

Internationalization Strategy 2030

Last amended: August 19, 2021

Technology
Arts Sciences
TH Köln

Contents

Imprint

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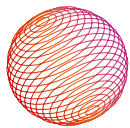
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Executive Summary

The development of TH Köln's internationalization strategy, set out in this document, took place in a participatory process that ran between September 2019 and June 2021 and brought all the institution's internal and external stakeholders on board.

At the strategy's heart are five strategic goals that embody what TH Köln intends to achieve in the arena of internationalization by the year 2030.



Addressing Global Challenges

Committed to applied sciences and to its overarching guiding principle of "shaping social innovation", the teaching, research, and knowledge transfer activities undertaken by TH Köln will contribute to addressing key societal challenges whose associated scientific/academic issues and educational needs transcend regional and national borders. In this spirit, TH Köln will aim to align its future activities even more closely with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.



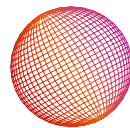
Driving and Communicating Global Citizenship as an Overarching Skill Set

TH Köln wants to support its members in active, responsible participation in a liberal, democratic, internationally interconnected society. Its internationalization strategy adopts the principle of global citizenship as outlined in TH Köln's Strategic Guidelines on Teaching and Studies^[1] and seeks to communicate it to all members of our institutional community.



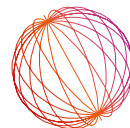
Producing Globally Employable Graduates

TH Köln is committed to providing an academic education that balances scientific rigor with the needs of the labor market. TH Köln's conception of employability is in line with its Strategic Guidelines for Teaching and Studies. Acutely aware that international and intercultural competencies facilitate graduates' entry into a complex, dynamic world of work and boost their ongoing professional development, we apply our employability principles to all operational areas and target groups of internationalization at TH Köln.



Establishing and Maintaining Sustainable Global Partnerships

International partnerships will serve as the institutional bedrock and operational backbone of TH Köln's internationalization process. Their disciplinary and geographical diversity will support institutional development at TH Köln and among all stakeholders in each partnership. Our aim is to increase the extent, variety and depth, of academically dynamic and institutionally stable partnerships that bring large numbers of actors together in a spirit of trust and equality to pool their efforts and resources in advancing research, teaching, and knowledge transfer.



Increasing TH Köln's Global Visibility

Internationalization is a virtuous circle. When TH Köln's members perceive their institution as international, this spirit diffuses into and permeates the institution as a whole. At the same time, TH Köln's visibility in its international environment will increase its involvement in European and global discourse and projects, strengthening its position in the competition for reputation and resources. In this way, global visibility both resonates with and amplifies all the other strategic goals.

On the basis of these five strategic goals, TH Köln has developed 24 intermediary objectives and 85 operational objectives, whose implementation will enable it to sustainably and effectively internationalize all areas of its work, develop the profiles of its faculties, and establish governance structures to support this institution-wide process of transformation.

[1] https://www.th-koeln.de/mam/downloads/deutsch/hochschule/profil/qualitaetsmanagement/strategische_leitlinien_zu_lehre_und_studium.pdf
[in German]

1 Conceptual Framework

The North Rhine-Westphalia Higher Education Act (Section 3 (6)) defines internationalization as one of the tasks of higher education institutions. We at TH Köln go beyond a view of internationalization as an obligation imposed from outside, instead considering it an expression of how we see ourselves and what we want to become. Internationalization is one of TH Köln's six core values. We see it as "*[...] a process that continuously calls for and provides new perspectives. The key elements of our approach are an awareness of cultural differences, the belief that what is unfamiliar to us represents an opportunity for us to learn, and intercultural competencies*".^[2]

TH Köln views internationalization as an opportunity for us to fulfill our role as an academic institution with relevance to society now and going forward. If we are to continuously advance, we need self-reflection and self-knowledge, alongside the ability to look beyond our own institutional, regional and national horizons.

As a strongly research-focused university of applied sciences, TH Köln has a close and robust network of partnerships and alliances in its immediate urban surroundings and on a regional, national (UAS7 ^[3]) and international (EUA ^[4], Magna Charta Universitatum ^[5]) level. We see the adoption of an international view as a sign of quality and a driver of continuous, ongoing reflection and renewal. This approach reveals internationalization as integral to all areas of TH Köln's work: research, teaching, and knowledge transfer gain in relevance, innovativeness and effectiveness when internationality, diversity and a range of cultural perspectives are at the heart of an institution rather than at its margins.

The internationalization strategy presented here seeks to embody and communicate our approach.

[2] Cf. Wissenswertes auf einen Blick - TH Köln (th-koeln.de) (April 30, 2021) [in German]

[3] UAS7 homepage | UAS7

[4] EUA

[5] Magna Charta Universitatum (th-koeln.de) [in German]

2 Background and Initial Situation

TH Köln's Internationalization Strategy 2030 represents its first institution-wide blueprint for internationalization. The process of its development and adoption has made it the central foundation of the specific focus and structure of the action for internationalization set out in it.

Alongside ongoing internationalization activities at TH Köln, two key documents have served as guidance and as requirement analyses for the strategy's development:

1. The recommendations of the expert committee that conducted the 2015 German Rectors' Conference (HRK) audit of the internationalization of – what at that time was still Fachhochschule Köln (Cologne University of Applied Sciences). They provide comprehensive insight, from an external point of view, into the status of the institution's internationalization process at that point in time and into what remains to be done.
2. TH Köln's Institutional Development Plan 2030 ^[6], which is embedded in its overall strategic planning and defines specific and in some cases highly tangible development objectives for the institution's internationalization process to 2030.

Drawing on the Development Plan as a foundation, TH Köln has identified specific aspects of the current state of internationalization at the institution and areas requiring action, which will define the development process to be undertaken (section 3), its objectives, and the desired outcomes (section 4). These are as follows:

Internationalization is not an end in itself

TH Köln's international activities serve to achieve its primary institutional aims and to improve the quality of its teaching, learning, research, knowledge transfer, and administration. In line with this overarching role, the goals and objectives of our internationalization strategy address all these areas of TH Köln's work and define interfaces to other strategies and guiding documents it has produced.

