

**IU GROUP SUSTAINABILITY AND
SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT 2025**

**25 YEARS
OF EDUCATION
FOR EVERYONE**

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PLACING STUDENT SUCCESS AT THE CENTRE OF EVERYTHING WE DO

Address by Sven Schütt,
CEO of IU Group

2025 was a year of progress and growing confidence for IU Group—and also a moment for reflection. As we marked 25 years since the launch of our first learning programmes, we were reminded of how far this institution has come: from a small group of students in Bad Honnef to an international education group serving learners across Germany, the United Kingdom, and Canada. At a time of profound change in higher education and the world of work, this anniversary gives us both perspective and clarity about what matters most.

Education matters because it opens doors—to opportunity, participation, and resilience in a changing world. For IU Group, our responsibility in delivering this begins with a simple commitment: student success comes first. Throughout 2025, this principle guided our actions as we sharpened our priorities, strengthened the consistency of our offerings, and invested deliberately in quality across the group.

Our mission is to democratise education and prepare our students in the best possible way for the world of tomorrow. That means making high-quality education more accessible, more flexible, and more relevant to people's lives. It also means preparing students for a future shaped by artificial intelligence. Our AI strategy is guided by a clear conviction: technology should augment human intelligence, not replace it. We use AI to support better learning, more personalised guidance, and stronger outcomes—always in service of human development.



Our confidence in our mission is bolstered by the fact that it is reflected in external feedback. Recent surveys show that 89% of employers describe IU graduates as more engaged and more practice-oriented than comparable graduates, and 85% say they prefer IU graduates when

recruiting. Students themselves consistently report that their studies are worthwhile and prepare them well for professional life. Taken together, these signals show that our focus on relevance, quality, and student success is creating real value.

Building on this foundation, we continue to invest thoughtfully in the future. By strengthening our processes and pioneering technologies that support people, we are shaping an education group that can deliver high-quality programmes reliably and at scale. These efforts are gaining traction, and we expect their impact to become increasingly visible—particularly in terms of student experience, educational outcomes, and institutional resilience.

Our ambition is purposeful and measured. We aim to grow in areas where we add clear value, to earn trust through reliability, and to contribute constructively to the societies we serve. With 25 years of experience behind us, we're moving into the next phase of IU Group's journey with confidence and humility: we are committed to widening access, strengthening quality, and preparing our students for an AI-shaped future in which human intelligence, amplified by technology, will matter more than ever.

**OUR
VISION**



EVERYBODY

**WE ARE INCLUSIVE AND NON-ELITIST
FOR GLOBAL TALENTS**

CAN ACCESS

**OUR OFFERING IS ACCESSIBLE
AND AFFORDABLE**

EDUCATION

**OUR OFFERING RANGES
FROM HIGHER EDUCATION
TO NANO DEGREES**

TO GROW

**WE DRIVE INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS
THROUGH HIGH-QUALITY,
CAREER-ORIENTED EDUCATION**



ABOUT IU GROUP

ABOUT IU GROUP

IU Group offers a vertically integrated educational platform with the largest portfolio of bachelor's and master's degree programmes in Europe.

Being one of the largest and fastest-growing private providers of higher education in Germany and Europe, we deliver high-quality study programmes, leveraging technology and innovation to meet the rapidly changing demands and needs of the labour market and of students. IU International University of Applied Sciences (IU), the main institution of higher education managed by IU Group, offers more than 200 programmes and 500 certified courses in German or English. Students can shape their studies in their own way with the help of a digital learning environment that features various study models. In addition, we facilitate continuing education and promote the idea of lifelong learning. In line with our mission, we aim to provide

access to personalised education to as many people worldwide as possible. IU Group is pioneering the integration of AI in higher education, leveraging technology to revolutionise the learning experience—reducing course completion times, personalising exam preparation, and improving learning outcomes. IU was established in 1998, and it is now represented in 37 German cities. We cooperate with over 15,000 companies—including Motel One, Vodafone, AWO, and Deutsche Bahn—and we actively support them in employee development. Since 2023, IU Group has also been represented in the United Kingdom by Walbrook Institute London and in Canada by the University of Fredericton.

STUDENTS
~130 000



STUDY LOCATIONS
AND OFFICES
60



INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER
EDUCATION IN GERMANY,
THE UNITED KINGDOM,
AND CANADA
3



MASTER'S
AND BACHELOR'S
PROGRAMMES OFFERED
>200



GRADUATES OF
BACHELOR'S, MASTER'S,
AND MBA PROGRAMMES
IN 2025



>14 000

MASTER'S AND
BACHELOR'S DEGREE
PROGRAMMES IN ENGLISH



50

CERTIFIED LEARNING
COURSES IN GERMAN
IN ENGLISH



>500

* All numbers as at the end of 2025 or for 2025 unless stated otherwise

OUR HISTORY



The foundation
of IU as the International
University of Applied Sciences
Bad Honnef / Bonn (IFH)

1998

**Admission to the “Leading Hotel
Schools of the World” network**
IFH becomes the first and only German
university to be accepted into the “Leading
Hotel Schools of the World” network. The
exclusive association Hotel Schools of Distinction
emerged from this network in 2014.

2000

Launch of the first learning programmes
at the Feuerschlösschen Castle in Bad Honnef



2003

2004

**Presented with a Hospitality
Studies concept award**
IFH becomes the first German
university to be awarded the
hotel industry’s Oscar, the
Hotelier of the Year Award, for
its outstanding study concept.

2009

**Geographic expansion,
institutional accreditation**
Bad Reichenhall is opened as a new branch
of IFH. IFH unconditionally receives the
longest possible accreditation of 10 years
from the German Council of Science and
Humanities. Innovation Minister of the
state of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany,
Prof. Andreas Pinkwart, congratulates
the institution on this achievement.





Launch of distance learning courses

IFH launches its first distance learning programme.

2010

Further recognition

IFH becomes a member of the German University Rector Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz).
The United Nations World Tourism Organization awards the UNWTO Tedqual certificate to IFH tourism programme.

2011

2012

New locations and sustainability

Düsseldorf and Munich become the first dual-campus locations to be opened besides Erfurt.
IFH commits to the principles of sustainability by joining the United Nations Global Compact.

2013

UN PRME signatory member

IFH becomes a signatory member of the International Academic Network of the UN PRME Network, an initiative for responsible and sustainable academic management education.

2014

Top rankings and premium seal

IFH achieves excellent results in the CHE university ranking.
In terms of business administration, IFH positions itself among Germany's best private providers of higher education. IFH five study programmes in the fields of hotel management, tourism and event management receive the premium seal of the FIBAA.
This qualifies IFH as one of the leading universities in Germany, with five or more premium seals.

2016

Online exams

IFH launches its first online degree programme and becomes the first provider of higher education worldwide to launch online exams.



2017

IFH receives the **Innovation and Excellence Award** 2017 for innovative study programmes.
The institution is renamed the International University of Applied Sciences Bad Honnef – Bonn (IUBH International University of Applied Sciences).

New locations and accreditation

IUBH launches a part-time study format at Düsseldorf and Munich for the business administration and social work study programmes. IUBH becomes system accredited. Over 15,000 students are enrolled in 80 degree programmes. More than 500 permanent professors, lecturers, and employees work for IUBH in research, lecturing, consulting, and administration

Evolving to fulfil our mission

This year sees the commercial launch of the new, innovative myStudium offer for school graduates, as well as IU Academy as a new upskilling programme for corporate partners. IUBH is renamed IU International University of Applied Sciences to emphasise its international profile.

Developing a global AI-based sustainable education offering

LIBF, now Walbrook Institute London, (UK) and the University of Fredericton (Canada) become part of IU Group, marking historical steps towards international expansion. IU International University of Applied Sciences joins the Association of African Universities. Following a rigorous assessment of its environmental, social, and corporate governance profile, IU Group becomes a certified B Corporation, joining a global community of sustainability-oriented organisations. IU International University of Applied Sciences is the first university worldwide to use ChatGPT-4 technology within its dialogue-based AI-powered teaching & learning assistant Syntea.

New programmes and awards

In 2025, IU International University of Applied Sciences expanded its academic offering with new future oriented programmes, including the Applied Linguistics distance learning degree. The university also launched the IU Innovation Award to support sustainability driven student ideas in the real estate sector. IU received system reaccreditation until 2033 — the maximum possible term granted by the German Accreditation Council — confirming the strength of its internal quality assurance system. In addition, IU was recognised at the QS Reimagine Education Awards, for its innovative contributions to digital learning.

2018



2020

First major environmental certification

IUBH receives its first PAS 2060 climate neutrality certification after a detailed audit of its carbon footprint and compensation of emissions. A total of 36,000 students are enrolled, representing 110 countries and spread across 80 different study programmes. Twenty-nine new study programmes are launched and eight new locations are opened.

2021

2022

Scale and quality

The IU student body reaches 100,000. IU receives the Very Good Provider Award and is included in the list of top distance-learning providers. IU is ranked number 1 among the most popular universities on [StudyCheck](#) thanks to its dual studies programme. The university achieved this while maintaining a recommendation rating of 96%.

2023

2024

Emphasis on award-winning AI-based technology

In 2024, Syntea receives the GM Innovation Award and the Global EdTech Award (in the Best AI Integration category).

2025



A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a black beanie, a long red coat, dark jeans with a tear at the knee, and light-colored sneakers, is walking on a cobblestone street. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The street is lined with historic European buildings, including a prominent red and white half-timbered building. In the background, there are parked cars, motorcycles, and other pedestrians. The scene is set in a city during autumn, with some trees showing brown leaves.

LIVING

OUR MISSION



EMPOWERING GLOBAL LEARNERS: IU GROUP'S MISSION IN ACTION

Empowering learners across the globe with a highly personalised approach to education is at the heart of IU Group's mission, which is guided by the vision that everybody can access education to grow. In 2025, this mission continued to shape how IU Group designs learning experiences, expands access to higher education, and invests in innovation across its institutions.

WHO WE ARE

With around 130,000 students, IU International University of Applied Sciences (IU) is Germany's largest provider of higher education. The institution was founded in 1998 and began teaching in 2000. Today, IU operates at 37 locations with students from more than 160 countries, offering flexible study models that include distance learning, dual studies, and campus based programmes. IU has over 200 bachelor's, master's

and MBA programmes that combine academic quality with strong practical relevance.

IU Group also includes Walbrook Institute London in the UK and the University of Fredericton in Canada. Across the Group, flexible and learner centric education enables people to study alongside their work, family, or other commitments, while preparing them for a rapidly changing and increasingly digital labour market.

In 2025, IU Group marked 25 years of institutional development, reflecting its evolution from a small, private education initiative into an international education group with a strong focus on access, personalisation, and innovation.

PROGRESS AND KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN 2025

In 2025, IU further strengthened its approach to personalised and digital learning at scale. Several dozen new and updated study programmes were launched across its online, dual-study, and campus based formats, spanning the bachelor's, master's and MBA levels and covering more than 10 subject areas. A strong focus is placed on artificial intelligence, data science, cybersecurity, software development, engineering, business, health, and social sciences, reflecting labour market demand and skills shortages.

A key milestone was the continued expansion of Syntea, IU's in house AI learning companion. In early 2025, Syntea was enhanced with advanced AI agent functions that proactively support study planning and adapt learning methods to individual needs. This work received international recognition in December 2025, when Syntea won Gold at the QS Reimagine Education Awards in the 'AI in Education

by Higher Education Institutions’ category. IU Group’s leadership in digital education was also acknowledged with the EdTechX Leviathan Award 2025, marking the third consecutive year the Group received this distinction.

Beyond teaching and learning, in 2025 IU expanded its societal engagement. Among other initiatives, in April IU established the Centre for Radicalisation Research and Prevention (ZRP) in Essen, which focusses on strengthening practice oriented research in social work and contributing evidence based insights to address pressing societal challenges.

WHAT LEARNERS TELL US

To assess how these efforts are experienced by learners, IU regularly surveys students and alumni on its mission and vision. The University Experience Study 2026 shows that a clear majority of learners consider IU to be living up to its mission. 88% of IU students and graduates say IU adapts learning experiences more strongly to individual goals and learning styles than other study options they know. 85% of the IU students and alumni surveyed confirm that IU has opened up an educational path for them that would not have been possible elsewhere. 92% of IU alumni confirm that the university’s academic programs gave them the opportunity and

chance to grow. 97 percent of IU graduates say that studying at IU was worth the investment of time, money and effort.*

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2025, IU Group continued to translate its mission into tangible impact – through an expanded, future oriented study portfolio, personalised learning, the responsible use of AI, strong employer partnerships, and growing international reach. Learner feedback confirms that these efforts are widely felt. Going forward, IU Group will continue to scale access to education while ensuring that quality, inclusion, and long term impact remain at the core of its mission.

*Source: University Experience Study 2026, a survey conducted by Kantar Profiles between 27 August and 20 October 2025. A total of 4,004 students and graduates from public and private universities were surveyed, including 1,597 alumni, representative in terms of age and gender. The target group was alumni from the last five years, students and university dropouts. The survey was commissioned by IU International University from Kantar Profiles. The data was collected independently by Kantar Profiles in accordance with internal quality standards.



EDUCATION QUALITY AND LEARNING OUTCOMES AT IU

Education quality is inherently difficult to measure. Learning is a long-term and highly individual process, and its effects often become visible only well after formal studies have ended. However, while no single indicator can fully capture education quality, consistent patterns across learning experiences, graduate outcomes, and external perspectives allow for a grounded assessment of how education performs in practice.

Independent survey data show high and consistent evaluations of the core elements of teaching and learning at IU International University of Applied Sciences (IU). 94 % of surveyed IU students and alumni report satisfaction with their course content, compared to 86 % at other private universities.² Satisfaction with the quality

of courses, lecturers, and learning materials is each at 91% at IU, compared to 84–85% at public universities and 84–86% at other private universities. Practice-oriented learning is rated positively by 86% of IU respondents, compared to 78% at public universities and 81% at private universities overall.



² Quantitative figures are drawn from University Experience Study 2026, a survey conducted by Kantar Profiles between 27 August and 20 October 2025. A total of 4,004 students and graduates from public and private universities were surveyed, including 1,597 alumni, representative in terms of age and gender. The target group was alumni from the last five years, students and university dropouts. The survey was commissioned by IU International University from Kantar Profiles. The data was collected independently by Kantar Profiles in accordance with internal quality standards. Qualitative references to individual career paths (e.g. founders, members of parliament, elite athletes) are based on publicly available information and internal institutional records and are included solely for contextual illustration, not as evidence of performance or impact.

Students also report stronger alignment of learning with individual goals and learning styles. 88% of IU students state that learning can be adapted to their individual needs, compared to 81% at public universities and 84% at other private universities. Support services are actively used by 82% of IU students and alumni, compared to 73% at public universities and 77% at other private universities, while 82% are satisfied with the career support provided by IU, compared to 77% in benchmark institutions. IU's emphasis on practical relevance is further visible in systems-level comparisons. Satisfaction with the integration of theory and practice is reported by 86% of students and alumni at IU, compared to 81% at private universities overall and 78% at public universities. This places IU five percentage points above the private-sector average and eight points above public universities.

Educational quality is also reflected in outcomes after graduation. IU alumni report an average income increase of 12%, compared to 9%

among graduates from benchmark institutions. On average, they find relevant employment after 2.63 months, compared to 3.69 months in benchmark institutions. 65% of IU alumni report taking on greater responsibility or receiving a promotion within 12 months after graduation, compared to 60% in benchmark institutions.

Beyond aggregate survey data, the professional trajectories of IU alumni provide additional qualitative context. IU graduates include successful business founders and entrepreneurs, senior managers in established organisations, activists, and members of the German Bundestag. A growing number of German-speaking elite athletes, including Olympic and national-team athletes, also choose to study at IU alongside their sporting careers, often enabled by flexible and digitally supported study formats. These diverse individual career paths illustrate the breadth of professional contexts in which IU graduates are active and the range of demands the study model can accommodate.



OUR APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is among the core values of IU Group and its educational institutions.

We are committed to the highest standards of sustainability to benefit all our stakeholders. IU Group is a certified B Corporation, and IU International University of Applied Sciences is a participant of the United Nations Global Compact and a member of PRME, an initiative of the UN Global Compact that unites institutions of higher education. The key principles behind these initiatives define our approach to social responsibility and sustainability.

Given the nature of IU Group’s work, our social elements play a key role in our sustainability profile. We have identified three key areas of social impact, as defined by the relevant stakeholders:



**OUR
STUDENTS**



**OUR
EMPLOYEES**



**OUR
COMMUNITIES**



**OUR ENVIRONMENTAL
FOOTPRINT**



**OUR CORPORATE
GOVERNANCE**

We have structured our ESG Report in accordance with this approach.



BUILDING A MORE PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE WITH THE UN SDGS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The UN sustainable development goals provide a series of benchmarks and targets for the future growth and development of humanity. Created as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the goals act as a blueprint for building a future that is peaceful and prosperous for all people, all over the world. The 17 SDGs seek to address a wide range of challenges that we face today—from tackling poverty, hunger, and inequality, to addressing climate change and building worldwide partnerships.

Equal access to a high-quality education is a key pillar of the agenda and is related to several of the SDGs. To this end, IU Group operates within the framework of the SDGs to help bring about the UN’s shared vision for a better world.

The challenges addressed by the SDGs are

interconnected, and to achieve the greatest impact on sustainability and future prosperity, it is important to work in many directions at once within the framework. Every year, IU Group assesses its activities through the lense of contribution to the SDGs. This report presents examples of this.

GOAL 1: No poverty



To end poverty in all its forms everywhere

See case studies
on pp. 43, 45

GOAL 3: Good health and well-being



To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

See case studies
on pp. 57, 61

GOAL 4: Quality education



To ensure inclusive, equitable, quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

See case studies
on pp. 32, 36, 39, 40, 41,
43, 46, 53, 54, 55, 56

GOAL 5: Gender equality



To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

See case studies
on pp. 38, 39, 41

GOAL 7:
**Affordable and
clean energy**



To ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

**See case studies
on pp. 60, 61**

GOAL 8:
**Decent work
and economic
growth**



To promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

**See case studies
on pp. 31, 32, 36, 37, 40,
46, 51, 57, 60, 61, 72**

GOAL 9:
**Industry,
Innovation and
Infrastructure**



To build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

**See case studies
on pp. 31, 33, 54, 73**

GOAL 10:
**Reduced
inequality**



To reduce inequality within and among countries

**See case studies
on pp. 31, 32, 35, 36,
40, 45, 53, 56, 74**

GOAL 11:
**Sustainable
cities and
communities**



To make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable

**See case studies
on pp. 39, 52, 53**

GOAL 12:
**Responsible
consumption
and production**



To ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

**See case studies
on pp. 33, 42, 52, 61, 72, 74**

GOAL 13:
**Climate
action**



To take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

**See case studies
on pp. 42, 53, 60, 61**

GOAL 15:
**Life
on land**



To protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

**See case studies
on pp. 55**

GOAL 16:
**Peace, Justice,
and Strong
Institutions**



To promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

**See case studies
on pp. 33, 34, 35, 69, 72, 74**

GOAL 17:
**Partnerships
for the Goals**



To strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

**See case studies
on pp. 32, 33, 42, 53**

Making real progress on the SDGs takes more than a committed vision and philosophy. It requires a professional approach, with our shared vision and ideals being matched by practical activities and projects, by achieving sustainable certification at the highest levels, and more.



