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Fostering Sociocultural Adaptation, Personal Development and Academic Success: Support Services for Internationals

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Topics

I. Initial Remarks: Key Figures and General Principles

II. Support Services for International Students: A Comprehensive Approach to the Student Life Cycle

III. Support Services for Academic Staff: A Culture of Welcome Across Campus

IV. Resources

V. Concluding Remarks: Fostering International Cooperation as a Joint Responsibility
1. Initial Remarks: Key Figures

30,958 students in total

4,351 international students from 131 countries

of which

1,177 are enrolled in undergraduate programmes

1,714 are enrolled in graduate programmes

1,460 are doctoral students

~450 per academic year are incoming exchange students

Top 10 countries of origin:

China (825), India (257), Turkey (210), Italy (150), Iran (134), Russia (115), Syria (111), Nigeria (105).

~340 newly registered international researchers (plus ~250 accompanying family members) per year
I. Initial Remarks: General Principles

- Support services for internationals a **joint responsibility of central administration and academic departments**: “division of labour” based on segments of administrative workflows, phases of the student/researcher’s life cycle, and the complementarity of competencies
- Support services operate in a **network / ‘ecosystem’ of university and municipal/state institutions** to be managed actively
- International Office aims at **integrating administration and support** for all incoming international students, at providing **one single (primary) access point** to all support services for international researchers
- International Office **pilots** internationals within the wider network of the university’s and the municipality’s support infrastructures
- International Office **monitors and proactively addresses specific needs of internationals**, develops, maintains and coordinates support measures, engages in knowledge management, represents the interests and needs of internationals in networks and workgroups
Islands and Archipelagos: Life in Networks
Scalar Organization as a Challenge...

- functional perdifferentiation of administrative structure creates **multiple access points**
- navigating them implies knowledge about administrative structure and processes
Scalar Organization as a Challenge...

- implies intransparency for foreigners
- leads to non-linear, potentially frustrating contacts and less than ideal results
Support Services for Internationals

Support Services as „Pilot“:
- one single (primary) access point
- ‘informed referral’ based on institutional knowledge helps to navigate local structures and administrative processes uses institutional weight to the client’s benefit

Support Services as (a Step towards) a Solution...

The International Office

University
- International Office
- HR
- Student and Academic Services
- Academic Departments

Municipality
- Residents’ Registration Office
- Foreigners’ Registration Office
- Social Services
- Tax and Revenue Office

Other Services
- Landlord
- Bank
- Child Care
- [...]
II. Support Services for International Students: Selected Actors

- Academic Departments
- Student and Academic Services
- The International Office
- Student Welfare Services

- Graduate Schools
- Centre for Languages and Transferable Key Competencies
- Centre for Intercultural Competence
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity Unit
- Cooperation and Innovation Unit

- Interdepartmental Certificate Programmes
- University Sports Centre

- **Local and regional partners**: City and County of Göttingen (Residents’ Registration Office, Foreigners’ Registration Office, Economic Development Unit), health insurance companies, housing industry, etc.

- [...]
Support Services for International Students: Key Actors

[Central Administration] Student and Academic Services („Abt. Studium und Lehre“)

- Student Administration for EU nationals
- Advisory and Counselling Services (ZSB – Zentrale Studienberatung)
- Subject-independent preparatory programmes (visits and guided tours on campus, “autumn university”, information events, workshops for first generation students, early study programme, information and orientation days)
- Information on social life and **financing**
- Family Service
- Career Service
- Alumni Network

[Central Administration] The International Office („Abt. Göttingen International“)

Departments („Fakultäten“)

Student Welfare Services („Studentenwerk“)
Support Services for International Students: Key Actors

### [Central Administration] Student and Academic Services („Abt. Studium und Lehre“)

- Student information and administration for non-EU undergraduates, all international graduates and doctoral students and all exchange students
- Information and advice in matters of visa/residence permit, health insurance, social security, daily life in Germany and Göttingen; support in navigating the university’s network of support infrastructures
- Events for newly-enrolled international students: introductory week etc.
- Social media channels and groups for international students
- **Accommodation Service** for exchange students and degree seekers
- Workshops and events fostering sociocultural adaptation, social integration and resilience: excursions and trips with a focus on national and regional history and culture, weekly workshops (painting, yoga, language clubs), colloquy on the international student experience, buddy-programmes
- Interdepartmental Certificate Programmes (from Intercultural Training to Building an International Career)
- Coaching on learning strategies, academic writing and general academic culture
- Individual support in intercultural communication and conflict management
- **Financial and administrative support in emergency situations**
- Support for refugees
- Networking with communal, local and regional partners