Internationalization is a matter for everyone

Just as internationalization affects all areas of TH Köln's work, all its members come into contact with aspects of the international in the course of their work or will do so in the future. With this at the forefront of our minds, we have brought all groups of academic and administrative staff across all faculties, and TH Köln's central organizational units, on board with the development and implementation of our internationalization strategy, and will continue to engage them in driving this process forward.

Internationalization inspires

TH Köln's internationalization activities initiate developments that grow beyond them. International partnerships, for instance, can create new interconnections between research and teaching; the addition of a global dimension opens up fresh vistas on issues of sustainability. The goals and objectives of our internationalization strategy express this potential and our intent to harness it more closely and productively going forward.

Internationalization is asynchronous

The various institutional and organizational areas of TH Köln are in different places on their journey toward internationalization. This means that our internationalization strategy needs to enable the expansion of internationalization on a broad scale and advance the creation of a distinct international identity spearheaded by institutional leaders and academic top performers. We have accordingly given the faculties autonomy over the speed and nature of their internationalization trajectory in areas within their governance remit.

Internationalization is a resource

Internationalization activities require time, financial, practical, and natural resources. In defining action to support the process and structuring the associated responsibilities, TH Köln's internationalization strategy seeks to ensure that these activities continue and augment their current focus on sustainability, resource efficiency and capacity to transfer to other people within the organization without loss of knowledge or time.

[6] <https://www.th-koeln.de/mam/downloads/deutsch/hochschule/profil/hochschulentwicklungsplan2030.pdf> [in German]

3 The Development Process

TH Köln's internationalization strategy has emerged through a participatory process, based on dialog and open-ended in terms of outcomes, that ran between September 2019 and June 2021. Fig. 1 illustrates the process, which we regard as an integral component of its own result and as crucial to its proper understanding.

The President of TH Köln led on the strategy, while committees, the Project Group and the Forum, undertook the major part of the development work.

The ten members of the **Project Group** were appointed by the **project leads** (the President of TH Köln and the Director of the Department of International Affairs) solely on the basis of their expertise, without their roles or remits giving rise to any bias or partiality in any specific direction. They adopted an institution-wide perspective in their work. During their meetings, the project group's members prepared the content of the strategy and further components of the process of its development, gathering input from various groups and official institutional committees and using it to advance the drafting of the strategy.

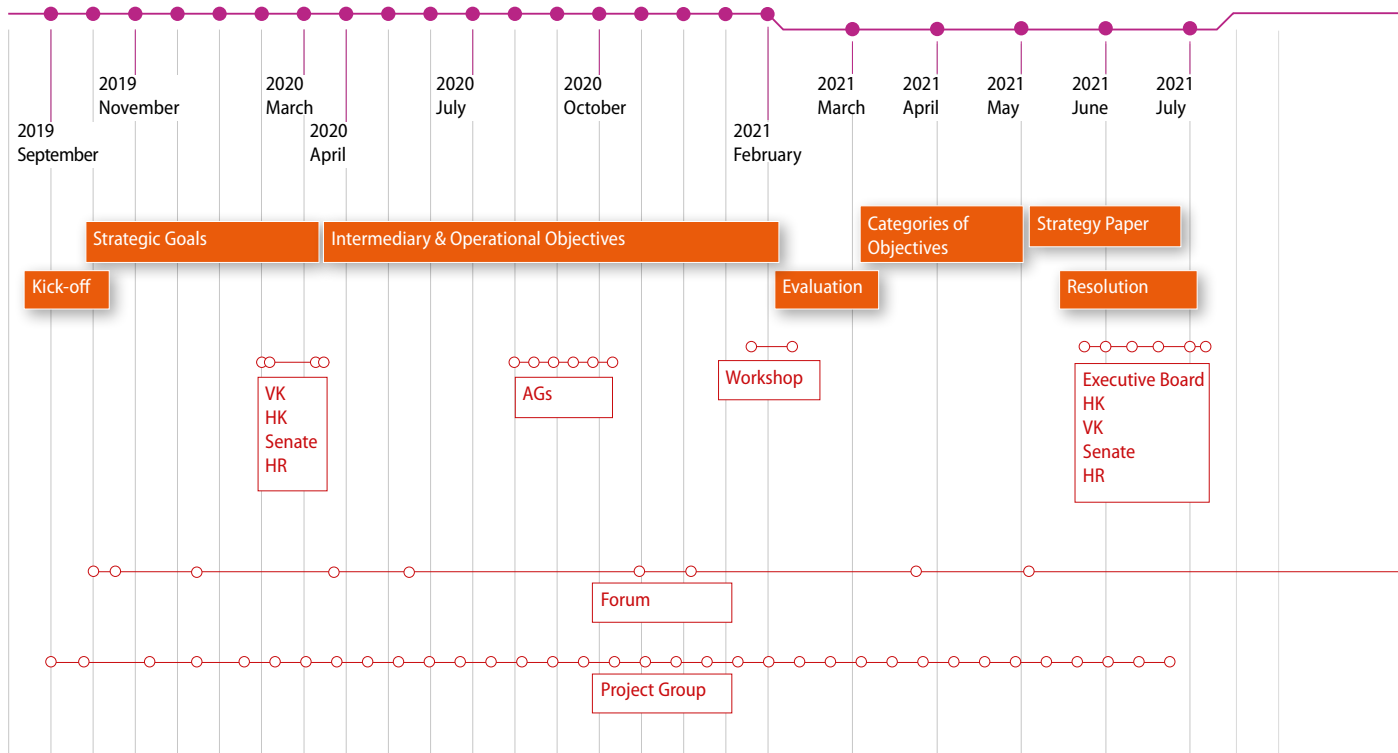
In the **Forum** delegates from TH Köln's twelve faculties, relevant central administrative units, and the student body met with the members of the Project Group. The Forum served as a space for defining and honing the core components of the strategy and sharing expertise on the international dimensions of its members' respective disciplines; those involved in it took the strategy development process back into their areas of work at TH Köln.

