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TO THE  
ACTION

REPORT

# MUTUAL INFLUENCE? UNIVERSITIES, CITIES AND THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONALISATION



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Scotland  
**Glasgow**

Ireland  
**Dublin**

Netherlands  
**Amsterdam**

Germany  
**Hannover**



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# FOREWORD

I often marvel at the role universities played in shaping medieval and early modern Europe.

The new institution of higher education, the university, was a driving force in the economic development of Europe – this much is widely recognised (Cantoni and Yuchtman, 2012).

But it was the way these institutions taught that to me was more striking. Subjects were taught in Latin, the lingua franca. Initially medieval universities did not have physical faculties; classes were taught wherever space was available, such as in churches or in homes. Students were given privileges (effectively subsidised training) and could travel and study for some time at one university, say Bologna, and later at another one, say Oxford. It was, in every sense, truly international. There was often competition between universities to secure the best and most popular teachers – the beginnings of education marketing.

Times have changed, but it is always good to know your history and to realise that internationalisation of our universities started long before globalisation. That said, globalisation has had an immense impact on the internationalisation process of our education sector as we currently know it. Higher education institutions compete in the international arena to attract the best international students, the best teaching and research staff and, of course, the biggest slice of the financial resources. Strong university brands have been developed in order to bring in international talent and promote multiculturalism.

The same goes for cities. Globalisation, internationalisation and urbanisation have allowed cities to compete with other cities around the world. The international image and reputation of a city is more important than ever and urban planners have adopted sophisticated marketing and PR strategies to attract skilled workers. All this generates revenue, fosters exchange and promotes cooperation.

We live in an era characterised by both globalisation and urbanisation with more than half of the world's people living in cities and towns. Universities and colleges are the global connectors of fast-evolving knowledge economies; cities are the beating hearts of innovation. 'Global Cities: Connecting talent, driving change' – this is the theme of Going Global 2017. Our urban-global age provides tertiary education institutions with unprecedented opportunities to mobilise their expertise, prepare young people for the future and drive forward research and policy agendas at an urban, national and global level.

Or is it the other way round? Do cities mobilise their knowledge and resources to drive forward the policy agendas of universities and colleges?

Or alternatively, is it a continuous process of mutual influence?

This report focuses on that question of mutual influence between higher education institutions and European cities by exploring the role of higher education institutions in the internationalisation strategy of four European cities (Amsterdam, Dublin, Hannover and Glasgow). Equally, it explores the role of city marketing in the internationalisation of higher education institutions.

Mutual influence? Or does one side gain more than the other?

***Bianka Stege***

***Director Education and Society, EU Region  
British Council***



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**This report is aimed at leaders and planners within universities and cities. It analyses university and city internationalisation activity within four medium-sized European cities: Amsterdam, Dublin, Glasgow and Hannover.**

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## SECTION ONE

**introduces the concept of ‘strategic internationalisation’:** activity that is targeted and tailored to place, positioning and partnerships. It is long-term, deliberate and part of a wider vision of the future of the city

## SECTION TWO

**provides a high-level overview of models of collaboration in the four cities.** The make-up of institutions and priorities differs from one city to another, and although universities and cities may have different missions and objectives, they can unite around the unique focal point of place that they both share. However, there is often initially a key individual, in many cases from the city, who brings people together.

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## SECTION THREE

**draws six findings from a series of interviews with key individuals in each city:**

1. Internationalisation is core business, a means to realising the broader development strategy of cities and universities. It is cross-cutting and seen as integral to future success.
2. Cities are rarely uniformly internationalised: there are pockets of activity (normally at the centre) and marginalised areas. City and university planners should work together to bring the benefits of internationalisation to marginalised parts of cities and their hinterland.
3. University staff and city officials share a good understanding of the city's position within the country and the wider region. Place is inextricably linked to identity, and to internationalisation.
4. Through a range of activities from cultural events to educating students, universities and cities are redefining the meaning of internationalisation.
5. Identifying and understanding areas of overlap is important for effective university-city cooperation. There are areas of mutual influence, such as marketing; there are areas of mutual dependence, such as housing; and there are often opportunities to work together on other strategic issues that make the most of local strengths.
6. Although cities can learn much from one another, models for collaboration should be developed locally by university and city leaders, rather than imported from 'best practice'.

## SECTION FOUR

**concludes that working together on internationalisation brings shared advantages for universities and cities, and that the positive collaborations outlined in this report are replicable in cities all over the world.** However, the international futures of universities and cities are threatened by populism and protectionism.

Leaders and planners will need to make the case for internationalisation and free movement of people. They need to measure and demonstrate the impact of their work. The social and economic benefits of internationalisation also need to be aligned and evenly distributed. The report concludes with ten recommendations for different audiences.

# **INTRODUCTION**

## INTERNATIONALISATION BRINGS SHARED ADVANTAGES FOR UNIVERSITIES AND CITIES

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# INTERNATIONALISATION IN ACTION

A walk around the city can be a tour of internationalisation in action. Crossing Pearse Street in Dublin, you can pop into Science Gallery Dublin (part of Trinity College Dublin) for a coffee and to browse the latest exhibition – on artificial intelligence, for example, with displays drawn from around the world. In Amsterdam you can take a stroll through the Buiksloterham district, a ‘living lab’ for the circular city with an emphasis on complete sustainability. Developed by research institutes, the city and its communities, it is an example of planning for the future attractiveness of the city. Stopping by Hannover’s Neues Rathaus, or New Town Hall, you might notice a plaque listing partner cities from Blantyre to Bristol. Although the plaque doesn’t mention it, many of these city links are mirrored in relationships between the universities. And walking down Renfrew Street in Glasgow you might be struck

by the concentration of arts and cultural institutions – from Glasgow School of Art to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland – and the diversity of performances and performers.

