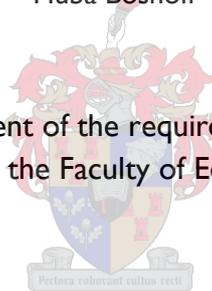


**Potential barriers to international exchange semesters at
Stellenbosch University**

by

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Philosophy in Higher Education in the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University



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Declaration

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Abstract

Higher education is challenged by the changing climate created by globalisation and the phenomenon of internationalisation. Internationalisation of higher education provides a platform for institutions to engage with counterparts across the world in a manner that would enhance the quality of all aspects of the institution, but also poses a number of challenges to institutions and higher education systems. The literature review of the study sketches the background to the study and analyses some of the above-mentioned opportunities and challenges.

The study researched one aspect of internationalisation, namely the mobility of undergraduate students. The mobility of students can take place through an array of activities that includes summer school programmes, internships, or tailored short programmes. This study focuses on one type of mobility, namely an international exchange semester.

The study stemmed from the actual problem at Stellenbosch University where a major imbalance exists in the number of students received from partner universities and of Stellenbosch students taking part in a semester at the partner university.

The rationale and practice of international exchange semesters in four Faculties were analysed on multiple levels by means of a case study design. The four case studies were concluded in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Science, the Faculty of AgriSciences and the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, and within these Faculties the investigation was restricted to general-formative programmes. Data were collected and analysed at four levels of each Faculty, namely the climate that is created through Faculty strategy, the views and perspectives of students in their final and pre-final year, the view and perspectives of programme coordinators, and finally, the views on a managerial level by means of the inputs of deputy deans.

Each of the case studies reveals specific issues and opportunities for international exchange semesters within the particular Faculty, yet, the comparative perspectives reveal that the major barriers to student mobility are consistent across faculties, and that particularly the type of information available, the applicability of that information within the particular academic environment and financial aspects are consistently identified by students in all four Faculties. The barriers identified by staff, both on departmental and management level, resonate with the barriers identified by students, but further illustrate more specific organisational and pedagogical challenges linked to the implementation of international exchange semesters.

The study not only makes a contribution to a deeper understanding of existing challenges pertaining to international mobility by means of an exchange semester but it also makes specific recommendations to address these challenges and poses alternatives to existing practices.

Opsomming

Hoër onderwys word uitgedaag deur die veranderende omgewing as gevolg van globalisering en deur die verskynsel van internasionalisering. Internasionalisering van hoër onderwys bied 'n platform vir interaksie tussen instellings en hul eweknieë in ander wêrelddele op 'n wyse wat die gehalte van alle aspekte van die instellings kan bevorder. Internasionalisering is egter ook 'n verskynsel wat 'n bedreiging en 'n uitdaging vir instellings en hoëronderwysstelsels inhou. Die literatuurstudie van hierdie studie skets die agtergrond tot die studie en ontleed van hierdie geleentheid en uitdagings.

Die studie het een aspek van internasionalisering, naamlik die mobiliteit van voorgraadse studente, ondersoek. Die mobiliteit van studente geskied deur 'n verskeidenheid aktiwiteite wat somerskole, internskappe en taalkursusse insluit. Die studie fokus op een aktiwiteit, naamlik internasionale uitruilsemesters.

Die studie het gepruut uit 'n voortslepende uitdaging by die Universiteit van Stellenbosch (US) waar die aantal inkomende uitruilstudente van vennoot-instansies die aantal US studente wat aan uitruilsemesters deelneem, ver oorskry.

Die rasionaal en uitvoering van internasionale uitruilsemesters in vier fakulteite is deur middel van 'n gevallestudie-ontwerp op verskeie vlakke ontleed om 'n omvattende begrip te ontwikkel. Die vier gevallestudies is in die konteks van die Fakulteit Lettere en Sosiale Wetenskappe, Fakulteit Agriwetenskappe, Fakulteit Natuurwetenskappe en Fakulteit Ekonomiese en Bestuurswetenskappe uitgevoer, en in die studie van hierdie vier fakulteite is die konteks verder tot algemene vormende programme beperk. Data is ingewin en ontleed op vier vlakke in elke fakulteit, naamlik die platform wat geskep word deur die strategie van die fakulteit, die oortuigings en perspektiewe van studente in hulle finale en voor-finale jaar, die perspektiewe en insig van programkoördineerders, en laastens die perspektief op bestuursvlak deur middel van onderhoude met adjunkdekane.

Elke gevallestudie onthul spesifieke kwessies ten opsigte van en geleentheid vir internasionale uitruilsemesters binne die betrokke fakulteit, maar die vergelykende perspektiewe dui aan dat die grootste struikelblokke vir studente mobiliteit deurlopend dieselfde is tussen die vier fakulteite. Die studie toon aan dat die beskikbaarheid van die tipe inligting, die toepaslikheid van daardie inligting op 'n student se spesifieke situasie (program) en finansiële aspekte in al vier fakulteite deur studente gekies is. Die struikelblokke wat deur personeel, beide op departementele en bestuursvlak, uitgewys is vind aanklank by die struikelblokke wat deur studente aangedui is, maar illustreer ook verdere uitdagings ten opsigte van organisatoriese aspekte en pedagogiese uitdagings wat verband hou met die implementering van internasionale uitruilsemesters.

Die studie maak nie net 'n bydrae in terme van 'n dieper verstaan van die bestaande uitdagings ten opsigte van internasionale studente mobiliteit deur middel van 'n uitruilsemester nie, maar maak ook voorstelle oor hoe om hierdie uitdagings aan te spreek en stel alternatiewe voor vir die bestaande praktyke.

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List of Acronyms

AAU	African Association of Universities
ANIE	African Network for Internationalization of Education
ARUA	African Research Universities Alliance
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DAAD	<i>Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst</i> (German Academic Exchange Service)
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EAIE	European Association of International Education
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EUA	European University Association
EU	European Union
FOAS	Faculty of AgriSciences
FASS	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
FEMS	Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences
FOS	Faculty of Science
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
HPSCA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
IAU	International Association of Universities
IOC	Internationalisation of the Curriculum
IAH	Internationalisation at home
IEAA	International Education Association of Australia
IEASA	International Education Association of Southern Africa
NAFSA	Association of International Education (formerly the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers/Affairs)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PGIO	Postgraduate & International Office
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAICA	Southern African Institute for Chartered Accountants
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SARUA	Southern African Regional Universities Association
SLE	Senior Lecturer Equivalent
SU	Stellenbosch University

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CHAPTER I

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Motivation for the study

Since its inception about 1 000 years ago, higher education has gone through various phases of development and change. Some of the most prominent developments in the past decade include massification, explicit role playing in knowledge creation for the knowledge society (Prinsloo & Louw, 2006) and widespread internationalisation of higher education (Altbach & Teichler, 2001; Knight, 2004). In spite of this increase in prominence in recent times, internationalisation of higher education can by no means be described as a new phenomenon. The university in its earliest form was created as an international institution, and as far back as the 13th century, higher education institutions in Paris and Bologna demonstrated an international dimension (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Altbach & Teichler, 2001; Saglamer, 2013).

The current sharper focus on the internationalisation of higher education can be ascribed largely to globalisation (Altbach & Teichler, 2001; Knight, 2004) and the effect this has on the flow of knowledge and information. In the report of the 4th International Association of Universities (IAU) Survey by Egron-Polak and Hudson (2014) it is stated that internationalisation is an integral part of an incessant process of change that has grown in importance with the more general developments of globalisation that offer new opportunities but also pose new challenges. The higher education sector has developed into a sector that is a leading indicator in the wealth, development, and ambition of a nation (Altbach & Salmi, 2011; Knight, 2011), and the massive expansion of higher education worldwide can be described as one of the biggest social transformations shaping the globe (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009). The internationalisation of higher education is a key focus to many institutions to stay relevant and competitive in a changing educational context. Therefore, the internationalisation of a higher education institution is a possible strategic motive to increase visibility, generate income, and play a leading role of developing the knowledge economy (Altbach et al., 2009) in the realm of globalisation. In the context of higher education, Teichler (2004) summarises the distinction between internationalisation and globalisation as internationalisation being the tendency towards an increase of border-crossing activities among more or less established national systems of higher education, whilst globalisation tends to assume that borders and national systems as such become blurred or even may disappear. However, De Wit (2012) warns that 'internationalisation of higher education' should not be a universal phrase for everything and anything that has an international dimension in the context of higher education. He goes further to define internationalisation of higher education as "a process to introduce intercultural, international and global dimensions in higher education; to improve the goals, functions and delivery of higher education and thus to upgrade the quality of education and research" (De Wit, 2012:7). I shall return to these definitions and my own preference in Section 1.5 of this chapter.

These definitions underscore the internationalisation of higher education as a key feature of the management and delivery of higher education. In national contexts, however, there is not a 'one size fits all' approach. National imperatives for internationalisation of higher education range from building strong partnerships to the recruitment of foreign students to supplement other sources of institutional income (Qiang, 2003). The rationale for internationalisation in higher education has been framed by Teichler (2004), Knight (2004) and others in the context of globalisation. This aspect and particular national initiatives will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

In South Africa, the newly released White Paper for Post-school Education and Training (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013) regards the internationalisation of higher education as an opportunity for cross-cultural learning, developing global citizenship and better communication, all of which can contribute to national and international goals such as peace and cooperation, and even more significantly, to find solutions to global challenges such as sustainable development, security, renewable energy and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Utilising international partnerships and links to increase knowledge production, intellectual property, and innovation in South Africa is seen as a strategic objective for the higher education sector.

The variety of activities associated with internationalisation of higher education has already been implied by the benefits listed in the White Paper (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). Other activities include the mobility of students for short- and long-term periods. The White Paper (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013) highlights two important aspects of student mobility that are beneficial to the sector, namely that the exchange of students can strengthen South African institutions through capacity building and that it provides a platform to share indigenous knowledge with the international community (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013).

1.2 Statement of the problem

From the motivation of the study, it can be construed that the internationalisation of higher education is a central focus of higher education institutions to stay relevant and competitive in a changing global context. The benefits listed by the White Paper on Post-school Education and Training (2013) emphasise cultural understanding, knowledge production, and addressing global challenges as key benefits of internationalisation of higher education. The internationalisation of higher education includes a broad range of activities, namely the inward and outward mobility of students and staff, bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements, international research collaboration, an internationalised curriculum, international students and staff as a substantial component of the diversity profile of the institution, joint programming, and the establishment of overseas campuses (Beelen, 2012; Clifford & Montgomery, 2013; De Wit, 2012; Knight, 2011). The activities include a wide scope, but it is important that internationalisation efforts are approached and developed in such a way that they infiltrate all levels of the institution and main role players, namely undergraduate and graduate students and staff can benefit from internationalisation.

By now, it is well documented that students experience significant intellectual and personal development during university study (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). For those who also engage in international mobility opportunities during this period, developmental outcomes that are even more significant have been reported (Leask, 2009; Minh Nguyen, 2012; Tarrant, 2010). A US study conducted in 2002 on participants who studied abroad between 1950 and 1999 identified four major areas of development that can be associated with international mobility experiences, namely personal development, intercultural development, academic commitment, and career development (Dwyer & Peters, 2004). Although this is not a recent study, one can assume that these developmental benefits remain vital for university students in the 21st century.

Rizvi and Lingard (2010) argue that higher education should equip students to live and work in the globalised world of the 21st century. International exposure through academic exchange provides a means to achieve this goal. Engaging students in a multicultural context and including perspectives from different cultures to discuss, analyse and make sense of complex issues is a valuable pedagogical tool and transcends regular approaches to teaching (Beelen, 2007).

International exposure can be accomplished through an array of activities and initiatives. The key concepts in this chapter (Section 1.5) also define certain types of activities that are essential for the study. Chapter 2 reviews literature that addresses different types of international exposure and in particular refers to exposure through international mobility. The research study focused on one particular type of mobility, namely an exchange semester. An exchange semester can take place at different stages of the study programme. This study investigated exchange semesters only in terms of undergraduate programmes and particularly focused on general formative programmes.

The primary purpose of all exchange semesters is to add value to the study programme and to the overall university experience of a student. The exchange semester(s) must be a substitute for one or more semesters of the programme at the home university and thus not add study time to the students' programme. The exchange semester(s) must fit into the programme structure and adhere to the course and credit requirements of the programme to ensure credit transfer and graduation on condition that the exchange semester courses are completed successfully at the host university. One of the principles of institutional exchange agreements is reciprocity; in other words, the expectation is that for international students enrolling at Stellenbosch University (SU) through an exchange agreement¹, SU will reciprocate by sending more or less the same number of students for exchange to the partner university. In practice, however, this expectation is not being realised, as the SU, whilst receiving between 300 and 400 international exchange students every year, sends only more or less 65 students on exchange to partner universities per academic year (Postgraduate & International Office, 2013).

¹ An exchange agreement is an official document between two higher education institutions that details the process for exchanging students. The exchange of students is stated as a key activity of collaboration between institutions.

The imbalance in exchange numbers holds three principle disadvantages for SU. The first relates to the partnership between SU and the partner institution and the terms and conditions stated in the partnership agreement. An exchange agreement is based on reciprocity, and a lack of mobility of SU students places the institution in breach of contract. The second disadvantage can also be linked to the terms and conditions of agreement and has a financial implication. Exchange agreements are generally based on tuition waivers for participants, and an imbalance in numbers places a financial burden on SU. Finally, the lack of participation by students is indicative of the opportunities for personal and academic development that students miss. The operational aspects related to these three disadvantages are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

In higher education in South Africa, the low uptake in student exchanges is not unique to SU²; therefore, an investigation into the causes of this low uptake can provide valuable insight into the factors that are hampering student exchange programmes as one of the efforts of internationalisation on which higher education institutions embark.

1.3 Research aim and objectives

The challenges described above raise a number of questions: Why is there such a discrepancy in numbers between incoming and outgoing exchange students at Stellenbosch University? Is an international experience merely a 'nice to have' for students from developing countries? Are students sufficiently informed about the opportunities offered by exchange partners? What are the perspectives of academics with regard to the academic merit of international exchange semesters? Should Stellenbosch University engage in the practice of international exchange semesters as part of a broad-based approach to internationalisation at the institution? How does SU as an institution view internationalisation of higher education?

The study did not present answers to all these questions, but it took an in-depth look at the practice of international exchange semester at one university in the South African context. The aim of the study was to gain a better understanding of the factors that create barriers to international academic exchange semesters at Stellenbosch University. In investigating these potential barriers, the study also addressed some of the above-mentioned important questions. The study also presents recommendations with regard to a strategy for the implementation of exchange semesters in order to increase the number of undergraduate students who participate in exchange semesters, and in doing so, contribute to delivering graduates who meet the demands of the knowledge economy and fit the graduate profile of Stellenbosch University.

The aim of the study can be detailed in objectives namely to:

² University of Cape Town reports the mobility of 49 students in 2014 and 38 in 2015. Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University reports 12 students in 2014 and 9 in 2015.

- analyse the institutional and Faculty policies that create a barrier to international academic mobility at undergraduate level;
- investigate academic considerations with regard to an international exchange semester in terms of programme structure, departmental support, and academic involvement;
- explore, from a student's perspective, the reasons why more undergraduate students do not take part in international academic exchange semesters; and
- highlight existing good practices for facilitating exchange semesters.

The study investigated the phenomenon of international exchange semesters by means of a multilevel analysis within the milieu of one South African higher education institution. The results of this study could be generalisable to a wider South African context in terms of generic outcomes of the study, but the specific institutional imperatives and barriers may not necessarily be applicable in other South African higher education institutions.

1.4 Research paradigm, approach and design

The research study was conducted in the pragmatist research paradigm using a mixed-method approach. Lately, the mixed-method approach has gained ground amongst social science researchers as it provides a tool set to address the problem that is being researched and a focus on the consequences (Feilzer, 2009) by using quantitative and qualitative research methods to investigate the research problem. The pragmatist approach offers flexibility to the research design and thus offers social scientists a more practical approach to a research problem (Feilzer, 2009).

The mixed-method approach allowed the researcher to approach the study from a quantitative and qualitative point of view and to use research methods from both methodologies in an integrated manner (Feilzer, 2009). The approach also supports a multileveled study as described by the data-collection methods. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) confirm that a multilevel, mixed-method study assists the researcher in addressing the research questions with different methods from different research strategies that inform and supplement each other because they can address different aspects or layers of the phenomena. The use of a mixed-method approach offers the platform to study the research problem comprehensively, which is not necessarily possible by using either quantitative or qualitative research (Creswell, 2006). The case study research design was applied to the study. The case study design provided a mechanism to study the complex phenomenon of the potential barriers to international exchange semesters in the context of four Faculties and in the broader institutional context (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

The study focused on final-year and pre-final-year students in general formative undergraduate programmes in four Faculties at Stellenbosch University, namely the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, the Faculty of AgriSciences, and the Faculty of Science. The researcher purposely decided to restrict the study to general formative programmes that have a more or less homogenous programme structure with a 360-credit load leading to a qualification on Level 7 of the Higher Education

Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF). The inclusion of professional programmes in the study would have added further complexities in terms of credit loads, as well as requirements of professional bodies such as the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) in undergraduate engineering programmes, the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPSCA) in medicine and health science programmes and the Southern African Institute for Chartered Accountants (SAICA) in the case of the accounting programme. I compared the results of the programmes in the four Faculties to highlight differences and similarities between the programmes and Faculties. The research results are presented in the form of a case study for each of the four Faculties.

1.4.1 Data selection and collection

In line with the mixed-method approach, a range of data collection methods was used to ensure a broad-based pool of data of qualitative and quantitative nature. The first level of data collection was the analysis of policy documents on Faculty and institutional level to determine which aspects have a direct effect on international exchange semesters and to what extent policies create barriers to international exchange semesters. The next step in the data collection was on the academic level and consisted of a questionnaire that was sent to the programme coordinator(s) of each applicable programme. In addition, individual interviews were conducted with the deputy deans tasked with teaching and learning in each of the four Faculties. These interviews particularly focused on the academic considerations, namely curriculum and programme outcomes with regard to exchange semesters in their particular programmes and Faculties. The third and final level of data was collected by means of a survey that was distributed to all non-final-year and final-year students enrolled for general formative programmes in the selected Faculties. The purpose of the survey was to gain broad insight into students' understanding of international exchange semesters and to gauge the level to which students would or would not engage in such opportunities.

The research aim, namely to identify and analyse the barriers to international exchange semesters could not be achieved by a unidimensional approach and, as alluded to in the research objectives, it was necessary to include a student perspective, an academic perspective, a management perspective, and a policy perspective to create a nuanced and in-depth representation of data regarding international exchange semesters at one higher education institution. The multilevel strategy to analyse the *status quo* and, more importantly, to identify the barriers to international exchange semesters is a comprehensive approach that can be used in future implementation of international student mobility.

1.4.2 Data analysis

As this study was conducted in the mixed-method approach, a variety of data analysis techniques was used to ensure that data were analysed comprehensively to address the aim and objectives of the study. The analysis of data included selected policy documents on institutional and Faculty level, an analysis of two different questionnaires distributed to

students and programme coordinators, and an analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with the deputy dean responsible for teaching affairs in each of the four Faculties.

Analyses of the various data sources are discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.5.2.

1.5 Key concepts

The study of the potential barriers to international exchange semesters hinges on a number of key concepts. The following five concepts are clarified to facilitate a clearer mutual understanding between the researcher and her audience:

1.5.1 Higher education

The term 'higher education' has been used freely in the preceding discussion, and it is necessary to provide some context to this term. There is no single or simple definition for higher education. It has been described as the distinguished level of education that by definition implies a level of education higher than secondary schooling (Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe, 2014). This explanation is not comprehensive enough, however, and does not allow for the distinction between higher education and further education, as both these types of education follow on secondary schooling. Mainly and generally, higher education means university-level education that will result in a number of qualifications ranging from higher national diplomas and bachelor degrees and as a further step, postgraduate programmes such as master's and doctoral degrees (Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe, 2014). The duration of higher education qualifications is determined by the particular national policy and qualification framework.

1.5.2 Internationalisation of higher education

The introduction to this chapter has already proposed a number of definitions of the concept of internationalisation of higher education. This section alludes to these definitions again and highlights the definition that will be used in this study.

Van der Wende (1997:18) proposes a broad definition of the notion of internationalisation of higher education namely that internationalisation is "any systematic effort aimed at making higher education responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalisation of societies, economy and labour markets". Even though Van der Wende's definition is helpful in establishing a clear link between globalisation and internationalisation of higher education, it is rather vague in terms of the purpose of internationalisation.

Hudzik and McCarthy (2012:2) introduce the idea of "comprehensive internationalisation" as follows:

[It] refers to the institutional missions and values in global terms as well as in local and national terms. It recognizes the interconnection of local and global issues and how higher education institutions play a pivotal role in mediating

between global forces and local impact and how an institution of higher education becomes broader and more inclusive.

Hudzik (2011) underlines that comprehensive internationalisation surpasses the effect of global aspects on campus life and extends to the institution's external frames of reference, relations and partnerships.

The research study did not focus on one single definition but engaged aspects of comprehensive internationalisation as defined by Hudzik and McCarthy (2012), as well as by De Wit's (2012) definition that particularly focused on the quality enhancement aspect of internationalisation (Section 1.1).

1.5.3 Study abroad

Study abroad is the umbrella term used to refer to short-term (undergraduate) international mobility activities of students. The term 'study abroad' includes a broad range of activities, namely summer programmes, international internships, Faculty-led programmes, clinical placements, cultural tours, language training, and international exchange semesters. Study abroad is also included in the broad terminology concerning 'education abroad' used by international organisations like NAFSA.

1.5.4 International exchange semester

Literature on international education rarely refers to an international exchange semester in isolation. This mobility activity is included in the 'study abroad' concept as defined in 1.5.3. However, it is highly relevant for this study to refer to international exchange semesters as a specific type of international mobility of students. Therefore, the researcher defines this term as a period of study spent at a university outside the home country that is equivalent to one or two semesters of study within an undergraduate degree programme, and that will count towards obtaining the degree through credit transfer.

1.5.5 Internationalisation@Home and internationalisation of the curriculum

Two important concepts in the context of internationalisation of higher education are the internationalisation of the curriculum (IOC) and internationalisation at home (internationalisation@home or IAH). Internationalisation at home is aimed at providing a broad-based international experience without outward mobility of students and staff (Beelen, 2007). Proponents of internationalisation of higher education believe that internationalisation at home is a principle that should be entrenched in all functions of the university and thus should include the full spectrum of role players (Beelen, 2007). It is important to note that, although IAH draws on educational concepts such as comparative and collaborative learning, in itself it is not a didactic or educational concept (Beelen, 2011).

Internationalisation of the curriculum refers to a curriculum that engages students with internationally informed research and exposes them to cultural and linguistic diversity through engagement. Thus, it will purposefully develop the international and intercultural perspectives of students to become global professionals and citizens (Leask, 2009). Internationalisation of the curriculum includes the formal and informal curriculum and thus covers the entire student experience (Leask, 2012). The development of intercultural competences is a key outcome of an internationalised curriculum (Leask, 2009). This type of curriculum provides an internationally orientated education to all students.

1.6 Ethical considerations

The researcher focused on two central aspects of ethical conduct in the study. First, it was necessary to ensure that the study was conducted in a manner that did not infringe on the privacy of participants. In the student survey, it was easier to ensure anonymity because the survey was electronic and did not include information that could be traced to an individual, for example student numbers or e-mail addresses. In the case of programme coordinators, the researcher was in possession of the names of participants but excluded the personal detail from the narrative and coded the responses randomly. All participants were informed of the aim and scope of the study. The student and staff questionnaire included a consent clause, and a consent form was signed as part of the introduction of each interview to ensure that participants were informed of their rights and that their input would not be exploited. The second ethical aspect involved ensuring that the researcher did not misuse her position as a staff member and colleague of the respondents to gain particular responses.

1.7 Conclusion

The first chapter gives a background to the current study and highlights the key aspects of the study on the potential barriers to international exchange semesters at Stellenbosch University. The chapter explains the research problem and introduces the research aim and objectives of the study. The chapter also highlights and explains key concepts in this study to outline the upcoming chapters and to contextualise the study. The significance of the study is outlined by the motivation for the study.

The next chapter outlines a number of global and local perspectives on international student mobility in the overarching context of the internationalisation of higher education.

CHAPTER 2

INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS BACKGROUND TO AND RATIONALE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 introduces the research study by discussing the rationale for the study, as well as the research aim and objectives, and also highlights the most prominent concepts used in the study. The goal of Chapter 2 is to provide an overview of the existing body of knowledge on aspects relating to the research study (Mouton, 1996). The chapter consists of an interpretative synopsis of a broad scope of literature on internationalisation of higher education as providing the context and rationale for international student mobility.

The overview is organised according to three main themes. The first theme focuses on globalisation and internationalisation of higher education and the link between the two phenomena. The second theme analyses the rationale and relevance of the internationalisation of higher education. It also examines the practice of internationalisation of higher education by highlighting particular continental and national examples. This includes perspectives on internationalisation in the South African higher education system and policy initiatives related to internationalisation. The third theme relates to internationalisation at student level with a particular focus on international student mobility. This part of the chapter includes a discussion of literature related to various aspects of student mobility, the role of study abroad in student development as well as study abroad in the context of internationalisation.

The literature review is the background to identifying and contextualizing potential barriers to international exchange semesters at Stellenbosch University. The perspectives, particularly those relating to student mobility, are contextualised further in Chapter 3.

Theme 1: Globalisation and internationalisation of higher education, and the relation between these phenomena

2.2 A brief introduction to globalisation

Globalisation is not a new phenomenon; it has been a buzzword since the late 20th century (Yang, 2003). Yet, its exact definition remains elusive (Bourn, 2011; Kellner, 1998). Some scholars like Giddens (1991) link globalisation to a broader debate on modernity, while others view it as a global diffusion of Western modernity, or simply put, westernisation (Robertson, 1992). Martin Khor, President of the Third World Network in Malaysia, even refers to globalisation as colonisation (Khor, 1995). On the one hand, globalisation can be regarded as a single phenomenon, and on the other hand as a process of change (Al-Rodhan & Stoudmann, 2006) involving economic integration, transmission of knowledge, the transfer of policies across borders, cultural stability as well as the reproduction, relations and

discourses of power. Fischer (2003) refers to globalisation as the ongoing process of greater interdependence among countries and their citizens, and Al-Rodhan and Stoudmann (2006:3) define globalisation as a “process that encompasses the causes, course, and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities”.

In his book *The Race to the Top: The Real Story of Globalization*, the Swedish journalist, Thomas Larsson (2001:9), writes that globalisation “is the process of world shrinkage, of distances getting shorter, things moving closer. It pertains to the increasing ease with which somebody on one side of the world can interact, to mutual benefit, with somebody on the other side of the world.” Bourn (2011) argues that globalisation cannot only be seen as economic but also as social, cultural and environmental. In an educational context, Bourn (2011) argues that, to address the challenges for higher education, the importance lies in acknowledging the global reality in which learning takes place. One of the foremost thinkers on the theme of globalisation, Ulrick Beck, refers to globalisation in the context of education stating that one of the main responses to globalisation has been to build and develop the education and knowledge society (Beck, 2000). For the purposes of this study, I associate with Larson (2001) and Beck’s (2000) line of thinking and regard globalisation as an inevitable process that increases the mobility of people and enhances the movement of knowledge and ideas, resulting in them becoming more interconnected and interdependent.

The aim of quoting these often divergent definitions is not to challenge the idea of globalisation, but to illustrate the effect it has on all spheres of life. The relation between globalisation and internationalisation of higher education will be scrutinised further in the literature review to determine the influence of the one upon the other, but also the causes and effects of the two phenomena.

2.3 Internationalisation of higher education: More than a response to globalisation?

Internationalization may be seen as both a cause and an effect of the advent of the global knowledge economy. To varying degrees across national and institutional contexts, it is also the manifestation of fundamental – and still evolving - changes in the way we think about what constitutes relevant, high-quality tertiary education today. (Rumbley, 2015:16).

This introductory statement by Rumbley on the internationalisation of higher education can be linked directly to the definition of the internationalisation of higher education that has already been discussed in Chapter 1 as being a comprehensive approach and process aimed at enhancing the quality of higher education by introducing intercultural, international and global aspects in both the input and output of higher education (De Wit, 2012; Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012). At the same time, Rumbley’s (2015) statement alludes to globalisation in terms of the global knowledge element highlighted by Beck’s arguments (2000).

The crucial role that internationalisation plays in the study requires further analysis and consideration of the notion of internationalisation, but more so of the perspectives surrounding the internationalisation of higher education in the current global environment.

Alemu (2014) argues that the development of the internationalisation of higher education not only revised the conceptual framework for higher education but also enhanced its scope, scale and importance whilst reshaping relationships between countries. The European Association of International Education (EAIE) defines the internationalisation of higher education as “the whole range of processes by which [higher] education becomes less national and more internationally orientated” (EAIE, 1992 online). The definition adopted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) describes internationalisation as a compound of processes of which the collective effect, planned or unplanned, is to enhance the international dimension of the experience of higher education in universities (OECD, in Rudzki, 2000). The three definitions all provide a different view on internationalisation but share two features with one another. The first is that internationalisation involves a significant change in the way that higher education institutions engage in the international paradigm, and secondly, that internationalisation is not a single event but a process that will change an institution.

In a recent study by the European Parliament on the internationalisation of higher education in 17 countries around the world the following definition was introduced as a point of departure: internationalisation of higher education is the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society (De Wit, Hunter, Howard & Egron Polak, 2015).

It has already been stated in Chapter 1 that this study did not use a single definition for the internationalisation of higher education but drew on the definition of De Wit (2012) and the definition of comprehensive internationalisation as detailed by Hudzik and McCarthy (2012). De Wit’s definition emphasises that internationalisation is “a process to introduce intercultural, international and global dimensions in higher education; to improve the goals, functions and delivery of higher education and thus to upgrade the quality of education and research” (De Wit, 2012:7). This definition can also be discussed in terms of De Wit’s (2012) four approaches to internationalisation, namely the *activity approach*, which describes internationalisation in terms of different types of activities; the *competency approach*, which considers internationalisation from the human dimension with a focus on the knowledge and attitudes of students and staff as well as skills development; the *ethos approach*, which emphasises the development of an ethos or culture at the institution that values and supports intercultural and international perspectives and initiatives; and the *process approach*, which is reflected in De Wit’s definition above (De Wit, 1995). I would argue that internationalisation of higher education cannot be described in terms of only one of these approaches but rather that it is a combination that takes shape in a particular institutional and national context.

The emphasis on the mediating role of higher education as encapsulated in the definition of “comprehensive internationalisation” (Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012) marks a new era in the meaning of internationalisation of higher education. In essence, it goes beyond the idea that internationalisation of higher education is simply a reaction to globalisation but imagines a more proactive role for higher education in societal development, knowledge development, and engagement with the broader environment. It also supports arguments of the role that higher education has to play in the reality of the 21st century, particularly the way in which these sentiments are transferred to student level. The rationale for internationalisation is discussed further in terms of local and global perspectives on the matter that highlight the essence of internationalisation of higher education. The contextualisation in Chapter 3 positions one higher education institution, Stellenbosch University, in the realm of internationalisation and explores how the institution has engaged with the phenomenon by investigating the *status quo*, particularly on student level.

As indicated by the preceding discussion and in the statement of the research problem in Chapter 1, internationalisation of higher education cannot be defined by merely ticking the right boxes or having an impressive list of statistics or activities. In its most authentic form, internationalisation permeates throughout and across the entire higher education institution and higher education sector with a significant effect on the output of this sector in terms of human capacity, research, and society. The empirical part of this study particularly applied the principles of the effect of internationalisation on student level.

References to the effect of globalisation on the internationalisation of higher education require a more critical look at the connection between these two phenomena. The literature review that follows explores the connection between globalisation and internationalisation in the context of higher education.

2.4 Interface between globalisation and internationalisation in the context of higher education

In Chapter 1, the scope of globalisation and internationalisation is described in terms of the interaction as well as the cause and effect of the two phenomena (Altbach & Teichler, 2001; Saglamer n.d.; Teichler, 2004). Jackson (2008:349) refers to globalisation as the “unprecedented intensification of economic, cultural, political, and social interconnectedness”. One of the significant aspects of globalisation that makes it so influential is the increased mobility of goods, services and people (IAU, 2012). Increased mobility on multiple levels has a significant effect on higher education and has led to the intensified mobility of ideas, students, and academic staff that expands the possibility for collaboration and the global dissemination of knowledge.

Yang (2002) advances an intriguing perspective on the relationship between internationalisation and globalisation. He argues that globalisation is a continuation of historical inequalities linked to Western colonisation and dominance, whilst internationalisation has the potential to create relations that are more equitable (Yang, 2002). The sentiment is also shared in the potentially harmful effect of internationalisation as

discussed in the brief exploration of globalisation, for example the position of Khor (1995). The perspective regarding the imposing of an inherent Western way of doing as intrinsic of internationalisation is deconstructed further in the discussion on continental and national responses to internationalisation as well as the discussion about internationalisation in the Global South and Global North.

Another perspective to consider is the way in which universities contribute to understanding the complexity of a globalised world. Yang (2002) highlights the role that universities should play to cultivate the appreciation and articulate the reality of interdependence among nations and among students and staff to function in an international and intercultural context. Yang's perspectives resonate with the application of comprehensive internationalisation in higher education institutions, as it speaks to the core mission and business of higher education that includes "the creation of knowledge through research, the transmission of knowledge to learners, and the translation of knowledge in action for society's benefits" (Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012:5).

Again, the perspective that is fostered by the use of the definition of comprehensive internationalisation positions internationalisation as a key and central aspect of higher education in the current context and not only as a reaction to globalisation. Rumbley's (2015) statement on internationalisation in the preceding discussion is also important, as it links internationalisation to the enhancement of the quality of education.

In response to the explanation of the role of higher education and how it manifests, Liz Beaty, Director of Learning and Teaching at the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) highlights the type of student that a higher education institution must deliver. She describes such a student as one that should be critically aware and understand his/her responsibility in the world; this includes the ethical and social basis of the values that he/she holds (Beaty, 2006, in Bourn, 2006). The introduction to the study in Chapter 1 refers to the research of Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) that underscores the extent to which the time at university shapes the intellectual and personal development of students. The introduction of intercultural, international and global dimensions as a mechanism to improve the goals, functions and delivery of higher education, as encapsulated by De Wit's (2012) definition, accentuates the way in which institutions should go about transferring these aspects on student level. This particular aspect of internationalisation will be discussed when the rationale for internationalisation in terms of the development of graduate attributes, graduate employment and also the student development and learning linked to international student mobility is discussed later. From the preceding discussion on internationalisation and what it means in the 21st century, it is undeniable that institutions must engage in internationalisation that permeates all aspects of the institution and is crucial for producing graduates that can participate in the knowledge economy.

Theme 2: The rationale and relevance of internationalisation of higher education – theory and practice

The rationale for and relevance of internationalisation of higher education encompass a multitude of factors and, as already mentioned, can arguably be linked to the substantial effect of globalisation on higher education. However, the preceding arguments did illustrate that internationalisation is not merely a reaction to globalisation, but that it has specific relevance for higher education institutions. This statement is investigated further by considering the rationale and relevance of internationalisation. The rationales can be defined as motivations for integrating an international dimension with higher education. Alemu (2014:72) argues that the rationale behind the internationalisation of higher education in the feudal era was “the search for knowledge and exchanges of academic and social cultures”. The internationalisation of a higher education institution is a strategic initiative to increase visibility, generate income, and play a leading role in developing the knowledge economy (Altbach et al., 2009). Alemu’s position will be revisited briefly and in the light of the more recent references to the rationale of internationalisation, three areas that highlight the rationale and relevance of internationalisation for the higher education sector and higher education institutions in the current context will be addressed. These are the economic rationale, the academic rationale, and the developmental rationale. The three should not be seen as independent or mutually exclusive of one another, but rather as distinguishably intertwined, which will be evident in the discussion of the three rationales.

2.5 Three major rationales for internationalisation of higher education

2.5.1 Economic rationale

The discussion of national initiatives in this chapter (Section 2.6.2.1) illustrates the immense income-generating potential of international students. The provision of higher education to international students has become a lucrative business for countries that accept large numbers of foreign students. Altbach (2004) reports that foreign students contribute more than \$12 billion to the U.S. economy each year. The Australian Bureau for Statistics further supports this argument with statistics showing that as much as \$16.3 billion was contributed to the Australian economy through international students in 2010 and 2011 (Australia Bureau for Statistics, 2011).

The economic rationale is particularly relevant in terms of the provision of education, not only with regard to the direct enrolment of international students, but also with regard to transnational education in the form of regional educational hubs (Knight, 2011) and the establishment of international branch campuses.³ The concept of regional hubs for higher education has been well documented by Knight (2011) with reference to the role of Dubai in the context of the Middle East, as well as Singapore and Australia in the Asian context. Australia has become a hub for higher education in a regional context. Similarly, South Africa

³ An international branch campus is defined as an entity that is owned, at least in part, by a foreign education provider; [face]-to-face teaching; and provides access to an entire academic program that leads to a credential awarded by the foreign education provider” (Lane, 2011:5)

can be described as a hub for higher education on the African continent, particularly in the SADC region (Section 2.6). The number of international branch campuses (IBCs) has increased more than five times from 2002 to 2009, from a mere 24 in 2002 (in more than 50 countries) to 162 by 2009, with fewer than 20 closures in the same period (Cross-border Research Team [C-Bert], 2013). The Cross-border Research Team (C-Bert) reports that the number of IBCs currently stands at 173 (C-Bert, 2013).

The economic rationale of internationalisation of higher education is also illustrated by the emphasis on joint international research projects and international grants that are based on the collaboration of institutions in different parts of the world. Examples of such funding schemes are discussed in Section 2.6.

2.5.2 Academic rationale

The principle goal of the internationalisation of higher education as encapsulated in De Wit's (2012) definition is to improve the quality of higher education and can thus be linked to an academic rationale in terms of 'what is offered' and 'how it is offered' within the scope of the global context. Thus, the first aspect of the academic rationale can be linked to the very content of what students are taught and the manner in which it is taught.

International students do not merely increase enrolment numbers and create a steady source of income as argued in Section 2.5.1, but also contribute to a nation's global competitiveness by swelling the numbers of highly trained people in key disciplines. Recruiting the brightest minds on staff and student levels is a major contribution to the institutional goal of academic excellence. In some graduate specialities such as engineering and computer sciences, international students constitute the majority of enrolments at the doctoral level (Altbach, 2004).

The academic rationale of internationalisation is often linked to the standing of the university in terms of international rankings such as the Times Higher Education and QS rankings that are regarded as an indication of quality. The rankings include particular indicators that address aspects pertaining to the international dimensions and position universities on a global scale but also in terms of regional groupings (for example BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) or fields of expertise.

2.5.3 Developmental rationale

The developmental rationale of internationalisation can be discussed from three perspectives: institutional development, student development and societal development.

The goal of higher education is not to address social and global problems by solving the problems but by being a knowledge-creating institution that can assist in addressing issues (Leibowitz, 2009). Alemu (2014) argues strongly for the importance of developing human capacity as a prerequisite for economic growth and development. Altbach and Salmi (2011) argue that the generation of knowledge has become the source of growth and prosperity

and has replaced the previous focus on capital assets and labour productivity. This notion is supported by Maassen (2003), who argues that a nation's ability to apply new knowledge to existing knowledge is essential for economic development. The shifted focus to knowledge generation and innovation as key indicators of development has also changed the approach to higher education of many countries and has created a wave of new institutions and organisations that can support the generation of knowledge. If these perspectives are viewed against the preceding arguments on international collaborations creating access to funding sources, the building of human capacity to address the academic rationale and participation in the knowledge economy illustrates the inherent potential for institutional advancement that is entrenched in internationalisation.

The motivation for the study detailed in Section 1.1 alludes to the potential of internationalisation to address societal challenges by international collaboration. The sentiment of societal development is also seen in Hudzik and McCarthy's (2012) definition of comprehensive internationalisation to be mindful of the local effect.

2.6 Engagement of higher education with internationalisation

The rationale for internationalisation has already been discussed in the preceding section of this chapter (see Section 2.5) by looking at it from a thematic angle, namely the economic, academic and developmental rationale, but it can be further explained by considering continental and national approaches to internationalisation in terms of policy and specific internationalisation initiatives; in other words, the manner in which higher education systems engage the challenges and opportunities of internationalisation.

The overarching goal of internationalisation, namely to enhance the quality of higher education by a more international approach and role playing in the global sector can be linked to individual institutions, but it is also relevant on a more macro level. The internationalisation of higher education on a national or continental level can be of significant strategic value to the economic growth and development of a country (Altbach et al., 2009; Altbach & Salmi, 2011).

One of the most significant examples of internationalisation of higher education on a continental scale is that of Europe. The continent is well known for the way in which internationalisation is addressed at a very high level by means of explicit support for international collaboration through government policy and support, large student mobility schemes, and the influence of knowledge communities such as the European Association of International Education (EAIE) and the European University Association (EUA) that actively lobby for internationalisation on a continental level.

The scope and *status quo* of internationalisation of higher education on the African continent is in distinct contrast to the well-developed strategies and programmes found in Europe. The African continent also has organisations that aim at supporting the internationalisation of higher education, namely the African Network for Internationalisation of Education (ANIE), focusing on the production of high-level research on the continent (ANIE Network, 2014),

and the Association of African Universities (AAU) that has an explicit focus on fostering collaboration between universities on the continent and also with the rest of the world (AAU, 2014). However, the effect of these organisations is much smaller and less visible than that of their European counterparts. It could be argued that the difference can be ascribed to financial means and the lack of incentives to participate in a similar manner.

The strategies and programmes of these two continents will be discussed briefly to highlight the macro-level effect of internationalisation of higher education.

2.6.1 Continental initiatives

2.6.1.1 *Europe*

The two major initiatives that have become the main vehicles of internationalisation of higher education or frameworks guiding the European response to globalisation are the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Strategy (Van der Wende, 2007) that, according to Van der Wende (1997, 2007), emanate from the European Union's goal to become the world's leading knowledge economy. The two initiatives were launched with different approaches and goals and can be categorised as intergovernmental (Bologna) and supranational (Lisbon), but together, they manage to converge into an overarching approach to internationalisation of higher education (Kwiek, 2004; Van der Wende, 2007).

The Bologna process focuses on intra-European convergence and reform of the higher education sector (Bologna Process, 2010; Van der Wende, 2007). The overarching aim of the Bologna Process is to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) that is based on international cooperation and that would attract European students and staff as well as the broader global audience of higher education (Bologna Process, 2010; Papatsiba, 2006) – thus, the promotion of conforming and compatible higher education systems was high on the agenda. The three main goals of the reform was to facilitate the mobility of staff and students (on different levels), to prepare students for future careers and lives as active citizens, and finally, to offer broad access to high-quality education (Bologna Process, 2010).

The Lisbon Strategy was a supranational policy initiative to stimulate a European knowledge economy (Keeling, 2006; Van der Ploeg & Veugelers, 2007; Van der Wende, 2007). The goal of this strategic initiative was to surpass the leading global competitors of the time and to advance Europe into becoming “the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment” (European Parliament, 2010). Launched in 2000 with the aim of achieving the main goals within a 10-year timeframe, the sheer scale and complexity of this policy initiative made it one of the most far-reaching to have been embarked upon over the past few years (European Parliament, 2010).

The extent to which this continental focus on internationalisation has been embedded in institutional practices can be seen in the 2013 report of the EUA, reporting on the extent of internationalisation in European higher education. The report is the result of an online

survey distributed to 745 rectors' offices and 620 international offices at higher education institutions in the 47 countries of the European Higher Education Area (EUA, 2013). The survey achieved a return rate of 25% with responses from all European member states with the exception of three countries (EUA, 2013).

The study made two important findings pertaining to the level of internationalisation at higher education institutions in the member countries. One third of respondents indicated an international student population of more than 10% of the total student population, while 56% of the respondents confirmed having an internationalisation strategy in place (EUA, 2013).

The emphasis on and the continental engagement with the internationalisation of higher education can be observed in the flow of students. The continental mobility scheme, the Erasmus Mundus Mobility scheme, commonly referred to as Erasmus Mundus, is one of the single largest initiatives to increase the mobility of students from Europe to other countries, as well as from other countries to European countries (European Commission, 2001) through long- and short-term mobility opportunities. Erasmus Mundus aims to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding among people and cultures by cooperation with Third Countries⁴ (European Commission, 2013). It further contributes to the development of human resources and the international cooperation capacity of higher education institutions in Third Countries by increasing mobility between the European Union and these countries. This initiative is driven and funded by the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), a division of the European Commission. The Erasmus Mundus mobility schemes consist of different types of mobility, including degree and non-degree mobility (European Commission, 2013). The programme was launched in 2004 and has resulted in a growth of student mobility of up to 200 000 European students per year⁵.

However, it is important to note that, despite the seemingly widespread adoption of internationalisation of higher education as a key strategy, and apart from continental statements on internationalisation and funding schemes, there is no official European or European Union policy on internationalisation of higher education. Policy regarding the internationalisation of higher education is made and implemented at the national level.

2.6.1.2 Africa

Teferra (2012), an African scholar, argues that, while Africa has one of the most internationalised continental higher education systems in terms of model, dimension and scope, the continent also has a globally marginalised system. The argument relates to the trends observed with regard to unequal participation in internationalisation activities; for

⁴ The term "Third Countries" refers to all countries that are not listed as EU member states as well countries in the European Economic Area, Croatia, countries candidate to EU membership (Turkey and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia plus Serbia) and countries of the western Balkans (European Commission, 2013).

⁵ The Erasmus Mundus programme is not restricted to the mobility of European students and has had a significant effect on the mobility of students in Third Countries as well.

example, partnerships and mobility programmes. The phenomenon of brain drain of African scholars to higher education institutions predominantly in the Global North has marginalised African universities in particular (Alemu, 2014). In 2000, the World Bank (2000) reported that it was estimated that at least one third of the highest qualified Africans were working and living outside their country of origin.

An example of a mobility scheme on the African continent that aims to build capacity and restrict brain drain was a call for a mobility programme in the African and Caribbean Pacific countries under the intra-ACP collaboration window (European Commission, 2010). This programme fostered mobility in and between the mentioned areas. European collaboration in this particular mobility scheme was as technical partners to assist Third Countries with implementing the mobility scheme.

However, the reality is that there is very little focus on undergraduate mobility in Africa and closer to home, South Africa. The Institute for International Education (2014) reports that Africa is one of the largest sending continents when it comes to degree studies but does not report on the short-term mobility of students as it does for regions like Europe, the USA, and Latin America. The International Education Association of Southern Africa (IEASA) also does not keep track of data on this aspect of internationalisation in the SADC regional context, and although the statistics provided annually to the broader sector provides an overview of the incoming international students, the lack of data on the outward mobility of students is a limitation.

In the light of the two brief continental overviews and the preceding discussion on the engagement with higher education, two aspects emerge. The first is the inequality in participation on continental level and, as already mentioned, the lack of incentive to address internationalisation on a more continental level. Secondly, the differences illustrate issues pertaining to access and, as discussed in the three rationales for internationalisation, the importance to be a role player in the global context.

