

Internationalization Strategy



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1. Preamble

Although political scientists have been talking about ‘internationalization’ for many decades, there is still no universally accepted definition of the term. Nevertheless, a consensus is gradually emerging that ‘internationalization’ in the context of the higher education sector refers to the implementation of a multicultural, ‘international’ approach in teaching, research and administration. In the present document, ‘internationalization’ will be taken to mean *the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of [research and] higher education*¹.

The concept of ‘internationalization’ generally has positive connotations: an international perspective in education and research; improved links with universities and research institutions in other parts of the world; increased possibilities for students, teachers, researchers and administrators; improved language skills; increased preparedness for meetings across different cultures; and more uniform standards of quality assurance².

1.1. The Vetmeduni Vienna

The Vetmeduni Vienna was established by the Empress Maria Theresia in 1765 as the first school of veterinary medicine in the German-speaking world. Initially the focus was very much on training veterinarians to ensure the armies of the monarchy had a steady supply of healthy horses but the *K.K. Pferde-Curen- und Operationsschule* was also responsible for training people for work with many other species of animal. The enhanced focus was reflected in a change of name to the *Tierärztliche Hochschule Wien* (Veterinary College of Vienna) in 1897 and from 1975 the institution has been known as the *Veterinärmedizinische Universität Wien* (University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, or Vetmeduni Vienna).

From its very beginning the Vetmeduni Vienna has been active far beyond the borders of present-day Austria. It has educated and trained veterinarians from a wide range of European countries and further afield, as well as training Austrian veterinarians who have subsequently relocated elsewhere. The teaching at the Vetmeduni Vienna has naturally benefited considerably from expertise from abroad. As an example, the recent international developments in multimedia technologies are being rapidly and efficiently incorporated into the Vetmeduni Vienna’s educational programme, offering vastly enhanced opportunities to students at all levels.

Internationalization developments at universities do not relate solely to education. As recently as twenty-five or thirty years ago, scientific research was essentially the domain of individuals or small groups. This is no longer the case and a glance through the table of

1) Knight, J. (2004) Internationalisation remodelled: Definitions, rationales, and approaches. *Journal for Studies in International Education* 8, 5-31.
2) http://www.gu.se/digitalAssets/1176/1176207_!InternationalPolicy.pdf [accessed 6.6.2014]

contents of any of the leading international scientific journals – such as *Nature*, *Science and Cell* – shows that the majority of the articles are authored by a large number of people, generally from several groups, often geographically widely separated. In short, leading research has grown substantially in scale and has become far more collaborative in nature.

1.2. Driving forces for internationalization

A number of reasons underlie these trends. Three prominent causes are the increasing complexity of top-level research and higher education, which require expertise in more fields than is normally available under a single ‘roof’; the rapid technological advances, which make it impossible for single institutions, even the most wealthy, to afford all the up-to-date facilities and equipment necessary to compete on a global stage; and the almost universal access to efficient and rapid communication procedures, primarily via the Internet, which have revolutionized the exchange of scientific information since the late 1980s. There is also a more practical aspect: the increasing concentration of research funding on large-scale collaborative projects, often requiring participants in several countries, is acting as a driving force for scientists to work together beyond the borders of their host countries.

The result has been a dramatic increase in the internationalization of research and higher education. It is no coincidence that this development is taking place at a time when people are more mobile than ever before. Students, researchers and teachers are prepared to move between countries in search of the best positions, while the competition between universities and research institutions for the most promising students and researchers is steadily intensifying. Increased competition has naturally led to improved quality and we now frequently speak of applying ‘international standards’ when reviewing manuscripts or in assessing applications for positions or for funding.

For the Vetmeduni Vienna there is a further incentive to increase internationalization. Although the Vetmeduni Vienna naturally has close ties with other research and education institutes within Vienna, its nearest neighbours in the field of veterinary medicine are located abroad: in Zürich, in Munich, in Brno, in Budapest and in Ljubljana. As stated succinctly in the Vetmeduni Vienna’s ‘Development Plan 2020’, ‘Due to the fact that the Vetmeduni Vienna is the only university for veterinary medicine in Austria, the international focus on teaching and research and the mobility of students and staff are naturally evident. National and international as well as inter- and trans-disciplinary cooperation and networking are of particular significance to the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna’.

