

Erasmus Policy Statement

2021-2027

Our strategy

The Erasmus Programme has greatly influenced the ability of The Hague University of Applied Sciences (THUAS) to become as internationalised as it currently is. We offer bachelors and masters programs ranging from information technology to law and social sciences to business; our educational programmes reinforced by centres of practice-oriented research, of which 11 are undergraduate international programmes. Our main campus is located in The Hague, the governmental capital of the Netherlands also known as the international City of Peace & Justice. We have approximately 26.000 students that come from more than 140 different countries. Our institution is committed to creating an educational and work environment that is rich in diversity, inclusive, and supportive of all students, faculty and staff, that is ethical responsible and educationally sound. Our policies are founded upon a core set of values which include a commitment to inclusive approaches and practices and to provide education which is transformative, enabling and empowering for students and staff. The emphasis within all our policies, from support services to education faculty, focuses on Global Citizenship.

Nearly 40% of our students are from migrant families, mostly belonging to the Surinam/Hindustan, Moroccan, and Turkish communities. About 10% of the student population comprises of international students from all over the world, and 48% of our student population are first generation students, and thus the first members of their family to study at a HEI. To ensure inclusivity and diversity, educational programmes have a wide range of learning outcomes which need a similarly broad range of learning and assessment approaches which actively involve students in the learning process at all stages. Students are encouraged by learning and assessment methods used to adopt a deep approach to their learning and application of this rather than simply being able to reproduce knowledge. In doing so, we give students the opportunity and support to develop the personal and professional attributes and skills needed to be effective in society and the labour market. Many of these learning outcomes are directly linked to the Erasmus Mobility Programme, e.g. intercultural skills. The teaching and learning approaches adopted will range from tutor-centred approaches to student-led autonomous learning and will typically involve a mixture of lectures, tutorials, staff and student led seminars, workshops and practical assignments and both individual and group-based projects. IT also plays a crucial role and is becoming increasingly important. Not only is literacy and access to technology is relevant for our curriculum and learning experience, but also its societal impact. For us technology, and in particular skill-based information technology, is also a vehicle to tackle inequality and enhance equal opportunities. The impact of widening participation upon the characteristics of the student profile and the implication of this for learning, teaching and assessment means providing opportunities for all. This is all enshrined in our educational framework and vision document "Let's Change".

A key aspect of our mission is preparing our students to be global citizens for twenty-first century challenges. The university's practical/vocational orientation reflects what is happening in

the world of work. Mixing theory with practice, we require all students to follow an internship to develop skills and competencies such as teamwork and problem-solving skills needed to succeed in their careers. Our graduates are well prepared for their future and contribute fully to society. Hence, our curricula reflect the challenges and dilemmas of this new global century. We seek to continuously improve learning environment and the tools that Erasmus programme provide are vital to ensure that the educational and research practices within THUAS can keep pace with the needs and wants of modern society.

Our WIN themes

THUAS has a long tradition in internationalisation. It has been an institutional priority for THUAS as early as our establishment in 1987, due to the diplomatic traffic in The Hague, the Dutch efforts concerning development cooperation and the long history of Dutch international trade. Awareness of and knowledge about the national and regional wishes for an international workforce and international scholars for the knowledge and information society is key to respond to the needs of society. THUAS has deliberately chosen to actively participate in a number of Erasmus key actions, to be able to respond with a strong international programming of higher education and research and have students graduate with the skills needed to engage in civic society as well as have the capabilities and skills needed in our globalised workforce. Our institution has been a front runner in internationalisation initiatives in The Netherlands as founding institution in different consortia like UAS for Europe and the Sino-Dutch for Higher Education. Members of the Executive Board are influential experts on internationalisation at the national level as well as within the Association of Universities of Applied Sciences. Through their leadership, national policies have been developed in collaboration with the Association of Research Universities. Additionally, our policy on international strategic partnerships has been a pioneering activity within Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences. The vision of THUAS is to create Global Citizens, and to do so we have identified three strategic goals: to promote Global Citizenship, to increase and foster our internationalisation activities, and to expand and deepen our relations with other organisations through our Network University policy.

