



FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF RIO GRANDE DO NORTE

UFRN's STRATEGIC INTERNATIONALIZATION PLAN

UFRN 2025-2031

Toward responsible
and sustainable
internationalization



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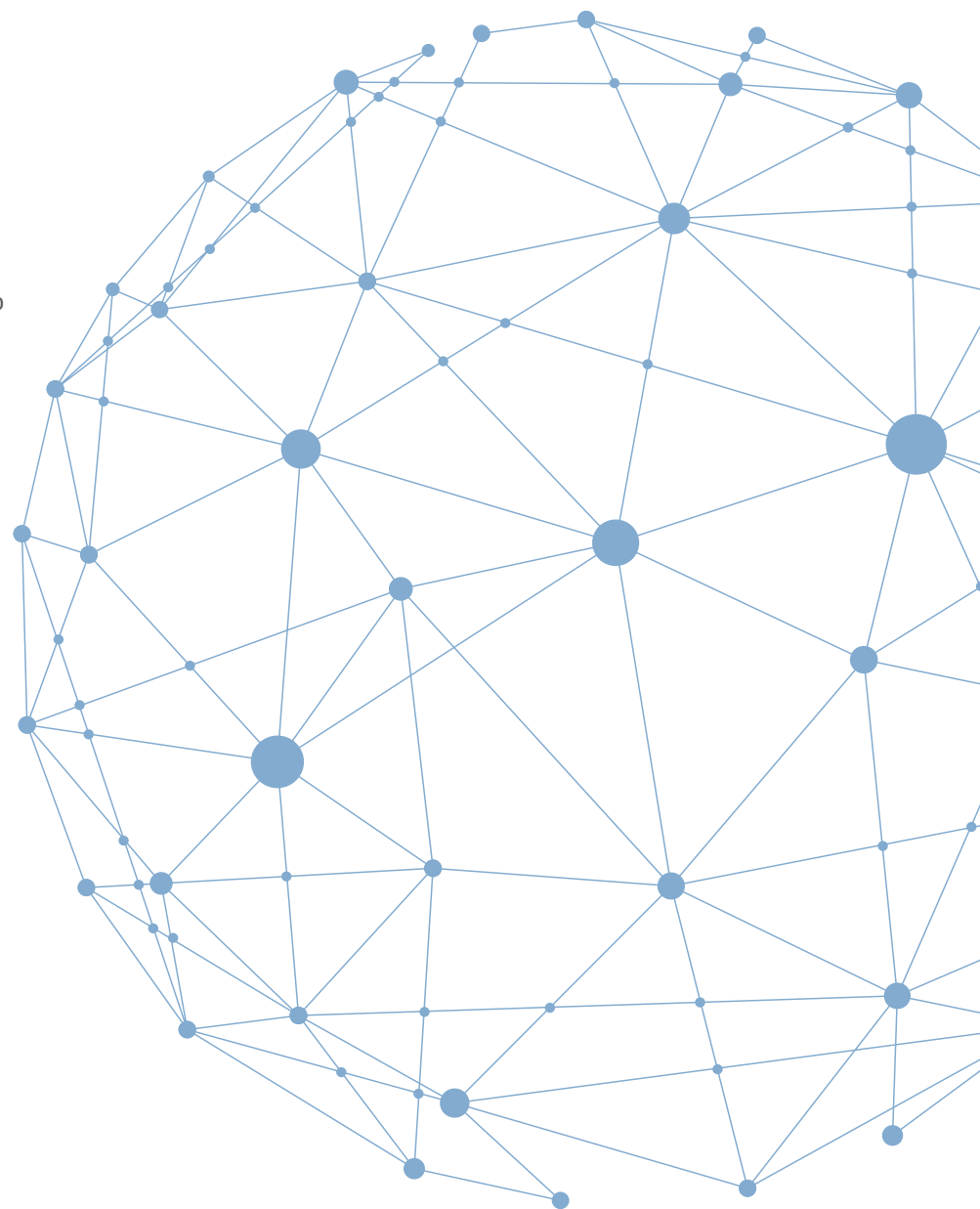
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INTRODUCTION



The purpose of UFRN's Strategic Internationalization Plan for the 2025-2031 period is to present the institutional direction that will promote, through international cooperation, the continuous construction of academic excellence in the areas of teaching, research, extension, innovation and management.

Due to the growing importance of the internationalization process for higher education, a result of globalized societies and the borderless circulation of knowledge, higher education institutions have assumed this process as part of their mission. At UFRN, this commitment is expressed in the vision for the future established in the **Institutional Development Plan (IDP 2020-2029)**: “the consolidation of UFRN as an innovative and inclusive institution, socially referenced, recognized nationally and internationally for its academic and management excellence” (p. 21).

In line with the Institutional Development Plan (IDP) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this plan aims to continue the internationalization project for UFRN in a responsible, sustainable and cross-cutting manner across the entire institution. This plan also follows the recommendations of the Regional Conference on Higher Education (CRES) – promoted by the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC), one of UNESCO's branches – according to which university internationalization should promote regional integration and strengthen collaboration with other regional blocs (Africa, Asia, Europe), always based on the principles of solidarity, reciprocity, and horizontal cooperation.

