



INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY LUCIAN BLAGA UNIVERSITY OF SIBIU 2021-2027

DRAFT PROPOSAL

DISCLAIMER:

This document presents the internationalization strategy of Lucian Blaga University Sibiu for 2021-2027. The overall university strategy for the same time period has not yet been released. As the latter document represents the guiding framework for international activities adaptations to the document at hand might become necessary in order to achieve alignment between the two documents. Both documents – the overall and the internationalization strategy – will be subject to approval by the university Senate before coming into effect.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
International Activities	4
The „acting“ framework	7
Labor-Market Regional and Educational Trends	8
The Internationalization Strategy	10
Vision	10
Mission	10
Overall objectives	10
Internationalisation of education	12
Incoming and outgoing student mobility	16
Internationalization of research	18
Incoming and outgoing research mobility	20

LUCIAN BLAGA UNIVERSITY SIBIU: INTERNATIONALIZATION SINCE 1990

Introduction

Lucian Blaga University Sibiu (LBUS) is a public Higher Education institution located in the city of Sibiu in Romania. The origin of LBUS as an academic institution is recorded in the first months of 1990, immediately after the overturn of the political regime in Romania. The university became a legal entity by means of the Romanian Government Decree no. 255 of March 5, 1990 which stipulated that the former Sibiu Higher Education Institute changed into an independent University subordinated to the Ministry of Education. On May 12, 1995 the University of Sibiu was granted the name of the distinguished Romanian writer and philosopher Lucian Blaga.

LBUS encompasses nine faculties organized in departments, with aprox. 1000 academic and non-academic staff working with a total number of aprox. 15 000 students for bachelor, master and PhD degree programs, for the academic year 2020 –2021.

International Activities

Since 1990, when Lucian Blaga University Sibiu was established, an important strategic direction, mentioned in the University Charter, has been the development of cooperation with foreign universities – a prerequisite for Sibiu's higher education to achieve in short time, prestige, as well as national and international recognition.

Institutional internationalization has thus represented one of the main priorities of LBUS having been included in its specific strategies and development plans ever since. Specific actions for the development and strengthening the cooperation with European universities as well as with universities from all over the world have been undertaken on one hand to enable the students and academics to experience other education systems, and on the other hand to promote abroad the educational values of the university in Sibiu.

International activities remain a major objective for LBUS. All collective efforts have been focused on the enhancing the degree of internationalization and on the improvement of the university's visibility abroad. Nowadays, LBUS is a member of the most important international organizations and academic networks.

The university gives great importance to students' and teachers' mobilities and undertakes a great variety of activities designed to improve curricula and introduce new topics and courses through transnational collaboration between universities. Mobilities fosters not only learning and understanding of the host country, but also a sense of community among students from different countries and LBUS has tried to make this community stronger through the cultural events and workshops organized for both Incoming and Outgoing students.

LBUS has about 300 bilateral agreements signed with most European countries and sends annually about 150 students to prestigious universities in the EU and receives around 130 students.

To support incoming students in their integration at LBUS, the university provides a regular Module of Romanian Culture and Civilization for Erasmus Students since 2016. At the end of the Module students receive a certificate of participation and 5 ECTS/ course. The course aims at providing knowledge of basic Romanian language, culture and civilization. It enables students to benefit in a fruitful way from their studies in Romania. It introduces students to elements of Romanian history, geography, culture, civilization, helping them connect their own culture with the Romanian one. The present module includes the following courses: History notions of Romanian people, Romanian Language, Natural Heritage of Romania, General culture (customs and behavior in Romanian society), Culture and civilization of Romania.

Also, LBUS offers to foreign candidates from EU third countries the possibility to attend the Romanian language preparatory year, organised under the regulations of the Romanian Law of Education. The duration of the Romanian language preparatory year is of one academic year. The admission process for the Romanian preparatory year is organised in accordance with the methodology and the admission calendar approved by the University. Citizens from EU third countries are registered for studies at LBUS based on Letter of acceptance issued by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research.

