



Internationalisation Strategy

2021 – 2025

Internationalisation Strategy – Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences 2021 – 2025

Introduction

Today, economic, political and social developments are increasingly subject to global influences. Globalisation has permeated every area of society and public life. Ideas and actions are not limited by borders, whilst problems can often no longer be solved exclusively at national level. Instead, society is required to confront processes that reach beyond national frontiers and to take them into consideration when making decisions. The higher education and science sector has a crucial part to play in this. Universities are not only trail-blazers and drivers of innovation, they also make an important contribution to transnational understanding. Through targeted internationalisation and, in particular, the integration of an international and intercultural dimension in studying, teaching and research (cf. Beelen & Jones, 2015; De Wit et al., 2015; De Wit & Altbach, 2021) they prepare young people to face the complex challenges of a globalised world. They build bridges, shoulder responsibility and facilitate cooperation. Their ideas and knowledge are not bound by national borders. Their networking strengthens research and teaching, and influences culture and society. **Universities are essential actors in a global knowledge society.**

Internationalisation is not an end in itself, but an outlook. “Today, a workable internationalisation strategy is part of the armoury of many universities,” explains the President of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Professor Dr. Joybrato Mukherjee (Mukherjee, 2020). In recent years, Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences has successfully developed an international profile. As one of the first universities of applied sciences in Germany to do so, in 2016 it drew up a strategy for systematically driving its internationalisation process forward. The first Internationalisation Strategy (2016 – 2020) produced good results, in particular in terms of structuring the institution’s internationalisation work. The collaboration between the stakeholders tasked with internationalisation responsibilities within the university was streamlined, knowledge of internationalisation projects was pooled and a communication structure was established. Structured approaches to marketing the university internationally were implemented and plans for the internationalisation of existing study programmes and the introduction of international degree courses were advanced.

- 📍 *A tangible example of this is the **new English-language Bachelor’s degree programme in Sustainable Resources, Engineering and Management (StREaM)**. The course, which is closely linked to Business Engineering, and has a particular focus on sustainability, was jointly developed by three departments. It aims to enable students to understand and apply the principles of sustainable development and their importance for the economy, environment and society, as well as to help shape transformation processes. The planned start date for the programme is the summer semester of 2022.*
- 📍 *Concrete plans are being made to develop international study programmes in other departments of the university. The Department of Mechanical Engineering is planning a **double degree programme** with Hebei Agricultural University in China.*
- 📍 *The Department of Economics is working with the German Jordanian University to develop a **joint Master’s programme** combining science and economics.*

Moreover, Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences has succeeded in consolidating existing strategic partnerships with universities abroad, on both an institutional and a departmental basis.

📍 **Strategically important international ties** include – alongside the university-wide cooperation with the German Jordanian University – Quingdao University of Technology (China) and Perm State Technical University (Russia) in the field of Civil Engineering, the GIDE research project conducted by the Institute of Industrial Design, and the University of Pereyaslav (Ukraine), with which the university is engaged in close cooperations in a variety of disciplines in Social and Health Care.

📍 The Spanish university of A Coruña is an associate partner in the international degree programme in Water Engineering, which has become a **successful model**. No other Master's degree programme is currently receiving more applications.

📍 Another important **partner country** is **Austria**. The university runs postgraduate courses in Business that cooperate closely with Johannes Kepler University in Linz, as well as in Psychology with the Schloss Hofen – Wissenschafts- und Weiterbildungsgesellschaft m.b.H. in Vorarlberg.

📍 Furthermore, there are also **joint research projects** with Vietnam in the field of Engineering Ecology. The SAND! project – alternatively Sand Production and Risk Reduction of Dredging in Vietnam is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung [BMBF], 2019).

📍 The university's interdisciplinary SPiRiT research group also features **international work and networking** (Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences, 2021).

Accordingly, Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences views the results of its first Internationalisation Strategy with satisfaction and, with this strategy paper, aims to build on the successes already achieved.

When developing its **Internationalisation Strategy for 2021 – 2025** the university looked to the relevant regional, national and European higher education policy frameworks. This means that the Internationalisation Strategy is based equally on the target agreement between the state of Saxony-Anhalt and the university, and on the Saxony-Anhalt Internationalisation and Europe Strategy as well as the European Commission objectives for the European Education Area.

