

University of Rostock Internationalisation Strategy



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Internationality through Tradition and Innovation

Traditio et Innovatio – the University of Rostock’s motto also applies to its internationalisation efforts. Founded in 1419 – as one of the oldest and most traditional universities in Germany – the University of Rostock is proud of its long history of scientific relations, especially in the Baltic region.

Even today, good relationships that have culturally and technologically enriched the *Alma Mater Rostochiensis* in the past continue to be fostered. The University of Rostock sees itself as a pivotal part of European research and education, and, in an increasingly interconnected world, promotes this vision of development with enhanced internationalisation efforts in the form of innovative and international projects.

The university also assumes responsibility as an established municipal institution through its cooperative involvement with the local economy, politics and public life of Rostock as a city open to the world that places value on a sustainable culture of hospitality.

A high degree of internationality strengthens the quality and diversity in research, teaching and services, thereby, enhancing the university’s national and international visibility.



International Profile – Internationality as a Baltic Port City

The University of Rostock skillfully leverages its regional advantages as a coastal city within a predominantly rural environment. EU-funded programs such as the "European Master Program for Rural Animators (EMRA)" or the Erasmus Mundus "Integrated Advanced Ship Design (EMSHIP)" program have been successful in creating international partnerships and offering students and visiting



scholars highly innovative and competitive study and work programs within both a domestic and international framework. Participation in projects in the Baltic strengthens established academic programs at the University of Rostock such as aquaculture, marine biology, agriculture and environmental sciences while also promoting close cooperation with the Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research.

Although the Baltic Sea region is the regional focus of international cooperation, the university's vision of internationalisation is hardly restricted to this region. Other regions targeted for partnerships and project financing include Eastern Europe, the USA, Latin America and East Asia. Research cooperation with European Union programs is of tremendous importance. Certain pivotal research topics such as global food security, water supply, soil conservation, and climate change impacts, can only be worked on in conjunction with developing countries. Furthermore, solid partnerships with excellent facility commitments are also sought in these countries.

