



UNIVERSITY
OF COLOGNE

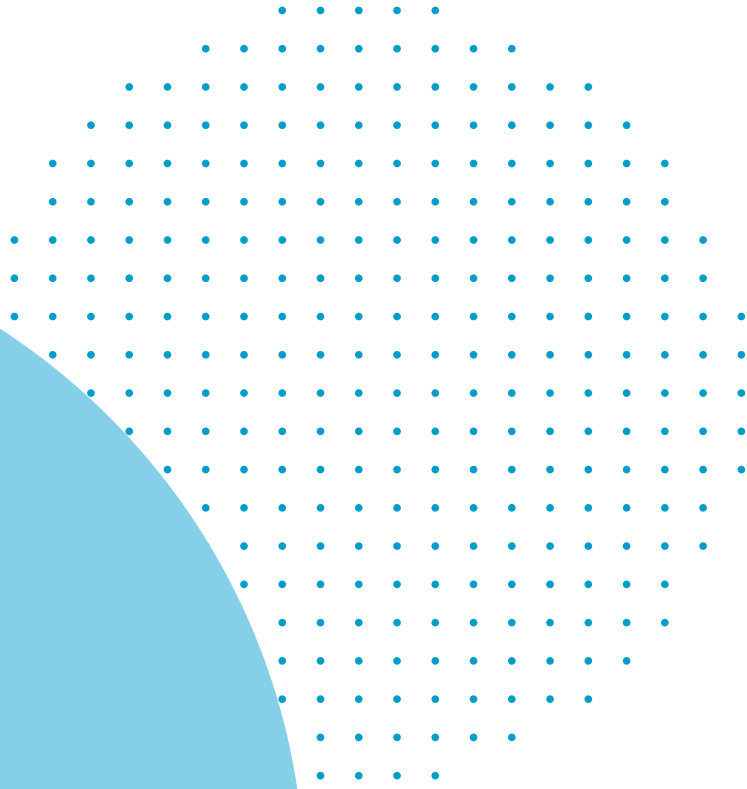
KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY- TRANSFER

Transfer Strategy of the University of Cologne

Vice-Rectorate for Transfer

– EXTERNAL VERSION –

This strategy was adopted by resolution
of the Rectorate on 27 November 2024.
It is valid until 31 December 2029



Foreword

Societal progress begins with insight – and insight arises from dialogue between science and society. It is the fundamental mandate of universities to actively share their knowledge with the broader public – especially in times of multiple crises and profound transformations. The University of Cologne embraces this responsibility with a clear and committed transfer strategy, which we are pleased to present in this document.



Our university boasts an impressive range of transfer activities – from academic consulting and innovative spin-offs to research collaborations, cultural events, and continuing education programs. This diversity reflects our broad understanding of knowledge transfer, which goes far beyond technological application. We see transfer as a reciprocal process, closely intertwined with practice, through which the university applies new knowledge to societal challenges in a solution-oriented way and creates added value.

This strategic approach makes one thing clear: transfer is not a side task, but a core dimension of academic performance. To ensure successful knowledge transfer, we must promote it purposefully, anchor it structurally, and make it visible. The “success factor” in transfer depends not only on excellent academic achievements, but also on suitable organizational frameworks, recognition and appreciation, and the courage to embrace interdisciplinary perspectives and diversity.

This strategy paper serves as a guide for all members of our university as well as for our many regional and international partners. It reflects our commitment to making transfer professional, innovative, and impact-driven – and at the same time, it is an open invitation to actively contribute.

Because only together can we unlock the full potential of our university to make a meaningful impact on society.

I would like to sincerely thank the team at the Vice-Rectorate for Societal Transfer, led by Professor Dr. Werner Reinartz, for their outstanding work, and I look forward to the continued development of this important area at our university.

Cologne, September 2025

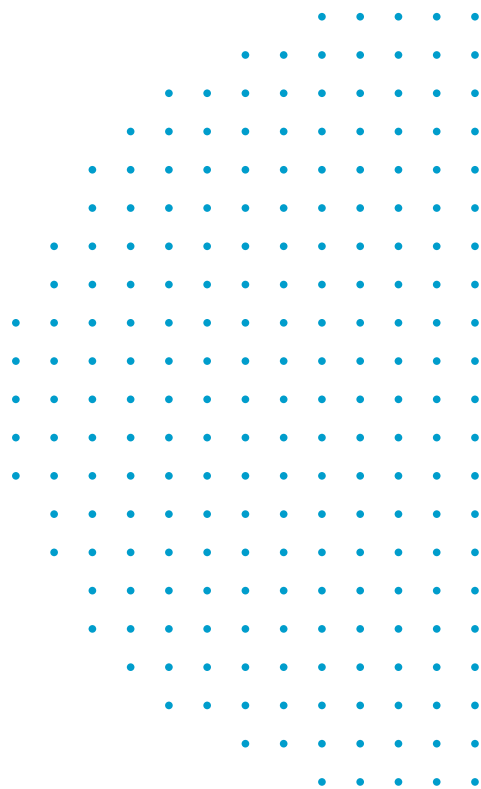
A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Joybrato Mukherjee".

