



# Curriculum Innovation for the Internationalization of Islamic Education Study Program at Higher Education Institutions in Surabaya, Indonesia

Abd. Rachman Assegaf\* , Husniyatus Salamah Zainiyah  & Muhammad Fahmi

Islamic Education Study Program (Master), Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia

✉ [assegaf@uinsby.ac.id](mailto:assegaf@uinsby.ac.id)

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## Abstract

Islamic Education Study Programs face various problems shaping curriculum innovation for an International Class Program (ICP). This research focused on efforts to innovate the appropriate curriculum for Islamic Education Study Programs at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya (UINSA), State University of Surabaya (UNESA), and the Sepuluh Nopember Institute of Technology (ITS) in Surabaya, Indonesia. The research method carried out in this study is developmental research using a qualitative approach and comparative analysis. Data were collected through visits, interviews, and direct observation with full awareness of health protocols, as well as documentation from printed and electronic materials. In addition, data were collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and the Delphi Method, a smaller scale of FGD. The results show that Islamic Education Study Program needs to immediately establish an international class program starting from the takhassus class, the excellent class, and the international class. Based on the findings at UNESA and ITS, the patterns of international classes are different in terms of programs, curriculum, learning, and multimedia application, which makes the position of the Islamic Education Study Program more flexible.

**Keywords:** *Curriculum Innovation; Higher Education Institution; International Class Program; Islamic Education; Study Program*

## INTRODUCTION

Mega changes in national education have caused Islamic universities to immediately work to establish international class programs. Many universities have launched international programs at the university level, study program (*Program Studi* abbreviated *Prodi* in Bahasa Indonesia), and classroom level. In the relatively young Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) of Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel (UINSA), there were efforts to increase capacity, training, and preparation for the implementation of an ICP (International Class Program). As comparison, it can be said that the Islamic Education Study Program or *Program Studi Pendidikan Agama Islam* (hereinafter abbreviated as PAI) is better prepared in terms of human resources, facilities, accreditation status, public trust, policies, and high public interest. On this rational basis, the PAI needs to move quickly in pioneering curriculum innovations for internationalization of Islamic studies ([FST UINSA Newsroom, 2020](#); [Syafi'i et al., 2022](#)).

Recent years have seen a proliferation of new International Class Programs, which is in accordance with the government's objective of providing support to universities that are prepared to launch such programs. Universitas Indonesia (UI), Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII), Universitas Negeri Malang (UNM), Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY), Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang (UIN Maliki), Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember (ITS), and other universities have organized international classes or joint degree programs. Universitas Indonesia (UI), for example, is excellently operating the recruitment system, classroom facilities and adequate practice rooms for the implementation of international

classes (Handoyo et al., 2017), while UGM has had an International Program at the Faculty (IP) of Medicine since several decades ago. UII in Yogyakarta has an International Program at the Faculty of Business and Economics, Faculty of Industrial Engineering, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Law, and the Faculty of Medicine.

The existence of faculties, study programs, and international classes can boost the university's ranking nationally and internationally which lead to a world-class university status (Ordorika & Lloyd, 2015; Vieira & Lima, 2015). As evidence, at many overseas campuses, international programs have been running long before Indonesian universities initiated them. Many Indonesian Islamic universities' lecturers used to study Islamic studies in many universities abroad, such as McGill University in Canada, Leiden University in the Netherlands, Western Sydney University in Australia, Hokkaido University in Japan, Hamburg University in Germany, University of California, Los Angeles in the United States, and others. These universities are accepting foreign students with optional Islamic studies programs. Furthermore, there is an increase in number of madrasas and Islamic centers abroad that are attended by foreign students.

The Government of the Republic of Indonesia has endorsed the Islamic universities to be pioneers in world-class universities. The existence of an educational unit aiming to achieve an international standard was supported by Article 50 of the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003. After this policy had been enacted, many schools and madrasas in Indonesia applied internationally standardized curricula. However, after the Government abolished the international standard schools' system, the "international standard" label was switched to "excellent schools", whereas the curriculum and programs were the same. In some schools in Surabaya, it turns out that international classes are still active, although they are now attended

by a limited group of students (Zulfah & Mudzakkir, 2015). In private schools, the establishment of international programs continues growing and these have drawn much attention in public opinion. The Jakarta Intercultural School (JIS) formerly Jakarta International School (Jakarta Intercultural School, 2022), and the Olifant School in Yogyakarta (Olifant School, 2022) are organizing pre-school education, elementary schools, and secondary schools within an international standard framework. Furthermore, several global schools began to appear in various cities in the country. As the numbers of schools in Surabaya and elsewhere in Indonesia have shown their development in running ICPs, the tertiary level of education should not fall behind from those schools' innovation. This kind of development is important for higher education in Indonesia to initiate international classes at the PAI Study Program level. Their alumni are expected to fill the need and to take part as managers, leaders, teachers, and education staff in international schools.

Attempts to strengthen the Islamic studies program should be done by establishing international classes, so that the program does not lag the progress of other universities, and at the same time it can raise the level of their campus to an international level. Rationally, it is important to conduct this research, due to several potential problems faced, namely: first, although Islamic studies is classified as established, the implementation of ICPs in various universities in Surabaya is still looking for the appropriate forms leading to privileges and superior programs; second, there has not been any effort to develop or even innovate the updated curriculum, which is very important, considering that online and virtual learning via digital media is always needed during the Covid-19 pandemic and the new normal period. Third, the ICP has not been optimally applied in Islamic studies.

