



UNIVERSITÄT **BONN**

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2030 INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BONN

From a vision to a mission

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VISION



The University of Bonn's Internationalization Strategy is geared toward making the overarching guiding

framework provided by its international activities a clear and integral part of the work done by all of its individual bodies. The strategy highlights why internationalization is an indispensable element of the University of Bonn's profile as a University of Excellence and how it is boosting the innovative capacity of its research, learning, transfer and administration.

As a University of Excellence with a global outlook and global responsibilities, the University of Bonn is working rigorously to hone its international focus in research, teaching, administration and transfer. By 2030, we want to have expanded our role as a hub for science, academia, intercultural dialogue and pioneering solutions to global challenges that has links all over the world.

We promote the international mobility of our students, researchers and staff at all stages of their careers and are creating lasting structures for strategic partnerships with leading higher-education and research institutions worldwide. We are also strengthening Bonn as an international center of science and research (e.g. via the Bonn Research Alliance (BORA)) and an open campus for talented individuals from all nations as well as facilitating "internationalization at home" (e.g. through the continued development of the Bonn Global Campus). Now we intend to build on our achievements of the past few years in attracting outstanding international students and researchers and encourage even more top

talent to come to Bonn through strategic marketing activities tailored to each target group.

Our innovative teaching and learning formats, digital collaboration and interdisciplinary research partnerships are gearing our students up to assume the mantle of responsible global citizens and makers of a fair and sustainable future. Thus we see internationalization as a bridge between cultures and an active contribution toward resolving some of the challenges facing the world. And being in Bonn—Germany's former capital, its only "federal city" and a base for the United Nations—gives us unique synergistic effects that we can leverage to this end through our close links with federal ministries and international organizations. Now there is a need to integrate the individual researchers into these networks even more closely and familiarize newly appointed international professors in particular with these institutions.

In this respect, we are picking up where the 2025 Internationalization Strategy left off and are carrying on with measures that have proven their worth. However, we are also identifying new instruments to deploy and milestones for 2030 to work toward and measure our success against.

Echoing the Strategy 2030 being pursued by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), we are well aware that the current realities of climate change, geopolitical power shifts, international conflicts, and far-reaching technological, social and economic transformations are calling for an approach that is guided by the prevailing interests, mindful of the risks involved and founded on solid expertise. An additional action area—"Institutional resilience in global and multipolar

crises”—has therefore been added to our own strategy for 2030 so that we can address the new geopolitical environment and current international crisis dynamics effectively.

Since we see ourselves as a University of Excellence with strong international links, fostering successful international cooperation with partner universities across the world is a key pillar of our 2030 Internationalization Strategy, including—and in particular—in the light of geopolitical challenges. This principle mirrors our firm belief that successful international cooperation hinges on dialogue and exchange and that this can be achieved by academic partnerships bridging political or cultural differences.

We are doing all we can to be among the leading universities in the world. The Academic Ranking of World Universities (the “Shanghai Ranking”) placed us 4th in Germany and 68th worldwide in 2025, and we are working toward breaking into the world’s top 50 and Europe’s top 20 universities by 2030. To this end, the University of Bonn will be expanding its bi- and multilateral dialogue with its international partners over the next five years, examples of which will include:

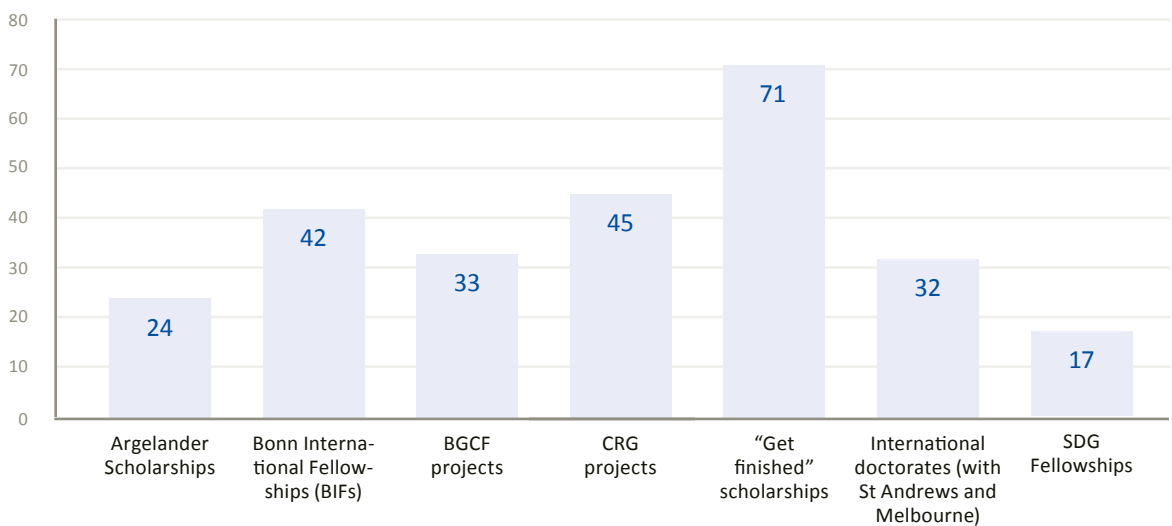
- The Global Universities for Societal Impact (GUSI) network, which was formed in 2023 together with the University of St Andrews, Emory University, Waseda University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, will be developed further. The partner universities in GUSI are committed to linking exceptional research with future-oriented teaching and social responsibility in order to find solutions to the most pressing challenges of our times. Building on three pillars—education, research, and leadership and innovation—the

network provides a flexible framework that adopts a global approach to current trends while also paving the way for a lasting root-and-branch transformation in higher education at national and international level.

- Our NeurotechEU European Universities alliance is to be embedded even more closely in an institutional context, e.g. by bringing more subjects on board, employing best-practice models in other fields and ramping up networking even further through collaborative research projects and courses. This institutional mainstreaming of NeurotechEU forms a mainstay of our Europe Strategy. One important milestone—the introduction within the alliance of a joint international master’s degree program in Neurotechnology—is planned for 2027.
- In line with the priorities set for German and European research funding within the framework of international cooperation, we want to establish more multilateral partnerships built on sustainability and equal opportunity with institutions from the Global South. Our experience from the past few years has demonstrated that individual project grants—e.g. as part of the Bonn Global Cooperation Fund (BGCF) or Collaborative Research Grants (CRGs) as well as the Argelander Scholarships, SDG Fellowships and other University-based grant programs—can lay the foundations for long-term collaboration, thus ensuring that our research is enriched by a wide range of knowledge systems and viewpoints. For example, seven funding instruments have been created for the internationalization of research and for cooperation with the Global South. These grant programs have proven extremely valuable for launching new research and university part-

nerships (BGCF) and expanding existing strategic partnerships (CRGs, Joint PhD programs) as well as for working more closely with researchers from the Global South and raising the University of Bonn’s profile in these countries (SDG Fellowships, Argelander Scholarships).

Five calls for applications from 2020 to 2024 produced funding for:



It is worth emphasizing that numerous international third-party-funded projects have been successfully secured thanks to the CRG and BGCF grant programs in particular. Even just considering projects approved in 2020/2021, researchers from the University of Bonn reported participation worth around €8.5 million in confirmed third-party-funded projects, compared with a total expenditure volume of some €550,000. The abovementioned grant programs are to be evaluated based on this experience and adapted and developed further in line with the strategic objectives formulated in the Excellence Strategy.

