

Erasmus Policy Statement

At **HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht**, some 40,000 people of more than 100 different nationalities work on and study the societal challenges of today and tomorrow in one of the most competitive regions in Europe. We develop competencies, knowledge and solutions that are needed for and in the professional practice. Over the past 25 years, we have trained 150,000 **innovative professionals** and put our research on the map; this makes us one of the **drivers of social change**. We make an important contribution to the **development** of the **professional practice** and participate in an **open, fair and sustainable society**. The world is our playing field: we contribute to solutions to local and global challenges at both regional and international level.

An international orientation is inextricably bound to the role we, as a University of Applied Sciences (UAS), wish to fulfil in society with our practice-based research and education. This is reflected in our ambitions.

- Based on our profile, 'quality of life and society in our urban environment', we work on **mission-driven challenges** set out in the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. To that end, our key focal points are **sustainability, health and well-being, education and digitalisation**. These tasks are border-crossing and they demand cross-border cooperation. We wish to further develop our international expertise and capacity needed to work on innovative solutions. We can learn by applying international perspectives to similar local challenges.
- This can only be achieved in close collaboration with networks of reliable and complementary partners. The social assignments are characterised by their complexity and demand a trans-disciplinary, smart and creative approach. The **HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht community** is ready to meet the challenge of realising the world of tomorrow in collaboration with our **regional, European** and other **international partners**.
- It is more important now than ever before to **continue to learn and develop**, as well as to acquire new skills for the future, regardless of time and place, and to keep up with and develop those skills. Knowledge development happens worldwide and professionals are continuously monitoring developments in their work and research fields to be able to work with state-of-the-art information. This makes an international orientation indispensable in our education and research.
- We enable our students to develop into global citizens and to acquire competencies that are essential in a globalised community that contributes to a **meaningful and successful** society and professional practice. An innovative professional has **interpersonal competencies, intercultural sensitivity and an international orientation**.
- The **digitalisation of society** lowers the threshold for broadening the horizon of education and research. We use digital options to facilitate internationalisation 'at home' and to develop closer cooperation in European research. **Digital resources** also play an increasingly important role in the acquisition of competencies in the field of substantive knowledge sharing and in the form of cooperation and connection with international partners.

In achieving our goals, we work closely with our partners all over the world with whom we exchange knowledge, experience, students and personnel. This is a continuous process of joint education through bachelors, masters, minors and summer courses (www.utrechtsummerschool.nl), research projects, virtual exchange, work placements and honours projects. The Erasmus+ programme hereby plays a significant role. In total we have 294 contracts with 208 Erasmus partners (71% of all our Exchange contracts), which makes this an important part of our international network and besides, we embrace the European priorities in our policy. This is seen by the focus in our institutional ambitions, where Erasmus themes like inclusion, sustainability, digitalisation, lifelong learning and community-building play a central role.

Another important strategic network concerns our CARPE consortium (<https://carpenetwork.org/>). This strategic collaboration with European partners aims at:

- Exchange and collaboration in European research programmes;
- Developing joint study programmes;
- Exchanging students and staff (also non-academic);
- Establishing a strong European reputation.

The impact of HU participating in the Erasmus+ programme on each of the four priorities that apply to all sectors, is explained below, per priority. In general, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) hereby play an important role:

1. **Inclusion and diversity:** with the support of the Erasmus facilitation, we work on the development of (social) inclusion and diversity with regard to mobility and international collaboration in general. We hereby involve our student community and contact persons of several related departments like student psychologists and deans, student support centre (studen +), International Office and the policy department. We aim to design projects and activities with an inclusive approach and inclusive facilitation. This can refer to financial support as well as process and information support, and to stimulating mobility and understanding as well as working on online initiatives. This should lead to the creation of inclusive environments that foster equity and equality and that are responsive to the needs of the wider community.
2. **Environment and fight against climate change:** *Healthy urban living for everyone* is a central theme in our organisation. Together with our regional and international partners we work on innovation of professional practice and the development of talent through high-quality education and research. In this way we contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of an open, just and sustainable society. Our way of working aims at raising awareness about, and involvement in, environmental and climate-change challenges and in our business operations we practice what we preach.
3. **Addressing digital transformation through development of digital readiness, resilience and capacity:** In our digital developments we take into account the purposeful use of digital technologies to carry out projects and the development of digital skills and expertise in the use of digital tools. Possibilities of hybrid learning, online collaboration projects and knowledge sharing form a good base for practise. Also, digital possibilities provide for great opportunities with regard to the aforementioned priorities.
4. **Participation in democratic life:** we aim for active citizenship and foster the development of social and intercultural competences, critical thinking and media literacy. We do so by working closely together with the professional field and other local and regional stakeholders. As a University of Applied Sciences (UAS), we strongly propagate our active role in society, stimulating involvement in SDG's and other societal challenges in our education and research activities and projects. Social and civic engagement is promoted through formal and non-formal (learning) activities, taking into account common EU values and the principles of unity and diversity. We encourage and appreciate active participation of students and employees in our internal advisory boards, as a democratic instrument to improve the quality of our organisation and its activities.

The governance philosophy of HU UAS is one of a network approach, following the subsidiarity principle. This means developments derive bottom up throughout the whole organisation, centrally supported by people from the International office, HU Grant Office, Policy Department, Student Affairs and other relevant HU Services.