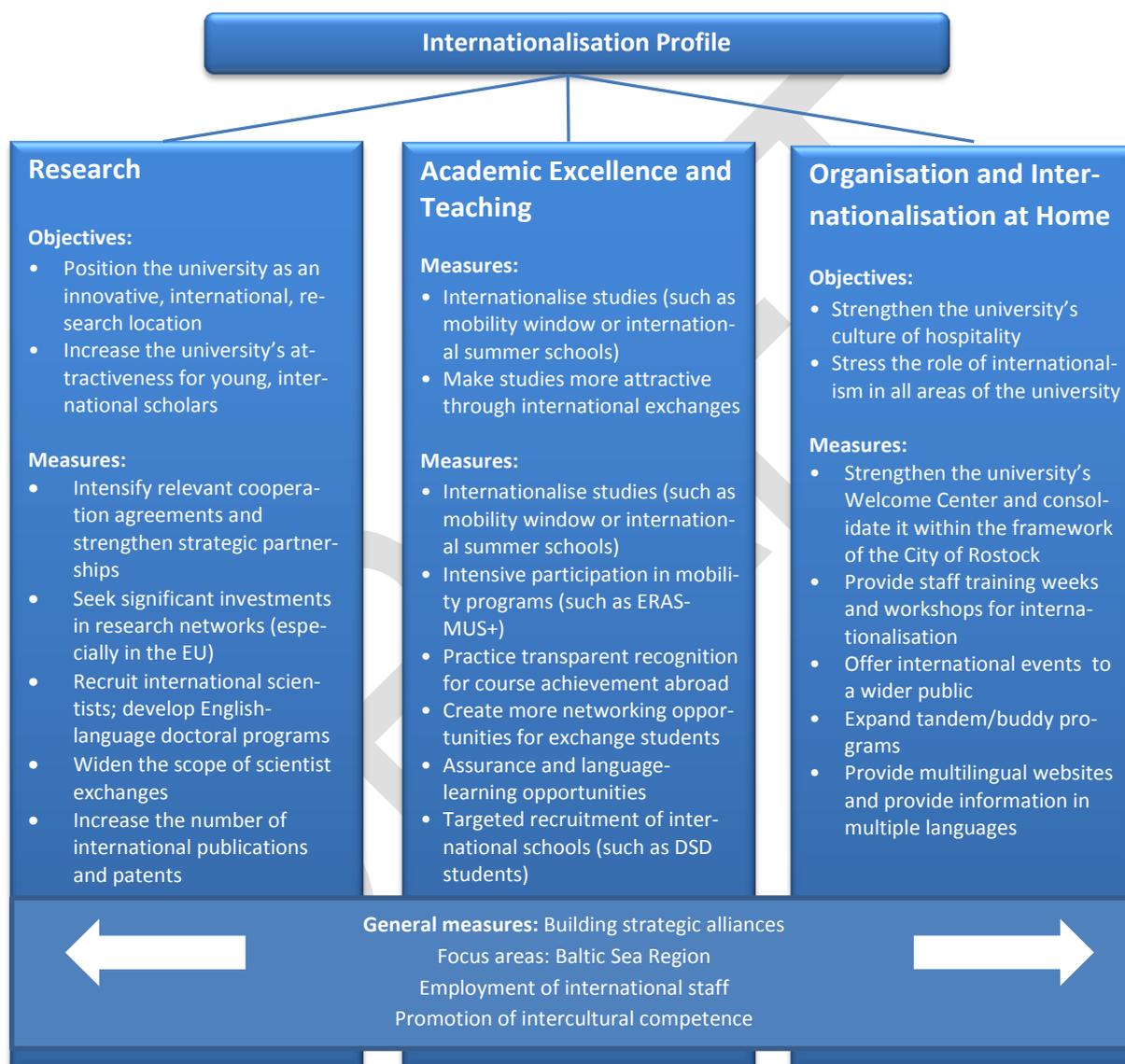
In addition, a heightened awareness of the social significance of such partnerships for research and teaching is created. University partnerships are regularly evaluated and, where promising, expanded in the form of strategic partnerships. To enhance the profile of the university's academic profile, the "Maritime Systems" "Life, Light and Matter", "Aging of Individuals and Society," and "Knowledge-Culture-Transformation" programs were launched in 2007 as interdisciplinary efforts and also, by its international relevance, have increased the hallmark of the university.

The University of Rostock can persuade national or international students in many areas such as medicine, computer science or mechanical engineering and should continue to pursue these successes with concrete measures to internationalisation. Summer schools, double degree programs, the Multinational Graduate Program in Demography (Demo-Doc) or the international courses in "Physics of Life, Light and Matter" and " Computational Science and Engineering " are important blocks for the international orientation of our university.

Internationalisation at the University of Rostock – All Good Things Come in Threes

The University of Rostock's internationalisation efforts have been targeted in the three areas of "Research", "Study and Teaching" as well as the service "Internationalisation at Home".

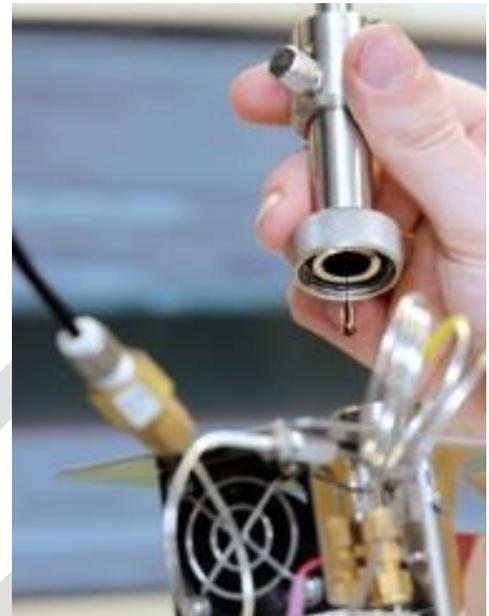
Figure 1: Objectives and measures of internationalisation in the areas of I. Research, II. Academic Excellence and Teaching, III. Organisation and "Internationalisation at Home"



Internationalisation can only be strengthened through commitment and enthusiasm at all working levels. In addition to the typically targeted areas of research and teaching, "Internationalisation at Home" will also be given special importance, since the university is aiming to not only enhance internationalisation facilities and service but also to attract international scientists, scholars and non-academic staff so that the university's international profile will be taken for granted. This includes international events at the Rostock International House, including student events, language and cultural training, staff training, workshops and international conferences.

