

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES ERFURT

The University of Applied Sciences Erfurt (FHE) is intensively endeavouring to expand and intensify its international orientation. As part of the discussion on an internationalisation strategy, focal points of international cooperation (country focus or orientation towards interdepartmental activities with foreign partners) have been and are being defined. As an expression of the special appreciation of FHE for international activities, the function of a Vice-Rector for International Affairs and an 'International Affairs' working group were established in 2005. In the meantime, the area of 'International Affairs' has become the responsibility of the Vice President for Studies and Teaching.

Cooperation and activities within the framework of the ERASMUS programme are a key focus of the international strategy of FHE. Mobility measures with partner universities in EU countries have traditionally been and will continue to be a high priority for FHE in the ERASMUS+ programme. Due to the many years of good contacts with universities in Central and Eastern Europe, mobility activities with these partners are to be further expanded. In addition to student and lecturer mobility, there are numerous other forms of cooperation such as joint courses and workshops as well as joint research projects, publications and the development of joint degree programmes.

The ERASMUS activities of FHE are publicised in a variety of ways: Information is provided via the university website (centrally and on the pages of the departments), via information events at the university, in the notice boards of the International Office and in university publications. The ERASMUS Charter and the Erasmus Policy Statement are published on the FHE website.

FHE makes intensive efforts to realise an anti-discrimination policy. The Act on the Implementation of European Directives on the Realisation of the Principles of Equal Treatment and the Equal Treatment Act relating to FHE are published on the website and the corresponding principles are applied. The university's Equal Opportunities Officer and Disability Officer are actively involved in decisions in university committees. The framework integration agreement for severely disabled people is published on the FHE website.

Numerous initiatives to combat xenophobia and racism - such as the projects 'Strangers become Friends' and 'Café International' - are realised by the International Office of FHE in cooperation with students, faculties and external partners in order to counteract xenophobia and racism.

In the process of establishing internationally compatible degree programmes (Bachelor's and Master's), all degree programmes are consistently modularised and credit point systems are established to facilitate the recognition of academic achievements abroad.

All departments promote semesters abroad and internships abroad for their students as part of the ERASMUS programme by providing information, specialist advice and recognition of academic and practical achievements. Students at FHE who are planning a semester of study, or an internship abroad receive comprehensive advice and information on funding opportunities, conditions at foreign partner universities and specialist advice from the International Office and the participating departments.

For students from foreign ERASMUS partner universities, an effective counselling and support system has been in place for a number of years through tutors. In co-operation with the Studentenwerk Thüringen, all foreign guest students are provided with accommodation, provided they apply on time. The FHE Language Centre offers a wide range of foreign language courses for students at our university and courses in 'German as a foreign language' at various levels for foreign guest students. The university management will continue to promote all activities of professors and students within the framework of the ERASMUS programme and recognise achievements.

In the area of student internships, the existing Thuringian network via 'EU-Praktikum Thüringen' will continue to be utilised. It works on behalf of the Thuringian Ministry of Education and the participating universities and has a regional working group as its decision-making body. It was awarded the 'European Quality Award in Mobility 2006' and came 2nd in Europe. This honoured the outstanding quality management. This structure, which has proven itself over many years, is to be built upon.

At FHE, there are several players such as the International Office, the internship offices of the faculties and the relevant professors who advise and support the applicants. The co-operation is clearly regulated and runs smoothly. All content and responsibilities are set out in contracts with the companies. Experienced supervisors support the interns in the companies.

Academic recognition is handled by the relevant persons and committees in the departments and is regulated in the internship regulations and curricula. Internship reports contribute to the evaluation. A wide variety of methods are used to find and place internships, such as direct contact with companies, internship exchanges, individual contacts and job fairs. Information on current national and international job offers is provided on the FHE website.

Internships abroad in the area of student mobility are individual cases with a high level of individual preparation and support, but this is of decisive importance for the quality of the internships. A high level of transparency throughout the entire internship largely avoids disappointment for those involved. It has been proven that internships abroad and the newly acquired 'soft skills' significantly increase the employment opportunities of our graduates on the national and international labour market.