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Technische Universität Berlin

Newsletter INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS Nr. 4 III/2020



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[Student mobility in times of coronavirus](#)

Approximately 400 TU Berlin students studied abroad during the first quarter of the year. By mid-March another 100 were ready to go with packed bags and about a dozen were left stranded, the coronavirus throwing a wrench in all of their plans [\[more...\]](#)

[After seven years Erasmus+ enters next round](#)

In 2021, a new generation of the Erasmus+ program will begin. Over the next seven years, the program is committed to working on the core topics of digitalization and inclusion in addition to reinforcing many of its existing principles. The Erasmus+ program is also to become more environmentally friendly. [\[more...\]](#)

[DigiEduHack 2020 | Building Bridges – Digital, International and Sustainable](#)

The future of teaching in the digital age is one of the most exciting challenges of our time. As part of DigiEduHack 2020, we are searching for visionaries from the Berlin University Alliance to take part in TU Berlin's own local hackathon "Building Bridges – Digital, International & Sustainable". [\[more...\]](#)

[INTEGRA 2.0 at TU Berlin](#)

The first preparation courses offered by the Preparatory School and funded by the Berlin Senate for refugees wishing to study for a STEM degree started back in November 2015. [\[more...\]](#)

[New Proofreading Service at TU Berlin](#)

The qualification of junior scholars and the advancement of their academic careers are a stated aim of TU Berlin. To help meet these goals, the University established its new Proofreading Service to offer doctoral students and research associates employed at TU Berlin the opportunity to have an English-language text proofread free of charge. [\[more...\]](#)

[Visa Service 2.0](#)

Effective immediately, only electronic visas for students and visiting scholars will be issued and must be applied for in person. The TU Berlin Visa Service will continue to advise on matters regarding residency regulations. [\[more...\]](#)

[Bridge for German-Russian University Cooperation](#)

Technische Universität Berlin and its strategic partner Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University (SPbPU) were honored for their longstanding cooperation in the "Bridges for German-Russian University Cooperation" competition. [\[more...\]](#)

Ausschreibungen

MEL-BER Partnership: Call 2020/21

Deadline: 19 October | 14:00 (CEST). Within the framework of their partnership, the University of Melbourne and the Berlin University Alliance have announced a second call for proposals introducing additional support for the development of joint PhD training opportunities embedded into new and existing research collaborations.

Funding for further teacher training in STEM subjects (German only)

Deadline: 27 October 2020. The Joachim Herz Foundation is providing funding of up to 4,000 euros for further teacher training and workshops on digital media in natural science education. New: This year the foundation is also accepting proposals for digital and hybrid formats.

PROMOS scholarships for students

Deadline: 31 October 2020. Students can apply now for PROMOS scholarships for study stays, language/short courses and final theses in non-European countries.

Student exchange USA/Canada/Mexico/Ecuador/Colombia/Israel and Asia

Deadline: 25 November 2020. Students can now apply for exchange places at partner universities in the USA, Canada, Mexico, Ecuador, Colombia, Israel, and Asia for the 2021/2022 academic year.

Student exchange Europe

Deadline: 12. January 2021. Beginning November, students can apply for exchange places at TU Berlin's European partner universities for the 2021/2022 academic year.

Various calls with a focus on the Global South

Deadline: See individual calls. International Projects regularly publishes internal and external calls for cooperation with Global South countries on its website.

Various calls focusing on digitalization

Deadline: See individual calls. International Projects regularly publishes internal and external calls on the topic of digitalization on its website.

FAPSEP-TU Berlin SPRINT program start postponed

The start of the FAPSEP-TU Berlin SPRINT program scheduled for this year has been postponed until further notice. The program is expected to start in the second quarter of 2021.

Teaching assistant in Brazil (DAAD/Capes, PROBRAL)

The program will not be offered for the 2021/2022 academic year.

Events

14-17 October 2020

| online conference

Climate Change and Citizen Science

17 October 2020 | 12:35 CEST

DWIH New York Future Forum 2020: Building Biopolis

Over four days online, American and German climate experts from industry, policy and academia will convene to build Biopolis, the green city of the future. Together with FU Berlin, the Leibniz Association, and the Museum of Natural History, TU Berlin is participating in the conference with an exciting contribution titled "Climate Change and Citizen Science."

