

Erasmus Policy Statement (2021-2027)

In its mission statement, KU defines itself as a cosmopolitan university. Internationalisation is a cross-sectional task that affects all of the university's major activities. Traditionally, Europe has been a particular focus here. KU has been participating in the Erasmus programme since the 1990s, was one of the first universities in Germany to establish its own European studies programme and still maintains long-standing partnerships with almost 200 universities in Erasmus+ programme countries. With its participation in the Erasmus+ programme, KU wants to make its contribution to the implementation of the measures of the renewed EU agenda for higher education and the goals of the European Education Area.

With regard to the renewed EU agenda for higher education, KU responds to the very high demand for high-quality competences in Europe. It places particular emphasis on the acquisition of cross-cutting and key competences as well as on meaning and value orientation. The interdisciplinary programme Studium.Pro, which has been successively introduced in all degree programmes at KU, offers students the opportunity to acquire key competences, to deal with interdisciplinary topics and current problems in an interdisciplinary way, and to increase social and civic engagement. Attending interdisciplinary courses, acquiring key competences and social engagement at Erasmus partner universities can also be credited within the framework of Studium.Pro and integrated into the degree programme.

KU is responding to the increased demand for digital competences in particular by understanding digitalisation as a cross-cutting issue with its tenure-track programme "For a digital society oriented towards people". The junior professorships to be filled within this framework take up the advancing digitalisation in research and teaching at KU, complement each other in terms of subject matter and thus form a digitalisation cluster across faculties and disciplines. With its concept for promoting young academics, KU continues to respond to the need for good university teaching staff. It supports its academics in acquiring and developing didactic skills through various offers, especially from the university didactics department. In addition, the KU offers individual teaching coaching for first-time professors as needed, which is arranged by HR Development in cooperation with University Didactics.

As a Catholic university, KU can and would also like to contribute to the creation of inclusive and networked higher education systems, as called for in the renewed EU agenda. Based on a Christian understanding of the human being, KU's mission statement focuses on the person with his or her talents and potential - regardless of religion or worldview, nationality, ethnic, cultural or social origin, disability, gender, sexual orientation and age. Inclusion is a fundamental value at KU, which also significantly determines measures in the area of internationalisation. KU thus acts in line with the goal of the European Education Area that everyone should have access to quality education regardless of their social and economic background. The holistic idea of inclusion is to be lived and strengthened through participation in the Erasmus programme.

KU is a university with a strong network - building bridges between academia and society is also a value stated in the mission statement. It wants to consciously break down the barriers between the academic world and the rest of society and make knowledge available. In doing so, it networks sustainably with various actors in the region and strengthens the social engagement of its students. Through the conscious

promotion of mobilities in the area of service learning and the involvement of business and society in the region, participation in the Erasmus programme has a positive effect on the region and the regional economy by increasing the quality of academic education and teaching.

The Department of Education Innovation and Knowledge Transfer at KU bundles the transfer activities of the university and brings the latter two aspects together with the innovation idea of the renewal agenda. Among other things, it pursues the goal of strengthening the exchange of knowledge between science, politics, business and civil society and contributing to securing the quality of life and prosperity in the region with technological and social innovations. To this end, for example, information and advisory services on sustainable organisational development are being designed. The exchange of students and lecturers in the Erasmus programme expands these regional transfer activities with an international dimension, new ideas, suggestions and thus potential for innovation in the region.

As a state- and church-funded university, KU aims to make its own higher education system effective and efficient through internal cooperation and good resource management. With regard to Erasmus, KU has integrated funding opportunities for training activities in Europe into KU's own staff development programme (KU FIT). This gives staff a greater incentive to take part in training programmes abroad and to continue their international education. This project is also to be continued within the framework of Erasmus 2021-2027.

In line with the goal of the European Education Area that stays abroad for study and learning purposes become the norm, KU has established mobility windows in all degree programmes. In relation to its size, KU is among the leaders in Germany in teaching mobility - an area that is to be further expanded. In order to maintain this high level of mobility, KU's participation in Erasmus Key Action 1 "Mobility for students and university staff" is essential. In this context, the aim of enabling its graduates to enter the labour market as well as the academic qualification of its academics plays an outstanding role for KU. Participation in the Erasmus programme increases the mobility of students and lecturers and thus the quality and labour market relevance of academic education. This is achieved in particular through the promotion of key competences such as independence, critical thinking, acquisition of foreign language skills and intercultural competences as well as scientific exchange with an international scope.

Through the mobility windows and numerous double degree programmes, KU enables its students to learn or perfect two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue. The involvement of international professors at KU and teaching at partner universities within the framework of teaching mobility also strengthens the foreign language skills of the teaching staff, which in turn is indispensable for an international campus.

Beyond labour market qualification, networking, innovation and efficiency, participation in Erasmus 2021-2027 offers another important opportunity for KU students, faculty and staff - the chance to experience our European identity and to learn about and appreciate Europe's cultural heritage and diversity. This is not only a personal enrichment for each individual, but also strengthens the profile of the entire KU as a university open to the world and at the same time anchored in the Christian-European cultural area.