

Fulda University of Applied Sciences (FUAS) was founded in 1974. It has about 9,700 students, amongst them approx. 1,250 international students, 700 staff members with 160 tenured professors. FUAS has 8 departments that cover a broad range of subjects: Applied Computer Sciences, Nursing and Health Sciences, Business, Food Technology, Social and Cultural Sciences, Nutritional, Food and Consumer Sciences, and Social Work.

Internationalization plays a key role for the future success of academia and shall become a profile-building element in developing Fulda University further over the next years. In 2018, FUAS underwent the "HRK Audit Internationalisierung der Hochschulen" (Audit of the German Rectors' Conference for the "Internationalisation of HEIs in Germany") and was awarded the corresponding certificate. The results of that process were translated into our new internationalization strategy 2021 – 2025. The internationalization strategy 2021-2025 forms part of our institutions' Development Plan which was adopted in February 2020 by the University Board.

Internationalisation, interculturality and intercultural integration are integral parts of our vision. We prepare our students for the global job market and increase our attractiveness by offering more and more international (English taught or bilingual) study programmes. We support the study success in order to activate and support civic engagement and active citizenship. International and intercultural exchange on campus (internationalisation at home) shall be supported further, demographic change in the region needs more qualified and educated persons, thus we contribute to our regional development. Further priority is given to an increasing number of student and staff exchange as well as to the strategic and further development of our cooperation network, also with regard to participation in international research projects.

The Education and Training Policy 2020 still sets the framework and objectives towards a European (Higher) Education Area in which our internationalisation strategy could be embedded:

- "Make lifelong learning and mobility a reality
- Improve the quality and efficiency of education and training
- Promote equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship
- Enhance creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training"

The overarching vision of FUAS is to become a truly „**international(ised) university**". This conviction is reflected in one of four strategic goals of the internationalization strategy. A second strategic goal addresses the necessity of intercultural understanding, intercultural classrooms and diversity. Thus, **interculturality** is to be included and brought into all areas and to all members of the institution. The remaining strategic goals aim at international and home students respectively: The **number of international students** as well as the **graduate rate shall increase** significantly. At the same time, all home students shall gain intercultural and international competences.

In the end, all members of Fulda University shall have gained international and / or intercultural competence at the end of the programme period.

Furthermore, the institutional strategy stresses, amongst others, the importance of internationalization in Research and Transfer as well as transversal topics like Digitalization, Inclusion and better access for disadvantaged groups, Further Education for administrative staff, civic engagement and sustainability.

International University Business Cooperation has been an important objective of the internationalization agenda of Fulda University. This is reflected in the role of the University as leader of the Erasmus+ consortium (KA108) "Regional Network for EU-traineeships and university-business cooperation" and the European COSME (Erasmus for young entrepreneurs) consortium "OPEN-EYE". The strategic objective for the period 2021-2025 is to maintain and further develop this role as part of an international approach to the "knowledge square" – linking the areas of research, education, transfer and service to society. Fulda University will continue using its membership in European networks such as Leo-Net or EUN to contribute to the further development of European mobility as well as European research and innovation programmes and potential synergies among them. Fulda University plans to further increase its engagement in European networks in the future.

Fulda University is located in an economically relatively strong region in the federal state of Hessen with predominantly SMEs.

In times of lacking experts on the job market, it is more important than before that FUAS contributes to educating highly qualified, professionally and socially skilled young adults with international competencies for the regional as well as the global job market.

In order to achieve these goals, a strong international cooperation network is needed: the new programme opens the chance to rethink the European network, monitor cooperations and establish new links. Regions such as Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus Region shall be explored further.

Moreover, we aim at participating in development cooperation programmes - an area where FUAS still has a lot of potential and where the Erasmus programme can help, e.g. with KA 107 or other projects with an international dimension. Two main target regions will be Southern and Sub-Sahara Africa and the Middle East where FUAS can profit from already existing cooperations or make use of KA107 to foster and develop cooperations.

FUAS pursues the ambitious goal to address all policy goals which shall lead to a harmonized and high-quality European Education Area, these goals shall be accomplished through various measures, supported by the Erasmus programme, such as:

- Increase of outgoing and incoming student mobility
- Increase in number of international students up to 20%
- Application of ECTS tools for qualitative monitoring of mobilities
- More integrated mobility semesters
- Full Implementation of European Student Card Initiative, incl. Online Learning Agreement and Erasmus+ App
- Foster language learning
- Mutual and Automatic Recognition of stays abroad
- Incentives for doing a "Green mobility"
- Increase the number of visiting teaching staff
- Foster teaching and administrative staff exchange
- Promote measures for internationalisation@home, such as introduce international staff training weeks and intercultural training activities

- Cross-sectoral cooperations (schools and industry)

The ECHE principles serve as a qualitative monitoring tool and will be applied to all actions and measures taken. Fulda University is committed to the principles of non-discrimination, diversity, inclusion and transparency. This is stipulated in the institution's anti-discrimination strategy of 2017; in the same year, FUAS was awarded the diversity certificate "Shaping diversity" by the "Stifterverband" which was the result of an audit process, put forward in 2014.

It is our strong belief that through the Erasmus programme actions, a significant contribution and progress can be made to bring us closer to achieving the milestones and change ways positively in the areas addressed by the European Commission in their working paper of January 2020, which include the "Green Deal", "The Digital Age", an "Economy for the People", a "Strong Europe in the world", "Fostering Democracy in Europe" and "Promoting our European way of life".