

# Pioneering German project: Digital University for Digitization Experts

## An initiative by Professors Mike Friedrichsen und Christoph Meinel

Germany can become the first country to launch a fully digital university to train specialists and managers from all over the world specifically **for mastering the digital transformation**. We are both committed to creating a corresponding private and **non-profit digital university** – the "**German University of Digital Science**" ([www.german-uds.de](http://www.german-uds.de)). The concept for this lighthouse project has been agreed with the state government of Brandenburg, as the innovative institution will be located in Potsdam-Babelsberg.



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The German Science Council is due to discuss the project shortly. At the same time, talks on financing are underway. We are approaching committed private individuals, companies and institutions who are committed to corporate social responsibility (CSR), who are also committed to implementing the United Nations' Sustainable Development



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Goals (SDGs) and who therefore want to improve both access to and the quality of higher education.

Once approval has been granted, research and teaching operations could begin in October 2024. The headquarters and "machine house" of the planned virtual private university is located in the "CloudHouse" in the media city of Babelsberg.

Our goal with the German University of Digital Science is to democratize global access to high-quality digital education and to impart practical knowledge that is necessary for coping with the rapid digital transformation and to help alleviate the shortage of skilled workers. At the same time, the future German digital university should also make an active contribution to ensuring freedom, equality, tolerance and the rule of law in the digital world.

### The former German science minister supports the project

The ground-breaking project is being supported by an international advisory board of scientists. In addition to experts from the universities of Stanford (USA), Monterrey (Mexico), Madrid (Spain) and Cape Town (South Africa), the eight-member advisory board also includes former ministers Prof. Johanna Wanka and Prof. Sabine Kunst. Wanka was research minister for the federal government for five years until 2018 and previously for the states of Brandenburg (2000 to 2009) and Lower Saxony (2010 to 2013), while Kunst was also the state science minister of Brandenburg (2011 to 2015). She was previously President of the University of Potsdam (2007 to 2011) and later of Humboldt-Universität Berlin (2015 to 2021).

## **Paid Bachelor's, Master's and MBA degree programs in English**

The Digital University's English-language study programs (to start with: the Bachelor's program "Digital World", two Master's programs "Digital Leadership" and "Applied AI", the MBA program "Digital Transformation") are primarily aimed at people who want to combine their educational interests with their everyday and family life. This includes, for example, talented young people from countries in the global South who would not be able to leave their home country to study. However, career-oriented professionals who wish to remain at their place of work during an academic course should also be able to gain a qualification online. The course content has a modular structure and can also be completed individually with an additional qualification, such as a micro degree.

## **Combination of traditional university and distance learning university complements university system**

Right from the start, our new digital university of the future is aiming for a doctorate in order to position itself in international research. It aims to complement the existing university system by using the possibilities of digital technologies to combine and further develop the characteristics of traditional universities and distance learning universities. With the Digital University, we are striving for an international leadership role in research and teaching.

2 In the first five years, we want to recruit 20 internationally outstanding researchers as professors - ten full-time and ten part-time. They will be able to research and teach from their respective locations around the world.

Future students will pay moderate and affordable fees. In addition to the technical content, the courses also teach the basics of law and ethics and promote teamwork, social skills and flexibility. By also teaching the innovation approach of design thinking, we strengthen the ability to innovate, problem-solving skills and entrepreneurial thinking and action.

## **Non-profit limited company launches digital university**

In the initial phase, we will act as founding presidents. We will be supported in the Digital University project by national and international academics.

The planned digital university will be launched and supported by a foundation that is a shareholder in the supporting company German University of Digital Science gGmbH. It provides the funding for the Digital University and is responsible for all its rights and obligations.

As founders, we are currently actively seeking the support of other committed individuals and institutions who are interested in promoting the first online university in Europe. The common goal must be to train specialists and managers in the best possible way to successfully master and sustainably shape the digital transformation in their countries.

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Basic information about the German University of Digital Science