



Universität Hamburg  
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

# Internationalization Strategy of Universität Hamburg's Presidium

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## 0. INTERNATIONALIZATION AT UNIVERSITÄT HAMBURG IN LIGHT OF GLOBAL, NATIONAL, AND REGIONAL CHALLENGES

Universität Hamburg, one of Germany's five largest universities, is located in the country's second-largest city. A comprehensive university offering the entire range of disciplines (with the exception of engineering), the University stands for internationality in academia in this cosmopolitan port city. Accordingly, it aims to facilitate “globally responsible research, teaching, and studying” (DAAD 7/2013) and to meet global challenges with its research and teaching. Internationalization is hereby understood in terms of the *transnationality* of the University as a whole. This means that the University is responsible for taking part “in a world university system undergoing development” (German Rectors' Conference, 12/ 2012) and in promoting the “cultivation of cosmopolitanism” (German Rectors' Conference 9/2012). At the national level, internationalization in this sense also means ensuring the ability to innovate and to address the shortage of skilled workers in Germany (cf. Action Committee on Education, 18/2012).

Universität Hamburg's contribution is influenced by three factors:

- its historical obligation
- its guiding principles
- the political framework for internationalizing universities in Germany

The University's historical obligation is reflected in its mission statement: “To Research, To Teach, To Educate and Form.” In pursuing these aims, Universität Hamburg places particular value on the *formation of character* (in addition to research and teaching), a process in which internationality, i.e., promoting cosmopolitanism and the cosmopolitan character, plays an especially important role.

With regard to its guiding principles, Universität Hamburg is committed to sustainability and sees itself as a *University for a Sustainable Future*. The Center for a Sustainable University (Kompetenzzentrum Nachhaltige Universität, KNU), founded to pursue these very goals, has established four dimensions within which the internationalization of the University should also play a role:

### *The content dimension*

Sustainability as a research topic. Internationally: the pursuit of global research topics, e.g., those pursued by the Cluster of Excellence “Integrated Climate System Analysis and Prediction” (CliSAP), the excellence cluster for climate research.

### *The reflexive and critical dimension*

Call for the international establishment of the continental European understanding of academia, whereby the university is conceived less as a business venture and more as a socially responsible institution committed to social progress.

### *The didactic dimension*

The pursuit of teaching methods and classroom approaches which posit teaching and learning as sustainable processes with regard to both subject matter and learning results. Internationally: rather than *learning to the test*, establishing a comprehensive academic understanding of society and the world.

### *The institutional dimension*

Sustainable institutional governance via participatory processes in contrast to business-oriented control mechanisms. Internationally: advocating for the university as a locus of democracy.

Finally, an internationalization strategy must be pursued within a suitable political framework. This has been established by the federal and *Länder* ministers of science (cf. BMBF 1/2013) in new fields of action, which are also reflected in the strategic funding activities of the federally funded associated organizations. These activities include the following:

1. Strategically steering the internationalization processes
2. Establishing a welcoming environment
3. Establishing an international climate on campus / *internationalization at home*
4. Increasing international mobility with a view to quality
5. Increasing the attractiveness of the study location
6. Recruiting excellent young researchers from abroad
7. Expanding international research cooperations

Universität Hamburg's internationalization strategy adheres to these structural guidelines, demonstrating its achievements in every field of action thus far and measures planned up to 2020. Both of these—its achievements and its plans— derive from the recommendations made in the Internationalization of Universities audit conducted by the German Rectors' Conference at Universität Hamburg in 2011 (recommendations for Universität Hamburg, 2011). Universität Hamburg is currently implementing these



recommendations. The internationalization process is the responsibility of the Presidium and has been assigned directly to the president. Both an internal and an external council of experts advise the University as it implements measures. The internal council of experts is made up of responsible persons in the University's faculties and institutions. The members of the external council are as follows:

Ulrich Grothus (DAAD), Stefan Herms (Public Office of the Free and Hansestadt City of Hamburg), Steffen Mehlich (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation), Uwe Muuss (Georg August University, Göttingen), Mette Thunø (Aarhus University), Marijke Wahlers (German Rectors' Conference).

