

## Internationalization of studies and teaching

### English-language courses and examinations

#### Preamble

Internationalization is a declared goal of TU Dortmund University. The University Development Plan ([Hochschulentwicklungsplan](#), HEP) 2022 to 2026 states the following for the area of teaching, among other things:

"With its internationalization strategy, TU Dortmund University has set itself the goal of increasing the proportion of international students from currently 13 percent to 22 percent. To this end, it will expand its offered range of English-language courses and degree programs and increase mobility for outgoing and incoming students."

Under the guiding principle "Education wins in a global perspective", the [Guiding Principles Good Teaching](#) adopted by the Senate also formulates the goal of increasing the attractiveness of TU Dortmund University for students and teachers by expanding the internationally-oriented teaching and study offers.

Many departments would like to offer parts of their courses in English in accordance with the university's strategic goals. This paper summarizes the most important framework conditions for offering courses in foreign languages and aims to support departments in the internationalization of their study offers.

#### Master's degree programs

**Goal.** One goal of the University Development Plan<sup>1</sup> is the increased introduction of English-language degree programs. This refers especially to Master's degree programs - here, a conversion to English-language degree programs should be made possible. The subject culture of the degree programs plays a significant role in the decision on the language of the degree program, since the importance of the (teaching) language varies greatly between scientific disciplines. This applies particularly, for example, when teaching content in the natural sciences or the humanities.

**Department's decision.** The decision to offer a degree program entirely or predominantly in English is made by the **department**, which is guided by the respective subject culture and the professional field of the graduates. This is true for both the introduction of new, internationally-oriented degree programs and for the conversion of the language of already existing degree programs. The corresponding **representatives of the student body** will be involved as early as possible in the decision-making process regarding the conversion of existing degree programs.

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<sup>1</sup> University Development Plan of TU Dortmund University 2022-2026, published by the Rectorate of TU Dortmund University in May 2022, Version of 13 May 2022.

**Funding.** New study offers - regardless of the teaching language - are considered according to the usual regulations within the budgeting model of TU Dortmund University. The Rectorate does not provide any additional financial support. External funding opportunities for international degree programs exist, e.g. via the DAAD or via Erasmus+.

**Joint degrees.** With the introduction of new English-language degree programs, the degree programs that are offered in partnership with other universities and conclude with a joint degree are also attractive. Characteristic for joint degree programs is a **common curriculum**, which the students partly complete at TU Dortmund University and partly at one or more other, foreign universities. In these cases, a **cooperation agreement** regulates important framework conditions of the joint degree program, such as enrollment and admission, the examination procedures and quality management. Beyond this, **joint examination regulations** are devised which standardize the legal framework conditions for the examinations in compliance with the provisions of the North Rhine-Westphalia Higher Education Act (*Gesetz über die Hochschulen des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen*, HG NRW). In the meantime, the university has accumulated experience in the introduction of joint degree programs, from which you as a department can benefit.

**New degree programs.** The introduction of new degree programs (with or without a joint degree) requires close coordination with the **Rectorate**. If you are considering the introduction of a new degree program, please contact the **Corporate Center University Development and Organization** at an early stage.

**Existing Master's degree programs.** Existing Master's degree programs can be converted in **whole or in part** to another language. If existing degree programs are converted in their entirety to another language, usually a **re-accreditation** is necessary. For this purpose, the targeted time of the conversion should be chosen in such a way that no unnecessary additional workload is caused for the department.

**Transition period.** When changing the language in existing degree programs, the transition phase can be particularly challenging. Please consider early on, which potentially **bilingual offers** are needed for students in the transition phase.

**Partial offers in English.** If a Master's degree program is not to be conducted entirely in English, it is also possible to just change parts of a degree program. This can affect individual courses, modules, fields of study, compulsory courses and/or elective (compulsory) areas. In a German-language degree program, it is sufficient if, in addition to the English-language courses, the **course materials are made available in German**, in case this is desired by the department or the students. **Examinations** should be given in the **language of instruction**.

