

# Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

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## ***D. Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)***

The Institution agrees to publish this overall strategy (all three parts) on its website within one month after the signature of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education by the European Commission.

Please describe your institution's international (EU and non-EU) strategy. In your description please explain a) how you choose your partners, b) in which geographical area(s) and c) the most important objectives and target groups of your mobility activities (with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, including study and training, and short cycles). If applicable, also explain how your institution participates in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees. (max. 5000 characters)

Original language [EN]

In the spring of 2013, Karel de Grote University College (KdG) embraced a new policy regarding internationalisation, enhanced by a mission and vision statement. Its general objective is to become a leading institute of higher education with regards to internationalisation, in the Flemish region as well as on an international level. In doing so, we want to provide to our students and staff a learning environment with a strong international orientation that reflects the globalized world of the 21st century.

In order to reach this goal, we've developed 6 important strategies. By the end of 2020, KdG wants to:

1. Increase the number of outgoing students to at least 20% of all our students.
2. Increase the number of incoming students in order to achieve a balance between incoming and outgoing mobility
3. Increase the mobility of our staff, as well as support their efforts to take part in international networking activities
4. Work on the internationalisation of the curriculum in a dual way: creating opportunities for incoming students as well as for students at home (internationalisation@home)
5. Take up a more active role concerning cooperation activities with developing countries
6. Engage more actively in international cooperation projects, and to increase the number of projects in which we take part, as partner as well as coordinator

Developing our network of partners is crucial to succeeding in our overall goal and to the implementation of our different strategies. In the past years we have invested in different partnerships, mainly in Europe. In the coming years, we will enhance those partnerships and make them stronger through various cooperation activities. The main criteria for choosing partners in Europe are all pragmatic and focused on the benefits we can offer each other. Since we mainly train students for professional bachelor degrees, it is very important to us that our partners can also provide a network of possible work placement-companies. The programme offered by our partners is also inspected for staff exchange opportunities, incoming as well as outgoing. We also look at the mission statement of our partners: do we share the same goals and objectives? In this respect, we investigate the composition of the courses offered by our partners: will our students have the opportunity to blend in with the home students?

Geographically, we tend to look for partners in regions where English, Spanish, German or French is one of the main languages. This also makes it easier to accept incoming students from our partners.

Under the Erasmus for All-programme, we will form partnerships outside the EU as well. We will follow our government's policy regarding preferential partners for cooperation, and combine it with our existing contacts inside our different departments.

Given the global changes of the last decade, our focus outside Europe will mainly be on the new emerging countries (BRIC): to give our students and staff the chance to get to know the new world economies, and to provide them with the competencies needed to become active members of the globalised world. We will look for partners in specific regions, where we can work together with different institutions.

As stated above, we wish to strengthen our students and our staff with important competencies, such as intercultural competencies, maturity, social development, general interpersonal relating skills, global awareness and a deepened sense of European identity and citizenship. This is one of the most important objectives of our international activities. We train mostly young people, who are still at the beginning of their careers. We owe it to them, as well as to society, to train them in such a way that they discover their talents and feel the urge to develop them, not only during their academic years, but also for the rest of their lives. This means that we teach them to seize opportunities that occur in a changing environment.

Mobility and intercultural exchanges are very important factors in that respect. Therefore, we find it crucial that all of our students can profit from our international strategy.

Participation in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees will be an important tool in realising our ambitions of becoming a leading institution in the field of internationalisation. We recognize the importance of bringing together educational expertise on a structural level. We have taken the first steps in our own country, working with institutions located in the French-speaking regions. Under the Erasmus for All-programme we will use our experience(s), and reach out to other institutions inside the EU.

If applicable, please describe your institution's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme. (max. 2000 characters)

Original language [EN]

With its strategic partners, KdG invests in international educational and training projects, both within and outside of Europe. Cooperating in projects – as partner and/or coordinator – is a key element in our internationalisation strategy, because it creates various synergies and opportunities: (1) it provides access to international networks, (2) it is a way to improve the quality and increase the volume of teaching staff and student mobility, (3) it increases the quality and the volume of our partnerships, (4) it provides access to international expertise, which strengthens the quality of our curricula and leads to educational innovations, and (5) it has spin-offs, like the development of double degrees and other joint ventures. In its international projects, KdG aims for close cooperation with enterprises, industries and other stakeholders to ensure their relevancy for the professional field and to optimize students' opportunities for work placement and employment. Erasmus for All will be a stimulating programme that will provide us with the opportunity to become an active player in the field of international educational and training projects. Next to Erasmus for All we will seek other ways to finance international projects, like the European Social Fund, the European Structural Funds and funding opportunities at the Belgian and Flemish levels.

In cooperation with the partner countries of the EU, sustainable development is very important to KdG. In this context, we wish to cooperate with different countries in the South, and focus on a shared development and modernisation of the higher education. KdG commits itself to a better world in which all students and staff members are stimulated to develop their talents and make a positive contribution to a world with equal opportunities for all. Therefore, we invest in strategic partnerships and collaborate in international projects in developing countries with non-governmental organisations like VVOB and VLIR UOS.

Please explain the expected impact of your participation in the Programme on the modernisation of your institution (for each of the 5 priorities of the Modernisation Agenda\*) in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve. (max. 3000 characters)

Original language [EN]

KdG wants to form strategic partnerships to foster intense, structured and long-term cooperation activities among other University Colleges as well as with important stakeholders.

As an institution of higher education, based in the multicultural town of Antwerp, KdG wants to fulfil its role in society and contribute to local and European prosperity, by challenging our students, staff and alumni to become global citizens. One of the key principles in our educational strategy is to offer a tailor-made course to each of our students and to attract a broad cross-section of society to our institution. We will invest in helping students with financial problems and in enrolling disabled students in mobility activities.

We offer mainly professional bachelor degrees and, because of that, a lot of our curricula are developed in dialogue with the work-field and other relevant stakeholders. We encourage our (teaching) staff to be actively involved in exchanges and lifelong learning activities. This way, we keep our curricula up to date with the latest evolutions in the work-field. In our opinion, we need to keep renewing our ways of teaching as well. For KdG, didactics and technology are inseparable. Technology transforms learning processes to the extent that it is unthinkable not to deploy it. Because technology makes it possible to differentiate, to achieve quality education tailored to each student, it is absolutely necessary to invest in Technology Enhanced Learning.

In addition to realising the indicated goals for internationalisation through individual student and teacher mobility, the coordination of or cooperation in international education projects can be a key driver for a qualitative 'internationalisation' of our institution. It is important that learning mobility is more systematically built into our curricula, taking into account the ongoing evolutions on a European level.

As an organisation we want to lead on innovation: we want to discover new needs and provide suitable answers. By sharing experiences and good practices in an international context, we add to this objective a European or even international dimension.

In our vision, we hope that by exchanging staff and students, by cooperating in international projects and by internationalising our curricula we can add an intercultural and international dimension to our different tasks in the fields of education, research and social services. Our goal is to be an active player in the field of internationalisation, and participating in the Erasmus for All-programme will be very welcome and useful to the realisation of this objective.

\*COM (2011) 567 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0567:FIN:EN:PDF>)