Cities and universities have often had a close relationship. And today, cities face new challenges and are being given greater responsibility, while universities are under increasing pressure to deliver activities beyond research and teaching, both locally and internationally. Research into the internationalisation activities of cities and universities, and particularly how they intersect, provides insight into how the two can work effectively together in the face of growing international competition.

## TOWARDS STRATEGIC INTERNATIONALISATION

A city is greater than the sum of its parts. Individual universities, museums, businesses or districts may have world leading reputations, but magic happens when they are brought together in close proximity. Ideas are developed, shared and tested. New knowledge is produced, art created and buildings designed. Young people move in, study and start a business. Tourists visit, businesses are born, offices are opened and families start new lives.

Universities play an important role in cities. They generate and curate new knowledge, connect places to the wider world, attract staff and students, provide leadership and strategic support and offer a window to the world. There is a strong relationship between the success of universities and the cities and regions in which they are based (Christopherson et al., 2014).

A successful city is an international city. The era of city walls is over, even as new ones are proposed by nations; cities thrive when they are in constant connection (Clark & Clark, 2014). Cities are ‘defined by pragmatism and collaboration’, with some commentators calling for a return to the Hanseatic style leadership of cities, with mayors empowered to tackle humanity’s most intractable problems (Barber, 2013). There is a growing narrative on the ‘rise of cities’, with rapid urbanisation leading many to conclude that the future of humanity is inextricably linked to the future of cities (Moir et al., 2014). However, the promise of cities is ‘hampered by patchy collaboration with national governments, limited access to global governance processes... meagre funding for collaboration and poor data collection and sharing’ (Acuto, 2016).

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Universities have long been outward facing, with internationalisation changing the world of education and globalisation changing the world of internationalisation (Knight, 2003). This brings challenges: competition is leading to increased ‘sameness’ of aspirations, growing funding challenges and the risk of homogenous internationalisation strategies (European Union, 2015). There is also a danger of missing the benefits by blindly adopting broad umbrella concepts and not looking beyond mobility as a measure of internationalisation (Noorda, 2014).

However, there are clear shared advantages for universities and cities of internationalisation. International migrants, including university staff, share their skills and knowledge with their new colleagues. They directly improve urban competitive advantage, underlining the importance of attracting and retaining such talent (Clark & Moonen, 2009). As long distance scientific and knowledge exchanges increase, so do similar local interactions (Scott & Storper, 2015). Internationalisation opens up new opportunities for selling goods and services and attracting students, workers and visitors.

Different cities and universities will necessarily have different understandings of internationalisation. A place-based definition is adopted for this report: of engaging with the world and incorporating it locally. This may cover activities such as branding and place marketing, research, network building, the internationalisation of curricula, mobility and exchange partnerships and branch campuses. Internationalisation also covers the ‘outputs’ of these activities: migration of workers or staff and international students, inward investment, business winning, exports and tourism.

Amsterdam, Dublin, Glasgow and Hannover all have a different model of collaboration between universities and the city. However, the resulting internationalisation activity is targeted and tailored to place, positioning and partnerships. This strategic internationalisation is long-term, deliberate and part of a wider vision of the future of the city. It stretches from local communities to campuses to relations with international partners. It is underpinned by ‘place attractiveness’, the crucial link between improving local areas, and internationalisation by creating a place that people want to visit and stay in.

## A NEED FOR INTERNATIONALISATION

Strategic internationalisation brings long-term benefits, but there are also short-term pressures on cities and universities. Political commentators in the USA have called for cities to heal the social divides exposed by the presidential election by bridging divisions and leading a ‘metropolitan revolution’ of bottom-up innovation across the country (Katz, 2016). Others in Europe have called for universities to continue a long history of brokering links between nations and of

helping to ease the tensions wrought by nationalism and anti-integration rhetoric (Altbach & De Wit, 2015).

Both highlight the importance of internationalisation and the vital role of both universities and cities. In turning to examples of practice in Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Scotland we see how cities and universities are jointly shaping their international future.

# A RECENT HISTORY OF UNIVERSITIES AND CITIES

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in its flagship 2007 report *Higher Education and Regions*, called for universities to ‘do more than simply educate and research’. They must ‘engage with others in their regions, provide opportunities for lifelong learning and contribute to the development of knowledge-intensive jobs which will enable graduates to find local employment and remain in their communities’.

Others echo this shift to a regionally relevant higher education system. Birch et al. (2013) describe how the concept of higher education has ‘morphed’ from the notion of an unengaged ivory tower to a ‘new, highly engaged, place-based or community-based concept’. In the UK, the pressure for universities to engage with local business is part of the ‘re-scaling’ of the policy emphasis by local development and central government to focus on decision making,

together with budgetary pressures on governments and universities and a push for knowledge transfer from higher education to business (Pugh et al., 2016).

