



# The Picture in Uzbekistan: Mapping Internationalization Across Uzbek Universities

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# AGENDA

1. Introductions and Workshop Outcomes
2. An Overview of the Uzbek Higher Education System
3. Models for Internationalization
4. Building and Sustaining Mutually Beneficial Partnerships
5. Conclusion and Action Items



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# OBJECTIVES

- **Introduce Uzbek higher education system and aspects that impact international collaboration**
- **Introduce models for internationalization; explore the purpose for internationalization in context of Uzbekistan higher education**
- **Understand best practices in international academic partnerships**
- **Explore student mobility programs as an aspect of internationalization; explore opportunities for developing study abroad programs**
- **Identify how collaboration with Uzbek institutions can advance internationalization at your home institution**



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# 1. Introductions



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# ABOUT TSUULL UNIVERSITY

**Established in 2016, TSUULL is Central Asia's leading university dedicated to advancing the Uzbek language, history, ethnography, and Chagatai studies, while integrating global academic standards and inclusive internationalisation.**

As a regional hub for Uzbek Studies, the university promotes national identity through modern linguistic research, digital humanities, and specialised programmes in Uzbek and Chagatai languages, supporting SDG-4: Quality Education through access, excellence, and academic innovation. TSUULL's internationalisation model is strongly inclusive and partnership-driven, consistent with Partnerships for the Goals. The university integrates Uzbek Studies into global academia and actively opens cultural and research centres in collaboration with Oxford University, Osh State University, Bursa Uludağ University, the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, and Shanghai International Studies University, expanding global recognition of Uzbek culture and scholarship.

With a strong commitment to Gender Equality, TSUULL promotes gender-balanced participation in international programmes, supports women's leadership, and ensures inclusive access for students from low-income groups, rural regions, and vulnerable communities – as documented across multiple pages of the Sustainability Report (e.g., tuition support, community programmes, and cultural inclusion initiatives).



Uzbekistan  
(O'zbekiston)

Tashkent



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TSUULL has rapidly strengthened its global academic reputation. In the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, the university is placed in the **201+ global band**, with outstanding subject performance: **Top 10 globally in SDG 5** (Gender Equality) and **Top 23 globally in SDG 4** (Quality Education) – placing it among the world’s most socially responsible and inclusive universities.

- In the QS World University Rankings by Subject, TSUULL is listed in the **301–350** band for Modern Languages, reflecting its rising international visibility in linguistics, literature, and cultural studies.



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1
NO POVERTY

TSUULL provides comprehensive support for the creation of financially and socially sustainable start-ups developed jointly by its students and representatives of the local community, with a strong focus on poverty reduction and income generation.

Through its Start-Up Support Hub, the University delivers entrepreneurship training, mentoring, business incubation and access to facilities for projects in the fields of language, culture, education, creative industries and IT technologies. In 2024, TSUULL allocated 250,000,000 UZS to support high-potential joint start-ups aimed at sustainable business development.

**IMPACT AND OUTCOMES**

- 32 start-ups supported since 2022 among students and members of the local community
- 42% of beneficiaries are female entrepreneurs, many from low-income or rural backgrounds
- 12 start-ups have achieved commercial sustainability, employing over 50 individuals
- 4 start-ups have received national-level recognition through youth innovation contests

Special attention is given to empowering local youth, unemployed women and low-income residents by providing free training, expert consultation, workspace and practical guidance. Since its establishment, the initiative has supported more than 32 start-ups developed jointly by students and members of the local community, several of which have evolved into self-sustaining micro-enterprises.

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**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND TSUULL**

We open up to students the students community's role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

**INTERNATIONAL RANKING BASED**

We strive to ensure that the University is recognized as a leading institution in the world.



### Comprehensive Tuition Support for Students from Low-Income Families

In 2024, Alisher Navoi Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature (TSUULL) ensured full and equitable financial access to education for students from low-income families. Within the framework of its institutional anti-poverty strategy, 12% of the total student body is granted full tuition coverage, with 11 academic first-class funds. University (a total of 5,900,000,000 UZS was allocated). This support extended beyond tuition fees and included the provision of essential academic resources, such as study materials, laboratory and full access to digital learning platforms, thereby guaranteeing inclusive and barrier-free educational environment.

To enhance the effectiveness and transparency of its support measures, TSUULL systematically aligns its financial assistance policies with social protection initiatives, including *Ittifoq Dafaqari Axborot* and *Ittifoq Dafaqari*, which serve as formal instruments for identifying students from socioeconomically vulnerable backgrounds. In the 2023-2024 academic year, nine students (seven of whom were female) were awarded highly competitive state and university scholarships, including the *Navoiy State Scholarship*, the *Pro-Scholarship*, and the *Edam Karimov State Scholarship*, in recognition of their outstanding academic achievements.

Moreover, two female students were selected as participants in the University's Oshana Academic Exchange Programme, which enables them to pursue tuition-free studies for one academic semester at a partner institution, with complimentary accommodation and meals provided. In addition, two TSUULL undergraduate graduates, with institutional endorsement and support, successfully obtained the national "El-Yul Ushadi" Scholarship, permitting them to undertake fully funded Master's degree programmes at the University of Reading (United Kingdom). This prestigious scholarship comprehensively covers tuition fees, accommodation, living expenses, and associated academic costs.

Collectively, these measures demonstrate TSUULL's sustained and strategic commitment to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No Poverty) by systematically eliminating financial barriers to higher education, expanding access to international academic mobility and fostering long-term social and economic advancement for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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**TSUULL'S COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMMES: ENHANCING ACCESS, INCLUSION, AND OPPORTUNITIES**

University implements a comprehensive set of community support programmes aimed at reducing inequality, expanding access to essential services, and strengthening social and economic resilience. Through free and fully inclusive initiatives, the University supports youth from low-income families, socially disadvantaged women, older adults, and persons with disabilities by equipping them with practical skills, emotional resilience, and improved access to education, employment, and social participation.

