



Navigating Global Engagement: Internationalization Policy Framework of the University of Gondar

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1 Introduction

The University of Gondar is a major and comprehensive university that provides post-secondary education at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. The university is the hub of the creation of new knowledge and ideas that drive the socio-economic development of Ethiopia. It also has wider interaction with universities and research institutes around the world, which enables it to fully leverage the benefits of internationalization by opening a world of opportunity to the institution, its faculty members, students, and staff at all campuses, and to the country as a whole.

In the coming 10 years, as one of the biggest universities in the country, the University of Gondar will strive to further integrate an international, intercultural, and global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of its research and education. The university will embed an international perspective in every layer of its operational structure. However, research activities including graduate programs of the university will be given the highest attention in the internationalization process so that faculty and students will gain exposure to different perspectives, develop intercultural competence, and operate appropriately in multicultural teams and environments. In addition, the internationalization process will enable our staff and students to be flexible, curious, tolerant, and adaptable, which in turn will help them to have better jobs and careers in the competitive world. This positions the University to compete successfully in the current global knowledge environment.

For the past ten years, it is acknowledged that the University of Gondar has been playing a leadership role in internationalization by bringing talented students (via scholarships and self-sponsorship), hiring expatriate staff, collaborative research, and internationalizing curricula. For the next ten years, the university will continue its efforts of internationalization by aligning with its teaching and learning framework, its research strategy framework, its public engagement/community service framework, and its other strategic plans. With this spirit, UoG will continue strengthening its internationalization efforts through the following strategic initiatives and activities.

2 Expected Outcomes

In ten years, we would like to achieve the following outcomes.

2.1 Theme1: Attracting international students

The university currently has both graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in its different programs from different nationalities ranging from Djibouti to South Sudan to Somalia to Eritrea. In the past few years, in collaboration with the Mastercard Foundation, UoG has been able to attract students from different countries in Africa. In the next ten years, the university would like to expand the number of international students beyond the neighboring countries and attract more graduate international students. A critical mass of international students is

needed in order to positively impact the campus environment. International students are an important resource as they create educational and cultural experiences for the community. The connections and contacts of our students and staff with international students would help them to prepare themselves to be effective global citizens and leaders. To facilitate this internationalization process, the university may create an international admission division.

2.2 Theme 2: Attracting international researchers and grants

The University of Gondar has a rich experience in research and scientific activities. A number of organizations that rank universities in terms of publication and citations of their research consistently put the University of Gondar among the top lists in Africa. Building on this experience, the university would like to strengthen its research capacity and produce cutting-edge research and discoveries that solve social, economic, health, environmental, and political problems of our globe. In doing this, the University of Gondar, in the next ten years, would like to see itself as one of the top ten universities in Africa in terms of publications, innovation, and scientific discoveries. The university believes that this vision will be achieved through becoming the research hub for international researchers and students across the globe. The university will strengthen its academic think tanks, research centers, and laboratories so that a conducive research environment is created for our students, faculty members, and guest researchers. When necessary, the university will create new centers and platforms that could help facilitate the internationalization process/activities related to research. For example, the university may establish a Global Health Institute so that it attracts global health researchers, donors, and development agencies that work to prevent future pandemics, address current health-related challenges in Africa and the globe, and tackle policy and health governance issues.

In the next ten years, we envision that UoG will be the main destination for international scholars, researchers, and scientists to teach, research, and speak at our university events. To achieve this vision, the university will have yearly international/global symposiums on selected issues so that global researchers and scientists will flock to attend our international events.

The university will provide effective leadership for strengthening research collaborations with international partners, particularly emphasizing interdisciplinary research activities. Benchmarked against our peers, UoG will continue to excel in research collaborations with international partners. Graduate and undergraduate students will benefit from enhanced opportunities to participate in international research collaborations. To facilitate international collaborative research and grant-making, the university will assign an IT staff member who will make international grant information, professional opportunities, and other externally funded programs available and share them on the UoG's website.

The university will also prepare an International Working Group annual award for recognizing and supporting faculty interdisciplinary working groups in order to increase faculty engagement in international activities.

2.3 Theme 3: Aiming for global impact: partnerships

Partnerships with other countries or universities offer great opportunities to internationalize colleges or universities. The exchange of students, sending staff and students to study abroad, and recruiting international researchers and students will remain the first priority for most institutional alliances.

