



UNIVERSITÄT  
HEIDELBERG  
ZUKUNFT  
SEIT 1386

## Memorandum of Understanding on participation in the Joint Heidelberg-DBT Graduate Program on Big Data Research

### Heidelberg University ("Heidelberg");

represented by the Rector Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Bernhard Eitel  
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69117 Heidelberg  
Germany

and

### Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)

Represented by the Vice Chancellor Professor M. Jagadesh Kumar  
New Mehrauli Road  
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hereinafter collectively referred to as the "**Parties**" have reached the following understanding:

### PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding ("**MoU**") is formally to record the mutual interest of the parties in promoting and furthering links between the parties of this MoU. In particular, it is the interest of the parties to establish a joint PhD program as part of the research training group "Big Data Research in the Biosciences" initiated by Heidelberg University and Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology of the Republic of India ("**DBT**")

### PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS

2. Heidelberg University and the DBT have already signed an MoU on the general framework of the Joint Graduate Program on Big Data Research. The parties of this MoU have discussed the possibilities of collaboration as partners in this program. The collaboration will focus on:
  - training highly talented young academics in big data research particularly in managing, processing, analysing and evaluating different text and image data types
  - supporting the establishment of sustainable research structures between the partnerssubject to negotiation of the appropriate contractual terms and to the necessary funding being available.

### FUTURE STEPS

3. Following the project confirmation by the DBT, the parties aim to implement a joint doctoral research training group (RTG) that will include further PhD candidates from other Indian partners in the project as well. The following steps have been identified by both parties to pursue this goal.
  - 3.1 The program will establish a *scientific council* to which each Indian partner delegates one scientific representative. Further scientists will be appointed by Heidelberg University, the DBT and possibly further institutions. The scientific council will prepare all decisions regarding the selection of candidates to the various stages of the program.

The program will also establish an *joint board* to make final administrative decisions in line with the proposal and the regulations of the program. Headed by a delegate of DBT, a delegate of Heidelberg University and an external expert, the joint board will additionally consist of three internal and three external experts as well as administrative members of the program.

The *administrative office* of the program will be located at Heidelberg University. Both parties agree to direct all request to the program through the Heidelberg office of RTG Big Data research which will transmit these requests in a suitable format to the joint board of RTG Big Data Research. The Heidelberg Center South Asia in New Delhi will support the implementation of the program.

- 3.2 The Indian partners will promote the program to suitable PhD candidates upon completion of the PhD entry exam. During the first year of the PhD students can apply to become *candidates* of the program by submitting their transcripts, CV and letter of motivation to the Indian partner. Selection of program candidates will be carried out by each Indian program partner based on the submitted data and the fit of the applicant to the program.
- 3.3 Researchers from both parties will aim to form *research tandems* by linking two researchers with common research interest – one from each party. The research tandems form the supervision basis for the RTG by defining *PhD research proposals* and submitting them to the joint board of the program (Heidelberg office). The decision to accept research proposals lies with the scientific council of the program.
- 3.4 Upon acceptance of research proposals the supervisors will announce the proposal at the institution of the Indian supervisor of the authoring research tandem. Candidates at this Indian institution can apply to join the research proposal during an application period of two weeks by submitting a letter of intent that motivates the application. Based on the candidates' data (CV, transcripts, PhD entry exam, letter of intent) the research tandem compiles within two weeks a discussion report and a ranking of all candidates of their proposal. Based on this evaluation, the scientific council suggests to the joint board the *phase-1 (internship phase) membership* to one candidate for this PhD research project. The final funding decision lies with the joint board.
- 3.5 Each research tandem will define individually with the Heidelberg office an internship phase for their selected phase-1 member. The parties agree that phase 1 is an important step to complete the complex matchmaking between the two supervisors, the RTG Big Data Research, the PhD research project and one PhD candidate. During the internship the phase-1 member works on a preparatory research practical to ensure the best fit between all links of the PhD project. The phase-1 internship usually lasts between 6 and 10 weeks and is carried out at Heidelberg University in the lab of the Heidelberg supervisor of the corresponding research tandem.
- 3.6 Upon finishing the phase-1 internship, both supervisors compile a common statement on the performance of the candidate and the fit to the proposed project. They evaluate the resulting fit on a scale from 10 (perfect fit) to 1 (misplacement). The phase-1 candidate writes a report on the internship stating the results of the practical and an own assessment of the internship. The reports are due 4 weeks after the end of the internship.
- 3.7 The scientific council meets at a regular basis (usually every 8 weeks) by video conferencing to discuss the outcome of all phase-1 internships. The representative of the Indian partner is responsible to present all reports of their own phase-1 candidates in the program. The intake period for phase 1 runs from October to next September. In September, the last month of each intake period, the scientific council compiles a ranking of all phase-1 internships. Based on this ranking, the joint board of the RTG Big Data Research decides to offer phase-2 funding to selected projects. This offer is limited by the funding available to the project. To decide tie-breakers between level candidates, the distribution of funding to the partners as well as gender and diversity aspects can be employed. The offers are made within 2 weeks after the submission of the ranking.
- 3.8 The Indian partner asserts to respect the decision by the joint board. Research tandem and candidate have 1 week to decide on the funding offer for phase-2 (PhD research phase). The funding for phase 2 consists of all costs (transfer, cost of living, insurance, lab cost) associated with a research stay of 18 to 24 month at Heidelberg University in the work group of the Heidelberg supervisor of the research tandem. The details are given to the candidate with the funding offer. The exact duration and time table for the research stay, including the possibility to split the phase 2 internship into two periods, are decided by the research tandem, depending on the work plan of the project. Reductions below 18 months and extensions above 24 months have to be confirmed by the scientific council.