*Prof. Dr. Joybrato Mukherjee
Rector of the University of Cologne*

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1. Why do we need a transfer strategy?

Times of social change, multiple crises and global problems require the utilisation of academic knowledge: Making current research results available and usable in a way that creates value for society is a decisive contribution to overcoming these challenges. Together with other transfer activities, easy access to evidence-based findings and the impartial academic assessment of facts are very important, e.g. in the context of climate change and political discussions on crisis topics such as energy security or migration. The aim is to enable society to hold debates based on facts, make decisions and find solutions to current challenges. Making comprehensibly presented facts easily accessible is particularly important today, as science and research are increasingly met with scepticism. As a comprehensive university with a strong research program, the University of Cologne takes responsibility for making its findings available to society in a variety of ways.

The University of Cologne can boast a large number of outstanding transfer activities and special expertise in various organisational units to support transfer. Developing a university-wide strategy that considers the special strengths of each Faculty emphasises the importance of transfer as a central performance dimension closely interlinked with research and teaching. The Vice-Rectorate for Transfer, which was established in 2023, will be responsible for the overall design and further development of the strategy, defining clear responsibilities, processes and goals for transfer that apply to the entire university. This makes it possible to first identify existing transfer structures, to organise and consolidate them, and then to promote and develop them further. The further development of the transfer strategy is in line with strategic objectives for university development and academic excellence.

The transfer activities are closely linked to the actual research questions and results – whether in the profile-defining research areas or in individual departments across the university. This research-related and research-orientated transfer at the University of Cologne ensures that results are made accessible to society. This exchange also ensures that new, topical questions and problems from many areas are brought to the university's attention, which in turn drives research.

Knowledge and technology transfer are closely or constitutively linked to the object of research in some fields, e.g. in parts of the humanities and social sciences. However, other, mostly basic subjects, require additional expertise in order to successfully implement transfer activities and achieve a demonstrable impact on society. In addition, such transfer services often require skills that are not usually the subject of academic education. In other subjects, there are excellent activities suitable for transfer, but there is a lack of resources and possibly a lack of appreciation for the implementation of transfer.

Key players in research and policy have therefore recognised the need to professionalise knowledge and transfer activities and make them more visible. Accordingly, knowledge and technology transfer are defined as an individual task in the Higher Education Act of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia and other federal states, but also as a priority area in recommendations of the Council of the Euro-

pean Union¹. Various normative documents, for example from the German Council of Science and Humanities or the Stifterverband, provide guidance on the integration of activities and the design of metrics for successful transfer. In its 2016 position paper, the German Council of Science and Humanities described the transfer to society as a mission that goes far beyond technology transfer.²

2. The University of Cologne's understanding of transfer

The University of Cologne's transfer strategy is based on a common understanding of which requirements are important for implementation. In addition, the orientation is based on a deliberately broad understanding of transfer.

*"Knowledge and technology transfer is a **central performance dimension** for the University of Cologne and is seen as one of the **core tasks** with which the University of Cologne fulfils its responsibility to society. Transfer activities grow out of the two areas research and teaching.*

*For the university, transfer is a **reciprocal process** between the university and **partners** from society, industry, politics and culture.*

*The University of Cologne is committed to **actively contributing** to society, the economy, politics and culture, as well as to **providing impetus** for progress and developments."*

What does this mean for the University of Cologne?

- Knowledge and technology transfer is **one of the core tasks of the University of Cologne**, along with research, teaching and the promotion of early-career researchers. Transfer is closely linked to research and teaching and could not exist without the knowledge is generated in those two areas.
- In addition, transfer should be understood as a **reciprocal process**. Transfer can take place both out of the university and into it. Findings, results, advice, IP, start-ups etc. are transferred out of the university – always in close collaboration with research (this applies both to large research networks and to individual disciplines). At the same time, the university reacts to developments in society; activities, ideas or current issues are brought into the university, especially in the ideation phase, but also in the impact assessment or practical suitability. This external impetus can then initiate new research activities, the results of which are ultimately channelled back into society.
- The University of Cologne sees various stakeholders in society, industry, policy and culture as **partners** in its activities. Due to the wide range of topics dealt with at the university and the individual Faculties, transfer activities can be found in many different areas involving the public.
- With all of its transfer activities, the University of Cologne pursues the goal of contributing **actively** and **specifically** to discussions, demonstrating solu-

¹ See Council of the European Union (2022).

