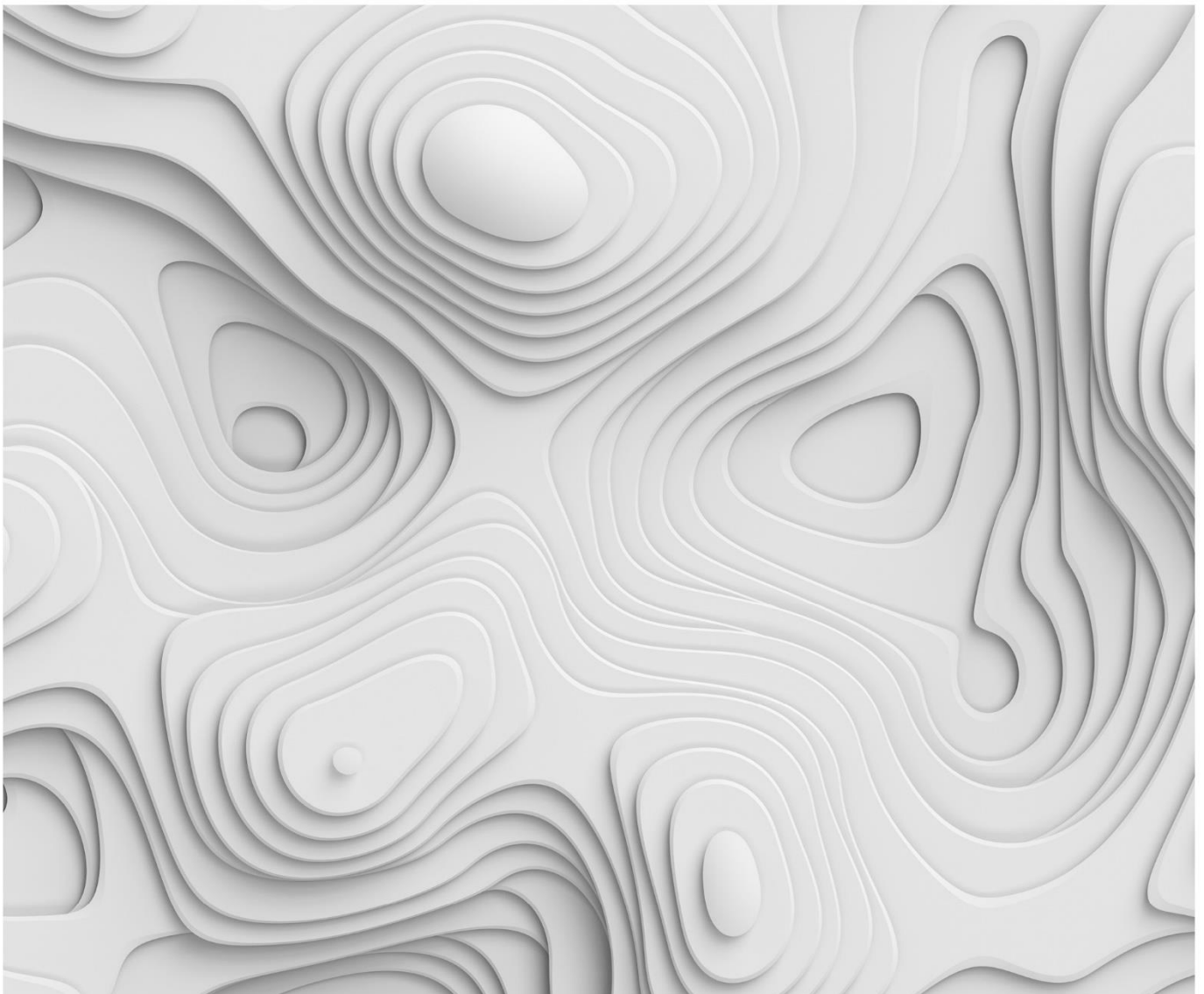




Hochschule für
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Strategy paper **Internationalisation** at the HWR Berlin



