



# Strategic Internationalisation in Sweden 2012



**STINT**

The Swedish Foundation for International  
Cooperation in Research and Higher Education

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## Foreword

The Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education, STINT, launched a new programme Strategic Grants for Internationalisation with a closing date for applications in March 2012.

Sweden's university presidents/vice-chancellors were invited to propose one or two projects addressing strategic internationalisation for co-funding by STINT. The response to this first round was good, with a total of 31 applications from 20 different universities. After careful review of these applications aided by a panel of international experts, five projects were selected for co-funding in June 2012.

The purpose of this report is to use the unique material represented in the 31 applications to Strategic Grants for Internationalisation to discuss university leaderships' approaches to internationalisation

Based on previous literature, a framework of internationalisation activities and rationales was developed in order to facilitate a structured discussion of the data. The applications were then mapped in relation to this framework, thus highlighting the activities and rationales contained by the various applications.

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# STRATEGIC INTERNATIONALISATION IN SWEDEN 2012

## Abstract

This paper addresses strategic internationalisation at higher education institutions. Empirical data was taken from the response to a call for proposals addressing university presidents/vice-chancellors in Sweden. Through this call, university leaderships applied for co-funding for their priority internationalisation projects.

One aim of the paper has been to derive a framework for description and analysis of internationalisation strategies at institutional level. Based on previous literature, a modified set of internationalisation activities and rationales was tested. The paper argues that this modified framework contributes to a structured and informative discussion.

Another aim of the paper was to describe the higher education leaderships' agendas for internationalisation, using the theoretical framework. Analysis of the 31 applications revealed very diverse approaches to internationalisation. Internationalisation of higher education was frequently addressed, with international students and joint/double-degree programmes as common types of activities. Internationalisation of research was mentioned in a smaller number of applications and it is argued that internationalisation of education might need more top-down involvement than internationalisation of research.

International branding and profile was the single most mentioned rationale among the applications. This is in line with one of the emerging trends proposed in previous literature.

## Introduction

“The establishment of a world-class university requires, above all, strong leadership, a bold vision of the institution’s mission and goals, and a clearly articulated strategic plan to translate the vision into concrete targets and programs.”

Salmi (2009:9)

Which are your top priority internationalisation projects? This question was answered in 2012 by the university presidents/vice-chancellors or their immediate staff at 20 different Swedish higher education institutions (HEIs). As the answer was in the form of an application for co-funding, it can be considered a relatively honest description. This paper aims to describe and discuss the strategic internationalisation proposals. To this end, it also elaborates on a framework of internationalisation activities and rationales which form critical elements of the proposed internationalisation projects (Knight 2007).

International relations are and have always been inherent in higher education and research (Smeby and Trondal 2005). However, internationalisation of higher education institutions exhibits a growing trend, as illustrated by bibliometric data (cf. The Royal Society 2011). The main driver of internationalisation is globalisation. Within the concept of globalisation lies increased international competition as well as increased international collaboration (cf. McKelvey and Holmén 2009). A global market develops which leads to students and firms having international references and requirements. Partly due to globalisation, individualisation and marketisation follow (Frölich 2006), with increased privatisation (Altbach et al. 2009). Amongst other things, these trends challenge the leadership of the HEI and lead to changes in management structure (Sporn 2007).

One important enabler of internationalisation is global economic growth. This has enabled many more people to advance to post-secondary education. Expanding student numbers are leading to increasing demand and a more diverse student body. Another enabler is technologies, particularly

information and communications technologies but also the supply of lower-cost international transport (Wildawsky et al. 2011). The expanded use of English is a further factor facilitating the internationalisation of higher education (Svensson and Wihlborg 2010).

On the policy side, important regulatory mechanisms include tuition fee requirements and the trend is towards increased and broader use of tuition fees for students (Altbach et al. 2009). As noted by Healey (2008), the introduction of tuition fees partly discourages internationalisation. Free-trade agreements for services act as enablers of international higher education (Altbach and Knight 2007) and harmonisation; the Bologna process, for example, is another policy measure which might support internationalisation (van der Wende 2001). Finally there are traditional funding schemes, which sometimes, as in the EU Framework Programmes, call for international collaboration. Student and faculty mobility is also specifically funded, through such programmes as Erasmus.

According to Bartell (2003), internationalisation is a far from clearly defined and understood concept. Given the growing importance of internationalisation in contributing to HEIs' accomplishment of their missions, there is a need for a framework to facilitate a structured approach. Previous literature provides a wide range of activities and rationales on the national, sector and institutional levels (cf. Knight 2007). Based on this comprehensive framework, this report derives and tests in comparison to Knight (2007) a more compact set of internationalisation activities and rationales on the institutional level. It also provides a snapshot of the internationalisation endeavours on the agenda in Sweden in 2012.

The report is structured as follows: The next section develops a theoretical framework for the study. This is followed by descriptions of the methods, the Swedish context in 2012 and the empirical data. In the next section, the data is analysed and finally there are discussions and conclusions.



## Theoretical framework

A number of attempts to define internationalisation of higher education have been made. One relatively open working definition is proposed by Knight (2003:2) “Internationalization at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education.” A more focused definition is suggested by Rudzki (1995:421): “Internationalization of higher education can be understood as [...] a defining feature of all universities, encompassing organizational change, curriculum innovation, staff development and student mobility, for the purposes of achieving excellence in teaching and research.” In line with the second definition, this study considers internationalisation a tool to better achieve the HEIs’ missions.

The framework for the empirical analysis in this study is based on Knight (2007), which in turn refers to previous literature (e.g. Knight 2005; 2004; 2003; 1999; Knight and de Wit 1995).

