



1. ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)

1.1 Erasmus activities included in your EPS

In this section, you need to tick the Erasmus activities covered by your Erasmus Policy Statement. Please select those activities that your HEI intends to implement during the entire duration of the Programme.

Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility:

The mobility of higher education students and staff

Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions:

Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices

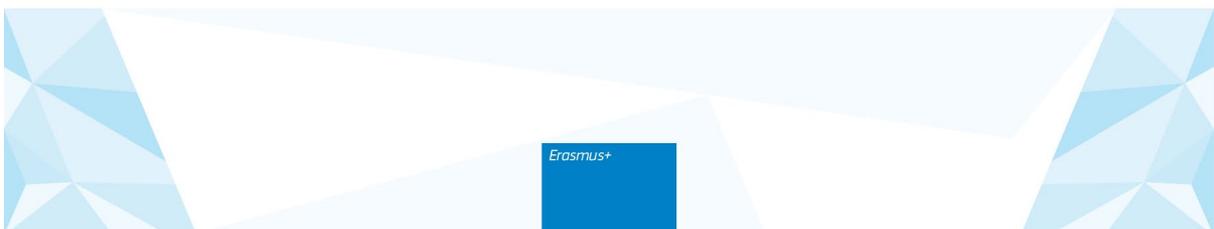
Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities

Partnerships for Excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

Partnerships for Innovation

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3):

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3) - Support to policy development and cooperation:



1.2 Erasmus Policy statement (EPS): your strategy

Your Erasmus Policy Statement should reflect how you intended to implement Erasmus after the award of the ECHE. Should you wish to add additional activities in the future, you will need to amend your Erasmus Policy Statement and inform your Erasmus National Agency.

What would you like to achieve by participating in the Erasmus Programme? How does your participation in the Erasmus Programme fit into your institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy?

(Please reflect on the objectives of your participation. Please explain how you expect the participation in Erasmus to contribute towards modernising your institution, as well as on the goal of building a European Education Area¹ and explain the policy objectives you intend to pursue).

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

INTRODUCTION

Saxion is a regionally focused knowledge institution with an international orientation in education, research and entrepreneurship. The world is becoming more and more international, and we make sure our students are equipped to face this reality. Our international orientation prepares students for the national and international labour market and gives them the competences these markets call for. Internationalisation of education and research is not an end in itself, but a way of providing better education and enhancing research. Our applied education and research contributes to issues at a global, Euregio and regional level, as well as to society, the relevant professional fields and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

International student / staff mobility (ISM) and the internationalisation of higher education (IoHE) are a constant and important factor for Saxion. Internationalisation of education for us is not an end in itself, but a way of providing better education and enhancing the student experience. We are very proud of our diverse student body. Our international student population tops 3,500 students with a total of 89 different nationalities. Many of Saxion's full-time educational courses are already conducted in English, with more being added each year. Our international classrooms are made up of a mix of students from all over the world. In this way we provide you with a truly multi-cultural experience in which you can compare experiences with and learn from fellow students of different backgrounds and nationalities.

The current state of affairs in the international education cooperation arena is being influenced by themes such as changing demographics, diversity & inclusion, migration, and most recently the Covid-19 virus pandemic. It shows that as an institution we have to be prepared for and show educational leadership in a global community which is more and more VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous). As university of applied sciences we have a distinct role to play as change agents and keep the promise that education can transform societies. It is not for naught that Education is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (#4).

1.1 ECHE AND THE STRATEGIC VISION 2020-2024 SAXION

¹ For more information on the priorities of the European Education Area, such as recognition, digital skills, common values and inclusive education, please consult the following website: https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area_en

The Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) provides the general quality framework for European and international cooperation activities a higher education institution may carry out within Erasmus+ in the period 2021-2027. In signing the Charter, Saxion confirms that it not only continues its participation in Erasmus+ as part of its own strategy for modernisation and internationalisation. It is an acknowledgement of the place and value of European principles, identity and cooperation takes in the Saxion strategy in continuous improvement of the quality of its higher education programmes and student experience. Obtaining the ECHE is therefore a vital achievement on our way to global education excellence. It is an endorsement of our competence in mastering of white space in the upcoming Erasmus+ programme, where we don't necessarily have an overview of implications of the new programme, but where we will experiment, ask around and try out new ways of working until it's resolved.