The way in which continents respond to and engage in internationalisation on a macro level has been discussed in terms of the European and African perspectives. In a broad sense, the role of higher education is also adaptable to the particular national context. The next part of the literature review considers three national responses to the internationalisation of higher education.

2.6.2 A national perspective: South Africa

South Africa has no national policy on the internationalisation of higher education, and aspects of internationalisation such as student mobility and collaboration on joint and double degrees with international higher education institutions are not addressed by policy guidelines on national level. However, it would be unjust to state that there are no references to internationalisation in higher education policy. The SADC Protocol (2000), responding to the Higher Education Act, Act 101 of 1997, the National Development Plan (2013), and the subsequent White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (2013) can

all be referred to as policy initiatives that include features that can be linked directly or indirectly to internationalisation of higher education in the South African context.

(a) Policy initiatives

As part of the literature study on the national responses to internationalisation with South Africa as an example, two key policy documents pertaining to aspects of internationalisation in the South African context were reviewed, namely the SADC protocol on Education and Training (1997) and the White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (2013).

(i) *SADC Protocol*

The SADC Protocol on Education and Training (1997) makes specific provision for facilitating the mobility of students in the region. The Protocol includes five key stipulations pertaining to higher education with reference to aspects that address credit and degree mobility. The stipulations can be summarised as follows:

- A recommendation that HEIs should make provision for at least 5% of student admissions coming from SADC nations other than their own (with a cap of 10% overall).
- This should be read in conjunction with the stipulation that higher education institutions may not charge higher tuition fees for students from the SADC region than for local students.
- An initiative to work towards harmonisation of qualifications and systems, equivalence, and in the long term, the standardisation of entrance requirements.
- In conjunction with the previous stipulation, institutions are advised to devise mechanisms for credit transfer.
- The development and promotion of student and staff exchange programmes.

(Kamper, cited in Jooste, 2014).

The ratification of the SADC Protocol in 2000 urged higher education institutions to take cognisance of the stipulations of the protocol in terms of their approach to and administration of students from the region. The contextualisation of South Africa in terms of regional cooperation will be discussed later in the country example.

Thus, in a sense, the current debate on the benefits and challenges of the rise of regionalisation and internationalisation was preceded by a concerted effort of the South African government and the broader SADC community to harness the potential of regional cooperation in higher education and training.

(ii) White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (2013)

The White Paper on Post-School Education and Training makes explicit reference to internationalisation and highlights the role internationalisation can play in addressing global developmental issues such as HIV/AIDS and sustainable development. The focus on creating international partnerships that would contribute to knowledge production is also a central element of the discussion on internationalisation in the White Paper. The explicit reference to student and staff mobility and the role such mobility can play in terms of human capacity development also supports the notion of developing institutional mechanisms for effective mobility. According to the White Paper, internationalisation should also be seen as an opportunity to take local and indigenous knowledge to the international community.

*(iii) New policy developments**Joint degree task team*

A further indication of policy development on internationalisation in higher education is the establishment of a Ministerial Working Group on international joint programming. Joint programme offerings are increasingly regarded as a strategy for enhancing the student experience and enhancing quality. The Working Group investigated the offering of joint and double degrees globally with a view to provide the South African Government with recommendations to develop a regulatory framework for the offering of such qualifications. An explicit guideline for developing the recommendations was to enhance the internationalisation of the system by joint or double degrees. A draft policy on postgraduate collaborative, joint, and double qualifications was submitted to the Minister in November 2014.

National Policy Framework for SA higher education

The final policy initiative to include in the review of the policy context in South African higher education is the most recent development to create a national policy framework for South African higher education. A working group was established in November 2014, and a subsequent advisory panel from a broad range of stakeholders was constituted in February 2015. The advisory panel consists of representatives from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the Department of Science and Technology (DST), the National Research Foundation (NRF), the Higher Education South Africa (HESA), the Council on Higher Education (CHE), the Delegation of the European Union (DEU), and representatives to be nominated by the Director-General: Education and Culture (DGEC) of the European Union and the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) respectively. An international expert will be nominated by the Director-General: Education and Culture as an external reader of the draft policy. The focus of the working group is to “develop a policy framework which seeks to broaden the scope of benefit to the South African higher education system” when engaging with internationalisation (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2014a).

(b) International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA)

The International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) was launched in January 1997 because of the need for higher education institutions in South Africa to respond to international educational trends. IEASA, a private, non-profit professional association, is the only South African organisation representing the interests of those engaged in the internationalisation of higher education in South Africa. It is a member-orientated and -inspired organisation promoting international education and providing professional development opportunities to its members. The organisation focuses on three major areas: creating and disseminating knowledge, influencing internationalisation policy, and maintaining a strong association. In terms of scope and mandate, the organisation is similar to the EAIE mentioned earlier.

(c) Student mobility in South Africa

References to student mobility in the White Paper on Post-school Education and Training focus on the benefits to the national system in terms of capacity building and the sharing of knowledge in the global domain, the former being primarily related to incoming mobility and the latter to outward mobility.

(i) *Incoming mobility of students*

South Africa is one of the biggest receivers of students in Africa. International student numbers coming to South Africa showed a steady increase from 7 031 contact students⁶ in 1994 to 40 213 contact students in 2013; this represented 7 percent of the total student population. The percentage ratio of international students to local students has remained constant since 2007, which shows that the growth rate in the numbers of international students is consistent with the growth of the South African system.

A further analysis of international student numbers indicates that 31,5 percent – almost one third – of international student registrations in 2013 were master's or PhD students. This is an indicator of the significant contribution of higher education to knowledge creation and capacity development. South African students registered for master's and PhD studies represent only 8.7 percent of the total. It is clear that the South African system is very attractive to postgraduate international students and that South African universities focus on the recruitment of such students (Jooste, 2014).

Another defining characteristic of international student mobility to South Africa is that the majority of these students are from the Southern African region. In 2011, 73,3 percent of international students were from SADC countries, 74,8 percent in 2012, and 76,9 percent in 2013. This illustrates a steady growth in the proportion of international students from SADC

⁶⁶ The term *contact students* refers to students that are enrolled in programmes that contain a contact period at a South African institution and thus exclude distance education where international students never enter the country.

countries. A further analysis of these numbers indicates that more than a third of those students were from Zimbabwe. Because of the political instability of that country and the struggling higher education sector, students migrate to South Africa to study. Thus, the SADC Protocol plays a very important role in promoting internationalisation at a regional level in South Africa (Jooste, 2014) and in essence positions South Africa as a regional hub for higher education that resonates with the academic and economic rationale of internationalisation (Section 2.5).

(ii) *Outward mobility of students*

The outward mobility of students remains a challenge for most South African institutions. The lack of balance in exchange numbers discussed in Section 1.2 and the extent of the challenge can be seen in the imbalance between incoming and outgoing exchange students at Stellenbosch University, which is discussed in Chapter 3.

One example of a successful outward mobility programme aimed at student exchange is the Erasmus Mundus programme. The European Erasmus Mundus programme, already discussed in more detail in Section 2.6.1.1, facilitates the mobility of students from Third Countries to Europe through various initiatives. Action 2 is a mobility scheme within the broader umbrella of Erasmus Mundus that was used as a vehicle to facilitate the mobility of postgraduate students and staff between European countries and selected Third Countries. In 2010, the first call for European/South African collaboration was launched as a collaborative initiative with the support of the Department of Higher Education and the South African EU delegation (European Commission, 2010). The mobility programme was open only to South African citizens and was restricted to particular academic areas that were deemed focus areas by political role players. Mobility could entail short-term visits of 6 to 22 months, depending on the type of programme that could be used to conduct research or to participate in course work, and would not result in a qualification from the European institution. This type of mobility can be described as a semester exchange. The mobility could also be long-term enrolment that would result in grantees graduating from the host university. The call for programmes was repeated from 2011 to 2014, with a number of changes in the nature of the programme. These changes included the inclusion of more academic fields and the two-way mobility of participants. More than 500 students from South African higher education institutions received grants for mobility to Europe (European Delegation to South Africa, 2014).

Outward student mobility is the central focus of the study and will be addressed in the context of one South African institution in Chapter 3. The data obtained by means of an empirical study conducted, and the analyses of the potential barriers to an international exchange semester as a particular outward mobility activity will be discussed in Chapter 5.

2.7 Global South vs. Global North

The literature review about the influence of globalisation on the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of higher education refers to the idea of regional education hubs (Knight, 2011) in Section 2.5.1 and Section 2.6.2.2 as a key development in the internationalisation of higher education, and an illustration of such developments was discussed in the review of the South African response to internationalisation and the role of the country as a regional higher education hub in the SADC. A further consideration of the geographical alliances in internationalisation reveals marked differences between the Global South and the Global North. The preceding overview of continental and national responses to internationalisation has already highlighted discrepancies in terms of the engagement of countries with internationalisation as highlighted by the brief overview of the continental approach of Europe and Africa to internationalisation.

Traditionally, internationalisation of higher education has been characterised by a dominance of North over South. The examples of national and continental mobility schemes discussed above confirm arguments that the mobility of students has been dominated by the industrialised countries to serve their national needs and institutional priorities (Rivza & Teichler, 2007; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Alemu (2014:71) confirms the inequality in participation between the Global South and the Global North universities as a persistent occurrence that pushes a continent like Africa to the periphery and emphasises that the relationships between the geographical areas remain “asymmetrical, unethical and unequal”.

The internationalisation of higher education as a predominantly Western phenomenon and with the industrialised West as the driver also manifests in study abroad. Wächter (2014) argues that degree mobility is predominantly ‘vertical’, namely from countries of a lower level of provision both in terms of qualitative and quantitative considerations to student mobility to countries of a higher level of engagement in these activities. Rivza and Teichler (2007) distinguish between horizontal and vertical mobility in terms of the movement of students between geographical areas. Whereas horizontal movement is the mobility of students between countries or institutions of more or less equal levels of academic quality, vertical mobility refers to the movement of students towards economically more advanced and academically superior systems. This line of thought links to other arguments on the effect of internationalisation in supporting the traditional countries associated with knowledge production, namely the Global North. However, it also highlights a very elitist view on the assumed disparity between the levels of quality of institutions. Yang (2003) makes a very strong argument that the mobility of students is a clear value judgment of the quality of degrees.

The flow of students between developing countries should also be included in the discussion, however. In the 2011 Project Atlas Report (Bhandari, 2011: 6), the “expanding pie of global student mobility” is discussed in terms of traditional hosts and new players. Arguably, the developed countries in Europe, North America, and Oceania have dominated the global mobility landscape, and even though this trend continues, the situation is changing with new and unexpected players emerging. Amongst others, these include China, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Thailand (Bhandari, 2011). Another shift in mobility flows is discussed by

De Wit, Agarwal, Said, Sehoole and Sirozi (2013) in the so-called circulation of students in South-South mobility. This includes mobility to countries like South Africa, Egypt, Indonesia, and India. The international student numbers in South Africa is discussed in more detail in Section 2.6.2.

Theme 3: Internationalisation of higher education at student level

The internationalisation of higher education was discussed from multiple perspectives and levels in terms of geographical groupings and individual institutions. The literature review has already addressed some of these areas by considering the phenomenon of internationalisation from a continental and national point of view. The review has also addressed the rationale for internationalisation of higher education. Furthermore, internationalisation of higher education can be discussed in terms of the range of stakeholders and role players involved in these processes. This provides a micro-level perspective on internationalisation. This part of the review is particularly important to form the empirical part of the research discussed in Chapter 5.

Higher education institutions have multiple stakeholders and role players. The list of stakeholders compiled by Jongbloed, Enders and Salerno (2008) includes administration, employees, government entities, 'consumers' (students), non-governmental regulators, financial intermediaries, donors, competitors, suppliers, communities, and joint venture partners. The previous chapter addressed perspectives of some of these stakeholders by addressing predominantly national and institutional perspectives on internationalisation. One key stakeholder, both as a participant and arguably a principal beneficiary of internationalisation that has not yet been discussed as a primary focus in the literature review, is the student. The final theme of the literature study will focus on students as key stakeholders and role players in a review of literature pertaining to student mobility as an essential facet of internationalisation of higher education.

2.8 The phenomenon of student mobility

Based on the definition selected for the study, namely to approach internationalisation as a mechanism to enhance the quality of education in all aspects (De Wit, 2012) as well as the comprehensive internationalisation approach to mediate between global forces and local effect (Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012), the review of student mobility is conducted from the same improvement perspective that student mobility in itself is aimed at enhancing quality of education and student experience.

The effect of globalisation on higher education has seen the rapid increase of the movement of students from enrolling for education in their home country to engaging in higher education in the public and private sectors abroad. In 2013, the OECD reported that almost 4,5 million students in higher education were enrolled outside their country of citizenship (OECD, in Rudzki, 2013). The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2014) provides a comprehensive overview of international higher education enrolment. The most recent

enrolment figure number for international students is 183 603 974 in 2012, while 118 382 444 international students enrolled in 2002. The mass expansion in the participation is a major educational reform. Kandiko and Weyers (2013:3) explains the widening of participation and the mobility of students as a noteworthy shift in understanding higher education in terms of the traditional duality of “domestic” and “international” towards a much “more fluid, dynamic and complex” conceptualisation of higher education.

The mobility of students is a crucial activity in the context of internationalisation of higher education. Tsigiliris (2014) argues that students should be at the heart of internationalisation to meet the developmental goals of study abroad such as employment, and the development of cultural competence and understanding, as well as the overarching focus of increasing the cross-border activities of universities. According to Bhandari (2011), most countries view international academic mobility and educational exchange as fundamental components for building intellectual capital and sharing knowledge in order to remain competitive in a globalising world. The developmental rationale is also discussed in Section 2.5.3. Deardorff (cited in Alemu, 2014:81) argues that, from the perspective of globalisation and internationalisation, the purpose of the mobility of students is “to gain different perspectives, to develop languages and global skills, to become global citizens, to be better prepared for the global workforce...and so on”.

The perspectives of these authors provide the background for an in-depth discussion on student mobility in the context of the internationalisation of higher education at student level.

2.9 Types of student mobility

A broad range of initiatives aimed at student mobility, including mobility schemes and funding mechanisms, has already been discussed in the continental and national initiatives discussed in this chapter (Section 2.6). The mobility of students can be discussed in terms of:

- different types of mobility that can be categorized broadly in non-degree and degree-seeking mobility⁷; or
- the direction of the mobility, namely incoming or outgoing international student mobility. Incoming and outgoing mobility refer to the direction in which students are moving; for example, a student going from the home country (country A) to enrol in a host country (Country B) for the purpose of seeking a degree or studying abroad will be described by the receiving institution or country (Country B) as incoming mobility, while a student from the same country (Country B) or institution leaving for

⁷ Alternative terminology used to distinguish between students enrolling for a degree and those only taking part in short term mobility is degree mobility vs. credit mobility.

the purpose of seeking a degree or studying abroad to enrol⁸ in another country (Country A) or institution will be categorised as outgoing mobility.

The study focuses on non-degree mobility; therefore, the review will primarily review aspects related to this type of mobility. However, the reference to degree-seeking mobility is important to provide a more comprehensive picture of the scope of student mobility.

2.9.1 Degree-seeking mobility

Degree-seeking mobility refers to students from a country enrolling in another country for a full degree. The student relinquishes ties with the home country and institution for study purposes. The host country will benefit from the enrolment (depending on enrolment practices) in terms of funding and student fees, and in terms of developing human capital (Kandiko & Weyers, 2013).

Studies pertaining to student mobility predominantly focus on degree-seeking mobility covering a broad range of topics, for example the rationale for participation in higher education abroad, the effect of international students in host countries, and the flow of international students. The statistics of international students are also predominantly linked to degree-seeking students.

The emphasis on creating a knowledge economy and the role that higher education plays in attaining this goal has already been discussed as a reason for internationalisation of higher education. Furthermore, the economic rationale of internationalisation of higher education is linked strongly to the financial benefits to institutions, but it is also relevant from a student perspective in the form of prospects for future employment based on the stature and level of the education obtained abroad (see Sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2).

One of the major criticisms against degree-seeking mobility is the phenomenon of brain drain. The review of literature and arguments relating to the disparity between the engagement with and benefits of internationalisation among different countries refers to the dangers of the mobility of students creating further disparity between nations in terms of economic growth and global participation (Alemu, 2014; Knight, 2013).

2.9.2 Non-degree mobility

Non-degree-seeking student mobility entails that students take part only in a short international experience that will not lead to a degree or qualification in the host country. Non-degree mobility includes a broad range of activities, namely summer programmes, international internships, Faculty-led programmes, clinical placements, cultural tours, language training, and international exchange semesters (Daly, 2011). The international experience may or may not be part of the formal curriculum or activities of a higher

⁸ The reference to *enrolment* of non-degree seeking students is related to institutional requirements as registration is a requirement for visa purposes as well as institutional management information. This category of enrolment will however be different from enrolment for degree purposes.

education institution. Another term used for this type of mobility is ‘temporary student mobility’ (Rivza & Teichler, 2007). More commonly, the term ‘study abroad’ is used and will be used for the rest of the discussion on non-degree mobility with reference to specific activities pertaining to study abroad.

2.10 Study abroad: Rationale and goals

Study abroad, specifically an international exchange semester, is the primary focus of this research study; therefore, I shall focus in depth on the rationale, goals and benefits of study abroad in the application of the overarching rationale and goals of internationalisation.

Education is recognised as much more than a process of imparting formal knowledge (Findlay, King, Smith, Geddes & Skeldon, 2011). Orr (1991) advocates the rethinking of the role of education and highlights six principles to consider. The second, fourth, fifth and sixth principles in particular support the notion that international mobility is an important aspect of the educational experience. The second principle is derived from the Greek concept of *paideia* and states that the goal of education does not imply the mastery of subject matter but rather the mastery of one’s person. The fourth principle states that one can claim to know something only if one understands the effects of that knowledge on real people and their communities. The fifth principle states that learning is more powerful in experiences than in words (i.e. theory). The final principle relates to the way in which learning takes place and states that the way in which learning occurs and the content of the courses are equally important. Applied in the context of study abroad, the cited principles underscore the benefits, one of which is that a period of study abroad has intrinsic educational value through the formal education part and the out-of-classroom experience. The overall international exchange semester can be summarised in terms of Orr’s (1991) principles as being an experience that greatly enhances self-development by gaining skills such as independence, confidence, and intercultural communication. Learning in a new academic environment with different teaching approaches, cultural learning in and outside the classroom, as well as intensified personal learning, contribute to the dynamic experience of an international exchange semester.

Garam (2012) makes a link between the role of education and internationalisation. He describes internationalisation as having many functions, one of which is to “prepare students for an international living and working environment” (Garam, 2012:2). Engaging students in a multicultural context to discuss, analyse, and make sense of complex issues through the perspectives of other cultures is a valuable pedagogical mechanism and transcends the regular approaches to teaching by utilising student perspectives to educate others (Beelen, 2007). Findlay et al. (2011) also introduce the concept of study abroad as a mechanism to accrue social and cultural capital. Another perspective to consider is that some students consider study abroad as a first step towards migration (Rivza & Teichler, 2007). Short-term mobility provides an opportunity to learn from the ‘other’ both at an academic and cultural level without the long-term commitment (Rivza & Teichler, 2007).

Dolby (2007) highlights some of the benefits of study abroad as promoting a worldview and awareness of global issues with participants. This sentiment is supported by other authors (Altbach, 2004; Minh Nguyen, 2012; Tarrant, 2010) that reflect on the practice of study abroad as being of great significance to student development and delivering well-rounded graduates. The four areas of development identified by Dwyer and Peters (2004) have already been mentioned in Chapter 1, but it is important to reiterate the benefits that have been identified in their research. Personal development, intercultural development, academic commitment, and career development are important concepts to include in learning experiences of students. Trilokekar and Rasmi (2011: 495) highlight the following three main reasons put forward by the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada (AUCC) for promoting study abroad: “to develop responsible and engaged global citizens; to strengthen students’ international understanding, knowledge and perspectives on global issues and to develop students’ international cultural awareness and skills”. The aspects identified by Dwyer and Peters (2004) and the AUCC are often encapsulated in more detailed and outcome-based activities in the graduate profile of institutions. Reference is made to these aspects in the review of the institutional context created by policy and strategy, particularly the graduate attributes of SU.

On an academic level, Bourn (2011) lists the learning outcomes associated with the curriculum of study programmes abroad as including knowledge and understanding; cognitive, social and practical skills; as well as values and attitudes. A study conducted by Michigan State University (2000) on the effect of study abroad on student learning highlights six goals of study abroad, namely to facilitate intellectual growth, contribute to professional development, accelerate personal growth, enhance self-awareness and understanding of their own culture, and contribute to the internationalisation of the department, Faculty and university; i.e., to contribute to the internationalisation strategy of the institution (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004). The first five goals all have a direct bearing on student learning.

There are also counterarguments with regard to pursuing study abroad, namely that it is merely ‘fun’ and does not add value to the educational experience of students. In addition, the practice of study abroad is sometimes criticised as being ‘academic tourism’. One of the major concerns regarding the educational benefit of study experiences abroad is the extent to which students are really engaged with the learning experience. Trilokekar and Rasmi (2011:496) distinguish between being “internationally active” and “internationally engaged”. Garam (2012) emphasises that internationalisation through international student mobility should have well-defined learning outcomes to help participants to work on the acquisition of international competencies throughout the curriculum and thus ensure the goals of study abroad are achieved.

The preceding discussion on the rationale and goals of study abroad has highlighted the institutional, individual, and societal advantages for the inclusion of study abroad as a key initiative of internationalisation on student level. However, the discussion can be deepened to include a more nuanced consideration of the overarching benefits. Two specific issues to discuss in this regard include the role of graduate attributes in the rationale for study abroad as well as aspects relating to employability.

2.10.1 Graduate attributes

Graduate attributes is one of the strategic considerations for institutions to engage in the phenomenon of study abroad. Graduate attributes are defined as the skills, knowledge, competences and values a university community agrees its graduates should develop during their period of study at that particular institution (Griesel & Parker, 2009; Jones & Killick, 2013). The graduate attributes must include but also exceed the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses (Bowden et al., 2000, cited in Barrie, 2006). In terms of higher education, the graduates of a particular institution are a reflection of the quality of the institution and furthermore a product that should reflect the ethos and institutional culture of that particular institution. In an attempt to address the question of what these graduate attributes should be, and particularly to establish a link between the employability of graduates and higher education, institutions in various countries promote themselves because of the types of graduates they will produce and the contribution their graduates can make to the world of work. The link between the world of work and higher education seems to be tied to the role of higher education in human capital development, which links directly to productivity and economic growth (HESA, 2007; Griesel & Parker, 2009). Graduate attributes are closely linked to gradueness that refers to the employability of individuals. Yorke (2006) suggests that employability is more than just a set of key skills. Rather, it provides evidence of the application of a mix of personal beliefs and characteristics, understandings, and the ability to reflect on experiences.

2.10.2 Employability

The emphasis on employability and the set of skills needed for employment in the 21st century is strongly related to the advantages of study abroad. Orahood, Kruze and Pearson (2004) refer to a study conducted by Indiana University, USA, at the Kelley School of Business, which considered study abroad programmes and the link to business students' career goals and highlights three pertinent outcomes for employability, namely intercultural competence, international perspectives, and personal growth. The Institute for International Education (IIE, 2014a), a not-for-profit organisation with the mission to advance international education and access to education worldwide, argues that studying abroad should no longer be seen as a luxury. The organisation argues that international experience is now deemed as one of the most important elements of a 21st century education because of the demands of globalization that require a workforce that possesses knowledge of other countries and cultures as well as having language competence in languages other than English (IIE, 2014b). Behle and Atfield (2013) oppose the significance of international exposure for the workplace by stating that little empirical research has been done on the relationship between students' experiences of studying outside their home nation and their employability as graduates. However, Behle and Atfield (2013) do concur that the skill set of students has gained renewed focus with the expansion of higher education; therefore, it can be argued that

internationalisation of higher education imparts a particular set of skills associated with the global world of work.

The world of work is an environment that is becoming more international and multicultural in nature and thus needs people who are able to adapt and thrive across national, cultural, and ethnic boundaries. Rizvi and Lingard (2010) endorse this argument and state that students should be equipped with appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to live and work in the globalised world of the 21st century (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004). These would include personal growth, intercultural awareness, professional development, and intellectual growth (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004). International exposure through an academic exchange provides a means to achieve this goal.

The study on the impact of Erasmus Mundus mobility on the employability of participants revealed that both students and employers view the international experience and skills associated with such experiences as important for employment. The study also revealed that employers view the transversal skills associated with international experience as one of the top three aspects to consider in employment of a candidate. The other two factors are knowledge in their field and relevant work experience (European Commission, 2014).

In light of the previous references to the importance of international experience in future employment, it can be argued that an internship as part of the study programme could be of more strategic value. An internship is one of the activities that can be included in the scope of study abroad and thus the references made here to employability and study abroad can indeed be applied in context of internships abroad.

Norris and Gillespie (2009) make a specific link between the effect of study experiences abroad and students pursuing global careers, and provide data that support this argument. The results show that students' resolution to study abroad correlates with the lasting effect of developing a career with an international focus. Their study, which was conducted in the context of the Lincoln Commission and the European Erasmus Mundus mobility scheme, found that there had been a steady growth in the correlation between students participating in international mobility experiences and, in so doing, being influenced to pursue jobs overseas.

Tsigirilis (2014) strengthens his argument for placing students at the centre of internationalisation of higher education by listing three student-centred objectives, namely creating multicultural exposure, enhancing value for money, and increasing employability. This perspective strengthens the argument that internationalisation has a strong supply and demand dynamic that supports the economic rationale and refutes the view of the goals of study abroad as being student development and empowerment.

2.10.3 Student participation in study abroad

2.10.3 i Motivation for participation

The discussion of the rationale and goals for study abroad has already referred to the set of skills that is assumed part of the benefits of the study abroad experience. Predicting the participation of students in international mobility programmes has been linked to the economic theory of human capital and sociological perspectives (Perna, 2006). The human capital theory predicts that students would decide to take part in international study if they deem the net benefits of the experience to exceed the net benefits of other activities (Becker, 1993).

2.10.3 ii Barriers to participation

The aim of this study is to identify the potential barriers to international exchange semesters at one South African higher education institution; therefore, it is necessary to refer to existing literature that discusses the barriers to student mobility, particularly non-degree mobility. The lack of literature pertaining to non-degree mobility has already been mentioned, but a number of significant studies that investigated factors prohibiting or deterring students from pursuing international academic mobility on a semester basis were obtained.

A study by Perna, Orosz, Jumakulov, Kishkentayeva and Ashirbekov (2015) focused on mobility programmes that were government sponsored and revealed three aspects that are particularly relevant in view of the preceding discussions of student mobility and the aim of this study. The three aspects are perceived benefits and costs (Perna et al., 2015) selection criteria, and programme information. A study conducted by Souto-Otero, Huisman, Beerkens, De Wit and Vujic (2013) concentrated on the barriers to mobility as identified in the Erasmus Mundus programme, particularly the differences between mobile and non-mobile students. The study explored five barriers that were identified in a literature study, namely financial barriers, barriers related to higher education system comparability, awareness and information barriers, personal background, and social background (Souto-Otero et al., 2013).

The IAU Global survey distinguishes between external and internal obstacles to mobility where the former refers to factors outside of the university and the latter to obstacles created or imposed by the institution itself (Egron-Polak and Hudson, 2014). The differentiation between external and internal obstacles can form an important platform to contextualise the findings of this study.

The specific barriers to semester exchange programmes in the institutional context of Stellenbosch University have been investigated by this study and are discussed in Chapter 5.

2.10.4 International exchange semester

Study abroad has been discussed above as one form of the implementation of internationalisation of higher education on student level. For the purpose of this study, the discussion will focus only on a specific activity of study abroad, namely international exchange semesters.

An international exchange semester is a temporary period of study that takes place in the context of an exchange agreement between two universities (Teichler, 1996). It is assumed that students who take part in an international exchange semester are enrolled at the home university and will use the credits obtained during the exchange semester(s) towards credit accumulation for degree purposes (Ahn, 2011). The degree will be awarded by the home institution. Students who take part in this type of study abroad are referred to as exchange students.

The academic experience of obtaining credits for degree purposes is combined with the experiences of the host nation's culture and language (Ahn, 2011) as well as the other learning opportunities offered by the host institution. Thus, the international mobility is an integrated part of the student's higher education.

The duration of such mobility in particular prioritises the notion of an exchange semester above shorter study experiences abroad. Tarrant (2010) specifically argues against short-term programmes because the (lack of) academic rigour of these types of programmes does not support a strong ethos of student learning.

Engle and Engle (2004) report that international educational programmes with a short time abroad have become increasingly popular due to the cost effectiveness and short time away, but they further argue that to cast the net wide to include these types of exposure under the umbrella of study abroad seems unfair, as there are significant differences between the various international mobility opportunities. These authors suggest a classification framework for study abroad that would match the programme/mobility with the students' academic, personal, and future goals. A major distinction is made between culture-based international education and knowledge-transfer study abroad. It is crucial that the goals of study abroad are considered critically to distinguish it from studying at home, and to distinguish the different forms.

2.11 Shortcomings in literature on student mobility

I have identified two significant shortcomings in terms of available literature on international student mobility. The first is the lack of an African and South African focus on data pertaining to the outward mobility of students who take part in the broad range of study programmes abroad. The second shortcoming is the lack of literature on study abroad that focuses on the educational value and effect of these types of programmes. The second shortcoming also includes the overall lack of literature that specifically focuses on the type of mobility that is addressed in this research study, namely international exchange semesters.

2.11.1 The lack of empirical data on the African and South African context

The necessity of international mobility statistics has been shown by the emphasis on student numbers and mobility of students in describing the state of internationalisation in a country or region. The rationale of internationalisation is also expressed by the mobility of students; therefore, although there is significant information on the number of African students leaving the continent to pursue degree programmes abroad and the number of international students that enrol for degree programmes in South Africa through research studies like ProjectAtlas®, the number of students that take part in study programmes abroad is lacking. The lack of published statistics in South Africa and Africa is a shortcoming to address the flow of students and to create a continental picture of the opportunities for student development through international student mobility.

2.11.2 Lack of literature on study abroad

The review has also identified a lack of evidence in the literature for the educational value and effect of study programmes abroad for students enrolled for higher education. The literature pertaining to degree-seeking mobility surpasses that of publications on aspects relating to study abroad, and even more so on literature pertaining specifically to international exchange semesters (Findlay, et al., 2012). The complex nature of what a full semester (or year) abroad within a specific academic programme entails requires more research with substantive empirical data to support the practice of international exchange semesters in the broad context of the internationalisation of higher education.

2.12 Literature review conclusions

The literature review addressed three main themes, namely globalisation, internationalisation of higher education, and the link between them; the rationale and relevance of internationalisation of higher education – theory and practice; and lastly, internationalisation of higher education on student level. The review has highlighted the following key findings relating to the three themes:

Theme I: Globalisation, internationalisation of higher education, and the thread in between

- Globalisation and internationalisation of higher education are linked undeniably, but internationalisation is not merely a reaction to globalisation.
- The internationalisation of higher education is a reality of higher education across the globe.
- The review has also identified major challenges with regard to internationalisation in the higher education sector. The increased emphasis on the role and contribution of higher education in and to the global knowledge economy requires the higher

education sector of developed and developing countries to rethink their core functions and how they are performed.

- There is an intrinsic value and importance for higher education institutions to engage in internationalisation on all levels of the institution.

Theme 2: Rationale and relevance of internationalisation of higher education – theory and practice

- The rationale for internationalisation of higher education can be discussed in terms of economic, academic and developmental rationales
- Engagement with internationalisation on continental, national and institutional level is varied in terms of strategy and implementation
- The major imbalance between the level of engagement in internationalisation of countries and institutions highlights a disparity on the level of higher education but also with regard to national policy.

Theme 3: Internationalisation of higher education on student level

- The mobility of students globally is an inevitable result of globalisation and a changing job market.
- Generally, the mobility patterns of students are orientated to mobility from the Global South to the Global North, but there has been significant and insightful shifts in mobility patterns.
- The goals and benefits of student mobility are linked strongly to enhancing the learning experience and can be linked to the definitions used in the study.
- That student mobility adds value to the education students receive in higher education has not been proved unequivocally, but significant literature exists to support this notion.
- The positive effects of short-term mobility on student learning and engagement rely on well-planned and integrated programmes.

The perspectives in this literature review have provided a background for the discussion to follow on the mobility of students by means of international exchange semesters, particularly pertaining to the potential barriers to international exchange semesters at Stellenbosch University. The context of Stellenbosch University in terms of policy and organisation structure is discussed in Chapter 3 to contextualise the study further, followed by the overview of the research methodology in Chapter 4 and the analysis of data in Chapter 5. The final chapter, Chapter 6, provides the findings of the study and concludes the dissertation.

CHAPTER 3

INTERNATIONALISATION AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

3.1 Introduction

The rapid changes in the higher education landscape globally and locally were discussed against the background of globalisation and other driving forces in Chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 1 provided a broad overview to the study and highlighted the motivation for the study, namely the low uptake of international exchange semesters by students at Stellenbosch University. Chapter 2 provided a range of perspectives on globalisation and internationalisation, the rationale and relevance of internationalisation of higher education, as well as the continental and national responses to internationalisation. Chapter 2 also gave an overview of international student mobility, the types of student mobility in the context of international education, and the role of student mobility in internationalisation of higher education. Chapter 3 contextualises the study further by discussing the present state of affairs of internationalisation at Stellenbosch University in the context of higher education in South Africa. This discussion is framed in terms of institutional vision and strategy, policies, support structures for internationalisation initiatives, and finally, student mobility at Stellenbosch University.

This chapter provides the context for the analysis of the data that were collected on multiple levels, namely from students, academic staff, and members of Faculty management. The scope of the empirical study and the research methodology used are discussed in Chapter 4, followed by an analysis and discussion of the results in Chapter 5.

Le Grange (2009) argues that, despite the changing landscape of higher education, the core business of higher education remains the production, transmission and acquisition of knowledge. The shift that has taken place in higher education has been in the **nature** of knowledge production, knowledge transmission and knowledge acquisition, and **the way in which** that knowledge is valued and legitimated (Le Grange, 2009) (my emphasis). Within this lie entrenched the principles of internationalisation discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 in the definitions of this phenomenon (De Wit, 2012; Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012) and the preceding literature review with particular reference to participating in collaborative networks and partnerships (Section 1.1), exposing students and staff to new knowledge systems through mobility (Section 2.11) and internationalisation@home (Section 1.5.5). The renewed focus on internationalisation of higher education in the 21st century has already been justified through arguments around globalisation in Theme 1 (Section 2.2, Section 2.3, and Section 2.4), graduate attributes (Section 2.10), student development (Section 2.5), and the role higher education institutions play in creating knowledge (Section 2.5 and Section 2.6).

The discussion of the role and relevance of higher education in the global arena can be applied to the way in which higher education systems at national and supranational level react to internationalisation – as indicated by the literature review on continental and

national responses to internationalisation. The same principle applies when discussing the institutional response to internationalisation.

3.2 The higher education landscape in South Africa

Higher education has already been explained as a key concept in Chapter 1, and reference has been made to the South African context. In South Africa, higher education is governed by the Higher Education Act of 1997. The definition of a higher education institution should be considered with the definition of higher education of the Council on Higher Education referring to “all learning programmes which lead to qualifications which meet the requirements of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF), which is a sub-framework of the National Qualifications Framework as contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act No. 58 of 1995)” (CHE, 2013).

The South African higher education sector includes public and private providers. The public higher education sector currently consists of 26 higher education institutions. These are classified as research (11) or comprehensive universities (6) or universities of technology (6), indicating the primary institutional focus as mandated by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)⁹. The term ‘research university’ does not imply there is a lack of teaching, but indicates the particular focus and drive of these institutions to enhance graduate education and research output.

The private sector consists of 116 registered and provisionally registered higher education institutions but contribute far less in terms of student enrolment numbers (DHET, 2014). The provision of education by the private sector is limited mostly to programmes at undergraduate level, namely certificates, diplomas, and bachelor degrees (CHE, 2009).

3.3 Internationalisation of South African higher education

In Chapter 2 (Section 2.6.2.2), the absence of a South African national policy on internationalisation in higher education or related matters, for example joint programming, has already been highlighted as creating a policy vacuum for the entire sector to engage in internationalisation. The lack of an internationalisation policy at the national level is not unique to developing countries. One should also admit that the lack of a policy itself is not necessarily disadvantageous, but rather the lack of a national strategy to engage in the inevitably internationalising nature of higher education to ensure that national developmental needs are met and that higher education institutions can take part actively in the global arena. In Chapter 2 the policy context of South Africa was described (RSA, 1997; DHET, 2013) in terms of the national response to the internationalisation of higher education; therefore, the policy will not be discussed again.

⁹ The University of Mpumalanga (Mbombela, Mpumalanga) and Sol Plaatje University (Kimberley, Northern Cape) were established from national institutes in 2014 to improve the distribution of higher education across South Africa and address the need to increase the number of graduates (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2002). Subsequently, the Sefako Makgatho Medical University was established after the demerger of the formerly merged Medunsa.

3.4 Stellenbosch University: Institutional history and context

Stellenbosch University is a research-led university accredited as a public higher education institution by the Department of Higher Education and Training in terms of the Higher Education Act (CHE, 2009).

3.4.1 A brief history of Stellenbosch University

The history of the institution dates back as far as the 17th century with the initiation of school education in the town of Stellenbosch in 1685. The Theological Seminary of the Dutch Reformed Church established in 1859 was the commencement of higher education in this university town. December 1863 marked the foundation of the Stellenbosch Gymnasium, which was established formally in 1866. From the Stellenbosch Gymnasium, the so-called Arts Department was founded in 1874, starting with 120 students and two professors in the fields of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, and Classical and English Literature respectively. The lack of teaching space spurred the decision to build a proper college building. This decision led to a new building being inaugurated on 6 November 1886 and named Victoria College in 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's golden jubilee, the 50-year celebration of her ascent to the British throne. From 1897 to 1900, Victoria College expanded to include a Physics laboratory, a building for Education and Sciences as well as the Christian Marais Library. Further expansions to the College included the establishment of research chairs in Botany, History, Zoology, and Applied Mathematics. The first professor in Education was appointed in 1911 (Stellenbosch University, 2014).

A change in government policy and the adoption of the University Act in 1916 created a platform for the establishment of a full-fledged university. Victoria College became Stellenbosch University on 2 April 1918, thanks to a £100 000 donation by a local benefactor, Mr Jan Marais of Coetzenburg. Immediately prior to the transformation of Victoria College to Stellenbosch University, the institution hosted 503 students and 40 lecturing staff (Stellenbosch University, 2014).

3.4.2 Stellenbosch University in the 21st century

Today, the institution is an internationally recognised institution spread across five campuses housing ten Faculties (Stellenbosch University, 2014). Currently (in 2014), the institution has a student enrolment of 28 156 students of whom more than one third (34,6 percent) are postgraduate students. The number of international students has also grown exponentially since 2000 and now stands at 4 110 students (15 percent) (Postgraduate & International Office, 2014a).

By means of its Vision 2030, Stellenbosch University has positioned itself to be a higher education institution fit for the 21st century. Vision 2030 states that the institution is “inclusive, innovative and future focused: a place of discovery and excellence where both staff and students are thought leaders in advancing knowledge in the service of all stakeholders” (Stellenbosch University, 2013a). The vision makes no clear reference to

internationalisation or to the global context of higher education. The accompanying mission statement is equally limited in references to internationalisation, the global context, and their relevance to the training of graduates.

The internationalisation policy of a higher education institution should provide a framework for developing and integrating internationalisation in the university's strategy, organisation, culture, and governance. Stellenbosch University and many other higher education institutions in South Africa do not have internationalisation policies, yet the goals of internationalisation of higher education are voiced, to a lesser or greater extent, in the vision and mission statements of almost all of the public higher education institutions in South Africa (Jansen, Mclellan & Greene, 2008). The lack of an internationalisation policy does not imply that internationalisation is not important, but simply that it might have been obscured by a focus on other matters like national imperatives, transformation, or lack of funding, or it could be due to the lack of a centralised office to drive internationalisation (Jansen, et al., 2008). At Stellenbosch University, however, the lack of an internationalisation policy cannot be attributed to the latter, as the institution has been at the forefront of international collaboration, receives some of the highest numbers of international students in the country,¹⁰ and has a well-established international office.

In view of the fact that there is limited reference to internationalisation in the vision and mission statement of the institution and that a policy framework on internationalisation is lacking, it can be concluded that Stellenbosch University has not aligned itself with higher education institutions across the globe that actively and strategically engage in the challenges and opportunities of internationalisation. The absence of policy guidelines that could serve as directives for internationalisation activities at all levels of the institution creates the impression that international and intercultural competencies for graduates are not important to Stellenbosch University. This may deprive students of a higher education experience that is relevant in the international context, and is not fitting for an institution that is regarded as one of the top institutions in the country, and among the top four South African universities on a number of international rankings.

The Institutional Plan is the steering mechanism for Stellenbosch University's vision and mission. It encompasses the planning and implementation of the strategic drivers of the institution, and hinges on four foci, namely the knowledge base of university staff, diversity of students and staff, student success, and systemic sustainability (Stellenbosch University, 2011a and 2013a). None of these strategic foci has a specific reference to internationalisation; yet, the goal is to be an institution that is positioned for the 21st century. However, the foci are open to interpretation, which creates an opportunity for progressive academic environments to engage in the different elements of internationalisation.

A policy document that lends itself towards accommodation of aspects of internationalisation is the Strategy for Teaching and Learning, which includes the graduate attributes of the institution (Stellenbosch University, 2013b). The central role graduate

¹⁰ Study South Africa: The Guide to South African Higher Education, 12th edition (IEASA, 2013).

attributes play in the rationale for other higher education institutions to engage in internationalisation has already been discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.10.1). The graduate attributes of the SU are summarised as follows:

- A Stellenbosch graduate will have an enquiring mind
- A Stellenbosch graduate will be an engaged citizen
- A Stellenbosch graduate will be a dynamic professional
- A Stellenbosch graduate will be a well-rounded individual.

The strategic documents, including the graduate attributes, are discussed in depth in the analyses and discussion of the research results in Chapter 5.

3.5 Internationalisation at Stellenbosch University

The lack of an institutional policy on internationalisation and the absence of reference to internationalisation in the vision and mission do not imply that Stellenbosch University has not been engaged in the phenomenon of internationalisation or is unfamiliar with the international arena. The institution has a long history of international collaboration that ranges from interaction between individual researchers to complex international networks. The first formal bilateral agreement with a higher education institution abroad was signed in 1993 – before the end of apartheid and the reintroduction of South Africa into the international academic arena. The first partner institution was the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KU Leuven) in Belgium.

Stellenbosch University is recognised as an international institution that attracts more than 4 100 international students from more than a 100 countries every year, employs 111¹¹ international academic staff members and is regarded as the highest academic publishing institution in peer-reviewed publications with 2102 publications in 2013 (SU, 2013c; SU, 2015). The latter means that, *per capita*, Stellenbosch University produces more publications than any other South African higher education institution, of which 74 percent are published in international indexes. Other activities that quantify the extent to which Stellenbosch University engages in the international dimension of higher education include more than 100 bilateral agreements that cover the broad spectrum of international collaboration including student mobility, research collaboration and staff exchange, 330 joint research projects in 38 African countries, more than 40 EU-funded research projects, and 16 joint postgraduate programmes (Postgraduate & International Office, 2014b; Stellenbosch University, 2015).

As mentioned, the lack of an internationalisation policy should not be interpreted as a lack of institutional support for internationalisation. The institution has a strong continental commitment, and initiatives such as the African Doctoral Academy (ADA) and the Partnership for Africa's Next Generation of Academics (PANGEA) are testimony to the

¹¹ The total number of academic staff members is 930.

commitment of the institution to support collaboration and capacity building on the African continent.

Further initiatives that demonstrate a strong alliance to internationalisation are the Hope@Africa and Hope International networks launched in March 2014 as part of the Hope Project. Hope@Africa is a network comprising seven leading African universities, namely the University of Botswana (Botswana), University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Makerere University (Uganda), University of Nairobi (Kenya), University of Namibia (Namibia), University of Malawi (Malawi), and Stellenbosch University (South Africa). The network will address developmental challenges and will use a network model in contrast with a hub-and-spokes model. The Hope@Africa partners intend using 21st-century information and communication technology (ICT) to build African expertise, facilitate sustainable networks, and promote lifelong learning. Hope International developed from the notion that institutions of higher education have a responsibility to promote human development and tackle social challenges through academic and research excellence. The network consists of Stellenbosch University and four Swedish institutions, namely Dalarna University, Gothenburg University, Linnaeus University, and Malmö University, bringing together the Global South and the Global North to promote collaboration in higher education towards increasing knowledge and combining expertise with regard to the major challenges facing the global community and to contribute to the long-term achievement of global development goals.

The most recent collaborative initiative on the African continent is the African Research Universities Alliance, a research network intending to build indigenous research excellence with the objective of asserting Africa as a powerful global force. Other SU initiatives that indicate support for internationalisation outside the African continent is active and broad-based participation in the Erasmus Mundus mobility scheme, the Centre for Chinese Studies, and the Confucius Institute that forms part of the Postgraduate & International Office.

In the light of these multileveled activities aimed at internationalisation, is a policy necessary? Should the initiatives described in the preceding discussion not be viewed as sufficient support of internationalisation across all three pillars of the institution, namely teaching, research, and community engagement? These questions will be interrogated by means of the empirical study and supported by a specific analysis of the vision and mission statements of the four Faculties involved in this study, namely Arts and Social Sciences; Economic and Management Sciences, Science, and AgriSciences.

3.5.1 Support for internationalisation in terms of organisational structures

The function of internationalisation can be equated to other central strategic functions at Stellenbosch University, such as student development, teaching, research, or staff development, but at the same time, it can be considered in terms of operational support functions such as information technology services, student accommodation, finances, or library services. This dichotomy underlines the complexity of internationalisation and raises the question: Who should do this and how? The role of an internationalisation policy and

strategy has already been discussed in this chapter (Section 3.4.2), and the lack of such policies at Stellenbosch University has been contextualised in the preceding discussion (Section 3.4.2 and Section 3.5). Institutional support includes the ways in which an institution creates a conducive environment for student learning through the support services it provides (Zephke & Leach, 2010); thus, the continued support of a centralised international office that is well resourced in terms of human resources and physical space can be regarded as a positive contribution of the institution to support student engagement in internationalisation, i.e. student mobility.

Various organisational models for implementing internationalisation in higher education institutions exist, ranging from centralised offices that deal with all aspects of internationalisation, including advising of executive management, to Faculty-specific offices that deal mainly with aspects related to student mobility. At Stellenbosch University, the organisational structure for facilitating and supporting activities pertaining to internationalisation consists of one central office with two subsidiary offices: one serving the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (at the Tygerberg campus) and the other the Business School (at the Bellville Park campus). The central office, namely the Postgraduate & International Office, is situated on the main campus in Stellenbosch and is discussed in the next section to sketch the context of internationalisation at Stellenbosch University. It is important to note that the Postgraduate & International Office is not mandated to implement internationalisation at the institution. Internationalisation forms part of the responsibility area of the Vice-Rector: Research and Innovation. Within the responsibility area, the Postgraduate & International Office is tasked with playing a facilitative and more specifically, a supportive role in internationalisation activities. The role and goals of the support division are discussed below.