2020/2021

first period in which projects were approved

€550,000

total expenditure

approx. €8.5 million

slice of third-party-funded projects successfully secured

- Its admission in 2023 to the U7+ Alliance of World Universities—where it is one of only five German members—enables the University of Bonn to have a direct hand in drafting recommendations for the countries of the G7. The U7+ network is the first grouping of university leaders aiming to set out tangible measures that universities can take to tackle global challenges among themselves and together with the heads of government of the G7 member states and beyond.
- We see a particular need for our University to build up expertise on China and India, taking account of the differing conditions that apply in each specific case. More students come from these countries than any other, and their numbers are trending sharply upward in contrast to their peers from elsewhere in the world. This is the case across Germany, within North Rhine-Westphalia and also at our own University. In particular, we need expertise in attracting these students and devising a strategy to identify those subjects that are especially appealing to students from the two nations. However, such a strategy will also need to pinpoint universities in China and India with which a) a joint selection process can be designed directly and b) a joint degree program can be developed so that the student selection process, preparatory courses and other aspects can be set in motion in the students' home country.
- To make this a reality, we will be investing in dialogue with China and India over the coming years, both bilaterally and together with our partners in GUSI, via a new competence hub focused on partnerships with these countries. The hub will also support the various adminis-

trative units responsible for the two countries, including with recommendations relating to research ethics and research integrity, and will answer questions from University of Bonn researchers about selected universities in order to help them to forge partnerships that are mindful of the risks involved.

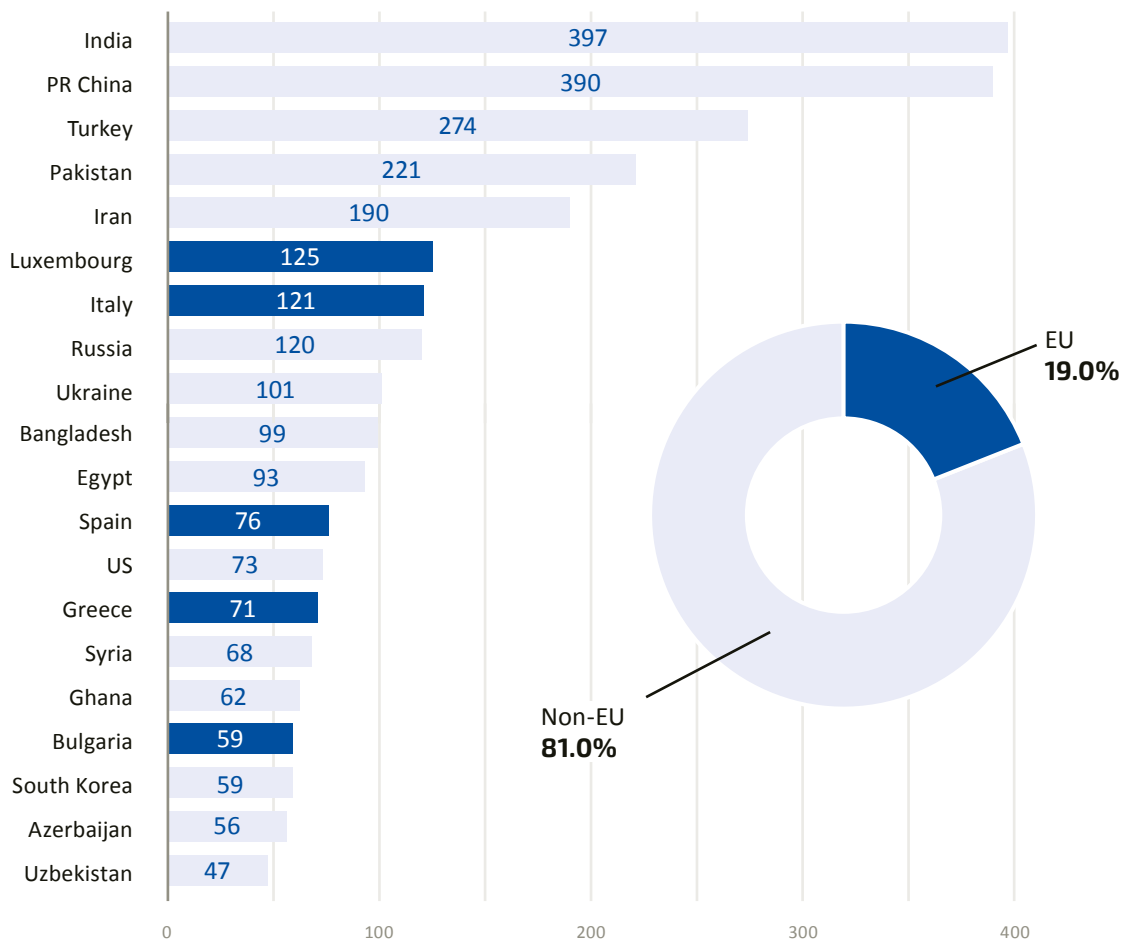
The 2030 Internationalization Strategy was devised in a participatory process together with researchers from all status groups at the University of Bonn in order to take as many views and needs into account as possible. Dovetailing with the University's own Excellence Strategy, the new 2030 Internationalization Strategy is designed to flesh out the vision of a university that is actively embracing a new form of internationality within the German research environment while also outlining some tangible ways in which this can actually be achieved. Taking as their framework the action areas for internationalization already established and developed further for this 2030 strategy, the following chapters present this guiding intention in all its various guises and shades. We have given each action area its own set of objectives and examples of measures so that, taken together, the topics addressed by the six overarching action areas and the content focused on by each of the objectives cover the full length and breadth of the University.

Only if all our organizational units work together will we be able to shape our role as a hub for science, academia, intercultural dialogue and pioneering solutions to global challenges that has links all over the world. As a network promoting dialogue, therefore, the Internationalization Commission is to remain a format in which University management's strategic considerations

can be discussed and the various teams within the University can voice their needs. The faculty-based internationalization officers and status group representatives sitting on the commission will also share information and concerns from University management with their organizational unit, conveying this information and advocating these concerns competently. Building on this proven teamwork based on trust, we want to

bring about the University of Bonn’s successful transformation into a university that, right across the board, sees internationality as a duty for all its constituent organizations.

**International students in the 2025/26 winter semester
(only those working toward a degree and not holding a German university entrance qualification)**



MISSION



Founded in 1818, the University of Bonn emerged from the 2019 Excellence contest as the most successful university in Germany with six Clusters of Excellence. Six years later, in May 2025, all the existing clusters were granted an extension and two new ones were secured, thus retaining its status as the German university with the most Clusters of Excellence. It goes without saying that this achievement would not have been possible without the many international networks that our researchers, our administrative staff and, of course, our students are involved in. One of the aims of the Excellence Initiative is to increase the degree of internationalization at German universities. For us, this means learning from and with our partners all over the world and never ceasing to reflect on what unites us and develop it further. As part of this, we do not only want to appreciate diversity and a plurality of opinions but also actively harness them to achieve our common goals.

For us at the University of Bonn, excellence in our international focus means taking responsibility for shaping sustainable, resilient and livable spaces for the future together with our international partners. How we are pursuing this aim is enshrined in the three pillars of our Excellence Strategy. With regard to our international activities, this means:

WE invest in people

At the University of Bonn, we are committed to encouraging academic excellence at all career stages and want to keep on improving in this

area, so we have also set ourselves the objective of training the talent of tomorrow and giving them the space they need to grow and develop. The introduction of high-profile professorships has enabled us to appoint a crowd of top international researchers to our faculties and Transdisciplinary Research Areas (TRAs) in recent years. Meanwhile, we set up the Bonn University Ambassadors program to put contacts in place for students and researchers based abroad. The scheme sees up to 20 former guest researchers—all established and prominent researchers—represent the University of Bonn in their homeland and, in particular, within their home institution and the research culture specific to the relevant country. Our Ambassadors research and teach at universities all over the world and help to forge lasting links, e.g. by arranging visits (to Bonn or their home country) for early-career researchers, holding fact-finding sessions on doing a degree program or doctorate in the host country or organizing various joint alumni events. The University of Bonn is also committed to promoting international mobility and removing structural barriers to spending time abroad, especially for students and early-career researchers but also for administrative staff, e.g. as part of the International Staff Week, the International Partner Days and the Erasmus+ Programme. Alongside traditional exchange formats, the University also offers virtual opportunities to facilitate intercultural encounters in as accessible a way as possible.

