

Internationalisation Rationale Prioritisation Exercise (IRPE) © Vicky Lewis Consulting 2014

One of the outputs of my DBA (<http://opus.bath.ac.uk/22465/>) was an exercise – the Internationalisation Rationale Prioritisation Exercise (or IRPE) – which can be used by institutions to stimulate discussion and aid development of an internationalisation strategy. Ideally it should be used at the outset of strategy development to clarify rationales for engagement and, in particular, any gaps between aspirations and reality which might help to inform the way forward. It can also be used as part of a strategy review.

A suggested process is as follows:

STEP 1

Select coordinating team (for the IRPE) and identify a relatively small number of key individuals with responsibility for setting the institution's approach to internationalisation. These need to include those who determine the overarching strategic direction of the institution and other senior staff with a range of remits (including internationalisation).

STEP 2

Ask the key individuals to complete the IRPE - see **Appendix A** – then collate the results. If this assessment of institutional internationalisation rationales is being undertaken at the start of strategy preparation or as an element of strategy review, it may be helpful for participants to be instructed to complete the IRPE once to reflect the current balance of rationales, and a second time to reflect the desired balance of rationales at the end of the strategic planning period (or even further ahead). Once the results are collated, this will help to determine the areas where there is the greatest gap between current drivers and future aspirations.

STEP 3 (if required)

A useful additional exercise is to repeat the IRPE with a wider group of staff (including those working at operational level – both academic and professional – and in roles not directly connected to the international agenda). This will indicate how close / far the senior staff view is from that of other staff, which may also help to inform the emphasis of the strategy. It is possible to segment respondents if, for example, it is suspected that different priorities will need to be stressed among different groups of staff. The very process of undertaking this exercise more widely can also signal a consultative approach and help to achieve buy-in for subsequent initiatives.

The IRPE can only ever be a starting point to help focus thinking and encourage people to reflect on institutional rationales for internationalisation and the values that underpin these. It provides a stimulus for discussion and is a precursor to the hard work of devising a strategy that will move the institution from its current position towards its desired one.

The outcome of the exercise can be visually represented in pie chart form, as per the example in **Appendix B**.

Appendix A

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Rationales ¹

Below are four statements developed to act as proxies for common rationales for institutional internationalisation (Prestige, Academic, Economic, Social). You have 20 points to distribute across these four statements to reflect the priority placed by your institution on each.

For example, if one statement matches your institution's rationale exactly and the others carry no weight at all, you might choose to allocate all 20 points to that statement and none to the others. At the other end of the scale, if you feel that, for your institution, each statement carries equal weight, you might allocate 5 points to each.

Statement A (Prestige rationale)

My institution is concerned with enhancing its international profile and reputation as a world class institution

No. of Points:

Statement B (Academic rationale)

My institution is concerned with ensuring that a global outlook permeates all areas of academic activity – from research to the curriculum

No. of Points:

Statement C (Economic rationale)

My institution is concerned with generating significant income from international sources

No. of Points:

Statement D (Social rationale)

My institution is concerned with equipping all its students and staff (and the institution itself) to make an effective and informed contribution in a world where borderless careers and cross-cultural interaction are the norm

No. of Points:

¹ Although the statements used as proxies for the different rationales are considered to represent the main rationales for HE internationalisation, individual institutions may adapt them or include additional rationales which they feel are more pertinent to their specific situation.

Appendix B

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Sample results pie charts

Figure 1

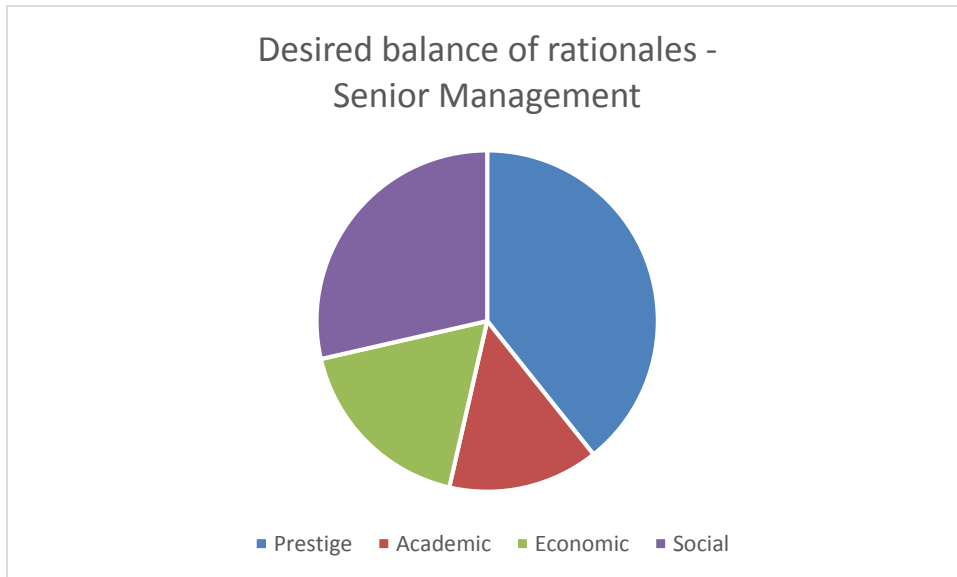


Figure 2

