

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

In its mission statement the IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems confirms that it aspires to become an internationally recognised European Higher Education institution and hence internationalisation, excellence of education and quality assurance are among its key features in order to ensure employability of its graduates; cultural awareness, mutual respect and respect of diversity, social responsibility and fairness are its core values; the strong commitment of the institution to mobility fosters mutual understanding as well as sustainable social and economic coherence without boundaries.

Internationalisation at IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems is based on a European and trans-European network of academic and business partners for students and staff; the strategic goals for the further development of this network are a balanced spread of partners in all European countries, enhancement of knowledge creation and transfer through regular incoming and outgoing mobility of staff and students between partner institutions (academic and business), the implementation of an international dimension in teaching and learning as well as the enhancement of diversity of the student body and a focus on language learning at home and abroad. The range of languages offered at IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems also influences the direction of students' academic (i.e. exchange) orientations and traineeship projects within Europe (the most important geographical target area), the Americas, Asia and Australia.

Intensified cooperation with partners has already been reached through the design of double degrees at Bachelor's and Master's levels which has contributed to the further development of teaching and learning methods in order to enlarge and deepen graduates' competences. The two-cycle structure (legal regulations do not provide for offering PhD programmes) allows student mobility at both levels. Due to its practice-oriented programmes with a clear international dimension in teaching and learning, the institution will continue to give priority to all measures enhancing incoming and outgoing mobility (e.g. languages, training in intercultural competence), transparency of acquired skills and competences (EUROPASS, Diploma Supplement), acceptance of students and graduates by the labour market as well as access to further studies and quality assurance. The IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems will continue to cooperate within multilateral network projects (e.g. the European Certification & Qualification Association - ECQA) for the enhancement of certified skills and competences and take an active role in the continued dissemination of the results to internal and external stakeholders. Furthermore, cooperation in research emanating from the expertise of researchers at the programme and departmental levels (IMC is organised in 3 Departments: Business, Health, Life Sciences) shall foster knowledge creation & transfer and enlarge & deepen institutional links through strategic and target-oriented staff mobility. In addition, staff mobility is seen as an appropriate means to help establish and strategically develop an institutional culture of inter-cultural awareness and international understanding.

Responsibility for ERASMUS activities and their dissemination is rooted at the institutional level and also strategically reflected in the comprehensive institutional communication concept and efforts. Both ECHE and EPS will be made accessible to students and staff through internal communication channels (intranet, student and staff conferences), to network partners and external stakeholders through the internet (homepage) and public and media relations.

The IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems is also firmly committed to its core values of tolerance, fairness and mutual respect and supports students and staff with special needs through technical infrastructure and personal counselling measures. Fostering gender equality as well as the combat against xenophobia and racism are further guiding

principles of its institutional policy. Finally, through its pronounced international focus on education (at home and through mobility) the IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems also provides orientation and guidance for students and staff in their challenging quest to live their lives as active European citizens contributing to the welfare of their more and more diverse social environment.

Mobility is seen as a key element in order to enhance graduates' learning outcomes in terms of employability, thus mobility windows and opportunities for SMS & SMP are integrated into all curricula at both cycle levels. Counselling before and during the mobility periods (exchange & traineeship) as well as in-depth reflection of experiences made ("lessons learned") are also integral parts of all programmes. Specific sessions organised for outgoing students provide CV-, application- and (job) interview-related counselling. Every programme has a specific coordinator who helps students with finding a traineeship as well as with legal, logistical and administrative procedures. Evaluation and recognition of mobility periods follow institutional procedures that guarantee "no loss of progress". For incoming students the guiding principle is their quick and sustainable integration into the student community (encouraging inter-cultural experiences) as well as into the institutional course/research framework fostering the achievement of envisaged learning outcomes. Welcome Day, the Buddy-system and an Exchange Students' Fair support team-building efforts. Tandem language learning helps to promote linguistic competences and intercultural understanding.

German courses are also offered at four different levels. Prior to their arrival general & course-specific information has been provided in Students' Guides and by staff of the International Office as well as accommodation and (airport)transfer services. Staff mobility (STA & STT) is organised and supported according to the same quality rules as student mobility. Teaching mobility is considered as an enhancement of didactic and intercultural competences and thus actively encouraged as a specific measure for life-long professional development.

The Programme's expected impact on the modernisation of the IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems may be broken down as follows:

1. Increasing attainment levels...

Following the institution's strategic goal of equipping students with the competences they need to make them employable and fit for the challenges of a rapidly changing global job market, all programmes are designed to foster the development of the key competences defined in the EHEA framework through study and work mobility; whereas the Bachelor level is clearly geared to rapid integration into the job market (which is enhanced through mobility experiences) Master programmes foster scientific and methodological competences for which the focus on research alliances stemming from the expanding partner network will continue to be crucial.

2. Improving quality and relevance of higher education...

Through participation in the programme, the clear focus on competences and learning outcomes of IMC programmes will be complemented by intercultural learning outcomes to be acquired through outgoing or incoming mobility and its effect on the institutional "corporate culture". Intended outcomes for graduates of both cycles and their reflection within the curricula will be nourished through enhanced cooperation both with academic institutions and enterprises/professional organisations (widening & deepening of relations). Since quality as the unquestionable basis for mutual trust is a must for all institutional cooperation, stringent quality procedures, based on the already existing ISO 9001, 14000 and 29990 certifications will be continuously developed and complemented by further international accreditations.

3. Strengthening quality...

Student and staff mobility is clearly geared to learning from others through self-experience and critical reflection as well as to flow back and measures derived from mobility experiences. Lessons learned and derived measures will have an impact both on programme design and further programme development as well as personnel development and competence enhancement. Cross-border cooperation in research, particularly with neighbouring countries will not only encourage mobility to these destinations but also raise awareness for Europe and European diversity.

4. Linking higher education, research and business...

Teaching and research at higher education institutions are inseparably linked as the qualifying signum of higher education. At IMC University of Applied Sciences research is based on cooperation with the respective industry sectors aiming at fostering innovative solutions for business partners, and enhancing methodological, analytical and problem-solving skills for students.

5. Improving governance...

Benchmarking with strategic partners and through further international accreditation projects will lead to integration of good practices into governance; adequate allocation of sufficient funds will guarantee intended outcomes of all mobility measures.



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