There is an important distinction to be made between the university in the city versus the university as part of the city, or universities in urban areas versus urban universities (Addie, 2016). In the USA, universities such as the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle were founded as urban universities in the 1960s, with a strong focus on being locally embedded (Goodall, 1970). Similarly, universities in England such as the University of Manchester and University of Liverpool were founded as civic institutions with the explicit purpose of meeting local needs – a purpose many institutions are rediscovering after a period of national and international focus (Collini, 2003; Goddard, 2009).

# WHY IS MARKETING AND BRANDING IMPORTANT FOR UNIVERSITIES AND CITIES?

Internationalisation is more than marketing – but effective marketing can sell a broader vision and benefit universities and cities. From ‘I Amsterdam’ to ‘People Make Glasgow’, a city brand can strengthen internationalisation efforts and international activity can in turn strengthen marketing and branding.

Universities seek to communicate competitive advantages and enhance their reputation through branding (Chapleo, 2011). Cities seek an image that is a source of economic value and socioeconomic development, and that helps to reinforce local identities (Popescu, 2012). City marketing has

evolved into an ‘urban management philosophy’ that looks to ‘create a set of messages that readjust the city image among international target groups to correspond with an emerging on-the-ground reality’ (Clark & Moonen, 2009).

The result is a complex process of capturing, reflecting and shaping life in the city and within universities, and an inevitable mutual reinforcement for both parties as cities look to incorporate their higher education offer and universities look to promote the city that houses them.

# CITY PROFILES

PLACE, PARTNERSHIPS

AND POSITIONING

DEFINE UNIVERSITY-CITY

RELATIONS

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## **This section sets out the main initiatives in each city. An analysis of findings follows in section 3.**

**Amsterdam, Dublin, Glasgow and Hannover are medium-sized cities (with a population between 540,000 and 850,000) that play a significant role in their wider region. The profiles are restricted to the core urban city rather than the broader metropolitan area, although there is an inevitable blurring between the two, with many universities drawing local students from the region and bringing internationalisation to the hinterland. Each city has a mix of applied or teaching-focused universities and research universities.**

**In all four cities the university strategies include many references to the city in which they are based, and the city strategies feature higher education institutions throughout. See page 43 for a list of publicly-accessible strategic plans from which information in this section is drawn.**

# AMSTERDAM

Capital (and largest city), Netherlands

Population: 851,373 (2017)

**Higher education institutions considered in research: University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions, Amsterdam University of the Arts, Royal Tropical Institute, Inholland University of Applied Sciences**

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## Place

Place is important for all of Amsterdam's universities. The University of Amsterdam describes the city as its campus, emphasising four open campuses that are meeting places for the students, staff and residents of Amsterdam and a key part of recruitment marketing. VU University Amsterdam emphasises an international learning environment for local and international students. The Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences sees itself as intertwined with the city of Amsterdam: 'The city truly is our classroom'.

## Partnerships

The Expatcenter, part of the Economic Department of the City of Amsterdam, works closely with the major universities – the University of Amsterdam, VU University Amsterdam, the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences and the Inholland University of Applied Sciences. The group agreed an agenda in 2016 focusing on student housing, scholarships, employment, law and regulations, and marketing and communication. Teams work on each of these topics and the results are monitored by the deputy mayor and university leaders.

## Positioning

Amsterdam has a highly focused city marketing department which recognises that, while the city has many natural assets and to some extent sells by itself, the brand image needs to be managed in the face of growing competition from many other cities. The city has identified connectivity, a competitive price to quality ratio, an international business ecosystem, world class talent and liveability as key factors in attracting companies to the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area.

The international, multicultural history of Amsterdam is clearly important. As noted by Janssen-Jansen (2011), there is a 'fascinating continuity between Amsterdam's status as a centre of the high arts and music in the Golden Age and its emergence as a modern-day centre for applied design and creative services'.

The city has recently campaigned to try and attract more business visitors and to encourage visitors and residents to travel to areas outside the city centre by showcasing the city's different neighbourhoods.





# DUBLIN

**Capital (and largest city), Ireland**  
**Population: 553,165 (2016)**

**Higher education institutions considered in research: Trinity College Dublin, Dublin City University, University College Dublin, Dublin Institute of Technology**

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## Place

The international activities of Dublin's universities are strongly rooted in place. Trinity College Dublin looks to connect research and education strategically to creative practice in the city and to link it to European and global networks. It has also built links with Dublin City Council's 'Greening the City' initiative by developing a sustainable campus. Dublin City University actively engages with its north Dublin neighbourhood and helps prepare graduates to flourish in an increasingly globalised world. University College Dublin has 'Global Centres' in Beijing, Delhi, Kuala Lumpur and New York, working with government agencies, partners, alumni and the Irish diaspora in each and helping to link the city globally.

## Partnerships

Dublin is a relatively small but open city, with many individuals working on internationalisation as part of strong but informal networks.

A focus for collaboration is Smart Dublin, a centrally coordinated initiative to promote Dublin as a smart city and bring together universities and research institutes to pilot new technologies. While many cities around the world are styling themselves as smart cities, Dublin is home to the Europe, Middle East and Africa headquarters of many of the world's top technology companies. The city is seen as an ideal size – not too big and not too small – to test new developments.

As academic commentators have noted, the challenge for the smart cities movement is understanding what change at so many levels means for the city (Batty, 2016). Universities and cities will need to work together to capture and analyse evolving trends.

