

Internationalization Strategy of the University of Potsdam 2020-2024

The University of Potsdam is a young academic institution at a location steeped in tradition – a place associated with Voltaire’s and La Mettrie’s ideas of Enlightenment and, since the 19th century, with Alexander von Humboldt’s ideas of globality as well as with empirical natural scientific research on Telegrafenberg. The UP views internationalization as an integrated part of its overall strategy and a cross-sectional task that is managed by the University’s administration, the faculties, and the central and scientific institutions and is supervised by the University’s Advisory Board of Internationalization. The process of internationalization contributes to enhancing the quality and competitiveness as well as diversity in research, teaching, and studying at the University of Potsdam. It also promotes an international mindset, intercultural exchanges, and a welcoming culture on its campuses. This will make the University of Potsdam more visible and attractive in a European and global context. The University’s increasing internationalization also ensures the number of first semester students in Brandenburg thus making an important contribution to ensure the availability of skilled labor force in the federal state of Brandenburg. The internationalization strategy 2020-2024 continues the previous internationalization strategy of 2015-2019 specifying and, where necessary, adapting its strategic decisions to changing objectives.

Important results of the UP’s internationalization processes of 2015-2019 are: founding the Advisory Board for Internationalization as an advisory body of the university management, English-language master degree programs established by the faculties, extending the Welcome Center as central component of “Campus International” and creating structures that support advising on and supervising of internships abroad as an alternative to study visits (“Ab in die Praxis” - a portal for job offers and internships). The introduction of the university-internal funding instrument “KoUP” (UP Cooperation Funding) has proved to be an important invigorating tool in the internationalization processes and supports the researchers with seed money for their international projects as a substantial financial resource provided by the university management. The audits and re-audits conducted by the German Rector’s Conference (HRK) in 2012 and 2016-20 served as an important instrument of focusing on suitable measures for implementing the University’s self-defined internationalization goals. For 2024, a similar internal university evaluation procedure is to be developed for the internationalization strategy 2020-2024, which will enable the University to monitor the state of implementation and, if necessary, adapt processes and future objectives.

The internationalization strategy for 2020-2024 is divided into five priority topics and three cross-sectional strategic fields of action describing the priority topics of the next five years from the point of view of the university management. They are closely interlinked with the overall university strategy (see Plan for University Development). One of the overarching strategic fields of action include the challenge of using the opportunities of digitization for innovative and flexible mobility thus promoting the process of internationalized higher education - an idea that is also the foundation of the European Alliance “European Digital UniverCity” ([EDUC](#)). As a lead partner, the University of Potsdam will establish it together with European partners in the coming years. This will also affect all eight fields of action and priority topics. By 2025, EDUC will become a European university

community based on mobility and exchange scenarios, multilingualism, inclusion, interdisciplinarity, and digital technologies which will optimally prepare students for the challenges that society will face in the future. Another cross-sectional field of action is the Internationalization of Teacher Education. It will prepare future teachers for the challenges of globalized teaching and learning scenarios - a task that is in the strategic interest of the state of Brandenburg. In the strategic field of action "Global Topics", the University intends to reach an understanding with its international partners on the global relevance of transdisciplinary research, teaching, and transfer and promote the development of joint projects that have a social impact in this field.

Strategic Fields of Action

Internationalization by Digitalization

The University of Potsdam has developed an original systematic approach for the strategic field of action "Internationalization by Digitalization", which has been incorporated in its central strategic documents (Internationalization, E-Learning and IT Strategy). Formats of Online International Learning (OIL.UP) will be expanded - especially as part of the European Alliance "European Digital UniverCity". Students will benefit from a wide range of mobility opportunities that provide physical incoming or outgoing mobility and promote intercultural and language competences. The UP will also promote the networking of researchers by using digitalization tools (such as ConnActUP) and digitalize the management of projects that support internationalization.

Internationalization through Global Topics

The UP has the aim to strategically focus on raising the awareness of sustainability issues, as defined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), in all of the University's status groups and jointly engage in their implementation. In addition, the University of Potsdam is further developing its research and transfer strategies and curriculum considering the defined topics of sustainability. The University will particularly network and promote transdisciplinary research and teaching with international partners and include civil society actors. It will focus on global problem-solving strategies and on safeguarding the future. Within all its status groups, the UP will sharpen the perception of issues related to research, teaching, and transfer in a global context. Together with its strategic partners, the University is developing suitable information and funding formats and is examining the sustainability of international cooperation and development partnerships. These activities will contribute to building the international profile of the University of Potsdam and its students and underpin the consolidation and sustainability of academic research and teaching with regard to questions of general social concern. The promotion of refugees and threatened researchers will be strengthened.

Internationalization of Teacher Education

The internationalization of prospective teachers is highly important since teachers today must be able to successfully teach and support culturally diverse groups. The core objectives of the internationalization of teacher education derived from this concept are to increase the mobility of

students and teaching staff, expand intercultural learning opportunities by offering international summer schools, and use formats of Online International Learning. This also includes establishing mobility windows and a more flexible system of recognition. Expanding the cooperation with foreign teacher training institutions and successfully cooperating with German schools abroad for the completion of practical semesters and school internships play a major role in expanding the internationalization of teacher training.

