

Policy Statement 2021-27:

In order to be able to meet the global and Europe-wide challenges of the coming years, it is necessary to have a high level of intercultural competence and multilingualism.

Universities of Teacher Education, which are responsible for the education, further education and training of teachers, have a key role to play here: they should make (future) teachers aware of the importance of interculturality and multilingualism and develop the corresponding competences of teachers. This is a prerequisite for these teachers to educate and train our children accordingly and to prepare the growing generation for a good future together.

The PH Burgenland is in a very special situation here: Burgenland with its ethnic groups (Burgenland Croats, Hungarians, Roma) has been considered a model of lived interculturality and multilingualism for decades. The multilingual school system regulated by the Minority Schools Act offers a wealth of experience in the field of intercultural and regional language education and enables all pupils to learn the ethnic group languages Croatian, Hungarian and Romany today.

These regionally specific characteristics also characterise the internationalisation strategy of the PH Burgenland: a special focus is therefore placed on cooperation with neighbouring Hungary and language-related Croatia. Numerous cooperations with educational institutions in Germany and other European countries form the basis of international networking, which focuses primarily on scientific discourse, exchange of practice and further development of the PH Burgenland. The following profile-forming focal points are at the centre of attention:

- Learning in virtual spaces:

The PH Burgenland as a knowledge mediator and knowledge producer is an active shaper of the digital transformation. To this end, it makes full use of the potential in all its areas of responsibility, in teaching, research and university administration. The specialist didactics centre for digital teaching and learning, the online campus Virtual PH and the learning platform LMS guarantee that the future topics of coding and robotics, artificial intelligence and open science will be advanced.

- Learning in natural environments

The PH Burgenland sees Education for Sustainable Development as a contribution to the development of common values such as solidarity, mutual respect, sustainable use of natural resources, careful use of human resources, etc. and, in cooperation with partners from the university sector and the business world, pursues the goal of using formal, informal and non-formal learning in education, training and further education to equip teachers and students with appropriate skills. The Competence Center Education for Sustainable Development is the hub of these activities.

- Multilingualism - ethnic group languages (Croatian, Hungarian, Romanes) - intercultural education

The PH Burgenland is dedicated to pedagogical professionalisation in the fields of interculturality and multilingualism. The social, cultural and linguistic diversity in a globalised and individualised society leads to an increasing heterogeneity of life plans, which is reflected in all educational systems. Networking with partner institutions contributes to increasing the competence of teachers and students.

- Transition Education

PH Burgenland perceives transitions as condensed development requirements and takes them up. In teaching and research, these phases of important changes and increased burdens are focussed and, based on this, offers for practical application are developed.

- Interlocking of theory and practice

The PH Burgenland considers the intertwining of theory and practice to be indispensable and thus takes up the further development and consolidation of the pedagogically reflective habitus of the students as an essential element in teaching and research. The resulting offers in terms of casuistry can be found in education, further education and training.

Due to the Brexit, the focus in the next few years will be on the reorientation and intensification of cooperation with English-speaking partners. English as a language that connects people should be promoted in all educational institutions in Burgenland. The PH Burgenland, as the educational institution responsible for the training and further education of teachers, is doing valuable development work in this area.

The International Office of the PH Burgenland initiates international cooperation projects in teaching and research based on this strategic orientation and thus contributes to increased mobility of university teachers and students. High-quality mobility and cooperation activities enable international or intercultural experiences of university teachers and students and lead to a corresponding further development of the teaching and research offers at the PH Burgenland.

The activities initiated by the PH Burgenland thus contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the European Education Area (the right to general and vocational education and the right to lifelong learning) of high quality and in an inclusive form. The priorities set at the PH Burgenland support the package of measures created by the European Commission, especially in the areas of digitisation and lifelong learning.

In addition to student and staff mobility, the already well-established long-term cooperation with universities from Hungary, Croatia and Germany in the primary sector is increasingly being used for joint research in the transition from elementary to primary level. This focus will promote mobility, joint teaching, excursions, etc.

When planning and implementing mobility programmes, the personal, thematic and linguistic interests of university staff and students will be considered and harmonised with the profile-building priorities of the PH Burgenland. The strategic goals of internationalisation are the focus of both personnel development and the orientation of national cooperation.

As part of the management circle of the PH Burgenland, the International Office develops formats (Erasmus Days, i-Days, Welcome Days for Incomings etc.) in coordination with the other organisational units in order to promote the implementation of the PH Burgenland's internationalisation strategy. The results subsequently flow into the periodic target, performance and resource plans in the sense of a quality control loop.

The basis for the international activities is the Erasmus programme, which is intended to contribute to making Eisenstadt more attractive as a location. In order to further enrich the services offered by the PH Burgenland for incoming students, there are co-operations with partner universities in the Teacher Education Network South-East and with regional tertiary education institutions (FH Burgenland, Joseph Haydn Conservatory).

To improve language skills, language courses are regularly offered for university staff and students. The PH Burgenland comprehensively supports students in their mobility to broaden their cultural competences and to deepen their language skills. The skills acquired promote their professional careers and personal development. They become more competent in their desired profession as teachers in dealing with students from different cultural backgrounds.

The effects of mobilities and international cooperation can be seen in the generation of new knowledge in pedagogy, didactics and methodology as well as in a positive personal attitude of people in dealing with diversity. Teachers and students of the PH Burgenland are convinced that with this internationalisation strategy they can contribute to a peaceful, strengthened Europe.