WRITE THE FUTURE. Make a difference. For and with the region. Technology driven. This is the title of the Saxion Strategic Plan 2020-2024. In this document Saxion shares its vision on our contribution to a vibrant region by remaining an attractive university of applied sciences to students. We want to be the leading, international orientated, university of applied sciences, offering future-proof education including applied research for smart solutions. Saxion as an effective higher education institution and civil society organisation ready to serve the community it services.

The principles underlying the Saxion Strategic Vision 2020-2024 are not new. They reiterate and build on the rules, the use of the tools and the institutional orientation elaborated over the last decades in order to ensure transparency, fairness, and effectiveness in the organisation of student education. What makes this strategic vision more relevant to the ECHE and the Erasmus+ programme is the explicit dimension of continuous improvement in internationalisation, as part of the Saxion True North. It entails the ongoing involvement of each organisation unit within Saxion and its staff in fostering an institutional culture of strategic thinking, transparency, fairness and effectiveness in internationalisation. The True North and the strategic line Internationalisation of Saxion is convincingly at the heart our "Erasmus Policy Statement".

1.2 CONTRIBUTION TO ACHIEVING THE SDGS

One of our main objectives is to educate students to deliver a contribution to solutions that can be helpful for the people in tomorrow's world. Saxion was one of the first universities of applied sciences in The Netherlands to sign the SDG-charter on 29 March 2018 and to start to work on contributing to the SDG ambitions. The first paragraph of the Saxion Strategic Plan for the years 2020-2024 is: "The consequences of the climate crisis are becoming increasingly clear, and society's call for solutions is also becoming louder and louder. Saxion has a key role to play in meeting Sustainable Development goals for the year 2030, as formulated by the United Nations. Developing sustainable solutions requires education and applied research that is directly connected to the world around us" (Saxion Strategic Plan, 2020-2024)

We contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by creating the link between societal issues and technical solutions being developed within our education and research programs. These solutions are among others designed to end poverty, inequality, and climate change by 2030. The university system is generating huge amounts of fundamental knowledge and applied research. We see it as our task to bring this knowledge to market, with a short implementation time. Universities of applied sciences can use applied research to bridge the gap between fundamental knowledge and society. Technology is developing rapidly, driving changes in professional practice and imposing demands on the education we provide.

To be able to monitor the impact and outcome of all activities regarding the Sustainable Development Goals Saxion has developed a central coordination point. This department is pivotal in organising all activities regarding the SDG's. All Saxion Schools and service departments are challenged to decide which SDG item they will establish and promote within

their department. In this manner all activities regarding diversity, inclusivity as well as all items regarding the Sustainable Development Goals are on everyone's agenda and communicated on a regular basis regarding the progress.

All the above mentioned goals are part of the cooperation agreements with central governments, industries and regional institutions. The SDG targets are also part of the agreement negotiations with partner universities. Interdisciplinary working is an important component in our education. When we let students from different study programmes collaborate, they learn to combine knowledge and tackle complex issues. Our Smart Solutions Semester is a good example of this. In a single semester, students from different courses collaborate on issues raised by companies, institutions and government bodies. Innovative and creative solutions emerge within teams that have a unique mix of experience, skills and talent.

1.3 FUTURE PROOF INTERNATIONALISATION

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on student mobility and international education provision are being chartered through different European and Dutch international education platforms in which Saxion actively participates. Scenarios include educated guesses about the impact of Covid-19 pandemic and which mitigation measures are visible and feasible. Saxion firmly believes and advocates that European and global cooperation is an essential pre-requisite in addressing the myriad challenges the post Covid-19 society poses us with. Besides financial, social and organisational challenges, there is also the opportunity to make a lasting change for a better society. Innovations in education which have been carefully experimented and piloted with the help of European partners in the last few years have proven to be valuable. The process of strategic transition to student centred learning, spearheaded by the Saxion ICT& Education department, as part of the Saxion Education and Student Services department (ESS), has prepared our students and teaching staff to deal adequately with the shock of the accelerated shift to online education. A second example where participation in the Erasmus+ programme will shape the European Education Area. As a result of staggered recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic we expect that European HEIs will need to strengthen information provision efforts and increase the accessibility of support measures (over the spectrum from the financial to the psychological support) to make sure that Europe remains inclusive and supportive of the recovery of international student mobility.

Please reflect on the Erasmus actions you would like to take part in and explain how they will be implemented in practice at your institution. Please explain how your institution's participation in these actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of your institutional strategy.

