



Hochschule Neu-Ulm
University of Applied Sciences

Internationalisation Strategy Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences

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Background and opening remarks

With the Internationalisation Strategy, Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences (HNU) presents for the first time a university-wide, teaching-related development concept in the field of internationalisation. Through its elaboration and resolution, this concept forms the central basis for the orientation and the design of internationalisation measures in teaching.

In addition to the ongoing internationalisation activities, the following documents primarily served as orientation guidelines and analysis of needs for the development of the strategy:

- The organisational analysis of the International Office by HIS-RES in 2019 provides comprehensive findings on the status and requirements for the development of internationalisation at the HNU from an external perspective.
- With the Higher Education Development Plan (HEP) 2025, specific and partly very concrete development goals are defined for internationalisation, integrated into the overall planning of the HNU.
- International Report 2018-2020 (Status Quo)
- Internationalisation Report 2013-2018 (Partnership Model, p. 56)
- Erasmus Policy Statement 2021-2027
- Erasmus Charter (ECHE) 2021-2027: Commitments for the implementation of Erasmus+
- HRK Audit 2013 Results Report
- Position paper "Internationalisation at the HNU" by President Feser in January 2022
- Internationalisation Strategy FHNU by Prof. Wagemann 2007
- Target Agreements with the Bavarian State Ministry of Sciences and the Arts 2019-2022
- University Contract 2023-2027 (field of action "Internationalisation")

On this basis, the following initial conditions and basic beliefs of the internationalisation strategy were identified, which are characteristic of both its development process and its objectives:

Internationalisation has an impact

The international activities of Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences serve to achieve its primary organisational goals and improve the quality of teaching, research, transfer and administration. In terms of these interdisciplinary functions, the objectives of the internationalisation strategy address all of these dimensions of performance, which means that interfaces with other strategies and guiding documents of the university must be consistently taken into account.

Internationalisation provides momentum

The internationalisation activities of Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences initiate independent developments. For example, international partnerships can be used to create new cross-references between research and teaching or to better illuminate the global dimension of sustainability issues. This potential can be utilised to a greater extent in future with the objectives of the internationalisation strategy.

Internationalisation is a cross-disciplinary task

The departments at Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences show varying degrees of internationalisation. The internationalisation strategy therefore enables the expansion of internationalisation across the board as well as profile development at the top. In this way, faculties and all other institutions of the university can determine the speed and focus of their own development in areas that are purely their own responsibility.

Why is internationalisation important for the HNU?

Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences (HNU) is an international business school for innovation, sustainable entrepreneurship and digital transformation. It educates internationally experienced, solution-orientated thinking and responsibly acting shapers of the future.

The internationalisation of higher education not only includes exchange programmes for students, lecturers, academics and staff, but also internal processes such as the recruitment and development of international students, the internationalisation of the curriculum and the establishment and maintenance of international partnerships.

In cooperation with industry, the university prepares students enrolled in Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes to tackle professional challenges in a regional and global context. Doctoral students also work together with international researchers from HNU's partner universities.

In addition to academic knowledge, we impart practical skills and methodological expertise. Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences places particular emphasis on personal development and an international orientation in all study stages. In this context, the internationalisation of higher education is no longer seen merely as a goal, but as an effective means of improving the quality of education.

The idea behind internationalisation in general is, in addition to the original and recently renewed goal of promoting international understanding, the individual promotion of international competence. For students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff, this includes promoting cultural sensitivity and respect for others, engaging with other cultures and expanding methodological and foreign language skills, personal development and openness to mobility.

Strategic goals at a glance

In a global market, the development of international skills is essential for young academics. Due to the high export orientation of many regional companies, there is a global labour market in the region. Companies expect graduates to be internationally orientated and to have internationally relevant skills. To this end, an internationally orientated university provides an important foundation for open-minded personal development and the willingness and ability to work in a global economic and business environment.

Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences maintains a wide range of international contacts and co-operations. The aim of this internationalisation strategy is to formulate these into a cross-faculty concept that is accepted by all those involved.

This is done with a particular focus on allowing for heterogeneity and diversity of commitment and identifying opportunities for support. In this context, heterogeneity refers to the different orientations and demands of the departments and academic institutions themselves as well as to the diversity and motivation of the individual stakeholders to further spread the idea of the university's international orientation. In addition to our partner universities and partner companies, this includes teaching staff, researchers, students and administrative staff.

The foundation of the internationalisation strategy is the promotion of international competence under the theme "Living global diversity". For students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff it is to varying degrees essentially made up of the following components:

- Understanding for other cultures
- International employability
- International visibility of the HNU

We promote these goals through appropriate measures. Internationality is an essential element of our university culture.

Strategic concept

HNU's internationalisation strategy emphasises three strategic goals.

