

Press Release

DAAD-Strategie 2025

“Shaping Foreign Academic Policy in the Anthropocene”

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Promoting potential worldwide, strengthening academic networks and bringing expertise to international relations – these are the key spheres of action in the German Academic Exchange Service’s (DAAD) new strategy. With the paper, the world’s largest funding organisation for academic exchange is setting the course for the next five years, addressing the main opportunities and challenges for the international positioning of German higher education institutions and the academic system up until 2025.



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“With the Strategy 2025, we want to make a substantial contribution to shaping Foreign Academic Policy in the Anthropocene age and, in particular, to developing international relations

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between higher education institutions in the 2020s,” says DAAD president, Prof. Dr Joybrato Mukherjee to mark the publication of the strategy. The strategy aims to develop measures alongside the three main spheres of action.

“Recognising and promoting potential worldwide is our first strategic sphere of action. The awarding of scholarships to excellent students and young academics remains one of our core funding activities,” explains Mukherjee. “But these core areas are undergoing rapid change. The digital transformation is reshaping the way in which we experience international exchange. Virtual formats supplement and enhance physical mobility and, to an extent, have the potential to replace it. We’re now seeing and experiencing this all over again every day during the corona pandemic.”

Digitalisation, just like sustainability, is one of eight key issues that have been outlined in the strategy. Both issues refer to the necessity to find alternatives to the unlimited growth of mobility. A stay abroad is not a realistic option for everyone and a large number of flights accelerates climate change. The resulting integration of virtual elements here offers new solutions.

“I’m convinced that we urgently need innovative and digital formats to continue to attract excellent young people for academic studies in Germany going forward,” urges DAAD Secretary General, Dr Dorothea Rüland. “We are therefore committed to developing digital resources for before, during and after their academic studies in Germany. In doing so, we will also promote even stronger networking at all levels of higher education institutions, from teaching and research to administration. Even if physical exchange continues to be the ideal solution for gaining cross-cultural experiences and developing sustainable academic networks, with targeted digital preparation, support and follow-up, we can achieve more successful studies and, in turn, more sustainability.”

Sustainability is a key term in the second sphere of action: “Strengthening strategic academic networks”. The key message: Going forward, the DAAD will make even stronger contributions to solving global challenges and achieving the targets of the Agenda 2030 with subject-specific programmes. “The corona pandemic has shown us that we can only overcome the challenges of climate change, health or conservation of biodiversity on our finite planet Earth if we bring together the brightest minds and best institutions from across the world,” says DAAD President Mukherjee.

The third sphere of action, “Bringing expertise to international relations”, positions the DAAD as a forward-thinker in the current discourse on the internationalisation of academia, and as a key player in the political and civic decision-making process. Whether it is in relation to a unified, politically strong Europe, developing academic collaborations with African countries, German as an academic language or collaborative partnerships in the midst of difficult political constellations – Foreign Academic Policy can open doors and keep them open, even where communication breaks down on other levels.

To also ensure German higher education institutions’ strong international position in the future, the DAAD has set itself the following targets to achieve by 2025: Secure a place for Germany among the top five target countries for international students and doctoral candidates, increase the studies completion rate of international students to that of their German counterparts, increase the number of international academics at German higher education institutions, and facilitate international and cross-cultural experiences for half of all students at German higher education institutions. “In order to achieve these targets, and together with our member higher education institutions, we are building on the values to which the German higher education and academic system owes its strength: partnership, academic freedom and commitment to finding joint solutions to pressing global issues,” explains the DAAD president.

Link to the Strategy 2025 (German):

https://static.daad.de/media/daad_de/der-daad/wer-wir-sind/daad_strategie_2025.pdf
[https://static.daad.de/media/daad_de/der-daad/wer-wir-sind/daad_strategie_2025.pdf]

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