

Erasmus Policy Statement for the University of Gävle

The University of Gävle (UoG) believes that modernisation through internationalisation is one of the key goals of the internationalisation strategy of the university. The main tool, with respect to achieving this goal, is to participate in the two Key Actions KA1 and KA2 of the Erasmus+ programme. International programmes are among the top priorities in the scientific and educational activity of the University. It has previously participated in the 6th and 7th Framework Programme, and in the Erasmus Programme (as part of the Lifelong Learning Programme), as well as the former Socrates and Tempus programmes. UoG is fully committed on implementing the priorities of the EU Agenda for higher Education. For its own modernisation, and with respect to the goals towards a modern and competitive European Education Area, the university fully recognises the priorities for action, their intended implementations, and their expected impact on the modernisation of the university. UoG recognises the significance of student mobility for study and traineeships as it contributes to the improvement of students' professional, intercultural, social, and networking skills as well as their real-life experiences and know-how, which will increase their chances of future employability. International collaborative partnerships are a core element in our broader strategic objectives in regard to teaching, learning and research.

The board of University of Gävle (UoG) has recently established two goals for a new ten year general strategic plan for the period 2021-2030. These goals are;

1. The University's complete academic environments have an international impact
2. We are a challenge-driven university that creates local and global benefits

Internationalisation has been set up as a crucial component to reach high quality in every aspect of academic work at the university. A new internationalisation strategy is being issued up as well. The strategy states that the university should reach its two strategic goals by creating international collaboration, make use of innovative digital technologies and include an international perspective in education and research. Furthermore, the UoG has the ambition to create good possibilities for student- and staff exchanges, easily integrate visiting students, staff, teachers and researchers and to find different projects within education and research to contribute to the global benefits in a wider perspective. Exchanges are supposed to be looked upon as a natural part of the education at the UoG, something that can easily be carried out and with no problem upon arrival back home. Since we work towards the goal to create as well local as global benefits, the contribution to fulfilling the goals of the European Education Area are important.

Considering the new objectives set up by the board and management of the university, it is clear that the Erasmus+ programme will play an important role to fulfil all the aims of the new strategy. The Erasmus+ programme is the backbone in creating exchange possibilities for students and staff as well as to build long-lasting co-operations for innovation and joint degrees. To promote the university within Europe and at the international arena, European co-operation is the starting point. With support from the Erasmus+ programme we look forward to developing our complete academic environments through joint master degree programmes and collaborations with our European partner universities. As all around Europe, the region the UoG is situated in has a challenge in the future when it comes to creating possibilities for the inhabitants to get further or new education. The discussions concerning a lifelong learning strategy just started and the input through collaborations with the European partner universities will be important in the development of this strategy. The gains of the innovations and joint master degrees that are expected to be the results from these Erasmus+ programme projects are clear to us. It will lead to a development that can be used to fulfil the goals of creating local and global benefits and help to meet the different global challenges that stands before us all.

The internationalisation strategy that is issued up right now is to be followed by an action plan to meet the aims of the strategy. The University of Gävle (UoG) has the objective to raise the number of outgoing and incoming Erasmus+ students and staff. Structures and routines for sending and welcoming students and staff are well established since many years, but due to the new strategic intentions, a review will be undertaken in order to improve all procedures with the help of the evaluations from earlier exchanges. Encouraging more staff to do an exchange is meant to lead to the general opinion that international exchanges are a natural thing to do when you work at the UoG. Teachers going for an exchange play a key role in spreading the information about the benefits of an exchange to the students, and by using the teachers for marketing exchanges we intend to work towards higher numbers of outgoing students.

The use of virtual learning platforms for teaching and learning is common at the UoG and something to use to a greater extent during the coming seven years. This type of digitalised internationalisation is something that has been tested in small scale earlier, and will be developed further in the future. Working together with our Erasmus+ partner universities, we will be offering international guest lectures, possibilities for students to meet digitally with other European students and to co-operate in their course work, to get another, international perspective on the subject area of studies. The digitalised internationalisation model has many benefits. A large number of students gets a European perspective of their education with a limited impact on the environment. Staying at home while meeting other Europeans is a sustainable way to meet. Everyone in the classroom is included in this internationalisation, even if you have something hindering you to travel. This way, we give everyone the possibility to the European perspective. When offering this to all students the goal is of course to raise awareness of Europe and to encourage the civic engagement. Moreover we believe that injections of digital internationalisation activities will spark off the students' interest for exchanges, and by that help us raise mobility numbers.

To make a mark at the international scene, we need to reach further with our education and research. We will use the Erasmus+ programme and the actions within Key action 2 to enrich our complete academic environments by creating joint master degrees together with our Erasmus+ partner universities. To find good collaborations where great innovations are the result is crucial in meeting challenges and contribute to the effort to reach the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Participating in and leading these projects are important stepping stones toward joint research projects.

UoG will continue to cooperate with countries outside of Europe as well, within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme.

Internationalisation includes the whole world and we are all facing a lot of common challenges.

The University of Gävle (UoG) always strives to improve the quality and relevance of teaching and research training, to equip graduates with the knowledge and core transferable competences to succeed in high-skill occupations by promoting research opportunities. This will be achieved through development of new and flexible degree programmes and curricula which allow all students to participate in mobility through projects like the new Erasmus+ programme. The expected impact of participation in the Erasmus+ programme is to ensure that we increase the number of higher education graduates who have taken part in a study or work placement programme to a good number of the UoG student population. This will be achieved by ensuring flexible curricula that allows students to be mobile and ensures that underrepresented groups are given guidance and support. This is done through the Division for Student Support, faculties, the International Office and the Division of Communication and External Relations.

The university aims to increase internationalisation of its curricula in terms of content and forms: the focus will be placed on international and intercultural learning outcomes to reflect the UoG internationalisation strategic policy. The vision is to shape a university characterised by expert knowledge that can offer advanced study programmes to attract international students and staff, to promote the European dimension in curriculum structure, contents and methods as well as improved teaching and learning environment.

The overall aims for the Erasmus+ programme period 2021-2027 are;

- **Student Mobility and the International Dimension in Education**
All study programmes at the UoG has at least three bilateral agreements with prioritised partner universities. No obstacles will meet students doing an exchange at one of these universities, before, during or after their exchange. The agreements will go through a yearly quality check, where relevance for the education and how well it has functioned is assessed.
The number of outgoing students will raise with 10% each year, although starting with reaching pre-corona numbers.
Student reports will show that both incoming and outgoing students are fully satisfied with their exchange, both academically and with the support given by the UoG.
By 2025 all study programmes have at least one digitalised internationalisation activity per semester.
Exchange students are seen as an asset and will be given time to share their perspectives in the classroom.
- **Staff Mobility**
By the end of the programme period, all staff at the UoG are aware of the exchange possibilities.
By the end of the programme period 25% of the staff will have carried out an exchange, starting with reaching the pre-corona numbers.
Staff exchange reports will show that both incoming and outgoing staff are fully satisfied with their exchange and the support given by th UoG.
- **Knowledge of the programme and the strategy**
By 2022 all staff have had the opportunity to get information concerning the Erasmus+ programme principles and the strategic goals.
By the end of the programme period the Erasmus+ programme is well known by all students.
- **KA2 projects**
By 2024 at least four KA2 projects have been applied for
By the end of the programme period at least one joint master degree is up and running
The awareness of the project possibilities are well-known by the staff through a higher number of marketing efforts.