To increase staff and student mobility across different countries and institutions, UoG will continue partnering with universities from different countries and regions. In the past ten years, UoG has partnered with a number of universities, mostly from North America and Europe. This partnership has enabled many of our staff members to receive their master's and doctoral degrees, as well as collaborate on multiple grand research projects intended to solve the world's most pressing issues, such as global health, nutrition, poverty, inequality, and education, among others. In the next ten years, the university will expand its partnerships with universities in neighboring countries, Asia, and other African countries. This geographic expansion will help our university enhance its global impact through more collaborative research programs, staff and student mobility, and the establishment of joint programs and curricula. For example, the university will collaborate with universities in neighboring countries to provide our students with international internships or allow our faculty to spend up to a semester in research and academic institutions in these countries. We will develop a more formal system to assess the effectiveness and outcomes of international learning and research activities that the university will undertake.

2.4 Theme 4: Expansion of education abroad opportunities

UoG is establishing formal relationships with universities around the world. We will look to take advantage of these partnerships by linking classes with similar focuses through technology, considering dual degree initiatives, and utilizing partners' logistical and instructional assistance. In the next 10 years, UoG will strive to open more PhD programs that have a collaborative nature with our international partners. Such collaborative programs will facilitate the mobility of our students and staff, collaborative research activities, and other academic-related activities. We will also strengthen the existing PhD programs and departments by connecting them with our current partners in North America and Europe. This will provide opportunities for many of our students and faculty/staff to study, teach, research, or pursue service learning and internship opportunities in these locations.

As a support to the above-mentioned activities, the university will open a foreign language study center so that our students and faculty have the opportunity to develop their language skills essential for their study and research activities abroad. The language center will provide training in major languages such as English, French, Spanish, Arabic, and German. For example, our history PhD students who want to spend a semester or more at a French university to study the medieval period of Gondar, taking a French course would enable them to use materials and books written in French. The program will recognize students and faculty/staff

who engage in foreign language learning, education abroad, and participate in global service learning and co-curricular activities.

3 Policies and strategies

In the coming few years, UoG's internationalization activities will be led by a more coordinated, formal, and institutionalized system. It will establish offices and centers, develop policies and strategies, and make institutional arrangements that foster international collaborative research, curriculum, and related practical training. The university will use the ESDP V strategies and recommendations for internationalization as a baseline. ESDP V has a number of points and strategies that are pertinent to the UoG's goal of internationalization. The following points are more relevant.

1. Each university will have an international collaboration strategy and will open an international liaison office; UoG will have this office.
2. The percentage of research funds secured from industry and international sources will reach 50%. For the coming ten years, UoG will strive to attract international research grants from foreign institutions and partner organizations that surpass its annual research budget allocated by the government.
3. The share of joint research programs undertaken in collaboration with non-Ethiopian universities will be 20%. By evaluating its current collaborative research and taking the ESDP V recommendations, UoG will work to achieve the 20 percent mark even more in the coming few years.

3.1 Strategic Considerations

As recommended by Green (2005) and the Internationalization Strategy of the University of Waterloo, Adapa (2013, pp. 8–9), the following seven strategic considerations can be identified for effective internationalization of research and academic activities at the University of Gondar:

- a) Clear institutional commitment—internationalization of research shall be articulated in the essential documents of the institution, such as its mission statement, strategic plan, various policies and procedures pertinent to the activities of the main institutional units, university website, prospectus, etc. Internationalization has to be clearly identified as one of the top priorities of the institution. Articulating commitment also requires the institution to undertake a periodic assessment of its internationalization activities, examining progress, shortcomings, and potential for improvement.
- b) Institutional mechanisms: crafting proper policies and procedures to provide seed funding and other forms of support for international initiatives; reporting mechanisms to identify and keep track of international research projects in order to consider them in fundraising priorities; and setting guidelines to ensure part of the overhead gains are reinvested in similar initiatives all play important roles. The presence of dedicated human resources, such as offices

responsible for the various activities of internationalization or campus-wide standing committees, along with the necessary resources, including office space, mechanisms of communication, etc.

c) Marketing: showcasing the research and scholarly strength of the university to other institutions, international researchers, potential donors, alumni, etc. by participating as well as organizing relevant academic conferences and by advertising in journals and other scholarly publication outlets. Marketing also works internally. Effective communication of internationalization agendas and activities, use of the university website, group email, newsletter, bulletin, etc. to reach out to faculty and researchers to keep them informed of internationalization activities and update them on opportunities plays a crucial role.

d) Support system: Faculty are the ones who will be directly involved in international research; hence, they have to be supported, motivated, and rewarded for achievements in this specific area. The professional development of faculty with respect to international engagement has to be institutionally supported by earmarking resources for this specific purpose. Organizing workshops on how internationalization works and how to engage in international research collaborations, providing technological support, flexibility to accommodate study abroad or research visits, support in grant writing, etc. constitute the kind of institutional support needed to promote the internationalization of research.

