

## Erasmus Policy Statement (2021-2027)

*Your Erasmus Policy Statement should reflect how you intended to implement Erasmus after the award of the ECHE (European Charter for Higher Education).*

*What would you like to achieve by participating in the Erasmus Programme? How does your participation in the Erasmus Programme fit into your institutional internationalization and modernization strategy?*

*Please reflect on the objectives of your participation. Please explain how you expect the participation in Erasmus to contribute towards modernizing your institution, as well as on the goal of building a European Education Area and explain the policy objectives you intend to pursue.*

In the Strategic Institutional Plan (2015-2020) of Artevelde University of Applied Sciences (AUAS), **internationalisation was given a vital role**, and much was accomplished in that respect. By means of a **cross-cutting approach**, internationalisation was introduced in all processes and policies of all AUAS sections. Many frameworks were developed to implement the several aspects of internationalisation in offices and departments, as well as in the general policy. For example, global citizenship is one of the three main objectives of our educational concept, besides professional and personal development.

Among others because of the following **actions and achievements** we have a **pioneering role in Flanders**:

- **mobility windows** are included in all our bachelor programmes
- the **ICOMS** (intercultural competences) are implemented in our curricula
- focus on **intercultural skills and language skills** in the professionalisation offer for staff members by organising an English C1 course and a module 'How to teach an intercultural Classroom'
- **@abroad and @home** are considered **equal**
- **automatic recognition is optimised**. The complete Course Catalogue can be consulted on our (Dutch and English) website well in advance, so students are informed before nomination and application start. Additionally, Erasmus Student Charter, Grant Agreement, Learning Agreement, TOR/TOW and Diploma Supplement are offered and completed step-by-step, by means of a digital management system.
- participation in **Egracons** with grading scales (institutional and per domain) based on ECTS
- quality, quantity and relevance are **monitored** on the basis of our **detailed internationalisation indicators** in HR, leadership and organisational structure, communication, education and quality assurance and is communicated to all staff members via the annual report and a Power BI specifically for internationalisation.

**In our current** short-term and long-term **strategy, internationalisation** continues to take a prominent place as one of the **catalysts for innovation, modernisation and quality in education and research**.

Internationalisation is **part of our corporate communication**, and hence is a fixed part of Artevelde UAS's profile as a professional and internationally oriented university of applied sciences.

In practice this means that we will continue our focus on internationalisation in our new organisational structure, which officially starts in September 2020.

The Offices of Quality Management, Education Policy, International Policy, Research and Development, and Marketing are gathered under the same Direction. This way, consultation and coordination are encouraged, and internationalisation is definitely on the agenda of these offices. Additionally, **International Policy became a separate office**, to increase its effectiveness and to enable the office **to act as a centre of expertise and knowledge** on internationalisation.

All departments were gathered in 5 expertise networks: Business and Management - Media, Communication and Design - Healthcare - Education - People and Society. In every network, a full-time International Coordinator (each with their own discipline-specific expertise) will act as a connection with and an extension of the International Policy Office to promote consultation, dissemination, and implementation across all departments.

Arranging consultation with the following offices who were not yet mentioned (Study and Career Guidance, Student Support, Financial Office, Legal Issues & Insurance), creating institutional support and embedment.

Our new organisational structure brought along 4 'mindshifts', and the **opportunity for internationalisation to develop further according to current and future needs and challenges.**

**This evolving focus and structure implies our commitment and contribution to offer quality education, innovation and cooperation, since we take pride in creating professionals (as a university of applied sciences) able to connect to the existing labour market and to face current and future challenges in our diverse society.**

**Our current course catalogue offers** opportunities for our own as well as incoming students, who get to work together in mixed classrooms: International degree programmes, exchange semester programmes in all our domains of expertise, an interdisciplinary and intergenerational exchange semester; summer schools, joint programmes, and double degree programmes. Further, we have recently developed a language offer (English, French, Spanish and Chinese) in our Artevelde Business Academy.

We send and receive students in a qualitative partner network.