This internationalization strategy paper is the result of a comprehensive consultation process within the University assisted by the two councils of experts. The University simultaneously established the Department of International Affairs (Dept. 5), numbering roughly 30 employees.

## 1. FIELD OF ACTION 1: STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE

The University has undertaken the following comprehensive measures: developed the following internationalization strategy, established two councils of experts, and created a program for the targeted acquisition of external funding. It has also developed data management procedures for the purpose of collating all international key figures that constitute a significant improvement upon the former status quo.

Strategic governance focuses on forming strategic partnerships involving a manageable number of interdisciplinary partnerships in specific regions rather than on superficial and essentially inactive cooperation agreements. It is important to note that University management is responsible for university cooperations and the faculties are responsible for faculty cooperations. Two consortia have been established since 2011—one in Europe, known as Stella Polaris, comprising Aarhus University, Syddansk University, and Kiel (due to expand to include Göteborg and Bergen), and one with Fudan University in Shanghai and Macquarie University in Australia. Furthermore, firm individual relationships have been (re)established with four American universities: Berkeley, Northwestern, Johns Hopkins, and NYU. Universität Hamburg has also established a vibrant partnership with Stellenbosch University in South Africa. The consortia will receive seed money for trips, cooperation meetings, and scholarships and grants.

In the future the University will pursue further strategic partnerships with Brazil and Japan. Hamburg's partner cities play an especially important role in all of these endeavors. All university partnerships involve joint academic programs, the development of regular visiting lectureships, joint specialist workshops, and summer schools.

## 2. FIELD OF ACTION 2: ESTABLISHING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

By establishing the Universitätskolleg, funded through the Quality Pact for Teaching (€13 million), the University reconceived the transition to university study and developed special programs and events for international students and students with immigrant backgrounds. The Universitätskolleg's activities are subject to ongoing development and should be pursued further in the second phase of the Quality Pact for Teaching.

Activities relating to internationalization “at home,” of particular significance in a large city such as Hamburg, as well as the task of integrating and supervising incoming students have been provided for in the University's regular budget. There are plans underway to expand the PIASTA program, which was awarded a prize from the Foreign Office.

A welcoming environment also includes better housing for international students. Studierendewerk Hamburg is currently planning the development of more student housing.

The University is also expanding its range of German courses and language exchanges (*Sprachtandem*).

Universität Hamburg pays particular attention to the supervision of international doctoral students and doctoral students wishing to go abroad. For example, the University runs faculty-based graduate schools set to be incorporated into a University-wide umbrella graduate school, facilitating the consolidation of services in the faculties for international students, doctoral students, and academics.

The University has also established a translation office charged with the task of translating important administrative documents into English for international guests, thereby facilitating their stay in Germany.

### 3. FIELD OF ACTION 3: ESTABLISHING AN INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE ON CAMPUS / *INTERNATIONALIZATION AT HOME*

One of Universität Hamburg's goals is to encourage young students to study abroad. Hamburg's attractiveness as a city and the University's rigorous curricula make it particularly difficult to convince students of the benefits of studying abroad. In order to facilitate matters, the University has initiated a process to reform the Bologna Reform (Bologna 2.0). Reform efforts over the past two years have included rescinding numerous restrictive provisions on Bologna programs, thereby liberalizing and rendering the entire system more flexible. These reforms benefit both students keen to study abroad and students who would like to come here. The University also contracted a service institute to investigate hurdles in the recognition of foreign academic achievements—including university professors' grade conversion practices—and to make recommendations for measures to liberalize the system that could be implemented directly.

One of Universität Hamburg's particularly noteworthy achievements is its broad spectrum of foreign language courses. Students at Universität Hamburg can choose from roughly 100 languages, making the goal of multilingual education highly feasible. Courses offered by the Language Center are supplemented by specialist or subject-related foreign language courses for both German and international students designed to facilitate studies in a particular discipline either in Germany or in the English language.

In order to achieve the goal of multilingualism, the University offers more than twenty-five English-language or multilingual master's programs, various joint degree programs, and a host of nationally unique academic programs such as those in performance studies and cosmetic science. Joint and double degree programs, in particular with strategic partners in the University's key research areas, complement these opportunities. The University has welcomed and made intensive use of resources such as the DAAD's international university partnership program (Internationale Studien- und Ausbildungspartnerschaften, ISAP) in developing such programs.