- 3.9 The project aims to fund up to 20 phase-1 internships as well as 10 phase-2 PhD research projects across all of the partners in the research training group per year. As not all phase-1 projects will be accepted for phase-2, the Indian partner confirms that for PhD candidates who apply for phase 2 but are not selected, the phase 1 internship will be acknowledged as part of their regular PhD education, which will continue at their Indian home institution following the regulations of the Indian partner.  
While the membership to RTG Big Data Research of PhD candidates, who are not accepted to phase-2, ends one year after their application as project candidate, the RTG Big Data Research motivates the parties and the research tandems to pursue the proposed research project within the regular PhD education at the Indian institution.  
Both parties agree to support the program PhD projects. This includes a ban for each party to allow PhD candidates to leave the program in favour for an individual PhD project with only one of the two supervisors without written consent of the other supervisor involved in the research tandem.
- 3.10 Both parties aim to support the RTG Big Data Research in all additional measures of the project.
- Specifically both parties will promote the postdoc program of the RTG Big Data Research and actively help in the search for suitable young researchers to pursue exchange for usually 6 months in a lab of the Heidelberg partner.
  - Both parties will also encourage their students (master and bachelor) to take part in activities such as exchange terms summer schools and other mobility projects.
  - To improve the formation of research tandems, both parties will send researchers to matchmaking workshops in India to be held by the program as necessary (up to twice per year).
  - In order to generally enhance the cooperation on the level of young researchers, both parties will actively participate in joint summer schools of the program, sending lecturers, participants and staff for training and networking.
- 3.11 The parties will define the administration of PhD training (sandwich structure and/or cotutelle du thèse) in a separate MoU, which they aim to negotiate within one year after this MoU is signed and which will also set out the terms of the use of the research results (publication, intellectual property rights of the parties, the modalities of filing of patents etc.). An individual PhD agreement will be signed for each phase-2 project.

#### **PUBLIC STATEMENTS**

4. The parties acknowledge the merits of positive publicity but they recognise that no party should make any press announcement or public statement about the proposals or this MoU, which has not been agreed in advance by another party.

#### **BRAND PROTECTION**

5. No party will use the name, trade name, trademark, logo or other designation of another party in connection with any products, promotion, advertising, press release, or publicity without the prior written permission of the other party.

#### **EFFECT OF THIS MEMORANDUM**

6. While the parties wish by this MoU to make clear their support of, and enthusiasm for, the proposals, with the exception of clauses 4 (Public Statements) and 5 (Brand Protection) and this clause 6, which the parties acknowledge to be legally binding upon them, this MoU is not intended to create any legally binding relationship between the parties. The parties recognise that any agreement or agreements involving the parties which may subsequently be negotiated will, prior to execution, require the express approval of specific bodies and duly authorised officers of both parties, and they acknowledge that at any time in advance of such execution the parties and each of them shall be free to propose arrangements different from those outlined in this MoU or unilaterally to cease any consideration or negotiation contemplated by this MoU without any liability whatsoever to the other parties.

This MoU supercedes and overrides all other agreements/MoUs/etc. between the two parties and shall remain in force for a period of five years from the date it is signed by the appropriate officials of the two parties. All activities in terms of this MoU shall be subject to the applicable domestic laws of the country where the activities are carried out.

This MoU may be amended at any time by mutual written consent of the parties.

Any difference arising out of the interpretation or implementation or application of any of the provisions of the MoU shall be settled amicably by mutual consultation or negotiation between the Parties.

Signed at Delhi on April, 2019 in two originals in the English language.

Signed for and on behalf of Prayagraj Heidelberg University by Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Bernhard Eitel, Rector

Signed for and on behalf of Jawaharlal Nehru University by Professor M. Jagadesh Kumar, Vice Chancellor

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