

ERASMUS Charter for Higher Education 2021-2027 European Policy Statement

HSD Hochschule Döpfer, specializing in health and social higher education with programs in social work, nursing, therapy sciences, psychology, and medical pedagogy, is strategically planning to actively participate in Erasmus+ actions. Our goal is to further increase the quality of education, promote international cooperation and offer enriching opportunities for students and employees.

The Erasmus+ measures fit seamlessly into HSD Hochschule Döpfer's vision to become a globally recognized institution dedicated to equip students with the necessary skills to overcome the complex challenges in the field of health and social sciences. To highlight the necessity of international Erasmus exchanges in the health education sector, HSD Hochschule Döpfer recognizes that exposure to different international healthcare systems, cultural contexts, and therapeutic approaches is crucial for the development of wellrounded professionals. Participating in Erasmus+ actions will enable our students and staff to gain a global perspective, enriching their understanding of different health practices, and promote intercultural competence.

Key Action 1 (KA1) – Learning mobility of individuals- will be addressed by HSD Hochschule Döpfer providing various activities, with a specific focus on mobility for studies and internships. Given the nature of our health and social program, demographic trends, migration policy, and the need to recruit international professionals in the health and social sectors to meet the challenges of the future, it is essential for students to experience health and social care in different settings and cultures. The opportunity for students to complete part of their studies abroad and learn about different methods and approaches, will significantly contribute to their professional development. Additionally, internships abroad will provide students with invaluable hands-on experience in an international context, enhancing their clinical skills and cultural sensitivity.

HSD Hochschule Döpfer is aware of the importance of practical experience and has identified healthcare institutions in various countries to establish partnerships, creating opportunities for students to participate in internships abroad. These partnerships, like our collaborations with renowned healthcare organizations in the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Austria, exemplify our commitment to providing students with a well-rounded education that extends beyond the classroom. This allows students to gain practical and hands-on experience in their chosen field. Through partnerships with organizations in different countries, students can gain insights into various health and social care systems, policies, and practices. This knowledge can be invaluable if they plan to work internationally or in a diverse social-/healthcare environment.

Moreover, staff mobility for teaching and training is a crucial component of HSD Hochschule Döpfer's strategy under KA1. Our academic and administrative staff will have the opportunity to engage in training activities abroad, allowing them to bring back

the latest innovations and best practices in health- /social care education. Collaborative initiatives, such as staff exchanges, guest lectureship, workshops, and seminars, will facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise among our faculty and their counterparts in international institutions. Also, these activities support intercultural exchange and research collaboration. However, HSD will act sustainability in all mobility planning and focus on innovative blended programs that combine physical and virtual mobility and learning experiences. Virtual exchange programs offer flexible learning and collaboration opportunities, promote digital skills, and contribute to sustainability and the reduction of CO2 emissions.

In addition to KA1, HSD Hochschule Döpfer recognizes the potential of participating in Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organizations and institutions.

Cooperation among organizations and institutions, including partnerships with NGOs, plays a pivotal role in our multidisciplinary research initiatives within our HSD Research Center, aligning with KA2 objectives, especially partnerships for cooperation and innovation. HSD Hochschule Döpfer is committed to conducting research that addresses the evolving challenges in social-/healthcare, particularly regarding the digitalization in the social and healthcare industry. International collaborations within the health-related innovation ecosystem, which may involve NGOs, will expedite the development and transfer of knowledge, benefitting the different stakeholders and contributing to the growth and creativity of the sector. These partnerships, encompassing joint projects, research initiatives, and cultural exchange, aim to promote and enable diversity, inclusion, strengthen research, and enhance student exchange. We aim to participate in alliances of European HEIs, including collaborations with NGOs, to create integrated, transnational higher education systems that provide innovative, studentcentered learning experiences. In terms of research activities, HSD Hochschule Döpfer has been involved in a series of research projects, including "Peter Pandemic - Peter Pandemic & the Mothers of Infection," a serious game about disease mechanisms, social consequences, and health policy measures in pandemics; "CAYPVAR - Covid Apps for young adults for preventing transmission and promoting vaccination among refugees"; "A-DigiKomp - Adaptively promote digital competence and sovereignty among adolescents through micro games"; "Ma Ma Märchenprinz: Cultural education work in rural areas"; and "BKKB - Image competence in cultural education." These projects have focused on educational research in the health and cultural sectors, with a particular emphasis on cross-border phenomena such as pandemics. Additionally, the research has addressed the aspect of compensating for disadvantages for people with a refugee or migrant background and overcoming obstacles to mobility, utilizing modern scientific methods such as eye-tracking analyses, apps, or serious games. Erasmus+ will play a pivotal role in advancing research activities at HSD Hochschule Döpfer, elevating their international profile, and addressing global challenges in health, education, and cultural exchange.

Participation in Erasmus+ initiatives aims to internationalize and modernize health and social education while contributing to global education initiatives and policy

development under Key Action 3 (KA3). Through conferences, seminars, and workshops, HSD Hochschule Döpfer actively seeks to shape effective healthcare policies at both the EU and system levels by adopting best practices from worldwide teaching methodologies and empirical evidence.

In summary, HSD Hochschule Döpfer is strategically positioning itself to actively contribute to the Erasmus+ program. Through mobility for studies and internships, as well as staff mobility for teaching and training, we aim to enrich the education of our health and social sciences students and enhance the expertise of our faculty. Our commitment to international collaboration and research aligns seamlessly with the objectives of Erasmus+, ensuring that HSD Hochschule Döpfer plays a pivotal role in advancing social-/healthcare education on a global scale.