The target agreement between higher education institutions in Saxony-Anhalt and the Ministry states that the universities should contribute to ensuring the supply of skilled workers through the creation of sought-after study programmes. Equally, they are expected to ensure the proper infrastructure for successful research and the recruitment of high quality scientists, including from the next generation. In this connection, the state sees internationalisation as a challenge that must be met across the board and encourages universities to increase the proportion of international study programmes in line with demand as well as to provide the relevant support for study trips abroad by their students through the creation of the requisite structures (Saxony-Anhalt Ministry of Economy, Science and Digitalisation, 2020).

These aspirations are derived from the Saxony-Anhalt Internationalisation and Europe Strategy, which ascribes particular importance to “the development of internationally and Europe-oriented, effective educational institutions, which convey international, European and foreign language competences both through their teaching and extra-curricular activities, and contribute to overcoming the challenges posed by a globalised world” (Saxony-Anhalt state government, 2016).

The objectives of the European Education Area include structuring the universities to be transnational, sustainable and diverse as well as promoting access and equality of opportunity, inclusion and fair cooperation in all areas (European Commission, 2020). “Alongside better relaying of basic knowledge and transversal skills, mobility and cross-border cooperation are key drivers in improvements to the quality of education. Existing barriers to this must be removed. At the same time, it also reiterates that in future mobility must be structured in such a way that it is more sustainable and in a position to meet digital challenges.” (German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Brussels, 2020).

In addition to this policy framework, the Internationalisation Strategy builds specifically on the Higher Education Strategy - the Strategic Map 2020 – 2024 - of Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences (Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences, 2020). In so doing, the strategically planned implementation of the measures for achieving these objectives forms the core of this Internationalisation Strategy. Each individual objective and sub-objective contributes towards increasing the attractiveness of the university and its range of programmes.

With the Internationalisation Strategy for 2021 – 2025, the university has defined **two primary objectives and three across-the-board tasks** for itself, which are linked to the results already achieved under the previous strategy and will further consolidate the international profile of the institution taking into account the higher education policy framework previously mentioned.

Objectives and Measures

Objective 1 *Internationalisation of studies, teaching and research*

According to the Teaching and Learning Guidelines at Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences, quality is achieved by all members of the university taking an equal interest in teaching, research and development, knowledge transfer and social responsibility (Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences, 2019). Internationalisation consolidates and enhances quality in all areas and is also shaped by every stakeholder at the university, all of whom bear equal responsibility for it. In the process, internationalisation has long since ceased only to be about, in simple terms, mobility of university members and joint international research projects, but instead is an integral and tangible part of the academic teaching and overall university organisation (University Rectors' Conference, 2017).

Derived from this, the implementation of an international and intercultural dimension (Beelen & Jones, 2015) is an important focus of the university. This applies to the design of study programmes, their modules and courses, via content, methods, foreign language offerings and structures, as well as embedding internships in the curriculum, stays abroad and international projects. The same is true of the extracurricular activities offered. On the whole, programmes aimed at promoting a local *welcome culture* are being expanded. Through

these projects, the university is seeking to further establish itself as an attractive environment for teaching, studying and conducting research in an international environment.

The design methodology used for international syllabuses includes the integration of digitally supported modules which are suitable, for example, for blended learning. We are seeking to establish transnationally interlinked curricula from which content can be configured in the form of joint modules with international partners, through to planning complete joint degree programmes. Even without physical mobility, students, lecturers and employees are being enabled, via *online and hybrid formats and collaborative approaches* to teach and study internationally. As a result, knowledge acquisition and transfer in internationally mixed learning groups as well as dealing with interculturality are not restricted only to the physical presence of the participants. Rather, international study experiences are, through fundamentally *internationally-oriented teaching concepts*, becoming a fixed part of study programmes and thus accessible for all university members. The implementation of such measures contributes not least, in the sense of *Internationalisation at Home*, to students who do not travel internationally being able to acquire interculturality and foreign languages skills. This brings

about a lasting improvement in their individual employability.

In the area of internationalisation of research, *internationally networked collaborative research* is being pursued, in tandem with a progressive development of the profile of the university at European level and in international research networks beyond this with benefits for both learning and teaching. International research is being developed into a distinct area of activity within the university. The expansion of networks and cooperations is accordingly a key area of focus and is being achieved, on the one hand, by working more closely with local partners such as non-university research establishments in Saxony-Anhalt (Saxony-Anhalt Ministry of Economy, Science and Digitalisation, 2020), and on the other through alliances with international partners when tendering for and conducting research projects. National and international research cooperations involving the university support the acquisition of scientific knowledge and provide the impetus for innovation activities in the region. At the same time it is also about the visibility and reach of the university's research activities beyond state borders. In turn, internationally visible research strength attracts further international interest and excellence.

