims to cultivate a thriving academic environment that champions excellence, innovation, and intercultural exchange. These collaborations will not only facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise but also pave the way for cutting-edge research, further solidifying Malaysia's status as a hub for education, skills and knowledge. This dynamic ecosystem is poised to draw foreign investments, thereby advancing the nation's economic growth.

In essence, this transformation is driven by the necessity to bolster the country's global reputation, attract international talent, and position itself as a frontrunner in the global knowledge economy. These endeavours are expected to propel Malaysia into a future characterised by enduring growth and prosperity.

## List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
BHA	International Relations Unit ( <i>Bahagian Hubungan Antarabangsa</i> )
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
EMGS	Education Malaysia Global Services
EPA	Education Partnership Agreement
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GERD	Gross Domestic Expenditure on Research and Development
GII	Global Innovation Index
GLOBE	Global OutBound Education
GTCI	Global Talent Competitive Index
HEI	Higher Education Institution <i>*Note: This term may be used interchangeably with Higher Learning Institution (HLI).</i>
ICT	Information and communications technology
ICU	Internationalisation Coordination Unit
IESALC	International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
JPPKK	Polytechnic and Community College Education Department (Jabatan Pendidikan Politeknik dan Kolej Komuniti)
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MEB (HE)	Malaysia Education Blueprint (Higher Education)
MIRF	Malaysia International Research Fund
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPC	Malaysia Productivity Corporation
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
MyCAS	Malaysia Centralised Application System
MySEA	Malaysia Student and Staff Experience Assessment
MyQUEST	Malaysian Quality Evaluation System for Private Colleges
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIMP	New Industrial Master Plan
NPSTI	National Policy of Science, Technology, and Innovation
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PolyCC	Polytechnics and Community Colleges
R&D	Research and Development

SETARA	Rating System for Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia ( <i>Sistem Penarafan Institusi Pengajian Tinggi</i> )
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organisation