### **Institutional internationalisation activities**

From an institutional perspective, Knight (2007) lists a number of strategies and organisational measures for incorporating the international dimension into all parts of the institution, from top-level governance via the operations to various service functions (cf. Table 1). She justifies the use of the term strategy in order “to go beyond the idea of international activities. The notion of a more planned, integrated and strategic approach was implied in the use of the word ‘strategies’.”(Knight 2007:221) This study uses the notion of internationalisation strategy in the more traditional sense, i.e. the set of activities which, in sequence or parallel, lead to the longer-term internationalisation objectives defined by the institution. As this package of activities may include several of the items listed by Knight (2007), the word “activity” is used in this paper to avoid confusion.

Table 1: **Internationalisation activities (Knight 2007).**

<p><b>ACADEMIC PROGRAMS</b></p> <p>Student exchange programs          Foreign language study          Internationalized curricula          Area or thematic studies          Work/study abroad          International students          Teaching/learning process          Joint/double degree programs          Cross-cultural training          Faculty/staff mobility programs          Visiting lectures and scholars          Link between academic programs and other strategies</p>	<p><b>EXTERNAL RELATIONS: DOMESTIC AND CROSS-BORDER</b></p> <p><b>Domestic:</b>          Community-based partnerships with NGO groups or public/private sector groups          Community service and intercultural project work          Customized education and training programs for international partners and clients</p> <p><b>Cross-border:</b>          International development assistance projects          Cross-border delivery of education programs (commercial and non-commercial)          International linkages, partnerships and networks          Contract based training and research programs and services          Alumni abroad programs</p>
<p><b>RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY COLLABORATION</b></p> <p>Area and theme centers          Joint research projects          International conferences and seminars          Published articles and papers          International research agreements          Research exchange programs          International research partners in academic and other sectors</p>	<p><b>EXTRA-CURRICULAR</b></p> <p>Student clubs and associations          International and intercultural campus events          Liaison with community based cultural and ethnic groups          Peer support groups and programs</p> <hr/> <p><b>ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES</b></p>

In Knight (2007), there is also a list of organisational strategies with activities in the following four categories; governance, operations, services and human resources. The common thread in these internal activities is that they enhance the capability of the organisation to handle internationalisation. These activities are clustered under the label Organisational strategies in this study.

A distinction is made between internationalisation at home, which Hudzik (2011) calls “campus internationalisation”, including the intercultural and international dimensions in the teaching/learning process, and internationalisation abroad or cross-border (or even borderless) education (Knight 2004).

### **Institutional rationales for internationalisation**

“Without a clear set of rationales, followed by a set of objectives or policy statements, a plan or set of strategies, and a monitoring and evaluation system, the process of internationalization is often an ad hoc, reactive, and fragmented response to the overwhelming number of new international opportunities available.”

(Knight 2005:15)

An assessment of the internationalisation impact has to be aligned with the core missions of the HEI (Hudzik and Stohl 2009). Successful internationalisation activities depend on several factors, including the profile and strength of the HEI, the character and quality of its local, regional, national and international environment and networks, and its internationalisation capabilities. These capabilities include language proficiency, administrative routines to manage international students and staff and much more.

Knight (2007) presents rationales for internationalisation for each of the traditional four groups: social/cultural, political, economic and academic. In addition, five national-level and six institutional-level rationales of emerging importance are mentioned, cf. Table 2.

Table 2: **Internationalisation rationales (Knight 2007).**

	<b>COMMENTS</b>
<b>SOCIAL/CULTURAL</b> National cultural identity Intercultural understanding Citizenship development Social and community development	Predominantly national level rationales
<b>POLITICAL</b> Foreign policy National security Technical assistance Peace and mutual understanding National identity Regional identity	Predominantly national level rationales
<b>ECONOMIC</b> Economic growth and competitiveness Labour market Financial incentives	Predominantly national level rationales
<b>ACADEMIC</b> Extension of academic horizon Institution building Profile and status Enhancement of quality International academic standards International dimension to research and teaching	Predominantly institutional level rationales
<b>NATIONAL LEVEL RATIONALES OF EMERGING IMPORTANCE</b> Human resources development Strategic alliances Income generation/commercial trade Nation building/institution building Social/cultural development and mutual understanding	These rationales appear to partly overlap the other national level rationales
<b>INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL RATIONALES OF EMERGING IMPORTANCE</b> International branding and profile Quality enhancement/international standards Alternative income generation Student and staff development Networks and strategic alliances Knowledge production	These rationales appear to partly overlap the academic ones

## Modified set of activities and rationales

In this sub-section, the framework proposed by Knight (2007) is modified with the aim of: (a) making a specific framework focusing on the institutional level; (b) adding activities and rationales devoted attention in 2012; (c) reducing the number of activities and rationales to make the framework easier to use; (d) reducing the overlap within and between the sets of activities and rationales.

Given the strong interdependencies between activities and rationales, it is difficult to make a clear-cut distinction. The framework proposed by Knight (2007) comprises one activity called International links, partnerships and networks as well as a rationale entitled Networks and strategic alliances. Knight argues that a strong worldwide reputation has gained much importance, that the number of strategic alliances has increased dramatically and that there is now a need for developing more concrete alliances with clear purposes and outcomes. One step in this direction is the development of networks. In line with this study's consideration of internationalisation as a tool, international networks are placed under the heading of activities and removed from the list of rationales.

There appears to be an overlap between several categories. The rationales of Profile and status and International branding and profile appear quite similar, whilst the triangle of Enhancement of quality, International academic standards and Quality enhancement/international standards appears to cover similar rationales. Another type of overlap is that if one project rationale is, say, developing student and staff, it will very likely also enhance quality. Amongst the activities, it is also quite likely that a project addressing joint or double-degree programmes also has some kind of influence on the teaching/learning process. Contributing to this confusion is that the activities and rationales belong on different hierarchical levels. Enhancement of quality is generally a top-level rationale whereas International academic standards, for example, is a more specific rationale which normally (but not always) contributes to quality. Similarly, International research agreements can be considered a sub-category of International linkages, partnerships and networks.

