

European Policy Statement (EPS)

Our University's European & international activities are central to our educational aim of developing every student's potential. We provide appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to enable them to continue life-long-learning in our rapidly changing world. We believe in our own BA/MA program in design but we also value the educational experience provided by our partners. Today, globalization has made the institution the student's portal to a network of expanding knowledge, opportunities, experiences, skills and perceptions. Being European makes it imperative for students to study in other cultures, which are also educational resources. We extend this belief in our international strategy not only to our European partners but to our global network. It is through the comparative experience of different educational systems that students have the best chance to develop intellectual confidence and independence. Confidence enables students to become adaptable to crossing the temporal, geographical, social, digital, knowledge and conceptual borders, allowing continual development and employment. These borders must all be navigable by tomorrow's Euro citizens if they are to have appropriate employment for their skills. Student mobility will help create a strong social system within Europe where innovation can flourish. As an active member of the Cumulus network we strongly believe that this idea can grow globally.

We choose our partners based on three criteria:

- [a] First there is quality. Our internationally reputable university links to partners that ensure our quality standards within their curriculum. This is not only to provide successful exchange programs for our students but to make the programs valuable for our incoming international students as well. Our contacts to Milan and Ohio, which are strongly established, give two examples of this concept.
- [b] Second, we aim to gain partners in regions, where the design discourse, cultural and social ideas for the future of our globalized world can be experienced today. This is the reason for our activities in South America, Turkey and the Asian-Pacific region. To us this long-term strategy already has proven to be sustainable regarding our experiences in Rio and Istanbul.
- [c] Third, we believe that design can contribute to the development of social infrastructure and society change. This is why we are building contacts in the Arabian countries. We aim to widen the intellectual and intercultural skills of our students as we consider it fundamentally important to be a part of this development.

As a result our small university always has to focus on its resources. This leads to a sharp profile in our international activities. Our international seminar week features speakers from all over the world. We are among the design schools with the highest rate of incoming and outgoing exchange students. By establishing our international office in 2011 we made a big institutional step towards the implementation of our Erasmus and international activities within the university's structures.

Our institution opens its mobility concept not only to students. We value life-long by focusing on the individual development of our staff's skills and knowledge. This includes faculty staff as well as academic personnel and workshop manager. Two examples of this strategy are the Istanbul workshops and the visiting program of the Milan fair.

All the aspects of our strategy follow strict guidelines, which are driven by our university's concept to strengthen sustainable design strategies for the social, scientific and industrial future.

We consider our university a place for young designers to improve their skills and build up their European and international networks. Being part of Erasmus enables us to fulfill this mission.

The main strategic idea of the HfG is not only to implement but to institutionally anchor the international programmes. We consider lectures of international teachers (as in the international seminar week) so important for the development of our students that we actually run the 9th international seminar week this year. Moreover, our incoming students are an integral, highly accepted part of our courses and lectures. The International office is the core element in managing and creating cultural and design experiences for incoming and outgoing students. It handles all aspects of exchange scenarios and personal needs of the students. Our school is glad that after having had a period of informal international projects we now have established the institutional representation of our international efforts.

Despite our small size, our institution performs well internationally: involved in 51 partnerships, sending more than 40 students each semester around the world, participating in each Cumulus association.

-Thanks to Erasmus our international students can integrate in the abroad experience in their curricula and we give them the appropriate support. We try to facilitate the application process to go abroad and offer the right support to our students.

Our staff is also dedicated to recognise prior learning and working experience. Having students and staff with different backgrounds brings diversity into our institution.

-The expectations of our students to find a job quickly are naturally high. We are giving support to students through different measures. Connecting our students to German companies is the first step. In the global world staff and students are supposed to have international experience in their curricula, by studying but also by working. Our institution will create more data available to students to find appropriate companies which would match their needs. We strongly think that foreign companies enable students to bring new learning modes in the school.

-Through Erasmus and the ECT-System it has become easy to recognise the abroad experience at partner universities. If partners do not use our European system students simply need to calculate the workload at their host university. This system enables our institution to work internationally, considering the credit transfer system as a helpful tool. Our agents can then search for new learning mobility windows, like institutions in China or South America. It is also essential that we have bridges to a variety of partner institutions and international companies so that our students have a choice in planning their academic/professional career trajectories.

-Our institution expects to foster new business partnerships. Our primary strategy is to improve our access to more and contrasting knowledge. We aim to give our students the expertise of problem solving with different strategies whilst possessing international experience.

-Thanks to Erasmus funding and through the funding support of the region, our students can afford living abroad and maximize their creative and innovative potential. In the next years, our institution will include more funding of the regional companies as they should both, students and institutions, benefit from it.