



SCIENCE COMMUNICATION AT HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY

Science communication takes on significant functions of society by investing the considerable effort of translation necessary to encourage an interest in academic research, to make research results accessible to non-experts, and to generate an understanding of scientific findings and their provisional character. It also crafts the dialogue with both the general public and specific publics, as well as initiating and accompanying cooperation with different partners, thus making a contribution to solving urgent societal problems. An essential factor for the national and international visibility of Heidelberg University and the research achievements of its scientists and scholars, science communication forms a central pillar of the university's communication and transfer strategy.

Since 2009, the Rectorate's Communication and Marketing (KuM) department has been coordinating, operationalizing and enhancing the communication concept of Heidelberg University, taking into account the university's strategic goals and the various target groups. To this end, the department works in concert with the Rectorate, the university administration and the central and decentral units: the stakeholders are offered a wide range of support services that are geared towards various groups and utilize different media and formats. The activities are coordinated by the "Communications Round Table", which ideally involves all decentral players from the areas of science communication and public relations (since 2010). A further discussion forum focuses on the interaction between art and science. A work group seeking to network the collections and museums and increase their visibility is developing a concept involving short-, medium- and long-term measures and perspectives.

With different event and communication formats addressed to the broad public, and also through bringing representatives of politics, culture or industry together with scientists and scholars, Heidelberg University aims to connect research expertise and specialist knowledge with the different target groups. In addition, publications and digital formats promote the communication of scientific findings to every sector of society. The central portal heiONLINE gathers up digital offerings such as lectures, panel discussions and podcasts and makes them available also to an international target group via livestream or recordings. The major concern of these activities is to make research results accessible for innovations of all kinds and thereby also open up new perspectives for students and early-career researchers.

Tasks and services

The Rectorate's Communications and Marketing (KuM) department offers consulting and support for all matters related to the professional communication between science and society, guaranteeing that it is aligned with the needs of the specific target groups and media outlets.

Press and Media Work

- Regular reporting on research results and projects in the university's newsroom
- Making research news available to national and international media via professional infrastructures, such as "Informationsdienst Wissenschaft", "AlphaGalileo" and "EurekAlert!"
- Advising members of the university on handling the media and different target groups in the general public
- Issuing publications of the university, including the Unispiegel and the University's Annual Report
- Editing the university's online event calendar and providing assistance to institutes and departments with publishing information on their events

Web Office

- Conception and maintenance of the university's central web presence, as well as social media channels
- Advising and supporting members of the university's institutes and facilities in implementing their web presence

Corporate Design and Corporate Publishing

- Graphics services for designing print and digital products such as posters, brochures, flyers and onepagers
- Implementation, maintenance and advancement of a consistent image of the university
- Designing, developing and implementing publications, including the Ruperto Carola research magazine

Science Communication and Event Management

- Planning and organizing of target group-specific event formats, Rectorate events and award ceremonies
- Supporting the organization of events of other university institutes and departments
- Renting premises to external partners of the university

Science Communication: Key measures at Heidelberg University

- Strategic bundling of central communication activities and concentration on focus topics, such as the Ruperto Carola Lecture Series, which complements the Ruperto Carola research magazine
- Development of new communication formats, such as “ÜberLebensStrategien” and the Academic Lunch Break
- Promotion and combination of decentralized formats and platforms, such as “Marsilius kontrovers”, the Monday Conference at the IÜD and the Heidelberg Bridge colloquium of the HCE
- Modular use of various (especially digital) communication channels: major offers are made available internationally in the heiONLINE portal as livestream, recording or podcast

Selected communication formats

Research magazine Ruperto Carola

- The research magazine Ruperto Carola reports on scientific findings and ongoing research projects at Heidelberg University.
- Each of the issues, which has a circulation of 6,000 copies and is distributed internationally, is dedicated to a socially relevant focus topic on which Heidelberg researchers present their scientific work across disciplines and subjects.
- In an accessible language, the authors show the various ways in which research is conducted at Heidelberg University.

Ruperto Carola Lecture Series

- Using the method of focal themes, Heidelberg University presents socially relevant research issues to a wider public in different formats.
- The respective topic is set by the Ruperto Carola research magazine and also forms the focus of the Ruperto Carola Lecture Series and of further target-group specific events.
- The lecture series comprises presentations by academics from different fields who each deal with the focal theme from the viewpoint of their discipline.

ÜberLebensStrategien

- The lecture series “ÜberLebensStrategien” is a format with which the life science researchers of Heidelberg University reach out to a wider public.
- They introduce selected issues, methods and long-term goals of molecular life sciences in the relaxed atmosphere of a special event location.
- A joint project with Rhein-Neckar Fernsehen, the individual lectures are recorded and broadcast by the local TV station.

- In addition, members of the Collegium Musicum of Heidelberg University provide a musical setting for the events.

Round Table on Science and the Arts

- In 2022 a round table has been set up so that researchers at Heidelberg University and other actors can share views and information on the interface between science and the arts, and current projects in this field. A website was also created in this regard.