Objective 2 **Increasing the number of international students and support for the mobility of all university members**

In line with the objectives of the European Education Area, the university is increasing its number of international students and the opportunities for its students and lecturers to travel abroad. The **Erasmus+** programme represents one driver promoting mobility. With its extensive offers for all university groups, the programme acts as a spur to the internationalisation process and in this way promotes the further development of the university towards becoming a modern, international, academic institution. It facilitates the acquisition of essential foreign language and other key skills and promotes the understanding of democracy and the dissemination of European values, which are of primary importance for the university.

Through closer cooperation with its partner universities abroad, the university is succeeding in exchanging ideas, innovations and change processes. This type of networking helps to realise synergies and enhance the effectiveness of both its own and partner institutions. In this area there is a connection with the Saxony-Anhalt Internationalisation and Europe Strategy, which seeks to achieve long-term benefits for the state through economic, cultural and social **co-operation and networking between universities** and foreign regions (State Government of Saxony-Anhalt, 2016).

With regard to the subject of mobility, for the university it is important to **prepare and support trips abroad** both technically and institutionally. Structural adjustments in terms of improved recognition processes, preparatory and accompanying (digital) foreign language courses and advisory services are planned, as is making the relevant **continuing education opportunities** permanent.

The range of tasks to be accomplished in **international university marketing** are also diverse, especially at a time when the framework conditions are constantly changing. Wherever it is more useful for the target group, English-language web pages will be used more frequently. Efficiency and effectiveness of marketing tools will be optimised and the use of these tools will be managed in a more focused way in order to reach more prospective students abroad. The Departments are contributing separately to the development of a centrally-managed marketing strategy. Regular evaluations and adjustments enable the university to react flexibly to change. Furthermore “efforts will be made to bring about **ties between international prospective students** and the university at an early stage” (Saxony-Anhalt Ministry of Economics, Science and Digitalisation, 2020).

Cooperation with external partners is greatly significant, both for the recruitment of international students and also for their **prospects of remaining in the area**. For many prospective students, the professional profile and qualifications as well as their prospects on the labour market are the decisive arguments when selecting a study programme and destination. For this reason, it is not just cooperations with internship companies and institutions that are relevant, but also additional mechanisms for integrating into society. These may be programmes for learning the German language, advice on the possibility of taking up voluntary work or admission into the university's alumni network. Stronger local networking as well as with the partner regions and cities in the state, with the state capital of Magdeburg and the Hanseatic town of Stendal, and also the Altmark districts of Salzwedel and Stendal is thus required. These cooperations produce opportunities for students and graduates to integrate in the local, German and even international labour markets. Their satisfaction with their study programme and the subsequent transition to the labour market has a positive impact on their sense of connection to the university. In this way, international students become important multipliers. ►

Objective 2

In summary, it can be said that in terms of the two primary objectives of the Internationalisation Strategy, the development of international and intercultural formats, both extra-curricular and curricular, depends above all on personnel in the departments dealing with the relevant strategic orientation, and testing, evaluating and implementing formats. These human resources create a structural framework for the university so that it can markedly hone its international profile and increase its openness to diversity in studies, teaching and research and to be more effective in its international partnerships and networks. The resulting rise in attractiveness and increase in visibility abroad are only two of many positive outcomes of the internationalisation process.

Across-the-board tasks

Beyond its core objectives, the Internationalisation Strategy of Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences will also feature **three across-the-board tasks** in the years from 2021 to 2025. In this connection, an “across-the-board task” is a process that encompasses all areas and levels of the university, which either appears squarely at the centre of the implementation of measures or else takes effect in tandem with them. The across-the-board tasks are an integral part of the overall strategy and are fundamentally taken into account during the planning and implementation of all activities.

