



Erasmus Policy Statement

LAB University of Applied Sciences (LAB) is an institution offering education leading to a first and second cycle UAS degrees, Open University studies, continuing education and research, development and innovations services. Education is offered in the fields of business, health care and social services, tourism and hospitality, design and fine arts, and technology.

The strategic focus areas are based on the higher education institution's strengths and interest groups' needs: circular economy, design, commercialization of innovations and service innovations for health and well-being. Especially LAB wants to emphasize its potential in growth and internationalization in research, development and innovations (RD&I).

The strategy of LAB promotes sustainable collaboration with partner institutions, companies and other organizations to generate international and professional competence and innovation as well as support the regional strategies in South Karelia and Päijät-Häme. Mobility and international cooperation projects are the main tools for the internationalization of our curricula, learning environment and operations. By participating in these key activities we aim to strengthen the quality and competitiveness of our programmes and enhance the professional, social and intercultural skills of our students and staff. The efficient integration of mobility into education and RD&I activities is secured at both institutional and faculty level.

LAB has active partnerships in both EU and non-EU countries. The selection of partners is based on the objectives of the strategy and shared quality principles. The criteria include multidisciplinary cooperation opportunities, and the commitment to develop RD&I cooperation. Partnerships are initiated at faculty level and the selection is based on the compatibility of academic profiles and curricula. Partnerships are approved and monitored at both institutional and faculty level. In the future, our objective is to strengthen the multidisciplinary cooperation in our focus areas.

The majority of the mobility and international cooperation projects in LAB are based in EU countries. The selection of partners for student mobility takes into account the language policy of LAB and the objectives to support the learning of most commonly spoken languages in Europe. Outside EU our main geographical areas for internationalization are Russia and Asian countries.

LAB addresses an interest to increase the mobility of students, teachers and other staff to and from partner universities and also amount of joint RD&I projects. Both the first and second cycle students can participate to the exchange programmes. The aim is to further develop these mobilities by better enabling the internationalisation and mobility periods into the curricula of all degree programmes.

The number of exchange students is agreed in bilateral agreements with the partner institution and students are nominated by the sending institution. In all mobility LAB follows the rules of the exchange programme in question.

Special attention is paid to under-represented groups in incoming mobility, such as students with

disabilities to secure that they can enter and move in the faculties easily. For outgoing disable mobility LAB sees a partner which is able to receive a disable person.

LAB has many double degree agreements with the partner institutions. To create a double degree LAB and the partner must have a long experience in cooperation in many fields of operations. The programmes are carefully evaluated and curricula must match well for both parties. Curricula are developed with the partner higher education institution.

Our institutional procedures and processes maintain, develop and enhance the high quality of the mobility. Internationalisation at LAB is seen as a process which is led with a goal-oriented approach. The progress is systematically assessed by considering education, RD&I and regional impact.

The objective of LAB is to generate international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training to enhance the international know-how for the development of our curricula, learning environments and operations. Goal is also to tighten cooperation with globalizing companies and companies serving international customers by joint projects involving both students and staff.

The objectives, tasks and roles of participants in each international cooperation project are specified at both institutional and faculty level. Participation in international cooperation projects is regarded an important aspect of the professional development of students and staff. The allocation of the workload for both planning and implementation of the projects guarantees the staff's commitment. Students are encouraged to participate in the projects and by participating they gain credits towards their degree. The dissemination of the project activities and results is considered throughout the projects' lifecycle.

Expected impact of our participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on the modernization of our institution

LAB contributes to the new EU agenda for higher education with the following impact:

1. Tackling skills mismatches and promoting excellence in skills development.
In order to improve the quality and relevance of our education, we systematically cooperate with companies and other organisations in the design, delivery and assessment of our programmes. Our competence-based curricula encourage flexible learning paths and we provide part-time, virtual and distance learning. In addition to degree programmes, we provide further education opportunities for adults in the labour market. We invest in continuous professional development of our staff, by allocating working time for professional development and for participating in mobility and national and international RD&I activities. Students are encouraged to participate in the RD&I activities, which are often real-world problems. Strong connections to working life are also seen in curricula, as work placements are integrated to all first cycle curricula.
2. Building inclusive and connected higher education systems
In order to ensure that LAB is inclusive and connected to the community, we have strong connections with schools, local companies, other organizations and higher education institutions both in Finland and abroad. Our both campuses in Lappeenranta and Lahti are safe and accessible for all students and also to disabled persons. We are building also virtual campus which will make all students equal no matter in which town they are physically studying and enables more flexibility in studies.

3. Ensuring higher education institutions contribute in innovation

LAB aims to be innovative higher education institution and innovation is one of the key focus areas of LAB. Our strength is in research, development and innovation and education, and we aim to strongly increase our share in RD&I projects.

Our goal is to enhance regional cooperation and the core activity is on developing sustainable partnerships with regional operators. The aim is to build a regional innovation hub to strengthen the knowledge-transfer and to promote international and multilateral RD&I on regional competence focus areas.