

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)

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

Avans University of Applied Sciences has 53 higher professional education study programmes, 31,000 students and 2,800 employees. We have been ranked in the relevant national rankings in the top 3 of multi-stream Dutch universities of applied sciences for many years. Avans has campuses in Breda, 's-Hertogenbosch, Roosendaal and Tilburg. We maintain high standards – for our students and ourselves as well.

Our purpose is to develop students' talents and to strengthen our professional field. We do this by providing various forms of higher professional education, conducting practice-based research together with organisations and companies in our region, and exchanging knowledge on both a national and international level. Our university of applied sciences will continue to be a community of committed students and staff who are aware of the impact they can and will have on their surroundings. At the heart of these efforts is a commitment to contributing to the transition to a sustainable society.

We are doing this on the basis of trust, accountability, personal leadership and learning ability, in a small-scale environment where we see, recognise and acknowledge each other.

Avans Ambition 2025: Agility and Resilience

Participation in the Erasmus Programme primarily aims to maximise the opportunities for all our students and staff to develop their talents and achieve our ambition, regardless of their individual background and baggage. The ambition of Avans University of Applied Sciences is laid down in the Avans Ambition 2025: Agility and Resilience. Since the world around us is developing rapidly, our ambition is to train professionals who are able to adapt, to take responsibility, to make a positive contribution to society and make a difference in and for a sustainable society. Our graduates are studious, inquisitive and have an entrepreneurial mindset. They are able to tackle a social issue from different disciplines and perspectives, due to our interdisciplinary approach.

Together with (international) organisations, companies and knowledge institutes, we are ensuring that our education ties in with developments on the globalising labour market, that our students gain correct international and intercultural competences, and that they are adaptive and agile. We design our curricula and study programmes in collaboration with the professional field. This goes beyond simply asking for advice: it means that we will work together to develop curricula and to find solutions to issues that arise in the field. We develop and share knowledge with the region and train independent and critical professionals.

Internationalisation will continue to be a priority in our education, as increasing globalisation has an impact on the professions Avans trains its students for. We make sure exit qualifications our students gain during their study programme match the demands of the international professional field. The context of the profession dictates to a large extent both the international and intercultural perspectives and the degree to which students are trained in the competencies. The Erasmus Programme strengthens the opportunities for our graduates to gain international and intercultural competences, and enhances their chances on the globalising labour market. Opportunities such as exchanges or work placements abroad, being taught in an international classroom at Avans or gaining intercultural skills in a specific professional environment, are provided to all our students via the Erasmus Programme.

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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Participation in Erasmus Actions

Avans will participate in Key Action 1 (KA1) of the Erasmus Programme during the entire duration of the programme. We expect that participating in the Erasmus Programme in general and the KA1 more specifically will contribute in various ways to achieving our institutional strategy. We consider participation in other key actions (KA2 and KA3), specifically on themes such as sustainability and digitalisation, to achieve our ambition.

Strengthening international and intercultural competences

It is important that the exit qualifications our students gain during their study programme match the demands of the international professional field. The context of the profession dictates to a large extent both the international and intercultural perspective, and the degree to which students are trained in the competencies. Each programme takes into account the specific international competencies required and offers courses in which these competencies and skills are adequately addressed.

Participating in the Erasmus Programme enables Avans's students to develop these international and intercultural competences necessary to gain the required exit qualifications of the study programmes. We use different instruments, which are supported by the Erasmus Programme, to ensure that students can develop these competences. The basis for the international context of each study programme at Avans is internationalisation at home, which includes English-taught integrated semester programmes (i.e. minors), international classrooms and other internationally oriented course components in our curricula. In addition to internationalisation at home, student mobility is a powerful tool for applying an international context to a study programme.

The programmes are monitored both in programme accreditation and the internationalisation plans, detailing the required competencies and the actual activities to develop those competencies, are monitored by the Executive Board.

Sustainability

Sustainable development has been incorporated into our DNA. We teach our students how they can contribute to the transition to a sustainable society and a new, more circular economy. Just like the Erasmus Programme, by focusing on sustainability we would like to contribute to a greener and fair society. We do this by naturally integrating sustainable development into our education, our research, and our working and learning environment. The international Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are used as a basis and guideline. Sustainable choices in working and learning are distinguished within the following 4 themes: good health and well-being, sustainable transport, inclusion and responsible consumption.

Inclusive education

Avans is particularly committed to inclusive education and the well-being of all our students. Participation in the Erasmus Programme has an impact on all our students, regardless of their individual background and baggage. It broadens their horizon and makes them more open-minded, curious about new challenges and tolerant towards other people's values and behaviour. The Erasmus Programme strengthens our students as global citizens. Furthermore, it also provides staff with opportunities to enhance their professional development in both an international and intercultural perspective. This will equip our staff even better to contribute to an international and intercultural environment where our students can prosper.

International collaboration and strategic partnerships

The Erasmus Programme in general, and specifically for Avans, makes international collaboration possible. As international collaborative partnerships, as for example set up via the Erasmus Programme, are a core element in the broader strategic objectives we have set with respect to teaching, learning and research, we cannot do without the Erasmus Programme.