The **Erasmus+ Programme** creates many **opportunities** on several levels which we consider to be key elements, being **mobility and cooperation**. These opportunities contribute to the further development of internationalisation and achieving our goals.

**Our main priorities:**

**Attention to new learning methods that improve international and intercultural competences and learning outcomes**

- Further development of **interdisciplinary programmes** that promote **cross-curricular skills**
- Developing an offer of microcredentials in the context of **lifelong learning** and which we will use to attract international talent
- **Virtual/blended mobility** - appointing a COIL coordinator who can implement this new form in many study programmes, in line with the int@home story and possibly enhancing inclusion.
- Implementing our realisations from our bachelor programmes into the associate degree programmes that became part of Artevelde UAS since September 2019.

**Attention to broad collaboration with a focus on quality rather than quantity**

- Developing an institutional strategic consortium, together with our strategic partners
- Mapping out a trajectory towards a 'European University'
- Encouraging innovative projects within KA 2 in all expertise networks with sufficient platform to share results
- Focus on quality rather than quantity via monitoring and evaluation by means of a detailed policy framework on partner criteria and the application of the eQuATIC tool.

### **Focus on mobility**

- **Accessible and constructive**, in the form of study trips, doing an international week, semester, or longer period, or foreign internship after graduating. Especially the form of **blended** mobility in the Erasmus+ Programme offers sufficient opportunities for students. We continue our mobility calls for the entire staff and still preserve SST mobility for administrative staff only, to ensure opportunities for all.
- With an increased focus on **sustainability** by means of 'green destinations' (accessible via slow travel)
- **Inclusive**, with additional attention for everyone with fewer opportunities. Our collaboration with the Offices for Student Support and Study and Career Guidance continues to act as a driving force.
- We continue to aim for the European target of 20% graduates who obtained at least 15 ETCS abroad (AY 16-17: 12.7% / AY 17-18: 15.8% / AY 18-19: 16.7%)

Artevelde UAS considers the development and implementation of **these objectives as a clear commitment and contribution to the European Education Area**, where many solid foundations were established.

***Please reflect on the Erasmus actions you would like to take part in and explain how they will be implemented in practice at your institution. Please explain how your institution's participation in these actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of your institutional strategy***

AUAS will **take part in all the 3 Key Actions**. KA 3 because of the legal incorporation of SIHO into AUAS (for more information on SIHO, I refer to the answer regarding inclusive mobility. They were selected for their inclusive mobility EPIFME project, and they aim to keep on contributing towards support for policy reform.)

#### Implementation of the different actions:

AUAS and its International Policy Office appoints an institutional **Erasmus+ Coordinator**. This allows us to **centralise, communicate and disseminate all calls and opportunities within all three Key Actions**.

**KA1: The International Policy Office plays a key role in coordinating and monitoring** mobility activities. **Together with our 5 full-time International Coordinators (one per expertise network)**, and, where needed, with assistance of colleagues from other offices (such as Student Support, Student Administration, Financial Office), the whole mobility process (information, nomination, selection, OLS, Learning/Training Agreement, Grant Agreement, Certificate of Attendance, TOR/TOW, EU Questionnaire) is an accessible digital process or 'flow', where everybody performs their part.

Of course, before the mobility process can begin, **a network of partners has to exist**. A partnership always starts based on an actual need within a department. Again, the process of making and evaluating (and possible withdrawal) a partnership is a mutual task, where **central monitoring and management** is done. The role of the departments is to discuss content and to forward this to the International Policy Office. In order to provide a network of quality partner institutions for outgoing and incoming student and staff mobility, AUAS also implements a policy on quality criteria to be used when scanning potential partners. This was developed together with our Office for Quality Management.

**KA2 and 3:** the actual **project ownership is located at the level of the departments/offices** who officially applied. By placing ownership at this level, we guarantee innovativeness by making use of the combined knowledge and expertise in each of our expertise domains. As for the monitoring and **disseminating** of figures and % of our international mobility and partners, we annually 'feed' our **Power BI**, which is a part of AUAS' **Annual Report**.

