

The internationalisation strategy of the University of Salzburg 2019-21

Setting the scene - the University of Salzburg

Situated in the heart of Europe, Salzburg offers easy access to neighbouring countries and to some of Austria's most beautiful alpine national parks. It is also a culturally vibrant city, home to world-famous performing arts and music festivals. Operating in this setting, the University of Salzburg offers international students and scholars a broad and unique range of experiences.

Most of the University's twenty sites are within walking distance of each other, and are located in Salzburg's medieval historical centre - listed as world heritage by the UNESCO - or in purpose-built research and teaching facilities nearby.

Salzburg is one of the safest cities in the world, and the University's excellent student-to-staff ratio means students also enjoy a supportive environment and learning culture.

The largest higher education institution in the Federal State of Salzburg, the University of Salzburg is central to the region's scientific, economic and cultural life. More than 50% of academic staff and approximately 38% of the University's students come from international backgrounds.

The proximity of the mountains, the University's great sports facilities and the cultural events staged in the city combine to offer an outstanding quality of life.

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The scope of the strategy

- The internationalisation strategy of the University of Salzburg 2019-21 concentrates on the University's relationships and activities with international partners and is open to new initiatives and partnerships. On top of that, it fosters internationalisation at home, and is based on the strengths of the various departments and scientific centres, their scholars and students, and on existing partnerships.
- Initial international relationships focused on student and staff mobility. The scope of this strategy goes beyond this and includes collaborative research, joint academic programme design and delivery, innovation and entrepreneurship, including collaboration with industry.
- The overall objectives of the strategy originate from the current development plan of the University for the period 2019-24 (Entwicklungsplan der Paris-Lodron Universität). Its implementation will be monitored through the universities' performance agreement (Leistungsvereinbarung) by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, beginning on 1 January 2019.

Overall objectives

- Strengthening the University of Salzburg as a globally acting research and teaching hub through international collaboration
- Enhancing the overall quality of education at the University of Salzburg through internationalisation
- The University of Salzburg is committed to an EU-wide common research policy, and its activities therefore contribute to the further development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research and Innovation Area (ERIA).
- International profiling of the University of Salzburg following Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

Strategic partner regions

- Traditionally, the University of Salzburg has strong ties to other universities in Europe with a focus on Central and South-East European countries.
- Due to its internationally-oriented faculty members, the University of Salzburg has developed long-standing collaboration with outstanding institutions beyond Europe, including universities in Australia, North America, China, Russia and Central Asia.

Moreover, the University of Salzburg fosters capacity building in higher education in developing and newly industrialized countries through collaborative research and teaching activities, in particular through EU and other international projects that modernize, internationalize and increase access to higher education around the world.

Ownership and driving force

- The international strategy is owned the University of Salzburg, approved by the Rectorate of the University and led by the Vice Rector for International Relations and Communication.
- The identification of specific goals and strategic projects relates to the overall development plan (Entwicklungsplan der Paris-Lodron Universität 2019-2024). The implementation of strategic projects requires discussion and implementation by internationalisation working groups.

Specific goal: development of strategic partnerships

- The development of strategic partnerships focuses on the coordination of joint educational and research interests with international partners and the identification and funding of joint projects.
- Unlike traditional university partnerships, a strategic partnership can go beyond university collaboration and might include NGOs, companies, foundations or NPOs. Each strategic partnership needs to be underpinned by a joint work programme. Its implementation and KPIs are monitored by the participating parties.
- Case by case, strategic partnerships need to foster joint teaching and/or research programme development and include student and/or teacher mobility between partners. Innovative mobility mechanisms must be fostered and could include mobility windows or integrated return mechanism for outgoing students.

