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*Dear readers,*

The coronavirus pandemic has been upending all aspects of our lives for more than a year now, and it has posed unprecedented challenges to research and teaching at our university. But thanks to the enormous personal efforts of all UDE members, thanks to their readiness to adapt to the new circumstances and resulting political conditions and find solid, workable solutions at a moment's notice again and again, 2020 has been the most successful research year the University of Duisburg-Essen has ever seen.

Our researchers have secured three new collaborative research centres and extended two existing ones. They have acquired two research training groups, established one research unit headed by UDE and obtained funding from the German Research Foundation's Heisenberg Programme for six researchers. Our cancer research centre has been selected as a site of the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT). Now in its 18th year, the University of Duisburg-Essen is consistently achieving outstanding success at the national and international level.

Having expanded the University's central tenure track programme and appointed 23 new WISNA professors, we are delighted about every new colleague who has embarked on the programme in 2020, every new scholarship holder in the NRW academic returnee programme who has decided to return from abroad to join us, and every prestigious prize awarded to the young leaders of research groups at our university.

The newly established Centre for Start-Ups and Innopreneurship, GUIDE, has injected a large dose of dynamism into research transfer across our university. With funding from the EXIST programme of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (GUIDE regio), additional funding from the state government (GUIDE plus), an interdisciplinary board and fantastic projects from many university members who are enthusiastic about research transfer, GUIDE has achieved visibility within our region and beyond.

These and the many other impressive developments in our research are reflected in the placement of the University of Duisburg-Essen in the Times Higher Education Young University Ranking 2020. We came sixteenth out of all universities in the world that are younger than 50 years, and we are 'the young top university' in Germany.

I would like to thank every single person who has contributed to the successes and developments of 2020, the year of the pandemic. In particular, I am grateful to all our academics who are working on exciting new research projects about COVID-19 at UDE.

Beyond the many initiatives that happened this year, we have also laid the groundwork for



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success in future endeavours, such as the 2026 Excellence Strategy.

This research report presents the fascinating research taking place at the eleven faculties of the University of Duisburg-Essen.

We hope you enjoy it.  
Yours,

**Prof. Dr. Dr. med. Dagmar Führer-Sakel**  
Vice-Rector for Research,  
Career Development & Science Transfer