

GAZIANTEP UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONALIZATION POLICY DOCUMENT (EXPANDED)

The *Higher Education Internationalization Strategy Document*, published by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) on June 30, 2017, serves as a guide for determining the strategies to be followed in the internationalization of our university during the 2025–2029 period. Internationalization is a process through which higher education institutions enhance academic interaction, strengthen knowledge exchange, and promote intercultural cooperation. As Gaziantep University, we have found it necessary to update our internationalization policy in order to increase our global visibility, expand academic collaborations, and attract students from various regions to our university. Within this framework, we aim to both strengthen existing partnerships and incorporate new regions into our policy.

The *Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE)*, granted by the European Commission, requires our university to adhere to the ethical and quality standards outlined in the internationalization process. The ECHE provides a framework to ensure that education and exchange activities carried out within the Erasmus+ program meet specific quality standards and encourages students and academic staff to gain international experience. In line with the ECHE framework, Gaziantep University will intensify its efforts to facilitate student and staff mobility and to sustain academic collaborations.

Under the current internationalization strategy, Gaziantep University supports student and academic mobility through programs such as Erasmus+, Mevlana, and dual degree programs. However, in light of the evolving dynamics of the global academic environment, it has become imperative to establish new partnerships and diversify our educational programs. In this context, collaborations have been expanded to include regions such as Asia, Central Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, the Caucasus, the Russian Federation, and the Western Balkans. Additionally, Sub-Saharan Africa has been newly incorporated into our internationalization strategy.

In the 2025 *Higher Education Internationalization Strategy Document* published by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), it is stated that following Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, Turkish universities will establish campuses in the Balkans, the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa, aiming to strengthen Turkey's presence in the global academic arena. In alignment with this strategy, Gaziantep University also aims to become more academically active in the Balkans.

One of the main components of Gaziantep University's internationalization process is the *International Student Office*. Since 1986, our university has been admitting international students and has consistently increased the number of students since the 2004–2005 academic year. Today, we host approximately 6,000 international students from 100 different countries. The admission process is conducted based on exams such as GAÜNYÖS and İÜYÖS, with applications undergoing a rigorous evaluation. Scholarship opportunities are primarily provided by institutions such as the *Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB)*, and the governments of Afghanistan and Yemen.

Considering recent developments in Southeast and East Asia, our internationalization process prioritizes collaborations in areas such as technology transfer, disaster management, and humanitarian aid. Academic relations with countries in Central Asia and the Middle East will enhance educational and research processes, contribute to regional cooperation, and promote

cultural exchange. In these regions, partnerships in the fields of medicine and health will be deepened through joint research and student exchange programs.

Our internationalization policy also incorporates initiatives aimed at developing curricula on disaster management following the earthquakes of February 6. These efforts have paved the way for joint academic projects with countries that share similar socioeconomic conditions with Turkey. One of the most notable innovations in this policy is the inclusion of South Africa in our internationalization strategy. In addition to countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where we already have active student populations, we have initiated collaborations with universities in countries with lower international student numbers, such as Botswana and Tanzania. These partnerships aim to promote knowledge exchange in the fields of agriculture, health, and environment. Moreover, research on disaster management and crisis response aims to strengthen academic capacity in these regions.

In this process, the *International Relations Office*, *Erasmus Office*, *Gaziantep University Center for European Union Studies (GABAM)*, and the *International Student Office* will play active roles. These units will be responsible for managing international projects, coordinating with partner universities, and effectively facilitating student and academic staff mobility. In addition to managing exchange programs, they will organize activities to support the integration of international students and strengthen intercultural interaction.

In light of all these developments, Gaziantep University will review its international collaborations annually and revise its policy in line with emerging opportunities to ensure that its internationalization strategy remains sustainable and dynamic. The university is committed to strengthening its integration with the global academic community and to providing students with an international educational experience.