Strategic goal 1: Intercultural understanding

The international activities of the HNU are intended to support the members of the university in participating actively and responsibly in a liberal, democratic and globally orientated society. As a result, those involved will be able to build and shape constructive relationships with and between people of different cultural backgrounds and beliefs. With this aim, international understanding is taken into account, in the spirit of the original idea of exchange programmes between European universities, which led to the founding of the Erasmus+ programme 35 years ago. Lively and varied international activities at various levels contribute to reducing global tensions and conflicts.

Strategic goal 2: International employability of graduates

The consistently international orientation of the HNU enables our domestic and international students of all disciplines to position themselves successfully and effectively on the regional, national and international labour market.

Strategic goal 3: International visibility of the HNU

The HNU is a competent institution and a valued player in the eyes of other academic institutions, relevant political bodies, stakeholders in civil society and business partners in the region. Increased visibility and attractiveness will lead to an increase in student numbers in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

Implementation of the strategy

Based on the three strategic goals, their status quo was initially assessed.

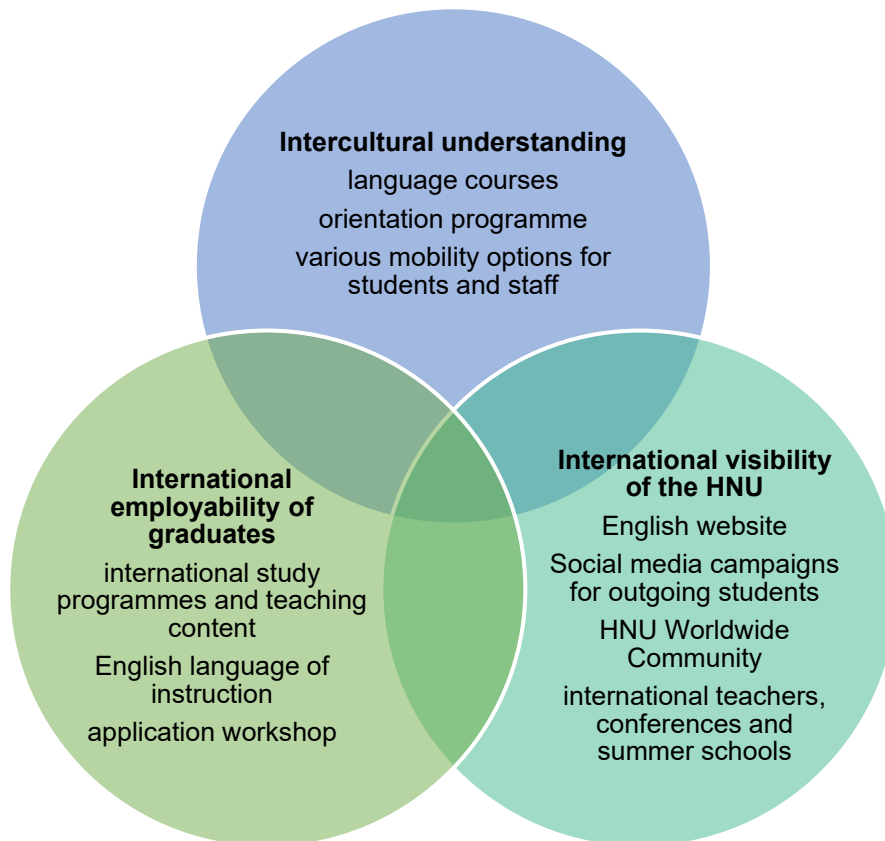


Fig.: HNU's internationalisation activities with examples for the period 2018-2022

Building on this, the application of the Blue Ocean Strategy in an adapted form enables the classification of future measures in the following categories

- Intensify
- New activity

The implementation of this approach enables the HNU to achieve sustainable and effective internationalisation and profile building in teaching.

Brief description of the relevant student target groups

International exchange students are students who usually study at the HNU for one or sometimes two semesters. They usually come from international partner universities with which an agreement on student exchange has been concluded. Some exchange students are also so-called "freemovers"; they come from universities abroad with which there is no corresponding cooperation agreement. The exchange students take courses at the HNU and receive a transcript of records at the end of their stay, but they do not receive a degree from the the HNU. This group of students is usually referred to as "**incomings**" in short.

In addition, there are **international double-degree students** at the HNU who, like exchange students, are nominated by their home university at the HNU at an early stage and are thus included in the programme for exchange students. They spend two semesters at the HNU and receive a degree from the HNU at the end of their studies.

HNU students who spend a period of their studies abroad are referred to as "**outgoings**". In some degree programmes, these students also have the option of acquiring an international double degree.

International degree-seeking students are students with a foreign university entrance qualification who complete a full degree programme at the HNU.