Internationalisation remains at the core of our strategic focal areas and has, through time, further developed and deepened across our entire organisation. Due to the changing nature of internationalisation, and as a response to the shifting paradigm in society towards sustainability and inclusion, an increase of international degree programmes and growing numbers of exchange students are no longer goals in themselves. Internationalisation permeates our education, our research and our services, in other words our organisation as a whole. This is reflected in the international classrooms, in our curricula and the study and student associations that welcome international students and help them find their way in student life, as well as in the many international events organised by our organization and the focus on internationalisation in the professionalization of our staff.

We continue to advance our international profile, to promote global citizenship and to become a network university through our institutional plan in order to further strengthen the quality of our education and research. The themes of Global Citizenship, Internationalisation and Network University (together these themes are referred in Dutch to as the WIN Themes) contribute to the quality and profile of our education and research. They also contribute to the objectives we have set ourselves to give our students lifelong tools so they can develop into strong people who go through life as involved, informed people who bring about change. It is of paramount importance to equip our students for future challenges and to enable them to shape the society of today and tomorrow, their personal and moral development and lifelong learning. Internationalisation and the creation of a networking university contribute to that. This perfectly matches the aims and objectives of the Erasmus programme. THUAS intends to strengthen its partnerships further and to develop more cooperation under KA1 and KA 2, to work more closely together and build

on projects that we have initiated in the past years. As the number of participants has been growing, we have also made progress in digitalising the Erasmus process. THUAS still needs to improve these processes and is happy to follow the steps as outlined in the EWP and ESC. In promoting Global Citizenship, we aim for young people, for our students to develop into a confident person who is adaptable and resilient, knows itself, thinks independently and critically, and communicates effectively. THUAS also strives to support students to be independent learners who take responsibility for their own learning, who question, reflect and persevere in the pursuit of learning. By doing this they become an active contributor who are able to work effectively in teams, exercises initiative, takes calculated risks, is innovative and strives for excellence. One of the key aspects in Global Citizenship are transversal skills, at THUAS we therefore promote mobility to all our students under the Erasmus programme. Hence, our educational framework is partially based upon the participation of THUAS in Key Action 1. With our focus on Global Citizenship we are looking forward to implementing the new ECHE principles as they match with our core values.

Implementation

We consider our primary task to provide applied, vocational education. Our aim is more than just preparing students for their first job or further study. We also give our students lifelong tools, not only for their working lives, but also for their (active) participation in society as citizens. Both of these involve a process of broadly-based personal development for students, which is more than just a matter of simply acquiring professional knowledge and skills. This reverberates throughout our bachelors and masters offer.

Practice-oriented research is a growing activity which brings the opportunity to serve to society, economy and local authorities and NGOs. Our research is 'mission-oriented' as conceptualizes in the European Union's approach (Mazzacuto, 2019). As far as possible this is interlocked with our educational offer, the Erasmus Programme enables us to widen and deepen our provision. As stated in part 1, our vision is to create Global Citizens, derived from that our strategic goals are; promoting Global Citizenship, fostering Internationalisation and establishing a Network University. The Erasmus Programme enables us to weave and personify these strategic goals into meaningful learning and professional experiences for our staff and students alike through not only mobility, but also research and intercultural sharing. The Erasmus Programme we would participate in are Key action 1, Key Action 2 except for Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degrees, and Key Action 3.

KA1: Learning mobility

It is often considered that successful intercultural interactions should be at the heart of what modern education is all about, a claim made by scholars and employers alike. Motivating educators to include intercultural competences in their educational provision has long been a struggle. However, over the last ten years it has become apparent that integrating these skills in all disciplines provides for better employability skills, more rounded professionals, and increased empathy. Scholars such as de Wit (2015), Leask (2015), di Pietro, (2015), Beelen and Jones (2015) affirm this in many of their recent works. Erasmus can provide THUAS with the moral principles and financial means to further foster and engage the advance development and adoption of these skills, within our institution.

An experience abroad, provided the experience is well prepared and supervised, is an intense and rich learning experience where a student is submerged in a different culture and learning environment. Such an experience enables students to develop a wide set of employability skills, such as intercultural communication, critical and creative thinking and adaptability, enabling them to grow their international mindset and foster inclusive thinking. Without the Erasmus

Programme, there would be significant less student mobility, the Programme is and will be a key instrument in allowing them to have an abroad experience to further develop the necessary transversal skill set as is outlined in our strategy.