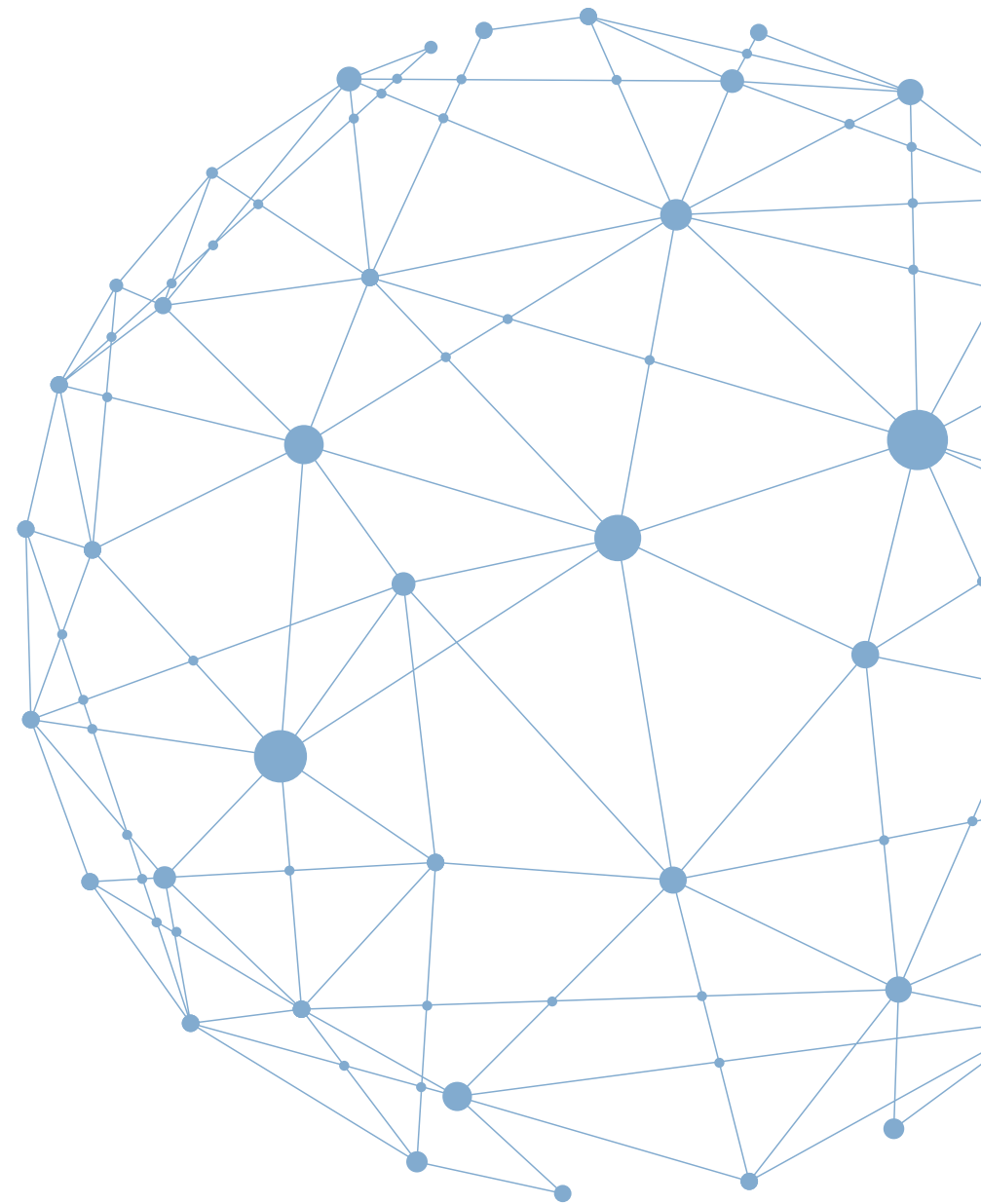
Based on knowledge of its local reality and the advances already achieved over its more than sixty years of existence, the aim is to promote a true international culture within the institution.

Based on its potential and areas of excellence, it seeks to: (i) strengthen and expand international academic and scientific partnerships in a reciprocal and horizontal manner, both in the North-South and South-South directions; (ii) encourage linguistic, artistic, and cultural exchange between different international agents and partners; (iii) celebrate and learn from the plurality and diversity of knowledge exchanges, promoting equal opportunities for the entire academic community, civic education for students, and continuous improvement for staff.

The internationalization model presented in this Plan defines the actions necessary to address the international cooperation challenges faced by UFRN as a Higher Education Institution (HEI), in scenarios that are not always friendly from the point of view of global political and ideological tensions and polarizations and restrictive budgetary policies that impact national and international academic practices.

For these reasons, the University is committed to promoting a responsible and sustainable internationalization process that can drive knowledge production capable of responding to multiple local, national and global challenges.

Structured on the basis of the previous plan (**Resolution No. 52/2018-CONSEPE**, of April 30, 2018), this second Strategic Internationalization Plan is built in accordance with the Internationalization Policy (**Joint Resolution No. 03/2022-CONSEPE-CONSAD**, of May 17, 2022) and UFRN's Language Policy (**Resolution No. 44/2017-CONSEPE**, of April 4, 2017). It is thus organized into objectives, goals, and actions, which are underpinned by the pillars of teaching, research, extension, innovation and management, the foundations of quality higher education.





THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION



Internationalization in higher education is intrinsic to the very definition of a university as a place for the production of specialized knowledge, ever since these spaces were created in the Middle Ages, with the first schools in Europe known as *universitas*. The concept of University refers to this space, not always physical, in which teachers and students from different regions of the continent, with “knowledge sharing” as the common goal of their interactions, came together, bringing together a multiplicity of worldviews, theoretical, philosophical and political perspectives, as well as people from different parts and places (Stallivieri, 2002)¹.

Internationalization as a practice is therefore not a new term and seems to be an imperative for higher education. In contemporary times, the concept of internationalization is spreading worldwide and often guides the actions and strategies

1 STALLIVIERI, Luciane. O processo de internacionalização nas instituições de ensino superior [The internationalization process at higher education institutions] *Revista Educação Brasileira*, v. 24, p. 35-57, 2002.

of higher education institutions as a response to economic globalization and the emergence of the global knowledge economy, which require the education of professionals capable of building knowledge to deal with the common challenges of societies at all levels: local, regional and global.

Recognized worldwide as experts in international education, authors Jane Knight and Hans de Wit are behind two of the most widely adopted definitions of internationalization in higher education. In 2004, Knight described internationalization as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or provision of higher education” (Knight, 2004, p. 11)².

2 KNIGHT, Jane. Internationalization remodeled: definition, approaches, and rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, v. 8, n. 1, p. 5-31, 2004.

This definition, widely accepted globally for over a decade, was revised and redefined in 2015 by de Wit and Hunter (2015, p. 3)³, as

intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and provision of higher education in order to improve the quality of teaching and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society.

Despite listing important elements intrinsic to any and all internationalization processes – such as the mobility of people and cultural and linguistic exchanges, which can diversify and enrich academic practices in teaching, research, and extension – these authors' definitions refer to the context of the global North and reflect not only the practices, but also the needs, priorities and interests of educational institutions in Europe and North America.

3 DE WIT, Hans; HUNTER, Fiona. The future of internationalization of higher education in Europe. *International Higher Education*, n. 83, p. 2-3, 2015.

