**Evidence Based Health Policy,
Management & Economics**

Strategies for Internationalizing Research and Technology in the Medical Universities of Iran

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Executive Summary

In this applied research, the strategic planning of the internationalization of research and technology of the universities of medical sciences in Iran (seventh macro-region) for the three-year period from 2023 to 2025 was carried out. The steps taken to develop this strategic plan include identifying key stakeholders, formulating the mission statement, perspective and values, analysis of the internal and external environment (SWOT), and determining the strategic position of the universities in the seventh education region of country in the field of internationalization of research, and finally, determining the main goals, objectives and necessary strategies to achieve these goals. At the end, an action plan was developed and presented to determine the necessary measures to achieve the goals and strategies set in the period of 2023-2025.

Problem statement

In today's world, internationalization has become a core principle of scientific development. The knowledge produced by a country can only be recognized as science when it is shared globally. Over the past two decades, the internationalization of higher education has become a priority for academic institutions, gradually affecting their missions. Universities today serve as institutions that promote scientific exchanges between nations and cultures, influenced by globalization and internationalization. Globalization refers to integration, while internationalization denotes cooperation and partnership. The internationalization of higher education involves organizational transformation, enhancing international perspectives in management, improving quality, and integrating international dimensions into teaching, research, and service responsibilities (1).

Various motivations drive the internationalization of higher education institutions, such as commercial, knowledge acquisition, and language learning, with many viewing commercial gain as the most significant. Countries like the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom derive substantial portions of their GDP from the export of education. This phenomenon positively impacts the quality of services and institutional standing, particularly as the international job market grows, the knowledge economy takes precedence, and public resources allocated to education decline (2).

Among the most influential factors in the internationalization of higher education is research, which is the primary product of scientific institutions worldwide. Internationalizing research is a key policy in Iran's Sixth Development Plan, which emphasizes strengthening scientific

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communication with reputable international educational and research institutions (3). Furthermore, Iran's Vision 2025 Plan aims to position the country as a leading scientific force in Southwest Asia. Numerous initiatives have been undertaken to enhance the internationalization of universities, such as forming committees, signing agreements with foreign institutions, and organizing international conferences and seminars (2).

In Iran, several studies have investigated various aspects of internationalization of educational institutions. A number of studies have examined the challenges and obstacles of the internationalization of universities of medical sciences (4, 5). A number of studies have also examined various components in the

internationalization of higher education institutions (5- 7). However, in order to have a clear path and reach the goals mentioned in above documents, every higher education institution, including universities of medical sciences, must adjust and revise its strategic plan with an emphasis on this matter.

In this policy brief, the broad and specific strategies and goals of the internationalization of research and technology in the universities of medical sciences in seventh educational Region of Iran in the period of 2023-2025 are presented.

Policy solutions and options

Proposed goals and objectives for the internationalization of research and technology in Iran's universities of medical sciences (seventh educational region) are provided in table 1.

Table 1. Proposed goals and objectives for the internationalization of research and technology in Iran's universities of medical sciences (seventh educational region)

Goals	Objectives
G1: Strengthen infrastructure and prerequisites for the internationalization of research services at universities	G1O1: Improving the software, hardware and physical infrastructure of universities in line with the internationalization of research services by 20% by the end of 1403
	G1O2: Improving incentives and support for the internationalization of research services by 40% by the end of 2015
	G1O3: Improving the skills and capabilities of university professors, staff and students in line with internationalization by 15% annually.
G2: Improve incentives and support for internationalization efforts	G2O1: Increasing the number of international research projects and grants obtained and publishing articles and books with international cooperation by 10% until the end of 1403
	G2O2: Upgrading the rank of at least 5 current scientific research journals of the university and indexing them in at least one of the valid databases (ISI / PubMed / Scopus) by the end of 2015
G3: Enhance the skills and capabilities of faculty, staff, and students for international engagement	G3O1: A 50% increase in the admission of foreign students until the end of 1404
	G3O2: A 30% increase in international congresses/webinars/joint workshops with other domestic and foreign universities and research centers until the end of 1403
	G3O3: Granting study opportunities or scientific visits and sending at least 1% of active and elite faculty members in each university to universities and research centers or related industries abroad.
	G3O4 - Developing the effective communication of the International Vice-Chancellor and the Industry Liaison Office of each university with scientific-research institutions or related national/international industries by 10% per year

Recommendations
Strategic planning serves as a tool for analyzing the situation and developing strategies. This involves: 1.

identifying and classifying strengths and weaknesses, 2. recognizing opportunities and threats outside the system 3. establishing a strategic

position and creating a SWOT matrix, and 4. developing various strategies to guide the system.

In this report, which is a summary of the comprehensive strategic and operational plan for internationalizing research and technology for the medical universities of seventh education region of Iran, the main goals and objectives for internationalizing in research and technology are presented for use by relevant policymakers and stakeholders. The following strategies are recommended in order to achieve the first goal: strengthening the university's English website, strengthening the university's English website, improving the webometric ranking of the university based on relevant indicators, creating transparent trends and structures in the field of research internationalization, developing clear rules for international grants and removing some cumbersome rules, trying to achieve international accreditation standards for university educational and research programs (entering the university into international ranking systems), allocating funds and making significant investments for the internationalization of research, granting special awards (research credit, incentive rank, promotion point) to attract grants and other international activities of professors and students, creating a platform and culture for doing international work and obtaining grants, and strengthening the English skills of all faculty members and staff related to international affairs of the university through a series of face-to-face or virtual workshops.

Identification and introduction of non-resident Iranian researchers interested in scientific research cooperation with the university and efforts to attract international cooperation in the field of research, monitoring and informing about research grants abroad and holding training workshops about training for attracting these grants, definition of joint international grants and payment of fees for each researcher based on the currency of his country, definition of megaprojects based on provincial priorities and technological plans, and taking efforts to attract and publish articles by foreign authors or with international cooperation

are the suggestion to move toward the second goal. Moreover, introducing the strengths and capabilities of academic staff and university members to researchers outside the university to increase visibility, advertising the university and its programs on websites and magazines, providing the necessary infrastructure and facilities in the university to attract and provide services to international students, inviting entrepreneurs and elites of industries and companies related to medical sciences to hold workshops and scientific research meetings, facilitating the travel of researchers to participate in congresses and research courses, holding international congresses to introduce new abilities or achievements of university experts in various branches of medical sciences, and establishing university campuses in foreign countries are the recommended strategies to achieve the third goal. Implementing these strategies will help the universities move towards internationalization and foster collaborative research based on the needs of their communities.

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