

KIT: The Research University in the Helmholtz Association

Overarching KIT 2025 Strategy Outlines the Way for the Years to Come – Research for the Benefit of Society: Focus on Energy, Mobility, and Information

The Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) consistently continues its role of pioneer in the German science system. As “The Research University in the Helmholtz Association,” the KIT will make full use of its synergy potential. In the years to come, the duties of a national research institution and of a state university will be merged further step by step.

Henceforth, the KIT will concentrate even more strongly on the topics of Energy, Mobility, and Information. In this way, the KIT aligns its major research areas to the long-term challenges facing society in order to develop sustainable solutions of urgent problems of the future. Energy, mobility, and information have traditionally been strong research areas at the KIT; their perfect merger in fundamental research and their application are essential, for instance, to the success of the “energiewende.”

“While improving fundamental conditions and strengthening autonomy, we also want to enhance the property of the KIT as one single institution also in legal terms such that the scientific capability of the KIT can become even stronger,” emphasizes Baden-Württemberg Minister of Research, Theresia Bauer.

“Our overarching KIT 2025 strategy outlines the way for the years to come,” explains KIT President, Professor Holger Hanselka. “Our objective is to make decisive contributions in top-level research, teaching and innovation to the success of major projects of our society, such as the “energiewende,” safe and sustainable mobility or intelligent technologies for the information society. We achieve this by the high quality of our research with a view to national and international competition and research-oriented teaching. This is to achieve optimum preparation of our students for their responsible duties in society, industry, and science.”

Thus, all scientists at the KIT will henceforth help shape the teaching function. “In this way, our students can benefit from the advantages offered only by the KIT as the research university in the Helmholtz Association,” explains Hanselka. The KIT in particular wants to win

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young women, who often are among the best in their age groups, for technical and scientific study courses. Thus, the share of women students, averaged over all study courses, is to rise to 40% over the next ten years.

Promoting young scientists is just as important an objective of the KIT as the education of students. Especially in the phase of working for a doctorate as the first step in a career, the KIT intends to offer good starting opportunities to its graduates.

In its research strategy, the KIT intends to merge even more closely natural sciences, engineering, economics, humanities and social sciences. "Science must take into account the expectations, hopes, and fears of the public," emphasizes KIT President Hanselka. "The conversion of the energy system, for instance, can be achieved only if society supports this process."

The KIT Emphasizes Innovation Culture and a Founding Spirit

The KIT is already very strong in acquiring third-party funds and is one of the most successful universities in the research atlas of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG. As a university supporting startup companies, the KIT won the 2013 competition by the Federal Ministry of Economics. In 2014 alone, 33 firms were launched in the environment of the KIT. The KIT spinoff, Restube, won the German startup award in the startup category in 2015. The KIT is among the 100 most innovative universities in the world (Reuters TOP 100 Ranking 2015), supporting staff members and students alike in launching promising ideas on the market. "Innovation to us means applying scientific findings," says Hanselka. "From an idea to its solution, we at the KIT work on projects benefitting society, a healthy economy, and the preservation of the natural foundations of life." In order to further underline the importance of innovation, the KIT, among other things, has created a new Presidential Function for Innovation and International Affairs effective January 1st, 2016.

Making Full Use of KIT Synergies

Fully unfolding the synergies of the KIT is another important objective of the overarching KIT 2025 strategy. Thus, a public law in 2009 made possible the courageous step of merging a state university and a national research center, but the KIT to this day has worked on separate funds from state and federal sources, and there are different regulations in place also in other areas. It is imperative that these administrative obstacles be removed together with the federation and the state. One opportunity is coming up now for the first time with the re-

laxation of the ban on cooperation in the German Basic Law (Article 91 b), which will now make it possible for the federal government to fund permanently individual universities and institutes. “We hope that this will give rise to important changes which will sustainably contribute to one uniform KIT,” states the President of the KIT. “The active and promising development of the role of the KIT in the German science system requires a high level of autonomy and an extended space in which to work independently. One case in point is the characteristic of builder owner we are seeking for the entire KIT. “

“By sharpening its profile and through mutual interconnection in the fields of energy, mobility, and information, the KIT will be able in the future to provide more easily pioneering answers to fundamental issues of our age, such as the implementation of the “energiewende.” On the basis of the amendment to Article 91 b, Basic Law, it is our objective to further expand the scientific performance capability of the KIT in research, teaching, and innovation and intensify the strategic capacity to act of the KIT in competition in science,” stresses Minister Bauer.

The Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) pools its three core tasks of research, higher education, and innovation in a mission. With about 9400 employees and 25,000 students, the KIT is one of the big institutions of research and higher education in natural sciences and engineering in Europe.

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Since 2010, the KIT has been certified as a family-friendly university.

This press release is available on the internet at www.kit.edu.