



## **Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS)**

### **1. Institution's international (EU and non-EU) strategy.**

As institution, we aim at inspired students, lecturers and other staff, and schools that work in inspiring learning environments. The encounter with the other in various international activities inspires the participant and this creates an inspiring learning environment. We wish to improve the intercultural competencies of those involved.

Internationalization contributes to the broader aspiration of Driestar educatief and we consider this as a means to achieve our institutional objectives on education, research and a contribution to society. We consider internationalization as an impetus to the quality of teaching.

We have summarized this view in five components, which serve as the basis to our strategy. Internationalization:

- is considered as part of the worldwide Christian community;
- ensures the broadening of one's horizons in one's discipline;
- ensures the acquisition, development and broadening of knowledge;
- ensures the development of identity;
- contributes to global citizenship and social integration.

#### *Building up Partnerships*

Driestar educatief has gathered various contacts abroad over the years. We observe a difference in contacts; some contacts are more intense than others. We realize we are a small institution and we are not able to engage in all the contacts, rather we want to commit ourselves to qualitatively sustainable partnerships. Hence, we have prepared the following profile. We will engage in close partnerships, based on a profile, in which we clearly indicate the areas on which we may meet the other.

1. *Identity* - The identity of the partnership is a priority when engaging in close partnerships. As an institution with a Christian identity, we seek for partnerships with institutions that shape their teaching from a similar ideology, wherever possible.
2. *Vision* - The partner institution should have a clear vision of education and of the strategy to be pursued by the institution.
3. *Quality of teaching and/or institution* - The institution should possess a high quality and should be on an equivalent level.
4. *Win-win situation* - There are sufficient shared interests within the cooperation (win-win), concerning goals and projects.
5. *Size* - The partner institution is comparable in size, regarding the number of students and staff in the institution or a particular department.

#### *Geographical areas*

We focus on particular areas. First, Europe is an important area with many opportunities, related to Erasmus as well. We have partnerships in Romania and Hungary and we cooperate with institutions in the United Kingdom, Germany and Belgium. Additionally, there are several other focal areas, in particular South Africa, Canada, the United States and Asia. We decided upon these countries, because there have been partnerships before and our characteristics for building up partnerships are applicable. There has been a past en present connection with The Netherlands. The societal aspect is involved as well. We consider it our duty to contribute to institutions in underprivileged and/or difficult circumstances. We collaborate with various NGOs in third-world countries.

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### **2. Objectives and target groups**

By means of internationalization, Driestar educatief aims at the following key objectives:

1. Improvement of the quality of Education;
2. Internationally and interculturally increased competence of students and staff;
3. Consolidation of the international reputation by an inspiring performance;
4. Contributing to its surroundings.

Driestar educatief's secondary objectives are:

1. Internationalization is set within Driestar educatief.
2. Driestar Educatief contributes to the knowledge of (Christian) education, presents itself abroad as centre of knowledge and acquires new understanding in order to improve its own teaching and institution.
3. Driestar Educatief supports schools in its working field in the initiation and expansion of internationalization.
4. Driestar Educatief has an internationally oriented curriculum.
5. Driestar Educatief promotes incoming and outgoing mobility of its students and staff in the context of Lifelong Learning.
6. Internationally oriented staff.
7. Continuing development of education in underprivileged circumstances.

### **3. Driestar educatief's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Erasmus Programme.**

We will test current and future cooperation projects against our own policy, which in turn are based on the policy of Erasmus for All. We consider it important to use the policy of Erasmus for All as guiding principle in our institutional strategy as well.

As stated before, we attach importance to accomplishing the quality of education by mobility of students and staff, and by cross-cultural cooperation. Additionally, this will increase the quality of higher education.

Currently, Driestar educatief is discussing its future, specifically the institution's policy for 2020. In the course of this year, this will result in a sustainable strategy.

We aspire the following main issues, elaborated in the strategy:

- (Research) Projects will have an international component, participation in project opportunities in the Erasmus Programme is sought wherever possible;
- There is a wider range to our students and staff (all segments) to participate in transnational placements/study/projects/research as applicable;
- Staff will participate in international conferences, courses such as the Comenius Programme,
- We will engage in a greater number of qualitatively strategic partnerships (joint degrees);
- There is a wider range to foreign students and researchers: Master programmes, intensive programmes;



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- ICT is a priority in our policy, we actively exploit the opportunities available in the field of ICT: research of and interaction with the possibilities of digital resources, the launch of a lectorate New Media, establishing digital platforms, distance learning courses.
- Cooperation with NGOs and offering courses on the spot to support the education in development countries (this is part of our mission).

#### **4. The expected impact of your participation in the Programme on the modernisation of your institution in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve.**

- to increase the number of higher education graduates;
- to improve the quality and relevance of teaching and researcher training, to equip graduates with the knowledge and core transferable competences they need to succeed in high-skill occupations;
- to provide more opportunities for students to gain additional skills through study or training abroad, and to encourage cross-border cooperation to boost higher education performance;
- to strengthen the "knowledge triangle", linking education, research and business and
- to create effective governance and funding mechanisms in support of excellence.

Participation in the Erasmus Programme is of great significance to the modernization of Driestar Educatief and is in line with the ambitions of Driestar Educatief and its policy regarding internationalization and its vision on the quality of education. We take into account the Modernization Agenda. Within our institution, we still work on shaping some aspects that are important to the completion of the strategic plan of 2020.

Participation will give students and staff the opportunity to encounter with other educational systems and with colleagues abroad. More (international) opportunities and challenges will have a stimulating and motivating effect on students and staff. Therefore, we promote the mobility opportunities, the international component of the training or profession in our recruitment of students and staff. Mobility is one reason to opt for higher education. We are proactive in our approach of prospective students.

We strongly believe that participating in the Erasmus Programme will increase the quality of our training. We regard internationalization as a means to guarantee the quality of our courses. Internationalization will create teachers and students with a broader view, who acquire skills and competencies that are important to live and work in a society that seems to be growing smaller (globalization). We think it is important to be well equipped by a proper preparation and evaluation. This will provide insights in the achievements, which will affect the atmosphere of both class and university. Furthermore, we believe internationalization will even have a greater effect, because our students will also be able to show the effects in elementary and secondary schools (during their placements in Dutch schools). In addition, we offer various sorts of education, such as distance learning courses and on-site courses, through modern equipment. Furthermore, we pay attention to excellent students; therefore, we offer a programme of excellence. We continuously aim at professionalism (continuing education).

The Erasmus Programme offers further opportunities to collaborate internationally to both students and staff. This way we are able to increase the mobility of students and staff and to acknowledge this mobility. We aim at a quality impulse as well and at opportunities for development of students, researchers and lecturers from other countries, for this, we offer various courses and research projects.

We aim at international cooperation, with research and development as focal points, we seek for opportunities to collaborate with the business community and we explore support by institutional

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funds and capital funds. Here, we collaborate on the level of region and nation and internationally. This is taking place already by collaboration with local municipalities and with NGOs.

In this, we pay particular attention to fundraising. We have established a new division that is specifically looking for funds (institutional, capital or private).

Participation in the Erasmus Programme implies a change within the institution as well, and is crucial to its future. We aim to ensure that mobility will become standard for both students and staff. In addition, we also seek for an international component, when entering into projects, such as research projects. In short, participation in the Programme is both an impetus to our organization and will help us accomplish our set goals.