United Nations
Global Compact

IU International University of Applied Sciences (IU) is a signatory of the United Nations Global Compact, the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, and is a member of the Global Compact Network Germany.

IU is committed to the 10 principles of the UN Global Compact, which are derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organisation's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

LABOUR

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and

Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

ENVIRONMENT

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

ANTI-CORRUPTION

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.



IU International University of Applied Sciences is also a member of Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), an initiative of the UN Global Compact that unites institutions of higher education.

PRME works to promote the following principles in the education sector worldwide.



Purpose

We advance responsible management education to foster inclusive prosperity in a world of thriving ecosystems.



Values

We place organisational responsibility and accountability to society and the planet at the core of what we do.



Teach

We transform our learning environments by integrating responsible management concepts and practices into our curriculum and pedagogy.



Research

We study people, organisations, institutions, and the state of the world to inspire responsible management and education practice.



Partner

We engage people from business, government, civil society, and academia to advance responsible and accountable management education and practice.



Practice

We adopt responsible and accountable management principles in our own governance and operations.



Share

We share our successes and failures with each other to enable our collective learning and best live our common values and purpose.

IU GROUP: A CERTIFIED B CORPORATION



In November 2023, IU Group earned the status of a certified B Corporation. It is a significant achievement that underscores our commitment to environmental, social, and governance excellence and marks a milestone in our journey towards maximising our positive societal impact.

The certification process was an extensive two-year endeavour that involved adjusting our articles of association and carrying out a meticulous assessment covering every aspect of our operations. From scrutinising our environmental footprint to evaluating our engagement with students, communities, employees, and governance, the assessment was a comprehensive exploration of our organisational practices. This achievement wouldn't have been possible without the collaborative efforts of dozens of

managers across IU Group who played a pivotal role in this journey.

Being accepted into the global community of certified B Corporations is not just an accolade: it opens doors to exciting opportunities for learning and collaboration. We now have the chance to engage with like-minded organisations, share insights, and participate in collective projects and initiatives that align with our commitment to sustainability.





EDUCATION AND RESEARCH



**ADVANCING LEARNING
IS A RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS
SOCIETY, EMPLOYERS,
AND FUTURE GENERATIONS**

‘Used thoughtfully, AI allows us to personalise learning pathways, provide timely feedback, and support students more effectively.’

Holger Sommerfeldt,
Rector of IU International University
of Applied Sciences

At IU International University of Applied Sciences, 2025 underscored the close connection between academic quality, innovation, and social impact. Our work in teaching and research continues to be guided by a simple principle: learning must empower students to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Advancing learning is therefore not only a pedagogical task: it is also a responsibility towards society, employers, and future generations.



One of the most important developments over the past year has been the further integration of AI into learning processes as part of our academic model. Used thoughtfully, AI enables more personalised learning pathways, timely feedback, and targeted support—particularly for students balancing their studies with work, family, or other commitments. From the outset, our approach has been to embed these technologies within clear pedagogical frameworks and academic oversight.

This long term commitment to responsible innovation was recognised in December 2025, when Syntea, IU’s AI learning companion, was awarded Gold at the QS Reimagine Education Awards in the category of ‘AI in Education by Higher Education Institutions’. The award reflects the cumulative work of our academic, didactic, and technology teams over several years, and it confirms that technology, when developed in close alignment with teaching practice, can meaningfully enhance learning at scale.

Within this model, academic staff play a central and active role. Intelligent systems support teaching by handling routine guidance, enabling educators to focus more deeply on mentoring, critical engagement, and academic judgement. This interaction between human expertise and technological support strengthens the quality, relevance, and credibility of studying at IU.

Our research activities continue to reinforce this approach. Across disciplines, research at IU addresses real world challenges—from environmental sustainability and social inclusion to responsible innovation and marketing—and it feeds directly back into teaching and practice. This close link between research, learning, and application is a defining feature of our academic model. The system reaccreditation granted in 2025 for the maximum possible term further confirms the robustness of our quality assurance framework and gives us confidence as we look ahead: confidence in our standards, in our academic community, and in the value we create for students and society.

>160


COUNTRIES OUR STUDENTS
COME FROM

70%


OF STUDENTS ARE FROM
NON-ACADEMIC HOUSEHOLDS

6x


MORE STUDENTS WITHOUT A LEVELS
COMPARED TO THE AVERAGE AMONG
GERMAN UNIVERSITIES

7x


GROWTH OF THE IU STUDENT
BODY FROM 2018 TO 2025



Steve Hill,
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer
of Walbrook Institute London

2025 was a year of significant change for Walbrook Institute London. The most obvious change was introducing our new name, Walbrook, which reflects our history in the City of London. However, we also made major changes to improve our online higher education offerings and governance processes.

In this year’s IU ESG report, I’m proud to share just a few of the success stories from Walbrook across 2025. We introduced our new paternal leave policies, which support both men and women to share parental responsibilities. Last summer, our student-support team launched new careers bootcamps, which helped on-campus undergraduate students and recent graduates to start their careers—especially those from less privileged or underrepresented backgrounds. This work is now being expanded into an online offering for our postgraduates.

Our LIBF professional education directorate has also worked on a number of initiatives to support a wider range of people seeking to get into the field of mortgage or financial advice. This includes a small scholarship programme for our industry-leading CeMAP qualification, as well as launching a major new apprenticeship programme to help the financial services sector bring in new recruits or develop existing talent. In 2026, we have even more exciting plans to develop our environmental, social and governance commitments.



Trevor Pothier,
President of the University of Fredericton

At the University of Fredericton, we recognise that sustainability and social responsibility are essential considerations for any institution preparing learners for the future. As an online university, we are thoughtful about how our operations, partnerships, and learning environments can contribute positively to the communities we serve.

Our connection with IU Group continues to provide valuable guidance as we strengthen our approach to ESG. Their experience and established frameworks help inform how we think about sustainability and responsible governance as we continue to grow.

We are making progress towards establishing a sustainability strategy that reflects our values as an institution. We see this work as an ongoing journey. As UFred continues to evolve, we remain committed to learning, improving, and identifying meaningful ways to contribute to a more sustainable future for our students, our community, and the world around us.



BUILDING AI-RELEVANT SKILLS AS A CORE PART OF IU'S SOCIAL MISSION

Artificial intelligence is increasingly shaping how work is organised, how decisions are made, and how value is created across almost all areas of society. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025 highlights that a significant share of core job skills will change within the current decade, with AI-related capabilities and analytical thinking now being two of the fastest-growing requirements across professions. This makes it clear that the ability to work competently and responsibly with AI is becoming a foundational skill, not a niche qualification. For higher education institutions, this development creates a clear responsibility: to ensure that students are not only exposed to AI tools but are systematically prepared to apply those tools critically, ethically, and confidently in professional contexts.

At IU International University of Applied Sciences, this responsibility is addressed through the Job Readiness Framework, a structured and transparent model for developing AI-related competencies as part of accredited degree programmes. Conceptual work on the framework began in 2025, reflecting IU's early recognition that rapid technological developments in the field of AI were outpacing the depth and consistency with which related skills were being fostered in higher education.

The Job Readiness Framework defines what it means for students to be 'AI-ready' at different stages of their studies. It structures competency development across five progressive levels, ranging from the basic and reflective use of AI tools to more advanced applications and strategic collaboration with AI in professional decision-making. Rather than focusing on a single tool or technology, the framework emphasises transferable capabilities that will remain relevant as AI systems evolve.



Many IU students are working adults, people in the midst of a career change, or first-generation students seeking access to future-relevant skills. By embedding the Job Readiness Framework across disciplines—from IT and business to social work and design—IU helps ensure that students from diverse backgrounds are equipped to participate responsibly and confidently in an AI-enabled working world.

A recent IU survey³ underscores the impact of this approach: 83% of IU students and graduates agree that they have learned how to meaningfully deploy AI tools during their studies. By comparison, the figure is only 70% at other private higher education institutions and 67% at state universities.

Through the Job Readiness Framework, IU is translating technological change into educational responsibility, contributing to our students' long-term employability and social mobility, and ensuring a more inclusive transition into the digital future.

Students develop these competencies through their regular coursework, not through stand-alone AI modules. Existing subject content remains academically unchanged but is complemented by AI-related learning activities that are directly connected to disciplinary contexts. Depending on the programme and level, this includes learning how to formulate meaningful questions for AI systems,

critically assess and interpret AI-generated outputs, compare different tools, and decide when tasks should or should not be supported by AI. Crucially, students are expected to reflect on the limitations, risks, and ethical considerations of AI alongside its efficiency gains.

The framework deliberately combines technical understanding with human capabilities

such as judgement, critical thinking, creativity, and responsibility. In doing so, it reinforces the principle that AI should support human decision-making, not replace it. Assessment focuses on application, reasoning, and reflection, enabling students to demonstrate AI-related competencies in a manner that is transparent and comparable.

³ Quantitative figures are drawn from University Experience Study 2026, a survey conducted by Kantar Profiles between 27 August and 20 October 2025. A total of 4,004 students and graduates from public and private universities were surveyed, including 1,597 alumni, representative in terms of age and gender. The target group was alumni from the last five years, students and university dropouts. The survey was commissioned by IU International University from Kantar Profiles. The data was collected independently by Kantar Profiles in accordance with internal quality standards. Qualitative references to individual career paths (e.g. founders, members of parliament, elite athletes) are based on publicly available information and internal institutional records and are included solely for contextual illustration, not as evidence of performance or impact.

PIONEERING AI IN EDUCATION AT IU: QUALITY, TRUST, RESPONSIBILITY

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping how people work, learn, and make decisions. In higher education, this creates both an obligation and an opportunity: to use AI not as a shortcut or replacement for academic work, but as a tool that genuinely improves learning quality while preparing students to act responsibly in an AI enabled world. Syntea, IU International University of Applied Sciences' AI based study companion, was developed to address this challenge in a concrete, institutionally governed way.



Syntea is designed to deliver high quality, personalised learning support at scale for distance learning students, most of whom are working adults balancing studies with professional and family responsibilities. For these learners, continuity, time efficiency, and confidence in their progress are crucial. Syntea supports students by helping them structure their studies, resume learning efficiently, and make progress visible. It does not replace lecturers or academic staff; instead, it reinforces the self learning aspect of higher education within a university controlled academic framework.

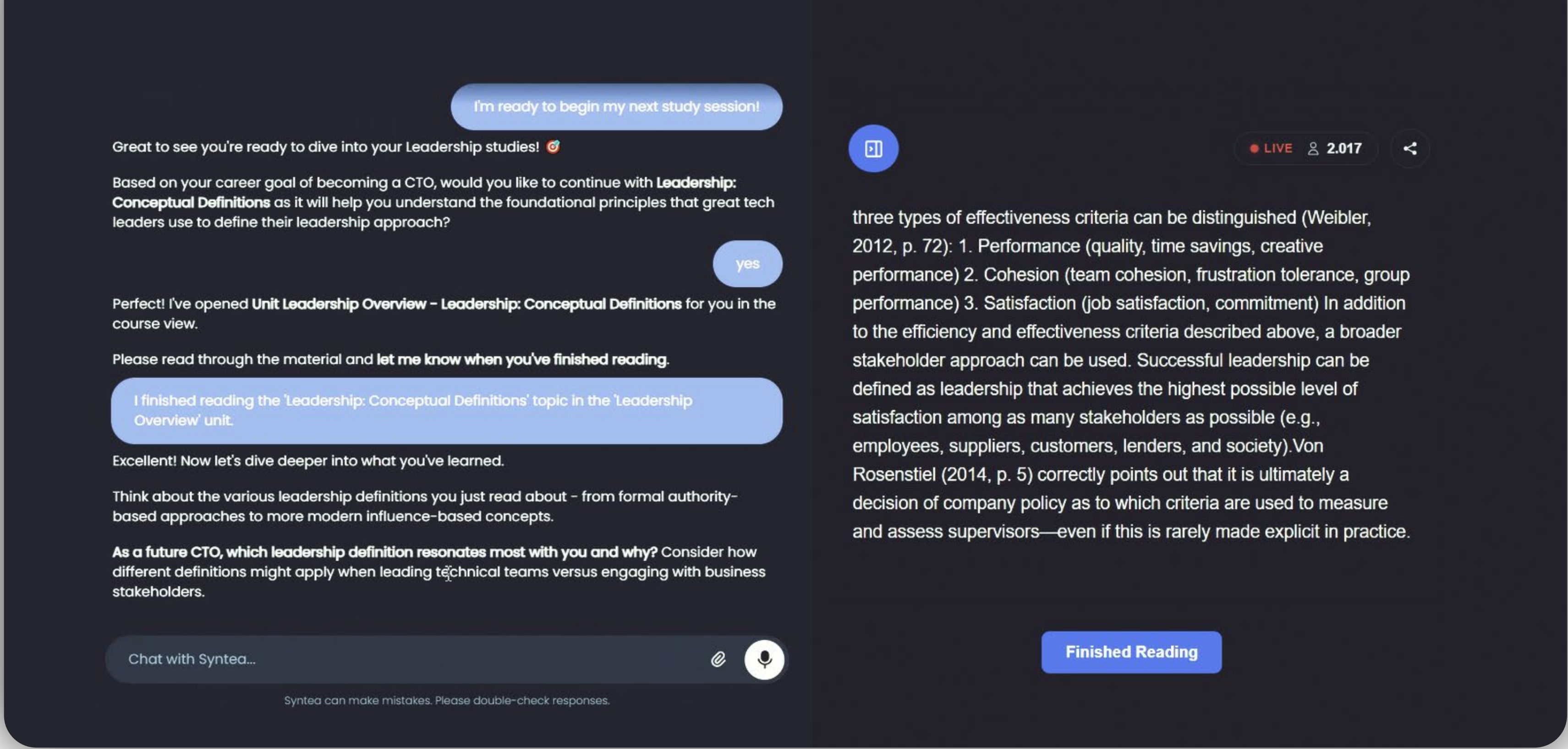
The strength of Syntea lies in its pedagogical integration of artificial intelligence. Rather than producing isolated answers, the platform guides students through structured learning journeys that move from understanding to application and reflection. It adapts to individual learning progress, supports different learning formats, and provides clear indicators of learning status and exam readiness. Students who engage with Syntea voluntarily and over sustained periods of time report deeper understanding of course content and increased confidence in exam preparation. Faculty members benefit from aggregated insights into engagement patterns and learning challenges, enabling more targeted academic support without individual level monitoring.

The educational value of this approach has also been externally validated. In December 2025, Syntea received the Gold Award in the category ‘AI in Education by Higher Education Institutions’ at the QS Reimagine Education Awards. The award recognises initiatives that embed AI into teaching and learning in a way that measurably improves educational outcomes and complements academic instruction. Responsibility has remained a core design

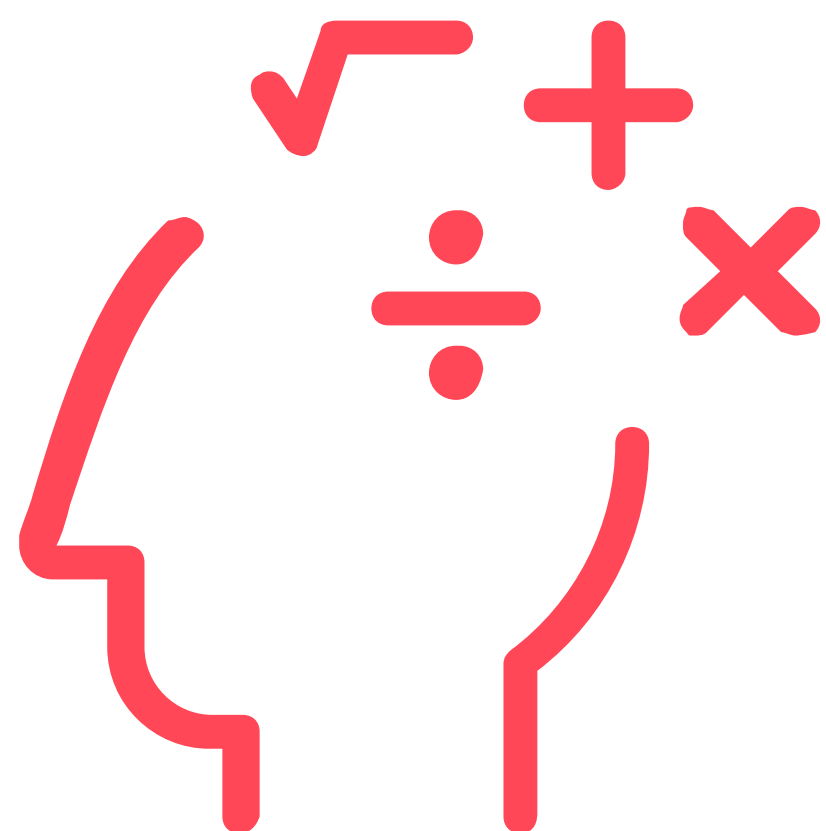
principle throughout Syntea’s development and operation. The system is deliberately limited to supporting learning, not completing assessed work. Outputs are primarily grounded in IU curated course materials, reducing risks related to inaccurate or fabricated content. Quality assurance processes and expert reviewed answers further enhance its reliability. IU also addresses broader the risks associated with AI through measures to mitigate

bias, misuse, and security vulnerabilities, as well as through strict data protection practices aligned with GDPR. Instructor views are aggregated and anonymised, ensuring privacy and proportionality.

Through Syntea, IU is demonstrating how artificial intelligence can be used to raise educational quality while being still governed responsibly—supporting student success today and building essential competencies for an AI shaped society.



CASE STUDIES



FOUNDERS@IUG – STRENGTHENING ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT THROUGH RESEARCH AND TRANSFER



Continuing to build on the momentum of launch in 2022, Founders@IUG (previously known as Founders@IU) further expanded IU’s entrepreneurship ecosystem in 2025 by strengthening structures, increasing outreach, and deepening research-based insights into students’ entrepreneurial intentions.

A key milestone was the establishment of the Transfer and Research Centre ‘Founders@IUG’ to further professionalise IU’s support for entrepreneurial students at the crux of research, teaching, and transfer.

Throughout the year, Founders@IUG hosted ‘Startup Date’ events in cooperation with multiple German universities and EXIST, published interviews with founders and external experts, and ran information sessions focussed on the

EXIST programme. In addition, the team conducted individual counselling conversations with students interested in founding a company. IU’s research office has submitted nine EXIST applications (all for the EXIST start-up scholarship). Four were approved, with two officially starting in 2025 (and two starting in 2026).

To embed entrepreneurship more strongly in the student community, an entrepreneurship information course was established, an Entrepreneurship at IU Students’ Teams group was launched, monthly meetups were conducted, and expert mentoring sessions were introduced.

