

## **ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT**

Academy of Social Sciences in Łódź (UNS) notices the potential of education and culture as factors supporting economic growth, creating jobs and social coherence, as much as a means to experience the European identity in all its diversity. For these reasons, the UNS desires to deepen the process of internationalization and take an active part in building the European Education Area. UNS in its activities aims to support education, training, and youth. It provides opportunities for students and staff to engage in international activities, fostering cooperation and exchange across borders.

Below are some of the fundamental aspects that the Academy of Social Sciences will follow under ECHE Charter that it is applying for:

1. **Inclusive Mobility:** Erasmus+ will encourage mobility for students, staff, and learners with diverse backgrounds, including those with fewer opportunities.
2. **International Cooperation:** The program introduced at UNS will promote collaboration and partnerships between educational institutions, businesses, and other relevant organizations across different countries.
3. **Quality and Relevance:** Erasmus+ will aim to enhance the quality and relevance of education and training by supporting innovation, modernization, and the development of new curricula and teaching methods.
4. **Recognition of Qualifications:** The program will support the recognition of qualifications and skills acquired through mobility periods, ensuring that they are acknowledged both within and outside the participating countries.
5. **Transparency and Recognition Tools:** Erasmus+ will provide tools and instruments such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) to ensure transparency and facilitate the recognition of studies and qualifications.
6. **Language Learning:** Emphasis will be placed on language learning, encouraging participants to improve their language skills and promoting linguistic diversity.
7. **Capacity Building:** Erasmus+ will aim to strengthen the capacity of education by providing high-quality experiences and opportunities.
8. **Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** The program will support innovation and entrepreneurship by encouraging collaboration between the education sector and businesses.
9. **Social Inclusion:** Erasmus+ will seek to promote social inclusion by providing opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds, fostering equal access to education and training.

10. Environmental Sustainability: There will be an increasing focus on integrating environmental sustainability into educational activities, aligning with broader EU goals for a sustainable future

The Academy is working to increase the size of funding opportunities and its financial autonomy so that it can develop as a dynamic and intellectually agile institution, ready to take risks, launch new programs and support emerging opportunities. The Academy is open and always supports the search of knowledge and development of institution and the growth of its potential. Being the place of many opportunities our institution sees this as a need to build its position among other universities and create grounds for partnerships. UNS aims at digitalisation, inclusion and sustainability of all its actions planned within the scope of ERASMUS+. By participating in ERASMUS Program our university would like to build a strong position in the academic world where recognition is one of the aims and should be pursued on every day basis. Modern academic world is a set of interweaving institutions, situations and options therefore the support of ERASMUS (both financial and organizational) can lead to further growth and build up of a strong unit. We would like to have the regional potential to be seen as a reliable and trustworthy organization which helps students and staff to develop, gain knowledge and increase the horizons of competence. All mobility periods will receive our recognition and will become part of the curriculum.

Our priorities for the 2021-2027 period are: – to increase the Academy's visibility in Europe and beyond – to complete the Course catalogue with the ECTS information package and publish it every academic year – to continue to maintain regular contact with partner institutions and students through monitoring visits and attendance by University staff at training sessions – to improve the contact between university staff and the International Relations Office through regular meetings, workshops and presentations in order to disseminate information and encourage further participation in all aspects of the Program – to develop and strengthen co-operation agreements with partner and program countries An important element of the vision is cooperation between partners from other countries in order to educate students to be best oriented in the modern world as well as developing their key competences needed for personal development, healthy and balanced lifestyle, higher chances for employment, active civic attitude and social integration. UNS makes it its priority to internationalize didactic and research, e.g. through exchanging students, scientific and administrative workers and teachers, as well as forming new strategic partnerships. The university is planning to introduce the policy further by participating in ERASMUS+ program. During the cooperation and mutual contacts, the sides of contract will act on the basis of common values while at the same time experiencing cultural and worldview diversity conditioned by history and specific problems of each nation.

