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HÄME UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES, FINLAND

EUROPEAN POLICY STATEMENT (EPS) 2021 -2027

What would you like to achieve by participating in the Erasmus Programme? How does your participation in the Erasmus Programme fit into your institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy? (Please reflect on the objectives of your participation. Please explain how you expect the participation in Erasmus to contribute towards modernising your institution, as well as on the goal of building a European Education Area¹ and explain the policy objectives you intend to pursue).

The world of work, entrepreneurship and international cooperation are at the heart of the operations of Häme University of Applied Sciences, HAMK. HAMK builds its strategy for 2030 on four key focus areas: knowledge and research, competence and education, internationalization and entrepreneurship and cooperation. Internationalization intertwines with all other three focus areas and crosscuts all main action areas at HAMK. The Erasmus+ programme is the main enabler in achieving the goals set by HAMK in its strategy for internationalization of education and research, development and innovation activities and for strengthening the international competence development of students and staff members. The key in achieving these goals is strong, mutually beneficial and versatile partnerships with other European higher education institutes. Erasmus+ programme offers various tools for achieving these goals through student and staff mobility in KA1 and through KA2 projects in education and research activities, in addition to increasing the means of internationalization at home for students, staff and the community.

European cooperation is the strength in HAMK's international collaboration with partner universities both in Europe and also globally. HAMK's versatile partnership network in Europe enables strong cooperation which contributes to building the joint European Education Area. HAMK shares its expertise in versatile education development and innovation activities with its partners in Europe for mutual development and learning and values the expertise and experiences shared by HAMK's partners. Cooperation with various European partners enable joint innovation and development work in education through opening minds and challenging the staff members for new solutions in joint education provision which build on European values of democracy and equality and enables the provision of inclusive and high-quality education which reflect the common cultural heritage and diversity in Europe. HAMK also systematically widens the scope of internationalization and ethically responsible global engagement with global mobility and education projects offered within the framework of Erasmus+ and other European instruments. HAMK, with its European partner universities, seeks also to widen its activities to cooperation with universities in specific African countries and thus contributes to achieving joint progress in the key areas as set in the EU Commission Joint Communication Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa. HAMK aims to use to its full potential the possibilities offered by Erasmus+ within Europe and globally as an instrument in implementing HAMK strategy for 2030.

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HAMK is a significant contributor to the vitality and internationalisation of the Häme region, being the only higher education institution in this region. HAMK contributes to the development of the region through increasing the cultural diversity and supporting the understanding and enriching elements of multicultural communities. Incoming and outgoing mobility of students, teachers, researchers and other staff members play a key role in maintaining strong partnerships and supporting and enabling the common development work in education, research and cooperation with enterprises. In reaching the national goals, as set by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland for the policy development for the internationalisation and high quality in Finnish higher education and research, it is necessary to develop a truly international higher education community which is appealing as a platform for education, research and as a work place. A truly international higher education community is participatory, multilingual and multicultural and it systematically integrates and enables the development of international competences. International content in education and methods of internationalisation at home are tools for developing international competences of students, but the role of mobility is still central. Various studies demonstrate the significance of student mobility in development of international competences and its positive impact for future career development. Erasmus+ programme offers students opportunities for enhancing their international competences and expertise which opens more work and entrepreneurship opportunities both in the home country and in other European countries. International learning experiences also strengthen students' sense and ownership of their European and global citizenship. HAMK bases its educational strategy in providing education of which graduates are global problem-solvers with a creative and progressive approach.

Through the strategic development activities, lined with the aims of HAMK's strategy leading the way to 2030, HAMK builds its international, active and modern higher education community. Modernisation processes are on-going in management and administration levels but also in student services and education provision. HAMK has long experience in on-line teaching and is fluent in providing various virtual and on-line possibilities for education to versatile target groups, which provides a strong basis for the development of virtual and blended mobility possibilities for students and staff members. Student services, including counselling and guidance, are being developed to serve students 24/7 through various automatized solutions. These digital solutions and the abilities to implement these in administration and education serves also for implementing the actions as outlined in European Student Card Initiative.

Please reflect on the Erasmus actions you would like to take part in and explain how they will be implemented in practice at your institution. Please explain how your institution's participation in these actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of your institutional strategy.

HAMK seeks to utilize the possibilities offered by the Erasmus+ programme to its full as a tool to reach its strategic objectives in building an internationally attractive university of applied research which boldly and creatively reforms the world of work. In reaching these goals, HAMK specifically identifies the Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility (the mobility of higher education students and staff) and Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions (especially Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of

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practices, Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities and Partnerships for Innovation) as the central tools. Implementing projects within the European network of strong and long-lasting partnerships build during the current Erasmus+ programme period is the way through which HAMK increases cultural diversity in its campuses and in its regions.