## Positioning

Dublin recognises that it is more vulnerable to global competition compared to competitor cities in other countries with greater populations and larger economies. The city plan identifies infrastructural deficits, cost competitiveness issues and a relatively small population as particular challenges.

Dublin plans in response to become both an 'Innovation City', a world leading city in promoting creativity, productivity, competition, density, entrepreneurial activity and clustering; and an 'Education City', a destination of choice for international students. Improving the general attractiveness of a city for people and investors is seen as a key part of maintaining competitiveness and creating a vibrant place that draws in and retains creative people within the city, as well as developing economic, cultural and institutional clusters within the city centre to optimise economic potential. Ireland as a whole seeks to double the number of international students by 2020, in part to address the issue of a relatively small population.





# GLASGOW

## Non-capital (and largest city), Scotland

Population: 606,340 (2015)

**Higher education institutions considered in research: University of Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow School of Art, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland**

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### Place

Place runs through the strategic plans of the Glaswegian universities, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Glasgow School of Art. This often has an international dimension: the University of Glasgow emphasises that international students can enrich university and city life with their different experiences and perspectives. It is working to expand the international student community and focus on integration. Glasgow Caledonian University, proudly rooted in its social and community mission, boasts as its chancellor Muhammad Yunus, a Bangladeshi social entrepreneur and founder of the pioneering Grameen Bank. Strathclyde, a technological-focused university, is looking to support and build a community of high-growth SMEs locally, regionally and internationally.

### Partnerships

Higher and further education is one of eight key sectors identified in Glasgow's economic strategy. A marketing group set up by the City Marketing Bureau (now part of Glasgow Life) brings together university and college senior staff and meets every few months, seeking to promote Glasgow as a world class city. The work has fed into the 'People Make Glasgow' brand campaign. Outputs have included student-created videos and marketing materials. Other cities in the UK have followed the model and partners are looking at adapting the focus of the group as part of recently launched economic strategies and tourism and visitor plans running to 2023.

The £1.13 billion City Deal for the Glasgow City Region is also bringing partners together, with plans to invest in infrastructure, encourage growth in life sciences, support business innovation and tackle unemployment.

### Positioning

Glasgow is positioning itself as a cultural powerhouse. The city's tourism and visitor plan is focused on Glasgow's distinctive cultural offer and on promoting Glasgow as a city to live and work. As with Amsterdam, the city's heritage informs its future direction – in this case post-industrial reinvention. The notion that the revitalisation of former industrial areas can bring new competitiveness and energy, popularised by the likes of Van Agtmael & Bakker (2016), is evident in Glasgow.

Interviewees noted that the city has always been Glaswegian, Scottish and European too. While it isn't a capital city, it can be a top tier city. This is reflected in international leadership: Glasgow and Amsterdam will establish the European Innovation Forum, bringing together Europe's nine most innovative cities.

But the city faces challenges from the UK's departure from the European Union (the city was one of the first to publish a report on impacts, actions and asks), and the city council recognises that Glasgow needs a bigger population and more inward migration.





# HANNOVER

**Non-capital, Germany (capital and largest city of the German state of Lower Saxony)**

**Population: 540,075 (2017)**

**Higher education institutions considered in research: Leibniz Universität, University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Hannover Medical School, University of Music, Drama and Media, University of Veterinary Medicine, Private University of Applied Sciences, Leibniz School of Business, GISMA Business School, Lower Saxonian Municipal University of Applied Administrative Sciences**

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## Place

A key international recruitment tool for Leibniz Universität is Hannover itself: a city that is green, safe and affordable. Hannover emphasises nature and tranquillity with the benefits of a big city and international connectivity. The city is home to the Hannover fairground, which is the biggest exhibition centre in the world and the headquarters of many international companies. Internationalisation in Germany is a more coordinated process than in some of the other education systems in Europe and the rest of the world (European Union, 2015), with internationalisation targets agreed between the universities and the Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture.

## Partnerships

Since 2007 members of the Hannover Science Initiative – a network that includes the nine universities and higher education institutions in Hannover, several scientific institutions, the Students Services Organisation, the regional economic promotion company, the Volkswagen Foundation and the city administration – have worked together on projects to boost the attractiveness of Hannover as a centre of academic and scientific activity. The network and most of its projects are coordinated by the City Hall. A website with videos (in English) and other material promotes the work of the initiative (see 'Key documents', page 43).

The city and the universities have developed an extensive welcome programme for international students, focusing on language support, integration, housing, antidiscrimination and 'study and stay' – an initiative to bring students and companies together to retain graduate talent in the city.

## Positioning

Healthcare is a key growth industry, with one in seven employees in the region working in the sector. The city is home to Hannover Medical School, the International Neuroscience Institute and Hannover University of Veterinary Medicine. Biotechnica, a leading European life sciences fair, is held in Hannover every two years. Hannover hosted the World Expo in 2000 and enjoys an international reputation as a trade fair and convention venue.

The city sells itself partly on its liveability, but also on clusters of excellence in teaching and research: Hannover is home to a high concentration of higher education institutions and students.