WE foster networks

We at the University of Bonn support transdisciplinary research and teaching with global links. Working with our partners around the world,

we want to use findings gleaned from the very latest cutting-edge research to find solutions to the major challenges of our time that straddle international borders. Our partnerships are driven by trust and integrity and give us insights into the examples of best practice adopted by our international partner universities. We invest in partnerships based on trust—in the form of bilateral cooperation agreements but also in multilateral alliances, e.g. with our partner institutions in the Global Universities for Societal Impact (GUSI) network and the NeurotechEU European Universities alliance. Back in Bonn, we and our partners formed the Bonn Research Alliance (BORA), a coalition that also includes local non-university research institutions with an international outlook such as the Institute for Environment and Human Security at the United Nations University (UNU-EHS). The successful cooperation that we have enjoyed in our longstanding international networks gives us major encouragement, however challenging the times may be, to preserve and expand what we have inherited and the joy of working together. Additional bi- and/or multilateral partnerships are also planned for the years to 2030, focusing particularly on partner universities in the Global South (Ghana, Brazil) as well as in India and China.

WE create impact

As a University of Excellence with global links, based in the “federal” and “UN city” of Bonn, we promote intercultural encounters and see ourselves as a diverse and inclusive university community. The University regards itself as a bridge-builder and, in the interests of science diplomacy, endeavors to keep academic channels open and strengthen democracy both inwardly

and outwardly. It is committed to defending universal values such as academic freedom and self-determination and rejects all forms of discrimination, a stance that it maintains consistently in its partnerships and networks both within Germany and farther afield. We support a resilient, science-based democracy and take our responsibility seriously, including in respect of embedding research and knowledge in the international community. Building on these aims and values, we work to guarantee the security and integrity of research at the University by, for example, weighing up potential international partnerships in a targeted way that takes due account of the risks involved. We also consider ourselves a catalyst of technology and knowledge transfer and are keen to shoulder social responsibility in Bonn and beyond, something that we try to achieve through communication and dialogue as well as tangible support for researchers at risk, e.g. in the wake of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. Immediately following the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022, therefore, the Cologne/Bonn Academy in Exile was set up, which is currently helping 15 researchers from Ukraine, Russia and Belarus to carry on their research and teaching. The University of Bonn also secured 16 Philipp Schwartz Fellowships during the relevant timeframe for researchers at risk. Given that the abovementioned international conflicts that originally prompted these initiatives are likely to still be ongoing, or at least still having an impact, in the years to 2030, we believe that it is vital to maintain this form of international research funding while also broadening the focus to include other international trouble spots and the researchers directly or indirectly affected by them (e.g. Sudan, Israel/Palestine).

These three pillars have helped the University to consolidate, strengthen and advance its position as a world-renowned institution. Its 2025 Internationalization Strategy and the over 200 individual actions that it contained have helped to drive the University of Bonn's across-the-board transformation into a fully international university, something that it will continue to do with the aid of the measures and objectives outlined here. The auditors for the "Internationalization of Universities" re-audit conducted by the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) called the University's strategic internationalization efforts from 2018 to 2024 an "impressive success story."

Every single member of our University had a hand in this achievement. As well as continuing to help implement the core measures, therefore, all seven faculties have also injected momentum of their own with dedicated faculty-specific internationalization strategies, thus taking account of their individual needs and the culture that is unique to each subject. In particular, the increase in the percentage of non-German professors from 11.3 percent in 2019 to 15.6 percent in December 2024 constitutes a joint achievement together with the faculties and the product of an increasingly international approach to recruitment. This trend becomes even more marked when one considers the percentage of appointments from institutions outside Germany (i.e. regardless of the appointee's nationality), which jumped from 17.8 percent in 2016–2018 to 34.2 percent in 2022–2024.

Supported by core measures including an expanded onboarding phase, which ensures support during the first few months post-appointment as well, and the introduction of high-profile

professorships—half of which have been awarded to international candidates—we have managed to enrich our professoriate with a wide range of intercultural experiences and perspectives over the long term. The plan for the years to 2030 is now to ramp up these efforts even further.

This important achievement is just one example among many. Across all its action areas, the University of Bonn is seeing positive trends thanks to strategic measures that are being overseen and implemented by a large number of organizational units. In addition to University management and the individual faculties, therefore, the Transdisciplinary Research Areas (TRAs), the Clusters of Excellence, the Bonn Center for Teacher Education and Central Administration are also doing much on an ongoing basis to make the University of Bonn even more competitive on the international stage.

In light of these successes, among other things, we will continue to do all we can to further our development as an international University that is viewed as such not only within Germany but also on the European and global stage. As far as we are concerned, this means continuing to advocate cohesion, tolerance, diversity, educational equity and academic freedom together with our partner universities and international networks in the spheres of society and politics and to promote the education of cosmopolitan young people.



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ACTION AREAS



A) The strategic internationalization of excellent research



B) The targeted internationalization of teaching and learning



C) A strong framework for internationalization



D) The continued development of strategic partnerships and networks



E) The internationalization of partnerships in the international city of Bonn and its surrounding area



F) Institutional resilience in global and multipolar crises

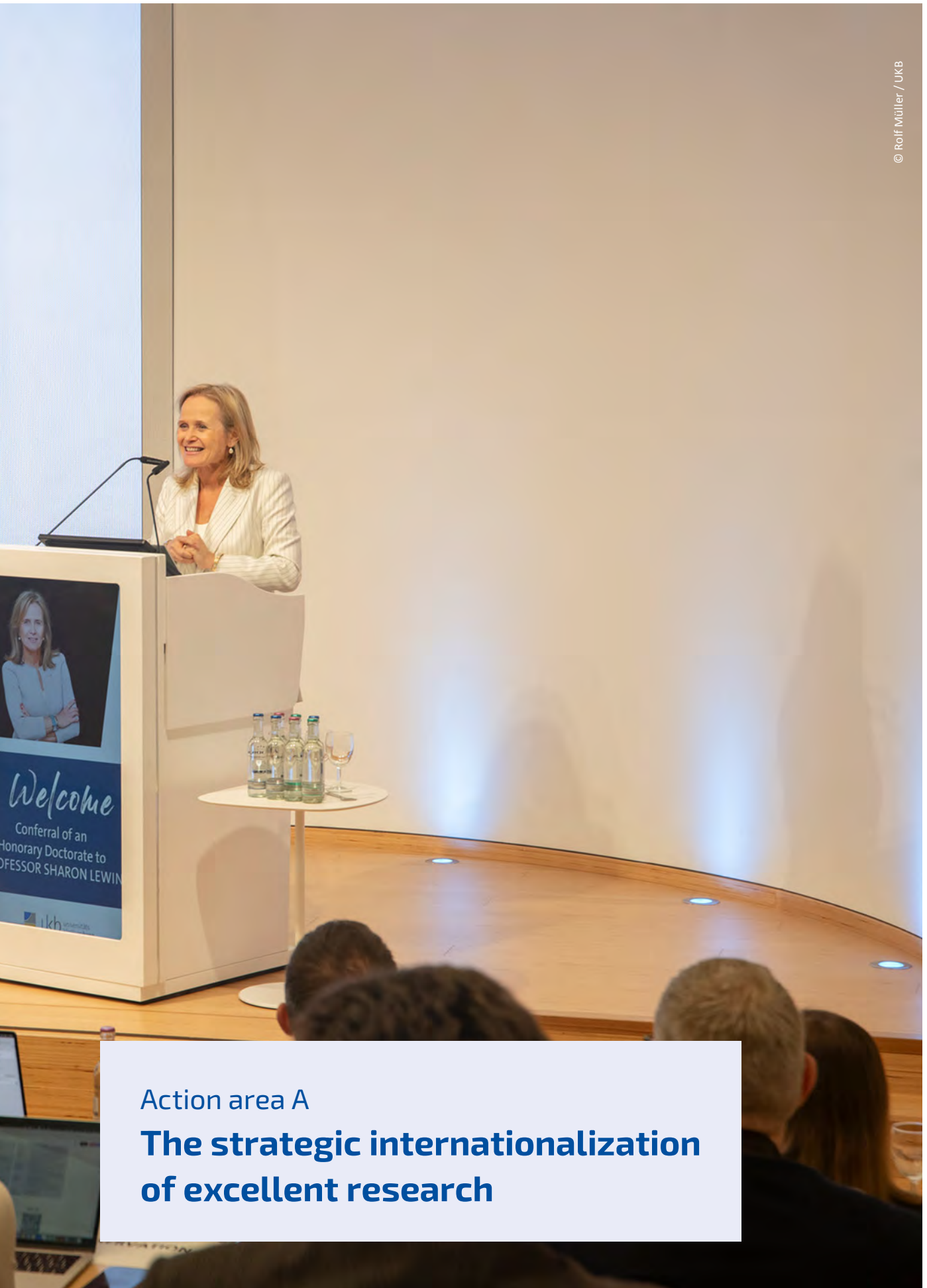


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A joint venture between The University of Melbourne and The Royal Melbourne Hospital