² See German Council of Science and Humanities (2016), p. 5–6.

tions and providing knowledge for social **development**. Increasingly, it has the ambition to proactively help shape the future of society. By gaining extensive knowledge and technologies, especially in **socially relevant areas**, society, the economy, politics and culture will be enabled to **pave new paths for the future**.

- The idea of transfer is part of the DNA and has played a major role since the university was re-established in 1919. The UoC was deliberately founded on the basis of the commercial college to innovatively combine the practice-oriented, academically based vocational training/education with a university focused on research that was shaped by developments in the 19th century as a new 'new university'.

The University of Cologne plays a particularly important role for its city and **region**. The term 'region' can be defined more narrowly or more broadly depending on the context. Many of the university's transfer activities are carried out with partners from the **City of Cologne**. This is an important concern, as the university wants to provide citizens with access to knowledge. The very successful start-up and business creation activities should also be emphasised. They show that Cologne is an attractive location for new entrepreneurs. The University of Cologne has the fourth highest number of spin-offs in Germany,³ making it an excellent starting point for spin-offs. Other activities are spread across the entire state of **North Rhine-Westphalia** because tasks such as teacher training affect the entire state. Cooperations with companies also often extend across the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, which has a very strong industry, and can still be regarded as regional. At the same time, not all transfer activities can take place with a regional focus. Strategic, and in particular international cooperation and activities in research continue to play an important role in shaping the university's profile. Scholars and scientists at the University of Cologne should not be restricted in their transfer endeavours, for example by only demanding purely regional activities.

The university defines the fields of action **Communicate**, **Consult** and **Apply** for its transfer activities, as is laid out in more detail below. In addition, the university uses the category **Continuous education**. The individual transfer activities are recorded and categorised within these categories. Categorisation makes it possible to better identify fields of attention and uncover areas where there is potential for development. As a university with a broad range of topics and different subject areas, no category is more important than others. In this way, it is possible to utilise the strengths of the different disciplinary cultures in research-oriented transfer and thus have an impact on society as an academic and expert organisation.

³ Cf. Kollmann, Hirschfeld, Gilde, Walk & Pröpper, p. 25.

3. Structure of transfer activities

3.1 Fields of action

The transfer activities of the University of Cologne can be categorised – according to the broad understanding of transfer of the German Council of Science and Humanities – into the three fields of action **Communicate**, **Consult** and **Apply**. In addition, the university uses the category **Continuous education** to make important transfer aspects visible, e.g. from the areas of continuing education and lifelong learning as well as the university's important career-related degree programs.

The fields of action are defined as follows:

- **Communicate:** Content arising from research and teaching is specially prepared for non-university target groups. It also includes the support offers through which scholars and scientists are trained and supported in their respective communication with these target groups. Examples: Communicate via media or events to promote transfer
- **Consult:** By providing expertise, research findings are made accessible for a non-university target group for a specific purpose. Examples: scientific advice, expert opinions, participation in external committees in policy, industry and society
- **Apply:** This field of action covers the area of technology transfer overall, but also generally the further development of findings from research and teaching into innovative services or products. Examples: developing applications in cooperation with exploitation partners, start-ups, licensing, creation of educational and teaching materials and legal practice
- **Continuous education:** This field of action include the university's educational programs that are primarily designed for a non-university audience. Naturally, this area is closely linked to teaching. Examples: Continuous education offers and lifelong learning

3.2 Status quo in the four fields of action

The transfer activities of the scholars and scientists at the University of Cologne cover all fields of action. Depending on the Faculty and specialisation, naturally different formats and contents are suitable. In this section, special transfer actions are presented for the various fields of action **Communicate**, **Consult**, **Apply** and **Continuous education**. In future, active monitoring of these actions will provide a university-wide overview, identify synergies and improve their presentation to the public.

3.2.1 Communicate

The University of Cologne has established communication formats for the general public, successful exchange formats between academics and professionals as well as cultural event formats with and in the city of Cologne.

Important research findings are communicated daily, usually internationally, in the form of press releases, magazine articles, multimedia web articles and social media posts. For media enquiries, the **Communications and Marketing Division** finds experts and supports them in their individual communication activities.

Faculty-wide media contributions on press enquiries relating to current social issues are published in various format (articles and interviews in online and print media or television). In addition, the departments also publish their own media contributions in various formats. A highlight among these are the activities of the **Clusters of Excellence**, which communicate their research results in various formats and make them accessible to the public.