Furthermore, IU contributed again to the international GUESSS study (coordinated by the University of St. Gallen and the University of Bern) and continued its role as national coordinator for Germany for the GUESSS 2025 data collection process.

Together, these activities reinforce IU’s commitment to empowering students with skills, networks, and evidence-based support to turn ideas into impact.

 For more information, see the Founders@IUG website: www.iu.de/en/graduation/founders-at-iu/



THE STUDY ACCESS ALLIANCE

The Study Access Alliance (SAA) provides scholarships that enable financially disadvantaged students to access university education, initially with a focus on Africa. With only around 9% of university-aged people across many African countries enrolled in higher education (approximately four times lower than the global average), the SAA helps address affordability barriers by offering access to high-quality online bachelor’s and master’s degrees across a range of disciplines.

Founded in 2022, the SAA works through a network of local organisations to support students where they live and learn. IU Group has been involved since the initiative began, with IU International University of Applied Sciences contributing a broad portfolio of online degree programmes. Beyond tuition support, the SAA and its partners provide mentoring, soft-skills development, and internship opportunities to help students build practical experience and improve their employability alongside their academic qualifications.

To support the transition from study to work, the SAA also collaborates with employability-focused organisations that provide career pathways and, where possible, job placement opportunities after graduation. These partnerships are designed to connect students with professional networks and improve their prospects of securing meaningful employment.

In 2025, the Study Access Alliance strengthened its foundations to expand its long-term impact. Early in the year, the Alliance expanded its statutes to enable future scholarship programmes in developing countries beyond Africa, opening pathways for potential engagement in regions such as South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. The Alliance also welcomed ALX Africa as a new implementation partner, further enhancing its delivery capacity and reach.

As at the end of 2025, the programme supported 1,300 active students, with the largest cohorts coming from Nigeria (606) and South Africa (494), followed by Kenya (68) and Uganda (31). The average age of students was 28 years, and the gender distribution was 55% male, 45% female, and 0.3% diverse. The students’ academic portfolios maintained a strong focus on technology and digital degree programmes, with Cyber Security (187), Data Science (167), and Computer Science (165) being the most popular fields of study.

Implementation continued to be led primarily by Reconstructed Living Labs (RLabs), the project’s main implementation partner, supporting 1,243 students. Additional partners contributing to delivery and local support included Mully Children’s Family, Watoto, Artsy Africa Academy, Tangeni Shilongo Namibia, TooShare, NifA, and others, reinforcing the collaborative approach to expanding access to education and digital skills development.

 **For more information, see the SAA website:**
www.study-access-alliance.org



It is fundamental to us at IU Group that all people have access to education and growth, which is why we are proud to partner with the Study Access Alliance.

Dr Sven Schütt,
 CEO of IU Group



RESEARCH CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE MEDIA & MARKETING (RCSMM): ACTIVITIES IN 2025



The Research Center for Sustainable Media & Marketing (RCSMM) is an IU research centre that looks at how media and marketing can create value in a way that is transparent, responsible, and aligned with IU’s ESG goals. A core focus is developing better ways to assess media impact—going beyond classic performance metrics such as reach and clicks.

 **For more information, see the RCSMM website:**
<https://www.iu.de/en/research/projects/research-center-for-sustainable-media-marketing/>

IN 2025, THE RCSMM WORKED IN THREE MAIN AREAS:

1. RESEARCH:

Developing the Value Media Scale

The RCSMM continued building the Value Media Scale, a measurement approach that aims to capture the broader value of media and advertising (for users, businesses, and society). In autumn 2025, the team conducted a qualitative research study (including group discussions and interviews). Early findings showed that people see different media types as providing different kinds of value, and that factors such as trust, transparency, and resilience matter. The research also found that whether advertising is turned into action depends on the context and the user’s goal at that moment.

2. COLLABORATION:

The Value Media Board

To link research with real-world needs, the RCSMM runs the Value Media Board, a forum

that brings together media organisations, advertisers, agencies, audit experts, and academics. In 2025, the Board met twice in Hamburg and held four online working sessions. These meetings were helpful in testing ideas early, collecting feedback, and agreeing on next steps. The Board also introduced ‘Value Voices’, inviting external experts to review and challenge the interim results.

3. PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

Workshops with pioneer partners

The RCSMM also worked with selected partners in a series of three workshops to translate topics related to ESG and resilience into practical media and marketing approaches. The RCSMM and its partners developed and discussed concrete value propositions and explored how to make sustainability commitments more credible by linking them to clear criteria, KPIs, and governance.

The RCSMM’s work received attention in industry media and was referenced in the IAB Europe Social Impact Report 2025, thereby supporting the centre’s aim to advance more responsible media planning.



IU ESTABLISHES NEW INSTITUTE FOR PRACTICE-ORIENTED RESEARCH ON RADICALISATION AND PREVENTION IN ESSEN

On 29 April 2025, IU International University of Applied Sciences established the Centre for Radicalisation Research and Prevention (Zentrum für Radikalisierungsforschung und Prävention, ZRP) as an independent institute at its Essen campus. The launch was marked by a joint symposium with the Evangelischer Erziehungsverband e.V. (EREV) that brought together leading researchers and practitioners from across Germany.

The ZRP positions scientific research as a central pillar in countering anti-democratic and extremist movements. As a practice-oriented, interdisciplinary institute rooted in social work, it aims to identify blind spots in radicalisation research and to develop reliable, evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, public administration, and frontline professionals. The findings will be actively translated into prevention work to address current challenges with new, practical concepts.

Prof. Dr Burak Çopur, Head of the ZRP, said:

‘We deliberately chose the Ruhr region as the location for the ZRP: the region stands for social diversity, urbanity, and structural challenges like no other. With its excellent team of researchers, the ZRP is the first of its kind in North Rhine-Westphalia—with a decidedly practical focus—and it complements the existing research landscape in the field of radicalisation and prevention with an urgently needed, practice-oriented social work perspective.’

As part of its founding events, the ZRP hosted a symposium at the Essen campus in cooperation with EREV titled ‘Recognising the signs! Developments in right-wing populism after the 2025 federal elections—challenges in child and youth welfare’. The programme featured hands-on workshops on the role of social media in radicalisation dynamics, recognising and addressing right-wing extremist attitudes in families, and victim protection, alongside space for discussion and networking.

The ZRP takes an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on social work, political science, criminology and education, and employing diverse methods. Its researchers analyse the causes and dynamics of radicalisation across family settings, schools, digital spaces, and civil society. Its work is intercultural and multilingual, and it is conducted both nationally and internationally, including through cooperation with the University of Vienna. Evaluations of existing exit and advisory programmes are a core element. Early projects have focused on antisemitism, religiously motivated extremism, ultra-nationalism and (de)radicalisation in youth contexts.

 **For more information, visit the ZRP website:**
<https://www.iu.de/en/research/projects/forschungsinstitut-zrp>

IU GRADUATE ALINA KLEIN HONoured FOR GROUNDBREAKING WORK ON QUEER REFUGEES

Queer and refugee: two identities that can each pose challenges—and when combined, can form a doubly-marginalised, frequently overlooked group. Alina Klein, a Bochum resident and graduate of the Dual Study programme in Social Work at IU International University of Applied Sciences (IU) in Dortmund, dedicated her bachelor’s thesis to queer refugees in Germany. She received the IU Diversity Award 2025 for her work.

In her thesis, LGBTQIA+ in the Context of Refuge, Klein explores the intersectional challenges and needs of queer people with refugee experience. Her aim is to create visibility, foster understanding, and provide professionals with concrete, practical options for support. ‘Many queer refugees experience double marginalisation—because of their origins as well as their sexual orientation or gender identity’, says the 28-year-old graduate. ‘My work aims to show that more is needed than symbolism—namely, real spaces, safeguarding concepts, and awareness-raising in everyday professional practice.’ Theory and practice are closely interlinked

Klein’s thesis, which is connected to her practical work at the Protestant Youth Welfare Service in Bochum, where she works on a self-sufficiency programme for unaccompanied minor refugees. She also conducted interviews with professionals from a Bochum network partner that provides both educational work on sexual and gender diversity as well as targeted services for queer refugees. IU’s Dual Study model offered Klein an ideal foundation for combining theory and practice: ‘I was able to apply my knowledge directly to my professional everyday life—and, conversely, to address the topics that concern me in practice in

a scientifically sound way. The high degree of flexibility in the design of examinations allowed me to translate my passion into an academic project.’ Even during her studies, Klein engaged in practice beyond the curriculum. She organised training courses on protection against discrimination and implemented awareness-raising initiatives in her workplace, including workshops for young refugees, flyers, stickers, and rainbow pins. ‘It’s often the little things that have a big impact. One client told me that our campaign made her feel truly seen. That was very touching’, she recalls. Klein’s work was recognised with the IU Diversity Award 2025 for its social relevance and practice-oriented depth. ‘Alina succeeds in illuminating a highly sensitive topic not only with a scientifically sound approach, but also with tangible empathy and practical relevance. Her work highlights what is



often overlooked—and provides concrete ideas for how professionals can better support queer refugees. It is an outstanding example of how scholarship can help shape social change’, says Ariane Weber, staff member at the Equal Opportunities Office and project manager for the Diversity Award at IU International University of Applied Sciences. Looking ahead, Klein plans to continue to pursue her vision. She has begun a master’s degree in social work focused on trauma education, refugee issues, and migration, and she envisages pursuing a doctorate in the longer term. Her goal is to share her experience with students and encourage them in their future roles as social workers. IU International University of Applied Sciences has been bestowing the IU Diversity Award to its students twice annually since 2018. Students, whether based in Germany or internationally, are eligible to submit their bachelor’s or master’s thesis for review by a 10-member jury comprising teaching staff and specialists on examinations, equality, and other areas. The IU Diversity Award seeks to raise public awareness of research in the field of diversity and is endowed with a prize of 500 euros.

WALBROOK OFFERS CAMPUS TO CAREER BOOTCAMP

Between 17 June and 10 July 2025, Walbrook held its first Campus to Career Bootcamp. Walbrook’s student-support team designed the bootcamp to prepare upcoming and recent graduates to compete with confidence when entering the graduate labour market. It was particularly aimed at helping the 2025 graduating class to break into the competitive banking and finance sector.



The programme was specifically designed with students/graduates from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds in mind. To help prevent this group from potentially facing further disadvantages in the jobs market, the team used a flexible approach to widen participation and eliminate barriers.

The team ran four core sessions covering graduate career pathways, strategic job hunting, personal branding, and how to win in recruitment. As the programme ran in the summer months, each of the four core sessions were run three times to fit busy schedules. This enabled upcoming and recent graduates to balance work, holidays, and job hunting. All sessions were

hosted live over Microsoft Teams, so people could join from anywhere in the world without the need to spend money or time on travelling to central London.

In a survey afterwards, 100% of respondents said the sessions gave them clear, useful takeaways for their job search and that they would recommend the bootcamp to their peers. Moreover, 86% said they already felt more confident applying the topics the team covered in the sessions.

Here are the views of one student who participated:

‘The Walbrook careers bootcamp offered me a way to not only better prepare myself for work, but also to understand and better navigate the whole job application process. I was given active advice and feedback on the whole process, and I quickly understood how to best present myself to employers. The result was a much higher response rate from employers, with a multitude of

Campus to Career Bootcamp

Still looking for your first graduate job?

Join Walbrook Careers' Campus to Career Bootcamp, with four interactive skills sessions to help you break into banking and finance!

✓ Flexible schedule

✓ Hosted live virtually on MS Teams

✓ Accelerate your job search

Free £50 voucher

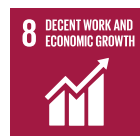
WALBROOK
Institute London

17 June – 10 July 2025 | Register on Brightspace

interviews and job offers, among which was my dream job offer at a top fintech bank.’

Walbrook used the Campus to Careers Bootcamp to pilot its new approach to careers support. This first cohort was composed of undergraduate banking and finance students. However, the student-support team designed the bootcamp format so that it can be scaled up to support online students as well as those studying on campus.

They will now explore how to adapt it for online postgraduate students who are at different career stages and aiming for outcomes like changing careers or stepping into leadership.

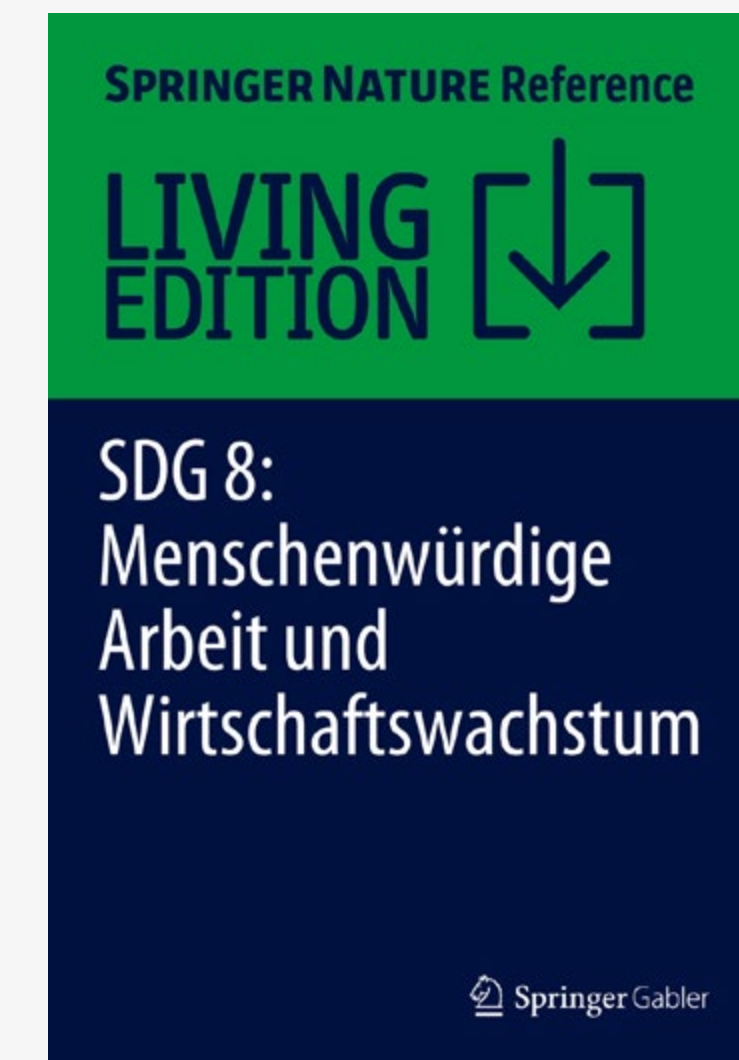


IU CONTRIBUTES TO LANDMARK REFERENCE WORK ON SDG 8

IU International University of Applied Sciences has contributed to the newly finalised German-language reference work *SDG 8: Menschenwürdige Arbeit und Wirtschaftswachstum* (SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth), edited by leading academics, including IU's Gabriele Schuster. The handbook provides an authoritative overview of the United Nations' SDG 8 and serves as a vital resource for research, teaching, and practice. IU academics authored or co-authored 9 of the 63 articles, underscoring IU's scholarly contribution to advancing decent working conditions and sustainable, inclusive economic growth.

IU CONTRIBUTIONS INCLUDE CHAPTERS BY:

- Astrid Mühlböck, *'Empowerment—Nachhaltige Hilfe zur Entwicklung: Eine Fallstudie aus Kenia'* ('Empowerment—Sustainable Development Aid: A Case Study from Kenya').
- Caterina Fox et al., *'Fliegen für morgen: Empfehlungen für eine nachhaltige Gestaltung der Luftfahrt'* ('Flying for Tomorrow: Recommendations for a Sustainable Aviation Industry').
- Esin Bozyazi, *'Soziale Innovationen in Uganda zur Erreichung von SDG 8'* ('Social Innovations in Uganda to Achieve SDG 8').
- Johannes Treu, *'Die Rolle von finanzieller Inklusion und Fintech bei der Realisierung des SDG 8'* ('The Role of Financial Inclusion and Fintech in Realising SDG 8').
- Lars Wohlers, *'Vielfalt regionalökonomischer Effekte von Großschutzgebieten'* ('The Diversity of Regional Economic Effects of Major Protected Areas').
- Marion Kalteis, *'Nachhaltige Werbung zur Unterstützung der Ziele für nachhaltige Entwicklung (SDG) der Vereinten Nationen: Die Rolle des nachhaltigen Marketings in der Förderung des Sustainable Development Goal 8 inmitten globaler Herausforderungen'* ('Sustainable Advertising and the UN SDGs: The Role of Sustainable Marketing in Promoting SDG 8 amid Global Challenges').
- Miriam O'Shea and Gabriele Schuster, *'Ablösung des Wachstumsparadigmas: Eine systemtheoretische Analyse zum Aufbau einer ressourcenschonenden, verteilungsgerechten Ökonomie'* ('Moving Beyond the Growth Paradigm: A Systems-Theoretical Analysis for a Resource-Saving, Equitable Economy').
- Nicole Fabisch, René Schmidpeter, Gabriele Schuster, and Andrea Sihn-Weber, *'Überblick zu den Zielen einer nachhaltigen Entwicklung (Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des 8. Nachhaltigkeitsziels'* ('Overview of Sustainable Development Goals with a Focus on Goal 8').
- Sonja Württemberger, Eva Voß, and Katharina Rehfeldt, *'Strukturelle Diskriminierung und Gendergerechtigkeit'* ('Structural Discrimination and Gender Equality').



This collective contribution reflects IU's commitment to evidence-based scholarship that supports the 2030 Agenda and informs policy, industry practice, and curriculum development.



IU-LED STUDY: PUBLIC WANTS MORE WOMEN IN POLITICAL POWER

IU International University of Applied Sciences has conducted a representative binational study on gender and political leadership in Germany and the USA. The findings show strong public support for more women in positions of political power, alongside clear evidence of ongoing structural barriers.



In Germany, 63.5% of respondents believe the world would be better governed if more women held political leadership roles. At the same time, 69.8% think men are more likely to be elected, even when equally or better qualified women are available. In the USA, results collected before the most recent presidential election show a similar picture: 69.2% agree ‘completely’ or ‘somewhat’ that the world would be better governed with more women in power, while 76.3% believe men

still have an advantage, even when women have comparable or better qualifications. IU’s research also shows that stereotypes remain deeply rooted in how politicians are perceived. In Germany, 73.5% agree that men tend to be seen as assertive in difficult situations, while 69.3% say women are more likely to be perceived as emotional in similar contexts. In the USA, 80.8% agree ‘completely’ or ‘somewhat’ that men in politics tend to be perceived as assertive in difficult situations.

Prof. Dr. Alexandra Wuttig, Chancellor of IU International University of Applied Sciences and Professor of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, says: ‘These results illustrate how deeply rooted gender stereotypes shape the perception of political leaders. They not only influence how politicians are viewed by the public but also affect women’s careers and opportunities to rise to leadership positions. Prejudices such as the image of the assertive man and the emotional woman mean that women are often passed

over despite having equal or even better qualifications. These entrenched stereotypes not only make individual advancement more difficult but also hinder social progress towards a fairer and more diverse political landscape.’