# SIX DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPEAN INTERNATIONALISATION

## HOW CITIES AND UNIVERSITIES ARE JOINTLY SHAPING THEIR INTERNATIONAL FUTURE

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## **University and city officials in Amsterdam, Dublin, Glasgow and Hannover are leading the way on strategic internationalisation.**

**Activity has evolved from separate initiatives, such as attracting inward investment and promoting student mobility, to a wider understanding that internationalisation is rooted in place, partnerships and positioning.**

**There are areas of shared interest – for example branding, infrastructure, attracting and retaining skilled individuals – where working together brings significant benefits for universities and cities. Yet there are also areas of collaboration that may not be so obvious. Those cities and universities that effectively work together on both the obvious and the not-so-obvious areas of internationalisation will begin to pull away from the pack.**

# INTERNATIONALISATION IS CORE BUSINESS...

A shift has taken place, putting internationalisation at the heart of university and city planning. It might once have been enough to insert 'become more international' as a goal within a strategy or as an annex to a five-year plan and look forward to benefitting from the international student and tourist income this might bring, but internationalisation is no longer an end in itself. Instead, it has become a means to realising the broader development strategy of cities and universities. It is cross-cutting and seen as integral to future success. Internationalisation has, as one interviewee says, been 'normalised' within their institution.

'Should we internationalise?' has been replaced by 'how should we internationalise?'. Different institutions and cities have different priorities for their internationalisation work, often shaped by their histories. For Glasgow internationalisation is part of reinvention, capitalising on its post-industrial heritage and a reputation for cultural dynamism. Dublin understands internationalisation as key to competitiveness, and emphasises creating an attractive place to live and work. Similarly, some universities look solely to their region for student recruitment, while others look globally for staff and students.

Some cities have a long history of internationalisation and have become highly professionalised. Amsterdam has several focused but interdependent organisations looking at specific facets of internationalisation such

as attracting companies and skilled workers, marketing and economic growth. Hannover draws upon a history of town twinning as a form of 'municipal foreign policy', utilising links with Bristol, Hiroshima and others. In keeping with all four cities, the universities and their city actively share contacts to expand their international trade, recruitment and knowledge links.

Although internationalisation is now core business, it is an incremental and gradual process in a world typically dictated by five or ten-year planning cycles, sometimes with an annual refresh. There are some exceptions: Hannover city has a strategy to 2030 and Amsterdam has a 200-year climate change mitigation plan. The EU referendum outcome in the UK and the USA presidential election have shown how dramatic changes to the political landscape can take place in 12 months, but there is still a case to be made for long-term planning in parallel to shorter strategic cycles. A 20-year horizon might help to put individual shocks in perspective, but it could also uncover trends, possible scenarios and threats to business models missing from a five-year plan. Consideration should be given to how best to support long-term internationalisation planning: facilitated scenarios workshops, collation of relevant data and sharing examples of methodologies could be helpful. Above all, long-term planning needs to reflect the cross-cutting nature of internationalisation and be rooted in local context.

## ...YET INTERNATIONALISATION CAN EXIST IN POCKETS

Even smaller cities cover a large patchwork of communities and neighbourhoods. Some of these may be home to a high concentration of globally connected individuals and businesses (usually in the city centre), whereas others may be marginalised and often poorer. The same applies to universities: some departments and faculties may have stronger international links or a more internationalised curriculum than others. It is convenient though misleading to view a city or a university as a homogenous unit, and one that is either 'internationalised' or 'not internationalised'. In reality they more closely resemble a heat map showing varying degrees of internationalisation across their districts or organisational structure, together with pockets of isolation.

For universities, as internationalisation has become a cross-cutting theme within institutional strategies, international activity has been decentralised within institutions, moving beyond the international office. At the same time, a form of international osmosis takes place in many of the universities: for example, a team working on widening participation may speak to colleagues from the international office to bring a global dimension to their work. Where pockets exist they may not be immediately obvious: for example, a researcher on smart cities might have strong research connections around the world but not necessarily feed these back into the university administration or the city, where they might have been particularly relevant or where the city could have been a good 'laboratory' itself for applied research. The University of Amsterdam is collecting information on the international work of its researchers: where a professor sets up an internship for a student at

a Chinese laboratory, for example. Such information forms a useful repository of international connections that can be used to broker new relationships or to identify areas of strength.

Universities themselves can help to internationalise marginalised pockets of cities, and institutions in all four cities are keenly aware of areas of deprivation. Trinity College Dublin holds an international foundation programme for foreign students at an associated college 15 minutes from the city centre. Dublin City University attracts 120 nationalities to its north Dublin neighbourhood and also works in the regional 'corridor' that connects the city to Belfast. The benefits go beyond the associated spending, investment and demand for services, with international studies demonstrating greater tolerance as a result of increased multiculturalism (Christ et al., 2014). Leibniz Universität and several Amsterdam universities have established programmes to support refugees. Glasgow's Convention Bureau works with universities to bid and host international academic conferences and meetings, and has used these to spread wealth to different parts of the city.

## PLACE IS PARAMOUNT

Universities and cities have a long history of working together. Many universities were founded to serve their community and have a range of links with neighbourhoods and local businesses and continue to coordinate economic and social activity in their region. Even for those universities that highlight their global reach, they are a product of the city that is often within their name. There may once have been a justification for the concept of the ‘ivory tower’ – the university removed from the city that housed it. Within the four cities in this report, however, the ivory tower is mostly a tired label and that fails to reflect the complex and deep relationship between universities and cities.

