



ERASMUS declaration on higher education policy (general strategy)

Internationalisation forms an integral part of the EFH RWL's strategic orientation. The **guidelines** adopted in 2011 identify internationalisation as a process which affects the entire university and which should be actively pursued by all groups within it. This basic principle is explicitly expressed in these words: "Internationality is a dimension of professional qualification training. Moreover, the EFH sees itself as a place where people learn to live responsibly in the One World. We are involved in ecumenical dialogue. International academic contacts are a source not only of cultural exchange, but also of knowledge transfer. We value and encourage the international exchange of students and staff. We regard foreign students and staff as an enrichment of and an asset for our university."

Taking these guidelines as its starting point, the **University Development Plan 2012-2016** describes a number of concrete goals and measures. Two internationalisation target areas are allocated to the strategic principle of "expanding networking". The first of these target areas is "**to invest in the international exchange of students and staff**", and it comprises the following concrete goals:

- To increase to 10% the number of students staying abroad for a while
- To further encourage trips and excursions abroad
- To attract foreign students and guest lecturers.

The second target area of "**stabilising and expanding cooperation with foreign universities**" has the following concrete goals and tasks associated with it:

- To stabilise existing points of cooperation
- Specifically and particularly to expand cooperation with other European countries
- Joint courses and lectures and international forums and/or symposiums.

These are indicative of the desire and aim of the EFH RWL to prioritise its activities within the scope of Key Action 1: "the mobility of students and staff within the EU and worldwide". Students are the first target group for this mobility, the emphasis being on Bachelor course undergraduates. Given the structure of these courses with their compulsory practical placements, greater importance falls to promoting such placements abroad than to encouraging semesters of study at foreign universities. The second target group is the teaching staff, and support is given to their mobility in terms of academic exchanges and the development of joint projects with colleagues throughout the world. The other way round, attracting guest lecturers and foreign students to the EFH helps promote "internationalisation at home", meaning that intercultural experiences also become increasingly possible in courses and lectures at a local level.

Geographically speaking, the focus of the EFH's cooperation to date lies outside the EU – in Russia, South Africa and Brazil. Consideration is being given to sharing course contents together with a university in Russia. The decisive criterion for the desired expansion of contacts within Europe and beyond is the question of astutely matching academic courses, specialisation and profile elements. Further aspects include accessibility (neighbouring countries), language communication and understanding, and the teaching staff's existing academic contacts. There is much demand for the innovative potential that exists in foreign universities and which appears to be of significance for the academic discourse and the vocational training at the EFH RWL.

The EFH RWL anticipates that the implementation of its internationalisation goals will be facilitated by taking part in the programme.

Since it was first founded, the training offered by the EFH RWL has contributed towards raising the academic profile of a variety of professions in the social and healthcare sectors. At present, this is being done especially in the fields of nursing and early education. Here in particular, we anticipate that an international exchange with countries which already have a longer history of teaching these professions at an academic level will be stimulating and will be a source of academic progress.

We anticipate being able to release onto the job market graduates who have had top quality training and who have developed intercultural competence.

Likewise, students from abroad who have been trained here can, in the long term, help meet the demand for skilled personnel in the social and healthcare professions.

We anticipate an enhancement in the quality of teaching and research as a result of international knowledge transfer. Networking closely with enterprises in the social economy as well as with social and healthcare institutions, churches and diaconate bodies ensures that practical relevance is maintained. Such an exchange at a national and an international level is a crucial condition in ensuring that the courses taught are in line with demands and related to actual practice. At the same time, such cooperation is conducive to regional development, especially in the Ruhr Area.

We anticipate that improved financial assistance will give rise to increased mobility, the consolidation and stabilisation of existing relations, the development of new contacts, and an enhancement of the quality of international measures.

The fact that the EFH RWL is taking part in the ERASMUS programme underscores its commitment to its internationalisation strategy, and it constitutes a substantial element in managing and monitoring processes in the field of internationalisation.

Bochum, May 2013