3.5.1.1 The Postgraduate & International Office (PGIO)

The Office for International Relations (OIR) (later, the International Office – IO) was established in June 1993. Its establishment stemmed from the vision that Stellenbosch University (SU) would become an international role player and should deliberately position itself as such. When the political dispensation changed in 1994, it meant that SU, by means of the OIR, could begin to explore the increasingly open international academic world proactively. The OIR was an important support mechanism for and facilitator of international mobility (Stellenbosch University International Office, 1997; Baumert, 2014).

Since the inception of the division, a set of practices for the establishment of cooperative agreements, the management and administration of international students, the funding of international academic visits and exchange programmes, and the promotion of international mobility of students and staff evolved (Postgraduate & International Office, 2014b). The OIR, and later the IO, was managed accordingly and, as the context changed and new challenges presented themselves, new strategies were developed.

An investigation into creating a support platform for postgraduate students was initiated in December 2008 and led to wide-ranging consultation. The International Office was identified

as the support unit that would be tasked with this responsibility, and the Postgraduate & International Office (PGIO) was established with effect from 1 January 2010. The management of the University committed itself to the concept since it is in the interest of the institution to offer better support to its postgraduate students. The aim of the newly established unit was to respond to an institutional imperative with regard to promoting postgraduate studies and postgraduate student success, and to employ and expand the then existing service platform for the support of international academic mobility. The brief of the PGIO is to strengthen this service platform by way of policy and system development, efficient service delivery, and effective coordination and support of existing related initiatives and activities. The PGIO is a support service division in the area of responsibility of the Vice-Rector: Research & Innovation (VR: R&I) with an overarching institutional responsibility (Postgraduate & International Office, 2010).

Institutionally, the division is directed towards¹²:

- a. contributing to achieving institutional strategic objectives with regard to
 - i. student success by shortening the completion time for master's and doctoral students by 15 percent;
 - ii. broadening the knowledge base by an increase in the proportion of postgraduate students from 32 percent to 37 percent, with the ultimate aim of reaching 40 percent, as well as increasing annual postgraduate output to 1,5 per SLE;
 - iii. systemic sustainability by an integrated approach in planning and budgeting; and
 - iv. diversity in terms of race by increasing the percentage of undergraduate coloured, black, and Indian students from 24 percent to 33 percent, as well as overall diversity in terms of increasing the attractiveness of the University as the first choice for studies and employment, via the effect of the Hope Project;
- b. contributing to diversifying and rejuvenating the research community within the strategic plan for the environment of the Vice-Rector: Research & Innovation;
- c. supporting all the Faculties where the academic activity of postgraduate students is primarily situated, i.e. in the relevant academic environment and subject to the processes in that particular Faculty. By coordinating services and processes, the PGIO provides a platform for support services to postgraduate students, in order for the University to foster postgraduate students in a more efficient manner;
- d. supporting the outcome of Hope projects, where necessary and applicable, by means of programmes and activities for postgraduate students and international visitors (including international students); and.

¹² This alignment is according to the institutional priorities at the time of establishment of the PGIO. New Institutional Plan is in process of development.

- e. supporting internationalisation at the University with regard to initiatives in Africa, (North)-South-South interaction, and establishing strong international academic networks to enhance mobility of international staff and students.

Although Objective E relates directly to internationalisation and student mobility, the emphasis on internationalisation is rather obscure in these institutional directives, which places a question mark over the central role of internationalisation at Stellenbosch University. This point of view is unpacked in the empirical study of the potential barriers to international exchange semesters that follows in Chapter 5.

The role of the PGIO in terms of its founding document and the actual activities taking place, is to serve as a platform to foster and increase student engagement in internationalisation of higher education. In principle, the ability of the PGIO to play an active role in creating learning opportunities, increase student and staff interaction, provide an academic challenge, promote active learning and overall create a campus environment that is conducive to student learning in the context of internationalisation can be unpacked further by considering the current practices of the division for International Student Mobility (ISM).

3.5.1.2 International students at Stellenbosch University

Stellenbosch University was host to 4 110 international students in 2014¹³. This number amounts to more than 15 percent of the total student population (undergraduate and postgraduate) and includes students from almost 100 countries worldwide. The international student population can be divided into two major groupings, namely degree-seeking and non-degree-seeking students. As the term suggests, degree-seeking students are international students who enrol for a full degree and will graduate with a Stellenbosch University qualification upon completion. The majority of degree-seeking students are from other African countries and are enrolled for postgraduate programmes (Postgraduate & International Office, 2014a).

Non-degree-seeking students include the wide spectrum of students who are not enrolled for degree purposes but for other academic activities, for example an exchange semester, a summer school, Faculty-led programmes, or research that can be categorised as study abroad. Non-degree-seeking students usually obtain credits that can be used towards their degree programme at their home institutions, either in the form of a compulsory study abroad requisite, or the specific course selection as an alternative to courses at the home university, or a research project.

Students categorised as exchange students are students who are currently enrolled at one of the partner universities of SU. The bilateral exchange agreements outline the mobility of students for the different types and levels of mobility. The principle of exchange agreements is that, for students from partner universities enrolling at SU under an exchange agreement,

¹³ This figure was provided by the Postgraduate & International Office and represents the number of registrations for the academic year 2014.

the institution will reciprocate by sending students for exchange to the partner university¹⁴. The primary purpose of exchanges is to add value and experience to the study programme and overall university experience of a student. The exchange semester(s) must be a substitute for an equivalent in the programme of the home university and thus not add a semester to the students' programme unnecessarily. It must fit into the programme structure and adhere to the course and credit requirements of the specific programme to ensure credit transfer and graduation on condition that the courses are completed successfully at the host university.

3.5.1.3 Unit for International Student Mobility

The mobility of students on all levels is coordinated and facilitated by a unit in the Postgraduate & International Office. The core activities relating to short-term students (i.e. all non-degree students) are managed and coordinated by the Unit for International Student Mobility. The goals of this unit include increasing the number of students enrolled at SU who take part in international mobility opportunities, particularly at postgraduate level, ensure interaction of local and international students, facilitate the flow of students through partnerships, diversify the student body by incoming student mobility, as well as a strong focus on internationalisation at home (Postgraduate & International Office, 2014c).

However, it cannot be claimed that the unit is solely responsible for student mobility at Stellenbosch University, as it is a complex process with various role players, and mobility occurs independently of the PGIO. The lack of an overarching system to track the mobility of students throughout the institution is a point of concern.

In the Unit, various staff members focus on particular aspects of student mobility. This division is made according to the type of mobility, namely summer school, short programme, or exchange programme. The staff members working directly with the exchange programmes have grown from one coordinator and a student assistant to two full-time coordinators, one administrative assistant, and a student assistant in the past two years. The expansion of staff was necessary to address the growth in student numbers, but also to create more capacity to address the outward mobility of students.

3.5.2 International exchange semesters

3.5.2i Basic principles

The basic principle of a semester exchange is that the student remains enrolled at Stellenbosch University (home university) and replaces the corresponding course work of the home university with similar course work at a partner university (host university). Thus, the exchange is an integral part of the study programme. Students registered for full-time study in undergraduate programmes can apply for one or two semesters of exchange. The student will complete relevant course work (60 to 120 credits) at the host university that

¹⁴ SU sends more or less 65 students on exchange per academic year, whereas the university receives between 300 and 400 exchange students annually.

will be used as substitution for Stellenbosch courses. Students must have completed at least three semesters of their degree programme at the time of exchange. Students in the last semester of their programme do not qualify for an international exchange semester.

At postgraduate level, there are three variations of the method of exchange. The first is similar to the description of the traditional exchange semester at undergraduate level explained above. The second refers to a full research programme where a student takes part in an exchange and completes course work at the host university as preparation for or supplementary to their intended research study. The last variation is a full research programme where the student completes part of the research at the host university but remains fully enrolled at Stellenbosch University. The latter differs from enrolment in a joint degree where the awarding of the qualification is done jointly, subject to meeting the degree requirements of both institutions.

3.5.2ii *Financial arrangements*

For exchange students, fees are paid to Stellenbosch University, and tuition fees are waived at the partner universities. The exchange agreement between Stellenbosch University and the host university would include specific reference to further financial support such as accommodation scholarships and living stipends. The financial support offered by partner institutions ranges from a monthly scholarship of 250 Euro (\$265) to support that is more comprehensive, covers accommodation and meals. The Postgraduate & International Office also provides exchange scholarships in the form of meeting travelling costs. The amount awarded to each student in 2014 amounted to R17 000 (roughly \$1500). These funds are generated by the income of other short-term international student mobility activities, for example, the annual summer school, and short programmes arranged for international institutions, as well as by the income generated by the well-established Freemover programme that entails the enrolment of students from non-partner universities for one or two semesters (Postgraduate & International Office, 2014b).

Thus, it is possible for students to take part in the exchange programme with financial support that covers all their major expenses, so that they can do so without using any of their own funds (Postgraduate & International Office, 2014b).

3.5.2iii *Criteria and evaluation*

The following minimum criteria are applied in the evaluation of exchange applications:

- The applicant must be enrolled for a full degree.
- The applicant must have an average of at least a 60 percent at the time of application.
- The applicant must have the full approval from his or her academic department in the form of a signed learning agreement. The learning agreement will be discussed in further detail in 3.6.4.

All applicants apply directly to the Postgraduate & International Office, where a panel¹⁵ evaluates the applications. The application consists of an application form, a letter of motivation, two reference letters, a short CV, and an application video in which students provide answers to topical questions. The main aim of the panel is to decide on the suitability and preparedness of the applicant to take part in an exchange programme. Applicants must list their choice of host universities. The choice of a host university must be based on academic considerations that include a fit for the necessary course work, and in the case of a research semester, there must be an indication of similar specialisation at the host university.

3.5.2iv *Academic approval*

An important part of the application is the learning agreement. The learning agreement document assists with the credit transfer and is modelled on the Erasmus Mundus learning agreement. The learning agreement is also the guiding document for the approval of courses at the host university. The learning agreement will include the list of courses that must be taken during the particular semester, as set out in the calendar of the applicable Faculty. Applicants must list all the courses for which they will be enrolled at Stellenbosch University during the semester of exchange and provide details on the substitute courses for which they intend to enrol at the host university. The substitute courses must be similar in content, level, and number of credits. For example, if a student is enrolled for Political Science 142: Introduction for 12 credits at Stellenbosch University, he or she must find a course that will teach the same content and has similar outcomes and that will be equivalent to 12 credits. This model is applied to students from all Faculties, except the Faculty of Law. The Faculty of Law has adapted the programme structure of the LLB¹⁶ programme to provide students the opportunity to engage in an international exchange semester in the last semester of their degree programme. Students who apply for this option would complete their selected courses at a partner university and would further continue with one Stellenbosch course via correspondence. The criteria for approval for the selected courses is that they must be on the final year level, have a final assessment (in line with the assessment policies of the Faculty) and not be equivalent to any course for which students have enrolled up to the time of the exchange.

Each course substitute must be approved by the relevant lecturer, head of department or programme coordinator. The Postgraduate & International Office provides extensive support to students to find relevant courses, obtain approval from departments and register for these courses at the host university.

Thus, the process for academic approval entails that students must do thorough research on the available academic offerings of the potential host institution(s). It further highlights the

¹⁵ The panel is convened per semester and consists of staff of the PGIO, academic staff, and staff from relevant support units such as Student Affairs.

¹⁶ The LLB programme is a degree programme in the Faculty of Law with different programme structures. Students can follow either a four-year undergraduate programme, followed by a master's degree or a three-year postgraduate programme following a degree from another Faculty or institution.

complexity of an international exchange semester in terms of finding host institution(s) that will have a good fit with the programme structure and curriculum of the wide variety of undergraduate programmes at Stellenbosch University.

3.5.3 Status quo of student exchanges

The mobility of students with regard to exchange semesters is governed by agreements between Stellenbosch University and its partner institutions. Stellenbosch University currently has more than 100 agreements on various levels (institutional, Faculty, and department) that make provision for the mobility of students. Each agreement stipulates particular academic and administrative considerations for the collaboration with regard to student mobility. The aim of an exchange agreement is to foster two-way mobility and to achieve or maintain reciprocity of numbers for the duration of the agreement – usually a three- or five-year period. In some cases, the number of students would be unequal in order to make provision for a scholarship from the partner university; for instance, Stellenbosch University would send one student per academic year, while the partner institution would send three students but provide a housing scholarship to the incoming student(s). These provisions are aimed at stimulating the mobility of students between the institutions.

The flow of students has been imbalanced for most of the agreements, which can be ascribed to a variety of factors. One of the main aims of this study, as described in Chapter 1, is to identify the potential barriers to international exchange semesters. The imbalance between incoming and outgoing exchange students is illustrated in Table 3.1. The table includes the numbers for all students who took part in or were received as exchange students, regardless of the level of study. Students are counted per semester; therefore, students who go or stay for a full year are counted twice. The table shows the major imbalance between incoming and outgoing students. These numbers do not include semester exchange students enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences or the Business School.

Table 3.1: Stellenbosch University: Number of incoming and outgoing exchange students, 2012 – 2014

Year	Number of incoming students	Number of outgoing students
2012	306	49
2013	351	61
2014	353	66

Source: Postgraduate & International Office, 2014.

Table 3.2 provides insight into the level of study of students going on international exchange semesters. The table provides an overview of the past three years and distinguishes between undergraduate and postgraduate students. The postgraduate component also includes students in the postgraduate LLB programme and all students enrolled for honours degrees.

Table 3.2: Stellenbosch University: Number of undergraduate and postgraduate students that took part in an international exchange semester, 2012-2014

Year	Number of undergraduate students	Number of postgraduate students
2012	9	40
2013	21	40
2014	15	51

Source: Postgraduate & International Office, 2014.

The overview of numbers of incoming and outgoing exchange students, as well as the distribution between undergraduate and postgraduate exchange semesters for the past three years, confirms firstly that Stellenbosch University sends far fewer students for semester exchange than it receives, and secondly, that semester exchange uptake is far better among postgraduate students than among undergraduate students at Stellenbosch University. These conclusions confirm the importance of the study on the potential barriers to international exchange semesters as encapsulated by the aims and objectives of this study in Chapter 1.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has sketched the *status quo* of international student mobility at Stellenbosch University by providing an overview of the institutional context on the level of policy and the implementation of internationalisation. Furthermore, the chapter has contextualised student mobility at Stellenbosch University in terms of the broad student population.

The lack of an internationalisation policy at national and institutional level has been presented as debilitating the work of the Postgraduate & International Office. A clear endorsement of internationalisation at institutional level will create more accountability at all levels of the institution. The contextualisation of internationalisation has shown that it cannot be limited to a particular function of the institution, such as research or student development, but it rather requires an integrated approach that would permeate the entire institution.

The overview of student numbers highlights the imbalance between incoming and outgoing exchange students and provides a platform for the purpose of this study. The following chapters build on this contextualisation to provide empirical evidence on the potential barriers to international exchange semesters based on Faculty-specific information.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In educational research, the aim is to explore and understand social phenomena that are educational in nature (Dash, 2005). This chapter focuses on the research methodology that was used to explore the potential barriers to international exchange semesters at Stellenbosch University. The research methodology provides a framework for a research inquiry and includes guiding principles for researchers to design, interpret and present research in particular contexts (Dash, 2005), and explains the decisions on the procedures and tools used in the study (Mouton, 2001). This chapter includes an overview of the research aim and objectives, the research approach, the methods for data collection, and the methods used for data analysis in this study. The chapter also outlines the philosophical assumptions underpinning the study and pays particular attention to the empirical techniques used.

4.2 Research aim and objectives

All research commences with the identification of a research problem (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In Chapter 1, the problem of the imbalance in incoming and outgoing exchange students at Stellenbosch University is discussed in the light of the internationalisation of higher education. The problem is contextualised further by the literature review in Chapter 2, which addresses the broad scope of literature on the rationale of internationalisation of higher education and more specifically considers the phenomenon of study abroad. Lastly, it is contextualised in terms of institutional considerations in Chapter 3.

4.2.1 Research aim

The research aim plays a central role in the research process (Tashokkori & Teddlie, 2010). The University of South Hampton, UK, provides a useful exposition of what research aims entail namely that research aims are broad statements of the desired outcomes of the research. These statements accentuate what the research study should accomplish; thus, the research aim should reflect the expectations of the research (University of South Hampton, 2014).

The aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of the factors that created potential barriers to international academic exchange semesters of undergraduate students in four Faculties at Stellenbosch University. The research aim was supported by the research objectives that formed the building blocks towards addressing the problem posed in the research aim.

4.2.2 Research objectives

The research objectives outline the steps that the researcher will take to address the research aim and explain how this aim will be accomplished (University of South Hampton, 2014).

The research objectives of the study are summarised in the following four statements:

Objective 1: To analyse the institutional and Faculty policies that create a barrier to international academic mobility at undergraduate level.

Objective 2: To explore, from a student's perspective, the reasons why more undergraduate students do not take part in international academic exchange semesters.

Objective 3: To investigate the academic considerations with regard to an international exchange semester in terms of programme structure, departmental support, and academic involvement.

Objective 3: To highlight existing good practices for facilitating exchange semesters.

Each objective was addressed by a specifically selected data collection method to produce results that would aid in addressing the overall aim of the research study and thus lead to a better understanding of the research problem described in Chapter 1.

4.3 **Research approach, research paradigm and research design**

4.3.1 Research approach

The methodological approaches used in a research study are explained by Babbie and Mouton (2001) as being more than a collection of research methods and techniques. Each methodological approach involves a variety of assumptions related to the methods, procedures and techniques that are employed to address the research question (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Creswell (2014:3) explains a research approach as “the plan and procedures for research” that includes all the steps “from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation”. Amongst others, the decision to choose a specific approach is based on its suitability to generate data that will answer the research questions (Bryman, 1988).

Traditionally, the primary distinction between research approaches has been between quantitative and qualitative approaches (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest and Namey (2005) state that quantitative and qualitative research approaches differ primarily in the types of questions they pose, the forms of data they produce, the degree of flexibility of the research design, the types of data-collection tools they use, and lastly, in their analytical objectives. Table 4.1 below provides an overview of the major differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches as summarised by

Mack et al. (2005). The differences between these two approaches provide guidelines for researchers to justify their choice of a particular approach.

Table 4.1: Major differences between quantitative and qualitative research approaches

	Quantitative research approach	Qualitative research approach
<i>General framework</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to confirm hypotheses about phenomena. • Instruments use more rigid style of eliciting and categorising responses to questions. • Use highly structured methods such as questionnaires, surveys, and structured observation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to explore phenomena. • Instruments use more flexible, iterative style of eliciting and categorising responses to questions • Use semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation.
<i>Analytical objectives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To quantify variation. • To predict causal relationships. • To describe characteristics of a population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To describe variation. • To describe and explain relationships. • To describe individual experiences. • To describe group norms.
<i>Question format</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close-ended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-ended
<i>Data format</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerical (obtained by assigning numerical values to responses). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textual (obtained from audiotapes, videotapes and field notes).
<i>Flexibility in study design</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study design is stable from beginning to end. • Participant responses do not influence or determine how and which questions researchers ask next. • Study design is subject to statistical assumptions and conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some aspects of the study are flexible (for example the addition, exclusion or wording of particular interview questions). • Participant responses affect how and which questions researchers ask next. • Study design is iterative; that is, data collections and research questions are adjusted according to what is learnt.

Source: Mack, et al., 2005, p. 3.

In recent years, a new approach has emerged that has gained significant popularity among social science researchers. Yet, the mixed-method approach (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) or the multi-method approach (Brannen, 1992) is still contested with regard to definition and use of the approach (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). One of the major criticisms against the mixed-method approach relates to the practice of this approach. In her 'five P's framework', Cameron (2011) states that the problems related to methodological and data integration remains one of the biggest criticisms against the use of a mixed-method approach, and researchers should determine

the appropriateness of the selected methods based on the research question or questions that are asked.

In a call for papers, the *Journal of Mixed Methods* (2006) uses the following explanation to define mixed-method research: research in which the investigator collects, analyses, mixes and draws inferences from both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a program of inquiry. Creswell (2014: 3) proposes a more comprehensive definition that clarifies mixed methods as follows:

Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone.

The latter part of Creswell's definition of mixed methods is the primary reason for the use of this research approach in this study titled *Potential Barriers to International Exchange Semesters at Stellenbosch University*. The mixed-method approach allowed the researcher to use research methods to gather quantitative and qualitative data in an integrated manner (Feilzer, 2009) that led to a better understanding of the research problem, which would have been affected by the adoption of only a quantitative or a qualitative approach.

The mixed-method approach also supports a multi-level study (the different levels of this study are highlighted in 4.4 and 4.5). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2010) confirm that a multi-level, mixed-method study assists the researcher to address the research questions with different methods from different research strategies that inform and supplement each other because they can address different aspects or layers of the phenomenon.

The type of mixed-method approach that was used in the study can be described as a convergent parallel mixed-method approach (Creswell, 2014). This refers to a form of mixed-method design in which the researcher integrates quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. Both types of data were collected at roughly the same time and were then integrated for interpretation of the overall results. This application of mixed methods addresses the criticism of a lack of integration.

The overview of the research aim and objectives indicates how different types of research methods were used to address each of the objectives and ensure that the methods supported each other in addressing the overall aim and all the objectives of the study. The philosophical framework that underpins the mixed-method approach is discussed in 4.2.2 to clarify the research methodology that was used in the study.

4.3.2 Research paradigm

The research paradigm forms the 'lens' through which the research may be viewed. Rossman and Rallis (2003:37) define the research paradigm as the "shared understandings of reality", while Guba and Lincoln (1994) refer to research paradigms as a set of basic beliefs and guiding principles within which the research is framed. Mittwede (2012:23) denotes research paradigms as "matrices of deeply held assumptions or conceptual frameworks that undergird and guide research". Research paradigms are based on presuppositions regarding reality; therefore, they can be described as theories of reality and how this reality may be understood (Creswell, 1994; Mittwede, 2012).

Understanding the paradigm underpinning a research study is important because methodological selection does not occur in a philosophical void. Brannen (2005) argues that the choice of methods is driven by philosophical assumptions. The research paradigm most commonly associated with a mixed-method approach is the pragmatist paradigm. In its simplest sense, pragmatism constitutes a practical approach to a problem (Cameron, 2011). The pragmatist paradigm has lately gained ground among social science researchers, as it provides a toolset to address the problem that is being researched and to focus on the consequences (Feilzer, 2009). Creswell (2014) argues that pragmatism as a worldview (i.e. paradigm) arises from actions, situations, and consequences, rather than from antecedent conditions as associated with a post-positivistic paradigm, and highlights three core aspects of the pragmatist paradigm, namely that it is problem-centred, pluralistic, and oriented towards real-world practice. The pragmatist paradigm allows for flexibility in the research design and thus permits social scientists to adopt a more practical approach to a research problem (Feilzer, 2009).

The convention of pragmatism was followed as the philosophical underpinning of the mixed-method approach used in this study. The research problem stemmed from a prevailing practical challenge in international education and thus required an approach that would result in empirical research to understand and address the problem. The imbalance in student exchange numbers and especially the context surrounding the practice are not described well; therefore, a study from multiple perspectives was required. Consequently, the pragmatist paradigm was useful for this research study, as it allowed the researcher to analyse a practical problem from multiple perspectives to form a holistic view of the problem.

4.3.3 Research design

Having gained clarity on the approach and paradigm underpinning the study, the research design was considered. The research design of a study is described as being the plan of what is being researched, and focuses on what kind of results the study will yield (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Creswell (2014) calls the research design the "procedures of inquiry". The case study research design was selected for this study.

According to Yin (2003), four main questions must be asked when determining if a particular study should be conducted by means of a case study design. The first is when the research question is focused on answering ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions. Secondly, a case study design can be used when the behaviour of those involved in the study cannot be manipulated. The third situation for the use of a case study design is when the researcher wants to cover contextual conditions because they are relevant to the phenomenon that is being studied. The fourth and final condition in which a case study design is appropriate is when the boundaries are not clear between the context and the phenomenon. Based on these four contexts in which a case study can be applied, it is evident that it is an appropriate research design for the study on potential barriers to international exchange semesters in specific Faculty contexts in a broader institutional context at Stellenbosch University.

Baxter and Jack (2008) refer to case study research in terms of the facilitative role it plays to explore a phenomenon in its context by using an assortment of data sources. This application is also evident in the range of data sources that was used in this study and is discussed in Sections 4.4 and 4.5 of this chapter. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001) highlight six strengths of case study research, of which five are particularly applicable to this research study: The first is that a case study design allows researchers to understand complex interrelationships and thus allows for engaging the problem at hand in depth. The complexity of an international exchange semester was mentioned briefly in the rationale for engaging a pragmatist approach in the study. Secondly, case study designs facilitate the exploration of the expected and the unexpected. The third strength that Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001) highlight is that case study research is grounded in a *lived reality*. Fourthly, they argue that multiple case studies are an enabling mechanism to focus on the meaning of the particulars of the study. Finally, they state that case study research can facilitate conceptual and/or theoretical development.

Based on these explanations of case study design, the choice of a case study design to address the research problem of the potential barriers to international exchange semesters was appropriate as it offered the researcher the toolset to address the complex interrelationships of the institutional context, Faculty contexts, student perceptions and experience, the role and perspectives of academics, and the actual administration and processes related to international exchange semester in a single study. It also supported the goal to develop a conceptual framework for the effective implementation of international exchange semesters.

In case study design, it is important to be clear on what the case or unit of analysis is (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Miles and Huberman (1994: 25) define a case as “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context”. The next aspect to address in the case study design is to bound the case to ensure that the researcher does not attempt to answer a question that is too broad (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Different authors propose different approaches on how to bind the case. I chose the approach of Miles and Huberman (1994) to bind the case by means of definition and context. If these two questions are applied to the research study, the case is defined as the *potential barriers to international exchange semesters*, which is bound by the context, namely four Faculties at Stellenbosch University.

The study focused on undergraduate students enrolled for general formative programmes in four of the ten Faculties at Stellenbosch University, namely the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, the Faculty of Science, and the Faculty of AgriSciences. The Faculties were selected to include a range of academic disciplines and thus included Faculties covering the *humaniora* as well as the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) sector.

The programmes covered by the study are listed per Faculty in Table 4.2, indicating the qualification that the programme leads to, and, where applicable, the different subject-specific fields offered in each programme.

Table 4.2: Stellenbosch University: Programmes included in the study per Faculty

Faculties	Programmes
Faculty of AgriSciences	BSc Agric in Plant and Soil Sciences
	BSc Agric in Food and Wine Production Systems <i>Stream: Food Science</i> <i>Stream: Viticulture and Oenology</i>
	BSc Agric in Animal Production Systems
	BSc Agric in Agricultural Economics and Management
	BSc Agric in Forestry and Wood Sciences
	BSc Agric in Conservation Ecology
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences	BA in the Humanities
	BA in Social Dynamics
	BA in Development and the Environment
	BA in Drama and Theatre Studies
	BA in Human Resource Management
	Bachelor of Music (BMus)
	BA in Music <i>Stream: General</i> <i>Stream: Music Technology</i>
	BA in Political, Philosophical and Economic studies
	BA in Psychology
	BA in Socio-Informatics
	BA in Value and Policy Studies
	BA in Visual Arts
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences	B Comm
	B Comm (Economic Sciences)
	B Comm (Financial Accounting)

Faculties	Programmes
	B Comm (Management Accounting)
	B Comm (Management Sciences)
	B Comm (Mathematical Sciences)
	B Comm (Industrial Psychology)
Faculty of Science	BSc in Physical Sciences <i>Stream: Chemistry</i> <i>Stream: Physics</i> <i>Stream: Earth Science (Geo-informatics)</i>
	BSc in Mathematical Sciences <i>Stream: Mathematical Sciences</i> <i>Stream: Biomathematics</i>
	BSc in Biological Sciences <i>Stream: Biodiversity and Ecology</i> <i>Stream: Molecular Biology and Biotechnology</i> <i>Stream: Human life sciences</i> <i>Stream: Sport Science</i>

Source: Stellenbosch University Faculty Yearbooks, 2014.

I purposely decided to restrict the study to general formative programmes at Bachelor's level as they share a more or less homogenous structure and carry a 360-credit load. The programme structure of the Faculty of AgriSciences is different from this model, however, because it has a four-year programme structure that leads to a qualification on Level 7 with a credit load of a minimum of 480 credits, as determined by the HEQSF (CHE, 2013; RSA, 1995). The exclusion of professionally oriented programmes was deliberate to avoid the complexity of additional programme requirements set by professional bodies, for example the HPCSA in all Medicine and Health Sciences programmes, SAICA in the case of the Accounting programmes, and ECSA for undergraduate engineering programmes. This limited the Faculties that were included in the study and made it more manageable.

The study was aimed at students enrolled in the final and non-final year of their study programme. In three of the Faculties, it meant that students in the second and third year of their studies were included, and in the Faculty of AgriSciences, students in the second, third and final year were included in the study. I decided not to include first-year students because the first year of study in most programmes is quite generic, and students do not yet have a clear idea of the coherence of their programmes. Furthermore, this study was restricted to undergraduate programmes, as the dynamics of international exchange is quite different at the postgraduate level. The mobility of postgraduate students exceeds that of undergraduate students, and the profile of postgraduate students is considerably different. For these reasons, I concluded that the inclusion of postgraduate students in this particular study would not produce results that would be applicable to address the research aims and objectives. Furthermore, the mobility of students on postgraduate level has a different character, as it differentiates between mobility for research, mobility for course work, and a combination of the two modalities (see Section 3.5 for further explanation of international exchange on postgraduate level).

To ensure that the study was conducted true to the principles of the case study design, it was also necessary to determine the type of case study that would be conducted (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Baxter and Jack (2008) state that the selection of a specific type of case study design will be guided by the overall study purpose. As detailed by the preceding discussion of the scope of the study, the focus was on providing insight into the phenomenon of international exchange semesters at one higher education institution in the contexts of different Faculties. Thus, the study can be defined as a descriptive case study. Yin (2003), explains a descriptive case study as the type of case study that is used to describe a phenomenon (or intervention) and the real-life context in which it occurred. Furthermore, I decided to conduct a multiple case study to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon, which allowed me to analyse within each setting and across settings (Baxter & Jack, 2008), as done in Section 6.3.

4.4 Research methods

The case study design is also characterised by the use of multiple data sources. This feature of case study design enhances the data credibility of the study (Yin, 2003). The case study design was coupled with the use of a mixed-method approach, as explained in Section 4.2.1; therefore, it included quantitative and qualitative research methods. (The differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches are highlighted in Table 4.1.) The use of the mixed-method approach required the triangulation of data to ensure that one set of findings was strengthened or substantiated by another. It also facilitated the collection of data at multiple levels. The study was conducted on the levels of students, academic staff, and senior management of each Faculty. The data-collection procedures were developed based on the review of prior research and relevant theory found in literature.

4.4.1 Qualitative data collected

Qualitative data were collected by means of individual interviews with members of the senior management of each Faculty as well as a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions that was distributed to academic staff members in charge of the programme management of each of the applicable programmes.

Babbie and Mouton (2001) provide three important criteria for the selection of appropriate respondents for one-to-one interviews in qualitative research. Firstly, the respondent should be informed thoroughly about the specific context of the study, and secondly, he or she should have a current involvement in the issue being investigated. Thirdly, the respondent should be allowed adequate time for the interview. A hasty interview will result in insufficient information.

For this study, the Deputy Dean: Teaching was interviewed in each of the relevant Faculties. I requested an hour per interview to ensure that the discussion was not rushed. The time proved to be more than sufficient to cover the interview questions in depth. In the case of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, which has a different senior management structure

from the other three Faculties involved in this study, an interview was conducted with two of the three deputy deans. The structure of each Faculty is discussed further in the chapter on data analysis, Chapter 5. Five interviews were conducted and transcribed by the researcher.

Questionnaires were distributed to programme coordinators of all the programmes included in the scope of this research study. The initial intention was to conduct interviews with each of these programme coordinators, but owing to the large number of programmes included in the study and time considerations, I decided to use a questionnaire instead. Thirty-seven questionnaires were distributed. Some coordinators were willing to take part in the study, but did not want to complete the questionnaire by themselves; therefore, the researcher completed the questionnaires during interviews with the programme coordinators concerned.

Lastly, a document analysis was conducted to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the research issue and to respond to one of the objectives (Objective 1). The SU Institutional Strategy and Intent (SU, 2013a) and the Strategy for Teaching and Learning (SU, 2013b) were identified as the two central documents to be analysed on institutional level. On Faculty level, the vision and mission of each Faculty was studied in detail.

The qualitative data were used mainly to address Objectives 1, 3, and 4 as explained in the discussion about the aim and objectives of the study.

4.4.2 Quantitative data collected

The quantitative data were gathered by means of a survey employing a broad-based questionnaire to undergraduate students in the applicable year groups, programmes, and Faculties, which was a cost-effective way to collect information from a large sample and facilitated the anonymity of participants. Challenges with surveys as a data collection tool include that questions can be misinterpreted by respondents, which makes in-depth questioning difficult. Low response rates are another challenge often occurring in surveys.

The questionnaire was compiled and distributed by means of the Stellenbosch University online survey resource, SU Survey. The online system enabled the researcher to design a survey that would be easily accessible and user friendly. The questionnaire was sent to students only once.

The student questionnaire addressed a broad range of topics and aimed to generate data that would provide an indication of the perceived barriers to international exchange semesters from the student perspective. It also gathered biographical information of the respondents that could provide further insight into potential barriers, but also added value to creating a profile of the Faculty in each case study. Explicit socio-economic factors were not included in the questionnaire to avoid deterring students from participating in the student based on stigma. Categorising socio-economic factors in the fluidity of the South African context would also have added additional complexity to the data that would not

necessarily have contributed to identifying broad trends in factors creating a barrier for participating in international exchange semesters.

4.5 Data selection and analysis

4.5.1 Data selection

The preceding discussion on research methods alludes to the data that were collected for the study. The use of the case study design has been discussed as being an appropriate design to gain comprehensive insight into the phenomenon of international exchange semester from a multitude of perspectives. For this reason, I decided not to make use of a sample of participants on student and staff level, but focused on specific target groups. In the case of the student survey, the population constituted all students enrolled in their final and non-final years of general formative programmes in the four Faculties, namely the Faculty of Science, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Faculty of AgriSciences, and the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.

The academic staff members were selected based on their involvement in the programmes that were included in this study. The staff members responded from a programme management perspective, but considering their positions as academics with a teaching and research responsibility, the responses also covered perspectives from a more hands-on position.

The selected policies were selected based on the role they played in creating a context for the functioning of the institution on operational and strategic levels. Based on the case study design used in the study, I used documents that addressed these aspects on the institutional and Faculty levels.

4.5.2 Data analysis

Data were analysed on three levels: the analysis of policy documents, the analysis of questionnaires on student and staff level, and the analysis of interviews.

4.5.2.1 *Data analysis of policy documents*

As mentioned in the discussion on the collection of data, the selection of policies for analysis was done carefully to ensure that the context could be described in depth on institutional and Faculty levels. The documents that were selected for analysis on institutional level was the Institutional Intent and Strategy (Stellenbosch University, 2013a), which includes the vision and mission statements of the institution to provide insight into the broader strategic focuses, the Strategy for Teaching and Learning (Stellenbosch University, 2013b), which provides insight into the context of the environment the institution aims to create, and finally, the graduate attributes that are contained in the Strategy for Teaching and Learning (Stellenbosch University, 2013b) to gain insight into the type of graduate the institution aims

to deliver. Each of the documents was analysed by means of coding the content in terms of references to internationalisation or elements of internationality.

On Faculty level, the vision and the mission of the Faculty were analysed using the same method of coding to identify references to internationalisation or elements of internationality in terms of the goals of the Faculty and the student profile they pursue. I also wanted to analyse the application of graduate attributes in each Faculty, but none of the participating Faculties possessed a Faculty-specific document pertaining to the graduate attributes.

4.5.2.2 Data analysis of questionnaires

The study used two questionnaires: a questionnaire for undergraduate students, and a questionnaire for programme coordinators.

The questionnaire for undergraduate students included qualitative and quantitative content and thus required different methods of analysis. The data obtained by the student survey were analysed by careful scrutiny of the individual responses and the trends that emerged from the responses. The analyses were performed by the Centre for Statistical Consultation at the Stellenbosch University. Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarise and describe the demographic details of the population. Further analysis included converting the responses to percentages. The data were analysed using STATISTICA (V10), a data-analysis software package (StatSoft Inc., 2011). It is important to note that the questionnaire yielded a large body of data and that all the data was not used in this study. For example the data obtained on students motivation to participate in an international exchange semester, students impressions of the value of international experience and ambitions to work abroad was not included in the study.

The questionnaire to programme coordinators was more qualitative in nature. I analysed the content of the questionnaires by reviewing the individual questionnaires and identifying emerging trends.

4.5.2.3 Data analysis of interviews

The qualitative data obtained by means of the interviews were used to shed light on issues highlighted in the survey, as it would provide descriptive content (De Hoyos & Barnes, 2012). The interview data were transcribed and coded by means of content analysis to provide an integrated overview of the barriers to international exchange semesters (George Washington University, 2011). The codes that were applied throughout resonated with the coding of document analysis and particularly focused on references to internationalisation and internationality. References to vision and mission, as well as the graduate attributes, were also identified and viewed together with the data obtained from programme coordinators in order to triangulate the data and increase the credibility and validity of the study.

4.6 Warrantability of the research

The validity of a study is an important methodological principle (Plowright, 2011). Burns (1999: 160) stresses that “validity is an essential criterion for evaluating the quality and acceptability of research.” Different authors refer to validity in varied terminology depending on the paradigmatic strategy. For example, Bryman (2008:152) differentiates between five types of validity namely *face validity*, *predictive validity*, *convergent validity*, *concurrent validity* and *construct validity*. In a mixed methods study such as this, where research methods of both a quantitative and a qualitative nature are incorporated, validity becomes more complex. Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) introduce the concept of legitimation to purposefully create a new terminology in the mixed methods lexicon to address the issue of validity. The authors highlight that legitimation of research is not only an outcome but a process and should be a continuous process rather than a fixed attribute of a research study. ONwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) qualify this statement by explaining that the process of mixed methods research tends to be interactive and therefore definitive statements regarding inferences (see Plowright explanation below) might never be possible in a study. Legitimation in strongest effect identifies how much a researcher’sok level of interpretation goes beyond their own knowledge (Dellinger & Leech, 2007).

Dellinger and Leech (2007) argue the importance of a common understanding of issues pertaining to validity in mixed methods research by introducing a validation framework. The validation framework incorporates traditions from both qualitative and quantitative research as well as emerging validity terminology from mixed method research vocabulary. The validity framework provides an outline for organising the necessary evidence (analysed data) needed to support data meanings (findings). The framework draws on of aspects of well-known concepts of validity in both quantitative and qualitative research. Some of the aspects of quantitative research included in the framework are design-related elements namely determining the population and measurement-related elements. On the qualitative side issues of transferability as encapsulated by descriptive validity and triangulation as encapsulated by evaluative validity is included in the framework. Further new terminology introduced by Dellinger and Leech (2007) is the *foundational element* of the framework. The foundational element is a reflection of the researchers’ prior understanding of the construct and/or phenomenon that is being studied. The *foundation element* hinges on a critical questions for example “Does the review [literature] inform the purpose, design, measurement, analysis and inferences?” (Dellinger & Leech, 2007:322) and “What preconceptions, prelogic, prior knowledge and/or theories are (un)acknowledged by the researcher as relates to the meaning of data?” (Dellinger & Leech, 2007:322).

Plowright (2011:134) introduces the concept of “warrantable research” that hinges on the principle that research should be planned, design and executed in a manner that will lead to credible and confident responses to the research question(s). Research warrantability is thus where the research methods are used in such a way that they answer the research question and report the findings to portray context and process. I applied the concept of warrantable research in the study. In the study on the potential barriers to international exchange semesters that is portrayed in four case studies, the viewpoints of students and staff is portrayed in institutional and Faculty context to foster a strong warrantability. Plowright

(2011:141) further states that the “warrant” for the research is “based on the reasons [the researcher] provides to explain the conclusions” and that this is “based on the process of *inference*.” Teddlie and Tashokkori (2009) also support the notion of *inferences*. The inference(s) can inform future practice.

In this study I applied the principles of research warrantability by comparing data from a broad range of data sources. The four data sources are discussed in detail in Section 4.4 and subsequently in each of the four case studies. The empirical data is further supported by explicitly referring to policy and theoretical contexts discussed in Chapter 2 of the study.

Plowright (2011) further states that explaining the findings of a study by drawing on warrantable evidence acknowledges the complexity of the research process. As stated already, the warrantability of research should be embedded in every aspect of the study. In this study I paid particular attention to integrate data sources in a credible manner and ensure a balance between different data sources. The warrantability of this study is further underpinned by the ethical considerations discussed in Section 4.7 of this chapter.

4.7 Ethical considerations

Ethics in itself is typically associated with morality, and both of these terms refer to matters of right and wrong (Babbie, 2010). The online Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2013) defines ethics as “the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group”. Ethics can be defined as that which pertains to doing well and avoiding harm (Beauchamp & Childress, 1989 in Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). Israel and Hay (2006) echo this definition and highlight that ethics in research are to protect others, minimise harm and increase the sum of good of the research.

Ethics in research can be seen as “rules and conventions” that distinguish socially acceptable behaviour from unacceptable behaviour within the boundaries of the conducting of research (Anderson, 1990:144). Ethical considerations should be part of the planning and the implementation of the research inquiry and are thus a vital part to ensure the integrity of the research project (Anderson, 1990; Ismael & Hay, 2006; Oliver, 2010). The integrity of research also strengthens the relations of integrity and trust between researchers, which in turn strengthen the community of practice (Ismael & Hay, 2004).

Pimple (2002) distinguishes three measures in the domain of research ethics that can be formulated in terms of three leading questions:

A – Is it true?

B – Is it fair?

C – Is it wise?

Question A refers to the relationship between research results and the physical world. It underlines the principle that the data and the conclusions should correspond with reality. Data that are fabricated or falsified are not true (Pimple, 2002). Question B concerns the social relationships in the research world. This area refers to issues like the relationship between researchers and animals (animal welfare), relationships between researchers (authorship and plagiarism) and the relationship between researchers and human subjects (informed consent) (Pimple, 2002). Pimple (2002) argues that, even if a research report can be deemed true, it was not necessarily conducted by means of fair practices. Question C is concerned with the relationship between the research agenda and the broader social and physical world in the present time as well as in the future. The limitations of time and funding with regard to pursuing research, is a leading factor for including Question C in the decision-making process concerned with the ethics of research (Pimple, 2002). Pimple's (2002) categorisation provides a useful guide to the responsible conduct of research. If these three measures are applied to this research study, I can concur that the research results presented in Chapter 5 are an actual representation of the data obtained, and that all measures were taken to ensure that the research was conducted according to fair practices. These fair practices are described in subsections 4.7.1, 4.7.2 and 4.7.3. The final question about the value of the study that was highlighted in Chapter 1 can be answered unequivocally.

4.7.1 Securing informed consent and voluntary participation

The categorisation of research measures by Pimple (2002) alludes to informed consent as the relationship between the research and human subjects. Informed consent forms are a mechanism to safeguard ethical principles by employing measures that ensure that subjects base their voluntary participation in a research project on a full understanding of the possible risks involved, the full spectrum of the research project, and the possible applications of the results of the research project.

The documentation required by the Ethical Committee at Stellenbosch University includes consent forms to be signed by potential participants to ensure that researchers disclose the full details of the research inquiry to participants. The consent form informs the potential participant of the purpose of the study and why they have been selected to take part in the research. The form also explains what is expected of the potential participants in the research inquiry and the risks or discomforts involved in participating in the research (Stellenbosch University, 2011b). The form also clearly states that all information provided or obtained by means of the study that can identify participants will be treated as confidential and will be released only with the consent of the participant or as required by law (Stellenbosch University, 2011b).

The researcher included an informed consent clause in the student survey that allowed the students to read the scope and description of the study and the commitment that they would be making in participating in the study before actually completing the questionnaire. An informed consent clause was also included in the questionnaire distributed to academic staff members.

The deputy deans were required to sign an informed consent form prior to the interviews taking place. All participants willingly signed the consent form.

4.7.2 Anonymity

The nature of this study makes it very difficult to ensure the complete anonymity of the participants, as the pool of staff included in the study is very specific. No reference is made to names of individuals in the study, however, and participants are referred to only according to their position and capacity in which they took part in the study.

The survey did not request students to disclose personal details other than their nationality and gender. These details would not be used to identify individual participants.

4.7.3 Professional conduct of the researcher

I was vigilant to conduct the interviews with senior Faculty management professionally and to not misuse my position in the Postgraduate & International Office to influence the interview. It was very important to separate the role of the researcher and that of an administrative staff member directly involved in the practice of international exchange semesters to ensure the integrity of the study.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed overview of the process that was used in this study. It has provided details about the research approach, research paradigm and research design. Furthermore, it has explained the research methods that were used throughout the study and has addressed issues pertaining to data collection and data analysis. The chapter concludes with brief references to the ethical considerations the researcher kept in mind.

The use of a case study design was instrumental in ensuring the inclusion of perspectives from a multitude of dimensions while also creating nuanced perspectives on crucial aspects pertaining to international mobility by means of exchange semesters.

Chapter 5 applies the analysis described in Chapter 4 to the data that were collected and leads to the final chapter of this research study, Chapter 6, which provides the conclusions to the research study.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The research methodology that was adopted to conduct the study on potential barriers to international exchange semesters at Stellenbosch University was discussed in Chapter 4, highlighting the use of a mixed-method approach in the research design of the four case studies (one for each of the relevant four Faculties) to investigate the research problem. The data-collection methods have also been discussed in Chapter 4, and the researcher has explained how quantitative and qualitative methods were integrated to address the different research objectives.

Chapter 5 reports on analyses of the data obtained from four principal data sources by means of the different methods. The first data source was a survey distributed to undergraduate students in general formative programmes in the four relevant Faculties, namely the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Science, the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, and the Faculty of AgriSciences. The second data source was a questionnaire with open-ended questions distributed to the programme coordinators of general formative programmes in those four Faculties. A further source of data included interviews conducted with the deputy dean of each Faculty to gain insight into the management perspectives relating to the practice of international exchange semesters. Finally, the data analyses included an exploration of the vision and mission statements of each Faculty to determine the strategic value that each Faculty placed on the practice of international exchange semesters to reach the desired graduate profile of their graduates. The document analysis was conducted on institutional and Faculty levels.

As outlined in Chapter 4, the data were used to construct a case study of each Faculty that addressed the research problem of this study. I used the same structure for each of the Faculties to first provide a Faculty profile, then give an overview of the data obtained, and then analyse the data on multiple levels.

Chapter 5 is concluded with the analyses of data across Faculties to identify commonalities, emerging trends, and divergences. The comparison of the cases is discussed in the Chapter 6.

