



ACCORD ON THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION



ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN DEANS OF EDUCATION

This Accord was developed under the leadership of

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SECTION 1 PREAMBLE

The Accord on the Internationalization of Education emerges from the Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE), a network of deans, directors, and chairs of faculties, colleges, schools, and departments of education from across Canada. ACDE members are committed to “national, public discourse on the importance of public education in developing and sustaining a civil society (ACDE General Accord, 2006a, p.1). This Accord is the product of a shared commitment across members of the ACDE network, and is intended to speak to a diversity of stakeholders and audiences, within and external to the university communities from which it emerged. In particular, the Accord seeks to stimulate discussion of critical issues and institutional responsibilities in the internationalization of education, and to give careful consideration to representations of marginalized individuals, groups, and communities.

The framework for the Accord on Internationalization is built upon and affirms the principles and stances embodied in prior Accords, including the General Accord (2006a), the Accord on Initial Teacher Education (2006b), the Accord on Indigenous Education (2010a), the Accord on Educational Research (2010b), and the Accord on Early Learning and Early Childhood Education (2012). By articulating a set of shared beliefs and principles, the Accord provides a broad framework for guiding internationalization practices within Canadian faculties of education. It is hoped that the Accords, taken individually or collectively, may also serve as useful guidelines for other faculties and departments within institutions of higher education, and as reference points for developing and enabling public policy.



SECTION 2 THE CONTEXT FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION IN CANADA

The Global Context for an Accord: Principled Educational Practice

Members of the ACDE community serve broad mandates for educational research and practice. A common element is the responsibility for the education and preparation of teachers for professional practice. In addition to this core function, member organizations engage in programs and research affecting educational practice within a wide variety of educational and community settings.

Within this Accord, the conceptualization of internationalization processes in education is explicitly framed along five inter-related areas of educational practice:

- Experiences of international mobility (e.g., receiving and sending students, faculty, and staff, among others);
- International teaching partnerships (e.g., offshore course delivery, consultancy projects, or dual and joint degrees);
- International research partnerships;
- The internationalization of Canadian curriculum; and
- The preparation of educators and leaders for schools, post-secondary educational systems and other locations of educational practice.

This conceptualization of internationalization leads to three broad areas of concern that frame the context for this Accord. First, increasing international mobility has facilitated the rapid internationalization of higher education, straining the capacity of institutions to respond to service demands in ways that are socially accountable. Second, local and global forces are challenging educational systems to respond to increasing levels of complexity, uncertainty, diversity, and inequality in Canada and internationally; these challenges necessitate a reconsideration of the curriculum in Canadian institutions. Third, current economic imperatives of globalization have intensified the drive towards profit-seeking, standardizing, and potentially exploitative internationalization activities, often without full consideration of or particular attention paid to the vulnerability of marginalised communities. Taken together, these concerns necessitate the creation of guidelines for principled international educational practices within Canadian faculties of education; it is hoped that these guidelines may, in turn, influence universities and institutional partners in establishing standards for ethical practices.

The Need for an Accord

The need for an Accord on the Internationalization of Education is framed broadly in terms of potential benefits and risks of internationalization policies and activities within and beyond faculties of education.

Benefits

The potential for enriching and enhancing educational experiences for all students.

- Principled practices for the internationalization of education create opportunities for collaborative knowledge production, exposure to different contexts and worldviews, more complex and nuanced analyses, and improved capacity to respond to change and diversity.

The potential for increased intercultural understanding and dialogue through a realization of interdependence.

- Sustained and supported intercultural contact creates opportunities for individual and collective reflection, creative collaborations, cooperative action, and educational transformation. Taken together, such activities promote deeper understanding of the local-global connection.

The potential for building partnerships based on reciprocity, social accountability, and sustainability.

- Internationalization offers an opportunity to establish collaborative, ethical partnerships that foster the ideals of economic and social justice and that take us beyond the ethnocentric, hegemonic, depoliticized, and paternalistic historical patterns of engagement. In turn, increased understanding may result in a reciprocal improvement of educational research and practices. As we better understand the perspectives and contributions of diverse ethno-cultural groups, faculties of education may come to employ collaborative practices that result in mutual growth and respectful development.

The potential for integrating learning throughout curricula.

- Increased understanding and improved pedagogy may also work their way throughout domestic curricula; what is learned in international contexts will serve to better inform and educate our domestic administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

The potential for system change.

- Internationalization has the potential to equip participants to understand local and global connections critically, to expand frames of reference and possibilities for rethinking, relationships and educational, economic, and social practice.

Risks

The risk of exploitative practices emerging from an exclusive or primary focus on profit maximization.

- Funding for post-secondary education is increasingly under siege, and one of the mechanisms institutions may consider to redress chronic funding shortfalls is to apply differential fees to international students, programs, or services. International activities often use revenue generating mechanisms to ensure sustainability; however, concerns arise when financial goals supersede the educational, research, and community building goals of the program or institution.