Particular attention is often given to distance education or e-learning as a means of serving an international audience (Stokes 2011; Wildavsky et

al. 2011). To make this type of activity more visible in the framework, an activity has been added; Cross-border distance education. Other activities which evoke much discussion are various forms of branch campuses (Altbach 2007; Altbach et al. 2009), thus leading to the addition of Offshoring and branch campuses as an activity.

The service mission or “third mission” of the HEI is relatively invisible among the academic rationales proposed by Knight (2007). One such rationale which receives much attention is innovation and how universities can contribute to it (cf. Gibbons et al. 1994; McKelvey and Holmén 2009; Nowotny et al. 2001). Another, similar rationale related to knowledge production, innovation and some of the predominantly national rationales is global or “grand” challenges, such as climate change (The Royal Society 2011). Innovation and grand challenges have been added to the list of rationales.

Internationalisation activities can contribute directly or indirectly to HEI missions. International branding and profiling is predominantly indirect and enabling in nature. A strong brand and profile facilitates internationalisation efforts and contributes to other aspects of interest to HEIs. One particular (and in several countries quite influential) type of branding is the rank position of an institution. The increased use of rankings impacts on individuals, institutions and national policy. Adding to the emphasis on reputation and branding, Salmi (2009) discusses the development of world-class universities and the role of internationalisation in this process. Another indirect rationale is Institution building; cf. Knight and de Wit (1995). Moreover, there is a feedback loop which can trigger a positive (or negative) spiral of development. For example, a simultaneous expansion of international networks can enable other internationalisation activities.

Alternative income generation is a difficult rationale to assess from an institutional perspective. What should be considered “alternative” probably depends largely on the situation. If a project aims to attract more international students, do the fees which some students pay represent alternative income? In Sweden, the newly introduced tuition fees are meant to cover full costs. Consequently, there should not be any direct profit emanating from fee-paying students. However, profit is obviously not the same

as income. From a national perspective international students represent an income, especially if paying tuition fees but probably otherwise too (cf. Knight and de Wit 1995). In slight contrast to the dominant message that economic factors have become more important (cf. Altbach and Knight 2007; van der Wende 2001), Frölich (2006) notes that academic values still dominated at five Norwegian universities.

A number of activities and rationales have been removed in order to reduce overlap. Another method of reducing overlap and increasing the framework's clarity is to introduce a revised hierarchical structure. Depending on the intended use of the framework, this hierarchy could be further refined with a third level of activities and rationales.

A revised framework for institutional internationalisation activities is proposed in Table 3.

Table 3: **Institutional internationalisation activities.**

<b>EDUCATION</b>	International students: Inbound International students: Outbound Student exchange Teaching/learning process Cross-border distance education Joint/double-degree programs Internationalised curricula
<b>RESEARCH</b>	International collaboration International conferences and seminars
<b>SERVICE/THIRD MISSION</b>	Entrepreneurship Relations with non-academic organisations International development assistance projects
<b>OVERARCHING AND ENABLING</b>	Cross-cultural training Faculty/staff mobility International linkages, partnerships and networks Foreign language Management and administration Alumni abroad Extracurricular Offshoring and branch campuses

Also for the institutional rationales, a slightly revised framework is proposed, cf. Table 4.

Table 4: **Institutional internationalisation rationales.**

<b>ENHANCEMENT OF QUALITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student and staff development</li> <li>International dimension to research and teaching</li> <li>Extension of academic horizon</li> <li>International academic standards and quality assurance</li> </ul>
<b>KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION</b>	
<b>SERVICE/THIRD MISSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Innovation</li> <li>Grand challenges</li> <li>Economic growth and competitiveness</li> <li>Labour market</li> <li>Political</li> <li>Social/cultural</li> </ul>
<b>OVERARCHING AND ENABLING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institution building</li> <li>International branding, profile and status</li> <li>Alternative income generation</li> </ul>



## Universities in Sweden and the role of STINT

There are 47 higher education institutions in Sweden, of which 36 universities are entitled to award licentiates and PhDs. Funding is allocated to universities based on the number of students admitted and the number of credits attained. A funding cap for each institution is decided annually by the government. Since 2009, 10 percent of the funding and new resources are allocated based on citations and research funding from external sources. In 2010, the Higher Education Act was amended to introduce application and tuition fees for citizens outside the European Economic Area and Switzerland. Higher education institutions are required to charge tuition fees to these students covering the full costs (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education 2011).

STINT, the Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education, was set up as independent endowment foundation by an act of the Swedish Parliament in 1994. The mission of the Foundation is to enhance the quality and competence of Swedish higher education and research through international cooperation. The Foundation is a hub of competence in international cooperation on research and higher education and has a network extending around the globe. It offers Swedish academia a portfolio of various grant and scholarship programmes.

# Empirical data and methodology

## Call for proposals

One of STINT's experiences in over 15 years of promoting internationalisation from the policy side has been a keen demand from benefactors for bottom-up funding, i.e. funding for individual researchers to conduct projects with the minimum of external interference. Almost all funding from STINT was used for these types of activities, even though there was an aim to foster a more institutional type of international collaboration. A study of university leadership positions in terms of internationalisation revealed them to be quite interested, albeit weak in terms of resources, actual management power and ambition to drive institutional change (Göthenberg et al. 2012).