22 +26 October 2020

| online

Introduction event for international students

The two-day introductory seminar, traditionally offered at the beginning of the semester for newly enrolled international students, is being held this year as an online ISIS course beginning 22 October. Additionally, a virtual meeting for subject-specific small groups will take place on 26 October 2020.

23 October 2020 | Audimax

Welcome event for international exchange students

Despite the uncertainties presented by the coronavirus, we are expecting 150 international exchange students from partner universities to attend TU Berlin during the winter semester. Student Mobility and International Students looks forward to welcoming many of them in person in the Audimax.

29th October + 6th November 2020 online	A4Tech winter school "Engineers with Social and Ecological Responsibility" TU Berlin is organizing the A4Tech winter school this year. The Blue Engineering Group of Faculty V Mechanical Engineering and Transport Systems offers an online workshop for the A4Tech students in the topic of Sustainability and Engineering Sciences.
9-10 November 2020 10:00-12:00 (BRT), 14:00-16:00 (CET) online	Brazil Online Workshop 2020: Postdoc in Germany Online workshop for prospective visiting researchers from Brazil. Doing a postdoc in Germany means working in an international and competitive system with many opportunities to enhance your research career. We invite you to get to know the German system and hear about opportunities for research stays at Germany's top universities. Learn about postdoc career steps, financial grants and benefits and get in contact with other interested researchers as well as postdocs that have recently returned from Germany.
Between November 2020 and March 2021 online	International Trainings in Transferable Skills for Doctoral Candidates Multi-day trainings on a range of topics within the "Training the mindSET" project. Doctoral candidates from STEM subjects are invited to apply. Details of topics, deadlines and dates as well as information on how to apply are available on the website.
26 + 27 November 2020, 9:00-12:00 Online	Berlin Center for Global Engagement: Research Collaboration with Partners in the "Global South" – Opportunities and Best Practices – Training Course Training for members of the Berlin University Alliance (FU Berlin, TU Berlin, HU Berlin, Charité); early career researchers, postdocs, and coordinators. Limited to 15 participants Register by 4 November: bcge@berlin-university-alliance.de
Different dates in November online	Info events on studying abroad (Europe and overseas) During digital events offered by Student Mobility & International Students and TU Berlin's faculties, students will learn everything they need to know about studying abroad. Questions will be answered during the event in the live chat.
3-4 December 2020 10:00-12:00 (CHL) 14:00-16:00 (CET) Online	Chile Online Workshop 2020: Postdoc in Germany Online Workshop for prospective postdocs from Chile. Doing a postdoc in Germany means working in an international and competitive system with many opportunities to enhance your research career. We invite you to get to know the German system and hear about opportunities for research stays at Germany's top universities. Learn about postdoc career steps, financial grants and benefits and get in contact with other interested researchers as well as postdocs that have recently returned from Germany.

Student mobility in times of coronavirus



© Uta Kirchner

Approximately 400 TU Berlin students studied abroad during the first quarter of the year. By mid-March another 100 were ready to go with packed bags and about a dozen were left stranded, the coronavirus throwing a wrench in all of their plans.

Due to restrictions and uncertainties concerning their stay at their partner university, 80 students were forced to terminate their stay, while others had to postpone their stay abroad shortly before they were to leave. Others, such as Leonhard Donle, chose to make use of their partner university's online teaching offers. Here he shares his experiences during his – regrettably quite short – study abroad "Down Under":

In February, you packed your bags and left Berlin to attend the University of Technology Sydney, one of TU Berlin's strategic partner universities, for one semester. What were your plans for those six months? Had you thought about the possible implications of Covid-19/coronavirus before departing?

When I left for Australia, I wasn't aware of the tremendous and global impact Covid-19 was to have. I also felt a bit cut off from the world in Australia. And because the first cases in Australia occurred significantly later than those in Europe, there was a lot of hope Australia would be spared. Of course, I also had a few trips planned and my family was supposed to visit. Those are all things that didn't happen.