Current strategic partnership portfolio

- Leading universities are focusing their partnership portfolios on a smaller number of key institutional relationships for more intensive cooperation, often based on co-financed collaborative research projects, faculty and student mobility and joint programmes.
- The University of Salzburg is proud to have Salzburg Global Seminar (SGS) as a strategic international partner. A newly established cooperation agreement with SGS includes the Salzburg Centre for European Union Studies, the Department for Geoinformatics Z_GIS and the Office for International Relations of the University of Salzburg and focuses on cooperation between international research programmes. SGS supports the University in its outreach to potential partners worldwide as well as in joint partnership and funding proposals.
- The Russia Centre based at the University of Salzburg collaborates with the Russkiy Mir foundation. It develops and implements outreach projects of the University of Salzburg in schools and among the general public, including Russian language courses. It also provides Russian cultural databases, mediatheks and library services.
- Among the core services of the Chinese Studies Centre of the University of Salzburg are to offer cultural and language teaching as well as cultural briefing and programmes for University departments and centres, NGOs and companies. It is currently developing a Confucius Institute in Salzburg together with Hanban as the executive organ of the Chinese Language Council International authorised by the Chinese Ministry of Education.

Internationalisation funding

The University of Salzburg is committed to international relations. It therefore sees funds raised and money spent on international relations, including on strategic projects, as investment.

Strategic projects

The development plan (Entwicklungsplan der Paris Lodron Universität 2019-2024) indicates a list of ongoing and future strategic internationalisation targets and projects (see following). The Internationalisation Strategy outlines an internationalisation framework including an internal mechanism within the University to monitor the implementation of each target and project. Targets and projects include:

- monitoring the international elements of existing PLUS Doctorate Schools, Doctorate Kollegs and other doctorate programmes;
- further development of administrative and financial support mechanisms for internationalization, focusing on joint project and programme development with international partners
- development of an international awareness raising mechanism, including higher education ranking management training;
- development of an incentive mechanism for successfully raised funds and internationally recognised academic output
- development of joint internationalisation projects with the university conference Salzburg (Salzburger Hochschulkonferenz), Salzburg Agentur and Salzburg's provincial development agency ITG focusing on the joint promotion of Salzburg as a location for higher education
- further development of the Welcome and Dual Career Services for incoming academics and their partners and families;
- further engagement in the local working group 'Internationalität und Europa' run by the city of Salzburg;
- further development of University of Salzburg internal support mechanisms that foster brain circulation versus brain gain/drain;
- strategic development of joint studies, joint degree or double degree programmes with international project partners;
- development of network internationalisation in teacher training in close cooperation with the Salzburg University of Education Stefan Zweig;
- further implementation of mobility windows in existing study programmes;
- further development of study programmes taught in English;
- enhancing international lifelong learning programmes through university courses (Universitätslehrgänge)
- further development of the University of Salzburg student welcome service, in particular the buddy system in cooperation with the Austrian student union ÖH;
- further development of incentives for job shadowing, observation periods or to attend specific training courses abroad, both for academic and administrative staff
- increasing incentives for students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds to study abroad and introducing international standards of widening participation at PLUS, including quality assurance mechanisms.

Increasing visibility: International awards and clubs

Internationalising HE is a transformative and continual process of sector-wide concern. Learning, teaching and research, and the interconnections between them are centrally important.

Promoting a high-quality, equitable and global learning experience can help prepare graduates to live in and contribute responsibly to a globally interconnected society.

In order to increase the visibility of international students, scholars, projects and programmes, the University of Salzburg plans

- to award the title of 'light house project' to projects with more structured and systematic incoming and outgoing mobility (e.g. mobility windows) or comparable innovative mechanisms integrated in the overall joint teaching or research programmes;
- to further promote the International Scientific Award for postgraduate scholars and to introduce an International Graduate Award,
- to further develop the international outreach of the Alumni club of international students @ Salzburg, and
- to foster a credited student mobility licence incentive mechanism for outgoing students

Monitoring Internationalisation and key performance indicators (KPIs)

Evaluation of current developments and the aforementioned activities and objectives will be carried out yearly to monitor progress and to pinpoint areas for improvement. The monitoring system is an important element of the evidence-based management system of the University of Salzburg. The existing instruments for measuring institutional internationalization performance focus on student outgoing and incoming mobility. However, times are changing and improved KPIs are needed that focus on quality rather than simple quantity, and on pre-defined internationalisation goals.

The University of Salzburg will therefore set itself new goals for internationalisation. Existing goals will be submitted to annual reflection and revised strategies drawn up of how to achieve these goals.

The pre-definition of targets and determining how the results are to be used are to be developed jointly with and carried through by all the parties concerned.