Focus on Research

World-class research is not feasible without international cooperation and networks, and so numerous collaborations with research facilities around the world are maintained at the University of Rostock. The overall goal is to strengthen these contacts, so the university's research profile – as one of the three fundamental areas of focus – will become more visible internationally. A focus must be made on excellent research groups, but also on the attractiveness of the University of Rostock for young international scientists (through English-language graduate programs). In this sense, very rewarding research relations are singled out and can be intensified for maximum results for both the University of Rostock and the relevant international partners. Further support of research activities (particularly greater participation in European Union research programs) is also of utmost importance.



Focus on Academic Excellence and Teaching

Teaching will become more attractive through internationalisation by promoting the mobility of students and teachers and an alternative design of programs, e.g., through the implementation of English-language teaching, an intensification in international summer schools or Graduate Colleges – for both national and international applicants. International exchange is not an end in itself, but is culturally inspired and should result in qualitatively-increased knowledge production. A wide range for the promotion of language-learning for German students and course-related German courses for international students and the provision of network services offers additional support for mutually profitable exchanges. The attractiveness of the University of Rostock for international students also depends on their academic success from which not only professional, but particularly language and intercultural competence will be determined. Therefore, the university seeks to expand the preparatory measures required that secure linguistic and intercultural study skills. The University of Rostock, therefore, sees the internationalisation of teaching and learning as one of the most essential tasks.



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“Having a good proportion of international students offers all of our students the opportunity to learn more about the world.” (University of Edinburgh Pamphlet)

Focus on Internationalisation at Home

Research and academic excellence should not be the sole focus of the internationalisation process, but surrounding conditions should be adapted to a constantly changing environment. A positive attitude among the staff toward the university's internationalisation efforts is therefore as important as the implementation of concrete measures. The "Internationalisation at Home" initiative should therefore not be understood as a supplementary function, but as a fundamental basis. In this sense, internationalisation efforts can be seen as a logical development of an ongoing process.

Targeted measures would, among other things, further the expansion of a culture of hospitality. While specialised personnel would assume responsibility in establishing a Welcome Center as a service facility, this facility is also significantly influenced by other factors, such as linguistic and intercultural competence of university employees. A wide range of services for international students (such as the Tandem / Buddy programs) alleviates some of the stress of arrival in Rostock and may also contribute to the university's overall appeal.

The creation of an Rostock International House (RIH) gives the internationality of the University of Rostock a face, which is further enhanced by events such as lectures, workshops and conferences, summer schools, study and research programs. While an internationally oriented development agency for internationalisation could contribute to internationalisation, the university must strive to recruit internationally recognised researchers and international staff for administrative positions.

A marketing strategy is certainly part of the internationalisation process that will establish the University of Rostock's success-oriented public relations plan for international purposes and will be supported by corresponding fundraising activities. These include the optimisation of the English-language or multilingual offers on the university website, targeted, relevant and up-to-date printed material as well as hosting international fairs and conferences.



Maxim of Feasibility

All efforts of internationalisation at the University of Rostock are subject to the maxim of feasibility, which means that they must be subject to continuous evaluation and adaptation to the widest possible acceptance among the members of the University of Rostock and the greatest possible efficiency of achievement, which will ultimately be measured with respect to their success. For those involved in internationalisation, incentives and tools must be created to help overcome the inevitable obstacles in this process. Close interaction between faculty and university administration in the form of an ongoing dialogue, also in terms of quality assurance is essential. Valuable input can come from either side, yet once the implementation is carried out, as appropriate, either by the faculties themselves or by the university administration, the university administration will support innovation in research and teaching in the best possible manner. This dialogue can help the University of Rostock's internationalisation project become a success, and make our university a "global player."

