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Internationalisation concept of Bielefeld University 2016-2019

Bielefeld University

“Transcending boundaries globally and locally: in-/between disciplines, cultures, theories, and institutions”

Mission statement

Bielefeld University is both a research university and a reform university. A young, dynamic, and renowned research institution with high international standing, it is known for its ground-breaking approach to research that goes beyond established disciplinary paths and cultural borders, for its critical examination of the traditions of various sciences and cultures, for its focus on theoretical and methodological reflection, and for its ongoing commitment to institutional reform. Coming from highly diverse regional, national, and international backgrounds, Bielefeld University's students are academically trained to the highest international standards to meet the demands of a complex, diverse world in which they must constantly overcome barriers and transcend boundaries. Students reflect upon local and global interdependencies, encounter theories and methods beyond their own fields, acquire intercultural competence, and are trained in issues surrounding diversity.

Comprehensive internationalisation

Bielefeld University considers internationalisation to be a process of change affecting all areas of university life – science & research, studying & teaching, administration & planning. In a changing world, internationalisation has to be reinitiated and re-examined on an ongoing basis in relation to evolving needs and situations. It thrives on the interna-

tional cooperation of scholars and students and is grounded in lively, personal interaction on a local level. Internationalisation "at home" and internationalisation outside Germany are therefore two different facets of the same integrated and comprehensive internationalisation strategy. Thus, internationalisation – like equality and diversity – is a key cross-cutting issue. It is targeted towards an ever-changing culture and aims to intensify and qualitatively enhance international relations within and outside the university, a task to which all its members contribute: Transcending boundaries globally and locally.

Internationalisation: Where are we now?

In many areas, Bielefeld University is one of the world's leading research institutions; its high profile and relevance are recognised by international scholars. Approximately 300 researchers from all over the world come to Bielefeld every year for longer stays and enrich university life through their research and teaching. The Centre for Interdisciplinary Research, the oldest German Institute for Advanced Studies, exemplifies Bielefeld University's powerful international presence.

Bielefeld University attracts approximately 1,700 international students (both students with a German *Abitur* and those with qualifications from abroad). These students are enrolled in numerous German- or English-speaking degree programmes, double degree programmes, and Erasmus Mundus programmes. In its core subjects, it is recognised as one of the best places to study in Germany. It educates its students to the highest international levels. Bielefeld University maintains numerous international cooperation arrangements with outstanding universities on all continents. It is a founding member of the Turkish-German University, an active member of the German-French University and is currently preparing strategic partnerships with the renowned University of Alberta in Canada and Osaka University in Japan. It collaborates intensively with two excellent European partner universities, the University of Bologna with its rich academic tradition and the Paris-Diderot University, a reform university.

Aims of internationalisation: Where will we be in three years?

Bielefeld University is an **internationally successful and globally connected institution**. It has strong roots in the region as well as considerable influence on the international research community and national and local society. It sees itself as a multilingual university which promotes strategically relevant and needs-based multilingualism in research, studies, and administration. In select areas of research, teaching, and administration, English has become the main working language. In other areas, Bielefeld University combines English-speaking research and teaching activities with German-speaking ones. It encourages the acquisition of German academic language competence alongside other European academic languages.

In the **area of research**, Bielefeld University has raised its international profile and has succeeded in recruiting more international researchers or interesting them in spending time here as visiting scholars. The University has become even more attractive for promising international students and has increased the number of its international degree programmes and double degree programmes to 15. It has also established new measures to promote the university internationally. The **training of all students** in intercultural competences and in dealing with diversity is a hallmark of Bielefeld University, as is its experience with internationalisation (at home and abroad), which is anchored in all curricula. It creates a space for societal reflection which is characterised by international exchange, **cultural openness**, and constructive debates.

Angelika Epple