TSUULL delivers completely free digital literacy courses for socially vulnerable women, youth from low-income families, and older adults in order to reduce the digital divide and expand access to online services and income-generation opportunities. As a result, participants have strengthened essential digital skills, improved access to employment and freelance opportunities, gained confidence in using e-government and online payment systems, and enhanced their overall economic participation and long-term resilience.

In addition, the University provides free and confidential support services. The Psychology Services Centre from low-income families, and in order to strengthen well-being, reduce stress, and support social stability. As a result, participants have developed stronger awareness, improved coping skills, enhanced well-being and self-confidence, and demonstrated greater resilience into adult life, and employment.

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In order to foster inclusive education and community resilience, TSUULL provides free sign language courses to promote social inclusion and communication accessibility for people with hearing impairments and other vulnerable groups, including students and families from low-income backgrounds. The programme strengthens communication skills, improves social participation, and expands access to educational and professional opportunities. As a result, families and community members report better interaction, increased confidence, and stronger social cohesion.

We provide free language courses in *English, Arabic, Turkish, Korean, and German* for youth from low-income families, supporting their access to higher education and improving future educational and employment prospects. The programme develops practical language skills, academic readiness, and intercultural competence through quality instruction, workshops, and online learning resources. As a result, participants demonstrate improved language proficiency, increased confidence and motivation for further studies, broader cultural awareness, and stronger pathways to higher education and employment.

Through its integrated, inclusive, and community-oriented approach, TSUULL significantly enhances access to education, digital skills, psychological well-being, employability, and social participation. These programmes contribute directly to poverty reduction, the empowerment of vulnerable populations, and the development of sustainable and resilient communities.

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NO POVERTY

**POLICY ENGAGEMENT FOR POVERTY REDUCTION AT MULTIPLE LEVELS**

University actively contributes to poverty reduction policy-making at the global, national, regional, and local levels through the strategic engagement of its leadership and academic community.

Rector of the University, Shokhiddin Shukhat Samarkandovich, serves as a deputy in the national parliament and as a member of the Tashkent City Permanent Commission on Industry, Transport, Construction, Utilities, and Public Services. In these capacities, he participates in legislative and municipal decision-making processes related to social development, inclusive urban planning, and poverty reduction at the national and regional levels. His regular visits to local mahallas provide firsthand insight into the socio-economic challenges faced by vulnerable populations, ensuring that community needs are reflected in national and regional policy discussions.

Vice-Rector for Research, Innovation and International Cooperation, Nuriya Normurodova, contributes to shaping higher education and human capital development policies. As a permanent member of the Expert Council of the National Academic Commission and as a member of the Tashkent City Permanent Commission on Industry, Transport, Construction, Utilities, and Public Services, she supports inclusive academic mobility, strengthens international cooperation, and promotes equitable access to education and research opportunities at the national and global levels. Her involvement aligns national higher education strategies with global standards and inclusive development frameworks.

Many university professors serve as official members of the Scientific and Technical Council under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Through their expert participation, the University contributes to the development and evaluation of educational reform, innovation strategies, and evidence-based policies that promote social mobility, reduce inequality, and strengthen human capital at the national and regional levels.

Through this multi-level engagement, TSUULL plays an active role in shaping inclusive policies, strengthening social protection mechanisms, and supporting poverty reduction in all its dimensions, in line with SDG 1.

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**CONFERENCE AND 2025**



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## Report on the Contribution of "Uzacademy" to SDG 4: Quality Education

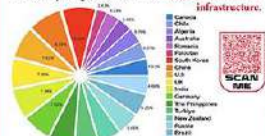
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The Uzacademy platform, established by Alisher Navoi Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature (TSUULL), represents a major national innovation in advancing open, inclusive, and high-quality education aligned with SDG 4 as a modern digital learning ecosystem. Uzacademy provides free and open access to Uzbek language education for global audiences while simultaneously promoting Uzbekistan's history, literature, art, culture, and national values on an international scale. Developed under Presidential decree PQ-19 January 12, 2020, the platform conducts Uzbekistan's strategic commitment to preserving its cultural and educational heritage worldwide through science and technology.



### How Uzacademy aligns with the

The entire learning environment is designed and delivered from a professional multimedia studio, offering interactive video and audio lessons, virtual practice sessions, and real-life situational exercises to ensure authentic learning experiences. The curriculum is fully aligned with the *German European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)*, covering proficiency levels from A1 to C1, and provides 24/7 multilingual access (in Uzbek, English, Russian, and other languages), ensuring flexibility and inclusivity for learners of diverse linguistic backgrounds. With over 700 international students from across Europe, Asia, the Americas, and Oceania—including participants from the USA, UK, China, South Korea, Germany, Italy, Turkey, India, and Brazil—the platform has demonstrated tangible global reach and engagement. A milestone achievement in the platform's development occurred on October 14, 2025, when the "Uzbek Studies Program" was officially launched at the University of Oxford (UK), marking the formal integration of Uzacademy's digital content into Oxford's educational infrastructure.



This initiative undertakes Uzacademy's dual mission: to serve as a digital gateway for Uzbek language learning and as a bridge for intercultural exchange and heritage dissemination, establishing TSUULL as a leader in open-access education and international academic cooperation in line with global sustainable education goals.