In the light of this, the Strategic Grants for Internationalisation programme was launched. Its aim was to contribute to the renewal and development of internationalisation strategies at university level and the following four project selection criteria were determined:

- A. The anticipated contribution of the university's activities to strategic internationalisation, i.e. in what ways the project will help in the short and long terms to strengthen the university's international competitiveness in research and/or training and which groups at the university will be affected (various disciplines, researchers, lecturers and students).
- B. The level of renewal in regard to internationalisation in the project and/or forms of international cooperation and potential of the project.
- C. The university leadership's commitment to and involvement in the implementation.
- D. The project proposal's planning and approval, such as quality and level of clarity in the project plan, plus the anticipated benefit in relation to the size of the investment.

Among the formal requirements was 50 percent co-funding and each university president/vice-chancellor was allowed to submit up to two proposals. Project duration was restricted to two years and public funding of the project was limited to EUR 115,000.<sup>1</sup>

The first call was published in December 2011 and closed in the end of

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<sup>1</sup> An exchange rate of EUR 1.00 = SEK 8.70 has been used in this paper.

March 2012. Out of 47 theoretically eligible university president/vice-chancellors, 20 submitted a total of 31 proposals. All the applications and applicants are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: **Applicants and application titles.**

Applicant	Application title(s)	Size of university *)
Lund University	Creating visual Media Resources For The Global Classroom Swedish Excellence seminars	4 985
University of Gothenburg	“Global Learning” – education and research co-operation between the University of Hong Kong in China and the University of Gothenburg in Sweden RFI – Regionally Focused Internationalisation – South Asia	4 177
Uppsala University	International Network for Studies on Risk, Uncertainty and Fear International internship exchange programme between Uppsala University and partner universities	4 034
Karolinska Institutet	Leading for Change in Global Health Professional Education Internationalization of research and Education Through Distance Education And double Degree	3 637
University of Stockholm	Engagement for Global Challenges	3 355
Umeå University	Language, Cognition and Learning: <i>Lifting, Motivating And Supporting All</i> Development of a Platform For International And Bilateral Collaboration: Umeå University and the University of Wollongong	3 134
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	The Global Challenges University Alliance	2 609
KTH – Royal Institute of Technology	3+1+1 Integrated Sino-Swedish Engineering Education KTH-IDEA	2 413
Chalmers University of Technology	Climate adaptation and Sustainable Change – Global Perspectives Through Local Contexts Chalmers China Internships	1 765

Applicant	Application title(s)	Size of university *)
Linnaeus University	Linnaeus Summer Academy Scholarship Fundraising Project	1 495
Malmö University	Positioning Malmö University in a Global Learning Environment in Higher Education Creating Input from Below for Malmö University's Internationalization Strategy International Week	1 191
Luleå University of Technology	Barents Cooperation Center	1 015
Mälardalen University	Global – Regional Cooperation	755
Jönköping University	Putting Knowledge to Work: Developing the Scholarship of Application Shaping the Future Of Entrepreneurship Research And Education	623
Dalarna University	North-South Collaboration in e-learning Reducing Maternal And Child Mortality In Somaliland: Implementing Web-Based Education At Advanced Level Within Sexual, Reproductive an Perinatal Health	584
University of Borås	Strategic Internationalisation at University of Borås	555
University West	Internationalisation strategies for Work Integrated Learning	472
Blekinge Institute of Technology	International students “in real life” at BTH	452
Royal College of Music in Stockholm	China–Europe International Music School (CEIMS): Shaping the future for Global Music Production, Consumption and Governance	172
The Red Cross University College	Intercultural Peer Learning in nursing education	50

\*) Size is presented based on the full time equivalent number of teaching and research staff (Source: Swedish National Agency for Higher Education 2011)

## Case study approach

This is a study of one case, i.e. the results of the 2011/12 call, Strategic Grants for Internationalisation. The use of the case study research method (cf. Eisenhardt 1989) is in line with other attempts to increase knowledge on institutional internationalisation. Central to the case study approach is that each case serves as a distinct experiment. However, in comparison to laboratory experiments, the possibilities to isolate the phenomena from the context are limited. Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007:25–26) argue that “building theory from cases is likely to produce theory that is accurate, interesting, and testable.”

The proposals were mapped against the lists of activities and rationales, thus creating large matrices with 31 applications in one dimension and activities plus rationales in the other. One additional aspect was studied in addition to the activities and rationales: Does the application address internationalisation at home, the development of a bilateral collaboration or the development of a network for international collaboration?

The main difficulty relating to the mapping exercise was that the rationales and activities are more or less explicitly described in the proposals. A guiding principle in this study was to include only those activities and rationales explicitly mentioned in the application.

Proposals respond to the call text and the postulated criteria and are thus not a true reflection of what the university management considers most important. An initial sanity check involved comparing the criteria with the activities and rationales used for the analysis. This check indicated no direct correlation. The criteria are a cause of further bias, but this was deemed to be relatively limited as the call was very open. The fact that some applicants required their applications to be treated confidentially underlines how the proposals represented critical, strategic ideas. However, one definite bias introduced by the call requirements involved the budget and time restrictions which exclude larger or longer initiatives.

One specific aspect probably influencing the content of the applications comes from a change in the institutional context; the introduction of tuition fees. This had a significant impact on student recruitment and has probably been a semi-permanent item on universities' agendas since com-

ing into force. To allow assessment of the applicability of results emanating from this study, a few characteristics of the Swedish university landscape have therefore been provided under the section Universities in Sweden and the role of STINT.

A further potential bias comes from the sampling method. There is a risk that a certain type of university will have responded to the call. However, any bias was considered to be small, especially as a large number of eligible universities responded and showed great variety of size, age, profile and location.

Finally, as in all externally (co-)funded calls there is a risk that projects are proposed just because there is additional funding available. There is a delicate balancing act for a funding agency between funding projects which would not otherwise have been carried out and funding those of core interest to the applicants (cf. Nelson 1959). Several of the proposed projects appear slightly more risky in nature than the usual activities conducted at the universities.

