



Erasmus Policy Statement: Erasmus Declaration on Higher Education Policy

An **active and dynamic internationalisation policy** is a key objective of the USTP - University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten and therefore prominently anchored both in the mission and the strategy. The further qualitative and quantitative expansion of the international activities aims to further promote an open learning and innovation culture. In this context, special emphasis is placed on the promotion of **interdisciplinarity, internationality and innovative strength** in order to contribute to a knowledge-based, open society and to lay the foundation for lifelong learning. The USTP strives to enable its students to think globally, in networks and in terms of society as a whole. Furthermore, they are taught to develop a heightened **social commitment** and to act as competent and responsible citizens who see themselves as part of a united European community. The Erasmus programme and the orientation towards the **common principles of the European Higher Education Area** play a central role in pursuing these objectives.

The USTP is committed to the continuous improvement of its intensive collaboration with partners and universities in other countries within the framework of European **cooperation projects** and research activities as well as the language and intercultural skills of students, teachers and administrative staff, and the attractiveness of the USTP for international students, teaching staff and researchers. The ambitious strategic goal is to ensure that every graduate of the USTP has gained at least one international and/or interdisciplinary experience during her/his time at the USTP.

By means of the increased expansion of **English-language as well as intercultural and interdisciplinary study programmes**, the USTP makes an effort to become an attractive place to study for international students. The international networking of teaching and administrative staff plays a central role in this context.

The academic mobility of students, teachers and administrative staff remains the core of the internationalisation agenda of the USTP. The target is to generate a high-quality annual

growth of 5% and the mobilities to Erasmus programme countries are the most important component in terms of figures. The consistent compliance with the quality standards of the Erasmus programme (use of ECTS, learning and training agreement, diploma supplement, etc.) applies correspondingly as a guideline for other mobility programmes as well.

The USTP International Office **informs, advises and supports** all incoming and outgoing persons in the organisational and administrative handling of their mobilities. A particular focus is on counselling non-traditional students and encouraging them to engage in international exchange. International coordinators in the study programmes are a key interface between teaching and the service unit International Relations. The “International Student Network” features students advising and supporting incoming fellow students.

Most (but not all) mobilities take place with **partner universities**. Incoming and outgoing mobility in the form of so-called “free movers” is also possible but happens to a considerably lesser extent. Another goal is the networking with the cooperation partners in the fields of teaching and research. The mobility activities have their **geographical focus** in Europe. Partner institutions are selected primarily according to the compatibility of study programmes and the teaching language(s). However, the ties to partner countries such as the USA and South Africa are supposed to be strengthened and expanded through the new **global** Erasmus programme generation. In addition, the USTP strives to increasingly use the possibilities of **KA107 “International Credit Mobility”** in this context.

A key strategic goal is the further promotion of the **internationalisation in the curricula**, particularly including the optimisation and expansion of the mobility windows in all study programmes, the use of digital methods such as MOOCs, the internationalisation of courses and the implementation of short formats such as blended learning, summer schools, etc. The experience gained through successfully implemented, currently ongoing international semester formats like the “iLab” and the “European Project Semester” is invaluable in this endeavour.

Short formats as an affordable and low-threshold form of mobility are supposed to play a central role in addition to “traditional” semester mobility in the form of studying and internships abroad. The idea is to promote inclusion by reaching a larger group of persons, e.g. part-time students (whose number is included in the growth target) and non-traditional students. The USTP intends to work out and implement a concept for recording these mobilities. In this context, a special focus is on the expansion of **Blended Mobilities** by using the corresponding

possibilities offered by the Erasmus programme 2021-2027. The annual inter-departmental **International Week** is to be developed further to include as many study programmes as possible and to make this week an integral part of their curricula.

A mobility software is used to promote the **digitalisation**, professionalisation and administrative simplification in the handling of mobilities and cooperation agreements. In this way, the USTP also strives to implement the targets of “Erasmus without Paper” and, as a consequence, to support the efforts for the realisation of the European Student Card.

In order to achieve the internationalisation goals, the USTP plans to increasingly **participate in cooperation projects under Key Action 2** as well as knowledge transfer projects in general. In this context, the submission of an application of a “**European University**” deserves special mention. In 2020, the USTP took the lead in a consortium which submitted a project with the objective of empowering European regions and promoting the collaboration of medium-sized towns in smaller EU countries – with a focus on entrepreneurship and innovation. In the course of the next Erasmus programme generation, the submission of an **Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programme** is planned as well. The already submitted **Knowledge Alliance, Sector Skills Alliance and Strategic Partnership** projects will – if they are approved – make further important contributions to the internationalisation and modernisation of the curricula, the teaching and learning methods, and the intensification of the relationships with the respective project partners and sectors. In consideration of the temporal, financial and personnel resources for the submission and implementation of the projects as well as the dissemination of the results, the USTP is planning to increase its active participation in Erasmus cooperation projects. The service unit International Relations offers professional assistance in the execution of the projects.

The Board of the USTP has launched a **sustainability** committee. Climate-friendly mobility forms by bus or train as an alternative to air travel and a focus on Blended Mobilities offer possibilities to make internationalisation activities as sustainable as possible. A study programme on “Sustainable Mobility and Climate Neutrality” designed to establish new competencies in this field has been submitted for accreditation.