Digitalisation plays an important part in the internationalisation process at the university, since a close link between digitalisation and internationalisation is essential for an institution’s ability to face the challenges of the future. For this reason, digitalisation is one of the across-the-board tasks in the overall strategy and an integral part of many measures. Work is currently under way on a university-wide digitalisation strategy that will include both studies and teaching as well as other service areas of the university. Digitalisation processes, particularly in teaching, offer a good way of proactively approaching international teaching and learning scenarios. The university understands the linking of digitalisation and internationalisation as an opportunity to realign curricula, administrative processes and technology, and to train its students and staff in new skills. It is pursuing the objective of

implementing service-oriented, digital and networked infrastructures for teaching, knowledge transfer and administration. Overall it is about the dismantling of barriers and equal access to information for all, as well as to international, and intercultural/transcultural experiences. Studying and working across borders can be made more flexible by integrating digital learning and teaching activities. In this way, for example, experiences in the (virtual) international classroom can be intensified as desired and, if needed, also complemented by physical trips, the duration of which may vary.

In the context of the progressive internationalisation of the university, the potential of the **cooperation with the German Jordanian University (GJU)** as a strategic partner is also being utilised more intensively. The GJU project, a transnational flagship project of the Federal Government, which Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences manages, is supported as part of the “Transnational Education – Supporting Binational Universities” framework programme by the DAAD from funds supplied by the BMBF and the Federal Foreign Office. Due to its success, the GJU is considered to be a flagship among universities with a German dimension and transnational educational character. The intended closer dovetailing of technical and structural cooperation between the two institutions will be reflected in many of the following measures and thus constitutes the second across-

Across-the-board tasks

the-board task detailed in the Internationalisation Strategy of Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences. For example, there are plans to increase the number of GJU students spending a year in Germany at Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences, as well as the number of students from the university undertaking exchange programmes at the GJU. Both sides are supporting both the participation in online study programmes and physical and virtual mobility programmes for students and academic and administrative personnel. The university is benefiting in this regard from the existing digitalisation expertise at the GJU. The reciprocal opening up of courses to facilitate exchanges between learning groups is also accompanied by collaboration between the two partners in developing didactic continuing education courses for application-oriented university teaching.

The third across-the-board task to which the university has committed, is to always consider internationalisation in **sustainability** terms. In its Sustainability Strategy, the German Federal Government has committed to the sustainability goals of the United Nations' Agenda 2030 (German Federal Government, 2018). Against this background, in implementing its Internationalisation Strategy, Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences will pay attention to ensuring sustainable results, that is outcomes that achieve a lasting impact. For the university, the challenging concept of taking the sustain-

ability aspects of mobility into account means that away from long-term and/or structurally-enshrined trips abroad by its members, it must more closely scrutinise travel for academic purposes and, wherever it appears sensible, raise awareness of the possibility of utilising digitally-supported alternatives. Naturally, it is still the case that internationalisation cannot succeed without some physical mobility. "Real" meetings and exchanges will continue to be needed, since not everything can be replaced by digital formats. Therefore, in the case of short-term travel, a balanced assessment will be undertaken of the ecological impacts and targeted outcomes.

Objective 1

Internationalisation of studies, teaching and research

Objective 2

Increasing the number of international students and support for the mobility of all university members