By offering opportunities to diverse groups of learners and by providing the optimal creative environment for the talented young students that Europe needs, universities are increasingly central to future growth and to the consolidation of Europe's knowledge society. It also facilitates the development of innovative practices in education and training, and ensures interaction between Erasmus students in an academic environment.

Innovation of the educational process itself as well as the support activities is facilitated by international educational projects supported through the Erasmus+ Programme. Development of summer schools is an efficient and effective way in promoting the values and image of LBUS. Starting from 2012 onwards the instrument of Erasmus Intensive Programs and subsequently the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships have been intensely used by the faculty staff of LBUS to drive the innovation of curricula and teaching modules as well as to exchange best practices with their European peers. Furthermore LBUS is currently leading an Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliance in the domain of smart manufacturing, focused on the knowledge transfer between industry and academia. At the same time the university is a partner in an Erasmus+ Skills Alliance project with Asia.

Development of cooperation with Asian countries, and especially China, has been a longstanding strategic goal of LBUS. Setting up the first Confucius Institute in Romania at LBUS in 2007 represents the successful outcome of this longstanding diplomatic and academic cooperation.

The goal of the Confucius Institute is to promote and intensify intercultural understanding in Romania by offering programs in Chinese language and culture. Thus, the Confucius Institute at LBUS promotes its mission through a variety of educational and cultural activities addressed to students and teaching staff, as well as to the local community and business leaders. The role of the Confucius Institute at LBUS is to build bridges and strengthen Romanian-Chinese interaction at all levels. Students and teaching staff alike have the opportunity to immerse themselves in Chinese language, culture and society and to gain genuine knowledge about one of the world's most important competitors.

Starting with 2019 this cooperation has been strengthened by a post-graduate study programme in „International Management”, which offers a double diploma from the EAST China University of Science and Technology in China and LBUS.

The UNESCO Chair in Quality Management of Higher Education and Lifelong Learning Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu – set up in January 2011 – The purpose of the Chair is to develop and promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation under the broad perspective of lifelong learning and quality assurance and management. The mission of the UNESCO Chair of LBUS is to build capacities, promote and cooperate with other HEIs in Central and South Eastern Europe on identifying and sustaining actions needed for the strengthening of higher education-graduate employment/employers links, the increased assurance of the quality of learning and competencies provided by higher education in the country and the region, the provision of skills for lifelong learning as well as the improvement of the employability rate among graduates.

Starting with 2018 LBUS has established also the Hasso-Plattner-Institute Knowledge Transfer Center in cooperation with the HPI Germany. The center’s mission is to contribute to enhancing economic competitiveness by stimulating and harnessing the scientific and innovative potential and by assimilating the technological progress in key areas of LBUS.

Since 2007, LBUS is a member of the The University Network of the European Capitals of Culture (UNeECC) and from January 2014 ULBS has also taken over the General Secretary until January 2019. LBUS had an important role in organizing the annual conferences and general assemblies -with an important input in the Scientific Committee and as editor of UNeECC’s volume of proceedings - and by providing representatives in the management of UNeECC: Presidency and Board. UNeECC is an international non-profit association, which was founded in Pécs, Hungary in December 2006, by 15 founding members. At present UNeECC has more than 44 members. The creation of UNeECC originates from the recognition of the fact that the prestigious European designation of being a European Capital of Culture is a special asset for Universities and establishments of Higher Education based in European Capitals of Culture in as much they can utilize this experience to stimulate new forms of academic and educational institutional collaboration.

As it is stated in the Statutes, the general aim of UNeECC is:

- a) to ensure the recognition of the role and contribution of universities to the success of the cities conferred the title "European Capital of Culture"
- b) to provide the member universities with a possibility of a continuous and full participation in the European Capitals of Culture movement enhanced by "Universities of the Year"
- c) to foster inter-university cooperation to develop and reshape the universities regional position to create new activities for city and university collaboration.