3.2.2 Consult

Scholars and scientists at the University of Cologne, particularly from the Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Law, are involved in **continuous education** ing social and political decision-makers as well as industry partners and cultural institutions. Particularly noteworthy are the **advisory services** provided to **policymakers** in the decision-making process. Transfer activities are particularly evident in the participation of scholars and scientists in the development of legislative proposals, through memberships in expert committees of the federal or state government (e.g. membership in the Council of Experts on Climate Change in accordance with the Federal Climate Change Act, in the Economists' Round Table of the Federal Chancellery and in the Scientific Advisory Board at the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action) or through positions in international expert committees (e.g. Venice Commission).

3.2.3 Apply

The **Gateway Excellence Start-up Center** (Gateway ESC) at the University of Cologne supports people at all career stages interested in founding a company as well as start-ups by providing coaching and advice, for example on funding and business models, as well as co-working spaces and an incubator program. To this end, transfer scouts in each of the university's Faculties identify and support suitable ideas, thereby assisting the Faculty and university headship. Gateway is located in its own modern building, the InnoDom, which was financed by generous donations. Through the work of the Gateway ESC, entrepreneurship and innovation are anchored in research and teaching. In addition, exchange formats offer opportunities for networking with business partners in and around Cologne.

In addition, the Gateway ESC also supports the university's Clusters of Excellence and Collaborative Research Centres by providing conceptual support for their transfer projects.

As a result of these activities, the University of Cologne was ranked sixth among the most start-up-friendly universities in the Stifterverband 2022 start-up radar, making the University of Cologne the best performing university in North Rhine-Westphalia.⁴ According to Deutsche Startup Monitor 2024, the University of Cologne achieved third place among Germany's start-up-friendly universities.⁵

⁴ See Fritzsche, Kessler, Schröder (Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft e. V.) (2023), p. 14.

⁵ Cf. Hirschfeld, Kollmann, Gilde, Walk & Ansorge, p. 23.

The university's Faculty of Medicine has succeeded in another outstanding transfer activity: the translation of research findings into direct **improvements in the diagnosis and treatment of patients**. The Faculty of Medicine succeeded in realising this fundamental aspiration in practice. The highly complex, long-standing collaboration between clinicians and laboratory researchers in translating findings, which looks back on a long history, has been particularly successful.

Service Learning at the University of Cologne offers students the opportunity to incorporate social commitment in everyday student life. Students work in interdisciplinary teams to support non-profit organisations, thus creating added value for themselves and others. In this way, they learn in projects while providing a benefit to the public.

The main advantage of this offer is that students contribute their expertise from their studies or their other interests and skills to support non-profit organisations. They gain practical experiences, develop their skills and get involved for the community. They acquire key skills which are particularly valuable when it comes to starting a career. Students can choose between different projects and partner organisations and are supported in the implementation of the project by a suitable accompanying seminar.

The University of Cologne and its ProfessionalCenter are founding members of the university network *Bildung durch Verantwortung e. V.*, which aims to involve the public more closely in teaching, research and transfer.

3.2.4 Continuous education

Based on the University of Cologne's strong profession-oriented teaching profile, it offers a wide range of professional **continuous education** for specialists from different professions.

The **University of Cologne Business School** brings together the necessary expertise for the advanced management training of specialists and supervisors at the University of Cologne. It was founded in 2015 and is one of the leading business schools in Germany. The Business School offers an MBA program in English as well as compact management seminars for individuals or companies. It collaborates with national and international partners. The innovative program is aimed at a range of clients from young professionals to top international managers, covering a broad spectrum of experience. The participants acquire specific qualifications that increase their professional and career opportunities, and receive a certificate.

The **Center for Teacher Education** (ZfL) is the contact point for teacher education students at the university. Students can learn and professionalise themselves on the basis of current research findings. The task of the ZfL is to coordinate the Cologne teacher training program across different Faculties and universities.

Particularly relevant are the tasks that go beyond training as part of the teacher training program and deal with continuous education opportunities for teachers. In this context, the ZfL also acts as the host of the steering group of the Cologne training region. It coordinates the collaborations among universities, schools and

centres for practical teacher training. The steering group is responsible for the further development of cross-institutional cooperation. It organises regular events to expand collaborations, but also to provide mutual continuous education opportunity.

Furthermore, the ZfL is committed to promoting aspects that are relevant for teacher education within and beyond the University of Cologne, and connects various agents of teacher education. The ZfL team strives to create an environment in which, among other things, already trained teachers can professionalise and develop in an optimal and sustainable way. In publications and events, the ZfL addresses interdisciplinary social topics such as education for sustainable development, digital education, internationalisation and educational opportunities.