In addition to these key bodies, we included seven working groups on specific issues in the development process; their role was to review the intermediary objectives and formulate and focus the operational objectives.

A Review Workshop on the strategy's then status opened up the discussion to other internal and external stakeholders at the beginning of February 2021.

Alongside this, the strategy was the subject of presentations and discussions in multiple meetings of various official institutional bodies, such as the Senate, the Board of Trustees, the Deans' Conference, and TH Köln's Advisory Council ^[7].

[7] (Appendix 1 contains a complete list of the members of the Project Group, the Forum, and working groups associated with the strategy, and participants in the Review Workshop).



- Months
- Meetings

Fig. 1, HR = Board of Trustees (Hochschulrat), HK = Deans' Conference (Hochschulkonferenz) ^[8], VK = Administrative Heads' Conference (Verwaltungskonferenz) ^[9], AGs = Working Groups (Arbeitsgruppen)

[8] The Deans' Conference consists of the members of TH Köln's Executive Board and the deans.

[9] The Administrative Heads' Conference consists of the members of TH Köln's Executive Board and the heads of the administrative departments, the library, and the Campus IT.

4 Hierarchy and Categories of Goals and Objectives

TH Köln's internationalization strategy consists in a **three-level hierarchy of goals and objectives** in the form of a matrix; the objectives fall into three categories (Fig. 2).

Five **strategic goals** form the **top level of abstraction**, representing TH Köln's long-term vision of where it wants to be as an international higher education institution in 2030. Alongside the area of **Organization and Governance** (see below), these goals provide the overall framework of reference for the further elaboration of objectives and the associated action.

Each of the 24 **intermediary objectives** stems from at least one of the five strategic goals and specifies it or them at an **intermediate level of abstraction**. Many of the intermediary objectives support the attainment of several strategic goals, illustrating the transversal character of internationalization. Specific intermediary objectives of major importance which served all five strategic goals emerged during the strategy's development process and, alongside the operational objectives drawn from them, formed the **Organization and Governance** area of the strategy, which stands alongside the strategic goals.

The 85 **operational objectives** were derived from the intermediary objectives. Sitting at the **lower level of abstraction** within the strategy, they are the objectives with the highest direct capacity for operationalization. Although the degree of their specificity varies, they generally point directly toward action, responsibilities, and performance indicators.

Below the level of the operational objectives are specific points for action. These are not components of the strategy itself but they arise from it. The working groups have already drawn up a number of points for action and passed them on to the Project Group and the Forum for discussion. These will serve as a starting point for the strategy's implementation and will be refined as this progresses.

The three **categories of objectives** within the internationalization strategy emerged subsequently to the Review Workshop, at which a need to prioritize the intermediary and operational objectives and clarify responsibilities became evident. The categories are:

Institutional objectives for the first phase of implementation (2021-2025): 17 intermediary objectives and 43 operational objectives, on which all areas of TH Köln are required to work, form the core of the strategy in the initial phase of its realization.

Faculty objectives for the first phase of implementation (2021-2025): The intent of these objectives is to enable the faculties to extend and enrich particular aspects of internationalization, in accordance with their specific disciplines and key interests, and in doing so to define their own distinct approach to internationalization. Engaging with the institutional objectives and in dialog with TH Köln's Executive Board and the faculties, each faculty will decide which of the 5 intermediary and 15 operational objectives in this category it will seek to achieve.

Prospective operational objectives for the second phase of implementation (2026-2030): 2 intermediary and 27 operational objectives have been designated as prospective objectives for this phase. The two planned cycles of the strategy's evaluation (2024 and 2026) will include assessment of these objectives' ongoing relevance to our internationalization and the potential for their realization^[10].

[10] The process also generated objectives whose particular focus makes them more apposite to – for example – other strategies or framework documents.

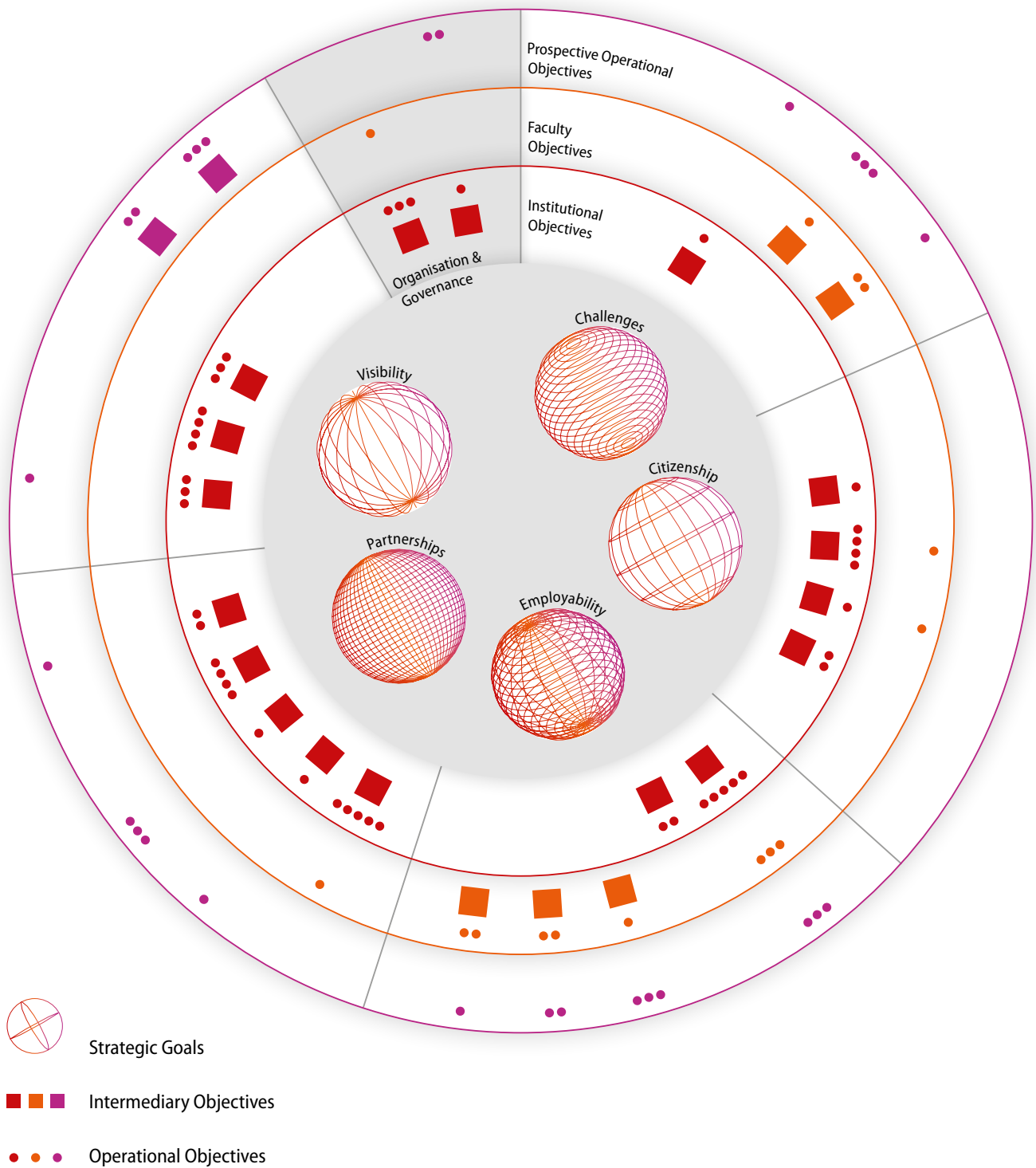
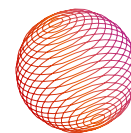