Another important endeavour in terms of internationalisation is the yearly event *International Week of LBUS*.

The aim of International Week event is to create the opportunity for intercultural exchange between students, practitioners and teachers from all around the world and to foster cooperation between the partner universities.

During this event, the guests will meet the students and teaching staff from Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu and share with them knowledge and expertise in the different scientific and practical fields. This event will gather all the nine faculties of LBUS together with all the international partner universities through the central topic that is established each year .

Complementary to the academic activities, the week's program includes social and cultural endeavors which shall enlarge the guests' experience. The city of Sibiu and its surroundings offer a great variety of natural and architectural displays which favor unique leisure-time activities.

Contribution of the guests:

Academic guest deliver lectures for an audience which consists of Bachelor, Master, Doctoral Students and professors from the same field of expertise. The non-academic staff attend the workshops and participate in meetings with administrative personnel from the same field.

The „acting” framework

At present, there are over 110 public and privat universities in the Romanian higher education system. Any thorough discussion and accurate understanding of the educational system requires reference to some legislative considerations.

The implementation of the Bologna system in Romania, as of the academic year 2005 -2006, has generated new challenges for the higher education system entailed by the major changes to the organizational strategy. The Romanian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (ARACIS) – one of the most important national institutions created for monitoring and control in view of successfully meeting the Bologna requirements – has functioned since 2005 as a result of the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 75/2005 approved by Law no. 87/2006. ARACIS is a public institution of national interest, responsible for drawing up standards and methodologies necessary for the approval of undergraduate and postgraduate academic study programs. Most Romanian universities underwent the process of institutional accreditation of academic study programs, performed by ARACIS between 2007 and 2010.

The legal framework of Romanian education underwent changes in February 2011 when a new Education Law no. 1/2011 was issued and further launched the process of university classification and hierarchy of academic study programs, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education Research Youth and Sports and in collaboration with EUA.

Given this context, LBUS has focused on the achievement of two academic goals: implementing and optimizing the institutional adjustment to higher education requirements in keeping study levels; as well as enhancing the quality and visibility of research and educational processes.

The national evaluation process ranked LBUS in the B-type category of teaching and research public universities.

Labor-Market Regional and Educational Trends

The current status and trend of regional and national labor market have divergent effects on the educational demand of LBUS. Demographic trends have negative effects, considering there are fewer high school graduates, while the labor demand in Sibiu County has positive effects, because it is usually higher than the national average.

The decreasing number of high-school graduates has been a common indicator of the last eight years, which on one side is entailed by the birth rate decline typical for all European countries, but also by partially decreasing promovability levels of the high-school graduation exam in Romania. LBUS has taken local initiative by providing free tutoring to last year high-school students to counter this trend.

Also most LBUS students are aged between 18-25 years. For growing the university it will be necessary to increase the number of post-gradual and short term education. This however is met by fierce competition of online education which is growing at a fast rate internationally.

The Romanian labor market, like every other European market, is in an uncertain situation. The pandemic has immediate devastating effects on the labor market and there are also socio-economic consequences, which can not yet be fully surmized in their size and impact over the next few years. Moreover Sibiu and its metropolitan area are strongly dependent of mechanical manufacturing, mostly in automotives, industries which are expected to go through considerable transformation and automation until the end of the 2020's. How this will impact the university can not yet be foreseen.

Currently Sibiu still has a low unemployment rate. This is associated with a wide range of part-time job opportunities in Sibiu contribute to a higher degree of attractiveness for the potential LBUS candidates. The partnerships concluded with the Sibiu City Hall and the Sibiu County Council enables LBUS to act as a significant service provider to the community. Besides such partnerships, LBUS has also initiated and developed collaborations with high profile economic units and stakeholders in Sibiu, as well as national and international associations and foundations. The partnerships concluded with the business community are aimed at developing applied research and providing technical assistance in a large number of fields: automotive industry, pharmaceuticals, finance-banking, and cultural patrimony capitalization.

