

Quality-oriented selection of university partnerships

ESB Business School's selection matrix

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An active commitment to internationalisation is the hallmark of Reutlingen University. Winner of the German Academic Exchange Service's (DAAD) "International University 2010" Award, Reutlingen University applies the principle "think globally, act locally" to its education of young people. Its aim is to produce graduates who are highly qualified and responsible citizens with a set of intercultural skills that enable them to operate confidently and with cultural awareness in a global network. All five schools are involved in the internationalisation process. It is, however, the largest school, ESB Business School, where this process is most advanced.

At ESB Business School, the internationalisation process is considered a natural part of the institution's quality culture. Quality in this respect encompasses not only quality assurance in teaching and learning, but also the systematic integration of internationalisation measures into the internal school and university quality management system. The goals are to establish greater transparency and better

procedures, clear assignment of authority and responsibility, better quality of services, and to guarantee compliance with legal requirements.

Many renowned international partner universities work together with ESB in this way to agree on quality requirements for agreements that enable students to integrate their foreign studies into their chosen degree programme for credits. To ensure the quality of the learning experience, students are advised to choose one of the 120 foreign institutions with which ESB Business School maintains partnership agreements.

Decisions on potential cooperation agreements are based on the criteria listed in the selection matrix. Faculty members wishing to establish a new cooperation agreement – typically International Officers or Programme Directors – are required to make a case to the Head of International Relations and the Faculty Board that the cooperation will meet given prerequisites. Afterwards, the Faculty Council and the President's Office are informed about the new cooperation.

The request for approval details the reasons for establishing the partnership, using the qualitative criteria from the catalogue to allow for a more precise assessment of the benefits the collaboration will bring to the faculty and the university. The strategic importance of the partnership, its particular appeal, the economic and political significance of the location for Germany, the hallmarks of the institution, and its current position in terms of ranking and accreditation are just a few of the many criteria which have to be recorded and analysed before the partnership is approved. The focus of the planned cooperation, the unique selling point of the course portfolio and the target group must also be documented. Furthermore, information on tuition fees and the university infrastructure is provided to present an overall impression of the potential partner institution.

The deployment of this tool is just one example of good practice at Reutlingen University, where internationalisation has always been greatly valued and is a central component of the institution's structure and development plan. Our experience with the selection matrix has indicated that it is far more important to highlight the concrete positive effects of internationalisation for the economy and for society than to simply measure and report a certain degree of internationalisation as a critical success factor.



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