Sub-objective 1

Internationalisation of the curricula and Internationalisation at Home

Sub-objective 2

Internationalisation of research

Sub-objective 1

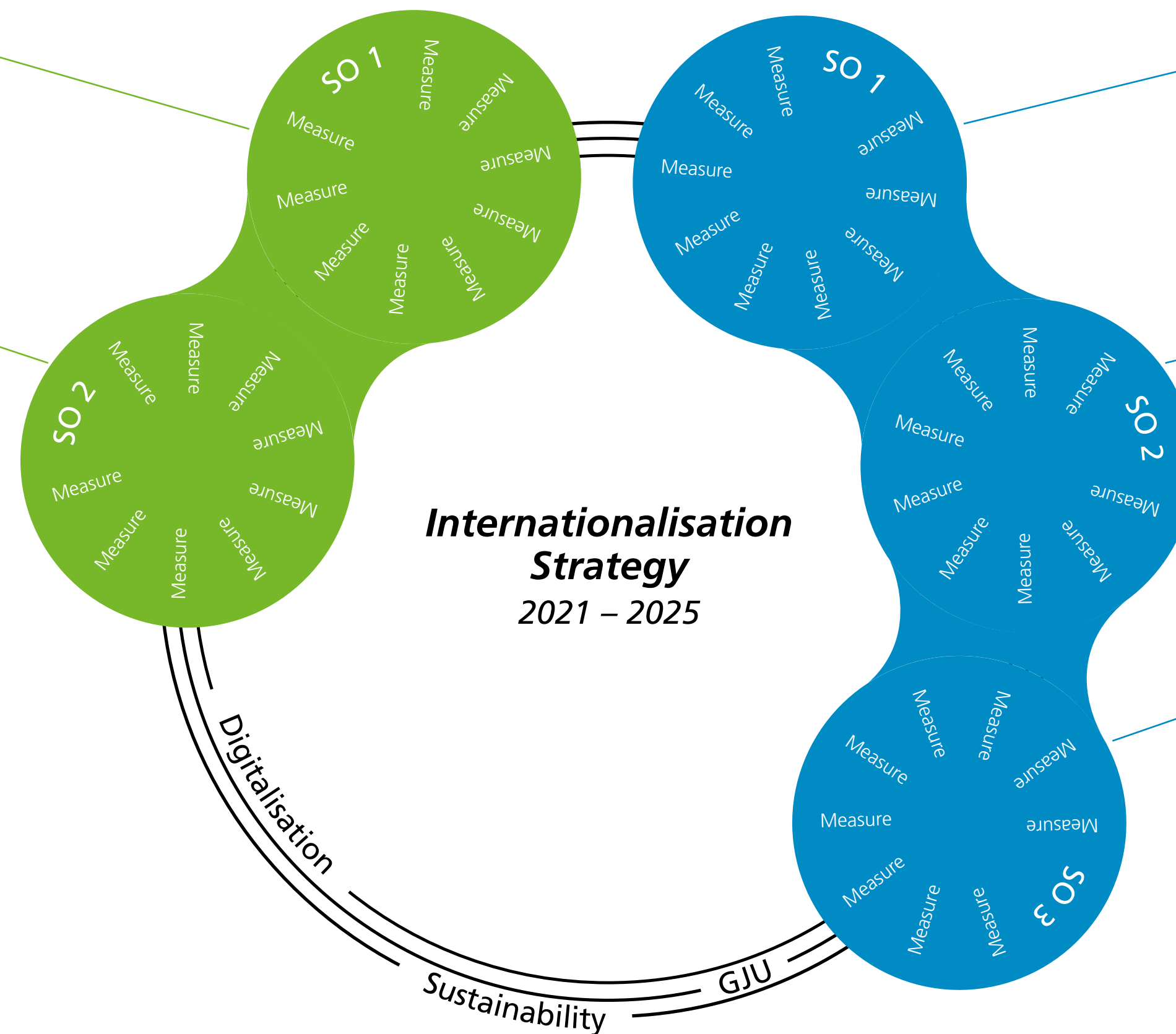
Expansion of activities designed to facilitate and promote mobility