Action area A

The strategic internationalization of excellent research

Action area A

The strategic internationalization of excellent research



Scientific excellence is largely dependent on how international an institution is, for four main reasons:

a) Global knowledge networks

International cooperation produces networks for sharing methods, data and ideas. Innovation is often produced at overlaps, especially where different research cultures come into contact.

b) Access to talent

Excellent research calls for excellent minds, and the fight to attract the best up-and-coming talent is a truly global one. A university with an international profile can attract talented individuals who will make their research environment stronger and more diverse.

c) Sizable research infrastructures

Many current research questions can only be answered by large-scale international alliances, e.g. in physics, mathematics or artificial intelligence (AI). International projects offer resources that a single university or country would not be able to access.

d) Quality assurance via the international competition

Anyone who publishes work in the international arena will be submitting themselves to a tougher academic review process, thus increasing the quality of the methods used, questions posed and results obtained.

The research that goes on at the University of Bonn is shaped by strong global links and significant involvement in international networks. Our researchers are engaged in partnerships on six continents and occupy top positions in international rankings for numbers of international co-publications (e.g. 68th in the 2025 Academic Ranking of World Universities and 1st in Germany for mathematics and economics in the Global Ranking of Academic Subjects).

As well as being heavily involved in international collaborative projects funded by organizations in Germany and abroad, the University's own calls for proposals to fund research projects involving researchers at our strategic partner institutions are another vital component of our international profile.

The markedly international dimension of our early-career researchers is reflected in the current total of 12 Bonn International Graduate Schools (BIGSs) as well as other Research Training Groups with an international element and numerous cotutelle and joint doctorates, including with our strategic partner universities (see action area D: “The continued development of strategic partnerships and networks”).

List of all Research Training Groups with an international element

→ 12 BIGSs:

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Clinical and Population Sciences
- Development Research
- Drug Sciences
- Economics
- Immunosciences and Infection
- Land and Food
- Mathematics
- Neurosciences
- Oriental and Asian Studies
- Physics and Astronomy

→ Joint/Double PhD programs, cotutelle agreements

→ International Research Training Group (IRTG) 2168 funded by the DFG: Bonn & Melbourne Research and Graduate School Immunosciences/IRTG 2168 (2016–2025)

- Ended in July 2025—final outcome (up to July 2025): 48 joint degrees awarded, with up to 19 more anticipated

→ Joint PhD programs (including doctoral grants awarded from Excellence funding and after a competitive call for proposals) with the

- University of St Andrews (28 Joint PhD procedures)
- University of Melbourne (16 Joint PhD procedures)

→ Trinational Research Training Group “European Foundational Myths in Literature, Art and Music” (together with the University of Florence and Sorbonne University)

→ International doctorate in Italian Studies (together with the University of Florence; Literature and Cultural Studies also with Sorbonne University)

→ Double Degree Doctoral Program together with the University of Osaka in the ImmunoSensation Cluster of Excellence (from 2026 onward)

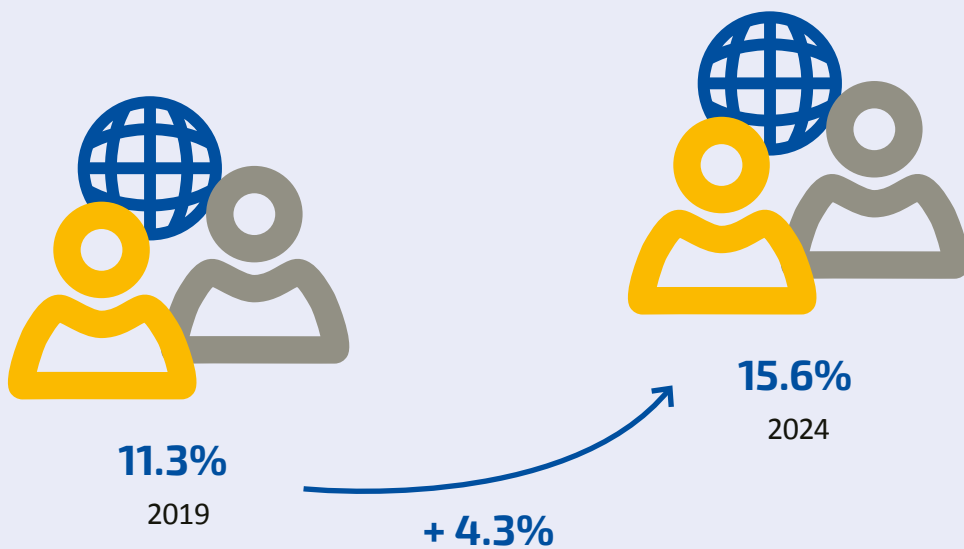
The number of joint doctoral examination procedures (cotutelle agreements and Joint PhDs) is an important and quantifiable parameter for gauging the internationalization of doctoral training overall, an area in which the University of Bonn ranks second in Germany according to the latest doctoral student statistics: 170 out of the just over 6,500 doctorates being pursued (2.6 percent) involve international partners.

The international character of our research is one of the University of Bonn’s great strengths, something that was highlighted in particular during the “Internationalization of Universities” audit conducted by the HRK in 2018, the inspection of the University as part of the Excellence contest in 2019, the HRK’s re-audit for “Internationaliza-

tion of Universities” in 2024 and the University’s application in 2025 to retain its University of Excellence status.

The University succeeded in increasing its percentage of non-German professors from 11.3 percent in 2019 to 15.6 percent at the end of 2024 thanks not least to the predominantly international makeup of its newly appointed high-profile professors in line with its Excellence Strategy as well as targeted measures such as the Distinguished Professors Emeriti program and greater diversity in the appointment statistics for all its faculties. This is an important achievement that we intend to build on in the years to 2030 by further increasing our percentage of international professors.

Change in international professors over the past five years



Besides nationality, more emphasis is to be placed on the extent to which a candidate's career to date can be considered "international" when assessing internationality in the future, e.g. when appointing individuals who have mainly worked abroad up to that point. This will enable a more nuanced view of the heterogeneity of the candidate mix in appointment procedures, for instance, in order to attract even more outstanding researchers from all over the world and keep them at the University long-term. Among other things, innovative ideas such as the Joint Professorship program with the University of St Andrews have helped to enhance the professoriate's international dimension. Since 2022, two professors from each university have been appointed to the other institution for a three-year term while retaining their professorship at their home university. During this period, they develop joint degree programs and launch third-party-funded projects in both cities, either bilaterally or as part of larger alliances. The best-practice models devised in the process will also be able to serve as blueprints for joint appointments involving other partners in the future.

The EU Project Office, which was brought into being with the 2025 Internationalization Strategy, provides researchers with targeted administrative support when they are applying for EU funding. Meanwhile, the CoordinAidEU incentive scheme aids the coordination of collaborative proposals in particular by relieving the administrative burden and intensive support, which has had a positive impact on the percentage of proposals for EU grant programs coming from the University of Bonn (the "proposal rate") and the success rate of these proposals.

