

Philipps



Universität  
Marburg

# Leading Higher Education from Reformation into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**The Philipps-Universität Marburg Internationalization Strategy**

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## FOREWORD FROM THE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

Scholarship knows no borders. The Philipps-Universität Marburg, the world's oldest Protestant-founded university, is committed to this principle: from its beginnings in 1527 to the present day. Scholarship was and always is international. Important members of the Republic of Letters, who felt an obligation to knowledge and science, independent of nation, profession, religion or social status, performed research, taught or spent formative years as students in Marburg. Just to name a couple: Denis Papin or Michail Lomonossow, the founder of the Russian university system, which still serves as a bonding point for cooperation between the Universität Marburg and Russian universities and academies.

To this day, the disposition of science remains unchanged. What has changed is the framework within which international dialogue and exchange take place today. Creating a framework for internationalization and adapting it to the needs of science and research, teaching, and academic study is therefore one of the Universität's most important strategic tasks. The focus is on supporting and – however and whenever possible – facilitating the motivation that is present in the thoughts and actions of scientists and scholars. The focus is also on thinking and acting on this motivation present within scholars and scientists across borders, including arousing motivation among those whom we teach – at the least via the role model function, which all scientists and scholars always have as teachers.

Hence internationalization cannot remain limited to mobility and exchanges among universities. Rather, it is about rising to the scholarly and social challenges and taking appropriate measures to facilitate international thinking and action in science and academia. In this way we want to contribute to strengthen and further the development of an international and intercultural place for scholarship and science. We see ourselves as a public entity with the task of helping to solve societal and social problems and finding scientifically sound answers to many key questions of the 21st century. We would like to help our students to act and think confidently in international contexts, both academically and also in society.

The objective of the following Internationalization Strategy of the Philipps-Universität Marburg is thus to systematize, evaluate, in some instances rethink, and overall to strategically focus the already existing activities whereby the framework for international activities is further developed and optimized. The goals, which apply throughout the Universität, are formulated as such that they allow ample space for and also encourage the undertaking of individual initiatives.

With its sights set on the forthcoming “internationalisation of universities” audit by the HRK (German Rectors Conference) and a planned universitywide event on the topic of internationalization in the spring of 2013 – with the goal of reaching a broader university audience and including that audience in the discussion – the President’s Office of the Philipps-Universität will continue to develop this Internationalization Strategy and further adapt it to the needs of the scholars, scientists and students.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katharina Krause".

Prof. Dr. Katharina Krause,  
Präsidentin



## I. THE PROCESS OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

The Philipps-Universität Marburg (UMR) sees internationalization as a continual and dynamic process for the optimization of the framework that facilitates and eases international thinking and operating. All members of the Universität share the responsibility for this universal task, which should therefore be executed in the most transparent and multi-perspective way possible and include all relevant groups of the Universität.

The Internationalization Steering Committee, which was established by the UMR Office of the President, is to guide the process, initiate and promote campuswide communication concerning the internationalization strategy, work on concepts relating to the leading themes defined by the Office of the President, and formulate recommendations on definitions of objectives and applications of funds. Members of the Steering Committee are: the Vice President for International Affairs, four departmental representatives (two responsible for each of the areas i) research and young scholars, and ii) teaching and learning), the Director for International Affairs and Family Services, a representative from the corporate publishing department and two student representatives.

The Office of the President and the Steering Committee have worked together to design a master plan for the framework of internationalization in the area of development planning of research and the advancement of young scholars, student education and – last but not least – administration and science management.

The internationalization sphere of activity is a component of the agreements on objectives between the Office of the President and the departments of the Universität. The individual measures to be taken by the departments and faculty/scholars will be voted on as part of these agreements on objectives and the annual status meetings on the structure and development planning of the departments in regard to their conformity with the institutional objectives. The Office of the President steers the operationalization of the universitywide internationalization objectives with the intention of guiding the departments on the way to an internationalization concept that is specific to a department and its subdepartments. It also discusses with individual departments measures toward their further internationalization.