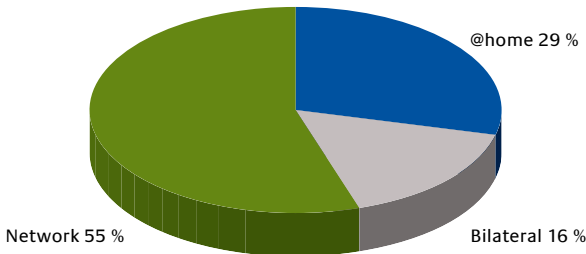
As in all case studies, the generalisation of the findings has limitations. Given the above potential biases and especially the specificities of the Swedish university system, the results of a similar study in another country may be quite different. Therefore the stability of the proposed revised theoretical framework should be questioned and tested with further data.

The data analysis is presented in the next section.

# Analysis – strategic internationalisation in Sweden 2012

Almost one third of the received applications addressed internationalisation at home, with activities mainly targeting better management of international students and including initiatives to involve international students in improving the routines. Other proposed types of activities at home were initiatives to improve the HEI's profile area with international support and summer courses for national and international students. The projects involving external relations were largely aimed at establishing or reinforcing networks, cf. Figure 1.

Figure 1: **Types of internationalisation projects.**



The various figures below illustrate how the applications incorporated the activities and rationales listed in the theoretical framework. An overview of the focal areas targeted in the applications is given in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Figure 2: **Activity categories mentioned**

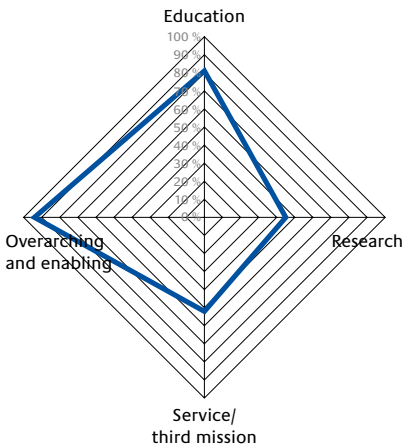


Figure 3: **Rationale categories mentioned**

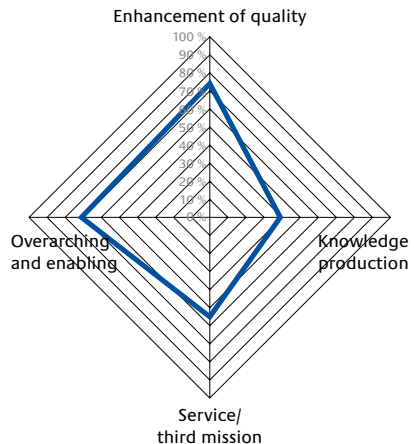
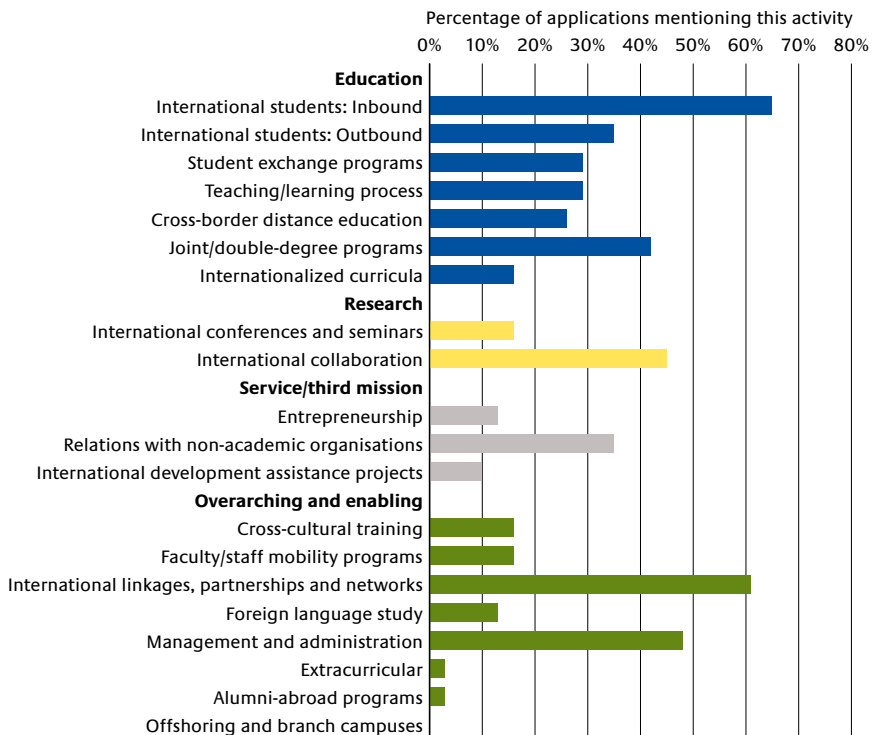


Figure 2 indicates that education-related activities are more frequently mentioned than activities relating to Research or Service/third mission and that almost all applications mentioned some activity of an overarching or enabling nature. The pattern in Figure 3 is similar, indicating that Enhancement of quality was most frequently mentioned among the rationales.

Sometimes internationalisation is considered to be international students and not much more. International students: Inbound was also the most frequently mentioned activity among the applications, cf. Figure 4. Another typical, simplified conceptualisation of internationalisation is to reduce it to international collaboration between HEIs. This simplification is also supported by the data as such activities also were among the most frequently mentioned activities. A lot less attention is normally given to internal activities to strengthen capacity for managing internationalisation. However, according to the applications, almost 50 percent included such activities.