The following priority topics will be pursued in the next five years:

I. Partnerships and Networks

The EU funding program for European University Alliances will invigorate the partnerships and network cooperation of the University of Potsdam in the coming years. The collaboration takes place within the alliance European Digital UniverCity with the Universities of Paris Nanterre and Rennes I (France), Cagliari (Italy), Masaryk University (Brno, Czech Republic), and University of Pécs (Hungary). The UP continues to emphasize international profiling by focusing on strategic partnerships ([Macquarie University](#) and [Tel Aviv University](#)) and partnerships in key regions/ countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, France, Israel, Canada, Columbia, Poland, Russia, USA, and Sub-Saharan Africa). The Asian region will be integrated by establishing one to two partnerships in China. Priority regions/ countries pool international experience and key activities of the University with the aim of facilitating international exchange and cooperation by creating harmonization and coordination frameworks and increasing the number of benefitting members of the University. Strategic partnerships are directly linked to the University's strategic development goals and provide institutional support through the exchange of knowledge and experience, joint concept and program development, third party funding, international benchmarking, and networking. The importance of partnerships is measured by their quality and not the quantity of activities. Networks ([CONAHEC](#), [COIL](#)) will be used for the development of physical and virtual mobility, EDUC and [EUA](#) for co-operations on the European idea.

II. Internationalization of Teaching and Studies

To prepare students for the globalization of the society, they should have the opportunity to gain international experience – from traditional studies and internships to summer schools and degree theses abroad, blended learning formats, buddy programs, international field trips, and studying in English-language degree programs together with international students. The University promotes multilingualism among its students and expands intercultural competence in their studies and career through the services of [Zessko](#). This goes hand in hand with the expansion of a competitive and internationally compliant range of degree programs. Teaching in English in bachelor's degree programs also acts as a "currency" for being admitted to partner institutions abroad and the number of these degree programs will be increased. Specialized counseling and administrative support in the International Office is being expanded, aiming at both a quantitative expansion and a qualitative improvement while focusing on support measures in English-language master's programs and support measures for English-language teaching. Support measures are also developed for expanding dual degree programs or fast track procedures. With regard to the number of mobile teachers, the

University of Potsdam has the aim to continue to take a leading position in Germany. As multipliers, foreign alumni (teachers and students) should promote physical mobility.

III. Welcome Culture and Support for International Students and Researchers

All aspects of the welcome culture for researchers, students, and employees will be further expanded in order to sustainably improve the attractiveness of Potsdam as a place for studying and research. A binding guideline for the studies and supervision of foreign students is the [National Code of Conduct for German University Regarding International Students](#). As an internationally oriented university, the University of Potsdam wants to offer an attractive and stimulating working environment for researchers from Germany and abroad. Against this backdrop, the university will continue to implement the [European Charter for Researchers and the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers](#). The successfully launched internationalization of its administration remains an important goal of internationalization - as well as the expansion of the English-language website, the further translation of key documents, and the development of a bilingual signage system in German and English. In the coming years, international students will be particularly supported through tutoring programs, the network ESiSt – Successful Start in University Studies for International Students in Brandenburg – and projects for the successful transition from studying to professional life. The successfully established Welcome Center will continue to support researchers. The University of Potsdam is a member of the [Scholars at Risk](#) Network and is expanding the supporting structures for threatened researchers.

IV. Research, Knowledge and Technology Transfer

The University of Potsdam is establishing its position in leading international research primarily with its four research priorities *Data Centric Sciences, Earth and Environmental Systems, Evolutionary Systems Biology und Cognitive Sciences*. The cooperation with several extramural research institutions, joint professorships and cooperation projects, such as the Potsdam Science Park in Golm and establishing joint labs provide an excellent context for the University's internationalization. The University of Potsdam will expand its regional networking with enterprises and continue networking with partner universities worldwide for collaborative research and for strengthening the University's profile.

The University of Potsdam primarily adopts a strategic position the European research area, particularly by participating in the EU Research Framework Program. In this regard, the UP seeks to increase the quota of applications for EU grants. The University also participates in other international tenders outside the EU. In addition to increasing third-party funds, this also serves to expand international research cooperation with non-European partners and expand the international research horizon of the University.

In the context of its work on sustainability issues, the University of Potsdam verifies the expansion of international technology and knowledge transfer through development partnerships in selected target regions and the development of capacity building programs in public management and quality assurance. Furthermore, knowledge and technology transfer should be placed on an international basis through a targeted internationalization of start-up support in Potsdam.

The existing structures within the Potsdam Graduate School (PoGS) for the international promotion of young researchers will be developed continuously. Foreign and German young researchers and academics will be networked nationwide in the "Network for the Career Development of Postdoctoral Researchers". The international young researchers are to be prepared for an academic career as well as for the non-university labor market in Germany. The aim is also to increase the share of both regular and visiting foreign professors at the University of Potsdam.

V. International Visibility and Networking

The University of Potsdam's goal is to be an internationally visible, networked, and attractive place for studies and research. To this end, the UP will strengthen the International Student Marketing activities and increasingly use modern digital forms of communication. Specific target countries and universities will be defined that are in line with the University's strategic internationalization priorities or otherwise contribute to the main objectives of student mobility to Potsdam. The University of Potsdam uses the growing strategic importance of rankings to improve its (inter) national visibility. The UP actively participates in the THE-Ranking and examines a further participation in other evolving ranking formats. The International Summer Campus will expand its offers and merge them to an umbrella brand as part of a general campaign for international visibility. Academic formats on sustainability will be used as a marketing tool. Branch offices have proven a central instrument of the University's networking abroad. They keep in touch with university administrations, researchers, foreign schools and students who spend an exchange, internship or teaching semester abroad. In addition to the existing branch offices in Buenos Aires and São Paulo, the University will recruit on-site staff for the strategic partner countries Israel and South Africa, and in the long run also for China. In the period until 2024, the University of Potsdam will also establish a coordination unit at the International Office, which will serve to establish a researcher alumni network for international networking.

(adopted at the 277th meeting of the Senate on 23 October 2019)