



**Universität  
Bremen**

**Transfer strategy  
the  
University of Bremen**

## **Self-perception and understanding of transfer at the University of Bremen**

In its Strategy 2018 – 2028, the University of Bremen has formulated the following vision: The University of Bremen is a leading European research university and an inspiring place of education – it is diverse, responsible, cooperative and creative<sup>1</sup>. The claim to take on social responsibility and to engage in this in cooperation with actors within and outside the scientific system has characterised the University of Bremen since its foundation in 1971. The University of Bremen can be measured by its scientific achievements as well as by its contribution to overcoming social challenges.

In the Strategy 2018 - 2028, this mission continues to be given high priority: We want to provide impetus for social debates, cultural life and economic development – especially in the state of Bremen, but also beyond. The university is better able to achieve this with its partners: Cooperation is a key to success and a defining feature of the University of Bremen.

The University of Bremen also lives and breathes cooperation internally: it is a medium-sized university that, with its twelve faculties and the Research Faculty MARUM, covers a broad spectrum of the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, engineering and teacher training. The future issues of today's societies are addressed in six interdisciplinary research areas:

- Marine, polar and climate research,
- social change, social policy and the state,
- material sciences and their technologies,
- Minds, Media, Machines,
- logistics,
- health sciences.

These scientific priorities also reflect the central fields of innovation in the state of Bremen. All disciplines, scientific priorities, departments, institutes and working groups are already active in transfer to varying degrees and with varying scope. Transfer forms and transfer partners are highly diverse. They represent the disciplinary breadth and the respective subject cultures. This diversity enables all those involved to pursue their own "transfer path", while at the same time repeatedly orienting themselves towards examples of good practice from their colleagues and learning from one another.

In the social and science policy debate, the "classical" transfer of technology and knowledge with companies is currently undergoing a dual expansion, both in terms of aspects of knowledge transfer and science communication and in terms of new cooperation partners in other social sub-areas<sup>2</sup>. The University of Bremen welcomes this development and is driving it forward. It sees transfer as a broad-based, research-based exchange process that encompasses the cooperation and dialogue between its scientists in research and teaching with actors from society, culture, education, politics and business. The freedom of research and teaching is always preserved. Our understanding of transfer also includes the fact that the University of Bremen is committed to further education. It sees itself as a place of lifelong learning and has committed itself to this in its Strategy 2018 – 2028.

This transfer strategy sets out what the transfer culture of the University of Bremen is, what motivates the university in its transfer activities and which paths we are pursuing. Our plans for governance and quality development in transfer, as well as concrete fields of action for implementing the transfer strategy, are formulated in a separate appendix.

### **The transfer culture of the University of Bremen**

We aim to be a university that is active and successful in the field of transfer. This requires the establishment and further development of a transfer culture whose values are shared by scientists from all disciplines, by the university management and by employees in administration and technology. The transfer culture at the University of Bremen is characterised by curiosity, self-evidence, respect and professionalism.

**Transfer culture of curiosity:** Curiosity is the basis and driving force of scientific work and transfer. Through transfer, the university remains curious about actors outside the scientific system, curious about their topics and questions, curious about testing its own findings for practical relevance and applicability, and curious about giving results back to society.

**Transfer culture as a matter of course:** For the university, working with actors outside the academic world is a matter of course. Transfer is closely linked to research and teaching. Transfer services are valued. The opportunities offered by transfer are always taken into account and gladly seized.

**Transfer culture of respect:** We want to engage in collaborations that benefit all participants and lead to an increase in knowledge. To this end, the university approaches the people and institutions it encounters outside the university in an open and equal manner. The university regards social actors as experts in their specific fields and integrates their knowledge.

**Professionalism of the transfer culture:** Transfer projects place high demands on their management at the university. Relationships with all partners must be maintained, costs calculated, deadlines and budgets adhered to, and changing conditions must be responded to in a flexible and goal-oriented manner. Communication must be timely, goal-oriented, clearly understandable and appropriate for the target group. The university invests in professional transfer.

### **The motivation of the University of Bremen**

Since its foundation, practical relevance and social responsibility have been the guiding principles of the University of Bremen<sup>3</sup>. This is the basis of the University of Bremen's fundamental understanding of itself as a social actor: it is part of the innovation system, part of the economy and part of civil society. It is its mission and its legal mandate<sup>4</sup> to contribute to sustainable development, to help shape social change and to improve people's lives – in the region, but also nationally and globally.

