

Erasmus Policy Statement for FH JOANNEUM (2021-2027)

1.1 FH JOANNEUM would like to participate in the following Erasmus+ activities:

- **Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) – Learning Mobility:**
 - Mobility for students and staff

- **Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation between organizations and higher education institutions:**
 - Partnerships for cooperation and exchange of good practice
 - Partnerships for Excellence - European Higher Education Institutions
 - Partnerships for Excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degrees
 - Partnerships for innovation

1.2 Erasmus Policy Statement: Strategy of FH JOANNEUM

Implementation of measures within the framework of Erasmus

FH JOANNEUM - University of Applied Sciences (FHJ) is - compared to the "traditional" universities and colleges in Austria - a relatively young institution. Founded in 1995, it has continuously expanded its international activities in the 25 years of its existence and is now among the leading universities of applied sciences in Austria when it comes to internationalization, student and staff mobility and international projects. The basis of the internationalization activities is a stable network of about 300 partner universities worldwide. Since 2015, the program KA 107 (International Credit Mobility) has also been a fixed and important component of internationalization - FH JOANNEUM has been recognized as a best practice example for its successful handling of KA 107 and received the Erasmus Award in 2018 for it.

The core of FH JOANNEUM's institutional strategy as an application-oriented university is practice-based education in full-time, part-time and dual degree programs with an interdisciplinary orientation. Our courses are oriented towards current international social and technological challenges and the needs of the economy and focus on the acquisition of the eight key competencies and the professional skills of graduates. We want to give our students the best education and training - cultural diversity, international thinking and understanding of other cultures and perspectives are an indispensable part of being able to succeed in further professional life and to be successful in a globalized world.

FH JOANNEUM understands internationalization as a continuous and dynamic process to optimize the framework conditions that support and facilitate international thinking and action. As a cross-sectional task, it affects all areas of the university and is therefore the joint responsibility of all university members. This includes

- the integration of a global perspective in teaching and research
- the creation of an international and intercultural learning environment
- mobility experiences in a variety of forms (study/internship, short/long-term/virtual)

The mobility of faculty and general university staff is also seen as an important lever in the internationalization of the curriculum and the university as a whole. They are explicitly encouraged and supported in their planning and carrying out of mobilities in order to establish international contacts, bring an international dimension to their teaching, and develop and strengthen their didactic and intercultural competencies.

The basis of internationalization is cooperation with internationally recognized universities in teaching and research. A distinction is made between two groups: In addition to basic partners, which are primarily used for mobility activities, we have defined a small number of outstanding strategic university partnerships, which are used on several levels - especially also in the development of joint study programs and in the implementation of research projects. FH JOANNEUM has entered into double-degree agreements with several universities. We have defined strict criteria for the selection of new university partners or for the evaluation of existing ones. The basic prerequisite is a compatible and high-quality study program in order to ensure a smooth recognition of the academic achievements. For all degree programs at FH JOANNEUM, "mobility windows" have been defined, in which a stay abroad at one of our partner universities is possible; students are also actively encouraged to complete their compulsory internship abroad and are supported in their search for suitable host institutions by both the central International Office and the international coordinators at the degree programs. In order to ensure the best possible preparation and support, preparatory workshops and accompanying seminars are offered.

Multilingualism is at the heart of the vision of a European education area. CAMPUS LinguaNEUM offers a wide range of foreign language training courses at various levels for both staff and students. For incoming students and international regular students we offer a comprehensive teaching program in the field of "German as a foreign language" and are a certified ÖSD examination center. The Tandem Program provides Austrian and international students with an additional opportunity for intensive immersion in the respective other culture and effective communication and language training.

FH JOANNEUM attaches particular importance to providing equal and equivalent framework conditions for all, also in the area of internationalization and mobility. Peer counseling is offered for persons with special needs in order to provide the best possible low-threshold information and assistance in planning and implementing a mobility abroad. During the semester, numerous events on social integration and intercultural communication are offered for all target groups: Workshops and events as part of the intercultural focus R.U.D.I (respectful - united - diverse - intercultural) are dedicated to the exchange of ideas, languages and cultures and are designed to bring participants closer to the European idea, diversity and common cultural heritage, as well as to raise awareness of their own identity. International students are intensively advised and supported by the International Office and through the Buddy Program even before their arrival; in order to ensure the best possible integration and an easy entry into the study program, an intensive orientation program and intensive language courses are offered at the beginning of the study program.

