

Erasmus Policy Statement

Academia, College of Short-Cycle Higher Education (hereinafter: Academia) supports the EU Agenda for Modernization and Internationalization for Higher Education. The Erasmus Charter for Higher Education is key for the development of our institutional plans, cooperation and international strategy. Higher Education is essential for the world as we know it nowadays. Educated professionals contribute to the economy, culture and intellectual wealthiness of a society. At Academia we are facilitators of inclusive, supportive programs that embrace the principles of excellence, resourcefulness, modernization, self-development and academic culture, among others. Participating in the Erasmus+ program allows us to expand the reach of our activities. One of the main objectives that we have been pursuing is to contribute to the European Education Area by developing and joining projects under its different actions, such as Strategic Partnership or Capacity Building. In regard to mobility, we are committed to increasing the number and nature of opportunities and possibilities that we can offer our students, both as optional or embedded in the curriculum. This contemplates mobility and work placements in program and partner countries; our strategy will focus on increasing short-term mobility, trying to reach a more diverse student profile, while introducing new and less familiar study destinations in partner countries.

Our international collaborative partnerships represent a keystone when broadening our strategies in teaching, learning and researching. These partnerships are born out of the shared commitment and mutual benefit from the relationships created between us and our partner institutions. Our international partner network is diverse, reflecting the needs and priorities of both the partner institution we cooperate with and of our students and staff. Through these international cooperations, we exchange our knowledge, teaching approaches and work on common projects. It helps us improve the quality of the education that we deliver and we contribute sharing practices with our partners. Our staff benefits from the mobilities since they can review how new methodologies are applied in different countries, further training our lecturers and workers. We also foster our cooperation, strengthening it and opening new possibilities, such as giving the chance to our students to participate in an Erasmus+ mobility, which will benefit their employability, European awareness, and cultural diversity consciousness.

Regarding the policy development and cooperation action, we would like to contribute and collaborate with associations in order to reach decision makers and stakeholders to develop new policies and proposals that will, overall, improve the quality of global education in Europe.

Under the KA1 - Learning Mobilities we contemplate different scenarios:

- Outgoing students in SMT – Our students must fulfill 400 hours per year doing practical training in a company. The opportunity of them joining a foreign firm to implement their internships bring many benefits, mostly related to non-formal and informal learning (learning a new language, cultural background...)

- Incoming students in SMT – Interns coming to our company will encounter a completely different experience than in a firm in their home country. The trainees will be involved in the day-to-day program planning, they'll work on their own projects for students or with students, experience life in a different culture, and take courses that will improve their skills related to their job here or their study. A mentor will always be available to guide the trainees and connect them with our students or other foreign students. The exchange of knowledge and skills will operate from a trainee to our students including our staff and vice versa.

- Incoming students in SMS – Students coming for a studies mobility will experience the dual system education implemented at our organization, enrolling as if (s)he was a domestic student, but with multiple benefits of being in a different, multicultural country. They will be able to join internship programs in one of our associate firms, take courses to acquire skills needed for today's job market, and connect with other foreign students through events that we prepare. We will encourage them to present their culture and school which will benefit us and our students to reflect on similarities, differences, advantages of our and their education system.

- Staff outgoing – For our staff, joining outgoing mobility represents a great experience in their careers. Having a chance to explore how associate colleagues from other countries work, enriches them and keeps them eager for self-improvement. We contemplate both Staff mobility for training and Staff mobility for teaching since we believe that we are experts in some fields where we can contribute and be of use to partner institutions. Mobility of our staff will contribute to improving their teaching methods in higher education and getting a wider knowledge in their field of expertise.
- Staff incoming – We are also promoting the modality of incoming staff, under both frames for teaching and for training. Our institution has many fields of expertise that can be taught by incoming staff from other institutions and we are eager to exchange our educational system and methodologies with them. At the same time, we do believe that incoming

teachers represent a great contribution to our students since they can learn from experienced professionals in their field of studies.

- KA2 - Cooperation among organizations and institutions

We will be addressing the Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices and Partnerships for Innovation. These two different actions are especially interesting for us since they help us improve our institution and we can contribute by developing different fields in partner countries. By being part of the Erasmus+ programme, we can afford to address bigger issues under an international scope, achieving greater results, rather than if we just worked alone on them. Besides, the outcomes of our cooperation follow the Erasmus+ standards and contribute to the whole community, helping many organizations at the time.

- KA3 - Support to policy development and cooperation

By addressing this KA, we would like to further develop education in general terms. Our institution is a vocational education training provider and a higher education institution that aims to deliver the best quality formation possible. However, like every institution in Europe, we are limited by a curriculum, law and educational ministry. This is not necessarily bad; however, we believe that we could address some specific topics that will generally improve the outcomes of our practice. Having the opportunity to cooperate with different institutions, organizations and experts in the fields of the KA3 projects that we cooperate in would surely empower us to make changes and reach greater outputs than the ones we would have achieved on our own. Joining forces, we will be able to reach decision-makers and stakeholders.

How Erasmus+ benefits Academia

Our students and staff would benefit from mobilities under the Erasmus+ programme. Regarding the learning process, the mobilities out of our institution are recognized with ECTS matching the internship in their programs. Students would meet new people which would increase the chances of employability abroad. There would be a possibility to experience different learning practices and teaching methods, that can result in students' knowledge. What is most important is the fact that students with fewer opportunities could apply for an Erasmus grant or other financial support to study abroad. This would increase participation in the Erasmus+ programme and we could even better promote going out and incoming mobility.

The staff mobilities foster cooperation with different institutions and contribute to the development of new projects in further calls. We approach partners that contribute to our institution or that can



benefit from it and we aim to make the cooperation between our organizations stronger, in order to work towards bigger outcomes. The staff would gain knowledge of good practice and new skills for teaching and transferring knowledge to students. This would be a very effective tool for enhancing the internationalization of teaching. With staff mobility, we would motivate students to become mobile and provide promotion of exchange of expertise and experience on pedagogical methods. This could result in offering and enriching our lectures and maybe offering some new courses. The results of the mobilities are disseminated at both local and international levels. The knowledge brought by staff after the mobilities is reviewed and implemented if suitable at our institution.

Regarding the projects, we cooperate in the different actions mentioned above. These projects are framed under one of our experience or expertise fields, allowing us to contribute and be useful partners. The outcomes of the projects are used in our daily work and disseminated through the community. The time scheme of when these activities are carried out depends on the actions:

- The mobility action is carried out on a regular basis, throughout the year. The dissemination is always done shortly after the end of those.
- The KA2s are continuously developed. Once a project is approved, we need to work on it for the whole duration, each of them depending on how they have been planned. We normally participate in different events in the projects, such as Training Courses, Project Meetings, or taking responsibility for some Intellectual Outputs. The dissemination of the results when they are finished also depends on the planning during the application.
- With projects under the KA3 action, we will try to create bigger changes at an international, European, or national level, promoting new policies that will improve the general quality of the education and decisions taken by decision makers or stakeholders. These decisions would ultimately affect us, so having the chance of raising our voice and contributing to their development together with our partners will ensure a better general outcome.