Fig. 2

Strategic Goal I: Addressing Global Challenges



TH Köln's international activities in teaching, research, and knowledge transfer will contribute to addressing global challenges.

Institutional intermediary objective

■ Sustainable Internationalization

TH Köln remains committed to responsible development that seeks to conserve resources, and will assume responsibility for sustainability and its institutional ecological footprint in its internationalization activities. (I.1)

Institutional operational objective

- By June 2023, TH Köln will have defined a concept for sustainable mobility and sustainable conduct in the context of international activities for all its staff in all areas of its activities. (I.1-1)

Prospective operational objective

- TH Köln will increasingly hold international conferences and workshops which it hosts in online or hybrid formats, facilitating participation in these events without geographical barriers and extending the range and intensity of academic and scientific communication and the sharing of ideas and research findings. (I.1-2)

Faculty intermediary objective

■ Addressing global challenges in teaching

TH Köln's Bachelor's, Master's and other degree programs and the associated teaching will engage with global challenges to a greater extent than has been the case to date. Drawing on the subject expertise held and communicated by academic staff and gained by students during their degree programs, the members of TH Köln will possess, or acquire, an explicit understanding of selected global and transnational dimensions of their disciplinary and/or occupational field. (I.2)

Faculty operational objective

- Students will be able to demonstrate, within their individual academic profiles, that they have actively explored global challenges during their degree program. To this end, by June 2023, TH Köln will have developed a corresponding policy whose implementation will take place in cooperation with the appropriate institutional stakeholders. (I.2-1)

Prospective operational objectives

- TH Köln will encourage all its members to acquire subject-specific expertise in engagement with global challenges and will continuously establish this approach as an ongoing mission covering all areas of the institution. (I.2-2)
- TH Köln will seek to empower all stakeholders involved in teaching and the delivery or study of degree programs across all faculties to think and act globally, transnationally and sustainably. (I.2-3)
- TH Köln will create structures that support the incorporation of its students' experiences and ideas into its ongoing development as a sustainable institution. From the second phase of the strategy's implementation onward, all stakeholders involved in the management and implementation of exchange programs will seek to facilitate this process. (I.2-4)

Faculty intermediary objective

■ **Advancing research that helps address global challenges**

Areas of research, and research projects, at TH Köln will make explicit reference to global challenges. Each working in their particular fields, the members of TH Köln will identify research questions and conduct the associated research in a transnationally relevant manner and will demonstrate this relevance in high-visibility publications and activities related to international discourse. (I.3)

Faculty operational objectives

- Researchers at TH Köln will be aware of the major global challenges as defined by the United Nations and of the “twenty-first century skills” required to tackle them, and will take them into account when establishing areas for research and designing and developing research projects. (I.3-1)
- Researchers at TH Köln will expand their international networks by taking part in conferences and through memberships in international associations. (I.3-2)

Prospective operational objective

- TH Köln will identify innovative research areas that explore global challenges and establish conference series addressing at the relevant international research communities. (I.3-3)

Strategic Goal II:

Driving and Communicating Global Citizenship as an Overarching Skill Set



TH Köln's international activities will support the institution's members in active and responsible participation in a liberal, democratic, internationally interconnected society. In so doing, they will enable stakeholders to forge positive connections with and among people with diverse cultural backgrounds and differing values.

Institutional intermediary objective

■ Acknowledging the significance of differing cultural, economic and political contexts

Students will experience the significance of differing cultural, economic and political contexts via degree program content with a focus on international issues and/or via study in international environments at home or abroad. They will learn both to appreciate and to critique these contextual differences and to draw on their knowledge of them when engaging with challenges in their future careers. (II.1)

Institutional operational objective

- From June 2023 onward, in line with an 'Internationalization at Home' approach, students at TH Köln will be able to access a broader range of analog, virtual and/or hybrid learning environments (through the medium of both German and other languages) that is currently available, both in their specific disciplines and in interdisciplinary contexts. In this way, they will be empowered, in a spirit of awareness of diversity, to experience and reflect on the significance of differing cultural, economic, and political contexts in one or more countries or regions of the world. (II.1-1)

Institutional intermediary objective

■ Internationally experienced staff

TH Köln's faculty and administrative staff will increasingly evolve into an international community, extensively familiar with international academic and professional settings and practiced in taking active account of the cultural, economic, and political influences at work in these spheres. (II.2)