The **Coordination Office for Science + the Public** (Koordinierungsstelle Wissenschaft + Öffentlichkeit, KOOST) creates stable structures for lifelong learning at the University of Cologne by making academic education accessible to various target groups. It also aims to make the significance of science and scholarship understandable. This includes communicating the latest research findings, disseminating knowledge about how to obtain, evaluate and contextualise them, as well as introducing and involving the public in academic discourse.

KOOST reaches pupils of different age groups and from different school types, parents, teachers and guest students in the professional and post-professional phase of life via the Cologne Kids and Junior University as well as the guest auditor and senior citizen program. By carrying the knowledge they acquire in the programs into society, participants serve as multipliers for research and the university as an agent of societal change. Thanks to the KOOST programs, the university functions as a place of learning for all generations.

When organising events, KOOST draws on a large number of experienced lecturers from all Faculties, but also offers new contributors the necessary support and advice to organise events suitable for the target groups.

In 2022, for example, 3,408 participants took part in a total of 82 events as part of the Cologne Kids and Junior University.

The university's **certificate programs/micro-credentials** are also particularly important in the area of continuous education. Students can participate in extra-curricular continuous education courses to obtain further professional skills. Some certificate programs already exist which can also be attended by external persons. Due to the overarching importance of digital education, the Vice-Rectorate for Teaching and Studies is currently developing a comprehensive, innovative and skills-based continuous education program for digital education. The project aims to offer all learners low-threshold, highly flexible and internationally accessible learning experiences to develop their individual digital skills. The offer is based on both micro-credentials for individual learning experiences and a micro-degree in digital education, which learners can use to prove their level of competence.

3.3 Transfer activities of the Faculties shape the university's profile

The University of Cologne is characterised by its six large Faculties. It is therefore important to consider the Faculties' perspectives on transfer. The Faculties of the University of Cologne are active in all fields of action. However, the focus varies from Faculty to Faculty.

3.3.1 Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences

The Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences focuses on transfer activities in the areas of lifelong learning, social commitment and research transfer. The Faculty's academic focus is on start-ups as the economic utilisation of research results, as well as entrepreneurship. Collaborations with the private sector play a particularly important role in student placement, with joint collaborative projects with companies being sought already during the degree program (e.g. capstone projects). In teacher training, students are involved in the organisation of everyday school life through study projects at schools. In addition, the Faculty's affiliated institutes act as a point of contact with society and strengthen the Faculty's transfer profile.

3.3.2 Faculty of Law

The Faculty of Law is very successful in terms of transfer. The Faculty's scholars are actively involved in advising the legislator and contribute to the further development of the legal system by actively shaping legal practice. At the same time, effective public communication formats for connecting research and practical experience, policy and the public play a particularly important role for the Faculty. In addition, compared to other German law faculties, the Faculty has a high number of professors who work as part-time judges, judges at European courts, etc.

3.3.3 Faculty of Medicine

For the Faculty of Medicine, the translation of research results into applications with a direct influence on patient care (not necessarily commercialised) is of great, even profile-defining importance. This also includes the global dissemination of the results for use in all medical institutions. In addition, the commercialisation of research results in the form of patents, licensing and spin-offs is an important part of the Faculty's transfer activities.

3.3.4 Faculty of Arts and Humanities

For the transfer activities of the scholars at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, it is essential to maintain close links to society and to participate in research-led social discourse, including through media contributions and various communication formats for the interested public. An important transfer activity of the Faculty with lasting social relevance is teacher training. It is carried out in close cooperation with the Centre for Teacher Education (see 3.2.4 Continuous education), as is the case in the other four teacher education Faculties. The training of new teachers is not the only transfer activity, but also the research-oriented design of teacher training. This ensures that future teachers carry interest in research into society. The Mercator Institute for Literacy and Language Education and German as a Second Language, which is part of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities but works very

closely with the Faculty of Human Sciences, is particularly important. The organisation of cultural events in Cologne is also a priority (e.g. the Poetica literature festival).

3.3.5 Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences

For the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences and the Faculty of Medicine, technology transfer is an important focus, including spin-offs, patents and licensing, among other things. In addition, activities in the area of teacher education on the one hand, but also educational and communication formats for pupils and schools have a lasting impact on society, such as teaching-learning labs and teaching materials (open educational resources).

3.3.6 Faculty of Human Sciences

Research at the Faculty of Human Sciences has a strong focus on practical application and transfer due to the pedagogical focus on teacher education and consultancy in the education sector. The Faculty also focuses on healthcare. For example, it provides continuous education for healthcare professionals and teachers. Furthermore, the Faculty endeavours to establish close links with the public through active cultural mediation.