Internationalisation of HAMK's education provision is one of the core elements of HAMK's strategy for 2030 as it leads the way to achieving the strategic goal of educating such graduates who are desired experts in the labour market. One of the key enablers in reaching this goal is versatile internationalisation of students' learning experience and learning platforms. For a student this means that they have various international learning experiences integrated to their degree studies. At HAMK, a degree consists of modules and in each module (15 ECTS) it is required that there are elements connecting the content to the world of work, an element which supports sustainability and an element which is international. Furthermore, at HAMK each student makes an international project during their studies. These integrated international elements in HAMK's educational provision are made possible through the cooperation possibilities within the Erasmus+ programme, specifically in implementing KA1 and KA2 projects. The programme has offered and will offer the key tools for the teachers in integrating international elements into the modules through inputs by incoming teachers' mobility and by forming international student teams and project groups with the support of incoming exchange students. The outgoing teacher mobility offers possibilities for teachers to increase their international competences, share their expertise and pedagogical tools and identify good practices from partner universities which can be utilised in HAMK education.

Staff and teacher mobility are tightly connected to internationalization of HAMK's education and competence development of staff members in education, research and support services with the aim of increasing the intellectual capital of HAMK. Erasmus+ teacher mobility has already led to excellent results in developing and implementing joint education provision, e.g. in specific modules where students work on-line in international teams and it has also led to successful negotiations of double degree programmes in Bachelor level within Europe. As part of internationalization of the education provision, HAMK further aims to increase the number of European joint degree programmes in the Bachelor level and to develop double and joint degrees both in Bachelor and also in Master level to contribute to the creation of European Education Area. HAMK also aims to design international paths to Doctoral studies within its European partnership network. HAMK is a committed member of the strategic European network of 8 regional universities of applied sciences, the RUN-EU network. The RUN-EU network is developing joint education content, from short courses to joint degrees, and has also applied funding for a European Universities' project in 2020 call. The possibilities offered by the Erasmus+ programme and other European funding tools will be utilised within this network as the RUN-universities have committed to joint strategy for 2025 in developing joint education provision, implementing joint research and on its part building the strong European Area of Education.

Mobility of students, teachers and other staff members play a key role in maintaining strong international partnerships and supporting the strategic development work in education and research, development and innovation activities. The current student and staff mobilities

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between HAMK and its European partners are a demonstrative example of partnerships which foster international networking, further increase student and staff mobility and bring positive outcomes in developing European education together. Each student has a possibility to embark on a mobility period during their studies. At HAMK the module chart is constructed so that this can be achieved with every student and the exchange period does not prolong the degree studies. In the module chart there are professional studies which are obligatory and profiling studies which the student can freely choose as they design their own degree content. This structure enables flexible possibilities for the student to integrate studies completed abroad as a fully recognised part within their degree studies. Erasmus + mobility is the main and most important instrument for HAMK in implementing mobility schemes for students and staff members.

What is the envisaged impact of your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on your institution?

The long-term benefits of Erasmus participation are identified in the internationalisation of curriculum, in competence development of staff and students and in enabling possibilities for internationalisation at home for the benefit of the higher education community and the region. In line with HAMK's strategic aim in strengthening the organization by thorough internationalization and the goals as described in section 1.2., HAMK expects to have the following impact through participation in Erasmus+ Programme, specifically in KA1 and KA2 projects:

1. **Competence development:** HAMK graduates are global problem solvers and they have gained their international competences through possibilities of mobility and internationalisation at home. HAMK staff members in education and research, development and innovation activities and staff members in support services have reached the professional level of international competence as set in HAMK's framework of competences.
2. **Internationalisation of education:** HAMK students have personalised study paths in which international learning opportunities and platforms are provided in modules, through double and joint degrees and by internationally designed study paths from Bachelor all the way to Doctoral studies within HAMK's European partnership network.
3. **International higher education community:** HAMK is a truly international higher education community with appealing study, research and work opportunities. HAMK's international activities support and contribute to the internationalisation of the region.

The above impact areas interlink, are co-dependent and strengthen each other. Partnerships are the key in enabling mobility, internationalisation of education and the region and implementation of versatile cooperation projects. In developing and maintaining strong and active European networks partnerships, HAMK seeks to form partnerships which crosscut the organisation linking the different HAMK Schools and research units. This is seen as a quality factor in the development of partnership network is a quality indicator and functions as the key in building the competences of students and staff, internationalising the curriculum and having cooperation projects.