

Supporting the Exchange between Cultures

KIT Supports Integration of Foreign Students – Success in the Competition for DAAD Funds



With a number of projects, KIT enhances the integration of foreign students. (Photo by: Dieter Prinz)

The Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) wishes to better integrate its foreign students. This is the objective of several projects that will be funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) with EUR 80,000 over a period of two years. The International Office on KIT's Southern Campus has applied for funds from the program to support the integration of foreign students (PROFIN). From 119 candidates, KIT's International Office, together with 45 other applicants, has now been chosen for funding by the DAAD.

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With various partners, the International Office conceived a package of projects that will start in summer 2009, its objectives being integration in teaching, in accommodation, and in the living space of the city. With the kww, the office for scientific advanced training of Universität Karlsruhe (TH), the International Office is presently designing a module for intercultural competence in university didactics. Later on, the participants will implement the contents at their faculties. In addition, both institutions are developing a new element for the training of specialized tutors: Intercultural communication. It is not only aimed at improving the quality of tutorials, but at supporting the exchange between cultures in practice: The groups of tutors are mixed. In addition, the International Office has launched a model project together with the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and the UStA (Independent Students Committee) for supporting mixed learning groups. "In this way, the students learn to work in international teams at a very early point of time", says Sandra Hertlein from the International Office. The most successful learning group will be awarded a prize.

Integration in teaching also comprises two seminars. One on international project management will be organized by the International Office together with the Center for Applied Cultural Science and Studium Generale | ZAK. Half of the seminar group is planned to consist of foreign, half of German students. This will also apply to the seminar of "Scientific Work and Presentation in the International Context" organized by the International Office in coopera-

tion with the Studienkolleg (course program in which foreign students prepare for entering normal university courses). According to Hertlein, it is aimed at the students acquiring intercultural competence before they go abroad.

In cooperation with the Office for Psychotherapeutic Help of the Studentenwerk (Student Union), the International Office focuses on integration in accommodation. Training of tutors of residential accommodation will be extended by an intercultural communication module in order to better prepare them for cultural conflicts.

In cooperation with the city of Karlsruhe, the International Office wishes to support the integration of foreign students in daily life. The partners want to find mentors, who will offer foreign students an accommodation for some weeks at the beginning of their studies and who will act as social contact persons and invite them on holidays, to celebrate Easter, for instance.

The Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is the merger of the Forschungszentrum Karlsruhe, member of the Helmholtz Association, and the Universität Karlsruhe. This merger will give rise to an institution of internationally excellent research and teaching in natural and engineering sciences. In total, the KIT has 8000 employees and an annual budget of 700 million Euros. The KIT focuses on the knowledge triangle of research – teaching – innovation.

The Karlsruhe institution is a leading European energy research center and plays a visible role in nanosciences worldwide. KIT

sets new standards in teaching and promotion of young scientists and attracts top scientists from all over the world. Moreover, KIT is a leading innovation partner of industry.

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