

INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW

INTERNATIONALIZATION 2024

A. International academics

A number of professorate holders of the Department of Law have been hosting international academics on a regular basis for years now. Presently, ten academics from the UK, Japan, China and other countries are at the Department of Law on a research visit. The Department has added a web page with information specifically for visiting academics to its website to increase visibility of the Department of Law's international academic exchange activities and facilitate the integration of academics visiting Bonn on a temporary basis.¹ The web page provides information on current events for international academics conducting research at the Department for one or more semesters including lectures conducted in German and English or the series on 'Art in the Department of Law', for example. The long-term objectives are to reach more visiting academics with optimized support during research visits and to design measures ensuring attractive conditions for visiting the Department of Law. One of the first measures being taken is drafting a questionnaire to be sent out to professorate holders and institutes of the Department to gather data on the frequency and duration of research visits, professorate activities and support provided to the visiting academics, for example. The survey results are to be drawn upon in devising further recruitment, support and integration measures. These may include a regular email newsletter providing information on current events of interest to the target group, bios of visiting academics and special offers for international academics such as legal foreign language courses and English-language workshops on special topics.

B. Study offerings and teaching

The curricula for the academic discipline of Law can only be internationalized to a limited extent because it fundamentally concerns German laws/ legislation. The Department of Law does however hold a number of foreign language events every semester, including lectures, presentations and seminars connected with the study major, courses on international legal terminology and foreign language courses, as well as UNICert-certified subject-specific Legal English courses introduced in 2011. Additionally, the Department hosts several

¹ <https://www.jura.uni-bonn.de/>: Internationales/ Gastwissenschaftler*innen

moot courts in English on international public law, international criminal law and international trade law. Participants receive one semester of preparation for international competition from native speakers and visit international law firms located in Germany and abroad.

First-semester students take a language competency level test as part of a language data project funded by QSL to gauge student requirements for further foreign language courses (especially languages not already offered).² Additional foreign language and German-as-foreign-language course offerings are now in planning in response to preliminary findings from the survey. These include special-topics legal workshops in Chinese and other foreign languages, and potentially an English-German bilingual summer school.

A special offering for international students is in place that includes a Legal German course for foreign majors and master's students and a tutorial for incoming Erasmus students. The Department has been actively sharing student mobility information with partner universities on a regular basis for years now, and between 60 and 90 students visit foreign partner universities as Erasmus outgoings annually. The number of incoming students is lower at 30-40 students per year, which is why the Department has adopted the goal of raising this number. This is in parallel with enhancing the Department's attractiveness for international students through a package of measures, some of which have already been implemented. These also include social integration activities for master's students, such as group outings and group attendance of Departmental events. To further develop these activities, the Department intends to launch a Study Buddy program for master's students in coordination with the International Office aimed at accelerating integration of the new students arriving at the Department every semester. Improving the housing situation is another salient issue in enhancing the Department's general attractiveness to international students. Accordingly, the Department strives to secure dormitory places for students every year, and may on a case-by-case basis assume lease default guarantees (for incoming students from Oxford, for example). The Department intends to further develop its existing offerings for all international students, adding on special-topics workshops, for example, among other informational and learning formats. The International Coordination website is also to have a page with testimonies and photos from former Erasmus incomings and other visiting students. These steps are being taken to increase the informational reach to international students potentially interested in studying at the Department.

In certain cases in recent years the Department has made specific efforts to recruit academics from abroad for professorate positions in the fields of international law and private international law. Because of the nature of the subject matter and the language of instruction, these are generally German academics teaching in other countries. Such individuals are sought in order to leverage the experience they have gained in several years of teaching abroad in another language, with exposure to differing teaching methods and learning content, to inject an element of internationalization into teaching here.

Additionally, more and more teaching positions and lecturer contracts are being offered to individuals who have international backgrounds or are from other countries (like Canada, Paraguay or Australia) for main curriculum and language acquisition courses.

Professors from the Department are also frequent visiting lecturers at summer academies and at foreign universities as part of Erasmus Teaching Mobility, which increases foreign student interest in the LL.M. program and research visits at Bonn during their doctoral studies. Academic staff also contribute to the Department's internationalization by attending and presenting their research at conferences abroad and doing doctorate research visits to foreign universities arranged by their supervising professors.