Problems in this study can be identified in several points, namely: first, how is the international curriculum of Islamic studies organized at UNESA and ITS? Second, how are the elements of the international curriculum appropriate for Islamic studies in an Islamic university? Third, why is an ICP needed for the development of the PAI Study Program? Based on these background questions and problems that have been mentioned above, it is deemed necessary to discuss further on curriculum innovation for internationalization of Islamic studies at higher institutions in Surabaya.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Curriculum Innovation**

People's understanding of the curriculum develops continuously according to the times and expert opinions and has different implications from one field of study to another. In ancient Greece, curriculum was a term used in sport. At that time, the curriculum was defined as the distance a race had to be taken (a racecourse; a place for running). The definition of this curriculum then tended to change, from the physical meaning to other dimensions such as education. In education, the curriculum was originally defined as a teaching and learning plan or something that was planned for children to learn (a plan for learning). This meaning put emphasis on aspects of the subject matter or content that must be studied. However, the focus of the curriculum on this aspect was later considered to be too narrow and should be expanded ([Ainsworth, 2014](#); [Lalor, 2016](#)).

Now, the curriculum is understood not only as material (content) that must be studied, but also involves objectives (purposes), methods, and assessment (evaluation). In further definition, the curriculum is understood as all activities and learning experiences programmed by educational institutions for their students to achieve educational goals

([McConnell et al., 2020](#); [Santone, 2018](#); [Stern et al., 2021](#)). Included in this understanding are programs of activities outside of school in the form of extracurricular activities, namely supporting activities outside of Teaching and Learning Activities (KBM), such as scouts and others, and co-curricular or supporting activities, such as homework, assignments, or others. The description of the curriculum in this section follows this meaning framework.

Given the increasingly broad meaning of the curriculum, it needs to be prepared by considering the basic needs of students (psychological foundation) ([Stratemeyer et al., 1947](#)), community needs (social foundation) ([Carter, 2015](#); [Hardiman et al., 2007](#)), and the development of science or academic study itself (philosophical foundation). From this point, factors outside the curriculum are relevant. Why is that? Because the curriculum is one of the factors that influence the progress of an educational process ([Cubukcu, 2012](#)).

In relationship to curriculum innovation for the internalization of Islamic studies, this could be understood as developing and discovering new ideas about the current curriculum that is applied to international programs ([Abdullah, 2020](#); [Abou-Dagga, 2020](#); [Munadi, 2020](#)). The term innovation is considered in accordance with the latest developments, where previously the terms curriculum improvement and curriculum development were commonly used. In the context of the international program curriculum for PAI Study Program, it can be interpreted as an effort to renew the PAI curriculum in accordance with international standards. Curriculum innovation needs to be carried out continuously to respond to the demands of globalization. Recently, the society has entered an era of globalization in various fields, such as the globalization of science and technology, as well as aspects of social, political, cultural, and educational life. This will have implications for many educational problems that must be addressed

through various breakthroughs and curriculum innovations in operating higher education.

### **International Program**

International classes organized by the Study Program emphasize the use of English and/or other foreign languages in the entire lecture process. An international class is a class that specially designed to prepare students to take excellent international programs. Learning with the introduction of a foreign language is considered capable of providing a positive value that distinguishes between international classes and regular classes (Anwar, 2021; Littlewood & Yu, 2011).

Among the advantages of an international class is that students are given the freedom to take outbound and global mobility programs, such as double degrees, student exchange, internships, and summer courses in partner universities abroad, where students participating in this international program can work part-time. By joint-cooperation with the partner university, international students are encouraged to be fluent in the foreign language where they live, especially English and Arabic for Islamic studies. Vice versa, foreign students who take international class lectures in the local program, for example PAI Study Program, are also encouraged to understand Indonesian culture and language. If PAI is the flagship program, then these foreign students are expected to be able to live up to the Islamic values of Muslims that are developing in the country. In short, this international class program is mutually beneficial, between national students studying at host university abroad, and foreign students at the PAI Program od Study.

In relation to the efforts to internationalize campuses, Masdar Hilmy conveyed two important things that need to be understood, namely: first, increasing the indexation of scientific publications, which must be increased, both from among lecturers and students,

and the credibility of the campus in the ranks of the world's elite. Second, the international outlook in relation to the composition of international students and lecturers. According to him, the majority of our students still come from within the country. However, if the commitment to build the internationalization of this campus is truly realized, then the ideal composition is 20 percent from abroad ([FST UINSA Newsroom, 2018](#)). These conditions and prerequisites are optimistic, so they can be achieved in stages, and it is hoped that they can be started from the PAI Study Program. If the link between ICP curriculum innovation and strengthening the international class which represents the scientific integration paradigm of science and Islam.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Reviewing the previous research results and studies related to international programs is very useful in finding the research focus in this context. Moreover, this research position is intended to strengthen the PAI Study Program here that can be realized optimally after knowing the comparison with the implementation of international curricula on other campuses. Based on the scientific papers published on previous findings, such as books, journals, papers, and some previous studies can be mentioned as follows.

[Handoyo et al. \(2017\)](#)'s research on Unnes and UI concluded that the two universities in question had carried out well the international program although some obstacles and limitations were encountered, such as the presence of lecturers and students who did not master English, and a lack of facilities, infrastructure, and an adequate language laboratory. It was also found, however, that the University of Indonesia has implemented a recruitment system, lectures, and collaboration with partner of international universities in accordance with world class standards.



In relation with scientific studies on the implementation of international program at Semarang State University, [Prabajati & Permatahati \(2019\)](#) revealed several new findings. The results show that the State University of Semarang has seven program features that are implemented with English as an introductory language and learning media and curriculum standards that are in accordance with international demands. The application of Geography as an international class provides requirements for lecturers to have a TOEFL certificate with a minimum score of 550, although some students encounter problems with English proficiency, but in the end, this can be overcome.

