

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences and a Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences are strategic partners and involved in a merging process. The International Services has a common Head of International Services since 2010. The close cooperation affects the international strategy, which is quite similar in both institutions.

a) The criteria for choosing partners to us are following:

- Possibilities for successful and efficient student exchange. This means in practice sufficient offer for studies in English or other languages suitable for both parties of cooperation.
- Cooperation possibilities for teacher and staff exchanges and joint teaching activities, including possibilities for Double Degree Programs
- Cooperation possibilities for RDI-activities

Mikkeli UAS offers altogether 27 study programs in the fields of humanities and education, culture, natural sciences, natural resources and the environment, tourism, catering and domestic services, social services, health and sports, technology, communication and transport and social sciences, business and administration. Partners, that have a possibility to cooperate successfully with several study programs, are preferred.

b) The most important target of the mobility activities is Europe. Within EU, we concentrate especially for cooperation around Baltic Sea Region. Outside Europe, Russia is the most important target country. We have set special strategic goals for Russian cooperation.

Mikkeli UAS has been and will be active in international cooperation outside EU. Mikkeli UAS's partner network covers Europe, Russia, Americas, Africa, Asia and Oceania, with partners in over 40 countries.

c) The main objective of the mobility activities is excellent employability of the graduates. Mobility is one of the key tools to reach this objective.

Students are the primary target group. Besides, for example LLP-funds, Mikkeli UAS allocates its own budget funds to boost mobility. Both outgoing and incoming students (partners) are informed regularly about the exchange study and training possibilities.

All the over three month exchange study and training periods are individually tailored to fit the student's study plan. The outgoing students are offered sufficient funding to carry out their exchange and training periods abroad. Finnish and foreign degree students of Mikkeli UAS are offered the same possibilities. Each student is monitored before, during and after his/hers mobility period. Racial, cultural, gender or any other kind of discrimination is prohibited.

The main aim of the teacher and staff exchanges are to strengthen the cooperation with the partners and to promote and strengthen the student mobility. RDI possibilities are also often taken up during the exchanges.

The targets for teacher, staff and RDI mobility are set annually by the management. Heads of Departments/Units take teacher and staff exchanges systematically up during annual career development discussions with their personnel.

The incoming teacher, staff and RDI mobility is strengthened through international theme weeks within departments. For these weeks, a larger group partner teachers and staff are invited to Mikkeli UAS.

In Mikkeli UAS most of the mobility is carried out during the first cycle of studies. The second cycle students are also offered the possibility, but most of them are employed during their studies. This makes the participation to especially long-term (more than three months) exchanges or training often difficult. Mikkeli UAS does not offer third cycle studies.

Intensive courses in Finland and abroad are the main tools for short term mobility (under three months). Mikkeli UAS organises a full term summer term program from May to August. All the courses are delivered in English Language.

Mikkeli UAS is active in developing double degree programs with the partners. The fields of activity for the moment are Building Services Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Information Technology, Business Management, Hospitality Management and Nursing. Double degree programs are done both with EU and non-EU partners. Most of the graduates in double degree programs come outside of the EU, as non-EU students are often motivated to obtain an European degree.

Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences is higher education institution of lifelong learning, and a strong implementer of research, development and innovation activities (RDI), with a special strength on its expertise on Russia. The strategic development targets are as follows: Promote regional development through RDI activities based on the degree programmes of Mikkeli UAS; reinforce interactions between RDI activities, education, and working life and business, and strengthen international cooperation and partnerships.

Mikkeli UAS carries out practice-oriented research projects under the following themes: material technology and the environment, eServices, health and welfare and tourism and event management.

Increasing the number of graduates: The objective is to get in talented students and to implement the studies efficiently. Mikkeli UAS student recruitment activities and student quality feedback are key elements for increasing graduation results. A wide range of activities are being used for student recruitment, such as www-promotion, participation for student fairs, presence in social media, parent's evening, contacts with enterprises etc. The number of applicants/starting place has been rising. For the degree programs in English in spring 2013, Mikkeli UAS had 1010 applicants for 60 study places.

Increasing quality and relevance: The objective is to increase the quality and relevance to ensure good employability of the graduates and student satisfaction. Mikkeli UAS policy is to gather systematically feedback from students, enterprises, international partners, teachers & staff, employers and other cooperating parties. This feedback is used to develop and modify curricula, individual courses and also, when needed, structure of the degree programmes.

Improving internationalisation: Mikkeli UAS sets annual targets for both student and staff mobility by study sectors. The meeting of the targets is monitored regularly. At present, some 15-20 % of the students study abroad one or two semesters, or complete over three month practice abroad during their studies.

Students are informed about the exchange and training possibilities abroad regularly. The work is shared by International Services personnel and teachers. All students from all degree programs have a possibility to apply for exchange. The studies abroad are included to degree at Mikkeli UAS.

Strengthening the links between education, business and research: The objective is to constantly strengthen the interaction between Mikkeli UAS and the business life. Regional development is the responsibility of universities of applied sciences. Mikkeli UAS has traditionally close contacts with working life and continues this reach. The RDI projects are often practically orientated, the goal is to benefit especially regionally important issues but also to bring the results to students and education.

Ensuring efficient funding: The objective is to put funds into beneficial use. Mikkeli UAS budgets its international and other activities annually. The allocation of funds is monitored constantly. For internationalisation, student exchanges and traineeships over three months are preferred to obtain good learning results for future employment.