Strategy, objectives and impact

The mission statement of HSD Hochschule Döpfer is anchored in a commitment to high academic standards in both teaching and research, with a focus the integration of innovative ideas. The goal of HSD's internationalization strategy is to enhance its effectiveness in research, teaching, and knowledge transfer with other higher education institutions, research units, companies, and government agencies, as well as to promote an international perspective. This includes the development and implementation of novel concepts that address the challenges presented by a modern, digitalized, and globalized world, while also fostering humane and respectful collaboration. The university is dedicated to enhancing the communicative and cooperative competencies of its community members, aiming to provide a qualification that is both competence-oriented and of high quality. Moreover, an important goal in HSD's vision for the future is that HSD operates internationally and contributes to a sustainable and healthy society. Consequently, the first and most important point in its strategy is to accelerate the process of internalization. This is not only essential for HSD's development, but also for the worsening demographic situation in Germany and the resulting enormous shortage of skilled workers in health and social services.

In alignment with this mission and vision, HSD is already cooperating with the Internationale Hochschule SDI München (IHS) that offers degree programs with a focus on international communication. Both universities already signed a memorandum of understanding for the joint development of educational offerings and collaboration in acquisition, research, and projects. Together, they are currently developing courses on intercultural (technical) communication with a focus on the health professions. The planned joint project *CommuniCare* aims to offer international students a holistic education (technical knowledge and intercultural skills). An application for funding from the FIT-program of the DAAD as a network partner of the IHS has currently been submitted for the *CommuniCare* project.

Given these strategies and project plannings, the participation of HSD Hochschule Döpfer in the Erasmus+ program is a logical necessity and participation in the program

will make a significant contribution to promoting the internationalization and intercultural competence of its participants. Erasmus+ enables an environment in which participants can immerse themselves in an international context and thus acquire not only specialist skills, but also intercultural and linguistic skills. In addition, the program expands opportunities for collaboration with universities and institutions on a global level, which is crucial for the university's international networking.

Also, the HSD Hochschule Döpfer has started to collaborate with GISMA University of Applied Sciences' Multidisciplinary Research Centre for Innovations in SMEs (MrciS). This collaboration is expected to expand shortly, with a focus on the social impact of in-house research conducted in collaboration with open innovation actors, especially top-ranked universities, research centers, and industries. The overarching goal of this partnership is to concentrate on various aspects of social entrepreneurship, with HSD contributing its strengths in research and education in health and social sciences. The aim is to address pressing societal challenges, creating a positive social impact, fostering socially conscious entrepreneurs who drive positive change, and contributing to the overall well-being of our communities.

This, in turn, significantly enhances the quality of both teaching and research. The integration of new research and teaching methodologies through these international collaborations aligns seamlessly with the continuous improvement of higher education as envisaged in HSD Hochschule Döpfer's mission statement. Such initiatives contribute to the university's ongoing efforts to adapt and evolve in response to the dynamic demands of the social and healthcare sector, ensuring that it remains at the forefront of educational excellence and innovation.

The participation in the Erasmus+ Programme is integral to achieving several key objectives:

Enhancing Mobility: HSD aims to significantly increase student and staff participation in mobility activities, encompassing studying, teaching, and internships abroad. These experiences are designed to contribute to academic and professional development while fostering intercultural and multicultural sensitivity.

Building International Partnerships: By forming partnerships with European universities, HSD integrates itself into a robust international network. This strategic move provides access to invaluable international experiences and resources, especially crucial in the healthcare and social care sector, facilitating research collaboration and innovation, and enhanced societal impact through NGO collaborations.

Fostering the quality of our health education: HSD incorporates European health and social topics and policies into its curricula, recognizing the importance of European cooperation in the care sector. This integration raises awareness of the complexities within European health and social systems and aligns with the evolving needs of the industry.

Promoting Diversity and Inclusion: HSD ensures that Erasmus+ opportunities are accessible to a diverse range of students and faculty, in line with its commitment to diversity and inclusion. This commitment fosters an unbiased, appreciative, and diverse academic environment that values individuals from various backgrounds.

Improving Learning and Employability: HSD's participation in the Erasmus+ program contributes to improving students' learning and employability in the social and healthcare sector, offering multifaceted opportunities for growth and development. Essential approaches to enhance both learning outcomes and employability encompass:

Diverse Learning Experiences: By providing students with a range of diverse learning experiences, their employability is significantly enhanced. This is particularly pertinent in the social and healthcare sector, where exposure to varied care and medical practices as well as social and health systems can broaden students' perspectives and skills.

Participation in Mobility Programs: Engaging in student mobility programs for studies, traineeships, and blended intensive programs is instrumental. These programs, offered through Erasmus+, allow students to gain hands-on experience in different social and healthcare settings across Europe. Such exposure is invaluable in understanding the nuances of healthcare delivery in various cultural and regulatory environments.

Development of Double and Joint Degrees: Contributing to the development of double and joint degrees is another critical aspect. These degrees, recognized internationally, equip students with qualifications that are valued across borders. In the social and healthcare sector, where global challenges like pandemics and chronic diseases require cross-border collaboration and understanding, having a qualification that is internationally recognized is incredibly beneficial.

These approaches, combined with the opportunities provided by the Erasmus+ Programme, prepare health and social sciences students not only with theoretical knowledge but also with practical skills and an understanding of the global social and healthcare landscape. This holistic education model is key to nurturing healthcare professionals who are well-equipped to meet the challenges of the modern healthcare sector.

In summary, our participation in the Erasmus+ Programme aligns also with the European Education Area's vision by promoting mobility, enhancing quality, fostering innovation, supporting policy development, cultivating European values, and increasing access to education. Through our active engagement in Erasmus+, we play a vital role in building a more integrated, connected, and competitive European higher education landscape, ultimately contributing to the realization of the European Education Area as outlined by the European Commission.