

## Policy Decision on KTH's International Collaboration for Research and Education 2024-2028

### 1 Preamble

This policy decision is based on the premise that KTH is a progressive university, with excellence and societal challenges in focus, which has extensive international collaborations with renowned universities, companies and organisations all over the world.

According to *KTH's vision and overall goals* (V-2023-0668), KTH shall take the lead in sustainable societal development and be a unifying force internationally to tackle global challenges. Our degree programmes shall be internationally competitive, and our research shall be world leading. We shall attract outstanding teachers and researchers and ambitious students worldwide, and we shall be an international, development-oriented university characterised by gender equality, diversity, and equal opportunities. Researchers shall work in strong international research environments and have competitive conditions to conduct research.

International collaborations aim to strengthen KTH as an institution within the university's main tasks of research and education. Internationalisation and mobility must be in line with KTH's sustainability goals. The strategic work with international collaborations shall primarily be based on deepening and further developing existing collaborations and developing new long-term partnerships.

KTH attracts many talents from all over the world and is characterised by an international academic environment. The campus environment should therefore be perceived as vibrant and accessible to our international faculty and students. KTH's position is strengthened by the ability to attract international students and researchers and by making our international collaborations visible.

The ability to create favourable conditions for internationalisation is crucial for KTH as a leading technical university and is based on the commitment of all employees in the organisation and on different units and employees collaborating with their counterparts in other countries. Successful internationalisation requires sufficient allocation of resources for ongoing and strategic efforts.



## 2 International Collaboration in Research and Education

*KTH shall deepen its strategic collaboration with universities, companies and organisations globally.*

KTH's researchers in various disciplines have well-developed collaboration with many universities globally within research and education. Collaborations are usually initiated by individual researchers. In addition to these collaborations, KTH shall strategically prioritise collaborations for broader or more extensive engagement.

### 2.1 The Nordic Region

Within the Nordic region, KTH shall deepen its close collaboration with Chalmers University of Technology, the Technical University of Denmark (DTU), the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and Aalto University within the Nordic 5 Tech network.

### 2.2 Europe

Within the EU, the focus shall be on co-operation within the European university alliance Unite! In education, collaboration with partners in joint programmes, such as the EIT's master's programme, continues to be important for KTH's development and contributes to the quality of KTH's educational offering.

In addition, KTH shall continue to collaborate with prominent European universities in the EU as well as the UK and Switzerland, which contribute to stronger research results and increased international co-publication. Since 2022, KTH has had a specific strategy for participation in Horizon Europe 2021-2027 (VF-2021-0194).

### 2.3 Globally

KTH has long worked globally with several strategic partner universities and regions. The ambition is to increase the number to broaden the geographical spread. Prioritised areas for the period are the USA and South Korea. Africa is a region that is developing very rapidly and for which KTH has developed a special strategy (V-2022-0079).

Collaborations with strategic partner universities are characterised by a wide range of different internationalisation activities, for example:

- Co-operation at management level.
- Joint supervision (through cotutelle agreements) or joint doctoral programmes. The programme for joint supervision of PhD students between KTH and these strategic partner universities will be expanded.
- Joint master's programmes leading to either double degrees or joint degrees, and development of courses.
- Different forms of mobility, not least student exchanges
- Joint seed funding

- Significant research collaborations.

#### Seed funding

Seed funding is mainly used in the strategic university partnerships, but also in various networks in which KTH participates. There are several purposes for this, including initiating collaborations between researchers and raising the academic brand through collaboration with reputable partner universities.

### 3 International Innovation

*KTH shall maintain and further strengthen its role as an international leader in innovation and work actively to identify international collaborations that create value for KTH's activities.*

KTH participates in several European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) with activities in education and innovation. The KIC's are developing in different directions and at different speeds. It is important to monitor this development and to be able to reassess KTH's participation based on developments in each KIC.

There is a great deal of interest from KTH's partner universities in conducting various collaborative projects in the field of innovation. KTH shall ensure that such collaborations clearly create value for KTH and that there is capacity to manage such collaborations.