In this context, LBUS invited representatives of the business community and local administration to join the Advisory Board of LBUS that provides advice to the top management of the university in order to better respond to the community needs.

LUCIAN BLAGA UNIVERSITY SIBIU: INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY

The Internationalization Strategy

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu is an academic institution focusing on research and research-based teaching. Its acting principles are deeply rooted in the credos of academic freedom and cooperation. As such it fosters and supports the exchange of ideas, the common development and exchange of knowledge both in research and teaching.

Vision

Lucian Blaga University Sibiu is positioned internationally as an outstanding interdisciplinary higher education institution, which promotes excellence in research and teaching. It is a modern institution serving the needs of all types of students along their lifelong-learning path, who is actively conducting fundamental and applied international research and who is positively impacting society. Its actions and objectives are all committed to the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion, equitable access for all as well as resource sustainability.

Mission

LBUS is a center of convergence for national and international knowledge, culture and humanism open to all who comply to the rigors of its values. Its mission is to

- a) fulfill its educational and research purpose and to
- b) fulfill its societal mission. Therefore it educates national and international specialists who are able to innovate and create solutions for today's problems and implement them in a beneficial way for the planet and its inhabitants. Both academics and students at LBUS are aware of their social responsibility.

To realize its mission:

- LBUS promotes education and research aligned with international standards of the knowledge society, sustaining innovation and lifelong learning as well as integration in the European landscape
- LBUS staff and students create original contributions to science for societal benefit
- LBUS offers innovative, flexible, open and modern educational programs for national and international learners along their lifelong learning path
- LBUS is open to local, regional, national and international collaboration with businesses and other societal stakeholders
- LBUS fosters a network of international partnerships with European universities

Overall objectives

Lucian Blaga University Sibiu strives to increase its level of internationalization.

This includes activities of „Internationalization abroad” like

- Increasing the number of mobilities of students, teachers and staff
- Increasing the number of cooperations with international universities
- Increasing the number of international research collaborations and projects
- Increasing the number of international visiting profesors and researchers.

However it comprises also activities of „Internationalization at home” like

- Cultural events and exchanges with international participants
- On-boarding events for international students and staff
- Events that foster international understanding and integration
- Continue the internationalization process around the Bologna Process

To achieve these overall objectives LBUS has defined a number of **long-term strategic goals** and corresponding measures.

- 1) Increase the number of mobilities, both physical and blended, for all types of beneficiaries by 30% over the next 7 years.
- 2) Increase internationalization and innovation in educational programs by taking appropriate measures (visiting professors, staff exchange, participation in Campus Europeae projects).
- 3) Support the implementation of the Erasmus+ Program by driving digitalization, innovation and international exchange in all aspects of academic life.
- 4) Developing and extending international projects, both in research and academic activities.
- 5) Developing the network of international partnerships of ULBS.

Along the functional areas of activities the strategic goals presented above are divided as follows:

In the field of „Education and Training” internationalization looks especially into the internationalization of educational programs, creation of short term intensirve programs as well as incoming and outgoing mobility for students, teachers and staff.

In the field of „Research and Innovation” internationalization is directed towards facilitating strong and stable international partnerships which can contribute to the goal of internationalizing research activities. Accessing international research networks and exchanging researchers will further boost the research potential of LBUS.

The focus of „Internal Processes and Learning” is put mainly of the digitalization of administrative processes in support of „Education and Training” as well as „Research and Innovation”. Given the technological updates which have to be realised during the next years an accompaying necessary activity is capacity building as staff level in order to make sure that efficiency gains possible through digitalization are fully exploited by knowledgable employees. The migration to different technologies will also have a disruptive effect on the organisation which needs to be mitigated through according measures.

Financial measures will be dealt with in detail in each yearly operational plan.