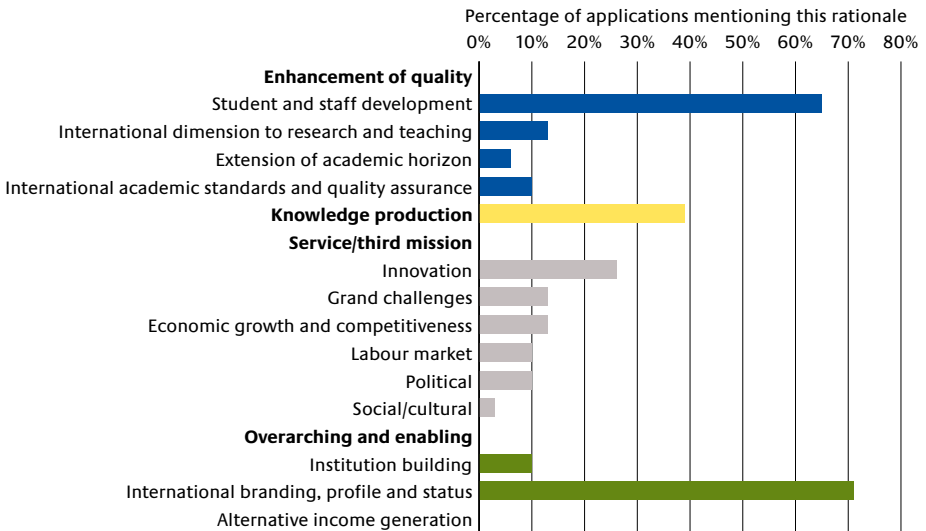
Figure 4: **Activities mentioned in the applications**





The top rationale was International branding, profile and status, which was mentioned in more than 70 percent of applications, cf. Figure 5. This was followed by the broad rationales of Student and staff development and Knowledge production. Various Service/third mission rationales, in particular Innovation, were also mentioned to some extent in the applications.

Figure 5: Rationales mentioned in the applications



The applications differ a lot in terms of ambitions and scope, even though most of them had approximately the same budget volume. As shown in the histograms of Figure 6 and Figure 7, 3–5 activities and 2–3 rationales were typically mentioned in an application.

Figure 6:  
**Number of activities per application**

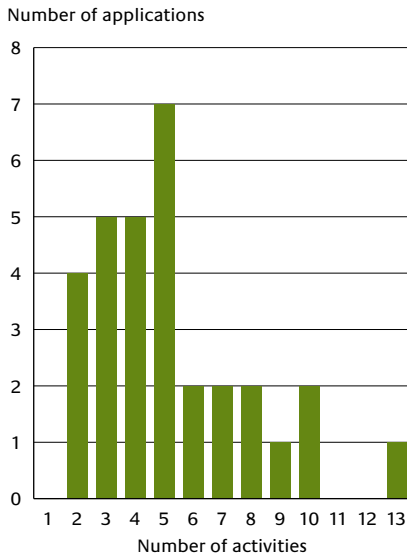
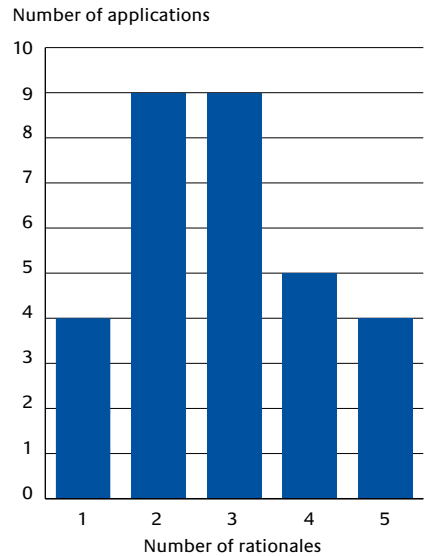


Figure 7:  
**Number of rationales per application**



The heat maps in Figure 8 and Figure 9 illustrate correlations between activities and rationales. In Figure 8, the number of applications mentioning a specific combination of activity and rationale is given in relation to the total number of applications mentioning this activity, whereas in Figure 9, the calculation is made in relation to the total number of applications mentioning a specific rationale. Two examples: In Figure 8, among the 20 applications mentioning the activity International students: Inbound, all (100 percent) mentioned the rationale International dimension to research and teaching. Among the 12 applications mentioning the rationale Knowledge production, 92 percent included the activity International collaboration, cf. Figure 9.

Figure 8 illustrates, amongst other things, that Grand challenges were predominantly addressed by research-type activities.

Figure 8: Rationales by activity

Rationales by activity	Student and staff development	International dimension to research and teaching	Knowledge production	Innovation	Grand challenges	Economic growth and competitive-ness	International branding, profile and status
International students: Inbound	65%	20%	35%	20%	10%	15%	75%
International students: Outbound	91%	27%	64%	27%	18%	9%	82%
Student exchange programs	89%	33%	67%	11%	11%	0%	78%
Teaching/ learning process	78%	0%	0%	22%	0%	11%	89%
Cross-border distance education	100%	13%	38%	0%	0%	0%	75%
Joint/double-degree programs	85%	15%	62%	23%	15%	0%	92%
Internationalized curricula	80%	20%	60%	40%	0%	20%	100%
International research conferences and seminars	60%	40%	100%	20%	80%	0%	60%
International research collaboration	71%	14%	79%	29%	29%	0%	64%
Relations with non-academic organisations	73%	18%	18%	36%	9%	36%	82%
Cross-cultural training	100%	0%	20%	40%	20%	20%	60%
Faculty/staff mobility programs	100%	0%	60%	40%	0%	0%	40%
International linkages, partnerships and networks	63%	11%	58%	32%	16%	5%	74%
Management and administration	73%	13%	27%	27%	7%	13%	73%

