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## **Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy) from the KTH Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2020-2027, call 2020**

This European Policy Statement is to be viewed in the context of the strategy presented in the KTH policy documents Vision 2027, the Development Plan 2018 – 2023 and the International Policy, expressing the mission and long-term goals for KTH as a leading technical university in Europe.

Participating in the Erasmus programme and commitment to the European Charter helps KTH to offer international mobility for students and staff with the quality and standard expected of a leading technical university in Europe. Further engagement in Erasmus partnerships for cooperation, as well as teaching and learning methods. It is foreseen that a relevant number of Erasmus+ cooperation projects will be executed within the scope of the European University Alliance UNITE!, selected by European Commission in 2019 under the piloting phase of the initiative.

### **Modernisation of the Institution**

KTH is committed to the long-term goals presented by the European Commission in the renewed EU Agenda for Higher Education (2017), addressing the role of the universities to offer education programmes which will provide the students with the skills needed to meet our present and future societal needs. Besides skills and competences in the STEM areas (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), the study programme curricula at KTH includes activities and assignments where the students are asked to reflect on e.g. environmental sustainability, global challenges and equality issues. Mobility opportunities for students and staff are seen as a desired feature of the life-long learning aspect, accumulating the skills and international perspectives needed for the future profession. Here the Erasmus+ Mobility for Individuals sub-programme action serves as the key tool to strengthen the European awareness and identity among students and staff at KTH. As the Erasmus grant is available for students, teachers and administrative staff, the programme is imperative for building long-lasting relationships with our partner universities.

An engineering degree from KTH shall also provide the students with the opportunity and necessary tools to strengthen the entrepreneurial mind-set. This objective is supported by “KTH Innovation” whose goal to further develop a strong and complementary ecosystem for innovation support in order to ensure an effective process to facilitate the transfer from idea to market, given both a national and international perspective. The current engagement in five EIT KICs, where of three KICs offer Master degree programmes, is a base for the KTH

management to modernise and offer entrepreneurial courses as a part of the curricula for other engineering study programmes. Within the framework of the new Erasmus programme, partnerships formed under KA2 “Partnerships for Innovation” will support KTH to reach further goals of embedding entrepreneurship and an entrepreneurial mind-set in its programmes, which is also in line with the priorities of the European University Alliance UNITE!

KTH understands its societal role and responsibility to offer attractive, accessible and inclusive educational programmes. For example KTH:

- is engaging student ambassadors to reach out to young people to promote engineering studies,
- is involved in national and EU projects aiming at attracting women to STEM education,
- hires personnel for validation of professional experience in the admission assessment process,
- offers a one-year training in STEM subjects (secondary level) for prospective students not having the required knowledge in these subjects from previous studies.

Moreover, KTH aims at expanding the national and EU-funded project Software Development Academy, providing migrants and refugees with an academic background with skills in software development and pedagogical methods in cooperation with industry. Since KTH also is accredited to award a teaching degree in STEM subjects at secondary school level, graduates with an MSc or PhD degree are offered complementary courses in pedagogics and teaching methods allowing them to work as accredited professional teachers. International mobility is as important for these groups of students as any others and KTH welcomes the new opportunity to offer grants for shorter mobility periods in combination with blended learning. This is an important asset for the ambition to offer mobility programmes beyond the traditional credit exchange semesters.

Shorter mobility periods will also provide an opportunity to scale up individual exchange programmes for PhD students. It is the ambition of KTH to better organise the mobility for PhD students, and the structured tools of learning agreements and course recognition will serve this goal.

Digitalisation and modernising the curriculum has been on the KTH management agenda for the past years. This goes in line with the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament addressing the fact that future jobs will require a higher demand for knowledge and skills, asking for high-level qualifications. KTH is continuously involved in projects and actions directed towards modernisation and adaptation of the educational programmes to contribute to the goals of a European Education Area. It is the ambition of KTH to have a leading role in E-learning and blended learning, combining the strategy for implementing E-learning with the research on E-learning conducted at KTH. The Erasmus+ projects *Partnerships for Cooperation and exchange of good practices* and *Partnerships for Excellence* will support this ambition. Erasmus funding for cooperation projects with partners in Europe and beyond not only empowers the individual staff member but the academic and administrative culture at KTH as well.

Production and development of teaching and learning materials, design of e-learning materials, international cooperation and successful external funding are all valid aspects for the portfolio presented for academic promotion at KTH. For the coming programme period, the promotion of career progression aspects deriving from the participation in Erasmus+ related activities will be enhanced among postdocs and young faculty members at KTH.