[Hamzah \(2014\)](#)'s study on curriculum of Makassar State University and International Standard School Pilot (*Rintisan Sekolah Berstandar Internasional* abbreviated RSBI in Bahasa Indonesia) Junior High School Makassar City indicated that the ICP FMMIPA curriculum has a relevance level of 33.3% in Basic Biology, 31.4% in the High School Physics Practicum and several other subjects of 31.4%;second, that the ICP FMIPA curriculum with the RSBI SMP curriculum in Makassar City is evidently relevant. [Zulfah & Mudzakkir \(2015\)](#) researched on the rationality of parents in choosing an international class program for their children as students of SD Khadijah II Surabaya. The results of this study indicate that although the presence of an international class program in schools is not mandatory, some parents participate in the program, because international language skills are considered important for the development of their children in future.

Some researchers also paid attention on international programs abroad. [Holland & Vasquez de Velasco \(1998\)](#) reveal the need to include an international dimension at the syllabus level, integrate the international dimension at the curriculum level, and provide an overseas-minded learning environment. Meanwhile, it is recognized

that incorporating and integrating these three elements is highly dependent on video conferencing technology and the internet which are models for distance education with reciprocal effects. Hill (2012) also examines the international model of world-class education for international undergraduate degrees. He stated that the practice of an international mindset is rarely associated with curriculum development and pedagogical approaches that lead to inter-cultural dialogue, as well as the realization of interdependent nations. This was manifested in student exchange programs between countries, until the emergence of international schools since the first half of the 20th century which became a catalyst for the development of schools' international thinking programs. This scientific article includes a discussion of the constantly changing elements of international thought.

Based on the above-mentioned studies, the position of this study is different in terms of the focus which emphasizes the curriculum innovation for internationalization of Islamic studies at higher institutions in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia. The specificity of the multimedia approach in learning in international programs and curriculum is due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation which has not shown any signs of improving or of returning to normal yet. The principle applied here is that education must continue even when living through the Covid-19 emergency, but the implementation of the learning process must be carried out with suitable adjustments here and there. Likewise, efforts to strengthen the PAI Study Program through the internationalized program, should not stop even in an atmosphere of concern for the Corona outbreak. For this reason, this research is relevant and important.

## **METHOD**

This research is a multi-case study. It examines the current existence of Islamic studies for developing international programs. The research approach is qualitative with a comparative analysis method between several universities in Surabaya: UNESA, ITS and UINSA. This research involves informants as direct data sources that represent the situation under study, including its historical background and brief profiles. Data sources are classified into two sections, namely: first, primary data sources from observations and interviews with informants, such as faculty leader of international programs. Second, secondary data sources from the library, formal reports, and all related documents. Regarding the selection of these informants, the researcher used the snowball technique, which was to identify and interview someone who had a "common thread" with the characteristics of the required data. Those who have been verified and qualified are also asked to identify other informants like them, and so on until the informants show saturated data. Based on the results of the analysis of the data obtained, a qualitative research report framework was prepared (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). This research approach applied in several steps, beginning from pre-survey from digital and internet sources, visiting UNESA, ITS, and UINSA for observation and field data obtained from interviews, and analyzing the data.

The timeline research was set up between June to October 2021 with some flexible adjustment. The Study Program that will be detailed here is the PAI Study Program at UINSA. Meanwhile, information on the implementation of international programs was obtained from several established universities in Surabaya and referred to as comparisons for international class organizers, namely UNESA and ITS. The implementation of data collection was carried out through a set of instruments that are useful as a measuring tool in

research to obtain information or data. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The researchers tried to observe the subject of various educational activities at several universities in Surabaya. A check list was prepared, where the researchers just left a mark on the observed conditions or activities. The results of this data collection technique were written in the form of field notes, which were then analyzed. All collection of data through direct observation complied with health protocol standards due to the high Covid-19 outbreak situation.

Data analysis was carried out after the results of data collection had been obtained from observations, interviews, documents, and FGDs were sufficient. The incoming data was then processed and analyzed through stages: organizing data, classifying data, synthesizing it, looking for patterns of relationships, finding what was considered important and what had been learned and then making decisions that would be conveyed to others (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). As in any qualitative research, data analysis was carried out simultaneously with data collection and the work of collecting data had to be followed by writing, editing, classifying, reducing, and presenting data. The data analysis included: data collection, data display, data reduction, and conclusion (Miles et al., 2018).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Experiences of Universitas Negeri Surabaya with International Program**

Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) is a continuation of *Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Surabaya* (IKIP Surabaya), a state educational university founded in 1950. In 1999, IKIP Surabaya was converted to UNESA with six faculties and a post graduate program.

Its vision was to be excellent in education and science. From 2011-2015, UNESA has set its strategic plan as an excellent university within the national research university (2026-2030); and to become recognized as an international research university (2031-2035) ([Universitas Negeri Surabaya, 2020](#)). In pursuing this strategic plan and become an internationally recognized university, UNESA has set up the special curriculum known as *Kelas Unggulan* (excellent class) within the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (*Fakultas Matematika dan Ilmu Pengetahuan Alam* abbreviated FMIPA in Bahasa Indonesia) since 2009 ([FMIPA UNESA, 2020](#)).

*Kelas Unggulan* of FMIPA UNESA has no difference in terms of curriculum compared to the regular classes. The curriculum is designed and developed in accordance with the National Higher Education Standards. Chief of the Study Program explained ([D. A. P. Sari, personal communication, September 20, 2021](#)):

“The curriculum of *Kelas Unggulan* is designed to be the same as that of the regular class, so that students of both classes get the same lecture materials without any difference. The difference between the two lies in the language. *Kelas Unggulan* uses English as an introduction language and is bilingual. Reference books are also provided in English texts.”