The risk of systemic exclusion.

- The primary imperative of a university is to create and disseminate knowledge. Differential fee and access structures may create an “issue of privilege” in which only certain international students—usually the wealthy or politically connected—benefit from what Canadian institutions may have to offer. Similarly, it may only be those Canadian students with sufficient means who are able to benefit from international experiences. Finally, individuals or groups within Canada may be excluded from post-secondary participation if attention, resources, and energy are diverted away from pressing issues of social justice in Canada and towards international contexts. It is important to be cognizant of how our policies and practices determine who is included and who is excluded from educational opportunities.

The risk of personal and social disruption.

- The disruption or marginalization of individual identities and cultural practices, or indeed broader social disruption, may be the unintended consequences of widespread internationalization activities. Activities that aim to intervene in or build knowledge about communities without a deep critical analysis of the economic, social, cultural, and political factors that frame the positions of helpers, visitors, and researchers vis-à-vis the recipients of the activities are particularly problematic.

The risk of (neo) colonization.

- The attempt to export educational practices and norms may have an impact similar to enforced social and economic colonization: the subjugation of one group to the power and control of another, and the elevation of a predominantly imported mode of thinking above all other forms of knowing.

The risk to participants in international activities.

- International settings with high educational needs may also be locations with higher levels of risk to personal safety and security. Institutions that engage in international practice have an obligation to protect individuals who engage in international practice.



SECTION 3 ACDE AND THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION

Faculties of education in Canada have a rich and varied history of teaching, research, and service in international contexts, with the concomitant challenges and opportunities. However, we are increasingly moving towards a globally situated, knowledge-based society in which information has become ubiquitous and the need for transforming information into knowledge has become paramount. Within this milieu, there are an increasing number of educational service providers, and an increasingly diverse array of reasons for providing such services in the internationalizing educational marketplace. Therefore, ACDE now articulates a set of principles to guide internationalizing educational practice in order to convey the unique perspectives that faculties of education bring to bear on such discussions. In particular, it is ACDE's hope that:

- The signatories of the Accord adopt the principles and commitments that follow when considering or engaging in internationalization activities;
- The Accord will serve as a catalyst for discussion of internationalization within and beyond the academic community, and will inform principled decisions in educational, government, and community settings.
- All forms of educational practice will be informed by this Accord.



SECTION 4 PRINCIPLES

This Accord promotes:

- Economic and social justice and equity across contexts and sites of educational practice
- Reciprocity as the foundation for engaging in internationalization activities
- Global sustainability
- Intercultural awareness, ethical engagement, understanding, and respect

- Equity of access to education, regardless of socio-economic status or financial circumstance.

The embodiment of these principles within the five broad areas of educational practice will collectively and individually help us to move towards a preferred future for the internationalization of educational practice.



SECTION 5 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Deans, directors, and chairs of education in Canadian universities are uniquely positioned to substantively influence the internationalization of education. Within that context, ACDE supports and encourages practices of internationalization that uphold principles of inclusion and access, as well as scholarly rigour and excellence. ACDE believes that internationalization allows us to construct and share knowledge across a broad range of communities and settings with a view to developing deeper and broader educational conceptions, models, and theories, thus improving educational practice.

ACDE supports a call for principled action under four distinct headings: experiences of mobility; teaching and research partnerships; internationalization of the curriculum in Canada; and institutional commitment.

1. PROMOTE INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES OF MOBILITY BASED ON SUSTAINABILITY

- Sustainability implies a relational motive, rather than a profit motive, for internationalization activities. The conceptualization and management of international projects requires attention to financial, relational, and conceptual sustainability.
- Incoming international students should be fully supported to navigate local organizational, linguistic, academic, and cultural systems, norms, and practices. Equally, their transnational knowledge should be seen as a social, cultural, and institutional asset that enriches the educational experience of all students, rather than as a barrier to learning in host institutions.
- Faculty, staff, and students need support in making fully informed decisions regarding travel abroad so that they understand potential personal risks. Additionally, those who do travel abroad need adequate cultural and language preparation prior to departure, support during their time away, and opportunities to debrief and share their learning on their return. Taken together, such actions mitigate the potential for neo-colonial attitudes and practices while concomitantly increasing the likelihood of a successful international experience.

- Faculty and staff who participate in international activities should be fully informed about the potential implications of such activities on their career trajectories. This is particularly the case for junior faculty members, where extensive time committed to travel and/or program development may interfere with traditional scholarly productivity for tenure, promotion and merit review processes.
- Risk management assessments and examinations of ethics and social accountability should be conducted frequently in mobility initiatives.
- Engagements with Indigenous ways of knowing in different contexts should be encouraged as a principle of social justice and as a way to make connections between local and global issues, especially issues related to Aboriginal peoples in Canada.
- Engagements with diasporic immigrant communities at home and abroad should be encouraged to further the principles and understandings of internationalization.
- Care must be taken to consider the environmental costs (e.g., pollutants through increased air travel) associated with international activities.

