

Internationalisation Strategy (Education)

Preamble

Internationality is intrinsic to universities. A university can only fulfil its legal mandate to advance science and education through science by embracing international exchange and dialogue and by offering internationally oriented educational programmes. At the University of Klagenfurt (AAU), internationalisation is both a mission and a process that encompasses all of the university's activities and involves a wide range of efforts. In the sphere of education, internationalisation specifically means promoting the international experience of students and teachers and the internationality of teaching content appropriate to the respective subject culture, the creation of international curricula including joint international degree programmes, the acquisition of inter-/transcultural competences, and the recruitment of international students and teachers. AAU recognises cultural diversity and differences among teachers and students as an opportunity and a resource, as well as a starting point for critical academic discourse, and a positive teaching and learning experience. By contributing to internationalisation and inter-/transculturality, AAU also sees itself as a firm advocate of an open society in the region and as an active contributor to social change. AAU is firmly committed to promoting diversity, gender equality, social mobility, and inclusion. It also holds its cooperation partners to the same standards.

AAU internationalisation strategy with regard to education

AAU strives to discharge the duties assigned to it by law in supporting international cooperation in the field of academic education to the best of its ability. This includes delivering an education programme with an international focus, in which students as well as teachers and administrative staff can gain experience, establish contacts across national borders, and acquire inter-/transcultural competences. Through its global network of international partner institutions, comprehensive organisational support in preparing for mobility, a wide range of mobility grants and corresponding offers on campus, AAU seeks to provide all its members with the **best possible conditions** for gaining qualified international study or professional experience.

- **Students** shall have the opportunity to build networks and acquire inter-/transcultural competences and other transversal skills relevant for their future employability through internationally oriented educational and mobility programmes.
- **Teachers** shall be encouraged to expand their teaching experience and enhance their teaching activities through university-sponsored interaction with other scientific, teaching and learning traditions, and shall be supported to the fullest extent possible in networking “without borders” in the spirit of research-led teaching.
- **Administrative staff** provide an important contribution to a sustainable “culture of mobility” at the university that is firmly anchored within the institution. Consequently, AAU specifically promotes the international mobility of its **administrative staff**. Moreover, further education measures offered on site are also designed to facilitate the internationalisation experience.
- Groups that are currently **underrepresented** when it comes to mobility (students and employees with disabilities, those from disadvantaged social backgrounds, and/or those with responsibilities in terms of care) shall receive the best possible support through targeted counselling formats and additional funding in order to be able to spend periods of time abroad that are relevant to their field of study.
- To complement these efforts, AAU also strives to offer all those university members unwilling or unable to be mobile the opportunity to engage in international networking, intercultural exchange, and to acquire and improve their foreign language skills through high-quality offers on campus. In this context, the university views itself as a space for encounters, where **plurality** is valued and **diversity** is practised (see also the [AAU Equality Plan](#)).
- AAU actively supports both its students and staff in **acquiring and developing language skills**. In addition to promoting German language skills among international university members, AAU members are also encouraged to learn foreign languages (in particular Carinthia's second national language, Slovenian, as well as other languages spoken in the Alps-Adriatic region).

Core areas of the internationalisation of AAU in the sphere of education include:

- **Cooperation and mobility**
- **Education and administration** with an international focus
- Commitment to an **open society** and advocacy for **sustainable, socially equitable global development**

Strategic objectives of the internationalisation of AAU in the sphere of education include:

- Raising the **international visibility and attractiveness of AAU** as an educational institution,
- **internationalisation** which is progressive, sustainably anchored, and appreciated as an added value, and which relates to both the **university** and the **region in which it is situated**, as well as
- fulfilling its legal mandate “to contribute responsibly to solving the problems faced by humankind, and to the **welfare of society and the environment**” (Article 1 (1), Universities Act), not least by means of internationalisation measures.

Measures to achieve these goals include:

- The **international orientation of education** in order to prepare students and graduates for their future work in globally networked worlds of work and life,
- the **systematic development and expansion of the network of partner universities** within the extended Alps-Adriatic region, the European Higher Education Area, and beyond,
- the sustained **increase of high-quality mobility** amongst students as well as teaching and administrative staff,
- ensuring that all members of AAU have access to opportunities to acquire **inter-/transcultural competences** as well as
- fostering activities to shape AAU’s campus as a space for exchange and individual and collective development, where **plurality, diversity and inclusion** can be nurtured and actively experienced.