Strategic goal 1: Intercultural understanding

The international partnerships form the institutional foundation and the operational backbone of the internationality of the HNU with the aim of intercultural understanding. They enable the further development of the institution and its individual members in a variety of subject areas and regions. The aim is to expand and differentiate thematically high-quality and institutionally stable partnerships that are characterised by trusting cooperation between many stakeholders on an equal basis and the joint shaping of research, teaching and transfer.

Current activities of the HNU - Status Quo

For international exchange students:

- The HNU offers German language courses at beginners' level (A1) and, if there is sufficient demand, up to level B1, as well as an intensive language course during the orientation phase before the start of lectures.
- An intensive orientation programme lasting two to three weeks takes place at the beginning of the semester. There is networking with German buddies, as well as information events about studying at the HNU and the formalities in Germany, as well as cultural excursions and city tours.
- Exchange students can choose courses flexibly and from all academic departments.
- A detailed welcome brochure and a special information package on the website and in an HNU eLearning course provide the target group with comprehensive information on all important aspects of their studies and their stay in Neu-Ulm.

For international degree-seeking students:

- A detailed welcome brochure and a special information package on the website and in an HNU eLearning course provide the target group with comprehensive information on all important aspects of their studies and their stay in Neu-Ulm.
- At the beginning of the semester, in addition to the academic introductory events in the degree programmes, there is a special information event on formalities in Germany.
- International degree-seeking students may participate in the German language courses for international exchange students, provided there is capacity.
- From funds provided by the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts (StMWK) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), scholarships are awarded to provide financial support to students in need.
- Every year, the DAAD Prize is awarded to an outstanding international student.

For all students:

- Studying at the HNU includes comprehensive language training with English as a compulsory language in almost all degree programmes. The Language Centre also offers English, Spanish, French, Italian, Japanese and Chinese as optional (compulsory) subjects for all students, so that they can either improve their language skills or learn another language.
- Excursions abroad are very popular and are being offered by all faculties, the Centre for Postgraduate and Professional Studies and the Language Centre. In 2018-2020, a total of 296 students took part in 25 excursions to 16 countries.
- Stays abroad are advertised extensively from the beginning of the studies in order to show students both the variety of possibilities and the feasibility. To this end, a comprehensive range of information has been designed on the website and in eLearning. Students can find out about all aspects of a stay abroad at regular information events, and recordings allow them to view this information again at any time and from any location. Experience reports from students who have spent time abroad complete the information provided.

For staff:

- Staff mobility includes the mobility of outgoing and incoming lecturers, researchers and administrative staff. In 2018-2020, a total of 153 international guests from 27 countries visited the HNU (e.g. as participants in the International Teacher Exchange Week 2018 and the International Conference on Economics, Management and Technology 2019). HNU staff have travelled abroad a total of 127 times to 34 countries; particularly frequent reasons for international mobility were for further education and training purposes and participation in international conferences. Teaching at partner universities was also a popular reason. In addition, numerous delegation visits by larger and smaller groups to or from partners abroad took place, which served to strengthen cooperation and intensify collaboration.

Intensify

- Further Erasmus+ partnerships with partner universities in partner countries outside of Europe should be initiated.
- Relevant information on websites, in guidelines and documents is consistently provided in English as well.

For all students:

- The HNU intends to continuously include excursions abroad in the teaching programme and to communicate them internally and externally with detailed reports in the appropriate channels afterwards.
- Internationalisation@home initiatives are being intensified (e.g. through English-language courses, international lecturers and teaching content, international students, language courses, language tandem, cultural evenings).

For international students:

- The HNU strives to offer German language courses for international students from all faculties in order to facilitate access to the German labour market.
- The language tandem should be revitalised, in particular a modern digital networking option should be examined.
- The English course offer for international exchange students should be increased in a demand-orientated manner and communicated at an early stage. The new internship programme "Founders Kitchen" should be established.
- The HNU will offer a course on culture and history in Germany for international Bachelor's and Master's students from all faculties who want to know more about German history. It will help to raise awareness of Germany, its culture and its traditions.
- The HNU intends to organise regular educational excursions for international students in the region of Ulm and Bavaria-Swabia via the faculties in order to raise their cultural awareness of the region.
- A sufficient number of dormitory rooms and accommodation should be permanently available for international students.
- The HNU will expand its services for international degree-seeking students. In addition to the academic programme, the provision of information, integration and support services will also be enhanced. The establishment of a "Welcome Centre" is planned, which will take on the following tasks:
 - Expanding and optimising the information on hand
 - Provision of orientation options at the HNU, in the region and in Germany
 - Offers for integration and networking
 - Introduction of a buddy system
 - Encouraging involvement in the student council

For staff:

- All staff should be encouraged and supported to be internationally mobile in order to gain international work experience and/or improve their language skills.
- The "Welcome Centre" described above is also intended to be a point of contact for international guests in teaching, research and administration and to support them in their orientation at the HNU and in the region.