The experience is equally important for (support) staff, hence it supports our comprehensive approach towards internationalisation. As staff mobility is recognized as a way to learn from peers and experts at our partner universities, it helps them to further develop content for our educational programs, to share practices and knowledge on different themes, as well as processes within their own programmes/service departments. We see our staff as the key to successfully achieving our ambition of creating Global Competent graduates. They have the means to ensure that plans are drafted (support staff) and are the crucial contact point with students as well as responsible for the implementation of policy (faculty and support staff).

In practice the following policies are implemented to ensure that the activities under Key Action 1 can take place:

- Student mobility (in and outbound): we maintain a wide partnership network to be able to all students the opportunity to either go on exchange or an internship abroad, our international office has the expertise and experience to help and guide students. We actively promote international students to study at THUAS. We organise an orientation week, policies on student mobility, grades preparation courses for an experience abroad. The partners are managed on different levels across the organisation to ensure grades recognition, quality of education and facilities at our partner universities are good.

- Staff mobility (in and outbound): embedding HRM policies to support and actively promote (international)staff mobility, organise workshops through our WIN-lab on sharing best practices, trainings, and workshops on staff mobility. Organising themed international Staff weeks with our partners. COVID-19 has increased the virtual meet ups between partner universities, we have set up 'Big Talks' that are centered around themes that are currently the most salient for universities involved e.g. online education, diversity & inclusion, international students.

- Virtual Mobility/Blended Learning has and is being developed in curricula, we have a blended learning desk that supports the programmes in effectively incorporate opportunities in the curricula.

- to support staff to develop blended courses. COVID-19 has also encouraged us to look at different forms of exchange, like virtual exchanges for staff and student. COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) is used by THUAS and its partners to develop and provide virtual education. However now we have started to research how we can organise virtual exchanges sometimes combined with short stay mobility. THUAS therefore sees great opportunities for the blended mobility opportunities the new Erasmus Programme offers.

- KA2: Cooperation among organization and institutions:

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KA2: Cooperation among organization and institutions:

In addition to the multitude of small cooperation ventures on programme and faculty level, THUAS wants to continue its cooperation on a more strategic university-wide level. This is not simply scale- up of our current activities but ultimately creating new synergies and opportunities that positively impact the quality of THUAS teaching, learning and research goals as described in THUAS comprehensive internationalisation policy titled “Global Citizens in a Learning Society” as well as to benchmark our support services. Not only do we have a policy for internationalisation, we have created Strategic Partnership Advisors, which are the link between internal needs and wants and the international partners. They actively engage stakeholders to work together on an international level. The Subsidy desk is the point of information for all international grants and bids, they send out a monthly newsletter with new possibilities, best practices, tips and tricks. Our research centers are organized in such way that they can act swiftly and adequately on request to participate in international projects, as has been in the case with UaccessS (European University Initiative) which is tied in with our Global and Inclusive Learning research center.

THUAS has a proven track record in KA 2 projects. These projects have helped to strengthen our partnerships. The different projects have allowed our partners and us to innovate in different areas of our curriculum a co-curriculum as well as develop new didactical toolkits for others to use. Joining in Strategic Partnerships can have considerable benefits to the quality, the quantity, the scope and the relevance of the cooperation activities across all of THUAS, and specifically when looking at our existing EU network of strategic partners where we work on aligning systems to facilitate mutual recognition, promote internationalisation and the European Identity by the European University bid ‘UacesS’, help to facilitate student and staff mobility. For the next few years we intend to elevate the European successes to global strategic partnerships.

KA3: Support policy development and cooperation

The next few years we will further explore the possibilities to be a driver in policy development as we are currently doing through the project Multinclud. This project intends to help educational organizations, in particular schools, to deploy strategies both in the classroom as well as within their communities to enhance access to, participation in and completion of education of learners from disadvantaged groups. This project is very much aligned with our strategy on inclusive education and are looking forward to becoming a frontrunner in initiating projects as well as to participate in future projects, drive policy change and combined with research related to this theme.