**Transfer enables impact outside the scientific system:** Scientists who are active in knowledge and technology transfer expand their sphere of influence. In addition to scientific achievements and publications and the reputation acquired in the scientific community, there are also the effects that, for example, the cooperation partner benefits from, the creation of jobs through start-ups and other social effects. The ability to make one's own,

observable and valued contribution to solving societal challenges can also be satisfying and motivating for scientists.

Furthermore, good transfer shows that it is important for our society to provide excellent science with the appropriate resources.

**Transfer broadens the research opportunities:** Transfer is not a one-way street, but is characterised by communication and dialogue. The University of Bremen learns from its transfer partners and is faced with new challenges. The University incorporates external questions, approaches, solutions and technologies into its research, thus broadening and enriching its research activities. Transfer opens the door to new research collaborations. Through its transfer strategy and its diverse transfer activities, the University of Bremen qualifies for participation in application-oriented and transfer-oriented tenders and funding programmes at the regional, national and European level.

**Transfer enables additional career paths:** Participating in transfer activities, planning and implementing one's own transfer projects, promotes the development of important skills in scientists. This also qualifies them for a career outside of science.

**Transfer enriches studies and teaching:** a defining feature of the University of Bremen's degree programmes is research-based learning, which focuses on the active and research-oriented exploration of concepts and knowledge. Students are encouraged to apply the skills and knowledge they have acquired in the context of projects and to develop problem-solving skills. Motivation and learning success can be particularly high when projects are practice-oriented, in which students work on real problems together with external partners and receive direct feedback. The vast majority of graduates of the university choose a profession outside of academia. They benefit from the link between the content of the teaching, the knowledge and skills acquired and the practice within the framework of their studies.

**Transfer creates added value for the region:** The University of Bremen sees the region as a space for cooperation and responsibility, i.e. the region and the cooperation partners based here offer the university opportunities to advance its research questions and topics and to implement its own transfer opportunities. However, as the only state university in the state of Bremen, the University of Bremen also has a special responsibility for the development of the city of Bremen, the federal state and the metropolitan region. Transfer with regional stakeholders is therefore of great importance. The University of Bremen is a driving force behind the regional innovation system, addresses future issues for the city and region, and connects the region to national and international

discourses, ensures the supply of specialists and managers and their further academic training. Cooperation with political and civil society actors is one of its priorities. It enriches the city culturally and enables lifelong learning from children's university to senior studies.

### **Our transfer path**

With this strategy, we aim to establish and develop a transfer culture that is shared and lived by all members of the university. To this end, we will organise the transfer of knowledge and technology in all scientific fields, including its support structures, in a broader and more strongly interrelated way than before. We can build on a good status quo, because our

scientists already carry out many communication and cooperation activities that have not yet been considered from the perspective of an expanded transfer concept.

With the following steps, we are contributing to the establishment of a transfer culture by concretising it, prioritising transfer activities, aligning them and ultimately intensifying broad transfer. These steps are the link between our motivation and the fields of action listed in the appendix.

We will:

- increase the visibility of transfer and express appreciation for transfer activities,
- strengthen transfer competences and establish support structures,
- combine teaching, studying and transfer,
- promote the start-up culture,
- intensify our communication with current and potential transfer partners and
- strengthen our roots in the city and region.

In order to take these steps, we will take measures with regard to governance and quality development as well as for concrete implementation. These are described in more detail in the appendix.

#### **Appendix:**

##### **The governance of the University of Bremen**

Transfer concerns all areas of responsibility of the rectorate. The responsibility for coordinating and managing transfer lies with the Vice-Rector for Research, Young Academics and Transfer. The twelve faculties appoint experts from their own ranks as transfer officers and thus contribute to the further development of transfer. By networking the transfer officers, the university utilises the knowledge available in the faculties about successful transfer approaches in the various disciplines.

Within the university administration, UniTransfer, the transfer office of the University of Bremen, has been operating as a central support agency and coordination platform since 1985. The staff at UniTransfer already work on a wide range of topics, supporting the university's many transfer and cooperation activities: start-up support and company investments, inventions and patents, staff transfers and mentoring, fundraising and sponsoring, donations and foundations, school partnerships and alumni. UniTransfer will play a central role in implementing the planned measures.

In the areas of "transfer in teaching" and "transfer in further education", the Department of Teaching and Studies and the Academy for Further Education, in cooperation with UniTransfer, support scientists in their transfer activities.

There are other players in the immediate vicinity of the University of Bremen who make important contributions to the implementation of the transfer strategy, in particular the BRIDGE start-up network, which is supported by the universities of Bremen and Bremerhaven, Jacobs University and the Bremer Aufbau-Bank, in addition to the university.