Figure 9: Activities by rationale

Activities by rationale	Student and staff development	International dimension to research and teaching	Knowledge production	Innovation	Grand challenges	Economic growth and competitiveness	International branding, profile and status
International students: Inbound	65%	100%	58%	50%	50%	75%	68%
International students: Outbound	50%	75%	58%	38%	50%	25%	41%
Student exchange programs	40%	75%	50%	13%	25%	0%	32%
Teaching/ learning process	35%	0%	0%	25%	0%	25%	36%
Cross-border distance education	40%	25%	25%	0%	0%	0%	27%
Joint/double-degree programs	55%	50%	67%	38%	50%	0%	55%
Internationalized curricula	20%	25%	25%	25%	0%	25%	23%
International research conferences and seminars	15%	50%	42%	13%	100%	0%	14%
International research collaboration	50%	50%	92%	50%	100%	0%	41%
Relations with non-academic organisations	40%	50%	17%	50%	25%	100%	41%
Cross-cultural training	25%	0%	8%	25%	25%	25%	14%
Faculty/staff mobility programs	25%	0%	25%	25%	0%	0%	9%
International linkages, partnerships and networks	60%	50%	92%	75%	75%	25%	64%
Management and administration	55%	50%	33%	50%	25%	50%	50%

Finally, an attempt was made to investigate whether the university size (and in most cases the related age – an old university is normally a large university) correlates to certain activities or rationales. The applicants were divided into three groups based on their staff numbers, cf. Table 6.

Table 6: **Size groups**

Size *)	Group label	Number of applications
Above 3,000	L (large)	11
1,000–3,000	M (medium)	10
Below 1,000	S (small)	10

\*) Size is presented based on the FTE number of teaching and research staff (Source: Swedish National Agency for Higher Education 2011)

As Figure 10 and Figure 11 indicate, there does not appear to be a systematic correlation between size and activities or rationales. The only great difference is the absence of applications from medium-sized universities mentioning activities relating to Teaching/learning process and Cross-border distance education programs. Another potentially systematic difference is the higher level of interest in Management and administration among the smaller organisations.

Figure 10: **Activities in relation to university size**

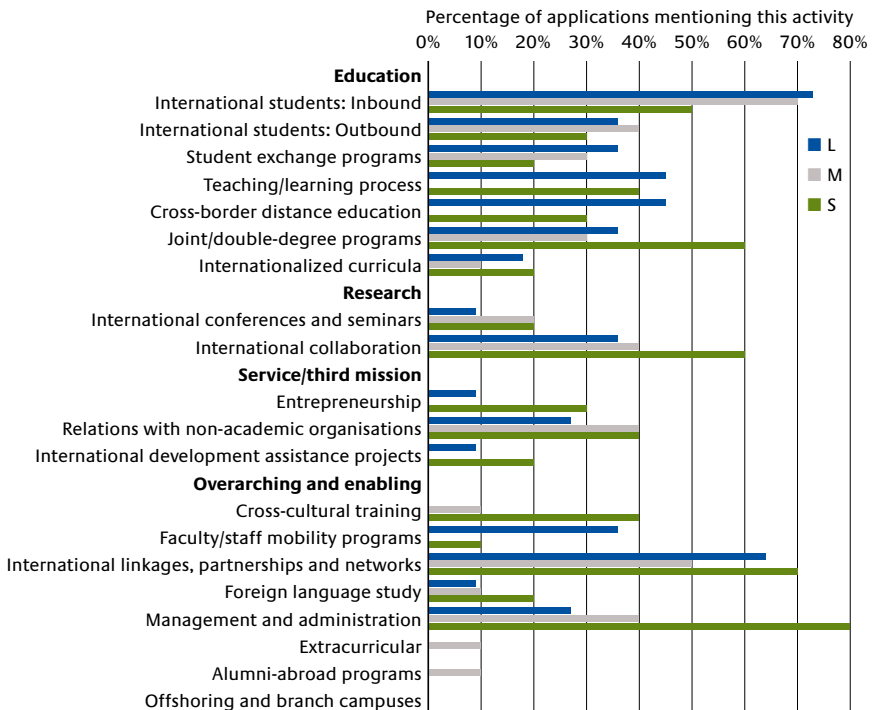
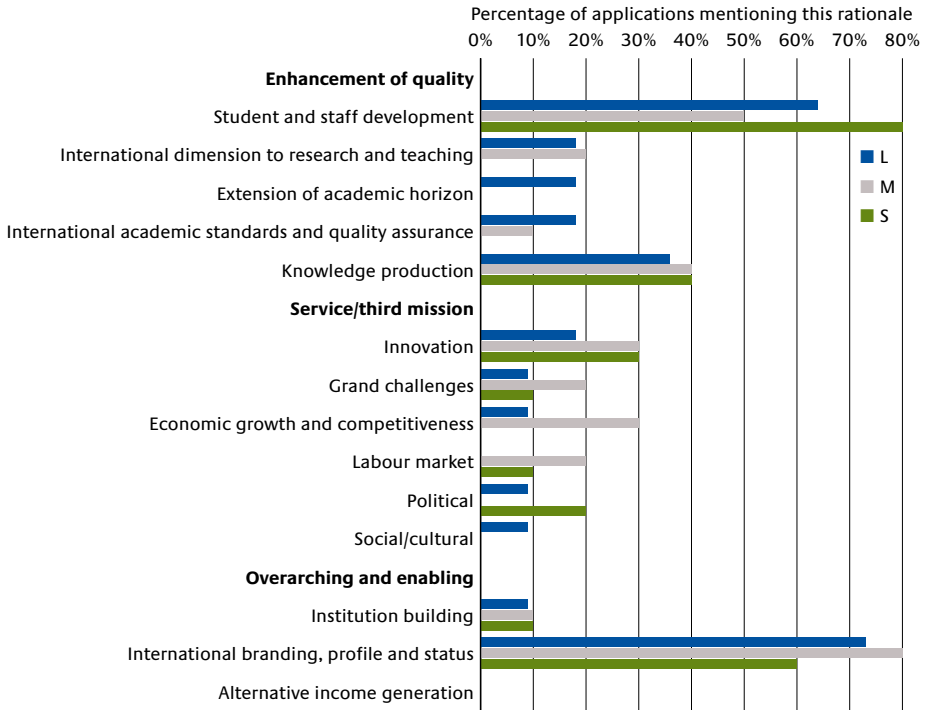