Impact

One of the main goals of our internationalisation policy and Erasmus is to provide the most relevant education to students, who will be the citizens, entrepreneurs and scientists of tomorrow. Internationalisation is not an end in itself, but a driver for change and improvement – it should help generate the skills required in the 21st century, spur on innovation and create alternatives while, ultimately, fostering job creation. Yet the current global situation needs to be addressed in our future policy and how to account for newer forms of mobility during a global pandemic. We are currently researching our possibilities, sharing best practices and gathering input from stakeholders (students, lectures, staff, professional field, strategic partner universities). Blended mobility will be one of the possibilities that will be operationalised.

Today, internationalisation functions as a two way street. It can help students achieve their goals to obtain a quality education and pursue research. It gives students an opportunity for “real world, real time” experiential learning in areas that cannot simply be taught. Institutions, on the other hand, may gain a worldwide reputation, as well as a foothold in the international higher education community, and rise to meet the challenges associated with globalisation.

The top three reasons for internationalisation at THUAS are:

- Increase quality of education (e.g. improve student preparedness, I@home)
- Strengthen research and knowledge production
- Thought Leadership

Targets (qualitative & quantitative)

1. Mobility inbound outbound
Staff 5% increase per year
2. For students we would still like to increase the number of students abroad but rather than focus on numbers we would like to focus on the qualitative outcomes. By making the impact of the mobility more visible we expect to not only increase the number of students but also to become more inclusive
3. European University Initiative
A bid has been placed under the name of ‘UaccesS’, if even the funding will not be allocated, we have pledged to continue working together on our shared vision, including the European Identity.
4. THUAS multidisciplinary projects
Partnership for Innovation, working on thought leadership by sharing practices on Internationalisation, specifically I@H (Internationalisation at home). Partnerships for cooperation with partner countries, specifically in Latin America.
5. Research projects
Increase by 10% per year on applications for international research projects

Our perspective on education identifies three aspects: qualification, socialization and subjectification (Biesta, 2016). Qualification is connected to knowledge, skills and values. Socialization contributes to the social and cultural continuity and is helping newcomers in society understand its culture, traditions, and norms and values. Subjectification deals with the personal growth, the autonomy and responsibility. Hence making sure that global citizenship is reflected within our teaching and learning strategy and contributing towards the achievement of our mission and strategic priorities. The Erasmus Programme provides THUAS with ample opportunity to create engaging and challenging ways for students to experience the three aspects which characterize our educational programmes, hence having a big impact on our educational vision, quality and operationalisation.

Research is a key part of our concept of Network University where our contribution to society and business take a vital role. As University of Applied Sciences, THUAS, has an incipient and growing participation in research. (In the Netherlands UAS have started with practice-oriented research in 2000) For our research strategy, participating in Erasmus Programme which is one of innovation and thus modernizing our institution and our system of higher education, is a must. In order to prosper in this endeavor we established interdisciplinary centers that sponsor and support this research. These efforts are also institutionally sponsored and organized to engage faculty from across the institution. The seven Research & Innovation centres (Centres of expertise) are the place where people, ideas, and resources come together to address issues of common interest to the University and the surrounding region. THUAS research centers organize workshops, forums, online services, service-learning, living-labs (notably in Brazil and China) and internships: all type of activities facilitating knowledge production, information sharing, and discussion between the campus and the community about issues of common interest for all stakeholders. Our research is also strongly

linked with our international strategic partnerships policy and in doing so we strive to create a consistent and sustainable institutional policy on education, research and internationalisation. THUAS provides valuable input into the development of internationalization in many arena. We regularly provide input into national policy development with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Our leadership serves on the National Leadership Council on Internationalization at Universities of Applied Sciences and participates on councils of Teaching Learning and Scholarship at NAFSA and the AIEA. A number of senior academics and staff are on committees of the EAIE. We actively advise Nuffic. Additionally our research fellow for Global Learning is a world renown leader in Internationalisation@home. Our policy is regularly held up to the light and given critical input by leaders in the field such as Elspeth Jones.

Timeline & indicators

2021 and beyond : Operationalise blended learning opportunities in curricula across THUAS.

2021 and beyond : Put in bids for Key Action 1 on all sorts of mobility

2021 and beyond : Put in bids for Key Action 2

2021 and beyond : Put in bids for Key Action 3, follow up MultInclude

2021-2022 : Develop a travel policy with regard to lowering the carbon footprint for all international travel

2021-2027 : Continuously monitor ECHE principles , making use of the Tools provided by the National Agency