Internationalisation strategy of HWR Berlin, 2021-2027

<p><u>What does our guiding principle say?</u></p> <p>“International exchange is an enriching experience for us. We enable the mobility of our students, teaching staff and employees in collaboration with a worldwide network of partner universities. We are pleased to welcome a large number of students, teaching staff and researchers from many countries around the world. We attach great importance to a culture of exchange and welcome.</p> <p>We celebrate internationality, and are qualified for activities in international and intercultural contexts that also benefit our region. A vibrant exchange as well as the promotion of intercultural competences and language skills are essential for us. They are not only relevant for the employability of our graduates, but also contribute to the development of the personality, reduce prejudices and thus foster a sense of peace.”</p>	<p>Development of our internationalisation strategy</p> <p>The development of the internationalisation strategy of HWR Berlin, which now exists for the first time, is based on the participation of all status groups¹: Students, teaching staff and employees in technology and administration. An extensive document and data analysis was carried out first. This was followed by individual and group discussions with representatives of the departments and all employees of the International Office.</p> <p>A group of 11 experts confirmed by the Academic Senate, consisting of people with relevant experience from all status groups, including the two Copying Service assistants for International Affairs and an external expert from the DAAD, provided essential impulses for the content.² The results of a nationwide online student survey conducted in the first quarter of 2021, in which approximately 2,000 students of HWR Berlin participated, were also included.</p> <p>In addition to the interdepartmental coordination in the university board, the Academic Senate and its standing committee for development planning were also involved.</p> <p>Consistent data collection is a basic prerequisite for implementing the internationalisation strategy. In addition to data from annual table figures from HWR Berlin, the mobility database of the International Office and surveys of university members are also used for this purpose. The internationalisation strategy can be adapted if necessary.</p>
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¹ In the past, HWR Berlin has already outlined its perspectives on internationalisation in the structural and development plans, which, however, have a more implementation-oriented character, as seen most recently in [Structure- and development plan 2019-2022](#).

² Based on the positive experiences, it should be examined whether the group of experts could be converted into a “Permanent Expert Group on Internationalisation”.

1. Why is internationalisation important to us?

Motivation for a cosmopolitan orientation

The internationalisation of a university as an overall concept

The internationalisation of universities contributes significantly towards ensuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and research through international exchange. The interplay of globalisation of the economy and society combined with climate change, technological progress, demographic change and increasing migration movements requires critical reflection in the university as an educational institution. It is only on a global scale that the great challenges of our time can be solved. International networking of the institution as a whole is of great importance for the joint and solid strengthening of democratic values and principles of academic freedom, especially in times of crisis. Understanding other cultures and values can be seen as a contribution to peacekeeping, because the reduction of prejudices through meetings can promote empathy and an inherently tolerant attitude. Within Europe, the cross-border partnership of universities represents a supporting pillar for consolidating the European idea and the emergence of a European community of values. University partnerships are suitable for reducing reservations about European unification and for encouraging young people to contribute towards shaping the development of the European Community.

In recent years, internationalisation has reached a new dimension in the academic landscape, both qualitatively and quantitatively. The opportunities and challenges associated with teaching, research, mobility of university academics and infrastructure should lead to an overall institutional concept in the sense of a strategic linking of all international activities.

Objectives of the internationalisation of a university

The internationalisation of universities is intended to promote various goals, such as strengthening innovative ability, the reputation of the science system and the individual university, along with increasing academic performance and competitiveness. International exchange enables the inclusion of different perspectives and can thus enrich teaching and equip university academics with important skills - for more information on this, please check out Diversity Strategy of HWR Berlin [Link].

An internationally active university shapes its profile through cooperation with suitable universities around the world. This promotes the exchange of students, academic and non-academic staff and thus research collaboration and cross-cultural learning along with that. Active international cooperation creates valuable opportunities in the area of "Internationalisation at Home" (I@H) and can promote engagement on campus. As a place of learning and education, universities can thus fulfil their responsibility of imparting training in intercultural and foreign-language skills and enabling participation in them for all university members. The establishment of a cosmopolitan welcoming culture is a sign of a university that is networked across borders.

The charisma of an internationally active university with worldwide partnerships supports competitiveness in the long term. The reputation of the institution is built globally and ensures that the university is highly attractive to future students and other members of the university. The HWR is firmly rooted in the large, internationally characterised and networked metropolis of Berlin. Thus, it also understands its location as an obligation towards contributing to the cosmopolitan outlook of Berlin's economy and society.