How did you experience your time at your host university and in Sydney? How and when were changes due to the coronavirus implemented and how were these communicated?

During the third week of lectures, university operations ceased for a week to organize a complete transition to digital courses. Afterwards, all courses were taught via Zoom without exception. At this point there were very few Covid-19 cases in Sydney, while the pandemic had already reached its zenith in Europe, particularly in Italy. Many businesses in Sydney closed and, where possible, switched to online operations. The general recommendation was not to travel, even domestically, and to leave home only when strictly necessary. Most Australians adhered to these rules.

Unlike other exchange students studying in Australia at the time, you decided to discontinue your stay and return to Germany and attend the UTS courses online from here. What prompted this decision? How was the return journey? And what was your experience of the virtual semester at UTS?

Being worried about my family and afraid that flights might not be operating at the end of the semester were the main reasons for my decision to return. Many airlines had already canceled flights. I got a ticket for one of the last flights chartered by the federal government to bring back citizens from abroad. The flight and arrival in Germany were surprisingly unremarkable. Initially, I stayed with my parents since my apartment was still sublet. The virtual courses at UTS were well organized but the 10-hour time difference meant that some courses were quite early or late for me. In the end, though, it was worth it and the classes were very interesting.

How did you cope with returning to life in Berlin and your studies at TU Berlin? Did you receive credit for your UTS courses?

The coronavirus had hardly any impact on receiving credit, as the courses remained the same and I passed them all. Of course I was sad to return to Berlin so early but, unfortunately, I also adapted to Berlin again quite quickly.

You are now planning a new stay in Australia and have applied for a PROMOS scholarship to fund your final thesis, which you intend to complete at UTS. Tell us more about your plans. Did the idea originate while you were there? What are you hoping to gain from the research stay at UTS?

At UTS I had excellent experiences with many professors and research assistants, particularly in one faculty, whose research I really wanted to assist and contribute to. That led me to the idea to do my final thesis there. I also received a great deal of support for this from the TU professor at the corresponding institute at TU Berlin. I hope my research stay can take place. It's still unclear whether it will be possible.

What is your advice for students who are uncertain whether they should apply for study abroad in the current situation or who are currently planning a stay abroad?

Of course there's always the risk that the stay cannot take place as planned or at all, but it's worth all the effort. Even during my short time in Sydney, I had many defining moments and developed a desire to return. I certainly did not regret it. Organizing everything during corona doesn't require that much extra work -- even for individually organized projects -- as many people understand and sympathize and support students. I would advise everyone to pursue study abroad. (Interviewed by Uta Kirchner)

We second this recommendation: Applications for TU Berlin exchange programs and PROMOS to fund independently organized study stays are possible and welcomed as usual by the scheduled deadlines and under current conditions. We are happy to advise and assist you.

Further information about the exchange programs and PROMOS can be found [here](#).

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Student Mobility and International Students

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© Oliver Reetz

In 2021, a new generation of the Erasmus+ program will begin. During the next seven years, the program is committed to working on the core topics digitalization and inclusion in addition to reinforcing many of its existing principles. The Erasmus+ program is also to become more environmentally friendly. Concrete plans for how to achieve this are currently still being forged in Brussels.

The TU Berlin Department of International Affairs is currently operating at full speed to set the course for the new program. To continue its participation in the Erasmus+ program, TU Berlin was required to submit an application outlining its plans for a new Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) in May 2020, an effort led by Amelie Krüger, Erasmus+ university coordinator in Student Mobility and International Students. The ECHE provides the general quality framework, including minimum requirements, for European and international cooperation activities which a higher education institution may conduct within Erasmus+.

The next concrete steps in the area of digitalization will be renewing the existing Erasmus+ Agreements using the new *Mobility Online* database and *Erasmus Without Paper* network as well as introducing the digital Online Learning Agreements in 2021. Further major steps will also be taken to contribute to internationalization through digitalization as set out in TU Berlin's Internationalization Strategy.

Additionally, the development of an inclusion concept including plans for flexible mobility formats as well as a concept for implementing and funding environmentally friendly methods in the area of international affairs and Erasmus+ are planned for 2021.