Internationalisation of education



Being a young and relatively small university LBUS was and continues to be cognisant that attracting international talent is important. Especially in lieu of the European Bologna Process, which is striving towards a harmonized structure of study programmes and emphasises collaborative elaboration of courses/programmes in form of joint degree studies, a working culture which understands to accept differences while integrating the strenghts of different countries/universities becomes inherently important.

Key to attracting high-potential international talent are

- educational programs in foreign languages,
- short-term intensive educational programmes coupled with blended mobilities
- use of international quality standards
- agreements with universities as a framework for collaboration
- efficient, effective and transparent administrative processes
- transparent as well as up to date communication
- foster individual support

a) educational programs in foreign languages

The world of (higher) education is going through a major transition. Digital technologies enable the granularisation of education in a way which has not been possible before. One of the side effects is that potential students, the generation of digital natives, use English as lingua franca. Thus the main emphasis for LBUS will be to diversify its educational programs mainly in English language.

Nonetheless Romanian universities in general have longstanding cooperation agreements with French universities and institutes, due to the closeness of the Romanian and French language. Due to its geographical location LBUS is also in a unique position to have also a significant number of active cooperation agreements with universities from German-speaking countries. The percentage of international incoming students from these countries lies at 40% of the total exchange.

The prioritisation of the topics/courses to be provided in foreign languages will also take into account strategic cooperation programmes, like cooperation programs with Asia, where LBUS has had a strong strategic focus during the last 20 years.

The highest priority for internationalization will be given to courses and/or programmes on Master level, followed by those on the Bachelor level. At PhD level internationalization will be driven by joint supervision between local and international professors as well as a strong inclusion of the PhD students in international research.

As such it is an ongoing pursuit for LBUS to develop courses and/or programmes in English, German and French language. In parallel LBUS is striving to provide more opportunities for international students to attend intensive Romanian language courses upon their arrival in Sibiu.

The provision of courses and/or programmes in foreign languages and in front of an international audience motivates teachers to ensure topical interest and quality in courses/programmes. For students it improves intercultural and language qualifications to participate in such foreign languages courses.

In context of the general considerations presented above LBUS focuses on the following to improve its attractiveness for international talent:

b) short term intensive educational programmes coupled with blended mobilities

During the last eight years LBUS has developed quite a number of Summer Courses, both as externally funded programmes as well as self-financed ones. First experiences showed an increased visibility of the university for students and better cooperation levels with partners closely involved in these courses, especially if/when the courses were awarded ECTS and given recognition at all participating universities.

Thus LBUS aims to increase the offer of international summer schools. The aim is to create more flexibility in the degree programmes and tackle relevant scientific and didactic topics which are not (yet) included in curricula but are of interest for the academic communities. Course and programme development is done and made available in close cooperation with strategic partner universities, with ECTS credit endowment, recognition and quality assurance being essential actions to be covered.

Summer schools provide good opportunities to increase the visibility of LBUS within the international student community and attract high-potential talent. They also provide good opportunities for lifelong learning.

For programmes and activities LBUS shall also strive to cooperate closely with Sibiu city and county in regards to the large pool of cultural activities the city offers. There is a high visibility of these events which can be used by the university in domains related to culture. Detailed plans shall be made available in the yearly operational planning.

Primary focus for summer schools at LBUS will be courses and/or programmes at Master level.

d) use of international quality standards

LBUS has had different experiences with international evaluation, through the university evaluation which has been done by the European Universities Association.

Drawing from this LBUS will maintain the quality standard approach – derived also from national regulation – for the development and accreditation of courses. A systematic approach will also be maintained for the award of ECTS credits to courses in order to maintain the ECTS label. For courses/programmes which are not yet awarded ECTS and which are to be included in the international programme ECTS course valuation will be compulsory.

