



Erasmus+ Statement on University Policy 2021-2027

With about 5,700 students, Mainz University of Applied Sciences is among the smaller universities of applied sciences in Germany. It faces strong regional competition from universities of applied sciences in Darmstadt, Frankfurt and Wiesbaden. Its location in the Rhine-Main area, an economically and structurally thriving region, offers very good opportunities for collaboration with international companies. Mainz University of Applied Sciences endeavors to enhance its professional identity by increasing internationalization, expanding dual degree programs and implementing comprehensive digitalization, with the resulting modernization increasing its competitive edge in the national and international arenas. Mainz University of Applied Sciences is divided into three schools: Design, Engineering and Business. These three schools are very diverse with regard to their internationalization efforts. This heterogeneity was highlighted as a typical characteristic of Mainz University of Applied Sciences in the 2012 audit, *Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions*. A joint internationalization strategy was developed on this basis, taking the diverse opportunities and requirements of the Erasmus program into account.

In addition to numerous partners within and outside the EU, some partners of many years and some new, we have actively established new collaborations in Africa, Asia, North and South America and Oceania. In the process, we chose universities that have a range of subjects as similar as possible to our university, so as to leverage all possible synergies. Our EU and non-EU collaborations focus on student and faculty exchanges, with the aim of preparing students for the international job market and providing them with social and intercultural skills along with their academic qualifications. The target group includes students in both bachelor's and master's degree programs. Three of the master's degree programs in the School of Business – Franco-German Management, Maestría Argentino-Alemana and International Business – also offer the possibility of obtaining double degrees by earning a degree from the respective partner university in addition to the degree from our university.

In the International Civil Engineering degree program, the third year is offered entirely in English for students from our partner universities (60 ECTS credits). A mandatory year abroad is a fixed part of the curriculum of this degree program for students seeking a degree. The mandatory one-semester internship can also be completed abroad.

In the Business Law degree program, the mandatory internship semester abroad was reintroduced after it had initially been eliminated as part of the Bologna reforms. We participate in the Erasmus+ internship program as part of a consortium called EU-ServicePoint, formed by five universities in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate.

Windows for mobility have been established in almost all degree programs to facilitate international mobility and its recognition. The ECTS system is used throughout the university.

Faculty and staff mobility has increased continuously and very substantially in recent years. The exchange of administrative and technical staff is recognized and supported by university management as a professional development measure. As part of its bi-annual International Week, Mainz University of Applied Sciences offers faculty and staff from partner universities the opportunity to come to Mainz and exchange ideas with colleagues in the same field.

Mainz University of Applied Sciences conducts applied research and development (especially in the field of engineering) – hence the name University of Applied Sciences. Our research institutes employ numerous foreign researchers, and the working language is usually English. In addition, cooperative doctoral studies are provided in collaboration with some foreign partner universities, which in turn has a positive impact on research activities. The focus here is more on international cooperation in joint research and development projects than on student exchanges. For example, one of our graduates in engineering is currently pursuing a doctorate at the Universidad de Granada in Spain.

Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration is a necessary prerequisite for unlocking the full depth of the impact of technological innovations. Social and technological innovation potentials thrive in cross-disciplinary interactions. More than anything else, this is how previously unrecognized opportunities can be tapped into. The master's degree program Digital Methods in the Humanities and Cultural Studies, offered at Mainz, is a cooperation between Johannes Gutenberg University and Mainz University of Applied Sciences that reveals what is relevant today and will be so in the future.

The degree programs in the School of Design and the Department of Architecture work on projects and workshops with their foreign partners. Joint topics are developed at one's own university and the results are subsequently presented in a joint workshop at one of the partner universities or another relevant location. These short stays or excursions are particularly interesting for students who do not have the opportunity to spend time abroad. They are able to work together in international teams while learning about the teaching methods of the foreign lecturers. One professor in the School of Design, for example, has been coordinating an animation and short film series with varying partner universities for many years, the results of which are regularly presented to a larger audience as part of our International Week.