Institutional operational objectives

- By December 2021, the Deans and the Executive Board of TH Köln, working with its Departments of Human Resources and International Affairs, will have compiled a set of criteria on International Competencies for Academic and Administrative Staff, which will serve to identify the current and target proportion of staff with an actively deployable set of international competencies. (II.2-1)
- By June 2022, the Department of Human Resources will have designed a training plan for international competencies, which it will integrate into its CPD portfolio. (II.2-2)
- Commencing in January 2023, TH Köln will make specific training for the acquisition or improvement of language proficiency available to its academic and non-academic staff, including international visiting scholars. (II.2-3)
- TH Köln will increase the proportion of its academic and non-academic staff with an international background and will draw up guidelines on welcoming and supporting new staff members joining us from outside Germany. (II.2-4)

Faculty operational objective

- Teaching at TH Köln will make explicit reference to differing cultural perspectives on the matters under discussion in the classes, lectures or courses. (II.2-5)

Institutional intermediary objective

■ **International skills and diversity awareness for students at all levels**

Students at TH Köln, at all levels from undergraduate to doctoral, will possess intercultural skills and diversity awareness which they will be able to translate into corresponding action. (II.3)

Institutional operational objective

- Students will prepare for intercultural/international environments in other regions of the world by acquiring intercultural skills and diversity awareness at TH Köln in the context of their degree programs' curricula and in extracurricular activities. (II.3-1)
-

Faculty operational objective

- The enriching experience of immigration has made Germany a heterogeneous society in which staff teams in businesses and organizations, their customers and clients, and the workforce in general are highly diverse. Against this backdrop and in this spirit, students at TH Köln, at all levels, will attain intercultural competencies and diversity awareness within their degree programs' curricula and through extracurricular activities. TH Köln will raise their awareness of situations in which the risk of discrimination arises and empower them to combat these risks on an individual and structural level. (II.3-2)
-

Institutional intermediary objective

■ **Internationalizing lectures and classes**

TH Köln will support its faculties in their endeavors to internationalize their lectures, classes, courses, programs, and extracurricular activities in both analog and digital formats. It will establish the infrastructure required to undertake this successfully, particularly with regard to information technology, and maintain its compatibility with international standards and practices. (II.4)

Institutional operational objectives

- TH Köln's administration will help welcome academic staff members from outside Germany and engage them in the life of the institution. (II.4-1)
- Commencing in summer semester 2023, TH Köln, in partnership with its faculties, will advance and support the delivery of classes (online or face-to-face) at TH Köln by academic staff from its international partner institutions, and vice versa. (II.4-2)

Strategic Goal III: Producing Globally Employable Graduates



TH Köln's international activities will enable students at all academic levels, be they from Germany or abroad, to successfully position themselves in the regional, national and international labor market and to make a sustained contribution to internationalization in Cologne and the surrounding area.

Institutional intermediary objective

■ Opportunities to gain degree program credits and research experience abroad

Under- and postgraduate students and doctoral researchers at TH Köln will have opportunities to attain degree program credits and usable research experience in international settings within and outside Germany in the context of structured formats. (III.1)

Institutional operational objectives

- Commencing in summer semester 2023, TH Köln's faculties will, individually or jointly, create bespoke digital and analog teaching formats for international students that will enable TH Köln students and international students to study alongside one another. (III.1-1)
- From summer semester 2023 onward, degree program reaccreditation processes at TH Köln will systematically incorporate periods of time into degree programs for students to undertake international mobility. (III.1-2)
- Every two years from summer semester 2023 onward, each of TH Köln's faculties will define the percentage by which they will aim to increase the proportion of students participating in international mobility – be this digital or in person, long-term or short-term – and will formulate a plan of action to achieve this target. (III.1-3)
- Every two years from January 2023 onward, all organizational units within TH Köln define the percentage by which they will aim to increase the proportion of their staff who participate in international mobility in the course of a year – be this digital or in person, long-term or short-term – and will formulate a plan of action to achieve this target. (III.1-4)
- TH Köln's Language Learning Center will offer customized English courses for lecturers to all faculties wishing to expand their portfolio of classes taught in English. By June 2022, it will have created a program on English as a Medium of Instruction in collaboration with the Center for Academic Development. (III.1-5)

Faculty operational objectives

- From summer semester 2023 onward, TH Köln's faculties will make provisions in the examination regulations of their degree programs to enable students to access course formats with a strongly international character, in the spirit of promoting general education and facilitating the recognition and transfer of credits within and outside Germany. (III.1-6)
- From summer semester 2022 onward, TH Köln will work with each of its faculties to support and encourage its students, at under-, postgraduate and doctoral level, to engage in cooperative project work and research projects with international partner organizations. (III.1-7)
- TH Köln's faculties will expand their portfolio of classes and courses taught in English in line with demand. (III.1-8)

Prospective operational objectives

- In the second phase of the strategy's implementation, TH Köln's official institutional committees will agree upon binding standards for the internationalization of its degree programs. These standards will actively boost our progress toward the goals and objectives set out in the internationalization strategy. (III.1-9)
- Likewise in the second phase of implementation, TH Köln will establish a forum for the sharing of experiences of and ideas around internationalization among professors from a range of disciplines who maintain a wide range of personal and institutional corporate relationships. (III.1-10)
- The second phase of implementation will also see TH Köln expand the remit of its Career Service to include services for students and doctoral researchers who aim to commence their careers outside Germany and for international students and doctoral researchers who wish to establish themselves in Germany's labor market. (III.1-11)

Institutional intermediary objective

■ Improving proficiency in foreign languages among students at all levels

Students at TH Köln, at all academic levels, will be able to improve their general and occupational proficiency in foreign languages, increasing their employability in labor market sectors in which international settings are commonplace. (III.2)

Institutional operational objectives

- By September 2022, TH Köln will have conducted a process aimed at establishing a language skills policy, coordinated and headed by the Language Learning Center in consultation with the Department of International Affairs. The outcome of this process will encompass clearly-defined targets and corresponding action, alongside the publication of a policy document outlining TH Köln's proposed institutional language skills policy. This document will be presented to the relevant committees by March 2023. (III.2-1)
- By June 2023 at the latest, the faculties of TH Köln will have embarked upon a process of the successive incorporation into their degree program curricula of general and discipline-specific courses in all languages offered at TH Köln, including German for speakers of other languages, and courses in intercultural skills. In so doing, they will reaffirm and practically support the importance of international competencies within the degree programs they run. (III.2-2)