² The study results and related documents are published in summarized form in the Foreign Language Acquisition Annual Report for 2019 and an internal ad hoc report.

Furthermore, for ten years now the Department has provided support to colleagues active in organizing international conferences on campus and initiating international projects, including funding if applied for and the applicable conditions are met.

C. Internationalization of administration, language policy

An international background and corresponding foreign language skills are increasingly sought in recruiting both secretarial and academic staff, which is of benefit to both foreign students and visiting academics. The Department also ensures that staff working in language acquisition and in international coordination, subject-specific student advisory services and other areas with a substantial advisory element have the necessary language competency and receive appropriate continuing education.

Translation of the Department's website commenced in 2017, performed principally by language acquisition and academic staff of the respective professorates, using the University's official glossary.

The Department and individual institutes have for years now been encouraging staff members of all peripheral units to take language acquisition and continuing education courses, including educational leave, in an effort to enhance staff language competency in general. Also, a permanently hired instructor commenced his activities by designing Legal English courses for Departmental staff which are now being taught. Some secretarial staff have taken advantage of Staff Mobility opportunities as well.³ The Department intends to continue and expand these internal efforts as appropriate given adequate human and/ or financial resources. Additionally, the University's "Rosetta Stone" online language learning offering is to be promoted to a greater extent.

D. Location

The Department is already benefiting from the University of Bonn being located in a UN city, cooperating intensively with institutions based there. This includes hiring individuals from federal authorities and local law firms, some of which are active internationally, for academic staff positions.⁴ In 2018 and 2019 the Department created image videos for attracting new students, which highlighted Bonn's status as an international location.⁵ Another promotional video is in planning for 2019/ 20, highlighting research and teaching at the Bonn Department of Law, such as

E. Strategic partnerships

The Department currently has nearly 60 exchange program partnerships in place (both Erasmus and direct exchange). The cooperation with the University of Oxford is of particular significance, which only has one other German university as exchange student partner. The Department has also had a cooperation agreement in place with the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) in Australia for subject-specific foreign language acquisition within the UNiCert IV framework. Under this agreement, FFA IV-level students can complete a distance learning module with the USQ which counts as credit if studying for an LL.M. later at the USQ.

A long-standing partnership is also in place between the German Law School in Warsaw and both the Faculty of Law and the German Foundation for International Legal Cooperation (IRZ) in Bonn. The German Law School conducts one-year courses in German and European law, a summer school and, since 2013, language classes for Law School students.

³ See also the report in the 2015/ 16 WiSe newsletter.

⁴ climate protection courses held with United Nations staff.

⁵ The Department of Law YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgSHEvdJb-2fVZd7ECKLTOQ>



The Department also strives to enable foreign students interested in obtaining a doctorate in Law to do so as part of a bi-national “cotutelle” doctorate program. Three doctoral students have already successfully completed this dual-degree program, which requires submission of a special application. It is being discussed whether the doctoral degree regulations should be updated to include the policies for this program.

The Department is also looking to promote and further expand both graduate and undergraduate cooperation in targeted fashion, especially with universities which have signed a strategic partnership agreement with the University of Bonn. The first step to be taken to this end is preparation of a questionnaire to survey existing contacts of the professorates. The survey findings will be used as the basis to design suitable strategic partnership measures.

The partnership with the association Jura Bonn Alumni e.V. formed in 2017 and the student alumni initiative FFA Connect are also aimed at forging international relationships and potentially leveraging these in joint projects, such as setting up an international law student internship board.

F. Public relations

The Department created an ‘International’ section on its website in late 2018, principally to heighten international visibility, where information on all foreign-language events for the respective semesters, for example, is posted. At the same time, several Department web pages on organizational professorate-related matters were translated into English, and further pages will be translated as appropriate in view of the respective content.

The Department will also be updating and optimizing its existing promotional brochures to be more closely aligned with international standards, such as by making these bilingual. The international rankings of the Department of Law are to be published in these materials once the decision has been made which rankings are best to cite for publicity purposes.

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