In addition LBUS will strive for international Master courses, like those in Business Education, where the university is running a very successful program to attain international certifications like EQUIS, AACSB or similar ones.

e) agreements between universities as a framework for collaboration

LBUS will continue its policy to support mobilities only within the framework of prior agreements between institutions. In line with the new Erasmus Programme these will be done digitally until 2023. Fundamentally they will however continue to establish the respective responsibilities of the different parties, as well as their commitment to shared quality criteria in the selection, preparation, reception, support and integration of international collaborations. These may include educational, research and even administrative activities.

f) efficient, effective and transparent administrative processes

LBUS will strongly focus during the next six years on the digitalisation of administrative processes aiming to make them more user friendly at the same time as more cost effective. This will enable a better interaction with Erasmus Programme instruments like the Erasmus Dashboard, the European Student Card Initiative (ECIS) as well as a more satisfactory experience for outgoing and incoming mobilities.

To this end LBUS will review and modernize existing processes for application, support, monitoring and reporting of mobilities. It will invest in digital solutions/software for mobility activities as well as in training of the staff in these solutions. This will include not only backend systems, but also frontend

system which enable direct and efficient communication and cooperation with international partners (at institutional and individual level).

g) transparent and up to date communication

One of the main goals during the next years is to make the rich and interesting educational offer more visible internationally. To this end LBUS will modernize its existing portal in order to automatically publish and regularly update information from the course catalogue in English language on the website of LBUS so that incoming students can plan their mobility period accordingly and are able to make well-informed choices. In addition interested students will have access to information about exam procedures, grading systems as well as grading tables in order to be able to orient themselves during their mobility.

Last but not least LBUS will create a portal where participants at mobilities have access to all documents and information necessary so that they can use it in a self-service manner.

With regards to the dissemination and experience exchange for mobilities LBUS will implement a communication plan for the next five years, including both traditional and electronic communication. Mobile participants will be encouraged to share their experiences and act as ambassadors of the programme. To this end social media distribution of their experience as well as face-to-face meetings (like firechats) will be used to promote the benefits of mobility and actively engage in building alumni communities.

g) foster individual support

Each individual is different and so are his/her needs. While LBUS has limited resources it will strive to support participants with tailor made measures as far as possible. LBUS will continue to offer participants in international cooperation activities support to increase their level of language proficiency and support them in the development of their intercultural competences. On a practical level it will continue to support incoming mobility participants with administrative procedures like helping them in finding accommodations as well as supporting them in obtaining visas and insurance.

LBUS as all Romanian universities has a scoring system for staff, where their academic and research activities are recognized. During the next years LBUS will strive to include the recognition of teaching and training activities undertaken abroad during an Erasmus mobility period into this scoring system, thus harmonizing the recognition of internal and external teaching. We expect that this will further motivate teachers to involve themselves in international cooperation activities.

Incoming and outgoing student mobility

Since Romania's accession in 2007 to the European Union LBUS mobility numbers – in terms of students and staff – as well financial budget for mobility have increased dramatically. With more than 300 active partnership agreements LBUS has a distinctive international profile as a quality educational institution. The university collaborates extensively with European universities – both on a research and teaching level – and has strategically focused since 2009 on attracting high-potential talent from Asian countries. As tools it employs the Erasmus tools, with satellite programmes like Tempus and Fullbright taking up a small proportion of employed collaboration schemes.

While the outgoing numbers of students are quite satisfactory, incoming students – especially for the duration of full study programmes – need to continue to increase. As the number of international talent who wishes to study abroad is constantly increasing and policies in place support such tendencies, LBUS aims to increase its intake of international talent. Their presence raises the dynamics of learning environments and constitutes a very important source of recruiting of young and talented researchers.

Strategically LBUS aims to diversify its cooperation pursuits in order to form a „triangle” with its large basis in Europe, with two strategic foci in Asia and Latin America, especially for students at Master and PhD level.

In order to achieve the objectives described above the university will:

a) Transparently inform potential students about opportunities at LBUS and strategically award available grants

International students shall easily have access to relevant information for incoming and outgoing stays as well as the programmes and grants available to them.