### Objectives

- Development of department-specific and general internationalization concepts incorporating the guiding themes and spheres of activity of the overall university strategy

### Measures

- Reports at regular intervals on the internationality of the Universität in the committees
- Naming of internationalization task force members in the departments with assigned functions and their placement in the Office of the Dean



## II. PRINCIPLES AND GUIDING THEMES

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We see ourselves as an **internationally active and cosmopolitan university**.  
Internationalization as a continual process pursues with the aim to,

- strengthen and continually optimize the framework for internationally networked thinking and operating in the Universität's central areas of activity (research, teaching, administration);
- further improve the quality of research and teaching with internationally focused measures;
- make the Philipps-Universität's high level of performance internationally visible and to further improve our competitiveness in an international and national context;
- ensure that our graduates are able to gain employment internationally and to act with confidence abroad, to promote their language skills, intercultural competencies, mobility and flexibility;
- strengthen the quality of our academic curriculum and research co operations and also to strive for a quantitative increase in student enrollment mobility numbers;
- further strengthen the Universität and the city of Marburg as an internationally known, cosmopolitan location for research, study and teaching.

A photograph of a library study area. Two students are seated at long wooden tables. The student in the foreground is leaning their head on their hand, looking at a laptop. The student in the background is reading a book. The room has large windows and modern lighting.

# III. SPHERES OF ACTIVITY – OBJECTIVES – MEASURES

### III. SPHERES OF ACTIVITY – OBJECTIVES – MEASURES

In the internationalization's four spheres of activity

1. **Research and young scholars**
2. **Studying and teaching**
3. **Administration and science management**
4. **Marketing and communication**

we set relatively longterm goals, formulate measures and connect them to a concrete time and resource plan.

## 1. Research and young scholars

Research at the UMR is internationally well networked, with scholars and scientists of the UMR maintaining various partnerships with universities and research institutions around the world. To ensure the sustainability of these agreements and individual activities, the UMR will be increasing efforts to harmonize these agreements and activities. To promote such cooperative international research programs, there will be an increased utilization of programs from the EU, the DFG and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. The central support services for application, implementation and project management will be expanded. As part of the research development fund, financial start-up assistance will be allocated.

The UMR was one of the first universities in Germany to establish a Welcome Centre back in 2007, providing a wide range of services to ensure that scholars and scientists from abroad can concentrate on research and teaching in Germany while moving to Marburg and during their stay here. As part of quality management, the Welcome Centre's services are constantly being adapted and

expanded to better meet the needs of scientists and scholars. To increase the number of international scholars and scientists, the UMR will post relevant openings for professorships and staff positions internationally.

During the qualification phases of doctoral studies and thereafter we will increase the mobility of researchers. We will particularly aim to promote binational doctoral degrees, entering more so-called cotutelle agreements with select partner universities.

Both structured doctoral programs and our graduate institutions as well will be further expanded and increasingly internationalized, in part via the acquisition of outstanding doctoral candidates, scholars and scientists. The advising and counseling provided by the MARburg University Research Academy (MARA) will further expand its offering of international services.

### Objectives

- Creative and innovative research through international networking
- Making accomplishments in research more internationally visible

### Measures

- Increase in number of scholars and scientists from abroad: International job postings for the acquisition of young scholars from abroad
- Increase in mobility of researchers and doctoral candidates
- Incorporate research alumni as advocates
- Development and institutionalization of bilateral and internationally oriented doctoral programs
- Promotion of binational doctoral degree programs: Cotutelle cooperation agreements with strategic partners
- Further development of English language offerings in career development for scientists and scholars
- Expansion and modification of the main support and advising services; Optimization and expansion of the services provided through the Welcome Centre

## 2. Studying and teaching

International cooperations and transnational exchange promote scholarly achievements, but they also influence the teaching methodology and content. They help contribute to the teaching of subject-specific, social, and communicative competencies that are becoming increasingly important for science and also for the job market outside the sciences. Internationalization also takes place right here, for example when students and colleagues exchange ideas and work together with their international counterparts in Marburg. We perceive the differences and diversity of our students and scholars as an opportunity and potential for reaching our goals on the international level.

### a. Internationalize fields of study and curricula

The UMR offers for Germans and international students alike an attractive academic curriculum. It provides for both groups the opportunity to acquire competencies in Marburg that are indispensable for working in an international and intercultural context. Given the fact that currently the majority of our students complete their studies without having studied abroad, higher priority must be given in the future to an internationalization of the learning environment and the curricula in Marburg, and also to a curricular safeguarding of mobility. In order to accomplish the latter, our new "General Provisions for Bachelor and Master Degree Program Examination Regulations" call for a minimum of one semester of study abroad without lengthening the degree programs.