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## TSUULL'S COMMITMENT TO ADVANCING WOMEN IN UNDER-REPRESENTED FIELDS (STEMM): Institutional Narrative for SDG 5

University positions gender equality as a core institutional value, demonstrated through a comprehensive suite of initiatives dedicated to empowering women in fields where they have historically been under-represented. The university's "Women in Under-represented Fields / STEMM" platform publicly documents its commitment to opening pathways for women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, media, and other emerging disciplines. As a dedicated part of the SDG 5 web portal, the page provides clear evidence of TSUULL's structured approach to advancing women's participation, visibility, and leadership across both academic and professional domains.

Between 2021 and 2025, participation of women in TSUULL's STEMM-related programs (computational linguistics, digital humanities, media technologies, academic research methods, and IT literacy modules) increased by 42%, with more than 850 female students taking part in short courses, mentorship programs, awareness workshops, and scholarships.

The platform highlights the persistent gender gap in STEMM fields, reflecting national statistics showing women constitute only 28-30% of the STEMM workforce in Uzbekistan. Responding to this, TSUULL has introduced structured capacity-building programs that specifically target women. Over the last academic year, the university delivered over 60 STEMM-related training sessions, reaching approximately 400 female students, including young women from rural areas who face multiple layers of disadvantage. The university's scholarship campaigns further simplify access in 2023 and 2024, a combined 140 competitive scholarships were allocated to women entering specialized fields such as computational linguistics, digital technology, and media literacy—representing a 65% increase compared to 2021.

TSUULL's mentoring ecosystem provides a quantitative evidence of impact. The V Leadership Clides and STEMM Mentorship collectively engaged over 120 women mentees during 2021-2025, facilitating in-career guidance, academic supervision, professional shadowing. Internal tracking shows 78% of female participants in these programs reported improved academic performance, confidence in research, and increased re-pursue postgraduate studies in linguistics, humanities, or educational technology. The network also contributed to reducing the drop-out among first-year women entering STEMM programs: attrition among female students tracks fell from 14% in 2021 to 8% in 2024.

Cultural transformation remains a key driver of TSUULL's strategy. The SDG 5 platform also more than 25 awareness campaigns, seminars, public dialogues conducted annually to foster stereotypes about women in technology and STEMM. These campaigns are typically attended by participants each, demonstrating strong engagement. The visibility of achievements—through published interview series and spotlight features—has significantly increased female representation in public discourse. Since 2022, TSUULL has highlighted 50 outstanding women in research, publishing and digital innovation, applying role models for the next generation.

Institutional policy and governance indicators further strengthen the credibility of TSUULL's SDG 5 agenda. The university's Gender Equality Report (linked from the SDG 5 site) documents measurable progress, including an increase in the proportion of women in academic leadership from 32% in 2021 to 45% in 2024, alongside a 25% rise in the number of women leading research centers, digital humanities labs, and corpus-studies groups. Likewise, women currently constitute nearly 60% of all students enrolled in digital humanities, educational technology, and linguistics-related programs—demonstrating the university's success in broadening participation across high-demand knowledge sectors.

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## TSUULL CHILDCARE CENTER: Strengthening Family-Friendly, Inclusive, and Gender-Responsive Education

We actively support students, academic staff, and employees who balance university responsibilities with family life. In alignment with Uzbekistan's legislation on education and labor rights and international frameworks such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the university operates an on-campus childcare center designed to ensure that parents can continue their studies and professional duties without compromising childcare. The childcare center consists of two fully equipped rooms—one for students and one for staff—plus a shared relaxation area. Each room is staffed by a nurse, a psychologist, and a childcare assistant, ensuring comprehensive physical, emotional, and developmental support for the children. The center serves 20-30 children daily, with around 10% accompanied by caregivers and the remaining children supervised directly by childcare staff. Daily health checks are performed by the nurse; 95% of children are cleared to join group play, while about 5% may be briefly monitored in separate rooms if signs of illness are detected. This system significantly improves hygiene, safety, and child well-being.

The Student's Childcare Room provides a safe space for young mothers and fathers continuing their studies. It includes a connected day area, educational toys, nap beds, a breastfeeding corner, and a changing station. This service directly supports academic continuity for student parents—particularly women—helping reduce absenteeism and improving academic performance among young mothers who often face higher dropout risks. The staff childcare room, furnished with the support of the Korean organization KIDG, serves children aged 0-5 in a secure ergonomic furniture, eco-friendly materials, natural lighting, climate-controlled comfort, five infant bouncers, feeding corner, and individual storage areas. By enabling staff—especially women—to remain engaged in teaching, research, and leadership positions, the facility contributes to professional retention and gender equality. Currently, women constitute nearly 60% of TSUULL's academic workforce, and access to childcare plays an important role in supporting their continued participation.

The Childcare Center is complemented by social and financial support mechanisms. Student parents receive a one-time allowance equal to 200% of the minimum wage, and expectant and new mothers are provided with two weeks of full pay leave. These benefits, alongside TSUULL's commitment to accessible education and the university's celebration of Children's Day (1 June) events attended by over 50 staff, reinforcing the family-friendly values. In-person staff also contribute to childcare quality. Nu Davronova, psychologist, Tashkent, and childcare supervisor, Tashkent, emphasize the center's role in creating a safe and nurturing environment where children can thrive while their parents pursue academic and professional goals.

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## WOMEN'S MENTORING & ACCESS SCHEMES AT TSUULL



### A University Built on Mentorship, Equity, and Excellence

At Alisher Navoi Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature, mentorship is not just an add-on to academic life—it is one of its foundations. TSUULL has created a comprehensive university-wide mentoring and access ecosystem to ensure that every student, especially those entering emerging and high-demand fields, receives the support, confidence, and opportunity needed to succeed.