This relationship is mirrored in branding and imagery. City marketing draws upon the traditional university spires and modern business incubators to reflect knowledge industries and centres of innovation. Universities feature green spaces, shopping districts and city skylines in their promotional material. The two are mutually reinforcing. Some universities noted they could make more of their architectural assets, such as Leibniz Universität’s stunning main sandstone building. A strong university identity can provide international recognition through ‘destination marketing’, regeneration schemes and, in some cases, globally recognised architectural projects (Melhuish, 2015; Marmot, 2015).

In all four cases, different stakeholder visions of the city and its future are closely aligned. University staff and city officials shared a good understanding of the city’s position within the country and the wider region. This alignment is important: it is invisible when it occurs – the city trade delegation

that presents a clear vision of opportunities and direction, for example – but jarring where it doesn’t. This alignment is partly the result of the models of collaboration outlined in section 2.

However, there are also clear differences, in particular the dynamics of capital and non-capital cities. Amsterdam and Dublin are capital cities and benefit from the profile this brings. In Glasgow and Hannover – the former the largest city by population in Scotland, the latter the state capital of Lower Saxony – there is a sharper focus on how to position themselves internationally, and this has been a force in getting partners around the table.

Part of effective positioning is an understanding of the role of the city. There is evidence to support the ‘rise of cities’ (see page 8): some of the universities interviewed are beginning to favour city trade delegations over national ones, primarily because they can move faster, be less encumbered by diplomacy and be more tailored to the needs of the area. Despite this, the lines between cities, regions and nations are blurred. Cities operate within national or state policy frameworks and funding regimes. The city frames itself within the nation and wider part of the world: Glasgow is a gateway to Scotland; Dublin looks to a future as the largest English-speaking city in the EU. In doing so, effective internationalisation draws upon multiple levels of place, from pockets within cities to international regions.



## ‘INWARD’ AND ‘OUTWARD’ INTERNATIONALISATION ARE MOVING CLOSER TOGETHER

Cities and universities often have different interpretations of internationalisation, and universities themselves can differ in their definitions. The ‘internationalisation at home’ movement began in Europe at the end of the 1990s, focusing on the internationalisation of the curriculum and the teaching and learning process, and a focus on intercultural values (de Wit & Beelen, 2012). For many institutions this is a driving force. The Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Dublin City University and Glasgow Caledonian University, to pick three examples, prioritise educating internationally aware students who can work in the modern, globalised and diverse city. Other institutions have a strong focus on outward mobility and have performance indicators to capture the number of students who study or work abroad as part of a degree.

Both approaches benefit a city and both can help to create adaptable graduates who thrive in an international environment. Moreover, internationalisation tends to beget internationalisation: an international, connected, dynamic and diverse city is likely to attract further international workers, students and companies. Leibniz Universität has a Chinese alumnus who returns often to Hannover on business and visits the university, and who connects industries, cities and universities in the process.

Events can be a window for internationalisation, from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland’s 500 public performances per year to Hannover Messe, the world’s leading trade fair for industrial technology. Events open up both the university and the city, encouraging

the flow of city residents and visitors into universities, and they can also spread beyond the city. Trinity College Dublin’s Science Gallery is a public exhibition space with a popular café; it has inspired the creation of Science Gallery International with galleries planned for other cities including Bangalore and Melbourne (and hosted by universities). Such exhibitions are in the city, of the city and beyond the city.

Dublin City University and Dublin City Council coorganise public lectures by diplomats and other international figures and alternate hosting at their respective sites. The Amsterdam Economic Board is organising an ‘academy’ bringing together university and business leaders to share and solve issues and has previously led a delegation to New York to study the relationship between universities and cities. The ‘November of Science’ in Hannover attracts more than 40,000 people with an international popular science program. And finally, the proposed ‘avenue of the arts’ in Glasgow will develop and brand the city’s Renfrew Street as a cultural hotspot, already home to the Conservatoire and Glasgow School of Art and numerous theatres and arts venues.

As such, events can be effective for ‘inward’ and ‘outward’ internationalisation. Collectively they can create a buzz and attract international visitors, and they can also bring the world to local communities. In the same way as the approaches of international mobility and internationalisation at home can ultimately benefit the city, events of all shapes and sizes can help realise the benefits of internationalisation.

## UNDERSTANDING AREAS OF OVERLAP IS IMPORTANT FOR EFFECTIVE UNIVERSITY-CITY COOPERATION...

In examining the four cities we begin to see areas of mutual influence, dependence and separation between universities and cities.

Mutual influence emerges strongly in branding. For Glasgow this is the focal point for university-business collaboration, with a city marketing group for higher and further education meeting regularly and shaping high-profile campaigns such as 'People Make Glasgow'. In all cities, there is an understanding that what is generally good for the university is good for the city and vice versa, although the extent of joint programming is often limited by budgets.

Mutual dependence is most visible as bottlenecks that prevent growth or constrain effective internationalisation. Areas of dependence are typically products of universities being part of the fabric of the city: essential infrastructure such as quality and affordable housing or transport links. Housing is a recurring theme in all four cities, from limited housing capacity in Dublin for new arrivals to rapid growth of private student housing in Glasgow and the risk of community friction (both cities are looking to grow their populations). The universities, the city and the Student Services Organisation in Hannover, with the support of housing companies, are campaigning to increase the supply of quality housing for international students in the private sector with some initial success. In Amsterdam, housing is a central issue on the agendas of the city and of the universities, as reflected in Open Amsterdam, the Amsterdam Strategy for International Talent (links on page 43). Challenges faced by universities are often challenges of the city itself, and working together to tackle these is essential for effective internationalisation.