Thus researchers from the University of Bonn have achieved sweeping success, even in the running for the extremely competitive European Research Council (ERC) grants—of which they are currently receiving 56.

The EU Project Office is currently doing a range of things as part of its outreach strategy to make its offering even better known. The services that the office provides are to remain an integral part of the administrative support structure over the long term so that the aforementioned high proposal and success rates for EU grant programs can be maintained and even improved further in certain areas.

Targeted measures are to be introduced to build additional international research partnerships and attract researchers from abroad to the University of Bonn in the interests of the further internationalization of research, focusing particularly on promoting early-career researchers. Alongside retaining tried-and-tested measures in international recruitment, new instruments will take account of the changes in geopolitical realities in order to consider the risks involved, e.g. by protecting against illegal knowledge transfer and by taking steps to preserve academic integrity (see action area F: "Institutional resilience in global and multipolar crises").

Achievements to 2025

- Increasing the percentage of international professors from 11.3% (2019) to 15.6% (2024).
- Introducing University-level grant programs as part of the Excellence Strategy to increase the number of joint international research projects.
- Increasing proposal and success rates in EU research funding programs to build up and expand European research and innovation networks.
- Helping early-career researchers to add an international dimension to their careers post-doctorate through tailored services such as the Argelander Program.
- Enhancing the international profile of the Bonn International Graduate Schools.

Objectives by 2030

- Increasing the percentage of international professors while making the “international appointment” category more diverse by adding criteria other than nationality. Aspects such as academic and discipline-specific socialization and several years spent working abroad are to be accorded greater weight in future. Incorporating these criteria, a target of increasing international professorships to 20 percent by 2035 is to be set.
- Consolidating international partnerships and improving their quality while also bringing new partner universities on board.
- At least maintaining, and ideally achieving a further increase in, the proposal and success rates for EU research funding programs.
- Honing country-specific skills in handling questions of research security in view of the new geopolitical realities, focusing on China and India.
- Retaining international researchers at the University of Bonn long-term.



Key measures for achieving the objectives

- Focusing on attracting international researchers from abroad and establishing more Joint Professorships (St Andrews) by expanding the scheme in 2026 to include visiting professorships for early-career researchers prior to a tenured professorship, which will also enable lecturers and (senior) readers to apply.
- Increasing the number of international professorships by stipulating a percentage of international appointments for tenure-track (TT) professorships in the same way as for the high-profile professorships in the first Excellence phase (Hertz, Argelander, Schlegel).
- Devising measures to improve the personalized onboarding services available to new staff even after they have joined, including through coaching and mentoring formats and legal assistance on e.g. the rights and obligations of a managing director (“Onboarding 2.0”).
- Evaluating, revising and strategically adapting the range of funding instruments offered as part of the Excellence Strategy to support international research projects.
- Maintaining the EU office and expanding its range to include subject-specific consulting services tailored to the needs of the individual faculties and the culture that is unique to each subject.
- Translating the Bonn University Ambassadors program from a project originally (2014–2017) funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation as part of international alumni work into a longer-term self-contained scheme with specific work packages every year; attracting new Ambassadors to support the new strategy (China, second area of focus in India).
- Continuing to develop international alumni work, e.g. through targeted alumni events in strategically important parts of the world and getting international alumni more closely involved with events in Bonn.







Action area B

**The targeted internationalization
of teaching and learning**

Action area B

The targeted internationalization of teaching and learning



The University of Bonn is working toward the targeted internationalization of teaching and learning in order to give students the best possible preparation for the opportunities and challenges of the global research and job market thanks to a comprehensive and excellent academic education. Foreign language skills, international experience, intercultural competences and insights into other knowledge systems and research environments are crucial to a professional career capable of standing up to the competition. By enabling students to meet and engage with teachers and peers with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, we are helping them to develop both personally and academically as global citizens. There is also a need to integrate specific aspects of internationality and interculturality into subject curricula, e.g. by teaching more courses in English, supporting teaching partnerships with other universities and creating mobility windows that allow students to gain foreign experience during their degree program.

It is vital that international students remain an integral part of academic life in Bonn in order to increase diversity among the student body. The University of Bonn will address the fiercer competition for students from Germany and abroad by enhancing its support services, focusing on teaching more courses in English (the International Classroom Bonn) and expanding mentoring programs for German and international students and doctoral candidates (“iStudy,” “Be strong!,” “Get finished”).

One significant milestone that the University of Bonn has reached in the internationalization of its teaching and learning has been to increase the number of master’s degree programs taught solely in English to 35 (current level as of the 2025/26 winter semester). The University also offers 58 bi- and multilingual study programs, including 14 double degrees awarded jointly with Sorbonne University, the United Nations University, the University of Florence, the University of Melbourne, the University of St Andrews and others. Last but not least, a number of digital teaching formats have also been devised as part of NeurotechEU, and a teaching and learning platform has also been introduced in the shape of Campus+.

The number of bachelor’s courses taught in English is also to be increased further in order to build on the internationalization successes achieved at postgraduate level. In addition, international students are to continue to be supported with tailored services designed to improve their German skills both before and during their studies. This will help students on English-language master’s degree programs or pursuing a FastTrack doctorate with a bachelor’s degree to integrate into the German and European research environment and world of work.

Furthermore, we will take the latest findings on the digitalization of teaching and use them at the University for international partnerships in teaching in order to facilitate subject-specific dialogue with students from other countries as part of

their regular study schedule and enrich our own study programs with the diverse perspectives furnished by international students and teachers. Recognizing our highly diverse student body, we will explore the possibility of integrating international perspectives to a greater extent into our curricula as part of the internationalization of Bonn as a place to study in order to teach intercultural skills. Promoting virtual exchange programs as part of our partnerships with other universities will also help both of these ventures to succeed.

We will further increase the international mobility of our students by taking a two-pronged approach: First, we will embed mobility windows in curricula as much as we can, increase the quality and quantity of our exchange programs, and provide support and encouragement through our Study Abroad Advisory Service.

Second, we will extend our mobility opportunities to include in particular students who are currently still facing access barriers due to structural handicaps, especially those with a disability, with family duties or with a migration background. Thus our 2030 Internationalization Strategy also ties in directly with the Diversity Strategy of the University of Bonn.

Achievements to 2025

- Ensuring the digital internationalization of teaching and learning through collaborative online teaching formats.
- Teaching more undergraduate courses in English via the International Classroom Bonn program from nine in the 2020/21 academic year to forty-one in 2024/25.
- Increasing the number of incoming international exchange students, especially at bachelor's level.
- Increasing outgoing student mobility, especially in the Global Exchange Program (by 20% from 2019/20 to 2023/24) and the Erasmus traineeship program (by over 90% from 2019/20 to 2023/24), and widening access opportunities for underrepresented student groups in the Erasmus+ Programme through additional "equal opportunity" funding.
- Expanding recruitment tools and improving the structure of the early studies phase for international students as well as extending tailored services to help international students learn German.

Objectives by 2030

- Continuing to develop attractive, bespoke study programs for international exchange students.
- Making academic stays abroad during a degree program more feasible and more attractive for students, especially those facing access barriers.
- Attracting excellent students from abroad who intend to work toward a degree as well as non-German nationals who obtained or will obtain their university entrance qualification in Germany.
- Improving the study success of international students from all countries.
- Increasing the percentage of female students from selected countries through specific programs.
- Promoting cultural awareness among students and teachers.

Key measures for achieving the objectives

- Continuing to develop the International Classroom Bonn study program by adding interdisciplinary courses taught in English for bachelor's students, including blended learning.
- Continuing to develop the strategy for attracting international students and identifying potential strategic priorities (including via the Competence Hub for China & India), e.g. a dedicated program to target female students in particular.
- Expanding funding options for international students working toward a degree in order to safeguard their long-term study success.
- Raising awareness of the creation of mobility windows to make the curricula for exchange students more flexible, potentially by setting up an "international semester" complete with preliminary course.
- Submitting more applications for teacher mobility funding, e.g. as part of Erasmus+ and the NeurotechEU European Universities alliance.