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Internationalisation of our institution, our academic courses, our staff, and our students is an explicit objective in the Saxion Strategic Vision 2020-2024. The outcome is students and staff who are prepared for the domestic and international job markets, who have the attitude and competences these markets call for. This means that Saxion has to offer them the opportunity to gain international experience and education, in so doing, broaden their horizons through participation in the Erasmus actions.

Erasmus actions implementation

In order to achieve excellence in internationalisation the responsibility for the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the Erasmus actions is centralised at the Saxion Education and Student Services department (ESS), to which the International Office belongs as well. ESS acts as a first port of call and a "window" into international credit mobilities and cooperation projects for internal and external partners, answering inquiries, arranging briefings and generally providing information in general. It is also the key portal for delivering applications

and project proposals for all Erasmus actions.

Architecture of the impact of internationalisation activities

Saxion has taken the first steps in building up a new strategic policy programme which integrates all international mobility programmes being supported relations with governmental, multilateral and private sector donors: the Saxion Program International Cooperation Empowerment (SPICE). Under SPICE a number of institution wide policy development and implementation innovations in international cooperation is being undertaken. The basis is the Saxion International Partnership Framework, which states the goals, objectives and working arrangements in international education cooperation. The objectives and priorities of Erasmus Decentralised Actions in Education and Training are specifically brought under this framework. All European and non-European activities encompassing education and training target increased learning and mobility, stronger ties between education, training and the world of work, enhanced quality, innovation and excellence in education and training delivery, policy cooperation, capacity building with non-programme countries are bundled together.

Implementation follows a matrix which reflects the gradations of intensity of impact of student/staff engagement in international goals and the complexity of use of internationalisation tools (institution funds, Dutch MoFA funding, Erasmus+ funding, international funding, etc.). This working method acts as a multiplier for the individual impact of international education cooperation projects, paving a sustainable growth path in achieving our institutional goal of international education excellence and providing our students with the competencies they need for the jobs of the future.

Resilience is flexibility in study options

Increasingly for many students, a distinguishing factor in their choice of where to study is flexibility. University study is expensive and more and more young people need to work to support their study. Those institutions that offer both on-campus and online classes, different forms of civic engagement and on-the-job learning experiences become a more appealing prospect. Innovations within the Erasmus actions such as extending and combining KA1 mobilities to accommodate options such as short term mobilities and blending on-campus with online can provide an enhanced opportunity to engage in higher education for students who are located in remote areas, who are engaged in full-time work or who have family commitments or medical conditions that prevent regular participation in the Erasmus programme. For Saxion, the critical challenge is again making sure that the quality of what is offered online is of a high standard. As Saxion increases participation in Erasmus actions such as KA1, KA2 and the European Universities Initiative, we and our partner universities will need to put in place robust quality assurance mechanisms, assign appropriately qualified staff to develop and deliver the education of the future and invest in providing them with relevant and timely professional support.

What is the envisaged impact of your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on your institution?

Please reflect on targets, as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators in monitoring this impact (such as mobility targets for student/staff mobility, quality of the implementation, support for participants on mobility, increased involvement in cooperation projects (under the KA2 action), sustainability/long-term impact of projects etc.) You are encouraged to offer an indicative timeline for achieving the targets related to the Erasmus+ actions.

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Current participation in Erasmus+ programme

In the last 5 years Saxion has consciously invested in growing its international partner network in quantity and quality. The Erasmus+ programme has been and continues to be one of the pivotal tools in this objective. That these investments have had a positive effect in our performance in the **European and Global Education Area** is proven by the fact that over time we see an increasing number of incoming and outgoing staff and student credit mobilities. Besides credit mobilities, as staff and researchers meet and work together within and outside Europe, Saxion receives more and more invitations to partner in **KA1, KA2 and KA3 projects**.

Envisaged impact on Saxion

In the coming period Saxion participation in Erasmus+ programme projects will more than ever be built around a number of core values: connectiveness, enterprising and efficient organisation. In this manner, the Erasmus+ programme acts as a catalyst to start innovations within our institution and is at the same time a benchmark for short and long-term goals as new (Erasmus) activities are introduced (source: Saxion International Office True North 2019).