Both cities and universities need to attract and retain skilled workers and staff. Hannover city coordinates a large welcome programme for all new students arriving in the city, and has a comprehensive plan to continue improving the welcome that students receive. Trinity College Dublin has collaborated with Lonely Planet to create a mini guidebook to the city for new students and staff. Although visa policy is rarely the purview of the city, a strong city lobby including universities can have a forceful voice here too. Recent changes to visa policies that encourage international students in Dublin, Hannover and Amsterdam to stay and work post study threaten to further distance UK cities from their continental competition.

There are also inevitably areas of little overlap between universities and cities. These include some core functions but also participation in international networks. For cities these include the likes of Eurocities or ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. For universities these tend to bring together universities of a similar profile: of the Amsterdam universities alone the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences helped found UREKA, the Urban Research and Education Knowledge Alliance; the University of Amsterdam is a member of LERU, the League of European Research Universities; and VU University Amsterdam is a founder member of the Auora network, focusing on social good and solving global challenges. There are also networks for higher education and cities: the University of Glasgow, for example, is member of PASCAL, centred on learning cities. Yet despite the apparent separation of universities and their cities in some of these networks, the existence of these networks and their outcomes continue to contribute to the internationalisation process of both parties.

## ... BUT THERE IS NO ONE CORRECT MODEL FOR BRINGING UNIVERSITIES AND CITIES TOGETHER ON INTERNATIONALISATION

This report has explored four models of universities and cities working together to push a strategic and focused internationalisation effort (see section 2). Each model is tailored to the nature of the city, the resources available, the priorities of partners and the history of collaboration. Although there is no single correct model for bringing universities and cities together on internationalisation, certain factors can help. Several cities have a dedicated member of staff in the city office to coordinate relations with universities: the Head of Science City Hannover, the International Higher Education Liaison at Expatcenter Amsterdam, or the Head of Marketing Communications at Glasgow Life are all examples of these. In Dublin the network is informal, yet key figures still coordinate on international activity; as one interviewee noted, you are only as strong as your informal network.

An effective forum reconciles the interests of local and research focused universities around the leadership of place. Interviewees unsurprisingly preferred a structure that minimised bureaucracy but encouraged creativity, pragmatism and some risk-taking. A common issue raised in the academic literature (for example Goddard et al. (2013), Christopherson et al. (2014)) is difficulties in effective collaboration between cities and universities, characterised by mismatched goals and communication hampered by jargon. Despite this, university and city staff in Amsterdam, Dublin, Glasgow and Hannover are leading the way on strategic internationalisation.

Universities and cities should come together over the areas of mutual dependence – infrastructure, housing and talent attraction. They should coordinate on areas of mutual influence – the branding of place and study destinations, the strategy of the region, joint activity and trade delegations. But they should also look for opportunities to work together on other issues: internationalising marginalised pockets within or outside the city, welcome and integration programmes for visitors and refugees, coordinating events and shaping the public realm.

All four cities are highly aware of their higher education ecosystems and of the importance of a connected, open and diverse city to tackle the social, economic and environmental challenges of the future. Through engagement on a range of issues – from areas of mutual dependence to those of strategic opportunity – the cities and universities of the future will be well placed to meet these challenges.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## CHALLENGES TO GLOBALISATION CALL FOR STRATEGIC INTERNATIONALISATION

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**Effective internationalisation is not inevitable. Activity has evolved from separate initiatives, such as attracting inward investment and promoting student mobility, to a wider understanding that internationalisation is rooted in place, partnerships and positioning.**

**There are areas of shared interest – for example branding, infrastructure, attracting and retaining skilled individuals – where working together brings significant benefits for universities and cities. Yet there are also areas of collaboration that may not be so obvious. Those cities and universities that effectively work together on both the obvious and the not-so-obvious areas of internationalisation will begin to pull away from the pack.**

## **GROWING RISKS**

Internationalisation is fragile. Although cities are moving towards shouldering the challenges of the future, they are still at the mercy of visa regimes and pressures on public finances. The positive collaborations outlined in this report are replicable in cities all over the world, but they are just as easily swept away by destructive forces. Much has been written in the past 12 months on the vulnerability of globalisation in the face of populism, on replacing borders with walls and on the rise of nationalism and isolationism at the expense of openness and free movement. Pressures continue to build on university funding and student numbers, with immigration policies, demographic shifts and institutional pressures together with a broadening of activity beyond teaching and research leading to challenges for the university business model.

The history of Amsterdam, Dublin, Glasgow and Hannover is one of international connections, of inward and outward flows of people and ideas, and of cities that capitalise on the vibrancy and cultural buzz that emerges from this situation. For these and other cities, continuing to make the case to the public of the benefits of migration and creating a welcoming environment for students and new arrivals are vitally important. The case for continued, strategic internationalisation is built upon demonstrating the impact of international activity and making the link between, for example, regeneration in individual communities or the provision of quality housing and international competitiveness. The future of internationalisation is in the hands of universities and cities working together.

