

# Fontys Erasmus+ Policy Statement

Version 2020

Fontys University of Applied Sciences, hereafter Fontys, will work according to the strategy and vision for internationalisation that was developed in the past years. Next to that, Fontys will take new developments into account that influence internationalisation of our University. The current COVID-19 situation shows a shift to more blended and virtual mobility, but also further steps to modernize and digitalize our Erasmus+ participation will follow during the coming Erasmus+ period. The activities selected are based on previous activity and will continue under the new Erasmus-Programme. In case of additional activities, Fontys will inform the National Agency and amend the Erasmus Policy Statement.

## **Participation of Fontys in Erasmus+ activities:**

In line with Fontys mission and vision for internationalisation, we wish to achieve the following with the participation in the Erasmus Programme. The desired impact for Fontys is to provide our students with the best possible position on the labour market and be able to respond to the needs of the society and economic developments. Next to that, it is important to provide students the opportunity to develop themselves as civically engaged European citizens. We do this in a highly international region where competences, new insights and self-confidence are developed, thanks to internationalisation. Those are the key outcomes (expected impact) of the Erasmus+ activities at Fontys.

The necessary output to achieve this impact is linked to the priorities of the European Education Area. Fontys wants to achieve structural exchange and cooperation possibilities by participating in the Erasmus Programme. Students and staff from all Fontys schools can participate in Erasmus+ activities. Learning and studying abroad, as well as *internationalisation@home* activities, are the elements that prepares Fontys students for the labour market in the regions where we are active. The Erasmus+ Programme supports partnerships with Universities throughout Europe and the world to facilitate mobility activities. These quality-based partnerships benefit and provide sustainable content to the existing study programmes and research activities, on a structural base. Both students and staff members need to experience the benefit of the partnership in order to reach the desired impact. Fontys supports its students to graduate with an internationally oriented view on the world, ready to continue with the next step in their life.

In line with our efforts in the previous years, we will strive for an active use of the different possibilities the new Erasmus+ Programme will offer for international cooperation projects. International cooperation with other organisations and institutions fits in our institutional strategy. The aim is continuously modernise and innovate educational programmes at Fontys. This will benefit our students and the society. Not only in our regions, Brabant and Limburg, but also elsewhere. We are dedicated to actively contribute to the EU agenda on education and innovation, by joining forces with higher education institutes and stakeholders from other EU member states and countries.

### **Fontys institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy:**

For the upcoming strategic period we have pointed out the following focus points which we would like to address and achieve with partners from education, industry, government as well as non-government, profit as well as non-profit. These partners have a crucial role as they are providing an authentic environment for learning, research and innovation for students and staff. We will only be able to tackle societal challenges when working closely with these partners and therefore, we are actively seeking cooperation. Fontys provides a wide range of disciplines. We increase the efforts of cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration. Technology, Entrepreneurship and Creativity are therefore central Fontys' themes where the development of knowledge and skills is based on. At Fontys, this is labelled as TEC for Society. Our focus points for cooperation are:

- Authentic learning environment
- Applied research and innovation
- New teaching and education methods
- Digitalisation & flexibility of education
- Teaching and training of future skills
- Life Long Learning

Technological, societal and economic developments influence and change the world around us, now and in the future. Fontys delivers an important contribution to these necessary changes by meeting more than the needs of the student and the world of the future. Our significance also lies in our effect on the implementation of the changes in society – regional, national and international. Our added value lies in our proactive role – in the joint designing and development of a sustainable and fair society.

We deliver this added value by linking talent development to change in societal sectors and fields of work. Our function as an open knowledge institute is to provide the form by linking education and research to current societal issues. This is how we contribute to innovation in the field of work, the professional context and social sectors. We form the regional, national and international agendas in cooperation with our social partners. We are proactive and future-oriented, so that we can have the necessary impact on society, today and in the future.

We also invest in talents. For us, talent is a personal natural aptitude or characteristic that enables you to contribute to society. Talent allows people to use their strengths. Fontys is there for everyone who wants to discover and develop their talents at the higher vocational level and everyone who wants to continue their professional development. We offer space to all cultural and social backgrounds.

Fontys understands its role and is aware of its responsibilities within the region, the EU and the rest of the world. The Erasmus+ Programme opens doors to a strong and sustainable network with partners who have the same mission. The framework for collaboration that Erasmus+ provides on different levels helps to get ambitions of various partners aligned.

