

Erasmus Declaration on University Policy (European Policy Statement) of Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf

The foundation for all international partnerships is an academic interest in the specific partner or partners. The University therefore helps its researchers to expand their international academic contacts and interests. Regional priorities result from the activities and interests of the researchers, who are working together above all with institutions in Europe, the USA, Israel and Japan. France is an important European partner. Three study programmes (the Media and Culture Science programme and two programmes in the field of Law) are already being fostered in the framework of the Franco-German University; a fourth in Romance Languages and Literatures is currently being planned. The development and consolidation of dual, multiple or joint qualifications are supported centrally, e.g. through information campaigns as well as increasing transparency in administrative procedures. The aim is to identify and eliminate other obstacles to mobility. In addition, Heinrich Heine University (HHU) wishes to achieve the following objectives by 2015:

1. HHU facilitates a period abroad - ideally financed through a scholarship - for as many students as possible, in order to enable them to expand their personal horizons and experience and augment their later career prospects. A broad range of foreign-language courses at the Language Centre and more and more intercultural groundwork helps students, graduates, doctoral researchers, academic and non-academic personnel to prepare and undertake visits abroad.
2. HHU pursues the principles of diversity management and brings together – under consideration of various requirements – students of different origins. In the framework of its “Internationalization at Home” programme, it enables all students during their studies to gain at least some experience with fellow students and/or guests from abroad in a supervised, international and study-related context. Participants’ international commitment is attested in an “Intercultural Certificate”, e.g. for later employment applications. This implicitly leads to better integration of students from abroad and guests into student and academic life at HHU.
3. Foreign students are given comprehensive support outside their specific disciplines too, e.g. in the form of tutorials and intercultural introductory lectures. Their level of satisfaction with their period of study at HHU is measurably higher as a result (indicator: International Student Barometer). The aim is for more foreign students to complete their studies with better grades in 2015 than in 2012. A wide range of foreign-language courses is available for foreign students. The courses offered for non-mobile foreign students to help them preserve and improve their native language competence (above all Turkish and Arabic) have been reviewed and where possible consolidated and expanded.

4. The international focus of study programmes and doctoral curricula at HHU has been intensified and consolidated. The range, for example, of multilingual or foreign-language teaching modules, excursions and programmes with an international focus has risen in comparison to 2012. Information on funding schemes and scholarships are more easily accessible. The faculties are given more incentives and support for the development of international study programmes. University teaching takes into account the need for intercultural and diversity skills. Teaching personnel receive more help with English-language lectures and seminars.
5. Within the framework of a wide variety of cooperation agreements, the international networking activities of the faculties have increased, amongst others as a result too of the professional support given by Central University Administration to lighten the faculties' workload. The International Office makes available model contracts and letters. The institutes, research facilities and graduate academies are given greater assistance with the supervision of international guests, e.g. by expanding the services offered by the International Welcome Centre. More is being undertaken to promote Erasmus Staff Mobility.
6. More researchers with an international background and corresponding experience will be appointed as professors at HHU in 2015 than in 2012. International experience will be taken into consideration as a qualification criterion to a greater degree when appointing professors.

Following successful implementation and consolidation of measures to achieve these objectives, a strategy for the establishment and expansion of research partnerships will be developed in a second stage from 2015 onwards.

The programme and its corresponding projects are run and coordinated centrally by the University's International Office. The International Office can thus link and bundle individual activities and create synergies as a result. Information and expertise are available from one source. This lightens the workload for faculties, institutes and individuals, above all with regard to administrative tasks, and thus allows them to concentrate on the measures' actual content.

Targeted support of exchange and transnational cooperation at individual level is a core element of the entire University's progressive internationalization process. Here, students, graduates, doctoral researchers, teaching staff and administrative personnel are given the best possible advice and support from a central source.

Preparing students for the international employment market is one of the University's prime concerns. In addition to entries in the Diploma Supplement, mobility activities, voluntary work in an intercultural area and language skills can be attested in the "Intercultural Certificate" and presented when applying for employment. The extensive assistance offered by the Career Service and job application training for specific groups serve to help all students to prepare for career entry.

The intention in a subsequent step is to extend the “Intercultural Certificate” to administrative personnel and in so doing to create a further incentive for staff mobility for all employees. Resources from the programme will be used to continue and expand the existing offer, e.g. a range of intercultural training measures for outgoing and incoming students and other members of the University, as well as a broader spectrum of foreign-language courses (above all English) for all members of the University.

By participating in the programme, HHU wants to achieve further internationalization objectives. The meeting of individuals beyond geographical borders and long-term networking between current and former participants are fundamental to establishing a welcoming culture. We will increase the level of participation in the programme of all members of HHU, raise further the percentage of graduates with international experience and also take the internationalization process forward in the areas of studying, teaching, key qualifications, administration and networking with the business community.

In 2013/14, the International Office will re-design its International Mobility programme. 25% of Bachelor graduates have already spent a study-related period of time abroad; in 2020 this figure should be at least 30 to 40%. In the framework of our extensive advice services, we will use a targeted approach to address those persons who have so far not considered going abroad and encourage them to participate in the programme. Former outgoing and current incoming students will in future be involved to a greater degree in promoting visits abroad and in supervision work. To complement the mentoring activities of the Erasmus Student Network Düsseldorf (ESN), we are at present setting up a Buddy Programme for students from abroad. By participating in the programme, we will be able to keep track of measures aimed at simplifying the recognition of study achievements. The “Intercultural Certificate” is open to students, graduates and staff.

A further goal is to ensure that as many students as possible are successful in their studies, e.g. through cross-faculty tutorials for everyone in all study phases. Prior to the start of their study programmes, first-semester students from abroad are introduced to intercultural aspects in the framework of the HHU Welcome Week and integrated during their studies in a mentoring programme. Erasmus incoming and outgoing students are given special language training and intercultural coaching from programme funds. The Heine Research Academies (heRA), founded in 2013 by the graduate academies of three faculties, foster (structured) graduate education at HHU. The exchange of teaching personnel will further enhance the faculties’ internationalization process and deepen the international aspect of the broad spectrum of free-of-charge university training measures for teaching personnel in all disciplines.

HHU is firmly embedded in the region’s network of research institutes and enterprises. The University’s Center for Entrepreneurship Düsseldorf (CEDUS) is the central contact point for the topics of self-employment and business start-ups. Campus Fair and company visits help students to make career decisions. We want our Erasmus partners to become involved in these networking activities and profit from them too.

HHU helps its researchers with their applications for third-party funding and has standardized and simplified its financial administration procedures to ensure that funds can be invested efficiently.