Faculty intermediary objective

■ Academic degrees opening doors to the international labor markets

The under-, postgraduate and doctoral degrees awarded at TH Köln will enable their holders to access international labor markets without needing to attain any additional qualifications. (III.3)

Faculty operational objective

- From summer semester 2025 onward, each faculty will run at least one degree program incorporating an international multiple degree and at least one degree program with a distinct international orientation. (III.3-1)
-

Prospective operational objectives

- TH Köln will create a format within which students will be able to provide employers, institutions etc. with a comprehensive overview of their degrees' curricular and extracurricular international components, evidencing their personal repertoire of international experience and skills. (III.3-2)
- The Department of International Affairs and the Department of Academic Affairs will support the faculties, heads of degree programs and industry representatives in drawing up a review of the current challenges facing graduates, the response to these challenges provided by TH Köln's degree programs, and the potential for additions and improvements to TH Köln's academic portfolio in this context. This review will be completed by the conclusion of the second phase of the strategy's implementation. (III.3-3)
- TH Köln's administration will provide appropriate and timely information to prospective and current students at all academic levels regarding fundamental legal issues related to launching a career outside Germany. In a similar manner, the faculties will provide information about those qualifications that are of particular relevance to students' planned fields of work and requirements specific to particular countries or world regions. Further, drawing on the support of TH Köln's administration, they will take action, as far as possible, to ensure their degree programs are eligible for legal recognition outside Germany. (III.3-4)

Faculty intermediary objective

■ **Additional academic and language qualifications for access to the German job market**

TH Köln will, within the provisions of the law and its financial means, offer applicants who hold academic degrees attained outside Germany which do not meet the general requirements of the German labor market the opportunity to attain additional academic and language qualifications with relevance to their desired career field. It will also provide other services on the basis of students' needs and in line with those of the labor market. (III.4)

Faculty operational objectives

- In order to ensure that TH Köln's assessments of international academic degrees in professions regulated by law are appropriate, the institution's relevant faculties will, commencing in July 2023, provide their expertise in the form of written assessments of equivalency. (III.4-1)
- Likewise commencing in July 2023, applicants to TH Köln who hold academic degrees attained outside Germany but do not meet admission requirements will receive individual advice and specialized training, in line with the needs of the labor market, in at least one academic field or career area per faculty. This service will help to improve these students' transition into graduate careers appropriate to their qualifications. If required, the Academy of Continuing Education will work with the faculties to realize these programs. (III.4-2)

Prospective operational objectives

- From the second phase of the strategy's implementation onward, applicants to TH Köln who hold academic degrees attained outside Germany but do not meet admission requirements will be able to attend specialized academic qualification programs catering to their needs and will take aptitude tests in at least one graduate occupational field per faculty. If required, the Academy of Continuing Education will work with the faculties to deliver these services. Depending on the specific profession or occupation in question, these programs may lead to the award of official accreditation by the German state (staatliche Anerkennung) or other comparable professional qualifications. (III.4-3)
- The second phase of implementation will additionally see the launch of specialized, needs-centered language qualifications for under- and postgraduate and doctoral students at TH Köln holding academic degrees attained outside Germany. Embedded in the students' curricular degree programs, these courses will be available in at least one graduate occupational field per faculty. The Language Learning Center will work with the relevant faculties to deliver these services. (III.4-4)

Faculty intermediary objective

■ **Support for students planning a future career abroad**

TH Köln will support its under- and postgraduate and doctoral students in planning a prospective career outside Germany. (III.5)

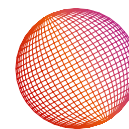
Faculty operational objectives

- From summer semester 2023 onward, TH Köln's faculties will deliver courses or other services whose purpose is to prepare their upcoming graduates for relevant challenges relating to access to international labor markets. They will supplement these activities by contributing to institution-wide services in this field. (III.5-1)
- At least 25 % of doctoral degrees will involve collaboration with institutions outside Germany and/or academics from outside Germany serving as supervisors. (III.5-2)

Prospective operational objective

- In the second phase of implementation, TH Köln will expand the portfolio of its Career Service to include services for under- and postgraduate students and doctoral researchers pursuing career prospects abroad and for those coming from abroad who intend to establish themselves in the German labor market. (III.5-3)

Establishing and Maintaining Sustainable Global Partnerships



TH Köln will engage actively in international partnerships and networks characterized by strong reputations, productive interaction among diverse academic and cultural fields, and high-impact activities in the fields of research, teaching and knowledge transfer.

Institutional intermediary objective

■ Three categories of international partnerships

TH Köln will maintain international partnerships in three categories: institutional partnerships (bilateral, faculty-specific or institution-wide), multilateral networks, and strategic partnerships. A set of established criteria will guide the definition and maintenance of partnerships in all categories. (IV.1)

Institutional operational objectives

- By March 2022, TH Köln will have worked with its faculties in a process facilitated by the Department of International Affairs to create an evaluation matrix that will systematically document and compare all existing partnerships for the period 2016-2020, on the basis of quantitative and qualitative criteria. Appropriate amendments and adjustments to the matrix will take place following an initial pilot phase. (IV.1-1)
- By December 2022, each faculty will have completed its portfolio of existing and prospective international partnerships. (IV.1-2)
- By June 2022, the President, the members of the Deans' Conference and the Department of International Affairs will have compiled a comprehensive portfolio of prospective international partnerships, encompassing all types and categories of cooperation (faculty-specific and institution-wide bilateral partnerships, strategic partnerships, and issue-specific multilateral networks). This portfolio will be updated on an annual basis. (IV.1-3)
- Likewise by June 2022, the Department of International Affairs will have set up a continuously updated internal information system whose purpose is to provide information about existing and emerging partnerships, associated activities, points of contact, etc. (IV.1-4)
- TH Köln will support to its faculties and professors in forging international partnerships. (IV.1-5)