For incoming students a marketing and a visibility concept for international activities at LBUS shall be established in order to increase the visibility level of the university for students.

Strategically LBUS will aim to use tools like Campus Europeae projects in order to attract high-potential talents from other European countries, while maintaining the strong cooperation with Asian countries through the use of post-gradual educational programs..

In general the university will make sure, that grants are directed towards the most talented students.

b) Professionalise the support system for outgoing and incoming students

During the last years LBUS has invested both in human and material resources in order to create an environment where students in general, and international students in special, are aided in their needs and provided information.

In order to ensure student satisfaction with the support system the services offered by LBUS (encompassing information, accommodation, residence permits, Romanian Intensive Language courses) will be periodically reviewed. To ensure a constant quality specific service packages shall be defined, each of them allotted with clear quality standards. The service packages shall cover the needs of all international students and shall be tailored to specific groups if necessary.

c) Increase the number of foreign incoming students at LBUS

Being an attractive university for international talent is considered by LBUS to be a quality badge. Thus the university will develop a marketing concept to attract more international talent. It will make use of its large number of international cooperation agreements to promote available places as well as of professional settings like fairs etc.

d) Improve administrative processes for outgoing students at LBUS

Unclear processes and ECTS recognition are two of the major hurdles – besides financial restrictions – hindering students to go abroad.

LBUS wishes that its students develop a global outlook and learn to work and live in international communities. Thus it will aim to create clear and transparent end-to-end processes for a complete outgoing service. The responsible departments need to ensure a smooth process for the preliminary recognition steps necessary for a stay abroad as well as a full credit recognition upon return. In addition LBUS will ensure that the inclusion of satisfactorily completed study and/or traineeship mobility activities are reflected in the final record of student achievements (Diploma Supplement).

e) Increase the number of international traineeships and agreements with international companies

To better enable knowledge transfer between academia and industry LBUS will increase the number (and funds) for international agreements aiming to place students in traineeships. It will also act as a local enabler for companies located in Sibiu who are interested in attracting international talent, i.e. students, and will strive to create common cooperation agreements.

f) Create an Alumni network for international students at LBUS

LBUS aims to stay in touch with its international graduates in order to exchange knowledge and develop the university's international network. As such LBUS will develop a plan for establishing and developing the international Alumni network. Activities will be realized in close collaboration with the university's Alumni network for Romanian students which is currently also under development.

Internationalization of research



As a research-driven university LBUS strongly focuses on the development of knowledge through research networks. Having to overcome structural difficulties which stem from an older staff structure as well as constantly changing regulations – on a national level – for the promotion of academic staff, LBUS strongly focuses its strategic activities towards (re)establishing a working research landscape within the university and creating promotion opportunities for young research staff.

LBUS' research covers the entire spectrum, covering basic research as well as applied and strategic research. The university location in a highly industrialized area of Romania, with multiple cooperation opportunities, also fosters knowledge exchange programmes.

Nonetheless LBUS has a stringent need to further develop its research infrastructure, improve its publication output as well as to use more the opportunities for developing knowledge across traditional academic disciplines.

Such progress and work towards excellence can be done exclusively in close cooperation with other excellent researchers and universities. LBUS will thus strive to increase its number of strategic alliances with outstanding research institutions around the world.

As one in many steps to be done in this area LBUS aims to ensure optimal conditions for the internationalisation of research. Research cooperations in LBUS are exclusively based on personal relations and individual research groups. While this has a lot of merits and should continue as such, the university needs to ensure through strategic alliances the needs and aspirations of the research environments for international networks.

LBUS is participating in the large European and international networks in the domain it covers, yet it needs to massively increase its presence as a partner in research programmes like Horizon Europe. As such LBUS will give high priority to attracting external research funding in order to develop knowledge with international public and private partners.

