

Framework Cooperation Agreement

between the

University of Bremen

(represented by the Rector, Prof. Dr. Jutta Günther)

Bibliothekstraße 1, 28359 Bremen

and the

Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg

(represented by the President, Prof. Dr. Ralph Bruder)

Ammerländer Heerstraße 114-118, 26129 Oldenburg

Preamble

The institutionalized cooperation between the Universities of Bremen and Oldenburg (hereinafter referred to as “the Universities”), which was established a quarter of a century ago, is to be continued and further expanded. This agreement is a framework agreement that outlines the various areas of cooperation. On this basis and against the backdrop of the joint strategy, more specific agreements on measures, processes, and responsibilities may be concluded, which should refer to this framework agreement. It thus forms the basis for future cooperation between the two universities.

1. Goals of the cooperation

The universities intend to consolidate and deepen their cooperation in the long term. Through close cooperation, they aim to strengthen both their individual profiles and their complementarities, improve the framework conditions for research, expand the quality and range of study opportunities in the region, and coordinate the development prospects of both universities.

This agreement focuses on long-term, institutionalized cooperation in the areas of research, transfer, university and scientific communication, teaching, lifelong learning and continuing education, academic career paths and personnel development, administration, and strategic university planning. The preservation of the autonomy of the individual locations is seen as an indispensable prerequisite for successful cooperation. Particular emphasis is placed on joint development in the field of research. The coordinated sharpening of research priorities is intended to visibly strengthen the competitiveness and visibility of both universities vis-à-vis other national and international locations. In addition, both universities emphasize their shared values, which they live out within their institutions and in their cooperation with each other, and which they represent to internal and external partners. This shared understanding of values, which is oriented toward social responsibility, forms the basis for trusting cooperation and contributes to the profile of the partnership.

In this way, the two universities form a close alliance in the scientific world, whose guiding principle of cooperation is the pursuit of excellence and which forms the core of a joint research and transfer area that strengthens the international visibility of the cutting-edge research concentrated in the northwest.

2. Strategic cooperation and management

The universities are jointly developing a strategy for their cooperation based on the following principles:

- Promotion of excellence in research and teaching
- Strengthening regional and international visibility
- Improvement of study and research conditions
- Further development of transdisciplinarity and social responsibility

A structured committee and work organization will be established to manage, plan, and implement the cooperation, consisting of the following elements:

1. A **Steering Board** (all members of the Presidium or Rectorate, supported by staff from the cooperation office and the heads of the planning departments), which is responsible for the fundamental strategic orientation of the cooperation, the content of the cooperation, the allocation of the funds available within the framework of the cooperation, and strategic controlling, and which decides on essential matters relating to the cooperation.
2. An **Executive Board** (President and Rector, Chancellor, and full-time Vice President for Administration and Finance, supported by staff from the cooperation's administrative office), which is responsible for implementing the strategy in concrete measures and projects, including operational controlling.

In addition, project-related working groups may be set up on request to work on specific cooperation objectives. These working groups may be temporary or permanent and are intended to promote and support cooperation between the universities in specific subject areas.

The universities will set up a joint office. The office will support the cooperation in terms of content and organization by coordinating the work of the committees, managing interfaces, supporting operational implementation, ensuring quality assurance measures, and preparing reports and decision-making bases for the committees.

3. Strategic university planning

The universities will develop joint priorities in research, teaching, and other areas and will work to coordinate in areas relevant to the cooperation, for example by:

- Exchanging information on university teaching position planning and personnel structure planning,
- Intensifying cooperation in appointment procedures in the areas of excellence, priority areas, and areas of potential at both universities. In particular, consideration should be given to the thematic coordination of denominations and job advertisements as well as mutual participation in appointment procedures,
- Exchange on structural planning, particularly with regard to the further development and planning of new research priorities and the development of teaching profiles,
- Joint application for externally funded professorships in order to build academic bridges between the universities and thus strengthen the joint research and transfer space,
- Development of a coordinated concept for cooperative professorships and cooperative junior research groups with non-university research institutions in the Northwest region,
- Where appropriate, establishment of new joint scientific institutions without legal capacity.