Strategic objectives, measures designed to achieve them, and indicators used to measure them during the respective performance period are set out in the performance agreements concluded between AAU and the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research. Furthermore, objectives, measures, and indicators related to Erasmus+ are outlined in the Erasmus Policy Statement of AAU.

Cooperation and mobility

At present, around **400 mobility agreements** with renowned partner universities worldwide and numerous **joint international degree programmes** (Joint and Double Degree Programmes) with partner universities in the Alps-Adriatic region and in the (extended) European Higher Education Area guarantee an **academically appealing and geographically diversified offer**. Moreover, AAU also participates in numerous **European educational projects** that promote **capacity building in EU partner countries** and **knowledge transfer** both within the Alps-Adriatic region and throughout the European Higher Education Area.

In the sphere of education, AAU seeks to cooperate with partner institutions in every region in the world in order to promote mobility and the further development of the European and global higher education area. In geographical terms, the “**Alps-Adriatic Region Plus**” is of particular strategic importance. In addition to Slovenia, Croatia and north-eastern Italy, this extended Alps-Adriatic region also encompasses the Western Balkan countries of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, which are important for the Union and for foreign policy.

AAU is committed to providing effective support to its students, teaching staff, and administrative staff with regard to international and intercultural activities (e.g. in the context of “traditional” physical mobility as well as “non-traditional” and innovative formats, in line with the university’s sustainability goals). In addition to **measures designed to prepare participants for mobility, mobility windows** in regular degree programmes and a wide range of

grants, special importance is attached to ensuring that achievements gained in the context of mobility are duly **recognised**.

AAU is committed to further **increasing the proportion of students, academic staff and administrative staff in university exchange programmes** (incoming and outgoing). The emphasis, however, is not on the quantity but on the **quality of the mobility experience**. This is backed up by a series of preparatory, follow-up and supporting measures, which are continuously evaluated and refined.

Education and administration with an international focus

Establishing internationally oriented education and the underlying administrative processes in a sustainable manner includes, on the one hand, the inclusion and promotion of all international university members and, on the other hand, the bundling of strategies and measures that are intended to appeal to non-mobile students and staff.

Central aspects include the progressive **internationalisation of the curricula** through the integration of international and global learning content, the inclusion of international teachers, students and digital tools, and the establishment of mobility windows. Other important aspects are the **continuous expansion of the multilingual** and, in particular, **English-language programmes offered**, both in the form of individual courses and as full-length degree programmes, as well as the creation of **spaces for intercultural exchange** and the **acquisition of intercultural competences** (for example, through the extension programme Inter-/Transcultural Competences or through the commitment of individuals to act as a “buddy” for incoming and international students). In addition to offering an attractive range of programmes, AAU also promotes **inclusive mobility and diversity** on campus by providing targeted information to potential incoming and outgoing students from underrepresented groups and awarding scholarships and grants to incoming students and teachers from developing and emerging countries.

In the spirit of a **broad and structurally integrated “welcoming culture”** at the university and in the interest of equality of its international members, AAU invests in the comprehensive provision of **English-language information formats and IT applications** in the area of education, and is also increasingly promoting corresponding further education programmes at home and abroad to ensure that **teaching and administrative staff are adequately trained in language and inter-/transcultural competences**.

Commitment to an open society and advocacy for sustainable, socially equitable global development

AAU is dedicated to **promoting international development** in line with the foreign policy goals of Austria and the European Union. In the sphere of education, the university successfully participates in European education projects to **support the transfer of knowledge** within the European Higher Education Area and to **promote capacity building** in developing and emerging countries.

In addition to **incorporating current global challenges into education**, **AAU’s commitment to sustainable and socially equitable global development** also includes a **commitment to social mobility and equal opportunities**, as well as **academic freedom**, refugee students, and politically persecuted academics.

As one of the earliest members of the scheme, AAU is actively involved in the Austria-wide **MORE initiative**, which introduces students and prospective students with a refugee background to the Austrian higher education system and supports them in acquiring and improving their German language skills. From the university’s perspective, the participation of MORE students in selected regular courses and the resulting opportunities for exchange represent a valuable enrichment for the university. As the second Austrian member of the **Scholars at Risk network**, AAU actively promotes the idea of academic freedom – on campus and beyond – and recognises its social responsibility in particular with regard to the dissemination of information and raising awareness.