EXPECTATIONS OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN GERMANY

IU’s study also examined what the public expects from political leaders. In Germany, integrity and honesty (38.0%) are cited most often, followed by expertise in political and economic issues (35.9%), crisis competence (34.5%), and leadership skills (31.4%). Moreover, 66.8% of respondents see benefits in having diverse leadership that considers factors such as gender, age, and origin.

METHOD AND SCOPE

IU surveyed 1,200 people in each country, aged 16–65, with samples representative of age, gender, and federal state (Germany) or Census Region and Divisions (USA). Fieldwork took place from 25 September to 3 October 2024. By conducting this research, IU advances evidence-based discourse on gender equality in leadership and contributes insights that can inform policy, education, and organisational practice.



ARCHITECTURE NEEDS DIVERSITY: IU PARTICIPATES IN WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE FESTIVAL 2025

With its clear stance on promoting equal opportunities in architecture and construction, IU International University of Applied Sciences in Munich took part in the nationwide WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE (WIA) 2025 festival. Under the programme title ‘Let’s Talk Transformation’, three public events were held in central Munich on 26–27 June, conceived by IU professors and dual-study architecture students in collaboration with Ruffinihaus Creative Hub Munich and the architectural firm bmquadrat | Architektur + Design.

IU aimed not only to advance the discourse on equality in the construction industry but also to make it visible in public space through lectures, dialogue formats, and a temporary dialogue kiosk at Rindermarkt. The first day drew strong interest from practitioners, academia, and the public, who debated structural barriers, personal experiences, and practical strategies for a more equitable planning environment. The second day focused on the question: ‘What does it take to achieve equal opportunities in the

construction industry?’ Interdisciplinary teams ran workshops on topics such as the gender pay gap, leadership, career access, and funding structures. Central questions included: How do construction projects benefit from diverse teams? What evidence exists? How can equality be promoted, both at universities and in professional practice? The context is clear: Over 60% of architecture students are women, yet, according to Statista data, in 2024 only 34.1% of practicing architects were women. In academia, just 27% of

professorships were held by women in 2023; while leadership roles in architecture and construction remained about 66% male-dominated, and the gender pay gap persists. There is also limited awareness that the industry’s environment must work for everyone—across genders, generations, and professional groups. ‘The numbers speak for themselves. But even more crucial is the potential: diverse planning teams demonstrably produce better results—they work more efficiently, more innovatively,

and with greater social sensitivity. Research that takes a multi-perspective approach is published more frequently and is therefore more relevant. Construction processes developed in mixed-gender and, above all, intergenerational teams shape a building culture for all’, said project lead Prof. Dr Bettina-Maria Müller, Professor of Architecture at IU in Munich. ‘We see it as our educational mission to continue this discussion and actively involve students in the necessary transformation processes.’



IU AND THE ASSOCIATION OF GERMAN VETERANS CONCLUDE A NATIONWIDE EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP



IU International University of Applied Sciences (IU) has become the first educational institution to cooperate with the Bund Deutscher EinsatzVeteranen e.V. (BDV e.V. / Association of German Veterans). The collaboration opens new opportunities for Bundeswehr service members injured in combat through personalised educational programmes, and it supports their pathway back into the job market. On 11 March 2025, representatives of IU and BDV e.V. signed the framework cooperation agreement at the Cologne campus.

Through this partnership, BDV e.V. members gain streamlined access to IU's more than 250 accredited degree programmes and approximately 500 continuing education programmes. Most offerings are available online, independent of location and time, and can be tailored to individual learning needs.

Prof. Kurt Jeschke, Academic Director of IU Corporate & Upskilling, commented: 'With our educational concept, we want to make a decisive contribution to giving these committed individuals the opportunity to develop professionally and shape their personal futures individually. For IU, it is not only an obligation but an honour to be available as an educational partner for those affected.'

IU's formats are designed around flexibility, technological innovation, and barrier-free access. Their digital delivery makes them particularly suitable for service members with deployment-related disabilities. IU also offers

individualised compensation for students with disabilities to ensure equal opportunities. Dedicated consultation hours support the formal application process and enable staff to advise on suitable measures and options. These services are complemented by mentoring, study coaching, and a moderated online community for students with disabilities.

The cooperation will initially be implemented in a pilot phase with selected participants. Continuous monitoring and evaluation will guide the further development of the support services, with the goal of establishing a scalable, sustainable model nationwide.

Andreas Eggert, Secretary General of BDV e.V., said: 'Education is the key to a self-determined life after service. We are pleased that IU accompanies our veterans on their path to a civilian future—with respect, flexibility, and concrete prospects.' BDV e.V. is a centralised organisation dedicated to the needs of soldiers injured in combat. It has

been described by the Research Service of the German Bundestag as a ‘driving force for German veteran culture’. The association gives those affected a voice and promotes their reintegration into the labor market through psychological, medical, and legal support—and, through its cooperation with IU, now also through education and professional development.

Since its founding, more than 10 million soldiers have served in the Bundeswehr, and approximately 462,000 have been deployed abroad in more than 50 countries to protect democratic values. Various studies indicate that up to 20% of deployed personnel return with a health impairment. Many veterans live with physical and/or mental disabilities, including hearing or vision impairments, mobility limitations, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). They have a right to education, further training, and other mechanisms to reorient themselves and re-integrate into civilian life—rights this partnership is designed to help realise.



WALBROOK STUDY HIGHLIGHTS BARRIERS FOR YOUNG WOMEN IN STEM



The Walbrook Institute London has released a new study, ‘Young women on STEM education’, that explores why comparatively few young women pursue science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) despite broad interest. Surveying 1,000 female students aged 16–19 across the United Kingdom, the report found that 70% expressed a personal interest in STEM subjects, yet several perceived barriers limited further engagement.

Five primary factors emerged: 61% believe STEM study requires an exceptionally high level of effort; 50% feel overwhelmed by STEM topics; 43% consider STEM too expensive because the heavy workload would prevent taking a side job; 42% think the subjects are too difficult; and 38% say others doubt their ability to complete such studies.

The respondents also reported high aspirations: 90% plan to attend university, 85% prioritise career success, 84% want to support and be present for their families, and 81% seek financial security.

The report concludes that, although interest remains strong, perceived workload and cost, confidence issues, and external perceptions continue to limit participation. It recommends targeted interventions to address these challenges and improve engagement and retention among young women in STEM fields.

REWARDING STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH TREE PLANTING: IU AND IMPACT HERO

IU International University of Applied Sciences, in collaboration with Impact Hero, is reinforcing its sustainability commitment by encouraging students to choose digital study materials over printed ones and planting trees in return.

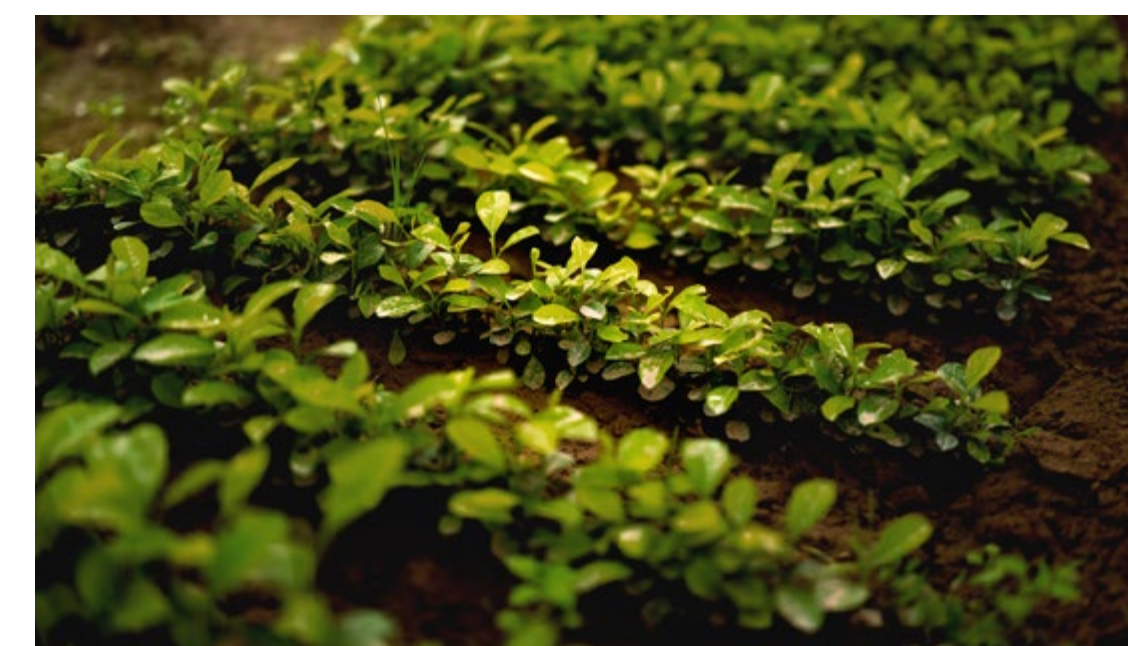
Most IU students study remotely and can opt to receive exclusively digital scripts instead of printed versions. For every 20 scripts not printed, IU donates to Impact Hero's 'Grow My Tree' project to fund the planting of one tree.

Alex Čaičics, Head of Sustainability and ESG Communications at IU Group, commented: 'This ongoing initiative underscores IU's commitment to promoting sustainable choices. As one of the first higher education

providers in Germany and Europe to calculate and offset our carbon footprint, we recognise that distance education produces at least seven times less greenhouse gas per student than traditional campus-based education. We aim to go beyond this by enabling our students to contribute even further to the decarbonisation of their educational journey.'

Since 2023, IU has planted more than 25,000 trees in partnership with Impact Hero. We remain committed to continuously enhancing our sustainability practices and making education more eco-friendly and accessible.

 **For more information, see the IU profile on the project website:**
<https://growmytree.com/en/pages/impact/iu>





IU STUDENTS TAKE ACTION ON YOUTH AND FAMILY HOMELESSNESS IN AUGSBURG

Throughout the reporting year, students from IU International University of Applied Sciences in Augsburg worked with local partners to address homelessness among young people and families through both awareness campaigns and hands-on support.

In a joint project with Stadtjugendring Augsburg, mixed teams from the Social Work and Media Design departments researched, conceptualised, and produced creative campaigns to highlight the realities of youth homelessness and to reduce stigma. Outputs included a poster series featuring real testimonials, short videos for social media, proposals for public installations such as a symbolic ‘suitcase wall’, and interactive workshops for local schools. Co-created with input from social services practitioners and communication and design experts, the work was presented at the project’s closing event, attended by representatives from youth services, social organisations, and the municipal administration. Elements of the campaigns are expected to inform ongoing public communication in the city and offer practical avenues for support and engagement.

Complementing this awareness work, first-year Social Work students Saniya Kececi and Donjeta Zyrapi led a hands-on project as part of IU’s Dual Study programme, managing a Bauwagen—a converted mobile activity space—dedicated to children from homeless families

living in transitional housing. The initiative, run in cooperation with the City of Augsburg, Prisma e.V., and the Evangelisches Kinder- und Jugendhilfezentrum, set up the Bauwagen in the Bärenkeller and Hochzoll-Süd neighborhoods in October 2025. Kececi and Zyrapi are responsible for the Bauwagen at Drosselweg in Bärenkeller, where children aged 5–13 take part in playful, creative, and movement-oriented activities and receive everyday support from social pedagogical professionals. The aim is to provide a safe, supportive environment that fosters confidence and independence amid complex family challenges. The project is supervised by IU professors Dr Christian Thiel and Dr Rebecca Schmolke.

Together, these initiatives strengthened collaboration between IU, local organisations, and public agencies, while also giving students the opportunity to apply academic learning to real-world needs and to contribute tangible support to the Augsburg community.

IU AND DIVERSITY CHARTER LAUNCH A FREE DIVERSITY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR FIRMS

IU International University of Applied Sciences and the Diversity Charter have introduced the Diversity Maturity Model (*Diversity-Reifegradmodell*), a free, open-access tool that helps organisations evaluate and improve their DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) practices.

Developed by IU professors Sonja Württemberger and Katharina-Maria Rehfeld in cooperation with Corina Christen and Şeyma Erdi from the Diversity Charter, the model is accessible and user-friendly, making it suitable for businesses of all sizes. It enables companies in Germany to assess their current DEI status and to define practical steps toward greater diversity and participation—from micro- and small enterprises to medium-sized companies and large corporations.

The Diversity Maturity Model is grounded in 24 qualitative interviews conducted by the two IU researchers with corporate DEI experts after the project launched last summer. A comprehensive literature review provided the scientific underpinning, and a multi-stage expert validation process ensured robustness. The methodological approach is described in detail in a recently

published paper. Companies can already use this model to self-assess the maturity of their DEI efforts via a free, open-access assessment. The tool, created with the assistance of the start-up D² – Denkfabrik Diversität, is now available. The Diversity Charter is Germany’s largest employer initiative that promotes diversity in companies and institutions. It advocates for a respectful, prejudice-free working environment

in which all employees—regardless of age, ethnic origin and nationality, gender and gender identity, physical and mental abilities, religion and ideology, sexual orientation, or social background—can develop their potential. IU is a proud signatory of the Diversity Charter.

 **For more information, see the Charter website:**
<https://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/>





IU LAUNCHES A RESEARCH PROJECT ON FINANCIAL EDUCATION FOR OLDER ADULTS

Studies indicate that older adults—particularly women with interrupted employment histories, former self-employed individuals, and migrants—often possess less financial knowledge and face a higher risk of poverty. Systematically developed educational and advisory services tailored to their needs remain scarce, yet such offerings would help older people make secure financial decisions in retirement and strengthen their long-term economic security.

In response to this need, IU International University of Applied Sciences has launched the interdisciplinary research project ‘FinBiSen’,

which examines the level of financial literacy among older adults and their specific needs in relation to financial education. The project’s primary objective is to generate robust data to inform precisely targeted educational offerings that empower older people to manage their financial futures autonomously.

‘In light of demographic change, sound financial education is especially vital for older adults—not only for their individual security, but also for social cohesion’, said project lead Prof. Dr Johannes Treu, Professor of General Business Administration and Economics at IU. ‘Strengthening the financial security of the older generation also promotes intergenerational justice and lays the foundation for a stable future.’

Funded through the IU Incubator, the project brings together three experts from the fields of business administration, childhood education, and social work. Prof. Dr Johannes Treu leads the project and oversees the quantitative component, designing online questionnaires and analysing data to identify knowledge gaps and areas of need. Prof. Dr Stephan Otto is responsible for the qualitative component, evaluating interviews with older adults and considering intersectional aspects. Prof. Dr Okka Zimmermann contributes expertise on social disadvantages and links the qualitative and quantitative strands

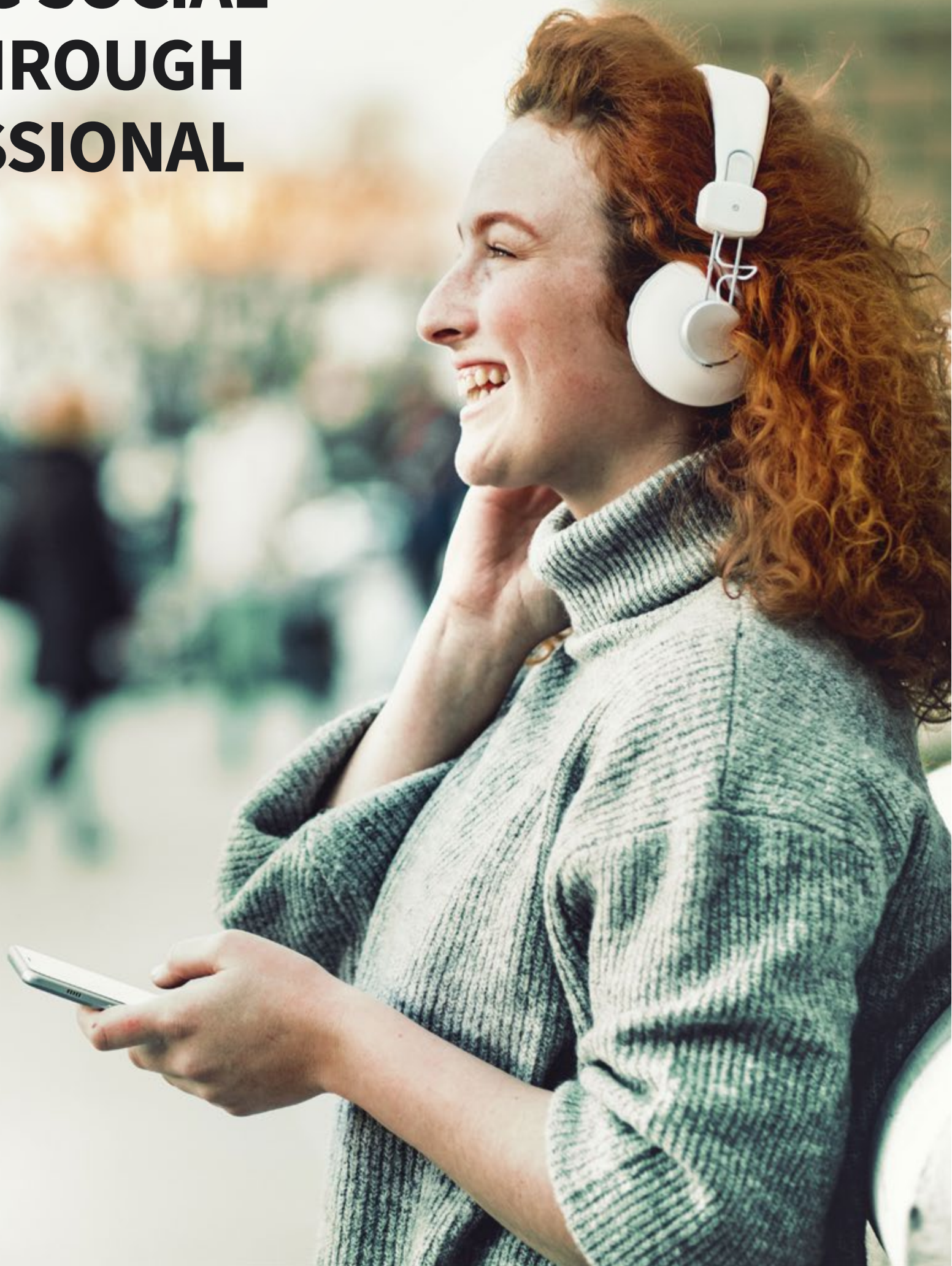
to reflect the heterogeneity of older populations. ‘Through our interdisciplinary approach, we combine economic, pedagogical, and social perspectives to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the financial needs of older adults and to develop targeted educational offerings that truly provide support’, explained Prof. Dr Okka Zimmermann. ‘Financial literacy in later life is not merely about numerical competence; it is closely linked to individual life circumstances and social contexts such as [having] a migration background, all of which must be taken into account’, added Prof. Dr Stephan Otto.

The project explores which areas of financial education are especially important for older adults, where specific knowledge gaps exist, what types of further education, advice, and information are desired, and which barriers and motivators influence participation in later-life learning. Methodologically, it begins with interviews to capture lived experiences, followed by a survey to validate the findings, reveal personal insights, and identify actual gaps in knowledge.