The outbreak of covid-19 in early spring 2020 urged for a shift to digital and distance education on very short notice this and led to a more articulated debate on the future of education delivery modes, resilience and the role of mobility in higher education. To meet the demand of students born in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as that of individuals entering or returning to higher education to enhance or upgrade their skills after a number of years in the labour market, flexibility and advanced pedagogical skills is required. It is foreseen that blended learning will become a common practice in the higher education arena and it will most likely represent the core of collaboration projects under Erasmus+. These developments and new scenarios contribute to the KTH goal to offer more and better virtual mobility options, as a mean of modernisation of the curriculum, as a tool for increased inclusiveness, and ultimately as one of the main elements of the local Internationalisation at Home practices.

While sharing the goals and objectives set for the European Education Area, KTH will engage in the Erasmus+ Key Action 1, 2 and 3 provisions, acknowledging the importance of the Programme for the achievement of the overall development goals set by the KTH management through learning mobility, partnerships and policy development. KTH is an international university with the ambition of delivering education, research and innovation of highest quality in order to attract the best students, teachers and researchers and at the same time delivering quality services to society. International visibility is crucial to KTH and it is pursued through the promotion of a multicultural campus at all levels where science and education meet. It is evident that participating in European projects for education and research have an impact on the visibility of the institution while at the same time providing an upward spiral of embedded goals and ambitions, cooperation and partnerships, visibility and attractiveness, concrete results and modernisation of the institution.

### **Internationalisation at KTH**

Internationalisation at KTH is also to be understood in a larger context, with the mission to strengthen Sweden as a knowledge base for research and innovation. The objectives for KTH are for the coming years:

- Immerse and expand existing international partnerships as well as activities for student exchange and student recruitment
- Secure that a significant proportion of the student body has experience from studies abroad
- Increase EU research grants
- Establish mobility path-ways for academic staff
- Implement a transparent strategy for ethical international cooperation

## **Student mobility**

Experience gained from student mobility is essential to empower KTH graduates to be well prepared for a global employment market and ready to contribute to future societal needs. Further, it is of strategic importance to KTH that inbound international students return to their home universities with a positive experience.

In order to strengthen the inclusion aspect of student mobility, KTH will:

- Immerse and expand mobility programmes with "Key Partner Universities",
- Focus on exchange opportunities with excellent European partner universities,
- Expand the offer of exchange packages with embedded automatic recognition with targeted partner universities,
- Encourage pilot projects for short-term mobility,
- Explore the opportunities to offer short and long-term mobility for internships and projects in cooperation with KTH business partners.

Currently more than 30% of the KTH graduates spend at least one semester abroad. In the years to come the ambition is to increase this number to 40 %. Further, the vision of the European University Alliance UNITE! is that 50 % of the students benefit from internationalisation of the curriculum through this partnership. Reciprocity for student mobility is pertinent. Non-mobile students receive international exposure through a wide range of opportunities provided by Internationalisation at Home activities, virtual mobility and activities generated by the progressive internationalisation of campus life.

## **Mobility for staff and faculty members**

KTH encourages international cooperation at all levels throughout the university, including individual mobility such as:

- "Sabbaticals" for teachers and researchers,
- International exchange opportunities for administrative staff.

Staff mobility within the frame of the EU programmes has increased remarkably during the programme period 2014 – 2020. A clear strategy from the HR department to encourage participation in staff weeks, English language courses and individual job shadowing has empowered the administrative staff at KTH. Academic staff mobility between the UNITE! partners will be prioritized throughout the coming programme period. Staff mobility, industrial staff mobility and e-learning tools are key elements of the above-mentioned Internationalisation at Home process that will also allow the portion of non-mobile students to be in touch with the international arena without leaving the home institution. As regional cooperation is a top priority for the UNITE! alliance, we foresee the emergence of structured actions for staff mobility between industry and academy.

## **Education programmes taught in English and joint programmes**

All second cycle study programmes are international in spirit and classroom composition, as well as being taught entirely in English. KTH will continue to invest in strategic joint programme partnerships, as part of the objective of being one of Europe's top University of Science and Technology. The KTH mission under the upcoming Erasmus+ Programme period is:

- To enhance student enrolment into existing joint programmes.
- To develop and establish new attractive joint MSc and PhD programmes together with key partner universities and with the participation of employers in order to ensure a high degree of employability.