By appreciating the phenomena of globalization and internationalization of the process of educating, the UNS wants to intensify the internationalization while at the same time introduce modern internal management and actively promote the university abroad, and

also participate more in educational programs of EU and outside EU. Rational management is an essential condition to realize the strategy of UNS. High quality of the administrative workers, together with aligning their competences with tasks they are given, is the fundament of success of our plans. We are planning to broaden the scope of cooperation with foreign centers, thus enabling our administrative workers to have access to the output of other countries in this respect, still raising the level of knowledge and qualifications as an essential element of professional career.

The actions within the Erasmus+ programme are also part of the goals of the Strategy of UNS, and they will support the university in its endeavor to internationalize and create a European profile. Thus, the participation of UNS in Erasmus+ programme will help realize the goals of the Strategy of the university, which will result in modernization of the university both in the realm of didactics, research and managing the university, and will help to build European Education Area.

We would like to fully use the opportunity of the Erasmus+ programme by taking part in the offered key activities:

- Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) – Learning mobility: The mobility of higher education students and staff Taking part in Key Action 1 will allow the internationalization of the didactic process, by e.g. exchange of students, scientific and didactic workers, which is a priority in the strategy of the university's development. Taking part in this action means practically also realizing another principle, which is digitalizing the university, to ensure more effective use of digital technology in teaching, learning and managing. We are planning to develop these actions gradually, starting from 2024 as the preliminary phase and build our potential year by year thus increasing the number of mobilities. Taking active participation in introducing European Student Card Initiative will go in line with realizing the postulate of Strategy of UNS in terms of technology and digitalization. The next step in the strategy for years of the 2021-2027 perspective will then be a consistent realization of a plan to modernize digital tools that have already been in use and implementing new technology for didactic, scientific and administrative purposes. The university, heading towards bigger scope of internationalization will realize KA1 through:

- Mobility of students in order to realize traineeships and part of their studies in a traditional form as well as blended mobility, especially encouraging this form of mobility to people from environments with more limited possibilities. To do that, UNS, in the following years, will consistently and continually realize the policy of equal chances and non-discrimination, complete and fair access to resources which the university offers and taking actions which are supposed to create conditions enabling the development of the whole academic community, including especially people with lower possibilities.

- The mobility of academic teachers in order to enable having classes with students and having didactic teaching together with methodical training in the scope of didactics,

especially when it comes to teaching digital competences used in the didactic process. The essential target of the mobility of the lecturers will then be improving the system of teaching students about the university cooperation, pursuing common education and research projects within the programme, and creating a system enabling the use of knowledge and experience of renowned scientists from abroad.

- Mobility of administrative workers for training. Our goal is high quality of management and administrative service of research and didactics. Therefore, the essential purpose of mobility of administrative workers will be systematically adapting them to work in an international environment with focus on quality, so that the university can meet all educational/ research/ administrative activities taken up in EU and outside EU and be flexible enough in integrating with international demands that meet real needs of the day
- University qualifications will be automatically recognized;
- The comprehension of foreign languages will widely grow;
- Strong feeling of European identity and appreciating cultural heritage of Europe, together with respecting the national diversity became a norm among our students, graduates and workers. University is planning to support the organizing and implementing of international (EU and outside EU) projects concerning cooperation in the realm of teaching and training within the programme.

Thus, it will relate to the following actions within projects, encouraging cooperation between organizations and institutions for creating strategic partnerships and exchanging good practices; creating partnerships for excellence, innovation; supporting the policy development and cooperation. The priority here will be introducing innovative educational solutions with the use of new digital and information technologies, preparing the youth for a success in the job market. Within the projects, as a result we want to create programmes of educating and training, including programmes in foreign languages, to adjust them to the requirements of the current job market and in the future create common MA studies. The university is going to encourage especially international cooperative projects concerned with teaching and training of science, natural sciences and technical sciences.

