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IRO
INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS
OFFICE

Braude International Relations Office Newsletter

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What is internationalization in higher education?

Internationalization is one of the latest buzzwords in higher education in Israel, but what does it mean? Internationalization promotes the concept of incoming and outgoing participants in international exchange programs around the world. It represents a process of opening up institutions of higher education to the wider world, whether through incoming international students, outgoing domestic students, the introduction of international elements to the home curriculum, or a combination of any of these elements. Furthermore, the reputation of the institution is enhanced by the development of its international dimensions. While exchange programs are perhaps the most well-known face of internationalization, the concept embraces a wide variety of international activities, including the integration of international elements to the curriculum and to the research carried out by the academic staff, the encouragement of the development of language skills, and all aspects of English language teaching. The development of intercultural understanding is a vital component of all international programs, and can be achieved through encouraging students to participate in international exchanges as well as through increasing contact with international students and through internationalization of the curriculum for the benefit of those students for whom an exchange program is not feasible.

The Israeli Council for Higher Education has set for itself a goal of increasing the number of international students studying in Israeli universities and colleges by 25% over a period of 5 years. Institutions are encouraged to promote internationalization and funding has been made available via a competitive selection process to assist



with the achievement of the overall goals. Braude won funding for the academic year 2017-2018, and has just been awarded a further grant for 2018-2019. Information on the international activities enabled by these grants will be presented in the next issue of the IRO Newsletter.

The IRO at Braude aims to promote the process of internationalization for the benefit of the student body, the academic staff and the administration. To this end, the IRO, which was formally established in 2016, has deepened existing relations with academic partners in the US and developed new relations with academic institutions in China and Europe. Under the funding of the ERASMUS+ K107 partnerships with European universities we are now able to encourage more students and staff from Braude to participate in exchange programs and to welcome incoming counterparts from all over the world.

International activities at Braude - an overview.

Braude College has been sending students to study abroad since 1995 when we first developed relations with the University of Rochester in the US. Since that time, we have also set up American exchange programs with the University of Pittsburgh and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) where our students take engineering courses and carry out their final projects. The participation of our students in these prestigious programs not only benefits them directly, but has also served to raise the profile of Braude College and of the students studying here.

Until 2013, most of our efforts were concentrated on developing academic ties with the US. The main reasons for this were the existing personal relations between our own academic staff with academic institutions in the US, and also because of the grants that were available to students for studying in the US. Since the opening of the college's international study program in the spring of 2013, however, our horizons have widened to include 5 universities in China whose students we have hosted every year since. Braude College's international activities now span three continents: Asia, North America and Europe.

European projects

Despite the many research connections that our lecturers have developed with their colleagues around the world, no formal relations between Braude and universities in Europe existed prior to 2010. The main reason for this is that research

relations are usually based on the development of personal relations between the researchers themselves. This began to change when the college's English Studies Unit was invited to join its first EU-TEMPUS partnership.

TEMPUS EFA - English for All in Higher Education (2010-2013)



The EFA - English for all in Higher Education in Israel project was the first TEMPUS project in which Braude was a partner. The aims of this project, coordinated at Braude by Dr. Linda Weinberg of the English Studies Unit, were to improve English language skills for students in higher education. Through this project, the Applied Technical English course which is

currently taught in the Industrial Engineering and Management Department and the Software Engineering Department was developed. In addition, a course in Critical Thinking was developed and taught in English in the partner institutions. Students from Braude participated in two international conferences, one in Nicosia, Cyprus and one in Wroclaw in Poland, where they ably demonstrated their critical thinking skills in English.