As a university, FH JOANNEUM assumes responsibility for the common good and social development. Students have the opportunity to acquire an "Intercultural Skills Certificate" in the course of their studies. For this purpose, four areas of competence must be successfully demonstrated, representing different skills in an intercultural context. In addition to proof of language skills, a study or internship period abroad and the completion of intercultural courses, the competence module "Intercultural and Social Commitment" is also integrated, for which volunteer and community work in the intercultural field can be credited. With the initiative "Refugees on the run - FH JOANNEUM helps", FHJ aims to generate added value not only for refugees but for the entire university through a wide range of projects. For example, a simplified admission procedure was already developed for this target group in 2015. In addition, young adults with a university background can take part in our German, foreign language and cultural courses free of charge together with Austrian and international students and are included in the rich range of intercultural events. In 2018, FH JOANNEUM was included in the list of "Places of Respect" in Austria for its offer for refugees.

One of FH JOANNEUM's goals is to pursue innovative study programs and research projects oriented to the needs of business and society and to identify new topics and trends at an early stage. As a university of applied sciences, we are a driving force for innovation in research and cooperate closely with our partners from business and society. In terms of applied research, FH JOANNEUM's research activities range from the transfer of results from basic research to innovative services & developments. In this way, both a close relationship to teaching and a high relevance for practical application are ensured. In regional, national and international projects we promote ecologically, socially and economically sustainable concepts and focus on the benefits for society and future living spaces. FH JOANNEUM is not only an important partner for regional business and industry, but has also established itself in the international research arena. In the 25 years of our existence, we have actively participated in or coordinated a large number of international cooperation projects. In the process, the share of international funding in the area of R&D has increased continuously and is currently at 25%, which is due in particular to the very active participation in European funding programs such as Erasmus+. The focus here is on quality-oriented university development and internationalization.

FH JOANNEUM is strongly committed to digitalization at all levels - both in teaching and in the administration of the university. The expansion of e-learning offerings and the promotion and development of blended learning formats is an important goal in this regard. The "Erasmus without Papers" initiative, the Erasmus+ app and the European student card not only help to reduce bureaucracy and simplify administrative procedures, but also promote virtual mobility and integrated learning.

Implementation of participation in Erasmus actions to achieve the goals of FH JOANNEUM's institutional strategy

In the mission statement of FH JOANNEUM - in the sense of a university of applied sciences - a quality-assured, comprehensive, practice-oriented and interdisciplinary education of its students is named as a central goal. The focus is on the graduates' professional ability in a global world, which is oriented towards the current international social and technological

challenges as well as the needs of the economy - international and intercultural competences, internationality, fairness, respect and a sustainable use of resources are seen as an obligation.

Consequently, the study programs at FH JOANNEUM are designed to enable all students to acquire the key competencies defined in the idea of a European Higher Education Area through a variety of different mobility and internationalization experiences. Participation in the European mobility programs (especially Erasmus+) has always formed the basis for this.

FHJ is fully committed to the goals of the European Renewal Agenda and is working towards realizing the vision of a common European Higher Education Area. Based on what has already been achieved, the aim is to further intensify (international) cooperation with partners at university level and in business and industry, and to raise it - quality-assured - to a new level.

In this context, mobility for students and university staff (KA1) forms the important basis of our internationalization activities. For many years, FH JOANNEUM has also successfully participated in projects under Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - strategic partnerships, knowledge alliances and capacity building projects. As a further step, the development of a joint Erasmus Mundus Master's degree is planned in the coming program generation, and the long-term vision is participation in the "European Universities" initiative.

Planned impact of participation in the Erasmus program on FH JOANNEUM

FH JOANNEUM's goals for the next generation of the program can be summarized as follows:

1) Deepening the cooperation with the already existing networks and partnerships:

The currently existing partnerships will be centrally evaluated along a defined set of criteria - partnerships that do not meet these criteria will not be renewed in the new program generation. Cooperations involving several study programs and where double degrees or other intensive cooperation is agreed upon continue to gain importance and are to be expanded into strategic partnerships - this process was started several years ago and has not yet been completed - it concerns EU and non-EU cooperations in the same way. Basically, a maximum number of 300 partners is aimed at, with a maximum of 10-12 universities there should be strategic partnerships. The selection of suitable partners is primarily carried out by the individual study programs, whereby a centrally defined catalog of criteria is applied. On the part of the university, special attention is paid to ensuring that partnerships are used by as many study programs as possible. In the selection process, quality and compatibility of the study program are given higher priority than regional aspects. Nevertheless, we continue to strive for a balanced distribution of our international network in order to be able to offer our students and staff a representative selection of mobility options. In this context, the program track KA 107- International Credit Mobility has proven to be extremely successful in recent years. This program will continue to be used intensively in order to provide incoming students from

economically weak countries in particular with scholarships and thus mobility experiences.