Connectiveness. This relates to how we work on a level playing field with our education, government and private partners. It is about reciprocity in forming mutually strategic and constructive partnerships at the local, national, European and global levels. European projects are complex projects which need full commitment from Saxion as an institution and from our implementing Schools, departments and research institutes. But there where the added value in terms of impact is evident, Saxion has proven to be an attractive and valuable project partner. More than before will participation in the new period of European actions be based on a conscious and intensive co-creation with our European and global partners.

Enterprising. As stated in our strategic vision, Saxion is a University of Applied Sciences which provides solutions to social issues through education, international cooperation and applied research in order to deliver maximum value to students, the professional field and society. At Saxion, we encourage enterprising students to maximise their potential and give them full support in setting up their own business in a European and global environment. The principles of 'social entrepreneurship' are our starting point: enterprising with pleasure, attention and significance in the social environment. By applying the latest methods and techniques developed through European cooperation, maximum justice is done to people's talents. Furthermore, we contribute to a vital labour market and new (regional) economy by working in close cooperation with international oriented private sector partners.

Efficient organisation. Not always is there enough resources and manpower available to participate. As the internal and external requests for participation increases, Saxion will invest in enhancing our institutional capacity to participate, coordinate, monitor, evaluate, learn and disseminate. As previously mentioned, coordination of participation in the Erasmus actions continues to be centralised. This is seen as an essential prerequisite to be able to embed the Erasmus+ programme within all Saxion Schools/ departments, act as a lead partner in KA2 cooperation projects and successfully participate in the European Universities Initiative.

Performance Targets.

As stated above Saxion has not formulated any strict qualitative targets as we chose to focus more on quality enhancements of our relationships and on the organisational performance. This runs parallel with the process of continuous improvement of our internationalisation strategy. From experience we see that this strategy has not only been a trigger for increased participation of staff and students in Erasmus+, but more importantly, it has also increased their awareness of the impact of Erasmus+ programmes on their academic performance, personal development and global citizenship.

In terms of general targets concerning specific key actions, Saxion has formulated the following ambitions above our current performance in the last years. By the end of the Erasmus+ programme in 2027....

All students will have had the opportunity to gain at least one (virtual) international experience which contributes to their (international) competence development through KA1 projects.

Saxion will have delivered at least one KA2 proposal as a lead programme country. Currently Saxion is invited to participate annually in at least two KA2 projects.

Saxion will have joined a consortium for at least one KA3 proposal. Saxion has been invited to participate in at least two KA3 projects. However personnel capacity limitations and securing participation at national level has hindered full eligibility.

Saxion will have formed at least two consortia within Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree Programme (EMJMD). Saxion is looking to improve our current offer and develop more Masters programmes. Participation in the EMJMD would facilitate this objective by learning and improvement through jointly delivered programmes. Furthermore, participation would increase the diversity within the Master Degree cohorts. Saxion currently offers 5 International Masters programmes. The Masters of Arts in Management and the Masters in Business Administration is a cooperation is a co-operation with the University of Greenwich. Upon graduation, students registered at Saxion will also obtain an internationally recognized British Degree. These programs are also offered in a part-time programme. The part-time programme is primarily aimed at individuals who are working full-time and need to balance study with work and home commitments. It employs blended learning, a flexible learning model which uses a mixture of different methods of study.

Saxion will have developed a proposal under the European Universities Initiative. In 2019 Saxion took the initiative to interest Erasmus partners for the idea to answer the call of European Universities. The objectives within the European Universities Initiative coincides with the concepts being developed through the Saxion Educational Model (SOM). The educational model allows us to respond flexibly and effectively to the changing European job market, and even anticipate changes to it.

Saxion will have participated where possible and relevant in Erasmus Youth projects. Saxion looks forward to implementing youth exchanges and training/networking for youth workers. Participation in these projects are based on developed expertise in educating teachers in primary, secondary and tertiary education and future professionals in Social Work. Above this, Saxion is able to offer exchanges and training through our Tech Your Future, our centre of expertise in Technology Education.

Saxion will have participated as a partner in an Erasmus+ mobility project for Adult education. Saxion sees lifelong development not only as an assignment, but also as an opportunity and challenge. The Saxion Part-time School (SPS) is part of our answer to this challenge. The education of the Saxion Part-time School is flexible and blended (mix of online learning and meetings) in an extensive range of part-time courses, courses and (individual) modules. SPS is an innovative concept which needs to be embedded in the European Education Area. Participation in Erasmus+ Adult education projects will contribute to this development.