In the coming years, Mainz University of Applied Sciences will focus on two goals: digitalization of all areas and internationalization. One example is the planned support of the Erasmus Administration in the International Office using databases, Erasmus Without Paper, digital inter-institutional agreements and more in the future. The various forms of digital teaching, in full swing in all degree programs since March 2020 as a result of the corona pandemic, are to be further improved and will continue to supplement in-person teaching after the pandemic is over. This also includes the exchange with international partners in the scope of online lectures, digital seminars and workshops, and conferences.

One of the first approaches to this was the online hackathon of the *Hochschulforum für Digitalisierung* (University Forum for Digitalization), which took place in 2020 on May 6th & 7th. Around 90 participants from Mainz University of Applied Sciences participated, including students, faculty and staff.

In this same context, the Internationalization@Home project aims to involve non-mobile students, faculty and university staff in the internationalization process – be it through guest lecturer programs, teaching in tandem or additional expansion of the language courses available.

In summary, the visibility of Mainz University of Applied Sciences in the scientific arena and in the city itself, the expansion and cultivation of national and international collaborations, a distinct research profile and the recognition of the importance of digitalization for all of the university's key processes are important milestones for its development. Mainz University of Applied Sciences is to be shaped into a forward-looking and innovation-friendly place to live and to learn.

Planned Erasmus+ measures and their practical implementation

Measure #1: Learning mobility of individuals

Mainz University of Applied Sciences will once again participate in learning mobility for individuals. Students, faculty and staff have significantly increased their mobility in recent years, and we hope that interest in doing so will keep increasing in the future. In addition, the International Office will continue to provide targeted information and advice to keep all university students, faculty and staff informed and motivated with regard to mobility, as already stipulated in the internationalization strategy.

Measure #2: Collaboration to promote innovation and the sharing of best practices

Mainz University of Applied Sciences would like to participate in this key measure in the future as a partner, since coordinating a large program at a small university is only possible to a limited extent due to the comparably small staff working in the International Office.

Among other things, the power of innovation at Mainz University of Applied Sciences is rooted in its in-depth involvement with the cultural heritage of the city of Gutenberg, while simultaneously looking to the future. Developing something new and substantial requires a thorough examination of what others have conceived and developed in the past. This is the basis for “intervening in the discourse on the social and technological changes of our time,” as expressed by the university’s Gutenberg Design Lab on its platform.

Measure #3: Supporting political reforms

In the future, Mainz University of Applied Sciences would like to be involved as a partner in programs supporting public policymaking and to assist with appropriate projects of our partners.

The projected impact of participating in the Erasmus program on our institution

Mainz University of Applied Sciences would like to improve student mobility both qualitatively and quantitatively. This is to be achieved by increasing in-person and digital advisory services and information. Similarly, the language-related preparation of outgoing students is to be expanded by intensifying the collaboration with the university’s own Language Center, currently in development. The German language program for incoming students is also to be expanded and offered throughout the university. In addition, OLS (Online Linguistic Services) offers for outgoing students are to be advertised more broadly. Language tests will, of course, be administered to everyone.

Our less mobile part-time students are usually employed and unable to go abroad for a full semester. To give this target group the opportunity to gain international experience as well, more short-term programs are to be offered at partner universities. Funding options from Erasmus for short stays would be very appreciated in this regard. Extending invitations to foreign guest lecturers is another way to contribute to internationalization. We will expand the digital teaching opportunities for this target group and facilitate joint projects with partners abroad.

Staff and faculty mobility has increased continuously in recent years. Advertising of this within the university is to be stepped up accordingly, so that even more university staff and faculty will be able to take advantage of these opportunities. Teaching mobility is to be broadened even further, boosting collaboration with partner universities and the international experience of teaching staff. The professional development course “Teaching in a Foreign Language” is also to be offered in a targeted manner, enabling our teaching staff to offer more and more of their classes in English. To encourage administrative staff to participate in international mobility,

we would like to make increased use of first-hand reports from staff members who have completed such activities.

The objective is to initiate projects for Mainz University of Applied Sciences through increased participation in collaborative activities that are beneficial and sustainable in the long term for our university and its partners, while harnessing eco-friendly methods to do so.