

Internationalisation at the University of Greifswald

Strategies and Measures

*Passed by the Rectorate following consultation with the members of the weekly general meeting and the Senate;
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The University of Greifswald defines increased internationalisation as a central development goal in its University Development Plan for the years 2016 to 2020.

The University of Greifswald shall use the HRK-Audit 'Internationalisation' for the strategic planning of increased internationalisation. The advisory group put forward an array of ideas and suggestions in its statement in September 2015.

This action plan takes up on the suggestion made by the group of advisors that proposes that the Rectorate should define the framework for the fundamental strategic orientation and set priorities for the most urgent demands. Based on five guidelines for general strategic orientation, the action plan maps out five fields of action as well as specific measures that are considered to be most urgent.

The action plan was discussed with the project group as part of the 'Future Workshop', which concluded the HRK's Internationalisation Audit on the 8 December 2015, and was confirmed with additional suggestions.

Guidelines for Strategic Orientation

- (1) The University of Greifswald's (at present) five key fields of research are considered to be 'core internationalisation factors'. The key fields of research are the starting point for strategies and measures for increasing the internationalisation of the University of Greifswald and its international visibility. The University of Greifswald uses its key fields of research to underline its strengths in the international competition for students and researchers and, at the same time, emphasises its status as a research university. All of the key fields of research are characterised by existing intensive international partnerships and collaboration. The key fields of research are complemented by individual fields of research that are internationally visible and characterised by international collaboration.
- (2) The collaboration with external research institutes located in Greifswald and the Alfried Krupp Wissenschaftskolleg Greifswald (Institute for Advanced Studies), which takes place within the key fields of research and other individual areas of research, provides the framework for mutually increasing the international visibility of Greifswald as a research location.
- (3) One of the five key fields of research - Cultures of the Baltic Sea Region - defines the exact target region for an intensified internationalisation due to the nature of its topic, which is a result of the geographical location of the University of Greifswald and its history. The various existing relationships to universities in the Baltic Sea Region that are based on both bilateral cooperation between individual researchers, as well as partnership agreements between the universities, shall be continued and intensified.
- (4) Internationalisation shall be based on topics, not on regions. It coincides with the respective research priorities and the corresponding internationalisation opportunities provided by the topic. Therefore - with the exception of the Baltic Sea Region and (due to historical ties) Vietnam - no priority is given toward regional foci or regional partnerships. The University of Greifswald's existing rules for creating university partnerships already place the emphasis on the key fields of research.

- (5) Increased internationalisation in teaching should mainly be based on the University of Greifswald's research profile, as defined by the key fields of research, and related subject areas. This is complemented by unspecified measures to increase the number of international students.

Fields of Action

The following fields of action are derived from the guidelines for strategic orientation and shall be realised with the highest level of priority.

(1) Intensification of International Exchange in Research

(1.1) Researchers who contribute to the key fields of research are the University of Greifswald's central international 'ambassadors'. Due to their international activities, they are particularly well suited and in a particularly good position for attracting students, doctoral students (either directly or indirectly via their supervisors) as well as visiting academics to Greifswald, including holders of both DAAD and Alexander von Humboldt scholarships. The group of researchers that are internationally active within the key fields of research is complemented by further internationally active members of staff from other individual subject areas outside of the key fields of research.

(1.2) It is very important that members of the University of Greifswald who are involved in international activities develop a consciousness for their special role as ambassadors. They should be equipped with appealing information material in English for personal encounters and be supported in their advertising activities by a suitably designed website that is provided by the University of Greifswald.

(1.3) In addition to the internationally active researchers from the University of Greifswald, foreign academics who come to Greifswald for limited periods of research (which are often related to the key fields of research) constitute the second important group of ambassadors.

Specific Measures

- Compilation of all potential 'ambassadors', i.e. the internationally active members of staff within and outside of the University of Greifswald's key fields of research. The Research Information System (FIS) shall be used as the basis and shall be complemented by information about international research projects.
- Production of information material: Appealing information about the University of Greifswald written in English, detailing its key fields of research, the research environment, collaboration with external research institutions, specific strengths, study opportunities relevant to international students and collaboration possibilities for external academics. The format and layout of the information should go beyond the existing English brochure, be updated regularly and fit in with the concept of the new website.
- All of the potential ambassadors will be contacted specifically; it would make sense to organise a kick-off meeting.
- Compilation of all of the international visiting academics, starting at doctoral level (including international fellows at the Krupp-Kolleg). This information can only be compiled with the help of the institutes and faculties. A database that can also be accessed by the Dean's Offices should be managed by the International Office.
- Medium-term: An annual Humboldt lecture series or meeting shall be organised with the help of the regional group of former *Humboldtianer* with the goal of increasing the number of international early-career researchers (involvement: Krupp-Kolleg, regional Humboldt group, ZFF).

(2) Intensification of International Exchange in Studies and Teaching

(2.1) Regarding teaching: a general switch to the teaching of courses in English to attract international students makes more sense for subjects in the natural and life sciences and, in particular, those subjects that play an active part in the key fields of research. English is the research language in the natural and life sciences; foreign students/doctoral students/postdocs can be directly integrated. It also makes sense to prepare German-speaking students in these fields more intensively for international careers. A switch to the teaching of classes in English is most appropriate for the master's courses; these courses are generally subject to higher demand from abroad.

