

## **Internationalisation Process of the katho**

### **Strategy Paper**

Following the core principles of Catholic Social Teaching, the Catholic University of Applied Sciences of North Rhine-Westphalia (katho) works on the realisation of human rights and human dignity in the pursuit of academic excellence in teaching and research. Based on the university's statute and its basic regulations and also in accordance with the duties described in the so-called Future of Higher Education Act of North Rhine-Westphalia ("Hochschulzukunftsgesetz des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen") and in the light of the calls made to Catholic universities in the apostolic constitution "Ex Corde Ecclesiae", the university will implement a systematic process of internationalisation in the coming years. Thereby, both the European and the global dimension are taken into account.

The katho has a worldwide network of partner universities. Moreover, the university is a member of the International Federation of Catholic Universities and shows a presence in intermediary science organisations<sup>1</sup>, thanks to its international profile features. In addition, the university networks with international professional organisations in the fields of Social Care, Health Care and Theology.

The university administration is committed to agreeing on specific strategic internationalisation measures with the individual departments on the following strategic points:

#### **1. Infrastructure and Promotion**

The katho supports and promotes the internationalisation process in various ways. In addition to funding through public programmes, the university provides financial and human resources within the scope of its possibilities and mission.

There is an adequate infrastructure to support katho members and international university members as well as visiting scholars. Students and teachers receive advice on the academic and organisational planning and realisation of a stay abroad. The administration works closely together, both centrally and decentrally, to fulfil this task.

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<sup>1</sup> e. g. the German Rectors' Conference ("Hochschulrektorenkonferenz"), the German Rectors' Conference of Confessional Universities ("Rektorenkonferenz konfessioneller Hochschulen") and the German Academic Exchange Service ("DAAD")

## 2. International Partnerships

The cooperation with international partner institutions is the core of the internationalisation process at the katho. Internally, we distinguish between four categories of cooperation:

- a) *Priority partnerships*: these partnerships are of major importance for the entire university and are the responsibility of the university management. They are confirmed by the Senate and coordinated by the International Office of the katho.
- b) *Erasmus partnerships*: these partnerships focus on the bidirectional exchange of students, teachers and non-academic university staff.
- c) *Individual partnerships*: these include, in particular, partnerships concluded on the initiative of individual teachers and departments or partnerships that were enabled through third parties. Individual partnerships are established by the conclusion of formal cooperation agreements.
- d) *International contacts of teaching staff*: these connections mainly come about through contacts of individuals and arise, for example, from academic networks.

The status of the partnerships is considered flexible. Therefore, individual partnerships can become priority partnerships at a later stage (or vice versa). However, the idea of priority partnerships envisages a medium to long-term cooperation, in accordance with the related strategic objectives.

## 3. Internationalisation of Teaching and International Campus

By implementing suitable offers, the katho is aligning its teaching internationally.

Teaching in English becomes part of the regular curriculum. When appointing new teachers, the ability to teach in English is part of the requirement profile. Students in all departments have the opportunity to attend courses taught in English every semester. If possible, offers in other foreign languages are also provided.

In individual cases, teaching staff can apply for support from the university administration for the development of an English-language teaching programme.

Individual short-term lectureships by teachers from our partner universities are regularly integrated into the semester programme. Where face-to-face presence is not possible or necessary, e-learning and blended learning tools are extended accordingly. There is a particular emphasis on the development and use of innovative teaching methods.

Multilateral, interdisciplinary intensive weeks in cooperation with European partner universities effectively complement the teaching programme.

Short-term, thematically focused exchanges and excursions are intended to complement the regular teaching offers and serve the sustainability and deepening of the partnerships.

The katho aims to increase the study-related mobility of students. Measures are being taken to enable Bachelor's and Master's students to spend an academic semester or a study-related internship abroad.

In addition, the katho offers students the opportunity to gain specialist language qualifications. International students (incomings) are supported in the acquisition of the German language. Other members of the university will receive funding, if they participate in language training measures that are relevant to their respective field of activity.

The expansion of international teaching goes hand in hand with the development of an international campus. The aim is to increase the number of European and international students. To promote the integration of visiting students, cultural events, excursions, international weeks, peer learning groups or an individual support programme are set up in addition to the regular academic teaching programme, depending on the possibilities. In all measures, the katho understands the cultural and biographical background of its international students as a qualification and potential.

#### **4. Research and Development**

The katho participates in calls for proposals from European research funding programmes and cooperates in international and European research networks (e. g. ERIS). The university plans and implements research cooperation with its respective partner universities. Research training projects of students and research assistants (e. g. as part of a doctorate) are supported accordingly and, if necessary, promoted through financial aid. Support is also provided for projects of accompanying scientific research but also for the participation in and, if necessary, the organisation of scientific congresses on topics of Social Work, Health Care and Theology.

#### **5. Research Assistants and Administration Employees**

Research assistants are encouraged to spend time abroad. Qualification can take place in particular through language courses, guest lectureships and visits to practice institutions and universities in other European and non-European countries.

The university administration participates in the internationalisation process. Through visiting programmes and individual work shadowings employees familiarise with the processes and standards of administration at other European and international partner universities and thereby qualify for cooperation. Employees in service positions receive intercultural and language training for working with international guests. Administration employees are integrated into teaching and research exchanges in accordance with their remit.

(adopted by the katho Senate on 29 January 2018)