Often, these interests override the value of using a particular language over others, adopt commercialization criteria for establishing partnerships, and do not adopt reciprocity as a defining criterion for international cooperation.

The stance adopted by UFRN, therefore, made clear since its first internationalization plan, is that it is not possible to think of internationalization as a process shaped by the epistemic and cultural hegemony of the global North, which exerts its influence, imposes its norms, and disseminates its ideas, worldviews, and values. Nor should it be conceived as a set of unrelated activities, such as sending students abroad, funding the participation of professors in international events or the publication of articles in foreign journals. Without articulation with a comprehensive project, these activities qualify much more as the internationalization of people than as the internationalization of the institution.

As a university located in a country in the global South, UFRN understands that its internationalization process must take into account the complex realities of the society in which it operates. For this reason, this process must be marked by the adoption of regional integration strategies based on solidarity, coordinated with public policies aimed at mitigating historical and cultural inequalities. Thus, UFRN's project for the future embraces the internationalization of higher education as

a critical and comparative process of studying the world and its complexities, past and present inequalities and injustices, and possibilities for a more equitable and just future for all. Through teaching, learning, research, and engagement, internationalization promotes epistemic plurality and integrates critical, anti-racist, and anti-hegemonic learning about

the world from diverse global perspectives to improve the quality and relevance of education (Heleta; Chasi, 2023, p. 269-270)⁴.

An internationalization concept like this one, despite North-South cooperation, also promotes South-South cooperation and is therefore not limited to exchanges or the mobility of people, but rather incorporates shared curricula, multilingual publications, Southern epistemologies, and a commitment to social justice. This model of cooperation seeks horizontality, reciprocity, and the valorization of local epistemologies, breaking with the traditional logic of dependence on the global North and strengthening South-South relations.

4 HELETA, Savo; CHASI, Samia. Rethinking and redefining internationalisation of higher education in South Africa using a decolonial lens. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, v. 45, n. 3, p. 261-275, 2023.



SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

3.1 Internationalization as a global goal of UFRN's institutional development plans

UFRN is an institution that has built its internationalization process continuously and securely over the years and under different administrations. Based on its last two Institutional Development Plans (IDP 2010-2019 and IDP 2020-2029 – currently in force), internationalization appears as an unavoidable goal in view of the university's expansion and the pursuit of academic excellence.

Internationalization has been consolidated as a management goal at UFRN since the drafting of the **2010-2019 IDP**.

The Institutional Pedagogical Project developed at the time was responsible for planning and implementing strategic academic and administrative actions to drive the institution's vigorous growth in different academic and management areas, incorporating the goal of internationalization whenever relevant.

Consequently, this period marked a major investment in the development of the university's internationalization process.

Thus, at the undergraduate level, flexibility in teaching activities and student mobility were encouraged, “through the transfer of credits and incorporation of knowledge acquired through the circulation of students among courses, programs, and higher education institutions” (p. 55-56), which would become the basis for the implementation of the international academic mobility programs carried out.

Similarly, in the graduate education system, academic cooperation was encouraged in articulation with research groups, “aiming at national recognition, international integration, the establishment of research networks with exchanges in the graduate studies system, and the pursuit of an international standard in education” (p. 58). This would consolidate many of UFRN's graduate programs as programs of excellence, according to the evaluation criteria of the Coordination

for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), and would enable the University to rank, years later, among the higher education institutions with the best internationalization projects in the country, having its internationalization proposal fully approved by the **CAPES-Print Program**, in 2017.

As part of the structural actions to maintain academic excellence and advance in UFRN's internationalization process, many programs and projects were developed and implemented during this period. Among them, the creation of the **Ágora Institute** in 2011 stands out, whose purpose is to meet the University's demand for internationalization in the field of language teaching. Although formally created in 2011 and working since then to promote modern foreign languages – such as English, Spanish, French and German, in addition to Portuguese as a non-native language for foreign students – it was only in 2017 that **Ágora** opened its own headquarters.

This physical structure provided better conditions for language courses. In response to ever-growing demand, this offering has been expanded year after year, consolidating itself as one of the actions with the greatest impact on the institution's internationalization process. In addition to serving UFRN students and staff, it also serves the external community and exchange students, contributing to the confirmation of partnerships between UFRN and foreign universities.

Equally important, the Institutional Pedagogical Project of the 2010-2019 Institutional Development Plan recognized the need to strengthen the management of internationalization at the institution, creating an **International Relations Office (SRI)** “with the responsibilities of promoting, coordinating, stimulating, supervising, controlling and evaluating UFRN's international activities” (p. 64). With the creation of the International Office, internationalization management became an autonomous department, with its own

budget and greater freedom to centralize international affairs and promote activities aimed at projecting UFRN abroad.

Also as a result of management during this period, two policies of great importance were drafted and approved to support the management of internationalization at the institution: the Language Policy, in 2017, and the Internationalization Policy, in 2018, which was later updated in 2022. These reference documents guide all of UFRN's internationalization activities.

In preparing the current 2020-2029 Institutional Development Plan, the goal of expanding internationalization was evaluated, and it was concluded that, although progress had been made, some challenges still needed to be overcome, such as “the need to expand research initiatives focused on topics of global interest and developed through international partnerships.” This need was felt when considering the diversity and plurality of UFRN's research areas and groups, which

did not necessarily achieve the same maturity as other areas whose international position and production were consolidated.

In the context of internationally consolidated areas, we can mention the **International Institute of Physics (IIF)**, focused on the development of frontier research in Theoretical Physics, with international recognition. This institute plays a national leadership role with a strong positive impact on the country's scientific development.

Equally important is the **Brain Institute (ICe)**, an international reference center focused on the development of research in neuroscience at the master's, doctoral, and postdoctoral levels, with a faculty and student body from various parts of Brazil and the world. Its innovative proposal was designed to promote free exchange of ideas, scientific excellence, training of qualified human resources, and social transformation.

For the next cycle (2020-2029), UFRN has developed a new Institutional Pedagogical Project, which establishes seven priority actions for internationalization:

- I.** Flexibility in graduate education models shared with other internationally recognized centers of academic excellence.
- II.** Increase and consolidation of scientific cooperation between graduate programs and research groups abroad.
- III.** Encouragement to the involvement of visiting foreign professors in UFRN's graduate programs.
- IV.** Encouragement to the participation of UFRN faculty and students in international research programs and networks.
- V.** Expansion of academic mobility with foreign institutions, making the University more attractive to students and researchers from abroad.