2) Expansion of Double- and Joint-Degree Agreements:

In line with its institutional strategy, FH JOANNEUM is pushing ahead with the expansion of double and joint degrees with strategically important partners as a particularly high-quality form of mobility. The goal is to establish at least three joint degrees from FH JOANNEUM's other five fields (departments) in addition to the existing agreements in the field of business over the next seven years of the next Erasmus program. In order to intensify the cooperation with excellent partners and to further increase the quality, in the medium term (within the next three to five years) the participation in an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Program, and in the long term the participation in the initiative of the "European Universities" is aimed at.

3) While the mobility figures in business and design are very satisfactory, there is still catching up to do in IT and engineering.

An increase in these areas is the declared goal for the coming years - the target is a mobility rate of 25%. This is to be achieved through the following measures:

- Identification and elimination of possible obstacles to study organization as part of the re-accreditation procedures.
- Targeted application and information campaigns at the relevant study programs for both students and teachers
- Intensive integration and use of the new mobility opportunities within the framework of the upcoming program generation in the study programs concerned.

4) The study programs in the health sector represent a special case.

Due to the Austrian legal situation, it is currently very difficult for students to complete an entire semester program (30 ECTS) at a partner university abroad, so primarily internships abroad are used. The possibility of short-term mobilities and blended learning stays in the new program offers especially for this target group the possibility to acquire scientifically sound intercultural and international knowledge within the framework of courses. Participation in this program should therefore be strongly promoted in these subject areas.

5) FH JOANNEUM aims to further improve the educational level and strengthen the mobility of students from different social backgrounds, in particular also students with a migration or refugee background and students with disabilities. All students - regardless of their social background - should have the opportunity to have an experience abroad as part of their studies. This is to be achieved through targeted information and advice, as well as concrete financial support through the provision of special grants and scholarships. The possibility of short-term mobility and virtual mobility should be intensively promoted, especially for part-time study programs.

6) Staff mobility (STT and STA) is already successfully anchored at FH JOANNEUM and should continue to be pushed and expanded as an important component of the internationalization strategy. It combines the elements of mobility and personnel

development and ensures the international exchange of experience on new forms of teaching and learning and being exposed to best practice examples. Employees are made aware of the possibility of staff mobility and motivated via a variety of communication channels. The administrative process is to be simplified, incentive measures are to be developed, successful mobilities are to be disseminated as widely as possible, and best practice examples are to be actively brought to the fore. A certificate (analogous to the already existing "Intercultural Skills Certificate" for students) will be developed for teachers and administrative university staff.

- FH JOANNEUM has been very successfully involved in international projects with partners in and outside the EU for many years. With a 25% international share of R&D funding, we are one of the most active universities of applied sciences in Austria. Our goal is to maintain this excellent position.

- 7) Ensuring the quality of internationalization and mobility activities at FH JOANNEUM is also a top priority in the new Erasmus program. Quality assurance measures in all mobility areas have been introduced and will be continuously revised and adapted.
- 8) The already extremely extensive offer for all student groups (outgoing, incoming and regular international students as well as for the special group of students with a refugee background) is to be continuously developed and expanded. Outgoing students should receive optimal information and support before, during and after their stay. A comprehensive integration and orientation program is offered for incoming students and international first-year students before the start of the semester. In addition, FH JOANNEUM offers a comprehensive range of German as a Foreign Language (DaF) courses and is a certified ÖSD examination center. Numerous curricular and extracurricular I@H activities are equally available to all student groups, with a special focus on the inclusion of students who, for various reasons, cannot be physically mobile. All these intercultural offers are of course also open to people with refugee experience - they are seen as an excellent opportunity to gain low-threshold intercultural experience and to get to know other cultures and lifeworlds. The range of courses offered as part of the intercultural focus R.U.D.I. is to be further expanded and supplemented by guest lectures and workshops by various institutions and experts in this field. The "Intercultural Skills Certificate" for students will be revised and adapted to the new program generation.
- 9) In line with the goal that all EU citizens should be proficient in at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue, the range of language courses offered at FH JOANNEUM will continue to be greatly expanded and improved. In the summer semester 2020, the cross-curricular "CAMPUS LinguaNEUM" was launched - students and employees are not only to be taught language skills, but also to open up new cultural areas. Currently, 10 languages are offered at different levels, tailored to the needs of students and employees. The offer is complemented by a target group specific training program especially for employees, in order to provide comprehensive language training opportunities not only for teachers but also for colleagues in administration and service departments.

10) An important goal for the next program generation is the further expansion of digitalization. The Erasmus+ app and the European student ID card are to be implemented at FH JOANNEUM in accordance with the timetable set by the Commission and will be available to all students.

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