- In the 2024/2025 academic year, women formed a strong majority across all mentoring and wellbeing programmes at TSUULL:
- 82% of participants in the Peer Academic Support Programme (PASP) were women.
- 73% of students using the Student Success & Wellbeing Mentorship Network (SSWB/MN) were women.
- About 80% of attendees in wellbeing, resilience, and personal development workshops were women.
- Over 18% of all TSUULL female students\* participated in at least one formal mentoring initiative — with even higher engagement when including leadership, scholarship-preparation, and career-readiness schemes.

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## Open Access Education: Advancing Inclusive And Lifelong Learning In Alignment With SDG 4

The Open Access Education initiative represents a cornerstone of the institution's strategic vision to democratize knowledge and advance inclusive, equitable, and high-quality learning opportunities in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4. As a national centre for language and cultural studies, the university has created a comprehensive open-access ecosystem that ensures all learners—students, educators, and the wider public—can freely engage with its academic and cultural resources.

The initiative provides unrestricted use of the Public Library, digital learning platforms, audiobooks, and online archives, supported by modern management systems such as IRIS 44+ and ARMA, which enable seamless connectivity between physical and digital resources.

The central library facilities include a main reading hall equipped with modern computers, a self-study room with over 100 workstations, and high-speed Wi-Fi to accommodate both on-site and remote learners. The open-access repository currently houses more than 14,000 titles and 47,000 volumes, including textbooks, research publications, foreign literature, and QR-coded resources—all fully digitized for universal availability. To strengthen lifelong learning, the institution regularly conducts open lectures, workshops, public talks, and academic exhibitions, offering access not only to enrolled students but also to teachers, school pupils, and the general public. Through YouTube channels, Telegram audiobook libraries, and virtual resource hubs, it extends learning far beyond campus boundaries, ensuring equitable access for rural and international users alike.

By removing financial and geographic barriers, enhancing teacher development, and promoting digital literacy, the Open Access Education programme directly supports SDG 4 targets on lifelong learning, inclusive education, and quality learning environments, while reinforcing the university's role as a leading national hub for sustainable knowledge dissemination and social transformation.



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Gender Equality

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## TSUULL Mentoring Ecosystem 2025

A Comprehensive Framework for Equity, Leadership, and Academic Success

TSUULL's mentoring and access schemes exceed international benchmarks, with more than 16% of all beneficiaries directly from structured guidance, leadership development, and targeted access programs. Initiatives are embedded into governance, academic support, career development, and wellbeing systems, contributing to TSUULL's most impactful contributions to SDG 5: Gender Equality.

### 1. Academic Support Through Peer Empowerment

Helping students master challenging subjects through community-based learning.

The Peer Academic Support Programme (PASPD) brings students together through structured peer tutoring, subject-based mentoring circles, and collaborative study pathways. These schemes strengthen academic performance, build confidence, and ensure smoother transitions for first-year students and those entering demanding linguistic, digital, or research-focused programmes.

### 2. Women's Leadership and Access to Global Opportunities

Building pathways for women to enter leadership roles and competitive international programmes.

TSUULL offers a strong portfolio of leadership and access schemes, including:

- Women's Leadership & Empowerment Academy (WLEA)
- Women Translators Network
- Fly High Women's Club (with Qizlar Akademiyasi and Qizlar O'yozi)
- "Let the Women Speak" Podcast Mentoring Lab

Female students also receive personalised preparation for high-level scholarships and mobility opportunities: Zulliya State Prize, Presidential Scholarship, Navoi Scholarship, Erasmus+, Fulbright, Chevening, Oshin Exchanges, and more. Targeted initiatives such as STEM Camps for Girls, computational linguistics workshops, and digital-skills masterclasses expand access to high-demand fields.

### 3. Holistic & Lifelong

Ensuring student confidence, reconnected through educational journeys.

The Student Wellbeing Network integrates support, confidence seminars, coaching, and belonging activities. Participants constitute the programme's backbone, supporting continuity and emotional wellbeing.

4

## Core Policies Supporting Gender Equity and Workplace Inclusion

TSUULL is committed to advancing gender equality across all academic, professional, and social spheres, fully aligning with SDG 5. The University has established institutional frameworks and policies to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and gender-based barriers, ensuring equal access, participation, and leadership opportunities for women, men, and transgender individuals. Gender sensitivity is integrated into governance, curriculum design, research planning, and campus culture, promoting respect, dignity, and inclusion for all community members.

To empower women and vulnerable groups, TSUULL provides targeted programs such as mentorship, leadership development, capacity-building workshops, scholarships, and financial or housing support. Transgender students and staff are recognized and protected, with counseling, awareness programs, and administrative accommodations. **Family-friendly policies, including maternity, paternity, and adoption leave, flexible study or work arrangements, and reintegration support,** ensure that caregiving responsibilities do not hinder academic or professional growth.

Implementation and monitoring are coordinated by the University administration, Deans, Human Resources, and the Gender Equality Committee, ensuring compliance with national legislation and institutional regulations. Through these measures, TSUULL actively promotes SDG 5 by increasing women's participation in leadership, protecting against discrimination, and fostering an inclusive, equitable environment where all genders can thrive academically and professionally.

