

Strategy Paper¹ TU Berlin's Global Responsibility

TU Berlin's position

Technische Universität Berlin is very conscious of its global social responsibility. It promotes the transfer of knowledge and good practices to socially relevant target groups in Germany and abroad as part of its central vision of providing a “response to global challenges”. It contributes to developing common solutions to global challenges through research cooperations, education programs, and the development and expansion of capacity building at universities in Global South countries. TU Berlin supports the development of the aspiring knowledge societies of the Global South where it is establishing itself as a partner.

Starting position

Global South

The term “Global South”, generally referred to as “developing and threshold countries” by external funding providers, embraces an enormous range of different countries across a number of continents. The higher education and research landscapes in these countries are extremely diverse and include leading international universities as well as universities with enormous local and regional significance as educational institutions with a key role in society but which are less well known on the international stage. A strategy for cooperation with this diverse group of countries needs to be oriented towards possible strategic networks and conducted on the basis of pursuing research goals reflecting political sensitivity, ethical values and a focus on global societal challenges, rather than on the basis of rankings or “privileged” partnerships. TU Berlin also places great value on ensuring academic freedom and supporting at-risk academics and scholars in its cooperation with Global South partners.

Research

International cooperation is essential for outstanding research. Finding sustainable solutions for global challenges requires the collaboration of researchers from diverse subject disciplines, with different national and cultural backgrounds, perspectives, approaches, knowledge and skills, and methods. Academic progress here can also be measured in terms of developing an understanding of local issues and conditions and their potential global impact.

¹ This strategy paper has been developed in the context of internal workshops with academics and scholars from TU Berlin and the Berlin University Alliance as well as partners from the Global South and on the basis of discussions with external funding organizations such as the DAAD, the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation, and the Robert Bosch Foundation. It was presented and discussed at a session of the advisory board of the Department of International Affairs, a meeting of the Vice Dean's Committee on Internationalization as well as at a meeting of the Board of Trustees and was adopted by the Executive Board in June 2019.

The Sustainable Development Goals defined by the United Nations serve to help guide a university with global responsibility in its international scientific cooperation with threshold and developing countries. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was developed by the global community. It provides a broad framework, oriented towards transnational challenges, for the diverse and interdisciplinary research interests of scholars at TU Berlin and the Berlin University Alliance. TU Berlin is also guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its work with the Global South and strives to ensure that its scientific and academic work, research, and teaching as well as its international partnerships are conducted on the basis of sustainable development and global responsibility.

Teaching

TU Berlin's goal is to provide its students with an understanding of the political and economic contexts of a globally networked world and equip them with the sense of responsibility required to address these contexts, while at the same time enabling them to develop their academic and intercultural skills. One challenge of cooperation with partners in the Global South is to extend the circle of academics interested in and committed to such cooperation. The internationalization of curricula and student mobility are two means to achieve early awareness among students of the global importance and the academic (as well as cultural and linguistic) added value of exchanges between the Global South and the Global North. Innovative formats are required to incorporate international perspectives into teaching and to supplement well established semester exchange programs. Structured short-term programs, such as field trips or joint workshops, present an opportunity for students to engage directly with the Global South. Such forms of collaboration can be developed into agreements for semester exchanges with certain partner institutions, provided that specific criteria can be met, such as a balanced demand for bilateral mobility, compatibility of teaching languages and language skills among students, and the possibility for recognition of completed courses, etc. Programs for degree-seeking students from the Global South also represent an enrichment for both parties, provided that international students are well prepared and supported, both in general as well as in terms of their subject expertise, and that the interaction achieved provides sufficient benefit in terms of education, internationalization, and approaches to global challenges.

Brain Drain

The University is fully aware of the international problem represented by brain drain and the particular challenge the loss of junior scholars and highly qualified experts poses for the Global South. TU Berlin is striving to actively reduce and combat the negative effects of unilateral academic mobility.

