

## **KAJAANIN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU – KAJAANI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**

### **EUROPEAN POLICY STATEMENT 2021 - 2027**

#### 1.1 Erasmus activities included in your EPS

**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

#### 2 Erasmus Policy statement (EPS): your strategy

**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?**

Participation in the mobility actions and development projects of the Erasmus+ program is intended to support the internationalization of students and staff and to develop international, teaching and RDI cooperation with selected partners. The aim of such intensified cooperation is to strengthen the international competence of students in international interaction and to widen their knowledge and skills through the offerings of international partners in cooperation. The objectives of the staff mobility periods are to develop innovative practices in teaching and study support services. In addition, the intention is for such practices to become integrated into KAMK's activities and into the activities of the project consortiums through projects, as has occurred in the case of the new practices, outcomes and training schemes achieved in the KA2 and KA3 projects. The projects also seek solutions to the common development challenges faced by European higher education institutions.

KAMK's international activities and its development are directed not only by its own strategies but also by national targets set for the years 2017-2025 by the Ministry of Education and Culture and targets concerning the European education area.

KAMK's goal looking forward to the year 2030, is to be an attractive and robust higher education community, to offer successful and effective education that meets regional requirements and to be a nationally and globally attractive partner within selected spearhead sectors. International cooperation will promote KAMK's strategic objectives. KAMK also plays a significant role in promoting internationalization in the region.

The aim of KAMK's international cooperation is to use English-taught degrees, double-degree programs, student exchange and RDI cooperation more efficiently and to provide fees-based education offerings and international education projects. As a regional higher education provider in Kainuu, KAMK creates interesting study path models for all types of learners with leading national and international universities. KAMK's task as a regional developer requires intensive, added value-

generating cooperation with working life (businesses, public organizations, third sector). Furthermore, KAMK's objective is to develop a time and place independent digital service concept. The opportunities provided by the Erasmus+ program form one of the central tools to achieve this goal.

KAMK's goal is also to genuinely benefit from internationality. This means that all the degrees contain a path focusing on international expertise. Internationality is included in the curriculum by offering courses taught in English, language, and cultural studies, and by encouraging mobility and in most degrees offered by KAMK, international exchange is already included in the curriculum. KAMK promotes the formation of a European education area by encouraging the active participation of students and staff in mobility. The number of students and staff participating in mobility schemes will be increased. The Erasmus+ program is the foundation of KAMK's international activities. Its funding provides all students with access to international exchanges and through accreditation, enables the inclusion of foreign studies or practical training in degrees accomplished in the student's home country. With the assistance of the Erasmus+ program, it is possible to implement and plan staff and student mobility periods in the long term which in turn advances the internationalization and quality of higher education, an example of this being the Diploma Supplement Label awarded to KAMK.

KAMK promotes the formation of a European education area by developing double degree programs in cooperation with European universities, offering high quality English-taught degrees, implementing joint student projects and courses and project cooperation. Moreover, KAMK's goal to develop a digital service concept supports the objectives of forming the European education area and the European Student Card initiative.

The programme offers possibilities not only to maintain the existing international cooperation network, but also to renew it to support and strengthen KAMK's education and RDI activities. International partners are selected, and strategic partnerships are formed based on the needs of education and RDI activities.

The internationalization of staff and students is KAMK's goal, and participation in international RDI work supports KAMK's basic mission. International RDI work also enables the development of business life at the regional and international level. International co-operation also makes it possible to improve co-operation and relations between KAMK and companies in the regions.

**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.**

During the new programme period, KAMK intends to participate in all three Erasmus Key Actions: KA1, KA2 and KA3. These actions assist in supporting the internationalization of students and staff and in intensifying international and RDI cooperation with selected partners. The aim of such intensified cooperation is to strengthen the international competence of students in international interaction and to widen their knowledge and skills through the offerings of international partners in cooperation. The objectives of the staff mobility periods are to develop innovative practices in teaching and support services. In addition, the intention is for such practices to become integrated into KAMK's activities and into the activities of the project consortiums through projects, as has occurred in the case of the new practices, outcomes and training schemes achieved in the KA2 projects. The projects also seek solutions to the common development challenges faced by European higher education institutions. Participation in the KA2 and KA3 actions, Partnerships for Excellence, European Universities and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees and Support to Policy

Development and Cooperation, are also planned they support KAMK's aim is to deepen and develop its international cooperation.

KAMK's goal for the year 2030, is to be an attractive and robust higher education community, to offer successful and effective education that meets the requirements of its catchment and to be a nationally and globally attractive partner within selected spearhead sectors. International cooperation promotes KAMK's strategic objectives.

