

TUM Global Engagement Principles

Building Resilient International Relationships

November 2022



Introduction

At TUM, international cooperation has long been part of our university's DNA. Driven by the members of our academic community and actively supported by university leadership, TUM's global engagement further advances the quality of our research, enhances the reach of our world-class education, fuels our innovation ecosystem by attracting international talent and enriches our diverse campus community. With select 'flagship partnerships' as well as strategic networks, TUM is connected to the world's most renowned higher education institutions. Through our university-wide partnerships, we actively support academic exchanges and collaborative activities across borders, create unique opportunities for students and researchers, and open up new pathways to train administrative staff.

We believe that international academic exchange and scientific cooperation, driven by joint interests in research, innovation, and educational, have brought communities of knowledge closer together, have reduced barriers to international and intercultural understanding, and have had a profound impact on our broader society beyond countries, continents, and cultures. On the other hand, in times of emerging geopolitical tensions, we have to take care of safeguarding academic freedom and integrity in collaboration without politicizing international engagement. Therefore, we must become more vigilant in order to identify and confront cooperation risks, protect the integrity of our values, and ensure a secure environment in which our community and our international relationships can flourish.

This document has been developed in response to this challenge and seeks to support members of our university who are actively engaged in the formation and management of TUM's international partnerships on institutional, school and individual level. It introduces TUM Global Engagement Principles that serve as a frame of reference and orientation in decision-making processes. These Principles are complemented by a set of guiding questions for those involved in building international networks, a navigation through TUM's central support services, and a selection of further helpful references which have inspired this document.

TUM's international engagement is as diverse as our campus community, encompassing comprehensive strategic relationships on the university-level, long-standing partnerships on school-level, and a myriad of trust-based relationships, cooperation projects and collaborations on the level of institutes, professorships and individual researchers. In appreciation of the diversity in TUM's global engagement, this document has been drafted to empower our community in its pursuit of international cooperation. It has been designed as a living document that will be developed further based on the needs and demands of our university community.

TUM Global Engagement Principles

Reflecting TUM's core values, our TUM Global Engagement Principles seek to further empower TUM's international relationships by giving orientation and guidance while naturally respecting the freedom of our academics to engage with partners of their choice.

Partnering on eye-level

In the spirit of scientific freedom and international understanding and based on its mission statement and values, TUM's international partnerships establish global gateways for scientific interaction and intercultural exchange, allow our talents to experience the world, and connect the brightest minds of present and future to our university. TUM's international partnerships are based on mutual respect, trust and shared objectives for the benefit of an increasingly global community.

Valuing TUM's international talent

TUM values international talent who make significant contributions to the intellectual performance and cultural diversity at our university. Even in times of geopolitical changes and aroused public sentiment, our university promotes intercultural dialogue while protecting all members of our community, especially those most vulnerable due to circumstances, from stigmatization, discrimination, and exclusion.

Upholding academic freedom and responsible action

At TUM, we regard academic freedom as prerequisite for science and innovation to flourish. We firmly believe that academic freedom is a compass to navigate the complexities of international cooperation and it is key to providing a safe and secure study and research environment for all members of our university, both abroad and at home. TUM appreciates a diversity of attitudes, opinions and perspectives, and we recognize that some of our international partners may adhere to different value systems and have to navigate a different socio-political environment.

Accepting complexity and ambiguity

When forming their individual international collaborations, members of our scientific community recognize that these relationships do not operate in an isolated sphere. They are embedded in a larger political, societal and economic context that may be different from our own. This complexity increasingly necessitates that our community makes informed and transparent decisions in their collaborations, accepting the many ambiguities that may be inherent in cooperation with partners in countries with different value systems. Our central administrative services therefore provide support regarding cooperation agreements, ethical questions, intellectual property stipulations, export control and dual-use, data and IT security, and the broader research and higher education contexts in which specific partnerships operate.

Ensuring responsibility

We are globally engaged in the long run. Members of our community strive to build global networks and partnerships that are based on trust, draw on multifaceted connections with TUM, and are forged by a shared understanding of cooperation objectives and cooperation values. We aim for our international partnerships to be resilient in times of rapidly changing circumstances, but we consider initiating consequent action in case members of our community would otherwise be exposed to substantial risk or subject to situations in which upholding a specific partnership would severely compromise TUM's core values and principles.



Building resilient partnerships – consultation and advice at TUM

At TUM, various service units and departments support the formation of international partnerships and also provide advice regarding the larger contexts of TUM's global engagement, international strategies and funding opportunities, and institutional cooperation formats.

Contact the TUM Global & Alumni Office (TUM G&A)

if you have general questions related to international cooperation and TUM's overarching partnership agreements; if you seek advice on how to start or join collaborations within TUM's strategic partnerships and networks; if you have an interest to learn more about TUM's funding opportunities (i.e. TUM Global Incentive Fund, TUM Global Visiting Professorship) and staff mobility; if you would like to learn more about student exchange programs and our engagement with alumni around the world; or if you need advice on the broader framework conditions for an international collaboration in a specific region and/or country.

