

Erasmus Policy Statement 2021-2027

Erasmus+: goals, actions and impact

Our goals for participating in the Erasmus Programme

As stated in our mission the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (AUAS) is a knowledge institution offering a broad range of professional education programmes to a diverse mix of students, enabling them to fully develop their talents and independently practise their chosen professions at a high level. By connecting education and applied research, the AUAS enables innovation in the professional sector and community in, and around, the cosmopolitan city of Amsterdam. We provide students with a diploma of value and students are enabled to develop themselves into world citizens and skilled professionals who are ready to enter the labour market. Internationalisation is an absolute necessity for an AUAS diploma of value; the work and professional field of our graduates takes place in an international, diverse and intercultural context and, in many cases, is highly subject to international developments. Internationalisation in all its facets, especially internationalisation at home, international research and mobility of staff and students, contributes to this diploma of value. Internationalisation is an instrument to enhance the quality of education and research, professionalise our staff, teachers, and researchers, and above all to equip our graduates with the necessary tools to enter the European labour market. We see Erasmus as an essential tool to accomplish this.

The integration of internationalisation is especially important because in the international and intercultural society of the Amsterdam metropolitan area (and beyond) every profession, including every professional, in the performance of his or her job, has to deal with a mixture of languages, cultures and forms of international cooperation. The professional field is strongly influenced by the dynamics and complexity of developments such as globalisation, Europeanisation and digitalisation. The AUAS has therefore integrated internationalisation in its educational programmes and research activities, offering students a base to develop international and intercultural professional competences and prepare for a career in an international working environment. The AUAS has fully implemented the Bologna key commitments and ensures that all students have a standard mobility window, granting them the opportunity for a study period abroad with a minimum study load of 30 ECTS. The AUAS is a 'learning organisation' and staff mobility is seen as a tool for professionalisation of one's knowledge and skills. Through mobility students and teachers can also acquire skills as set out in the New Skills Agenda for Europe, especially on key competences for lifelong learning, including active citizenship. We would like to achieve inclusive and sustainable mobility.

The AUAS incorporated the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education in its internationalisation policy and strategy. Full commitment to all the principles is specifically stated as a goal to improve the quality of our education, research and services. Safeguarding and continuously improving our culture of quality is a key characteristic of the AUAS. We see cooperation and sharing best practices, within and outside our institution, as an important tool to do this. Not only cooperation with local and national governments, multinationals, internationally operating organisations and knowledge institutions in the metropolitan region are important, but also cooperation with internationally based organisations and institutions. For example, the AUAS is a proud founding member of the Urban Research and Education Knowledge Alliance (U!REKA) consortium consisting of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Edinburgh Napier University, HOGENT University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Metropolia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki, Oslo Metropolitan University, VSB-Technical University of Ostrava and Politécnico de Lisboa. The exchange agreements between all partners is the foundation of this network. Through U!REKA we share knowledge and initiate international research into the challenges and opportunities of the urban environments of the participating institutions, and linking regional networks of higher education and businesses into an overarching international network. Through Erasmus we would like to intensify this collaboration and U!REKA aspires to become a European University in the future. We also aim to design and explore new forms of blended mobility and design and implement short term mobility with our U!REKA partners. Erasmus creates an important and essential framework for international cooperation on multiple levels for the AUAS.

Participation in Erasmus activities contributes towards modernising our institution in five ways, namely; build evidence on what works in higher education (in education, research, innovation and the design of systems) through studies, expert groups and analysis and monitoring of benchmarks and indicators; support cooperation, mutual learning and targeted policy advice between governments and authorities responsible for higher education; strengthen the capacity and outputs of higher education institutions by funding innovative cooperation projects between institutions and their partners (Erasmus+, Horizon 2020); support international mobility of students, staff and researchers as a way for them to develop their experience and skills; and strengthen collaboration between higher education, research and business. AUAS also focuses on newly emerged challenges such as tackling future skills mismatches and promoting excellence in skills development and building inclusive and connected higher education systems in line with the new EU agenda for higher education. Besides an impact on modernisation, our activities also contribute to the European Education Area.

In order to fully implement all principles stated in the Erasmus Charter all levels within our institution will take responsibility. We do this through an integrated approach. AUAS appointed a project manager to oversee the implementation of the Charter. Together with the relevant stakeholders it will be discussed which steps need to be taken and this will be done separately for every principle. In addition our Strategic Internationalisation Committee and our committee in charge of the operational side of internationalisation, will monitor and discuss the implementation. Thus guaranteeing institution wide involvement of our faculties and departments.