The mayor of Hamburg has launched a new initiative to create a Hamburg eLearning portal, facilitating cooperation with strategic partners in developing Internet-based learning opportunities.

#### 4. FIELD OF ACTION 4: INCREASING INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

The University's Presidium has obligated the faculties to implement the recognition guidelines of the Lisbon Convention consistently and to ensure that hurdles to mobility are identified and swiftly dismantled. Academic regulations will be revised successively with regard to establishing windows for mobility. This will now be made easier by Hamburg's new Higher Education Act, which allows the Academic Senate to dictate examination and academic regulations for the faculties in which mobility windows are obligatory.

International mobility does not only apply to students but also to academic personnel. For this reason, particular attention should be paid to increasing the number of successful Alexander von Humboldt and DAAD visiting lectureships, primarily with a view to recruiting project participants from strategic partner universities. Teaching staff are encouraged to take advantage of the ERASMUS+ Program in order to gain further international teaching experience at European partner universities and to offer their peers these opportunities in Hamburg. As the University provides basic funding for such measures, the slightly below-average number of DAAD and Alexander von Humboldt applications (with regard to actual mobility) is deceptive; generally speaking, academic staff are not dependent upon such applications and can draw upon budgetary resources within their faculties.

In order to improve international mobility, compulsory semesters abroad have already been established in academic regulations, for example, in East Asian studies.

Periods abroad for students are facilitated by resources from the University's own budget made available through the Hamburg**g**lobal Program.

In order to assist students unfamiliar with study abroad, the Universitätskolleg has set up a project to assist qualified persons prior to their arrival in Germany, in particular by facilitating or relieving them of bureaucratic procedures.

The University has established a program for its administrative staff likewise financed from its budget which allows them to gather experience in the administrations of partner universities abroad for a limited period. This program is enjoying increasing popularity.

## 5. FIELD OF ACTION 5: INCREASING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE STUDY LOCATION

Even though Hamburg—a cosmopolitan port city—is highly valued by many students, the University needs to expand upon its marketing activities abroad. Numerous measures are being taken to increase Universität Hamburg's visibility among international students. These range from information materials in English, an English-language promotional film, and international activities through to participation in international trade fairs and conferences—all with the purpose of recruiting international students.

The City of Hamburg has established a world-wide network of liaison offices, some of which are staffed by people responsible for academic matters. These offices help the University nurture intensive exchange. In some offices, for example in Shanghai, the University provides liaison officers. This prominent network avails itself further of public resources open to the University, such as the Hamburg Welcome Center, international working groups, Hamburg Hafen Marketing, the Hamburg Ambassadors, as well as various international municipal associations, many of which have long traditions reaching back to the Colonial period.

The Alumni Club, founded three years ago, has set up several regional offices in Chicago, Shanghai, New York, Los Angeles, and São Paulo, to name just a few.

It is not only the visibility of the University but also its well-organized academic programs which contribute to its attractiveness. University management and the faculties have therefore established incentives for the development of further English-language programs and courses within the framework of the Target and Performance Agreement. When visiting partner universities, University management explicitly expresses its desire to establish joint degree programs with partner institutions.

A less complicated application procedure for international students has contributed both to reducing the number of prospective students breaking off their applications and improving the administrative guidance provided to international staff, likewise increasing the attractiveness of Universität Hamburg.



## 6. FIELD OF ACTION 6: RECRUITING EXCELLENT (YOUNG) RESEARCHERS FROM ABROAD AND RECRUITING/DEVELOPING INTERNATIONALLY EXPERIENCED PERSONNEL

The University's human resource activities have been internationalized for both academic and non-academic staff. As part of this internationalization strategy, the University was able to successfully establish two Alexander von Humboldt professorships in physics and art history and a chair funded by the Anneliese Meyer Research Award in philosophy.

The University has also suggested a program for visiting academics within the faculties. Visiting professors would thus not only serve as substitutes for other professors; they would be invited to Hamburg on the basis of the quality of their work.

