

Erasmus+ Charter for Higher Education – Windesheim UAS Policy Statement

Windesheim University of Applied Sciences (UAS) considers international cooperation as a fundamental instrument to further improve the quality of its (co)curricular activities, staff and its students. Therefore Windesheim UAS chooses to participate in Erasmus+:

- To promote awareness of issues related to European policy and the integration process, including cultural diversity, among staff and students.
- To train students as future professionals, competent to function in an increasingly international and multicultural global society.
- To offer students a learning community that prepares them thoroughly for their future.
- To further enhance and ensure the international and intercultural competences at institutional level, allowing us to act as a centre of knowledge and expertise for our partners, profit and non-profit, at local, regional, national and international level.
- To create an international framework for our activities through participation in multilateral (research) projects and thematic networks in cooperation with qualitative strong strategic partnerships.
- Partnerships are composed on the basis of the intensity and specific character of the activities. Therefore Windesheim UAS makes a distinction between Top Partners (partners at university level), Focus Partners (partners at faculty level) and Exchange Partners (partners at course level). It is possible for partners to change level in relation to the intensity and the specific character of the activities. The partnerships are identified across different geographical areas in relation to the agreed activities. The majority of the partners is located in Europe, while some of them are located in other regions of the world. For international cooperation partners are located throughout the world in North and South America, Africa and Asia.

In the period 2013-2020 the ambition of Windesheim UAS is to incorporate international collaboration, specifically those made possible in Erasmus+, in ‘the mainstream’ of all our activities.

Our priorities therefore are:

- To achieve a substantial increase in incoming and outgoing student mobility, study and internships, in order to give students opportunities to gain firsthand experience in international and intercultural contexts, either on location or in international classrooms.
- To establish a number of high quality institutional contracts for students and staff exchange and other collaborative activities such as curriculum development, intensive programmes and research fitting into the overall policy and strategy of Windesheim UAS.
- To implement the European, international and multicultural dimension in the curriculum of all our study programmes, (partly) through student and staff exchange and multilateral (research) projects.
- The continuation of Double Degree programmes which are offered, mainly in the field of Engineering and ICT and the ambition is to start Double Degree programmes in other faculties too.

- To cooperate with partner institutions in- and outside Europe to further develop and implement the didactical concepts in relation to the internationalisation policy of Windesheim UAS and to train the students to become reflective and value-conscious professionals.
- The expansion of Windesheim Honours College, an English taught bachelor's degree programme and a second English taught bachelor's degree programme in International Business, will further contribute to the international orientation of Windesheim UAS.
- To continue the exchange programme International Sustainable Development in which Windesheim UAS is active in the field of international cooperation.

We will carefully evaluate if and to what extent our internationalisation activities and other actions e.g. research contribute to the objectives mentioned in the above.

The internationalisation activities in general and specifically those related to the European programmes will be made visible and are clearly communicated to our local and international students and staff through our usual communication channels: website, intranet, brochures, university papers, oral communication etc. Information meetings on international mobility will be organized at institutional and faculty level on a regular basis (at least twice a year). The ECHE and EPS will be integrated in all relevant text and media.

Windesheim UAS has a clearly defined and active diversity policy to combat any kind of inequality due to gender, socio-economic background, ethnic and cultural differences, age and sexual orientation or specific disabilities. Both incoming and outgoing mobility for staff and students are subject to this policy. We will carefully monitor that equal access is warranted to all activities related to the European and international programmes and activities for people belonging to possibly disadvantaged groups.

Strategy for the organization and implementation of international cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to the project implemented under the programme.

Windesheim UAS has been involved in the previous Charter period in Comenius and Leonardo Projects and Intensive Programmes. The motivation to participate is to share and exchange knowledge and skills with participating partners which can be used for curriculum development and to stimulate student and staff mobility. This policy will be continued and extended. In its internationalisation policy participation in European and non-European cooperation projects to support student and staff mobility will be stimulated and support in teaching and training innovation will be focused at. The objective is to strengthen the quality of all aspects of the internationalisation policy.

Therefore, between 2013-2015, Windesheim has designed a system of partnerships related to the intensity and specific character of the intended activities. In order to make sure that these activities are being implemented with the appropriate partners. Windesheim UAS makes a distinction between Top Partners (partners at university level), Focus Partners (partners at division level) and Exchange Partners (partners at course level). It is possible for partners to change level in relation to the intensity and/or specific character of the activities. Because of this differentiation in partners it is not only possible to make the appropriate arrangements but also to get a stronger focus on what can be successfully realized. This approach makes sure that the international cooperation projects within the university will have a strong support base and because of that the outcomes are being implemented.

Because of being a University of Applied Sciences, practice based research in the international policy document is one of the spearheads. Because of its regional embeddedness and its close links with regional companies and non-profit and public institutions, a strategy will be developed to incorporate these regional relationships and links as much as possible in its internationalisation policy.

Relation with the European Modernisation agenda.

In its agreement with the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science Windesheim UAS has indicated that its priorities for are: cooperation with Small and Medium Businesses, technological and social innovation, prevention in youth addiction and innovation in relation to ageing. Moreover, in relation to the studies offered it focuses at enhancing the quality in the training of teachers, limiting the drop-out figures of their students by supporting them in making the appropriate choices in their field of study and the professionalization of staff. In its Centres of Expertise practice based research will be organized and because of the valorisation of the outcomes of the research it will contribute to economic and social development.

In its policy Windesheim UAS is not only aware of its regional positioning. Regional development is closely related to the international setting in which companies and non-profit and public organizations have to operate. The priorities set in the agreement with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science have to be seen in this same sequence from regional to international activities. Because of its nature as a University of Applied Sciences the training of young professionals is not only limited to the regional labour market but has to prepare them for working and living in an international and multicultural environment too.

As an educational institution Windesheim UAS is part of the European Higher Education Area which supports the European agenda to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Because of its priorities for 2013-2017 Windesheim is contributing to this European agenda to increase the amount of young people that complete higher education and so reduce the drop-out rate. In its research programme it support the innovation strategies specifically for Small and Medium Businesses and together with its internship programme the relationship between education and the relationship between Windesheim as an educational institution and companies and non-profit and public organizations is realized. This way it is making the knowledge triangle work by linking higher education, research and business for excellence and (inter)regional development. Student and staff mobility as part of the teaching and research programme and in cooperation with the Top and Focus Partners the international dimension and relevance is guaranteed. Participating from this perspective in European Programmes as Erasmus+ contributes to strengthening the long-term impact and complementarity of European funding.