(2.2) In the arts and humanities, not only German, but also other languages (and not English) can be dominant; therefore, a general switch to the teaching of courses in English would not make sense. However, the University also aims to consolidate the courses on offer to international students in the arts and humanities. The prospects of creating a degree course that focuses on the Baltic Sea Region and/or degree programmes that cover even broader topics shall be checked in an open-ended evaluation.

(2.3) Furthermore, it seems to make sense to introduce individual compulsory classes and modules taught in English to promote English language competence as a general feature of qualification for all students. This should draw in particular on the existing English language skills of teaching staff. The University will check the possibility of integrating courses taught in English into General Studies modules.

(2.4) When trying to attract international students, apart from teaching selected degree courses in English (primarily in the natural and life sciences, see 2.1) and providing individual modules taught in English, it might make sense to provide more offers for summer and perhaps winter schools. Summer/Winter schools can also serve as 'compensation offers' as part of one-sided Erasmus exchanges.

Specific Measures

- Look into switching the teaching language of certain degree courses in the Department of Biology to English.
- Check the possibility of developing international/binational degree programmes in the arts and humanities, in particular the planned 'Baltic Sea Master'.
- Introduction of compulsory modules or individual classes taught in English, initially in the degree courses that are particularly well-suited for this and provided that members of teaching staff have the required level of language skills.
- Evaluation of a possible extension of summer/winter schools.

(3) Increase in International Visibility on the Internet

(3.1) The website is of central importance when it comes to the visibility of the university, the degree courses it provides and its research activities. Apart from existing research collaborations, earlier periods of stay in Germany and international university rankings, university websites are the main source of information for international academics and students.

(3.2) The international depiction of the University of Greifswald on the internet should be based on the image of a small, but strong research *universitas litterarum*, complemented by the following specific location factors: the five established key fields of research, current developments in the areas of research, how this is related to degree courses and the collaboration with external research institutions within the town. On top of this, reference should be made to location-specific advantages such as the high standards of teaching and good supervision (in particular for international guests through the International Office), high quality of life, vicinity to the metropolitan region of Berlin.

More relevant information is required about periods of stay in Greifswald for research or study purposes.

Specific Measures

- Prompt creation of an international 'landing page module' for the homepage prior to the relaunch in 2016; to be translated by the Translation Coordinator.
- Cumulation of required translations for the websites of the faculties and institutes.
- Stronger presence of Greifswald's external research institutions on the university's website; optimisation of backlinks to external research institutes.

(4) Language Policy

(4.1) The following rules should apply for language policy: The languages used in both research and teaching should correspond with the subjects' respective norms. Correspondingly, the focus should be placed on German/English in the natural and life sciences and on German in the arts and humanities, with the addition of further foreign languages in the respective foreign language departments and individual compulsory courses or compulsory modules taught in English.

Specific Measures

- Campus language: German and English versions of all information and forms. The Rectorate determined British English as the chosen variant for the homepage and forms. Translations into English will commence in 2016.
- German remains the official language of the administration and university bodies.
- English language skills in the administration shall be improved by providing language courses (check whether English courses should be extended to cover technical professions).
- The Foreign Languages Centre (FMZ) shall concentrate on the 'global languages' English, Spanish and French for the near to medium-term future. If possible, the language teachers at the departments of foreign languages are to be approached regarding further languages. A new and feasible concept shall be developed for the FMZ.
- The Translation Coordinator shall define standards for the translation of standard terms and phrases; and shall establish a technical infrastructure.

(5) Structurisation: Clarification of Responsibilities, Processes and Monitoring

(5.1) The internationalisation process at the University of Greifswald is currently run and organised by various players. This means that responsibilities and processes need to be defined clearly, in particular with regard to the efficient distribution of tasks between the faculties and central facilities.

(5.2) The clarification of responsibilities for defined tasks and process procedures also includes the corresponding allocation of necessary resources: The financing of tasks and equipment should be subject to longer-term planning.

(5.3) Sensible and successful internationalisation policies require reliable and complete information provided by relevant parameters. A monitoring process can be established by defining relevant parameters, improving the evaluation of existing data and integrating and centralising information systems.

Specific Measures

- Clarification of responsibilities for defined tasks (already completed) and process procedures. Assessment of equipment and financing.
- Definition of relevant parameters for monitoring. The following suggestions correspond with the profile data of the HRK, DAAD and AvH: Student and staff statistics, Erasmus mobility (students and teaching staff), funding received from the DAAD (funding for individuals and projects/programmes), AvH-related data, degree courses taught in English and bi-(multi-)national degree courses, university partnerships, international projects with involvement of scholars from Greifswald, international publications.
- Clarification of who is responsible for maintaining and managing relevant databases. Creation of an overview of existing databases. These should concentrate on central data in order to limit the amount of effort required by the institutions involved.
- Evaluation of how FIS can be used to record indicators that are relevant for internationalisation (international scholars at the University of Greifswald, international co-authors, international publications, international projects).