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# RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Although cities can learn much from one another, models for collaboration should be developed locally by university and city leaders, rather than imported from ‘best practice’. The make-up of institutions and priorities will differ markedly from one city to another. Although universities and cities may have different missions, objectives, stakeholders and even language, they can unite around the unique focal point of place that they both share. However, in the most successful cases there is usually a key individual, often from the city, who brings people together.
- 2** As internationalisation becomes further integrated into broader strategies, university and city leaders should consider long-term internationalisation planning.
- 3** City and university planners should work together (and with other partners including further education colleges) to bring the benefits of internationalisation to marginalised parts of cities and their hinterland, where appropriate and as part of broader development plans. Efforts should be made to capture and communicate the impact of this work and the benefits of migration, and to recognise that socially-driven activity reinforces economically-driven activity.
- 4** While internationalisation activity can be broad in scope, it should be strategic and practical in focus. This means city and university planners should leverage local strengths, including those of industry, and address shared infrastructure bottlenecks such as transport or housing, at the same time as being acutely aware of international positioning. Effective international activity can lead to increased competitiveness and connectivity.
- 5** The strategic plans of universities and cities seldom make reference to the strategies of their local counterparts, even if a fair amount of work is conducted in tandem. There may be opportunities for city and university planners to collectively formulate elements of their strategies, especially as many plans run on similar five-year timescales.
- 6** Local communities should be involved in internationalisation activity, whether through events or through consultation on future activity. This avoids a narrow interpretation of internationalisation and addresses the risk of friction over issues such as housing; internationalisation begins on campus and in neighbouring communities rather than on trade missions.
- 7** Cities and universities should utilise international students and domestic students with language skills or international experience as part of trade delegations. These students can help form new partnerships and share their knowledge and experience with the local community.
- 8** Collaboration is most effective when all partners are involved, at least in the sharing of information. Cities should recognise that universities are diverse and have different strengths. Universities should coordinate rather than start separate bilateral conversations with City Hall (this may also apply within individual institutions). A diversity of partners is what allows cities to be greater than the sum of their parts.
- 9** The British Council could collect further examples of good practice on data sharing and cooperation between universities and cities to manage performance and measure the impact of internationalisation activities.
- 10** In cities with little or no existing mechanism for university-city collaboration, the British Council may wish to convene an initial meeting to scope future activity and play an active role in linking universities and cities. Further research may wish to consider internationalisation in smaller cities.



# ABOUT THIS REPORT

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## Methods

Interviews with 25 university staff and city officials in Amsterdam, Dublin, Glasgow and Hannover took place in January and February 2017. Public strategic plans were analysed over the same time period (see 'Key documents').

The research was undertaken on behalf of the British Council by James Ransom (james@jcransom.com), supported by a team of advisors. James is a Policy Researcher at Universities UK, and a doctoral student at UCL Institute of Education. He undertook this research in an independent capacity.

## Acknowledgements

**Warm thanks to the following individuals for sharing their time and expertise (in alphabetical order):**

Chris Baker (Work and Learning Opportunities), Birgit Barden-Läufer (Leibniz Universität), Jos Beelen (Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences), Arne Brentjes (University of Amsterdam), Caroline Chipperfield (British Council), James Conroy (University of Glasgow), Aileen Crawford (Glasgow Convention Bureau), Manon de Ruijter (British Council), Alf Desire (British Council), Kevin Ennis (Trinity College Dublin), Mary Foley (Dublin City Council), Thomas Greenough (Glasgow School of Art), Jeanine Gregersen-Hermans (Glasgow Caledonian University), Calum Guthrie (Glasgow Life), Janette Harkess (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), Zef Hemel (Amsterdam Economic Board), Trevor Holmes (Dublin City University), Marcus Hoppe (Leibniz Universität), Lucy Kerstens (Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences), Ailsa Kienberger (British Council), Jackie Killeen (British Council), Justyna Krajewska (City of Amsterdam), Anna Devi Markus (British Council), Miriam Matthews (City of Hannover), Liz McBain (British Council), Tristan McCowan (UCL Institute of Education), Ray McHugh (University of Strathclyde), Theda Minthe (City of Hannover), Scott Parsons (Glasgow School of Art), Tom Rice (Glasgow Life), Kevin Richardson (HEFCE), Sinéad Ryan (Trinity College Dublin), Lynn Scarff (Science Gallery Dublin), Jeffrey Sharkey (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), Frans A.M. Snijders (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), Bianka Stege (British Council), Anouk Tso (University of Amsterdam).

*All errors remain those of the author.*

## Key documents

Selected strategic plans for the four cities and their universities follow; this is not an exhaustive list of documents consulted. Several plans are in the process of being updated or translated into English.

### Amsterdam

Open Amsterdam international talent strategy  
University of Amsterdam strategic plan  
Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences  
strategic plan (in Dutch)  
VU University Amsterdam strategic plan

### Dublin

Dublin City Development Plan  
Trinity College Dublin strategic plan  
Dublin City University strategic plan  
University College Dublin strategic plan

### Glasgow

Glasgow Economic Strategy  
Glasgow University strategic plan  
Glasgow Caledonian University strategic plan  
University of Strathclyde strategic plan  
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland strategic plan  
Glasgow School of Art strategic plan

### Hannover

Hannover city development plan (in German)  
Hannover Science Initiative  
Hannover city economy and business webpage  
Leibniz Universität Hannover  
internationalisation strategy

## Credits

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**Photo page 21:** Neues Rathaus Hannover Luftbild, by Matthias104a CC BYSA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>), via Wikimedia Commons

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