### 4 Mobility

*KTH shall continue to prioritise high-quality exchange studies with reputable universities, where numerical balance can be achieved as far as possible.*

*Researcher mobility shall increase, and better conditions shall be created through clearer and more efficient processes.*

*International co-publishing shall remain a natural part of the research culture.*

International mobility is of great importance for maintaining high academic quality. KTH shall increase the incentives and opportunities for researchers to take a sabbatical for a period abroad and for students to complete their degree project in another country by increasing the number of thesis projects and internships in other countries.

KTH shall facilitate mobility for researchers, students and staff, and encourage inviting prominent researchers from other countries. There shall be established procedures in the operational support to support this.

KTH is an attractive university for collaborations, especially for student exchanges. KTH's principle is to offer at least one exchange university per country in Europe. KTH shall have clear criteria for collaboration with exchange universities and subject reciprocity shall be sought in exchanges.

KTH shall endeavour to expand the range of course modules together with partner universities. Students shall have good opportunities to get credit for an exchange and the administrative handling shall be simple for both students and administrators.

Negative signals about difficulties in handling international students and researchers affect KTH's and Sweden's attractiveness as an international education destination. KTH shall work with the Government Offices and authorities to ensure that Sweden offers clear and manageable conditions for international students and researchers, for example in terms of the processes for residence permits, work permits, educational scholarships and banking matters. KTH shall ensure that the internal conditions for receiving international researchers are well-functioning.

## **5 International Recruitment**

*KTH shall maintain high quality in international student recruitment, which shall be characterised by talent, diversity and diversification.*

*KTH's international attractiveness as an academic employer shall be strengthened, including the ability to recruit and retain talented researchers and teachers.*

### **5.1 Students at Advanced Level (Master's Programmes)**

KTH has attracted an increasing number of qualified applicants to master's programmes and the number of students admitted to KTH's master's programmes has been stable for a long period. This shows that KTH has a well-functioning international student recruitment system for master's studies. The number of students may increase to some extent, but only within programmes with solid teacher capacity and high numbers of applicants. In addition to academic excellence, other aspects shall be taken into consideration, such as geographical spread and capacity building. Strategic models for recruiting mainly students but also researchers from countries with universities that are not ranked highly shall be developed. These models shall ensure the right conditions for successful studies without being too detailed.

### **5.2 Doctoral Students**

At KTH, doctoral students usually have a doctoral candidate employment, but most of the international partner universities do not use the Swedish model with doctoral candidate employment. As an international university, it is therefore important that KTH has collaborations with scholarship organisations, global companies and other relevant organisations in these countries. The handling of funds from foundations and other organisations, both national and international, shall be facilitated. All doctoral students, regardless of the form of funding, shall have equal financial conditions, and scholarship funding shall correspond to a doctoral candidate employment.

## 6 Responsible Internationalisation

*Openness should be the basis of international collaboration. At the same time, there should be an awareness of the need to protect national interests, knowledge and technology.*

*KTH shall strengthen the coordination of security issues linked to international activities and the work on responsible internationalisation.*

Responsible internationalisation refers to the ability to deal with issues of undue foreign influence, dual use, ethical dumping and human rights.

KTH, together with the Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (Stint), Karolinska Institutet and Lund University, has developed guidelines for reflection on international collaborations. These guidelines are intended to strengthen and raise awareness of KTH's responsibility as an international university and the researchers' ability to reflect on international cooperation.

This is recognised as the most effective way to increase our ability to create high research integrity, and this work shall continue.

Processes shall be developed to address difficult trade-offs in this area and how different parts of KTH can support the work with the overall aim of facilitating and encouraging international collaborations. An Advisory Board for Responsible Internationalisation (RAI) and a Governing Board for Responsible Internationalisation (SAI) shall provide support in these trade-offs.

## 7 Communication

*KTH's visibility as a well-established international university shall increase to strengthen the brand.*

KTH shall have a strong and dynamic presence in relevant communication channels that create dialogue with target groups that are important for the internationalisation of research and education, and highlight KTH's ability to obtain prestigious international grants.

The target group is mainly international and national students, researchers and teachers from other universities both nationally and internationally, national and international funding bodies and KTH's own students, teachers, researchers and staff. KTH's communication to these target groups shall be shaped through relevant messages and in channels that are relevant to the target group.

KTH shall actively conduct alumni activities both nationally and internationally. Alumni are important ambassadors for KTH.