e) Incentive schemes: Establish a reward system for performance review, promotion, and tenure of staff that acknowledges participation and excellence in international research. There should also be an institutional mechanism in place that supports and incentivizes faculty and researchers to apply for and obtain external funding for research. In light of promoting the internationalization of research, it is possible to set varying incentives to provide more reward for international grants or for those done in collaboration with foreign institutions or colleagues compared to other domestic sources.

f) Support for young professionals: In addition to using international research engagement as a criterion for promotion and/or other forms of reward, UoG will invest in supporting its junior faculty. Creating a system that especially encourages graduate students and early-career researchers to be involved in international research projects not only helps to enhance their capacities but also ensures continuity of international engagement at the institutional level.

g) Overall international environment: we will have to make sure that there is enough support for attracting international students (more at the graduate level concerning research) and for international activities on campus that generate exposure to global issues. Organizing on-campus international events, such as speaker's series on international issues, communication of international research, integration activities for international students, etc., as well as opportunities for [graduate] students to participate in international events, such as conferences, colloquia, research visits, study abroad, etc., are some of the mechanisms to support the internationalization of research.

Finally, in such an internationalization process, UoG will frame its strategies from its own point of strength. Although it is important to learn from the experiences of other institutions, UoG will need to look into its own advantage to negotiate partnerships and collaborations. For example, UoG can identify its niche areas of research advantage, which can be of interest for potential partner institutions, donors, and research funding agencies. However, it is equally important to strike a balance between ensuring that the research agenda is locally rooted and focused on addressing the issues and problems of the country, and the local environment, vis-à-vis crafting research programs that are merely driven by international aspirations.

3.2 Teaching-Learning: Producing skilled human resource for the changing economy

Since the 1950s, the University of Gondar has a rich history of producing skilled manpower that makes a significant difference to their local and global communities. By providing quality education, the University has been the main supplier of skilled labor to the market, ranging from medical doctors to economists to engineers and social scientists. By recognizing and honoring the developmental path we have followed, in the next ten years, UoG will position itself to pursue excellence in scholarship, creative expression, and research that address the important problems and questions facing our community, our country, and the world.

As our country's economy is changing and transforming, our way of academic training and the manpower we produce should be in line with these changes. Our graduates must have the skill and capacity to serve the needs of the changing economy as well as social transformations. Beyond our borders, here at home, global forces are impacting society and changing the nature of work. The emergence of the knowledge-based economy requires workers with strong basic skills and higher levels of education than ever before. All of these forces create challenges and opportunities for the University of Gondar.

Accordingly, over the course of the next ten years, we can expect to see dramatic changes in the way we deliver learning, teaching, and student support as a result of the rapid uptake of technologies. Our teaching-learning process will also focus on practical and experiential learning, where our students will be connected to industries, organizations, and communities through internships and research activities. The university will strive to provide students with a more personalized learning experience through the use of technologies such as artificial intelligence, cognitive computing, adaptive learning, and data analytics. With the emergence of the knowledge-based economy and the speed of change that will impact every workplace, it has never been more important to ensure students acquire the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to succeed in their chosen career path.

In the next ten years we expect to see:

- Strong academic programs promoting the uptake of technology-enhanced pedagogies that enable students to fit the 21st century labor market
- There is a strong focus on graduate programs (Masters, PhDs, and other advanced training). Since the UoG is designated as a research university by the government, strengthening graduate programs will be the university's central task in the years ahead. We will prepare platforms that engage our graduate students in innovative research, scholarly, and creative activities. Research centers, think tanks, lab units, institutes, and departments will be structured and organized in a way that enables graduate students and faculty to conduct interdisciplinary, innovative, and cutting-edge research.
- The university will mobilize resources from donors, grant-giving agencies, private companies, the government, and its internal budget, and set scholarship funds to attract talented graduate students as well as enhance equity by supporting those with financial problems. By the end of the tenth year, we expect up to 20 percent of our graduate students and 10 percent of our undergrad students to receive some sort of financial support. This plan will enable the university to help students with lower socio-economic status, promote gender equity by supporting female students, and increase graduate output.
- Enhance the balance in academic programming available to students through the development and establishment of additional professional, career-oriented, and interdisciplinary programs that respond to the growing student and societal interest in these programs. In the next ten years, the UoG will expand opportunities where students, both graduate and undergraduate, can build their academic horizons and skills through taking courses, certified training, and research activities outside of their own department or college. For example, a health science student can take one or two extra courses in social science or computational sciences if he or she thinks that it helps enhance his or her skills and knowledge.
- In the coming ten years, the university will work and expects up to 75 percent of students to join departments of their first choice. We believe that students succeed in their future careers if they join departments of their choice, instead of rationing students to available departments.
- The university will move away from accepting students based on central placement to selecting them based on standardized exams. The university will prepare its own standardized exam to admit undergraduate students.
- In the next ten years, the university expects to increase the stock of PhD holders and professors. We expect that up to 50 percent of our staff will have a PhD degree by the end of the next ten years. In order to achieve this, we will use several measures. 1) Strengthen our current PhD programs so that more of our current academic staff join such programs. 2) open more PhD programs in the coming years and encourage our academic staff to join them. 3) encourage departments and faculty to organize and structure PhD programs to be completed in a shorter period of time, for example, in three years. 4) sending our faculty to study abroad. 5) running joint PhD programs with our international partners so that we reduce the problems related to advisorship, resources, and research materials. 6) encourage and support female academicians to join PhD programs by reducing organizational constraints and systemic barriers.