In order to achieve the objectives above LBUS will aim to:

a) Increased international funding

In close cooperation with the research vice-rector and the corresponding structures at LBUS, who are in charge of providing advice about funding opportunities, international activities will focus on establishing strong and stable partnerships with highly recognized research institutions aiming at joint project development and research activities.

A thematic workshop series for research funding with international guests will be established through the next years as a support mechanism for international networking activities in the research area.

b) Increased number of research projects with international partners

LBUS aims to increase its number of research contacts and participation into research networks in order to be able to join international research project initiatives as a project partner. Using such tools in combination with the expertise of its outstanding researchers LBUS aims to increase its recognition as a viable partner in research projects. The university will thus seek to include its research groups in projects which provide an added value for the university, either in the form of knowledge access and development or in form of high talent.

c) Higher number and better ranking of international publication of research results

The current ranking and evaluation framework as well as career promotion for academics is strongly linked to research publications in highly ranked journals and conferences. LBUS considers it of strategic importance to provide incentives for international publications of university's PhDs and academic staff. The peer review system in place is also a badge of quality for the university's research outputs.

LBUS aims to participate to the international efforts to provide free access to research publications.

d) Organization of highly recognized and visible international scientific conferences

LBUS is currently very active and will continue to be a highly active member of the international academic community when it comes to organizing major international conferences which provide a platform to present the university's research results to international experts. The conferences reflect the university's strengths in research and the excellence of its staff. They represent good starting points for cooperations –both in the academic and research areas.

e) Establish research- based cooperation with international business entities

LBUS aims to increase international cooperation with companies also in research. This will be mainly done through research projects, either funded by public entities (like the European Union/Horizon Europe programme) or through mission oriented research.

Incoming and outgoing research mobility



Research, whether theoretical, basic or applied research, is being conducted increasingly in teams. A high percentage of these teams are composed by international researchers. Researchers are also increasingly mobile and move to institution's with a strong research reputation and available funding.

In LBUS' context of the demographic development and the financial endowment several research positions will become available during the next years. In order to attract highly-qualified talent the university aims to:

f) Offer development services/modules for talented research staff

LBUS is currently very active and will continue to be a highly active member of the international academic community when it comes to organizing major international conferences which provide a platform to present the university's research results to international experts. The conferences reflect the university's strenghts in reserach and the excellence of its staff. They represent good starting points for cooperations –both in the academic and research areas.

g) Professional efforts to recruit foreign research high-potentials

Carreer opportunities at LBUS will be made visible not only for internal staff but also for external potential researchers. Job descriptions will be provided both in Romanian and English language and the available positions will be advertised in international specialised databases. Available positions will be pro-actively advertised in existing networks and through the international Alumni association, as well as through personal contacts to qualified PhD students and researchers.

The university is also considering setting up a mentoring program through emeriti professors to support and advise the young talent.

LBUS will further seek to attract recognised visiting professors to the university.

h) Support researcher outgoing mobility

International collaboration networks, participation in international research projects, international publications – all represent invaluable assets in a researcher's career development. In order to develop and attract excellent researchers which are at the top of their research field LBUS needs to provide incentives for mobility both for PhD students and academic staff.

When recruiting staff the university will focus on international experience, both in research and teaching, by creating opportunities for sabbaticals.

In the case of PhD students a minimum stay abroad should be requested.

i) Professionalise the support system for incoming and outgoing researchers

LBUS has invested both in human and material resources in order to create an environment where students in general, and international researchers in special, are aided in their needs and provided information.

In order to ensure researcher satisfaction with the support system the services offered by LBUS (encompassing information, accommodation, residence permits, Romanian Intensive Language courses) will be periodically reviewed. To ensure a constant quality specific service packages shall be defined, each of them allotted with clear quality standards. The service packages shall cover the needs of all researchers and shall be tailored to specific groups if necessary.

In addition, the university will focus on the integration of incoming staff and their families in the Romanian society in close dialogue with the authorities and other key players in the university's immediate environment.