It indicates that every student gets the same portion of lecture materials. The difference lies between the two classes are in the lecturing process using English as instructional language. The classroom learning process has also a hidden curriculum. Regarding learning resources, students are directed to textbooks and scientific journal articles written in English as well as teaching materials designed also in English.

An Islamic studies course is mandatory for both regular and international class students. As indicated by the Law of the National Education System Number 20 Year 2003 that stated that Islamic religion courses are obligatory subject materials for every graduate

student. Islamic studies is conveyed in Bahasa Indonesia, due to the lack of understanding of the English language by the PAI lectures. The topics and themes of Islamic education were compiled and delivered in accordance with the national curriculum. The content, method and evaluation also followed the directives of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Basically, the whole process of Islamic education is promoting moderate Muslim in line with national insight. The other programs run as usual without differences between Islamic studies and non-Islamic studies.

Instead of implementing ICP, UNESA is using the term *Kelas Unggulan* or excellent class. To realize the best lectures, every lecturer who teaches in the class is required to use minimal English as an introduction. If there are lecturers who do not have the competence to master the English language, Islamic education is one of them, they may communicate in Bahasa Indonesia. The faculty has the authority to choose lecturers who really have excellent competencies to teach the superior class students. Some lecturers often mention how the education system abroad and foreign students are keen on learning any subjects of Islamic studies.

At the end of each lesson an evaluation activity is needed. Curriculum evaluation includes evaluation of the learning process, subject matter, or content, learning outcomes and achievement of objectives in the graduate profile. Regarding the evaluation of the *Kelas Unggulan* curriculum, Secretary of the Study Program explained (M. Budiyanto, personal communication, September 20, 2021):

“We carry out continuous evaluations. It is not only to determine student learning achievements at the end of mid-test or semester, but the superior class managers also evaluate all curriculum components that must be evaluated. Our evaluations consist of formative and summative [elements]. In terms of materials, methods, and skills of lecturers who teach in superior classes, we also evaluate them to know how they deliver materials, and how the condition of students in those

classes happened during the learning process. We also evaluate our facilities, the textbooks, and services to the students.”

Similarly, Chief of the Study Program also added (D. A. P. Sari, [personal communication, September 20, 2021](#)):

“What Mr. Budi said earlier is true, we are responsible for all components in the superior class, so we must carry out evaluations sustainably in detail. In order to evaluate well, we receive students’ complaints to the management if there are things that are not pleasing during the learning process. Beside that lecturer also may complain to us on whatever obstacles the students faced. Our evaluation also looks at the profile of top-class graduates to know whether the graduates are competent and acceptable in society.”

Evaluation is one of the components in the curriculum innovation that functions to measure to which extent the curriculum can be used, and whether the results have been achieved in accordance with the goals that have been set up before. The evaluation system is assumed to be comprehensive because the components that are evaluated do not only prioritize learning outcomes, but other components also related to the implementation of the learning process, objectives, materials or content, strategies or methods, and condition of lecturers and students.

UNESA has joint-collaboration in research activities, student internships, comparative studies, student exchanges and credit transfer programs. Those agencies in UNESA’s Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (MIPA) that are intending to engage in cooperation activities not only work at the university level, but also at the school level, international standard schools, industry, government institutions and other locales. Activities and collaborations made by the faculty in this case are specifically intended for supporting the *Kelas Unggulan*, both for students and lecturers.

*Kelas Unggulan's* curriculum programs consist of many activities, including: teaching immersion, field experience -- best known as *Praktik Pengalaman Lapangan* (PPL), online inauguration for graduate students during the Covid-19 pandemic breakout, international e-internship or virtual practice teaching program, student exchange, university to university collaboration with several universities in Southeast Asia, such as the Faculty of Education UiTM Malaysia, virtual invited lectures, an International Credit Transfer (ICT) program in collaboration with Tarlac Agricultural University, Philippines, and public lectures.

*Teaching immersion and field experience* program activities were carried out abroad and in International Schools in the home country. The MIPA Faculty has sent students annually to follow the program to visit the partner institutions. Teaching Internship Program activities are carried out by teaching practices at the Singapore International School (SIS) located at Pantai Indah Kapuk Jakarta, Kelapa Gading Jakarta, and several other locations. Likewise, this program is conducted at Indonesian Schools Abroad (SILN) in Singapore which is implemented for approximately 2-3 months. Meanwhile, the Teaching Immersion Program was held at Wadi Sofia International School, Kelantan Malaysia. It is known that Wadi Sofia runs an English Curriculum that leads to IGCSE and A-levels. In preparing everything, before leaving for Malaysia, of course, students are provided with English language competence and the ability to teach mathematics or science in English in accordance with the applicable curriculum at the target school, namely the Cambridge curriculum.

*Online Inauguration MoU.* Cooperation between foreign universities, including the graduate student of Science Education Study Program in academic collaboration with Department of Chemistry, India. This College is affiliated with Vikram University. *International E-Internship/Virtual Practice Teaching Program.* Recently



the program of activities conducted by the Superior Class during the Covid-19 pandemic was the "International E-Internship/Virtual Practice Teaching Program since the first Semester 2021-2022". Each of the students of the Superior Class was registered from either Mathematics Education, Biology Education, Physics Education, Chemistry Education, or Science Education. They had the opportunity to join this program. Program in the form of Virtual Practice Teaching or PLP was aired by and in corporation with Tarlac University (TAU)-CED Laboratory School, Philippines.