Faculty operational objective

- By March 2022, the faculties will have set out faculty-specific evaluation criteria to the end of systematically documenting their existing partnerships and providing descriptions of them that facilitate comparison of all partnerships. These criteria will be kept under ongoing review. (IV.1-6)

Institutional intermediary objective

■ **Bilateral partnerships as routes to diversity**

Bilateral partnerships will constitute the bedrock of TH Köln's international cooperation portfolio. In reflecting the complete spectrum of disciplines represented at TH Köln and connecting our institution with a broad range of countries and world regions, they will forge a path toward greater diversity. Bilateral partnerships will serve as a space for exploring forms of collaboration and lay foundations for the other models of cooperation TH Köln will develop going forward. (IV.2)

Institutional operational objective

- Drawing on the evaluation matrix for partnerships that also forms part of our strategy (see above), the Department of International Affairs will work with TH Köln's faculties to produce an overview of existing bilateral partnerships, deliverable by June 2022, that indicates which of these collaborations have the potential to evolve into strategic partnerships, which should be continued as they are, and which require review or discontinuation. This overview will be updated annually. (IV.2-1)

Prospective operational objective

- From the second phase of the strategy's implementation onward, when entering into discussions about a potential partnership, representatives of TH Köln will raise sustainability, as part of TH Köln's portfolio, as a potential area of possible collaboration. "Sustainability", in this context, will encompass both the sustainability of the collaboration/the project per se and the sustainability of the specific associated activities. In this process, representatives will emphasize the centrality to any partnership of TH Köln's commitment to taking on a pioneering role in the field of sustainable institutional development in higher education. (IV.2-2)

Institutional intermediary objective

■ **Multilateral networks with intensive foci**

Issue-specific multilateral networks will entail particularly close collaboration in thorough academic/scientific engagement with highly complex matters. They will help refine TH Köln's teaching and research profile. (IV.3)

Institutional operational objective

- By June 2022, all faculties will have compiled a brief overview of international networks in which they are actively involved that hold faculty-wide or cross-faculty, strategic or topic-specific significance. (IV.3-1)

Prospective operational objectives

- In the second phase of the strategy's implementation, TH Köln's Executive Board and the Deans' Offices will create transparent incentives for internationalization at institutional and faculty level by compiling concise overviews of funding opportunities and operational support for international networking activities and the applicable internal qualifying criteria and by disseminating this information. (IV.3-2)
- Network stakeholders, drawing on brief synopses of network activities and requesting additional evaluation by the Executive Board where required, will take decisions on the continuation, duration and termination of these activities. (IV.3-3)
- Researchers employed in TH Köln's faculties and academic units will broaden their involvement in existing international research networks and, drawing on the support of the Departments of International Affairs and Research and Knowledge Transfer, will explore and trial involvement in new networks on the basis of TH Köln's research foci. (IV.3-4)

Institutional intermediary objective

■ **Cultivating our profile via strategic partnerships**

Strategic partnerships, involving and engaging our institution as a whole, will serve to raise and enhance TH Köln's profile at the internationalization strategy's highest level of abstraction. Their foundation will be a "3 x 3 x 3" system, i. e. they will encompass at least three disciplines (usually represented by faculties), members of at least three internal stakeholder groups, and at least three types of activities (teaching, research, knowledge transfer, governance). (IV.4)

Institutional operational objectives

- By March 2022, the University Conference will have discussed and adopted a draft definition of "strategic partnerships" in the TH Köln context. (IV.4-1)
- By June 2022, TH Köln will have created a portfolio of planned strategic partnerships, including a schedule for the successive bringing on board of faculties/institutes, activities, evaluation cycles and other components. Following the establishment of the first strategic partnerships, this portfolio will be subject to biennial review on the basis of general and specific criteria. (IV.4-2)
- By June 2022, drawing on input provided by the Department of International Affairs, the Executive Board of TH Köln will have set up internal support services for all members of TH Köln with the purpose of facilitating the establishment and realization of strategic partnerships. (IV.4-3)
- Commencing in July 2023, the Department of International Affairs will offer advisory services around external and internal funding and support for the initiation and implementation of strategic partnerships. (IV.4-4)

Institutional intermediary objective

■ **Strategic partnerships upholding European values and promoting social innovation**

TH Köln is committed to the shared values that bind Europe together. Engaging in dialog with its European and non-European partners, TH Köln will actively promote social innovation in the spirit of driving positive societal developments, advancing sustainable economic growth, and caring for the environment. (IV.5)

Institutional operational objectives

- By June 2022, TH Köln will have drawn up guidelines on ethical policy and governance with respect to its partner institutions. (IV.5-1)
- TH Köln will actively promote the values to which it is committed and continuously support their active incorporation into prospective or ongoing projects in teaching and research. (IV.5-2)

Prospective operational objective

- In the second phase of the strategy's implementation, TH Köln will intensify its cooperation with partner institutions in settings undergoing political, economic, or other crises. (IV.5-3)

Strategic Goal V: Increasing TH Köln's Global Visibility



TH Köln will attain a reputation as an internationally attractive institution among other academic institutions, policymakers, civil-society stakeholders, business and industry, and its own members.