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## TSUULL AS A NATIONAL SAFE PLATFORM FOR NEUTRAL CIVIC AND POLITICAL DIALOGUE

TSUULL provides one of Uzbekistan's strongest and most documented examples of a neutral, protected, and academically governed space for open political and civic dialogue. Guided by its Academic Freedom and Scholarly Independence Policy—which guarantees that "academic work, public lectures, and scholarly speech shall not be restricted or influenced for ideological, political, or administrative reasons"—the University hosts structured, impartial forums where government representatives, NGOs, civil-society leaders, diplomatic missions, youth groups, and policy experts can engage in frank, evidence-based debate on sensitive national issues. Through its TSUULL Public Talks Series alone, the University has organized the open, free, publicly advertised events, featuring speakers from UN-affiliated organizations, national ministries, regional NGOs, human-rights institutions, and independent research centers. All events are institutionally hosted, professionally moderated, and confidentially registered, ensuring that participants can speak without political pressure, censorship, intimidation, or institutional interference. TSUULL's collaboration with the Association of Central Asia (ACARO)—whose national director is also a TSUULL professor—further strengthens its role as a trusted, non-partisan platform for discussions on equality reform, human rights, discrimination in education, and democratic governance.

4

## EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY AT TSUULL

TSUULL integrates sustainability and SDG principles across all academic programmes, ensuring that every student—regardless of discipline—develops the competencies required to understand global challenges and contribute to sustainable development. Sustainability is embedded into coursework, research, community engagement, digital platforms, and university-wide initiatives, making it a core academic value rather than a standalone subject. The University incorporates SDG content across 100% of bachelor's and master's programmes, supported by structured annual activities and measurable learning outcomes. Each year, TSUULL organizes 30+ SDG-focused workshops, lectures, and public dialogues, reaching more than 5000 students in addition to over 2000 students participate annually in formal SDG literacy assessments, with a survey response rate averaging 82%, ensuring reliable insights into students' knowledge and engagement.

TSUULL's sustainability education covers a wide range of interdisciplinary themes relevant to the humanities, linguistics, education, translation studies, and digital communication. Students explore real-world challenges—including climate resilience, inequality, cultural preservation, peacebuilding, gender equality, and sustainable digital transformation—through both theoretical and applied perspectives. This approach equips graduates with critical thinking, responsible communication skills, and the ability to analyse and address complex global issues. Courses and academic pathways include sustainability-related subjects such as global development, education for sustainable development, gender equality, digital literacy and ethical technology use, transition for international development, and social and emotional wellbeing in education. These are complemented by field practice, student volunteer projects, research seminars, and participation in outreach initiatives such as TSUULL Public Talks and SDG engagement events.

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## TSUULL'S DIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL & NGO SDG POLICY DEVELOPMENT

TSUULL plays a documented, institutional role in SDG policy development through sustained collaboration with national government bodies and regional NGOs. Each year, more than 25 TSUULL experts contribute to SDG-related working groups under the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Preschool and School Education, the State Test Center, and the Agency for Public Service Development. The University has co-developed 186 state language assessment tasks, produced 12 policy briefs, 27 monitoring reports, and contributed expert analysis to 4 national strategies (SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 10, SDG 16).

Through its partnership with ACARO, TSUULL conducts 20-25 civic-education workshops yearly, identifies community challenges, co-designs interventions, and provides evidence for national NGO shadow reports. The Gender Studies Centre and SDG Hub deliver annual gender-policy assessments and advise civil society platforms. TSUULL's input covers policy modelling, monitoring of interventions, and adaptive management, demonstrating a continuous, measurable contribution to Uzbekistan's SDG governance ecosystem.



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# INSPIRE QA INNOVATE IMPACT

## FUTURE-READY EXCELLENCE



We embrace  
emerging  
technologies,  
AI-driven learning,  
micro-credentials,  
and flexible  
pathways.

## INCLUSIVE BY DESIGN



We ensure equal  
opportunities,  
student wellbeing,  
gender equity, and  
access for  
vulnerable groups.

## GLOBALLY CONNECTED



We strengthen  
global partnerships,  
mobility, joint  
degrees, and  
international QA  
alignment.



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# Uzbek Higher Education



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# **DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN**

**Rapid Expansion** – Fast growth in universities, programmes, and enrollment since 2016.

**Centralized Reform Agenda** – Strong government leadership in modernization and policy direction.

**Quality Assurance Transition** – Shift toward ESG-aligned standards, external accreditation, and accountability.

**Inclusive Internationalization** – Active engagement in Erasmus+, global partnerships, and digital mobility.

**Cultural & Language Focus** – Strategic role in promoting Uzbek language, history, and cultural heritage.

**Digital Transformation** – Expansion of e-learning, digital libraries, and hybrid teaching models.

**Skills & Employability** – Priority on competency-based education and alignment with labor market needs.



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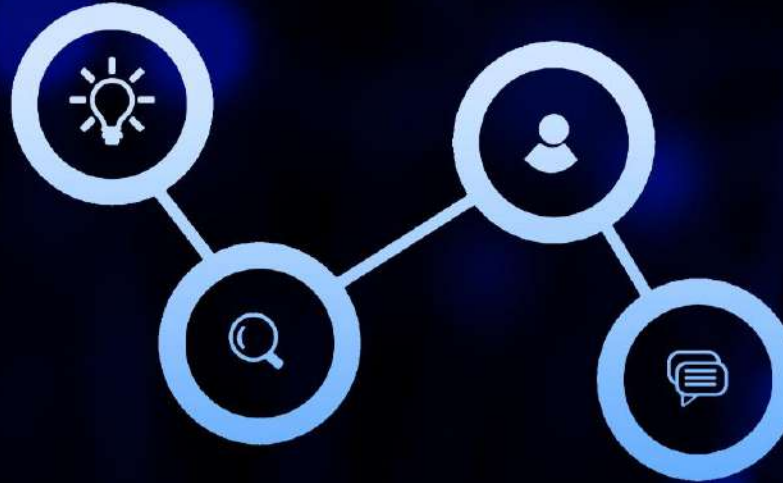
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# WHAT TYPE OF UNIVERSITY ARE YOU?