The Vetmeduni Vienna firmly believes that close interaction with internationally leading scientists and teachers is essential for the exchange of talent and ideas, the development of new knowledge and the maintenance of high standards. The Vetmeduni Vienna’s strategy to increase its level of internationalization is regularly reviewed and updated by the Vetmeduni administration. The present document provides a brief outline of the strategy.



2. Institutional policies and strategies – the Development Plan and beyond

The Vetmeduni Vienna is one of the leading universities of veterinary medicine in Europe. Its excellent reputation is based not only on the quality of its facilities but also on the high degree of competence of its clinical, research and teaching staff. It is a truism that maintaining excellence is considerably more challenging than acquiring a first-rate reputation. To meet this challenge, the Vetmeduni Vienna frequently reviews its teaching, its research and its clinical services. The outcomes are summarized in the Development Plan, which is regularly revised and updated.

The most recent version of the Development Plan was updated in 2014. The current ‘Development Plan 2020’ highlights the Vetmeduni Vienna’s strengths and sets out strategies to facilitate future developments. It also outlines strategic goals for the short- and mid-term future, with an entire chapter (Chapter 5) devoted to ‘Internationality, mobility, cooperation and networks.’ Two primary strategic goals are addressed, each of which has a number of secondary aims:

- Intensifying internationalization
 - Expansion of the international campus
 - Internationalization of education
 - Internationalization of research
- Increasing cooperation density and networking
 - Promoting specific cooperation in the areas of specialization with universities, government agencies, research institutions, economy/industry
 - Strengthening cooperation in the field of education

In addition, the chapters on ‘Education and continuing education’ (Chapter 2), ‘Research, knowledge and technology transfer’ (Chapter 3) and ‘University clinics and diagnostic facilities’ (Chapter 4) place considerable emphasis on the further internationalization of the Vetmeduni Vienna. The three areas are considered in turn in the following sections.

The Vetmeduni Vienna is fully persuaded of the need for internationalization. Its activities towards internationalization have been conceived and planned as a coherent and sustainable process that will not only help it attain short-term goals but will also ensure that it can face the challenges of the future with confidence. The benefits will be felt at all levels, from short-term junior students to senior professors, well beyond the five-year period explicitly addressed by the current version of the development plan.

The Internationalization Strategy is seen as a guide for employees at all levels and in all functions. Continued implementation of the strategy will establish internationalization as self-evident and inherent to university life.

3. Education and continuing education in an international context – internationalization of education

Universities are primarily institutes of higher education and the Vetmeduni Vienna represents the only institution in Austria dedicated to the education of veterinarians. This unique selling proposition makes the Vetmeduni Vienna responsible for educating and training veterinarians at all stages of their development, from diploma students to interns, residents, researchers and professors. Excellence in veterinary sciences is not possible without a focus on related subjects and the Vetmeduni Vienna also offers degree courses in fields such as equine sciences, biomedicine and biotechnology, comparative morphology, human-animal interactions and wildlife ecology and management, most of which are not available elsewhere in Austria.

The relatively high degree of specialization naturally makes the courses attractive to students from further afield. In addition, it means that graduates who wish to continue their education at another institution will generally have to do so outside Austria. These two points are reflected in the Vetmeduni Vienna's strategic objectives for its education and continuing education, which include:

- Internationalization of selected studies and post-graduate training
- Promoting student mobility

3.1. Internationalization of selected studies and post-graduate training

Due to the specific requirements associated with the qualification to practise in the veterinary profession – the primary point of contact for veterinarians are animals' owners – the Vetmeduni Vienna offers its Diploma Programme in Veterinary Medicine in German. Nevertheless, students are actively encouraged to read English-language literature. Lectures in English and courses on English language skills form an integral part of the Programme. The Vetmeduni Vienna is currently introducing a new curriculum for the study of veterinary medicine, in which students are introduced to research skills at an earlier stage. The new curriculum is fully compatible with the strategic goal of increasing students' international skills, making them more competitive in the international market for researchers and veterinarians.



A traditional way for students and early-stage researchers to gain international exposure is to attend a summer school. Summer schools form an important part of graduate and post-graduate education, enabling the participants to acquire specialist knowledge of certain specific topics. Summer schools are particularly attractive if they are provided by international consortiums. The Vetmeduni Vienna is currently a partner in the following summer schools:

- Summer School for Exotic Medicine and Surgery – in collaboration with the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Brno, Czech Republic
- French/German Summer School for the Promotion of Veterinary Science – organized by all veterinary schools in the German-speaking countries, together with the four French Veterinary Schools and the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Liège, Belgium. The School aims to encourage and develop research collaboration between the institutions. The Vetmeduni Vienna will host the Summer School in 2018.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will continue to seek international partners for summer schools in topics that it identifies as complementary to its courses and curriculums.