The findings will provide policymakers and education providers with concrete recommendations for user-focused, practical, and needs-based financial education. In turn, older adults will be better positioned to plan their financial futures with greater independence and security.



SUPPORTING SOCIAL MOBILITY THROUGH LIBF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION



Through its professional education arm, LIBF, Walbrook Institute London is committed to increasing diversity and social mobility within the financial services sector. This includes a number of programmes to encourage new people to join the industry. In 2025, Walbrook Institute London announced a major new programme with Future Financial Adviser to support financial services firms in hiring and training new talent.

Firms of all sizes are being invited to sign up to new Walbrook apprenticeship pathways. This package of support provides everything they need to apply for UK government apprenticeship funding and to recruit new talent or retrain existing employees. The UK government funds up to 100% of training costs for apprentices under 25 years of age.

Financial services apprentices on the Walbrook pathways will be employed by firms, enabling them to earn while they study for a recognised level 3, 4 or 6 LIBF qualification, building a career that they might not previously have considered or been able to access. The first apprentices are expected to start their qualifications with LIBF in the first half of 2026.

The new apprenticeship pathways aren't the only way in which LIBF, part of Walbrook Institute London, has been encouraging social mobility within the financial services sector.

In October 2025, LIBF announced that it was working with female-led mortgage firm, The Mortgage Mum, to develop a new scholarship programme. The new scholarship, which opened for applications in January 2026, specifically aims to support people from diverse or underrepresented groups to start a career in mortgage advice.

As part of the programme, Walbrook Institute London is fully funding three places on LIBF's industry-leading CeMAP qualification. The individuals selected for the scholarship will also receive mentoring and career support from The Mortgage Mum, supported by the Mortgage Advice Bureau, which recently secured an investment into the firm. They will also receive LIBF membership for the duration of their studies. The programme is starting small at first so that applicants can receive bespoke 1:1 support. However, there is potential for it to grow if successful.



SOCIETY

AND EMPLOYEES



EDUCATION AS A RESPONSIBILITY IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

‘Providing accessible, high quality higher education remains at the core of how we understand our social responsibility.’

Alex Čaičics,
Head of Sustainability and ESG Communications at IU Group

Challenging macroeconomic and geopolitical conditions are continuing to shape the environment in which organisations operate—including how they approach sustainability and social responsibility. These conditions do not reduce the relevance of these topics; they increase the need for deliberate and resilient approaches.

At IU Group, our commitment to providing accessible, high quality higher education remains unchanged. In times of uncertainty, education plays a vital role: it creates opportunities, supports individual resilience, and contributes to social cohesion. This understanding informs how we approach our responsibility towards our students, our colleagues, and the communities we are part of, as well as how we consider the effects of our decisions on people.

Regulatory developments increasingly shape our agenda. We are preparing for a significant change in how we report on sustainability and social responsibility. Under the upcoming requirements under the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), expectations regarding transparency, structure, and data quality are rising substantially. In this context, we have carried out a double materiality analysis; identified key impact areas, risks,

and opportunities; and acknowledged existing gaps. This process marks an important step in the maturation of our sustainability management and reporting practices.

Our status as a certified B Corporation provides us with additional orientation. It helps us set priorities and offers a structured framework to assess which standards we already fulfil and where further action is needed, supporting continuous improvement across social impact and workforce related topics.

We are aware that we do not yet perform equally strongly across all areas. Some structures and processes are still developing, and in some cases, progress is slower than we would like. But we know where our homework lies, and we are continuously working to do better. This mindset underpins how we approach external social impact and workforce policies—and how we continue to develop them.

over **50**
thousand

students study healthcare, social work, pedagogy, or psychology at IU International University of Applied Sciences, making up about a third of our total student body

31%

of IU's Dual Studies corporate partners are social, charitable, and humanitarian organisations

over **8**
thousand

of IU's students gain their practical experience at these organisations while getting their degrees

STAFF COUNT
(as of year end 2025)



>3 600

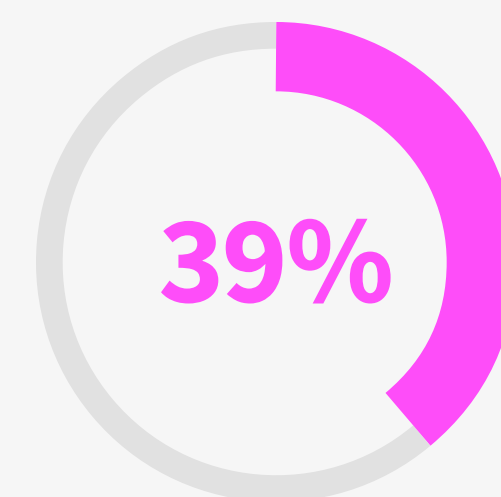
67.55
average hours



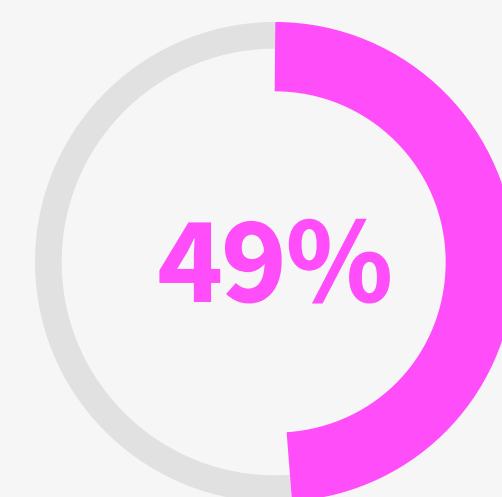
SPENT ON TRAINING PER EMPLOYEE
(up from 67.45 in 2024)

STAFF TRAINING

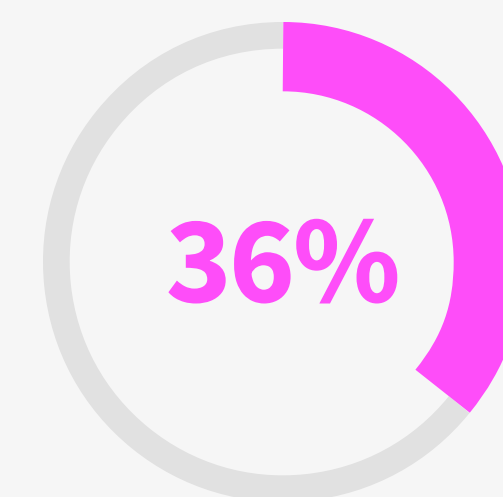
percentage of employees who received the respective training



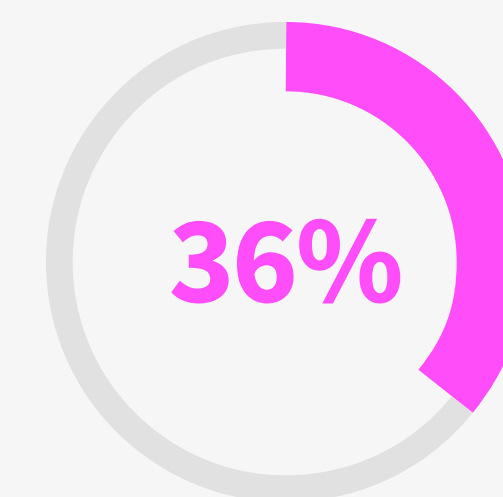
received skills-based training to advance their core job responsibilities



received cross-job functions beyond their regular responsibilities



received training on life skills for personal development



received specialised training on labour or human rights

**NATIONALITIES REPRESENTED
AMONG EMPLOYEES**



>80

GENDER PAY GAP: MEASUREMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

For 2025, IU reports an unadjusted gender pay gap of 21% and an adjusted gap of 3%. While the unadjusted gap reflects the raw difference in average earnings across the entire organisation, the adjusted gap measures differences in pay between people in the same or equivalent roles. To calculate the adjusted gap, IU applied the official methodology of the [German Federal Statistical Office](#), using job profile and tenure as objective control factors. The unadjusted gender pay gap is calculated based on gross pay and includes base salary, fixed allowances, and bonuses. It excludes overtime payments, expense reimbursements, non cash benefits, and deferred bonuses. All figures are calculated on a gross basis before the application of taxes. IU Group is committed to minimising both the adjusted and the unadjusted gaps in accordance with best practices.

OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, AND INCLUSION

IU Group is committed to equal treatment and non discrimination, as well as to fostering a respectful and inclusive learning and working environment for everyone we engage with.

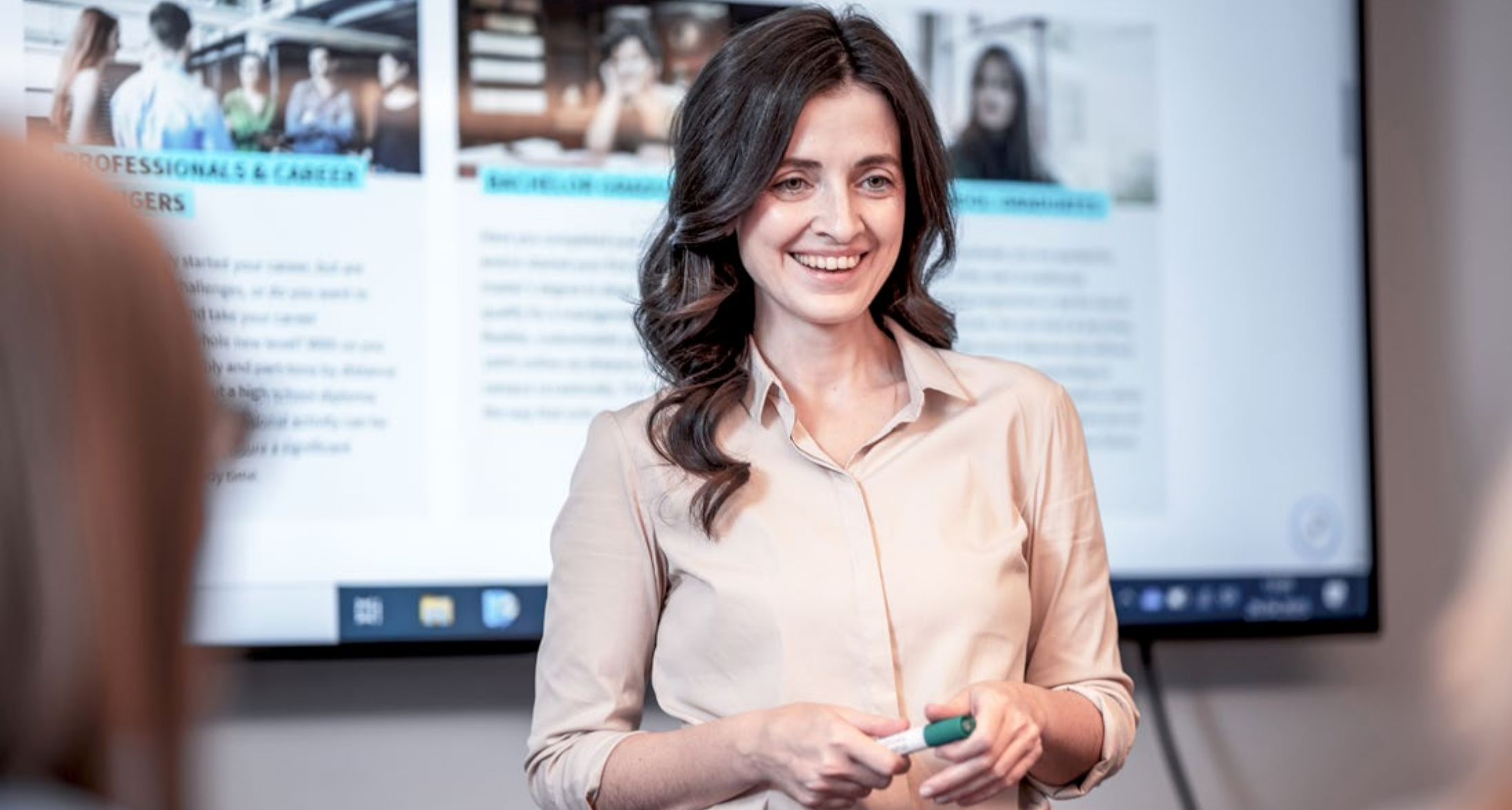
We value a diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, and ideas as a vital condition for high quality education, research, and innovation. Inclusion means creating an environment in which everyone feels respected, welcome, and accepted.

This commitment is endorsed by IU Group's Managing Board, and it guides the development of our people related policies, organisational culture, and stakeholder engagement.



SPECIAL INITIATIVES PLANNED FOR 2026

Based on feedback from students and employees, in 2026 we plan to develop internal and external communications guidelines to help ensure our official communications are fair, respectful, and inclusive. IU International University of Applied Sciences' existing guide on gender-inclusive language remains in force: the new guidelines will build on that work and extend similar standards to Walbrook Institute London and the University of Fredericton. The work is led by our Sustainability team, with input from Public Relations, Brand, the Equality Office, and other internal stakeholders, with necessary resources allocated. The project is targeted for completion in Q2 2026. We'll report on progress here again next year.



PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT AT IU GROUP

As a provider of higher education, we aim to inspire our employees to help inspire our students. People development is an integral part of the entire employee journey at IU Group. We build and maximise our employees' strengths for possible career progression through our array of Learning and Development and Leadership Development programmes. Additionally, IU Group identifies and fosters talent, ensures success, and boosts potential through talent management and performance management.

OUR APPROACH TO FOSTERING PERSONAL GROWTH REVOLVES AROUND FOUR FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS:

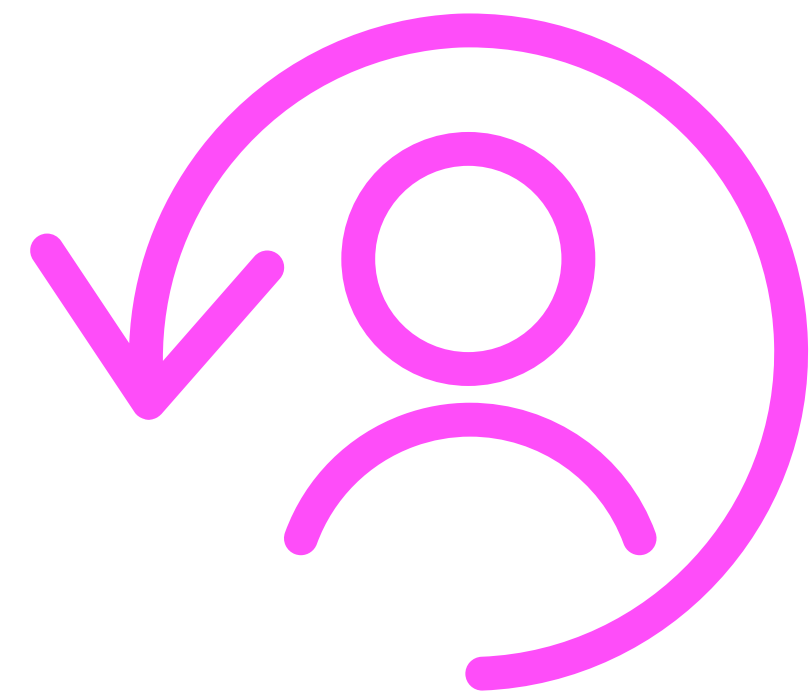
- 1. Structured learning opportunities.** These are facilitated by IU Group's comprehensive corporate learning management systems, namely the IU Learning Hub and IU Manager Learning Hub. Alongside individual learning, our employees benefit from team workshops designed to enhance collaboration, innovation, and skills within groups. Moreover, all employees have the exclusive opportunity to draw from IU Group's product portfolio of professional and higher education programmes to expand their skills!
- 2. Embracing informal learning avenues.** This encompasses recurring events like Learning Lunches and Deep Dives orchestrated by our own team members to facilitate in-house skill enhancement.

Additionally, we promote a buddy concept and community internships to encourage social- and peer-driven learning.

- 3. Holistic, organisation-wide knowledge management.** Through our well-established corporate network, primarily hosted on our intranet, we provide insights into organisational frameworks, processes, key contacts, and more.
- 4. Tailored offerings catered to specific groups of employees.** Examples of this include the Leadership Induction programme, Leadership Space (a centralised hub for leadership-related information, communication, and knowledge exchange), as well as specialised development tracks designed for distinct roles within IU Group.

As of today, the IU Learning Hub contains more than 1,500 courses and more than 65 training plans on topics ranging from Project Management and Sales to language skills, available to more than 3,600 employees, including both fixed-term employees and apprentices or trainees. Additionally, the IU Manager Learning Hub offers more than 180 study courses catered to the specific needs of our leaders.

CASE STUDIES



TRANSFORMING EVENT WASTE INTO COMMUNITY RESOURCES: LONDON-BASED EVENT CYCLE HONoured AT IU ALUMNI AWARDS

IU International University of Applied Sciences has recognised Event Cycle—founded by IU alumna Carina Jandt—in the ‘Sustainability’ category at the IU Alumni Awards, which spotlights alumni-led innovation that advances IU’s ESG priorities.



Based in London, Event Cycle helps the events industry reduce waste by repurposing surplus materials for schools, charities, and social enterprises. By converting excess event assets into community resources, the organisation promotes a circular economy and sets higher standards for environmental responsibility across the sector—delivering both environmental and social value.

This year, IU also engaged the wider community through a public vote on Instagram, where Carina’s initiative received strong support.

 **For more information about Event Cycle, see its website:**
<https://www.eventcycle.org/>



IU HOSTS CHILDREN'S CREATIVE CONTEST AWARDS FOR GLACIER PRESERVATION

IU International University of Applied Sciences has once again hosted the award ceremony for a children's creative competition dedicated to glacier preservation, held in Bad Honnef, North Rhine-Westphalia—the birthplace of IU. Organised by Bad Honnef AG (BHAG), the contest invited local schoolchildren to use their artistic and creative talents to highlight the urgency of protecting glaciers and addressing climate change.

The IU campus provided an ideal setting for the celebration, welcoming enthusiastic pupils, their families, and teachers. Entries ranged from colorful drawings and thoughtful poems to innovative digital projects, all of which reflected an impressive sense of environmental responsibility at an early age.

By hosting the awards and supporting this community initiative, IU promotes environmental awareness and youth engagement with sustainability—demonstrating that everyone, regardless of age, can contribute to climate action. IU remains committed to empowering the next generation of environmental champions and working together for a more sustainable future.

YOUNG MINDS IGNITE AT IU’S STEM DAY FOR FUTURE INNOVATORS IN ULM

On 25 February, IU International University of Applied Sciences in Ulm hosted a hands-on STEM Day to spark interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics among young children. Twenty-five children from three local nursery schools took part in guided experiments designed and delivered by IU staff and students.

