

Erasmus Policy Statement

HU University of Applied Sciences is a knowledge organisation providing high-quality education and research to promote innovation and professionalisation of professional practice. We are a rapidly expanding, dynamic University of Applied Sciences with currently more than 37,000 registered students. HU has an international outlook. Knowledge development within the institution as well as knowledge application, entrepreneurship and innovation are increasingly taking place in an international context. We want our students to be acquainted with and aware of this international context; therefore we stimulate students to do study and/or traineeships abroad but also actively stimulate study programmes to integrate 'internationalisation at home' in curricula.

HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht was one of the founders and is member of the European Consortium in Applied Research and Professional Education, CARPE (<http://www.carpenetwork.org>).

This strategic collaboration aims at:

- Exchange and collaboration in European research programmes;
- Develop joint study programmes;
- Exchange of students and staff (also non-academic);
- Establish a strong European reputation.

Apart from the CARPE collaboration HU has exchange partnerships with universities all over the world: most of them within Europe, but gradually expanding in other continents as well (Asia, Africa, Oceania, North and South America). Expansion of partnerships and geographical areas chosen is obviously content-driven (in which areas and in which universities can we find expertise supplementary to ours – where can our students broaden their scope and knowledge – where could our teachers contribute as visiting lecturer or vice versa?) but also demand-driven (what are our students looking for?).

HU stimulates students from bachelor's programme to study abroad, by offering excellent support services and guidance and applying a bachelor's programme structure offering one semester (out of eight semesters) to be filled in freely, which makes that study abroad is an option for all students. HU offers professional masters with an intake of professionals studying part-time, which makes it difficult to reach high mobility numbers there. This is where the internationalisation at home is an important tool. HU does not offer doctorate programmes. We take part in the Utrecht Summerschool (www.utrechtsummerschool.nl) with a gradually growing number of summer courses and stimulate faculties to take part in it, by having teachers share experiences and good practices.

HU takes part in the Kofi Annan Business School (www.kabsf.org), offering double degree programmes in cooperation with non-European partners, to provide talented and motivated students from developing areas, who do not belong to a privileged class and lack sufficient financial means, the opportunity to study at and obtain a diploma from one of the associated business schools in Europe, among which our HU Business School. As mentioned above, the CARPE consortium is also aiming at joint or double degrees. In 2012 we developed a guideline for international double degree programmes to secure quality, transparency and reciprocity in current and prospective double degree programmes. Considering staff mobility HU does not have specific objectives and targets, but does provide teachers with the necessary support to apply for Erasmus mobility grants and provides all staff going abroad with a free travel insurance.

Key aspects in the overall education strategy of HU are: quality, flexibility and lifelong learning.

These same aspects underlie our internationalisation strategy:

- we want our international collaboration links to be well-grounded and aimed at innovation and professionalisation of professional practice. Therefore our international activities are structurally assessed and evaluated, to maintain the desired quality standards. Structural partnerships support this quality assurance scheme;
- we want to provide possibilities for international experiences by offering a flexible structure for study programmes in which students can get the best out of their selves and choose their own path. We want curricula to be flexible in the sense that they can easily adapt to changes in the professional field;
- professionals are also stimulated to look across borders, even if they cannot go abroad for 3 months or longer, through internationalisation at home activities such as short international excursions, virtual mobility and summerschool programmes.

HU is member of the CARPE consortium, whose five members have in common:

- Our education focuses on the future world of work of our students;
- Our research is demand-driven and contributes to the innovation of the professional practice;
- We have strong connections with small and medium enterprises (SMEs), business, local & regional governments, as well as with the public sector;
- Entrepreneurship, social responsibility, creativity, sustainability and internationalisation are important themes in our education, research and institutional policy.

Contacts with European Commission officials and based on documentation about the new Erasmus for All programme, we learned that our common characteristics fit extremely well with the focus of the Erasmus for All projects 'Strategic Partnerships' and 'Knowledge Alliances'. We – as CARPE – will definitely aim at and prepare ourselves for submitting proposals for both of these projects.

The impact of HU participating in the Erasmus programme on each of the 5 priorities in the Modernization Agenda for EU member states and HE institution is explained below, explained per priority:

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

In the achievement agreement (prestatieafspraken), with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, signed in December 2012, HU committed herself to aim at less drop-outs and increase of successful graduates. This contributes to the attainment levels set by the European Union.

HU wants students to get acquainted with research throughout their studies, in order to become reflective professionals. Teaching staff is also increasingly involved in research projects (either by working towards a master's degree or by working towards a PhD – HU provides grants / vouchers for both tracks).

2. Improving the quality and relevance of higher education

As mentioned in the previous section, HU wants to offer flexible curricula, which can be easily adapted to changes in the professional field. Many of our teaching staff represents the professional field themselves, working as a part time teacher and part time entrepreneur or employee in the professional field. Through our strong links with the professional field it is guaranteed that our study programmes stay up-to-date. Our Life Long Learning programme, aiming at a broad and transparent offer of short courses, part time bachelor's and master's programmes and offering excellent facilities to professionals as students, is currently working on the implementation of blended learning to establish a stronger outreach and attract students from other regions as well.

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

HU aims at structural and well-founded partnerships by applying a transparent quality assurance scheme for exchange programmes. Academic recognition is obvious, provided that approval routes have been followed correctly.

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

For this priority, we would like to refer once more to our membership of the CARPE consortium, its members' characteristics and aims. See www.carpenetwork.org. Furthermore HU is recently given the opportunity to start one of two Centers of Expertise on Creative industries in The Netherlands, funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

5. Improving governance and funding

This priority is mainly an issue to be taken on by national politics; we aim at having indirect impact, by lobbying at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, as HE institution but also as member of the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (Vereniging Hogescholen), which by its turn is member of UASnet.