

1. ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)

Participation in Erasmus+

Gisma University of Applied Sciences plans to participate in Erasmus+ actions in the future through a variety of different activities. We are dedicated to improving the calibre of our educational offerings over time and to giving our staff and students enriching possibilities for international learning through mobility and collaborative initiatives. Participating in Erasmus+ actions will fuel directly Gisma's vision and mission to become a globally recognized institution empowering its students to think with originality and equip students with those professional and interdisciplinary competencies that enable them to pursue innovative, creative solutions to the pressing issues of the 21st century in an international business environment characterized by permanent change, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Thus, to meet our internationalisation and modernisation objectives, Gisma's strategy will be to participate in all three Erasmus+ actions namely learning mobility of individuals (Key Action 1), cooperation among organisations and institutions (Key Action 2), and support to policy development and cooperation (Key Action 3).

Under **KA1** we will participate in the following activities:

- **Student mobility for studies:** More than 90% of the enrolled students at Gisma come from abroad. This demonstrates on the one hand a high level of international mobility among the students by studying at Gisma. On the other hand, the high proportion also shows that Gisma has built up a very good infrastructure through its student services, particularly the **international study counselling, visa, and accommodation service**, and the **study language English**, which is suitable for supporting international student mobility. All study programmes at Gisma are designed in such a way that periods of **study at other universities abroad** are possible. Individual or several modules can also be carried out abroad within the framework of so-called **residencies**. The choice of cooperation partners is made according to the special professional competence of the institution matching the modules, or according to where the international or intercultural learning objectives of the study program are imparted in a special way. Student mobility also includes **recognition procedures** which ensure that the principles of the Lisbon Convention are applied in Gisma's framework admission, examination, and study regulations. This applies to competencies acquired abroad as well as to competencies acquired domestically at other universities. Gisma participates in this respect in a **pilot project** for a "**Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme**" (CAT). For certain fields of competence (e.g., marketing, HR, finance), the participating universities ("Mobility Network") provide module objectives, content, literature base, learning outcomes, teaching and examination strategies, which can then be compiled by interested students in a modular system into an international certificate for the disciplines mentioned, following a specific approval procedure and a jointly agreed group governance. The content is then composed of predefined elements from the participating universities. The teaching and learning approach is geared to **social, collaborative, and P2P approaches** with a focus on personal development of students ensuring students learn in groups and interact amongst their peers with diverse backgrounds to understand the strength of diversity. Intercultural skills and ethics are built in every study programme. Further, the possibility of launching **double and joint degrees** will help students to acquire multiple specialisations in less time and hence get more employment opportunities.
- **Student mobility for trainee-/internships:** All Gisma's programmes are designed in such a way that trainee-/ internships **abroad** are generally possible. Gisma can rely on a **Director of Strategic Partnerships to support the Gisma Career Centre** to support and encourage our students to participate in trainee-/ internships abroad, which will provide them with the opportunity to gain practical experience in their field of study and develop professional skills in an international environment. Examples of this are our active European partnerships with TCS in the Netherlands, AWWG Group and Cedrion in Spain, and Winning scientific management in Portugal.
- **Staff mobility for teaching and training:** Our academic and administrative staff will also have the opportunity to participate in training activities abroad, which will enable them to learn about best practices and innovative approaches in their field. Activities that have already been conducted or defined in memoranda of understanding with international partner universities and companies include:
- **Staff exchange** programmes (academic and administrative staff from one institution to visit and work at a partner institution for a specified period of time; includes teaching, research, or administrative activities). Professional **development workshops and seminars** to provide staff with the opportunity to gain new knowledge and skills in a specific area). **Online learning opportunities** (including online courses, webinars, and e-learning modules). **Conferences and symposiums** (platform for academic and administrative staff to present their research, share their expertise and learn about the latest developments in their field; provide opportunities for networking and building relationships with colleagues from other institutions). **Training programmes** (to provide staff with specific training in a particular area of expertise; can be done in person or via

videoconferencing).

In addition to KA1, our institution will also consider participating in **Key Action 2 (KA2)** - Cooperation among organizations and institutions, which includes **partnerships for cooperation**, partnerships for **excellence**, partnerships for **innovation**, and alliances for innovation. A key role in this regard plays Gisma's **Multidisciplinary Research Centre for Innovations in SMEs (MrciS)** which carries out research to benefit Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), assisting them in effective innovation and the development of their dynamic skills. The goal is to offer practical solutions to the difficult issues encountered by SMEs and industry. The research centre will put emphasis on **international partnerships** within the **innovation ecosystem** to speed up the **development and transfer of knowledge** that will benefit SMEs. The main goal is to offer SMEs from various industries interdisciplinary solutions to their issues, fostering their growth, creativity, and productivity. Additionally, Gisma has started **to offer its research centre resources to foreign researchers** that are willing to conduct research, with the possibility of undertaking their industrial doctorate (with **doctoral degree awarded by partner HEI**). This will also allow us to pass our expertise to our partners and **co-innovate** with them to develop the European Higher Education Area. Currently Gisma has active **industry partnerships** with companies like Winning scientific management, Portugal and Cedrion, Spain. Currently, **one industry funded research project** is ongoing with *FHNW University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland*, Olten, Switzerland, *Universidad de Alcalá (UAH)*, Madrid, Spain, *Politechnika Poznańska*, Poznań, Poland and *Universidad Politécnica de Madrid*, Madrid (Spain) as partners. Additionally, active research continues to be conducted in partnerships with numerous public and private universities in Australia, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, United States of America, and United Kingdom. Because of the emphasis on research and internationalization, cooperations are growing rapidly. By collaborating on research projects and hosting researchers from developing nations like Algeria, Gisma also assists such nations by helping them internationalize and modernize their education. These experiences will be beneficial in creating innovative educational and research infrastructures in rural, small island, and peripheral/outermost regions of EU countries as well. These collaborative activities will get boosted with participation in the Erasmus+ programme. These activities will involve working together with other institutions and organizations to develop and implement programmes and projects that promote cooperation and innovation in higher education.