3.3.7 Central institutions

In addition to the Faculties, a large number of central institutions and departments in the university administration either carry out transfer activities themselves or offer services and therefore support the Faculties' transfer projects. Besides the institutions already indicated above, the University and City Library Cologne, the Sustainability Office, the Transfer Department of Division 7 Research Management and Division 8 Communications and Marketing should also be listed. With its Global Responsibility Projects, Division 9 International Affairs contributes just as extensively to the transfer work of the University of Cologne as the Central Student Advisory Service.

The services provided by the central institutions cover all fields of action; they are not limited to supporting the activities developed by Faculties, but also include a large number of their own initiatives.

4. Objectives of the University of Cologne's transfer strategy

Based on the analysis of its own strengths and weaknesses on the one hand and external opportunities and risks on the other, the University of Cologne pursues **ten central development objectives** regarding transfer.

The development objectives were divided into three categories. Objectives 1 to 3 'Building the base' are aimed at helping to centrally establish knowledge and technology within the University of Cologne and make the many activities visible. Objectives 4 to 7 'Managing the impact' are intended to ensure that all university employees will acquire the relevant skills to successfully implement transfer measures and that adequate methods are organised effectively. Objectives 8 to 10 'Securing the future' are intended to ensure that transfer activities are continuous-

ly adjusted to future requirements in order to be successful and that the activities remain in line with the university's overarching objectives and meet the needs and developments in society.

The stated objectives are derived specifically from the SWOT analysis carried out in order to utilise strengths, mitigate weaknesses and exploit opportunities.



4.1 Raising awareness

The basis for successful transfer is a lively transfer culture. The University of Cologne draws the attention of as many of its members as possible to the transfer potential of their research and teaching and encourages them. In the medium term, all members should develop an awareness of the importance and opportunities of transfer to society. In addition, as many people as possible should be motivated to place their achievements more strongly in the context of university-wide transfer endeavours and to see transfer as a valued part of their work at the University of Cologne as a public institution. Several measures are planned to raise awareness of transfer. Overall, the wide range of transfer activities of the university's members should be communicated internally and thus made visible. Another measure to create awareness is the establishment of the new Vice-Rectorate for Transfer. Transfer is thus prominently established at level of the university's headship and employees are made aware of its importance. The implementation of the transfer strategy, for which the new Vice-Rectorate is responsible, will also raise awareness of the topic among all members of the University of Cologne. The strategy is intended to clarify the university's understanding of transfer and how overarching goals can be achieved with transfer activities. As a further measure, the final transfer strategy and existing transfer activities will be actively presented and communicated in the Faculties and central institutions of the University of Cologne.

4.2 Creating and promoting appreciation

In addition to the mere awareness of the importance of transfer, transfer activities should also be valued accordingly. If the activities are more appreciated, members of the university will realise that the transfer work is not taken for granted, but is perceived positively within the organisation. In addition, appreciation can create an incentive for employees who have not previously been involved in transfer activities to get involved.

Incentive systems, awards and honours are intended to motivate members of the university to continue their activities and expand their achievements. The scope and success of transfer activities by members of the university are made visible. The aim is both to demonstrate that certain activities represent a transfer achievement and to provide impetus for the development of new transfer activities (role model, examples, best practices). In addition to recognising outstanding transfer activities, e.g. through a regular award, there are also plans to make transfer a fixed reporting item in the various university committees and meetings. Integrating transfer aspects into the University of Cologne's reporting system ('Figures, Data, Facts') is also being considered. Overall, the aim is to create a positive connotation for the concept of transfer. The objective *Creating appreciation* is closely linked to the previous objective *Creating awareness* and the measures can have a correspondingly positive effect on both objectives.

4.3 Documenting and structuring the status quo

Goals 1 and 2 require improved documentation and structuring of the status quo at the University of Cologne.

In order to record the university's activities in a structured manner and to ensure systematic documentation, a regular survey of ongoing transfer activities in all areas of the University of Cologne will be carried out in future. All transfer activities are assigned to the four fields of action and the respective dialogue groups and recorded in a central database; they will also be presented on the university's website to provide a freely available overview of the activities.

4.4 Developing skills

The willingness and ability to transfer knowledge and technology are key factors in ensuring that transfer to society takes place at all. The many different transfer activities at the University of Cologne show that members of the university have been actively involved in transfer for a long time. In addition to the intention, the development of specific skills is also important in order to implement transfer activities effectively.