*Student Exchange.* The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (MIPA), UNESA, in improving the quality of the Superior Class Program held a Student Exchange program by sending several students to Khon Kaen University of Thailand. This activity usually lasts about 14 days. This activity aims to increase the provision and enrich knowledge of English for students ([FMIPA UNESA, 2021](#)). Initiation of Cooperation between Faculty of MIPA UNESA and the Faculty of Education UiTM Malaysia through the Google Meet Virtual Conference Room facility, which began with a meet and greet session. This activity is carried out to realize the student and staff mobility program, joint research, and publications through joint conferences and scientific journals.

*Virtual Invited Lecture.* The Department of Biology, Faculty of MIPA, UNESA held a Virtual Invited Lecture by inviting associate speakers. This activity is referred to as a guest lecture with the topic "Seaweed Herbarium Specimens as Indicators of Marine Environmental Change" which was enthusiastically welcomed by the academic community of the faculty. The guest lecture program is organized by all Program of Studies within the Faculty which invites resource persons from foreign universities to provide materials on Mathematics and Science. This kind of guest lecture is attended by lecturers, regular students, and top-class students. For Superior Class

students, it will have a tremendous impact in adding new knowledge. Chief of the Study Program explained (D. A. P. Sari, [personal communication, September 20, 2021](#))

“Virtual lectures or guest lectures can provide opportunities for students to broaden their knowledge through direct interaction with experts in their fields. Not only that, but the other goal is also to form commitment within the Department of Biology in supporting the Faculty of MIPA, UNESA, towards internationalization program and to provide international standard knowledge for the students.”

*International Credit Transfer (ICT) program in collaboration with Tarlac Agricultural University, Philippines.* This program is held annually as a facility for students in the Superior Class. The program has received recognition from the partner university abroad or host university. The students who join this program will gain international learning experience, build relationships, and expand the network of lecturers and new friends from the Philippines.

*Public Lecture.* Communication skills are a very important talent in the 21st century, especially for prospective educators. One of the programs organized by the Superior Class in improving good communication skills is through training in "Public Speaking Lectures". Public speaking is necessary for students to understand and practice the importance of communication skills in a public forum. This activity usually brings tutors from outside UNESA. Faculty of MIPA's Superior Class held a public lecture with the theme Public Speaking for Prospective Teachers. These public speaking skills are not only related to the professional teachers, but also related to real social life. This public speaking lecture teaches how to communicate publicly both in the Indonesian language and English.

## **Experiences of Sepuluh Nopember Institute of Technology (ITS) with International Program**

Beginning from 1957, the foundation of the Engineering College 10 November Surabaya was inaugurated by President Soekarno. Shortly in 1960, the name was changed into Institut Teknologi Sepuluh November (ITS) with the status of a state university. In 1983-2002, ITS has five faculties and two polytechnics. Consequently, there is a change in management patterns as they become independent institutions by opening opportunities for cooperation at national and international levels ([Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember, 2022](#)).

Like UNESA, Islamic studies at ITS are conducted in accordance with the national curriculum with additional activities initiated by the students. The campus Mosque generally used by civitas academia as a place of worship, Islamic ceremonials, reciting the Qur'an, and extra-curricular programs. For ICP students, Islamic studies are supposed as part of their basic and compulsory teaching materials. Most of ITS's students were obedient Muslims and put Islam as part of their living education, inside as well as outside the campus. They want to integrate science and religion. The rest of the subject materials and international activities are the same with the curriculum set up by the faculty.

To improve the quality and expand the horizon of education, the Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Systems Engineering organizes the International Undergraduate Program (IUP). Five departments hold the Undergraduate Education Program for Regular Class and IUP Classes. In relationship to the IUP curriculum, it is designed to be the same as the regular class curriculum. The only difference between the two curricula is the use of English as the instructional language in the IUP classes. IUP conducts several international programs, such as:

*Study Excursion.* In improving human resources and student achievement, organizing a study excursion is one of the support

components. The study excursion program with the slogan: "Goes Beyond Study Excursion" is usually carried out in Taiwan. With Study Excursion activities, industrial visits are made at home and abroad that make the visited companies as a place for research and various other collaboration activities. Cooperation is also carried out with several well-known universities abroad, among others are UTM Malaysia, NTUST, NCU Taiwan, QUT Taiwan, and Beijing Institute of Technology (China).

*Student Exchange.* It provides opportunities for students in the IUP to participate in student exchanges at foreign universities. In this activity, students are allowed to apply for credit transfer. Transferring credits is a recognition of a number of study loads that have been obtained by a student during the exchange program. One of the departments that organizes the Student Exchange program at ITS is the Department of Material and Metallurgical Engineering. This program provides an opportunity for students of the IUP class to apply for credit transfer. Before transferring credits, students must apply letter to the department, then the department will evaluate the transferred credits by considering the content of the transferred courses with a minimum 75% of the same subject.

*Joint-Degree.* The Department of Mechanical Engineering, which is one of the oldest departments at ITS, has organized a collaboration with Wismar University for Applied Sciences Technology, Business and Design in Germany. The collaboration is under the form of a Joint Degree program with the host-university. The Joint Degree program allows students to receive two degrees and diplomas, namely a Bachelor of Engineering (*Sarjana Teknik*, ST) from ITS Surabaya and a Bachelor of Engineering (B.Eng.) from Wismar University, Germany. With the above mentioned collaboration, it will produce Mechanical Engineering Bachelors who have high competence in technology design and energy management with renewable energy. Both

universities have agreed to produce Mechanical Engineering graduates with a focus on the field of renewable energy who will be able to play an active role in the development of technology and management both in Indonesia and Europe.