5.2 Overview of data

The multi-level approach of the study resulted in a large body of data to be used in the study on the potential barriers to international exchange semesters. However, the data obtained from the various sources were not equally distributed as far as the various types of data and the four Faculties were concerned. The data obtained in each Faculty are discussed in each

of the four case studies, but a summary of responses can be found in Section 5.2.2 and Section 5.2.3.

5.2.1 Staff responses

5.2.1.1 *Programme coordinators*

The second set of data was collected by means of the questionnaire distributed to programme coordinators of the relevant programmes in each Faculty. The relevant programmes are discussed in Chapter 3 and can be found in Table 4.2. The response rate of programme coordinators is shown in Figure 5.1, which illustrates the big differences between Faculties in response rates.

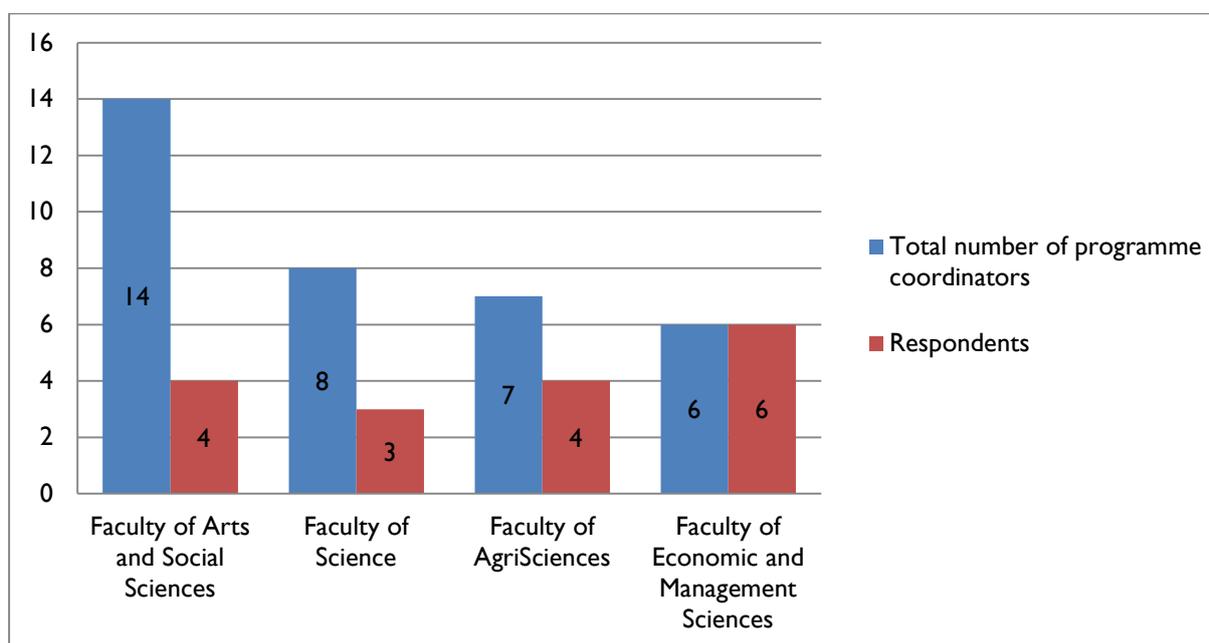


Figure 5.1: Feedback obtained from programme coordinators in four Faculties

5.2.1.2 *Deputy deans*

The third set of data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews with the deputy deans responsible for teaching and learning in each Faculty. The perspectives of deputy deans were included in the analysis of each case study as a management perspective. The position of the deputy dean differed from Faculty to Faculty, which is discussed as part of the organisational structure in the Faculty in each of the case studies. Six deputy deans were requested to participate in the study, and five consented to participate. The interviews were transcribed and coded for further analysis and interpretation.

These two sets of data formed the basis of the academic staff and management perspectives in the study on the potential barriers to international exchange semesters. The responses provided insight into personal points of view on the role of international mobility as well as

professional opinions on programmatic issues pertaining to international exchange semesters.

5.2.2 Student responses

An electronic questionnaire was sent to all final- and pre-final-year students in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, the Faculty of AgriSciences, and the Faculty of Science. This provided a potential respondent pool of 5 737 students. A total number of 425 students completed the student questionnaire. This gives a response rate of 7% for the online survey.

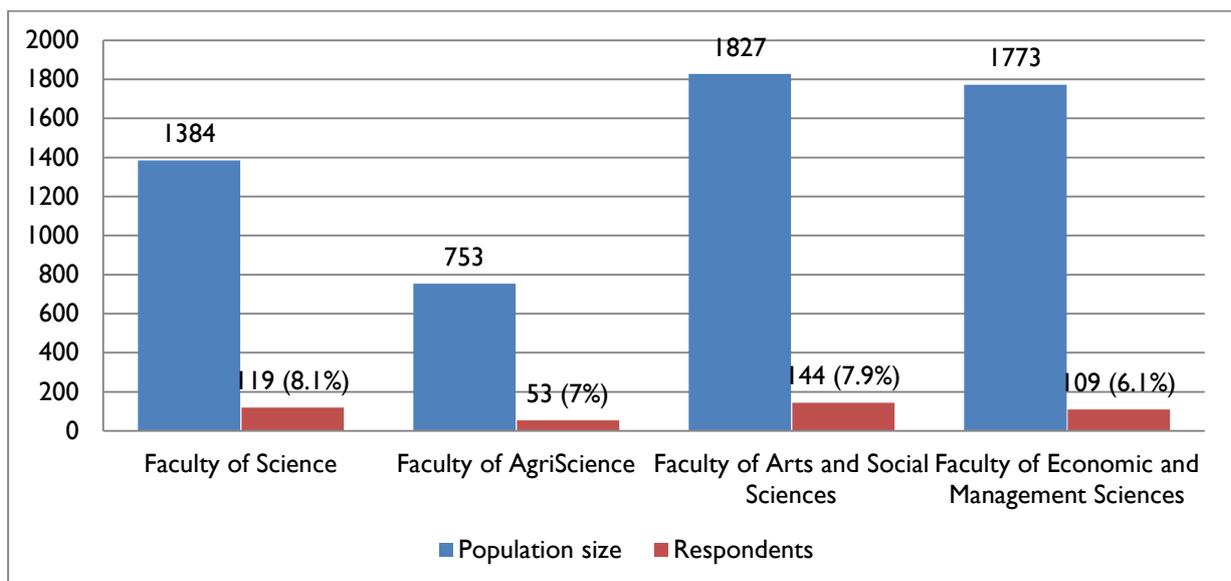


Figure 5.2: Student population size versus number of responses per Faculty

The graph (Figure 5.2) illustrates the difference in population size but also shows the distribution of responses among the Faculties. The Faculty of Science had the highest response rate of 8.6 percent. All the response rates were between five and ten percent. The response rates of the individual Faculties are discussed in each of the four Faculty case studies.

The four case studies that are presented include a number of generic markers as part of the analyses of data obtained on student level. The first is the demographic indicators, namely gender, country of birth, and language proficiency. Specific information pertaining to the demographic profile of the respondents was obtained by means of the student questionnaire. Demographic indicators could include socio-economic factors that in turn could be informative with regard to students' take-up of international exchange semester opportunities. However, the questionnaire did not include questions concerning socio-economic status. The demographic indicators could make a significant contribution in uncovering and understanding the potential barriers to international exchange semesters.

The demographic indicator of language required students to indicate their language proficiency by indicating their proficiency in languages other than Afrikaans and English. The responses of the students were coded and categorised to provide a more nuanced overview of the language profile of respondents in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (FEMS). Categories were created for the following: *Other South African languages* (for example isiZulu and isiXhosa), *African non-SA languages* (for example Swahili), *European languages* (for example German), and *Other languages* (for example Japanese). These categories can be interpreted as portraying a rather Westernised perspective of language, as French and Portuguese were classified as European, while these languages are widely spoken on the African continent. The focus was on providing a holistic view of language proficiency, however; therefore, categories were created based on geographical areas.

The second generic analysis was the review of the previous international experience of respondents. The following response options were included in the questionnaire: *I have been abroad as a tourist*; *I have lived abroad*; *I was born overseas*; *I am an international student*; and lastly, *I've taken part in an international academic experience* that included three sub-headings, namely *Summer school*, *School exchange* and *Exchange semester*. Respondents did not have the option to select an option for no international experience, but an option for *Other* was part of the responses.

The third generic analysis was to determine the barriers to student mobility based on a prescribed list of barriers. Students were requested to select the barriers to mobility from a prescribed list of barriers that was derived from previous studies as well as observations made by the researcher. Seven potential barriers were posed to student respondents with the option to also add further barriers they regarded as constraints to an international exchange semester. These listed barriers were the following: *lack of information on the available opportunities*; *lack of information on the process*; *financial constraints*; *lack of support by my Faculty*; *restrictions of my programme*; *family responsibility*, and *other responsibilities on campus*.

5.3 Document analysis of institutional policy and strategy

The lack of an internationalisation policy at Stellenbosch University has already been highlighted as a major issue, particularly in view of the vital role that internationalisation plays in the current higher education landscape. In Chapter 3, the institutional context for international student mobility is sketched in terms of the status quo with a brief reference to two applicable institutional policy documents, namely the Institutional Intent and Strategy 2012-2016 (Stellenbosch University, 2013a) and the Strategy for Teaching and Learning (Stellenbosch University, 2013b). The latter document includes the graduate attributes of Stellenbosch University. These strategic documents were analysed further in view of the guiding role that institutional policy and strategy play in international exchange semesters. The document analysis of institutional policy and strategy was also an important data source in framing the analyses of Faculty policy documents that follow in the four case studies.

5.3.1 Institutional Intent and Strategy

The Institutional Intent and Strategy is introduced with the statement, “We create inclusive and diverse experiences for our students and staff members to unleash their full potential,” and the accompanying value proposition, “We educate the thought leaders for the future” (Stellenbosch University, 2013a:3). These bold statements pave the way for a rather contentious vision.

Vision 2030 of the University is ostensibly focused on positioning the institution for the 21st century. Against the background of globalisation, internationalisation and the university in the 21st century (see Chapter 2), internationalisation and developing students who are able to successfully work and live in the context of the 21st century, this should entail a particular focus on engaging students with international learning opportunities. Yet, even though the vision states that the institution is “inclusive, innovative and future focused: a place of discovery and excellence where both staff and students are thought leaders in advancing knowledge in the service of all stakeholders” (Stellenbosch University, 2013a:7), it makes no clear reference to internationalisation or the global context of higher education in relation to any of the core functions of the institution.

The accompanying mission statement is equally limited to references pertaining to internationalisation and the global context. Only two of the seven points have a direct bearing on a continental and/or international dimension, namely “to investigate and innovatively implement appropriate and sustainable approaches to the development of Africa” and “to align research with a wide-ranging spectrum of challenges facing the world, Africa, our country and the local community” (Stellenbosch University, 2013a:7). These two statements also have limited relevance to undergraduate students and seem to be more applicable to graduate students and the research function of the institution that is aligned with the objective to be a leading research university.

This is in stark contrast with the previous version of the institutional vision and mission of Stellenbosch University, which explicitly stated the pursuit of being an academic institution that aimed to gain national and *international* standing by means of its research outputs and its production of graduates who were sought after for their well-roundedness and for their creative, critical thinking. The previous version further aimed at being relevant to the needs of the community, considering the needs of South Africa in particular and *of Africa and the world* in general; thus valuing the role of internationalisation on different levels (*italics added: researcher’s emphasis*) (Stellenbosch University, 2000).

If the vision and mission of an institution do not reflect the drive to engage with internationalisation, it is not likely to be actively pursued on other levels (Kezar & Kinzie, 2006). The lack of clear direction with regard to internationalisation can be a potential barrier to international exchange semesters. This will also be taken into account in analysing potential barriers to international mobility in terms of policy considerations.

5.3.2 Strategy for Teaching and Learning

The second institutional document that was analysed in terms of the potential barriers to international exchange semesters is the Strategy for Teaching and Learning (Stellenbosch University, 2013b). This document serves as a point of departure for operationalising the vision of the University, particularly in terms of undergraduate teaching and learning. The strategy is articulated in five strategic priorities, namely the professionalisation of the scholarly teaching role, the realisation of the graduate attributes in the curriculum, an IT-enhanced learning model, proactive support for a diverse student cohort, and programme renewal. The key elements of the strategy include these five strategic priorities, the graduate attributes that the university aspires to inculcate in students (addressing the student perspective) and the total learning experience that should lead to the achievement of these attributes (encompassing the lecturer perspective). The Strategy constitutes a broad directive and allows various Faculties and academic departments the freedom to engage with its requirements in a manner that suits the nature and disciplines of the particular environment.

The Strategy for Teaching and Learning refers to the national as well as international context in which the institution operates by highlighting for example the “socio-cultural, educational and economic challenges facing [the country]”, addressing the issues of transformation in the primary and secondary schooling system as well noting the “changes in the nature of the student population” (Stellenbosch University, 2013b:7). The Strategy also takes cognisance of the influence of national and international contexts on the delivery of higher education. The emphasis on the national context does not negate the international dimension but highlights the fine balance that a university and particularly a university in a developing country should maintain between being in touch with and attuned to the local context while also harnessing the international dimension at all levels of the institution. The policy context created by the Strategy for Teaching and Learning is conducive to the principles of internationalisation and international student mobility and could thus be a supportive factor for the implementation of international exchange semesters as an international experience.

5.3.3 Attributes of a Stellenbosch University graduate

The graduate attributes¹⁷ of Stellenbosch University are mentioned briefly in Chapter 3. The graduate attributes are a key component of the Strategy for Teaching and Learning (Stellenbosch University, 2013a) and thus an important institutional policy directive to include in the contextualisation of the four case studies to follow, particularly when analysing the rationale of internationalisation in terms of mobility at undergraduate student level.

The concept of graduate attributes and the role of these attributes as an important guiding principle for internationalisation on student level have already been discussed in Chapter 2. The arguments put forward by Bhandari (2011) and Tsigiliris (2004) include a particular focus on the set of skills and attitudes that can be inculcated by means of international mobility and

¹⁷ See Addendum A for full definitions of the graduate attributes as defined in the Strategy for Teaching and Learning (Stellenbosch University, 2013b)

are strongly aligned with the concept of graduate attributes as developing the qualities, skills and understanding a university community agrees its students should develop (Bowden et al., 2000, cited in Barrie, 2006). Thus, graduate attributes can be regarded as a mechanism to give effect to the responsiveness of higher education institutions to the demands of the 21st century. An overview of the graduate attributes of Stellenbosch University is given in Chapter 3, but these attributes will now be analysed further in terms of their relevance to the international dimension of higher education.

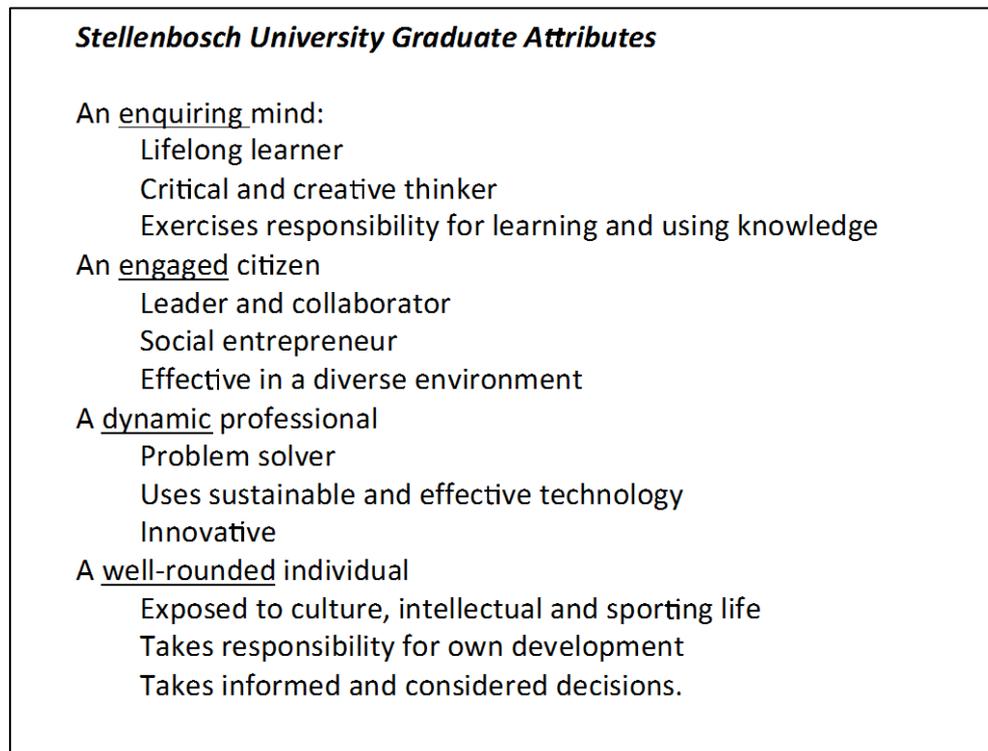


Figure 5.3: Profile of Stellenbosch University graduates

Source: Stellenbosch University, 2013b.

Figure 5.1 highlights the four main dimensions of the profile of a Stellenbosch University graduate, but also provides a short summary of skills and attitudes related to each of the main dimensions. The graduate attributes can be analysed in terms of skills and attitudes that are deemed to be developed by means of study abroad, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Certain phrases contained in the description of each of the graduate attributes have a direct link to the set of skills to be achieved by means of internationalisation activities such as an international exchange semester, for example “A Stellenbosch graduate will be aware of the value of interaction on a global level, and be open to influences from international settings,” which is encapsulated in the *Engaged citizen* attribute (Stellenbosch University, 2013b:8).

The attribute of an *enquiring mind* refers to different knowledge sources and states that students will be able to “(take) the best from international and dominant ways of knowing, and in addition from indigenous, local, lay and underrepresented knowledge sources” (Stellenbosch University, 2013b:9). The importance of the international dimension in what is

taught is highlighted, while also acknowledging the significance of local knowledge. This relates to the principles of internationalisation of the curriculum, as defined by Leask (2011).

In the third attribute of *dynamic professional*, the skills needed to work and live in diverse environments are discussed. “A Stellenbosch University graduate should have benefitted from the opportunity to learn to apply and communicate knowledge in various community, business, professional and personal settings” (Stellenbosch University, 2013b:8) can be interpreted in the context of an international exchange semester as being an encompassing experience of a different academic environment and ethos, creating a new support system and dealing with the diversity of a new society and country. The last aspect of the *dynamic professional* attribute also links with the rationale of an international exchange semester as it relates to the ability to adapt to the changes in the world of work, namely that “a dynamic professional has the flexibility to make career choices and decisions in relation to the changing nature of the world of work” (Stellenbosch University, 2013b:8).

The last attribute is that of being a *well-rounded individual* and refers particularly to the role of the curriculum of the institution. “The value of a Stellenbosch University curriculum should be evident in its cultivation of the humanity of the graduate” (Stellenbosch University, 2013b:8). Here, the internationalisation of the curriculum is relevant, as the development of intercultural competences is a key outcome of an internationalised curriculum (Leask, 2009).

The explicit references and implicit links to the international context and the ways in which graduates must obtain these skills strengthen the arguments put forward in the study thus far, namely that there should be international mobility activities as well as other internationalisation initiatives to cultivate the skills needed by university graduates to contribute to the 21st century on all levels. Although it would be presumptuous to claim that an international exchange semester is the only way in which to achieve the described set of skills and graduate attributes, there is merit in utilising an international exchange semester as a mechanism to contribute to this. Furthermore, it proves the importance of an international dimension in the curricular and co-curricular activities offered at the institution. Two concepts in international education that can be linked to the goals of programme renewal is internationalisation of the curriculum (IOC) and internationalisation at home (IAH). Leask (2011) demarcates the outcomes of an internationalised curriculum not only in terms of the graduates that it produces but as the complete pedagogical environment created by this style of curriculum. The outcomes include engaging students with internationally informed research and cultural and linguistic diversity; progressively assessing learning outcomes; purposefully developing defined intercultural and international perspectives; preparing students to deal with uncertainty by creating an open-mindedness and developing their ability to think both critically and creatively; and lastly, to move beyond the traditional disciplinary boundaries and dominant paradigms.

5.4 Case Study I: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

5.4.1 Faculty profile

The Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences is the largest Faculty in terms of student numbers at Stellenbosch University. The total student enrolment is 7 784 students out of a total student enrolment of 29 393¹⁸. The majority of enrolments are at undergraduate level, comprising more than half of the total enrolments in the Faculty, namely 4 391 students. The Faculty consists of five academic departments (the Department of Economics, the Department of Business Management, the Department of Industrial Psychology, the Department of Logistics, and the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Sciences), and three schools: the School of Public Leadership, the School of Accountancy, and the Business School. The latter is internationally triple accredited¹⁹ and ranks among the top three Business Schools in the country.

The Faculty offers eleven undergraduate programmes, of which seven were included in this study. The programmes offered by the Faculty can be categorised into three categories, namely:

- general formative programmes with a career focus;
- general formative programmes with a law focus; and
- degree programmes for professional registration.

The latter two groups were not included in this study to ensure homogeneity in the type of programmes (general-formative) included in the study and to exclude issues related to professional registration. In the broad, general formative degree programmes are particular focus areas, for example Financial Management or Entrepreneurship and Innovation, but this micro level of distinction and specialisation within programmes was not included in the analyses of programme matters. The focus of the study was not on analysing particular curricula, but on identifying Faculty-specific and crosscutting barriers to international mobility. The role of curricula was included in the analyses of data, however.

5.4.2 Data sources

Data were obtained on all levels of the study, namely the student questionnaire, feedback from programme coordinators, and an interview with the Deputy Dean: Teaching and Learning for a senior management perspective. Other sources of data included a document analysis of the mission and vision of the Faculty within the broad scope of the institutional policy framework.

¹⁸ The data were received from the Division for Institutional Research and Planning based on the June 2014 enrolment numbers submitted to the Department of Higher Education and Training.

¹⁹ Triple accreditation is the highest level of accreditation that can be awarded to a Business School and includes AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS accreditation.

5.4.3 Document analysis: Vision and mission of the Faculty

The vision of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences is

to be regarded by its interest groups as the leading Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences in South Africa; one that is committed to the development of the rich human potential of the entire spectrum of the South African population, respected as a role player at the international level, and acknowledged as a centre of excellence within the University. (Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, 2014)

This vision implies distinctive academic excellence that is continually demonstrated, adds value to all interest groups, and maintains the highest professional image and conduct by all academic and non-academic staff at all times (Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, 2014). The vision is supported by the mission of the Faculty, which has specific reference to students, particularly in the first mission statement, namely to empower its students by means of instruction (gaining knowledge) and professional training to (help) manage organisations in a well-informed, professional and creative way, and to add such value that will contribute towards greater organisational effectiveness, personal growth, development and prosperity for the country and her people.

The vision and mission of the Faculty can be linked clearly to the Institutional Intent and Strategy (Stellenbosch University, 2013a) in terms of the focus on access and equity. The vision of the Faculty is also explicit in terms of the community it serves by stating that it strives to be “one that is committed to the development of the rich human potential of the entire spectrum of the South African population” (Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, 2014). The only explicit reference to the international dimension is in its striving to be an international role player, although this aspect is not explicated further in the mission.

The lack of a more explicit international focus by a Faculty that produces graduates (on all levels) who will enter the job market in sectors (business, economics, and finance) that are inherently internationalised and heavily influenced by global forces is a first indication of one of the potential barriers to international exchange semesters in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, namely the absence of an explicit focus on preparing students for working and living in an international context.

As indicated in Chapter 2 (Section 2.10), one of the benefits of internationalisation of higher education lies in students gaining knowledge and skills to cope with the complexity of multiple cultures when working in international teams. Mission Point I of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences states that the Faculty aims to “empower its students by means of instruction (gaining knowledge) and professional training to (help) manage organisations in a well-informed, professional and creative way, and to add such value that will contribute towards greater organisational effectiveness, personal growth, development and prosperity for the country and her people” (Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, 2014). Although the statement does not make explicit reference to the international job market, it is clear that the mission of the Faculty of Economic and

Management Sciences indicates a strong drive to deliver graduates that can contribute to the workplace of the 21st century. In the light of the emphasis on the changes in the workplace of the 21st century, it can thus be argued that pursuing international exchange semesters as part of the programmes of the Faculty can contribute to attaining its vision and mission. The absence of explicit references to the value of the international and global dimension can create a barrier to international student mobility.

The vision and mission of the Faculty provides an indication of the type of student they intend to deliver, but this is not described explicitly in terms of the graduate attributes of the institution. In Section 2.10.1, the graduate profile of the institution is discussed with reference to the role of graduate attributes in general, as well as analysing the graduate attributes of Stellenbosch University (Section 5.2.1 iii) more specifically in terms of the implied and actual references to internationalisation of higher education on a student level.

5.4.4 Staff responses

5.4.4.1 *Overview*

In the context of the graduate attributes of Stellenbosch University, the preceding analysis of the vision and mission of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences outlines the staff responses obtained in the Faculty. Staff responses were gathered from two sources, namely a questionnaire sent to all programme coordinators and an interview with the Deputy Dean: Teaching and Learning. At least one of the programme coordinators of each of the relevant programmes completed the questionnaire. One of the programme coordinators is responsible for two programmes; therefore, only five respondents are reflected in the responses. Programme coordinators are tasked with addressing programme changes, developing curriculum, and applying the appropriate Faculty and institutional processes with regard to implementing programme changes.

The management and coordination of academic programmes are the responsibility of the Programme Advisory Committee of the Faculty. The Programme Advisory Committee consists of the programme coordinators of each programme as well as the Deputy Dean: Teaching and Learning. The role of the Programme Advisory Committee is to maintain supervision of the programme schedule of the Faculty and to align programmes with the vision and mission of the Faculty as well as the broader institutional context.

5.4.4.2 *Profile of staff participants*

The data obtained from staff members (programme coordinators and deputy dean) involved information pertaining to the personal and professional profiles of the academics. The employment profile revealed that all staff respondents had been in the higher education sector between 5 and 10 years, with three of the respondents indicating that they had been academics at Stellenbosch University for longer than 15 years.

The international profile is incomplete, as two of the respondents chose not to respond to the question. The respondents who completed the question indicated a higher prevalence of international research-related activities than other international activities.

5.3.4.3 Staff perceptions on graduate attributes

Programme coordinators were questioned specifically on the way in which an international exchange semester can contribute to achieving graduate attributes. All five of the programme coordinators reacted positively towards the question. One programme coordinator provided a personal interpretation of the graduate attributes and the role of an international exchange semester by highlighting three of the attributes. The coordinator qualified the first attribute of an enquiring mind in terms of an international exchange semester by highlighting critical thinking and stated, “Other cultures bring new perspectives. The 'shock' of having to cope on your own in a different country may very well help students to start thinking” (Programme Coordinator 2, FEMS²⁰, 2014). The programme coordinator also referred to dealing with diversity in terms of being an engaged citizen, and finally referred to the graduate attribute of being a well-rounded individual by focusing on the exposure and experience gained by means of an international exchange semester. “Students will not be in a comfort zone with their friends and SU support structures to help and guide them in their daily lives” (Programme Coordinator 2, FEMS, 2014). Another programme coordinator confirmed the positive sentiments towards the role that an international exchange semester can play in achieving the graduate attributes as outlined in the Strategy for Teaching and Learning (Stellenbosch University, 2013b). “I have no doubt that it would contribute to fostering an engaged citizen, as well as ensuring a well-rounded individual” (Programme Coordinator 3, FEMS, 2014).

When asked about how the Faculty viewed internationalisation particularly on programme level and with regard to achieving the graduate attributes, the deputy dean replied, “It is important to me but at the same time I must admit that the institution is not necessarily geared for undergraduate internationalisation or exchange semesters” (*Dit is vir my belangrik, maar tesaam erken ek ook dat ons as Universiteit nie noodwendig gerat is vir voorgraadse internasionalisering of uitruilsemesters nie*)²¹ (Deputy Dean, FEMS, 2014). Although support for broad-based student exchanges on undergraduate level on senior level was limited, alternative methods to include an international dimension were not excluded. The deputy dean responded as follows: “I think for our Faculty it is a more viable view of internationalisation on an undergraduate level, where we rather consider bringing in international students to let local students get that exposure.” (*Ek dink vir ons fakulteit is dit 'n meer werkbare beskouing van internasionalisering op 'n voorgraadse vlak waar ons kyk eerder na bring internasionale studente hiernatoe om plaaslike studente daai blootstelling kry.*) This principle of using incoming international students to introduce an international dimension to the

²⁰ Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

²¹ Where responses are in Afrikaans, the English translation is given first, with the *verbatim* Afrikaans in brackets

student experience of local students can be categorised as an example of internationalisation at home.

5.4.5 Student responses

5.4.5.1 *Overview*

The questionnaire was sent to second- and third-year students enrolled in the applicable programmes. The population size was 1 773 students, of whom 109 completed the questionnaire. This is a response rate of 6.1%, the lowest of the four Faculties. The table below provides an overview of the responses obtained in each of the programmes.

Table 5.1: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences: Student responses per programme

Programme	Respondents	Population size	Percentage
B Comm Management Sciences	56	690	8.1%
B Comm	13	479	2.7%
B Comm Management Accounting	11	219	5%
B Comm Financial Accounting	5	205	2.4%
B Comm Mathematical Sciences	8	95	8.4%
B Comm Economic Sciences	8	44	18.2%
B Comm Industrial Psychology	8	41	19.5%
Total	109	1793	6.1%

It is noticeable that the response rates of the two smaller programmes, namely B Comm Economic Sciences and B Comm Industrial Psychology, were much higher than in the programmes with more students. This could be mere coincidence, or it could be indicative of other factors that were not included in the study.

5.4.5.2 *Demographic profile*

As already explained in the overview of responses in this chapter (Section 5.2), three demographic indicators were used in the analysis of the responses in each Faculty, namely gender, country of birth, and language proficiency of respondents.

(a) Gender distribution

The gender distribution of the respondents in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences shows a fairly equal representation of male and female respondents of 55% and 45% respectively, with all respondents answering the question. This is very similar to the

undergraduate student gender profile of the Faculty where the male/female distribution is 54% and 46% respectively.

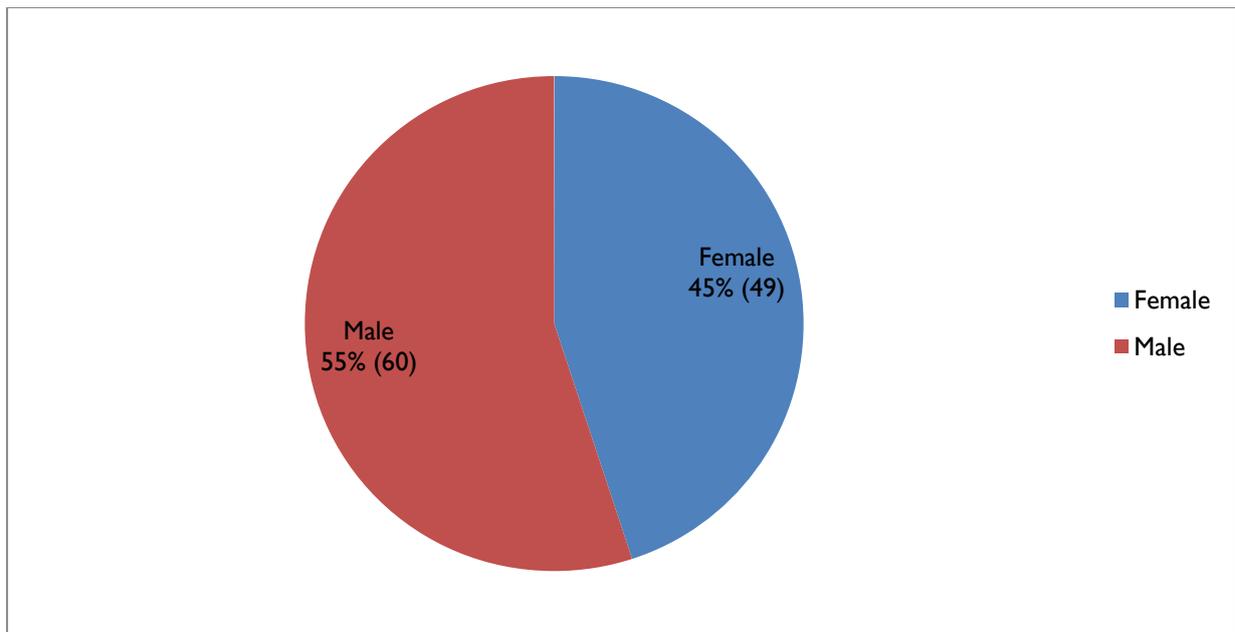


Figure 5.4: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences: Gender distribution of student respondents

(b) Country of birth

The second demographic indicator in this case study is that of country of birth. Figure 5.5 provides an overview of responses and shows a clear majority of respondents who were born in South Africa. This finding is not surprising, as the number of international students in undergraduate programmes at SU is very limited. A further aspect to note is the number of students that were born in other African countries. A total of 14 students (12.8%) were born in African countries outside South Africa.

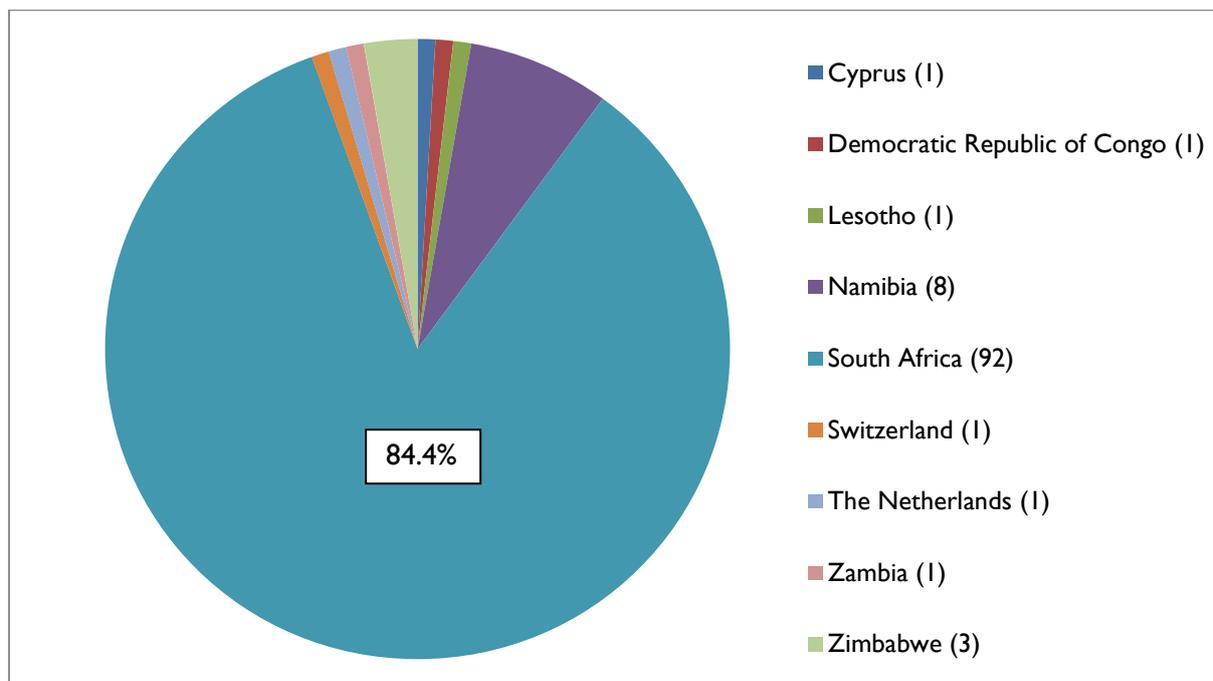


Figure 5.5: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences: Country of birth of student respondents

The country of birth of students is discussed further in relation to the international exposure of respondents, as captured by the questionnaire. The country of birth provides a first indication of the international exposure of students that can add to an understanding of factors that play a role in international exchange semesters; for example, the absence of previous international exposure could act as a barrier to future participation in international activities.

(c) Language proficiency

Language proficiency was the third demographic feature analysed as part of the case study of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. The central role of language in debates on internationalisation of higher education makes the analysis of language proficiency an important feature of the case study. Language is a key aspect of the international experience, and, amongst others, the motivation for students to take part in an international experience can be driven by language (Ahn, 2011; IIE, 2014b). The lack of proficiency in a language other than English, which is often regarded as the primary language medium for international education, can be perceived as a barrier to an international exchange semester based on the national languages that are still used in undergraduate teaching. This argument can be viewed from two perspectives in the SU context: Either that students, with what they deem a limited command of English, self-select based on their perceived lack of language ability, or that the language ability is restricted to Afrikaans and English and they will thus not be able to adapt to a learning environment conducted in another language.

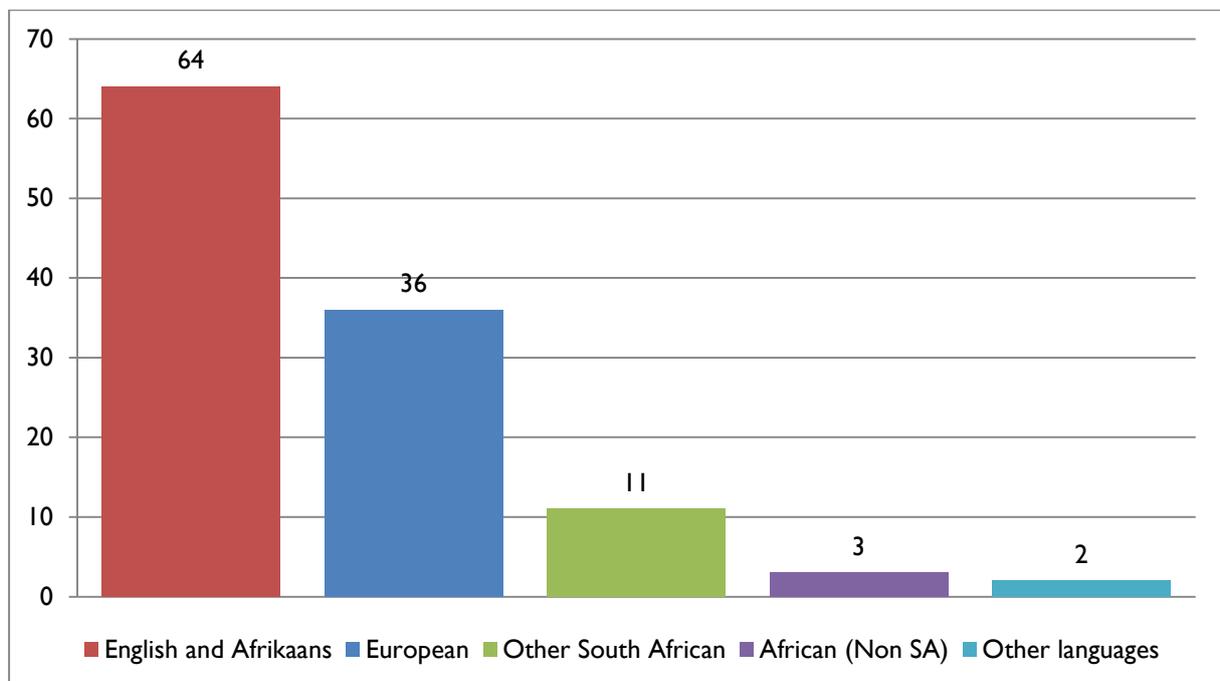


Figure 5.6: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences: Language profile of student respondents per category

The languages respondents mentioned included a broad range, with 41% of students indicating some form of language proficiency other than Afrikaans and English. The languages listed by respondents in the category *Other South African language* included Sesotho, Setswana, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Swazi, and Ndebele. In the category *European languages*, respondents listed French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese. Three students listed languages that were categorised as African Non-SA languages, namely Swahili, Shona, Oshiwambo, and Othjiherero. The category *Other* included Japanese and Mandarin.

In certain cases, the languages listed by respondents can be linked to the countries of birth, as indicated in Figure 5.5, with students from Namibia traditionally having some form of exposure to German and, depending on the area in Namibia, also the local languages of Oshiwambo and Othjiherero.

One respondent highlighted an interesting point regarding language proficiency by stating, “No, unfortunately I cannot (use other languages). However, I am eager to learn more languages” (FEMS Respondent, 2014). This response suggests that proficiency in another language is of some importance to students. This sentiment is confirmed by another respondent’s comment of “unfortunately not” (FEMS Respondent, 2014).

5.4.5.3 International exposure

Respondents could choose more than one option in this question, where a one-way frequency analysis of the responses to the question on international exposure was used; the frequency distribution is displayed in Figure 5.7. The majority of respondents indicated that

they had some form of international exposure as listed in the categories of the questionnaire (already discussed in the Overview of responses – Section 5.2.2). Respondents did not have the option to select an option for ‘No international experience’ but an option for *Other* was part of the responses. Seventeen students indicated under this option that they had *Never been abroad* or had *No international experience*. One responded unequivocally by saying, “I have not been outside of South Africa.” All these responses are grouped under the *Never been abroad* category in Figure 5.7.

The overview shows a high prevalence of respondents who had international exposure in one or more of the categories provided in the questionnaire. None of the respondents offered other options for international exposure.

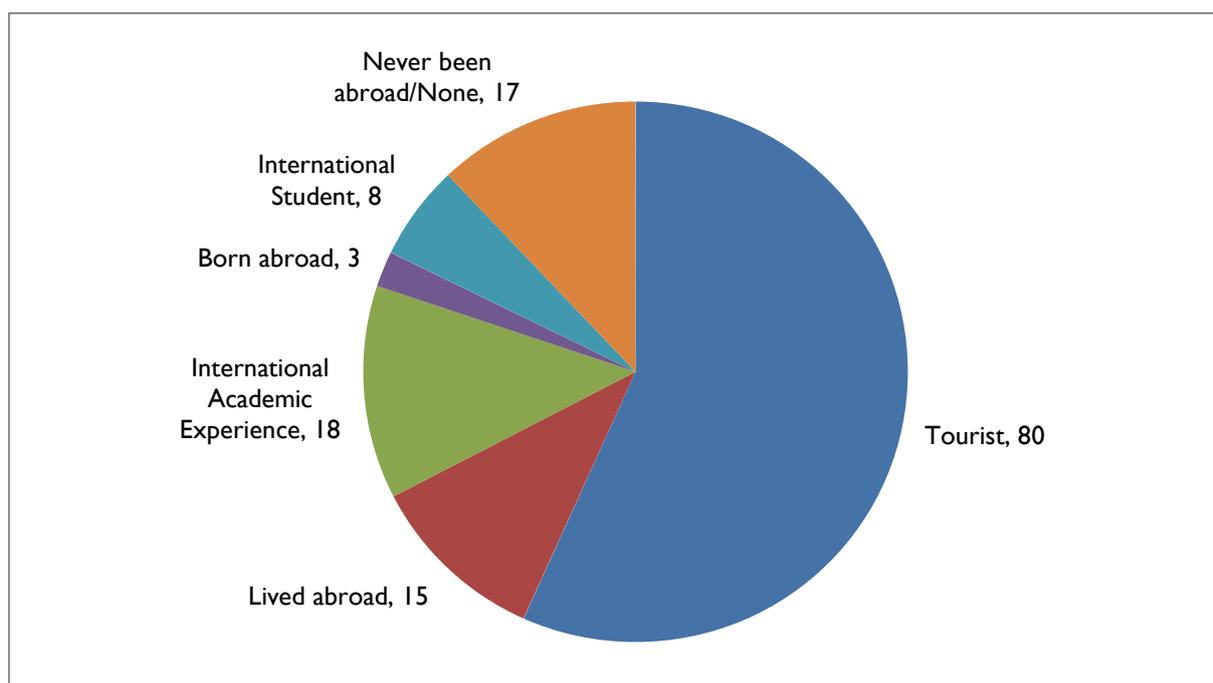


Figure 5.7: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences: Types of international exposure of student respondents

The questionnaire also aimed to gain insight into students’ intent to take part in an international exchange semester. In Figure 5.8, these responses are captured, and it shows that 97% of students would consider taking part in an international exchange semester.

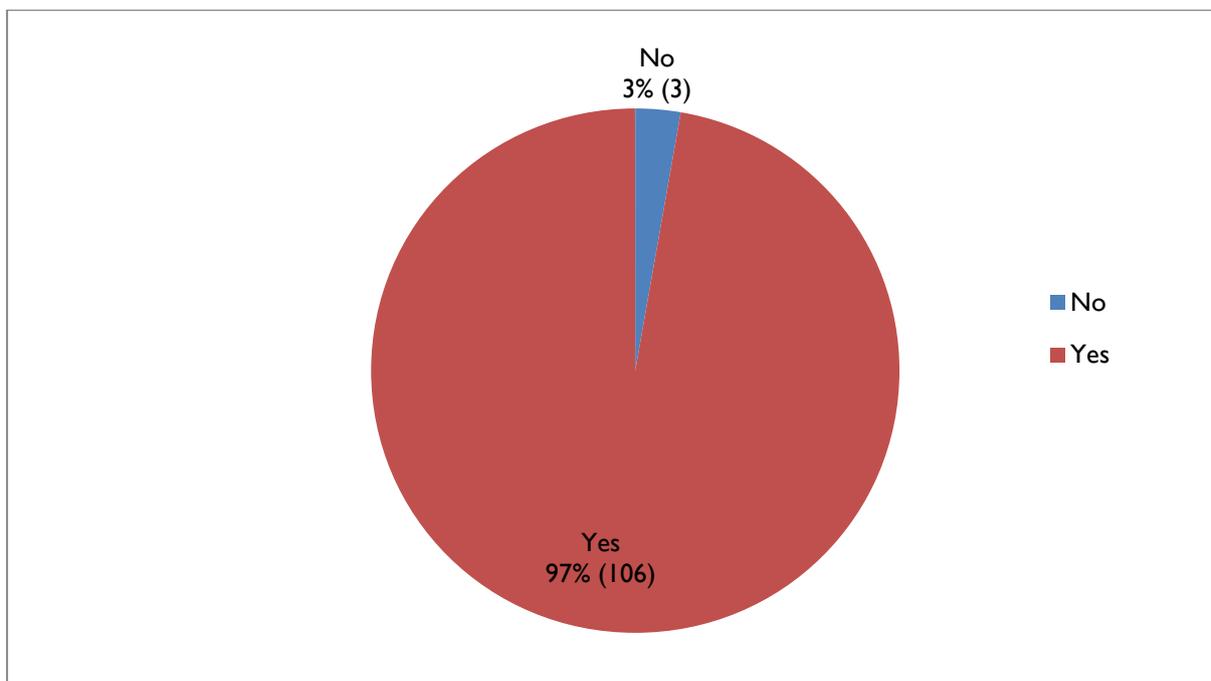


Figure 5.8: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences: Student respondents considering taking part in an international exchange semester

Considering whether students' previous international experience would have any effect on their intent to participate in future international academic experiences led to a two-way cross tabulation of these two variables. A maximum-likelihood Chi-square score of $p = 0.04$ was obtained. This indicates statistical significance and proves that there is some positive correlation between students' previous international experience and their intent to take part in future international academic experiences.

