

INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY FOR THE "GOCE DELCHEV" UNIVERSITY STIP 2020 - 2022

1. Introduction

The internationalization of the "Goce Delchev" University in Shtip is based on tradition and is a leading ambition, but above all it is the university's necessity. Internationalization in higher education is more than the mobility of students and professors; it represents the involvement of universities in the dynamic world we live in, in the rapid development of knowledge, creativity, and innovation. It is crucial for the quality of teaching and science.

The Internationalization Strategy aims to build on the achievements of the past by further developing the strengths of the university and establishing new directions for future development initiatives in the international environment. It builds on one of the principles of the University Development Strategy, namely: "Encouraging intensive international cooperation in the field of teaching and research as a prerequisite for the inclusion of the University in European scientific research and education processes."

The University strives for continuous improvement of research and teaching, deepens the international presence and strengthens the effectiveness of measures that support research and teaching in such international dimensions. The ability to attract foreign students according to criteria and conditions is a serious and acceptable indicator of the quality of the university.

These internationalization efforts apply to the entire university, although their actual implementation will honour the approaches and work experiences of the various faculties and the requirements of the European programs. Consequently, all activities of the University, especially in education and research, include internationalization in their activities and goals.

Long-term goals

1. Involvement of the "Goce Delchev" University in Shtip in the modern flows of inter-university cooperation in Europe, the region and the world;
2. Development of international study programs, first cycle, as well as second cycle, which will be based on the acquired research knowledge;
3. Creating students who are willing to work in diverse environments and different cultures;
4. Improving the quality of the teaching and scientific activity of the University;
5. Opening of a Centre for foreign students;
6. Increasing the mobility of students, teaching-scientific and administrative-technical staff;
7. Increasing the mobility of incoming students, teaching-scientific and administrative-technical staff;
8. Leadership in selected research areas, cooperation with society, regional development and cross-border cooperation.

9. Active role in university and institutional networks;
10. Creating an inter-cultural corner/program within the Department for international cooperation;

2. Research

The University's vision and mission are supported by research and the exchange of knowledge. The University actively supports international research collaborations by means of which researchers reflect their own aspirations to improve international scientific standards and to draw more attention to relevant disciplines. The "Goce Delchev" University in Shtip has a significant benefit from these collaborations, so the University supports partnerships with the most important institutions in the world, from every research field, which by means of scientific cooperation and knowledge circulation will improve performance, achievements, and efficiency in the field.

Historically, the University's research collaborations are the strongest with institutions in Europe and such collaborations will undoubtedly continue in the future.

With this Strategy, the University supports budding collaborations and defines new potential collaborations with leading institutions in Israel, Germany, China, Russia and other countries of interest.

In order to achieve this, the University is going to:

- support collaborations with the best research organizations in the world that share our commitment to high quality research;
- improve the quality of research through cooperation with international institutions in order to increase the scientific impact;
- take an active part in international associations and forums that work together to create solutions to current global challenges.

To achieve these priorities, the University is going to be an active entity in the European Higher Education Area, offering its researchers and research groups and inviting researchers from partner institutions to collaborate in multiple fields and within various initiatives. The University also plans to participate in several international projects in various programs and cross-border collaborations and establishes research links with international universities in the EU and around the world.

The internationalization of the research will be confirmed through publications, patents and innovations, participation in audits and analyses and participation in a number of projects.

By organizing international conferences, congresses and expert counselling, we are going to increase our influence regionally and internationally.

International exchange in terms of increasing research is going to be promoted by means of short-term and long-term mobility. Funding will be provided by European programs and international funds.

3. Teaching

Following the vision for internationalization of the university, the “Goce Delchev” University in Shtip is going to strive for development of internationally competitive study programs in English for undergraduate and postgraduate studies. In this manner, the University is trying to prepare all students for the demands of the global and professional world.

The programs are going to be taught by University professors and international guest lecturers from partner universities in selected priority areas.

The main focus is going to be on the Western Balkan countries, Turkey, Central, Eastern and Northern Europe, while at the same time the University is going to try to expand its activities in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Therefore, the university will strive to provide the best possible conditions for studying and administrative support to international students.

The main priority of the “Goce Delchev” University in Shtip is going to be to encourage the mobility of the academic staff and students. Outgoing and incoming mobility is going to be increased by means of promotional activities by the Centre for Inter-University Cooperation and by providing additional funding from international, European and national funds.

In addition to semester student exchanges, in the future, the work of the Centre for Inter-University Cooperation is going to be aimed at providing additional short-term exchanges for students such as summer schools, youth exchanges, training courses and contact seminars.

In order to achieve this, the University is going to:

- enable all students to have significant international experience during their studies;
- expand the opportunities for studying in English;
- increase the number of university integrated undergraduate and postgraduate study programs with Universities in the region and the world.
- create new e-tools and digital programs to increase the incoming mobility and visibility of the University.

4. Partnerships

The University's partnerships are based on bilateral agreements, inter-institutional Erasmus + agreements, as well as partnerships with local and national level institutions and economic entities of interest. These connections are fundamental to the work of the University. They form the basis for institutional and business partnerships and support growth through long-term relationships.

Partnerships with leading institutions and business entities enhance the visibility of the University and expand the links with the countries where we want to get involved and are an essential component of our educational or research presence.

In order to improve this, the University is going to:

- Foster collaborations with industry partners that help transform our ideas and practices into new technologies and innovations with global impact and application;
- Focus on and contribute to deepening relations with existing institutional and business partners in the region and Europe;
- Increase interdisciplinary cooperation with partners globally.

Existing partnerships are going to be expanded to new fields and new partnerships are going to be established in certain areas.

The Strategic Partnership Model currently in function with the University of Oviedo, Spain; Sofia University; University of Klaipeda, Lithuania; Smara University of Russia; The Jian Conservatory of Music in China and several others has proven to be a particularly dynamic driver for the development and internationalization of the University.

In the near future, the network of strategic partnerships should be expanded to include more partners.

5. Implementation and challenges

The best practices of the partner institutions of the “Goce Delchev” University in Shtip are going to be applied for the implementation of the Internationalization Strategy, and in accordance with the institutional goals and the Development Strategy of the University from 2019 - 2022. The Strategy must be embedded in all aspects of teaching and learning throughout the institution so that the University can adapt to the new challenges that will arise.

Implementation will be centrally coordinated.

The technical and administrative staff should also receive additional training in order to improve their international skills.

In order to achieve this, the University is going to:

- Raise awareness of the internationalization and interculturalism of the University at all levels and create a climate of openness;
- Use the existing international and intercultural experiences and skills of the university staff;
- Open a Centre for foreign students;
- Develop a concept for scholarships for foreign students;
- Increase the motivation of the University professors to teach in English;
- Develop a concept for financing renowned guest professors;

The Internationalization Strategy is going to be regularly monitored and evaluated so that it can be assessed whether the approach achieves its goals and delivers the benefits expected of it.

Research and statistical indicators are going to be developed to support effective monitoring of the internationalization process. The goals of internationalization are going to be incorporated in the comprehensive strategy of the University and the wider processes for ensuring quality in teaching and increasing student satisfaction.