KTH established double degree agreements with its strongest partners well before the introduction of the Erasmus Mundus scheme. Guidelines and professional support for joint programmes, as a result of the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships projects, are now used when setting up new joint programmes that aim to include social actors, companies and institutions covering other educational levels. KTH is a member of the T.I.M.E. network (Top Industrial Managers for Europe), a consortium focusing exclusively on the development of double/joint master programmes and of the Nordic 5 Tech alliance that has developed, among other activities, a Nordic Joint Master programme scheme. Moreover, a dual master scheme has been developed under the umbrella of the CLUSTER ([www.cluster.org](http://www.cluster.org)) consortium with a set of joint programmes in specific discipline areas that allow students to earn joint/double degrees from two partner universities. To support the KTH faculty to develop joint programmes, KTH has established a Quality assurance task force and the International Relations Office has staff dedicated to support joint programmes. Moreover, KTH hosts the Master School Office of two EIT KIC organisations. The faculty willing to develop new and innovative joint/double degree programmes are also supported through the results of the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships “REDEEM” and “REDEEM 2” which currently represent the state of the art in the field at European level.

### **Strategy for global activities**

An intensified focus is required to make KTH visible in certain strategic geographical areas. This is part of both a long-term international recruitment strategy and related activities, and of the objective of enabling interesting exchange opportunities for both students and researchers, as well as developing research collaborations. KTH will focus on international collaborative models involving both education, research and innovation. Important areas in this sense are:

- So called “emerging economies” e.g. those areas in Africa that are covered by the projects “Global Development Hub” and “the multinational university collaboration with universities in South Africa”.
- For international student recruitment; focus on selected areas in Latin America, e.g. Colombia and Mexico, and parts of Southeast Asia, e.g. Indonesia.
- China and India where comprehensive collaboration is on-going and new activities are initiated on a regular basis.

The international cooperative ventures requires KTH to adopt an approach towards challenges related to international collaboration. A council addressing *responsible internationalisation* has been established where amongst other topics pros and cons regarding engagement in various projects and partnerships are discussed.

In terms of knowledge transfer and dissemination of good practices, and as part of its global mission for development cooperation, KTH intends to exploit the experience accumulated over the past years within the Capacity Building programme and the many internal driving forces

committed to this kind of activities which are to be seen as complementary and not alternative to the efforts directed towards collaboration for excellence. Through the experience and results gained from the Erasmus+ Strategic partnership projects, KTH is well prepared to further develop Key Action 2 partner cooperation and to pilot ideas and foster excellence in order to meet the goals and objectives set by the universities, the national governments and the European Commission. A relevant number of these partnerships will be created to serve the global outreach strategy and activities of the European University Alliance UNITE!

### **European University Alliance UNITE!**

The UNITE! alliance, developed and established in 2019 by seven CLUSTER ([www.cluster.org](http://www.cluster.org)) members in the framework of the European Universities Initiative, is prioritized by the KTH university management as one of the main institutional internationalisation platforms and as one of the main tools to address the objectives of the European Education Area to be achieved by 2025.

Since the main scope of the alliance is the pursuit of progressive integration amongst its members in a number of fields, it seems natural that the strategies of the members in terms of internationalisation goals and the subsequent external funding strategies should also be harmonized to the highest possible degree, while at the same time taking into account the specific institutional and national needs and priorities.

Since the launch of the EUN initiative, the European Commission made it clear that the funding provided for the pilot project (2019-2022) and by the possible extension of the funding for the following four years would not alone be sufficient to carry out the ambitious plan to create full-fledged and well-established European Universities by 2025. The members of the alliance are expected to contribute with own funding, seek external funding at regional and national level, and make extensive use of the European funding programmes (namely the Erasmus+ programme) to extend the number and size of the activities and increase the ambition level of the alliance in the medium and long term.

UNITE! intends to embrace this approach by making use of the extensive experience of all its members in developing project ideas and managing European projects. This will, in this context, contribute to the achievement of the general goals and the specific objectives foreseen by the alliance Mission Statement.

This process will go hand in hand with the shared principle that the alliance should pursue the idea of both creating internal strengths and synergies that will lead to further integration, but also develop a common identity that will allow the members to speak and act externally with one voice. The latter principle will be promoted, structured and carried out by a specific Task Force that was created at the very beginning of the alliance activities and that will focus exclusively on the external global outreach. One of the main tasks of the Task Force will be to define topics and strategic partners/regions that should be prioritized for the development of project ideas to be funded under the umbrella of the ERASMUS+ project.

KTH is committed to influencing the future developments within the EHEA by acting as a key driving force within the networks and strategic alliances it participates in. Therefore, it is the intention of KTH to be active in the actions of the new programme such that an added value may be provided. The size of the institution, its past experience and performance in the internationalisation of HE and its current goals are definitely going to be an added value for the modernisation process. The areas in which KTH will decide to be active will be selected yearly by the University Management and will take into consideration different factors, such as them, the EU priorities, the long-term international strategies of the university, the topics identified by the university networks and the national higher education agenda. Most likely, these efforts will be carried out in the frame of the UNITE! Alliance which has already started working on comprehensive actions that might in the future become standard for the whole EHEA.

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