- the patent exploitation service provider innoWi GmbH,
- the University of Bremen Foundation with its trust funds,
- the Alumni Association of the University of Bremen,
- the Technology Park Uni Bremen e.V. association and
- Uni Bremen Campus GmbH (UBC).

The services and experience of these and other partners in the regional innovation system also strengthen the transfer culture at the University of Bremen.

We are supplementing these existing structures with a Transfer Advisory Board made up of external members as a strategic advisory body to the Rectorate. It will be made up of important personalities from the region and external experts. In this way, we want to systematically incorporate the perspectives and requirements of external cooperation partners into the further development of transfer activities. On the basis of implementation reports on the transfer strategy, the advisory board and transfer officers will make recommendations on the further development of the strategy, as well as on the retention, readjustment, intensification, but also on the termination and restart of implementation measures.

## **Fields of action for achieving the transfer goals of the University of Bremen**

### **1. Increase the visibility of transfer and express appreciation for transfer activities**

The Rectorate actively and appreciatively represents the transfer culture, transfer motives and transfer objectives in the committees at all levels of the university and to the state and external stakeholders.

Our website is used to make the range of transfer activities and the responsibilities, competences and offers of the transfer supporters at the university more visible.

The Rectorate and the Transfer Advisory Board of the University of Bremen will award a transfer prize to a tandem of a scientist from the university and an external cooperation partner for a successful transfer project with a model character and for the best combination of teaching content and practical application.

The press office will work with UniTransfer to develop communication about transfer activities and successes as part of the new communication concept.

Transfer services will be taken into account when applying for and approving a research semester. The Rector's guidelines will be amended accordingly.

Transfer will be recognised as a field of activity in the application of the university's regulations for the award of performance-related pay and bonuses (performance-related pay regulations).

Transfer will be taken into account as a field of activity in the application of the University's appointment regulations and in the general criteria of the tenure board for evaluation agreements for tenure-track professorships.

## **2. Strengthening transfer competences and establishing support structures**

The existing advisory services for DFG and EU funding will be supplemented by a funding advisory service with a focus on "applied research".

UniTransfer is developing a programme entitled "Scouting and Innovation Development for Academics". This is aimed at working groups that are interested in exploiting their research results and/or know-how.

In collaboration with the Human Resources Development department, the programmes for university lecturers, scientists and administrative staff will be expanded to include transfer topics, e.g. a basic course on "Transfer at the University of Bremen" for newly appointed lecturers and staff.

In cooperation with the BYRD (Bremen Early Career Researcher Development) centre for young researchers, programmes for acquiring transfer skills for doctoral students and postdocs are being developed and offered on an ongoing basis. The ProMentes mentoring programme is also being opened up to doctoral students and postdocs who are planning their future careers outside of academia, again in cooperation with BYRD.

The establishment of a central transfer funding programme modelled on and in cooperation with the central research funding programme is being considered. The aim is to promote, test and evaluate innovative transfer approaches.

The Rectorate is considering the initiation of a new funding programme called "Roland Projects". With a duration of up to 36 months, these projects enable the development and implementation of new transfer activities and/or the intensive communication of ongoing transfer projects to a broad public.

## **3. Combining teaching, studies and transfer**

Research-oriented teaching formats on socially and economically relevant issues are promoted through incentives and university didactic support. The establishment of application references through practical tasks that must be solved for and together with external partners using scientific methods enriches teaching, increases student motivation and strengthens the university's relationships with its partners.

Lecturers, teaching assistants and guest speakers from the world of practice broaden the horizons of students and teachers alike. Teaching at the university benefits from these impulses. The university encourages its scientists to engage in

external partners in teaching and offers support for this, e.g. through the practice offices of the departments.

In order to retain experienced and committed lecturers from the field in the long term, they can be appointed as honorary professors under the conditions of the Bremen Higher Education Act and the University's appointment regulations.

Many students at the University of Bremen have extensive professional and employment histories and can enrich university teaching with their experiences and questions from professional practice.

The ability and encouragement to engage in social commitment is an important dimension of academic education. The University of Bremen is examining the extent to which it can promote the civic engagement of students and teachers through service learning and anchor it in the curriculum. The decisive factor is that service learning enables students to acquire and demonstrate skills that contribute to achieving their study goals.

We will attract further employers with an interest in attractive recruiting tools as partners for our support services in the area of personnel transfer and development. These services, such as the Praxisbörse job fair, the ProMentes mentoring programme, and the services offered by the practice offices of the departments and the Career Centre, improve the career prospects of our graduates.