The TUM Global & Alumni Office will also liaise with the **Center for Study and Teaching (CST)** in case you intend to make formal arrangements for student exchanges, double degrees and international study programs.

Visit www.international.tum.de for an overview of TUM G&A contacts, services and programs.

Reach out to the TUM Office for Research and Innovation (TUM ForTe)

if you have questions related to specific international research or industry collaborations, technology transfer and entrepreneurship; if you plan or are involved in an international research collaboration and have questions regarding legal cooperation agreements or internal approval procedures; if you need advice on how to attract international research funding support (e.g. in the frame of Horizon Europe); if you would like to learn more about international talent recruitment programs (e.g. Research Opportunities Week, TUM Global Postdoc Fellowship); or if you need support for at-risk researchers (Philipp Schwartz Initiative).

Visit www.forte.tum.de for more information.

Consult with the TUM Graduate School (TUM-GS)

if you have questions related to doctoral training and international mobility of doctoral candidates, including, but not limited to, international stays abroad and funding, hosting international doctoral candidates at TUM, specific international cooperation programs in support of doctoral training, as well as potential joint doctoral supervision projects.

Visit www.gs.tum.de for more information.

Check-in with your school-level / departmental international affairs delegate

if you wish to learn more about international opportunities at or international partnerships on the level of your school/department.

Visit www.international.tum.de for contacts at your school/department.

Examples for guiding questions to facilitate international engagement

In the following, facilitators of international engagement will find some guiding questions to help translate our principles into more concrete partnership management practice. While these guiding questions, which mainly draw on publications by the German Rectors' Conference, have been selected to inspire reflection and assist in decision-making processes, they do neither constitute a mandatory (or conclusive) 'checklist', nor a normative frame of reference that will necessarily apply to all types of international partnerships. You may find it helpful, however, to consider them, particularly when in doubt about the wider context of your partnership.

- 1.** Is there sufficient knowledge about the partner institution and the specific contexts in which it operates (e.g. with regard to safety, political interference or the origin of funding)?
- 2.** Do international partners have academic and institutional aims that are compatible with those of TUM?
- 3.** Is your partnership related to similar activities in your unit, school/ department or at TUM, which might support your assessment of cooperation potentials and risks? Which colleagues would contribute to your international partnership (e.g. in the case of an international and/or double degree program)?

- 4.** Are there doubts as to how to uphold academic freedom under the partnership, both at the partner institution and at TUM? If so, have you thought of ways to safeguard against potential infringements upon academic freedom (e.g. through consultation with advisors in your unit or TUM's service offices)?

- 5.** Are you aware of any power dynamics and imbalances that may affect the relationship with other local or international stakeholders? Or the institutional autonomy of the partner institution and your collaboration partners?

- 6.** Is your partner aware of [TUM's Research Code of Conduct](#)?

- 7.** Does your collaboration include sensitive topics that may carry relevance for export control and dual use, respectively?

- 8.** Have you verified that the international collaboration does not fall into a restricted category, e.g. by prior consultation of relevant sanction lists?

- 9.** How is funding of your research collaboration organized and how do you assess any potential imbalances in terms of fair access to such funding?

- 10.** How would you assess your access to jointly generated research data and results? In case you expect restrictions, how do you define 'red lines'?

Further resources

This document is inspired by a larger discourse on international engagement in the higher education and international research sector. The following recommendations give insights into this larger conversation and may provide additional resources when engaging with international partners.

General information sources

German Academic Exchange Service

[Kompetenzzentrum Internationale Wissenschaftskooperationen \(KIWi\)](#)

Service platform for German universities and their members to provide orientation and advice in international engagement. Provides recommendations on engagement with specific countries or international actors, specifically with view to cooperation risks and risk management.

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

[Keine roten Linien. Wissenschaftskooperationen unter komplexen Rahmenbedingungen](#), 2020.

Document that helps navigate the decision-making process in international cooperation, touching, among other things, on framework conditions, strategy, and risk management. In German only.

German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

[Guidelines and standards in international partnerships](#), 2020.

Guidelines for German universities, clustered around the topics Strategy and governance, Joint teaching and learning, Joint research and Universities as transnational spaces.

Specific resources

European Commission Directorate-General for Research and Innovation

[Tackling R&I foreign interference: staff working document](#), 2022.

Policy document that includes recommendations on how to mitigate foreign interference in higher education and research institutions in Europe.

German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

[Guiding questions on university cooperation with the People's Republic of China](#), 2020.

Document that helps navigate international cooperation with China in research, education, and broader institutional engagement.

Universities UK

[Managing Risks in Internationalisation. Security Related Issues](#), 2021.

Document that introduces ideas on how to protect institutional reputation/values, members of a university community, campus environments, and partnerships from risks in international cooperation.

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