

The European Association for International Education (EAIE) in partnership with other like-minded associations around the world puts forward the following charter to the global higher education community:

International Student Mobility Charter

In 2010 more than 4 million students were studying outside their home countries.

According to UNESCO this number may rise to 8 million international higher education students by 2025. This globally mobile population of mainly young people seeking education represents an investment in crucial assets for sending countries, assets that are essential for future development, prosperity and welfare, when students return home with increased knowledge and skills prepared for global citizenship. For receiving countries, these students bring cultural and intellectual diversity to the institutions and the countries they visit, often representing also a source of revenue for those institutions and communities, and in some cases a source of skilled migrants' post-education experience.

Consequently, it should be in the interest of any country to facilitate mobility in higher education. This implies that every country and higher education institution needs to recognize the complexity of mobility and have a framework of support for both incoming and outgoing students.

At the same time there is a need to secure international students' rights and welfare. In some countries and communities, international students have suffered from discrimination on grounds of race, religion and culture, gender and have been confronted with circumstances on and off campuses, which pose a threat to their safety, dignity and security.

The demand for knowledge is global. All countries and cultures are in need of an increased level of knowledge, for many different reasons. This is a call to institutions of education, cities, regions and countries to recognize this need and to make efforts to facilitate knowledge mobility, in particular knowledge mobility linked to the global movement of students.

While respecting the integrity of education institutions, taking account of their diverse strategies and academic and national cultures and their roles in their communities, we call on governments and education institutions, as well as international agencies and associations of international education, to endorse, support and promote the following:

1. Equity of treatment

The civil and human rights of international students must be understood and protected, and measures taken by governments and higher education institutions to safeguard against discrimination.

2. Inter-cultural competences

In order to improve the quality of education and the integration of international students in the respective host country, the inter-cultural competences of faculty and staff at every level of service and education must be well-developed and actively applied. Such competences include recognition of one's own cultural and national perspectives, an awareness and respect for other perspectives, and the ability to communicate successfully across cultural differences.

With the same aim to enhance competences, mobile students should be given intercultural preparation and have access to advice on intercultural awareness as well as support with reintegration when they return home.

3. Integration of international students

When admitted to an education institution, international students are automatically also admitted to a country, a new community and its different culture. International students' integration and interaction with the academic as well as the wider community needs to be actively facilitated to maximize the value for all stakeholders.

4. Opportunity to complete studies

International students should enjoy the same opportunities to complete their education, taking into account the same rules and regulations that are valid for local and national students.

5. Portability and continuity of funding

National student loans and grants should always be portable. Students on grants that cover tuition and expenses while studying abroad should be provided with safeguards against arbitrary withdrawal of their funding.

6. Student status

A student's status in both host and home countries should be protected with safeguards against arbitrary withdrawal of study rights or temporary visitor rights.

7. Visas and formal requirements

In order to promote global student mobility and in compliance with national security priorities, transparent visa application procedures and swift processing of student visa applications are needed in all countries.

8. Information

Information on study and research opportunities, facilities and all aspects about entering and living in a respective host country should be open and easily accessible to all education seekers and other stakeholders. Students, their families, grant and student loan agencies, home institutions and schools and governments should all have easy access to relevant, adequate and accurate information, in order that students and sponsors can make informed choices and have realistic expectations.

9. Student rights support

In order to ensure quality in the provision of services for international students and to protect their rights, an independent authority both in their home and host country should be available on a local, regional or national level to which students can turn for a resolution of their legitimate problems, disputes or concerns or, if necessary, for legal advice pertaining to their studies, status and welfare.

10. Quality assurance

In order to benefit from global knowledge capacity, well-developed national and institutional quality assurance systems need to be in place. Institutions of higher education should meet agreed standards of accreditation in all aspects of their activities. Quality assurance systems should include all dimensions of international higher education - administrative, academic, extra-curricular programs and support as well as social care.