Academic Lunch Break

- The Academic Lunch Break takes place in the special atmosphere of the University Church, the Peterskirche in the Heidelberg Old Town.
- The event series is planned every summer semester by a different university faculty, institute or research centre; the purpose is to present scientific content in an understandable way, also for an audience of non-experts.
- It consists of scientists and scholars of the university giving insights into their research activities through 15-minute inputs followed by a round of questions and discussion.

heiSCHOOL

- heiSCHOOL, the brand of the Kids' Uni/Young University, aims to capture and foster the curiosity and enthusiasm of children and young people for scientific phenomena and research.
- Within the framework of heiSCHOOL, the project "GO FUTURE!" is currently focusing on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); a multi-semester programme has been developed together with researchers from the university.
- "GO FUTURE!" is aimed at school students and intends to support schools, teachers as well as parents in bringing the highly relevant topic of sustainability to young people in a knowledge-based way.
- One component is a lecture series that focuses on a different area of sustainable development each semester; furthermore, 17 short films have been produced in which scientists from Heidelberg University present their research and connection to the SDGs.

heiONLINE

- heiONLINE is the university's central portal for digital offerings such as lectures, panel discussions and podcasts.
- It makes them available via livestream or recordings, also addressing an international target group.
- The portal facilitates the promotion and linking of decentralized formats, such as "Marsilius kontrovers", the Monday Conference at the IÜD and the Heidelberg Bridge colloquium of the HCE.

Internal weblinks

Additional information related to science communication at Heidelberg University:

- Communications and Marketing (KuM):
www.uni-heidelberg.de/en/institutions/rectorate/communications-and-marketing
- Transfer – communication:
www.uni-heidelberg.de/en/transfer/communication
- Communication services:
www.uni-heidelberg.de/en/transfer/service-transfer/communication-services
- Newsroom:
www.uni-heidelberg.de/en/newsroom
- heiONLINE:
www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/heionline
- Research magazine Ruperto Carola:
www.uni-heidelberg.de/en/press-media/publications/research-magazine
- Ruperto Carola Lecture Series:
www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/transfer/kommunikation/ruperto-carola-ringvorlesung
- ÜberLebensStrategien:
www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/transfer/kommunikation/ueberlebensstrategien
- Round Table on Science and the Arts:
www.uni-heidelberg.de/en/transfer/communication/science-and-the-arts
- Academic Lunch Break:
www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/transfer/kommunikation/akademische-mittagspause
- heiSCHOOL:
www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/heischool
- Kids' Uni:
www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/heionline/kinderuni-digital
- Young University:
www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/heischool/junge-uni
- Project "GO FUTURE!":
www.uni-heidelberg.de/de/heischool/go-future
- Nature Marsilius Visiting Professorship:
www.uni-heidelberg.de/en/transfer/communication/nature-marsilius-visiting-professorship
- Marsilius kontrovers:
www.marsilius-kolleg.uni-heidelberg.de/public_activities/marsilius_kontrovers_en.html
- 'Marsilius im Gespräch' podcast:
www.marsilius-kolleg.uni-heidelberg.de/podcast.html
- Heidelberg Bridge colloquium of the HCE:
www.hce.uni-heidelberg.de/en/the-center/heidelberg-bridge

- Monday Conference of the IÜD:
www.uni-heidelberg.de/fakultaeten/neuphil/iask/sued/aktuelles/montagskonferenz.html

External weblinks

Additional information related to 'science communication' on external webpages:

- National Institute for Science Communication (NaWik):
www.nawik.de
- Science Media Center Germany:
www.sciencemediacenter.de
- Position Paper on Science Communication by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research:
www.bmbf.de/SharedDocs/Publikationen/de/bmbf/1/24784_Grundsatzpapier_zur_Wissenschaftskommunikation.pdf;jsessionid=85711517CB29822F1B98627BA51920FB.live722?__blob=publicationFile&v=4
- Position Paper by the German Rectors' Conference – 'Hochschulkommunikation als strategische Aufgabe':
www.hrk.de/positionen/beschluss/detail/hochschulkommunikation-als-strategische-aufgabe/
- #FactoryWisskomm – 'Handlungsperspektiven für die Wissenschaftskommunikation':
www.bmbf.de/bmbf/shareddocs/downloads/files/factory_wisskomm_publication.pdf;jsessionid=D485C68D99EDFDF12A27E1E38BFBCB4C.live472?__blob=publicationFile&v=2

Wording examples

The following text modules are examples of how to describe the general aspect of science communication in a proposal. They need to be refined and expanded, according to the specific context.

Example 1:

Science communication takes on significant functions of society by investing the considerable effort of translation necessary to encourage an interest in academic research, to make research results accessible to non-experts, and to generate an understanding of scientific findings and their provisional character. It also crafts the dialogue with both the general public and specific publics, as well as initiating and accompanying cooperation with different partners, thus making a contribution to solving urgent societal problems. Building on, and interacting with, the well-established structures in science communication at Heidelberg University, ...

Example 2:

With different event and communication formats addressed to the broad public, and also through bringing representatives of politics, culture or industry together with scientists and scholars, Heidelberg University aims to connect research expertise and specialist knowledge with the different target groups. ... will make use of communication formats such as ... In addition, it will develop its own formats, for example ..., in order to promote the communication of scientific findings to every sector of society.

Example 3:

Science communication forms a central pillar of Heidelberg University's communication and transfer strategy. To make research results accessible for innovations of all kinds and thereby also open up new perspectives for students and early-career researchers, ... will implement communication formats such as ...