

# Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS)

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## **FHWN´s strategy, objectives and priorities for Erasmus activities and other actions in the context of the Life-long Learning Programme (2007-2013):**

The University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt, Austria (FHWN) is the first officially accredited University of Applied Sciences in Austria. It is strategically aimed at an internationalized educational concept. Student and staff exchange with a significant volume has always played a major role. The objectives and priorities for student and staff exchange are positioned in all degree programs.

The FHWN has always been a trendsetter regarding internationalization of HEIs in Austria, the first student exchanges on a large scale beginning in 1998. In 2007, 55 partner university contracts world-wide have been realized. These contracts consider the real needs and mobility interest of students and teachers being an important strategic goal with more exchange possibilities than demand.

The two-tier-system was introduced in 2004 (3-years Bachelor, 2-years Master). Within the English-taught bachelor degree program "Business Consultancy International", introduced in 2003, 60% of a students´ year group spend their 3rd semester abroad. Within the Bachelor degree programs "Business Consultancy", "Business Engineering", "Information Technology" and "Mechatronics/Microsystems Engineering", 20% of a year group are mobile. Master degree programs will also offer student exchange programs, but are currently in their inauguration phase.

Internationalization is also actively pursued on the satellite campi in Wieselburg, Bachelor degree program "Product Marketing and Project Management" and in Tulln, 4-years degree program "Biotechnological Processes". Internationalization is integrated in the strategy of the new Bachelor degree programs "Occupational Therapy", "Speech Therapy", "Biomedical Analytics", "Radiological Technology" and "Police Leadership".

10 outbound and inbound teacher exchanges per academic year help to foster relationships with partner institutions.

The doubling of incoming exchange students from 30 to 60 from spring semester 2007 to fall semester 2007/08 is the best proof that the FHWN is on the right track to fulfil and implement Bologna goals and strategies.

Future strategic goals will focus on continuation of active fulfilment of bilateral agreements, a well-balanced student and staff exchange situation, which influences strongly the intercultural understanding of all players at the FHWN.

Visibility to Erasmus activities, publicity of the Erasmus University Charter/EPS:

Erasmus activities are published on campus and on the inter- and intranet. All target groups have easy access to detailed information on Erasmus strategies, goals and procedures and are actively encouraged to participate.

Non-discrimination objectives:

The university is completely adapted to the needs of disabled students and staff. Students and staff of different colour, ethnic and religious groups are fully integrated. The existence of more than 30 different nations within the English-taught degree program "Business Consultancy International" is evidence of this policy.

#### OUTGOING EXCHANGE STUDENTS

High quality in mobility is ensured by an overall communication strategy, an objective selection process of outgoings based on evaluation of the academic performance, course pre-recognition documents guaranteeing accreditation and individual advising on learning agreements. After return, outgoings evaluate the semester abroad from a social and academic point of view. Evaluations are available on the intranet and a fast source of information for future outgoings. The IO organizes information days to raise interest, special country evenings to promote less sought-after European countries and help desks with personal counselling.

#### INCOMING EXCHANGE STUDENTS

Inbound students receive tutoring, individual counselling and information on curricula by the IO before arrival, during the semester and after departure. The IO briefs and debriefs lecturers. The ECTS-system is used in all degree programs. A Buddy Network, run by senior regular students, helps to integrate incomings on a one-to-one basis from the first day onwards. The IO organizes a welcoming event, four social events in and around Austria and a closing event per semester in cooperation with the Buddy Network. ACCOMMODATION in a new and modern hall of residence within walking distance of the university is guaranteed by pre-booked rooms according to the number of exchange contracts. German, English, Spanish, Russian and Italian LANGUAGE COURSES at beginner, intermediate and advanced level are offered without fees.

#### STAFF MOBILITY

The IO is in charge of advising and organising prospective outbound and inbound lecturers and ensures curricular integration at the host and home university. The IO also initiates briefing and debriefing of mobile lecturers, which is essential for evaluation of the guest lectures. The IO prepares standardized descriptions of all guest lectures, including the assessment method, the sum total of lecture hours and curriculum vitae in EU-format of the mobile teacher.

## STUDENT PLACEMENTS

The FHWN encourages students in their 6<sup>th</sup> semester of the Bachelor programs to do the student placement in a company within the European Higher Education Area.

High quality in mobility in student placements is ensured by an overall strategy and an objective selection process of students based on the evaluation of their academic performance. Student placements are part of the Bachelor-curricula with a fixed duration of 3 to 6 months.

The IO organizes information days to raise interest and help desks with personal counselling and provides necessary application documents. Interested students hand in application forms including a curriculum vitae and a letter of motivation.

The FHWN helps to arrange placements. A yearly job fair on campus, a database and personal counselling are important tools to support students.

Once a student placement is fixed, the student applies directly to the relevant company.

The FHWN, the company and the student sign a training agreement and agree on specific educational goals and content of the placement. All rights and duties of parties involved are agreed upon in this placement contract.

The FHWN, the company and the student also sign a scholarship contract guaranteeing financial support for the student.

During placements, students have to write their Bachelor's thesis, hand in reports and follow blocked corollary seminars at the university. Students are in regular contact with their home coordinator by phone or e-mail.

After completion, students evaluate their placement abroad from a social and academic point of view. Evaluations are available on the intranet and a fast source of information for future students planning a placement abroad. After completion students have to hand in reports and supporting documents.

The recognition of the placement within the curricula is handled by the home coordinator.