The stages and mechanism of the Joint Degree lectures begin with student selection which is carried out with the Independent Partnership Selection (SKM) system. Furthermore, in semesters 1 and 2, Joint Degree enthusiasts students receive Basic Science courses. Meanwhile, in semesters 3 and 4, students will receive a Basic Mechanical Engineering Skills course. Furthermore, in semester 5 and 6, students receive Renewable Energy Technology courses which in this case are taught by lecturers from Wismar University. The lecture system is held with a module system, where for 16 meetings arranged as in ITS academic regulations, a block system will be carried out. This means that the 16 meetings will be completed in a period of only 6-8 weeks (1-2 months). Prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> semester, there will be an evaluation for outstanding students who will be given the opportunity to take part in a work internship and Final Project (*Tugas Akhir*, TA), work directly at Wismar University Germany and the partner company program in Europe.

*Guest Lecture.* To improve student knowledge, the Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Systems Engineering, ITS, always organizes guest lectures by bringing in speakers from Overseas Partner Universities. Guest lectures were attended by IUP students, class at the faculty forum. Likewise for regular class students, a guest lecture was held in the form of a Department-Based Guest Lecture Series organized by ITS Global Engagement for the Material Chemistry course, and for students of the Materials and Metallurgical Engineering Department.

No single pattern of international curriculum is applied in universities in Surabaya. The most reasonable arguments are no strict

prescriptions enacted by the Government, especially the Ministry of Education and Culture. University and faculty authorities are at the same position. According to the field observation indicates that with numbers of international class curricula, programs, and instructional design, ICP has various models of international programs held by higher Institutions in Surabaya. It could be described briefly as follows.

**Figure 1.** Curriculum innovation of international program in three universities in Surabaya

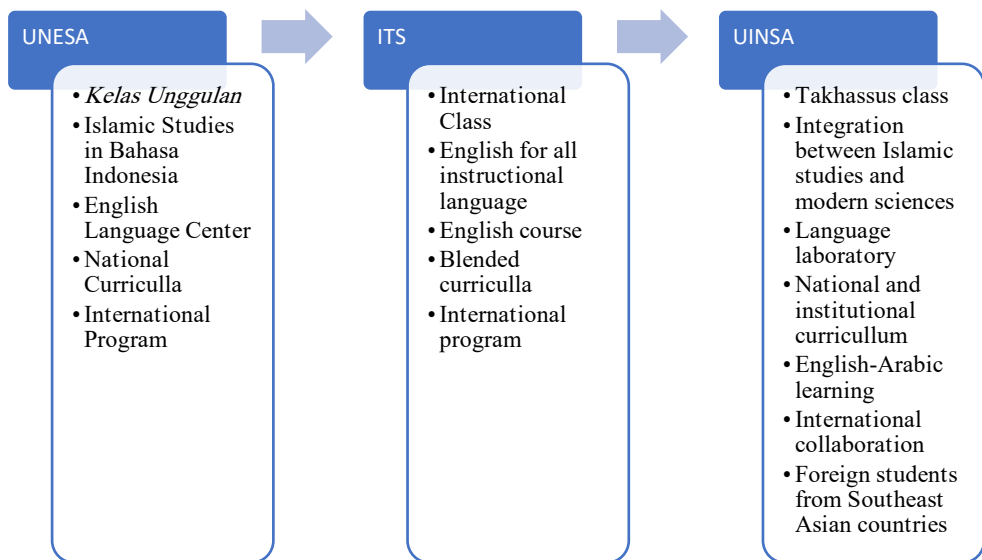


Figure 1 shows the various models of international programs and innovation curriculum. UNESA has designed its international program within the superior class, and the instructional classroom process of teaching Islamic studies is delivered with Bahasa Indonesia by a PAI lecturer, commonly graduated from an Islamic institution such as UINSA. Recently, UNESA utilizes its English center for the superior class students to help them improve their English proficiency. Based on the national curriculum, UNESA has

successfully built international linkages with international universities.

On the other hand, ITS has selected a special class known as the International Unit Program (IUP) for students to study in this campus. The cost they must pay for this IUP class is quite different from regular class, much more expensive. English as a second language is mandatory for IUP's students, including in the teaching of Islamic studies. During the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, a blended learning process was mostly followed. However, ITS has many optional programs related to joint-cooperation with partner universities abroad as mentioned earlier.

### **Pioneering the Internationalization of Islamic Studies at the PAI Study Program**

Before transforming into a university in 2013, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya (UINSA) was the State Institute for Islamic Studies (*Institut Agama Islam Negeri*, IAIN). The conversion of IAIN to UIN occurred on October 2, 2013. A year later, in 2014, UINSA officially had 9 faculties with 1 Postgraduate Program. UINSA is located in downtown of Surabaya, East Java, and is one of the oldest Islamic universities in Indonesia. In 2019, UINSA has achieved accreditation with an 'A' status for its institutional level. UINSA has been adapting international standards in the administration of education and university management. The implementation of higher education at UINSA is supported by adequate facilities and infrastructure, with two campus areas. Campus 1 is located at Jalan Ahmad Yani 117 Surabaya, and campus 2 is in Gunung Anyar District.

The PAI Study Program is part of the Faculty of Islamic Education and Teacher Training (*Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*, FTK). The PAI has common vision: "To become a superior, competitive, and international standard Islamic Religious Education Study Program by

2030". Meanwhile, its missions are: (1) Organizing education and learning in the field of Islamic religious education in a professional, accountable, and competitive manner. (2) Develop research in the field of Islamic religious education that is competitive, innovative, and relevant to the needs of the global community. (3) Conduct research-based community empowerment in the field of Islamic religious education. The PAI Study Program has an action plan that will be achieved with efficiency and effectiveness at the right time. In the first stage, the PAI should initiate the opening of the special class or known as the *takhassus* class. If the results are good, then the quality of the class needs to be improved and developed with new curriculum innovations and moving to a Superior or Excellent Class.

