

## **Internationalization Strategy (2021-2024) <sup>1</sup>**

The University of Mannheim attributes great importance to international exchange in teaching and research, and promotes the cooperation with universities and other partners worldwide. As modern science and humanities have an international scope that not only includes global divulgation, discussion of research results, involvement of international peer-reviews and publications, but also international exchange of students and professors, the university strives to be a place of international cooperation. The international orientation includes all aspects of university life: research, teaching and administration.

The University of Mannheim has more than 730 exchange programs with roundabout 450 partner universities worldwide. Thereof, 240 partner universities are located in Europe. Every year, about 1,100 students from Mannheim have the opportunity to study abroad. In return, the university welcomes about 1,100 international students in Mannheim. Together with roundabout 1,100 international degree-seeking students, the student body of the university is made up of about 18% international students. English-language master's programs and a very high number of English-taught courses in bachelor's programs add to this attractive international environment. The international curriculum is complemented by 17 double degree programs and the IBEA (International Business Education Alliance) program option in the bachelor's program Business Administration or the Bachelor 4 program of the School of Humanities which includes a one-year period abroad. In the past few years, the University of Mannheim was also able to raise its ratio of international researchers to 16%.

As the initiator and founder of the Alliance of Leading European Universities in Economic and Social Sciences (ALEUESS), the University of Mannheim has intensified its internationalization on an institutional level thanks to profound networking within Europe. This network facilitates strengthening cooperations in teaching and developing joint degree programs on a European level. In line with its clear-cut profile in economic and social sciences, the University of Mannheim pools a variety of common research activities within the scope of the European network and extends them keeping in mind the ninth research program of the European Union (Horizon 2021-2027). The University of Mannheim contributes its outstanding research expertise in processes of social change. The Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES) and the Leibniz Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW) are direct and indirect contributors. The Alliance creates incentives for researchers of the university to increase the influence of economic and social sciences on current political processes, particularly on a European level by means of national and international funds for research.

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<sup>1</sup> in accordance with the senate resolution of 4 March 2020

The University of Mannheim places great value on internationalization, and the internationalization strategy that is detailed in the following emphasizes this. Moreover, it defines measures to expand and consolidate internationalization in research, teaching and administration.

### ***Overall Objectives of the Internationalization Strategy***

#### **1. Internationalization abroad**

This objective accents the international position and reputation of the university with regard to high-profile research and teaching, research cooperations and the education of future scholars, specialists and managers. A classic mobility period of studying, teaching or researching abroad is the preference here, however, the classic model may be complemented or partially substituted by virtual mobilities.

#### **2. Internationalization@Home**

Internationalization@Home is aimed at the University of Mannheim itself as a place of cultural encounters and cooperation in research and teaching. The university prides itself on an open arms culture for international members and guests and strives to convey an intercultural world view to all its members. It has set itself the high standard of aspiring to be a place that shapes integration and brings cosmopolitan attitudes to life. This way, students and early-stage researchers are to be educated for an increasingly international labor market to become responsible leaders in business, politics, society and academia.

To accomplish these general objectives, the University of Mannheim has defined a number of strategic goals and corresponding measures.

#### ***Strategic goals and their corresponding measures in the following areas of internationalization:***

- 1) International mobility for students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff
- 2) Virtual mobility / digitalization for internationalization
- 3) Promoting and supporting cooperations and research activities on a European and an international level
- 4) International campus

**Goal I: International mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff****1.1 International mobility of students****1.1.1 Outbound credit mobility (studying abroad)**

The university will implement the student mobility goals that were set for Germany. According to these goals, at least every other university graduate is to experience study-related periods abroad and every third graduate is to complete a minimum study abroad period of 3 months and/or 15 ECTS credits abroad.

**Measures:**

- Maintaining and nurturing the world-wide network of partner universities including regular quality checks based on academic standards. Each school is to make the strategic decision whether the curriculum of the partners is to complement or match the program of study of the home university. Moreover, international reputation, accreditations and also guaranteed recognition of coursework and examinations are selection criteria for the programs of study. Additionally, the partner institutions are to provide a professional administrative infrastructure in order to guarantee essential support for Mannheim students studying abroad.
- Providing professional infrastructure for advice and support of Mannheim students going abroad on an academic level (at the schools) and on a non-academic, organizational level (at the International Office).
- Adopting program structures that allow for optional or obligatory mobility periods as part of the programs of study. Thereby, the recognition of coursework and examinations abroad is clear and can be guaranteed to students provided they fulfill certain requirements.
- Expanding international double degree programs (joint degree/double degree/cotutelle) based on a mutual exemption from tuition fees.