## Objectives

- Educating students to become graduates who can function with confidence in international and intercultural settings
- International and intercultural competencies for all graduates

## Measures

- Development of further international programs and study programs that are geared toward an international job market
- Development of joint/double degree study programs with international partners
- Development of partnerships at the departmental / major level
- Ensuring the international dimension of academic studies for all students, starting at the undergraduate level with "lossless" opportunities to study abroad and attend foreign language classes
- Expansion of the English language course offering
- Guest professors funded by the Fulbright Commission, the DAAD and QSL funds<sup>1</sup>
- Systematic support and advising of students with questions about studying abroad

<sup>1</sup> State funds provided to Hessian universities for the improvement of study and teaching conditions.

### b. Study and Internships Abroad

The relatively low mobility rate suggests that UMR students and faculty have to date not taken advantage of opportunities to study or complete an internship abroad as part of their degree requirements, partly due to financial reasons, partly because they fear that coursework completed abroad may not be recognized toward graduation requirements and would thereby prolong their studies. International qualifications with proof of foreign language proficiency and intercultural competencies are in demand on the international job market for scholars and scientists, and therefore indispensable for our students and their career perspectives. In addition to studying abroad, we will be acquiring more placements for internships abroad, including in non-European countries; to this end, we will be developing and continually working on an information portal.

### c. Acquiring and integrating foreign students

The UMR faces the challenge of acquiring highly qualified, academically strong students from abroad, both as exchange students and degree-seeking international students. Both groups enrich studies at the UMR and life in Marburg by providing different perspectives and experiences, and they also constitute a cultural and economic factor for the city and the region.

For **exchange students** the UMR offers, in addition to its regular semester exchanges, specialized programs that are geared toward certain higher education markets and meet the needs of individual groups of students. The *International Undergraduate Study Program*, the *International Summer University* and the program *Study Abroad in Marburg* provide international students – depending on their level of German proficiency and focus of interests – different options for study and thereby secure tuition-free study for German students with our partner universities abroad. Content and format of the specialized programs are evaluated on an ongoing basis and adapted to the changes in the international education markets.

## Objectives

- International employability of UMR graduates (foreign language skills, intercultural competencies, mobility, and flexibility)
- Quantitative and qualitative increase in student mobility

## Measures

- Further development of a campus-wide, transparent process for recognizing course work completed abroad
- Increase in faculty mobility in an effort to create a basis of trust for the recognition of course work completed abroad
- Stronger integration of the main international education services with those of the individual departments
- Securing tuition-free study abroad for our students by offering the equivalent to exchange students from abroad
- Internship placement abroad
- Supporting international mobility for students with a migrant background

Currently (as of spring semester 2012) 10.6% of our students are foreign citizens, with approximately 7% **degree-seeking international students**. We will significantly increase these numbers. In addition to continued development of the quality-oriented application and selection process, we will be placing extra focus on the academic success of our international students. In close cooperation with the Studienkolleg Mittelhessen, which provides international students who do not directly qualify for university admission with language and subject-specific preparation for studies at the UMR, we will be exploring the reasons behind the higher drop-out rate and use that information for taking steps to increase academic success.

As a first step, the UMR will establish a **mentor program** for foreign students in order to ease the transition from abroad to the preparatory studies phase at the Studienkolleg and on to regular studies at the UMR. Upper level students will be trained and receive qualification as mentors for guiding foreign students through their undergraduate studies and provide peer coaching – with subject-specific, linguistic and social aspects – at the outset of their master's studies. Special em-

phasis shall be placed here on fulfilling subject-specific expectations and requirements for study in the individual departments and thereby ensuring academic success. Among other things, the voluntary work of the mentors will be motivated by the supplemental qualification in intercultural competency and ECTS credit-bearing recognition of their work.

The UMR has adopted the "National Code of Conduct for International Study at German Universities," which implies the safeguarding of advising services for all phases of studies and the provision of comprehensive information about conditions and requirements for studies. The UMR will therefore continually develop its services toward a comprehensive advising and counseling concept for the duration of studies.