The new program generation will bring many new features. While preparations for the new program are underway, the last projects within the current Erasmus+ generation have recently been approved for the first key action "Learning Mobility of Individuals". In June 2020, TU Berlin's proposal was successfully approved and awarded roughly one million euros in funding, the highest funding volume to date for the ERASMUS+ KA 103 – Mobility with Program Countries (project duration: 2020-2023) program track, which is being coordinated by Student Mobility and International Students. International Projects (staff and PhD mobility) and Student Mobility and International Students are also happy to announce that within the framework of their program Erasmus+ KA 107 - Mobility with Partner Countries, all applications and thus funds for living expenses and travel grants for Egypt, Ethiopia, Australia, Ghana, Israel, Russia, and South Africa were approved (project duration: 2020-2023). The development of the pandemic will determine when mobilities with these countries can recommence.

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DigiEduHack 2020 | Building Bridges – Digital, International and Sustainable



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Universities and research institutions worldwide will take part in this year's Digital Education Hackathon, DigiEduHack, under the motto "Together we redefine learning". In ideation workshops to be held on 12 and 13 November, local Hackathon teams will work together to find solutions to one of the most urgent challenges of our time: What does the future of teaching in the digital age look like?

This year's DigiEduHack main stage event is hosted by TU Berlin, Hochschulforum Digitalisierung, and the DAAD in Berlin. At the same time, the Department of International Affairs and the Online Teaching Team invite you to participate in TU Berlin's own Hackathon "Building Bridges – Digital, International & Sustainable". Teams have two days to work with the support of mentors to develop solutions for the challenge.

"We envision a sustainable future for higher education and international cooperation in Berlin. Help us achieve this by joining our hackathon and finding innovative ways to use digital education tools to support teaching and learning in an international science community. Let us make the future more accessible, inclusive and sustainable – without losing our international focus, mobility and personal connections."

The best teams will be in with a chance to win €600 (1st place) and €400 (2nd place) in the local competition. In addition, they will compete with all DigiEduHack teams for the €5000 prize in the global award contest.

To participate, register [on the event website](#) by 10 November. We look forward to great ideas and an exciting hackathon! *The hackathon is supported by EU funds.*

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INTEGRA 2.0 at TU Berlin

The first preparation courses offered by the Preparatory School and funded by the Berlin Senate for refugees wishing to study for a STEM degree started back in November 2015. The Preparatory School later successfully acquired 1.4 million euros from the DAAD's INTEGRA funding program to continue their offer from 2016 to 2019. (see TUintern, May 2016). Together with the Modern Language Center (ZEMS) and Academic Advising Service, the Preparatory School developed tailored concepts to integrate refugees quickly and effectively into STEM degree programs at TU Berlin. By 2019, some 600 refugees had successfully completed courses at the Preparatory School preparing them for university studies, both in terms of language and subject content.

Many refugees have since begun studying. However, the integration of refugee students is a lengthy and multi-faceted process that does not end upon their enrollment in a degree program. Refugees, as well as international students in general, face significant challenges during their studies, both in terms of material and language, as well as when applying for internships or their first job in the German labor market.

The DAAD's new INTEGRA call took account of these different needs. In fall 2019, several key actors at TU Berlin came together to write a follow-up proposal for extended funding for refugees as well as international students for the first time within this call. This proposal was also successful and under the leadership of the Department of International Affairs, TU Berlin acquired the considerable sum of 700,000 euros for 2020-2021. As a result of measures introduced to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, the implementation of the program was slowed. However, all three funding lines have since been launched with a range of offers, some of which are still online due to the current circumstances:

- Further preparatory courses for refugees at the TU Berlin Preparatory School (https://www.studienkolleg.tu-berlin.de/menue/studienkolleg/fuer_gefluechtete/)
- German and English language courses at the Modern Language Center for refugee and international students (<https://www.zems.tu-berlin.de/integra/>)
- Seminars, workshops, and advising sessions on the transition to professional life are being offered by the Career Service as part of the new project (M)INT2WORK. (www.career.tu-berlin.de/mint2work)

This package of measures underlines once again TU Berlin's commitment to refugees and international students.

