

## Erasmus Policy Statement 2007-2013

***a) Please describe briefly your institution's strategy, objectives and priorities for its Erasmus activities (mobility, multilateral projects and thematic networks, etc.) and any other actions in the context of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013).***

Based on its recently published mission statement and development plan, the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna (VUW) defines internationalisation among the top strategic goals.

Within the framework of the new Lifelong Learning Programme, the institution's strategy will focus on activities within the sub programme ERASMUS. Priority shall be given to intensifying European mobility and exchanges for education and training purposes by increasing, and above all by improving the quality of mobility actions of individuals (both students and staff), within inter-institutional agreements.

The VUW plans to engage in mobility (student placements) within the subprogramme of Leonardo da Vinci, and will be ready for participation in multilateral projects, such as curriculum development (CD) projects, thematic networks, and intensive programmes, as it has already been successfully and fruitfully involved in such activities in the past years.

***b) Please also provide information on the following points: What specific actions are planned to give visibility to Erasmus activities and what type of publicity will be given to the Erasmus University Charter and the EPS? What kind of arrangements, if any, does the institution ensure to comply with non-discrimination objectives (e.g. actions related to gender equality, integration of disabled students and staff, enhancement of social and economic cohesion and combating of xenophobia and racism)?***

The University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna (VUW), will promote and increase the visibility of Erasmus activities by publishing both the Erasmus University Charter as well as the Erasmus Policy Statement on the institutional web page and give it a prominent position on the pages of the International Relations Office. The already existing Socrates/Erasmus page shall be renamed, restructured, and supplemented.

The VUW is devoted to provide equal opportunities. There is a number of concrete measures to ensure gender equality in personnel policy and – development, such as a preference for female applicants provided equal qualification, especially at the level of professors, leading positions, and all areas, where women are under represented. Furthermore, there exists a catalogue of measures to further gender equality in the area of central facilities, representation of interests, research policy, and career advancement. In order to facilitate work-life balance, the VUW students' union operates a child-care center on campus, which can be used both by (exchange) students and employees. All facilities of the new VUW campus (in use since 1996) were constructed handicapped accessible. Information and guidance on studying without barriers are provided by the VUW-Student point. The VUW is determined to provide counselling and facilitate individual solutions for prospective students and employees, as far as possible. The VUW performs and sponsors a number of formal and informal events furthering the social blending of students and staff members, e.g. ball of the veterinarians, sports competitions (e.g. skiing, sailing, street-soccer, etc.), outdoor-parties on campus, work outings, etc.

The VUW has reached a high level of internationalisation in both the composition of students and staff members, but there have never been any cases of racism and xenophobia noted so far. Nevertheless, the VUW is planning to establish an ombudsman and initiate specific intercultural events to further integration.

***Quality of academic mobility activities:***

***What kind of specific measures are implemented in the institution to ensure high quality in academic mobility activities?***

***Details should be provided on recognition and credit systems, the provision of information on curricula, information and counselling of outgoing students, tutoring and integration of incoming students, provision of student services (in particular accommodation), preparatory and refresher language courses, support and acknowledgement of staff mobility.***

The head of the VUW International Relation Office (IRO) acts as ERASMUS and ECTS Institutional Co-ordinator. EU mobility is carried out in full compliance with the underlying principles of the ERASMUS University Charter. Outgoing students are only sent to institutions that have been approved by the EAEVE (European Association for the Evaluation of Veterinary Education).

ECTS is fully implemented in all study programmes of the VUW. All ECTS key documents (application, learning agreement and transcripts of records) have been applied both for incoming and outgoing students.

Information on our curricula is provided online in full compliance with the ECTS Users' Guide. Individual counselling is offered to incoming students when preparing the learning agreements.

Incoming students are assisted with registration and provided individual time-tables.

'Welcome Lunches' are organised to bring together the students with the University's leadership and representatives of the students' union. The VUW buddy network helps integration of students by organising specific social and informative events.

Accommodation for incoming students is available in the VUW hall of residence. The link for online-registration for housing (either directly or via the Austrian Academic Exchange Service) is published in our ECTS Welcome-Guide, as well as information on German language courses, health insurance, leisure activities, etc.

Prospective outgoing students receive information on mobility programmes and eligible partner institutions (online, posters, handouts) and counselling in collaboration with the vice-rectorate for study affairs. Outgoing students with insufficient language skills are encouraged and supported financially to attend courses, while still in Vienna, or are being informed about and nominated for enrollment in an EILC.

Teaching staff mobility is an important factor in career advancement and is supported by the IRO by setting up contacts, help with housing and travel arrangements.

***Quality of student placement activities:***

***What kind of specific measures are implemented to ensure high quality in student placements?***

***Give details on how the work-programme and the placement agreements are prepared and implemented. Please describe the practical arrangements agreed between the parties. Please specify also the monitoring and evaluation of the placement(s) period as well as its recognition in the curriculum.***

The VUW intends to ensure high quality in placements through an agreement with the intermediary organisation DANUBE, which has over 15 years of experience in organising quality placement mobilities. It will be responsible for preparing, organising, operating, monitoring, evaluating, and disseminating results of the student placements.

Each placement is matched according to the focus of study and individual needs of each student. Only targeted matches guarantee good placements and mutual benefit for both student and host organisation. Students mutually agree on a job description along with the home institution, the host organisation, and the intermediary, which becomes part of the placement contract, signed by the above mentioned four parties. All rights and duties of parties involved are agreed upon in this placement contract.

Counselling/preparation of students, organising accommodation, language preparation etc. will be handled by intermediary and its partners, i.e. LEO-NET European-wide network for academic placements with more than 150 partners located all over Europe; thus on-site support for students/host organisations is guaranteed.

Furthermore, DANUBE also handles incoming student placement requests from bilateral partners on all practical matters, i.e. finding suitable companies, accommodation etc. Thus, the principle of reciprocity allows a constant quality improvement in all aspects of the placement.

Placements are reviewed in regular intervals to assure smooth running; students keep contact by phone or e-mail. Daily active monitoring is done by the tutor of host organisation.

Based on reports and questionnaires to be completed by the students; job description and evaluation sheet by host organisation; personal interviews with students after the placement to get further information about placement and host organisation for input on dissemination.

At the VUW, the recognition is done by the vice-rector of study affairs based on the curriculum requirements.