The participation in the projects will allow diversity and practical verification of educational and training offer. We will put special attention into projects which concentrate on the quality of teaching, service and the knowledge triangle: education-research-innovations. Interaction between the university and business asserts transfer of knowledge to the society and economic growth in Europe. The new system of making contracts and its digitalization will expedite and fasten the process of forming cooperation with partners and also will ensure the transparency of the roles of the sides of the projects and the rules of financing. In order to organize and implement international cooperation projects in the realm of

education, the internal development fund will be used, which is supposed to, among others, support teams working on international projects of the programme.

These enterprises will support the mobility of workers and students. The envisaged impact of participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on our institution The participation of UNS in the new perspective of Erasmus+ programme in years 2021-2027 will undoubtedly have vast impact on realizing the strategic objectives of the university. connected with internationalization, modernization and digitalization.

The benefits of the programme will be felt by all groups to which specific actions will be directed: students of all degrees as well as all university staff and the whole institution. We are expecting the didactic and international experience of lecturers gathered on European universities to help create a better didactic offer, which in consequence will mean doubling the number of university programmes in English offered to Polish and foreign students. In the future, it will create conditions to open, with cooperation of foreign partners, common studies ending with mutual/multiple diplomas and will enable reciprocal automatic recognition of degrees. The results of our actions, such as higher academic teachers' competences, modernizing the didactic offer and its better adjustment to the needs of the society and economy, and introducing new solutions as well as using digital technology in teaching and creating new didactic materials used e.g. in distance learning, will ensure high-quality education. The university will become more attractive for local and foreign students. The university would not be able to work effectively without efficient management and wellorganized, specialized administrative infrastructure.

We are expecting that the participation of the administrative staff in foreign trainings will support quality, modernization and internationalization of administrative service in the university, which will become a friendly workplace and study place. Social, linguistic, multicultural and digital competences acquired during trainings will help administrative workers overcome interpersonal, linguistic and technical barriers and will prepare them to work with foreign students, and in consequence, they will give more support to the participants of mobility. Training mobilities of the administrative staff will be a part of the career in UNS and it will be included in work evaluation, just as in case of mobilities of academic teachers.

They will allow raising of the level of knowledge and qualifications, and this will result in higher job satisfaction, engagement and openness to changes. The opportunity to introduce new efficient organizational solutions taken from foreign partners after trainings will raise motivation to work and identification with the university as a place where every worker, thanks to their engagement and creativity, has real impact on the development of the institution. The participation in foreign student mobility, studies and traineeships, will help develop students' key competences, including digital abilities and competences, language and multicultural competences, civic competences, competences connected with entrepreneurship, creativity and the sense of initiative. As graduates, thanks to acquired

competences as well as openness to new ideas and challenges of life in a globalized world, they will be more competitive on Polish, European and international labour market.

The support for students with smaller economic, social and cultural opportunities, and for the disabled, will give access to foreign exchange to a larger number of people. We wish that, thanks to the development of pro-ecological attitudes among students as well as implementing and promoting environment-friendly practices in the university situated in close proximity to trails and numerous open space reserves (forests, nature preserves and a national park), all students and graduates will consciously act for the good of the environment in all its aspects in the future.

Implementing and organizing the international Erasmus+ projects will be monitored by the university authorities and subordinate entities in order to ensure that the interinstitutional cooperation and the activities lead to balanced and sustainable results. The quality of participation and experiences will be monitored and analyzed through appropriate evaluation tools. Through raising the level of internationalization in all areas of functioning and participation in European Education Area, the university will increase the chances to use its educational and scientific-research potential. It will gain a European profile, and thanks to that, it will also gain a better position internationally. The mission of UNS in Łódź is to provide quality education in cooperation with representatives of employers and in accordance with their expectations.