Under the leadership of Prof. Dr Annette Schneider, Professor of Childhood Education, a team of 14 dual-study students planned, designed, and executed the event for the second consecutive year. To meet strong demand, STEM Day ran two sessions (morning and afternoon). The students handled room setup, timing, materials, budgeting, marketing, and overall coordination—they then facilitated the activities and documented their learnings in a scientific report. With activities such as a gummy bear dive, coin rescue, rainbow creation, and ‘cloud in a jar’,

children explored basic scientific principles in an age-appropriate way. One highlight was the ‘pufferfish experiment’, where balloon fish were inflated by the gas produced from mixing vinegar and baking soda—bringing simple chemistry to life. Prof. Dr Schneider emphasised the importance of early exposure: ‘The earlier and more positively children are introduced to STEM topics, the more likely they are to develop an open and enthusiastic attitude towards these fields, potentially leading to future careers in STEM.’



ABOUT IU’S DUAL STUDY PROGRAMME

IU’s Dual Study programme combines academic learning with practical experience through partnerships with local employers. Flexible study options include on-campus, online, and virtual campus formats.

 **For more information about programme, see the Dual Studies website:**
<https://www.iu.de/en/dual-studies/>

 **For more information about the Childhood Education Dual Study, see its dedicated website:**
<https://www.iu.de/en/bachelor/kindheitspadagogik/dual-studies/>



SUSTAINABILITY TRAINING FOR IU GROUP EMPLOYEES: CULTIVATING A SUSTAINABLE MINDSET

Sustainability is about much more than merely saving electricity or recycling: it's about fundamentally reshaping the way we interact with our planet and each other. It encompasses broader environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and ethical governance practices. By adopting a sustainable mindset, we can mitigate climate change, promote social equity, and ensure the long-term viability of our communities and businesses.

At IU Group, we firmly believe that every individual has the power to make a difference. That's why we've developed a range of training initiatives aimed at empowering our employees to become agents of positive change.

ONLINE TRAINING COURSES FOR OUR TEAM MEMBERS

Our internal online training platform offers a variety of courses designed to educate and inspire our employees to incorporate sustainability into their daily lives. Here's a glimpse into some of the training programmes available:

Why Sustainability Matters:

In this engaging learning programme, employees explore the significance of sustainability from multiple perspectives. They learn about the three dimensions of sustainability—environmental, social, and governance—and discover how their actions can create positive change in each area. Through interactive modules and real-world examples, participants gain a holistic understanding of why sustainability is crucial for shaping a better future.

Sustainability in Everyday Life:

Our e-learning course 'Sustainability in Everyday Life' empowers employees

to make small but impactful changes in their daily routines. From reducing waste to conserving energy, participants learn practical strategies for minimising their environmental footprint and contributing to a greener future.

Sustainability at IU Group:

This course provides insights into how IU Group integrates sustainability principles into its operations. From environmental conservation to social responsibility initiatives, participants can gain a deeper understanding of our commitment to sustainable practices and how they can actively contribute to our corporate sustainability goals.

Beyond our formal training programmes, IU Group fosters a culture of sustainability through initiatives like our annual Corporate Fitness Challenge. This year, participants not only focused on physical

health but also received tips and guidance on sustainable living. By integrating sustainability into activities like these, we reinforce the importance of sustainable development in all aspects of life.

The majority of our employees work from home, which has significant sustainability advantages but also limits the possibilities for in-person learning events. This is an area for potential improvement for us.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: KEY PILLARS OF OUR TRAINING APPROACH

IU Group is particularly committed to promoting inclusivity and diversity within our organisation, which is a necessary part of our wider sustainability agenda.

Our training programmes encompass topics such as gender-sensitive language, cultural competence, and equal opportunity principles. By fostering a culture of respect and inclusion, we strive to create an environment where every individual feels valued and empowered to thrive.

Every May, we actively participate Germany-wide Diversity Day initiatives to celebrate the richness of human diversity and to promote inclusion in the workplace. Through a series of online and offline activities, employees have the opportunity to engage in discussions, share experiences, and deepen their understanding of diversity-related issues. By championing initiatives like Diversity Day, we reaffirm our commitment to building a more inclusive and equitable society.

ACCESSIBILITY IN FOCUS: ART EXHIBITION BY AN IU ARCHITECTURE STUDENT IN HAMBURG



In April and May 2025, IU International University of Applied Sciences hosted an exhibition by IU architecture student Edoardo Bianchini highlighting accessibility in design and architecture. Following a 2023 accident that resulted in paralysis from the neck down, Bianchini began mouth-painting. He has produced 50 artworks, which were on display at IU’s Eimsbüttel campus in Hamburg.

The exhibition featured pieces installed along a construction fence and explored themes of inclusive architectural solutions. It was connected to his bachelor’s thesis and supported by his book *Breaking Barriers. Rethinking Architecture*, which examines the constraints of traditional design and proposes accessible alternatives. Professor Heiner Stengel said: ‘Edoardo’s work



offers a completely new perspective on architectural design and aesthetics. His art makes barriers visible that remain hidden to many.’ IU supported Edoardo’s continued education by adapting exams and providing individual solutions after his accident, underscoring the university’s commitment to inclusion, accessibility, and equitable learning.





IMPROVING SUPPORT FOR NEW PARENTS WORKING FOR WALBROOK INSTITUTE LONDON

On International Women’s Day in March 2025, Walbrook Institute London launched its new and improved maternity, adoption and paternity policies, designed to offer greater support, flexibility, and peace of mind to new parents.

The People team at Walbrook introduced the new policies in recognition that becoming a parent is a life-changing event and a time that requires understanding, flexibility, and support from employers.

The new policies included increases to the institute’s maternity and adoption pay provision, providing mothers or primary caregivers with the necessary time to bond with their new family member and to settle into life as a new family unit. This extension also aims to alleviate the pressure of returning to work too soon.

Enhanced parental leave policies are also key to reducing gender disparities in the workplace. When both men and women have equal opportunities to take leave, we move closer to an equitable division of caregiving roles.

Fathers and partners working for Walbrook now have access to four weeks of paid paternity leave, supporting them in taking an active parental role from day one. Under UK law, employees are eligible to receive just one or two weeks of statutory paternity leave, so Walbrook’s new policy represents a significant increase compared to the legal requirement and what many

companies offer. This policy change promotes shared parenting responsibilities and acknowledges the importance of both parents’ involvement in raising a child.

Jonathan Woolgar, Learning Content Editor, welcomed his first child, Wilfred, in September 2025, and he was one of the first to benefit from the changes to paternity leave. He said:

‘Walbrook’s new enhanced paternity leave made a huge difference to my wife and I when Wilfred was born. With so many new routines and responsibilities, just getting through the day with a happy baby at the end and remembering to feed ourselves was a monumental effort! Four weeks of leave allowed us time to steady the ship and begin to get our heads around this new normality. My wife says she would have really struggled if I’d had to go back to work after two weeks. I feel very lucky and grateful that I could be there to support her and spend extra time bonding with Wilfred. It was an enormous benefit to all three of us to have both parents so involved in those critical early weeks, and I very much appreciate Walbrook recognising the importance of this time.’

A photograph of a forest path. The path is a dirt trail that winds through a forest. On the left side of the path, there are several large, mature trees with thick, dark trunks. The ground is covered with green grass and ferns. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating dappled light on the path. The overall scene is a lush, green forest.

ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT



ONLINE EDUCATION MEANS A MINIMAL ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

‘Focusing on distance learning and lean facilities management allows us to deliver education sustainably and resource efficiently.’

Kai Mielenhausen,
Head of Infrastructure and Campus Development

A key structural factor shaping our environmental impact is our education model, in which distance learning plays a central role. Compared to traditional campus based universities, this model requires substantially less physical infrastructure and mobility. Supported by digital and AI based tools, it enables high quality education at scale while contributing to a comparatively low environmental footprint and illustrating how elements of higher education can be organised more sustainably.

Nevertheless, environmental sustainability is an important guiding principle for how we manage and operate our facilities. As an education provider with a growing and evolving organisation, we pay close attention to the environmental performance of our infrastructure and see responsible facilities management as an integral part of sustainable operations. Against this background, our infrastructure work focuses on the efficient use of office space. Over the past year, we have continued to streamline and consolidate our facilities portfolio, reducing office space where it is no longer required and improving utilisation of remaining locations. These

measures are driven by operational efficiency and new ways of working, with the goal of maintaining a lean, flexible and future oriented infrastructure. A smaller and more efficiently used office footprint inevitably leads to lower energy usage and, over time, reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Looking ahead, we will continue to manage and optimise our facilities with a long term and responsible perspective. In parallel, we are planning further improvements in how we monitor waste and water usage across our locations, strengthening the basis for informed decision making and continuous improvement in infrastructure management.

CASE STUDIES



COMPENSATION OF CARBON FOOTPRINT: PROJECTS FINANCED BY IU GROUP

Climate change is one of the great challenges of our time. IU Group is making continuous efforts towards climate protection in several ways, including through financial contributions to projects to offset our carbon footprint.

 More information on climate projects supported by IU Group can be found on the climate section of our website: <https://climate-id.com/en-gb/organisations/iu-group-nv>



WIND ENERGY IN TÜRKIYE

Since 2015, seven wind turbines with a capacity of 1.6 MW each have been generating electricity from wind energy on a mountain ridge near Ortamandıra in the province of Balıkesir. The facility feeds approximately 37,900 MWh of electricity into the Turkish power grid annually, thereby reducing dependency on imports and fossil fuels. Each year, the project saves around 24,560 tonnes of carbon emissions.

The impact of the project goes beyond climate action: it creates jobs, strengthens the regional economy, and promotes technology transfer for renewable energy in Türkiye.

CARBON FOOTPRINT COMPENSATED



7,714 tonnes CO₂e

(41% of IU Group's CCF for 2024)

CERTIFICATION STANDARD



Gold Standard



WASTE HEAT FOR CEMENT PRODUCTION IN PAKISTAN

Fauji Cement Company is renowned for its efficient cement production in Jhang Bahtar, in the province of Punjab in Pakistan, with an annual total production capacity of 3.3 million tonnes of cement. During the production of cement, a lot of heat is generated. To prevent this energy from going to waste and to reduce CO₂ emissions, the project has installed three heat recovery steam generators. They convert the waste heat, which would normally have been emitted into the atmosphere, into energy. The generated power is directly used for a cement-producing kiln and substitutes fossil fuel-fed electricity from the grid. The project, therefore, alleviates the demand pressure on the national power system and is expected to generate 54,696 MWh of electricity per year.



CARBON FOOTPRINT COMPENSATED



6,286 tonnes CO₂e

(33% of IU Group's CCF for 2024)

CERTIFICATION STANDARD



CDM/CER



SOLAR SYSTEMS FOR HOUSEHOLDS IN BANGLADESH

Many households in Bangladesh are not connected to the electricity grid and use kerosene lamps and batteries to cover their energy needs. This climate project offers a solution: installing solar systems in households to generate clean energy that can be used directly at home. This not only saves CO₂ emissions but is also healthier.

CARBON FOOTPRINT COMPENSATED



5,000 tonnes CO₂e

(26% of IU Group's CCF for 2024)

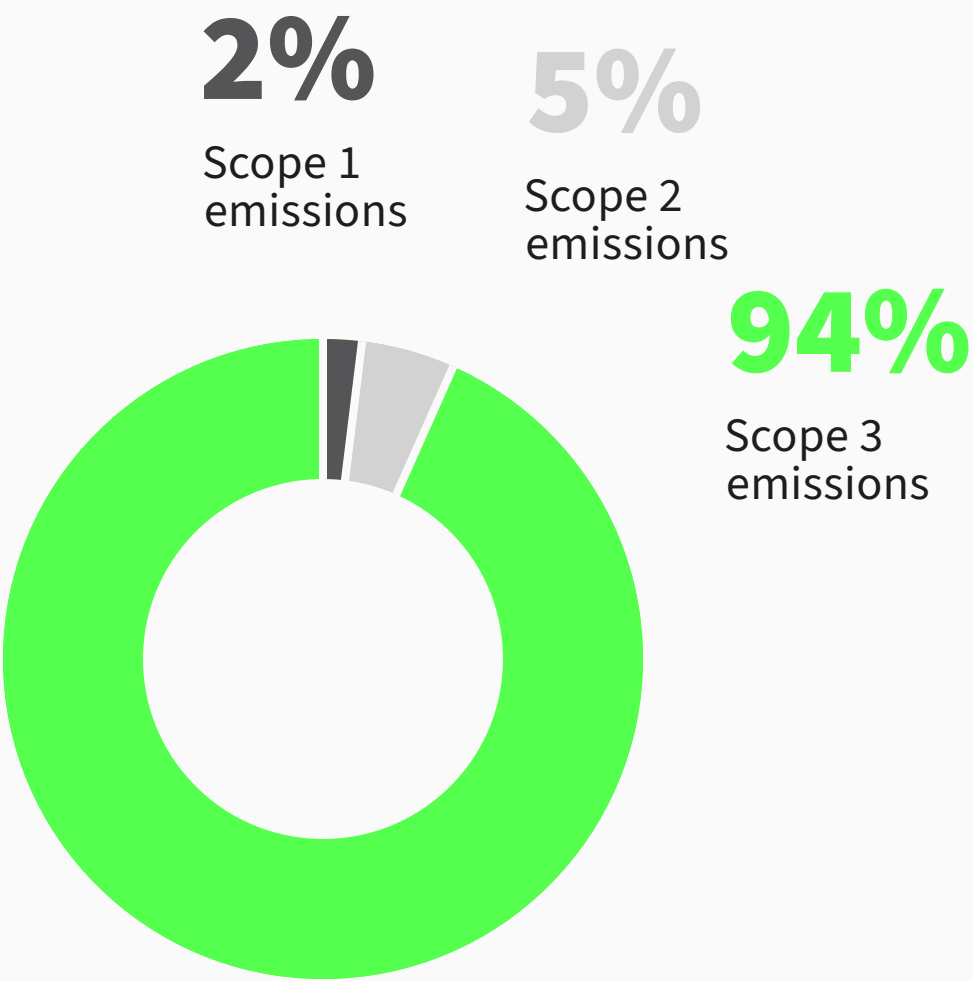
CERTIFICATION STANDARD



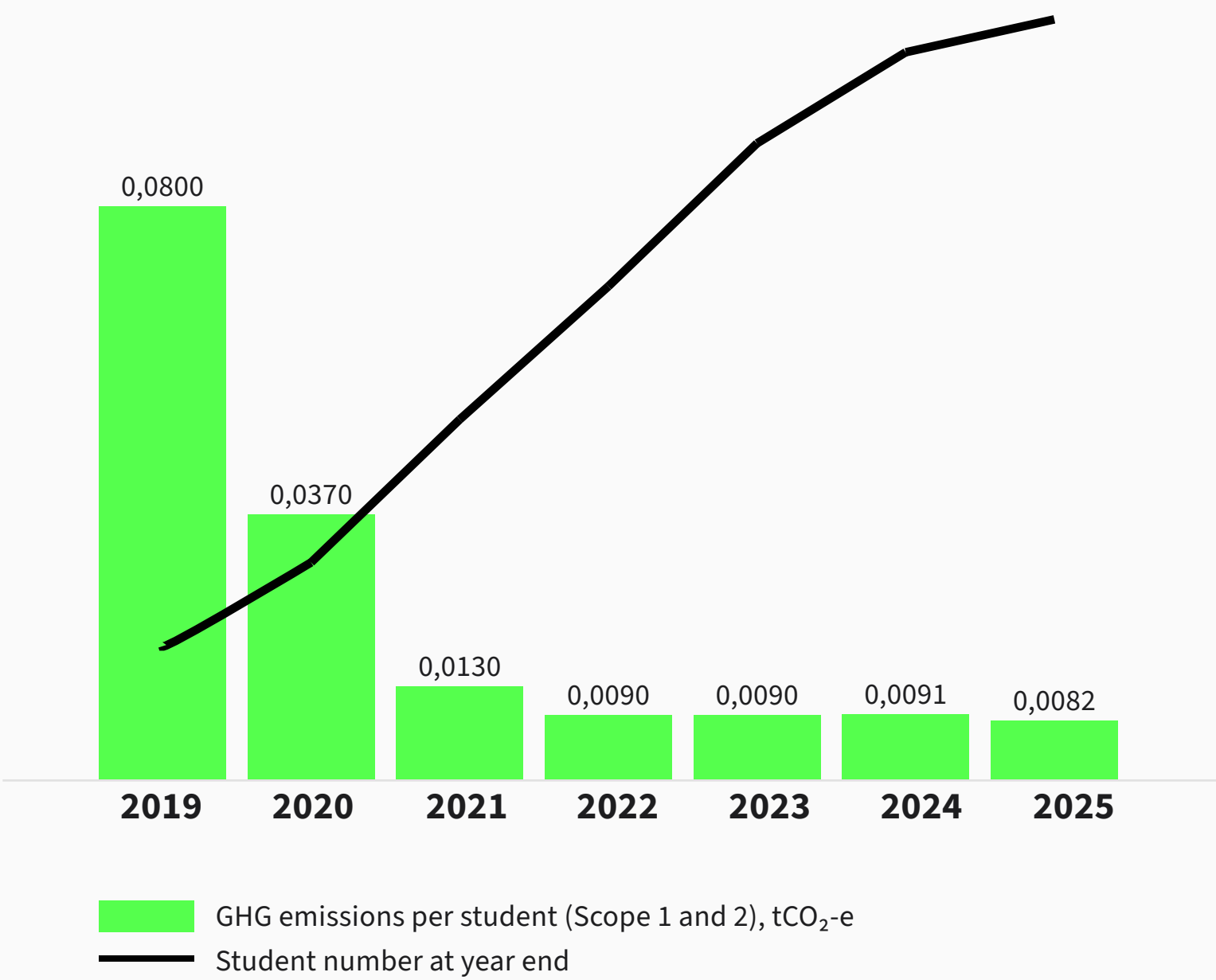
CDM/CER

IU GROUP’S CARBON FOOTPRINT

Structure of IU Group greenhouse gas emissions in 2025



Greenhouse gas emissions per student (scope 1 and 2), tCO₂-e




7 times

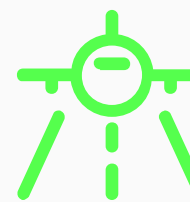
lower greenhouse gas emissions to teach one distance-learning student versus a regular off-line student, according to numerous research

PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE FURTHER REDUCTION OF OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT CURRENTLY INCLUDE:

