

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

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The Institution agrees to publish this overall strategy (all three parts) on its website within one month after the signature of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education by the European Commission.

Please describe your institution's international (EU and non-EU) strategy. In your description please explain a) how you choose your partners, b) in which geographical area(s) and c) the most important objectives and target groups of your mobility activities (with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, including study and training, and short cycles). If applicable, also explain how your institution participates in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees. (max. 5000 characters)

Original language [EN]

According to the Development Plan for Tallinn University (2010-2014) and Tallinn University Internationalisation Strategy 2008-2015, university continuously works to develop its position as an international university by participating in a range of international networks, international educational programs and various cooperation agreements.

Within the LLP/Erasmus Programme, every academic unit has the right to choose their partners with whom to cooperate on student and staff level. New agreements are usually initiated by the academic staff who already have contacts in a certain university or if an academic unit is searching for new partners, Departmental Coordinators can apply for a grant to visit the university that they would potentially like to start cooperating with. The correctness of the agreements is being centrally monitored by the Erasmus Institutional Coordinator who has all the original bilateral agreements. Since Tallinn University (TU) is a multidisciplinary university, offering a wide range of study disciplines, we have Erasmus partner universities all over Europe.

In addition to Erasmus bilateral agreements, TU has over fifty cooperation partners in other parts of the world, mostly in Asia but some also in the United States and one in Africa. We have chosen partner universities based on the needs of academic units. TU is the only university in Estonia offering Asian studies at BA, MA and PhD levels. According to the new governmental regulations, starting from 2014, responsibility areas have been divided between Estonian universities. TU is solely responsible for developing Asian studies in Estonia. A certain inclination towards cooperation partners in Asian countries is therefore inevitable. TU also hosts the only Confucius Institute in Estonia that provides a good number of scholarships for TU students for their exchange studies in China.

One can say that TU has a well-developed international partnersnetwork serving the academic needs and interests of the university, testifying to its wide experience in cooperation issues and to the trust of partners.

Our most important objectives and target groups are:

1. Increasing the number of outgoing exchange students. Participating in student exchange broadens students' horizons, gives added value to studies at their home university, and prepares them for competition on the international labour market. Also, starting from the next academic year, university's governmental funding will be depending on the number and quality of outgoing mobility. Therefore it is of utmost importance to increase the quantity and quality of our outgoing mobile students. The target group which gets special attention is doctoral students. Tallinn University Internationalisation Strategy sets the goal for every doctoral student to spend a part of their studies abroad.

In order to increase the number and quality of outgoing exchange students and to help them in this experience, the university is planning to introduce a preparatory subject in Intercultural Communication, starting collaborative projects to exchange full study groups with strategic partners in specific fields (for example Film studies), and to develop electronic experience sharing environments for students who are interested in mobility options and for returned students.

2. Developing teaching staff mobility. The university values work experience at partner universities and has the obligation of facilitating the mobility of its lecturers in every way. It is also essential to increase the engagement of international lecturers since it will contribute to the quality of studies, will give the opportunity to offer studies in fields where local competence is inadequate, increase the number of subjects taught in foreign languages, and provide local students with much needed international experience. In order to promote teaching staff mobility, university will develop a system for considering mobility as part of academic staff workload and as a prerequisite for the re-election process of professors. Electronic environments will also be developed where academic staff can exchange their mobility experiences.

3. Regarding the development of double degrees, TU has a five year long experience in being a partner in the Erasmus Mundus Action 1 project Digital Library Learning (DILL) run together with the Oslo University College and Parma University. TU's partnership was rated highly by the Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance team from ECOTEC Research & Consulting Ltd in June 2010. Currently, the university also excels in Estonia by being a partner in three EM projects: ALRAKIS 1 and 2 and BACKIS.

4. TU is the most active Estonian university contributing to Estonian development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The university has partner universities in Afghanistan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. A good number of development projects have been implemented, are in progress or being prepared.

If applicable, please describe your institution's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme. (max. 2000 characters)

Original language [EN]

The international dimension is today an integral part of the university, and is reflected in all areas of its core activities. Participation in international academic life is an inevitable part of the university's development, ensuring the quality and sustainability of research and higher education. This makes internationalisation not a target in itself, but rather the means for developing academic quality in all the activities of the university.

To implement the idea that internationalisation should be integrated into all areas of university's life, the management of international activities has been decentralized. The responsibilities have been delegated to the administrative units in the university that are responsible for the similar matters on the local level. Therefore, the Academic Affairs Office coordinates incoming and outgoing student mobility (student counseling, programme promotion, developing support services) and the admission and advising of international degree students; the Personnel Office is responsible for promoting staff mobility; the Institutional Development Office develops university's internationalisation strategy and other international cooperation partnerships besides the LLP/Erasmus Programme; the Marketing and Communication Office is responsible for international marketing and promoting study options in Tallinn University for potential international students.

In addition to central activities, there is a well-established network of Erasmus Departmental Coordinators at every academic unit in Tallinn University. The main task of the Departmental Coordinators is the counseling of incoming and outgoing students and staff, and developing and maintaining international cooperation within the LLP/Erasmus programme. The network is coordinated by the Erasmus Institutional Coordinator. Regular meetings are held for the purpose of monitoring, analysing and developing the mobility options and processes in the university.

Please explain the expected impact of your participation in the Programme on the modernisation of your institution (for each of the 5 priorities of the Modernisation Agenda*) in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve. (max. 3000 characters)

Original language [EN]

1. Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs.

Tallinn University has set a goal of increasing the quality and quantity of doctoral student mobility. Doctoral studies, as the main provider for continuity of researchers and lecturers at the university, should be international. On one hand this would help ensure quality, while on the other it would establish the prerequisites for the development of internationalisation among doctoral students.

2. Improving the quality and relevance of higher education.

To prepare students for the global labour market, universities need to integrate international dimension into its curricula. Studying abroad for a semester or two is a valuable experience for the student to get the knowledge and skills that cannot be gained staying only at home country. Also according to Tallinn University Internationalisation Strategy virtual mobility (e-courses in foreign universities, the virtual professional community etc.) should be supported for students who, for different reasons, are unable to participate in traditional student exchanges.

3. Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border co-operation.

Tallinn University will find more ways how to build learning mobility more systematically into curricula. We will start cooperation projects where we exchange full study groups with our partner universities in a specific study area (for example Film studies). Also students of philological sciences will be offered better options for studying abroad for a semester or two.

4. Making the knowledge triangle work: Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development.

Tallinn University will increase the relative importance of international internships in the curriculum to enhance entrepreneurial, creative and innovation skills of the students.

5. Improving governance and funding

Lack of financial support is often the first barrier for staff and students why their mobility options are limited. With the help of the Programme, Tallinn University can establish measures to offer co-funding options for the mobile staff and students.

* COM (2011) 567 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0567:FIN:EN:PDF>)