

Erasmus Programme: Declaration of University Policy

Internationalization is anchored as a declared goal in the mission statement of St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences. International activities are constantly increasing and are expressly promoted. An above average number of students complete a semester abroad and/or an internship abroad. In addition, a variety of other bilateral and multilateral activities are established.

The core of our internationalization agenda is **academic mobility**. Student and staff mobility is strongly shaped by the Erasmus programme, which is our most important co-operation programme. The fundamental quality assurance instruments of the programme (e.g. work plan, recognition) are also applied for mobility outside of the Erasmus programme, for instance with third countries.

The mobility takes place for the most part, but not exclusively, with **partner universities**. To a lesser extent there is also incoming and outgoing mobility by "free movers". The "free movers" often produce a good first contact to future co-operation partners. In particular, incoming lecturers who come to us from outside of university partnerships bring interesting input for example from third countries such as the USA, whose university collaborations are difficult to formalize.

The **geographical focus** of mobility is Europe. Partners are selected primarily on the compatibility of their study programmes and by their teaching language(s). Increasingly, emphasis is placed on the similarity of research interests because university partnerships should become sustainable partners for mobility and R & D projects. The network of European partner universities will in future be extended by a focus on hitherto rather neglected neighbouring countries (Italy, Hungary, Slovenia). The co-operation with the countries of the Danube region and CENTROPE should be strengthened.

Students are encouraged to spend a semester studying at a partner university or also to complete their internship abroad. **Study and practical training abroad** are facilitated in the best possible way by information, advice and support. In study, **international competences** are taught, which are complemented by various measures of "Internationalisation at home" (e.g. visiting professorships, inter-university student projects). The consistent use of ECTS, Learning and Training Agreement as well as Diploma Supplement contributes to quality assurance.

For **Incoming Students** important information on the website and in the form of an "International Student Guide" and "Course Catalogue" is prepared. At the beginning of each semester an orientation week takes place. Visiting students can choose the course "German Language and Austrian culture" and brush up on their German skills during a three-week intensive course before the start of the academic year.

Teacher mobility incoming as well as outgoing is well established, and there are numerous Good Practice Examples for staff training. The systematic recognition of these activities in terms of staff development, career paths and workload will be further improved in the future.

With **advice and support for mobile students, teachers and staff members**, the International Office, lecturers (International co-ordinators) and the student association the "International Student Network" (ISN) work together to achieve academic success and a good integration of the mobile university community. Particularly positive is the anchoring of the ISN in student representation, which entails closer co-operation between international and local students.

St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences has already set in motion the first steps for the preparation and participation in courses and study programmes which lead to **shared or multiple degrees**. We also endeavour to significantly expand the range of English language courses in order for international students to have an adequate offer and to increase our opportunities for co-operation within Europe and beyond.

St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences has in past years made great strides in the academisation of their teachers and the participation in **national and international research projects**. The scientific output has increased resulting in good contacts with the international scientific community. Through an international network of researchers a lively exchange has been created, which leads to further co-operation projects. Close co-operations already exist with the business world and the world of work, which in the new generation of the Erasmus programme are to be further developed into even more alliances and joint education and training projects.

With **projects in teaching** (multilateral, as a partner and in house) diverse experiences have already been had: through Erasmus Intensive Programmes, project openings, International Weeks and conferences in co-operation with industry (for example in the areas of health, media, railways). We want to continue to support and promote these diverse projects.

Our participation in the programme 2014-2020 aims to meet the **objectives of the European internationalization and modernization agenda**.

1. Raising the level of education to serve the need for academics and researchers in Europe:

The offer of St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences in study and continuing education programmes is geared towards practical application and international competences. It promotes the permeability and compatibility of study and work. Further education projects for students and staff, alliances for doctoral studies and the strengthening of e-learning elements in teaching should be further developed in the framework of international co-operation.

2. Improvement of the quality and relevance of higher education:

All courses have up to now been working intensively with the business community in the form of needs analysis and advisory boards. Through projects and alliances in the new generation of programmes it can be better ensured that students acquire labour market relevant and practical skills. We will convey our existing focus on media literacy increasingly internationally and in a transdisciplinary manner. The installation of a writing centre is being considered; scientific work and (foreign) language skills are part of our Excellence Agenda.

3. Increase in quality through mobility and cross-border co-operation:

We expect through cross-border co-operation, a decisive impetus for measures of the "Internationalisation at home" and the impartation of international competences.

4. Linking of university - research - economy:

Future joint projects in this knowledge triangle can build on well-established relationships. The "Friends of St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences" makes a major contribution to regional anchoring. Alliances and funding will be particularly important in this area.

5. Improvement of governance and financing

Economic and academic leadership work closely together at the management level. Third-party financing will be pursued. A controlling and quality management system ensures consistent internal monitoring. For managers, there is a sustainable training programme, and we live a culture of employee empowerment. Gender & diversity representatives bring to bear their expertise in (e.g.

common language guidelines). Partnership, interculturality and diversity should become the culture of our higher education life together.

Barbara Zimmer, International Office
May 2013