Although courses in veterinary medicine will continue to be offered in German, the new curriculum for the study of veterinary medicine foresees that up to 10% of the courses may be held in the English language. Accordingly, the Vetmeduni Vienna is gradually expanding the range of subjects and study programmes it teaches in English, thereby helping it to recruit more international students. In accordance with the Vetmeduni Vienna's strategy for internationalization, such courses may also be offered in collaboration with international partner institutions, enhancing the students' exposure to international cultures.

The following study programmes are currently offered in English:

- Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine
- PhD
- Master in Biomedicine and Biotechnology
- Interdisciplinary Master in Human-Animal Interactions
- European Master in Comparative Morphology

The last of these perfectly illustrates the Vetmeduni Vienna's active commitment to internationalization. Together with four other European universities (the University of Antwerp, Belgium; the University of Giessen, Germany; the University of Life Sciences, Poznan, Poland; and the University of Naples, Italy) the Vetmeduni Vienna is offering an international, collaborative Master of Sciences course – the European Master of Comparative Vertebrate Morphology (EUCOMOR) – funded by Erasmus Mundus.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will continue to seek to expand the range of courses it offers in English, focusing on veterinary medicine and veterinary sciences, its primary fields of expertise. Where possible, additional courses will be organized in collaboration with other institutions.

3.2. Promoting student mobility

Ensuring a high degree of student mobility is a central strategic goal for the Vetmeduni Vienna. The 2013 annual national statistical report (Statistisches Jahrbuch) for Austria ranked the Vetmeduni Vienna third of all Austrian public universities for its proportion of outgoing students and second for its proportion of incoming students.

A prerequisite for the effective exchange of students across national borders is that qualifications obtained in one country are recognized in another.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will continue to maintain its high standards for the international recognition of credits for studies and practical work abroad by entering agreements with institutions that are accredited by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education.

Enhancing the mobility of students helps them develop competencies, knowledge and skills, stimulating their personal development and increasing their competitiveness in the local and international job market. Some funding programmes, for example the prestigious START Programme of the Austrian Science Fund, generally require applicants to have spent a certain period abroad. The Vetmeduni Vienna is committed to making all students aware of the importance of experiencing other cultures and will implement the following measures to increase the mobility of its students, both within and outside the European Higher Education Area:

The Vetmeduni Vienna will develop an information strategy to enhance students' awareness of the many opportunities for mobility, increasing students' motivation to make use of programmes to promote their mobility. The Vetmeduni Vienna will seek increased funding for mobility.

The Vetmeduni Vienna is committed to providing internal funding for student mobility and will continue to apply for third-party funding to support student mobility. Possible sources include Erasmus+, CEEPUS, Marie Skłodowska Curie Action programmes and the Marshall Plan Foundation.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will make data on the composition of its student population (credit mobility, degree mobility) publicly available, drawing attention to the proportion of students who obtained their previous qualifications outside the European higher education area.



Nevertheless, the Vetmeduni Vienna does not intend to rest on its laurels and will continue to strive to make its courses and programmes attractive to applicants from beyond Austria and Germany. The following explicit measures are foreseen:

The Vetmeduni Vienna will seek to expand the range of courses offered in English, focusing on veterinary medicine and veterinary sciences.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will establish a web-based information portal containing information on the Vetmeduni Vienna's educational programmes in an attractive format and in English.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will maintain objective procedures for student selection, ensuring that all candidates have an equal opportunity of acceptance on all courses, irrespective of nationality, race or religion.

The strategic measures outlined above should increase the number of Vetmeduni Vienna students who take courses at institutions outside Austria, as well as recruiting more international students to the Vetmeduni Vienna. Unfortunately, some students are less able than others to take advantage of the range of possibilities on offer. The Vetmeduni is fully committed to removing the remaining obstacles to student mobility and to making mobility accessible to each student.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will strive to identify and remove the remaining obstacles to student mobility.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will identify and implement optimum “windows of mobility”.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will identify groups of individuals with unmet needs and decide whether these warrant the introduction of particular support measures.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will continue to evaluate the societal relevance and personal benefit of student mobility by conducting regular surveys of its alumni. The Vetmeduni Vienna will investigate the appropriate application of ECTS credits and Diploma supplements.