Figure 11: Rationales in relation to university size



## Discussion

### The Swedish case

Data indicates that the top priority for several university presidents/vice-chancellors is internationalisation of education. Given that international collaboration is natural in most research domains, there may be a greater need for senior management to engage in educational issues. It could be argued that research collaborations are largely organised according to a bottom-up process, whereas educational collaborations need more support from senior management at the university.

The most common rationale mentioned in the applications was branding. Contributing to this result is probably the ongoing change towards more competition for funding and the new and more difficult situation when it comes to attracting international students. Branding is also important in the market for international students and there is, consequently, a link between the domination of educational activities and branding rationales.

Innovation, i.e. various measures to ensure the implementation and use of new concepts and ideas emanating from research, is a relatively common rationale. The involvement of firms in internationalisation efforts is interesting and challenging, especially as it introduces intellectual property issues. The structure of Swedish industry, with a few large multinational firms carrying out the majority of research and development, may be one contributing factor to this rationale.

In general, the applications do not mention many rationales behind internationalisation. One explanation is that the writers of the applications may consider it obvious that internationalisation is “good”. However, consistent with the perspective used in this study (that internationalisation is just one tool to improve fulfilment of universities’ missions), there is clearly a need to explain why a certain activity is proposed.

The analysis of the data, particularly the heat maps (Figure 8 and Figure 9), indicates that efforts to internationalise education are expected to lead to quality improvement. On a general level, this can be interpreted as international inspiration; benchmarking and collaboration are closely related to increased quality in research and higher education. On the more specific

level, de Wit (2009) states that quality assurance of international education is a challenge and that there is a need for methods and improvements.

Offshoring and branch campuses are the cause of much discussion but, according to the study, no action in Sweden. One explanation might be that the modest budget volume allowed for in the project proposals made it impossible to accommodate such endeavours. Another potential explanation is that only few universities in the world have the resources and ambitions to establish branch campuses and that these are not located in Sweden.

Finally, there is no clear connection between size and the type of internationalisation proposed. The smaller universities might be expected to have a greater need to invest in branding, but this is not confirmed by the data set. Some of the newer universities have a tradition of teaching large numbers of foreign students. This has contributed to the overall volume (and probably also to the financial situation of these new universities) which, amongst other things, often have a larger burden of overheads. The introduction of tuition fees has resulted in a dramatic reduction in international students and it is therefore unsurprising that several of the new small or medium-sized universities are focusing on international students.

### **The theoretical framework**

The framework in Knight (2007) consists of 32 activities (when clustering all organisational strategies into one activity) and 30 rationales. It aims to cover the national, sector and institutional levels. The modified framework proposed in this paper has fewer activities and rationales, divided in two hierarchical levels. Apart from the new hierarchy, one new activity and two new rationales were added; Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Grand challenges. The activity International students was split into two new ones; Inbound students and Outbound students.

The data mapping indicates that two activities and one rationale are mentioned in almost all applications. This might indicate the need for them to be split or at least for a narrower definition to obtain more precision in the data analysis.



Based on this first and very limited test a few preliminary findings may be advanced in relation to the modified framework:

- it is compact and thus (depending on the purpose) quite easy to use;
- it updates the sets of activities and rationales reflecting current trends in internationalisation;
- it has limited overlap between activities and rationales.

The relative strengths and weaknesses of frameworks of this type depend on their intended use. For the purpose of studies such as the present one, the modified framework appears to facilitate the analysis. However, for other purposes such as serving as a checklist when updating the institutions international strategy, an even longer and more detailed list than in Knight (2007) might be of interest. Still, regardless of the purpose, a reduction in overlap is always of interest. This study illustrates a singular need for further research to develop better definitions or at least descriptions of the activities and rationales.

## Conclusions

One aim of this paper was to derive a set of internationalisation activities and rationales on the institutional level. Following a review of previous literature, in particular Knight (2007), a modified set of activities and rationales has been developed. The modified framework has been used to analyse empirical data and it has been argued that the modified set of activities and rationales contributed to a structured discussion highlighting critical differences and similarities in the approaches to internationalisation. However, it has also been emphasised that the relative strengths and weaknesses of a framework depend on its intended use.

Another aim of the paper has been to describe the HEI leaderships' agenda for internationalisation in 2012. The data mapping revealed a wide variety of initiatives. Internationalisation of higher education was frequently mentioned in the applications and it was argued that internationalisation of education might need more top-down involvement than internationalisation of research. International branding and profile was the single most mentioned rationale among the applications. This is consistent with one of the emerging trends proposed by Knight (2007).

Finally, with reference to Salmi (2009), a few indications of bold visions and strong leadership could be traced in the data. Given the relatively long distance to cover for most Swedish HEIs to become "world-class", the rather modest ambitions exhibited in most applications underline the fact that university management is approaching internationalisation with realistic and relatively short-term goals.

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STINT's aims are to promote internationalisation as an instrument to:

- enhance the competitiveness of higher education institutions;
- assist Swedish higher education institutions in developing into attractive scholarly environments for Swedish and foreign researchers, teaching staff and students;
- stimulate change through new or alternative means of international collaboration.

STINT regards international contacts and real experience of working in foreign academia as a natural and necessary part of research and higher education.



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