- Strengthen institutional support and recognition for research, scholarly, creative, and innovative activities conducted by faculty, students, and staff across the university. This will be done by preparing an annual science award and promotion program. The university will set up a standing committee that prepares the annual science award program and provides recognition for innovations and impactful research activities that our students and faculty conduct.
- In the next ten years, we will enhance the visibility and reputation of scientific journals run by the University of Gondar.
- Prepare summer school programs where high school students and college graduates spend weeks and months at the University of Gondar by taking certified skill-based training (e.g., STEM-related), leadership training, and life skills and career experience.

3.3 ICT infrastructure

Information, communication, and technology services at the University of Gondar are increasingly becoming part and parcel of every operation. Research, teaching and learning, conferences, and other academic activities are supported by the ICT infrastructure. A successful future for the institution relies on the ability to grow IT capabilities and provide the necessary support to all functions of the university. In the coming years, the university will strengthen its ICT infrastructure so as to further enrich teaching and learning opportunities, expand research and innovation capabilities, and develop more efficient administration systems. Accordingly, in the coming decade, the university expects to achieve the following outcomes:

- ✓ Establish a cohesive set of information systems, tools, and services to meet researchers' current and evolving needs.
- ✓ develop and implement redundant, reliable, efficient, and state-of-the-art ICT infrastructure systems to improve the limited ICT services, which include mail, internet, data storage, website services, scattered automation projects, user support, and help desk
- ✓ Develop research data management tools and processes to enhance the storage and sharing of research data and collaboration within the university and beyond.
- ✓ Enhance services and support for data science, aligned with evolving research needs, including machine learning, image processing, visualization, and predictive analytics.
- ✓ Assemble a flexible ecosystem of teaching and learning technologies, services, and facilities to support a broad range of learning modes and teaching methods.
- ✓ Provide a complete set of information systems and services to support the administrative activities and decision-making of the university in a user-friendly and efficient manner.
- ✓ Maximize the safety and security of the UoG through digital transformation, which includes AI cameras, digital ID, information, and cyber security infrastructure.
- ✓ Develop and maximize community services through technology by providing ICT facilities and developing platforms for the external community. These include the establishment of a technology incubation center, the provision of short-term technology

trainings, the establishment of an international certification center, the provision of community digital library facilities, the provision of IT-enabled services for other government offices in the region, and the provision of access to Internet services.

- ✓ Provide common tools and approaches in support of colleges and departments eliminating paper forms and records as part of the processes.
- ✓ Develop an IT risk management methodology.

3.4 Technology transfer and community engagement

As part of its University of Gondar's technology transfer and Innovation plan, we will focus on the following strategic Issue.

- **Foster entrepreneurship:** The University of Gondar will promote entrepreneurial issues, in addition to education and research, through university-industry cooperation, the transformation of the research into a commercial value, creating economic value for the city in which the university is located, and the contribution of entrepreneurial enterprises to the economy of both graduates and faculty members by establishing new university-affiliated enterprises and spinoff companies through entrepreneurial actions and integrating these activities with the technology business incubation center available at the university.
- **Encourage collaboration with the private sector and industries:** In today's competitive environment, the University of Gondar will develop new win-win partnerships with leading companies, foundations, and other research-intensive institutions. These partnerships are not just about transferring knowledge from the lab to practice. It can provide critical funding for talented faculty and students to pursue foundational research, enable students and faculty to exchange ideas with the very best minds inside and outside the academy, and perhaps most importantly, help prepare students to be practitioners and professionals.
- **Increase Technology transfer and technological capabilities:** The University of Gondar will focus on building the technological capabilities of staff and students. Technological capabilities refer to the ability of staff or students (or other actors) to identify, choose, access, learn, understand, use, and create new technologies.
- **Strengthen the intellectual property (IP) rights protection system:** The University of Gondar will focus on and strengthen intellectual property rights protection systems since they are considered one of the essential mechanisms to enhance university-industry cooperation and the commercialization of research and innovation.
- **Support the development and commercialization of technology.** The University of Gondar will work on the commercialization of technology products, software and systems, patents, traditional medicines, local resources, and indigenous knowledge in R&D and innovations.
- **Develop incubation centers and enterprise hubs**