**1.1.2 Inbound credit mobility (international exchange students)**

The number of study places for international exchange students per academic year is to be aligned closer with the number of study places required for Mannheim students abroad at renowned partner universities (currently 1,100 study places per semester or year, respectively). In order to cover the demand for places to study abroad, the University of Mannheim does not necessarily need to provide the same number of study places per semester for international exchange students. It is rather the demand for places in short-term programs for students of our partner universities world-wide that is increasing. This includes the option to complete short courses (tailor-made programs, summer schools, research internships etc.). The partnership agreements can include that, in return, Mannheim students get the opportunity to spend a semester or a year abroad.

At the same time, the available local infrastructure is a natural boundary, for example, affordable housing for short terms. The university can only expand housing options to a limited extend and only with the help of external partners, like the City of Mannheim, and provided the financial resources are available.

#### Measures:

- A curriculum with a sufficient ratio of English-taught classes at all schools and departments, which needs to be communicated by means of the central course catalog in due time.
- Adequate infrastructure for advice and support within the central administration (e.g. personnel at the International Office, at Division II and Division I), and on the departmental and school levels (e.g. personnel, such as international exchange coordinators, at the dean's offices. The services provided are to help with orientation and integration of international exchange students (on a central level: e.g. support in finding accommodation, sufficient German language courses, English-taught social skills courses, coaching programs / on the school-level: e.g. English-language information events, measures to support social integration, subject-specific academic support etc.)
- Providing adequate support to realize short-term programs (e.g. Summer Schools).

#### **1.1.3 Inbound degree mobility (international degree-seeking students):**

To realize internationalization on our own campus it is essential to promote the international student body. Therefore, the university strives to further increase the quota of international degree-seeking students (bachelor's, master's and doctoral students). Moreover, professional student monitoring is to increase student success for this target group.

#### Measures:

- Expansion of English-taught master's programs.
- Designing and implementing a professional recruiting strategy to acquire international students in collaboration with the schools. This includes personnel for the central administration.
- Adequate infrastructure in terms of advice and support for the above-named goals is made available during the entire student and doctoral life cycle (information/orientation/early stage of the program/graduation/transition to the job market) at the central administration (advisors at the International Office) and at the schools and departments (e.g. program managers).
- Adequate resources for individual support at the central administration (accommodation/sufficient number of German language courses, English-taught social skills courses, coaching programs, advice and trainings for a successful transition to the German job market) and at the school and departmental level (individual information events, English-language tutorials).

- Consolidation of existing student monitoring measures at the central administration and at the schools and departments.

## **1.2 International mobility of academic staff members (researchers and teaching staff)**

### **1.2.1 Inbound mobility**

In order to realize the strategic goal of Internationalization@Home the number of international researchers and teachers needs to be raised. In line with this, adequate advice and support is essential. International research requires periods of physical presence even during a digital age. Therefore, the University of Mannheim welcomes international guest researchers at chairs, research institutions and graduate programs and provides incentives in the form of advice and support for hosts of the University of Mannheim to realize international research trips to the University of Mannheim.

#### Measures:

- Adequate advice and support from the central administration provided by the Welcome Center for International Scholars (relocation services) and visiting researchers as well as infrastructure for accommodating visiting researchers and their families (guest house).
- Intensifying advisory services regarding national, European and international funding options for short-term mobilities, longer-term mobilities and/or teaching mobilities.

### **1.2.2 Outbound mobility**

Researchers of the University of Mannheim maintain international networks, cooperate with international partners, present their research on an international stage and publish their findings in internationally renowned journals. The University of Mannheim supports its researchers in fostering and extending these activities by means of international mobilities.

#### Measures:

- Providing infrastructure for advice and support to help researchers acquire funding from programs of funding organizations such as the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH), the German Research Foundation (DFG), COST-Actions of the European Union or the ERASMUS Staff Mobility program.
- Harnessing international relationships with partner universities to organize individual stays of researchers and teachers.

## **1.3 International mobility of administrative staff (inbound and outbound)**

In order to empower and raise awareness for intercultural topics the University of Mannheim provides its administrative staff with the option to upskill as part of the personnel development plan of the University of Mannheim.

Measures:

- Encouraging and partial funding of (short-term) further education abroad, such as Erasmus Staff Weeks.
- Harnessing international relationships with partner universities (e.g. ALEUESS) to allow for individual further education measures for administrative staff, e.g. in the form of an Erasmus Staff Exchange.

**Goal II: Virtual mobility / digitalization for internationalization**

It is a core goal of the university to promote digitalization in academic teaching. Digitalization is to help take account of the increasing heterogeneity of the student body by means of an individualization of teaching by offering students tailor-made learning solutions in line with their knowledge and competencies and their strengths and weaknesses. Digital teaching and learning solutions allow for flexible studies in terms of location and time. They allow for individual learning environments and processes, facilitate national and international cooperation in research and teaching and promote virtual student mobility and virtual experiences abroad through common learning experiences in a digital network with international partners. The measures are paralleled by fostering media competency of all university member (teachers, researchers, students and administrative staff) and providing the necessary digital infrastructure.