An exodus of highly qualified personnel can often be attributed to a number of reasons. Specialists and (junior) scholars leave in search of better education and career opportunities as well as better living conditions, but also in response to the rising demand for experts outside their country of origin.

Factors at work in the area of higher education include general issues such as political and economic instability, poor working conditions, high unemployment with poor prospects at national and regional level, as well as factors specific to the sector, such as poorly equipped and run-down educational establishments resulting from inadequate investment in tertiary

education, isolation from the international scholarly community and knowledge production, and restricted or non-existent academic freedom in some countries.

The loss of human capital in turn negatively impacts institutions and different sectors and damages the development of a country as a result of the loss of know-how, poor quality of education and the overburdening of educational establishments, as well as the loss of innovation and an important economic resource.

It is precisely universities and highly qualified individuals and scholars who are in a position to make an important social contribution as driving forces for sustainability, social change, and socioeconomic development. Universities and (junior) scholars are also key to the achievement of sustainability goals.

TU Berlin adopts a responsible position on these issues and supports specific measures aimed at ensuring the involvement of (junior) scholars in achieving sustainable research and innovation while dismantling asymmetries. Capacity building projects also represent an important aspect of collaboration in this regard.

Protecting academic freedom worldwide, including through international collaborative activities and support for at-risk academics, is a key concern for our university.

TU Berlin increases its commitment

TU Berlin wishes to address its global responsibilities more decisively in the future by strengthening the following aspects of its cooperation with partners in the Global South. An overview of specific measures, areas of responsibility, and financing targeted at achieving the following objectives is provided by the table in the annex (pages 9-12):

Networking

(See the list of measures in the annex, p. 9)

To create or strengthen exchange between academic chairs working with the same partners, countries, or regions, or who are engaged in work on similar issues, we need to collate and edit existing contact details and make these available to interested parties. Existing instruments, such as research databases and LinF, could serve as starting points for this **mapping** process. These instruments will, however, have to be supplemented by consultation and discussion with faculty staff and members of academic chairs responsible for internationalization. The objective is to create an easily updated overview of contacts as well as regional and thematic areas of competence and activities at TU Berlin relating to the Global South. This general overview will make it possible to generate country and thematic profiles (oriented towards the Sustainable Development Goals) which can be used to initiate research collaboration between TU Berlin's academic chairs, extend interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary cooperation with external partners, and help prepare in detail for visits.

In cooperation with German and international intermediary organizations and Quangos, the Department of International Affairs supports academic chairs in their cooperative activities by providing guidance concerning education and research systems as well as the political contexts in specific countries and regions. This also includes support regarding the assessment of measures taken by TU Berlin in politically sensitive contexts. Particularly critical cases are presented to the Committee for Ethics in Science and Research. To develop its own regional

expertise, the Department of International Affairs will draw upon the results of the mappings and concentrate particularly on countries with which the University already has strong cooperative ties. At the same time, the mappings will be used to identify academics at TU Berlin with strong regional experience whose expertise can be utilized to help provide guidance for other academic chairs.

TU Berlin's internal mapping process also serves as a basis for developing networks with academics within the Berlin University Alliance.

Drafting and editing written records of existing networks will be supplemented by **events** supporting the development of further networks with selected regions or which promote thematic research topics closely aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals. These events are designed to develop networks among TU academic chairs as well as with fellow academics in Berlin and, wherever possible, international partners.

Externally, TU Berlin aims to make its expertise in research and teaching in the areas of development assistance available to relevant national and international organizations. TU Berlin supports the organization of international conferences (e.g. UN Habitat in El Gouna), places great value on the work of some of its academics as experts in international organizations, and, both independently and as part of the Berlin University Alliance, actively makes the results of its research and its national and international network activities available to politics, international organizations, and the general public.