4. Cooperation in research

Cooperation in the field of research offers both universities new opportunities for the cross-location development of their research profiles by opening up new subject areas and jointly developing existing areas of focus. This cooperation is to take place across the disciplinary breadth of both universities, thus benefiting the scientific region in northwestern Germany as a whole. Both universities therefore agree to cooperate closely with the aim of strategically expanding the research strength of both universities across institutional and state borders by specifically pooling existing potential in research and research infrastructure and promoting innovative research approaches. Cooperation with non-university research institutions should also be taken into account. The universities also strive in particular to initiate and expand joint research networks that increase national and international visibility and third-party funding capacity and support the development of excellence. Within the scope of the given legal possibilities, the universities endeavor to enable the mutual use of infrastructures, including large-scale research equipment, laboratories, and other facilities. They strive to develop joint strategies, procedures, and principles in order to expand access to high-quality resources for both institutions and to coordinate the use of these infrastructures in an optimal manner.

5. Cooperation in the area of transfer

Both universities are committed to a joint Northwest Transfer Area and, to this end, strive to coordinate their respective transfer strategies and cooperate in their transfer activities. The cooperation partners understand transfer as a broad-based, research-based exchange process with partners from all areas of society. The universities actively shape the transfer of knowledge and technology in a variety of dimensions, including start-up support, and use a wide range of formats for this purpose. They strive to develop jointly in new transfer areas, such as public engagement or open transfer, and to cooperate in the acquisition of third-party funded projects in the transfer field. A particular focus is on cooperation with actors from civil society, culture, education, politics, and business in the region.

6. Cooperation in the field of university and science communication

The universities use their areas of cooperation for coordinated and joint communication activities. These can include, for example, press releases, web and social media posts, events, participation formats, or exhibitions. A particular focus is to be placed on joint science communication, which is based on both standards of good scientific practice and the needs of the respective target groups. To this end, the two universities also cooperate with existing science communication networks. The universities communicate their joint scientific findings and cooperation results, thereby making them transparent and usable, contributing to social discourse, and strengthening the joint science region.

7. Cooperation in teaching

The cooperation between the two universities in teaching and studies is intended to promote innovation in teaching, exploit subject-specific and interdisciplinary synergies, and contribute to expanding and further developing the respective offerings of the individual universities. The universities regularly exchange information on strategic issues relating to the development of studies and teaching and cooperate in the area of university teaching programs for the qualification and support of teaching staff. Teaching-related cooperation can take various forms and is regulated in project-related cooperation agreements. They are supported by the relevant authorities in a goal-oriented and objective manner, as well as cooperatively by the respective administrations in the spirit of good cooperation and in compliance with the legal framework in all phases. This includes, in particular, capacity planning, processes in program development, student and examination administration, and the issuance of certificates.

8. Lifelong learning and continuing education

When it comes to lifelong learning and continuing education, the cooperation partners work together through their institutions, the Academy for Continuing Education (University of Bremen) and the Center

for Lifelong Learning (C3L, University of Oldenburg), with the goal of supporting each other with expertise and coordinated program development.

Guest student and senior citizen programs will be opened up to guest students from both universities at special rates. Cooperation in the development and testing of technological and didactic innovations for the design of forward-looking learning designs in the field of continuing education is also planned.

9. Cooperation in the field of academic career paths and personnel development

Together, the universities intend to increase the visibility and attractiveness of the Northwest region for talent from Germany and abroad and to offer scientists at all career levels good development opportunities at the universities. To this end, the universities will cooperate in the following areas, among others:

- Development of joint strategies and measures for personnel recruitment with a special focus on diversity, gender equality, and international recruitment,
- Expansion of attractive, diversity-sensitive career paths,
- Mutual opening of opportunities for skills development and academic qualification (such as the interdisciplinary qualification programs offered by the Graduate Academy of the University of Oldenburg and the Bremen Early Career Researcher Development program at the University of Bremen),
- Development of joint content and organizational concepts that provide support to researchers in the qualification phase (academic performance levels R1–R3 according to the European Commission's categorization) at universities.