<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplplus-project-details/#project/510941-TEMPUS-1-2010-1-IL-TEMPUS-SMHES>

TEMPUS ECOSTAR - English as the Cornerstone of Sustainable Technology and Research (2014 - 2017)

A second TEMPUS project, [ECOSTAR](#), coordinated by Dr. Linda Weinberg of the English Studies Unit, took the learning and teaching of English for Academic Purposes in higher education, and English Medium Instruction, to new levels. Collaboration with universities and colleges in Israel and the National Institute for Testing and Evaluation, together with six universities from the UK, Cyprus, Italy, Poland, Romania, and the Netherlands, led to the creation of the [CEFR-aligned Framework for English in Higher Education in Israel](#) which conforms to European standards

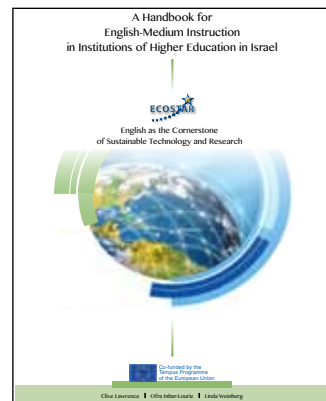


while accommodating the requirements of the Israeli Council of Higher Education (CHE). This new Framework decisively takes the learning of the English language into the 21st century by emphasizing the need for proficiency in speaking and writing just as much as in reading and listening. The Framework was presented to representatives of the CHE in January 2017.

As Israeli institutions of higher education take on board the notion of internationalization, and with the CHE's plans to greatly expand international and exchange programs over the next 5 years, the importance of English has never been more relevant. The number of courses being taught in English is set to grow, and the ECOSTAR project provides support for the increasing number of home and international students and lecturers who will be learning and teaching in English with its comprehensive [Handbook for English Medium Instruction in Institutions of Higher Education in Israel](#).

Both of these outcomes are essential components of the ongoing process of internationalization in higher education in Israel, where a high level of proficiency in the English language is required. Braude College is proud to have led and managed an excellent consortium which has promoted ongoing collaboration between universities and colleges. The results of the project's activities have been widely disseminated within Israel and the partner countries.

<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/543683-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-IL-TEMPUS-JPCR>



TEMPUS IRIS - Fostering Academic International Relations in Israeli Colleges to Promote Education, Research and Innovation

A third TEMPUS project, [IRIS](#), came under the coordination of Braude College in 2012, led by Dr. Dvora Toledano Kitai, at that time Head of the Center for the Promotion of Teaching and Learning, now Head of the Software Engineering Department, and Dr. Vered Holzmann, assisted by Shani Alchek.. The aims of the IRIS project, with partners from eight Israeli academic colleges and six European universities and



NGOs, were to foster academic international relations in Israeli colleges, to promote education, research and innovation; and to improve the academic quality as well as the status and competitiveness of public colleges vis-à-vis universities and private colleges through the development of internationalism capabilities and culture at the colleges. IRIS promoted the development of internationalization in Israeli public colleges, supported the development of institutional strategic plans for internationalization, and led to the establishment of International Relations Offices (IROs) in the Israeli partner institutions. Thanks to this initiative, Braude's **IRO** was established in 2016, headed by Dr. Shmuel Gazit, ably assisted by Ms. Liat Shmueli. On the national level, following a strategic plan to promote internationalization in Israeli HEIs and a meeting of all partner institutions' presidents with the Chairperson of the Council for Higher Education, the project had an impact which is demonstrated in a new program to promote internationalization in HEIs in general and in public colleges in particular.

<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/530315-TEMPUS-1-2012-1-IL-TEMPUS-JPGR>

ERASMUS+ IN2IT - Internationalization by Innovative Technology

The TEMPUS program has been superseded by the **ERASMUS+** program and Braude has been proud to coordinate a fourth European project, **IN2IT**, through the combined coordinating efforts of Dr. Vered Holzman, Dr. Dvora Toledano-Kitai and Ms. Shani Alchek. The aims of this project were to develop and implement an innovative technological infrastructure for the purpose of advancing internationalization in higher education, and thereby to expand the practical applications of internationalization in



Israeli academic colleges, to strengthen the capacities for teaching, learning, research, and training, and to improve the quality and positioning of Israeli state-funded academic colleges in higher education. IN2IT has further promoted internationalization in higher education in Israel, including the development of an internationalization maturity matrix model to assess improvement of internationalization in HEIs, the establishment of an international community of practice on internationalization, and the development of the IN2IT Learning Management System as well as several online international courses, including Diversity, English, Entrepreneurship, and Essential Skills, all of which have been studied in English simultaneously by students in the Israeli partner institutions, including from Braude, and students from the European partner institutions. These courses will be delivered again in the next academic year by faculty from various countries to Braude students and to students from other Israeli and European institutions.