Outgoing student exchanges and briefings about exchanges are organized according to a yearly schedule. A general briefing about international activities is held for all first-year undergraduates at the outset of their studies. In addition, all first-year students attend an international briefing in which they receive more detailed information about the exchange scheme and the exchange destinations available in their respective degrees. One briefing is held for students studying in blended degrees at the start of their studies and either the responsible lecturer or the International Coordinator informs master level students about international opportunities during their master-level studies. The master level students also have their own webpage containing further information about internationalization.

Before the application period, the students are notified that the application will begin via the Intranet News page, email and info-TV and an application briefing or question and answer session is also organized where they can ask for more information / guidance, for example about completing the application. The students whose exchange applications are accepted receive notification of acceptance and further instructions via email on how the process continues. A departure orientation event is organized for them and KAMK also attempts to organize an event on the students' return. However, the latter has been challenging because the students return from their exchanges at different times. Students returning from practical training abroad participate in practical training debriefing sessions.

The Intranet contains all the instructions on student and trainee exchanges in the section 'Internationality'. The main webpage contains subpages on 1) student exchanges 2) double degrees 3) trainee exchanges 4) international exchange for nurses and public health nurses 5) partner universities and 6) study trips. The website is constructed so that the students will find the following themes in the student exchange text 1) the main principles page (what it means, who is eligible to participate, how long the exchange lasts, how it can be funded and a brief process description), 2) applying for the exchange page (how to apply, application periods, selection criteria), 3) before the exchange page (partner university exchange application, learning agreement, OLS, departure orientation, when the exchange has been confirmed), 4) during the exchange page (writing a blog, social media posts, learning agreement/possible changes) and 5) after the exchange (what you need to bring from the destination university, how to have the remaining part of the grant paid to your account, accreditation of studies). Each page contains the forms relevant to each stage of the exchange process.

The trainee exchange webpage contains the principles of the trainee exchange, provides information on applying for practical training places and compiling a CV and instructions on what to do when an internship has been found and when the student returns after the internship.

The practical issues concerning exchanges are published in a separate webpage which contains information on funding, travel issues, insurance, accommodation, travel documents, health and safety, how to promote Finland abroad during the exchange, issues worth considering when living in a foreign culture and a check list for outgoing exchange students.

When the application period is over the International Coordinators for each degree and the International Services staff go through the exchange applications. The following principles are adhered to when selecting exchange students: the student has completed at least one year of studies before starting the exchange period, the student's studies have progressed according to plan, the student has the motivation and skills to accomplish studies in a foreign language and to adapt to a foreign culture. Other selection criteria include achieved course grades and language skills, and students who do not have international experience are prioritized. KAMK's foreign language courses and courses taught in a foreign language support the students' language skills development.

The International Coordinators compile a Learning Agreement in cooperation with each student. During this process the courses that the student must accomplish abroad, and which courses the foreign studies will replace, are agreed. Exchange students are expected to accomplish 30 ECTS credits/semester or 60 ECTS credits/academic year while abroad. These credits should be accredited to the student's home degree within the given deadlines if possible. Students are informed about the trainee exchange via a briefing and International Services, the International Coordinators and staff in charge of practical training participate in the trainee exchange process. During the trainee exchange, students complete 6 ECTS credits/month and in total a maximum of 30 ECTS credits.

Incoming exchange students apply online and the International Services office processes the applications and instructs students. Each degree updates its own course selection and International Services add the updated information to a website for incoming exchange students. KAMK usually welcomes all incoming exchange students from its partner universities. The SoleMOVE system sends an electronic letter of acceptance to the accepted students, which contains information on practical issues concerning the exchange. Students can also receive the original letter by post on request. The International Services office reserves accommodation for all incoming students and the student union receives them when they arrive. International Services also organize an arrival briefing in cooperation with the student union. The International Coordinators from each degree approve the Learning Agreements before the exchange but it is only possible to finalize them when the university's timetables are ready. Incoming students are advised to select courses offered to the same year group. In the future, Learning Agreements will be handled electronically according to schedule of the European Student Card initiative.

Incoming students are offered the opportunity to attend Finnish language classes. A website and a printed/PDF guide containing comprehensive information on permit related and insurance issues are available as well as a private Facebook group, which they can join and then chat with other incoming exchange students even before they leave. The student union organizes leisure activities for students and if they wish, incoming exchange students can participate in the friend-family scheme coordinated by KAMK.

Outgoing staff: Teacher and some staff exchanges involve intensive cooperation with partner universities, and it is becoming more common to agree on subsequent exchanges during the ongoing one or to link them with subsequent intensive courses. Some exchanges are agreed during personal progress review discussions and the International Coordinator or International Services can assist with choosing the exchange destination if necessary. KAMK's partner classification determines that outgoing teacher and staff exchanges select partner universities. The International Services office is responsible for instructions and forms on the intranet, and it informs outgoing participants how much Erasmus+ funding can be used for the exchange. The electronic documents for exchanges are saved in SharePoint and International Services collects the signed work plans and exchange confirmations into a file. Staff exchanges always have set goals and their purpose is to deepen cooperation and seek new openings.

