



ERASMUS CHARTER POLICY STATEMENT

In late 2011, The University of Skövde presented its long-term strategic plans for higher education and research in the analysis report "Vision 2023 - a long-term Development Plan", which was approved by the Executive Board in December 2011 (document number HS 2011/343-111). The University has for many years recognized globalisation of higher education as an important move towards worldwide equitable and sustainable development. Hence internationalisation in higher education and research is one of the essential elements included in the University of Skövde's strategic plans.

Student exchanges within as well as beyond EU borders are directly addressed in these plans through a number of key objectives, namely building exchange agreements on mutual attractiveness, creating a balance in the students and staff exchanges between the university and its contractors, and ensuring the successful integration of foreign students through establishment of "internationalisation strategies at home". The University's mission is to educate top students, administrators, and professionals to serve in the economy, politics and administration in Sweden, in the various international institutions in EU as well as outside the European community. In view of this, the University actively and consciously encourages mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff in all study programmes and at all cycles as well as traineeships. The vision is to shape a university characterized by expert knowledge that can offer advanced study programmes to attract international students/staff, to promote European dimension in science, culture and education and thereby to develop a trans-national identity. The University has successfully developed policies and action plans (available at the University's website) to ensure equal treatment of students and staff including measures to support gender equality, ethnical diversity, disability, and to restrain violation and harassment. The developed policies and action plans in this regard are regularly assessed among students and employees by administrator staff that is constantly educated on these issues.

Against this background, our partners will be chosen based on 1) attractiveness i.e. mutual attractiveness of the offered education programmes and research activities at both higher education institutions, 2) the established agreement be in line with University's educational policies and its research specialisation, 3) and ensure a balance in the exchanges.

The University is engaged in a variety of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects. At present our internationalisation activities are mainly focused on European countries, but these also include directed approaches towards a number of Asian countries (among others Bangladesh, China, India, South Korea), African countries (e.g. Tanzania, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa), Australia, USA, and the Latin American region.

The most important objectives and target groups of our mobility activities include mainly first cycle students for short-term study periods, usually for one or two academic semesters. However, other forms of academic mobility are strongly encouraged, as well as traineeships. We have systematic mobility of the administration staff, which is typically in form of bilateral short visits with the aim of improved integration with our academic partner and support mutual recognition of educational systems to facilitate varied mobility schemes. Teacher exchanges are

implemented at all levels (adjunct teachers, lecturers, professors/researchers) and are generally in form of short (one week to a few months) visits, including teaching at first, second and/or third cycles courses/programmes. As the majority of our teachers are also involved in research activities, such short visits are usually combined with research discussions to reinforce the existing and establish new research collaborations. The University of Skövde is one of the most profiled universities of Sweden in research and education areas. The education areas are mainly focused on the subjects in which the University has strong research specialisations. Accordingly, the established research collaborations with partner universities implicitly support student mobility and other cooperation projects through creating attractive research questions and offering appealing research projects within first and second cycles study programmes as well as for PhD studies.

Within its internationalization strategic plans, the University of Skövde is interested in and actively participating in the development of double as well as joint degrees. The University has created successful double degree possibilities with specific partners in Europe based on a strong and long-term contact between the academic staff at the institutions. The University is in the process of developing double and/or joint degrees with partner institutions in Asia and Africa.

All study programmes and courses at the University are regulated according to the Bologna Process to ensure comparability in the standards and quality of higher education qualifications as well as to facilitate mutual academic recognition of study programmes. The ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) is implemented in all courses, even in those given only to Swedish students; the teaching and administration staff is fully familiar with this system and use it to record credits, translate earlier grading systems, understand transcript of records from partner universities, etc.

Mobility activities and co-operation with the partner institutions are evaluated on a regular basis.

Outgoing students receive detailed information on the partner institutions including study options, host countries and their corresponding recognition status, as well as terms and conditions in regard to student mobility (e.g. European Student Charter).

Incoming students are provided with orientation sessions including general information on the Swedish society and culture as well as individual information on their respective academic activities. The students benefit from guaranteed accommodation and are offered free of charge language courses (Swedish and/or English). To facilitate integration of the students further, the International Office and the International Committee regularly arrange social and cultural activities for mixed groups of students.

Outgoing teacher and staff exchanges are fully supported by the International Office. Information on the available resources and partner universities are accessible to all staff interested in mobility.

Incoming teachers are welcomed with comprehensive information on the University, its facilities and even social activities. A new English website with extensive information on curriculum and other necessary information to support mobility and integration is under development and will be available soon.

Universities are the major stakeholders in globalisation of higher education to ensure worldwide equitable and sustainable development. Higher education has become central to cross-border relationships, therefore in reshaping global flows of people, information, knowledge, technologies, products and thus modernisation. In Europe the negotiation of the European Research Area (ERA) has defined a unified research area open to the world, in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely (<http://ec.europa.eu/research/era>).

The University of Skövde is a modern university that offers first-class programmes and competitive research which attract research scientists and students from all over the world. The University gives special attention to innovative projects/study programmes designed, developed and implemented in cooperation with the industry and other socio-economical bodies. The University of Skövde is one of the most specialised universities in Sweden

with research activities focused on the development and use of advanced information technology systems and models aiming to find smart solutions for the future. The University has long been committed to take part in activities related to globalisation of higher education and internationalisation and these are among the key policy themes presented in the University's long-term strategic plan. According to this strategic plan an excellent learning environment is the hallmark for modern university education. The excellent learning environment is achieved through development in following areas: internal quality assurance, teacher competence, internationalisation, equal opportunity and diversity, and student participation. Henceforward, the University has allocated resources in its annual budget to promote and support strategies of cross-border cooperation, internationalisation and modernisation.

Participation at this programme is part of the University of Skövde's own strategies for internationalisation as one of the key features to move towards an excellent and modern learning environment in the region and Sweden. The Erasmus programme is implemental for the University of Skövde's to achieve its internationalisation goals to increase the exchange of knowledge within and beyond Europe, to enhance the European dimension in education, to support excellence of learning environment and innovative research in the region, and thus to support regional development. The Erasmus programme is an exclusive opportunity for students, teachers and researchers to establish long-term collaborations in education and research through longer stays that in turn will undoubtedly support increased cooperation and collaboration in education and research through longer stays that in turn will undoubtedly support increased cooperation and collaboration in higher education and provide the foundation for joint grant applications to attract resources for new study programmes and research activities.