The responses to the international exposure of students highlighted the limitations created by the use of specific terminology in the questionnaire, and secondly, students' understanding of the concept of 'international' experience. In some of the responses received on this question, it seems that there were different interpretations with regard to the use of particular terminology. Some of the categories included in the questionnaire were *I have lived **abroad***; *I have been **abroad** as a tourist*; and *I was born **overseas***. The terms 'abroad' and 'overseas' could have created the perception that international experience implies "not on the African continent". This was pertinent in a response such as "Have no international exposure" by a Zimbabwean Respondent, while he/she is clearly regarded as an international student at Stellenbosch University. Another respondent did not select the option *I have been abroad as a tourist* but wrote "Mozambique if that counts" in the *Other* category, implying that he/she was not sure about what would be categorised as 'abroad'.

5.4.5.4 Student respondents' awareness of international exchange semester opportunities

The problems that prompted this study are the imbalance between incoming and outgoing exchange students and the overarching lack of participation by Stellenbosch University

students in international academic exchange programmes. The preceding discussion on the international exposure and the statistical analysis of the correlation between international exposure and the consideration to take part in an international exchange semester already shed some light on the awareness of students.

A common assumption exists that the low uptake of international exchange semesters can be ascribed to students being uninformed or ill informed about the existence of such opportunities. This assumption was tested by determining if students were informed about the opportunity offered by Stellenbosch University to take part in an international exchange semester.

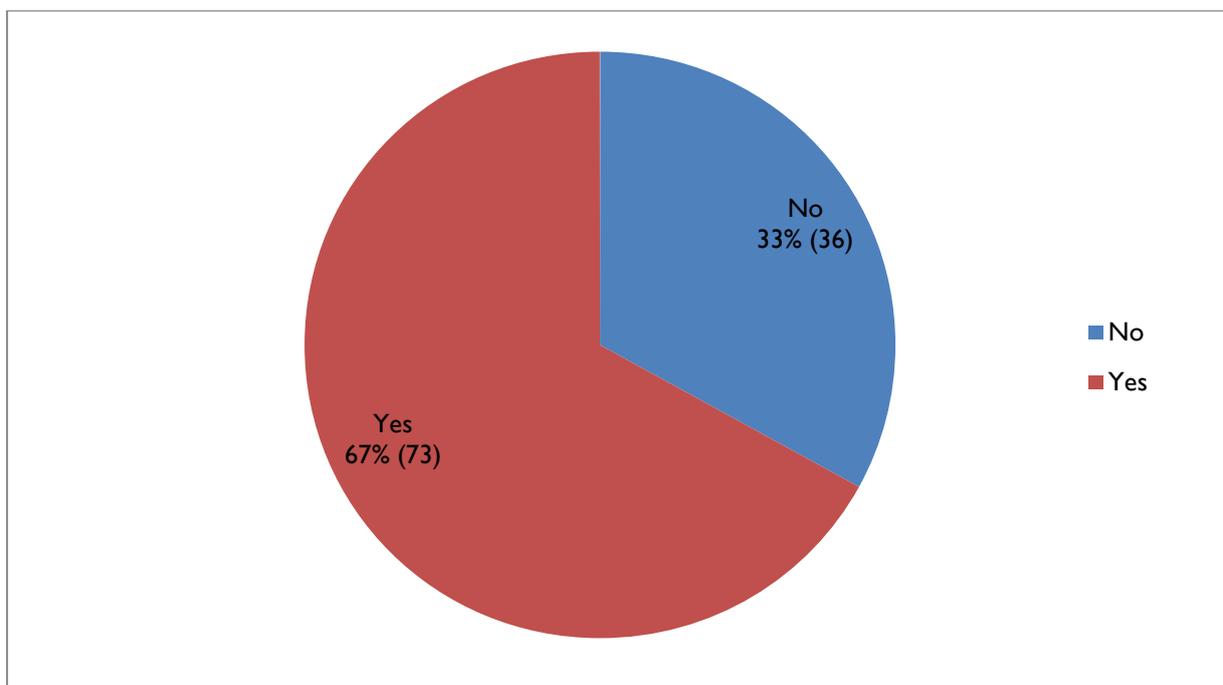


Figure 5.9: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences: Distribution of respondents informed about the opportunity of an international exchange semester

Figure 5.9 indicates that more than two thirds of respondents are indeed aware of the possibility of spending a semester or two at a partner university as part of their study programme. The aspiration of students in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences to take part in an international exchange semester has been discussed already and is illustrated in Figure 5.8.

The level of awareness of students of the concept of an international exchange semester is confirmed further by the percentage of students that indicates that they know another student that has taken part in an international exchange semester (see Figure 5.10).

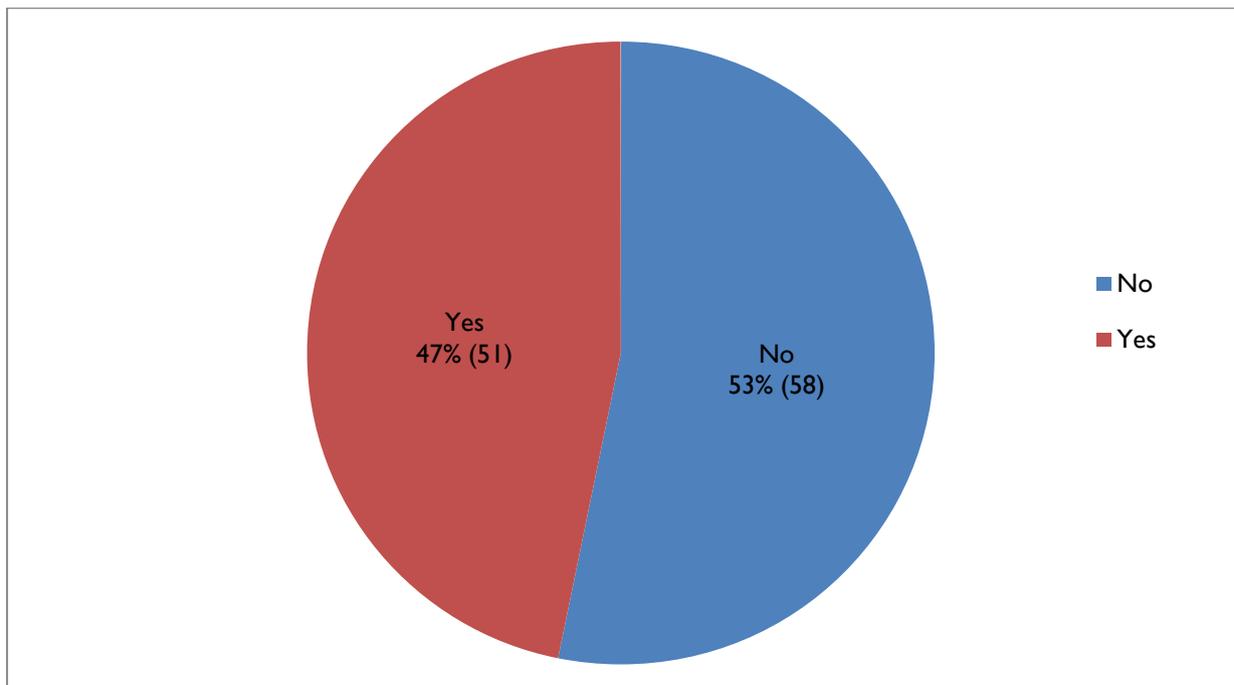


Figure 5.10: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences: Distribution of student respondents who know somebody that took part in an international exchange semester

The assumption that there may be a correlation between students' awareness of an international exchange semester, as illustrated in Figure 5.9, and the consideration to take part in an international exchange semester was analysed statistically by a cross tabulation of these two variables. The analysis produced a p-value of 0,2 that indicates that there is no statistical significance. On the level of implementation, this creates a challenge because creating awareness and informing students about the opportunities of an international exchange semester is one of the most important strategies to increase participation.

5.4.6 Faculty barriers to international exchange semesters

The research aim of this study is to gain a better understanding of the factors that potentially create a barrier to international academic exchange semesters for undergraduate students in general formative programmes. The aim stems from the dilemma that there is an imbalance between exchange students coming to Stellenbosch and those going to the exchange partners of the institution, yet the increased mobility of students is regarded as one of the major trends in international education in the past five years (Kandiko and Weyers, 2013; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014).

The preceding discussion provides an overview of the data obtained in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. In the next part of the case study, the barriers to international exchange semesters as identified by student and staff respondents are identified and discussed.

5.4.6.1 Barriers identified by students

Students were requested to indicate, from a list of possible barriers, which ones they regarded as barriers to international exchange semesters. The results are presented in Table 5.2. The open-ended option generated limited responses.

Table 5.2: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences: Barriers to international exchange semesters as identified by student respondents

List of barriers presented	Number of responses
Lack of information on opportunities	90
Financial constraints	77
Lack of information on process	71
Restrictions of my programme	40
Lack of support by Faculty	30
Other responsibilities on campus	16
Family responsibilities	12
Other	3

These results show that the barriers listed in the questionnaire were mostly confirmed by the respondents as constraints to international exchange semesters. Even though respondents had the opportunity to raise further constraints to international exchange semester, only three responses to the *Other* category indicated possible constraints to an international exchange semester. All these responses included references to the academic standing required, namely “Academic requirements”, “Only for students with all subjects at least above 60%” and “My perception of my academic marks”, and introduce an important additional perceived barrier to international exchange semesters. This can be interpreted as a barrier of self-selection: one that students impose on themselves. The latter is consistent with results from other studies about barriers to mobility (Souto-Otero et al., 2013).

5.4.6.2 Barriers identified by staff

Contrary to the student questionnaire, in the questionnaire for programme coordinators, the question about barriers to mobility was posed as an open-ended item and did not provide a list of options.

The barriers highlighted by programme coordinators in their responses to the open-ended item can be grouped under four main themes, namely differences between higher education systems (cf. Souto-Otero et al., 2013), programme content (cf. Perna et al., 2015), administrative burden, and financial implications. “To include a compulsory exchange

semester would be fantastic but the administrative burden would simply be too big. (Third year we have at least 100 students)” (Programme Coordinator FEMS 2, 2014).

This is illustrated by the following response: “Perhaps cultural insecurities, lack of awareness of the opportunities, preference for the comfortably familiar, and fears regarding the financial implications. Apart from these more generic reasons, there are the curriculum-related concerns that may delay a student’s progress towards professionalisation” (Programme Coordinator FEMS 3, 2014).

The barriers identified by programme coordinators are confirmed at management level. “Owing to the scheduling differences of the hemispheres that do not work well together when we consider the calendar, and I think the programmes of our undergraduate students are full.” (*Vanweë die feit dat die tydsraamwerke van die verskillende halfronde nie lekker saamwerk nie wanneer ons kyk na die kalender nie en ek dink ons voorgraadse studente se programme is vol*) (Deputy Dean: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, 2014).

5.4.6.3 Lack of buy-in as main barrier in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

The barriers identified by students and staff in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences can be discussed in more detail to create better understanding of the particular barrier in the Faculty. I did not focus on each of the barriers listed in the questionnaire but rather on aspects that contribute to the significance of each case study and that emerged as the major hindrance to the implementation of international exchange semesters on a broader scale.

Student respondents listed the lack of support by the Faculty concerned as the fifth barrier to mobility. Students were requested to indicate whether a lecturer had ever discussed the option of an international exchange semester with them, and if so, in which context such a conversation took place. A similar question was posed to programme coordinators. The results of both groups clearly indicate that the lack of support from a departmental side with regard to engagement of lecturers with students could be the reason why students identified the lack of support by the Faculty as a potential barrier to international experience.

Only four out of 109 student respondents indicated that a lecturer had discussed the idea of an international exchange semester with them. One respondent said, “In class was said we all have the opportunity to study overseas.” This response was not qualified further; thus, it cannot be confirmed that the lecturer concerned referred to “study overseas” in the context of a non-degree option and specifically an international exchange semester. In principle, it at least shows that some lecturers are informed about the opportunities and thus can act as motivators. Another respondent who indicated that they had been informed by a lecturer of the opportunity of international experience was more specific and indicated that the lecturer had mentioned “semester abroad, short-term exchanges, such as Tübingen and/or summer/winter schools” as options of international mobility opportunities. This further supports the notion that not all lecturers are ill informed about existing international opportunities for students. The low number of such responses is perturbing, however.

The responses of programme coordinators show an equally low engagement with students on the idea of taking part in an international exchange semester. All five programme coordinators reacted to the question, and not one explicitly stated that he or she supported undergraduate exchange programmes by actively promoting such opportunities as part of the programme for which he or she was responsible in the Faculty. One programme coordinator articulated it by saying, “Not really excited about the idea at undergraduate level” (*Nie eintlik opgewonde daaroor vir voorgraads nie*) (Programme Coordinator FEMS 5, 2014). Another programme coordinator is more optimistic, yet the challenges involved in creating such opportunities remain overwhelming: “To include a compulsory exchange semester would be fantastic but the administrative burden would simply be too big” (Programme Coordinator FEMS 2, 2014). A third programme coordinator was quite explicit about his aversion of implementing international exchange semesters on a broader scale at undergraduate level and stated, “I do not support the large-scale implementation of exchange semesters on the undergraduate level (students miss out on aspects of the US programme that may be critical when progressing to postgraduate studies), but am very supportive of exchanges on postgraduate level” (FEMS Programme Coordinator 4, 2014).

At management level, the idea of an international exchange semester is supported to some extent, but the deputy dean also highlights particular aspects to consider in such a strategy: “I think that an exchange semester has academic value if it forms part of the outcomes of a programme. If it is not part of the outcomes, it can be a costly nice-to-have. So when you develop a programme based on its international nature, for example the B Comm in International Business, then I feel it has academic merit” (*Ek dink dit het akademiese waarde as dit deel vorm van die uitkomst van die program. As dit nie deel vorm van die uitkomst van die program nie, dan kan dit 'n 'costly nice to have' wees. So wanneer jy 'n program ontwikkel rondom die internasionale aard daarvan soos B Comm International Business dan het dit myns insiens akademiese waarde*) (Deputy Dean, FEMS, 2014). The reference to the integration of an international experience with the programme outcomes resonates with the argument of Garam (2012) that international mobility should not stand loose from the learning outcomes of programmes.

5.4.7 Faculty opportunities for international exchange semesters

One of the objectives of this study was to identify and discuss existing good practices in Faculties to give impetus to the expansion of international exchange practices. Given the fact that the participation of students in international exchange semesters is so low, I rather focused on the opportunities for international exchange semesters that I could identify in the case study on the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.

5.4.7.1 *Programme schedule*

The reference of the deputy dean to the B Comm International Business Programme requires further consideration to understand better what this means in the context of the barriers to international exchange semesters and the opportunity it presents. The Faculty of

Economic and Management Sciences is the only SU Faculty that has an undergraduate programme that is structured explicitly to include an international exchange semester as a compulsory part of the outcomes of the programme. This can be described as a mobility window²². Other examples of such practices at postgraduate level exist in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Honours Programme in Chinese, and MA in Afrikaans and Dutch), as well as in the Faculty of Law, where it is possible for students to restructure the final year of the LLB programme (either the postgraduate option or the five-year undergraduate programme) to include an international exchange semester. The BComm International Business Programme was developed in 2013 and recently approved by the HEQC for implementation from 2016. Its programme structure differs vastly from that of other programmes in the Faculty in the sense that it includes the minimum requirements of a BComm degree but it also includes courses of two other Faculties (the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Law) and is spread over four years, not three as most BComm programmes. The programme outcomes require the inclusion of an exchange semester at selected partner universities.

5.4.7.2 *Faculty-specific set of skills*

The responses of the students who participated in the survey support the notion that there is a clear link between taking part in an international exchange semester and obtaining a set of skills they deem important and that may or may not be linked to employability. The data obtained by means of the student questionnaire reveal a strong trend for students to show interest in an international exchange semester.

5.4.8 Conclusions on Case Study I: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

The data obtained in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences were used to create a case study that described the Faculty in terms of international exchange semesters and highlighted aspects concerning internationalisation on student level. The case study addressed all four objectives of the research study and made the following findings on each of the objectives.

Objective 1 required an exploration of the student perspective with regard to international exchange semesters. The focus of the objective was to determine and analyse the potential barriers to an international exchange semester. From a student perspective, the constraints to an international exchange semester were analysed, but it also confirmed that there was a strong interest among students to take part in an international exchange semester to obtain critical skills such as intercultural competence and other employability skills that were included in the graduate attributes of the institution.

²² A mobility window is a period of time reserved for international student mobility that is embedded in the curriculum of the study programme (Ferencz, I., Hauschildt, K. and Garam, I., 2013).

Objective 2 turned towards the academic considerations and support within the Faculty to implement and support exchange semesters on a broader scale. The analyses on this objective revealed four major points:

- The lack of explicit commitment by lecturers to inform and support students in taking part in an international exchange semester creates a barrier to student mobility. As discussed, the lack of support by lecturers can possibly be attributed to a lack of understanding of international exchange semesters, the existing platform created by institutional agreements, and the support division for student mobility,
- In the Faculty is support for international mobility, but it is based on the feedback of senior management and programme management level. The support for international mobility on postgraduate level is far stronger than on the undergraduate level.
- The practical aspects to an international exchange semester and ways in which an exchange semester can be built into existing programmes with little or limited changes are not considered.
- On a programme level, the organisational aspects of an international exchange semester are highlighted as a barrier to student mobility.

Objective 3 required a policy perspective of barriers to international exchange semesters. For this purpose, the vision and mission of the Faculty were analysed in terms of institutional viewpoints such as the graduate attributes. It became evident that there is a disjuncture between the institutional policies on teaching and learning and the way in which the vision and mission of the Faculty view the need of international exposure of students.

Objective 4 sought to determine the existing good practices in the Faculty to build a framework for the implementation of these initiatives. The establishment of a new programme with a programme structure that enforces the practice of an international exchange semester by extending the programme duration, aligning the programme outcomes with international exposure, and adding specific courses to prepare students for an international exchange semester can be seen as a good practice that could be applied to other programmes in the Faculty. The implementation of this programme is in its infant stages, however, and it would be premature to give too much recognition for these practices.

From the data obtained and the critical analysis of the data in terms of the objectives of this study, it can be concluded that the implementation of an international exchange semester at undergraduate level is not supported by the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. The need for international exposure of undergraduate students is not denied, however; therefore, alternative mechanisms for exposing students to the international dimension should be investigated. The reference to existing international dimensions of the curriculum is significant as it supports the importance of the curriculum as a vehicle of internationalisation on student level. Mechanisms such as internationalisation of the

curriculum and internationalisation@home should be investigated as practices to support the Faculty in providing an international dimension to students. In terms of using an international exchange semester as a mechanism to develop workplace skills relevant to the 21st century, the feedback from Faculty management and programme coordinators point towards the same argument: The organisational complexity of an international exchange semester and the administrative challenges exceed the positive outputs, and for the large numbers of undergraduate students in the Faculty, it is not a feasible strategy. It is not denied that it would be possible in principle to incorporate an exchange semester into most of the programmes. However, the overall lack of buy-in on senior management and programme coordinator levels is the primary obstacle for implementing an international exchange semester as part of the strategy of the Faculty to include an international dimension in the profile of its graduates.

5.5 Case Study 2: Faculty of AgriSciences

5.5.1 Faculty profile

The Faculty of AgriSciences is the smallest Faculty included in this study. The Faculty has a total student enrolment of 1855 students, with the majority of students (74%) enrolled in undergraduate programmes. Agriculture was one of the first four Faculties established at Stellenbosch University, and from the outset, it made an indelible contribution to agricultural education and research in South Africa. In 2006, the Faculties of Agriculture and Forestry merged to become the Faculty of AgriSciences, as it is known today.

The Faculty consists of 11 academic departments, namely Agronomy, Conservation Ecology and Entomology, Forestry and Wood Science, Viticulture and Oenology, Genetics, Soil Science, Horticultural Sciences, Agricultural Economics, Plant Pathology, Animal Sciences, and Food Science. The Institute for Plant Biotechnology, the Institute for Wine Biotechnology, and the Standard Bank Centre for Agribusiness Leadership and Mentorship Development are also part of the Faculty. The two experimental farms, Welgevallen and Mariendahl, are also managed by the Faculty, providing indispensable sites for training at undergraduate level as well as for research projects by postgraduate students and staff members (Faculty of AgriSciences, 2014).

The Faculty offers seven programmes that provide for an array of specialisations in the broad fields of agricultural sciences, namely agriculture, conservation ecology, and forestry. The Faculty of AgriSciences does not offer any programmes with professional registration requirements at undergraduate level; therefore, all the programmes can be categorised as general formative programmes and are included in the study.

5.5.2 Data sources

Data were obtained on all levels of the study, namely by means of the student survey, the feedback from programme coordinators, an interview with senior management, and the analysis of strategic documents, namely the vision and mission of the Faculty. The latter was outlined by the analysis of institutional policy and strategy, as discussed in the introduction of this chapter, and by means of the contextualisation of internationalisation at Stellenbosch University in Chapter 3.

5.5.3 Document analysis: Faculty vision and mission

The vision of the Faculty of AgriSciences is linked to the three pillars of the university, namely research, teaching, and community engagement. With regard to research, the vision of the Faculty is to achieve “international excellence with wide acknowledgement of the depth and relevance of our research”. With regard to teaching, the vision refers to “the exceptional quality of our education”, and finally, for community engagement and value to society, the vision relates to “the usefulness of our service to agriculture and forestry” (Faculty of AgriSciences, 2014).

The vision of the Faculty is detailed further in its mission, which states that the Faculty of AgriSciences wishes “to be the preferred provider of world-class research, education and service to agriculture and forestry in southern Africa. We strive to use our knowledge, expertise and skills to the benefit of South Africa and the region, of its people and its industries, and of our clients in a manner that ensures the sustainable use of the region’s natural, physical and social resources and that gains the widest public recognition” (Faculty of AgriSciences, 2014:8).

The local, regional, and continental relevance of the role education and research in the Faculty plays in the agricultural sector is encapsulated in its vision and mission. The explicit international dimension portrayed in the vision and mission underpins the need to analyse the international dimension on student level in terms of the opportunities for internationalisation by means of an international exchange semester, with regard to the overall context created for international exposure of students. A further reference to the way in which the Faculty aims to collaborate in strategic alliances and international collaboration can be regarded as part of such strategic positioning. The vision and mission of the Faculty place a strong emphasis on excellence at all levels, which is aligned with the vision and mission of the institution as outlined in the Institutional Strategy and Intent.

Achieving the vision and mission of the Faculty to deliver graduates with the required set of skills that can make a significant contribution locally and internationally requires appropriate programme outcomes and co-curricular programmes that directly contribute to this vision. The set of skills referred to in the vision and mission is unpacked further in terms of the graduate attributes of the University (Section 5.2.1 [iii]). The Faculty does not have a separate set of graduate attributes but aligns its initiatives with the institutional graduate attributes.

If one argues that an international exchange semester is one of the mechanisms that can be employed to achieve the vision of the Faculty, the importance of determining the different perceptions and perspectives with regard to international exchange semesters is evident. The following section reports on staff perspectives.

5.5.4 Staff responses

5.5.4.1 *Overview*

The study has four main objectives, of which one specifically focuses on academic considerations with regard to international exchange semesters. To obtain insight into this aspect, data were obtained from the academic programme coordinators. The role of programme coordinators is to deal with questions and queries regarding programme matters, manage the execution of programmes and, on a more holistic level, coordinate processes regarding curriculum changes. The programme coordinators form part of the Programme Advisory Committee of the Faculty – a committee whose work mirrors the responsibility of the Institutional Programme Advisory Committee, a sub-committee of the Academic Planning Committee.

Four programme coordinators out of a possible seven respondents completed the questionnaire, for a response rate of 57%. Programme coordinators also carry teaching and research responsibilities and thus indirectly provide perspectives from a teaching point of view. On a senior management level, the current acting dean in his capacity as deputy dean of the Faculty took part in the study by means of a semi-structured interview.

5.5.4.2 *Profile of staff participants*

The data obtained from staff members (programme coordinators and deputy dean) included information pertaining to their personal and professional profile. The information revealed that all the staff participants had been in the academe for ten years or longer, with three of the five also having experience at other higher education institutions. This suggests an older age profile that might suggest some unfamiliarity and hence apprehension regarding including international exchange semesters in the respective programmes. This supposition can be substantiated by analysing the international profile of the participants and the comments relating to support for international exchange semesters at undergraduate level.

The international experiences of staff can be categorised broadly as teaching-related activities and research-related activities. All five staff respondents indicated an array of international experiences with regard to research activities, including attendance of international conferences and participation in international research projects. Only one respondent noted a longer period abroad as part of his/her international academic experience, namely having done a post doc abroad.

5.5.2.3 *Staff perceptions on graduate attributes*

Programme coordinators were interviewed with regard to the role that an international exchange semester can play in achieving the graduate attributes (Section 5.2.1 [iii]). One programme coordinator responded very positively to the way in which international experience in general would contribute to the inculcation of graduate attributes: “All of the graduate aspects listed would benefit from appropriate experience overseas – the broader the experience, the more enquiring, engaged, dynamic and well-rounded a person becomes (at least in my experience)” (FOAS²³ Programme Coordinator 1, 2014). Another programme coordinator formulated his/her response in relation to the actual graduate attributes by stating, “It will create well-rounded individuals who understand more of the world, different cultures and be [sic] able to relate what they have learnt to the world around them” (FOAS Programme Coordinator 2, 2014). These positive sentiments of critical skills that can be acquired by means of international experience were countered by Programme Coordinator 4 (2014), who suggested that the graduate attributes that can be acquired by means of an international exchange semester are only valid in terms of the ‘superior’ knowledge abroad that is not offered at Stellenbosch University: “Exposure to a high level of theory and mathematical calculations and social and political issues not yet relevant or urgent for the SA context.”

5.5.5 Student responses

5.5.5.1 *Overview*

As described in the research methodology of the study, the questionnaire was sent to all final- and pre-final-year students in general formative programmes. In the Faculty of AgriSciences, this implies third- and fourth-year students, as the Faculty of AgriSciences offers four-year bachelor programmes that lead to a qualification on NQF Level 7. These programmes articulate with master’s programmes in the Faculty of AgriSciences or with honours programmes, for example in the Faculty of Science.

The sample size in the Faculty was 753 students, of whom 53 students completed the questionnaire. This is a response rate of 7%. The table below provides an overview of the responses obtained in each programme.

²³ Faculty of AgriSciences

Table 5.3: Faculty of AgriSciences: Student responses per programme

Programme name	Respondents	Population size	Percentage
BSc Agric in Plant and Soil Sciences	8	124	6.5%
BSc Agric in Agricultural Economics and Management	6	55	11%
BSc Agric in Animal Production Systems	7	131	5.3%
BSc Agric in Conservation Ecology	9	114	8%
BSc Agric in Food and Wine Production Systems (Food Sciences)	7	142	4.9%
BSc Agric in Food and Wine Production Systems (Viticulture and Oenology)	5	109	5%
BSc Agric in Forest and Wood Sciences	11	78	14%
Total	53	753	7%

The percentages of responses indicated in Table 5.3 show a more or less consistent response rate of below 10% for the majority of programmes. Two programmes exceed the 10% response rate and one in particular is significantly higher at 14%. The differences in response rates of programmes may be an indication of barriers to international mobility, such as programme content.

5.5.5.2 Demographic profile of respondents

The three demographic indicators that have been included in the case study are gender, country of birth, and language proficiency of respondents. The demographic indicators can assist in understanding the potential barriers to international exchange semesters.

(a) Gender distribution

The gender distribution of the respondents in the Faculty of AgriSciences shows a fairly equal representation of male and female respondents with percentages of 45% and 55% respectively. When compared to the gender demographics of the Faculty as a whole, there is a marked difference. The percentage of male undergraduate students in general formative programmes is almost 20% higher than that of female students with a 59% and 41% distribution of males and females respectively. Compared to the undergraduate student gender profile of the Faculty, the percentage of female respondents in this study is much higher.

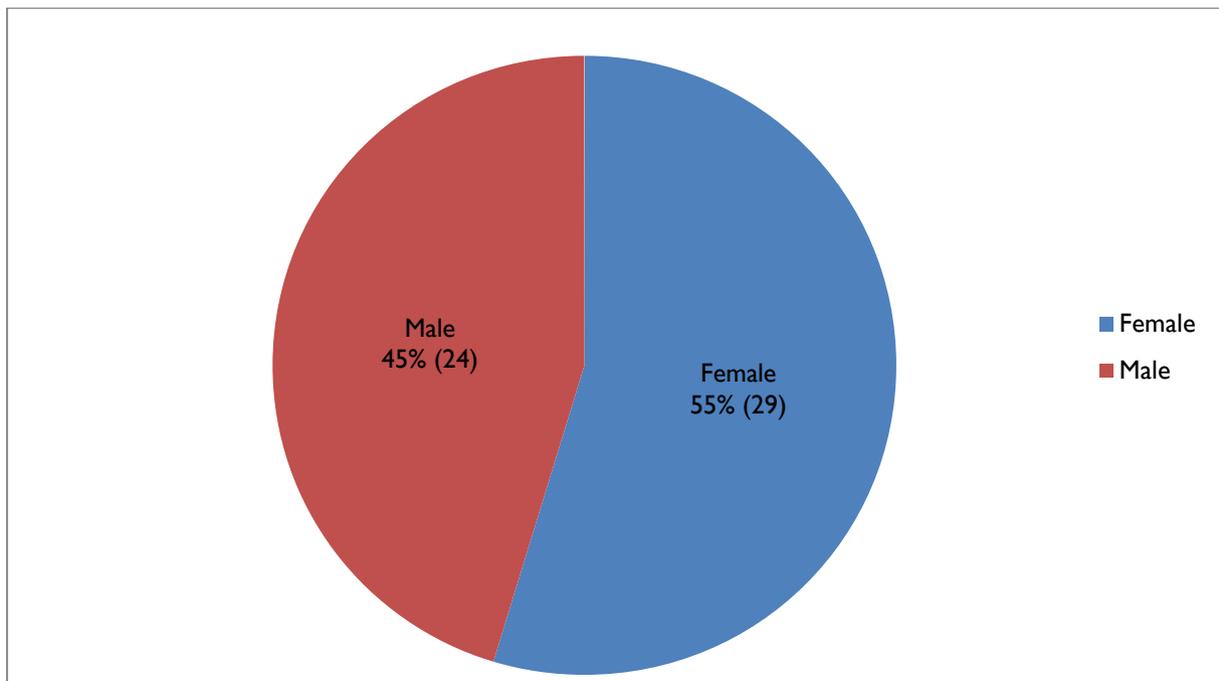


Figure 5.11: Faculty of AgriSciences: Gender distribution of student respondents

(b) Country of birth

The second demographic feature is that of country of birth. The responses obtained in this category provide a very interesting result. The respondents indicated only two countries of origin, namely South Africa and Namibia. Figure 5.13 below provides a graphic representation of the distribution of nationalities with a clear majority of respondents being born in South Africa.

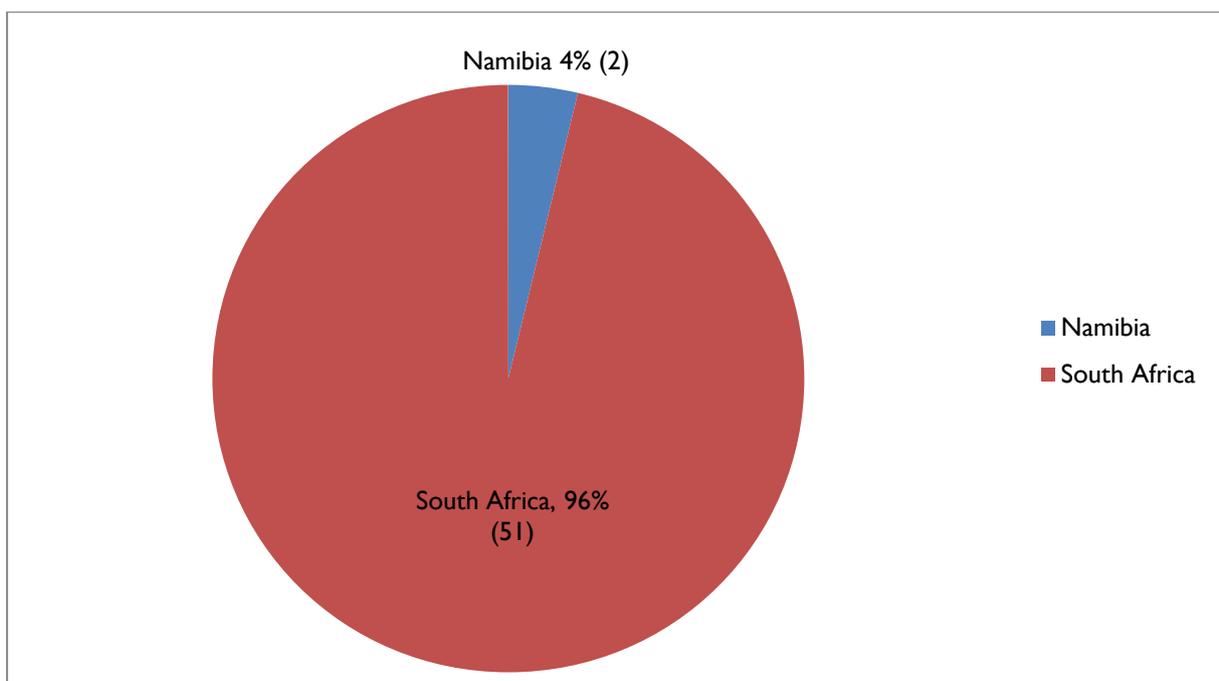


Figure 5.12: Faculty of AgriSciences: Country of birth of student respondents

An overview of the country of birth, as indicated in Figure 5.12, gives a first indication of potential international exposure of the respondents. The international exposure of students, particularly in terms of mobility, is discussed later in the case study.

(c) Language proficiency of respondents

As mentioned before, the language proficiency of students was included as a demographic indicator, but it can also provide some insight into the motivation (or lack of it) of students to take part in a study experience abroad. Language is a key aspect of the international experience, and the motivation for students to take part in an international experience can be driven by language, as highlighted by the research of Ahn (2011). The research of the IIE (2014b) referred to in Chapter 2 (Section 2.10.1) indicates that there is a strong tendency for students with proficiency in a foreign language to engage in international mobility opportunities. The categories for the analysis of language proficiency have already been discussed in the overview of responses, and the Faculty profile is displayed in the figure below.

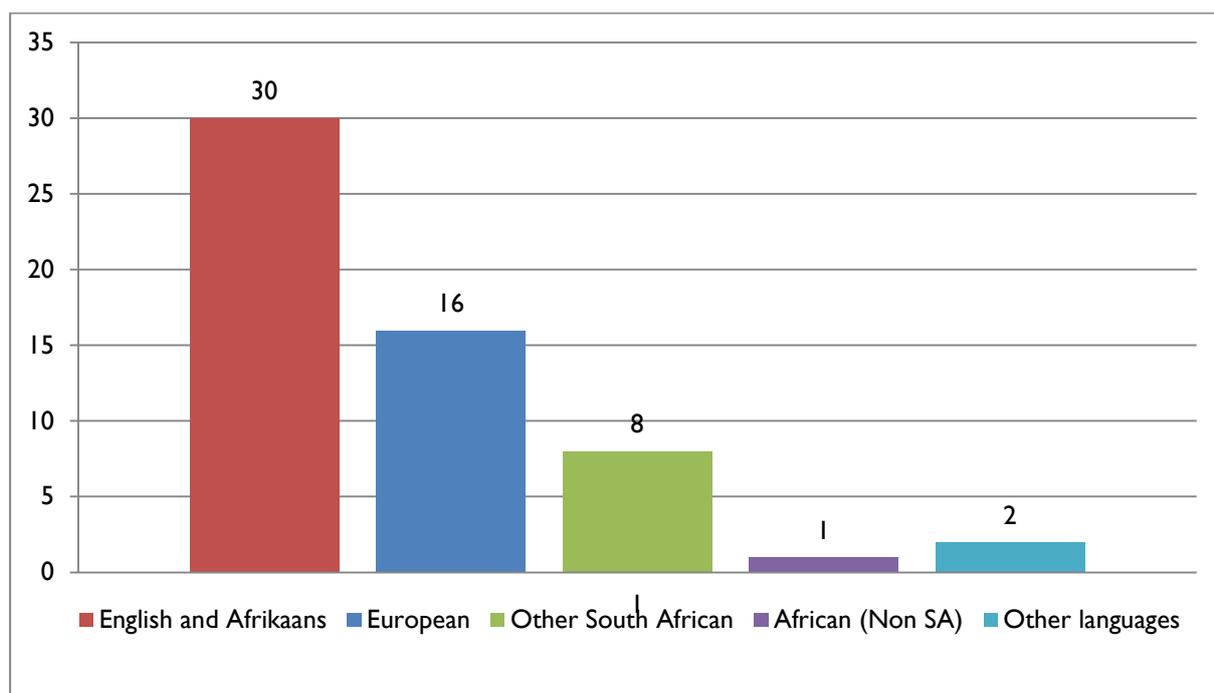


Figure 5.13: Faculty of AgriSciences: Language profile of student respondents per category

The language profile of respondents in the Faculty of AgriSciences, as shown in Figure 5.13, shows an interesting distribution. Given the demographic profile in terms of country of birth, the spread of languages is rather surprising. Thirty students out of 53 respondents indicated that they could speak only English and Afrikaans; thus, two thirds (43%) of respondents have some form of language proficiency other than Afrikaans and English. Furthermore, a

significant percentage (28%) of students could speak European languages, including French, German, Italian, and Portuguese.

One response in particular resonates with the idea that language can influence participation in international experiences. A student responded negatively to the question on proficiency in languages other than Afrikaans and English and then added, "...but I am planning on taking German in my final year, as I would like to go to Germany after my graduation" (FOAS Respondent, 2014).

5.5.5.3 International exposure of respondents

Figure 5.14 below provides an indication of the different international experiences that students had. The respondents in the Faculty of AgriSciences indicated a high level of previous international experience, with 30 out of 53 respondents indicating that they had been abroad as tourists. Respondents could not select "no international experience" but *Other* was part of the options, and 13 students who chose this option indicated that they had *never been abroad* or had *no international experience*. One responded clearly by saying, "I have not been outside of South Africa." These responses have all been grouped under the *Never been abroad* category in Figure 5.14.

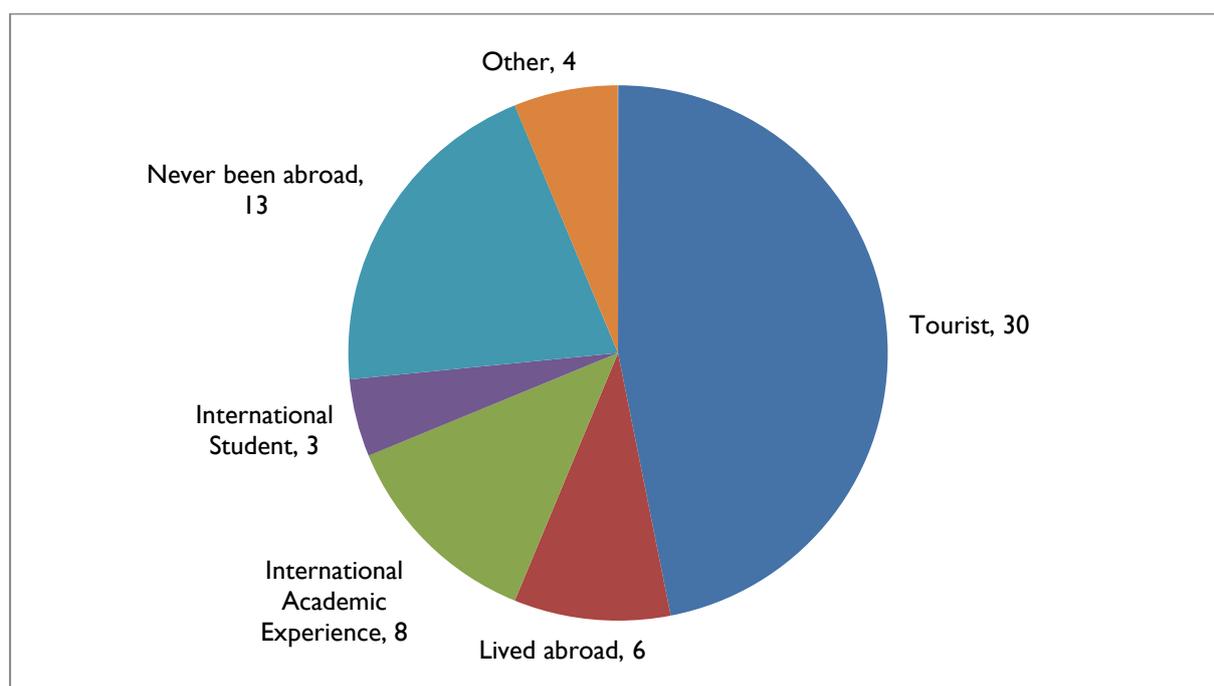


Figure 5.14: Faculty of AgriSciences: Types of international exposure of student respondents

Respondents could select more than one response to this question; yet, only three respondents did so. This indicates, firstly, that the types of international experiences that respondents had were restricted to the options listed, and secondly, that these international experiences were predominantly for tourism purposes.

One student provided an interesting response. He/she selected the option *I've taken part in an international academic experience*, but did not select one of the sub options, namely school exchange, semester exchange, or summer school. Instead, the following comment was added to the open-ended response: "I have interacted with international students that are here in South Africa currently, studying here at Stellenbosch University" (FOAS Respondent, 2014). This gives insight into how a student interprets the concept 'international experience' in terms of the interaction with international students that come to Stellenbosch University for study purposes. This idea of internationalisation@home as referred to in Chapter 1 (Section 1.5.5) is addressed further in other parts of this case study.

The responses of students with regard to their previous international experiences did not include further qualitative data to determine the level of their engagement with the international dimension. Upon analysing the responses of students to the question if they wish to take part in an international exchange semester, all the responses were positive with the exception of one respondent who indicated that he/she would not be interested in taking part in an international exchange semester. Figure 5.15 depicts the responses obtained to the question *Would you consider taking part in such an international exchange semester?*

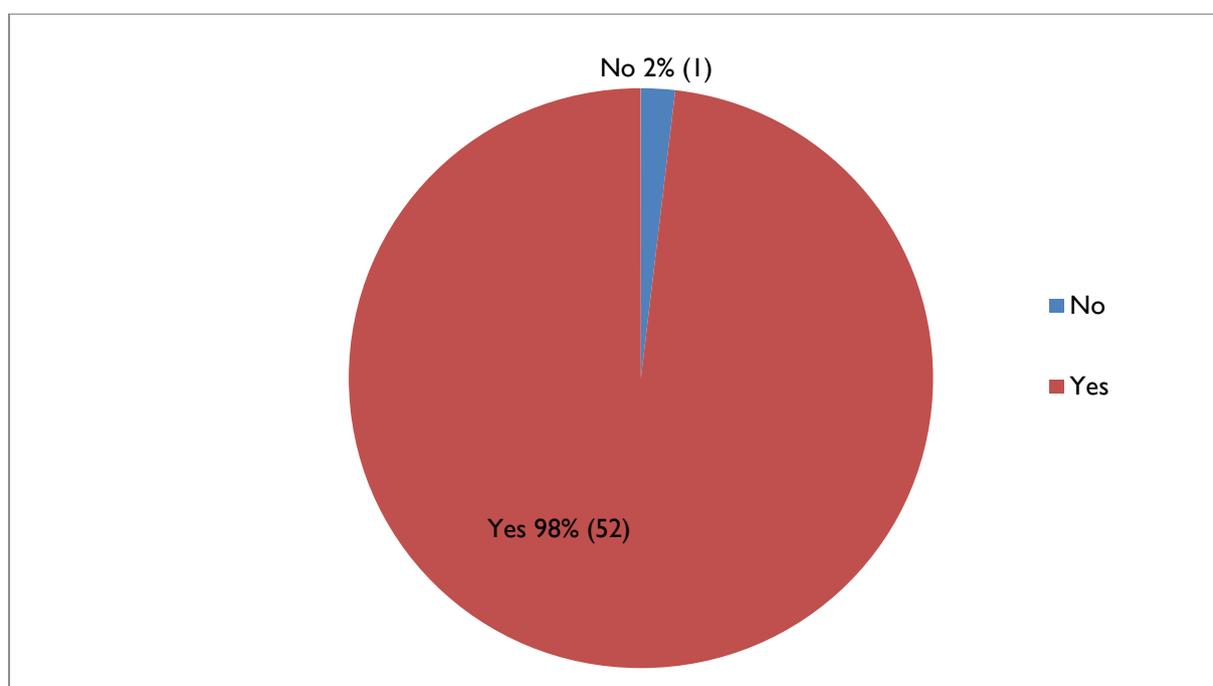


Figure 5.15: Faculty of AgriSciences: Student respondents considering taking part in an international exchange semester

The researcher assumes that there could be a correlation between previous international experience and the tendency to consider future international academic experiences. When this hypothesis is tested with the data obtained in the Faculty of AgriSciences, the cross tabulation yields a p-value of 0,4, which does not indicate any statistical significance. The awareness and interest of students in an international exchange semester are analysed in more depth later in this case study.

The student profile in terms of international exposure can also be linked to the demographic profile in terms of nationality. In this case, the nationalities of respondents were limited to South Africa and Namibia. This is not consistent with the international exposure profile, as none of the students indicated that they were international students.

5.5.5.3 Student respondents' awareness of international exchange semester opportunities

It is a common assumption that the low uptake of international exchange semesters can be ascribed to students being uninformed about the existence of such opportunities. The student survey tested this hypothesis, and from the results, the awareness of international exchange experiences does not seem to be a problem, as the majority of student respondents expressed an awareness of international exchange semesters. As seen in Figure 5.17 below, more than 50% of respondents responded positively when asked if they were aware of the opportunity to study at a partner university for one or two semesters as part of their degree programmes.