Sub-objective 2

Expansion of international student marketing

Sub-objective 3

Closer cooperation with partners outside of the university



Objective 1

Internationalisation of studies, teaching and research

Sub-objective 1

Internationalisation of the curricula and Internationalisation at Home

Measures

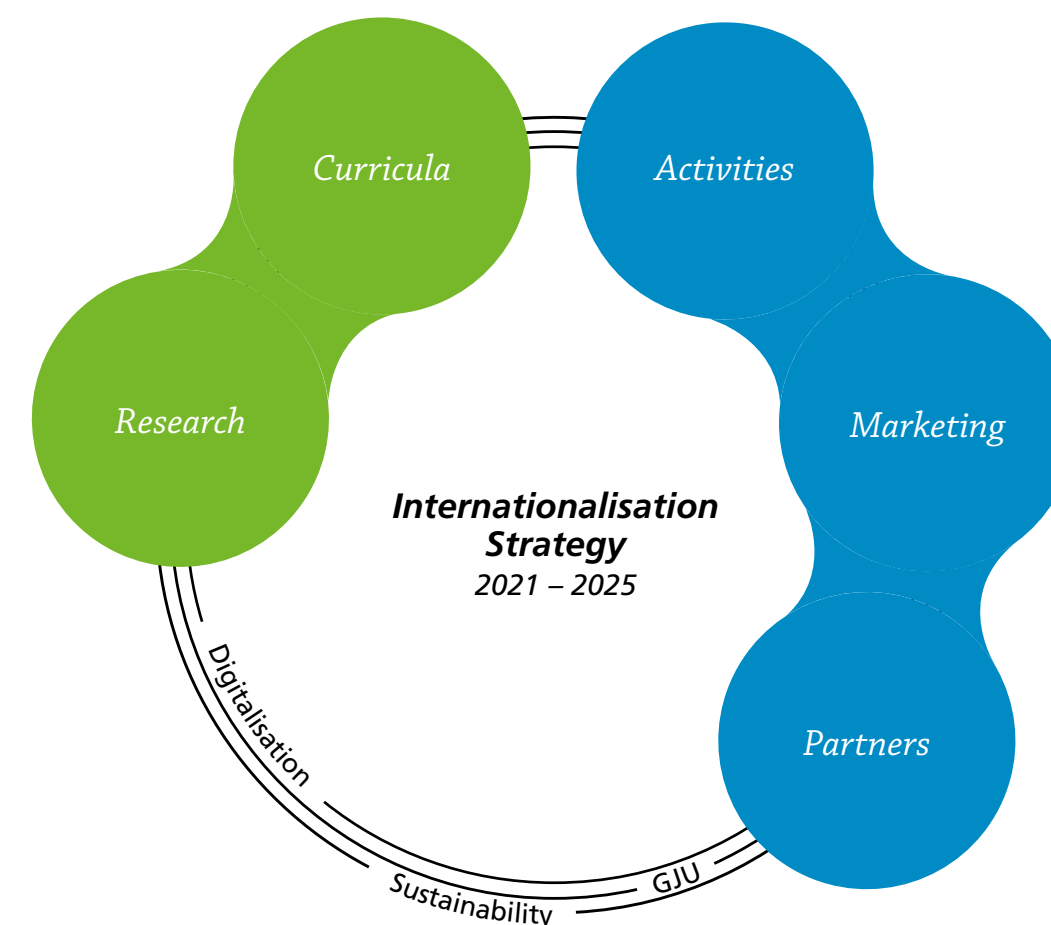
1. Revision of existing study programmes including the teaching and learning objectives
2. Development of new international and interdisciplinary study programmes in the departments (e.g. international degree programmes or modules)
3. Expansion of digital teaching and studying formats and virtual mobility / virtual exchange formats
4. Creation of staffing capacities in the departments for the internationalisation of study programmes
5. Expansion of foreign-language compulsory elective subjects
6. Institutionalisation of the "German as a Foreign Language" programme
7. Maintenance / development of the range of foreign language courses available (General Studies)
8. Expansion of programmes for the promotion of academic and social integration in the departments
9. Internationalisation of the services available to support students during their studies in the departments (e.g. through continuing training)
10. Increase in and raising of the profile of the advanced scientific training programmes

Sub-objective 2

Internationalisation of research

Measures

1. University-wide application support for EU research projects
2. Funding and development of international scientific and academic networks and projects in research and teaching
3. Increase in Third Mission activities
4. Promotion of digitally-supported research projects in virtual teams made up of international members
5. Acquisition of international doctoral students in the framework of doctoral centres
6. Expansion of research collaborations



Objective 2

Increasing the number of international students and support for the mobility of all university members

Sub-objective 1

Expansion of activities designed to facilitate and promote mobility

Measures

1. Implementation of the specifications of the "Erasmus Charter for Higher Education"
2. Participation in the EU's European Student Card Initiative and implementation of "Erasmus Without Papers"
3. Expansion of cooperation management and partnership maintenance activities in the departments as well as centrally
4. Promotion of the training and continuing education programmes and intercultural and linguistic skills of all university members
5. Promotion of trips abroad during study programmes or work-related trips by all university members taking into account sustainability issues
6. Promotion of improved recognition practices in the departments with regard to study-related trips abroad
7. Development and expansion of (digital) advisory and support formats for outgoing and incoming students
8. Support in making applications in the departments (e.g. DAAD, BNBF, Erasmus+, Horizon Europe)