The Excellent Class has an impact on improving the quality of the lecturers with added competency in foreign language skills: English and Arabic proficiency. In the Superior class, the improvement of students' language competence needs to be continuously increased parallel with activities intended for international programs. It is deemed necessary to have significant results from the *Takhassus* Class program to the Superior Class, it can be further improved gradually from all elements and devices to lift the status to "International Class within the PAI". It should emphasize the use of English and/or Arabic as a second language in the entire lecture process. The international class is a class that is specially presented to prepare students to take excellent international programs. Learning with the introduction of a foreign language is considered capable of providing a positive value that distinguishes between international classes and regular classes.

The PAI International Programs are required to enhance extra international activities by cooperating with other universities abroad. Through these programs, the PAI will be known worldwide, which will have an impact on the interest of prospective students from



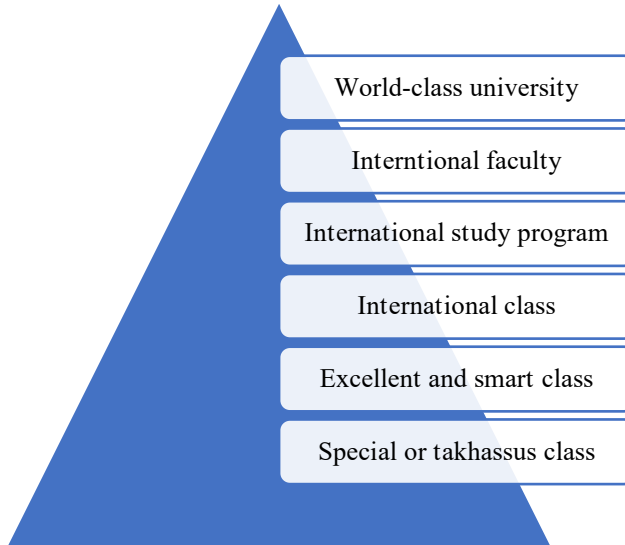
abroad, as well as domestic students who have scientific competence in Islamic Religious Education, language skills (English and/or Arabic), and their achievements so that they are ready to be part of the students who inhabit the international class cultures.

The ICP is intended for students who have advantages so that they can best utilize their abilities. It means that the selected students will be educated in an excellent learning process through bi-lingual communication in the Arabic and English languages. They need to pass the selection process: first, through written tests, interviews, and TOEFL ranking score. The selection process provides opportunities for all students without exception. It can be carried out at the end of the first semester of lectures or final examinations. The international class should be participated in by students who have passed the test in the second semester before graduation. The existence of ICP at the PAI, UINSA, will endorse accreditation status held by an international accreditation organization. Let's say, the AUN-QA (ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance).

The PAI has set its vision: "To become a superior, competitive, and international-standard Islamic education Study Program in 2030". If the vision that has been clearly displayed is not immediately carried out, how can the PAI quickly achieve an international standard. The PAI must step up earlier in pioneering this, so that other faculty and Study Programs may follow the example (Moh. Faizin, [personal communication, September 25, 2021](#)). With the achievement of an international assessment by the PAI, UINSA, the faculty is worthy to bear an international standard of Islamic studies. This commitment has been manifested in the faculty's vision which stated "Becoming an Excellent and Competitive International Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training". With the achievement of an international assessment by the PAI, it will contribute to UINSA in realizing its dream of becoming a World Class University (WCU). The figure

below presents the concept as pyramid steps towards a WCU status for UINSA which is planned to be achieved in 2030.

**Figure 2.** Pyramid steps of internationalization of PAI study program



Based on [Figure 2](#), the WCU status should be attained gradually from the lowest level, namely the *takhassus* class with international quality. The International Program of the PAI will be known as a competitive university globally, especially in the ASEAN regional environment. Having an ICP for Islamic studies should be accompanied by activities that are international in nature. This activity is intended for students and lecturers to introduce global insights that can be applied at the PAI, UINSA. The PAI needs to hold an MoU or cooperation with several international universities. Within this international collaboration the partnership must be built.

Among the advantages of the international program are giving the students freedom to take outbound mobility programs, such as double degrees, student exchange, internships, and summer courses with partner universities abroad, during which students can work part-time. International students are encouraged to become fluent in

the foreign language where they live, especially English and Arabic for Islamic studies. For their part, foreign students who take international class lectures in the local program are also encouraged to understand Indonesian culture and language. If PAI is the flagship program, then these foreign students are expected to be able to live under the Islamic values of Muslims in Indonesia. In short, this ICP has mutual benefits, between national students studying at the PAI Study Program and international students.

Based on fact findings on international program run by UNESA and ITS, the PAI Study Program should develop various outbound activities within an international collaboration framework, such as student exchange programs, double degrees, international assistantships, sandwich programs, joint-research, internship programs, research fellowships, and visiting lecturer programs. It is of note, that the PAI has several advantages in facilities, curriculum, and language abilities. The PAI recently built edifices, multimedia-based classrooms, active learning approaches, and adequate laboratories.

A language laboratory has been owned by this campus for a long time since 1975, when A. Mukti Ali served as Ministry of Religious Affairs. He campaigned for bilingual capabilities for Islamic university students in English and Arabic. The curriculum of UINSA has also undergone many changes that could be differentiated from those of its counterpart Islamic universities in Indonesia. So far, UINSA has not initiated a separate international program, but collaboration with international universities, especially in Southeast Asian countries has already been woven tightly through many international programs. Just one more step is needed in building the internalization of Islamic studies at the PAI Study Program.