10. Equal opportunities and diversity

The universities see the diversity of their students and staff, their potential and perspectives, not only as an enrichment, but also as an urgent obligation to critically review existing structures and change them sustainably in the interests of equal opportunities. They recognize that universities continue to be characterized by power and hierarchical relationships that cause exclusion and discrimination. Therefore, both universities commit to working together consistently on innovative and effective processes and measures that actively reduce discrimination at the structural and individual level and resolutely promote and further develop diversity, gender equality, and equal opportunities.

11. Cross-border and international cooperation

Both universities strive for closer cooperation in the further development of their international partnerships. The University of Groningen has a special role to play in this regard.

12. Sustainability and climate protection

The universities recognize the necessity and urgency of sustainable development and climate protection, as well as the special responsibility of universities as role models and pioneers, and declare their willingness to cooperate in these areas in order to share experiences, learn from each other, and develop joint initiatives to promote sustainability and climate protection. They support the implementation of sustainability measures in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at their respective campus locations and promote awareness and the establishment of measures for climate protection and sustainability in campus operations, research, teaching, and administration. In line with the stewardship principle, the universities see themselves as beacons whose commitment promotes and radiates sustainable development in society.

13. Cooperation in the area of services and central administration

The universities strive for cooperation in selected areas of services and central administration. To this end, regular meetings are held between the respective chancellor and the full-time vice president for administration and finance in order to jointly explore potential areas of cooperation and make concrete agreements.

14. Access and financial responsibility

Within the scope of the legal and actual possibilities for fulfilling their tasks, the universities grant each other access to their respective facilities in accordance with the general terms and conditions of access and use. The cooperation partners conclude separate bilateral agreements on access, billing and insurance issues, etc.

Each cooperation partner shall manage its own budget allocated to the cooperation on its own responsibility. The budgetary regulations of the participating cooperation partners as well as relevant internal and external regulations and provisions shall remain unaffected by this and shall take precedence in the event of a conflict with the provisions of this cooperation agreement.

15. Entry into force, term of agreement, and final clauses

This agreement shall enter into force upon signature by both universities and shall replace the previous agreement dated March 2, 2006. The agreement shall initially be valid for five years and shall be extended by one year at a time unless terminated by either university or changes are requested. In the event of a change in the framework conditions for either university, the agreement shall be amended accordingly.

For the subjects listed in Annexes I and II of the cooperation agreement dated March 2, 2006, the provisions set out therein and Sections 5. to 5.5 of the cooperation agreement shall continue to apply on a transitional basis for each subject until a new cooperation agreement has been concluded between the parties for the respective subject or the aforementioned provisions for the respective subject have been terminated. Termination is only possible with effect from March 31 or September 30 of a given year. In the event of termination, the parties shall continue to provide support for students already enrolled in the respective subject for a period of eight semesters from the date of termination.

Amendments, additions, or termination of this agreement must be made in writing. This also applies to any amendment to this written form clause. There are no verbal side agreements.

This cooperation does not constitute a partnership under the provisions of §§ 705 ff. BGB (German Civil Code). However, if, contrary to the express will and common understanding of the cooperation partners, such a partnership should arise as a result of the cooperation within the framework of this cooperation, it shall, according to the common will of the contracting parties, not participate in legal transactions, but shall serve solely to structure their legal relationship with each other. (company without legal capacity).

No cooperation partner is entitled to act in a legally binding manner with effect for the other cooperation partner without the latter's express prior consent.

Should any provision of this agreement be or become invalid, this shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this agreement. The provision shall be replaced retroactively by a valid provision that comes closest to the content of the original provision.

Bremen, November 5, 2025

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University of Bremen

Rector Prof. Dr. Jutta Günther

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Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg

President Prof. Dr. Ralph Bruder

non-binding reading version