VI. Encouragement to the offering of courses in foreign languages and the transfer of credits / recognition of activities carried out abroad, in addition to double degree and joint supervision agreements.

VII. Strengthening of international partnerships in the areas defined for the strategic internationalization program (CAPES) and other existing agreements.

These actions will be the subject of the internationalization goals and strategies that this plan seeks to address.

3.2 Management of internationalization by the International Relations Office (SRI)

Before 2010, internationalization at UFRN was managed by an International Affairs Advisory Office, which reported directly to the Provost's Office and played a relatively minor role within the institution. At the time, internationalization activities consisted of

formalizing agreements and partnerships linked to specific graduate studies contexts and participating in CAPES bilateral programs such as **Cofecub** and **Brafitec**.

The most extensive internationalization action consisted of managing the PEC program, which was divided into an Undergraduate (PEC-G) and a Graduate (PEC-PG) program. Created in 1964, this program offers foreign students, especially from developing countries, access to Brazilian universities. Considered one of the oldest and most successful initiatives for the internationalization of higher education in Brazil, this initiative, the result of joint coordination between the Ministries of Education (MEC) and Foreign Affairs (MRE), has not only enabled the comprehensive education of foreign students in various areas of knowledge at UFRN, but has also enriched the local academic community through exposure to the linguistic and cultural diversity brought by these students.

In 2010, with the creation of the International Relations Office (SRI, acronym in Portuguese), the management of internationalization at UFRN took on new challenges and began to adopt a proactive policy of prospecting, promoting, and developing actions aimed at consolidating existing practices and implementing new initiatives, expanding the scope of internationalization actions for the benefit of the institution and its core activities of teaching, research, extension and innovation.

Upon its creation, the international Office's new governance structure came to include a Director and Vice-Director of international relations and was organized into the following units: Technical Advisory; Coordination of International Cooperation Agreements; Coordination of Translation and Linguistic Support; Outreach and Data Coordination; Media Coordination; Academic Mobility Coordination; Academic Secretariat; Secretariat of the International Relations and Academic Mobility Committee.

Despite this organization, one of the difficulties lies in the lack of professionals

to compose the workforce necessary for the functioning of all units and coordination offices. Budget cuts and difficulties at federal universities in the national scenario directly impact hiring and competitive selection processes and, consequently, the constitution of teams, which limits the possibilities for action.

Even so, the International Office has successfully supported, monitored, and developed many internationalization initiatives. Three coordination offices are extremely active: (i) the Academic Mobility Coordination Office, responsible for the inbound and outbound mobility of undergraduate students and for the PEC-G and PEC-PLE programs; (ii) the International Cooperation Agreements Coordination Office, responsible for formalizing partnerships with international institutions; (iii) the Translation and Linguistic Support Coordination Office.

The latter is responsible for translating UFRN's official documents, free of charge, whenever faculty and students – even former students – request it. Translations

are provided in three languages – English, French, and Spanish – and the list of documents available includes academic transcripts, diplomas, and course syllabi for undergraduate and graduate programs.

It should be noted that, while there is still room for growth, it is noteworthy the support of UFRN's central administration, the interest of faculty and students in internationalization, and the fact that a high level of institutionalization of processes that legitimize international cooperation has already been achieved through standards and procedures adopted and respected by different sectors of administration and academic monitoring.

The institution also boasts a campus equipped with technical and technological resources that positions it among the federal universities with the best infrastructure in the country, including state-of-the-art labs in fields as diverse as neuroscience, petroleum chemistry, physics, geophysics, engineering, pharmaceutical production, music, and foreign languages; and a welcoming city

with a mild climate that delights foreign students and faculty who establish partnerships with UFRN, visiting it and sharing knowledge and experiences.

The main barriers in this process, therefore, stem from external factors. The University faces budgetary constraints in constructing infrastructure to support the presence of foreign students and researchers at UFRN, such as a transit hotel or student dorms. It also lacks significant resources to create its own scholarship program to provide students with the opportunity to undertake academic mobility abroad (Outbound Mobility) and attract students from partner universities abroad to undertake academic mobility (Inbound Mobility) at UFRN.

Furthermore, it is necessary to work emphatically to improve the linguistic competence of the academic community, offering courses and subjects in additional languages, raising awareness and motivating students, faculty, and technical-administrative staff about the importance of investing in language knowledge.

This progress will allow for the effective implementation of an internationalization at home (IaH) process. This process requires the Institution to make a planning effort so that international and intercultural dimensions can be incorporated at all levels and spaces of academic life: in curricula, subjects, assessments, extracurricular activities, cultural and institutional activities, virtual exchanges, among others. As an important governance strategy in scenarios such as that of the current society, with its economic difficulties and political and social instability, IaH becomes a process that, in addition to being efficient, is inclusive, responsible and sustainable.

3.3 International cooperation: networks and partnerships

UFRN is an institution that is represented in important national and international associations and cooperation networks. This presence expands opportunities for dialogue and cooperation, bringing together partners and focusing interests on the development of science in teaching, research, extension, and innovation through

the internationalization of higher education. In addition to bilateral cooperation between higher education institutions through various cooperation agreements and covenants, the strategic partnerships that drive teaching, research, extension, innovation, and management at UFRN are also the result of network cooperation.

In Brazil, UFRN is a member of:

- the Brazilian Association of International Education (FAUBAI);
- the International Cooperation Group of Brazilian Universities (GCUB).

Internationally, UFRN is part of:

- the Tordesilhas Group, a network of researchers that brings together universities in Spain, Portugal and Brazil;
- the Association of Portuguese Language Universities (AULP), a network with more than 130 members from eight Portuguese-speaking countries (Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe, and East Timor);

- the Montevideo Group Association of Universities (AUGM), a network of public universities in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Uruguay;
- the World Technology Universities Network (WTUN), a global network of universities focused on technology, united by a commitment to the inclusive advancement of sustainable scientific and technological education and research. Its members are predominantly in Europe and Asia, with UFRN being the only university in South America to be part of the network;
- The Ibero-American University Association for Graduate Studies (AUIP), with more than 300 member higher education institutions throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, Portugal and Spain. Its focus is on the development of graduate programs, promoting training, research, cooperation, and international academic integration among member institutions;

- The International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation (IASP), a global network for science parks and areas of innovation which, with its 350 members across all continents, seeks to boost the growth, internationalization, and productivity of its members;
- The Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), an association that brings together more than 1,000 higher education institutions and research centers from approximately 120 countries around the world, united in support of the development of scientific Francophonie.

