

Transfer strategy 2022 – 2028

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Preamble

At Georg Agricola University of Applied Sciences (THGA), transfer is understood as a responsible, mutual interaction between the university and its environment. Based on the vision, mission, and strategic goals of THGA, transfer not only focuses on the "First Mission" and "Second Mission", i.e. teaching and research, but also encompasses an active dialogue between the university and society – our "Third Mission". Since its founding in 1816, THGA has had a high impact on society – something that is fostered by applying all resources possible to identifying and nurturing talent, regardless of their background. Overall, the transfer including the Third Mission at THGA serves to develop technical, social, as well as human resources solutions to societal challenges; we provide specific supports to our employees to successfully achieve any transfer activity.

Transfer at THGA

Scientific responsibility – non-commercial knowledge transfer

Everyone at THGA is obliged to make the Code of Conduct "Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice" (as defined by DFG, the German Society for Research) the basis of their scientific work and to actively counteract scientific misconduct within their sphere of influence. For this purpose, a scientifically experienced ombudsperson is elected at specific intervals. With regard to the scientific work carried out for third parties and with third parties, two examples are worth mentioning: the transparency of processes and contributions of both, cooperation partners and THGA, as well as the adherence to ethical standards when conducting surveys and studies. THGA enables social advancement through education through a number of measures: we offer tuition-free study programmes in full-time and part-time; we provide special support to educational climbers and people with a refugee background. Particularly the part-time students, who already are in employment, enable an informal transfer of knowledge between regional industries and the university, as study programs are tailored precisely to the needs of the economy. Here, lecturers from the business community are continuously recruited and deployed purposefully. Research results in the form of methods and technologies are actively transferred to society by THGA. At the same time, the university maintains a dialogue with companies, institutions, and the public on research and development results; thus, we provide them with the opportunity to contribute their own interests, expectations and needs regarding the transfer by the university. Internally generated intellectual property rights should be utilised throughout the university to research based on them, and research results should be made available for appropriate and widespread use through both transparent internal communication and research marketing. This open, scientific discourse is particularly necessary for research-oriented teaching.

Economic responsibility – knowledge and technology transfer

THGA sees itself as a regional player with a corresponding responsibility for the development of Metropole Ruhr, the urban Ruhr area where it is based. Therefore, when planning its transfer measures, the university takes into account both qualitative and quantitative observations relating to the scientific, economic and institutional structures of the region. In this way, it always supports the enhancement of regional potentials. In addition, it is actively involved as an impartial expert in socially relevant topics as well as in advancing both the region and Germany as a business location. When it comes to exploiting economic activities significant to NRW and Germany as a business location, THGA avoids distortions of competition by applying market conditions and complying with the relevant legal provisions and requirements. If several options for exploitations with similar potential exist, a regionally based company is generally preferred over a national and, in turn, an international company. In addition, the proceeds are allocated to the core topics in order to strengthen this transfer area in the long term. As a state-acknowledged university, THGA is always striving towards a more efficient use of resources and the expansion of research, which additionally allows for internal funding of transfer activities to finance start-ups in order to solve societal challenges. Moreover, scientists at the university have knowledge, methods and technologies that can be utilised by companies and organisations in various forms and sometimes brought to the market as innovative products, technical solutions or services. Here, at all stages of the innovation cycle, the aim is to increase the technology maturity through to the application to societal challenges with a particular focus on supporting spin-off projects.

Our social responsibility – Third Mission

In addition to the core tasks of teaching ("First Mission") and research ("Second Mission"), THGA sees its mission within the framework of the so-called "Third Mission": in addition to the classic knowledge and technology transfer, we are committed to social responsibility and maintain a lively exchange with citizens, companies, and politicians. The promotion of educational advancement is an essential component of our Third Mission, which encompasses the areas of continuing education, low-threshold knowledge transfer, and social commitment. Moreover, THGA long defines its third mission as the social responsibility of its actions in all core missions. In this context, THGA sees its social responsibility in teaching – beyond as acting merely as an

educational institution – in two major areas: providing social advancement through education (university of advancement), and enabling a balance between studying, family, caretaking, and career. In research, THGA sees its social responsibility primarily in developing solutions to societal challenges: our scientists not only ask the right questions and take up impulses from society: they also provide objective expert knowledge in target group-oriented knowledge transfer. Beyond its regular educational mission, the university is committed, for example, to special target groups such as educational climbers or people with a refugee background; it also promotes STEM education for children and young people. Another focus is to make research results visible and usable for society. State-of-the-art insights and scientific expertise are made available via suitable formats for solving societal issues. Last but not least, THGA aims to break down barriers so we strive to be an interactive hub for the general public, welcoming a dialogue with all people interested. These third mission activities will be continuously developed, while employees and students will be encouraged and supported in their social commitment.

Goals, fields of action, and measures

The university has set itself the strategic goal of increasing both its visibility and its networking as a scientific institution; in addition, we aim to enhance our competitiveness in the missions of teaching, research and transfer. Accordingly, the primary goal of transfer – including the third mission – at THGA is to communicate and research socially relevant engineering topics in a sustainable manner and to visibly advance innovations. The EU Commission sees universities as central to the knowledge triangle of the core tasks of education, research and innovation within the European higher education system; accordingly, this position is firmly anchored in the transfer strategy of THGA.

