

ECHE 2014

D Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

The Institution agrees to publish this overall strategy (all three parts) on its website within one month after the signature of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education by the European Commission.

Please describe your institution's international (EU and non-EU) strategy. In your description please explain a) how you choose your partners, b) in which geographical area(s) and c) the most important objectives and target groups of your mobility activities (with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, including study and training, and short cycles). If applicable, also explain how your institution participates in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees (max. 5000 characters).

ASPETE is a distinctly Greek Higher Education Institution based in Athens, but our vision, aims and aspirations are international. ASPETE's modernization and internationalization strategy sets out how we propose to build on our long academic tradition of excellence and reputation to ensure that we maintain and even enhance an active presence in Europe and other parts of the world.

For ASPETE, partnerships with HE institutions worldwide not only assist in creating a distinctive educational experience for staff and students; they also allow ASPETE to adapt its mission and policies to a more competitive and globalised reality, and to take measures towards structural reforms to make the most of emerging international opportunities. In this context, ASPETE has built and continues to develop strong and effective partnerships at national and international level, encompassing joint projects, joint postgraduate degrees, inter-institutional Erasmus agreements for staff and student mobility, and general Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) that highlight potential areas of cooperation with HEIs both in EU and non-EU countries.

The establishment of formal international partnerships and collaborations is guided by ASPETE's framework for cooperation with highly ranked institutions and is aligned with quality processes. Inter-institutional agreements and MOU are signed and implemented based on a comprehensive understanding of the partner institution's mission and vision, compatibility of academic aims and objectives, and a relationship of trust and mutual respect. Other factors influencing the approval and/or initiation of agreements and partnerships include shared academic interests and targets, existing academic bonds, and specific mobility needs. Geographic and subject area balance is also considered to ensure both diversification and a good proportion of engagement opportunities and benefits for all our Departments. Priority is given regionally to Western, Central and Eastern Europe, but partnerships in other parts of the world that promote the expansion and consolidation of ASPETE's international orientation are equally welcome. It is our strong belief that building strategic, boundary-spanning partnerships on a focused number of countries and regions within and beyond Europe can offer greater added value to all parties involved. We also share the view that learning mobility helps individuals enhance their professional, social and intercultural skills and employability, which is the cornerstone of the internationalization and modernization of education and an important tool for the further development of the European higher Education Area. In this context and to this end, the most important objectives and target groups of ASPETE's mobility activities are:

- promotion of mobility activities only within the framework of prior duly signed inter-institutional agreements establishing the roles and responsibilities of the different parties, as well as their commitment to quality criteria in the selection, preparation, reception and integration of mobile participants;
- visibility of processes and well-defined activities – before, during and after mobility – indicative of ASPETE's mobility culture, to ensure successful, cost-efficient and sustainable mobility results of high quality;
- student credit mobility for studies at Bachelor and Master levels, as well as short cycle programmes, between participating countries, and to and from non-participating countries;
- student credit mobility for traineeships/work placements in enterprises at Bachelor and Master levels, as well as short cycle programmes;
- HEI academic staff mobility within HEIs or to other relevant organisations in participating and non-participating countries to teach and/or to be trained;
- HEI non-academic staff mobility within HEIs or to other relevant organisations in participating and non-participating countries to be trained;
- staff mobility from enterprises to deliver courses or workshops in specific subject areas of interest to ASPETE's undergraduate students;
- provision of equal mobility opportunities to all potential participants, including those from under-represented/disadvantaged groups;
- selection of mobile students and staff irrespective of their characteristics and award of grants in a fair, transparent and documented way and development of non-discrimination policies;
- full recognition of student mobility outcomes in terms of ECTS earned (inclusion in the final record of student achievements/Diploma Supplement);
- recognition of the importance and acknowledgment of the results achieved by staff members engaged in individual mobility (staff evaluation reports or equivalent);

- Joint Masters degrees for double/joint master programmes of high quality, delivered by consortia of HEIs from participating countries, with possible participation of a HEI from non-participating countries, to encourage high quality student mobility at Master level and to strengthen transnational and international cooperation. ASPETE is currently actively involved in the planning, promotion and implementation of the Joint Postgraduate Programme “M.A. in Education (Education Sciences)”, in cooperation with Roehampton University, London, UK. This joint degree is a successful example of transnational cooperation, indicative of ASPETE’s commitment to such academic ventures.