Curriculum innovation in many Islamic university is continuously developed within an integrative paradigm of knowledge which encounters science and religion (Islam). This can be seen from

the presence of several new non-religious faculties, such as the Faculty of Science and Technology (*Fakultas Sains dan Teknologi*), the Faculty of Psychology (*Fakultas Psikologi*), and the Faculty of Islamic Economy and Business (*Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis*) established in Islamic universities. Since the conversion of IAIN to UIN, the PAI has invented a new paradigm in Islamic studies. Classical Islamic studies, which consist of the following subject matter: *tafsir* (Quranic exegesis), *hadith* (the Prophet's tradition), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *ilm al-kalam* (Islamic theology), Arabic language, etc., have been combined and intertwined with modern sciences and scientific approaches. Basically, Islamic studies are globally recognized, since Muslims around the world have the same concern in studying Islam as religion. Arabic scripts with yellow book style (*kitab kuning*), that are well-known among Indonesian Muslim, especially madrasah students and *santri's pesantren*, are very helpful to accelerate the acceleration of an international program. Moreover, most of UINSA's lectures are Muslim scholars (*ulama, kiai*), who own *pesantren* and run Islamic education through primary resources in Arabic references.

Islamic studies at the PAI Program of Studies are recommended to make immediate reform and actualize the ICP as supported by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and university authority. In the first stage, a special class program or *takhassus* could be an initial step in pioneering international program. Some Islamic universities have already implemented new paradigm of integrating Islamic studies with modern sciences as indicated by the opening of social science, humanities, science and technology branches of knowledge by faculties and programs of studies (M. Hilmy, [personal communication, January 2022](#)).

Apart from facilities and curriculum inventions, the PAI has long been providing Arabic and English courses, both in the classroom setting and in the language laboratory. The students must pass the

language course before final examination and graduation. Furthermore, the PAI's students commonly graduated from madrasas and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in which they had already learnt basic Arabic language. Recent developments indicates that many foreign students, especially from Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, are increasingly enrolling as the PAI's students. As a social modal, the PAI is ready to step forward toward an internationally recognized Study Program.

In addition, most UINSA's lecturers are alumni of Western and European universities who are fluent in English, and Middle Eastern graduates who are proficient in Arabic. These showed us the prevalent conditions met to establish an international program at the PAI. Besides, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and UINSA's long term vision and mission have already mentioned the establishment of the international program. The program itself will surely endorse the highest achievement of accreditation status released by the Board of National Accreditation (*Badan Akreditasi Nasional, BAN*). To some extent, the PAI has been accredited by international institutes and an international standardization organization certification (ISO).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The international programs run by UNESA and ITS are unique and different in pattern if compared to the other universities in Indonesia. At UNESA, the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (MIPA), which consists of five departments, has been implementing "the excellent classes (*kelas unggulan*)", and since 2009, the recruited students who are included in this "excellent class" have been selected through a registration and acceptance process of new students who are accepted by grades, language skills, GPA, passing the selection test, and other performance criteria that have been

determined by the faculty. The Faculty of MIPA has collaborated with partner universities in several Southeast Asian countries, such as Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. Its single tuition fee (*Uang Kuliah Tunggal*, UKT) funding is not different from regular classes, as the cost of foreign language training is intensively subsidized by the faculty. Featured class activities include teaching immersion, field experience (PPL), online sessions, international e-internship or virtual practice teaching programs, student exchanges, joint-university programs, virtual invited lectures, international credit transfers, and public lectures supported by adequate facilities.

Meanwhile, ITS has held the IUP since 2019 in six programs of study within the Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Systems Engineering. Unlike UNESA, ITS recruits international class students at the beginning of the new registered student admissions period. Once they are accepted, they go straight to the international class. The requirements to be accepted are quite complex, such as high school report cards, English certificates, curriculum vitae, and other evidence of students' achievement. In addition, the fees charged to international class students are different from the regular class fees. The ICP curriculum at ITS is primarily in English as the introduction language as well as of the textbooks utilized. The international class activities include study excursions to leading universities abroad in Southeast Asian countries. In addition, student exchanges, joint-degrees, guest lectures are all carried out with the help of supporting programs. English courses, professional lecturers, international activities, including thesis supervisors, and smart class facilities specifically designed for IP students with sophisticated multimedia facilities are provided.

The uniqueness of UNESA is in selecting the best rank students enrolled from the first semester and categorized them as excellent students without any differentiation in financial requirements. By

contrast, ITS establishes the ICP class before the selection process of students. Furthermore, UINSA innovated to open ICP from *Takhassus* or Special Program with requirements including excellence in Arabic and English. The curriculum innovation for Islamic studies at the PAI needs to be initiated by considering several efforts such as curriculum redesign, program development, and multimedia-based learning processes. *First*, efforts to redesign the PAI curriculum can be pursued by starting with comparative studies, research, formal meetings or intensive meetings between university and faculty leaders, workshops and technical guidance for lecturers, arranging student activities in the international arena, and intensive bilingual training in Arabic and English language skills.

*Second*, pioneering several international programs gradually, which include at least a student exchange program, double-degrees, a sandwich program, joint-research, international assistantships, an internship program, research fellowships, a visiting lecture program, smart classes, and best practice instruction. *Third*, implementing multimedia-based learning facilities such as integration of the four pillars of UNESCO education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. Current reality-based learning is also important to be considered in the implementation of ICP at the PAI. The principle of learning to worship needs to be instilled in whole process of Islamic education.

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