- 

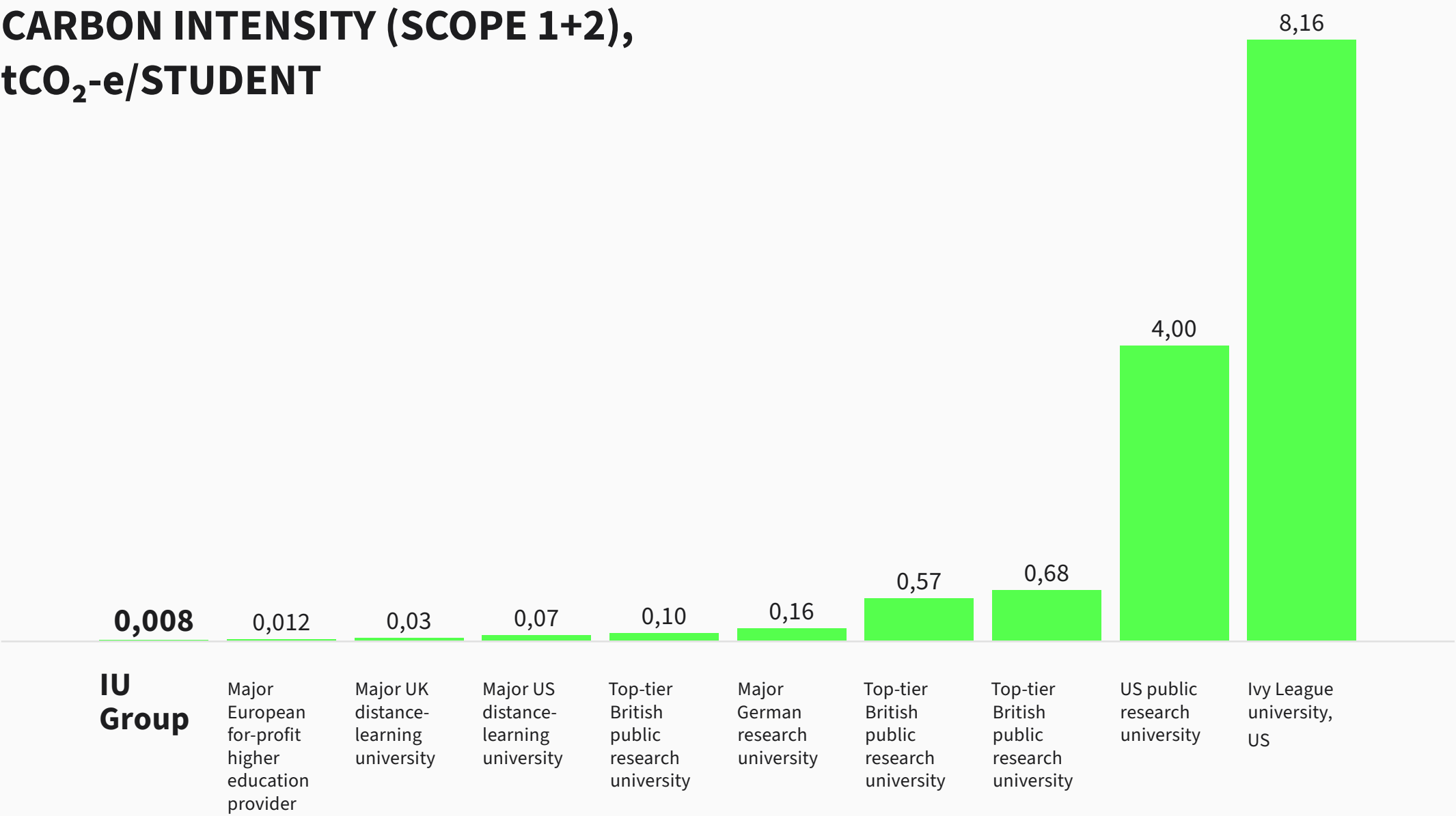
Reducing the average energy use of offices
- 

Increasing the use of electricity from renewable energy sources
- 

Reducing the amount of ordered student lecture notes
- 

Minimising business travel by airplane

CARBON INTENSITY (SCOPE 1+2), tCO₂-e/STUDENT



Source: public reports, 2025 or latest available

GOVERNANCE





EMBEDDING TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

‘Strong corporate governance is a visible expression of our responsibility to act transparently, ethically, and in the long-term interest of all stakeholders.’

Benedikt Iller,
General Counsel / Director Legal & Compliance

Strong corporate governance is fundamental to trust—trust from students, employees, partners, regulators, and society at large. In 2025, this understanding continued to shape how IU Group approaches governance, compliance, and ethical conduct. As a growing international education group operating in a complex regulatory environment, we see good governance not as a formal requirement but as a clear expression of integrity and responsibility.

Over the past year, we further strengthened our governance structures to ensure transparency, accountability, and consistency across all entities of IU Group. Our experience as a certified B Corporation, combined with ongoing preparations to meet our evolving ESG and reporting requirements, has enhanced our ability to manage risks proactively and to align legal compliance with our broader social mission. Clear policies, effective oversight, and accessible grievance

mechanisms are essential tools in safeguarding the interests of our stakeholders.

As expectations from regulators and society continue to rise, we are committed to maintaining high standards and continuously refining our frameworks. By doing so, we support not only legal compliance but also long-term stability, ethical decision-making, and responsible growth—ensuring that IU Group can continue to serve learners and communities with credibility and confidence.

LEADERSHIP

IU GROUP IS LED BY A HIGHLY EXPERIENCED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP TEAM.



**Sven
Schütt,**
CEO

Sven has led IU Group as CEO since 2010. His professional journey encompasses senior management roles within the education and public sectors, alongside significant experience in management consulting. He holds a PhD in Neurobiology from the Max Planck Institute, supplemented by degrees in Physics and Philosophy from the University of Bremen, as well as further studies in Neuroscience at the University of Göttingen and the University of Otago.



**Marvin
Lange,**
Managing
Director/CFO

Marvin has served as Managing Director and CFO at IU Group since January 2019. Before that, he held several senior managerial positions in Germany and the United Kingdom, focusing on finance and executive leadership. His educational background includes a degree in International Management from FOM and participation in executive programs at INSEAD Business School, Cranfield University, and Pfeiffer University.



**Holger
Sommerfeldt,**
Rector at
IU International
University of
Applied Sciences

Holger assumed the role of Rector at IU International University of Applied Sciences in early 2021, following more than 15 years of service in multiple capacities within the institution. His roles included Management Professor, Vice-Chancellor for Online Studies, and head of both the Distance Learning department and IU's campus in Bad Reichenhall. Prior to his tenure at IU, he held management positions within various publishing companies across Germany, France, and the United States. Holger holds a PhD in Management and Organisation, a master's degree in Management Research from the University of Oxford, and a degree in Economics from the Karlsruhe Institute for Technology.



**Carmen
Thoma,**
CEO Online Studies

Carmen has contributed to IU Group for almost 10 years in various capacities, including Chief Operating Officer for Online Studies and Director for Online Operations. Before joining IU, she was involved in the Economics Research department at a major university and worked as a Management Consultant. Her academic background includes a PhD in Economics from the Munich Graduate School of Economics, an honours degree in Technology Management from the Centre for Digital Technology and Management, and a degree in Economics from Ludwig Maximilian University.



Nils Vortmann,
CEO On-Campus

Nils joined IU Group in 2025 and serves as CEO On-Campus, overseeing all operational and commercial aspects of IU's classroom-based programmes. He is responsible for the overall performance, growth, and operational excellence of the On-Campus business. Prior to IU, Nils spent over six years at Mister Spex, most recently as Chief Retail Officer and a member of the senior management team. He led the company's omnichannel transformation with full P&L responsibility across multi-site retail operations and commercial teams. Before that, he was an Associate Partner in the Retail & Consumer Goods practice at Oliver Wyman, advising international clients on commercial excellence, transformation, and operational improvement. Nils holds a master's in Business Administration from the Perdue School of Business and a degree in Industrial Engineering from the Technical University of Berlin.



Carolin Kreuder,
CEO Professional Education

Carolin currently serves as the CEO Professional Education at IU Group, having been with the organisation since September 2020, where she started as the COO of International Partnerships & Upskilling. Additionally, she is a Board Member at Walbrook Institute London and the Chair of the Board at the University of Fredericton. Prior to IU, she served as the CEO and Managing Director at PROAKTIV Management. Her earlier career includes roles at NuCom Group as the Head of Operating Office and various director positions at ProSiebenSat.1 Media, after starting her career as a management consultant at Solon. Carolin holds a double degree in International Management from ESB Business School in Germany and Universidad Pontificia Comillas (ICADE) in Spain.



Michael Rademacher,
Chief People Officer

Michael joined IU Group as Chief People Officer in 2025. As a business coach, advisor, and interim executive, he has supported numerous organisations in organisational and commercial transformations, M&A integrations, and people operations. He has also held various global HR and other executive roles in private equity-backed, family-owned, founder-led, and digital-first companies. He began his career in top-tier management consulting, advising clients in the consumer, retail, and media sectors. Michael participated in Wharton's CHRO Programme, holds a doctorate in Value-Based M&A Performance Management from FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg, and earned a master's degree in Business Administration from the KUEI/WFI-Ingolstadt School of Management.



Sebastian Glöckner,
Chief Technology Officer

Sebastian joined IU Group as Chief Experience Officer in 2022 and took on the role of CTO in September 2023, transitioning fully to CTO in January 2025. He has extensive experience in digital business models, including online marketplaces and e-commerce, with C-level and managing director roles at Rocket Internet and Project A, working with portfolio companies such as Qunomedical, Caterwings, and GLOSSYBOX. As Co-Founder and Managing Director of GateSecure, he worked on SaaS models. Sebastian began his career at PlusServer, rising from Software Developer to Product Manager. He holds a degree in Business Administration from the University of Cologne and a Doctorate in Technology and Innovation Management from the WHU-Otto Beisheim School of Management.

ADVISORY BOARD

IU International University of Applied Sciences (IU) maintains an Advisory Board comprised of renowned opinion leaders from the fields of science, business, and politics. With the expertise and diverse experience of its members in central strategic fields of IU, the Advisory Board comprehensively advises IU Group’s flagship institution in its further development, including strategic orientation, study formats, and global growth. IU Group’s goal is to further expand its creative power as a driver of high-quality education both in Germany and internationally, as well as to be a globally relevant provider of digital education.

MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

Dr Frank Weise
Chair of the IU Advisory Board

Former Chairman of the Executive Board of the German Federal Employment Agency from 2004 to 2017 and simultaneously Head of the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees between 2015 and 2016. Dr Frank Weise is one of Germany’s leading experts on the future of education and employment.

Prof. Dr Tobias Bonhoeffer

Director at the Max Planck Institute for Biological Intelligence (in foundation)

Raffaela Rein

EdTech expert, entrepreneur, and formative protagonist in the European start-up, VC, and tech industries

Lucy Stonehill

EdTech expert and founder of BridgeU—a service linking secondary school, higher education, and professional life using data-driven decision-making

Jimmy Wales

Entrepreneur, founder of Wikipedia, advocate for the democratisation of knowledge

Sascha Lobo

Writer and journalist, leading expert on digital topics and technologies, including artificial intelligence

SENATE OF IU INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

 For more information, see the university management website:
<https://www.iu.de/en/university/university-management/>

→ Prof. Dr Kamal Bhattacharya (Vice Rector for Research and Transfer, Professor of IT Management & Data Analytics)	→ Prof. Dr Florian Hummel (Vice Rector for On-Campus Studies, Professor of International Service Sector Management)	→ Prof. Dr Sabine Bährer-Kohler (Professor of Social Work, Department of Social Sciences, Dual Studies, Karlsruhe)	→ Prof. Dr Silko Pfeil (Professor of General Business Administration, Department of Business, Dual Studies, Leipzig)	→ Bettina Maucher (Academic Lecturer IT & Creative)	→ Dr Lisa Schenk (Head of the Central Examination Office for Dual Studies)
→ Prof. Dr Regina Cordes (Vice Rector for Accreditation and Program Formats, Professor of Human Resources & Organisation)	→ Prof. Dr Karsten Leibold (Vice Rector for Teaching and Continuing Education, Professor of Aviation Management)	→ Prof. Dr Michele Dilenge (Professor of Business Law, Department of Business & Management, Dual Studies, Munich)	→ Prof. Dr Carsten Skerra (Professor of Computer Science, Department of IT & Technology, Dual Studies, Stuttgart)	→ Dr Simone Borkenhagen (Academic Lecturer, Psychology)	→ Tülin Esmeli (B.A. Real Estate Management)
→ Prof. Dr Anastasia Hermann (Vice Rector for Quality of Teaching, Professor of Human Resource Management)	→ Prof. Dr Michaela Moser (Vice Rector for Distance Learning, Professor of Human Resource Management)	→ Prof. Dr Marc-André Heidelmann (Professor of Social Work, Department of Social Sciences, Distance Learning, Bremen)	→ Prof. Dr Thomas Winner (Professor of Civil Engineering, Department of Design, Architecture & Construction, Dual Studies, Berlin)	→ Dr Florian Perst (Academic Lecturer, Business)	→ Julia Müller (B.A. Social Work)
	→ Prof. Dr Alexandra Wuttig (Chancellor, Professor of Innovation and Entrepreneurship)		→ Ulrike Wunder (Director of Library & Information Services)	→ Denise Mensing (Team Lead Examination Law)	→ Timotheus von Preussen (B.A. Business Administration)

CASE STUDIES



GRIEVANCES

IU Group values feedback and treats concerns related to human rights and governance seriously and with due care. We operate a grievance mechanism that is open to all stakeholders (including learners, employees, contractors, suppliers and members of the public) to raise concerns about perceived or actual adverse impacts—such as discrimination, harassment, unfair treatment, misuse of power, or other human-rights issues—without fear of retaliation. Grievances may be submitted confidentially or anonymously.



The grievance form is publicly available on our website in German and English:
<https://www.iu-group.com/get-in-touch>



Our grievance policy (including scope, confidentiality, and non-retaliation principles) can be found here:
<https://sustainability.iu-group.com/#policies-documents>

In 2025, we received 47 official grievances (42 submitted confidentially and 5 anonymously). Seven submissions were accepted as in-scope and investigated under the grievance mechanism; the remaining 40 were rejected as out-of-scope (primarily service quality or settlement issues) and were routed to the responsible departments for handling via our standard service channels. The seven accepted cases mainly related to workplace and governance concerns such as procedures, alleged discrimination, or misuse of authority.

All seven accepted cases were investigated and found to be unsubstantiated; the grievants were informed of the outcome in a timely manner. For accepted cases, the average time from receipt to closure was 11 days (range: 10 to 17 days). Rejected submissions are treated as completed once they have been screened and forwarded appropriately.

To make the process more transparent and to keep improving, there is currently a proposal to ask people for brief feedback once a case is closed (for example, via a short satisfaction survey). This would help us understand how stakeholders experience the process and where we can further strengthen accessibility, timeliness and trust.

OUR SUPPLIERS

The sustainability of any organisation is closely tied to the strength and integrity of its supply chain. This is also true for the education sector, where maintaining a sustainable supply base is essential for smooth operations and alignment with the broader societal goals of environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

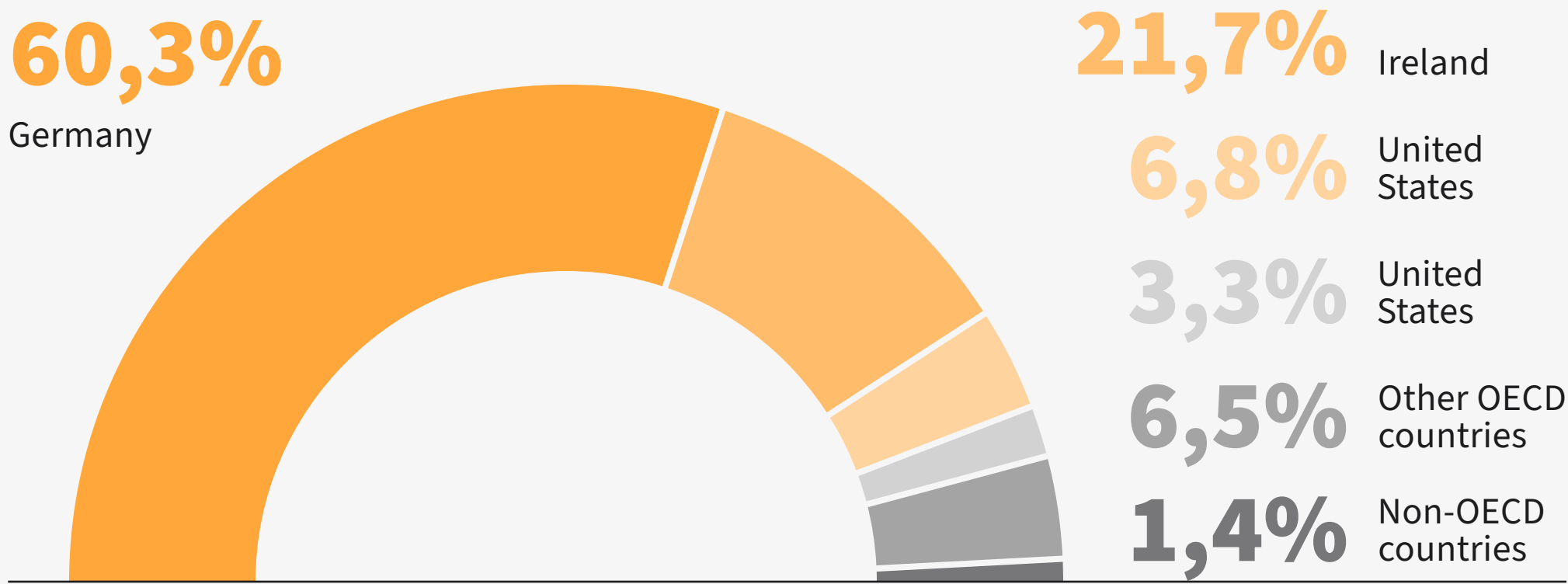
Organisations today must act as agents of sustainable development, promoting sustainability across their entire value chain, including suppliers and customers. This is what we at IU Group strive to do.

Our commitment to sustainability is reflected in our regular monitoring of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) risks among our suppliers. We focus on the geographical and organisational profile structure of our supplier base, as well as their adherence to high human rights and environmental sustainability standards.