To do so, the University of Cologne is improving and coordinating its continuous education offers to develop the skills of individual scholars and scientists in transfer-related areas such as research communication and entrepreneurship. In addition to offers from HR Development, other continuous education options may also be offered in the graduate schools in order to ensure the ability to carry out excellent transfer there as well.

Existing offers for research communication will be made more accessible and visible for this purpose. At the same time, the range of central and decentral activities is being expanded. The aim is to make more active use of research communication expertise in-house (Studiobühne, science communication research, central communication experts) and externally (City of Cologne, the Cologne Science Forum (Kölner Wissenschaftsrunde), science journalists in Cologne). In addition, the establishment of a research communication academy with customised training and coaching modules for scholars and scientists will ensure the development of expertise.

4.5 Promoting effective transfer processes and working methods

In order to effectively manage and communicate the transfer activities, the University of Cologne will continue to develop and partially reorganise its transfer-related organisational structure. The aim is to reflect a broad concept of transfer at the organisational/institutional level and to achieve a systematic link between transfer and the performance dimensions of research and teaching.

The University of Cologne has already established a Vice-Rectorate for Transfer, which is responsible for the formulation, implementation and further development of a university-wide transfer strategy. The Vice-Rectorate is in close dialogue with the Faculties, central institutions that provide transfer services, the heads of the Key Profile Areas and Clusters of Excellence and the administration.

In addition to the Vice-Rectorate at the university headship level, **Vice-Deans for Transfer** will be installed in the individual Faculties. They will be responsible for having an overview over the Faculty's transfer activities, but at the same time facilitate (catalyse) and promote the Faculty's activities. This ensures that the activities are in line with the strategies of both the Faculties and university.

The University of Cologne is establishing a central transfer committee in order to improve its management capability and achieve strategic transfer goals. It consults on fundamental issues in regard to transfer, makes recommendations on planning and strategic orientation and mediates in the event of conflicts of interest within the university.

The regular meetings of the transfer committee offer members the opportunity to exchange positions across disciplines and departments and to strategically coordinate activities. Particularly extensive application projects in knowledge or technology transfer often involve different disciplines. The committee provides a framework for coordinating such projects across the university. It can facilitate the introduction of centrally developed transfer ideas into various work contexts, while ideas and needs of these work areas are dovetailed and coordinated. This strengthens transfer and increases its visibility and status at the university.

The **start-up and transfer scouts** from the Gateway Excellence Start-up Center, who have already been successfully introduced in the Faculties, will serve as support and operational contacts for the Vice-Deans for Transfer. As they are more closely affiliated with individual people (usually scholars and scientists), they can inform the Vice-Deans about current events in the area of transfer and also work towards the operational implementation of strategic transfer objectives.

In the future, a **central Transfer Office** will provide support in all areas of transfer by providing consultation and advice, raising awareness as well as promoting activities and services. It will serve as a guide for internal and external interested parties. In a next step, the transfer scouts will closely collaborate with the planned Transfer Office – while remaining in the Faculties. The Transfer Office will be formally responsible for the transfer scouts. The aim is to better coordinate activities and to promote a broad concept of transfer, which will also enable the transfer scouts to make even better use of the specific transfer potential of each Faculty.

This will create effective information channels that run both ways between the Transfer Office and the Faculties and to promote transfer activities in the Faculties. It is connected to the Faculties and their specific transfer activities via the transfer scouts and ensures central and decentral communication and coordination of activities. In addition, the Transfer Office is responsible for organising Faculty-specific events to promote transfer, such as TransferTalks or ActivateIP. The Transfer Office is also responsible for the extensive internet presence of the transfer area.

In addition to establishing structures, procedures will also be introduced to increase efficiency. The university's central institutions will be involved in order to ensure closer collaboration with the Faculties. In addition, clear responsibilities will be defined.

4.6 Communicating transfer effectively

The University of Cologne is revising its communication approach to take greater account of topics relevant to transfer. This applies to all central as well as decentral or other communication activities. In the interests of target-oriented and target group-specific internal and external communication, the university regularly prepares and publishes transfer-related information regarding the type, scope and success of the activity. Communicating transfer topics more effectively helps to reach the goals of *creating awareness* and *creating appreciation*, among others.

For this purpose, the university's website will be expanded to include a separate section on transfer. In addition to information on successful transfer activities, it will include an overview of all transfer activities listed under point 3, central contact persons and the individual websites of the transfer activities.

4.7 Utilising natural affinities with partners

An important asset of the University of Cologne is its location in the Rhineland metropolitan region, with important institutions in research, business, culture and society, and against the backdrop of high population density.