**Specification.** The **module descriptions** of the respective module handbooks provide information on the offered language of instruction or in the examinations. It is also possible that the language of instruction varies in individual courses. In this case, the module description may provide for **several course languages**. When deciding which language is to be used in a specific course, students should be consulted to take their needs into account.

**Diversity management.** English-language degree programs generally open up a new, international target group. This can entail a greater diversity of prior knowledge, which should be taken into account when formulating the **admission requirements**. International students may also bring with them a greater need for advising, so that an appropriate, **English-language concept** for advisory services should be available as early as possible. It is also desirable that international students familiarize themselves with the **German language and culture** during their stay. Please consider integrating corresponding offers.

## Bachelor's degree programs

The Bachelor's degree programs at TU Dortmund University will **continue to be offered in German**.

**Elective courses.** In order to introduce students to English-language courses, however, courses in English should already be integrated appropriately and proportionately into Bachelor's degree programs. As a rule, this should and may only be the case in elective and compulsory elective areas and here in the higher semesters. In the elective area, **up to 40%** of the subjects may be offered in English. It should be noted that it must be possible to complete the Bachelor's degree program exclusively in German.

**Compulsory courses.** In justified exceptional cases, however, compulsory courses can also be held in English. If compulsory courses in English are to be offered, the examination regulations must specify a **maximum limit** (e.g., no more than two compulsory courses per semester, starting from a certain semester). In addition, to ensure that students have the necessary language skills, a **specialized English language course** must be integrated into the curriculum. Students have the option of taking the **exam in German**. In addition, in the case of compulsory English courses in Bachelor's degree programs, an **accompanying support offer** (exercises, tutorials, materials...) should also be available in German.

In addition to English-language courses, the introduction to foreign-language scientific language can also be initiated through the integration of corresponding literature.

**Technical literature.** As is true for the Master's degree programs, the module descriptions provide information on the according language(s) of the offered course(s) and examination(s).

**Specification.** As in Master's degree programs, **module descriptions** of the respective module handbooks provide information on the offered language of instruction or in the examinations.

**Competency level.** Since the acquisition of English language competencies is proven with the **general university entrance qualification** (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*), knowledge of the English language can and may be assumed for students in the Bachelor's degree program exclusively at the level of this school education. Supporting courses for the acquisition of subject-specific and scientific English language skills can also be integrated into the degree program.

## Examination regulations

**Examinations.** In Master's degree programs and, in justified exceptional cases, also in Bachelor's degree programs, examinations can be held in English in addition to the courses. Many **examination regulations** already provide that, **in agreement** with students and examiners, the (written and oral) examinations in the compulsory elective areas and elective areas may be held in English. **Bachelor's and Master's theses** may also be written in English.

**English documents.** English translations of the relevant documents (module handbooks, examination regulations, possibly internship regulations, etc.) and other information are to be provided. Support is offered by the International Office (see below).

## Support and advice

The change to English-language degree programs entails a number of challenges. In addition to the previously mentioned contact persons, TU Dortmund University therefore provides further support services to assist in this transition:

**Exchange of experience.** To support the departments in their planning, the **Vice President International Affairs** regularly invites to an exchange on the topic of changing the language of the degree program. Please do not hesitate to contact the Vice President ([prorektorin\\_internationales@tu-dortmund.de](mailto:prorektorin_internationales@tu-dortmund.de)) to benefit from the previous experience of other departments.

**Further training.** A new language of instruction is a change not only for students, but also for faculty respectively teachers. The [Center for Higher Education](#) (*Zentrum für Hochschulbildung, zhb*) offers courses such as "Teaching in higher education". The zhb also offers customized formats for teachers and departments - please feel free to contact them.

**Administration.** In the [International Office](#) you can get tips and advice on how to support the **integration** of international students in Dortmund. In addition, the International Office can also provide assistance with the translation of **documents**, information and the like.

If you have any questions regarding the **conversion of individual courses**, elective or compulsory modules, or whole degree programs, please do not hesitate to address your regular contact persons in the [Corporate Center Student Services](#) (creation and amendment of examination regulations) or in the [Corporate Center University Development and Organization](#) (development of degree programs and accreditations).