Professorial appointments to the University have also undergone internationalization. All professorships are regularly advertised internationally. The number of appointments offered to professors from abroad is accordingly relatively high, and rose from 20% in 2010 to about 35% in 2013. A total of 48 professors from abroad were appointed between 2010 and 2013.

Universität Hamburg does not appoint professors without international experience. In order to achieve this, the appointment procedure does not simply involve advertising posts; University management leads a scouting process. This means that University management only allows a position to be advertised if the faculty in question can name international academics who have explicitly expressed interest in applying.

The University also places particular emphasis on the international experience of administrative personnel. When hiring staff, value is systematically placed on foreign language skills. Employees at the University enjoy training, stays abroad, and visits to partner schools to strengthen their international profile.

## 7. FIELD OF ACTION 7: EXPANDING INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COOPERATION

Universität Hamburg is a locus of international research cooperation simply by virtue of its key research areas, a significant number of which cannot be seen as merely national in scope—either in regard to topic or personnel. These include: Climate, Earth, Environment; Matter and the Universe; Neurosciences; Multilingualism; Governance; Infection Research; Heterogeneity and Education; and many more. A number of internationally visible research (and teaching) ventures underscore the international focus of the University's activities. Examples include the clusters of excellence CliSAP and the Hamburg Center for Ultrafast Imaging (CUI), the Center for Structural Systems Biology, the Collaborative Research Center “Manuscript Cultures”, the EU-funded Regional Powers Network, the China-EU School of Law, and others. Moreover, the University maintains close relationships to the three Max Planck Institutes in Hamburg and to other external, internationally active institutions, such as the German Institute of German and Area Studies (GIGA) and the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy.

The University has been especially successful in acquiring EU research funding. Researchers at the University have secured around €40 million worth of funding from European sources over the last three years (2011–2013) alone. And the European Commission has awarded researchers at Universität Hamburg a total of 16 grants worth €25 million. It is due not least to Universität Hamburg's well-defined networking strategy that research funding bodies have taken particular interest in the University, for this strategy facilitates access to specific university relationships. With its well-defined network of vibrant partnerships, particularly with institutions in port cities, Universität Hamburg and the City of Hamburg would like to focus on the specific interests of similar cities and universities.

## 8. CENTRALIZED AND DE-CENTRALIZED INTERNATIONALIZATION

Universität Hamburg's constitution is characterized by one peculiarity: to a large extent, faculties make decisions independently of University management or University Council. This makes it, on the one hand, easier to make custom-fit, “on-site” decisions. However, it is difficult, on the other, to pursue university-wide policies in the name of “comprehensive management.” University management has no intention of pursuing a policy of “comprehensive management,” however, and has thus decided to maintain the relationship to the faculties according to the following rules:

- The University will establish and nurture partnerships with other universities centrally. Subject-specific partnerships, which do not require authorization by University management and are overseen and financed by the largely autonomous faculties, will be organized by the faculties.
- In order to prevent clashes between faculty and University strategies, each faculty is staffed with one person responsible for internationalization and the implementation of internationalization measures. In line with the requirements of the position, this staff member is, however, beholden to the guidelines established by the central authority; in daily operations, to the respective faculty. This allows for a counter current supporting both the interests of the discipline and the main policies of the University. For this purpose, each faculty also has its own dean of international affairs. Moreover, the faculties are represented in the internal council of experts for internationalization and are currently implementing decisions made centrally. These include:
  - the advancement of English-language courses
  - the establishment of joint degrees with strategic partner universities
  - the establishment of mobility windows in academic regulations
  - the use and administration of the Erasmus Program for student mobility
  - subject-specific supervision for incoming students
  - the establishment of fair recognition procedures for foreign academic achievements
  - a commitment to the appointment of international professors, English-language websites for the faculties,
  - submission of external funding applications to funding bodies that focus on internationalization

Universität Hamburg's internationalization strategy has been conceived to run until 2020. The University expects to have implemented and consolidated all measures resulting from the recommendations made during the audit by then. An interim review will take place in 2015 as part of a re-audit by the German Rectors' Conference.



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