Sub-objective 2

Expansion of international student marketing

Measures

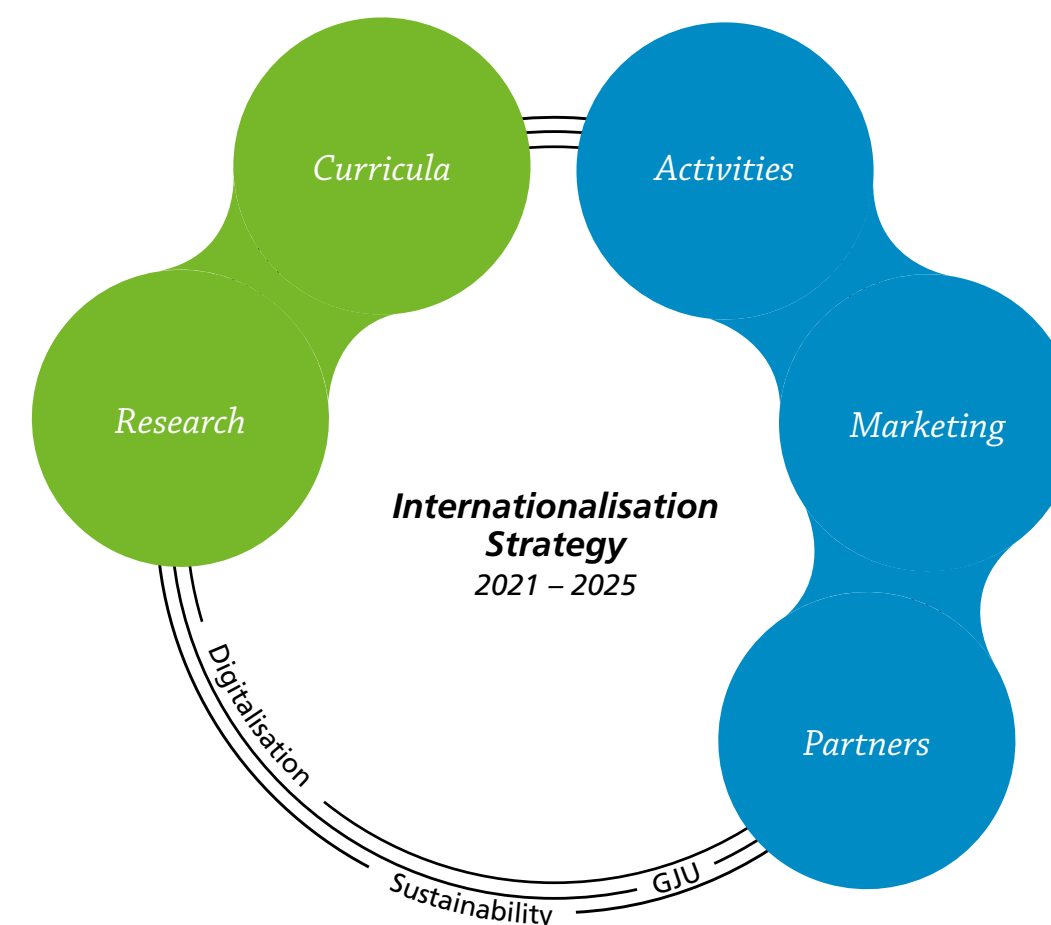
1. Establishment of subject-related student marketing measures. These will be managed centrally by the International Office and University Communications teams in collaboration. However, the design of content will be done locally in close coordination with the departments, so that a triad of expertise (target group identification, marketing, identification of distinguishing features) will evolve.
2. Establishment of targeting metrics for specifically addressing the individual target groups, in particular by means of online marketing and social media marketing campaigns

Sub-objective 3

Closer cooperation with partners outside of the university

Measures

1. Intensification of the cooperation with regional preparatory colleges and language schools
2. Intensification of the cooperation with social, health, educational and cultural institutions
3. Expansion and establishment of structures providing support during the study programmes as well as the creation of service offerings to promote the integration of international university members in society and the labour market after completing their studies
4. Development of a concept for alumni activities, with the focus on cooperations with industry



§ *Legal and institutional framework of the Internationalisation Strategy*

The Internationalisation Strategy of Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences was drawn up by the Senate Committee for International Affairs (KIA) with the involvement of all departments and status groups in the University in a participative process, and is based on the following:

Legal framework

- Saxony-Anhalt Higher Education Act 2020
- Target Agreement between the Saxony-Anhalt Ministry of Economy, Sciences and Digitalisation and Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences 2020 – 2024
- Agreement on the Implementation of the Contract for the Future of Higher Education and Teaching in the state of Saxony-Anhalt from 2021 to 2027
- ERASMUS+ Charter 2021 – 2027
- Saxony-Anhalt Internationalisation and Europe Strategy
- Objectives of the European Education Area of the European Commission

Institutional framework of Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences

- University Development Plan (HEP) 2015 – 2024
- University Strategy: Strategic Map 2020 – 2024
- University Mission Statement
- Teaching & Learning Guidelines 2019

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