What also counts is ensuring an attractive educational offer and continuously adapting it to the changing conditions of the labour market. We also strive to solve the problems of the socio-economic context of the higher education institution by engaging in research and expert activities. Our aim is to create an atmosphere conducive to expanding knowledge and developing professional skills that are key on the labour market, and to build good interpersonal relations with the student community and the socio-economic environment for joint development to meet expectations, opportunities and aspirations.

The pursuit of these goals coincides with the internationalisation of the educational process. Collaborating with institutions abroad, adapting the educational offer to European standards, developing teaching and expert staff and increasing the competitiveness of students and graduates of the Academy of Social Sciences by enabling them to gain experience at foreign universities are the most important elements of our mission, which we intend to develop through our participation in the Erasmus+ programme. The Academy of Social Sciences needs to be open to the process of internationalisation in today's world in order to successfully fulfil the tasks set out in its mission statement. Maintaining a high level of education, cooperation with the economic environment, adapting the educational offer to the changing labour market is nowadays conditioned by the introduction of an international and intercultural dimension to these processes. Such actions will also allow to have impact on the local scale in educational market, the promotion of cultural diversity, respect and tolerance, which are the most important values in the contemporary world.

The Academy of Social Sciences' strategic objectives are closely linked to the planned internationalisation of the educational process.

1. Education and improvement of the teaching process. By joining the Erasmus+ programme and implementing Key Action 1 (KA1), i.e. mobility of students, lecturers and university staff, it will be possible to improve the teaching process by learning from students and lecturers from abroad and by collecting information from students and lecturers of The Academy of Social Sciences going to universities abroad. The mobility process will positively influence the students' level of knowledge, skills and social competences, their level of foreign language proficiency, which in turn will translate into their self-esteem and self-confidence. This, in turn, will strengthen the position of exchange students on the labour market - not only in Łódź and nationally, but also in Europe. In this way, graduates of The Academy of Social Sciences will become an excellent showcase for the university, confirming with their competences the high level of education. The mobility of lecturers, in turn, will translate into the development of their working methods, thanks to which the improvement of the teaching process at the university will gain an international dimension. A natural consequence of these activities will also be the continuous development of the catalogue of classes taught in English.

2. Shaping an open and friendly learning environment. The cultural diversity that will result from the presence of students and lecturers from other countries at The Academy of Social Sciences will dynamically shape an open and friendly learning environment based on respect for diversity and tolerance. This atmosphere will also be strengthened by the experience of students, lecturers and staff of The Academy of Social Sciences going abroad (KA1).

3. Cooperation of the Academy with the socio-economic environment and apprenticeships in the educational process. The implementation of the programme, i.e. cooperation between organisations and institutions from abroad, will benefit the socio-economic environment of The Academy of Social Sciences and enable further practicalisation of the educational process. The experience gained by students, lecturers and university staff will allow the implementation of solutions applied in the European market, which should benefit the local socio-economic environment of the university. Cooperation with foreign institutions, e.g. in the field of student placements, will in turn significantly enhance the practicalisation of the education process.

4. Support for internationalisation processes: We see the process of internationalisation as a necessity resulting from socio-economic development. The Academy of Social Sciences's involvement in this process will become a reality through the implementation of ECHE Charter which consists of supporting development policy and cooperation. Drawing on the experience of foreign institutions and offering them solutions developed in Łódź will create an atmosphere of mutual trust and openness that will form the basis for building institutionalised rules for long-term cooperation.

5. Optimising the organisation and management of the university: Efficient university management translates into effective implementation of all the university's strategic objectives. Involvement in the Erasmus+ programme will enable the university to benefit from the experience of foreign universities - both through student, faculty and staff exchanges (KA1) and institutional cooperation (KA2). These experiences will enable the modernisation process of the university to be implemented internationally. Students will benefit from these experiences, through an increase in the quality of student services and an openness to the various needs and problems they face. The experience gained through involvement in the Erasmus+ programme will provide the basis for the Academy's development and will have a positive impact on its socio-economic environment.