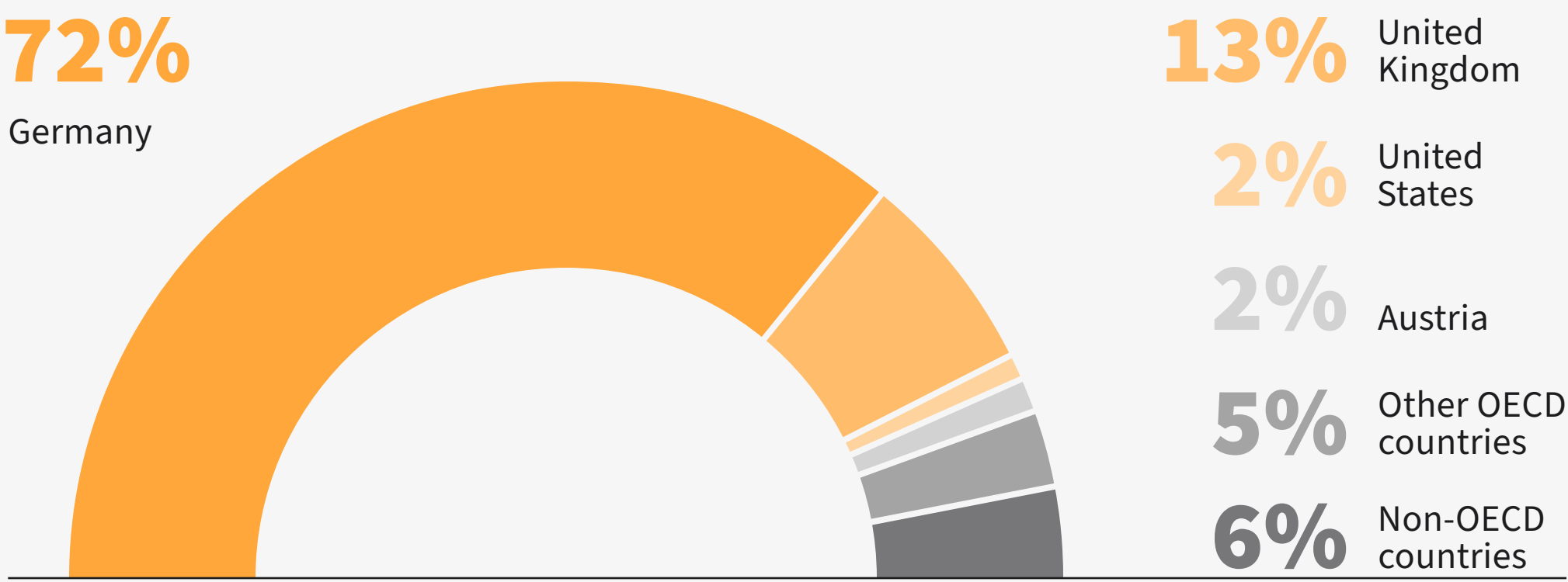
IU GROUP SUPPLIER STRUCTURE

Most of our suppliers come from jurisdictions with relatively well-developed regulatory frameworks and widespread sustainable business practices. Our analysis revealed that almost all of IU Group’s suppliers are based in OECD countries (94%), especially in Germany (72%), with significant portions also in Ireland, the United States, and other OECD countries. A significant portion of our expenditure goes towards marketing services, reflecting our focus on effectively communicating and promoting our educational offerings. Investments in technology, retail, and human resources management support our infrastructure and administrative needs.

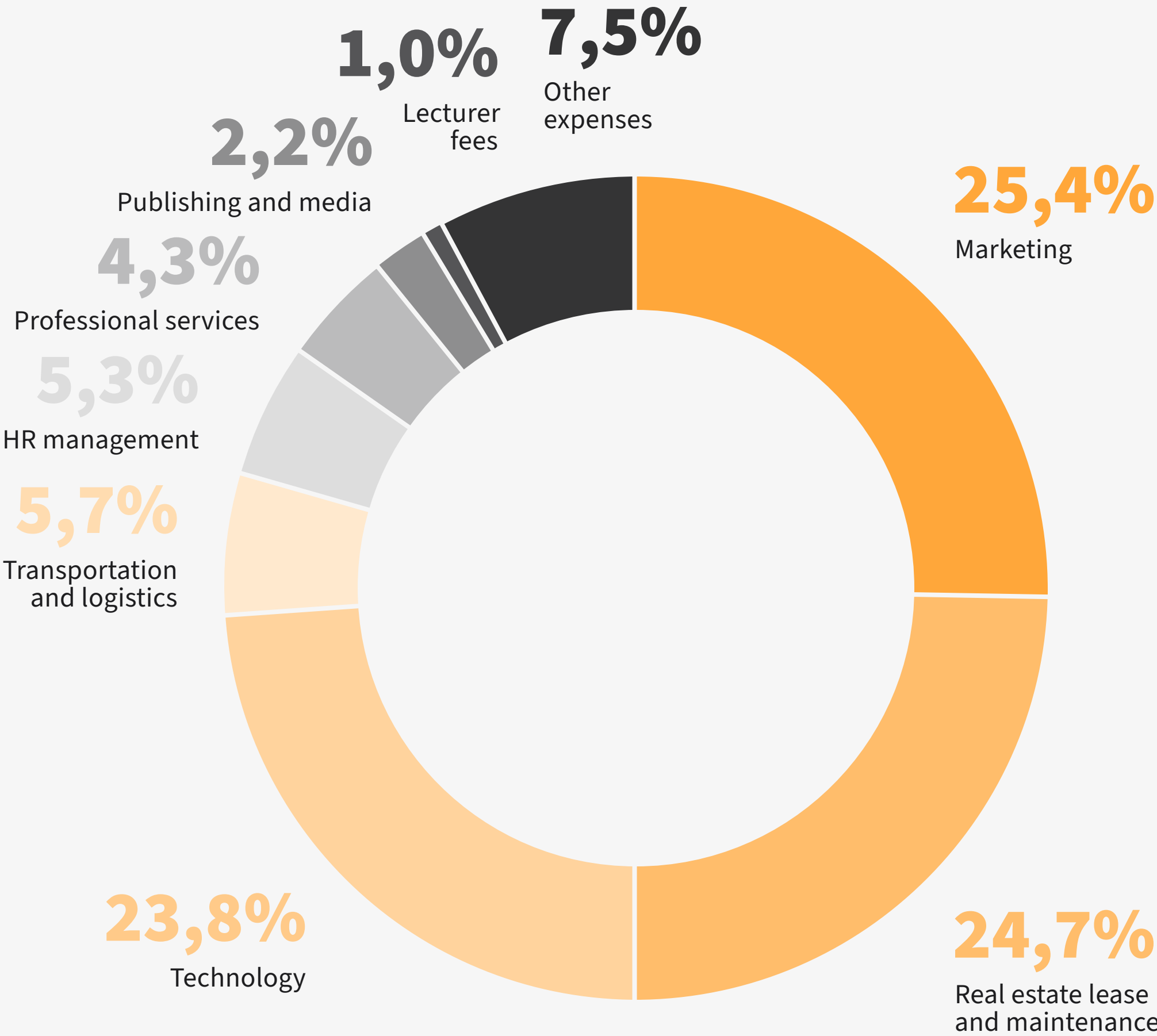
GEOGRAPHY OF IU GROUP SUPPLIERS BY AMOUNT SPENT



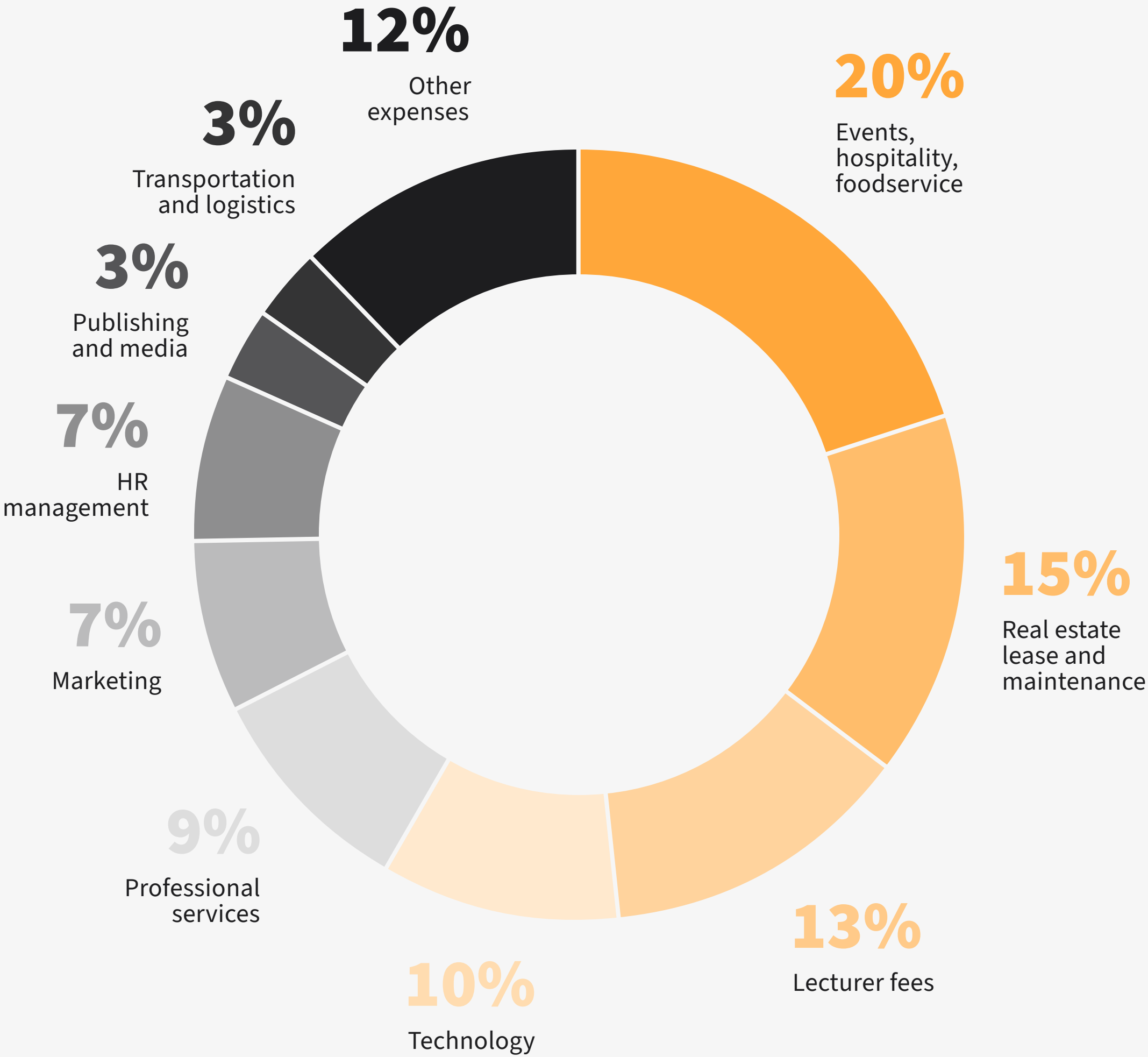
GEOGRAPHY OF IU GROUP SUPPLIERS BY PERCENTAGE OF SUPPLIERS



GOODS AND SERVICES PROCURED BY IU GROUP –
BY AMOUNT SPENT



GOODS AND SERVICES PROCURED BY IU GROUP –
BY NUMBER OF SUPPLIERS





RESOURCES FOR OUR SUPPLIERS



Our suppliers are expected to comply with IU Group’s Supplier Code of Conduct, which sets forth our rigorous standards for ethical business practices, human rights, and environmental sustainability. This code prohibits child labour, forced labour, and slavery, and it mandates safe and healthy working conditions. It upholds

freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, protects against discrimination, and ensures fair remuneration. Additionally, it prohibits unlawful eviction and land seizure, regulates the use of security forces, and includes stringent guidelines for environmental performance, such as monitoring and minimising environmental footprints and complying with environmental regulations. Governance standards within the code cover product responsibility, fair competition, anti-corruption measures, data protection, and sanctions compliance.

 **The Supplier Code of Conduct of IU Group can be found at**
<https://sustainability.iu-group.com/#policies-documents>

IU Group has a feedback system in place for addressing concerns about sustainability in our supply chain. It allows stakeholders to report issues confidentially and ensures that all complaints are reviewed and resolved responsibly.

 **The grievance submission form is available at**
<https://www.iu-group.com/get-in-touch>



RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND LOBBYING



IU Group is committed to engaging in public policy in a responsible and transparent way. Any such activity is subject to clear internal oversight, with defined approvals and accountability. We also carry out due diligence and regularly review our memberships and relationships with trade associations and other external partners to ensure they remain aligned with our values, and we do not make political payments intended to bypass transparency or proper scrutiny.

In 2025, IU Group did not carry out any direct or indirect lobbying at the local, national, or international level, and we did not make any political contributions. As a result, we have no lobbying positions or political contributions to disclose for FY2025. During the year, we appointed a new Head of Public Affairs and began updating our policy framework so that any future engagement is consistent with our purpose and stakeholder commitments, compliant with applicable laws, and governed by robust internal processes.

If we undertake lobbying or make political contributions in future financial years, we will publish an annual disclosure. This will cover the issues on which we engaged and our position, the jurisdictions and routes used (including any third parties), and a detailed record of any political contributions, alongside any actions taken to address any misalignment with our commitments.

ADVANCING CYBERSECURITY RESILIENCE AT IU GROUP

IU Group is continuing to strengthen its cybersecurity posture with a strategic, risk-based approach that is firmly embedded in its corporate governance. Cybersecurity is recognised as a key responsibility at the C-level, meaning IU Group ensures that security risks are actively monitored, assessed, and addressed at the highest level of the organisation. Throughout the past year, IU Group has further matured its security capabilities, reinforcing the protection of its digital ecosystem for students, employees, and partners alike.



SECURING ACCESS THROUGH PHISHING-RESISTANT AUTHENTICATION

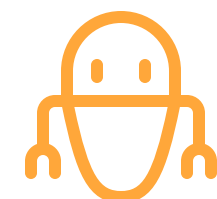
IU Group has significantly expanded its identity and access management framework by rolling out multi-factor authentication across its entire user base, covering both employees and students. By building on this, the organisation is advancing towards phishing-resistant login methods, providing stronger protection against

increasingly sophisticated credential-based attacks, and setting a new standard for secure access across the IU community.



STRENGTHENING IU'S EXTERNAL AND CLOUD SECURITY POSTURE

Through a dedicated focus on vulnerability management, IU Group has achieved a substantial reduction in its external attack surface, systematically identifying and remediating



LEVERAGING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR SECURITY ANALYSIS

Recognising the transformative potential of AI in cybersecurity, IU Group has begun integrating artificial intelligence into its security operations. AI-assisted analysis is now used to support the identification of security vulnerabilities and reviewing source code, enabling the faster detection of potential weaknesses and augmenting the capabilities of the security team in addressing an evolving threat landscape.



BUILDING A SECURITY-AWARE CULTURE

IU Group has deepened its investment in cybersecurity awareness across the organisation through targeted phishing simulation campaigns and comprehensive training

programmes. These initiatives have seen strong engagement among employees, with high completion rates and the rapid identification of simulated threats, demonstrating a growing culture of vigilance and shared responsibility for cybersecurity.

Maturing incident detection and response IU Group has continued to enhance its security operations by refining its incident detection and response capabilities. Through the integration of additional security log sources and the continuous improvement of its monitoring infrastructure, the organisation has strengthened its ability to identify, analyse, and contain security incidents swiftly and effectively, ensuring operational continuity and the protection of sensitive data.



LOOKING AHEAD

As the cyber threat landscape continues to evolve, IU Group remains committed to advancing its security capabilities through innovation, investment, and collaboration. By further expanding the use of AI-driven security tools, maintaining rigorous vulnerability management, and fostering a culture of security awareness, IU Group is continuing to safeguard its digital environment and uphold the trust of its community.

DATA PRIVACY, SAFETY & INTEGRITY: ONGOING PROJECTS IN 2026

PROJECT	PLANNED COMPLETION DATE
Account security: Roll out of new secure sign-in methods for all accounts accessing student data (incl. student accounts).	End of 2026
Review and tighten access to student data: Complete an access review covering 100% of systems holding student data; remove or adjust any access rights broader than required (least privilege).	End of 2026
Extend data classification: Apply classification to all systems containing student data so protection measures apply automatically based on sensitivity.	End of 2026
Improve backup resilience: Pilot immutable backups on the most critical student-facing services; expand to 100% of critical student-facing services.	Q4 2026
Cloud security risk management: Reduction of critical vulnerabilities in the cloud infrastructure underlying student-facing platforms: baseline and further tracking.	End of 2026
Introduce a review-and-approval system for AI tools:Establish a formal review-and-approval system for AI tools, covering data protection and transparency/explainability of AI-driven decisions.	End of 2026
Risk-based sampling audits with management reporting: Audit programme, results + corrective actions reported twice yearly to the top management; effectiveness tracked in the following cycle.	End of 2026
Policies for inconsistently implemented processes: Within 6 months of completing the first audit cycle, binding written policies for all critical processes found inconsistent; sign-off by the responsible unit; training of affected staff within 60 days.	6 months after 1st audit cycle
AI Policy: Development of an AI usage policy, formalising principles for responsible, lawful and ethical use of AI	H1 2026
Academic Compliance Team — Creation of a dedicated team with a written mandate, reporting line directly to the Rectorate and escalation rights	H1 2026



ETHICS POLICY

The Ethics Policy is IU Group’s key document covering the most important areas of corporate governance and ethics within the framework of the applicable laws, rules, and normative regulations. It sets out the ethical principles of IU Group and provides general guidelines to protect against corruption, economic crime, conflicts of interest, and other misconduct. The topics covered by the policy include personal responsibility, honest conduct, corporate citizenship, integrity, accounting practices, privacy and confidentiality, respectful treatment, and others.

THE ETHICS POLICY SETS OUT THE FOLLOWING ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF IU GROUP:

1. We conduct ourselves with honesty, integrity, and according to the highest ethical standards.
2. We seek, and are open to, diversity—valuing diversity of people, their views, and their experiences.
3. We contribute to the communities in which we work and live through civic engagement, both globally as a company and privately as individuals.
4. We observe and comply with the laws, rules and regulations that apply to us wherever in the world we operate.
5. We believe that the way we do business is as important as the results we achieve in doing so.

An important part of the Ethics Code of IU Group is the Supplier Code of Conduct. It reflects our understanding of corporate social responsibility and sustainability, setting out our requirements and approach to doing business with suppliers and contractors. IU Group expects its suppliers to be socially responsible and respect human rights, to meet high standards of environmental performance, and to implement ethical governance and business practices. We want our Supplier Code of Conduct to be an effective real-life guide and a basis for a broad dialogue with our business partners on sustainability-related issues





OFFICIAL RECOGNITION AND ACCREDITATION

IU International University of Applied Sciences fully complies with all legal requirements and holds all accreditations required in Germany. This status is founded on state recognition by the federal state of Thuringia, which confirms its status as a recognised higher education provider and its right to offer accredited degree programmes.



→ **Institutional accreditation** carried out by the Science and Humanities Council (Wissenschaftsrat): IU was most recently re-accredited on 22 January 2021 for a period of five years, and the next regular institutional re-accreditation is scheduled for completion in 2026. This review assesses academic standards in research and teaching, as well as governance, staffing and facilities.

→ **System accreditation** awarded by the German Accreditation Council (Akkreditierungsrat): In October 2025, IU received renewed system accreditation until 2033, the maximum possible duration. This confirms that the institution is authorised to assure the quality

of its degree programmes independently and to accredit its own programmes in accordance with legal requirements.

→ **Programme accreditation:** All degree programmes at IU are accredited internally within the accredited system, with the involvement of external experts and in line with the standards of the German Accreditation Council (Akkreditierungsrat). This ensures that all programmes meet the required quality criteria. In addition, all distance-learning programmes are approved by the State Central Office for Distance Learning (Zentralstelle für Fernunterricht).

CONTACTS

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LEGAL NOTICE
IU Group N.V. ('IU Group'), the holding company behind IU International University of Applied Sciences ('IU'), Walbrook Institute London (formerly also 'The London Institute of Banking and Finance', 'LIBF'), and the University of Fredericton ('UFred'), is a private university group. IU Group strives to keep its materials up-to-date, accurate, and complete. Nevertheless, and despite the careful processing of information, it cannot be entirely ruled out that errors occur. When referring to IU as a 'university' in the text of this report, the official status of 'university of applied sciences' (German: Hochschule) in accordance with the German classification of institutions of higher education is understood, unless stated otherwise.