The partnerships are not the only ways to achieve student and staff exchange. We aim to match our study programmes to labour market demands, and regional and international needs. We will be seeking to establish multi-stream partnerships with preferred partners who will join forces in designing and executing degree programmes. This will further develop curricula and also help in joint research to find solutions to issues that arise in the professional field in areas of mutual interest, and in our comparable regional settings. In this way, we can become a high-quality knowledge partner for companies and organisations and can commit to expanding our collective knowledge. To really have an impact in our research, we focus on a limited number of themes that are related to the Sustainable Development Goals and strengthen regional and international development.

Digitalisation

We are using technology and data to creating an integrated digital learning, working and research environment. We will work in a learning environment in which students are given the opportunity to collaborate, both digitally and physically, with other students, lecturers and the professional field. By incorporating more virtual components in our education, we broaden the opportunities for all our students. The option of blended mobility in the Erasmus+ programme for example will facilitate international mobility, by combining a short-term physical mobility with a virtual component.

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.

Achieving our goals

Avans will be **satisfied** if, by 2025, we are producing professionals who are studious, inquisitive and have an entrepreneurial mindset; who, thanks to their responsible attitude and interdisciplinary, international and intercultural experiences, are in an excellent position to make a difference in and for a sustainable society. These will be professionals who have learned to make and reflect on choices, and who understand the importance of continuous development – not just to further their own careers, but also to advance the organisations where they work and the society where they live.

To develop students' talents and to strengthen our professional field to the maximum, we believe in small-scale, vocationally oriented education with appropriate learning pathways. Each Avans programme has its own background and unique features, and is in its own phase of development. Therefore, each programme implements our ambition based on its own characteristics. This creates scope to translate what the basic principles of the ambition 2025 means for each specific programme, by detailing each basic principle in an action plan and describing how, where and when each programme will incorporate these principles into their education, all in close cooperation with the professional field. The Executive Board conducts substantive discussions regularly and structurally with each specific programme, to enable informed decision-making on whether to continue on the path we are following.

In the years to come, participation in the Erasmus Programme will form an integral part of achieving our ambition. We are committed to implementing the activities funded by the Erasmus Programme in line with the fundamental principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education. We envisage that the impact of our participation in the Erasmus+ programme will be certainly seen as detailed below.

1. New educational model

In order to be able to achieve our ambitions, we organise and structure our study programmes in a flexible way. Every student is unique and by organising our study programmes more flexibly, we can link our education to the individual needs of the student. To increase flexibility for students and to further specify our ambition, Avans will develop an Avans-wide educational model. In this model, students have the opportunity to put together their own personal learning pathway, but there is also clarity regarding the minimum requirements for each study programme in order to obtain a diploma, and where the exit qualifications of our students still match the demands of the international professional field.

Participating in the Erasmus+ programme enables us to link the individual needs of our students to our Avans-wide educational model even more. Our educational model focus is in line with the Erasmus+ programme on lifelong learning in order to continuously develop students personally and professionally, and on 'learning to choose' in order to give students a valuable learning path. Our students are educated to practise and develop the skills required for lifelong learning. Flexible and interdisciplinary education is in this way made easier, for example by designing education in modules and giving each student the possibility to study in-depth or broadening modules of their own choosing. The start of the implementation process of our Avans-wide educational is planned for January 2021.

2. Special feature sustainable higher education

From 2020, we will include sustainable higher education as a special feature in the regular accreditation of all study programmes. In 2025, all study programmes will have a positive decision of the NVAO on the special feature sustainable higher education. The global agenda of the SDGs will be incorporated. We will prepare students for the future by integrating sustainable development and the associated goals (SDGs) into our education. In this way, sustainable education is safeguarded in our education in the long term.

3. Vision on student welfare and mobility

We want our students to do well. We will ensure that by 2021 we have a vision on student welfare for all students at Avans. We choose a positive approach and focus on all our students (preventive approach) and not only on students with an additional need (curative approach). We also specifically choose to give the largest possible group of students the opportunity to gain knowledge and experience abroad via the Erasmus Programme. Avans supports this by topping up the Erasmus+ budget to approve all our students' grant applications, which makes every Avans student eligible to receive an Erasmus+ grant. To include students from groups that are usually under-represented in mobility, we intend to apply the measures recommended by Erasmus+ on this subject in the Erasmus Programme 2021–2027.

4. Creating an integrated digital learning, working and research environment

Technology and data is used to improve the teaching and learning environment. For that reason, in the current strategy period, we are developing a digital course catalogue, which creates a clear overview of all our modules so that our students are aware of all available options. We invest in further digitalisation by facilitating international mobility via blended mobility. We will also take the necessary steps to

implement digital mobility management in line with the technical standards of the European Student Card Initiative. We will integrate the road map for implementing Erasmus Without Papers in our work process for Interinstitutional Agreements and Online Learning Agreements (2021), Application and Admission (2022) and Transcript of Records (2023).

5. Increasing the number of university-wide partnerships

We will expand our range of collaborations to include multiple partners to continue to be able to satisfy the growing demand for mobility, and establish multi-stream partnerships. We acknowledge that a broader portfolio of partnerships with other EU and non-EU partners is in the interest of our students. In order to present our partners and students with the best possible offering, Avans will focus in the Erasmus Programme 2021–2027 more on university-wide partnerships from which all its regular programmes, minor programmes and schools benefit. This will result in a wider range of opportunities for all Avans students and staff, as well as for incoming students from our partners. We have not set a specific quantitative goal, as we believe that quality is the more important factor.