Capacity building and international collaboration

(See the list of measures in the annex, p. 9)

In order to stem brain drain, it is particularly important to build and develop local capacity, both in terms of educational establishments and the quality of teaching provided, as well as involve (junior) scholars from the Global South more closely in scientific cooperation. Through its work in scientific international cooperation, TU Berlin pursues the goal of developing solutions to global challenges. A lively scientific exchange helps to develop the skills and knowledge of junior scholars, develop solutions and ensure their impact is felt beyond the university in society. In addition to technical research and the creation of knowledge, this requires the development of the training/teaching function as well as transfer and consultation between academic partners as well as within other areas (society, politics, the economy).

TU Berlin has set itself the longer-term goal of establishing an **inter-faculty development project** and implementing this in the Global South. This will enable the effective and mutually beneficial coordination of different skills and areas of knowledge. Particular importance is attached to capacity building in teaching and in the structural organization of universities.

TU Berlin calls upon its members to pursue and strengthen synergy and areas of potential in its cooperative academic undertakings with the Global South. Various academic chairs at TU Berlin are already successfully working in a number of countries in the Global South, in areas such as curriculum development and the establishment of entire degree programs. The University is particularly committed in its support for these capacity building activities in the area of teaching. At the central administrative level, TU Berlin is involved in several capacity building projects with partners in the Global South and will use the previously mentioned

mappings to explore over the coming years which measures for the strengthening of central administrative structures to support and with which partners.

Given that the transfer of knowledge and technology (brain gain) is not linear, particular attention is to be given to ensure that collaborative measures do not become set as a one way process and to achieve the flexibility required to promote and develop multi-directional cooperation, north-south, south-north and south-south.

Guidance and funding

(See the list of measures in the annex, pp. 9-10)

Implementing cooperative measures such as mobility, joint research, and capacity building with partners in the Global South generally requires funding. The relevant departments within the Central University Administration are increasing the information and guidance services they provide for academic chairs regarding cooperative activities. The Research Department and the Department of International Affairs are working very closely in this regard. Joint information events are being offered on a regular basis.

Working in collaboration with embassies and international funding organizations, the University is also seeking to develop information about international funding programs as well as the national research policies of individual countries. Exemplary in this regard is the improved information service regarding research funding for cooperations with Brazil provided by the Department of International Affairs since the start of 2018 as part of its associated membership of the German Centre for Research and Innovation São Paulo.

A seed fund for cooperation with partners in the Global South is also available to initiate new interdisciplinary research within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Strengthening the bridging function of international (junior) scholars

(See the list of measures in the annex, pp. 10-11)

TU Berlin is greatly interested in attracting talented academics from all over the world and establishing networks with outstanding (junior) scholars. These are to be supported in their efforts to develop and maintain academic contacts in the long term both in Germany and their countries of origin to fully utilize their potential as mediators in the area of science and research, teaching and innovation. This is perhaps of particular importance for (junior) scholars from the Global South. The poor financing of science systems in many countries and their isolation from international scientific competition, the fact that some (junior) scholars are firmly ankered in the Global North/Germany as well as other political, societal, or academic defining conditions mean that returning to their country of origin on a permanent basis is often not an option for many international (junior) scholars. At the same time, their experience and intercultural perspectives provide research and teaching in Germany with a particular added value and can help forge links between scientific systems to develop higher education and research in their regions of origin. TU Berlin is seeking to strengthen the bridging function performed by academics and researchers from the Global South and consciously seeks to include them in its international cooperative undertakings.

By promoting transnational scientific partnerships with universities in the Global South, TU Berlin is also promoting the exchange of information, advice, and experience among international (junior) scholars. This involves encouraging and better utilizing the inherent

potential for development as well as promoting the potential for innovation in science and research and creative resources. In general, academics conducting research at TU Berlin in the area of global challenges relating to the Global South or who demonstrate particular cooperative commitment in this area are very highly valued. The Department of International Affairs and the Research Department provide specific and dedicated support for their work. Partnerships conducted on an equal footing as well as joint research proposals and bi-lateral mobility (north-south, south-north) are of particular importance for sustainable scientific cooperation, the transfer of knowledge and skills, and circular migration. Long-term goals are also being established aimed at supporting the potential for south-south cooperation in order to develop high-quality scientific structures in the Global South.