- **Strengthen STEM education and training.** The University of Gondar will place emphasis on informal educational initiatives with an integrative training approach that focuses on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to help students gain the skills required to succeed in today's challenging world. This helps the student's ability to think critically, solve complex problems, and drive advancements in science and technology. In the center, there will be a specialized learning facility that offers hands-on experience to local-area students who voluntarily and eagerly enroll in various age-appropriate programs, at no tuition fee for the students. In addition to this, UoG will launch the following programs as part of STEM activities:
 - Shared Science Campus Program
 - STEM Museum
 - Science Cafe
 - Fablab (fabrication laboratory)
 - STEM TV/Radio Program
 - Mobile STEM Lab
 - STEM Camp Program
 - Science Week

3.5 Infrastructure development

The university has invested more than seven billion birr in the past decade or so for the construction of different buildings and infrastructures to achieve its mission of implementing societal needs-tailored curricula, conducting problem-solving research and development, and strengthening community engagement and technology transfer.

For the next ten years, the university's direction will be:

- Build academic excellence, advanced research, and development centers as per international standards.
- Build a graduate house for MA and PhD students, which can serve as a residence, classroom, library, recreation, and R&D center.
- Build a residence for our faculty members. Staff housing will enable the university to retain and attract talented and experienced faculty members. By the end of the tenth year, we expect 75 percent of our faculty will have housing access.
- The university will have a multipurpose building in Addis Ababa, which will serve as a liaison office, a guest house, and classrooms for students, among others.
- A green environment and infrastructure around all campuses will also be our priorities.
- The university will also construct a building for oxygen production, wards (e.g., psychiatric ward, gynecologic ward, and cancer treatment center), and an administrative building for the hospital.
- All campuses will have clinic centers for students. Currently, our clinic centers are hosted in residence halls. In the next ten years, those clinics will have standard buildings and facilities.

- The university will also construct a career service center where graduating students and unemployed youths will have access to vocational and entrepreneurship training, career counseling, job fairs, and capacity building in soft skills, which are important for employability.
- Recreation and sports halls and centers will also be built on the main campus (Tewodros or Maraki Campus).
- The university will also build an exhibition hall where it will showcase its innovations, activities, and other related outputs to the public.
- To integrate our students with the local community, the university will encourage and support investors to build standard student residencies within the city. The university will collaborate with the owners of such residences so that interested students can rent rooms at fair prices.

3.6 Leadership and governance

Institutional leadership and governance are the key ingredients to successfully achieve the plans and strategies of the university. The university will set various procedures to encourage participative decision making, groom leadership, and exercise decentralized governance. In addition, the University management will strive to demonstrate greater accountability and transparency in all sorts of decision-making and operations. In the next decade, one can expect from the university:

- Build an open governance system where stakeholders can participate in decision-making. This can be done through a digitalized system.
- Creating a pool of young leaders equipped with leadership and management skills. The university will bring young, aspiring, committed, and energetic leaders to the forefront so as to serve the university in different capacities and structures. The university will prepare leadership training, mentorship programs, and a platform that encourages young professionals to play leadership roles.
- The university will work to bring more women into the leadership arena. Through providing leadership and capacity-building training, the university will work to balance the gender gap in leadership positions. Through the next ten years, we expect women leaders at the departmental, college, unit, and university levels to increase significantly, at least by the proportion of their numbers.
- The university will have zero tolerance for corruption, mismanagement, sexual harassment, nepotism, and favoritism. As an academic institute, the university has the mandate to serve and treat everyone equally regardless of their ethnicity, religion, background, gender, disability, and other forms of characteristics and conditions. The university will revise its current code of conduct and introduce new policies and regulations that will help prevent and control any form of corruption, mismanagement, and related governance issues. It will promote a positive working environment by tackling sexual harassment and any gender-related violence. The university will strengthen offices such as the gender office, the anti-corruption office, and the and the disability directorate, among others, through human resources, finance, and capacity.

- The university will establish a leadership center where it will provide training to our students, faculty, and young people outside the university. The center will enable the university to supply young leaders to the private sector, government offices, and other forms of organized entities.