It should not be overlooked that many students will simply not wish to go abroad. Some might have families or partners in Vienna, while others may have other legitimate reasons for preferring to remain in Vienna. It is important that such students are not ignored or marginalized but are offered access to at least some of the benefits that normally result from study abroad. The Vetmeduni Vienna is introducing a number of concrete measures to increase their intercultural competencies:

The Vetmeduni Vienna will develop alternative concepts such as “virtual mobility” and enable “international experience at home” for students who do not have the opportunity to go abroad.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will support foreign language courses.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will support cross-cultural training courses.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will enhance synergies with the International Veterinary Students' Association.

3.3. Quality Management of education and continuing education

As noted above, universities are institutes of higher education and they should therefore be assessed primarily on the quality of training and education they provide. The Vetmeduni Vienna is committed to offer education and training at the highest international level. It has thus elected to have the quality of its education and training and its entire quality management system assessed by an independent body, seeking accreditation from the appropriate European organization, the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education EAEVE. The mission of the EAEVE is to evaluate, promote and develop the quality and standard of veterinary medical establishments and their teaching, largely but not exclusively within the member states of the European Union. An EAEVE evaluation comprises two stages, in which an establishment must demonstrate that it conforms with the European Directive 2005/36 Stage 1) and that it follows appropriate academic standards and provides learning opportunities of acceptable quality (Stage 2). Stage 2 includes the assessment of the universities quality management system.

The Vetmeduni Vienna passed the first stage in 2006 and thereby attained "EAEVE Approval". Approved institutions must be evaluated at regular intervals and in 2012 the Vetmeduni Vienna again passed the first stage and additionally passed the second stage of the evaluation procedure, thereby attaining full EAEVE Accreditation thereby also fulfilling the requirement of the Austrian Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (Hochschul-Qualitätssicherungsgesetzes).

The Vetmeduni Vienna is committed to maintaining accreditation from the EAEVE and to this end will submit to international evaluation by the EAEVE at the prescribed intervals.



4. Research, knowledge and technology transfer in an international context

As outlined in the Preamble, research has become considerably more collaborative over the past decades and top-quality research is increasingly undertaken by consortiums of groups. Because of the developments in communications technology and thanks to the relatively low cost of international travel, there is no reason why partners in a consortium should be located in the same university, the same city or even the same country. Much of the development towards so-called ‘big science’ has been ‘bottom-up’, driven by researchers eager to secure access to the best specialized facilities available and to collaborate with the best people possible, regardless of where they are. More recently, a ‘top-down’ element has been added to the mix and funding agencies have accelerated the trend by introducing funding schemes to foster trans-national collaboration. These range from relatively simple bilateral accords, via agreements between several nations (such as the German-language D-A-CH group of Germany, Austria and Switzerland) to complex multinational structures such as the European Union (EU). The increasing availability of funding for large-scale collaborative research projects is a potent driving force for universities and research institutions to work together beyond the borders of their host countries.

The Vetmeduni is responding to the developments by seeking increased international funding, particularly from EU sources, and by expanding its alliances with collaboration partners at all levels: regional, national and international.

The ‘Development Plan 2020’ prioritizes a number of specific strategic goals.

- Maintain international research funding
- Maintain international recruitment
- Enhance staff mobility

4.1. Maintaining international research funding

4.1.1. EU Funding - Horizon 2020

Recent years have seen a major overhaul of the European funding system, leading ultimately to the delayed start of the HORIZON 2020 funding programme. During the period between the phasing out of the 7th Framework Programme and the start of HORIZON 2020 the Vetmeduni Vienna was actively preparing for the new funding instruments. In 2013 the Vetmeduni Vienna commenced a consultation and strategy development process, the 'ERA Dialogue', with the FFG to define its areas of expertise and its existing networks. The process is still continuing, aiming

- to enable the efficient screening of European calls for funding;
- to position Vetmeduni Vienna experts to influence the European research agenda and to direct the topics of future calls; and
- to strengthen the Vetmeduni Vienna's international ties and visibility, making Vetmeduni researchers attractive partners for international consortiums.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will maintain consultation with the FFG at the university level as well as on the level of organizational units.

Based on the ERA Dialogue, the Vetmeduni Vienna's Office for Research Promotion and Innovation will continue its strategic foresight, screening and support service to provide researchers with advance notice of emerging topics and upcoming calls.