New activities

- Short-term mobilities: The offer for international students and academic staff will be expanded through the introduction of or participation in short-term, flexible mobility options such as International Teaching Weeks or summer schools for our Master's and Bachelor's programmes. Short formats such as the "Blended Intensive Programmes" (BIP) as part of the Erasmus+ programme should serve as best practice here. These short-term mobility options should be offered via the faculties within their curriculum.
- HNU lecturers should network with international partners in new formats, e.g. design and implement joint transnational courses, for example as part of "Collaborative Online International Learning" (COIL) or "Blended Intensive Programmes" (BIP).
- An international certificate for staff should be introduced in order to emphasise and promote the importance of intercultural competence, foreign language skills and work-related stays abroad.

Strategic goal 2: International employability of graduates

Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences is committed to academic education in which basic scientific principles and the needs of the labour market are given equal consideration. Our own understanding of employability corresponds to the strategic guidelines for teaching and studies and is applied to all fields of activity and target groups of internationalisation. This is done with the understanding that international and intercultural competences facilitate access to complex and dynamic professional activities and promote professional development.

Current activities of the HNU - Status Quo

For all students:

- The HNU offers an application workshop with the aim of preparing an internationally competitive CV, cover letter and successful interview.
- The HNU offers an increasing number of international Master's degree programmes. These are particularly attractive to students from Germany and abroad due to their content and the English language of instruction.
- There exist two international PhD programmes: with Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia and University of Castilla - La Mancha, Spain.
- An international major ("Cross-Border Competences", 15 ECTS) has been introduced in some degree programmes, which makes it easier for students to have credits from abroad recognised.
- The HNU has numerous agreements with international partner universities on student exchange; in addition to semesters abroad, internships and final theses abroad are also supported administratively and financially.
- The HNU runs several double degree programmes. In addition to the Finnish partner university Oulu University of Applied Sciences, this includes the D'Annunzio University of Chieti - Pescara.

For international students:

- In cooperation with the Ulm Chamber of Industry and Commerce, regional companies, Ulm University and Ulm University of Applied Sciences, the HNU is involved in the organisation and implementation of the "Make it in Ulm" job fair for international students.

Intensify

For all students:

- Double-degree programmes should be continuously communicated, evaluated and recalibrated.
- An international certificate should be introduced for HNU students in order to emphasise and honour the great importance of international experience, foreign language skills, intercultural competence and international commitment (e.g. as a buddy for international students).

For international students:

- Depending on the need for internationalisation in the faculties, the number of courses taught in English in the Bachelor's and Master's programmes will be gradually expanded.
- Courses on academic standards and intercultural communication should be established.

For outgoing students:

- An expansion of the recognition database is planned, as is the digitalisation of the recognition processes. The aim is to make the recognition of academic credits from abroad transparent and to optimise processes.

New activities

For international students:

- As described above, a "Welcome Centre" should be introduced and established. In addition to orientation and integration, this centre will also provide support on career issues. In coordination with the existing Career Service, application training should be carried out and information on applying for jobs and the regional labour market should be provided for this target group.

Strategic goal 3: International visibility of the HNU

The perception of Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences as an international business school by its members themselves supports the spread of internationality within the organisation. At the same time, the visibility of Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences in its international environment increases its participation in European and global discourses, projects and the competition for reputation and resources. In this way, international visibility also acts as an echo and amplifier of the other strategic goals.

Current activities of the HNU - Status Quo

- International teaching assignments are incorporated into the regular studies on a case-by-case basis.
- The HNU organises international guest lectures and workshops for young academics with international lecturers, in which all students can participate.
- The HNU organises international conferences and workshops, e.g. "2nd International Conference on Economics, Management and Technology IEMT 2019".
- The HNU shares testimonials and real stories about outgoing students' experiences abroad via social media. The HNU Worldwide Community was introduced on the website as an inspiration and example of international experiences.
- The HNU website is clearly laid out and available in English throughout, including an English-language description of the subject content of the degree programmes.
- The HNU organises summer schools, such as "Entrepreneurship for Developing Countries 2022".

Intensify

- All units of the HNU, i.e. not only faculties but also general services, will ensure that information is also provided in English when communicating with students and lecturers.
- The HNU plans to communicate testimonials from international students on appropriate online channels in order to authentically promote the HNU in this way.
- The HNU will increasingly organise international conferences and workshops.
- Further international doctoral programmes are planned.
- The HNU will regularly update and expand its cooperation with international companies, especially with strategic corporate partners, for internships abroad and final theses.
- Communication about international activities is to be intensified both internally and externally.

New activities

- The HNU aims to consolidate summer and winter schools, which are open to all students from partner universities as certificate courses via the Centre for Postgraduate and Professional Studies or the faculties.
- The HNU plans to organise an Erasmus+ International Staff Week.
- The HNU is striving for international accreditation with the AACSB.