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Heidelberg University of Education

European Policy Statement

Heidelberg University of Education is a university with European and international reach and aspirations. It offers research and teaching in education in an international context and trains and qualifies students for careers in various areas of education, no longer only for the regional, but also for the national and international labour market. Expanding its field of activity is Heidelberg University of Education's answer to the demands of a globalised world and a society characterised by a large degree of diversity. With this expansion the University fully commits itself to contributing to the aims of the European Commission of supporting growth and employment, as stated in the agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems.

The University of Education strives to fulfil the highest standards as to the quality of implementation of European and international programmes and projects. This includes the implementation of common goals concerning the modernisation of higher education, excellence in research, early integration of and support for young researchers and academics, interdisciplinary approach, and acquisition of skills and competences. Heidelberg University of Education considers itself a driving force for the implementation of the Charter of the United Nations as to the equal participation of all people in education. Inclusion, being one of its key topics, is central to the University's approach.

The University chooses its partners in EU and non-EU countries on the basis of strong quality criteria reflecting this approach. It operates within and outside Europe. The University cooperates, among others, with universities in regions recognised as being leading in education (e. g. Sweden, Finland, and Canada), with countries belonging to the first participants in the ERASMUS programme (UK, France, Spain), with candidate countries (Turkey), as well as newly industrialising and developing countries (Chile, Colombia, Indonesia). This global network is perceived as a definite gain in terms of offering educational opportunities for enhancing employability on the international labour market.

The basis for the University's international activities is set by written agreements with its partners characterised by a deep understanding of the partner institution, considering the compatibility of academic profiles (level/standards regarded as being adequate for mobility), and based on mutual trust between the institutions relating to academic decisions. The objective is to conclude realistic agreements guaranteeing a valuable mobility period or exchange fulfilling high quality standards. Involving students in European and international projects, and the education and training of junior researchers and young academics are fundamental goals in establishing new co-operations. The university management strongly supports the initiatives for European and international collaborations and for creating networks initiated by members of staff.

The University of Education gives high priority to cross-border collaboration and networking, actively involving students of all courses and levels of study, as well as to high-quality

training of doctoral students in European and international research projects. All status groups of the University are included as target groups for mobility activities: students, graduates and doctoral students, teachers, researchers, and administrative staff. The University is committed to increasing the numbers of participants among students, graduates, and doctoral students between 2014 and 2020. In this respect, study and internships abroad are of equal value. With a larger number of teachers participating the University plans to produce a multiplier effect having a favourable impact on student mobility. In future, young researchers and academics are to be offered opportunities for research periods in the framework of project partnerships. To this end, it is planned to establish research internships. Administrative staff is also to be prepared for meeting the demands of a global economy. Moreover, improving their international skills and competences is a prerequisite for their being in a position to give the necessary support in the process of realising projects and exchanges.

Within the framework of the Strategic Partnerships joint modules and joint degrees are to be created from the year 2012 to 2020. Further developing the existing Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes is a promising way of achieving this aim. According to the University's strategic goals, joint modules or possibly even joint degrees in collaboration with partner institutions are to be designed in the Teacher Training Courses, too.

Heidelberg University of Education participates in joint European and international projects. This is an integral part of the University's Internationalisation Strategy. At an early stage, the University decides on the purpose of its participation, its own function and the objectives to be achieved. Further core criteria for engaging in projects are their expected sustainability and the further enlargement of the University's international activities, as well as the opportunities for developing Strategic Partnerships, and the nature of implementation of the results that is to be expected. The choice of project partners takes into account the University's geographical and academic priorities, the need of the University, and the available resources. Launching a project, the University of Education is highly committed to supporting all researchers and academics, members of staff, and students involved. The administrative body (e. g. financial administration, human resources department) assists with the implementation of the projects. Persons interested in the projects can easily find information about them on the University's website. The participation of members of staff is considered to be an important means of fostering the professional development of the persons involved and a means of modernising the institution. Project work is considered a key component of development in the 21st century. A plenitude of services and different types of media are provided by the University for sharing information and results. Since the University is heavily involved in the development and use of new media, all staff receive a high level of support in this area. Heidelberg University of Education promotes the participation in projects and motivates staff to show initiative. If available, it also provides financial resources with the intention of giving incentives for setting up projects.

Heidelberg University of Education fully acknowledges the principles of the EU Programme 2014-2020 for Education, Training, Youth, and Sport and the five priorities stated therein:

1. Raising educational levels to meet Europe's need for higher education graduates and researchers
2. Improving the quality and relevance of higher education
3. Boosting higher education performance by encouraging mobility and promoting cross-border co-operation
4. Making the "knowledge triangle" work, linking higher education, research and business in support of excellence and regional development.
5. Improving Governance and Funding

The University strives to actively support and reach these objectives by participating in educational programmes and by engaging in the following activities. Heidelberg University of Education plans to participate in

- Key Action 1: Higher education student and staff mobility (within Europe and/or into/from third countries); Joint Masters Degrees;
- Key Action 2: Strategic Partnerships, Knowledge Alliances, Capacity Building in co-operation with partner countries neighbouring the EU, Capacity Building in co-operation with other third countries; and
- Key Action 3: networking and political support.

Concerning its participation in activities within the framework of Key Actions 1 and 2 the University intends to guarantee for a high quality in staff and student mobility. Apart from continuing co-operations with universities, collaborations with other strategic partners such as business companies, regional authorities etc. are to be promoted in future.

Mobility and co-operation are central elements of the University's development. Its Internationalisation Strategy formulates a clear concept of them, also stating collaboration with partners in other EU countries or third countries, the promotion of groups being underrepresented so far, and measures to effect inclusion. In future, joint cross-country learning activities, modules and joint degrees will become increasingly important in international networking. In addition, the University will further strengthen and increasingly academically recognise European and international collaborations while promoting their visibility at the same time, in order to improve the University's own performance in the international context. The Strategic Partnerships with universities, other institutions outside the university and business companies, as well as networking activities in the teaching and education sector are considered to constitute essential driving forces for the University's future development. Heidelberg University of Education attaches utmost importance to ensuring a high quality of implementation and internal management when taking action in all above mentioned areas of activity. Thus, it takes into account the results of internal monitoring of its past and current mobility and co-operation activities boosting its own performance in the international context.