The ERA Dialogue has provisionally identified the most promising areas of HORIZON 2020 funding as

- Basic sciences, life sciences, (bio-) medical & veterinary sciences
- Global and societal challenges
- Regional (structural funds)
- ERA Nets

Horizon 2020's guiding theme is support for innovation. It has become increasingly evident that HORIZON 2020's research agenda will consist of a mix of policy-driven "top down" research programmes and "bottom up" research projects. The Vetmeduni Vienna is convinced that a number of research topics relevant to (veterinary) medicine will be embedded in "top down" calls, addressing the grand societal challenges such as

- H2020: Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, Marine and Maritime and Inland Water Research and the Bioeconomy
- H2020: Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing



- ERA Nets: EMIDA and ANHIWA
(subject to the availability of national co-financing)
- Joint Technology Initiatives: Antimicrobial Resistance
(subject to the availability of national co-financing)

The Vetmeduni will seek funding in the H2020 programs in particular the programme on Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, Marine and Maritime and Inland Water Research and the Bioeconomy and the programme on Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing

The Vetmeduni will continue to seek funding via regional EFRE programmes (subject to the improvement of the administrative framework and availability of co-financing)

The Vetmeduni will seek funding under the Joint Research Programming Initiative on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change (FACCE-JPI) in collaboration with the relevant Austrian bodies (BMG and AGES), in particular based on the longstanding collaboration in the field of veterinary public health.

The Vetmeduni will actively seek new collaborative partners and will facilitate networking e.g. via COST Actions

The ERC grants will continue to be a major source of European funding for basic science combining both substantial funding and high international prestige.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will strive to increase the number of ERC grantees on campus, either through recruitment or by providing support to candidates

At the same time, the Vetmeduni Vienna is aware of the necessity of advising the relevant policy-making bodies and EU offices, instrumentalizing expert groups that provide scientific advice to these institutions and individuals to suggest specific topics for future research.

The Vetmeduni Vienna has identified a number of topics in which it already has a foothold or is seeking to increase its presence. Two are of primary relevance to the university's work. A number of specific measures are in place to ensure that the Vetmeduni Vienna is best able to take advantage of forthcoming opportunities for funding from the European Commission.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will continue to participate in the European Technology Platform Global Animal Health ETPGAH.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will continue to participate in the European Innovation Partnership Focus Group on Reducing Antibiotics in the Pig Sector.

The Vetmeduni will also continue to provide both organizational and financial support for DISCONTTOOLS, a database and platform to support decision-making processes in the field of new and improved vaccines, diagnostics and pharmaceuticals for a wide range of animal diseases. The Vetmeduni Vienna will also continue its active participation in the Collaborative Working Group on Animal Health & Welfare of the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research SCAR, which provides foresight studies on animal health research in the coming 25 years.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will remain involved in European Innovation Partnerships, e.g. by supporting participation of its experts in the Focus Group on Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR) and will continue its involvement in the European Livestock Innovation Partnerships.

The Vetmeduni will actively lobby for financial participation of Austrian funding agencies and ministries in other ERANETs and Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs). Funding from national sources is a prerequisite to receiving EU funds but a number of ERANETs and JPIs have not received national funding commitments, including several in which the Vetmeduni Vienna could participate.

4.1.2. Expansion of existing geographic focuses

The Vetmeduni has identified regions of particular interest and will endeavour to expand collaborations within them:

■ Central and Eastern Europe

Danube Region. The EFRE Crossborder collaboration with Brno and Budapest gives the Vetmeduni Vienna close ties to the veterinary institutions in Slovakia and Hungary, which are helpful for attracting funding from the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. The Vetmeduni Vienna is involved in the Centre of Excellence for Poultry (CEPO), which is funded by the European Regional Development Fund and the cross-border European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programme. It plans to submit applications for follow-up funding to continue and to expand its networking activities in the Danube Region.

■ Asia / Pacific

Strategic partnership with the Medical University of Taipei, Taiwan (together with the Medical University of Vienna). The three universities are investigating the possibilities for a close collaboration in research and teaching based on expertise in particular topics (e.g. signal transduction pathways).

The Vetmeduni Vienna will seek to expand its international network to increase its ability to take advantage of joint funding schemes. The focus will be on topics that it has identified as strategic strengths.