## Objectives

- Strengthened acquisition of qualified and academically strong students from abroad.
- Ensuring academic success of foreign students and reducing the drop-out rate

## Measures

- Collaborating with partners and alumni on site to develop and implement country-specific concepts for acquiring students
- Establishing a network and expanding the decentral/national networks of foreign alumni
- Continued development of the quality-oriented application and selection process
- Connecting the degree-seeking international student statistics with a differentiated set of statistics on degree progress
- Continued development of a unified reception and welcome structure
- Ongoing advising and support up to graduation, including the development of a mentor program for international students
- Internship placement in the region

#### d. Strengthen student and faculty multiculturalism and multilingualism

Student and faculty multiculturalism and multilingualism go hand in hand with the internationalism of the UMR; measuring the internationalism of teaching and studying does, after all, include the internationalism of the academic staff. In future appointment and hiring procedures, we will be placing more emphasis on experience abroad, foreign language competency and an internationally focused research and teaching profile. The Hochschuldidaktisches Zentrum Mittelhessen (HDM) provides a joint program at all three central Hesse universities for university teaching training for professionals in teaching and for young scholars. The HDM's continued training program will add more focus on didactic concepts in multicultural teaching and learning situations.

For the internationalization of the UMR, foreign language skills among its German students, staff and faculty, and German language skills among its foreign students, staff and faculty are indispensable. The UMR Language Center offers all University students, staff and faculty members a wideranging, high-quality curriculum. As part of a language concept to be developed for the UMR, we will promote multilingualism of all students, faculty and staff, facilitate the qualified acquisition and usage of other languages and also contribute to the preservation of German as a scholastic language. We will emphatically recommend all exchange and international students as well as scholars and scientists to learn the German language.

### Objectives

- Multiculturalism and multilingualism of all University faculty, staff and students to promote science beyond borders and to strengthen the international and intercultural stage for scholarship and science

### Measures

- Development and expansion of the foreign language and intercultural academic curriculum (degree and continued training) for all members of the University community
- Language concept: Matching the curriculum with the program requirements, mobility flows and our university and research partnerships
- Expansion of faculty exchanges to include partner universities outside of Europe where faculty availability is flexible

### 3. Administration and science management

In January 2011, **Dezernat VI: International Office and Family Services** was established, with the objective of organizationally combining tasks relating to this area of operations. The International Office is not limited to administrative or service-related activities, but has been established as a strategically operative unit and international, service and customer-oriented competency center within the University administration. In the UMR's internationalization process, the International Office assumes the central coordination of all university stakeholders, both internal and external.

The internationalization of the University administration and the linguistic and intercultural qualification of staff is vital for the internationalization of research and teaching. The UMR will intensify its efforts in the continued education and training of technical administrative staff in regard to foreign language and intercultural competencies. Within the framework of the ERASMUS STT program, we will promote exchange with our partner universities in order to familiarize UMR staff with the work culture and business processes of foreign universities.

#### Objectives

- Internationalization of science management of the UMR

#### Measures

- Adjustment of administrative procedures to international target groups
- Services provided for all target groups in German and English
- Continued training and education for administrative staff
- Staff mobility

## 4. Marketing and communication

In order to strengthen the visibility of the UMR domestically and internationally and to better position ourselves in the international landscape of higher education, Dezernat VI will work together with the Corporate Publishing Department and the Office for Alumni Affairs to develop a strategic international marketing concept that will incorporate the acquisition of international students and doctoral candidates and maintain relationships with our former international students, graduates and scholars.

### Objectives

- Strengthening of international and domestic visibility as an internationally active university

### Measures

- Definition of *unique selling points*, including for international applicants (such as Australia, USA and Great Britain)
- Country-specific marketing strategies in consultation with the academic departments
- Rigorous expansion of an internationally oriented Web site
- Development of information materials for individual target groups
- Addition of advising and services in English and – depending on the subject area and international contacts – additional languages
- Participation in education fairs in countries and regions of focus

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair looking through the eyepiece of a black and white microscope. The image is partially obscured by a semi-transparent white horizontal band containing the title text.

# IV. UNIVERSITY COOPS, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, LIAISON OFFICES

## IV. UNIVERSITY COOPS, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, LIAISON OFFICES

The UMR has cooperation agreements at the university level with 68 colleges and universities outside of Europe and ERASMUS agreements with 210 European colleges and universities. There are also several other cooperation agreements at the departmental and institutional level. Focal points of international partnerships are often defined by the history of the relationships. The UMR has already begun evaluating the already existing college and university partnerships in order to determine which partnerships should be strengthened and expanded to include all other departments and offices. Expansion and development of already existing partnerships generally take a strong priority over the establishment of new partnerships. For the individual categories of partnerships (university, departmental/major partnerships, student exchange and project-related agreements), criteria are set that will help determine procedures, areas of responsibility, financing and sustainability (minimum duration of the agreements).

