

‘Internationalize Yourself’: Mobility in Academia as a Form of Continuing Professional Training

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Abstract : The FH JOANNEUM- a university of applied sciences based in Austria - cooperates in teaching and research with well-known international universities and thus aims to foster so-called strategic partnerships. The exchange of university lecturers and other faculty members is a way to achieve and secure strategic company goals, in which excellent research and teaching play a central role in order to improve both the development of academics and administration. Thanks to mobility not only the university but also the involved people truly benefit in their professional development which can be seen on several levels: increased foreign language proficiency, excellent networking possibilities within the scientific community as well as reinforced didactic competencies in the form of different teaching and learning methodologies. The paper discusses mobility in the light of the university’s strategic paper entitled ‘Hands on 2022’ by presenting results from an empirical research study among faculty members who participate in exchange programmes on a regular basis. In the form of an online questionnaire, mobility was discussed from different angles such as networking, collaborative research, professional training for academics and the overall impact of the exchange within and outside the organization. From the findings, it can be concluded that mobility is an asset for any university. However, keeping in constant dialogue with partner universities requires more than the purpose of the exchange itself. Building rapport and keeping a relationship of trust are challenges that need to be addressed more closely in order to run successful mobility programmes. Best Practice examples should highlight the importance of mobility as a vital initiative to transfer disciplines.

Keywords : higher education, internationalization, mobility, strategic partnerships

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