4.1.3. Smart Specialization

The main driver for collaborations will remain thematic matches within Europe and beyond. Nevertheless, a number of collaborations fit with regional initiatives and provide a basis for the Vetmeduni Vienna's participation in the regional Smart Specialization Strategies. Examples include:

- (Animal-derived) food (including food safety) and animal health, which is linked to a national K-Project. The Vetmeduni Vienna plans to expand this to a K1 COMET centre together with BIOS Science Austria.
- Regenerative medicine is well linked to the newly established Austrian Platform for Advanced Cellular Therapies PACT.
- Veterinary Medicine Biobanking, which is linked to the national and EU Biobanking and Biomolecular Resources Research Infrastructure (BBMRI.AT, BBMRI ERIC).

The Vetmeduni Vienna is committed to supporting applications for third-party funding that build on these national and regional initiatives.

4.1.4. Other international sources

Due to the budgetary limitations within the HORIZON 2020 programme, increased attention will be paid to national programmes to fund bi- or multi-lateral projects, such as the FWF joint funding programmes, and to funding opportunities outside Europe (US, Asia). The Vetmeduni Vienna will also seek to enhance its contacts with industry, thereby enabling additional applied research in the important field of veterinary medicine.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will increase its efforts to identify and recruit international and multi-national industrial corporations for research collaborations or to co-fund translational research, e.g. by establishing and operating Christian Doppler Laboratories.

4.2. International recruitment and staff mobility

Research excellence is heavily dependent on the recruitment of leading experts in specific fields and on the ability to attract the most promising and talented young researchers available. Conversely, a research institution's research becomes visible through its ability to position its researchers as attractive candidates for positions in top research institutions on a global level.

The Vetmeduni Vienna is committed to continuing its efforts to recruit the best researchers and to increasing the number of researchers from countries outside the German-speaking region.

These strategic goals will be accomplished by:

- international recruitment of young scientists into the Vetmeduni Vienna's post-doctoral programme and its PhD programmes.
- international recruitment of senior research staff, professors and other key personnel.
- transparency of selection procedures.
- offering administrative support, welcome services and housing support to newly recruited staff through the International Relations Office (IRO) and providing further services such as dual career services in collaboration with WWTF and UNIKO.
- staff training programmes (including language courses and cultural training).

Staff mobility will continue to represent an important strategic goal. Staff exchanges are naturally facilitated when institutions are well networked, so the Vetmeduni Vienna will expand and enhance its existing interactions with other universities and faculties of veterinary medicine. The focus will be on the following areas:

■ Central and Eastern Europe

VetNEST. The Vetmeduni Vienna is committed to maintaining close ties with the major veterinary universities in Central and Eastern Europe, building on the existing Veterinary Network of European Student and Staff Transfer (VetNEST), which includes universities in Belgrade Brno, Budapest, Kosice, Ljubljana, Sarajevo and Zagreb.

■ D-A-CH

“Veterinärmedizinischer Fakultätentag”. As a member of the “Veterinärmedizinischer Fakultätentag”, the Vetmeduni Vienna is closely linked to all relevant players in the two other countries where German is spoken, including the Freie Universität Berlin, the Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen, the Tierärztliche Hochschule Hannover, the Universität Leipzig, the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich and Vetsuisse in Bern and Zurich. The Vetmeduni Vienna will continue its active participation in this organization.



■ Asia / Pacific

Asea Uninet and Eurasia Pacific Uninet. These forums fund bi- and multi-lateral research projects, international workshops, summer schools and individual fellowships for interns, PhD students and researchers. The Vetmeduni Vienna is currently President of Eurasia Pacific Uninet. The Vetmeduni Vienna will continue and intensify its active participation in the two forums.

- **Additional bi-lateral partnerships outside Europe.** The Vetmeduni Vienna has active partnerships with universities outside Europe, mostly in the field of veterinary sciences, public health and life sciences, such as the Kasetsart University, Thailand; Northwest A&F University, P.R. China; the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil; Assiut University, Egypt; and the Insituto de Ciencia Animal, La Havana, Cuba. The Vetmeduni Vienna will continue to evaluate opportunities to establish additional bi-lateral partnerships.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will seek to expand its international network, focusing on topics that it has identified as strategic strengths.