3.4 Priority themes for the internationalization of UFRN in graduate education

Some areas, either due to the nature of their subjects of study or the involvement of their researchers in large-scale projects, have allowed UFRN to remain prominent on the national scene and, above all, have also provided growing international visibility.

These areas are organized into priority themes that guide the institution's core activities of teaching, research, extension and innovation.

Considering the areas in which UFRN has already made significant advances on the national and international scene and which have significant academic and scientific output, the priority themes for this Internationalization Plan are established here. Each of these themes is part of the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN's 2030 Agenda, reflecting the commitment of the management as a whole.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



- Health Care, Promotion and Rehabilitation
- Neglected and Degenerative Diseases
- Evolution, Cognition, and Behavior
- Public Health

HUMAN DYNAMICS IN DIVERSITY SCENARIOS



- Languages, Culture, Society and Politics
- Education, Inclusion, and Human and Social Development

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION



- Biotechnology
- Aerospace Science and Technology
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Nanotechnology

ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION



- Biodiversity and ecological transition
- Sustainable development

ENERGY



- Energy transition
- Biofuels
- Renewable energies and smart grids

3.5 Strategies related to internationalization management

Internationalization can be seen as a useful tool in strengthening the pillars of teaching, research and extension, given its capacity to enhance the education of professionals qualified to work in the global market, in addition to promoting the exchange of ideas, cultures, and knowledge on a global scale.

Thus, strengthening international collaborations plays a very important role in the effective execution of the missions of a university that aims to act as an agent of local and global transformation.

As mentioned earlier, UFRN is already at an advanced stage of internationalization and has a well-developed infrastructure in several aspects to support foreign cooperation.

Among these items related to the administrative side, the following stand out:

- offering foreign language courses to faculty and administrative staff;
- offering foreign language courses to students;
- offering Portuguese courses to international students;
- conducting the Portuguese proficiency exam (Celpe-Bras) at UFRN;
- financial support for students in socioeconomic vulnerability to obtain passports and visas and to take proficiency exams;
- internal regulation of student mobility;
- Program for welcoming foreign students by veteran UFRN students (Exchange Fellows Program);
- Established policies for internationalization and language teaching;

- Financial support for teaching activities abroad;
- Free translation of documents necessary for student and faculty mobility;
- Translation into English, French and Spanish of the syllabi of all undergraduate and graduate programs;
- Multilingual website with the necessary information for establishing cooperation with UFRN and for carrying out academic mobility;
- Establishment of cooperation agreements with partner institutions.

However, to advance more decisively in internationalization activities at UFRN, it is necessary to offer some services and implement actions that support the execution, registration, and publicity of internationalization actions. The main services and actions identified so far are:

- Updating the academic management system to record academic activities carried out in a foreign language;
- Updating the faculty progression resolution to acknowledge internationalization actions;
- Establishing international marketing activities to more dynamically disseminate information about UFRN abroad and to unify the institutional image internationally across all virtual media channels;
- Campus signage in foreign languages;
- English as a Medium of Instruction courses or the equivalent in other languages for professors who wish to teach academic courses in foreign languages.

The idea is that, by using these strategies, along with the academic strategies for internationalization presented below, UFRN can make considerable progress in its internationalization process.

3.6 Academic Strategies for Internationalization

As with management strategies, the Institution has several successfully implemented strategies. Therefore, before listing the proposals for this new cycle, the current strategies are listed below:

- Academic student mobility process, based on the students' own choice of institutions and courses, but with the analysis and approval of program coordinators;
- Possibility of flexible transfer of credits obtained and recognition of activities carried out at partner universities, without requiring full correspondence of workload or content;

- Possibility of students being granted authorization to take part in mobility not only to attend courses, but also to take part in research and extension activities, in addition to internships at higher education institutions or companies;
- Creation of programs that enable and encourage the presence of visiting foreign professors in graduate programs;
- Participation in programs and university networks that offer opportunities for academic mobility and scientific cooperation.
- Participation in international student competitions of university networks in which UFRN participates.

Although the actions implemented by the International Office and UFRN over the years have contributed to an increase in the University's internationalization, there has been more emphasis on passive internationalization, with the sending of staff and students abroad. It is true that the

execution of calls for applications for visiting professors from abroad in recent years fits the definition of active internationalization, enabling an exchange of knowledge and contact with diverse cultures and teaching-learning methodologies with the hired professors. However, there is still a need for greater dissemination of the Institution's teaching, research, extension and innovation activities abroad, as well as of Rio Grande do Norte and the cities where UFRN campuses are located, in order to increase the chances of attracting students and faculty.

The academic strategies that will be the focus of activities during the term of this plan are described below.

● Recruitment of International Students

Despite the increase in the number of international students at UFRN compared to the period before the establishment of the first Strategic Internationalization Plan (2018), this number is still far below

the Institution's capacity to attract these students, especially in undergraduate programs. Intensive recruitment of high-potential international students allows for attracting talent for mobility periods at UFRN.

Associating the UFRN brand with these talents is extremely beneficial, as it constitutes permanent positive publicity. To implement student recruitment strategies more efficiently, it is necessary to expand the production of audiovisual promotional material in foreign languages that highlights the different specific areas of knowledge.

Furthermore, partnerships with the state of Rio Grande do Norte and the cities where UFRN campuses are located should be established for the dissemination of promotional material both on official websites and at meetings, events, or fairs whose audience includes strategic agents and/or those interested in internationalization. Other opportunities for attracting international students are associated with extension

activities carried out abroad, such as the two editions of the Trilhas Potiguares program that UFRN conducted in Mozambique, in 2017 and 2025.

● **Alumni Involvement in the Marketing and Recruitment Process**

Higher education creates a lasting bond between the student and the university they chose and where they were welcomed. Being able to share accounts of their educational or mobility experiences at UFRN can be an excellent way to promote the institution within the home community of the foreign student interested in choosing UFRN as their educational institution. Therefore, permanent contact with alumni is important so that both the student and the institution can continue writing a shared history. UFRN is interested in this because the alumnus will serve as a letter of introduction for the institution. The greater their professional success, the greater the visibility they can provide to the institution that educated them.

