

STRATEGY FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION "HSWT GOES INTERNATIONAL 2.0"

Against the background of advancing globalization, the importance of internationalization at the HSWT is also steadily increasing. Internationalization is an urgent and weighty cross-sectional task and thus a central building block in the profile development of the university.

The Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences has already made considerable efforts towards internationalization in the past. For example, ambitious internationalization goals were set in the target agreements with the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts. Internationalization was also included in strategic planning as part of the preparation of the university development plan. Here, strengths and weaknesses were analyzed and initial strategic goals and measures were formulated.

The present strategy HSWT goes international 2.0 is based on the guiding principle "Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences is becoming more international" and on four strategic sub-goals:

(1) Strengthening international competencies of students

The qualification of students for the increasingly globalized labor market falls within the core mission - academic qualification with a strong application focus - of the HSWT. This includes qualification for the German labor market - in which international experience is increasingly required - as well as for international markets in which the excellent German education is recognized and utilized. In this context, the life sciences represented at HSWT are typically linked to knowledge and development on the local to global scale. The focus of the qualification must be on the subject-specific content and its adaptation to the international context. This complex will be particularly effective if language skills and intercultural competencies are taught in parallel.

In order to achieve this goal, the HSWT offers its students a wide range of language courses, opportunities for international study and internships, participation in support programs (e.g. ERASMUS or DAAD programs), study programs with double degrees, as well as active cooperation with educational institutions worldwide, and is continuously expanding this offer. In addition, an internship database has been developed in recent years and is continuously updated. In the future, further new university cooperations are to be established, the recognition of academic achievements abroad is to be facilitated, and more English-language courses are to be offered as preparation for a stay abroad or for "internationalization at home".

(2) Welcome culture promotes international exchange

The stay of international students, teachers and researchers enriches the university with new ideas and perspectives. This is another basic building block of internationalization and supports the further development and profiling of the university's own position. International guests promote the exchange in teaching, research and knowledge transfer with their home institutions through the change of perspective. At the same time, the stay of international students and teachers also requires linguistic, cultural and organizational competencies of all university employees in order to ensure a smooth process. This is all the more serious when incoming students arrive from crisis areas (such as Syria or Ukraine).

A university-wide welcoming culture includes, among other things, improved support and the development of linguistic and intercultural competencies of all university employees as well as a stronger integration of visiting professors and international students in teaching without obstacles of a bureaucratic, linguistic or cultural nature. With the expansion of English-language courses and through an international focus in the selection of teaching staff, their language competence should also be ensured.

In addition, English-language modules are increasingly being integrated into existing curricula, e.g. via project work and elective subjects. By expanding English-language study programs, HSWT is creating the conditions to attract more international students. Further offers include the expansion of the Career Service International for international students in English as well as the support of foreign students in the search for accommodation through information, search, placement. In addition, visibility abroad is ensured through bilingual film and information material, participation in international study information fairs and the publication of the English-translated homepage.

(3) Increasing the international mobility of university staff

On the one hand, the stay of particularly suitable personnel from teaching, research and administration secures the personnel link with partner institutions and thus promotes established trusting cooperations or serves to establish new contacts. On the other hand, a stay abroad also changes the view of one's own position through a change of perspective. Furthermore, stays abroad promote intercultural and linguistic competencies, are thus an essential part of the strategy and are to be supported by the university.

The implementation is to take place, among other things, through the creation of an incentive system for university employees, for example through relief hours, performance bonuses and staff development measures (post-Corona). Financial support for the stays will be provided by the Erasmus+ program and other project funds for higher-level interests of the HSWT. Furthermore, the participation in international network meetings is to be used increasingly to maintain contacts and to establish new cooperations.

(4) Expansion of international structures

Structures at the HSWT and in networks with partners set the framework for activities in internationalization. Examples are large, overarching networks and smaller subject-specific networks as well as internally provided structures, because through these the potential of the HSWT is strengthened and made (more) known. Both in the context of increasing visibility on the international stage and with regard to sharpening and further developing the profile of the HSWT, participation in such networks has a high priority. A central role is played by the Center for International Affairs, which bundles all international activities. Here, the Language Center, International Office (as IFC including Career Service and scholarship matters) as well as the HSWT International School are brought together under one roof. Within the framework of internationalization measures, there is close cooperation with the Center for Research and Knowledge Transfer (ZFW), the Center for Studies and Didactics (ZSD) and the Center for Continuing Education (ZW).

Participation and involvement in international networks and initiatives contributes on the one hand to increasing the visibility of the HSWT on the international stage and on the other hand to sharpening the international profile of the HSWT. An increased visibility of the international activities is to be created additionally by English-language information material and the promotion of English-language scientific publications. In addition to ongoing measures such as fundraising (international projects) and regular information about international affairs of the HSWT through the newsletter of the IFC, the established alumni network should be made attractive and known to international alumni in the future.

The present further developed strategy of the Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences forms the framework for the expansion of activities in internationalization. The strategy understands internationalization as a cross-sectional task that will be particularly successful if resources are bundled. The university thus faces the challenges, also after the worldwide pandemic, and assumes responsibility in the further development of the European Higher Education and Research Area as well as beyond.