

## **Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS) 2021-2027**

TTK University of Applied Sciences (TTK UAS), a state professional higher education institution, is the largest university of applied sciences in Estonia. TTK UAS strives to support the sustainable development of Estonian society through applied higher education and knowledge transfer in the fields of engineering, production, technology, architecture, construction and services. TTK UAS emphasizes the importance of continuous modernization of its instruction processes by employing innovation and digital technologies in education to offer smart, sustainable and inclusive education.

Participation in Erasmus+ Programme is an effective instrument to enhance the international dimension of a well-performing institution with the aim of ensuring its international visibility and building trust with partners. TTK UAS states in its vision to be a nationally valued and internationally recognised professional higher education institution and involvement in the Erasmus+ Programme has helped to make that vision a reality. The values incorporated in the Erasmus+ Programme contribute to achieving more open, cohesive and growth-oriented environment in the engaged institutions. On institutional level, strategic goals for modernization and internationalization at TTK UAS are described in a separate section TTK UAS' development plan currently being composed by the institution for the period 2021-2025.

TTK UAS promotes international cooperation with the objective of expanding the professional networks for its staff and provide effective mobility opportunities for its students. Participation in different international programmes and networks contributes to the development of TTK UAS' main activities in accordance with the relevant trends in the working world. TTK UAS employs different measures to maintain high quality in teaching in the modern environment, help students achieve better study outcomes and support their development academically and socially.

TTK UAS aims to be an inclusive and sustainable institution that is effective in its use of resources. TTK UAS already employs various digital solutions in its administrative and instructional work processes with a special focus on the development of smart e-learning methods. The forward-looking nature of the initiative to exchange student information for mobility programmes between the HEIs fully in a digital format is in complete harmony with TTK UAS' agenda.

TTK UAS values creativity, openness, flexibility, initiative and sustainability. These core values are taken into account also in the approach to international engagement. Participation in the Erasmus+ Programme contributes to achieving high international standards in teaching and in applied research. It is also an essential tool to enhance TTK UAS' attractiveness as a place to study and work. The international development of TTK UAS is in line with both national and EU guidelines and good practices keeping in mind the goals of European Education Area.

TTK UAS builds its development activities on the positions of international higher education networks by participating in international organisations such as EURASHE (European Association of Higher Education Institutions), UASNET (Universities of Applied Sciences network), ENAS (European Network of Academic Sports Services) and by taking part of the activities of NordPlus programme. This international experience is essential for planning

trends and directions for TTK UAS and managing its activities. TTK UAS is an active participant in many development projects.

The core element of international development is a good network of collaborative partnerships. The partnerships of TTK UAS are built on mutual interest, an understanding of the partner institutions, matching specialty areas and similar study programmes. TTK UAS has already built strong relationships with different HEIs in Europe based on Erasmus+ Agreements. TTK UAS constantly seeks to improve the quality of the cooperation with its partners to exchange mutually up to date knowledge, competencies and skills. Mutual trust, quality programmes, matching research topics, quality level of teachers, supervisors and project management are the foundation of successful cooperation. The invitations from partners to join new projects and networks shows the trust in TTK UAS' quality and reliability, which we highly appreciate. Our partners value the laboratory work, study in small groups and close contacts with industry.

Our partnerships within Erasmus+ framework not only facilitate and support the internalization of staff and students, but also make possible developments in teaching and learning, collaborative research and capacity-building. The aim is to enhance the international dimension of the curricula and research activity in order to keep pace with the global community today. To accomplish this aim, it is crucial to improve further the conditions of international experiences of students and staff by offering more varied high-quality mobility options, training possibilities and finding partners for projects.

TTK UAS actively disseminates across the institution the opportunities to take part in international mobility within the Erasmus+ Programme. Spending time abroad to study and learn are seen as an opportunity to test academic performance and social skills in competitive international environments. TTK UAS believes involvement in Erasmus+ Programme not only enhances students' competitiveness for an ever more global employment market, but also increases their understanding of the importance of cultural diversity and transnational cooperation in Europe and beyond.

TTK UAS students can also acquire an international experience from foreign visiting academic staff and professionals who are teaching at TTK UAS and from international visiting students who participate in academic activities. Contacts with incoming students and the international dimension added by the invited foreign lecturers and experts will not only enrich the educational and social experience of non-mobile students, but also give them a sense of being part of a wider transnational community. Intensive programme (IP) projects, both within and outside the Erasmus+ Programme, provide a great opportunity to offer international experience to students who might have different limitations (i.e. financial impediments, family or work obligations etc.) for taking part in longer mobility periods. These short-term mobility projects are more flexible and are often organized in form of blended mobility by including elements of both physical and virtual mobility. They are also hoped to serve as a form of inspiration and encouragement to take part in long-term mobilities.

Promotion of academic mobility will make it possible to explore mutual interests and opportunities, establish links for teaching and research, and identify the potential for implementing joint educational programs. Staff mobility is seen only as a tool of improving the quality of studies by exchanging new innovative teaching methods and practices, but also an instrument of self-improvement and personal fulfilment. Participating in mobility helps to raise academic competences, acquire new ways of thinking and teaching, practice interpersonal skills, raise cultural awareness and enhance intercultural understanding. From institutional viewpoint, staff mobility also contributes to establishing long-term connections, facilitates the creation of extended cooperation networks and increases student mobility. It may lead to initiation of new projects and establishing networks of cooperation that in the end all help cultivate a sense of integrity and community within the EU.