We plan to participate as well in Key Action 3 (KA3) -- Support to policy development and cooperation -- and launch various initiatives to promote the development and implementation of innovative policies and the sharing of expertise in education, training, and youth. Gisma is committed to adopting the best teaching methods from around the world, following suggestions from accreditation bodies, accepting feedback from external stakeholders, and helping current partners improve. By collaborating globally and using empirical evidence to adopt excellent teaching practices, we can help to create effective policies at the EU and system levels. This will also aid Gisma in supporting the EU in designing and executing its policy agenda for youth, sport, and education.

Strategy, objectives and impact

Gisma's institutional **strategy** focuses on internationalization and modernization. The goal of Gisma's internationalization strategy is to enhance its effectiveness in research, teaching, and knowledge transfer with other higher education institutions, research units, companies, and government agencies, as well as to promote a global perspective. This will enable Gisma to provide international exposure to its students and staff through mobility and collaborative projects, which will enhance students' practical learning, cultural exchanges, understanding of global issues, ability to co-innovate and gain dynamic competencies that enable them to create creative solutions.

By participating in the Erasmus+ Programme, our institution aims to achieve several key **objectives**:

- **Increase student and staff mobility:** Our main objective is to increase the number of students and staff participating in mobility activities, such as study abroad and traineeships, in order to provide them with valuable international experiences that will enhance their academic and professional development.
- **Promote international cooperation:** We aim to establish and strengthen partnerships with other higher education institutions, research units, and companies in order to promote cooperation and collaboration in research and teaching.
- **Enhance the quality of education:** Our participation in the Erasmus+ Programme will enable us to improve the quality of our education by incorporating international perspectives and best practices into our curriculum, as well as by providing our students and staff with access to a wider range of resources and expertise.
- **Foster cultural understanding and diversity:** Our participation in the Erasmus+ Programme will help

us to promote cultural understanding and diversity by providing opportunities for our students and staff to interact with people from different cultures and backgrounds.

- Growing the university research profile internationally: Through the Erasmus+ Programme, our institution can participate in research collaborations with other higher education institutions and research centres across Europe, which will increase our visibility and profile in the international research community. This can be achieved by sending staff and students to participate in research projects and trainings, as well as by receiving staff and students from partner institutions to work on joint research projects.
- Fostering co-innovation in education and research: The Erasmus+ Programme provides opportunities for our institution to collaborate with other higher education institutions, companies and research centres on projects that promote innovation in education and research. This can be achieved through partnerships for cooperation, excellence, innovation, and innovation.
- Better learning and employability of students: The Erasmus+ Programme can help our institution to provide students with more international and diverse learning experiences, which can improve their employability. By participating in the student mobility for studies, traineeships, and blended intensive programmes, students can gain valuable international experience, language skills and intercultural competencies. Additionally, through the Erasmus+ Programme, our institution can also participate in the development of double and joint degrees, which will provide students with an internationally recognized degree, while boosting their employability.

The Gisma modernization and internationalization strategy prioritizes mobility and participation in European and international cooperation initiatives as crucial for their **impact** on the quality of its higher education programs and providing valuable practical experiences for students and staff. As an Applied Science University, cooperation with other higher education institutions (HEIs) and industries is essential to meeting our strategic goals. The main objectives of Gisma's internationalization plan include increased effectiveness in research, teaching, and knowledge transfer with other HEIs, research units, companies, government agencies, and a global perspective.

Gisma's focus on applied research and teaching, along with its partnerships with regional, national, and international industries, institutions, public authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and universities, are key to enhancing the practical application of our research and teaching. Incoming and outgoing students and staff can benefit from mobility experiences, which provide new perspectives and experiences that can be easily integrated into Gisma, leading to further improvement and modernization.

Active and consistent participation from academics, staff, and students is crucial for the development of dynamic competencies and the ability to continuously innovate our research and teaching. As a result of increased international collaboration, both teaching and research will be strengthened. This allows us to stay at the forefront of our field and provide our students with the most up-to-date and relevant education.

Finally, the participation in Erasmus+ will help Gisma to further digitalise its processes, enhance technological, research, and professional skills of students and staff, as well as collaboration and networking with other HEIs, industry participation in academic offerings, global entrepreneurship, interdisciplinarity in research, better employment opportunities, and innovation and creativity.