Existing **programs for international alumni** offered by TU Berlin, the DAAD, or other funding organizations primarily aim to strengthen ties between alumni who have returned to their home countries (or who live abroad) and TU Berlin and Germany. The alumni program organizes alumni clubs and seminars and continuing education programs for all alumni to promote a thriving connection to TU Berlin. These programs need to be supplemented by measures to enable international researchers who have remained in Germany or at TU Berlin to maintain their academic contacts in their countries of origin and to establish ties with TU Berlin's networks. In cooperation with other units at TU Berlin (the Research Department, TU-DOC, the alumni team), the Department of International Affairs provides international visiting scholars and academic chairs at TU Berlin with an overview of existing programs offered by a range of funding providers. The University is committed to ensuring that all areas are covered by the network of external funding opportunities and is examining to what extent current deficits can be compensated by TU-financed measures.

It is important to ensure that visiting scholars maintain contacts to their own countries right from the outset of their stay at TU Berlin to ensure that these remain active. To this end TU Berlin expressly supports the **collaborative supervision of doctorates**. This approach makes possible the effective and mutually beneficial recruitment of international doctoral candidates even in the absence of cotutelle procedures and double degrees at both universities. The involvement of professors from the university where they acquired their previous academic qualification enables doctoral candidates to maintain active ties with their country of origin. This provides fresh impetus for research at TU Berlin and at the university in the visiting scholar's country of origin, helps establish new networks, and possibly presents researchers in the partner country with opportunities to publish which they otherwise would not have. Jointly supervised doctorates and other forms of scientific cooperation conducted on an equal footing can contribute to combating the isolation from international scientific work experienced by many universities in the Global South.

TU Berlin very much welcomes the commitment shown by academic chairs to the **development of teaching**, be it in the form of visiting lecturers, curriculum development, or the development of degree programs abroad (see above). This commitment can often be linked to research topics, helps establish networks, and helps identify and establish contact with potential TU Berlin junior scholars while at the same time supporting their home university. Doctoral candidates recruited through this approach are excellently suited to function as intermediaries between the two universities. The academic supervisors already know each other well, enabling mutual networks to flourish. Capacity building in teaching in the best cases leads to structures which make it attractive for doctoral candidates to return to

their university in their country of origin or to maintain their contacts as visiting lecturers. Their perspectives as well as the experience gained by other members of TU academic chairs are to be systematically incorporated into teaching at the University, both within the specific academic disciplines as well as for the purpose of promoting responsible international academic cooperation to a broader public within TU Berlin and beyond (see below). Training and continuing education for university staff in the Global South, linked to a strengthening of organizational structures, serve to stem the migration of highly qualified individuals. The recruitment of junior scholars is conceived in the sense of a global social responsibility with capacity building in the regions of origin and the promotion of connections and networks in the respective regions and universities of origin of the Global South.

Communicating the importance of academic cooperation and global responsibility

(See the list of measures in the annex, pp. 11-12)

In addition to establishing networks among actors already engaged in and committed to global academic cooperation, TU Berlin also seeks to communicate the importance of responsible academic cooperation with all global regions, particularly with the Global South, to all stakeholders who have not yet engaged thoroughly with this issue. This process is targeted towards both the various status groups within TU Berlin as well as the academic community and general public. Different instruments are to be deployed here depending on the target group.

The internationalization of curricula, the targeted integration of case examples from the Global South and the perspectives and skills of (visiting) lecturers and students from these regions into the process of teaching, including through the medium of online collaboration, will all help make **students** aware of the importance of north-south cooperation. Structured short-term stays such as field trips, joint seminars or summer schools as well as the arranging of internships with international organizations such as “Engineers without Borders” and helping students prepare for these all help students overcome their concerns about direct contact with the Global South and gaining experience there.

