Internationalisation Strategy of Kempten University of Applied Sciences (HKE)

The University’s Governing Board proposes several strategic targets to internationalise Kempten University. These targets are meant to be a guideline for developing an internationalisation strategy according to the needs and requirements of the individual faculties. Internationalisation is strongly based on personal contacts between professors at Kempten University and its partner universities abroad. First and foremost the faculties are challenged to elaborate faculty-related internationalisation concepts, which will then be integrated in an overall strategy for Kempten University. Internationalisation is a cross-sectional task for the systematic promotion of international projects as well as encounters between different cultures. The internationalisation process requires the necessary framework of staff, material and financial resources to be identified and made available.

Preamble

Kempten University of Applied Sciences is an international university. Internationalisation is considered a cross-sectional task which affects all areas of teaching, further education, applied research and the university administration. Our vision is to pursue sustainable international orientation based on values such as open-mindedness, tolerance and respect. Our goal is to offer education in an international context and provide international experience for students, lecturers and employees of Kempten University alike.

To achieve this goal, the following guidelines are defined which all players of the University are to adhere to.

1. Extend practice-orientation in an international context

   In view of the globalisation of the economy, a modern university of applied sciences must integrate the future demands caused by increasingly international environment in their practice-oriented teaching and research. On the one hand, this must affect the contents of teaching and research by integrating international scientific knowledge and problems to a point where specific intercultural teaching modules and projects are being developed. On the other hand, this international work must mirror itself in the "university routine", e. g. by offering international events and meetings in regular intervals, as well as in the way the university is perceived by the public.

2. Preparing students for internationalisation

   Kempten University provides academic training for experts and executives, mainly for regional companies. Doing so, it takes into consideration the demands of business and industry for high-quality, practice-oriented teaching and imparts specialist knowledge as well as social and personal competences.
Due to the globalisation of the economy international and intercultural competences are gaining importance for companies in our region, especially so since many of them are highly export-oriented. Such competencies can be imparted at Kempten only to a limited extent. Therefore the conditions for spending academic semesters or work placements abroad must be optimised, and incentives must be provided for students to spend study periods abroad. The directives set by the ministries of education within the Bologna process call for a share of semester stays abroad of 20 per cent. Additional to the improvement of the number and quality of language courses offered, the university strives for an enhancement of area studies of the target countries and their cultural peculiarities in order to better prepare students for study-abroad stays.

3. Attract more international students

In the technology area in particular many entrepreneurs are complaining about a shortage of qualified labour which, due to the demographical development, cannot be balanced out in the medium and long term by German junior staff. Moreover, the decrease in the number of secondary school graduates will lead to a reduction in student numbers. Therefore Kempten University must strengthen international recruitment and extend its “hochschule dual international” activities which concern international dual studies programmes. In addition, a higher share of international students will enhance Kempten University’s international profile. International organisations call for a share of 5 % degree seeking students with foreign university entrance qualification. Taking this into account an additional offer and integration of 30 ECTS-credits of lectures, seminars or workshops taught in English language in both the regular study plans of each faculty and on a central level alike is to be achieved. The Governing Board also supports the establishment and maintenance of links between domestic students, lecturers and scientists with their counterparts abroad.

4. Enhance and support exchange of teaching staff

An international profile can also be developed by attracting international lecturers to teach at Kempten University and integrating foreign scientific staff in research projects. This will help to improve language competences and make domestic students and staff gain international scientific knowledge. The Universities of Applied Sciences of Bavaria aim at welcoming at least one foreign lecturer per semester. To reach this aim, incentives must be provided for the local teaching staff to motivate them to spend teaching stays abroad. General approaches and measures destined to increase teaching staff mobility and enhance international academic exchange shall be fostered as well.

5. Increase participation in international research and development

In view of issues of future research areas, such as energy, the environment, mobility, health and nutrition gaining more global importance, research and development projects will increasingly be carried out on an international level and in conjunction with international partners. This will mainly affect projects
carried out within EU support programmes. Among these are international congresses, conferences and workshops. Located close to the borders with Austria and Switzerland, Kempten University can also increase its participation in the Interreg programmes. In any case, Kempten University must develop concepts to improve and further develop its internal conditions to provide incentives for teaching staff. Cooperative doctoral programmes with foreign universities must be supported, too.

6. Strengthen and incorporate international structures

The president of Kempten University of Applied Sciences leads the way for the initiative for developing internationalisation processes and sets the framework concerning targets and profile of internationalisation.

The International Office centrally administers and coordinates all international affairs. Its core tasks comprise particularly information and advice for students on mobility abroad, outgoing and incoming alike.

As regards to the academic contents, the faculties and research centres - represented by their international relations coordinators - decide on their international affairs strategy themselves. This includes for instance building up faculty-related university cooperation with international partners.

Cross-university projects are academically borne by the so-called “Project Group International (PI)”. An interdisciplinary group of lecturers, the PI has the task to initiate, support and carry out international interdisciplinary projects as well as measures of meeting and exchange between international teaching staff.

All these international players collaborate in solid communication and trust. Mutual information and transparency will help to put into practice the above-mentioned guidelines.

Within the framework of these guidelines the individual Faculties develop internationalisation strategies of their own. Their emphasis shall be adapted to students’ and teaching staff’s needs and the faculty’s requirements.

To achieve the internationalisation targets, measures of emphasis are defined which will have preference and should be implemented within a set period of time. These will be listed in a separate catalogue of measures.

The progress of internationalisation is to be documented by indicators apt to depict the implementation and achievement of the targets. The Governing Board offers an internationalisation budget. At least one strategic meeting (internationalisation round-table) chaired by the university president is to be held per semester.

In 2015, the implementation of these guidelines for internationalisation will be monitored on the basis of above-mentioned indicators mentioned and adapted to the university’s development, if necessary.

Prof. Dr. Robert F. Schmidt, President
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