



## **ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (OVERALL STRATEGY)**

**Description of Hochschule Aalen's international (EU and non-EU) strategy and how partners are chosen, in which geographical area(s), the most important objectives and target groups of our mobility activities (with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, including study and training, and short cycles) and the development of double / multiple / joint degrees where applicable.**

A fundamental principle of Hochschule Aalen, in terms of its educational role, is to promote the personal development of its students as the future professionals and managers, with professional and social accountabilities, of a Europeanized economy with global presence. In line with its mission statement, the University has set a goal of creating an environment that promotes competency-based lifelong learning in a special way. In the last ten years, the University has significantly strengthened its internationalisation initiatives and efforts. The average number of international students who study at the University has increased in this period by around 46% and is now about 430 per year. In the same period, the rate of Hochschule Aalen students who are studying abroad or doing their practical semester abroad increased by 42% and is now around 250 per year. On the one hand, the demand for studies and placements abroad by students increased significantly. The reason for this is found in the clearly communicated demands of employers for candidates with foreign language skills and international experience. On the other hand, studies and placements abroad for Hochschule Aalen are an essential element for promoting the personal development of the students. As part of its internationalisation strategy, the University is therefore pursuing, on one hand, the goal, to allow students the chance to study abroad, and on the other hand, to create an international campus, in which students and teachers meet different cultures. Currently, the outgoing quota, i.e. the proportion of students who spend a semester abroad during their first degree is 32%. This rate is expected to be greatly enhanced by a stronger provision of placement opportunities abroad (as part of an expansion of the company cooperation network) and study programs which allow students to study abroad without the loss of time, and full course recognition. This is also true for Master students, especially since the establishment of double degrees is relatively easy to make at the Master level (currently there is a Master double degree in the Business Administration area, two more are currently under negotiation in the areas of electronics and plastics engineering). Lastly the quota of international students who have achieved university entrance qualification in their home country, which is currently only 3.3%, will increase interest in the above mentioned "international campus". In order to attract more international students to Aalen from chosen countries, it will be necessary to initiate respective recruiting activities. In this context, the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) already hold a special role.

In addition, the care-taking of the international students is to be optimized by a more intensive network of the International Relations Office and the study departments. Finally, it is also planned to increase the number of English-language course offerings to make Hochschule Aalen significantly more attractive for international students, especially

exchange students from Anglo-Saxon countries such as the U.S.A. (with which there are already several well-functioning partnerships) but also for the exchange students from the many European partnerships which are no less important, as the European dimension in the form of the Erasmus program to achieve its internationalisation objectives is an essential anchor of the concept of the University. New partnerships are not only selected on the basis of professional mutual interest, but also on the basis of existing quality standards. A geographical diversity is highly desirable, regardless of certain defined key regions. Alongside the usual exchange measures, short term visits of international students (e.g. through summer schools and so-called Short Programs or Intensive Programs) and the exchange at the level of faculty and staff are promoted and intensified. Hochschule Aalen is aware that in this context the good relationships with the partner institutions at all levels, i.e. students, staff and faculty, will not only allow the acquisition of key competencies and intercultural competence of the participants, but also contribute to promote internationalisation in a positive manner. Synergy effects should therefore be achieved by encouraging outgoing mobilities of university members, this in complement to multilateral and network projects so that staff are increasingly involved in the international activities of the University.

**Hochschule Aalen's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme.**

As part of its strategy, Hochschule Aalen cooperates in a regular manner with other universities in the implementation of multilateral educational and research projects in the framework of its own specially established partnership networks, but also in the context of further strategic networks. Relevant plans and projects must be consistent with the overall strategy for the internationalization of the University. Since last year, the University is a member of the EUA. It is also a founding member of the European network EUCLIDES for promoting the study of engineering (since 2000). The University was and is still involved in projects in the following educational programs: Erasmus Pilot Project (Germaniac, 1997 – 2000), Leonardo da Vinci II (Competence Assessment Tools, 2000 – 2003), TEMPUS (Bosnia-Herzegovina University Management, 2003 – 2006), ALFA (Plastinet, 2004 – 2006), LLP Erasmus (Technical Office Management, 2010 – 2013), TEMPUS (ECBAC and Cap4Com, both from 11.2011 to 10.2014). The University currently cooperates in the development of a DAAD DIES project with universities in Peru and Chile and the University of Ulm (ESDI, 2012 – 2015) to accompany the process of internationalisation and the strategic development of the South American partners. Currently in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Hochschule Aalen coordinates, in the framework of the DAAD programme PROFIN, as one of four East-Württemberg universities (Baden Württemberg Cooperative State University Heidenheim, the University of Design Schwäbisch Gmünd and the University of Education Schwäbisch Gmünd) for joint supervision and integration of international students, with the participation of diverse external partners. With five other universities in Baden-Wuerttemberg in 2012, Aalen founded the Southwest University Federation, to develop joint activities for internationalisation in the future. The University also works with selected companies in the region through joint training programs, currently with a focus on Brazil and China.

**Expected impact of Hochschule Aalen's participation in the programme, on the modernisation of our institution (for each of the 5 priorities of the Modernisation Agenda) in terms of the policy objectives we intend to achieve.**

Through Erasmus, not only the mobility but also the attractiveness of the University will be increased. Given the increasing demands in the labour market, corresponding experience abroad is increasingly expected of candidates, a contribution to raising their education level is done at this point. Hochschule Aalen is involved in this respect in diverse ways, such as with the previously mentioned projects for the support and integration of international students, including students with an immigrant background. The project is focused on integration into the universities, in society, and the workplace. The latter is particularly important in view of demographic changes in Germany and the shortages of academics and engineers in the coming years. Together with regional entrepreneurs, the *explorhino* foundation has been established and brings children and youth closer to science and technology and serves to promote enthusiasm for higher education. The University also participates in projects to improve the quality and relevance of higher education, for example, in the framework of the Erasmus Project Technical Office Management with the goal of partner institutions agreeing on curricula with the involvement of companies, so that their students can earn double degrees. A third of the annual bachelor graduates of the University have spent at least a semester studying or doing an internship abroad. Nevertheless, the University is aware that it still must implement a number of measures to increase mobility in both directions. This requires high quality services for study and mobility in an attractive and safe study environment. Appropriate measures, such as simpler rules of recognition are part of the strategy and the new structure and development plan for 2014 – 2018, and will be gradually implemented at the University. Aalen is an applied research focused and practice oriented university in Baden-Württemberg. The linking of internationalisation with research and its strong corporate network is something the University management has consistently pursued. Making then in addition use of the Erasmus programme by enabling participation of companies is sought-after. In terms of improving the control and financing of projects, especially with regard to third-party funds, the University is concerned with fundamental changes (e.g. KLR and further professionalised accounting issues). The control of Erasmus is supported in particular by quality management measures, for example through annual faculty meetings with target agreements that also involve the implementation of internationalisation activities and mobilities. Erasmus will support Hochschule Aalen in its future strategic decisions in a very important way.

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