Curriculum offerings on entrepreneurship will be made available to other degree programmes in the form of general studies modules, not just to business students. Student initiatives, such as student-run business and PR consultancies, which aim to apply the skills acquired during their studies to solve practical challenges, will be supported.

#### **4. Promoting a culture of entrepreneurship**

The Bremen University Start-up Network (BRIDGE) will remain the central point of contact for start-up issues for students and scientists (in particular doctoral students and postdocs interested in setting up a business), supported by its experience in applying for and processing start-up funding under the federal EXIST programme, and will use its network approach in further federal tenders for start-up universities or similar.

BRIDGE will contribute its many years of experience in providing advice and support to these target groups to the START-Haus of the Bremer Aufbau-Bank.

BRIDGE will supplement the start-up support provided by awareness-raising, training, advice and the CAMPUSIDEEN start-up competition with a network of coaches and tandem partners from existing companies, thereby increasing the chances of success for start-up projects.

We will systematically record our start-up alumni, follow the economic development of their spin-offs and integrate them into our start-up support programme.

The university will ensure that intellectual property-based start-ups are granted property rights and that these are made available at fair conditions.

We will work with external partners to build and operate an incubator on campus where university spin-offs can benefit from proximity to other start-ups and established companies, as well as from a support package comprising rooms, the use of laboratories/workshops, and advice and training.

#### **5. Intensifying communication with current and potential transfer partners**

Communication about the content of expertise, experts and the portfolio of transfer instruments will be intensified. The press office and UniTransfer will work together to



anchor this in the university's communication concept. The focus will be on finding and developing success stories in transfer.

To support transfer from the humanities and social sciences, existing and potential cooperation partners – primarily cultural institutions, civil society organisations and political actors – will be surveyed together with scientists to determine their cooperation needs and desires.

The university supports its scientists in planning and implementing citizen science projects in which the interested public is actively involved in conducting scientific research projects.

The university secures its intellectual property primarily in the area of its research priorities and uses the resulting property rights to acquire transfer projects.

The university intensifies the dialogue with companies and institutions about their future need for skilled workers and develops suitable

further education opportunities at the university. In this context, the experiences of the Academy for Further Education from the "konstruktiv" project can be built on.

With the help of the newly established "Applied Research" advisory service, cooperation partners for suitable funding projects are approached and acquired.

## **6. Strengthening the university's roots in the city and region**

The University continues to invite the public to visit the campus on a regular basis (e.g. OPEN CAMPUS, Bremen Children's University, Senior Citizens' University, Behind the Scenes), consolidates and expands these offers and maintains a presence in the city (e.g. in the House of Science).

The University of Bremen encourages its members to participate in public discourse and political decision-making processes. The university's understanding and culture of transfer are openly communicated in order to gain the necessary acceptance, support and provision of resources.

Researchers at the university are involved in industry networks and clusters, as well as in political and civil society advisory bodies.

The university's visibility in the city and region is increased by the greater presence of scientists in regional media and public lectures. To support this, the press office uses a pool of experts to establish targeted contact with scientists in response to media enquiries or to actively approach the media themselves.

The unifreunde, the alumni association, the Rector's Circle and the University of Bremen Foundation with its trust funds will be kept better informed about transfer activities and successes and used as multipliers.

The university supports the urban planning and projects of the Senate, which will develop the university campus and the entire technology park into a science district with

residential and shopping opportunities and better connections to the city and the transport network.

### **Monitoring and quality development**

In order to implement the strategy, transfer services must be recorded and evaluated against the background of a broad and diverse understanding of transfer. The development and implementation of a monitoring and quality development concept is therefore a

conceptual task within the framework of this transfer strategy. We will work on this in workshops involving scientists from various disciplines, experts from the university administration (e.g. controlling) and external experts.

#### **The aim is to create a system with the following elements:**

**Collection and publication of transfer activities:** The existing diversity and performance in transfer will be systematically recorded by analysing the current transfer activities. A short profile will be developed to describe transfer activities, which will be made available to all scientists online. This will enable them to quickly and easily compile the most important information about their transfer projects. The profiles will then be published on the university's website. In this way, the spectrum of transfer activities is documented and made visible both within and outside the university.

**Recording and reporting on transfer activities:** The measurement and evaluation of transfer activities will be based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative elements. Known indicators (especially from technology transfer, e.g. the volume of contract research) will be supplemented by new indicators and qualitative elements (e.g. case studies, examples of good practice). In future, we want to report not only on the input and output of our transfer activities, but also increasingly on their effect, i.e. their outcome and impact. The regularly published transfer report is an important element in assessing the implementation status of the transfer strategy.