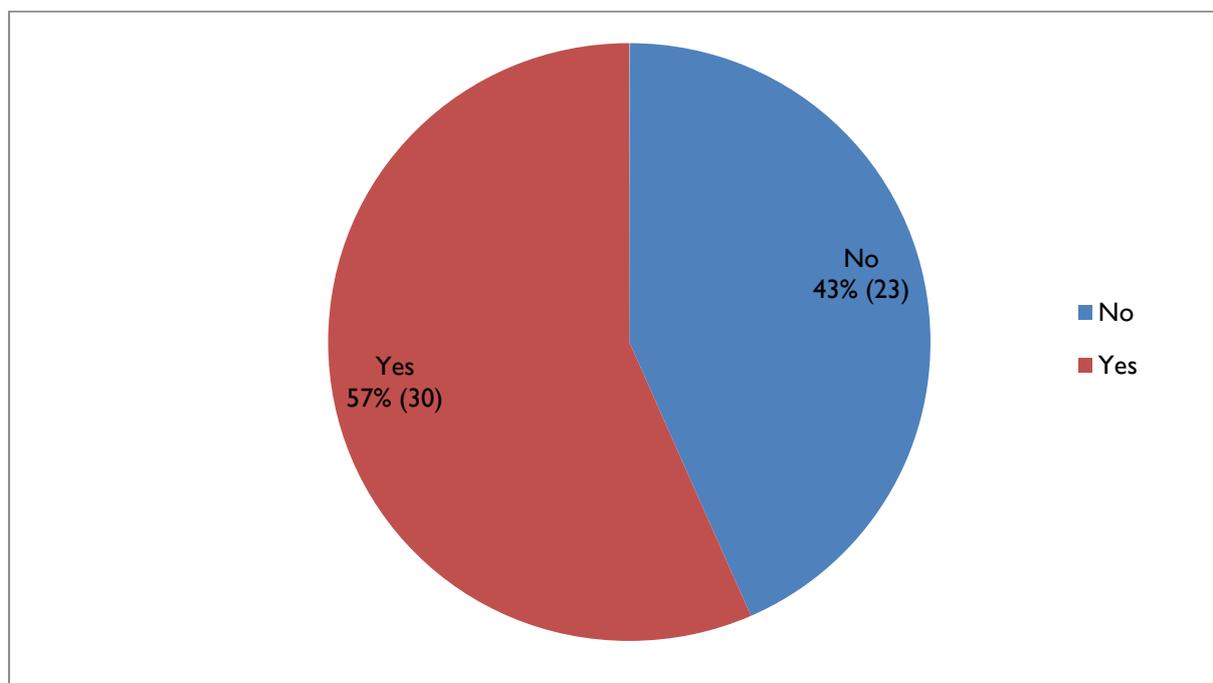


Figure 5.16: Faculty of AgriSciences: Distribution of respondents informed about the opportunity of an international exchange semester

When the same group of students were asked if they would consider taking part in an international exchange semester if given the opportunity, all respondents with the exception of one respondent indicated that they would indeed consider such an opportunity, as seen in Figure 5.15. Students could also choose *Maybe* as a response, but none of the respondents exercised this option, which can be interpreted as a strong indication of the desire of students to take part in an international exchange semester.

Students' awareness of the possibility of taking part in an international exchange semester can also be considered from a peer perspective. The feedback obtained from respondents in the Faculty of AgriSciences shows that almost one third of student respondents knew another student (at Stellenbosch University or another institution) who had taken part in an international exchange semester.

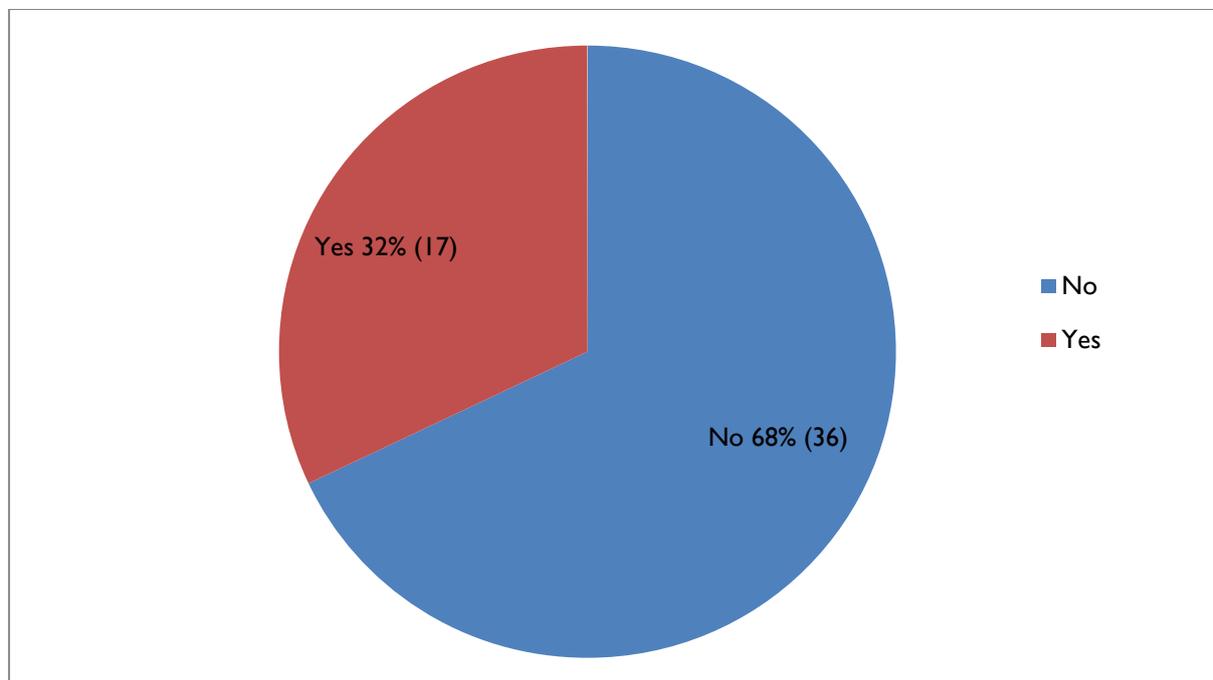


Figure 5.17: Faculty of AgriSciences: Distribution of student respondents who know somebody who took part in an international exchange semester

The analysis of students' level of awareness of and need for participating in an international exchange semester again highlights the importance of developing a better understanding of the potential barriers to an international exchange semester. The correlation between students' awareness of an international exchange semester as indicated by Figure 5.16 and their consideration to take part in an international exchange semester was analysed statistically by a cross tabulation of these two variables and revealed a p-value of 0.2, which indicates that this correlation is not statistically significant.

5.5.6 Faculty barriers to international exchange semesters

This study focuses on identifying the potential barriers to international exchange semesters by means of thorough analyses of key stakeholders and decision makers' insight into the phenomenon of international exchange semesters as a form of internationalisation on student level as well as an experience that can add to achieving the graduate attributes of the institution. The preceding discussion has highlighted important factors that contribute to, firstly, the environment that is created in the Faculty of AgriSciences for an international exchange semester, and secondly, the role and importance of such academic experiences for

graduates of the Faculty. However, it is necessary to distinguish between perceived and actual barriers to mobility. The preceding discussion of demographic indicators has made brief reference to potential barriers. The next part of the analysis focuses particularly on the barriers pertaining to an international exchange semester as identified by students and staff in the Faculty and tries to distinguish between actual and perceived barriers to mobility.

5.5.7.1 Barriers identified by students

The prescribed list of barriers has been listed and explained already in the overview of responses. The table below provides a summary of students' responses with regard to what they perceived as barriers to international exchange semesters.

Table 5.4: Faculty of AgriSciences Barriers to international exchange semesters as identified by student respondents

List of barriers presented	Number of Respondents
Lack of information on opportunities	43 (81%)
Financial constraints	38 (72%)
Lack of information on process	29 (55%)
Restrictions of my programme	25 (47%)
Lack of support by Faculty	14 (26%)
Family responsibilities	4 (7, 5%)
Other responsibilities on campus	2 (4%)
Other	1 (1,9%)

The 'Other' option was used by only one student, but the response he/she provided is disconcerting, namely that he/she considered race a barrier to an international exchange semester. Although listed by only one respondent in this Faculty, it is an important aspect to consider in terms of international education, particularly in the South African context where access to higher education, equity, and race are prominent on the national agenda. Existing policies and practices at the institution contain no criteria that limit the participation of particular race groups in international exchange programmes. However, the reference to race does support earlier references to socio-economic factors as a barrier to non-degree mobility, particularly in developing countries.

Table 5.4 shows that students perceived the first four factors in particular as barriers. The results indicate *Lack of information on opportunities* as the barrier selected most by respondents; yet, the responses obtained on the awareness of students indicate that 57% of students were aware of the option of taking part in an international exchange semester. This raises concerns about the manner in which information regarding the opportunities for international exchange semesters is conveyed to students.

The overview of responses presented in Table 5.4 forms the cornerstone of the study to identify and discuss the potential barriers to international exchange semesters from a multidimensional perspective. If analysed from a different perspective to indicate the **combination of barriers** selected by students in the Faculty of AgriSciences, the analysis shows that the combination of *Lack of information on the available opportunities* and *Lack on information on the process* was selected by 29 respondents (more than half of the number of respondents), with an equal number of responses for the combination of *Lack of information on the available opportunities* and *Financial constraints*.

5.5.5.2 Barriers identified by staff

The overview of responses above provides some insight into students' perspectives on the barriers to international exchange semesters, but should not be viewed in isolation from the perspectives of programme coordinators and Faculty management.

The responses obtained from programme coordinators were codified to create categories of responses that could be analysed as barriers to international exchange semesters identified by academic staff. Programme coordinators and the deputy dean highlighted the cost of living abroad as a barrier to international exchange semesters. This factor is widely accepted in literature as one of the major challenges for international mobility and is listed as one of the top three barriers by the student respondents. The barriers that emerged from the codified data obtained from programme coordinators can be summarised in two major themes, namely financial implications and academic considerations, or what Souto-Otero et al. (2013) call "differences in higher education systems". The latter theme includes references such as "semester times not synchronised" and "expectations of what should be delivered for the same number of credits". One programme coordinator summarised the barriers with regard to academic considerations as "tight timetables, which means it is a challenge to find the full suite of modules to replace those that are missed. Our timetable is a very full one" (FOAS Programme Coordinator 1, 2014). Two other programme coordinators highlighted the challenges posed by a strict curriculum and programme structure. Programme Coordinator 2 (2014) indicated that "[t]he biggest problem is the incompatibility of semesters and credit loads. Students basically lose a year if they attend a six-month exchange."

Programme Coordinator 4 (2014) highlighted challenges with regard to field-specific knowledge required by particular programmes and suggested that an international exchange semester would expose students to a context that was not relevant to the South African sector.

5.5.7 Faculty opportunities for international exchange semesters

To address the objective of the study to identify and discuss existing good practices, I evaluated the opportunities for international exchange semesters that were identified in the case study on the Faculty of AgriSciences.

5.5.7.1 Vision and mission of the Faculty

The vision and mission of the Faculty of AgriSciences shows a clear link to areas of international education, which provides an ideal platform to establish a stronger directive for the international exposure of students. The vision of the Faculty makes explicit reference to the role envisioned for graduates in the international agricultural sector. Thus, the inclusion of an international mobility period in the academic programmes would be an explicit commitment to cultivate the graduate skills and attitudes required to fulfil these roles.

5.5.7.2 Faculty support

On a senior management level, the value of an international exchange semester was expressed as being invaluable, regardless of the challenges it involves. “I think a student can from a career as well as an educational and a personal development point of view extract a lot more value from going overseas for six months even if it extends their degree duration” (*Ek dink ’n student kan uit ’n loopbaan, uit ’n opvoedkundige en uit ’n persoonlike ontwikkelingsoogpunt, baie meer waarde ontsluit deur ses maande oorsee te gaan, al maak dit hulle graad langer*) (Deputy Dean, FOAS, 2014). The reference to the multiple levels of benefits entrenched in an international exchange semester deserves further investigation, particularly because it encapsulates the cost-benefit approach of taking part in selected educational experiences.

The support of lecturers in motivating students to take part in experiences that will add to their profile as graduates and contribute to achieving the skills and attitudes outlined by the institution, has been highlighted as a potential motivation for students to actually take part. To test this proposition, students were requested to indicate if any lecturer had ever engaged with them on the topic of an international exchange semester. The programme coordinators and deputy dean were asked a similar question to determine if they had ever discussed an international exchange semester with students. The results show that there was an overall lack of communication regarding international exchange semesters between students and lecturers. Only four out of 53 student respondents indicated that a lecturer had mentioned the idea of an international exchange semester. However, all four programme coordinators indicated that they did engage with students on the topic of international exchange semesters.

On a management level, the support for academic staff to play a more active role in promoting exchange semesters is explicit. “Weirdly, I think one should start with one’s lecturers. Even if they just have the idea at the back of their minds. They can literally identify students and encourage them to take part – to really promote the idea among particularly our third- and fourth-year students ... But I really think that our Faculty can benefit from it a lot. And I think departments should monitor and facilitate (the opportunities)” (*Vreemd né, ek dink mens moet nogal begin by jou dosente. Al het hulle dit net in hulle agterkop. Hulle kan letterlik studente identifiseer en die studente bietjie aanmoedig – die konsep promoveer, veral onder ons derde- en vierdejaarstudente ... Maar ek dink regtig ons fakulteit kan baie daaruit baat. En ek dink die departemente behoort dit te monitor en te fasiliteer*) (Deputy Dean, FOAS, 2014).

5.5.8 Conclusions on Case Study 2: Faculty of AgriSciences

The data obtained in the Faculty of AgriSciences were used to create a case study that described the Faculty in terms of international exchange semesters and highlighted aspects concerning internationalisation on student level. The case study incorporated data obtained from the student perspective, academic staff members (programme coordinators), and management input. The case study addressed all four objectives of the research study and made the following preliminary findings on Faculty level on each of the objectives:

Objective 1 targeted the context created by institutional and Faculty policies. The analysis of the vision and mission of the Faculty, as well as the analysis of responses to the research study, shows a connection with the desired outcomes of an international exchange semester. The vision of the Faculty of AgriSciences is highlighted in the case study as one of the opportunities for Faculty to increase the participation in international exchange semesters.

Objective 2 shifted the focus to the academic considerations and incorporated the perspectives obtained from the programme coordinators and Faculty management. The focus of this objective was to investigate the academic considerations with regard to an international exchange semester in terms of programme structure and departmental support. The feedback obtained from programme coordinators illustrates that academic staff and management valued the rationale and benefits of an international exchange semester.

Objective 3 focused on the student perspectives pertaining to an international exchange semester. The high levels of interest of students to take part in such opportunities and the positive references to the ways in which international exposure can contribute to the development of critical skills and attitudes necessitates understanding and addressing of the barriers to international mobility.

Objective 4 took an optimistic view to the practice of international exchange semester and focused attention on existing good practices and areas that would facilitate the implementation of international exchange semesters.

The four objectives all create a very positive outlook towards international exchange semesters. The findings on Faculty level will be discussed further in Chapter 6 as an overarching discussion on the trends identified among Faculties. The trends and analyses on Faculty level are also used to derive recommendations for implementing exchange semesters as a form of internationalisation on student level.

5.6 Case Study 3: Faculty of Science

5.6.1 Faculty profile

The Faculty of Science is a medium-sized Faculty in terms of student enrolment with a total enrolment of 3011 students, of whom 2105 are enrolled in undergraduate programmes. Apart from the students enrolled in the degree programmes presented by the Faculty, the Faculty also presents training (service modules) at the undergraduate level in the physical, biological and mathematical sciences to students registered in the Faculties of Medicine and Health Sciences, Engineering, AgriSciences, and Economic and Management Sciences. The Faculty of Science has eight departments, namely Biochemistry, Botany and Zoology, Chemistry and Polymer Sciences, Earth Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Microbiology, Physiological Sciences, and Physics. The Faculty is also home to 17 centres that include world-renowned entities such as the Stellenbosch Water Institute and the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences that is a shared initiative with other higher education institutions in the Western Cape.

The Faculty offers three thematic programme qualifications, namely BSc in Physical Sciences with further specialisation in Laser Physics, Chemistry and Polymer Science, Chemical Biology, Theoretical Physics, Textile and Polymer Science as well as Earth Sciences and Geo-informatics; BSc in Biological Sciences with specialisation in Human Life Sciences, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, Sport Science as well as Biodiversity and Ecology; BSc in Mathematical Sciences with specialisation in Financial Mathematics, Computer Sciences and Applied Mathematics. As explained in the case study on the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, the areas of specialisation in the general-formative programmes were not added as a unit of analysis of the study.

5.6.2 Data sources

Data were obtained on all four levels of data collection in the Faculty of Science, including student questionnaires, questionnaires from programme coordinators, an interview with the deputy dean responsible for teaching, as well as an analysis of Faculty documents. In addition to the analysis of the vision and mission of the Faculty, the analysis of institutional documents, namely the Institutional Strategy and Intent as well as the Strategy on Teaching and Learning, was used to outline the Faculty strategies.

5.6.3 Document analysis: Vision and mission of the Faculty

The document analysis of the vision and mission of the Faculty of the Faculty builds on the institutional document analysis provided at the beginning of this chapter. The document analysis is an important background to the rest of this case study on the potential barriers to international exchange semesters in the Faculty of Science in terms of internationalisation of higher education and particularly the potential that is created, intentionally or inadvertently, by policy and strategy.

The Faculty of Science does not have a well-documented vision and mission. However, it does make specific strategic commitments that can be linked to national imperatives and the institutional vision in the statement on the Faculty in the Faculty Yearbook and website. The Faculty states the following:

In line with Stellenbosch University's Vision 2030 and the National Development Plan, the Faculty of Science is committed to positioning the University as a research-focused academic institution of excellence and a respected knowledge partner. Through quality research outputs, the Faculty contributes towards building the scientific, technological, and intellectual capacity of Africa and plays an active role in South Africa's development. The Faculty endeavours to make a substantial contribution to the National Development Plan's vision to increase the number of PhD graduates from the current 28 to 100 per million per year by 2030. (Faculty of Science, 2014).

As stated in the Yearbook, the Faculty aims to create a teaching environment that "focuses on giving all students the opportunity to develop their full potential by using the most suitable methods of teaching and by cultivating a sound scientific attitude in students" (Faculty of Science, 2014). The Faculty aims to equip students with the scientific, language and electronic communication skills needed to hold their own in challenging national and international environments.

The stance of the Faculty towards excellence and its teaching approach links clearly to the Institutional Intent and Strategy, but also refers to an international paradigm for which students must be prepared. The reference to capacity building in Africa can be interpreted as a somewhat outward and international focus.

Although the vision and strategy of the Faculty are elusive in terms of the set of skills to be developed in its graduates, references to the graduate profile can be linked to the institutional graduate attributes. For example, the Faculty Yearbook states, "The ideal [of the Faculty] is to shape graduates who are competitive and much sought after in the work environment and who can also function as independent thinkers." The Faculty does not have a separate document describing its graduate attributes.

5.6.4 Staff responses

5.6.4.1 *Overview*

Staff responses were obtained by means of a questionnaire distributed to each of the programme coordinators in the Faculty, as well as an interview with the Deputy Dean: Teaching. The interview with the deputy dean was transcribed and coded. The programme coordinators who responded to the questionnaire represent Biological Sciences (two respondents) and Physical Sciences (one respondent).

The return rate of questionnaires from the programme coordinators was low. Only three out of nine potential respondents returned the questionnaire. The lack of feedback from programme coordinators is a shortcoming in this case study.

5.6.4.2 Profile of staff participants

The questionnaire to staff members aimed at constituting a profile in terms of their own international experience and their particular career phase with a view to investigating if there was a link between these factors and their support for international mobility of students. All of the respondents indicated that they had been academics for more than five years and had been employed by other universities in South Africa before joining Stellenbosch University. Thus, all the staff respondents were well-established academics with multiple years of experience in the South African higher education system.

The international profile considered different types of international experiences in which the respondents participated or that formed part of their jobs. Two respondents indicated that they had completed a post doc abroad, but none of the respondents had taken part in an international exchange semester or completed a qualification abroad. All the other activities were related to research activities. All three respondents selected at least one of the research-related activities, namely *I regularly attend international conferences* and *I'm part of an international research project*.

5.6.4.3 Staff perceptions on graduate attributes

The questionnaire distributed to programme coordinators explicitly referred to the link between international exchange semesters and the SU graduate attributes. One programme coordinator highlighted embedding the graduate attributes in the curriculum as one of the responsibilities of the programme coordinator (FOS Programme Coordinator 2, 2015). Another programme coordinator was of the opinion that “it will contribute to all the attributes” (FOS Programme Coordinator 1, 2014). Programme Coordinator 2 (2015) also made a clear link between the individual graduate attributes and the experience of an international exchange semester: “I think it would help to make students more curious (enquiring mind), allow them to be more effective in a diverse environment (engaged citizen) and better-rounded in having experienced life in a different country.”

The same sentiment is shared on management level. “I definitely think so. Students could then also bring something back to South Africa” (Deputy Dean, Faculty of Science, 2014). The deputy dean goes further to explain how an international exchange semester can develop graduate attributes: “I think one of the things they learn is not to make excuses because when you go somewhere, it is survival. You are here, you wanted to be here, you make the most of it” (Deputy Dean, Faculty of Science, 2014).

5.6.5 Student responses

5.6.5.1 Overview

The student questionnaire was sent to all final- and pre-final-year students. In the Faculty of Science the sample size was 1 384 students of whom 119 responded to the questionnaire, which gives a response rate of 8,6%. The table below provides an overview of the distribution of respondents categorised into broad programme divisions. As explained above, the programmes presented in the Faculty of Science are quite dispersed due to the wide variety of specialisation areas. Thus, the programmes have been grouped into the streams in which degrees are awarded.

Table 5.5: Faculty of Science: Student responses per programme stream

Programmes	Number of respondents	Population size	Percentage
BSc in Biological Sciences (Human Life Sciences including Biology and Biology with Psychology)	45	376	12%
BSc in Biological Sciences (Molecular Biology and Biotechnology)	21	268	7.8%
BSc in Biological Sciences (Sport Science)	0	103	0%
BSc in Biological Sciences (Biodiversity and Ecology)	5	80	6.3%
BSc in Physical Sciences (Chemistry and Polymer Science; Chemical Biology)	17	124	13.7%
BSc in Physical Sciences (Earth Sciences and Geo-informatics)	8	187	4.3%
BSc in Physical Sciences (including Laser Physics)	3	31	9.7%
BSc in Physical Sciences (Textile and Polymer Science)	2	11	18.2%
BSc in Physical Sciences (Theoretical Physics)	2	11	18.2%
BSc in Mathematical Sciences (including Financial Mathematics; Computer Science; Applied Maths)	16	193	8.3%
Grand Total	119	1384	8.6%

The percentages of respondents indicated in Table 5.5 provide insight into the response rates per programme, which vary from 0% to almost 20% in the two programmes with the smallest population size. Programmes in the broad thematic field of Physical Sciences yielded the highest response rate of the three thematic streams.

5.6.5.2 Demographic profile of respondents

The demographic indicators obtained by means of the questionnaire included three aspects, namely gender, country of birth, and language proficiency.

(a) Gender distribution

Figure 5.18 displays the distribution of male and female respondents. The gender distribution of the respondents in the Faculty of Science shows a slightly higher percentage of female respondents with 58% female and 42% male respondents.

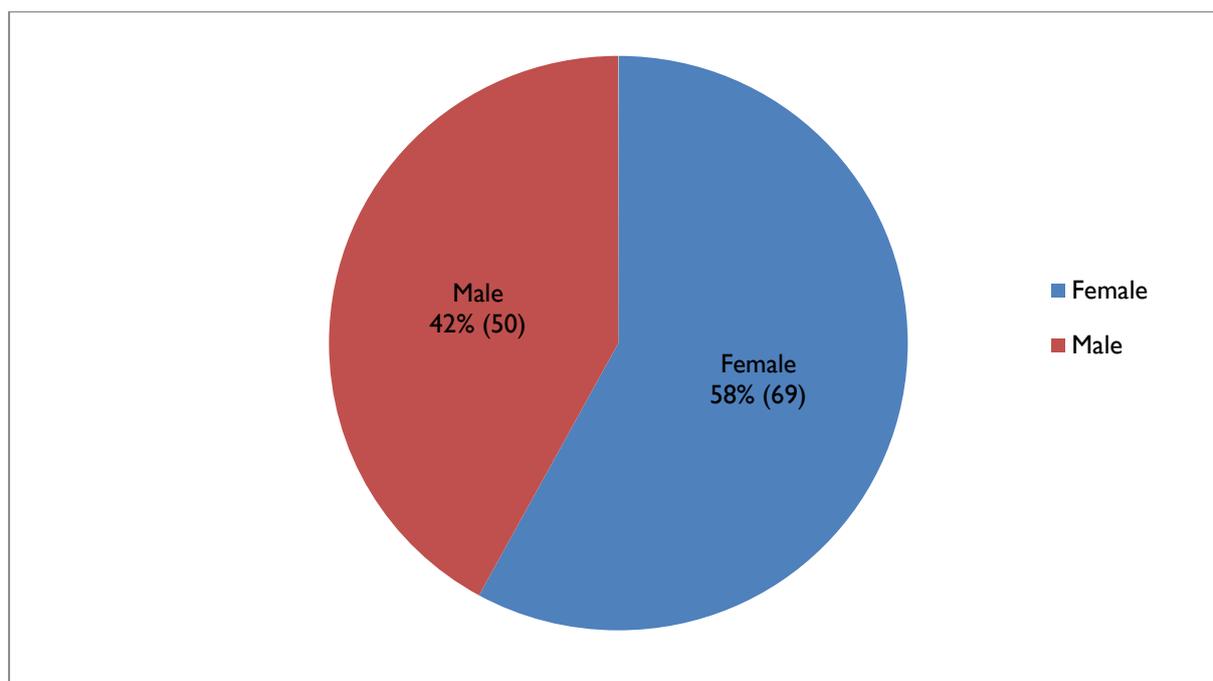


Figure 5.18: Faculty of Science: Gender distribution of student respondents

If compared to the gender demographics of undergraduate students in the Faculty, there is a 6% difference – 47% of undergraduate students in the Faculty are male and 53% are female.

(b) Country of birth

The second demographic feature was that of country of birth. Figure 5.19 below provides a graphic representation of the distribution of birth countries with a clear majority of respondents being born in South Africa with a further strong representation of other African countries. One respondent provided an atypical response to *Country of birth*, indicating that he/she was born in Africa. Although this is an outlying response, it can be interpreted in terms of the general distinction of respondents being predominantly from South Africa or from other African countries.

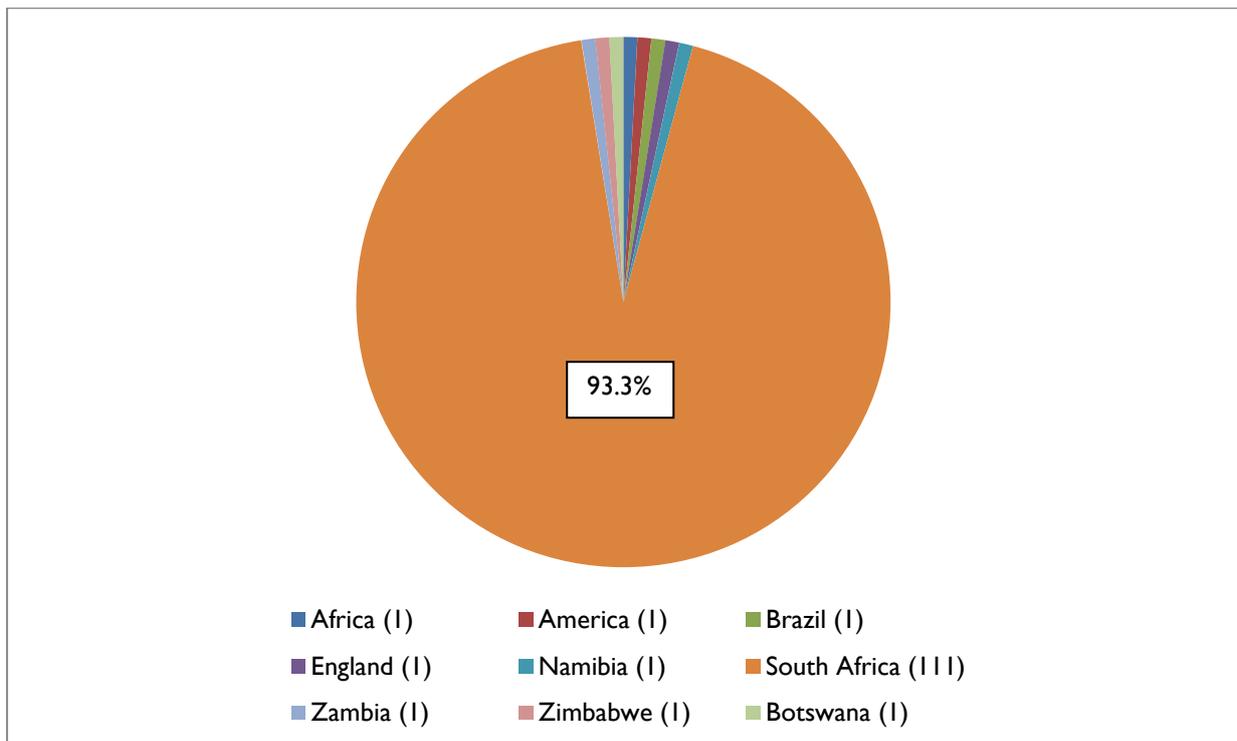


Figure 5.19: Faculty of Science: Country of birth of student respondents

(c) Language proficiency

The third demographic indicator was language proficiency. The importance of language in the internationalisation of higher education has been referred to in the literature review, pointing out that lack of language proficiency can be perceived as a barrier to international mobility (Ahn, 2011). The language profile of respondents in the Faculty of Science is reflected in Figure 5.20 below.

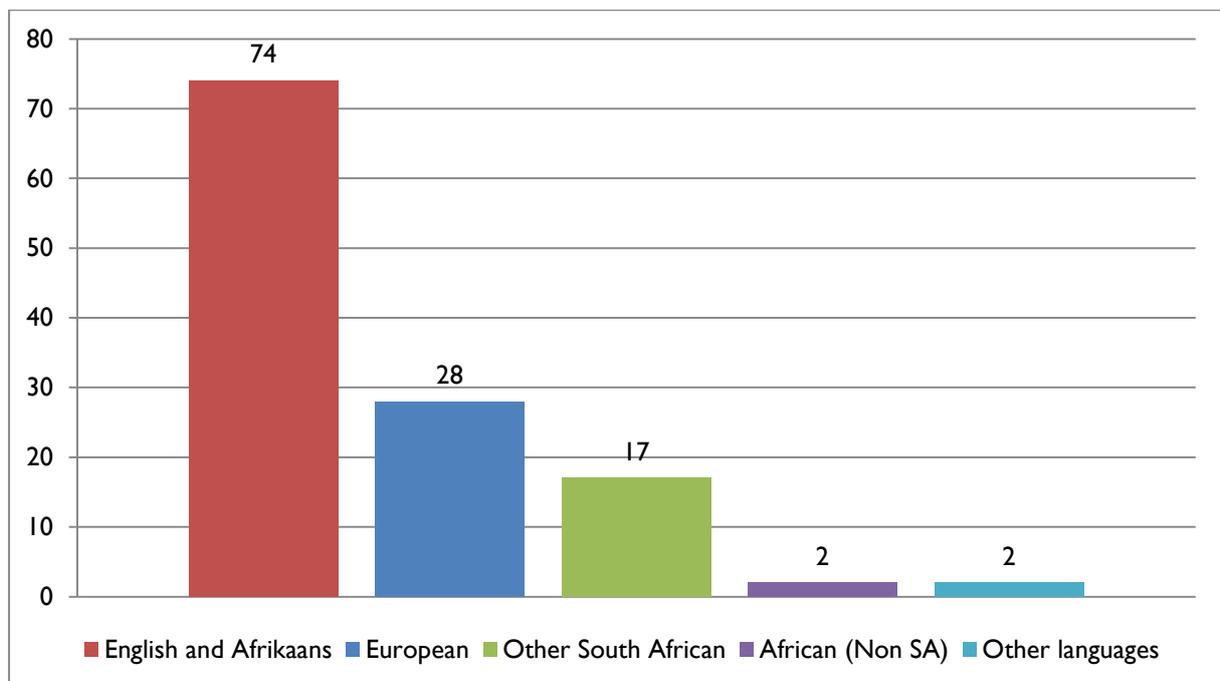


Figure 5.20: Faculty of Science: Language profile of student respondents per category

More than a third of respondents (38%) indicated alternative language proficiency in addition to Afrikaans and English. The category that obtained the second most responses was proficiency in European languages that included Dutch, German, Spanish, French, and Portuguese. Languages included in the *Other* category were Japanese and Creole, while the *Other South African* languages provided the full spectrum of national languages with the exception of Pedi and Swati.

The language proficiency of students can be linked to countries of birth, as discussed in the second demographic indicator. For example, the Namibian-born respondent made specific reference to his/her proficiency in German by stating, “My German got rusty after leaving Namibia” (FOS Respondent, 2014). Other references that can be assumed to be linked to the country of birth is the case of the Zambian respondent who listed his/her language proficiency as “Zambian languages – Bemba and Nyanja” (FOS Respondent, 2014).

5.6.5.3 International exposure of respondents

The international exposure of students in the Faculty of Science was also investigated in an attempt to assess their inclination to engage in international exchange semesters.

Figure 5.21 shows the responses of students, which were grouped and analysed based on the categories provided in the questionnaire. Students could select more than one option. Tourist activities received the most responses with almost half of the respondents indicating that they had taken part in this type of international experience.

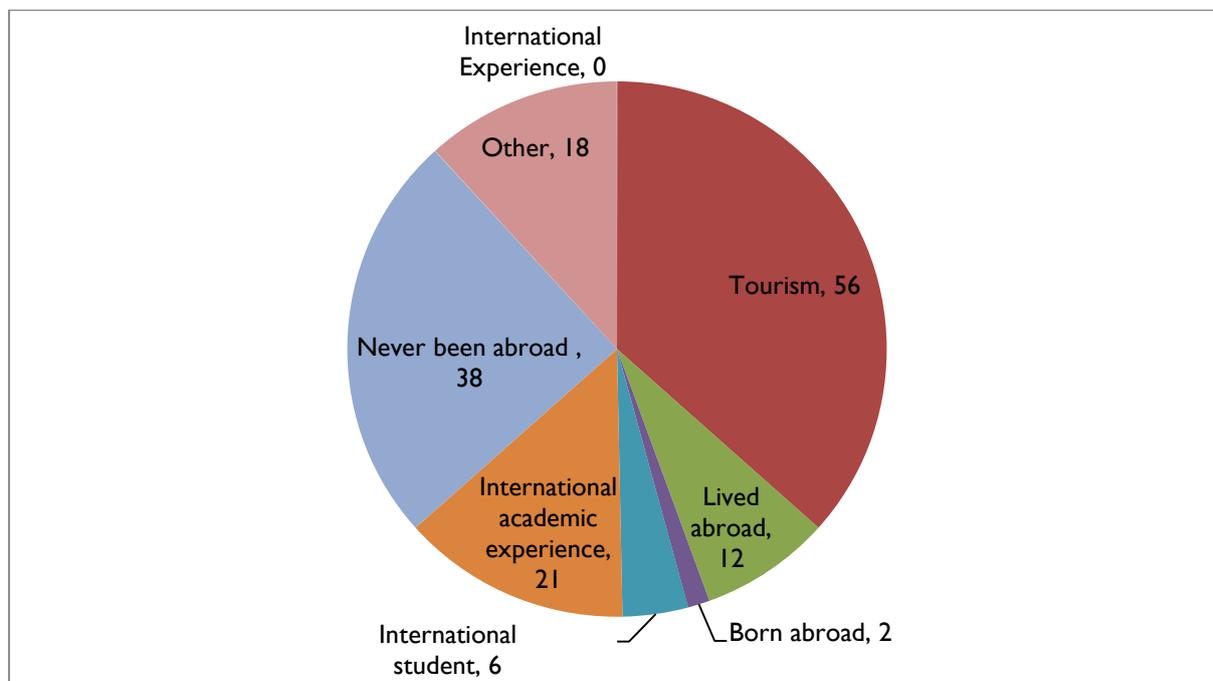


Figure 5.21: Faculty of Science: Types of international exposure of student respondents

Overall, a large number of students indicated that they had international experience. Particularly the number of students who indicated that they had an international academic experience was relatively high for a Faculty that generally did not contribute to the exchange numbers of the institution (Table 3.1).

The focus of the responses provided to students was on international exposure that entailed mobility outside of the home country. Two students provided outlying responses. One stated in the *Other* option, “Socialise with international students” (FOS Respondent, 2014). This provides an interesting perspective into how a student interpreted the concept ‘international experience’. Another respondent provided a similar response by listing an academic trip with American students as an *international academic experience*: “Part of a tour around South Africa with American students” (FOS Respondent, 2014). This idea of *internationalisation@home* as referred to in the literature study (Beelen, 2007, 2012; Leask, 2009) is an important aspect of internationalisation to consider in the implementation of strategies and initiatives on student level. The idea of *internationalisation@home* will be discussed further in Chapter 6 as part of the recommendations for the implementation of international exchange semesters.

The activities that respondents listed under the open-ended response included references to work and international exposure, a gap year after school, and short experiences such as “(taking) part in an international dancing event” (FOS Respondent, 2014) and “participate at sporting events”(FOS Respondent, 2014).

Respondents did not have the option to select “no international experience”, but *Other* was one of the options, and 38 students indicated under this option that they had *Never left the country* or had *No international experience*. This means that 68% of the respondents had some

form of previous international experience. The question did not require further explanation of the level of the exposure or more details about the experience itself, but an assumption can be made that previous exposure to an international experience could be a positive indicator of future participation. This was investigated further by asking students whether they would consider participating in an international exchange semester.

Upon analysing the responses of students to this question, it is clear that the majority of responses were positive, except for five respondents who indicated that they would not be interested in taking part in an international exchange semester.

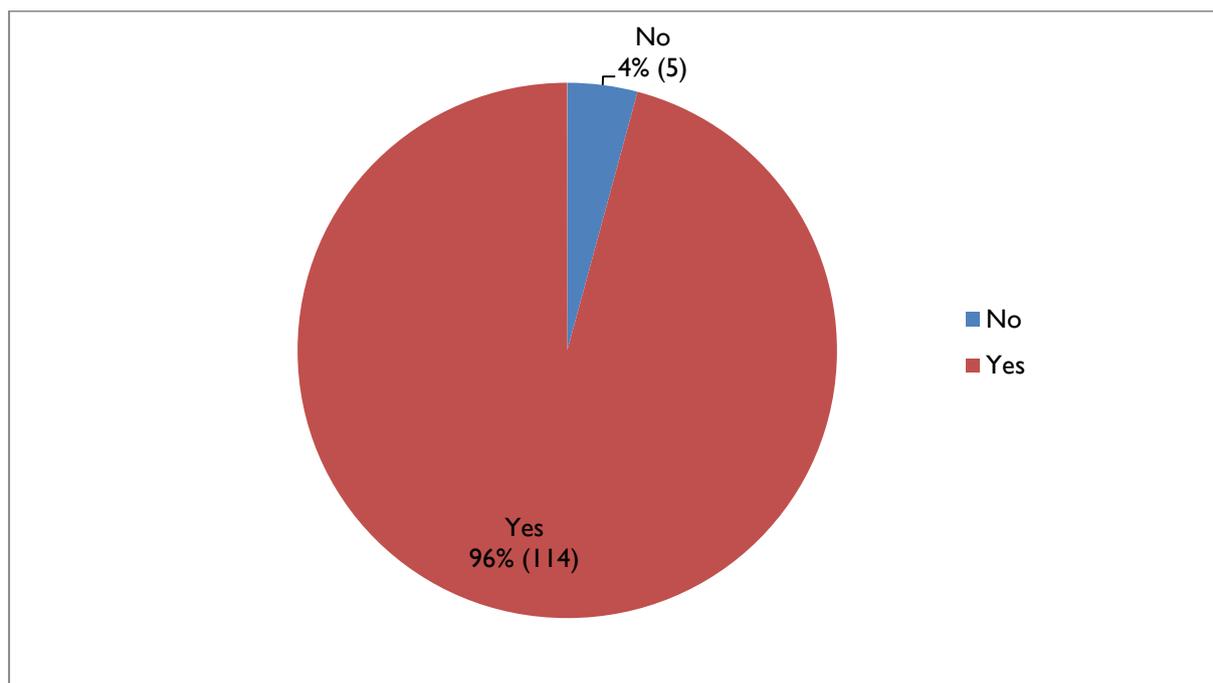


Figure 5.22: Faculty of Science: Student respondents considering taking part in an international exchange semester

Figure 5.22 graphically depicts the responses obtained to the question *Would you consider taking part in such an international exchange semester?* A statistical analysis of students' responses to the consideration to take part in an international exchange semester and their previous international experience, as depicted in Figure 5.21, reveals that there is no statistical significance in a cross tabulation of the two variables ($p = 0,17$); thus, it cannot be assumed that students with previous international experience are more likely to consider taking part in future experiences. The awareness of students and how that can be linked to the limited participation of students in international exchange semesters is discussed in more detail in the next part of the case study.

5.6.5.4 Student respondents' awareness of international exchange semester opportunities

The preceding discussion on the consideration of students to take part in an international exchange semester provided a first introduction to the role of awareness in students taking part in an international exchange semester. It is a common assumption that the low uptake of international exchange semesters can be ascribed to students being uninformed about the

existence of such opportunities. The questionnaire to students tested this hypothesis, and from the survey results, the awareness of international exchange experiences does not seem to be the problem, as the majority of student respondents expressed awareness of international exchange semesters. As shown in Figure 5.23 below, only 40% of respondents responded positively to the question regarding awareness of the international exchange semester at Stellenbosch University.

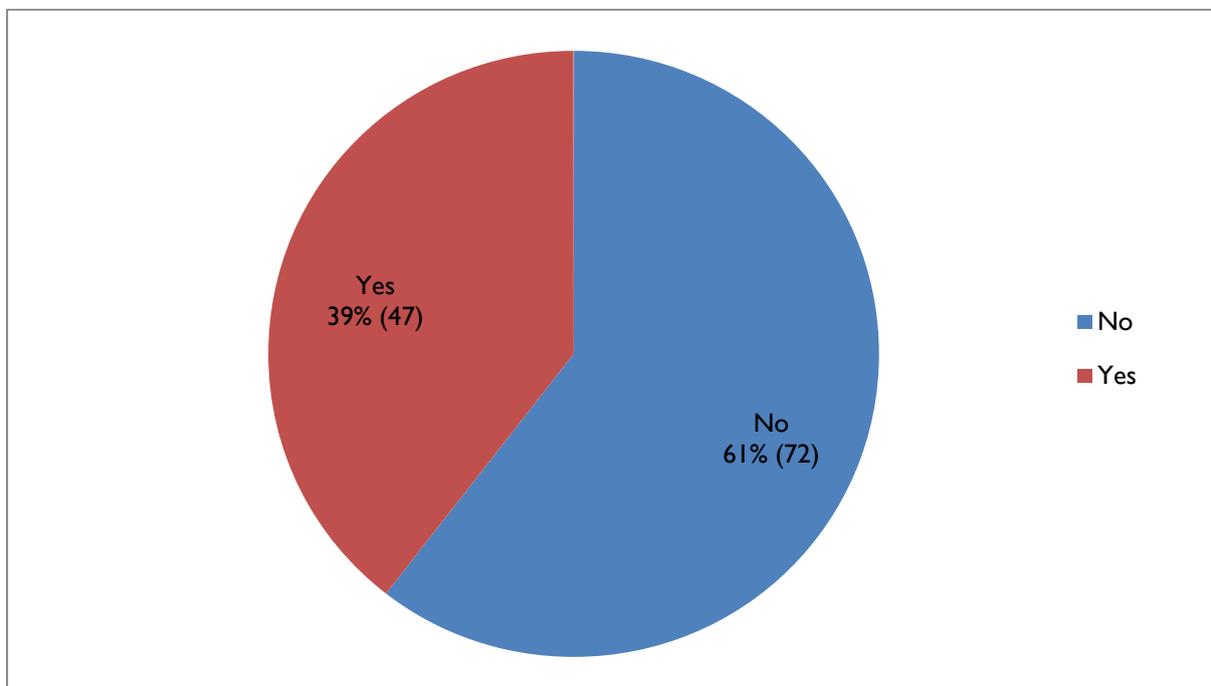


Figure 5.23: Faculty of Science: Distribution of respondents informed about the opportunity of an international exchange semester

When the same group of students were asked whether they would consider taking parting in an international exchange semester, if given the opportunity, only five responded negatively and indicated that they would not consider taking part, as shown in Figure 5.22.

The awareness of students of the possibility of taking part in an international exchange semester can also be considered from a peer perspective. The feedback obtained from respondents in the Faculty of Science shows that almost 40% of the respondents knew another student (at Stellenbosch University or another institution) that had taken part in an international exchange semester.

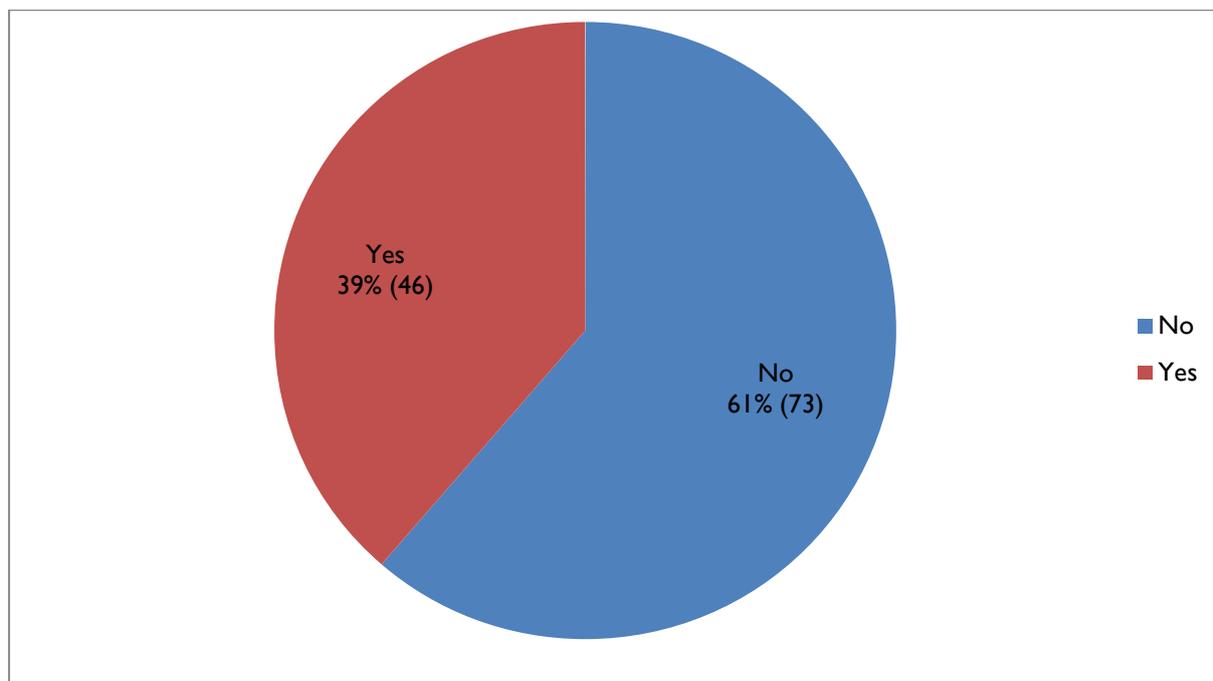


Figure 5.24: Faculty of Science: Distribution of student respondents who know somebody that took part in an international exchange semester

The analysis of their level of the awareness and inclination of students of the Faculty of Science to take part in an international exchange semester highlights the importance of developing a better understanding of the potential barriers to an international exchange semester. The assumption of a correlation between students' awareness and their consideration to take part in an international exchange semester was analysed statistically by means of a cross tabulation of these two variables, which revealed that the correlation was not statistically significant ($p = 0.36$). On the level of implementation, this creates a challenge, as creating awareness and informing students about the opportunities of an international exchange semester is one of the most important strategies to increase participation.

