



Study in the heart of Turkey

Interview with Professor M. Ege Yazgan, rector of Istanbul Bilgi University

By: Khalid ALKhalailah



Turkey welcomes students from different parts of the world to study in top-rated universities over the country. (PC: Wikimedia Commons)

Istanbul Bilgi University, a pioneer in providing a liberal arts-oriented curriculum in Turkey, is continuously broadening its global influence by prioritizing internationalization.

The university, a cornerstone of progressive education, is committed to fostering academic excellence and innovation, with a primary focus on building a diverse student body.

At the NAFSA 2024 conference, Professor M. Ege Yazgan, rector of Istanbul Bilgi University, emphasized the institution's dedication to fostering global connections while staying deeply rooted in the vibrant life of Istanbul.

According to Prof. Yazgan, internationalization aligns not only with the university's mission but also with broader national policies on education in Turkey.

“Internationalization is one of the most important priorities in our university,” he said. “It is also a national mission as well, and many other Turkish universities have put internationalization as one of their first priorities.”

Founded in 1996, Istanbul Bilgi University is one of Turkey’s first foundation universities established as a non-profit institution.

The University has three campuses integrated in the heart of Istanbul, including one near the Golden horn. This bustling location provides students with a great way to immerse themselves in Turkish culture and see what the city has to offer, while pursuing their education.

The university is home to 25,000 with 15 per cent of students being international, said Prof. Yazgan.

“Most of our international students are from the Middle East,” he said. “But we also have Egyptian and Moroccan students, and some students from Pakistan and India.”

Prof. Yazgan believes that having a vital strategy in place to increase diversity and multiculturalism among the student body is key for internationalization.



The government encourages international students to explore monumental sites in Turkey. (PC: Flickr)

“We need to enlarge the number of students and we need to diversify,” he said.

One of these strategies includes the university actively working with agents to attract international students. Participating in programs like Erasmus and the Bologna system help ensure easy credit transfers for European students, he added.

“This program allows us to draw students from Europe and South Asia,” he said.

For students abroad concerned about the cost of tuition, Prof. Yazgan clarified that fees for international students are similar to domestic students.

“It’s around \$5,000 to \$6,000 US dollars, which is not more expensive than it is for local students. It’s more or less the same fee,” he said.

Prof. Yazgan acknowledges that the cost of living in Turkey has risen since the COVID-19 pandemic, and suggests students consider sharing accommodations with fellow peers to help lessen the cost of living in the city.

The university offers a range of programs for international students. Initially known for its social science programs, Istanbul Bilgi University has expanded to include architecture, engineering and health sciences.



Istanbul Bilgi University offers students a chance to study but also immerse themselves in Turkish culture. (PC: Pexels)

Prof. Yazgan encourages international students interested in these fields to consider studying at Istanbul Bilgi University, not only because of its robust programs, but also due to its prime location in the heart of Turkey. Students have the unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the culture while pursuing a high-quality education.

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