To promote the mobility of its staff, the Vetmeduni Vienna will continue to provide support to members of staff at all levels to enhance their international visibility, to ensure international collaborations, to expand networks and to enable the introduction of the most advanced methods and techniques. Specific measures to enhance staff mobility will include

- providing internally funded travel grants through the International Relations Office (IRO) for short-term research exchanges as well as for participating in courses, workshops and conferences.
- offering continued administrative support to research staff through the Vetmeduni Vienna's IRO and other support services.
- participating in EU collaborative research projects.
- continued efforts to secure EU funding from mobility programmes such as Marie Skłodowska Curie measures.
- continuation of ERASMUS activities based on existing bilateral agreements and the Erasmus Policy Agreement.
- continuing the activities of the Veterinary Network of European Student and Staff Transfer (VetNEST) with selected veterinary research institutions in the Central and East European Countries funded through CEEPUS.

The Vetmeduni will also seek EU co-funding for selected internal funding programmes, such as its post-doctoral programme (e.g. via the COFUND Marie Skłodowska Curie measure).

4.3. Knowledge transfer and technology transfer

Since the introduction of the 2002 Universities Act, Austrian universities have become much more aware of their obligation to transfer the results of their research to the public. It is important to distinguish between two fundamental concepts: knowledge transfer, which relates to making progress at the universities accessible to interested members of the public; and technology transfer, which entails moving the results of scientific research from the laboratory to society and the marketplace, typically leading to marketable products. The Vetmeduni Vienna is active in both of these fields.

The Vetmeduni Vienna's work on knowledge transfer takes place primarily in two fields. Research on animal production and on the health of farm animals is communicated directly to farmers and other stakeholders by means of targeted workshops and publications; while the results of research on pet animals are communicated to pet animal owners and to veterinarians via the university clinics as well as directly through workshops and publications. In addition, the Vetmeduni Vienna has an active PR department (see Chapter 6.2.) and the results of its research are regularly featured in the national and international press.

Some of the Vetmeduni Vienna's technology transfer activities take place within the university. Directly transferring research results to the university clinics (see Chapter 5.) brings immediate and direct benefits to the (animal) patients and their owners and can have important consequence for aspects such as food safety and animal welfare. If the innovation is successful it may eventually become clinical routine worldwide.

Many research results are suitable for commercial exploitation. Because most of the large commercial players are now truly global in nature, technology transfer activities need to be conceived on a global scale.

Many research results are suitable for commercial exploitation. Because most of the large commercial players are now truly global in nature, technology transfer activities need to be conceived on a global scale. Long-term collaborations that attract additional third-party funding, either from national or international sources (e.g. FFG funding, Christian Doppler Laboratories, EU programmes), are given priority over other forms of knowledge transfer.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will continuously improve its services to support staff and industry (see FFI).

The Vetmeduni will support knowledge transfer on the national and international level by means of workshops and publications.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will employ internationally experienced experts and consultants to tackle patenting, marketing and legal issues on a global scale.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will strive to increase its long-term industrial research collaborations, both regionally and globally.



5. University clinics and diagnostic facilities in an international context – internationalization of the clinics

What distinguishes top-quality universities from other institutions of higher education is that they not only offer education and training but also undertake a significant amount of research. Students benefit from being taught by those who are actively contributing knowledge to the field, while lecturers benefit from fresh ideas and from the possibility to recruit talented students to work in their groups.

As set out in the preceding sections, the Vetmeduni Vienna is devoting considerable efforts to ensuring that its research and teaching activities remain at an internationally competitive level. But the Vetmeduni Vienna – as the Medical University of Vienna – has a significant additional responsibility to operate a clinic, in the case of the Vetmeduni Vienna a clinic for the treatment of animal patients. The Vetmeduni Vienna allocates considerable resources to providing clinical services, which are of great benefit to students of veterinary medicine and to research staff, who enjoy a level of access to cases that would otherwise be impossible.

The Vetmeduni Vienna's "Development Plan 2020" features the strategic objective related to the University clinics

- Strengthening of the national and international position of the university clinics as centres of excellence

5.1. Internships and the Residency programmes

Not only do the clinics of the Vetmeduni Vienna offer advanced services to animal patients, they are also responsible for providing postgraduate clinical training to graduates of Veterinary Medicine. Such training generally takes place within Internships and the Residency programmes.

Specialist clinical training is offered in the form of rotating internships in small animal medicine and equine medicine as well as in specific non-rotating internships in reproductive medicine and ruminant medicine. All internships last for one year. They are internationally advertised and applications are reviewed by a committee of teachers responsible for supervision of interns, which also interviews and selects candidates and undertakes regular evaluations during the course of the internships. The successful completion of an internship is a prerequisite for entering specialist programmes at European colleges.