#### How it will contribute to achieving our institutional objectives

The three goals of **our educational concept:** professional and personal development; becoming a **world citizen**. The last goal implies the implementation of ICOMS (intercultural competences) into our curricula, to prepare our students for the diverse society we live in, but also to compete beyond national borders. A key element in achieving this, is of course mobility itself, and not only for students. Students take courses taught by lecturers, so staff mobility is of equal importance in achieving these goals. As we are exploring the possibilities of **virtual mobility and COIL projects**, the new blended mobility opportunity will offer us a platform to **maximise potential in this area**.

Our **international strategy: '33% mobile students and 100% mobility of the mind'**. Following our educational concept, we have a clear Flemish target of 33% mobile students (for at least 10 ECTS abroad), but above all, 100% mobility of the mind refers to our **ICOMS embedded curricula** and the institution-wide attention to internationalisation and interculturalisation. It shows that both **@abroad and @home are two solid pillars of equal importance**. In order to achieve this, you need to rely on qualitative exchange semester programmes (which we have, I refer to the EPS) within a network of qualitative partners. Next to our semester programmes (and our international degree programmes), we have several joint programmes and double degree programmes on offer, all co-created by several European HEIs within our network. Also innovative interdisciplinary teaching 'labs' (semesters) were implemented at AUAS.

It goes without saying that participation in the **Erasmus+ programme** is a very **important contributor to achieve these goals**, since creating a network of ECHE holders is possible and because all ECHE holders do strive to offer qualitative exchange programmes. This allows our students to go abroad and their students to be welcomed by us. By offering Erasmus Grants (and top ups, exceptional costs, grants for special needs), we provide a financial boost for those still in doubt or with specific hurdles to overcome, thus enabling all students to participate.

**Our international indicators and objectives:** Again, we want to point out **transversal approach** by applying objectives into our organisational structure, HR policy, education, research, quality assurance, partnerships and networking, and communication and marketing.

Specifically on partnerships: by promoting and applying (and being awarded) within **KA2 – Innovative projects**, we put international cooperation on our map.

Applying for **international cooperation** happens in all of our 5 expertise networks, hence the importance of contributing and committing to international cooperation is clear. **Not only**

**mobility, but also cooperation are key elements in achieving the goals as they are set for a European Education Area.**

Specifically in this area, one of our current objectives is to seek partner institutions to explore the possibility of applying for 'European Universities'.

***What is the envisaged impact of your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on your institution? Please reflect on targets, as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators in monitoring this impact (such as mobility targets for student/staff mobility, quality of the implementation, support for participants on mobility, increased involvement in cooperation projects (under the KA2 action), sustainability/long-term impact of projects etc.) You are encouraged to offer an indicative timeline for achieving the targets related to the Erasmus+ actions.***

### **Impact**

After so many years of offering multiple possibilities, the Erasmus+ Programme is interwoven into our internationalization policy and procedures.

We are proud to have achieved the following numbers in recent years:

#### **KA103**

	SMS	SMP	STA	STT	TOTAL
AY 14-15	197	94	90	10	391
AY 15-16	206	92	109	10	417
AY 16-17	239	108	105	10	462
AY 17-18	232	72	120	23	447
AY 18-19	219	112	131	16	478

Apart from AY 17-18, we recorded an annual increase.

**KA107:** On a Flemish level, we have been awarded grants for applied projects for most of the Calls. In many cases we received positive final assessments, but due to a lack of funding, the projects had to be cancelled.

We are glad that part of the KA107 budget will be implemented in the KA103 budget as this guarantees a long-term and sustainable cooperation with institutions and countries.

**KA2:** On average, AUAS participated in 5 KA2 projects annually and we also gained experience in coordinating a KA2 project.

In regard to the European objective of 20% graduates who will have earned 15 ECTS abroad, we can present you the following outcomes:

AY 16-17: 12.7% / AY 17-18: 15.8% / AY 18-19: 16.7%

We expect a **steady increase** in numbers, especially due to the new blended possibility, but we would like to add that quantity has to go hand in hand with quality.

Regarding our **qualitative** achievements:

Our various achievements are spread throughout this application. I will not go into them in detail again.