THE PROMISE OF THE CITY

*Imaging the Future of Urban Community
in India*





Action area C

**A strong framework for
internationalization**

Action area C

A strong framework for internationalization



The University of Bonn has been working systematically since 2015 to improve the framework for internationalization in Bonn as a place to study, implementing numerous measures. A successful audit (2017–2018) and re-audit (2019–2024) under the “Internationalization of Universities” scheme of the German Rectors’ Conference (HRK) successfully embedded the issue of internationalization in the minds of the faculties and central units. This is reflected in subsidiary internationalization strategies being adopted by five out of the seven faculties, corresponding administrative structures being set up within the individual faculties, and a University internationalization committee being made permanent. This latter ensures regular dialogue at central and decentralized level between key people from all status groups involved in international affairs.

Alongside the Internationalization Commission, whose members also include representatives from the Transdisciplinary Research Areas (TRAs), more use is to be made of the TRA structure itself as a vehicle for forging closer inter-faculty links. The TRAs provide a unique opportunity for international networking via interdisciplinary projects as spaces for innovation in research and teaching where work is done across faculty boundaries on fundamental topics of major future relevance to science, technology and society. However, implementing individual internationalization measures at faculty level remains a key element of internationalization at the University. In light of the manifold successes of the past few years, the

faculties will be able to benefit from examples of best practice at the University of Bonn that have become firmly established.

The University of Bonn will align its services even more closely with the whole student life cycle in future in order to offer international students an ideal environment for studying. Specifically, we want to support international students not only just before they embark on their degree program but right from when they apply and enroll. This will then be followed by support while they are just starting their studies right through to when they write their final thesis, graduate and climb onto the career ladder.

The internationalization of Central Administration at the University has been lent additional support from Excellence Strategy funding since 2019. Achievements of particular relevance in this area include improving the integration of international professors, not least through one-to-one German coaching as well as providing all key documents in both German and English and offering targeted continual professional development to administrative staff via intercultural and language training, e.g. as part of a funded stay abroad at a partner university through Erasmus+.

Achievements to 2025

- Completing all central German/English services and having the relevant regulations and bylaws available in both languages.
- Offering more foreign-language courses and intercultural training for students, researchers and administrative staff.
- Passing the HRK’s “Internationalization of Universities” audit and re-audit.
- Digitizing the service structures for international students and researchers.
- Forming an Internationalization Committee made up of all status groups at the University of Bonn.

Objectives by 2030

- Continuing to remove language barriers across the University in a targeted way.
- Raising Bonn’s international profile as a place to study and research and making it a more attractive proposition.
- Continuing to improve the intercultural skills of technical and administrative staff in a targeted way by giving them international experience.
- Continuing to develop the services offered to international students and researchers through in-person and online services tailored to the target group.

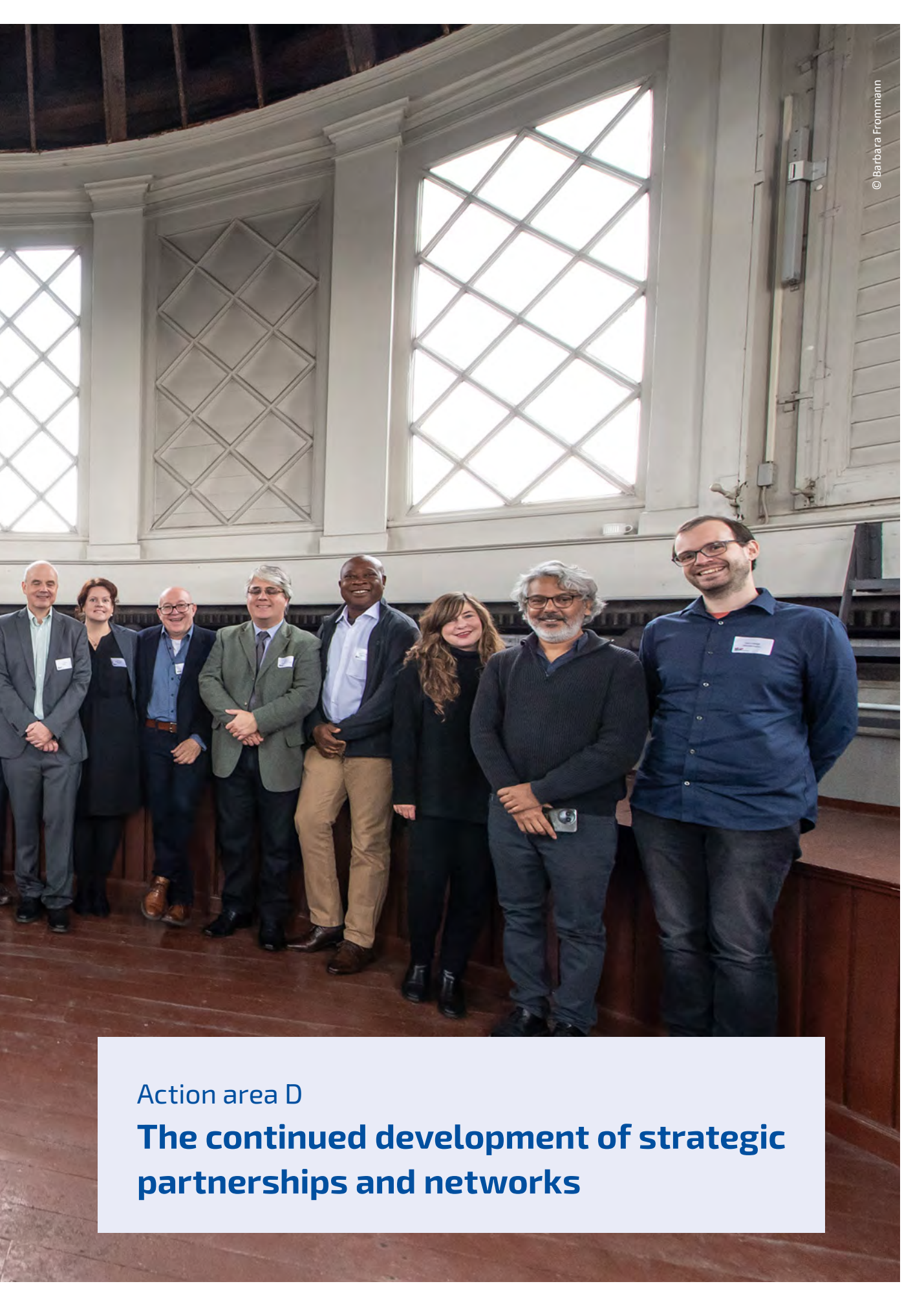


Key measures for achieving the objectives

- Removing barriers that all University of Bonn members encounter when using central and decentralized services, e.g. by providing all documents and information in both German and English until mid-2026 via the Central Translation Service with its two dedicated posts. A coordination office for the whole of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) funded by its Ministry of Culture and Science has also been based at the University of Bonn since January 2026.
- Developing a marketing offering tailored to each target group.
- Giving the University's international social media presence a more professional look.
- Getting different groups more involved in how the University presents itself and is perceived abroad, arranged by countries and subject-specific cultures—from the Bonn University Ambassadors through to international students. This will involve working group meetings and organizing social media internships for students.
- Devising a program for longer stays abroad as part of the Staff Exchange opportunities available for selected positions at selected partner universities (including in NeurotechEU).
- Increasing the visibility of “internationalization at home” services in the form of landing pages that account for the diverse nature of the target groups.
- Liaising closely with partners in the Global Universities for Societal Impact (GUSI) network on all matters relating to structural support for internationalization across the University. The first workshop, on AI and teaching, is in 2026.







Action area D

The continued development of strategic partnerships and networks

Action area D

The continued development of strategic partnerships and networks



In a bid to encourage dialogue in research, teaching and administration, the University of Bonn maintains partnerships at institute, faculty or whole-University level with over 200 universities all over the world. Over the past few years, we have worked systematically to build six strategic partnerships with the following universities in order to hone our international profile and intensify international cooperation in research, teaching and administration even further: Emory University (US), the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel), the University of Ghana (Ghana), the University of Melbourne (Australia), the University of St Andrews (UK) and Waseda University (Japan).

