



Press Release

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Topic: **Teaching & Learning**

University of Bayreuth launches joint digitization project with Ukrainian partner

The University of Bayreuth and the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (Ukraine) are planning to work together closely to promote digitization in studies and teaching as well as in continuing education courses for lecturers. At the beginning of the year 2020, the two universities launched the 'Learnopolis' project. The joint digital innovation laboratory which these partners are developing based on their existing cooperation will serve as the basis for future cooperation and is expected to set a positive example for cooperation between German and Eastern European universities. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) will be supporting the project for the next two years using funding provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) to the tune of around 200,000 euros.

In their joint project 'Learnopolis', The University of Bayreuth and the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (IFNUL) are pursuing the goal of promoting digitally supported learning and teaching processes and of refining corresponding concepts and instruments for specific universities and user groups. This will take place both in central units, such as the university libraries, as well as locally at the level of individual faculties and departments. In addition, each university intends to work towards making even greater use of the innovation potential offered by their regional settings, both for their own benefit and in the interest of the partner university.



The delegation from Lviv together with the team of the Centre for Learning & Teaching outside of the University of Bayreuth's main auditorium. Photo: Learnopolis.

In December 2019, Vice-Rector for Digitization Dr. Witalij Kucharskij along with members of IFNUL's extended university management visited the University of Bayreuth. This visit enabled the partners to put their objectives into concrete terms, especially with regard to institutional similarities and the differences between the two institutions. The bilateral project is headed by Nicolai Teufel, a research associate at the Centre for Learning & Teaching in Higher Education (FBZHL) at the University of Bayreuth.

"The generous funding provided by the DAAD with resources from the BMBF now gives us the opportunity to establish a cooperation platform that could develop into a pilot project for future cooperation

between German and Ukrainian universities. In doing so, we are able to build on the many years of experience gained by the University of Bayreuth within the framework of the BMBF's 'ProfilLehrePlus' programme and the FBZHL concept for the 'support of teaching and learning processes with digital resources'. At the same time, the project combines the intensification of East-West cooperation with sustainable modernization processes within our Ukrainian partner university", explained Teufel, who has already carried out several German-Ukrainian teaching projects funded by BayHOST, the Federal Foreign Office and the DAAD and received the 2017 'Golden Raven' award, a prize for outstanding university teaching at the University of Bayreuth.

The initial focus of Learnopolis is the development of a consulting and service range for digitally supported teaching and learning processes in Lviv based on the Bayreuth model. Guest visits will help to bring together the different horizons of experience and views of the two partner universities and to forge additional German-Ukrainian contacts. In a later project phase, the partners plan to jointly develop an initiative on the topic of 'International Cooperation in University Teaching'. Learnopolis brings together digitization, internationalization, and innovation. This is clearly illustrated by four German-Ukrainian project tandems, which will jointly test possible uses of digital instruments in specific areas, for example in the fields of 'Libraries and Open Access' and 'Language, Translation and Digitization'. Early-career scholars who wish to act as qualified contacts for questions concerning digital learning and teaching processes in their respective fields are invited to take part in these project tandems. A further focus of the project is knowledge communication and exchange with the local regions surrounding the two universities. A joint skills database for digital learning and international cooperation in Upper Franconia and the Lviv Oblast will be made accessible to companies and public institutions in these regions. A series of lectures has also been planned to showcase non-university best practices in the fields of digitally supported learning and international cooperation.

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The University of Bayreuth at a glance

Founded in 1975, the University of Bayreuth is currently one of Germany's most successful young universities. In the Times Higher Education (THE) Young University Rankings, it is ranked 40th among the 250 best young universities in the world. Interdisciplinary research and teaching is the main feature of the University's 154 degree programmes offered by seven faculties covering the natural sciences, engineering, law, economics, languages, literature, and cultural studies. The University of Bayreuth has around 13,660 students, roughly 1,260 academic staff members, 240 professors, and around 960 non-academic staff members. It is the largest employer in the region. (status: Oct 2019)