The participation in the Erasmus+ Programme allows Fontys to accelerate its innovation processes concerning societal impact. Specific focus points of the embedment of Erasmus+ in the internationalisation and modernisation strategy of Fontys are:

- Fostering of European and global citizenship of students and staff
- Development of international and intercultural competences and skills of students and staff
- Creating societal impact
- Taking a leading role in forming and shaping the future of our region, continent and the rest of the world
- Fostering solidarity and inclusion within Fontys and its wider network
- Stimulating new ideas, new concepts and innovations for a more sustainable world
- Pushing digitalisation and flexibility of programmes in Higher Education forward
- Facilitating Life Long Learning opportunities for all

## **Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1):**

### Network of Partners:

Mobility of students and staff starts with the network of Partners. The institutional strategy cannot be implemented without a sustainable network. This network is necessary for the participants to obtain valuable competences and to meet the desired impact of the Erasmus-Programme. The majority of cooperation with Partners and the choice of Partners takes place within every individual Fontys' school. They have autonomy in the way they implement the policy on internationalisation in their study programmes and choice of international partners. They make sure the quality of the education at the partner university is suitable for receiving students from Fontys and they ensure they work within the quality framework we are developing. Next to the international partners of the individual Fontys' schools, Fontys has as well centrally coordinated and chosen partners. We check those partners on quality of their education and research and evaluate regularly.

Until now, the focus of this Erasmus+ partner network was mostly European (KA103). Last year Fontys ran a pilot with cooperation with partner universities outside Europe (KA107). This type of mobility will continue in the future.

### Programme Management:

Team Internationalisation manages the Erasmus+ Programme at Fontys. The Erasmus-coordinator in this team is responsible for the correct implementation and management of the programme. The practical implementation is on the one hand done by the Internationalisation Coordinators at the Fontys Schools (e.g. inform and prepare participants, preparation of documentation for the mobility Abroad, such as learning agreement, course content and staff training content etc.). A dedicated team manages the funds and makes sure all regulations are met. Fontys has 1 Erasmus-coordinator that keeps the overview and 2 staff members that work on the processing of applications and scholarships. They are responsible for the overall management, selection of participants and financial management of the Erasmus+ Programme.

A support team at Fontys IT-department manages the IT-system that is used for all mobilities of Fontys, Mobility Online. They work closely together with the Erasmus+ team. That is why there is a smooth connection between the IT-system that participants use and necessary steps (e.g. Scholarship payment, language course and visa/accommodation application for incoming students). Fontys has a long experience in managing this Programme. We always look into where the improvements are possible. Especially those improvements that lead to a decrease of administrative burden on participants.

### Participation in networks:

European and National networks are an important source for Fontys to exchange ideas and practices when it comes to the implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme in practise. In addition, the National Agency is an important stakeholder.

### **Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) and Key Action 3 (KA3):**

Throughout the Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020, numerous Fontys schools from our campuses in Tilburg, Eindhoven, and Venlo have participated in Erasmus+ cooperation projects, thereby innovating higher education in their domains, including among others, engineering, logistics, nursing, arts, business management and teacher education. These projects are mostly strategic partnerships for innovation of higher education, but also include centrally administered project types (capacity building in higher education, forward looking project).

Pursuing our efforts from the previous years, we intend to take part in multiple cooperation projects during the new Erasmus+ programme period 2021-2027. Efforts will again be primarily geared up to actively promote and support the development and implementation of project partnerships for innovation of higher education (strategic partnerships, knowledge alliances), both as partner and project coordinator. Other potential partnerships will be explored when the opportunity arises, including KA2 partnerships for cooperation and excellence (capacity building, Mundus) and KA3 (policy development).

Aim is to activate even more Fontys schools to participate in Erasmus+ cooperation projects in collaboration with strategic partners from their international networks and with new partners. Thereby further strengthening the international profile of Fontys, and complementing our increased efforts to display and strengthen our applied research at European level. We believe that international partnerships and projects in both education and research can be mutually reinforcing and can benefit from an integrated approach. In 2019, Fontys has joined the UASNL network, consisting of 14 Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences that decided to work together for a stronger voice in Europe and to increase access to European networks and funding. The UASNL network partners acknowledge that valorisation and practice-oriented research is intertwined with their educational activities.

Every individual Fontys school has significant autonomy with regard to their involvement and commitment in EU funding bids and projects. We will continue our efforts at Fontys central level aimed at all Fontys schools to promote the different possibilities within the Erasmus+ programme. Furthermore, we will support new applications and projects. Both team Fontys Grant Office and Fontys team Internationalisation are situated at the Fontys central Department of Education and Research, ensuring information sharing and close collaboration in the support of Fontys schools. Fontys central department of Finances provides support to Fontys schools in implementation and administration of EU funded projects.