Goals

- To raise awareness and motivation of the workforce for the topic of knowledge and technology transfer
- To increase visibility as a scientific expert institute – locally to internationally
- To provide legal certainty under the German Employee Invention Act (German: ArbNErfG)
- To establish a meaningful and sustainable reporting system
- To form active and long-term involvement in Bochum and the region
- To achieve higher international competitiveness
- To gain high reach of the relevant output in research and transfer
- To generate steady transfer-related third-party funding

In this context, we will continue to hone the profile of THGA as a transparently operating institution of research and education as well as an impartial expert providing high social and sustainable benefits; thus, the local, regional, national as well as international competitiveness of students, researchers, teachers and third-party funded projects will be enhanced in favour of a successful expansion of all three core tasks, i.e., teaching, research, and transfer and third mission.

Fields of action

1. Building awareness and empowering employees on the subject of transfer
2. Raising visibility of university-wide transfer
3. Fostering a start-up friendly university climate
4. Enabling and evaluating the impact of transfer activities at local to international level.

Activities and measures

Transfer can occur through people, information, collaborations, proprietary rights, intellectual property rights and spin-offs:

Transfer takes place...	Activity	Tools
... through people	Contributing skills and knowledge to social, political and economic institutions	Cooperative theses, mobility of staff, internships, fellowships, guest lecturers, teaching assignments at other institutions
...through information	Maintaining formal and informal, exchange of THGA with different target groups in society, politics and business	Research studies, dialogues, exhibitions, open-door days, local commitment, presence at local and regional events, social surveys, educational opportunities, professional development, open access publications, conferences, expert reports, presence at trade show, networks, consulting activities, discourse participation, participation in committees, degree programmes with interdisciplinary elements
...through cooperations	Operating cooperative ventures with research institutions, companies, and other social and political institutions	Sovereign research cooperations, contract research, joint use of infrastructure
...through proprietary rights and other intellectual property rights	Transferring technology to interested parties in business and society, including own spin-offs	Licensing, patent sales, know-how contracts, transfer of software and equipment
... through spin-offs	Encouraging spin-offs from the university as a special form of transfer (Spin-offs mean transferring either an employee as a knowledge carrier to a start-up or existing knowledge / technology from the university. In most cases, a transfer via a proprietary right or intellectual property right goes hand in hand with a start-up)	Establishing start-ups, spin-offs or affiliated institutes; Supporting spin-offs undertaken by students with their own ideas or through variable provision of intellectual university property.

Measures to be implemented by the end of 2022

- Implementing a Senate Commission 2 on Research and Transfer
- Applying to transfer-related third-party funding
- Promoting the visibility of the Start!NG project's consulting office for people interested in founding a company among the staff and students
- Intensifying exchange and expansion of networking with politics, business, science and society

Measures to be implemented by the end of 2023

- Maintaining the strong commitment to the "Haus des Wissens" (a new knowledge hub) and the "UniverCity" in Bochum

Beginning of 2024

Evaluating the success of the measures implemented since 2022 by the Senate Commission 2 Research and Transfer, revising the transfer strategy if a need for adjustment is identified. Defining measures for the period 2025 to 2028.

Measures to be implemented by the end of 2024

- Implementing an invention reporting process
- Increasing spin-off activities
- Implementing a publication and open access strategy
- Establishment of regular reporting/communication on the transfer and Third Mission of THGA (annual report, university development plan, homepage, intranet, social media)
- Establishment of internal communication channels on the topic of research and transfer
- Developing a concept for transfer and science communication – locally to internationally
- Creation of the third-party funding process for economic, transfer-related projects

Measures to be implemented by the end of 2025

- Revision of the third-party funding guidelines, with consideration of transfer-related third-party funding

Measures to be implemented by the end of 2026

- Development of transfer management
- Establishing a central transfer management including all processes including outsourcing
- Defining sustainable indicators, prioritizing and target groups and establishing an internal, biannual evaluation
- Establishing of a sustainable documentation process
- Offering internal training on transfer and third mission via own expertise or external service providers
- Developing a concept for transfer and science communication – internationally

Beginning of 2026

Evaluating the success of the measures implemented since 2022 by the Senate Commission 2 Research and Transfer, revising the transfer strategy if a need for adjustment is identified. Defining measures for the period 2025 to 2028.

Further possible measures to be implemented by the end of 2028

- Empowering employees for any transfer activities
- Launching a mentoring initiative of transfer-experienced employees for newcomers
- Establishing new transfer formats in university events
- Intensifying centrally coordinated science communication
- Raising transfer-related third-party funding

- Boosting spin-off activities
- Increasing reviewer activities/engineering consultations
- Integrating a start-up strategy in the transfer strategy
- Transfer manual
- Strengthening the transfer commitment at European level in committees, consortia and advisory commissions
- Devising a fixed, annual transfer budget beyond the third mission budget
- Integrating transfer-related topics in the on-boarding of new employees
- Networking the research management on the topic of transfer with comparable institutions
- Translating all research and transfer-related information from German into English