We (aspire to) participate in three Erasmus actions

1. LEARNING MOBILITY

AUAS participates in learning mobility for students and staff. The International Offices of our faculties select their partner institutions. Their selection criteria are based on their particular, subject specific, ambitions and requirements. Each faculty formulates specific criteria with regard to study subject(s), language, level & quality of education and logistic arrangements. In some cases partnerships have been formed AUAS-wide or by means of an umbrella agreement in which at least two faculties are involved. Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIA's) are drafted and usually signed at faculty level. A copy of every IIA is saved by our Central international Office. For the AUAS, full recognition of a properly accomplished activity during the mobility period is an essential aspect of the Erasmus programme. The recognition for students is clearly defined and all mechanisms for timely recognition of the ECTS obtained are well established: we have an up-to-date course catalogue in place, we make sure all learning agreements/ traineeship agreements are complete and approved before the mobility period and we provide students with a transcript of records. For our staff we have ensured recognition through clearly defined indicators. During mobility we have all necessary mentoring and supporting measures in place. Through participating in learning mobility the AUAS also contributes to realising the European Education Area; we contribute towards the goal to making mobility a reality for all. We do this by promoting mobility and through removing obstacles for underrepresented groups. Learning mobility has a clear positive effect on at least four of the eight key competences needed for Lifelong Learning; multilingualism; interpersonal skills and the ability to adopt new competences, active citizenship and cultural awareness and expression.

2. PARTNERSHIPS FOR COOPERATION AND EXCHANGES OF PRACTICES

The AUAS' cooperation projects (i.e. international partnerships and teaching and training projects) are highly valued for their opportunities for educational innovation and curriculum development. The international aspects of these projects offer new (and international) insights and ideas on educational techniques and subject specific approaches that can be adopted and incorporated in the curricula of AUAS' regular study programmes. To enhance this adoption, results of international cooperation projects are to be disseminated within the faculty and the overall institution. With regard to international cooperation projects, AUAS applies a decentralised organisation. For purposes of subject specific quality criteria and relevance, international cooperation is initiated and developed at the level of the study programme. The International Offices of our seven faculties support and facilitate the organisation and implementation of international cooperation projects. Often, two or more of AUAS faculties work together on an international project, blending study areas and developing new interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. AUAS recognises activities under KA2 for students and staff. Activities under KA2 can lead to more strategic partners for the AUAS and can have a positive effect on common (European) values and inclusive education and therefore contributing to the European Education Area.

3. PARTNERSHIPS FOR EXCELLENCE - EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

The U!REKA consortium aspires to become an European University renowned for educating high quality European professionals, serving as an example in the European Higher Education Area and beyond. The guiding principles of the (future) U!REKA European University are: professionalism, inclusiveness, sustainability, student-centered, impact-focused, research-based, skills and partnership-driven. The future U!REKA European University Collaborative Model is based on professional innovation, interdisciplinary competence building, engagement, co-creation and continuous improvement and the enhancement of participation and mobility.

Forming a consortium has the aim to safeguard the quality of our education and research in an international environment. Forming a European University intensifies collaboration and contributes to the European Education Area in multiple ways. European values unite all the members of U!REKA and the goal is to promote them in our cities, regions, among our students and staff. U!REKA advocates the preservation of freedom of speech, freedom of thought, the right to independent research, and openness to discussion. In addition the alliance developed a set of common European values. U!REKA aims to actively preserve and promote this U!REKA identity within our larger community. Moreover, cross-border recognition and the diploma supplement is, in accordance with the Bologna principles, issued automatically, free of charge and in a language that is widely read through the European higher education area. U!REKA European University's vision includes the promotion of learning a second language and developing multilingual capabilities as part of the curriculum and establishing a tool to promote ties with the educational and linguistic world outside the EU.

Creating impact through participating in the Erasmus+ Programme

Creating impact is an important aspect of Erasmus. Participation in the Erasmus Programme has impact on our whole institution. We envisage that the quality of our education and research will improve by participating. Staff mobility will professionalize and inspire our staff in multiple ways and student mobility enables students to develop themselves into world citizens and skilled professionals who are ready to enter the labour market. We aim that all output will lead to the expected impact and therefore we always evaluate our projects thoroughly. If needed we adjust the input to increase the desired impact. Students and staff experiences are also extremely valuable for the AUAS to see whether some improvements can be made. A new way to generate impact is through U!REKA as a European University. This process sees higher education institutions working together so a new generation of creative Europeans are able to cooperate across languages, borders and disciplines to address the big societal challenges and skills shortages that Europe faces. We also expect that this new European University will ensure widening participation and supporting physical and online mobility experiences on our campuses, amongst our students/staff.

In the AUAS's strategic plan for 2021 to 2026 the themes of diversity and inclusion, sustainability and digitalisation have a prominent place. These themes have effect on our whole institution, and will be visible in our education, research, buildings, facilities and our behaviour. By participating in the Erasmus+ Programme AUAS expects to contribute to these central themes as well and we have formulated four related targets as desired impact and also set three more general targets for the coming years:



Identify and remove obstacles for mobility for underrepresented groups



Stimulate students and staff to travel more sustainably



Participate in blended mobility, a programme in which students go abroad for a shorter time physically and also have a virtual component



Digitalise the admin. processes for Erasmus+



Keep stimulating student mobility



Further stimulate staff mobility



Expand our dissemination activities