<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/561642-EPP-1-2015-1-IL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP>

Opening up to Europe

A very welcome outcome of the college's participation in these projects has been the development of excellent relations with the European partner institutions and the growing number of students and staff taking advantage of mobility opportunities. As a direct result, and with the formal establishment of the IRO, Braude has signed agreements with the following universities: the University of Montan, Leoben, in Austria; the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca in Romania; the Wroclaw University of Environmental and Life Sciences in Poland; the University of Bergamo



in Italy; the Politecnico di Torino, Italy; the Politecnico di Bari, Italy; the University of Cyprus; the University of Freiburg, Germany; the Vidzeme University of Applied Science in Latvia; the University of Innsbruck in Austria; and the University of Chemnitz, Germany. Other agreements are being negotiated.

The ERASMUS+ program

The European Union's Erasmus+ programme is a funding scheme to support activities in the fields of Education, Training, Youth and Sport, and to encourage:

- individuals to spend a mobility or volunteering period abroad and to receive linguistic training;
- organisations to collaborate in project partnerships in the fields of academic and vocational training, schools, adult learning and European sport events.

Erasmus+ also supports teaching, research, networking and policy debate on EU topics.

Student mobilities

In order to expand our international exchange program further and to attract more international students to our college, we have promoted the development of engineering courses in English. In the spring of 2017, the college offered 29 such courses in English for 18 incoming students from China, Europe and the US together with 289 Israeli students. By the spring semester of 2019, we will be offering international and home students a choice of 50 courses, across the departments, which will be taught in English.

In 2016, two Braude students travelled to Bergamo in Italy; in 2017, seven Braude students took part in exchanges: three in universities in Italy, one in Cyprus, one in Romania and one in Austria. Already signed up for 2018 are eleven of our students who will study in Italy, Romania, Austria and Poland.

For more information on these international exchange programs and how you can participate, please go to our website: <http://www.braude.ac.il/international/>

Academic staff mobilities

Exchange programs do not just offer opportunities to students. Several of our lecturers have traveled to partner institutions to teach, conduct research and learn



more about the process of internationalization in higher education in those countries:

- **Dr. Sami Abu-Saleh** from the Mechanical Engineering department went to the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca in Romania.
- As a result of his visit to the University of Innsbruck in Austria, **Dr. Aviv Gibali** is now collaborating with Austrian colleagues on an international conference.
- **Dr. Linda Weinberg** from the English Studies Unit will be visiting the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca in Romania in October.
- **Dr. Shmuel Gazit** has visited the Politecnico di Torino, the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, the University of Cyprus, and the Wroclaw University for Environmental and Life Sciences.

We have also hosted a number of international visitors in the past year, including the following:

- **Professors Daniele Regazzoni, Maria Vespucci and Andrea Vitali** of the University of Bergamo, Italy, were hosted by Dr. Miri Weiss-Cohen of the Industrial Engineering and Management Department. **Professor Rosalba Ferrari** also of the University of Bergamo, Italy, was hosted by Dr. Sami Abu-Saleh of the Biotechnology Department.
- **Professor Roberto Spina** of the Politecnico di Bari, in Italy, was hosted by the Mechanical Engineering Department.
- **Professor Uwe Brauer** from the Universidad Complutense Madrid, Spain, was hosted by Professor Lavi Karp of the Mathematics Department.
- **Professor Harvey Borovetz** from the University of Pittsburgh returned to Braude to teach in the Mechanical Engineering Department during the spring semester.

In the next issue of the IRO newsletter:

- **Profile:** Dr. Shmuel Gazit, Director of Braude IRO
- **News from the field:** students and lecturers share experiences from international mobilities
- **Partners:** focus on international partner institutions
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