## Teaching

Widening Participation/access  
Sector Skills  
Graduate Employability  
Employer Engagement and HE Targets  
Professional Quals  
Life Long Learning  
Workforce Development  
Foundation degrees



## Academic

Graduates  
Post Graduates  
Higher Education Targets  
Learning programmes  
Intellectual Capital

## Research

Academic Research  
International research base  
Discipline advancement  
New knowledge  
World Class Knowledge Base

## Societal

Economic Growth  
Business Competitiveness  
Knowledge Transfer  
IP exploitation/spinout companies  
Regional Development and regeneration



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### PROGRESS OF INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION IN UZBEKISTAN'S HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR:



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## UZBEKISTAN'S HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

- Primarily funded by the Government of Uzbekistan, with strong central policy oversight.
- Tuition fees partially subsidized, especially for social groups and priority fields.
- Unified national tuition model (no in-state vs. out-of-state differentiation).
- Tend to be larger, long-established institutions with broader programme offerings.
- Represent the majority of student enrollment nationwide (over 75% of all HE students).
- Lead in quality assurance reforms, international partnerships, and accreditation, driven by national modernization priorities.

## PRIVATE / NON-STATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

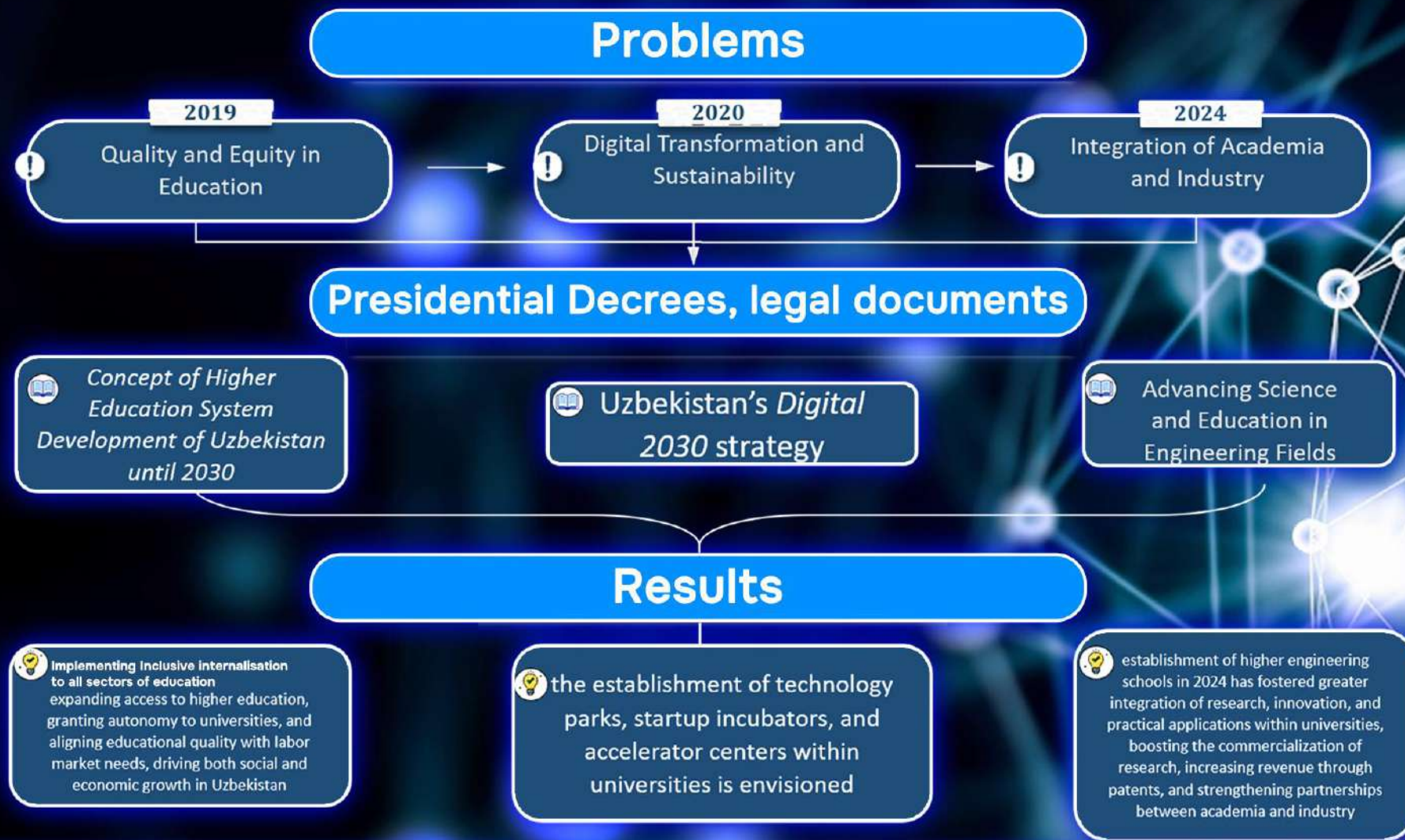
- Funded mainly through tuition payments, private investment, and limited donor or industry support.
- Tuition fees are generally higher than public institutions due to lack of state subsidy.
  - Tend to be smaller, more flexible, and often focused on applied fields (business, IT, management, design).
  - Growing rapidly and contributing to system diversification, innovation, and competition.
  - Attract students seeking alternative formats, such as evening programmes or practice-oriented curricula.
  - Represent a smaller but steadily increasing share of national enrollment (~20–25% and rising).
  - Primarily funded by the Government of Uzbekistan, with strong central policy oversight.
  - Tuition fees partially subsidized, especially for social groups and priority fields.
  - Unified national tuition model (no in-state vs. out-of-state differentiation).
  - Tend to be larger, long-established institutions with broader programme offerings.
  - Represent the majority of student enrollment nationwide (over 75% of all HE students).
  - Lead in quality assurance reforms, international partnerships, and accreditation, driven by national modernization priorities.



