

# **Internationalisation Strategy**

**University of Applied Sciences  
BFI Vienna**

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## 1. International Strategy

### *Managing holistic internationalisation*

Internationalisation is vital to many activities at the University of Applied Sciences (UAS) BFI Vienna, University for Economics, Management & Finance, and is a recurring theme in education, research and administration. We are convinced that cultural diversity is an asset for our university, and that intercultural exchange and international networking are a prerequisite for successful activities on the global stage.

## 2. Internationalisation goals

- **EDUCATION.** Enhancing the overall quality of education through **internationalisation at home and abroad.**
- **RESEARCH and DEVELOPMENT.** Strengthening the university's academic profile by boosting the quality and quantity of **research and development projects** through international collaboration.
- **CAMPUS CULTURE and ADMINISTRATION.** Strengthening our open-minded and welcoming campus culture through continuing development **of employees' international and intercultural competencies.**
- **THIRD MISSION and COMMUNICATION.** Contributing to social progress and sustainability by **promoting international and intercultural competencies** within and beyond the university.

Internationalisation at the UAS BFI Vienna, University for Economics, Management & Finance is firmly rooted in the Bologna System, which we have successfully put into practice. As a part of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and a holder of the Erasmus+ Charter for Higher Education (ECHE), we are committed to implementing common EU-wide policies and activities, as well as national strategies to promote further development and internationalisation of higher education. For us, internationalisation is not a goal in itself but an instrument for achieving the highest possible quality standards in education, research and administration, and equipping students with **international and intercultural competencies**, which they will need during their studies and after graduation. As a UN Global Compact member, we contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## 3. Geographical focus and partnerships

The **Erasmus+ programme countries** are the focal point for collaborations with higher education institutions and student exchange due to our location in Vienna – in the heart of Europe – and the strong, long-standing focus on **European** topics in our degree programmes. **Research and development** projects are centred on **emerging markets** because of the university's long-term experience, expertise and partnerships within these regions. Additionally, our degree programmes define **individual** focus regions based on their academic disciplines and objectives in terms of enhancing internationalisation and expanding partnerships. To intensify collaboration and the exchange of ideas, we form **strategic partnerships** with universities that share our academic profile and ambitions. Our **multinational business partnerships** complement our international collaborations with universities and highlight our strong **practical focus.**

## 4. Implementing internationalisation

### 4.1. Education

We enhance the overall quality of education through **internationalisation at home and abroad** by integrating new perspectives. We support the development of the **international and intercultural competencies** of all our students and lecturers by:

- Formulating and implementing a **study programme internationalisation strategy (SPINS)** for each bachelor and master degree programme<sup>1</sup> that includes:
  - o **Internationalisation goals**
  - o **Internationalisation activities and their impact on**
    - **education**
    - **research and development**
    - **campus culture and administration**
    - **third mission and communication**
  - o **Verifiable objectives**
  - o **Internationalised programme learning outcomes (PLOs)**
- Expanding the range of courses offered in **English and enhancing accessibility for incoming students.**
- Promoting participation in **internationalisation@home activities** such as **international weeks, virtual collaboration projects, internationalisation of learning outcomes and the integration of guest lecturers.**
- Promoting **internationalisation abroad** through **long-term mobility periods** (such as double degree programmes, exchange semesters and international internships) **and short-term mobility periods** (such as international weeks, field trips, summer schools and intensive programmes) **anchored in our curriculums** (mobility windows).
- Increasing the effectiveness of long-term mobility periods by providing preparation, guidance during these periods and re-entry workshops for students.
- Equipping both students and lecturers with **second and foreign language skills** and strengthening **intercultural competencies** to enable participation and teaching in an international classroom and in a global context.
- Promoting **networking** and the **exchange of ideas** between **international and local** students and lecturers.

### 4.2. Research and development

Our university carries out regional, national and international research and development projects. We strengthen the university's academic profile and the quality of **research and development projects** by:

- Actively **participating in** and **coordinating** international, interdisciplinary research and development projects with a practical focus.
- Evaluating financing options by means of **international funding** for research and development projects.
- Developing **international PhD partnerships** for students and staff.
- Fostering links between academics from our university and international colleagues within the framework of **university networks.**
- The active participation of our researchers and staff in **international conferences.**
- **Bringing out publications** on international topics related to the university's research and development strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 4(3) *Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz* (University of Applied Sciences Studies Act)

### 4.3. Campus culture and administration

Internally, we are committed to strengthening our open-minded and welcoming culture by further developing **our employees' international and intercultural competencies** and adding an international dimension to our support processes by:

- Increasing the **language proficiency and international and intercultural competencies** of our staff.
- Encouraging **staff mobility** among staff members without such experience.
- Creating **international classrooms** by means of targeted international student and lecturer **recruitment**.
- Enhancing our **attractiveness** for **international incoming** and **degree-seeking students**.
- Integrating **alumni** and their **international experience** into the ongoing development of our curriculums and programmes.
- Providing consistent printed and web-based information, containing consistent and standardised terms and concepts, as well as support systems in English for international students and lecturers.

### 4.4. Third mission and communication

Externally, we engage with society to promote diversity as an asset, as well as social responsibility and sustainability by:

- Organising public events that foster diversity, social responsibility and sustainability in higher education based on the university's research focuses (at the intersection of economics, management, finance and digitalisation)
- Contributing to achieving the **SDGs** and upholding the **principles of United Nations Global Compact**.
- Enhancing the intercultural and international competencies of all students and staff, taking the **work-life balance and job attractiveness** into account.
- Securing **international certificates, awards and accreditations**.

## 5. Definitions

### 5.1. International and intercultural learning outcomes

Following the approach adopted in European quality accreditation standards<sup>2</sup>, we define an **international learning outcome** as one that

“should refer to an ability that is actively demonstrated in functioning **in a certain discipline or an occupational area** with and in **other contexts** and **other regional settings of the world**.”

This means that an international learning outcome is specific to a particular discipline (e.g. knowledge of national legal regulations).

By contrast, an **intercultural learning outcome** is one that

“should refer to an ability that is actively demonstrated in **valuing** cultures **without judging and in enabling effective** and **appropriate communication** and **cooperation** with people of **all cultures**.”

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<sup>2</sup> Aerden, A. (2015). An introduction to international and intercultural learning outcomes. *European Consortium for Accreditation, Occasional Paper*, 1–22.

An intercultural learning outcome is therefore seen as generic. It is not necessarily connected with interaction between countries, but with people from diverse backgrounds, as different cultures can also exist within a single country, region, company or even family.

## **5.2. Long-term mobility period**

- A stay of **more than four weeks** in another country

## **5.3. Short-term mobility period**

- A stay of **between two days and four weeks** in another country

## **5.4. Sustainable Development Goals**

As defined by UN Global Compact<sup>3</sup>.

## **5.5. Strategic partnerships**

We have defined the following criteria to identify ten strategic partnerships. A strategic partnership at the university level is one that:

- Is geared to the long term, and is stable and reliable
- Supports the achievement of at least two of our four internationalisation goals
- Includes activities for different target groups (students, lecturers, researchers and staff)
- Is ideally a strategic partner for more than one of our degree programmes

## **Shortlist of partner degree programmes**

In addition to the ten strategic partnerships, shortlists are defined for the degree programmes with the most important and closest partnerships.

## **Partnership pool for student mobility**

In addition, there is a pool of partnerships that primarily offer a wide range of student mobility opportunities. They are monitored and managed by the International Office.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/sdgs/about>, 4 Dec.2018