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New Proofreading Service at TU Berlin



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The qualification of junior scholars and the advancement of their academic career are a stated aim of TU Berlin. To help meet these goals, the University established its new Proofreading Service to offer doctoral students and research associates employed at TU Berlin the opportunity to have an English-language text proofread free of charge. During the pilot phase in 2020, this offer is for one external funding application. Funding provided by the Berlin University Alliance has enabled the Proofreading Service to expand its offer to include papers for peer review journals.

The aim of this service is to achieve native-speaker quality for external funding applications, thus increasing their chances of success. It also offers an opportunity to further the English skills of TU employees through feedback on the quality of their text. The establishment of the Proofreading Service is a measure of the 2019/20 Advancement of Junior Scholars Action Plan to optimize support for junior scholars at TU Berlin and an outcome of the Round Tables with Junior Scholars, regularly held by vice president Professor Dr. Angela Ittel since winter semester 2018/19.

Further information is available [here.https://www.tu-berlin.de/?id=213601](https://www.tu-berlin.de/?id=213601)

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Visa-Service 2.0

Since June 2020, the Berlin Immigration Office has issued students and scholars electronic residency permits (eAT) only, which require an in-person application at the Immigration Office. As such, it is no longer possible for the TU Berlin Visa Service to handle residence permit applications.

However, staff in International Student Counseling continue to advise students and researchers on all matters concerning residency. We can be contacted by phone and email. If needed, individual in-person appointments can also be arranged.

Dr. Fred Mengerling

TU Berlin

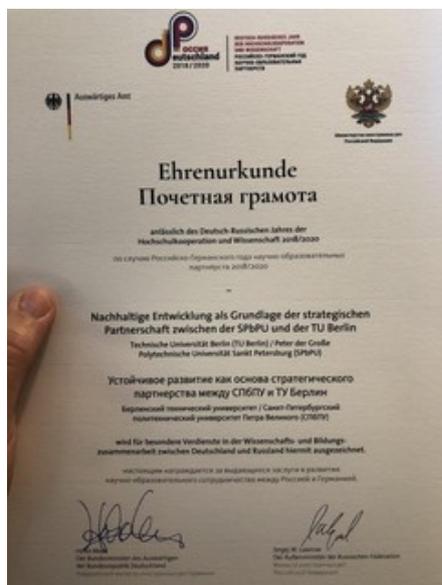
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Bridge for German-Russian University Cooperation



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Technische Universität Berlin and its strategic partner Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University (SPbPU) were honored for their longstanding cooperation in the "Bridges for German-Russian University Cooperation" competition. The competition was held as part of the German-Russian theme year for university cooperation and science from 2018-2020, which was initiated by federal minister of foreign affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany Heiko Maas together with minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation Sergei V. Lavrov. A total of 25 projects were recognized for their work. The award ceremony took place on 15 September 2020, during the final science policy conference of the theme year, held both physically and virtually in Berlin and Moscow.

SPbPU and TU Berlin have had a close working relationship for over ten years, signing their first cooperative agreement in 2007. In 2013 the universities signed a strategic partnership agreement. Agreements on student mobility and joint PhDs were then added in 2015. A double degree master's program in Innovative Entrepreneurship was also developed. In early 2020, the strategic partnership was renewed for another five years. Over the course of the partnership, a total of eight joint research focuses have been established: mechanics, information technologies, space engineering, welding technologies, energetics, civil engineering, business and humanities. The central aims of the strategic partnership are internationalization, interregional cooperation, the development of German-Russian university cooperation and science, fulfillment of the universities' missions concerning sustainable development, as well as strengthening the relationships between the two civil societies.

The German-Russian theme years were initiated in 2014 and have focused on a number of topics such as language and literature, youth exchange, and municipal and regional cooperation. The current theme year from 2018 to 2020 was dedicated to university cooperation and science with the aim of presenting the long-term and diverse relationships in research and teaching between universities, research institutions, and educational institutions in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Russian Federation to a wider public. In addition to nearly one hundred joint events organized by knowledge partners in both countries, the competition "Bridges for German-Russian University and Science Cooperation" was one of several central measures of the theme year. A total of 124 universities as well as research and other institutions competed for the award.

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