Residency programmes are supervised by the colleges that belong to the “European Board of Veterinary Specialisation” (EBVS) and some of them have been approved by colleges on the “American Board of Veterinary Specialties” (ABVS). An internal Residency Advisory Board (RAB) at the Vetmeduni Vienna supervises the Residency positions. The RAB determines the number of positions to be offered (there are currently ten), safeguards the interests of the university and the Residents and keeps track of all programmes, undertaking annual reviews of the training. The application and admissions procedure is regulated by the Vetmeduni Vienna’s Residency Statute. The positions are announced internationally.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will continue to offer internships and internationally accredited Residency programmes and is committed to ensuring that these are attractive to Austrian and non-Austrian veterinarians.

5.2. Diagnostic facilities

The Vetmeduni Vienna also operates diagnostic facilities and provides diagnostic services to its own clinics and researchers, to regional veterinarians and national authorities and in special cases, such as diagnostic services provided in the field of poultry diseases, on the international level.

The Vetmeduni Vienna’s “Development Plan 2020” features a strategic objective related to its diagnostic facilities and services

- Strengthening of the national and international position of the diagnostic facilities as centres of excellence

The Vetmeduni Vienna will continue to focus its diagnostic services on areas not covered by commercial providers or national authorities and will continue to work on the development of novel diagnostic methods.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will continue to offer special diagnostic services to the wider regional and international community.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will continue to develop novel and improved diagnostic methods in response to international trends and demands.



6. Services to support internationalization

6.1. Internal support services

The long-term strategy for internationalization at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is based on continuous enhancement of the activities relating to international networks and a strategic increase of the intensity of cooperation. The results will foster the international visibility of the Vetmeduni Vienna and improve the University's impact on international programmes and projects. The administrative framework to support international research and educational activities and to enhance the mobility of students and staff is key to success in international endeavours.

The Vetmeduni Vienna will continue to improve its administrative framework by further enhancing the supporting infrastructure.

The International Relations Office (IRO) is the primary contact point and the central source of information on international activities at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. The Vetmeduni Vienna is striving to accomplish fully internalized and institutionalized internationalization, and its efforts are spearheaded by the IRO, which serves as an interface between the central administration and remote organizational units as well as between the Vetmeduni Vienna and the many international partners with which it has cooperation agreements.

The IRO provides basic services, offering professional support in all aspects of student and staff mobility. In the future it will pay increased attention to integration and exchange activities, intercultural awareness and competence for all members of the Vetmeduni Vienna community.

Together with the IRO, the Vetmeduni Vienna's **Human Resources Department** supports incoming staff, offering dual career services and legal and administrative support as well as offering a wide portfolio of training programmes.

To help researchers become and remain involved in internationally leading projects, the **Office for Promotion of Research and Innovation (FFI)** provides comprehensive support to individuals and to all organizational units with regard to funding opportunities and international collaborations. The FFI also offers services in the area of technology transfer, such as

- Scouting
- Evaluation of inventions with regard to their international patentability and international market opportunities

- International patenting
- Worldwide identification of partners for cooperation and commercialization
- Contract negotiations and contracting

6.2. Information, promotion and marketing

Improved communication strategies inside and outside the University's structures is an essential part of the University's internationalization strategy. The Vetmeduni Vienna will continuously improve and expand the information available on its Internet and intranet resources.

Continued efforts to increase publication output in international journals with significant impact in the relevant research fields and an increased emphasis on open access publications should promote the Vetmeduni Vienna within the academic and industrial scientific community. Press releases aimed at the lay public and distributed to the national and international media support the national and international promotion of the Vetmeduni Vienna's education, training and research programmes.

6.3. Quality Management

The Vetmeduni Vienna's Internationalization Strategy also includes its research quality management system. The Vetmeduni will perform quality management and, where applicable, certifications and accreditations to national and international standards. Evaluation at the campus level, at the level of organizational unit or of individuals and peer review of internal funding applications will be supported or conducted by international peers. Elements of quality management to international standards include

- The Vetmeduni Vienna's International Scientific Advisory Board
The SAB comprises six experienced professors of veterinary medicine, including some with extensive experience of working with industry. It meets at least once per year to provide the Vetmeduni Vienna with strategic guidance on teaching and research and is heavily involved in research evaluations.
- The International Scientific Advisory Board of the Messerli Research Institute
- The International advisory boards to SFBs, graduates schools and CD laboratories
- The research evaluation by international peers as informed peer review and site visits at regular intervals of five to six years (as in 2007 and 2013)

