

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT 2014-2020

Internationalisation in the strategy of Karelia University of Applied Sciences

Karelia UAS has a general strategy in which developing international activities is included. Karelia strategy adheres to European, national and regional strategies. In addition, Development programme for Internationalisation (2011-2012) and Operations model for Partnerships of Karelia UAS as well as the Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland provide guidelines and framework for activities and choices to be made in the development of international activities.

The main purpose of internationalisation is to include the international perspective in all activities of the University, thus supporting the development of high quality education and RDI and improving students' preparedness for their future careers. The objective is to make Karelia UAS an acknowledged international university, to contribute to the competitiveness of the region and to create a truly international learning and working community.

The Karelia UAS aims to provide young and mature students with an internationally competitive alternative in higher education, to contribute to the success of the region's working life, especially in the regional areas of strength, and to actively respond to the challenges of modern working life. High quality education, research and development activities are carried out in close cooperation with Finnish and international partner institutions and working life.

Karelia UAS has identified six focus areas as its main areas of expertise, on which activities, particularly the RDI activities, mainly concentrate. They are 1) renewable energy, 2) welfare services in sparsely populated areas, 3) expertise pertaining to Russia, 4) precision technology, 5) multimedia experience services and 6) wood construction.

The partner network of Karelia UAS is developed on the basis academic needs taking into account the focus areas but also interests from the surrounding region. Each education and research centre has identified key partner institutions with which deeper collaboration is sought after. Partnerships are evaluated regularly.

Europe is the main focus of international cooperation and a deep and diversified liaison with key partners is essential. There are also close partnerships with universities in St. Petersburg and the Republic of Karelia (Russia) expertise pertaining to Russia being one of the focus areas due to university's location near the Russian border. On the basis of long tradition and continuous interest towards issues of global responsibility, Africa is an important geographical area for international collaboration and mobility. In addition, Karelia UAS has interest in strengthening partnerships in Asia, especially in China, as well as in Canada and in Brasil.

The main goal of international cooperation is to bring internationality as part of everyday experiences for all students and staff. Karelia UAS is committed to provide equal opportunities to all target groups – Bachelor and Master students, academic and non-academic staff. Regular mobility activities are promoted especially to Bachelor students for whom credit mobility for studies as well



as traineeships are equally important given the professional approach of education of UASes. Opportunities are sought for part-time Master students for whom long exchanges are challenging. Mobility of staff to partner HEI's for teaching and training is highly encouraged to deepen the partnerships and to share good practices and the purposes of pedagogic development. Mobility of staff to and from enterprises brings added value to the education and cooperation projects.

Karelia UAS aims to increase the number of courses and modules available in English to facilitate the mobility, the development of joint modules and double degrees with partner institutions. Double degrees are planned foremost at the Bachelor level where most of the education takes place. Opportunities for developing joint Masters will be sought towards the end of the Programme period.

Organizing and implementing international cooperation projects in teaching and training

Excellent partnerships are a prerequisite for high-quality cooperation projects. Karelia UAS maintains and strengthens the existing partnerships that have proved to function well and bring added value. Potential new partnerships are identified and established, if necessary. Karelia UAS aims at participating actively in the different types of international cooperation projects within the Programme. Especially the opportunities offered by the Strategic Partnerships are of interest, and support the strategic internationalization goals of Karelia UAS. There are plans to consolidate the collaboration in education and training projects with other HEI's as well as enterprises and vocational education sector.

Knowledge Alliances projects offer Karelia UAS valuable channels to develop innovation activities together with its partners for the benefit of regional and European development and economy. Karelia UAS endeavours new entrepreneurship projects with SME's as part of its RDI work and aims at creating spin-off businesses.

Likewise, Karelia UAS has extensive experience of international cooperation and capacity building projects with developing countries and thus is interested in implementing new projects with HEI's in the Third countries.

Involvement in individual proposals and projects is decided on the basis of annual and long-term plans taking into account the focus areas of Karelia UAS and regional development schemes where close cooperation is done with public and private actors and other educational institutions of the region. Cooperation projects with long-term key partners are prioritized, and the institutional "Priority Projects Scheme" is a key tool in the process. The objective has been to combine projects and other RDI measures into broader and multidisciplinary umbrella projects that are long-span and implemented together with various national and international networks.

Impacts of participating in the Erasmus+ Programme

European and international mobility, cooperation and the experiences and competences gained through it are particularly important for the Karelia UAS students and staff due to the university's location on the edge of Europe. Versatile, international education opportunities add to the attractiveness of the institution and are important for student recruitment. Support from the Programme guarantees wide and equal access to mobility and other activities. Number of graduates

and students who gain at least 55 cr. /year is of crucial importance for the funding of Finnish HEI's. The Programme offers ways to strengthen European and international partnerships which enable quality exchange periods, new possibilities for joint activities and transparency of education thus facilitating the recognition of credits and reducing the risk of drop-outs or delayed graduation.

Strategic partnerships activity contributes significantly to improving the quality of education and training, which is a key for success for any HEI. Staff mobility caters for the individual and collaborative development of international and professional competence, and helps to make teaching and research more international. The inclusion of foreign teachers and other staff members in the operations of the UAS enhances the internationalization of the operating environment. Since mobility numbers as well as external research and development funding are indicators for state funding, the Programme boosts the higher education performance.

The Curricula of Karelia UAS are theme and competence based. Themes are broad units responding to working life needs. The learning outcomes of degrees are defined as degree specific and general competences. The general competences, which apply to all degrees, include learning skills, ethical competence, working life competence, internationalization competence and development competence.

During the study and training mobility periods at the partner HEI's or enterprises students are exposed to new points of view and gain valuable professional skills and general competences for their degree. Karelia students who participate in the project activities offered by the Programme will gain good research and development skills for working life. In addition to the degree specific competences, the Programme strengthens all of the general, transferable competences, especially the internationalization competence.

Active international partnerships enable sustainable and effective RDI activities. International cooperation projects between HEI's, enterprises and other organisations, made possible by the Strategic partnerships and Knowledge alliances, are a natural way for increasing interaction and the transfer of knowledge and innovation between the sectors. Thus the Programme and its activities, along with other European programmes and financial instruments, benefit not only HEI's but also enterprises and other public sector organizations in the regions.



Dr. Petri Raivo
President, Managing Director
Karelia University of Applied Sciences