ASPETE acknowledges the key contribution of mobile students and staff, and of the participation in European and international cooperation projects, to the quality of its higher education programmes and the spectrum of its own mission and vision. ASPETE also undertakes to contribute to the European Union’s Modernisation Agenda by participating in further strategic partnerships, knowledge alliances, networks, and capacity building projects, and by promoting cross sector cooperation with other educational sectors.

If applicable, please describe your institution’s strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme (max. 2000 characters).

ASPETE undertakes to organize and implement the following types of international cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects funded under the Programme:

- Strategic partnerships to foster structured and long-term cooperation among HEIs and with key stakeholders (enterprises, local/regional authorities, other education and research institutions, social partners) ref. the organization and implementation of short-cycle further training and/or specialization programmes in a number of disciplines, including pedagogical and teaching competence programmes to meet the needs of in-service or prospective teachers. Commission and cooperation in high impact research of mutual interest is also a priority.
- Knowledge alliances within the University-Business initiative to create new multidisciplinary curricula to promote entrepreneurship within education as well as developing other transferrable skills such as real-time problem solving and creative thinking.
- International cooperation and capacity building projects between other HEIs in the participating countries and the partner countries (mainly neighboring third countries) to improve capacity and support the modernization and internationalization of Higher Education in the partner countries through distance learning initiatives. Guidelines, procedures and assessment criteria to ensure relevant agreements are maintained and regularly reviewed for quality, compliance against obligations and performance, effective communication between partners etc, are developed from constituencies within ASPETE and potential partners. These normally include the following steps: Initiation (aim identified, suitability of partners, request for agreement), Approval, Implementation and Monitoring in line with stipulations and terms of Agreement, Review and Assessment.

Please explain the expected impact of your participation in the Programme on the modernisation of your institution (for each of the 5 priorities of the Modernisation Agenda*) in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve (max. 3000 characters).

The expected impact of ASPETE’s participation in the Programme for each of the 5 priorities of the Modernisation Agenda, in terms of the policy objectives ASPETE intends to achieve, is as follows:

1. Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs:

ASPETE undertakes to enhance the quality of its study programmes, as well as the way they are delivered, to make them more attractive, cost-efficient, and employability oriented; this is believed to meet the projected growth in knowledge-intensive jobs, and sustain the European social model. It will also attract a broader cross-section of society into higher education, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Funding of tailored guidance to inform study options and reduce drop-outs will be a priority. ASPETE also undertakes to adopt and support a more research-intensive culture, and promote research in engineering education and pedagogy.

2. Improving the quality and relevance of higher education:

Involving labour market institutions in the redesign and delivery of its study programmes, introducing electives and tailored seminars on entrepreneurship, and including practical experience/traineeships in courses offered are institutional activities that ASPETE will further promote to foster employability and improve the relevance of HE. ASPETE is also committed to the better monitoring of the career paths of its graduates in cooperation with its Liaison/Career Office. Exploiting the benefits of ICTs and other new technologies to enrich teaching, improve learning experiences, support personalized learning, facilitate access through distance learning, and virtual mobility are among ASPETE’s priorities.

3. Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border co-operation:

ASPETE shares the view that learning mobility helps individuals increase their professional, social and intercultural skills and employability. In this context, ASPETE is committed to systematically support learning mobility, eliminate unnecessary barriers, and adopt an institutional mobility culture that involves

all of its members; such a culture will include full recognition of mobility results and credits earned abroad through effective quality assurance, and consistent use of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement.

4. Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development:

ASPETE shares the view that the contribution of higher education to jobs and growth, can be enhanced through close, effective links between education, research and business – the three sides of the “knowledge triangle”. Hence, ASPETE undertakes to stimulate the development of entrepreneurial and innovation skills in all its engineering education disciplines, and to promote innovation through more interactive learning environments. In cooperation with its Liaison/Career Office, ASPETE will also encourage cooperation with labour market stakeholders through reward structures, incentives for multidisciplinary and cross-organisational cooperation, and the reduction of regulatory and administrative barriers.

5. Improving governance and funding:

Sustaining and expanding high-quality higher education systems is likely to necessitate additional sources of funding, public or private. To cope with the challenge, ASPETE will encourage a more careful targeting of spending, focus efforts on its individual strengths, develop incentives to support a diversity of strategic choices, and facilitate access to alternative sources of funding.