

## 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).

a) Please describe briefly your institution's strategy, objectives and priorities for its Erasmus activities (mobility, multilateral projects and thematic networks, etc.) and any other actions in the context of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013).

b) Please also provide information on the following points:

What specific actions are planned to give visibility to Erasmus activities and what type of publicity will be given to the Erasmus University Charter and the EPS?

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)?

The Agricultural University of Athens (A.U.A.), the oldest Greek Higher Educational Institution in Agricultural Sciences is strongly committed to contributing at the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Declaration). The internationalization has always been a strategic priority and its ever expanding international activities are reflected to more than one hundred Erasmus Bilateral Agreements, the running of integrated programmes of study (master courses) with fellow European institutions leading to recognised double or joint degrees and the participation in innumerable European research projects. For the period 2007-2013 our Institution's objectives will be to further stimulate and improve the quality of all mobility activities having in mind the increasing interest of prospect incoming and outgoing students and teachers. Given the accumulated, valuable experience gained from other Erasmus activities such as Thematic Networks and the Leonardo Da Vinci Programme, the A.U.A. will notify its European presence by greater involvement with innovative Erasmus project proposals. Restructuring the development of European credit accumulation system to all our faculties and reviewing the syllabus according to ever changing needs of agricultural science and education are our top priorities for the next years. Furthermore, we are considering the offering of some courses taught in the English language for the further enhancement of our Institution's attractiveness.

Actions planned to give visibility to the Erasmus activities include dissemination of all relevant information to the academic community, organisation of regular seminars for students and teaching staff members and up to date all information provided on the AUA web page regarding place announcements and selection procedures. Once awarded by the European Commission the Erasmus University Charter and the European Policy Statement will be presented to the educational community via the AUA's web page and a special article will be included in our magazine "TRIPTOLEMOS". Our Institution's fundamental principles are respect for human rights and fight against inequality, racism, xenophobia. Each year A.U.A. welcomes students and teaching staff from all over the world and facilitates their stay to the best of its abilities. All visitors to the University have the same basic rights and obligations with home students. Within this framework the principle of gender equality constitutes one of our awarding criteria to the selection procedure of Erasmus outgoing students and teaching staff when applying from the same Faculty. Regarding the integration of disabled students and staff, so far we haven't face any situation of that nature, although all announcements regarding special Erasmus grants and arrangements are widely publicized. All visitors are helped throughout their social integration process by fellow Greek students and xenophobia and racism have never been issues in our University

Quality of academic mobility activities:

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

Details should be provided 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, support and acknowledgement of staff

mobility.

Continuous improvement of the mobility quality has always been our concern. The ECTS is key mobility tool and all faculties have established and are implementing it (using related documents). ECTS info catalogues are publicised on internet and we are in process of updating them. The study programme outgoing students follow abroad is agreed and fully recognised in advance. The AUA is working on final technical steps for the inclusion of Diploma supplement. The AUA has signed more than 100 Bilateral Agreements offering its students a wider range of hosting Institutions (list of Partners and relevant exchange information are available on internet). Information (AUA website, personal contacts, info sessions) and counselling for outgoing students is a continuous process throughout mobility stages, from preparation to completion of Erasmus studies. In addition to this, our Institution provides extra financial support to all Erasmus outgoing students. Equal attention and tutoring is given to incoming students prior and during their stay at AUA. Incomers enjoy the same rights to the Greek students; free meals, free access to library facilities, student discount card. Furthermore, until recently the AUA was funding all incoming students for attending Greek Language courses. From this year onwards we organise and offer on campus Greek and English language courses to foreign students, tuition free. Accommodation is still an issued to be solved, since our Institution doesn't have Dormitories. The International Office assists all incomers in finding accommodation. As far as preparatory and refresher language courses concerns, we must emphasize on the fact that it's prerequisite for our students to have proven good knowledge of the language used at hosting institution before their studies abroad (internal selection criteria) ensuring the linguistic quality of the mobility. The participation of academic staff in Erasmus mobility activities is recognised during career evaluation.

Quality of student placement activities:

What kind of specific measures are implemented to ensure high quality in student placements? Give details on how the work-programme and the placement agreement are prepared and implemented. Please describe the practical arrangements agreed between the parties. Please specify also the monitoring and evaluation of the placement period as well as its recognition in the curriculum.

Our University cooperates with Technological Educational Institute of Athens (TEI Athinon) which manages and finances student/graduate placements under Leonardo Da Vinci Programme. Due to limited financial resources and despite the increasing interest of our students/graduates, Leonardo Da Vinci scholarships are awarded only to a very small number of applicants. After announcement and set selection criteria (best academic performance, good proven knowledge of working language, student's personality) our Institution identifies the suitable candidates who fit to the placement vacancies and training project options. The applications are sent to the corresponding companies and following a well-structured project description of mutual interest, the trainee sign Agreements with AUA, TEI Athinon and the hosting Company or research Institution. The trainee is obliged to submit to the TEI Athinon placement certification by the hosting company and also interim, placement and final reports. Close collaboration of the staff supervising the placement is used to evaluate each practical training. According to AUA Senate's Council Decision 316/23-03-2004 all student placements under Leonardo Da Vinci Programme are fully recognised. Regarding the students' placements in AUA, we should note that our laboratories are qualified and most of them are often hosting foreign students doing their training period.