### [Central Administration] The International Office („Abt. Göttingen International“)

### Departments („Fakultäten“)

### Student Welfare Services („Studentenwerk“)
Support Services for International Students: Key Actors

[Central Administration] Student and Academic Services („Abt. Studium und Lehre“)

[Central Administration] The International Office („Abt. Göttingen International“)

Departments („Fakultäten“)

- Subject-/programme-related information and advice
- Coordination of exchange programmes
- Orientation days and introductory events
- Preparatory courses and tutorials
- Mentoring programmes and student work groups
- Social activities
- […]

Student Welfare Services („Studentenwerk“)
Support Services for International Students: Key Actors

- [Central Administration] Student and Academic Services („Abt. Studium und Lehre“)

- [Central Administration] The International Office („Abt. Göttingen International“)

- Departments („Fakultäten“)

- Student Welfare Services („Studentenwerk“)

  - Student halls of residence
  - Canteens and cafeterias
  - Social services
  - Psycho-social counselling
Support Services for Internationals

The International Office

- Pre-study information and support
- Application, admission, enrolment
- Subject-related/-independent support
- Personal development, transferable competencies
- Career building
- labour market integration
- Alumni activities

Department

- Subject-related information
- Information on application process and deadlines
- Admission (graduate and doctoral programmes)
- Orientation days
- Preparatory courses, entry phase
- Coordination and subject-related support
- Social activities

The International Office

- Subject-independent information on studying in Göttingen
- Information on application process and deadlines, visa and residence permit
- Enrolment
- Support with visa, accommodation, residence permit/registration, insurance
- Orientation days
- Administration
- Social integration
- Conflict management
- Financial aids and emergency support
- Social Services
- Psycho-social counselling
- Transferable Key Competencies
- Equal Opportunities Counselling
- Internships
- Development of labour market-relevant competencies
- Workshops and excursions
- Career fair
- Jobs and recruitment platform
- Alumni activities on university level

Student Welfare Services

- ZESS etc.

Student and Academic Services

- Alumni activities on departmental level

Cooperation and Innovation

- Alumni Bureau
III. Support Services for Academic Staff: Selected Actors

- Academic Departments
- Human Resources Department
- Municipality (Residents’ Registration Office, Foreigners’ Registration Office, Job Centre, Social Services, Tax and Revenue Office)
- Child Care and Schools
- Dual Career Partners
- Health Insurance Providers
- Local Housing Industry and Private Landlords
- Local Businesses (IT, Banks, Driving Schools...)

Diagram showing the distribution of support services: Academic Departments, Municipality, Human Resources Department, Others, The International Office.
Services for Academic Staff

- available to **newly appointed academic staff (post doctorate) and visiting researchers staying for more than 1 month**
- service portfolio covering the period from before visum application to **one year after arrival**

- **one single contact person during the entirety of researcher’s stay**

- support with visum application and contact with German embassies abroad
- issuing of Hosting Agreements
- travel arrangements
- housing
- health insurance
- registration with local authorities / residence permit
- coordination with HR department to facilitate employment process

- dual career options
- child care and schools
- support in all matters of daily life (IT and mobile plans, public transport, driver’s licence, registration of cars...)
- language classes
- information on revenue tax and social security

- events to foster sociocultural adaptation and social integration
IV. Resources
# Services by Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>FTEs</th>
<th>cases/year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head, Assistant, Finances</td>
<td>2,5</td>
<td>budget plus grant funding (\sim 600,000)€ excluding salaries (!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Centre (Academic Staff, incl. Accommodation)</td>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>(\sim 330) newly registered researchers, (\sim 400) partners/family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Administration and Support</td>
<td>3,65</td>
<td>(\sim 3,800) international students in direct responsibility, (\sim 1,600) applications handled, (\sim 1,100) new enrollments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation Service (for Students)</td>
<td>1,5</td>
<td>(\sim 550) requests for assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Integration, Support for Refugees</td>
<td>2,5</td>
<td>(\sim 900) participants (cases) in events, workshops, activities etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V. Concluding Remarks

• “Internationalisation”: playing fields and game plans
• Commitment to personal development and academic success of all students and researchers as a success factor

• Autonomy vs. integration: “sawtooth approach” in coordinating support services, networking as a key challenge in a ‘decentralized’ organization
• The city as an ecosystem: integration as a joint responsibility of town and gown

• The hidden costs of internationalisation: setting goals, updating infrastructures
Thank you for your attention!

For further inquiry:

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