All six partners complement the University of Bonn extremely well with regard to their high-profile research areas and the fact that they all have long-term, interdisciplinary collaborative projects under way.

We have also identified a number of focus countries for international cooperation as part of our Partnership Strategy. Following on from Australia, France, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, the UK and the US, we have now also set our sights on Brazil alongside Ghana in an effort to expand our partnerships in the Global South.

As the cooperation between the Hausdorff Center for Mathematics and the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) within the auspices of the Young African Mathematicians (YAM) program is already making clear, for example, more research partnerships and, in particular, more student exchange programs with universities in the Global South need to be established so that students from the University of Bonn can study in the Global South and their peers from countries in the Global South can spend time studying in Bonn. Focus countries are



chosen based on criteria such as existing close contacts in science and academia, regional ties, shared aims in university development, and alignment with the standards of scientific integrity and academic freedom.

We have built a global network—Global Universities for Societal Impact (GUSI)—with most of our strategic partner universities in order to raise the University of Bonn’s international profile. The network builds on proven bilateral partnerships in order to facilitate multilateral dialogue, increase the efficiency of international cooperation even further, leverage synergistic effects more intensively and make the universities more visible. The members of GUSI intend to work together to tackle some of the pressing issues facing society in order to shoulder their responsibility in terms of social policy. The focus until 2027 will be on AI. The relevant issues are addressed by the network’s three foundational pillars—education, research, and leadership and innovation—including at a workshop in Bonn in 2026.

Achievements to 2025

- Signing a multilateral agreement to establish the GUSI network.
- Expanding and continuing to develop the University’s bilateral strategic partnerships in research, teaching, learning and administration.
- Developing and consolidating the European University of Brain and Technology (NeurotechEU) within the framework of the funding provided to European Universities alliances.
- Expanding the partnerships with the German Centres for Research and Innovation (currently an associate partner in the centers’ network in Tokyo, São Paulo and New Delhi).
- Establishing joint doctorates and expanding cotutelle doctorates involving universities in the focus countries.
- Getting the University of Bonn admitted to the U7+ Alliance of World Universities.

Objectives by 2030

- Improving the University of Bonn's international reputation for global responsibility and impact through the strategic cooperation between the partners in the GUSI network in all areas (research, teaching, leadership, administration, transfer).
- Institutionalizing the NeurotechEU European Universities alliance across the University.
- Expanding South-(South)-North partnerships built on equal opportunity.
- Entering into strategic cooperation with selected partner institutions in Brazil, Ghana and other countries of the Global South.
- Seeking closer dialogue with selected U7+ partner universities (including in the areas of policy consulting and transfer).

Key measures for achieving the objectives

- Establishing annual themes to forge lasting links among GUSI members (kick-off workshop in Bonn in 2026), bringing together stakeholders from administration, research, teaching, learning and transfer to discuss AI.
- Developing a joint master's program in Neurotechnologies.
- Filling (by 2027) the three visiting professorships funded by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) foundation to tighten the partnership with Brazil, the overall aim being longer-term cooperation on science and research.
- Joining the Ghana-NRW University Alliance.
- Introducing systematic selection criteria for strategic partnerships and focus countries.
- Introducing innovative teaching formats and continuing to develop the existing program options for joint appointments (Distinguished Professorship programs, 100–20 versus 50–50 professorships).







Action area E

**The internationalization of partnerships
in the international city of Bonn and its
surrounding area**

Action area E

The internationalization of partnerships in the international city of Bonn and its surrounding area



The University of Bonn has enjoyed strong partnerships with non-university research institutions in the Bonn region for decades now. 2017 saw us develop our partnerships with local sustainability-focused research institutions (Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC), German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences, UN institutions) further into the Bonn Alliance for Sustainability Research, which is raising Bonn's profile as a sustainability hub and driving forward joint projects.

In 2018, we launched the Bonn Research Alliance (BORA) to lend greater visibility to these and other local partnerships and give them a more robust framework. The collaborative work that goes on within BORA is accelerating Bonn's growth as a center for research, driven by the development of the University of Bonn and its fellow members. This is honing the alliance's research profile, providing more support to early-career researchers and improving the research infrastructure. BORA is also a key measure in the successful Excellence Strategy. The alliance currently comprises 12 local research institutions that belong to one of Germany's four national research associations—Fraunhofer, Helmholtz, Leibniz and Max Planck—or are members of the regional Johannes-Rau-Forschungsgemeinschaft (JRF) or the United Nations University (UNU).

The University of Bonn's strategic links with the research institutions in its home city and region have resulted in numerous joint appointments. In the past few years, for instance, professors have come to Bonn in partnership with Forschungszentrum Jülich, the German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases and several Fraunhofer Institutes, among others, under the "Berlin" and "Jülich" models.

The close relationship that we enjoy with the Institute for Environment and Human Security at the United Nations University (UNU-EHS) through our successful joint degree program in Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security and the Global Health Risk Management & Hygiene Politics degree program for continuing education has been strengthened further, culminating in the deputy director of UNU-EHS being made an honorary professor at the University of Bonn. There are plans to develop a joint doctorate in Future Studies together with UNU-EHS by 2030.

Cooperation with the international academic organizations based in Bonn has also been steadily expanded. These include the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), which has sent regular delegations to the University as well as mounting joint fact-finding missions with it abroad. Joint events have also been held to support international partnerships and continue the DAAD Lecturer Programme at the University of Bonn. Another such organization is the German

Rectors' Conference (HRK), cooperation with which has come in the form of the "Internationalization of Universities" audits and re-audits conducted jointly and the staging of workshops at the University of Bonn on the prominence of German higher-education institutions in international university rankings.

The 2025 ENTRANCE regional conference, held at the University of Bonn, offered a valuable platform for debating China's growing importance in global research networks and how to support research, teaching and bilateral relations with the country. A workshop on research security was also organized at the University of Bonn in partnership with the DAAD to provide a space to discuss standards and practices in international research collaboration.

The University of Bonn is to set up a dedicated UN Office, a move geared in particular to help forge even closer links with the UN organizations based in the city. This office will coordinate joint initiatives, improve communication with UN institutions in Bonn and raise the profile of the University's activities in the realms of global challenges and sustainable development.



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Achievements to 2025

- Founding BORA and arranging joint appointments together with research and academic organizations in Bonn and the surrounding area.
- Deepening bilateral cooperation with UNU.
- Deepening cooperation with international (academic) organizations in Bonn (e.g. the DAAD and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation) through the BORA network.
- Deepening cooperation with companies from the region to help international graduates get onto the local job market.
- Introducing a set of guidelines for sustainability in international cooperation.