The networking events for specific regions and topics referred to above are also open to TU members not yet involved in cooperations with partners from the Global South and could serve to open doors for anybody interested. **Representatives of academic chairs at TU Berlin** and their partners present their research in a series of lectures on the global impact of our research. The lecture series, which will be of interest to all members of TU Berlin as well as a **wider public**, also features contributions on aspects of sustainable development from representatives of national and international organizations.

TU Berlin and the Berlin University Alliance are striving to exploit Berlin’s potential as the center of German federal politics and home to numerous embassies as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations by organizing joint events to raise awareness among the broader public of the important role academic cooperation plays in finding solutions to global challenges.

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List of measures

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	Type of additional FINANCING REQUIREMENT
Inter- and transdisciplinary networks - TU academic chairs - with academics from the Berlin University Alliance - alumni - with international organizations and other intermediary institutions (BMZ, BMB, Senate, embassies or NGOs and companies)	Mapping (research databases, LinF, discussions and consultation with faculties and academic chairs with special involvement) Regional and thematic profiles (oriented to SDGs)	INT	n.a.
	Networking events (internal + external)	INT	Travel expenses for presentations, advertising, catering
	Cooperation within the Berlin University Alliance, particularly with the Berlin Center for Global Engagement		Excellence Strategy funding
Capacity building and international collaboration Identifying inter-faculty projects (by end 2020)	Seed funds for initiating cooperative inter- and transdisciplinary research projects for SDGs with partners in the Global South	INT	Funding for travel to initiate projects
	Capacity building for teaching	Academic chairs	External funding programs
Financing	(Joint) information events organized by Dept. V, INT	VC, VE, INT	n.a.
	Information about the national research policies and funding offers of selected countries and international funding programs in cooperation with external partners	INT, VC, VE	Catering, travel expenses for presentations, advertising

	Seed funds for initiating cooperative inter- and transdisciplinary research projects for SDGs with partners in the Global South	INT	Funding for travel to initiate projects
Bridging function of international (junior) scholars	Survey of TU scientists with a migration background from Global South countries and TU scientists with research interests/focuses in the Global South: Requirements, potential, ideas	INT	n.a.
	Responsible recruitment, preparing and supervising junior scholars	Research training groups, academic chairs, INT	Welcome Center
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for cooperative supervision of doctorates • Funding of incoming and outgoing research stays for doctoral candidates 	TU-DOC, INT	Travel allowance for supervisors (from both countries), travel allowance and research stays for doctoral candidates from the GS
	Capacity building for teaching	Academic chairs	External funding programs
	Information and advice on external funding programs for international (junior) scholars, for academic projects at TU Berlin as well as for maintaining and consolidating academic ties to the country and university of origin	INT, VC, VE, TU-DOC, alumni program	n.a.
	TU financed measures for areas not otherwise covered		If required, travel allowances for supervisors (from both countries), conference participation in the country or region of origin, etc.

	Targeted involvement in the internationalization of teaching		n.a.
Communicating the importance of globally responsible academic cooperation - TU students - TU academic chairs - wider public	Internationalization of teaching and curricula	Academic chairs, program managers	
	Structured short-term mobility	Academic chairs, INT, Career Service	External funding programs
	If appropriate, regular semester exchanges	INT, faculties	External funding programs
	Lecture series		If required, travel expenses for presentations; advertising
	Summer/ Winter school focusing on sustainable development (SDGs) or an annual SDG conference within the European/ German sustainability week (end of May/start of June)	Academic chairs	External funding programs
	Networking events	INT	Catering, travel expenses for presentations, advertising
	Use of the location advantage of Berlin in cooperation with partners from the Berlin University Alliance		Particularly as part of BCGE (funded by ExStrat)

KEY

ABBREVIATIONS	FULL NAME
BCGE	Berlin Center for Global Engagement
ExStrat	Excellence Strategy
INT	Internationales / Department of International Affairs
TU-DOC	Office for Doctoral and Postdoctoral Studies
VC	Research Promotion Section
VE	EU Office