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Erasmus Policy Statement 2021-2027

Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk

The participation in the Erasmus Programme is one of the pillars of the AFA's process of internationalization. Together with the activities undertaken within the scope of 'internationalization at home' concept and participation in international events outside the Erasmus+ Programme (ex. joint workshops, conferences, plein-air's etc.), it has become a strategic priority in Academy's research, policy and practice.

Internationalization became one of the main aspects described in the "Development Strategy of the Academy for years 2016-2024". According to this policy, extensive international cooperation with leading art and design education centres is essential for further development of the institution. It also enables networking and promotion of the leading education activities at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk. For this purpose - in addition to maintaining the current directions of academic exchange – the desired directions of international cooperation need to be defined. It will enable synergistic and mutual collaboration and active creation of clusters, consortia and selected artistic applications, as well as the implementation of solutions on an international and global scale.

The Development Strategy also underlines the fact that the process of internationalization of studies involving the Academy in official cooperation with foreign academic and university centres and cultural organizations should be the subject of university-wide arrangements. It should take into account the need to ensure constant improvement in the quality of education in all organizational units of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk.

The Erasmus Programme has created the first frames of Academy's international cooperation, giving the best examples and solutions how these relations should be built on different levels: student mobilities, staff teaching and training, organization of education for incoming students etc. It helps to continually develop the cooperation with partners from other countries, not only the EU ones but also the institutions from partner countries within the framework of KA107 projects. The whole process of building the Academy's international network is based on prior agreements signed between institutions.

The Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk has defined the objectives to achieve by participating in the Erasmus Programme, which are:

1. Mobility for studies or traineeships should become an integral part of the study cycle, to increase student's professional and social skills as well as employability. Automatic recognition for the purpose of further learning, high-quality support at every phase of the mobility programme and ensuring adequate preparation for mobility (including linguistic support and intercultural education) are the leading measures to reach it.
2. Gaining the knowledge of foreign languages in addition to one's mother tongue (proficiency in one of the foreign languages is a standard, but the desired effect of Erasmus mobilities would be proficiency in two other languages).
3. The additional support and encouragement to participate in the Erasmus programme should be provided for inbound and outbound mobility participants with special needs, from lower socio-economic backgrounds, students with family responsibilities, part-time jobs etc. It will be achieved by the system of top-up grants, by appointing the Rector's plenipotentiaries for the people with disabilities, continuing the adaptation process of Academy's buildings for that group of academic society etc.
4. The process of support, promotion and recognition of staff mobility should be continuously developed and lead to a transparent policy implementation towards integrated, transnational teaching activities.



5. Improvement of international performance of mobilities and international cooperation should be gained by the regular promotion of the Programme and its results. To achieve it, the previous participants will be asked to act as ambassadors of the Programme; their experience will be valued as an inspiration to others, for example at the meetings dedicated to Erasmus programme, by getting additional points for participation in mobility in order to receive the Academy's scholarship, through volunteer activities and writing testimonials that could be published at AFA's website.

Promotion of a positive, inclusive understanding of European identity and belonging, strengthening the awareness of Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity is crucial. A great emphasis will be placed on the integration process with the whole student community and the institution's everyday life.

The Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk would like to take part in the Erasmus Key Action 1 – Learning Mobility, and to continue – through this action, the mobility programmes for students and staff of the institution. For many years our institution implemented, step by step, different types of mobility programmes. We have started with student mobilities for studies (outgoing and incoming) and staff mobilities for teaching, and a few years later we have added to this list the student mobilities for training and staff mobilities for training, both very popular among our academic society.

One of the main priorities of the Academy's strategy for years 2016-2024, is striving to enrich the existing educational offer with new aspects, connected with contemporary knowledge – humanistic, technical and economical, that could fulfil the teaching process in the area of fine arts and design. That is our shared mission, which cannot be fulfilled without the constant exchange of thoughts, experiences and ideas with the representatives of other – foreign, higher education institutions. The significant amount of that process can be implemented through the Erasmus+ staff mobilities, which became more popular between our staff during the last few years. The STA and STT visits have a long-lasting impact on our institution – academic and administration team come back with new experiences, that reflect actively on their future work. Results of it can be observed in modifying the educational programmes the most, but also in

multiplying the other, non-Erasmus international activities, like joint workshops, conferences, guest lectures etc.

Another important goal of the Academy's strategy is to raise the attractiveness of the institution in future student's eyes, also the foreign ones. Building the international environment, which is possible with the Erasmus+ programme- having classes with incoming teachers, cooperation between Polish and international students in the studios – all of it helps us to strengthen the awareness of being the fully open and international Academy between the institution's society.