Our objective is to contribute to a higher success rate and increased access to EU funding. International cooperation projects in the framework of Erasmus+ KA2 and KA3 offer valuable opportunities for Fontys schools to work together with organisations and institutions in other countries on shared challenges and values, complementary to other EU funding programmes such as the Interreg cross-border cooperation programmes.

**Think Bigger:**

Fontys aims to be an educational institution that is ‘inspiring growth through support & challenges’ and to be an educational organisation at which students can grow and learn to think more laterally, i.e. to ‘think bigger’ (Fontys’ slogan). Fontys aims to achieve these objectives through the provision of support and challenges to its students, staff and all relevant stakeholders. The core objective is to promote an organisation-wide mentality that will result in continuous attention for quality improvement in terms of education, content and processes.

The envisaged impact of the mission is visible in Fontys Internationalisation Strategy. In this strategy, Fontys defined several focus areas. All have a connection with the participation of Fontys in the Erasmus+ Programme. The Erasmus+ Impact Tool, developed by the Dutch National Agency for Erasmus+, is a guideline for Fontys in defining the impact of the participation in the Erasmus+ Programme and in defining the implementation strategy for the focus areas. The desired impact for Fontys is to provide our students with the best possible position on the labour market and be able to respond to the needs of the society and economic developments. Next to that, it is important to provide students the opportunity to develop themselves as civically engaged European citizens. We do this in a highly international region. In this light, they develop new competences, new insights and self-confidence, partly thanks to internationalisation of students and staff. Those developments the key outcomes (expected impact) of the Erasmus+ activities at Fontys.

**Impact indicators:**

In order to reach this expected and desired impact, it is necessary to reach a certain output. The following quantitative output indicators can be used to monitor the process towards impact:

1. The annual targeted number of student/staff mobility is 1000 students and 350 staff that participate in KA103/KA107 mobility by the end of the new Erasmus-programme (2027). Students with fewer opportunities are encouraged to participate as much as others. At the start of the previous Erasmus+ programme, this was 327 (students) and 48 (staff) and for next year we applied for around 735 students and 220 staff mobilities.
2. Improved and acquired competences, new insights and self-confidence are values will be measured every year by the collection of survey answers from students and staff that participated in the Erasmus-mobilities. The programme has to contribute to this to a high extent with more than 75% of the participants noting that their participation in an Erasmus+ mobility, made them acquire or improve their competences. The timeline for this is that it will last the entire ECHE period of 2021-2027.

The targets can only be reached if the qualitative indicators are reached as well. For this, support to participants and satisfaction of this support by the central and decentral structures that are involved, are crucial. Solid and well-organised partnerships and modernisation are of the qualitative indicators for this. Therefore, the participation of Fontys in the Erasmus+ Mobilities Programme will be a success when the next 4 indicators are met according to the timeline:

3. With a new programme on Strategic Partnership management, Fontys wants to review their Partnership portfolio and organise this, in line with its vision on internationalisation, in a better structured and futureproof way. This process is expected to end in the beginning of 2021.
4. The current COVID-19 situation has shown that flexibility and innovative ways of international mobility need to be considered and experimented. Blended and virtual mobility will be taken into consideration and during the coming 7 years of the new programme, we expect these ways of mobility to become more standardized.
5. Furthermore, digitalization and modernisation of the Erasmus-procedures (EWP / European Student Card Initiative) will increase the quality of the service towards participants and will decrease the time everyone has to spend on it. This will increase the speed and efficiency the processing of Erasmus+ mobilities. The timeline for this is that it will start in 2020 and will be completed by 2022.
6. The implementation will be more environmentally friendly; following the latest European developments on mobility when additional funds are available for green traveling this will be implemented in the Erasmus+ Programme during the first 2 years of the new programme period.

**Targets for cooperation projects:**

We strive for improving internal registration and decision-making procedures. This will benefit the monitoring and reporting on numbers, budgets and results. It is also necessary, to ensure the embedment of project outcomes at Fontys and to strengthen their wide-scale dissemination. Furthermore, we will provide maximum support to new international cooperation applications and projects, in the framework of Erasmus+ as well as other national and EU funding programmes.

Fontys Department of Education and Research (Fontys grant office, team Internationalisation) will organise among other things Erasmus+ possibilities and peer-learning sessions. These are sessions for both Fontys staff already involved in international cooperation projects and newcomers. This facilitates and stimulates the internal exchange of knowledge and experiences between Fontys schools with regard to the development, implementation and administration of international projects and sharing of good practices. Thereby it contributes to the institutional capacity of Fontys to successfully participate in the Erasmus+ programme.