



Erasmus Policy Statement of Akdeniz University

It is widely appreciated today that the internationalization of higher education is the most important item on the agenda of universities. Internationalization in higher education is defined as "the institution of the international dimension of higher education teaching, research and service to be included as a systematic process of function". Internationalization which increases understanding of higher education contributes to an increase in the quality of research and education in universities, as well as strengthening their regional and global role and changing the concept of the uniform university. It is necessary to have a healthy functioning strategy in order to successfully carry out the process of internationalization. In this strategy, international students are the most important component in the process. Similarly, it is very important for the internationalization of universities that they offer a suitable academic environment in which international guest researchers (sabbatical) can deliver lectures and pursue their research activities.

Within Akdeniz University it was clear that there was insufficient and ineffective coordination between the Branch Directorate of Foreign Relations (responsible of bilateral cooperation and European Union Education and Youth Programmes), the Bologna Coordination Office and the Farabi Coordination Office in the way their external Relations activities were being conducted. This situation led to units engaging in independent operations when they should have been coordinating with each other and benefiting from each other's outputs and activities. In addition, due to the dispersed structure within which they were operating, it was not possible to identify an internationalization strategy for our University which was both applicable and sustainable in the face of growing global competition in higher education. Therefore "The International Relations Office (IRO)" was established as the link between the Head of International Relations and the offices created to represent the 5 main fields of activity; the EU Education and Youth Programme, International Cooperation and Publicity, the Bologna Process, the Farabi Programme and the Mevlana Programme. In addition, in order to ensure an efficient level of communication for all internationalization activities, the International Relations Coordination Board was established in order to ensure there was effective coordination between the units, and to monitor all activities carried out by the International Relations Office within the new structure (<http://uio.akdeniz.edu.tr/organization-scheme>).

An Internationalization Strategy Board (BIS) has also been established within the structure of the International Relations Office to identify and direct the internationalization strategy of our university, and is expected to take on a very important role. Enquiries regarding possible international cooperation received by our university are evaluated for their content by the academic staff of the relevant unit who will decide whether they are acceptable or not. Although we have no specific policy regarding geographical area, our future strategy is to encourage cooperation with as wide a range of countries around the world as we can, because most of our present inter-institutional cooperation projects are with European countries within EU Programmes. Our other main priority for the near future is to increase the scope of cooperative activities in the fields of Curriculum Development, Thematic Networks, Intensive Programmes, and the Erasmus Mundus project. Among our successful projects are the Euromaster (<http://euromaster.akdeniz.edu.tr/en>) Joint Master's Programme with Hamburg University, a two-year programme which is financially supported by the DAAD and BMBF and which has prepared graduates for professional employment in a wide range of areas.

The Dual Turkish-German Master Degree Program in International Material Flow Management (IMAT) (imat.akdeniz.edu.tr/imat-admissions-at-au) is a 2-year programme which deals with the technical aspects of transforming a material-throughput-society into a sustainable Circular Economy. This study programme, which is



Erasmus+



run on the unique Environmental Campus in Birkenfeld in Germany and Akdeniz University in Turkey. Our next project will be a significant programme dealing with space sciences in cooperation with Liege University in Belgium.

We have experienced no problems with discrimination since the implementation of the programme in 2003. The selection of students taking part in the programme is carried out by a commission consisting of members of the University management, the Institutional Erasmus Coordinator. The selection process is transparent, and all the results with details can be found on the Akdeniz University web site. Until now the participation has been 46% female and 54% male, but female students are actively being encouraged to participate more, and the same is true for disabled students.