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# ISSUES IMPACTING HIGHER EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN

- Managing rapid system expansion while ensuring consistent quality across all institutions.
- Strengthening quality assurance and aligning fully with ESG and international accreditation standards.
- Enhancing faculty capacity in research, digital skills, and innovative teaching methods.
- Reducing regional disparities in access, infrastructure, and student support.
- Advancing digital transformation, including LMS modernization and digital literacy.
- Improving employability through stronger links between universities, industry, and skills development.
- Supporting inclusive access and gender equality, especially for women, rural students, and vulnerable groups.
- Expanding internationalization capacity to engage more effectively in global partnerships and mobility.



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# DEFINING TERMS: COMPREHENSIVE INTERNATIONALIZATION

Comprehensive Internationalisation is a deliberate and strategic process through which post-secondary institutions integrate international, intercultural, and global perspectives into their mission, functions, and educational practices. It enhances the quality of learning, teaching, and research for all students and staff, while fostering institutions that contribute meaningfully to a more connected, inclusive, and globally engaged society.



**CONCEPT**  
of Development of the Higher Education System  
of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030



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“a means [to] address the supply-demand gap, remedy low quality of teaching & learning..., accelerate research & innovation, prepare students to be competitive in the global labor market ... and enhance [institutional] profiles internationally & domestically.”  
(Iyer. 2017)



“a particular focus on student mobility, educational partnerships, and international rankings”

(Ota & Watanabe 2017)



“driven by economic development imperatives and the government’s desire to strengthen the country’s political and economic relationships with a wide range of trading partners.”

(Ziguras and Pham, 2017)



“driven by systemic higher education reforms aimed at improving quality, expanding access, advancing ESG-aligned quality assurance, and accelerating international collaboration to position Uzbekistan as a competitive and culturally distinct player in global higher education.”



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## REASONS UZBEK INSTITUTIONS INTERNATIONALIZE

- To improve student preparedness for a global era
- To diversify students, faculty, and staff
- To become more attractive to prospective students
- To generate new revenue for the institution
- To contribute to new international development initiatives
- To raise international rankings and reputation
- To attract global talent (faculty and researchers)

**Mapping Internationalization, CDE, 2022**

## PRIORITY ACTIVITIES FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION FOR UZBEK INSTITUTIONS (2020–2024)

1. Recruit international students to strengthen cultural diversity and global engagement across Uzbek campuses.
2. Increase outbound mobility, including participation of Uzbek students—especially women and regional students—in study-abroad, exchange, and internship programmes.
3. Develop strategic partnerships with institutions abroad, expanding joint degrees, dual diplomas, research collaboration, and regional/global networks.
4. Internationalize the curriculum and co-curriculum, integrating global competencies, multilingual instruction, digital mobility, and comparative cultural content.
5. Invest in faculty development, including EMI training, research capacity building, international accreditation skills, and participation in global academic networks.



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# KEY GOVERNANCE PARTNERS FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION (UZBEK CONTEXT)

## UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

- **Rector** – final authority on all international agreements, MOUs, and strategic partnerships.
- **Vice-Rector for International Affairs** – key SIO at institutions meeting the 200+ international student requirement.
- **Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs & Vice-Rector for Science, Innovations** – coordinate academic programmes, joint degrees, rankings, and research partnerships.

## CORE INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

- **Deans and Department Chairs** – develop joint programmes, academic mobility, and curricula.
- **International Relations Department** – operational hub for mobility, agreements, rankings, and diplomatic communication, reviews agreements, visas, HR matters for foreign faculty.
- **Strategic Development & Transformation Offices** – oversee QA, ESG alignment, THE/QS rankings, and international project portfolios.
- **Office of Research / Research Administration** – manages international projects, conferences, joint research grants.
- **Student Affairs Department** – supports incoming international students, orientation, housing, and wellbeing.
- **Finance Department** – coordinates scholarship payments, project budgeting, international procurement.



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# THE PICTURE IN THE UZBEKISTAN

## TOP COUNTRIES FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AS REPORTED BY UZBEK UNIVERSITIES

### EXISTING ACTIVITY

### TARGETED FOR EXPANDED ACTIVITY

Turkey	European Union (Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland) – Erasmus+, accreditation, STEM
South Koreya	United States research partnerships, policy studies, graduate pathways
Russia	South Korea & Japan technology, engineering, language programmes
Kazakhstan & Kyrgyzstan (regional leadership)	Saudi Arabia & UAE academic hubs, funding opportunities
United Kingdom (Oxford, Westminster, Cambridge collaborations)	China digital education, cultural exchanges, joint research
China (Shanghai, Beijing, Confucius Institutes)	Türkiye humanities, language, heritage studies, dual degrees
Azerbaijan (ANAS, Baku State University)	Malaysia & Singapore innovation, TVET, digital transformation
Japan (JICA, university partnerships)	
India (IITs, language & technology cooperation)	



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## DEVELOPMENTAL

- Align goals for partnership with institutional strategy
- Overall goals for the partnership activity
- Priorities for countries, activities, and project types
- Key stakeholders and their roles
- The aim of this phase is to establish the viability of the partnership

## WHAT MAKES FOR A HIGH PERFORMING PARTNERSHIP?

- Ongoing, regular communication
- Genuine dialogue, mutuality
- Capacity to deal with difficulties
- Capacity to evolve
- Opportunity to spread across the partner institutions and expand capacity for teaching, research, or service
- Support and encouragement from university leadership



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# CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

## 1. Institutional Compatibility

- Alignment with the university's mission, strategic goals, and Uzbek national priorities.
- Similarity or complementarity in academic strengths, programme structure, and student profile.
- Capacity to build synergies in language studies, digital humanities, STEM, or other priority areas.