On the other hand, the success of their alma mater is also in the alumnus's interest, because the greater the importance of the institution, the greater the value added to the obtained diploma.

In the specific case of foreign graduates, Chris Foley (2009)⁵ points out some advantages for their inclusion in the marketing and recruitment process of universities: they speak enthusiastically about their institution of study; they have the necessary experience to connect the benefits of their education to their professional practice; they generally have a broad network of relationships, from which the university ultimately benefits; their opinion about the university expresses credibility and can help tip the balance in its favor when other students are considering which institution they will choose; they have knowledge of both realities, that of the university and that of their country of origin,

5 FOLEY, Chris J. Making the Most of Alumni Contacts. In: HEANEY, L. (Ed.). *NAFSA's Guide to International Student Recruitment*. 2. ed. Washington: NAFSA, 2009. p. 119-121.

and thus, they can better assist new students in selecting the institution where they will study; they will have the value of the university's success added to their degree; they can assist the institution in their place of residence, in cases where it cannot, due to lack of budget, send its staff there; and, finally, they can assist in the process of raising funds through donations or investments from companies in their country.

- **Short-term Programs**

Short-term programs can be seen not only as a tool for disseminating specific knowledge based on a selected theme, but also as a way to promote other local activities, such as cultural, sporting and tourist activities. As defined by S. E. Spencer, "short-term programs typically consist of only one course, they offer an intensive academic experience and, if properly designed, an intensive intercultural experience as well"⁶.

6 SPENCER, S. E. et al. Short-Term Programs Abroad. In: BROCKINGTON J. L. et al. (Ed.). *NAFSA's Guide to Education Abroad for advisers and administrators*. 3. ed. Washington: NAFSA, 2005. p. 374.

Short-term programs, often called summer schools or winter schools, depending on the time of year and hemisphere, are a promising way to ensure a continuous flow of international students to UFRN. Furthermore, offering these short courses is a very important strategy to be employed for the internationalization of Extension programs at UFRN.

- **Encouraging bilateral cooperation between programs**

One strategy, in this case, consists of sparking interest among different undergraduate and graduate programs in dual degree agreements, as a way to establish a permanent flow of students in both directions and thus allow the internationalization of curricula and pedagogical practices, in line with the UFRN's Teaching Improvement Policy. This cooperation format, in addition to the advantages it brings to the programs' dynamics, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels, brings professors and researchers closer together in

both institutions and contributes to the consolidation of groups, which then cooperate more intensely. Furthermore, for students from both institutions, there is the added benefit of receiving two diplomas, one of them international, relieving them from the often exhausting pursuit of recognition of a foreign diploma in order to being allowed to exercise their profession in Brazil or of a Brazilian diploma in order to be allowed to exercise their profession abroad.

- **Internationalization at Home**

Promoting the internationalization at home strategy through the implementation of teaching activities based on the COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) methodology, which promotes learning through interaction and collaboration with international groups via virtual platforms. Using COIL, students and professors from different countries can be connected, encouraging them to work on collaborative projects, developing linguistic, digital, intercultural, and teamwork skills.

The use of COIL allows for a broader impact of internationalization actions, reaching a much larger number of students and reinforcing the internationalization of undergraduate and graduate programs' curricula.





GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this Plan is to promote internationalization as a strategic and cross-cutting principle at UFRN, fostering academic excellence in teaching, research, extension, innovation, and management activities at all levels of education, with an emphasis on graduate studies, in order to consolidate and expand the internationalization of UFRN to position it, in the coming years, among the best universities in Brazil.

Based on this guiding objective, four specific objectives were developed:

I. To boost UFRN's international cooperation through the establishment of new strategic partnerships, participation in academic and scientific networks, consolidation of cooperation among graduate programs and research groups, as well as the promotion of exchanges and collaborations in priority and strategic areas, including the induction of South-South cooperation.

II. To strengthen the management of internationalization.

III. To promote student academic mobility.

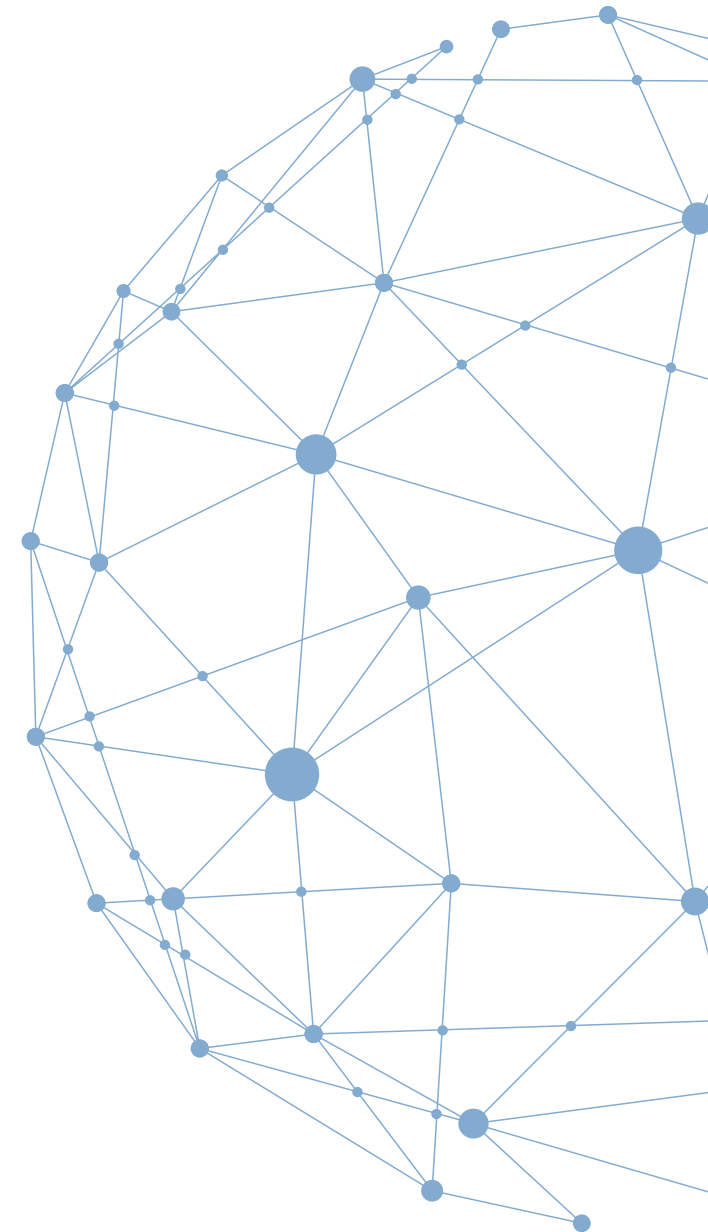
IV. To promote faculty academic mobility.