**Measures:**

- Providing advice and services for teaching staff at the university regarding didactic concepts and technical approaches (e.g. recording and cutting service) at the Educational Development Center (HDZ) in order to facilitate and implement digital teaching and learning concepts in the context of physical and virtual student mobility (e.g. *blended mobility, virtual mobility, augmented and virtual reality, blended learning, global classrooms*, etc.)
- Introducing mechanisms for incentives and support (e.g. alternative recognition of teaching workload) for teaching staff to implement digital teaching in cooperation with international partners.
- Expanding the existing university-wide online learning platform (with regard to technology and content) to become an adaptive instrument for optimum preparation of international students.
- Expanding the “digital first” approach at the administration to continue developing existing and new digital processes, particularly to manage mobilities and partners, nominations and recognition of credits in cooperation with international partner universities. Moreover, processes connected to campus management systems are to be brought in line with the approach.

**Goal III: Promoting and supporting cooperations and research activities on a European and on an international level**

The University of Mannheim aspires to become more visible in the European and the international research community. Therefore, the university wants to draw on its excellent reputation as a research institution to increase the number of international research cooperations in order to further expand its leading position in research at an international level and making sure these developments are sustainable. With the following measures, the University of Mannheim provides incentives for researchers to harness national, European and international funding programs for research cooperations, in particular for research activities within the Alliance of Leading European Universities in Economic and Social Sciences (ALEUESS).

**Measures:**

- Supporting the establishment and expansion of international research cooperations and research projects with an international scope.
- Increasing the number of internationally renowned collaborative research projects and individual fellowships, such as from the European Research Council (ERC), Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), COST-Actions of the European Union, Mercator-Fellows (DFG) or the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.
- Intensive advising and proactive encouragement of researchers who want to apply for research programs and awards with an European and international orientation.
- Encouraging researchers to assume positions in international research organizations or to assume editorship or membership on editorial boards of top-level international journals and publications.
- Recruiting researchers of all career levels worldwide, and supporting them in the relocation process, such as the search for suitable accommodation and dual career options.
- Inviting and mentoring international (visiting) scholars and promoting long-term research cooperations.
- Expanding doctoral programs with an international focus, particularly focusing on activities within the ALEUESS network.
- Supporting dissertation projects with international supervisors.
- Supporting the organization of international academic conferences in Mannheim.
- Encouraging early-stage researchers from Mannheim to attend summer schools abroad.



## Goal IV: International campus

### 4.1 Bilingual campus

In order to increase its competitive advantages, the University of Mannheim strives to create an international campus allowing international students, (early-stage) researchers, staff members and guests to work, research and study in Mannheim regardless of their level of German language skills. To achieve this, the university promotes bilingualism in all areas focusing on providing essential information in English and the proliferation of English as an international research language on campus.

#### Measures:

- Providing human resources and infrastructure by means of the Translation Services team (SfÜ) at the central administration.
- Centrally coordinated, standardized English translations of official documents, important information for students and staff members, print materials and websites, signage, user interfaces and information from schools and departments of the University of Mannheim.
- Providing and continuously expanding an English "corporate language" for the university in order to harmonize and standardize the use of higher education related English terminology within the University of Mannheim.
- Providing a style guide for the use of the English language at the university.
- Raising awareness for the importance of a bilingual campus and promoting the use of the English language in administrative processes by means of trainings.
- Continuous availability for advice and support for all questions regarding the use of English as a lingua franca.
- Advising and support throughout change processes regarding the bilingual campus.

### 4.2 Intercultural awareness in the administration

Along with the internationalization of research and teaching, all areas of the university management need to establish an infrastructure that is able to meet the demands of a campus becoming more and more international. Next to implementing English as a second lingua franca in university management and administration, it is crucial to raise intercultural awareness among all members of the administrative staff who daily face a variety of international students and staff with a number of very different needs. An internationalization strategy can only be implemented sustainably and successfully if it is backed by a well-staffed, well-equipped and open-minded university administration.

#### Measures:

- Providing tailor-made opportunities for upskilling, such as language courses, introduction to the “corporate English language”, intercultural awareness training and country-specific training.
- Systematic networking with partner universities and exchange of staff members of the university management according to their respective fields such as admissions, room management, academic advising and support, dual career, research support and infrastructure.
- Actively encouraging physical mobilities of administrative staff members (e.g. Erasmus Staff Weeks, see under 1.3)
- Providing staff members with a certificate after having completed a set number of educational measures as an integral part of personnel development.

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Prof. Dr. Thomas Puhl  
President