5.6.6 Faculty barriers to international exchange semesters

The preceding discussion provided an overview of the data obtained in the Faculty of Science. In the next part of the case study the barriers to international exchange semesters as identified by student and staff respondents are extracted and discussed.

5.6.6.1 *Barriers identified by students*

Students were requested to select the barriers to mobility from a prescribed list of barriers that was based on previous studies and observations made by the researcher. The seven potential barriers are listed in Table 5.6, which shows the number of responses to each of the proposed barriers.

Table 5.6: Faculty of Science: Barriers to international exchange semesters as identified by student respondents

List of barriers presented	Number of Respondents
Lack of information on opportunities	103 (87%)
Financial constraints	90 (76%)
Lack of information on process	81 (68%)
Restrictions of my programme	47 (39%)
Lack of support by Faculty	27 (23%)
Other responsibilities on campus	14 (12%)
Family responsibilities	12 (10%)
Other	1 (0,8%)

The undefined option was used by only one student who stated, “The degree you get [is] still from US not from the university [you] study at overseas. Big problem for me” (FOS Respondent, 2014). This succinct remark portrays a lack of understanding from the student perspective of the value of international experience as part of one’s degree that can lead to further academic experience such as degree mobility, as opposed to enrolling for a degree at a foreign institution.

Table 5.6 lists the barriers from high to low in terms of the number of responses and indicates the percentage of respondents that selected a particular barrier. The first three barriers received very high response rates; therefore, it can be assumed they are the most prevalent barriers to international exchange semesters in the Faculty of Science. I used a matrix to analyse and determine the combination of barriers that was most prevalent in the responses of students in the Faculty of Science. The results show that the combination of the two barriers, the *Lack of information on process* and *Lack of information on the available opportunities* has the highest prevalence with 68% of students selecting this combination of barriers. When the same analysis is performed with three barriers, the same two barriers emerge with the addition of *Financial constraints* forming the third barrier in the tri-combination.

5.6.6.2 Barriers identified by staff

The overview of responses obtained provides a Faculty perspective of student’s perspectives on the barriers to international exchange semesters, but these should not be viewed in isolation from the perspectives of staff. As indicated in the objectives of the study, the academic considerations with regard to an international exchange semester should also be analysed from the perspectives of programme coordinators and Faculty management. The perspectives from these stakeholders are particularly important to enhance the understanding of the potential barriers to international exchange semesters.

The lack of feedback from programme coordinators has already been highlighted as a shortcoming in the case study on the Faculty of Science. Programme Coordinator 1 provided a response that resonates with the findings on student level, namely that finances (FOS Programme Coordinator 1, 2014) is a barrier to international exchange semesters. The challenge of funding for international mobility is confirmed by the deputy dean: “Well, as a department, we don’t have funding. We are not going to pay you to go and do something over there; we don’t have that facility. Then we advise to go to the PGIO and find out” (Deputy Dean, FOS, 2014). The deputy dean also highlights the rigid nature of the curriculum as a barrier to international exchange semesters: “I mean, we get students to come in here quite regularly to even do maths courses and they get acknowledged elsewhere. But to what extent is South Africa being as flexible with regard to that?” (Deputy Dean, FOS, 2014).

Programme Coordinator 2 (2015) refers to the different ways in which course material might be presented and to what extent that would result in students not “[having] sufficient background knowledge for the course they are attending”. Programme Coordinator 3 (2015) also highlights issues regarding a mismatch between the Stellenbosch programme and the work completed during the exchange semester: “The missing of modules from a registered programme (approved by SAQA) which means the student does not actually meet the programme minimums” (FOS Programme Coordinator 3, 2015). This programme coordinator also refers to an important consideration in this regard, with reference to international exchange semesters: “This [the missing of modules] means the extension of the degree (likely four years) which reduces throughput rates” (FOS Programme Coordinator 3, 2015) These comments allude to the lack of knowledge of programme coordinators on how an international exchange semester works. This aspect is discussed further later in the dissertation.

A further comment by the deputy dean refers to the disparity in academic years, but the response is qualified immediately as a perceived barrier that can be addressed: “Part of it is also the timing, but I mean the European students manage to come here and sometimes do a project” (Deputy Dean, FOS, 2014). The barriers highlighted by the deputy dean can be grouped under *Differences in higher education systems*, as indicated in the study by Souto-Otero and others (2013), but at the same time, these barriers are also refuted in the sense that the deputy dean refers to experience that proves that, with some adjustment and creativity, the barriers can be addressed to promote mobility. Programme Coordinator 2 (2015) introduced a further barrier, namely the cultural differences between the home and host countries and the institution.

5.6.7 Faculty opportunities for international exchange semesters

One of the objectives of the study was to identify and discuss existing good practices in the Faculty to initiate the expansion of the practices into a more sustainable framework for the implementation of international exchange semesters as part of the curriculum of the Faculty. The preceding discussion has highlighted barriers identified by staff and students, but in the

analysis of data, three aspects that can be regarded as opportunities for international exchange semester have also emerged.

5.6.7.1 Support by the Faculty

Students listed the lack of support by the Faculty as the fifth barrier to international exchange semesters and, given the significantly lower number of responses for this barrier compared to the three major barriers, it can be assumed that students did not perceive the Faculty as resisting the practice of international exchange semesters. Given the positive input from the programme coordinators and the deputy dean, it can be assumed that there is sufficient support from departmental and management side to explore opportunities for international exchange semesters.

Student participants were requested to indicate if any lecturer had discussed the idea of going abroad as part of a study programme with them, and if so, what the context of the interaction was. The questionnaire did not list particular responses with regard to the context, but based on the responses and the coding of concepts done by the researcher, three categories were identified, namely a context to motivate students, a context to inform students, and a context of postgraduate studies. The responses to this question indicated a lack of engagement of staff with students on the topic of international experience as part of the study programme, with only five out of 119 (4.2%) student respondents indicating that a lecturer had discussed this topic with them in any context. The five respondents, who indicated that there had been interaction, indicated that this happened in an informative context. “The lecturer suggested that we find out about exchange programmes. His opinion is that employers take more note of those that have international exposure and experience” (FOS Respondent, 2014). The latter part of the response links with another respondent’s comments that the lecturer referred to an international mobility as “(g)aining experiences before working” (FOS Respondent, 2014). None of the respondents explicitly referred to the interaction in the context of postgraduate options, but all three programme coordinators referred to international mobility as having a better fit with postgraduate students.

Support from management level was explicit, and upon asking the deputy dean about the role academics can play in supporting international exchange semesters, the response was as follows: “I think we need to advertise it and open students’ minds” (Deputy Dean, Faculty of Science, 2014). The support in the Faculty can be seen as a major opportunity to investigate the possibility of including an international exchange semester in specific programmes, and in the same process identify alternative international experiences for students in the Faculty of Science.

5.6.7.2 Internationalisation@Home

The reference by the deputy dean to the participation of international students in the Faculty of Science is an indication that, on the one hand, there is an existing platform for promoting

more internationalisation@home activities to stimulate the outward mobility of students, but on the other hand, also as a goal in itself: “I mean, just to have an international student in class. In my third year (group), I had a German student and you hear the interaction: Oh I would love to come and visit...” (Deputy Dean, 2014).

5.6.7.3 *Alignment of programme outcomes and an international exchange semester*

Garam’s (2012) reference to including mobility experiences in the learning outcomes of programmes requires a more in-depth look at curriculum and programme structure. Such a micro perspective was not part of the study, but in principle, support for revisiting programme structure to facilitate the inclusion of an international exchange semester is present on managerial level. “I think it can be built in a lot more. I think we have students that have talent to do that. I guess we (i.e. staff) we need to make it more accessible by saying within our curriculum, if you were to do this, this is what it will mean for your programme. As we are doing teaching and learning, it might become more. Student-centred approach of learning ... as opposed to here is what you need to do and go. Well, my feeling is that you can also learn things in very different ways. And you can achieve the same modules in different ways” (Deputy Dean, FOS, 2014).

5.6.8 Conclusions on Case Study 3: Faculty of Science

The case study of the Faculty of Science used data obtained on all levels of analysis to describe the Faculty in terms of internationalisation on student level. The case study addressed the four objectives of the study, and the following observations can be made for each of the four objectives:

Objective 1 analysed the policy perspective on institutional and Faculty levels. The analysis on Faculty level provided some references to the international dimension and the role that the Faculty aimed to play in transferring such skills and knowledge to graduates.

Objective 2 focused on academic considerations with particular attention to the insight and support on Faculty level. The very low response from programme coordinators meant that the data on this level were so limited that it is difficult to make substantial conclusions. Based on the analysis of the single response from a programme coordinator and the deputy dean responsible for teaching, it can be deduced that there is some support by the department and management for the idea of incorporating an international exchange semester on a broader scale in undergraduate programmes in the Faculty.

Objective 3 explored the student perspective on the reasons why more undergraduate students did not participate in international academic exchange. The analysis showed that, although students could clearly identify the barriers to mobility, there was strong interest and unequivocal interest by students to participate in international exchange semesters. The barriers students listed as the most prevalent factors for not taking part in an international

exchange semester include *Lack of information on opportunities*, *Financial Constraints* and *Lack of information on the process*.

Objective 4 aimed at identifying existing practices that could be described as good practice. The overview of opportunities in the Faculty for international exchange semesters highlighted aspects such as support by the Faculty and the nature of science as an intrinsically international field of study to build on.

The case study presented on the Faculty of Science has resulted in a Faculty profile that illuminates the existing platform for internationalisation. The case study has further presented key findings on student and staff level pertaining to the barriers to an international exchange semester. The findings on Faculty level are discussed further in Chapter 6 as an overarching discussion on the trends identified among Faculties.

5.7 Case Study 4: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

5.7.1 Faculty profile

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences is the second largest Faculty at SU and boasts a student enrolment of 5 223 students, of whom the majority (3352 students) are enrolled in undergraduate programmes. The Faculty is divided broadly into three disciplinary areas, namely Arts, Languages, and Social Sciences. The Arts disciplinary stream consists of three departments, namely Drama, Music, and Visual Arts. The Languages disciplinary stream includes the Department of African languages, Department of Afrikaans and Dutch, Department of Ancient Studies, Department of English, Department of General Linguistics and the Department of Modern Foreign Languages. The latter includes German, French, and Chinese language studies. The Social Sciences stream is represented by the following departments: Geography and Environmental Sciences, History, Information Science, Journalism, Philosophy, Sociology and Social Anthropology, Political Science, and Psychology. This division into broad disciplinary areas is also demonstrated in the management structure of the Faculty, which will be discussed as part of the overview of data obtained in the Faculty. The Faculty is also home to ten academic centres that support the research and strategic endeavours of the Faculty.

5.7.2 Data sources

The data obtained in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences extended across all four levels of data, namely the student questionnaire, the responses from programme coordinators, interviews with deputy deans, and an analysis of strategic documents.

5.7.3 Document analysis: Vision and mission of the Faculty

The mission of the Faculty is stated on its website as “the discovery, transfer and application of knowledge for the promotion of the human sciences, and the enrichment and enhancement of the quality of life of the people of this region, country and continent” (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, 2014).

The vision of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences makes a clear connection with the desired levels of impact by stating that “the Faculty wishes to be a dynamic and internationally acknowledged centre of academic leadership in the Western Cape, South Africa, and the rest of Africa” (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, 2014). To a certain extent, the multiple contexts in which the Faculty aims to be a role player can be linked to the Institutional Intent and Strategy, which explicitly refers to the local and national relevance the institution aims to foster. The unequivocal reference to the “rest of Africa” confirms the continental reach the Faculty wishes to achieve. The reference to quality and excellence can also be linked to the definition of internationalisation of higher education stated by De Wit (2012) and used in this study, namely that internationalisation is a process to upgrade the quality of education and research by introducing intercultural, international, and global dimensions in higher education.

The vision of the Faculty contains five areas of action that support the overall vision. The first is to be a “sought-after base for training in the humanities, in particular the Arts, Languages and Social Sciences”. The focus on excellence is captured by the second vision point, namely to “(provide) excellent teaching and research that is relevant to the region, country and continent, and is internationally competitive”. The third vision point is to “[implement] innovative initiatives in community service and make a contribution towards developing a just society”. The fourth point addresses the national goals of access and equity by stating that the Faculty should strive to be “accessible to all members of the South African population who qualify for university admission”. The final area of action is a more holistic statement on the stakeholders of the Faculty that can be linked to the benefits of international exposure in terms of student development and engagement. The vision point is not clear in terms of the beneficiaries to which the statement refers, but one interpretation could be that the Faculty envisions that it will be an enriching environment in terms of “its teaching, research and service provision by a representative staff, with an institutional culture that promotes the optimal fulfilment of human potential and characterised by a participative, empowering ethos that exploits language and cultural differences as an asset” (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, 2014).

The vision and mission of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences maintains a balance between national imperatives as highlighted in the institutional policy documents, while clearly striving towards developing an international profile. The overarching themes of excellence and relevance are important markers to link with the institutional vision but also with the rationale of internationalisation of higher education, as discussed in Chapter 2.

The vision and mission of the Faculty discussed in the previous section do not make any explicit references to the type of graduate they wish to deliver, but given the framework that

is created by the vision and mission of the Faculty as well as the institutional Strategy on Teaching and Learning (Stellenbosch University, 2013b), the SU graduate attributes can be applied. Even though the Faculty does not have a further set of graduate attributes, the references to the set of skills of graduates can be linked directly to the institutional graduate profile discussed in the Strategy on Teaching and Learning.

5.7.4 Staff responses

5.7.4.1 *Overview*

Fourteen programmes were included in the study; yet, only four programme coordinators responded to the questionnaire. Although the response rate of the programme coordinators was low, the responses represented at least two of the three disciplinary areas, namely Social Sciences and Languages. The data obtained from the interviews with the deputy deans added to the input at staff level, and also covered two of the three disciplinary streams, namely Arts and Social Sciences.

The difference in the management structures of this Faculty compared to the three other cases needs to be highlighted. In the Faculty of the Arts and Social Sciences, the position of the deputy dean is not linked to a responsibility area, i.e. teaching or research as in other Faculties, but to the broad division of disciplines in the Faculty namely Social Sciences, Languages, and Arts. Each of the disciplinary foci has a deputy dean who has an overarching management responsibility with regard to all aspects pertaining to that disciplinary focus, including but not limited to teaching and research matters, strategic development, and human resources. Two of the deputy deans took part in the study and were interviewed with a semi-structured interview protocol. The third deputy dean was willing to take part in the study but due to scheduling challenges, could not take part in an interview. The interviews were transcribed and analysed to address the objectives as detailed in the +explanation of the methodology used in this study.

5.7.4.2 *Profile of staff participants*

The purpose of the questionnaire and interviews with staff respondents was to gain insight into their perspectives and knowledge pertaining to international exchange semesters. This investigation also captured information on the personal and professional profiles of respondents. The period of employment is indicative of the generational profile that can point to particular viewpoints or reservations regarding international exchange semesters. The employment history could also give an indication of previous international experience. The employment profile of staff respondent revealed that three of the respondents had been employed in the higher education sector for 15 years or more, while the other two had been in the sector for at least five years. Three of the respondents indicated their previous involvement in other higher education institutions. The employment history of the staff respondents also included employment in industry, the education sector, and foreign affairs.

The international profile of respondents can be categorised broadly into teaching and research activities. Only one of the respondents indicated experience in teaching abroad and an international qualification as part of his/her profile. Another respondent indicated participation in an international exchange semester, while all the others referred to research-related activities such as supervision, attendance of international conferences, and participation in international research projects.

The initial responses of staff respondents seem to indicate significant international exposure. The actual perspectives of staff with regard to international exchange semesters are discussed further in the case study.

5.7.4.3 *Staff perceptions on graduate attributes*

The graduate attributes have already been highlighted as a framework for incorporating an international experience into undergraduate programmes. Programme coordinators were requested to respond to the ways in which an international exchange semester could address the graduate attributes. The responses by all four programme coordinators indicate that an international exchange semester can contribute to delivering graduates of this calibre. Programme Coordinator 1 (2014) focused on the attribute of being a *well-rounded individual*, while Programme Coordinator 4 (2015) “firmly believe[s] that the current programme would contribute to development in all four key areas”.

The programme coordinators also linked the graduate attributes, programme outcomes and international exchange semesters in a positive way. Programme Coordinator 3 (2015) stated that the international exchange semester “would contribute to the required graduate attributes, since students will have an opportunity to grow both academically and culturally and increase interaction and networking opportunities”. The response implies that the programme outcomes of the applicable programme are already aligned with the graduate attributes and that an international exchange semester can be incorporated sensibly.

5.7.5 Student responses

5.7.5.1 *Overview*

The questionnaire was sent to all final- and pre-final-year students in general formative programmes, a pool size of 1 827 students. The questionnaire was completed by 144 students, which generated a response rate of 8%. The table below provides an overview of the responses obtained in each of the relevant programmes.

Table 5.7: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Student responses per programme

Programme	Respondents	Population size	Percentage
BA Humanities	37	524	7%
BA in Music (including General and Music Technology)	1	10	10%
B of Music (B Mus)	8	58	14%
BA in International Studies	18	152	12%
BA in Human Resource Management	3	45	7%
BA in Political, Philosophical and Economic Studies	7	66	16%
BA in Development and the Environment	5	139	4%
BA in Social Dynamics	8	147	5%
BA in Socio-Informatics	3	27	11%
BA in Language and Culture	32	190	17%
BA in Visual Arts (including Fine Arts)	12	172	7%
BA in Drama and Theatre Studies	8	128	6%
BA in Value and Policy Studies	2	33	6%
BA in Sport Science	0	136	0%
Total	144	1827	7.9%

The responses per programme were relatively high, with six out of fourteen programmes generating a response rate of more than 10%. The potential number of respondents in the BA in Sport Science was also big, but there were no respondents in this programme. The lack of responses from students in the BA Sport Science programme had a negative effect on the overall response rate of the Faculty. A similar low response rate was obtained in the BSc Sport Science programme (Case Study 3) and could be indicative of a lack of international importance in the field.

The highest response rates on programme level were obtained from students in the BA Language and Culture programme (17%), BA in Political, Philosophical and Economic Studies (16%), B in Music (14%) and the BA in International Studies (12%). The lack of further qualitative data from student respondents restricts the researcher from further insight into programme-specific reasons for high or low response rates, but a possible interpretation could be that these fields of study are more disposed to international experience.

5.7.5.2 Demographic profile of student respondents

Three specific demographic features were analysed in terms of the contribution or barrier that they could create for international exchange semesters. The first was gender, the second was the nationality of respondents, and finally language proficiency.

(a) Gender distribution

The responses obtained shown in Figure 5.25 show a distribution of 76% female respondents versus 24% male respondents. The gender distribution is consistent with the overall gender distribution in undergraduate programmes in the Faculty namely 72% female and 28% male.

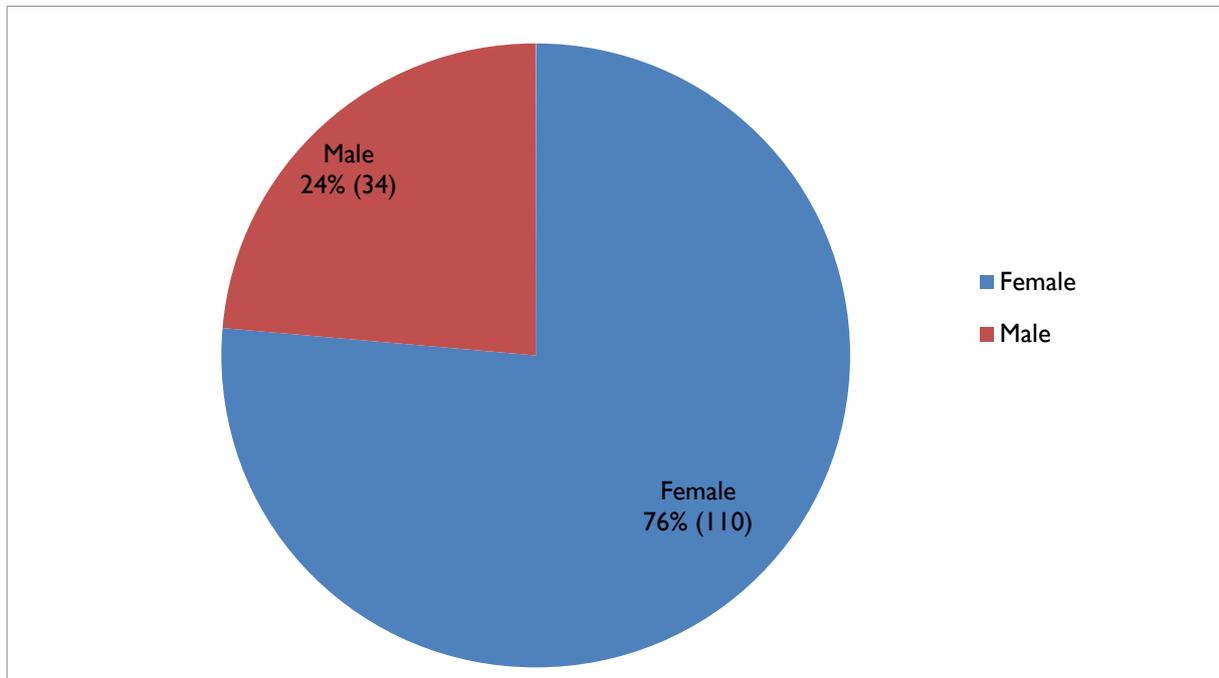


Figure 5.25: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Gender distribution of student respondents

(b) Country of birth

The second demographic indicator that was included in the study was the country of birth of respondents. The country of birth would partially illustrate the profile of the Faculty in terms of nationality but also provide insight into the potential international experience of participants. Figure 5.24 gives a graphic overview of the responses and indicates the number of students from a particular country in brackets.

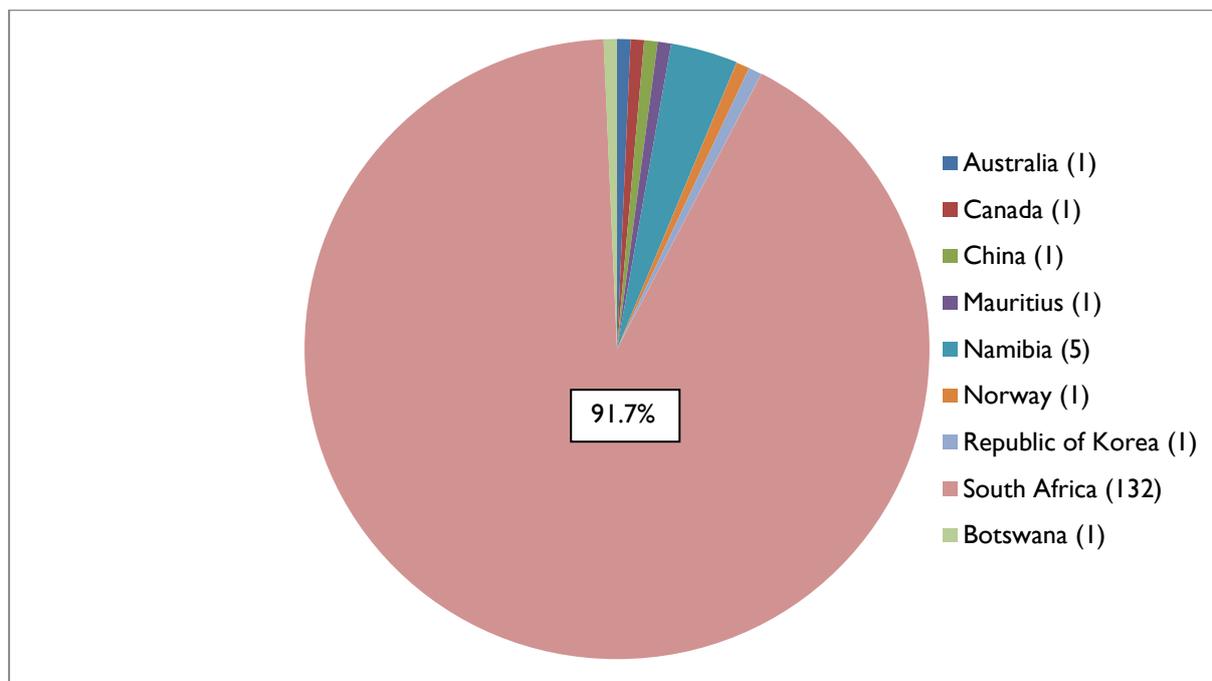


Figure 5.26: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Country of birth of student respondents

(c) Language proficiency of respondents

As mentioned, the language proficiency of students was included as a demographic indicator but the influence that language proficiency of students had on their motivation or their tendency to take part in a study abroad experience can also be interpreted as a barrier or motivator for participation in an international academic experience. Language is a key aspect of the international experience, and the motivation for students to take part in an international experience can be driven or hampered by language (Ahn, 2011; IIE, 2014b).

The questionnaire requested respondents to indicate their language proficiency. The results are illustrated in Figure 5.27.

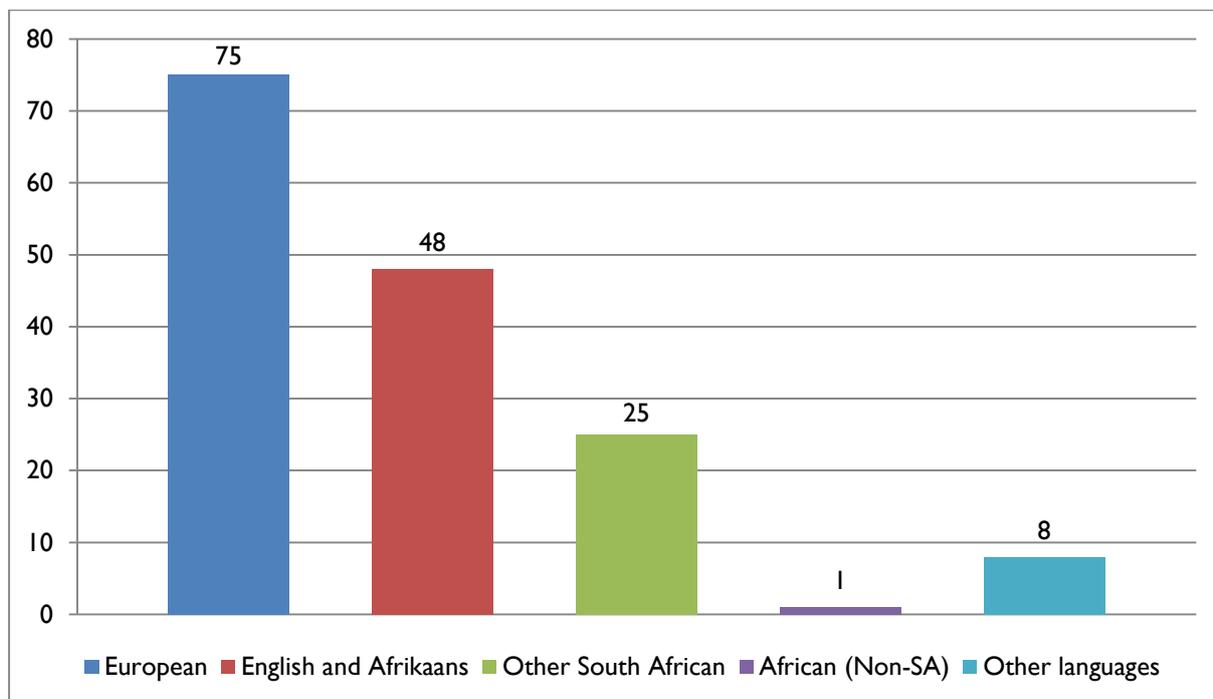


Figure 5.27: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Language profile of student respondents per category

As seen in the graphic depiction of the language proficiency of respondents, 75 out of 144 respondents indicated some level of proficiency in a European language. This actually exceeds the number of students that indicated that they could speak only English and/or Afrikaans. The dominant languages listed in the European languages category were German and French. The high level of language proficiency of respondents is consistent with the types of programmes offered in the Faculty. The dominant responses also coincide with the languages that are offered by the Faculty. The low number of students who indicated *Other* can be interpreted as a reflection of the languages that students select in the programmes of the Faculty. Language Studies is a component in most of the programmes included in this study, and it is disconcerting that students do not take part in international opportunities to utilise the set of skills that a foreign language offers.

5.7.5.3 International exposure of respondents

The list of options regarding the international exposure of students was listed already. The responses obtained in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences are shown in Figure 5.28.

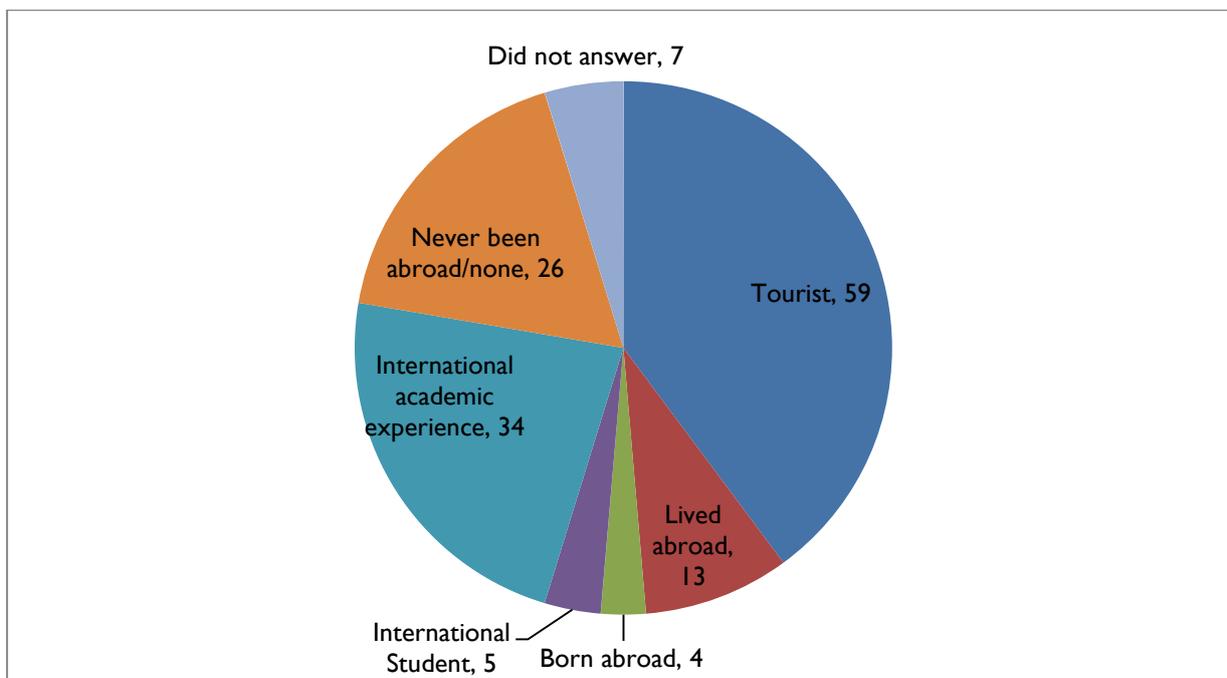


Figure 5.28: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Types of international exposure of student respondents

Respondents did not have the option to select “No international experience”, but *Other* was part of the options, and 26 respondents indicated under this option that they *Have not travelled* or have *None of the above*.

An interesting trend emerged from the responses to the question of how students interpret the idea of international exposure. The options provided listed only international exposure where mobility was involved, i.e. one had to travel outside of South Africa. The responses obtained from students made a link with international experience gained on campus. Examples of responses are “The only ‘international experience’ I’ve had are the friends I make from abroad (the international students)” and “I have quite a lot of international friends” (FASS Respondent, 2014). The interpretation of students on what international experience entails can be linked to internationalisation@home, and as indicated in Chapters 2 and 3, the inclusion of an international dimension into the experience of students can also be implemented by means of on-campus international experiences such as those highlighted by the respondents in the Faculty.

The response of students concerning their previous international experiences did not include further qualitative data to determine the level of their engagement with the international dimension. However, it can be indicative of taking part in future international experiences with a predominant focus on study abroad. An analysis of the responses of students to the question if they wish to take part in an international exchange semester indicates that the responses were all positive, with the exception of six respondents who indicated that they would not be interested in taking part in an international exchange semester. Figure 5.27 graphically depicts the responses obtained on students’ consideration to take part in an international exchange semester.

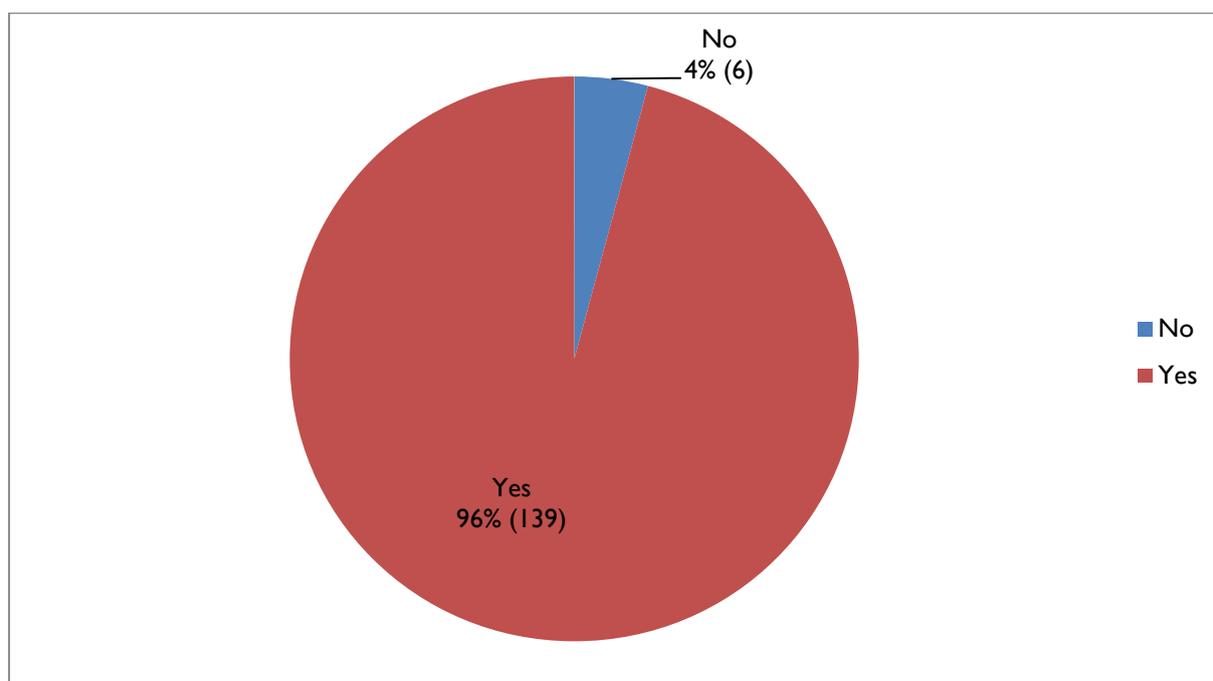


Figure 5.29: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Student respondents considering taking part in an international exchange semester

The effect of previous international experience or exposure to international dimensions as a potential indicator of students being interested in a further international experience in their university studies as well as a higher tendency for students with previous international experiences to take part in such opportunities during their studies is discussed in Chapter 2. If this hypothesis is tested with the data obtained in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the cross-tabulated responses yields a p-value of 0.4, which does not indicate any statistical significance that students who have previous international experience are more likely to consider taking part in an international exchange semester. Students' awareness of and interest in an international exchange semester are analysed in more depth later in this case study.

5.7.5.4 Student respondents' awareness of international exchange semester opportunities

The preceding discussion on international exposure and the statistical analysis of the correlation between international exposure and the consideration to take part in an international exchange semester already indicated the awareness of students. A common assumption exists that the low uptake of international exchange semesters can be ascribed to students being uninformed or ill informed about the existence of such opportunities. This assumption was tested by determining if students were informed about the opportunity offered by Stellenbosch University to take part in an international exchange semester.

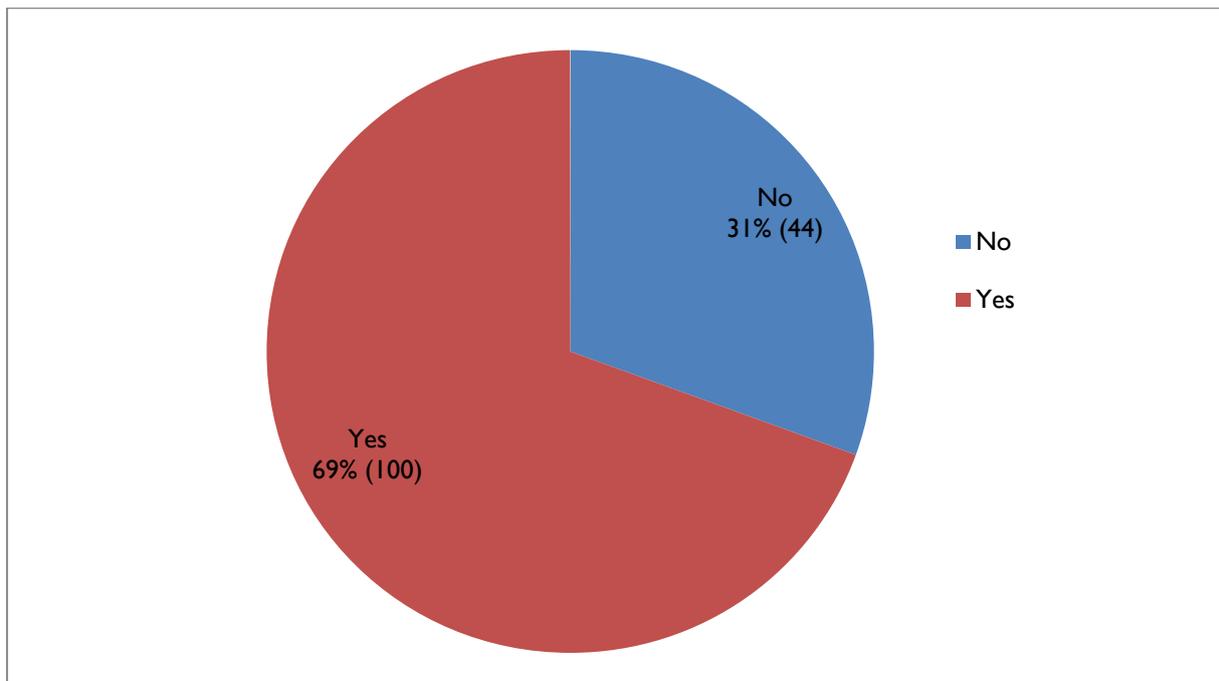


Figure 5.30: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Distribution of respondents informed about the opportunity of an international exchange semester

When the same group of students were asked if they would consider taking parting in an international exchange semester if they were given the opportunity, all the respondents, with the exception of six respondents, indicated that they would indeed consider such an opportunity, as shown in Figure 5.30.

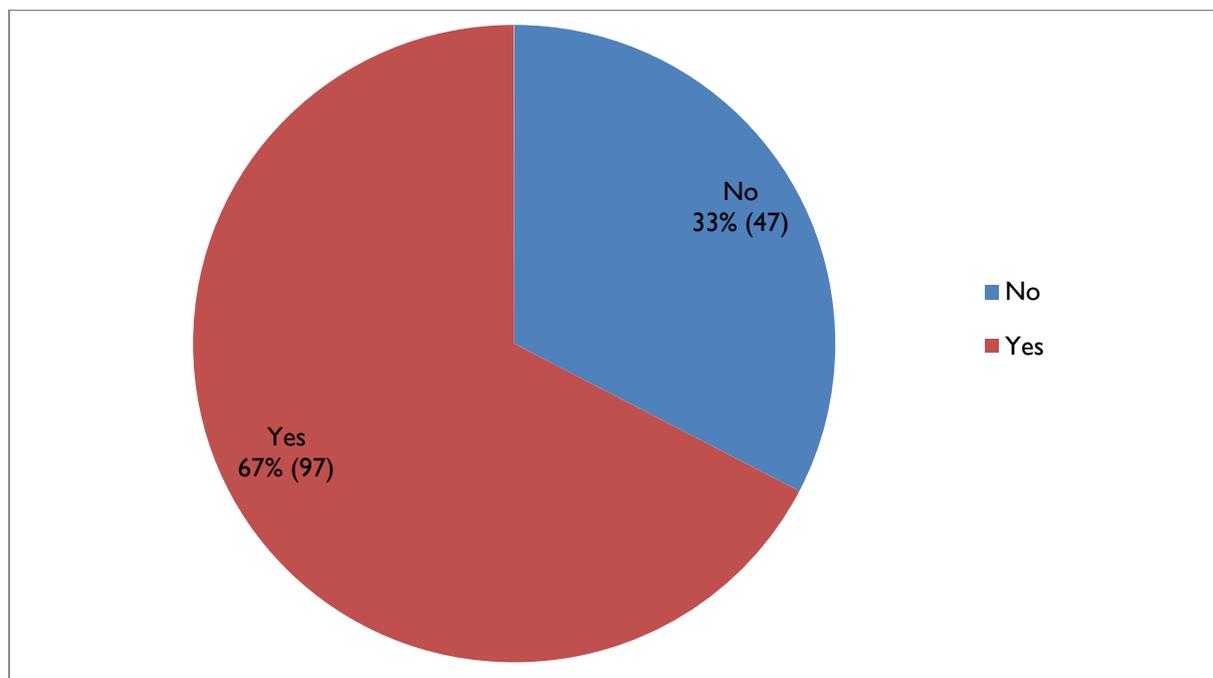


Figure 5.31: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Distribution of student respondents who know somebody that took part in an international exchange semester

The assumption on the correlation between students' awareness and the consideration to take part in an international exchange semester was tested by a cross tabulation of these two variables. This statistical analysis produced a p-value of 0.03, which indicates that there is a positive correlation between the two variables, which is statistically significant.

5.7.6 Faculty barriers to international exchange semesters

The research aim of this study is to gain a better understanding of the potential factors that create a barrier to international academic exchange semesters for undergraduate students. The aim stems from the dilemma that there is an imbalance of exchange students coming to Stellenbosch and going to the exchange partners of the institution; yet, the increased mobility of students is seen as one of the major trends in international education in the past five years (Kandiko and Weyers, 2013). The notion of internationalisation of higher education and an international exchange semester are discussed in depth in Chapter 2 and outlined further in an institutional context in Chapter 3. The preceding discussion provides an overview of the data obtained in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. In the next part of the case study, the barriers to international exchange semesters as identified by student and staff respondents are extracted and discussed.

5.7.6.1 Barriers identified by students

The researcher introduced seven potential barriers of an international exchange semester to student respondents with the option to list further barriers they considered as impeding participation in international exchange semesters.

Table 5.8: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Barriers to international exchange semesters as identified by student respondents

	Number of Respondents
Lack of information on opportunities	117 (81%)
Financial constraints	116 (81%)
Lack of information on process	88 (61%)
Restrictions of my programme	58 (40%)
Lack of support from Faculty	40 (28%)
Other responsibilities on campus	23 (16%)
Family responsibilities	9 (6%)
Other	7 (5%)

The table of responses shows that particularly the first four barriers introduced to students received a very high response. The fact that the results indicate *Lack of information on opportunities* as the barrier selected most by respondents (81%), yet the information obtained on the awareness of students indicate that 69% of students know about the option of taking part in an international exchange semester, raises concerns about the manner in which information regarding the opportunities for international exchange semesters is conveyed to students. The barrier that received the same percentage of responses as *Lack of information on opportunities* is *Financial constraints* and indicates to what extent a lack of funds or access to financial resources creates a barrier to international exchange semesters. It is important to communicate existing financial resources provided by the PGIO and partners (see Section 3.5.2ii) widely in Faculties.

One response refers to the lack of support on institutional level: “Lack of support from international office when it comes to matching courses at partner universities. I found the whole process very stressful, as the international office was not the most helpful, to be honest. I know two other students who also found the international office to be unhelpful and disinterested” (FASS Respondent, 2014). Although this is an isolated response, it is important to consider the level of support pertaining to an international exchange semester students expect during the entire process and to what extent different role players can address the expectations of students. For example, can a support unit be responsible for academic considerations such as the matching of content and credit value of a particular course? However, the service provided by the Postgraduate & International Office is identified in this response as a potential barrier to international exchange semesters; therefore, it is important that this unit ensures it provides a service that will empower students to participate. The response also links to previous observations regarding the

awareness of students and introduces the idea that students require information that is more specific pertaining to academic considerations prior to making a decision to take part in an international exchange semester.

The discussion on language proficiency in the Faculty alluded to the role of language in participation in an international exchange semester, and the sentiment was confirmed by one participant who mentioned “not being able to speak the local language” as a barrier to mobility (FASS Respondent, 2014).

5.7.6.2 *Barriers identified by staff*

The questionnaire distributed to programme coordinators, as well as the interview questions with the deputy deans, did not provide a prescribed list of barriers. Staff respondents were requested to provide a response from their own experience of exposure to international exchange semesters.

On management level, the support for an international exchange semester was expressed by both deputy deans who took part in the study, but both highlighted the barriers imposed by the programme structure. “I think it is a wonderful opportunity for students ... for me, I think the student must have a clear idea of where the courses completed at the partner university fits within the broader programme and the programme outcomes. So the semester must be planned and organised in a way that would not be academically disruptive to the student” (*Ek dink dis 'n wonderlike geleentheid vir studente ... vir my, ek dink die student moet goeie begrip hê van waar die modules wat elders gedoen gaan word, by die breër program inpas, en hoe sluit dit aan by die uitkomst van die program; so, 'n mens moet dit so beplan en organiseer dat dit nie akademies ontwrigtend is vir die student nie*) (Deputy Dean, FASS, 2014). The other deputy dean highlighted two key aspects pertaining to programme structure, namely the recognition of credits and the difference in academic semesters: “Maybe I can mention something that I deem a structural problem, and that is the difference in semester times” (*Miskien kan ek net nou een iets noem wat ek op die oomblik dink ook 'n strukturele probleem is, en dit is dat die semesters tydgewys verskillend gaan wees*) (Deputy Dean, FASS, 2014). The structural challenges of an international exchange semester were also highlighted by programme coordinators listing “year programmes” (Programme Coordinator 3, 2015; Programme Coordinator 4, 2015) and timing of exchange semesters (Programme Coordinator 2, 2015). The reference to timing by Programme Coordinator 2 (2015) was substantiated by suggesting that exchange semesters should be restricted to students in the second and third year of their studies. All these aspects can be grouped under the theme “difference in higher education structures”, as proposed by Souto-Otero et al. (2013) in a similar study in the European context.

The validity of responses pertaining to structural challenges should be evaluated against the existing practices of international exchange semesters, and recommendations for the implementation of international exchange semesters should address these structural challenges.