4.1 Actions and Goals

This section will detail the actions and goals related to the specific objectives listed in the previous section. A goal is understood as "the fragmentation of objectives, indicating, whenever possible, values, quantities, and dates, that guide the organization during the implementation phase" (Fishman; Almeida, 1991)⁷. An action, on the other hand, is understood as how to achieve the established objectives.

The goals and actions aligned with the specific objectives highlighted in this Plan are listed below.

⁷ FISCHMANN, A.; ALMEIDA, M. I. R. *Planejamento estratégico na prática [Strategic planning in practice]*. São Paulo: Atlas, 1991.



OBJECTIVE

Expand and strengthen UFRN's international cooperation, including the induction of South-South cooperation.

Goals

- To expand in 30% the cooperation agreements with foreign institutions, from 151 in 2025 to 197 in 2031.
- To expand in 50% the cooperation agreements with foreign institutions of the Global South and of BRICS, from 40 in 2025 to 60 in 2031.
- To encourage the academic production in collaboration with foreign partners, increasing the percentage of publications with international collaborations, from 35% in 2025 to 42% until 2031.

Actions

- To foster academic cooperation between researchers and students, expanding its international dimension.

- To implement graduate education models shared with other international centers of excellence.

OBJECTIVE

To strengthen the management of internationalization.

Goals

- To include specific score for internationalization actions in employee's performance evaluation for the purpose of career progression.
- To conduct international missions for officials and technical-administrative staff.
- To create a mechanism for registration of courses taught in foreign languages in UFRN's informational systems.
- To support the holding of 20 international events per year until 2031.
- To raise UFRN's position in at least 3 international reference rankings until 2031.

Actions

- To publicize to the directors of Academic Centers and Specialized Academic Units internationalization actions with a view to expanding the participation of the academic community in UFRN's internationalization processes.
- To encourage the trilingual version (Portuguese, English and Spanish) of institutional websites.
- To improve the process of preparing multilingual presentation and promotional material for UFRN.
- To encourage the provision of courses in foreign languages.
- To encourage multilingual publications, as well as the translation of foreign books into the Brazilian Portuguese and from Portuguese into other languages.
- To engage technical-administrative staff in internationalization activities.

OBJECTIVE

To expand student mobility.

Goals

- To expand academic education at international level, through double degree and joint supervision programs, reaching 35 students until 2031, which corresponds to a 50% increase in comparison with average numbers of 2024 and 2025.
- To raise in 20% the number of foreign students at UFRN in comparison with the average of 147 students achieved in 2024 and 2025, reaching approximately 177 annual students until 2031.
- To expand the international academic mobility of undergraduate students to UFRN's partner institutions, expanding in 40% the average of 40 students in the period from 2024 to 2025, to 56 during the plan's validity period.

Actions

- To foster student mobility, intensifying academic cooperation and exchange opportunities, including funding for students under socioeconomic strains.
- To promote the holding of short-term programs taught in a foreign language to attract international students.
- To encourage the participation of foreign students in several UFRN's teaching, research and extension activities.
- To promote the participation of graduate students in sandwich PhD programs.

OBJECTIVE

To expand faculty mobility.

Goals

- To foster the hiring of foreign visiting professors to work in UFRN's graduate programs, expanding the number of hired visiting professors from 8 in the 2018-2024 period to 16 for the 2025-2031 period.
- To expand in 20% the international mobility of UFRN faculty members until 2031, from the average 44 supports in the past two years (2024, 2025) to 53 annual supports in international missions.

Actions

- To promote the exchange of foreign professors in teaching, research and extension activities, strengthening UFRN's priority areas, making it more attractive for the establishment of international partnerships.