DESIRED OUTCOMES: initiatives that involve international mobility are sustainable over time and influence positive change over the long term. Participants in international activities are able to adapt to their experiences, to learn from the peoples and places they encounter, to understand the impacts they have and ultimately to make relevant contributions to the communities they visit and the communities to which they return.

2. PROMOTE ETHICAL TEACHING AND RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS BASED ON EQUITY AND RECIPROCITY

- Research and teaching in international projects should be based on cultural and political awareness and sensitivity and involve reciprocal and equitable knowledge exchange.
- International projects should involve community-engaged scholarship based upon an economic and social justice philosophy of education.
- Structural arrangements such as memoranda of understanding should reflect that relationships and partnerships are jointly created, agreed upon, and equitably supported. This includes articulation of the form and nature of institutional support.
- Relationships with groups other than universities (such as NGOs or community groups) can and should be considered.
- Connections between local and international issues related to Indigenous communities should be considered.
- Decisions, plans, and activities are informed by research evidence, sound educational design, and quality and fairness of assessment practices.

- International teaching and research partnerships should employ, where it is warranted, cost effective educational technologies to empower marginalized communities through distance education modalities that are culturally responsive to local contexts.
- When working with marginalized communities, participants should consider ethical principles for solidarity beyond charity and unidirectional flows of knowledge. The short- and long-term impact of engagements should also be carefully considered.
- Risk management assessments and examinations of ethics and social accountability should be conducted frequently during the life of a partnership.

DESIRED OUTCOMES: ethical, mutually beneficial long-term relationships among project partners that result in richer and deeper understanding of education and educational practice. A culture of research develops that has local relevance while being globally situated and connected.

3. PROMOTE CURRICULAR INTERNATIONALIZATION BASED ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND GLOBAL JUSTICE

- Pedagogy and content should reflect the contributions of different populations and ways of knowing.
- The membership of the teaching profession should be representative of diverse populations and ways of knowing..
- Representations of communities, especially those who have historically been marginalized and misrepresented, should be considered carefully to avoid generalizations and stereotypes. This consideration should include an interrogation of the dominant discourses and language of educational practice.
- Multilingualism should be valued and encouraged.
- Students should be supported in the development of intercultural and international dispositions, with particular attention paid to historical and political processes that maintain unequal relations of power between different economic and social groups.
- Students should be exposed to multiple worldviews and offered critical tools of analysis to assess the historical, political, ethical and social implications of different positions, including their own.
- Students should be given opportunities to examine the connections between local and global processes, in particular with reference to the systemic reproduction of discrimination, exploitation, unequal power relations, and the distribution of wealth and labour in Canada and internationally.
- Issues of economic and social justice in Canada, particularly issues pertaining to Indigenous peoples, should be emphasized and connected to issues of global justice.

DESIRED OUTCOMES: teacher education specifically, and higher education, more broadly, as a space of critically informed and socially accountable independent intellectual debate about alternative futures and a platform of economic and social justice praxis; an integrated and coherent curriculum that equips students and future educators to address complex local and global challenges in socially accountable ways and that holistically engages students in collaborative analyses and practices beyond their immediate contexts and social groups.

4. ESTABLISH AND SECURE LONG-TERM INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT

- Effective international work requires the ongoing moral support and financial commitment of the university's senior administration to enable the development of stable infrastructures to coordinate and support international initiatives.
- The metrics of accountability must reflect the broad aims and goals of internationalization set out in this Accord.
- International research and service work needs to be recognized in tenure, promotion, and merit evaluations of faculty members.
- Research funding should be included in international projects. To the extent possible, mechanisms must be found to support the research components of international projects to foster meaningful knowledge exchange and develop research capacity among all partners. Furthermore, in addition to the development of programs and activities, research that illuminates the impact of these programs and activities should be encouraged and funded.
- Undergraduate students should play an expanded role in setting goals for learning, providing community service, and engaging in basic research activities. Faculties of education should consider carefully the potential of international service learning and practicum opportunities to develop global citizenship among their undergraduate students, and press for appropriate recognition of these activities with certification bodies.
- The role of graduate students in international projects can provide vital energy to these initiatives and further the development of highly qualified, internationally engaged professionals.
- International capacity building should be supported for individuals and institutions as a whole, through hiring and research funding practices.
- Internationalization projects should be expanded to include lifelong learning, including formal and non-formal education.

DESIRED OUTCOMES: ethical and socially accountable internationalization activities are practiced by empowered communities of learners and seen to be integral to, not in addition to, core programs and activities.



SECTION 6 COMMITMENTS

Given the principles and call to action, ACDE members commit to:

- Advancing this Accord within their faculties and within their universities more broadly.
- Advancing this Accord with external partner groups such as funding agencies, community or business partners, governments and government agencies, national associations and other stakeholder or advocacy groups.
- Supporting equitable internationalization in education through transparency and accountability in the design, delivery, and communication of internationalization activities.

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