Studying abroad for a period of time can be an enriching experience in life and an investment in a successful professional future. In addition to the study period, the international internship or internship phase abroad also play a valuable role, as they do justice to the practical orientation typical of universities of applied sciences in a special way. Anyone who wants to succeed in today's job market needs not only excellent professional skills but also foreign language skills, intercultural skills and a cosmopolitan outlook. These are prerequisites for effective cooperation in multinational teams and competent action in a networked world. Thus, graduates of HWR Berlin also contribute to the international competitiveness of the companies and institutions in which they work.

2. What have we achieved? Taking stock of our internationalisation

Over the last 10 years, HWR Berlin has been steadily honing its international profile. Today, it is one among the most internationally oriented universities in Germany and thus meets the requirements of the Berlin Higher Education Act and the Berlin Higher Education Contracts to a great extent³:

- Over 180 partner universities, including innovative, practice-oriented universities as well as world-class research-intensive universities
- Quota of 13.3 % (2019) foreign students
- More than 500 foreign placements of HWR Berlin students at partner universities each year (2019)
- 600 placements of students from partner universities at HWR Berlin each year (2019)
- 1st place among all German universities of applied sciences for ERASMUS mobilities for student mobility studies (ERASMUS project 2017-2019)
- Around 80 foreign placements of teaching staff and employees in technology and administration each year (2019)
- 3rd place among German universities of applied sciences in the DAAD funding balance (2019: € 1.7 million)
- Ranking by CHE/Die Zeit: 1st place among all German universities in the criterion "International orientation" (2017)
- International double degree programmes with 17 partner universities
- 3rd place among German universities of applied sciences in the proportion of international degree programmes in advanced studies (DAAD profile data 2020)
- International research cooperation and networking of the institutes and the business incubation centre
- Member university of UAS7 e.V.: Liaison offices in USA and Brazil
- HWR Berlin Language Centre for Foreign Languages and German as a Foreign Language
- Employee+: International staff development programme
- Participation in transnational education projects of the federal government
- Numerous international summer and winter schools
- Several internationally accredited degree programmes⁴

At the same time, substantial potential for development has not yet been fully exploited. Thus, the level of internationalisation at the departments varies greatly, and in case of special forms of study such as the dual and internal degree programmes, which play a central role for HWR Berlin, internationalisation is subject to specific restrictions. Despite all the successes, the majority of

³ § 4 Paragraph 9 BerlHG (Berlin Higher Education Act) says: Universities shall promote international, in particular European, cooperation in higher education and exchange between German and foreign universities. For more information on this, please refer to section IX. of [Higher Education Contract 2018-2022 of HWR Berlin](#).

⁴ Association of MBAs (AMBA), European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) and Network of International Business Schools (NIBS)

students at our university - as at practically all state universities in Germany - do not have experience of studying abroad due to various reasons. Here, it is important to further reduce any barriers, develop even more customised mobility services and enable further expansion of I@H. With respect to numerous international, especially European, partner universities and the many personal contacts between professors at HWR Berlin and their foreign colleagues, the prerequisites fundamentally appear to be in place for carrying out international research projects on a larger scale and for applying for and implementing EU projects that have third-party funding. At present, the HWR Berlin is lagging behind its potential here. It is important, in this case, to make the foreign connections, which have so far been predominantly study-related and in individual cases research-oriented, even more fruitful for research and transfer and to support researchers in identifying international calls for funding and submitting successful applications.

3. Where are we headed? Organisational areas⁵ of our internationalisation strategy

3.1. Expanding mobilities (incoming and outgoing)

HWR Berlin aims to further increase the proportion of its graduates with study-related foreign placements. This includes international internships and practical phases abroad. All students at HWR Berlin should be offered attractive opportunities for a personal study-related experience abroad. This requires implementation differentiated according to the specific needs of the department and the different international orientations of the departments. Barriers are identified and removed wherever possible in trustful cooperation with the student representatives. HWR Berlin will continue to ensure that as many scholarship funds and other forms of funding as possible are obtained for students. The mobility services of HWR Berlin for all its university members are developing rapidly, especially through the use of digital forms of teaching and learning. Physical and digital experiences abroad can complement each other. Strengthening internationally structured study programmes with integrated experiences abroad, preferably with double degrees, can form an important basis for this, along with adequate curricular mobility windows and flexible recognition practices. The strength of the HWR Berlin in particular in the area of international degree programmes, which are designed and implemented together with foreign partner universities and in which all students complete significant parts of their studies at two or more universities, should be further expanded.