Furthermore, the UMR sees **strategic partnerships** with universities abroad as a trend-setting form of formalized cooperation, which on the one hand is intra-university in nature and on the other hand is based on the experiences of trusting cooperation. Strengthening these partnerships happens with the goal of increasing the UMR's visibility in certain regions of the world and making Marburg more attractive as a location for science and research. When identifying strategic partners we orient ourselves on scholarly focuses of the universities and also on the potential to supplement our academic curriculum in a way that is future-oriented.

Strategic partnerships mean close cooperation in research, teaching and administration, so that synergies and common strengths can be utilized and bundled together. through joint research projects and networks, particularly attractive course offerings in jointly offered summer schools, the introduction of double/joint degree programs, mutual promotion of young talent in the form of binational doctoral candidate programs, structured mobility models for students and postdocs, and the exchange of further qualification offerings for administrative staff.

### Objectives

- Strengthening of the international and domestic visibility of the UMR
- Making Marburg more attractive as a location for science and research

### Measures

- Identifying additional strategic partnerships (maximum 3–4) and intensifying already existing strategic partnerships
- Evaluation of university partnerships by index numbers: Mobility/year, participation/interest of the departments
- Usage of present scholarship funds to support selected partnerships

A first strategic partnership of the UMR in Europe was established with the University of Kent in Canterbury (UofKent), with which the UMR has been working together since 2010 in the areas of cooperative, joint degree programs, research projects and university management. Since the Winter Semester 2011/12 the master's program in Peace and Conflict Studies – jointly developed by both universities – has been offered, and a cotutele cooperation agreement was also signed between the UofKent and the UMR. Joint doctoral studies, research partnerships and other joint degree programs in psychology, English, business administration, and political science are in the planning stages.

We have also acquired two Chinese universities – **Zhejiang University in Hangzhou and Tongji University in Shanghai** – as strategic partners. Here we are planning to intensify already existing research partnerships in the areas of medicine, pharmacy, chemistry, and physics; a network of material sciences with all three universities participating will also be established.

This approach to a step-by-step development of a strategic partnership has worked well. We will also be using this model when we enter the implementation phase of future strategic partnerships. It helps ensure for the near and intermediate future a sustainable and constructive partnership that is based on mutual respect, esteem and mutual safeguarding of interests.

Die UMR maintains a contact office in New York and opened a liaison office in the Deutsches Wissenschaftszentrum Kairo (DWZ Kairo) in November 2012. Both offices have the function of supporting UMR scholars and scientists with their international activities in these regions, designing and taking steps to acquire students, doctoral candidates, and scholars, and organizing alumni activities.

# V. Outlook



## v. Outlook

Starting in October 2012, the Philipps-Universität will be participating in the HRK's "internationalization of universities" audit. Against the background of our profile and our institutional internationalization strategy we will use the audit to reflect upon, further develop and solidify our internationalization objectives. We anticipate the streamlining and addition of already implemented internationalization measures and hope to make the internationality of the Philipps-Universität more visible inward and outward. Parallel to this there is a campuswide event on the topic of internationalization planned for spring 2013. With this event we are hoping to reach a wider university audience so that we can not only enrich the discussion by adding many new perspectives, but also at the same time obtain wide acceptance for the planned measures.

This internationalization strategy is the subject of regular evaluation, and the planned measures will be examined for implementation and adjusted as needed. Evaluation of the internationalization strategy is performed by the internationalization steering committee. The senate and university conference will be informed about the status of the internationalization process every two years in the form of a key figure report. As a supplement to the key figure sets, the URM will be participating every two years in the *International Student Barometer*.

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Philipps



Universität  
Marburg

**Philipps-Universität Marburg**

**Dezernat für Internationale Angelegenheiten und Familienservice**

Deutschhausstr. 11+13

35037 Marburg

E-Mail: [international@uni-marburg.de](mailto:international@uni-marburg.de)

**[www.uni-marburg.de/international](http://www.uni-marburg.de/international)**