Institutional intermediary objective

■ Attracting highly qualified applicants from across the globe

TH Köln will aim to receive an increased number of applications from qualified international prospective students, faculty, researchers, and other staff, putting it in a position to successfully recruit student and staff bodies with a high proportion of international members. (V.1)

Institutional operational objectives

- By December 2022, TH Köln's administration will have issued guidelines on the international recruitment of students, doctoral researchers, academic and administrative staff. (V.1-1)
- By June 2023, working with the Department of International Affairs, the Graduate Center will have drawn up an internationalization concept for doctoral training and study at TH Köln. (V.1-2)
- By December 2022, TH Köln will have created an international marketing strategy addressing both its role as an employer and its portfolio of degree programs. (V.1-3)

Prospective operational objective

- In the second phase of implementation, TH Köln will design an introductory semester for international applicants who meet its entry requirements but are yet to attain the required German language proficiency. This semester will become part of the regular degree program for these students (known as semester 0) and encompass language and subject-specific components. (V.1-4)

Institutional intermediary objective

■ Bilingual communication

TH Köln will establish and cultivate bilingual communication in German and English across all dimensions of its remit. (V.2)

Institutional operational objectives

- By June 2022, TH Köln will establish a central Translation Services Unit within its Department of Communications and Marketing. The Unit's role will be to work with various TH Köln stakeholders to assess demand for the expansion of English-language communication at TH Köln, to set priorities and to meet the needs thus identified. (V.2-1)
- The Translation Services Unit will coordinate and deliver the successive translation of TH Köln's website with the aim of providing an English translation of all information appearing on the website by 2025. (V.2-2)
- By December 2023, the Department of Facility Management and the Translation Services Unit will have implemented bilingual signage throughout the major part of TH Köln's facilities and premises. (V.2-3)
- Commencing in January 2023, all advisory services at TH Köln will provide advice and support in English to all non-German-speaking students, doctoral researchers, and staff. (V.2-4)

Institutional intermediary objective

■ Centering internationalization in staff recruitment and onboarding processes

TH Köln will design its internal administrative processes in a manner that facilitates the uncomplicated recruitment and smooth onboarding of international staff. (V.3)

Institutional operational objectives

- By December 2021, TH Köln will have created and implemented a scheme for welcoming international staff, stipulating specific action for recruitment and onboarding in this area. (V.3-1)
- By December 2022, all documents relating to the recruitment of faculty and other staff will be available in English as well as in German. (V.3-2)
- By June 2022, all departments, central units, and faculties of TH Köln will have appointed designated contacts for international staff, and/or a number of people with an advanced command of the English language who are available to provide support. The Department of Human Resources will design and deliver training for these "internationalization ambassadors". (V.3-3)

Prospective intermediary objective

■ **An international alumni network**

TH Köln will establish an international alumni network and operationalize the contacts it encompasses to the end of increasing its international visibility and boosting its international recruitment activities. (V.4)

Prospective operational objectives

- In the second phase of the strategy's implementation, TH Köln will draw up an institution-wide plan for the establishment of an international network of alumni, whose realization will commence in July 2022. (V.4-1)
- The second phase of implementation will also entail the incorporation of discussions around the issue of sustainability into alumni-focused work at TH Köln. (V.4-2)

Prospective intermediary objective

■ **International events**

TH Köln will establish or adopt event formats with an international focus and will increasingly incorporate international approaches into existing formats. (V.5)

Prospective operational objectives

- TH Köln will increase its efforts to host international events. (V.5-1)
- In the second phase of the strategy's implementation, TH Köln will host an annual themed international week. (V.5-2)
- In the second phase of implementation, TH Köln will also ensure that each existing multi-day conference series or each multi-day workshop it runs includes a topic, section, or panel with an international focus. (V.5-3)

Objectives Centering on Organization and Governance (not exclusively associated with a particular strategic goal)

Institutional intermediary objective

■ Roles, rights, and responsibilities in matters of internationalization

The central and decentralized units of TH Köln will adhere to a principle of roles, rights, and responsibilities in matters around internationalization. (OG.1)

Institutional operational objectives

- By December 2021, working with TH Köln's faculties, the Language Learning Center and the Administrative Heads' Conference, the Department of International Affairs will have compiled a list of regularly occurring tasks in the field of internationalization, including their definitions and the associated processes and procedures. (OG.1-1)
- On the basis of the above outcome (OG.1-1), the Executive Board will define roles (including roles for Internationalization Coordinators based in the faculties), rights, and responsibilities for internationalization by June 2022. Where a need arises to add previously omitted tasks or define new ones, the process will be repeated to the end of successively adding to the portfolio. (OG.1-2)
- From July 2022 onward, internationalization will be a mandatory component of meetings between the faculties and the Executive Board and of discussions on budgets taking place between TH Köln's administrative departments and central academic units. (OG.1-3)

Faculty operational objective

- By June 2023, all faculties will have set out, within their faculty development plans, action for engaging their academic staff in internationalization activities on a discipline-specific basis and allocated a budget for this action. This process will include the creation of incentives and compensatory mechanisms, including provisions for the reduction of teaching loads for academic staff engaged in international activities, and the corresponding budgets. The faculties will make the documents containing this information available to all their members. (OG.1-4)

Institutional intermediary objective

■ Supporting internationalization via incentives and compensatory mechanisms

TH Köln will have well-established incentives and compensatory mechanisms which encourage its staff to engage in international activities and will continue to develop these mechanisms in line with its internationalization goals and objectives. (OG.2)

Institutional operational objective

- The Executive Board of TH Köln will establish incentives to motivate its staff to engage in activities relating to the internationalization of degree programs, teaching, research, and knowledge transfer. (OG.2-1)

Prospective operational objectives

- TH Köln's administration will develop support services for members of TH Köln applying for funding for internationalization projects. These services will be accessible in the second phase of the strategy's implementation. (OG.2-2)
- Applications for research sabbaticals or other forms of professional leave (pursuant to Section 40 of the North Rhine-Westphalia Higher Education Act of) that involve international topics and collaboration will be prioritized for approval in line with an institutional focus on activities supporting internationalization. (OG.2-3)

5 Outlook

TH Köln's adoption of its internationalization strategy marks the beginning of the first phase of its implementation. TH Köln will establish a monitoring system to accompany the process, including the committees and working groups whose remit this is. We expect to take part in the "Internationalisation of Universities" re-audit conducted by the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) in the context of this first phase of implementation. You can read ongoing updates on the internationalization strategy's implementation status and other relevant information in this context at www.th-koeln.de/lnstra.

Appendix

Participation in developing the Internationalization Strategy

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Vanesa Haucke,

FachschaftsvertreterInnenkonferenz

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Laura Mogollón,

General Students' Committee (AStA)

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Prof. Dr. Matthias Otten,

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Prof. Fabian Storch,

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