Also, appropriate measures must be taken to enable the further increase in the mobility of academic staff. Foreign placements for employees in technology and administration should be further promoted, also within the framework of staff development measures such as Employee+. HWR Berlin practises a welcoming culture for all incoming guests, existing measures such as bilingual communication should be expanded, and additional initiatives should be examined and promoted where appropriate.⁶ Increased visibility of international opportunities should promote low-threshold access for all university members.

International study and practical experience contributes to the “employability” of graduates. Intensified cooperation with companies and other practical organisations in arranging and carrying out foreign placements can help to strengthen these effects and increase the number of

⁵ The organisational areas of this internationalisation strategy must be implemented within the framework of the structural and development planning of HWR Berlin.

⁶ The group of experts advises the continuation of the Welcome Centre and further expansion of bilingual university communication (German/English) as well as the establishment of a students’ “International Club”.

participants. Systematic inclusion of the large, worldwide alumni network of HWR Berlin also seems to make sense in this context.

3.2. “Internationalisation at Home”: Using the opportunities of digitisation - acquiring skills

Internationality is an essential quality feature of good teaching at HWR Berlin. Acquisition of subject-specific, but mainly generic skills, especially in the context of international and intercultural experiences during the studies, is therefore promoted – for more information on this, please check out [Guiding principle on studies and teaching](#). HWR Berlin would like to offer to as many university members as possible, and to all students if possible, the opportunity to gain personal experience at their own university in international cooperation and enjoy shared learning with colleagues and students from all over the world, including guests from our partner universities. This also includes the opportunity to learn on site from teaching staff at the partner universities. These are important components of I@H. This way, our students can acquire linguistic, intercultural and additional subject-related skills, even if they themselves do not (initially) wish to pursue classic international mobility. It is of great importance to provide this group of students with substantial international experience. I@H can also contribute to motivating students to undertake mobility abroad for one or two semesters later on in their studies. Virtual internationalisation and physical mobility have the potential to reinforce each other. Modern technologies such as video conferencing systems and collaboration software must be used to a greater extent. Global Classrooms/COIL⁷ are methods with which students and teaching staff can learn, discuss and work together in teams virtually across borders within the framework of a course. These forms of international online teaching, possibly coupled with short-term mobilities or excursions, open up new potentials and should be built upon.

I@H benefits from an increase in the proportion of foreign teaching staff and students, in which the group of foreign students consists of the two large subgroups of “degree-seeking” students, who are with us for the duration of an entire degree programme, and exchange students, who generally study at HWR Berlin for up to one year. The HWR has been developing special offers to attract these groups of people to the university. International students should feel welcome and have an opportunity to connect easily; to this end, needs-based offers should be further developed.

The subject content of teaching and studies should include international references wherever possible and courses should be offered in English wherever possible and wherever appropriate - also to make the range of courses attractive for foreign guests, teaching staff and students. The expansion of the Language Centre at HWR Berlin will further professionalise and expand the range of courses for foreign languages and German as a foreign language for foreign guests. Training services in the field of intercultural communication can be a useful addition for the university members. Students coming from our partner universities should have the opportunity to take courses to learn more about the European Union and Germany. Further expansion of “International Weeks” and other short-term programmes for condensed implementation of projects and courses with partner universities can represent another suitable instrument of I@H.

⁷ COIL: [Collaborative Online International Learning](#)

3.3. Networking research and transfer activities internationally

The research and transfer activities of HWR Berlin contribute to solving global challenges such as those described in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations and the research missions of the EU. They open up innovation and employment potentials in various sectors of society and represent attractive career opportunities for our graduates through the associated start-up projects. Therefore, the research and transfer activities of our university members frequently have international relevance, in addition to regional effects. HWR Berlin sees itself as an active part of the European Research Area and takes advantage of the many opportunities offered by the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. It is involved in research networks, participates in multinational consortia and acquires EU third-party funding, especially from Horizon Europe and within the framework of the Innovation Union, Europe. In the process, it considers itself committed to applying high ethical and qualitative standards together with its partners, and promotes cross-border collaboration on PhD. Due to global networks, entrepreneurship and the establishment of social start-ups often rely on rapid internationalisation. Our business incubation centre supports this through a “Network of Centres” with select partner universities. The institutes at HWR Berlin also systematically contribute to the intensification of our network with their diverse international working relationships.