**But internationalisation has clearly earned its place as an institutional key element through various policies, frameworks, quality criteria and targets. It is embedded in our organisational structure** by appointing an Erasmus+ Coordinator, an International Policy Office, and International Coordinators for all expertise networks. The transversal nature becomes clear as **international and intercultural matters exceed the boundaries of 'only' the International Policy Office** by the existence of various work groups involving the Offices of Study and Career Guidance, Student Administration, Student Support, Finances, Education Policy, Research &

Development, Quality Management and HR & Professional Development. This to cover the domains of grading; setting up quality criteria; enhance, promote & monitor outgoing and ingoing mobility; incorporating grant payments; support mobility for those with fewer opportunities and to keep working on actual challenges, such as virtual mobility.

These achievements are **connected to actions that will keep on being relevant.**

But a **new programme and an ever evolving world** with all its changing needs deserves **new focus points.** We are able to reserve the necessary time for this, since all previously mentioned actions and achievements are now well embedded within institutional daily structures and procedures. They run 'freely', without the constant monitoring or 'push' from the International Policy Office.

**This evolving focus implies our commitment and contribution to offer quality education, innovativeness and cooperation, since we take pride in delivering professionals (as a university of applied sciences) able to connect to the existing labour market and to face actual and future challenges.**

**Targets that will further foster internationalisation and deserves our (increased) attention:**

- **within cooperation:**
  - o most of our attention went to bilateral agreements and departmental agreements, but our aim is to create an international institutional consortium, and see if we could **evolve towards a European Universities initiative.**
  - o Making sure that within the whole of the partner network sufficient opportunities exist for all students, also in certain 'niches' and expertise. This requires a persistent **targeted search for matching partners.**
  - o Further involve all our expertise domains in cooperating and investing in KA 2 projects, especially in the reshaped form in the new programme.
  - o A closer look at increasing dissemination of project outcomes; institutional promotion of multiplier events
- **Within** (blended) **mobility** of students and staff; outgoing and incoming
  - o Increase inclusive mobility
  - o Appoint climate ambassadors
  - o **Further successful integration of incoming students;** where we just recently appointed an Incoming Students Coordinator.
    - Institutional welcoming and sports and culture activities, also during the weekend and complementary to the ESN agenda
    - Further developing an institutional buddy system
    - Organise regular focus groups together with our Quality Assurance Office to incorporate the important and necessary voice of our incoming students.
    - Incorporate the city-perspective by co-creation and deliberation on visa, housing, activities, venues, and possible issues such as scamming
  - o On staff mobility: investigate what the Realise Project (Erasmus+ KA2 Project on ..... ) has to offer to adjust our policy.
  - o Successful connection and implementation of our international offer within the **level-5 programmes**, our associate degree students and staff members. Especially since we are faced with new challenges given the nature of these programmes: introduce mobility windows, introduce

- o possibilities of exchange, introduce benefits of international cooperation to increase quality of education, implement ICOMS into their curricula
- o Given the increased attention to **virtual /blended mobility**: the appointing of a **COIL Coordinator**
- **Within institutional organisation and structure:**
  - o Offer more and new international semester programmes; especially innovative and/or interdisciplinary programmes, such as our 3ID LABS and Climate Lab.
  - o Using our new organisational structure so that internationalisation will benefit on all levels and in all procedures.
  - o Keep on monitoring our achievements through our Annual Report, Power BI, institutional objectives
  - o Implementing EWP – ESCI according to indicated EWP timeline. This will require a lot of time and energy, and then we are not even talking about traineeship flows or staff mobility. I presume the coming programme will be a transition programme, but nonetheless, we need to reserve the needed time and resources for the coming years.

As for the indicative timeline: the current global situation faces us with the knowledge that we do not only depend on programmes and institutional possibilities, but also on the health of the world. Our aim is to start up all the mentioned targets and actions in AY 20-21, but we will decide later which actions need our immediate attention in order to avoid crises. For one thing, the current semester sharpened our crisis management, so we have achieved another goal already.