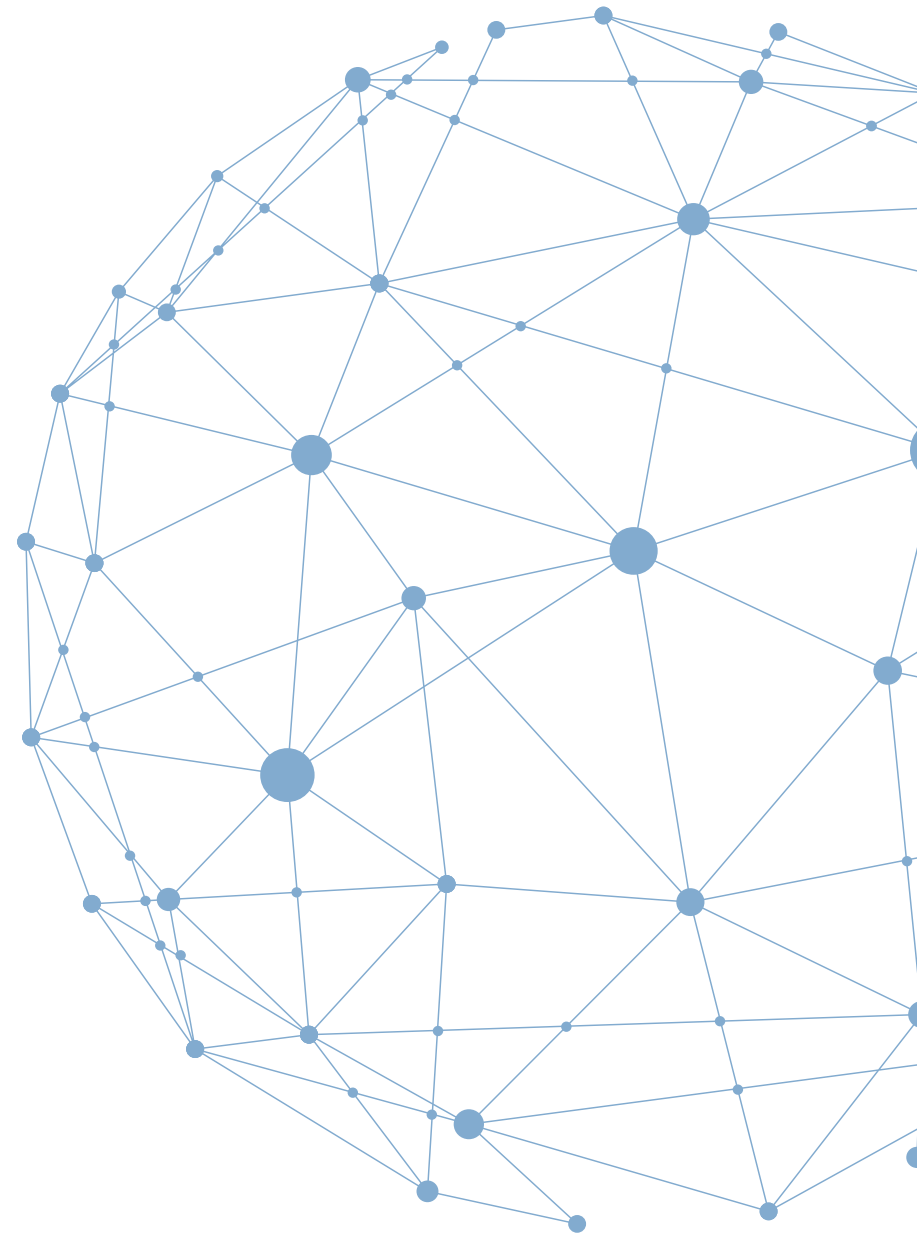


MONITORING AND EVALUATION



UFRN's Strategic Internationalization Plan is valid for 6 years (2025-2031) and must undergo an annual evaluation by UFRN's Internationalization Management Committee. The deadlines stipulated for the goals must be permanently reviewed and adapted to new trends or new circumstances that may affect the set of UFRN actions.

Whenever the goals, assumptions, or internationalization strategies presented here are altered, the Plan must be resubmitted to UFRN's academic community for consideration and approval by the collegiate bodies.



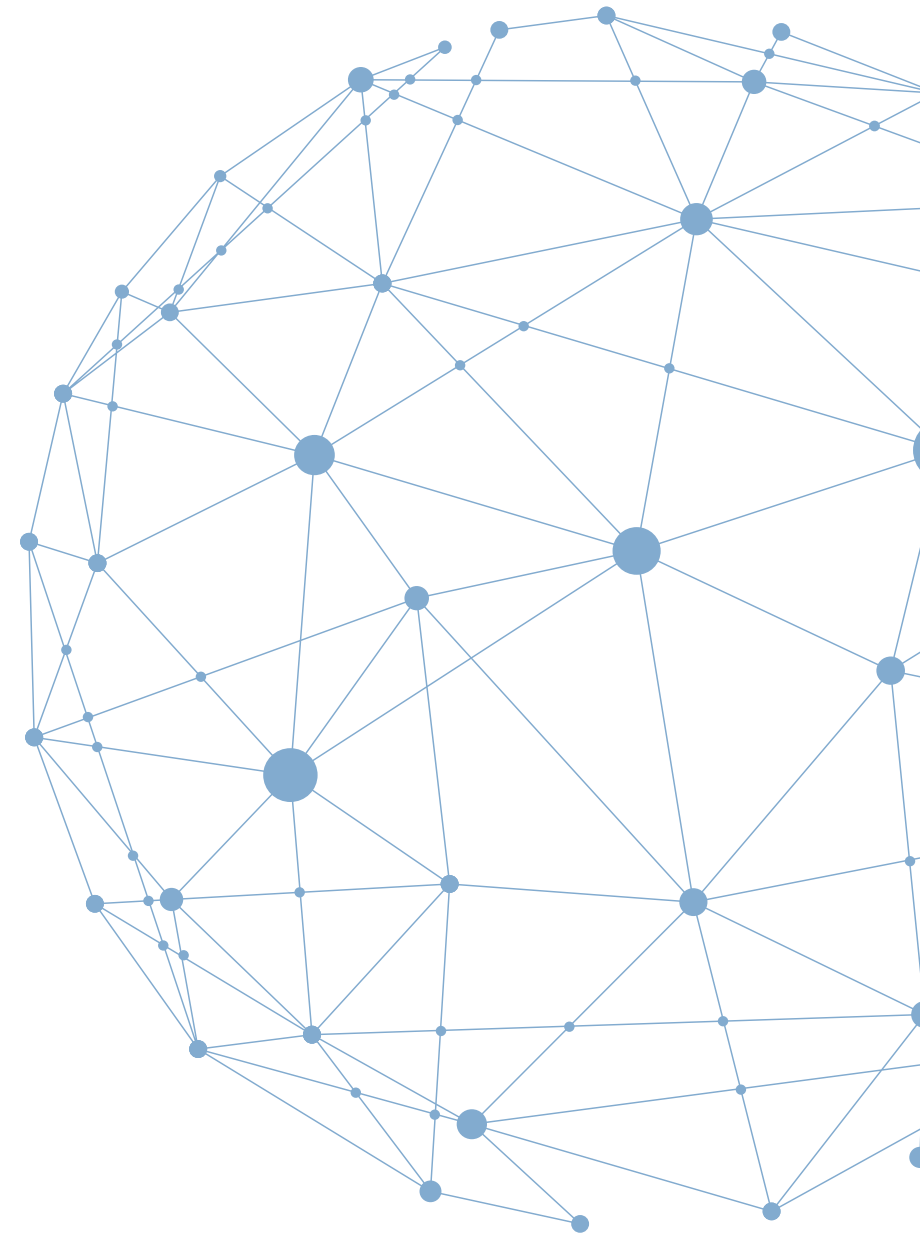


FINAL PROVISIONS

This plan was prepared and presented by UFRN's Internationalization Management Committee, in accordance with UFRN's Internationalization Policy, approved by Joint Resolution No. 03/2022-CONSEPE-CONSAD, of May 17, 2022.

Finally, this plan reaffirms UFRN's commitment to strengthening its international presence, fostering solidarity-based cooperation among nations, and valuing the knowledge, practices, and perspectives produced in the contexts of the Global South, consolidating UFRN as an innovative, inclusive institution recognized for its academic and management excellence.

Natal-RN, October 1, 2025.



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