The numerous study or teaching-related university partnerships provide a basis for enhanced academic collaboration. Teaching mobilities result in networks, which can also be used for cooperation in research and transfer. This results in particularly profitable, strategic partnerships with individual, foreign partner universities, which are characterised by a particularly close relationship across several higher education service areas and subject disciplines.

3.4. Optimising structures and processes (internal and external)

An outstanding network of foreign partner universities in terms of academic quality, attractiveness and academic and administrative collaborative capacity is the essential basis for successful institutional internationalisation.

It is essential that we expand this network with great care. Even though individual geographical focuses already exist, the network today spans all continents and it remains fundamentally open. Further development largely follows the interests of the university members, both from a geographical perspective and with a view to the type of individual partner universities. It seems worthwhile to establish strategic partnerships with universities. (for more information on this, please see section 3.3). The HWR Berlin is deeply rooted in the European spirit, and close partnerships with higher education institutions in other EU member states are therefore of paramount importance. Furthermore, HWR Berlin considers itself a player in global development cooperation - partnerships with universities from the Global South are therefore a matter of course and require special support in the acquisition of third-party funding.

HWR Berlin attaches great importance to compliance with ethical standards and principles of academic freedom. The freedom of research and teaching brings with it a special responsibility for the individual academics as well as for the HWR Berlin as a whole. In international partnerships, HWR Berlin and its international partners must ensure compliance with academic and academic-ethical standards and adhere to the general principles of good academic practice.

Students should learn the cross-border aspects of ecological, economic and social sustainability and, if possible, work on them together with students from the partner universities. HWR Berlin pays attention to the ecological sustainability of its internationalisation, in particular to minimising its CO2 footprint associated with travel. Factors that contribute to this, for example, are the selection of climate-friendly means of transport, participation in a “Green Erasmus+” and the use of video conferences - read more about this in the sustainability strategy of HWR Berlin [Link]. Existing collaborations, networks and transnational education projects of the federal government and the states can provide a valuable basis for trustful cooperation⁸. DAAD is the most important advisor and non-material and financial supporter of the internationalisation of HWR Berlin. International memberships and collaborations of HWR Berlin outside the higher education sector can also be made productive for internationalisation. For example, town-twinning arrangements of Berlin, German Houses of Science and Innovation, foundations and corporate partners. It is particularly important for the HWR Berlin to be a member of the UAS7 university network, which also defines itself as an internationalisation network. HWR Berlin makes use of the services of UAS7, which emerge, for example, through the work of the liaison offices in the USA and Brazil, and plays an active role in shaping them.

All processes associated with internationalisation, such as the preparation, implementation and follow-up of foreign placements as well as the recognition of academic performances abroad, should be carried out as unbureaucratically as possible and, if possible, digitally and integrated into the Campus Management System S.A.M. Internal distribution of tasks and responsibilities should be made transparent and the desire of the students for digital range of services and counselling services should be taken into account. Adequate resources must be ensured for the International Office. HWR Berlin promotes internal opportunities for exchange of experiences between university members and makes use of the extensive skills of its own experts.

4. Vision

HWR Berlin continues to expand its position as one of the most internationally oriented and mobile German universities. All students at HWR Berlin should be offered attractive opportunities for a personal study-related experience abroad. Internationality is a trademark of the university and remains a decisive argument for first-year students to choose HWR Berlin. Internationality is also gaining importance as a competitive advantage when appointing teaching staff. Internationalisation is supported by more and more globally networked professors in teaching as well as research and transfer, internationally oriented employees in technology and administration and a global network with outstanding partner universities.

⁸ Here are some examples of international higher education networks and transnational higher education projects involving the HWR Berlin: Association of MBAs (AMBA), Baltic Sea Region University Network (BSRUN), Cooperation Network for Risk, Safety and Security Studies (CONRIS), European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), German International University, Egypt (GIU), Network of International Business Schools (NIBS), Vietnamese German University (VGU)

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