Objectives by 2030

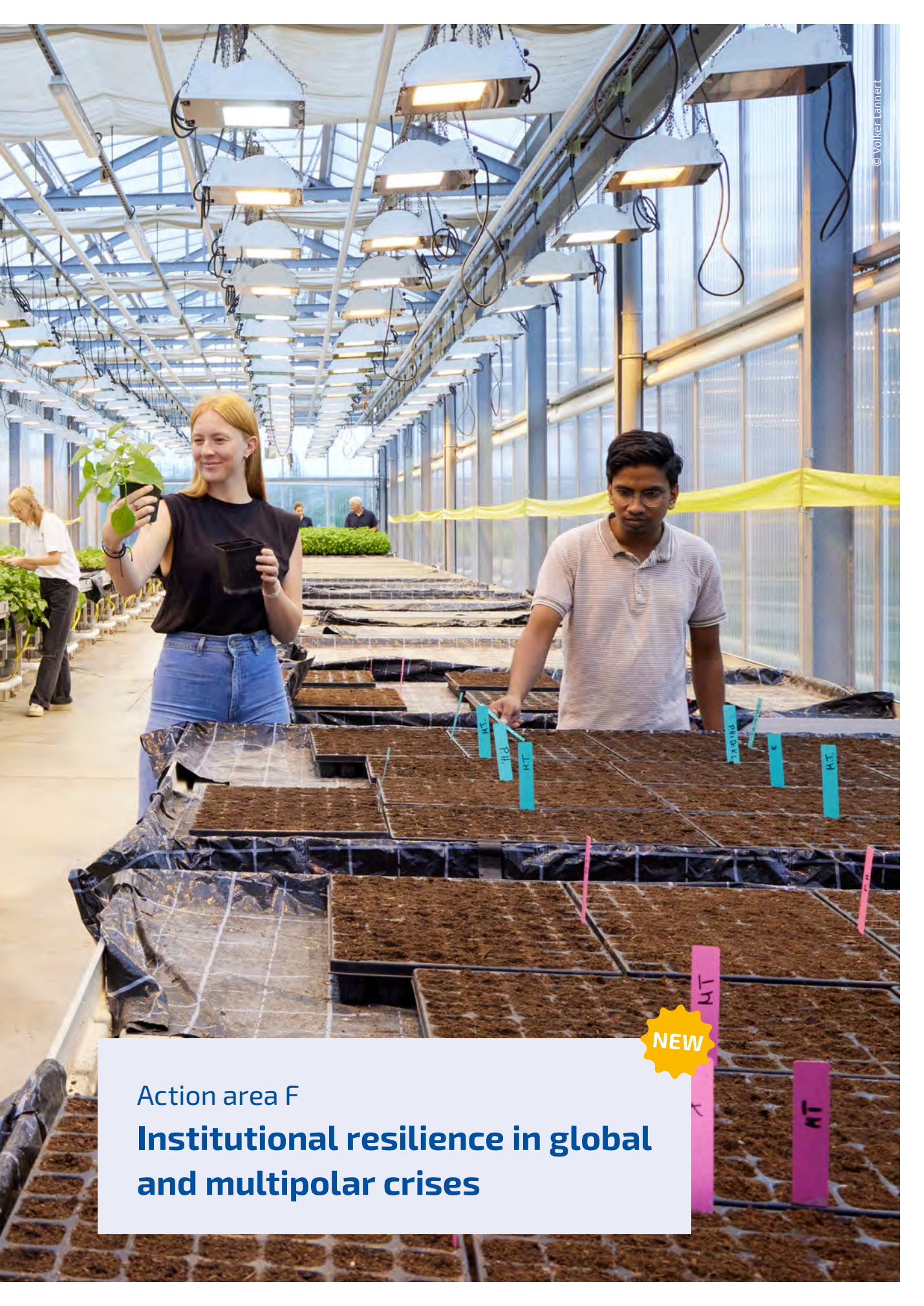
- Continuing to deepen bilateral cooperation between the University of Bonn and UNU-EHS, especially with regard to joint doctorates.
- Forging closer links with the other UN institutions based in Bonn.
- Deepening cooperation between the Vice Rectorate for International Affairs and the BORA Leadership Forum.
- Expanding support services to encourage international graduates to stay on in the region.
- Supporting researchers from abroad with matters relating to family responsibilities and a dual career.

Key measures for achieving the objectives

- Developing a joint doctorate together with UNU-EHS.
- Setting up a UN Office to build stronger links with other UN institutions in Bonn.
- Bringing University associates closer to the BORA institutions by supplying them with targeted information.
- Strengthening links with local companies and institutions and making use of testimonials from successful graduates, building on international alumni work.
- Pooling the initiatives of the Studierendennetzwerk, the General Students' Committee (AStA), the International Office and the Rectorate for engaging in conversation with city residents.







Action area F

Institutional resilience in global and multipolar crises

NEW

Action area F

Institutional resilience in global and multipolar crises



Now, in 2026, the University of Bonn—like many other higher-education institutions all over the world—is facing the challenge of standing firm in a world increasingly dominated by crises, conflicts and multipolar power shifts. Over the past few years, the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, energy crises, climate change and the polarization of society have thrown the manifold vulnerabilities of academic institutions with international links into sharp relief. At the same time, resilience—i.e. the ability to react to unexpected disruption flexibly, capably and sustainably—is becoming a key competitive advantage and quality factor in international higher education.

We are seeing increased fragmentation on a geopolitical level, with political conflicts liable to jeopardize partnerships with institutions in other countries at short notice. Higher-education institutions must be able to establish new partnerships, give students the flexibility to move abroad to study, or create alternative structures on their own campuses for incoming students. Digitalization, data processing, the provision of research resources and mobility are all interlinked global processes, and disrupting any of them will impact directly on research and teaching. Extreme weather events and global migration flows are having a direct effect on campus infrastructures and international mobility, including in Europe. Above all, however, political pressure on academic freedom and plurality of opinions is heightening all over the world, and a resilient

university must be able to defend its fundamental values even in a difficult environment.

“Institutional resilience” is a catch-all term that covers a range of areas:

- Preventing and managing crises: developing robust emergency plans for international partnerships and mobility
- Diversifying partnerships: reducing one-sided dependencies through broad-based international networks in different parts of the world
- Digital resilience: ensuring cybersecurity, data integrity and digital collaboration, even under difficult conditions
- Social resilience: supporting students and researchers experiencing crises (e.g. via scholarship funds, psychological counseling and flexible mobility options)
- Sustainable campus and infrastructure development: adapting to the consequences of climate change and ensuring the availability of energy and other resources
- Safeguarding academic freedom: devising strategies to handle political pressure on international partner institutions and the University itself

By adding this new action area, the University of Bonn is strengthening its role as a university that is fit for the future, conscious of its own responsibilities and part of some global networks. Rather than being merely a checkbox exercise, institutional resilience is a core element in any strategy to safeguard excellence in research, teaching,

administration and transfer, even under volatile, multipolar conditions. Due not least to falling student numbers and Germany's growing shortage of skilled labor, greater strategic engagement with China and India that remains mindful of the risks involved is a priority for this action area too, just as it is for some of the others (see above). The two countries have very large student populations and already constitute the biggest group of incoming students, while an increasing number of highly qualified researchers are entering the German job market.

In order to facilitate appropriate partnerships while taking account of the vast differences between both countries' academic systems and Germany's, a new competence hub for China and India is set to advise the University on strategic issues, including a country-specific strategy, as well as keeping researchers informed and help to build partnerships with China and India based on trust. Activities to market degree programs are also to be stepped up.

Achievements to 2025

- Setting up the Cologne/Bonn Academy in Exile (CBA), launching a mentoring program and providing ongoing advice on securing third-party funding to researchers at risk who have had to leave their homeland because of the war in Ukraine.
- Establishing an antisemitism office staffed by two Trusted Lecturers against Antisemitism.
- Joining the ENTRANCE network (with RWTH Aachen University and Forschungszentrum Jülich), which is funded by the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space's Regio China program, to gain new expertise on China (2023–2026).
- Forming a working group and organizing an initial DAAD workshop on research security.
- Establishing a matrix team for dealing with international crises and their consequences for academic dialogue and operations.

Objectives by 2030

- Formulating a strategy to attract outstanding students and researchers at all stages of their careers from selected countries (including India).
- Providing faster and more tailored support to researchers at risk who have been forced into exile by severe or long-term geopolitical crises.
- Gaining new expertise on China and India.
- Creating transparency regarding visits by international researchers to the University of Bonn to improve links, deliver targeted support and increase research security.
- Linking up the faculties, providing information formats and encouraging dialogue with the faculties to develop the Competence Hub for China & India.

Key measures for achieving the objectives

- Setting up a competence hub for China and India to pool existing knowledge, grow regional expertise and establish a central point of contact for researchers with questions about partnerships.
- Carrying out international projects with the City of Bonn, e.g. as part of the Bonn-Kherson solidarity partnership or the CBA's mentoring program.
- Creating a platform to increase the visibility of academic visits.
- Evaluating a research mapping process undertaken by the University while continuing to keep it up to date, e.g. by engaging directly with newly appointed professors.



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