One of the main objectives of the Academy's strategy is also building the whole cycle of studies in English, and the participation in the Erasmus+ programme helps the Academy to prepare the institution for that step. The constant presence of incoming Erasmus+ students in some ways forced the AFA to provide English-speaking consultations during the existing courses, or even organize the separate courses only in English. Each semester more and more teachers are interested in providing such English-language courses – in summer semester 2019/2020 we were able to organize fourteen of them. That situation brings us closer to opening the whole English cycle of studies.

The participation in the Erasmus+ Programme will have an impact on the Academy of Fine in Gdańsk in different aspects, such as:

1. Increasing the number of graduates and staff who participate in different types of international activities.

In 2019, about 5% of the total amount of students participated in the mobilities for studies, and about 3 % of students participated in the mobilities for traineeships. When it comes to staff, the number of participants increases each academic year, and in 2019 about 20% of the total number of AFA's team was involved in the mobilities for teaching or training.

As time passes by, we observe that AFA has more and more untapped international potential. That is why we aim to increase the number of students completing a period of study abroad to 10 % and training abroad to 8 % by 2025. All our study

programmes have many different mobility opportunities within the curricula and exchange agreements with international partners with relevant study programmes/ courses for their students.

When it comes to staff mobility, we aim to increase the number of AFA's employees participating in the Erasmus+ Programme to 30% in each academic year. It is possible to increase this number with 2% of employees per year, and achieve the goal by 2026.

2. Support offered by the institution in the area of internationalization.

The Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk is going to provide different types of mobility to its academic society – studies, student traineeships, training and teaching programmes for its employees.

For outgoing students, AFA will continue to encourage students to participate in the Erasmus+ programme and ensure flexibility in the curriculum for mobility periods. For incoming students, one of the main goals is to continually develop English tuition and the offer of additional courses in English.

The recognition process will be organized according to the good practices already implemented in the institution. The procedure of signing the learning agreement before the mobility by two representatives of AFA – dean of the home faculty and the Erasmus+ coordinator guarantees full and automatic recognition of outcomes when the mobility is over, without any additional work or assessment of the student.

What is more, our institution will ensure good visibility of mobility opportunities, including the marketing and promotion campaigns. Particular attention will be paid to the participation of individuals with fewer opportunities for either economic, social, cultural, geographical, health reasons or for reasons such as a disability or educational difficulties and AFA will ensure that their support needs can be met and their privacy respected.

The ongoing process of building a new English website of the Academy will guarantee that the information on AFA's educational offer, its structure and provided procedures in the context of internationalization is visible and easily accessible.



3. Increasing the number and quality of international partnerships to widen and diversify the mobility offer.

Professionally strong, international networks are a prerequisite for applying for project funding nationally and internationally. International cooperation agreements will strengthen AFA's participation in international cooperation projects in research and education.

That is why it is crucial to strengthen the existing partnerships by exchanging the academic staff and incessantly widen the AFA's international network. One of the most important goals while looking for new partnerships is to start cooperation with new higher education institutions from partner countries, especially from Asia and the Middle East. These are the regions with a high artistic and design potential, which is still enormously unexploited when it comes to the international cooperation between artistic institutions.

4. Support for the triangle of knowledge – Education, research and innovation as one of the keys of the further modernization process of HEI.

We believe that AFA's international orientation will strengthen cooperation and development of employment and business in the region. The main characteristic of AFA's strategic partnerships is that they opt for both student mobility and R&D cooperation. Further global collaboration within the Erasmus+ Programme will significantly contribute to defining the Academy's scope for action and development within this area.

5. Improving the management of the Erasmus+ projects through the "internationalization at home" initiatives.

To ensure the continuous development of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk in the area of internationalization, the institution participates in the project titled "Welcome to Poland". Within its framework, we implement different activities, which are:

- English language courses for academic, administrative and technical employees of AFA on various levels of proficiency,
- Providing new modules in AFA's student management information system "Akademus", to carry out the procedures connected with Erasmus+ Programme fully online,



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Erasmus+

- Workshops for AFA's staff i.e. organization of international events, intercultural communication and intercultural differences etc.,
- Providing a new English website,
- Preparing a new "International Student Guide",
- Study visits in the leading art and design universities,
- Preparing the system of bilingual information boards in AFA's buildings,
- Preparing the English versions of AFA's acts and regulations.