Programme Coordinator 4 introduced another barrier to the discussion, namely the perception created by the official documents of the Faculty that refer to the programme structure and content of programmes. “Perhaps the yearbook and/or University rules create the impression that students need to earn all their credits at Stellenbosch and that they need to complete the specific modules offered within our programme ... This may prevent students from exploring this option, especially if there is no leniency with regard to the credit allocation of existing compulsory modules.” The latter part of the comment can be linked to the structural challenges and barriers already discussed in this section.

The programme coordinators confirmed financial constraints as one of the barriers to international exchange semesters, which is consistent with the barriers identified by students. The specialisation of programmes in the South African context was also introduced as a barrier to international exchange semester. The notion that an academic programme should be suitable only in a particular national and/or geographical context challenges the principles of internationalisation of the curriculum and the overarching theme of internationalisation of higher education.

Two of the programme coordinators mentioned another barrier: Programme Coordinator 2 and Programme Coordinator 4 highlighted the choice of partner universities and information available about these partners as potential barriers to international exchange semesters. Programme Coordinator 4 (2015) referred to the challenges of “[f]inding a suitable partner university where they would gain relevant information ... So, students would have to do their own homework about other suitable partner universities.” Thus, an international partnership network that is similar but also complementary to the Stellenbosch curriculum is an important aspect to consider. The recommendations in Chapter 6 refer back to this point.

One of the two deputy deans also introduced the challenges pertaining to cultural adaptation as a potential barrier: “I think the challenge can also be to adapt to the everyday life in a foreign country” (*En dan dink ek die uitdaging is maar om aan te pas by die ‘everyday life’-omstandighede in ’n vreemde land*) (Deputy Dean, FASS, 2014).

5.7.7 Faculty opportunities for international exchange semesters

One of the objectives of the study was to identify and discuss existing good practices in the Faculty to initiate the expansion of these practices into a more sustainable framework for the implementation of international exchange semesters as part of the curriculum of the Faculty. For this purpose, I focused on the opportunities for international exchange semesters that were identified in the case study on the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

5.7.7.1 *Disciplinary focus areas of the Faculty*

The focus on a foreign language described in the discussion about prevalence and type of interaction between students and staff about the notion of and participation in an

international exchange semester has highlighted points of interest in terms of the rationale for students in Languages to participate in an international exchange semester.

The possibility that the Faculty could create opportunities for students in foreign languages to take part in an international exchange semester is a central theme in the data obtained by means of the student questionnaire. The students in Modern Foreign Languages have a distinct advantage in terms of their existing language ability. The importance of an international exchange semester was highlighted by Programme Coordinator 2 (2015), who stated, “[I]deally, all undergraduate students should spend a semester in the country where the foreign language they study is spoken.” A further focused disciplinary area that leans towards an international exchange semester is the BA in International Studies, of which the very nature and focus imply international exposure and experience.

5.7.7.2 Support by academic staff

Student participants were requested to indicate if any lecturer had discussed the idea of going abroad as part of a study programme with them, and if so, what the context of the interaction was. The questionnaire did not list particular responses with regard to the context, but based on the responses and the coding of concepts done by the researcher, three categories were identified, namely a context to motivate students, a context to inform students, and in the context of postgraduate studies.

Of the 144 respondents in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, 119 students indicated that no lecturer had ever mentioned the idea of going abroad as part of a study programme. An analysis of the responses in which students indicated a lecturer had engaged them on the topic of going abroad shows that the majority of students mentioned interactions aimed at informing them about the opportunities, and 20 respondents referred to the interaction as informative. “Our lecturer e-mailed the class on going to Germany as part of an exchange program for second-year German students” (FASS Respondent, 2014). Another respondent indicated that the interaction was “during a lecture” (FASS Respondent, 2014), and yet another respondent specified the lecture in which the interaction took place as “(i)n the German lecture” (FASS Respondent, 2014). A number of respondents referred specifically to the interaction being directed towards an international exchange semester, stating a lecturer mentioned “(a) semester abroad at a German University” (FASS Respondent, 2014). Another respondent listed two instances where a lecturer engaged on the topic of going abroad and also made reference to the motivation for taking part in international mobility, namely personal development: “German and Chinese class as part of the course or for personal enrichment” (FASS Respondent, 2014). One respondent listed multiple international experiences that were discussed by a lecturer: “Chinese lecturers have mentioned the opportunity of participating in a summer school in China, as well as spending a semester abroad during the honours programme. In addition, opportunities to win scholarships to study in China should one win or do well in Chinese Bridge Chinese Language Proficiency competitions. And government bursaries from the Chinese Government for study of Mandarin Chinese in China” (FASS Respondent, 2014). The benefits of going abroad were also reiterated by a respondent who stated that a discussion

by a lecturer occurred “(i)n political science about the educational benefits of travelling” (FASS Respondent, 2014). Another student confirmed the benefits of an international exchange semester highlighted by a lecturer as follows: “He said it would be good to study abroad (perhaps Germany) for six months in the field of music technology” (*Hy het gesê dit sal goed wees om vir ses maande miskien in Duitsland te studeer in die veld van musiektegnologie*) (FASS Respondent, 2014).

Five respondents highlighted the context of postgraduate studies as a context in which lecturers discussed an international exchange semester. One respondent indicated that “(a) meeting to discuss postgraduate options” was held (FASS Respondent, 2014). Another respondent highlighted different instances where an international exchange semester on postgraduate level was mentioned, both in the division of Languages: “French lecturers have mentioned the opportunity to do a teaching assistant-ship o(r) master’s in France after the honours programme.”

Based on the responses of students and staff, it is clear that lecturers in the field of Modern Foreign Languages (as it is categorised at Stellenbosch University) informed and motivated students to gain international experience as part of their studies more frequently than in other disciplines in the Faculty. The response of Programme Coordinator 2 (2015), which has already been referred to, confirms the explicit support of exchange semesters.

5.7.8 Conclusions on Case Study 4: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

The data obtained in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences were used to create a case study that described the Faculty in terms of international exchange semesters and highlighted aspects concerning internationalisation on student level. The case study incorporated data obtained from the student perspective, academic staff members, and management. The case study addressed all four objectives of the research study and made the following preliminary findings on Faculty level on each of the objectives:

Objective 1 considered the context that was created by the institutional and Faculty policies that either hindered or enabled international exchange semesters. The analysis showed that the context created by these policies did create a platform for international experience rather than create a barrier.

Objective 2 addressed the academic considerations with regard to an international exchange semester, and the findings showed that the academic fields in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences were particularly conducive to including an international exchange semester. However, the low level of input from programme coordinators was an obstacle; therefore, the case study lacks depth in terms of the opinions of academic staff members.

Objective 3 focused on the perspectives of students and revealed that there was significant interest from students to take part in an international exchange semester, but that it was not sufficient for international exchange semesters to gain ground in the Faculty. The language

profile of student respondents and the disciplinary foci of the Faculty are key aspects to consider in a framework for implementation.

Objective 4 highlighted good practices pertaining to international exchange semesters that have been identified by means of this case study and data obtained in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The specific academic *foci* in the Faculty and the broad engagement of staff with students on the topic of international mobility can be highlighted as two strengths on which to build a strategy for increasing the participation of students in international exchange semesters, and even include compulsory semesters abroad as part of specific programmes, for example the BA in International Studies and programmes in languages.

The platform for international exchange semesters revealed in the case study of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences should be utilised more constructively to include international mobility opportunities on a wider scale. The disciplinary focus areas, the vision and mission, as well as the documented engagement of academic staff of the Faculty with students on the topic of international exchange semesters, or more broadly international mobility, are three critical strengths of the Faculty that should be exploited for increased participation of undergraduate students.

5.8 Conclusions

Chapter 5 reports on analyses of the data that were collected on the multiple levels of the study on the potential barriers to international exchange semesters in four Faculties. The analyses of data have resulted in four case studies that provide a descriptive overview of the state of affairs with regard to international exchange semesters. The results show that, although certain aspects of the barriers to international exchange semesters can be linked directly to particular Faculties, the overarching themes of lack of Faculty support, programme restrictions, and financial constraints are consistent in all Faculties.

The case studies highlighted important aspects concerning international mobility on undergraduate level that can be used in future research on the phenomenon of international exchange semesters in the South African context.

The emerging trends have been discussed briefly and are addressed further in the recommendations for the development of international mobility of students in the final chapter of this dissertation. The final chapter also addresses the limitations and further areas for research that have emerged from this study.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

The analyses of data on the potential barriers to international exchange semesters discussed in Chapter 5 resulted in case studies of each of the four Faculties included in the study, namely AgriSciences, Arts and Social Sciences, Science, as well as Economic and Management Sciences. The chapter presents key findings on the international mobility of undergraduate students at Stellenbosch University by means of international exchange semesters on Faculty level.

Chapter 6, the final chapter in this dissertation, provides overall conclusions to the study conducted on the potential barriers to international exchange semesters at Stellenbosch University. The conclusions draw on the four case studies presented in Chapter 5 and include references to local and international literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The chapter considers similarities and differences between Faculties. Based on the trends that emerged from the four case studies, the chapter proposes potential institutional barriers to international exchange semesters. The chapter provides overall conclusions on the barriers to mobility on three levels of analysis, namely the level of students, the level of Faculty policy and staff perspectives, and the level of institutional policy. The final chapter also proposes recommendations for the implementation of international exchange semesters based on the findings of the study. Finally, the chapter provides recommendations for future studies of this nature.

6.2 Summary of data obtained

The case studies on each of the Faculties included provided significant insight into the barriers to international exchange semester per Faculty. The case study approach enabled the researcher to create a comprehensive depiction of a concept that is under-explored in the South African context. The data obtained by means of quantitative and qualitative methods are discussed in detail in each of the four case studies presented in Chapter 5.

The number of student responses per Faculty is illustrated in Figure 5.3 and shows the difference in sample and population sizes. The responses per Faculty, as shown in Figure 5.3 and as discussed in each of the four case studies, show a response rate of approximately 8%, except in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, where the response rate is almost 2% lower. The Faculty of Science had the highest response rate of 8.6%. The differences in the response rates of the Faculties are discussed in the four case studies.

The programme coordinators in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences had the highest feedback rate of all Faculties, while in the Faculty with the highest number of programmes, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, only four programme coordinators out

of a possible 14 responded to the questionnaire. The overview of responses by programme coordinators is illustrated by Figure 5.2.

6.3 Comparative perspectives

In line with the case study design discussed in Chapter 4 (Section 4.3.3), the four case studies presented in Chapter 5 yielded comprehensive insight into the phenomenon of international exchange semesters in the particular Faculty contexts. The case study design also required a comparative overview of the presented case studies. I shall highlight the most significant aspects that emerged from the four case studies as a background to the discussion of the aim and objectives in Section 6.4. Some of the comparative perspectives are included in the discussion in Section 6.4.

Student respondents in the four Faculties reveal insightful perspectives on each of the three demographic indicators, namely gender, country of birth, and language proficiency. The gender distribution in three of the Faculties (Economic and Management Sciences, Science, and AgriSciences) is fairly consistent with a 10% variance in male/female division ranging between 42% / 58% (Science) and 55% / 45% (Economic and Management Sciences). The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences presented a very different division with a 24%/76% male/female distribution. The Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences was the only Faculty that had more male than female respondents. If the male/female ratio of respondents is compared with the male/female division in undergraduate programmes in each Faculty, two Faculties (the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences) were an almost exact match, while the other two Faculties (the Faculty of AgriSciences and the Faculty of Science) showed significant variation.

The *Country of birth* revealed that all Faculties yielded a majority response of South African students. The Faculty of AgriSciences had a very limited distribution of countries with respondents from only South Africa and Namibia; thus, only one continent was represented in the responses. The other three Faculties had a more diverse profile of countries of origin but with a consistent majority of respondents from other African countries. When the countries of origin are grouped in terms of continents, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences had the most diverse profile with respondents from five continents (Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and Australia).

The third demographic indicator, namely *Language proficiency*, highlighted that three Faculties (the Faculty of AgriSciences, the Faculty of Science, and the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences) were dominated by the option selected by students who indicated that they could speak only English and Afrikaans, but in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, more than half of the students indicated that they had some level of proficiency in a European language. The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences also yielded the highest number of responses with regard to proficiency in other South African languages. The distinct difference in language proficiency in this Faculty can be ascribed to the programme schedule, as discussed in Section 5.7.5.2(c).

Responses to *International exposure* from the four Faculties also revealed interesting emerging perspectives. All four Faculties showed a very high level of international exposure, and the type of exposure was dominated by tourism activities. The only Faculty where more than half of the respondents *did not* indicate that they had had international exposure by means of tourism activities was the Faculty of Science. The Faculty of Science was also the Faculty with the most respondents that indicated that they had no international exposure. All the Faculties showed a significant number of respondents who indicated an international academic experience as part of their international exposure, with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences indicating the highest number of students per number of responses indicating that they had taken part in an international academic experience.

The four case studies presented an overview of the awareness of students and their intent to participate in an international exchange semester. The awareness of students of the opportunity to take part in an international exchange semester consistently indicated that at least a third of respondents per Faculty were aware of the opportunity, with an overall average of 58% of respondents indicating that they were aware of the opportunity to take part in an international exchange semester. The awareness of opportunities, consideration to take part, and knowledge of other students who took part in international exchange semester showed overwhelmingly that students were aware that Stellenbosch University offered the opportunity to take part in an international exchange semester, and more than 95% of all respondents indicated that they would consider taking part. Respondents in the Faculty of Arts and Social Science indicated the highest percentage of awareness, with 69% of respondents indicating that they were aware of the opportunity to take part in an international exchange semester, and 96% of respondents indicating that they would consider taking part in an international exchange semester, while only 39% of respondents from the Faculty of Science indicated that they were aware of the opportunity to take part in an international exchange semester. Contrary to the significantly lower level of awareness, the consideration to take part in an international exchange semester of Science students is consistent with that in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, with 96% of respondents in the Faculty of Science indicating that they would consider taking part in an international exchange semester.

6.4 Discussion of the aim and objectives

The aim and objectives of the study have already been explained in the contextualisation of the study in Chapter 1. As indicated in the introductory remarks, Chapter 6 summarises the findings discussed in Chapter 5 against the background of the aim and objectives of the study.

6.4.1 Discussion of the aim

The aim of the study was to gain better understanding of the factors that created a barrier to international academic exchange semesters in four Faculties at Stellenbosch University. The four case studies presented in Chapter 5 highlighted the Faculty-specific outcomes with regard to each of the four objectives of the study; therefore, I shall not repeat these findings

in this concluding chapter, but rather focus on the trends emerging from the case studies that can contribute to identifying generic institutional barriers applicable to all general formative programmes.

The objectives of the study were to (the researcher indicates key themes in bold):

- analyse the **institutional** and **Faculty policies** that can create a barrier to international academic mobility at undergraduate level;
- investigate the **academic considerations** with regard to an international exchange semester in terms of programme structure, departmental support, and academic involvement; and
- explore, from a **student's perspective**, the reasons why more undergraduate students do not take part in **international academic exchange semesters**;
- highlight existing **good practices** for facilitating exchange semesters and propose recommendations **for future implementation**.

6.4.2 Discussion of the objectives of the study

Objective 1: Faculty and institutional policies and strategies

The first objective required an institutional stance for the analysis of the institutional strategy and intent and the Strategy on Teaching and Learning (Stellenbosch University, 2013b). These institutional policies and strategies were the point of reference for the analysis of Faculty policies and strategies in each of the four case studies. Reviewing the policies and strategies addressed two aspects, namely references to internationalisation, or more generally, the international paradigm of higher education, as well as references to graduate profile.

At Faculty level, varying levels of support for internationalisation and the accompanying sets of skills for graduates were found in vision and mission of the Faculty statements of the Faculties. The Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and the Faculty of AgriSciences refer explicitly to international aspects in their vision statements, while the Faculty of Science refers only to the international environment in the graduate profile of the Faculty. All four Faculties refer to role-playing in Africa that can be linked directly to the institutional vision and mission. This demonstrates that the context created by policy and strategy can be instrumental in creating an enabling environment, but the absence of a policy focus on internationalisation can be equally detrimental to a broader implementation of international exchange semesters.

Rethinking graduate attributes provides suitable opportunities to place more emphasis on international experiences like an exchange semester. The analysis of the SU graduate profile and vision and mission statements of Faculties show a disconnection between the vision statements of Faculties and the graduates they wish to produce. The study highlights the lack

of a clear link between the vision and mission statements of Faculties and the overarching graduate attributes outlined in the Strategy for Teaching and Learning (Stellenbosch University, 2013b). As pointed out in each of the case studies, the graduate attributes provide a platform for the implementation of international exchange semesters as a mechanism to develop the sets of skills and attributes described by the strategy, but without an explicit link in the Faculty mission, it is unlikely that such strategies will be adopted by academic environments. However, it cannot be argued that an international exchange semester is the only way to achieve these attributes, but the contextualisation and analyses show that there is a disconnection between vision, strategy, and the opportunity provided by an international exchange semester.

Three key policy issues emerged from the case studies, namely the lack of policy regarding internationalisation, a disconnection between policy, intended graduate profile, and international context, and finally, the expression of international value and benefit in the policy and strategy of the institution. On a policy level it can be argued that the barriers are both external and internal obstacles to mobility as identified by the IAU Global Survey (Section 2.10.3).

Objective 2: Staff perspectives and academic considerations

The inputs from staff members have been very insightful to determine support for international exchange semesters and to identify potential areas of development. The barriers introduced by staff predominantly focused on structural challenges and financial considerations and, to a lesser extent, the cultural challenges involved in an international exchange semester.

Support of academic staff members for an international exchange semester was explored in the questionnaire for programme coordinators and in the interviews with deputy deans. The responses obtained on programme and Faculty management levels indicated a low level of support, which could indicate lack of insight.

The responses obtained from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences clearly indicate little enthusiasm to consider the implementation of international exchange semesters as part of a Faculty strategy for internationalisation at undergraduate student level. In the Faculty of AgriSciences, the opposite sentiment was observed, particularly at management level, where an international exchange semester was viewed from an educational and personal development perspective. The support for international experience is also evident in the Faculty of Science, but from a programme perspective there is a more distinct focus on how international mobility can be included into postgraduate programmes. On a macro level, the focus on mobility at postgraduate level can be accredited to the research mission of the institution.

The recurring response by programme coordinators of being supportive of international exchange semesters, but with clear preference for mobility at postgraduate level, did not include any pedagogical rationale for the preference. The responses of particularly

programme coordinators pointed to a lack of understanding of the possibilities that an international exchange semester offers and of the processes involved. Programme coordinators seemed to believe that the effort involved in aligning the programme outcomes with such an experience outweighs the pedagogical value for graduates. This phenomenon should be analysed further to gain more insight into the role that the support of academic staff members play in the decision of students to consider international mobility as part of their study programmes. The lack of information about the process resonates with the barrier identified by students as one of the major challenges for participation in an international exchange semester.

Objective 3: Student perspectives that emerged pertaining to the barriers to international exchange semesters

I would like to focus on two key aspects that highlight the similarities and differences that emerged from the inputs of students. The first is the association between the level of awareness and the contemplation of students to participate in an international exchange semester. The differences in the level of awareness have already been discussed in the comparative overview of the four case studies. The second aspect links directly to the research problem of the study and reviews the similarities and differences in the selected barriers to mobility.

The number of students who were aware and informed about the opportunity of an international exchange semester can be linked to different information sources. These sources include information obtained from other students, information from lecturers, or, can be assumed, by means of the information channels of the Postgraduate & International Office. The number of students who indicated that they were aware of other students who had taken part in an international exchange semester can be an indication of peer influence, and can be viewed from the perspective of students knowing another Stellenbosch student who went abroad, or the influence of incoming exchange students, increasing the awareness of international exchange semesters. The awareness raised by the engagement of lecturers on the topic of international exchange semesters seems to be a fairly minimal source of information, as only 38 out of 425 students (9%) indicated that a lecturer had discussed the option of an international exchange semester with them. The context in which lecturers in the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences introduced the idea of international exchange semesters was supportive of the overarching principles of internationalisation, namely to align with the set of skills required for the workplace and society of the 21st century.

The three principal barriers that emerged from student perspectives were consistent among the four Faculties, namely *lack of information on available opportunities* (1st barrier), *financial constraints* (2nd barrier) and *lack of information on the process* (3rd barrier). Therefore, the information students receive regarding international exchange semesters and the processes involved should be reconsidered. This issue is discussed in more depth in the recommendations of the chapter. The barriers that consistently received the lowest number

of responses were *Family responsibilities* and *Other campus responsibilities*, which were listed either last or second last by students from all four Faculties.

Objective 4: Good practice

The fourth objective was to highlight existing good practices for facilitating exchange semesters and to present recommendations for future implementation based on these and other findings of the dissertation. Each of the case studies highlighted a number of suggestions for the implementation of exchange semesters as part of achieving the graduate attributes set out by the institutional Strategy for Teaching and Learning (Stellenbosch University, 2013b), good practices in the particular Faculty, and areas for further consideration. Four key areas, namely *staff and student perceptions*, *role-player engagement*, *programme and curriculum review*, and *expanding the scope and impact of international exchange semesters* were identified to address in specific recommendations for review of current practices pertaining to international exchange semesters and future implementation.

- **Address student and staff perceptions**

The data obtained from students and staff alluded to a number of misconceptions regarding the way in which international exchange semesters are organised and coordinated. These misconceptions included the assumption that an international exchange semester would automatically result in an extension of the degree programme, as well as the fact that the programme structure and content of programmes of Stellenbosch University were so restrictive that it would not be possible to create a match with any of the programmes offered at partner institutions. The way in which academic staff (Faculty management, programme coordinators, departmental chairpersons, and individual lecturers) are informed about the concept of international exchange semesters as well as how these role players are engaged in the process, should be reviewed.

The misconceptions of students can be addressed by including better informed academic staff in the process, for example in the review process of applications to reassure students that the exchange is in line with programme requirements and that they have full Faculty support for participation in the activity. Returning students could also be a valuable source of information to address current misconceptions about international exchange semesters.

- **Role-player engagement**

Obviously, the implementation of international exchange semesters is not a simple activity: therefore, it is important to engage all role-players.

The lack of understanding on the side of academic staff of the opportunities and structures in place to facilitate an international exchange semester should be addressed, for example, by information sessions for academic staff. The sessions could highlight partner institutions that have a good fit with academic programmes of that particular Faculty.

The involvement of academic staff in the approval process should also be investigated and explained to students. The focus should be on cultivating a better understanding of opportunities and processes to create a triangulation of information between students, academic staff, and the PGIO.

- **Programme and curriculum review**

As mentioned in Chapter 5, one of the major trends that emerged from the four case studies is the need to align the programme outcomes with the graduate attributes that, in turn, have already been shown to link with the internationalisation of student learning and student experience.

A review of existing curricula is required, firstly to determine the extent to which current curricula include an international dimension, and secondly, to identify the specific barriers to mobility within curricula, such as the inclusion of year modules and modules with a South African focus that are spread throughout the programme in such a way that it is not possible to substitute one semester with courses at another university. A review of programme structure and content can also highlight potential mobility windows (Section 2.10.3) to support international exchange semesters.

Not only programmes and curricula of the home institution, but also the programme structures and content of partner universities should be reviewed. The match between home and host institutions is one of the deciding factors for students to take part in an international exchange semester. If it is not possible for students to find suitable courses to replace the course work of Stellenbosch University, expanding the numbers of participation is an unfair expectation.

- **Expanding the scope and effect of international exchange semesters**

One of the biggest criticisms against mobility as a key feature of internationalisation is the exclusivity of such activities (De Wit, 2012). However, the effect of an international exchange semester can be further than the individual taking part in the actual mobility, and this can be managed by means of a broader framework for international student mobility. Upon returning to the home country, the exposure and skills that students have gained during the international exchange semester should have a number of follow-on benefits for the institution and for fellow students. For this to succeed, the exchange semester should not be viewed in isolation and should be part of a pre- and post-exchange programme to ensure that students are well prepared to gain the most from their experience, and upon return be able to translate that experience into their overall degree experience. Kim (1998) argues that students returning to the home country after the international exposure can enable the faster creation of new knowledge and help other students to acquire similar skills.

Therefore, such a framework should make provision for different stages of the mobility periods, for example a re-entering period that can have a direct influence on other students.

The idea of an international exchange semester as a very exclusive and selective experience, as highlighted by the management members in all Faculties, can be counteracted by implementing a programme that can also have direct benefits for other students. The inclusion of a bigger group of students in the pre- and post-phases of international exchange semesters can spread the effect beyond the individual gain.

- **More effective sharing of information**

The discrepancy of students indicating that they were aware of the opportunity to take part in an international exchange semester, while the barrier listed by most respondents was *lack of information on available opportunities*, was highlighted in all four case studies. Although this is an assumed incongruity, one of the objectives of the study was to determine the student perspectives of the barriers to an international exchange semester; therefore, the responses cannot be dismissed merely as an anomaly, ignoring the reality from a student perspective.

I would propose three major changes with regard to the way in which information is conveyed as well as the type of information that should be available. The change in approach also considers the previous recommendations on the programme review and inclusion of stakeholders. The first suggestion would be to include academic staff as champions of the international exchange semester and not focus on staff of the Postgraduate & International Office as the only or even main source of information. The second suggestion would be to make information available in a way that directly addresses the barriers identified by the study, namely by providing information that is specific to the process, highlights the existing financial benefits, details the overall expenses involved in the exchange, and is programme specific. The final change in approach to communicating information is linked to the first suggestion to include the international possibilities in the Faculty and programme documentation, i.e. indicate the possibility of an international exchange semester in the Faculty Yearbook.

This recommendation is linked closely to the perspectives shared in the recommendation regarding engagement of role players, and the two points should be regarded as interconnected rather than two completely separate recommendations.

6.5 Conclusions on the institutional barriers to international exchange semesters

Based on the four case studies, the comparison of the four Faculties to identify similarities and discrepancies between the academic environments, and the proposed recommendations for implementation, it is possible to draw a number of conclusions regarding the institutional barriers to international exchange semesters.

6.5.1 Lack of strategy for internationalisation on institutional and Faculty levels

The lack of an internationalisation strategy on institutional and Faculty levels is certainly one of the major challenges. The policy vacuum pertaining to internationalisation is highlighted at the beginning of the dissertation (Section 3.4.2) by referring to the importance of policy and strategy in the successful implementation of internationalisation in a manner that would fit with the definitions proposed in the study. Existing institutional practices pertaining to internationalisation on student level are driven largely by a support unit. Without a more explicit and integrated institutional approach to internationalisation, the mobility of students will continue to be an activity that is limited to a small group of students, financially costly, and resource intensive.

The meaning of internationalisation has not been defined clearly at the institution, which makes it highly unlikely that the principles of internationalisation of higher education will filter to the students. I would recommend that each Faculty identify the role of internationalisation to deliver graduates who meet the needs of the workplace of the 21st century.

As discussed in each of the case studies, there is anecdotal evidence from staff and student perspectives that an international exchange semester can contribute to the development of the graduate attributes of the institution. The lack of an explicit link between the graduate attributes, programme outcomes, and the international dimension of higher education is a second institutional barrier identified by the study.

6.5.2 Perceptions of students and staff on process

The influence of perception on participation in an international exchange semester is certainly an area that cuts across all four Faculties. Furthermore, perceptions regarding an international exchange semester are not restricted in terms of the group one is analysing, but as the data have shown, perceptions regarding the strategic and logistical aspects of an international exchange semester are prevalent among students and programme coordinators, and on managerial level. The recommendations for implementation have proposed a practical approach to address perceptions on student and staff level. The barriers that have emerged from both staff and student perspectives are linked to the way in which information with regard to available opportunities, the processes involved, and financial considerations is perceived and conveyed.

6.6 Limitations of the study

6.6.1 Theoretical grounding and scope of study

The lack of theoretical grounding with regard to studies on international study experiences has already been highlighted as a point of concern in the literature review of this study. Souto-Otero et al. (2013) confirm the lack of transferability of the findings due to the absence of theoretical grounding. Thus, the danger exists that the study could be viewed as

standing loose from theory pertaining to the practice of international student mobility and the role these experiences play in internationalisation of higher education.

6.6.2 Scope of the study

In reaction to the first limitation to the study described in Section 6.6.1, the findings in this study can add to the body of knowledge on international exchange semesters. However, it is also limited in terms of the scope covered. It focused only on general-formative programmes; therefore, it can be repeated only at institutions where the programme structures are similar. Furthermore, it cannot be used to make institutional conclusions due to the lack of including all Faculties.

6.6.3 Data collected

6.6.3.1 *Use of questionnaires*

The questionnaire distributed to students yielded a low response rate. Although the response rate is consistent with this type of instrument and the targeted population, further insights could have been obtained, for example, by means of focus group interviews that would have enabled the researcher to probe further and interpret the qualitative and quantitative data obtained by means of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire distributed to programme coordinators yielded valuable information, but more information could have been extracted and substantiated by means of semi-structured focus group interviews. For a similar study, I would suggest that a number of programme coordinators from the applicable Faculties be selected and interviews be conducted with them. The selection of programme coordinators could be based on thematic fields that have emerged clearly from the study. The researcher should be mindful not to select only programme coordinators who have a predisposition towards international exchange semesters. This would bias the results and conclusions drawn.

The data collection methods of this study relied heavily on the interests of students and staff to contribute to the study. The lack of participation of more students and staff can be attributed to a lack of incentive to participate or because they were not interested in the phenomenon of international exchange semesters.

6.6.3.2 *Unequal participation among Faculties*

As discussed in Chapter 5, the feedback from programme coordinators in two of the four Faculties was very limited. Although the use of a questionnaire was a deliberate decision to leave room for more feedback, it in effect hampered engagement. An alternative to a questionnaire to programme coordinators is discussed in Section 6.6.3.1.

In principle, the programme coordinators should have in-depth understanding of the structure and outcomes of the programmes for which they are responsible. The lack of perspectives on how international exposure can be included in programmes limited the study to really use the knowledge of the programme coordinators to develop a framework for implementation that addresses programme structure, curriculum, and outcomes. These limitations could have been addressed by including other academic staff members, for example a randomly selected group of lecturers in different programmes.

6.7 Recommendations for practice and future research

Based on the results of the analyses of data and four case studies in this study, the following recommendations for future research can be made:

Recommendation 1: Based on the results obtained by means of this study, I propose two further studies to be conducted at the institution. The current study focused on undergraduate students in only four Faculties. To achieve a more holistic view of the institutional perspective on the phenomenon of international exchange semesters, a further study should be conducted in the other six Faculties at the institution. The second study should focus on international exchange semesters on postgraduate level to determine if there is more support for international academic mobility on this level of study. The two further studies would provide in-depth institutional perspectives but also contribute to a baseline for the national context. Aspects not included in this study for example the motivating factors to participate in an international experience, socio-economic factors and the benefits that students associate with an international experience can also be included in such a study.

Recommendation 2: The study focused on only one higher education institution but made frequent reference to the national context. I would propose that the study be replicated (with minor adaptations) at other higher education institutions in South Africa to gain statistical evidence of the mobility of students for non-degree purposes and also to gain more in-depth knowledge on the barriers to mobility on a national level. The study should however not only focus on repeating the same study as it is highly unlikely that the study will differ much but should rather look more on a discipline level to determine a national position within particular disciplines.

Recommendation 3: The role of curriculum has been highlighted as a central theme in factors inhibiting or promoting international mobility of students. I have also made recommendations with regard to the role of programme review and development for future implementation. A further analysis on programme level can provide a more in-depth picture on international exchange semester and can present findings that address the discrepancy between graduate attributes, programme outcomes and current developments in the global higher education sphere. Such a study could also draw on aspects of employability and internships as a form of international academic experience.

6.8 Concluding remarks

The study on the potential barriers to international exchange semester, as presented in this dissertation, provides an overview of literature on three main themes, then a contextualisation of internationalisation at Stellenbosch University was presented in Chapter 3 as background to the empirical study. The empirical study resulted in four case studies that have provided significant insight into the status and potential of international exchange semesters. As mentioned in the contextualisation of international exchange semesters in Chapter 3, as well as in the literature review on the rationale for study abroad, the notion of participation in international exchange semesters is often dismissed based on the barriers involved. In the South African context, the socio-economic factors are quoted as the foremost reasons why institutions do not promote study abroad as a primary activity for internationalisation on student level.

Three major barriers identified in the study in four Faculties at Stellenbosch University, which represented more than half of the total student enrolment of the institution, have been highlighted and discussed in detail in the four case studies, as well as from an institutional perspective. The barriers identified in the literature study, namely factors pertaining to differences in academic systems and financial constraints, are consistent with the factors that emerged as potential barriers to international exchange semesters from a student perspective. Thus, the barriers cannot be regarded as unique to South Africa, and it is plausible to dismiss arguments that the low participation in student mobility programmes in general can be ascribed predominantly to socio-economic conditions in South Africa.

Concluding remark 1: Despite policy references to internationalisation, the support for international exchange semester and the international mobility of students in general is not sufficient to pursue an implementation strategy that requires a huge amount of financial and human resources. The proposed recommendation is to enhance existing good practices on institutional and Faculty level, but the scope will remain minimal if there is no clear strategic directive to engage students with the international dimension of higher education in both the formal and informal curriculum.

Concluding remark 2: Complementary to the first concluding remark, I would argue that the emphasis should be shifted from actively pursuing a specific exchange semester as a key focus of outgoing international student mobility to an array of international opportunities that can be aligned with programme outcomes and that take the nature of programmes into consideration. The study has shown that certain Faculties and disciplines are better disposed to the notion of international exchange semester; therefore, a nuanced approach should be investigated rather than using a 'one size fits all' approach.

Concluding remark 3: At the institutional level, the plethora of bilateral partnerships, the existence of dedicated support staff, and continued financial support already creates a macro-institutional framework for an international exchange semester. However, the lack of entrenching an exchange semester in the programme outcomes and other identified constraints such as the absence of clear policies on credit transfer will continue to hamper the efforts of implementing international exchange semesters on a broader scale. The

barriers identified by this study can be further analysed and categorised in external and internal obstacles as stated by the IAU Global Survey to provide more insight and context for future implementation (Section 2.10.3).

Concluding remark 4: Although the focus of the study was to identify potential barriers to international exchange semesters that could result in a pragmatic approach to address the barriers and increase participation, it is important to consider not only increasing the numbers. Such an approach would push the study into the pitfall of minimising internationalisation of higher education into a tick box approach rather than focusing on the pedagogical value of the activities on student level and the overall enhancement of higher education on all levels, as encapsulated in the definitions applied throughout the study, namely that internationalisation as a process should permeate the institution on all levels, including intercultural, international and global dimensions connected to the local framework, to increase the quality of higher education (De Wit, 2012; Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012).

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Addenda

Addendum I: Graduate attributes as defined in the Strategy for Teaching and Learning

An enquiring mind:

- Lifelong learner
- Critical and creative thinker
- Exercises responsibility for learning and using knowledge

An engaged citizen

- Leader and collaborator
- Social entrepreneur
- Effective in a diverse environment

A dynamic professional

- Problem solver
- Uses sustainable and effective technology
- Innovative

A well-rounded individual

- Exposed to culture, intellectual and sporting life
- Takes responsibility for own development
- Takes informed and considered decisions.

An enquiring mind

A graduate who can be described as having an ‘enquiring mind’ is curious, a lifelong learner who thinks critically and creatively, and who uses systematic methods of enquiry to formulate decisions. An enquiring mind is open to new as well as diverse ideas, is willing to learn from the received wisdom of the past, as well as to invent new ways of knowing and doing. This involves taking the best from international and dominant ways of knowing, and in addition from indigenous, local, lay and underrepresented knowledge sources. It involves seeing the interconnectedness of different knowledge sources and knowledge systems, and being able process ideas and information in multi-disciplinary teams. An enquiring mind exercises discernment with regard to knowledge sources, knowledge claims and the values of knowledge. He or she considers the responsibility and accountability that accompany knowing and learning, and the respect for research-oriented approaches to problem solving.

An engaged citizen

An engaged citizen is one who is able to exercise leadership, and one who understands how to contribute as a member of a team and community, thus to collaborate and be of service. An engaged citizen cares for him or herself and exercises care for others in increasingly widening concentric circles. This implies, for example, care in the family setting, the workplace or the classroom, at a municipal or regional level, at the national, continental as well as international level. Citizenship implies an awareness of relationship between commitment to the local and national polity, on the one hand, and an awareness of the dangers of various forms of exclusivity, on the other. A Stellenbosch University graduate should have had the opportunity to engage critically in community interaction in the region, and to have considered potential solutions to the crises of sustainability and

climate change. A Stellenbosch graduate will be aware of the value of interaction on a global level, and be open to influences from international settings. An engaged citizen has been exposed to the idea that transformation of society involves transformation of the self.

A dynamic professional

A Stellenbosch University graduate should have benefitted from the opportunity to learn to apply and communicate knowledge in various community, business, professional and personal settings. These forms of communication are oral, written, digital and multi-modal. A dynamic professional benefits from opportunities to grow and prosper and uses knowledge gained at university and beyond to solve problems in the workplace, home and community. A dynamic professional is innovative, takes initiative and is aware of the power of entrepreneurialism. A dynamic professional has learnt the importance of ethical behaviour and what this means in practice. At the same time, a dynamic professional is effective, and harnesses own talent as well as the capacity of others. The dynamic professional has had the opportunity to learn how to maximise the use of material resources in an efficient and sustainable manner. Finally, a dynamic professional has the flexibility to make career choices and decisions in relation to the changing nature of the world of work.

A well-rounded individual

The value of a Stellenbosch University curriculum should be evident in its cultivation of the humanity of the graduate. It should offer opportunities for the student to grow along social and individual dimensions, and along intellectual, as well as affective dimensions. The curriculum would provide individuals with the opportunity to grapple with issues of efficiency and mastery, as well as with matters of value. It should provide the graduate with a sense of the importance of aesthetic, cultural, spiritual and traditionally scientific modes. A well-rounded individual would have had the opportunity to become a potential source of wisdom for him or herself, as well as to those with whom he or she interacts. A well-rounded individual uses his or her education to enrich life in its broadest sense.

Addendum 2: Student Questionnaire

Questionnaire to undergraduate students

Please answer the following questions related to the study of potential barriers to international exchange semesters at Stellenbosch University.

Introduction and Informed Consent

Did you know that Stellenbosch hosts more than 300 exchange students from around the world every year? Do you dream about seeing the world? Meeting interesting people? Speaking a foreign language? Have you ever considered studying in another country? Stellenbosch University has more than a 100 partners around the world that offers students the opportunity to take part in an international semester abroad as part of your degree programme. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey. You form part of the sample of students for the research study on the Potential barriers to international exchange semesters. This survey has been distributed to all final and non-final year students in your Faculty. The study has been approved according to the ethical requirements of the University. If you agree to take part in the survey, please continue....By clicking on the continue button you give consent that the content of your survey feedback can be included in the research study. This questionnaire will take less than 10 minutes.

I hereby give consent and agree to participate in this study

I do not want to participate in this study.

1. Gender: Male Female

2. Please select the relevant option:

I have a South African Passport

I have a passport from another country

I don't have a passport

I have passports from multiple countries

Other:

3. What is your country of birth?

4. Which programme are you enrolled for? For example: BA International Studies

5. Which year of study are you in?

6. Please give an indication of your international exposure. You can select more than one option.

- a. I have been abroad as a tourist
- b. I have lived abroad
- c. I was born overseas
- d. I am an international student
- e. I've taken part in an international academic experience
 - i. Summer school
 - ii. School exchange
 - iii. Exchange semester
 - iv. Other (please specify)

8. Can you speak any languages apart from English and Afrikaans? Please list below:

9. Has a lecturer ever discussed going abroad as part of your study programme with you?

Yes No

10. If so, in which context did the discussion take place?

11. Did you know that Stellenbosch University provides the opportunity for you to study at a partner university for one or two semesters as part of your degree?

Yes No

12. Do you know anybody (at Stellenbosch or another institution) who has taken part in an international exchange semester?

Yes No

13. Would you consider taking part in such an international exchange semester?

Yes No Maybe

14. What would motivate you to take part in an international exchange semester? Please give a short explanation.

15. Do you want to work abroad? And if yes, how do you think an international exchange semester can contribute to this goal?

Yes

Please clarify here:

No

16. Which of the following would you consider as constraints to international exchange semesters?

- Lack of information on the available opportunities
- Lack of information on the process
- Financial constraints
- Restrictions of my programme
- Family responsibilities
- Other responsibilities on campus

Other:

17. Which of the following factors do you **not** consider as constraints for international exchange semesters?

- f. Lack of information on the available opportunities
- g. Lack of information on the process
- h. Financial constraints
- i. Restrictions of my programme
- j. Family responsibilities
- k. Other responsibilities on campus

I. Other:

18. What do you think are the benefits of an international exchange semester?

Thank you for completing the questionnaire. Feel free to contact Huba Boshoff at boshoff.thesis@gmail.com for any questions or concerns regarding the study.

Addendum 3: Questionnaire distributed to programme coordinators

Background and purpose of the research:

The internationalisation of higher education includes a wide array of activities. It is important that internationalisation efforts are developed in such a way that key role-players namely students (undergraduate and graduate) and staff can benefit from internationalisation. At the student level internationalisation includes both mobility activities (non-degree and degree mobility) and what is referred to as 'internationalisation at home'.

This study explores the mobility of students through international exchange semesters, and more particularly, the imbalance between incoming and outgoing exchange students at Stellenbosch University (SU) where SU on average receives five international students for every one Stellenbosch student who partake in an exchange semester. It aims to identify the potential barriers to an international exchange semester in undergraduate programmes for SU students. An international exchange semester is a temporary period of study that takes place in the context of an exchange agreement between two universities enabling an undergraduate student to substitute one (or two) semesters of the Stellenbosch programme with a corresponding semester of coursework at a partner university.

Pre-final and final year students in general-formative undergraduate programmes in four faculties (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, Faculty of AgriSciences, Faculty of Sciences) are included in the study. This questionnaire aims at eliciting the perspectives of academic staff involved in the coordination of the relevant programmes with regard to international exchange semesters .

I. General introductory questions

I.1 How long have you been an academic?

- 0 – 2 yr
- 2 – 5 yr
- 5- 10 yr
- 10 – 15 yr
- Longer than 15 yrs

I.2 How long have you been an academic at Stellenbosch University?

- 0 – 2 yr
- 2 – 5 yr
- 5- 10 yr
- 10 – 15 yr
- Longer than 15 yrs

I.3 If applicable, where did you work prior to SU?

--

1.4 Briefly list your responsibilities with regards to the undergraduate programme in which you play a coordinating role.

2. International profile as an academic

Please select from the following list of activities, the options that match your experience as an academic in the international context. Mark all the relevant options.

- I completed a qualification abroad
- I did a postdoc abroad
- I took part in an international exchange semester as a student
- I regularly attend international conferences
- I have taught abroad
- I'm part of an international research project
- I'm an international staff member

3. International exchange semesters

The following questions pertain to the organisation and educational value of international exchange semesters.

3.1 Have you (as a lecturer) ever discussed going abroad with the students that you teach? Please explain.

- Yes No

3.2 Have you had interactions with students in an out-of-classroom context pertaining to international exchange semesters? Please explain your answer.

- Yes No

3.3 Do you think your programme is conducive to including an international exchange semester? Please explain your answer.

- Yes No

3.4 Do you think an international exchange semester will contribute to the realisation of the outcomes of your programme? Please explain your answer.

Yes

No

3.5 A summarised version of the SU graduate attributes is included. To what extent can an international exchange semester contribute to delivering such graduates?

3.6 What do you think are the benefits of an international exchange semester for students?

3.7 What do you perceive as barriers to international exchange semesters for students?

3.8 If an international exchange semester is incorporated in your programme, would any changes to the structure of the programme be required? And if so, are these changes feasible?

3.9 Can you make any suggestions on how international exchange semesters can be implemented on a bigger scale?

Addendum 4: Interview protocol for interviews with deputy deans

I. Introduction to study and researcher

Thank you for making time in your schedule to be interviewed for this study. As indicated in the informative email the interview will not be more than an hour. If it is in order with you I will use a recorder to ensure that I capture everything that we discuss.

The aim of the study is to gain a better understanding of the factors that create a barrier to international academic exchange semesters for students on undergraduate level. The study is focused on 4 Faculties (Science, Agriscience, Art and Social Sciences and Economic and Management Sciences). Only general programmes are included in this study.

The investigation of the barriers to international exchange semesters could lead to recommendations with regard to a strategy for the implementation of exchange semesters to increase the number of undergraduate students who take part in an exchange semester and in doing so, contribute to delivering graduates who meet the demands of the knowledge economy and fit the graduate profile of Stellenbosch University.

This aim will be supported by the following objectives:

- To explore the reasons why more students do not opt for international academic exchange semesters
- To investigate the academic considerations for an international exchange semester in terms of programme structure and departmental support
- To analyse the institutional policies that create a barrier to international academic mobility at undergraduate level
- To link the practice of international exchange semesters with the graduate attributes of Stellenbosch University as described in the Teaching and Learning Policy
- To highlight existing good practices for facilitating exchange semesters.

The study will thus frame the phenomenon of a semester abroad exchange within the context of the South African higher education system whilst highlighting the benefits for graduates.

My work in the PGIO has prompted this study because in the past 5 years in my position I've seen very little growth in the outgoing numbers of exchange students whilst our incoming numbers remain very high. It also seems to me that the trend is for an increase in outward (short-term mobility) but that South African higher education institutions struggle to maintain exchange balances.

2. Discuss informed consent

To adhere to the ethical guidelines of Stellenbosch University I want to ensure you that all procedures have been followed for the ethical clearance for this study and that for me as researcher it is of utmost importance that the study is conducted in an ethical matter.

I would therefore request you to read through and sign this informed consent form that highlights that anonymity of participants is a key feature of the ethical principles.

The information obtained in this interview will not be used for anything outside the scope of this study.

3. Start with general introductory questions

The part of the study that this set of interviews (academics and Vice-deans) will be used for is to particularly look into the role that academics play in the exchange process and the general feeling of academics towards international exchange semesters as a mechanism for student learning and development.

Let's start with some questions on your background and career path

- a. How long have you been in academia?
- b. How long have you been at Stellenbosch University?

{Depending on interviewee's response to A and B:} Where did you working prior to SU?

- c. How long have you been in your current position?
- d. Tell me about your responsibilities within your current capacity

4. Questions concerning international exposure of interviewee:

Let's discuss your international profile and experience....

Do you like travelling? *{prompt on living abroad and or own studies abroad}*

Tell me a little about your international experience as an academic....*{prompt interviewee on conferences, teaching at another institution and also touch on teaching international students at SU}*

5. Role and implementation of international exchange semesters

- a) As I've indicated this study focuses on the mobility of students through international exchange semesters. So I would like us to discuss this type of activity in the context of internationalisation but also in terms of student learning and development.
- b) Have you (as a lecturer) ever discussed going abroad with the students that you teach? Or have you had contact with students in another context pertaining to international exchange semesters?
- c) Do you know any undergraduate students (at Stellenbosch or another institution) that has taken part in an international exchange semester?
- d) What do you perceive as barriers to international exchange semesters for students?

- e) What do you think are the benefits of an international exchange semester for students?
 - f) Can you make any suggestions on how this (i.e international exchange semesters) can be institutionalised?
 - g) Is the idea of an international semester included in the vision and mission of the Faculty?
-