

## Guidelines for International Cooperation

### **Preliminary remarks**

*Higher education institutions are becoming increasingly involved in international cooperation. This offers them unique opportunities to broaden their scope and to provide their students and staff with cooperation opportunities in international contexts. International higher education cooperation in art and design contributes to artistic and design excellence, creativity and institutional competitiveness, as well as to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>1</sup> The internationalization of higher education in art and design means that cooperation sometimes takes place in very different cultural and political contexts.*

### **Purpose of the Guidelines**

Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) is one of Europe's leading arts universities, thanks in part to the benefits of international, academic cooperation. These Guidelines have been prepared to enable staff and students to consciously reflect on current and future international cooperation in teaching, research and further education, as well as to assess any risks that might violate the basic principles of ZHdK (see below). Guidelines do not constitute a decree and are not legally binding.

### **Cooperation potential and timely reflection**

ZHdK is an internationally oriented education and research institution. Cooperation focuses on academic and artistic excellence, creative originality, institutional competitiveness, as well as the development and advancement of lecturers, students and researchers. Dialogue between participating institutions and their members should be supported and fostered.

Timely reflection and analyzing potential opportunities, challenges and risks are crucial for successful cooperation. This process is not limited to the initiation phase but carried out at recurring intervals during cooperation. The International Dossier supports the analysis and assessment of cooperation based on these Guidelines.

### **Basic principles of responsible international cooperation**

It is fundamental for most European higher education institutions that the core values of modern, liberal societies are ensured in international, academic cooperation. In recent years, a wide range of reference documents<sup>2</sup> have laid the foundation for careful reflection on the principles of international cooperation at the European level.

The basic principles of Switzerland's 2018 International Strategy for Education, Research and Innovation<sup>3</sup> also apply to ZHdK: institutional autonomy, the bottom-up principle, the promotion of self-responsibility, excellence and creativity, as well as the ability to compete and innovate. ZHdK upholds fundamental academic principles such as the «freedom and integrity of teaching and research» or «institutional autonomy in cooperation with international universities». The freedom of science, art, expression and information enshrined in the Federal Constitution are non-negotiable for ZHdK.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

<sup>2</sup> *Magna Charta Universitatum*; Bonn declaration on freedom of academic research; 2020 Council of Europe work on Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and the Future of Democracy; 2020 Rome Communiqué of the European Higher Education Area; the 2022 European Commission staff working document on Tackling Research & Innovation Foreign Interferences Rome Ministerial Communiqué (European Higher Education Area); *Magna Charta Universitatum*; Bonner Erklärung zur Freiheit der akademischen Forschung

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/de/home/dienstleistungen/publikationen/publikationsdatenbank/int-strategie-bfi.html>

Finally, the swissuniversities Guide for Universities on Responsible International Cooperation, published in May 2022, offers a valuable resource for ZHdK.<sup>4</sup> The Guide is intended as a basis for reflection and discussion. It suggests dimensions and questions to be considered when planning, preparing, implementing, evaluating or consolidating cooperation with academic or private partners in an international context.

In line with the above reference documents, ZHdK has defined the following basic principles, which should be examined as follows in any international cooperation, while a profound understanding of local contexts and of legal, political and cultural differences is crucial:

- Is academic freedom and institutional autonomy guaranteed? Are teaching staff and researchers engaged in international projects free to choose their teaching and research methods and content? Do students enjoy academic freedom to the fullest extent?
- Is the freedom of art guaranteed in international projects?
- Is the safety of ZHdK staff and students involved in international projects guaranteed and are personal data protected?
- Are excellence, openness and diversity in teaching and research encouraged?
- It is guaranteed that research projects are not designed or intended for «dual-use» purposes?<sup>5</sup>
- Are research results (publications and data – «Open Science») openly accessible?
- Are intellectual property rights established and governed by mutual consent? Are the interests of all cooperation partners taken into account?

### **Safeguarding of basic principles**

Longer-term cooperation based on close institutional cooperation (levels 3 and 4, see below) should be assessed all the more precisely based on these fundamental principles.

Four levels of cooperation can usually be distinguished:

1. Temporary exchange and cooperation projects between ZHdK lecturers, students and researchers and partners abroad;
2. Contractually governed and regular cooperation in a specific area (e.g. student and staff mobility);
3. Institutional collaborations with long-term strategic, staff and financial implications (e.g. Shared Campus, PhD collaborations);
4. Participation in the governance of a foreign university (e.g. Shenzhen International School of Design) or of a ZHdK-based project involving a foreign institution (e.g. joint development of professorships or degree programmes at ZHdK with foreign partners).

Where cooperation is pursued at levels 3 and 4, efforts should be made to establish mechanisms that ensure — if basic principles are violated — that appropriate measures can be taken, as far as and including the dissolution of cooperation.

In particular cooperation with institutions whose national legal and value systems differ from those of Switzerland must be evaluated on a regular basis. Through this learning process, ZHdK will gradually expand its international cooperation competencies and ensure the quality and sustainability of its cooperative activities. The International Dossier supports the analysis and assessment of cooperation.

ZHdK University Board, 14 December 2022

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.swissuniversities.ch/organisation/dokumentation/medienmitteilungen/leitfaden-internationale-zusammenarbeit>

<sup>5</sup> «Dual-use» describes the basic usability of technologies or goods for civilian as well as military purposes.