## 2. Strategic Fit

- Partnership advances international teaching, research, mobility, and civic engagement.
- Supports institutional goals such as accreditation, English-medium instruction, Uzbek Studies promotion, or rankings.
- Fits into the university's overall internationalization strategy without duplicating existing partnerships.

## 3. Quality & Integrity

- Clear evidence of accreditation, recognized quality assurance, and ethical academic practices.
- Solid performance in global or regional rankings (THE, QS, subject rankings where relevant).
- Strong academic programmes and proven capacity for sustained collaboration



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# CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

## 4. Geographical & Strategic Relevance

- Region/country aligns with Uzbekistan's diplomatic, cultural, or economic priorities.
- Adds value to the existing geographical footprint of partnerships (e.g., EU, Türkiye, Korea, China).
- Offers mobility and research opportunities appealing to Uzbek students and faculty.

## 5. Existing Engagement Potential

- Presence of active contacts – faculty cooperation, joint research, mobility pipelines.
- Ability to involve multiple departments, not only one unit or individual.
- Strong institutional commitment from both sides, reducing risks of unequal effort.

## Challenges in Sustaining Partnerships (Uzbek HE Reality)

- Unequal commitment or lack of operational support on one side.
- Unclear goals or mismatch between expectations of the two institutions.
- Cultural and administrative differences, including bureaucratic procedures.
- Leadership transitions (rector or vice-rector changes), affecting continuity.



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# MOBILITY

- Full-degree abroad
- Research cooperation
- Faculty and staff exchanges
- Internship and services experiences
- Study abroad
- Virtual exchange



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# **MOBILITY AS IT RELATES TO INTERNATIONALIZATION AND PARTNERSHIPS**

- Connect faculty and staff in long-term relationships that build trust and cross-institutional knowledge
- Build complex understandings of partner and partner's country that deepen over time
- Create campus-wide awareness and atmosphere encouraging ALL students and faculty to connect with partner nation and institution
- Significantly contribute to intercultural students' intercultural learning
- Expand curricular offerings beyond what is available on student's home campus
- Create opportunities for intercultural learning for students on home campus through interacting with international students



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## **VIRTUAL EXCHANGE/ COLLABORATIVE ONLINE INTERNATIONAL LEARNING**

- Virtual Exchange (VE) or Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) is an innovative pedagogy that allows professors and students to use technology to engage with their peers at universities around the globe.

## **BENEFITS FOR VIRTUAL EXCHANGE**

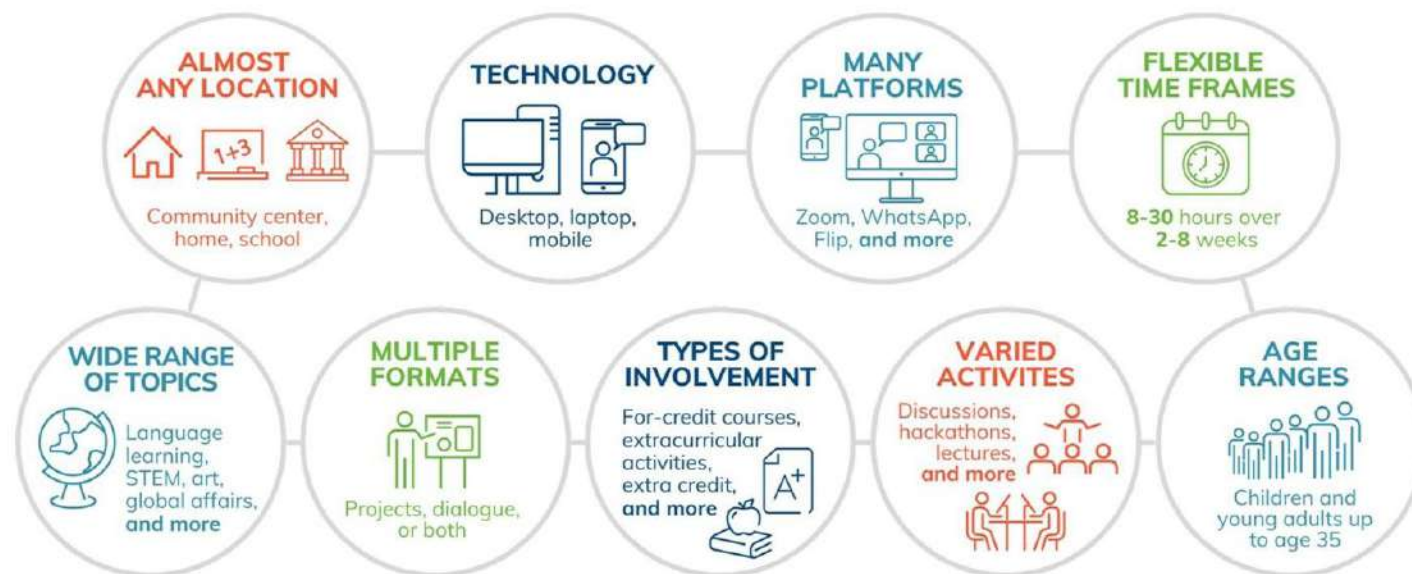
- Create opportunities for Uzbek universities to learn together without having to travel
- Effective pedagogical tool for student learning
- Cost effective
- Creates opportunities for faculty to work collaboratively
- Can advance curricular internationalization



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# THAN YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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