Exchange based cooperation occurs through email correspondence, meeting partners at conferences or other events and inviting partners to International Week. The majority of teacher and staff exchanges take place during International Week. During International Week, there is a common program for most of the participants arranged by the staff and students from different degrees and International Services. Students are appointed to take care of the practical arrangements. If the exchange does not take place during International Week, the International Coordinator organizes teaching hours for incoming teachers and compiles a visit program, as well as taking care of other practical arrangements. In staff exchanges, the host oversees such matters. International Services manages exchange-related documentation.

Robust RDI activities of universities and diverse higher education are seen more widely as motors for change in society and the economy. Universities are forming strong and internationally attractive hubs of expertise in which new knowledge, sustainable growth and increased wellbeing are created.

The strategic relevance of projects under application is verified during the planning stage within KAMK's internal project initiative procedure. This process assesses how well the project idea will implement KAMK's strategy to be an attractive and wellbeing university offering profitable and efficient education that meets the region's needs and to be a nationally and internationally attractive partner within its chosen RDI spearhead fields. Projects are planned in multi-professional teams, which include experts from different fields and financial administration. Project applications are managed and sent in a coordinated manner by the project administration service. The project administration service also assists in starting-up projects and guides key project personnel in managing and reporting the projects. The operational responsibility for implementing projects lies in the schools (fields of competence) in which the project personnel work. The project personnel integrate the outcomes of each project into KAMK's teaching and are responsible for including students in project activities.

Based on the experiences from previous program periods, students have been able to participate in projects unhindered and the impact of such participation on their studies has been positive. In most cases, members of the teaching staff also worked as project managers enabling them to easily include other teachers in Erasmus+ projects. In addition, it has been easy to commit students to projects via their courses. However, challenges arose due to the program's somewhat inflexible and categorical funding model. The allocated funds are meagre, and implementation requires excellent planning in advance to ensure that the actions are implemented smoothly and that the own funding of the lead partner remains at a tolerable level. Nevertheless, project actions and outcomes have been integrated into teaching at KAMK smoothly because the strategy-relevance of the projects was verified in good time before planning began.

### **What is the envisaged impact of your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on your institution?**

The objective of KAMK's participation in the Erasmus+ program is to grow mobility by increasing the number of student exchanges and particularly the number of trainees, teacher, and staff exchanges. When the new program period begins and agreements come to an end, a partner analysis will be conducted. This is due to a desire to manage mobility and develop cooperation with selected university partners. The purpose of mobility is to strengthen students' competence in international interactions and to widen this competence with the offerings of international partners in cooperation, develop double degrees, development projects, and initiatives that are based on joint teaching and cooperation with companies in the region. It is hoped that these actions and the new practices, results and education gained from the K2 projects will be integrated into the operations of KAMK and that solutions will be found to common development challenges. It is intended that by increasing the number of trainee exchanges, students will be encouraged to acquire international work experience supporting their career development.

Another target in line with the principles of the program is to develop digital administration to simplify and speed up processes and to decrease the amount of printed paper to support sustainable development in administration. Mobility will be increased by making better use of students and staff returning from and still on their exchange. It is intended that in the future, incoming teacher and staff exchanges will still be received in one international week. The themes of the weeks change each year, and they support KAMK's strategy.

According to the results of the EU survey, KAMK has high-quality and functioning processes for incoming and outgoing students, teachers, and staff. Feedback suggests that there is a specific need to develop the course selection for students. Thus, one target is to develop and simplify the course selection using Erasmus' digital tools.

The mobility target of Kajaani University of Applied Sciences for the years 2021 – 2027 is to reach the following amounts by the end of the program period:

- outgoing students/trainees: 40 - 50 students/semester. It is intended that the target will be reached by intensifying cooperation with partner universities and by streamlining the marketing of trainee exchange opportunities.
- outgoing staff: the number of exchanges is influenced by the financial situation of the university despite being able to cover an increasingly larger proportion of costs with Erasmus+ funding. The target is for controlled growth, i.e., 30 exchanges/year.
- incoming students/trainees: 55 – 60 students/semester. These amounts are determined by the availability of furnished accommodation.
- incoming staff 35 – 50 exchanges/academic year. To reach this target, KAMK must commit to organizing an International Week each year.

The targets for Kajaani University of Applied Sciences KA2 and KA3 project activities for the 2021-2027 period are:

- 50 new project partnerships
- 15% of KAMK's staff members will participate in KA2 / KA3 projects
- 5% of KAMK's students will participate in KA2 projects
- 20 Kainuu based companies will participate in RDI cooperation

Within the KA2/KA3 projects KAMK aims to increase the amount of Erasmus funding during the new programme period. Participation in the Erasmus+ programme enables the growth of KAMK's international education and RDI cooperation and thus it supports KAMK's strategic goals.