Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS)

In order to complete this section, please refer to the instructions given below. Please note that your EPS shall be given wide visibility in your institution and must be published on the web page of your institution. The EPS should set out the overall Erasmus co-operation strategy of your institution in relation with its mission statement, underlying its Erasmus cooperation plan as well as any other activities to be proposed in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP).

1.a) Please describe clearly your institution's strategy, objectives and priorities for its Erasmus activities (mobility, multilateral projects and networks, etc.) and any other actions in the context of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

- What is the institution's previous experience in international exchange and cooperation programmes?
- How does the participation in the Erasmus programme relate to the overall international strategy of the institution?
- What are the institution's priorities/objectives to be reached by participating in the Erasmus programme?
- What are the specific activities to be implemented in the framework of the Erasmus programme (e.g., exchange of students and staff, development of cooperation with higher education institutions or other types of institutions, participation in Erasmus multilateral projects/networks)?

Zöppelín University (or ZU) is a fully recognized and accredited institution of higher education by the State of Baden-Württemberg and the German KMK-Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung. Its programs are formally accredited by the FIBAA and ACQUIN accreditation agencies. Today ZU has 53 partner schools in 23 nations. The latest partners within the EU framework are in Italy, Estonia, Latvia, and Poland. Hence, ZU has gathered significant experience already in intentional exchange and has been in the process of exchanging students, faculty and staff for the past 6 years.

Participation in the Erasmus LLP program is absolutely essential for our success. The Erasmus network enables schools to find one another for partnerships, exchange information crucial to agreements and exchanges, provides conferences that are key to learning and improving our internationalization efforts, and, of course, provides students and faculty with much-needed financial support. Without this assistance the school's internationalization strategy would not prove successful.

ZU's primary strategy in the coming years is twofold. First, believing that Eastern Europe is key to European growth and stability, ZU plans to enhance the number of partner schools and internships there considerably in the coming years. Because ZU now offers 1/3 of its undergraduate programs and 1/2 of its graduate programs in English, we feel strongly that Zöppelín University will become a place of interest for Eastern Europeans. ZU has already undertaken a fair number of student exchanges in Eastern Europe. The local industry in Friedrichshafen also is very interested in Eastern Europe, a fact that will generate internships in the future for our outgoing students as well as incoming Eastern European (and other) students.

Second, ZU will continue to expand its partnership base in the Spanish-speaking world. Spanish is rapidly becoming a major factor in terms of overseas student exchanges. Already in the past year ZU added new partner schools in Spain and more are planned for this year. And, as is the case with Eastern Europe, many companies in our area are interested in Spain as a potential place of investment, which in turn translates into new internships for incoming and outgoing students.

Of growing importance is the exchange of faculty and staff within the EU. Faculty exchanges are planned now for Latvia in 2010 and more are envisioned in the future.

All of these ideas and projects—and more—will take place within the Erasmus LLP program for student exchange and the promotion of internships.
1. c) What kind of arrangements, if any, does the Institution ensure to comply with non-discrimination objectives (e.g. actions related to gender equality, integration of disabled students and staff, enhancement of social and economic cohesion and combating of xenophobia and racism)?

In terms of ensuring the visibility of the Erasmus Charter and the university's Erasmus activities, students, faculty and staff will be invited to attend several on-campus briefings and workshops on the Erasmus program. The ZU International Office will brief all the incoming and outgoing students about the diverse programs and opportunities available to them within the framework of the Erasmus LLP program. Outward-bound students will be advised additionally by their departmental advisors.

Zeppelin University's official policies have always strongly prohibited any form of discrimination based on ethnic background, race, gender, sexual orientation, or physical ability. New Europe-wide laws and policies against discrimination were immediately implemented by Zeppelin University. The international orientation of the university's student body, faculty, and the global spread of its partner network (partner schools in 23 nations) render any discriminatory practices at ZU unthinkable.

2. Quality of academic mobility activities:

What kind of specific measures are implemented in the institution to ensure highest quality in academic mobility activities?

Details should be provided in particular on: recognition and credit systems, the provision of information on curricula, information and counselling of outgoing students, tutoring and integration of incoming students, provision of student services (in particular accommodation), preparatory and refresher language courses, facilitation and acknowledgement of staff mobility.

Zeppelin University requires its students to apply for overseas placements, whether to study or to work in the capacity of internships, well in advance. All students must have a minimum of a 2.5 grade-point-average (ECTS grade scale) to qualify for an Erasmus placement. Student applications, partner schools, and internships are carefully screened. ZU also requires students to have solid language skills in the language of instruction or work before they accept a placement.

At the undergraduate level, all students at Zeppelin University are required to complete two internships before graduation (at the graduate level, one internship is required). One of these must occur outside German-speaking nations. These internships are anchored in the university’s curriculum and are awarded 18 ECTS points, 8 per internship. Each internship experience amounts to approximately 240 hours, or roughly 8 weeks (or more, time permitting).

Internships may only be completed at institutions approved by Zeppelin University. Internship providers must agree to the internship guidelines set by ZU. Once the position is approved by ZU, the internship provider and intern must develop an internship contract. A contract may be generated by the internship provider, or ZU will provide a contract. Both the student and the internship provider create an internship plan that adheres to the chronological and academic content requirements of ZU. Students must coordinate in advance with their academic advisor to ensure a fit between the content of the internship and their field of study.

Following the internship experience, students are required to file a 10-page final report with their supervising professor. Only upon final review of the report and the submission of a student evaluation of the whole internship experience will the intern receive final academic credit. The registrar’s office (or office of records) maintains all internship reports for review over a period of years.