The university plans to manage its existing (de facto strategic) partnerships more systematically. Relations with external institutions that are important to the entire university (key accounts) will be managed in a more holistic way, also involving the university headship. In the interests of effective key account management, the number of strategic partnerships should be kept to a minimum. The aim is to generate the greatest possible benefit for both sides and to network more extensively and with greater value (research, teaching, transfer, graduates/alumni). On the part of the university, as many Faculties as possible should open up to the

partners, especially if no transfer activities are yet under way. By working together more closely, there is potential to increase the impact of activities.

To achieve these aims, regular meetings will be held with the partners to understand each other's expectations and needs and to develop joint strategies for implementation. The potential partners have yet to be determined and should not exclusively consist of companies. The City of Cologne or cultural institutions, for example, might also be suitable.

In future, the ties of alumni and graduates to the university will also be used to a greater extent to coordinate transfer activities. This means that the interface and overlap between the two areas of transfer and alumni should be clearly defined and then jointly coordinated. The past has shown that there is a great deal of self-motivation to work on topics together within the university and with the Faculties.

4.8 Measuring effectiveness

The University of Cologne is systematising its reporting system for transfer activities and clarifying the methodology. This serves both internal performance measurement and external documentation. Input, output and impact for transfer activities will be defined and integrated into the reporting system. The university defines qualitative and quantitative indicators for transfer and summarises them in a catalogue that is continuously supplemented and specified as part of the implementation and further development of the transfer strategy. The indicators reflect the broad concept of transfer on which this strategy is based and take into account the Faculty-specific profiles.

The indicators should enable valid documentation of input, output and impact in a pragmatic and efficient manner. Faculty-specific implementation is also important, as input, output and impact are generated differently depending on the area and transfer activity.

Impact assessment may also lead to a more critical view of activities and their implementation. It is planned to reconsider less successful transfer activities and their continuation. This does not necessarily mean that the activities will be discontinued, but rather critically assessed as to how their impact can be increased in order to achieve greater benefits for the university and the interested public.

4.9 Further developing the transfer profile

Transfer services in the fields of **communicating, consult, applying** and **continuous education** are provided at the University of Cologne in a large number of bottom-up initiatives. The university aims to strengthen the potential of its members through measures for visibility, appreciation and systematisation (see above). The wide range of disciplines at the University of Cologne is a strength and harbours great potential for innovation, particularly in view of the broad concept of transfer.

At the same time, the university has identified key topics at the institutional level and areas with potential for transfer and will systematically develop them further. These are, based on the identified strengths and opportunities:

- Company formations, start-ups, entrepreneurship
- Continuous education for teacher education students
- Key Profile Areas in research

The University of Cologne is endeavouring to continuously develop the existing focus areas and establish new ones. It also envisions a possible focus for transfer based on the research profile. This could then be combined with other topics (e.g. teacher education or entrepreneurship). This opportunity arises because the research profile offers transfer topics that can be used to assume responsibility for society.

At the same time, the identified potential will be strengthened so that it can be developed into possible focus areas. There is potential in the areas of continuous education and lifelong learning. There are already many cross-cutting programs that need to be developed more systematically. There is particular potential in the area of continuous education for teachers. The University of Cologne can help to shape this with its research, for example by making findings from the research profile areas available in training programs (for teachers).

The (further) development of the thematic priorities is coordinated in accordance with the overall strategy of the University of Cologne.

In addition, transfer affinity should also be taken into account when recruiting staff in order to bring research, teaching and transfer closer together. In order to ensure that transfer activities can continue in the future, the assessment of transfer potential has been included in the strategic planning of professorships.

4.10 Adjusting the transfer strategy

For the transfer strategy to be successful, it is crucial to regularly review it and align it with any new objectives of the university.

Hence the understanding of transfer as well as the entire strategy and its objectives will be regularly evaluated to ensure that they are up to date. As part of this evaluation, the strategy will also be compared with the university's strategic objectives and the focus will be adjusted as necessary. This ensures that these objectives are streamlined. The experience from the implementation processes of the transfer strategy is also included in the evaluation.

Another important point is the requirements and needs of society. Transfer must always take into account the needs and problems of the environment if the findings are to be well received. The regular evaluation is also intended to make sure that the University of Cologne's transfer activities are relevant to society and can therefore have an impact.

The adjustment of the transfer strategy also takes into account the aforementioned measurement of the impact of transfer activities. The transfer strategy should also aim to increase the impact of the activities. For the future, new priorities for the transfer strategy can be derived from this analysis which need to be taken into account.

The University of Cologne will establish its own quality assurance measures for the performance dimension of transfer and will also use synergies with the QM systems in research and teaching to ensure innovation and new ideas. The aim is also to further integrate the performance dimensions and ensure that quality assurance measures are in line with each other.







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