

Erasmus Policy Statement

According to its strategy Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (SAMK) is a high quality higher education institution. It offers international level education, which provides the students with top-class skills for various tasks of the future and enables professional development.

Development and implementation of the international activities and exchanges are an essential part of the mission, profile and vision statements. The strategy defines SAMK as a high quality, attractive university, whose education and research & development activities are in an international level. SAMK obtains an active profile as a development agent for the international activities in our region. With our international education, mobility and RDI actions we help to develop Satakunta and its environs as a competitive, international region.

The Erasmus+ programme is significant in implementing these objectives. Student mobility, teacher and expert exchanges are key instruments in developing international perspective of the curricula as well as our RDI activities. All students graduating from SAMK will have qualifications for international activities. There is an open possibility for participation in the Erasmus activities, including our degree seeking students from outside the Europe.

SAMK uses also other international cooperation instruments to support the objectives of the Erasmus Programme. Those programmes include the Finnish national FIRST Russian exchange programme, Scandinavian Nordplus Programme, Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme, some exchange arrangements with individual countries (such as ASEM Duo) and own bilateral co-operation agreements with universities. Resources of these mobility programmes are small, so opening the cooperation possibilities with non-Erasmus countries is welcome.

Exchanges are focused on the 1st cycle, as the exchanges are the most feasible to facilitate on the bachelor level. SAMK promotes exchanges and provides courses in English in all faculties, so that we can host exchange students and teachers and to offer international environment to all our students. Our master level students work simultaneously, they are older and often have families, so that full term exchanges are difficult to arrange. We develop short exchanges, student projects and online cooperation with our key Erasmus and other partners.

International practical training placements are also our focus activity. Compatibility of the exchanges in curricula is developed further. Joint and complementing modules are developed with partner universities, aiming also for double degree arrangements. Teacher and expert exchanges are key tools of the development strategy. SAMK is developing deeper cooperation with our strategic partner universities, multilateral curricula and RDI projects are developed with partner universities and with our region.

SAMK has ca. 160 international partner universities, and they are divided into the strategic partners, key partners of faculties and "normal" exchange partners. We develop educational and RDI activities and services to our region through mobility and other cooperation with our international partners. Choosing the partners is based on the needs of our educational areas and RDI objectives. We also discuss the needs and focus areas with the stakeholders of Satakunta region.

The economic activities of the region are strong with Erasmus area, but also with China, Namibia, Russia, South Korea and other South East Asian countries. Economic cooperation is developing also with other African countries, there is potential for our expertise in social and health care, maritime education and energy and environmental technology. We lack resources for co-operation with Latin American countries. Cooperation with the USA and Australia is important also, because the exchange possibilities with native English speaking countries in Europe is limited. However, resources for mobility and other cooperation has been limited with these far-off locations.

Inside the Erasmus area we work to develop deeper curriculum cooperation, strategic mobility activities and RDI projects with partners which we have gained good cooperation experiences with. This includes active partner universities in the Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, Germany, and France; and in the areas of health and welfare with universities from the UK, Spain and Czech Republic. Non-discrimination acts are integrated in our activities, e.g. with instructing teacher-tutors and student-mentors. Arrangements for disabled students have been made.

Satakunta University of Applied Sciences develops teaching and training actively in international cooperation projects with our partners. SAMK has defined the focus areas of higher education, and our four areas of expertise (faculties) develop the activities through international cooperation projects. That serves also other stakeholders in our region in Western Finland. Their needs are taken into account when planning our international activities in study and practical training activities, teacher, staff, and research mobility and international projects.

Erasmus+ programme is very significant in implementing these actions at SAMK, and it gives the framework also for using other project tools. We have defined international strategic partner universities and agreed to develop the content and forms of activities using the Erasmus and other development projects. SAMK is active in several international higher education networks in the fields of business management, technology, health care, welfare, intelligent processes, logistics and fine arts. We work with the partners in best practices, teacher cooperation, intensive projects, staff training weeks, curriculum development, online and distance applications, student projects and work-related training projects.

SAMK also participates in helping international partners to develop their activities, by introducing our innovative education methods, such as the student enterprise accelerator, business cooperation, our student focused education methods, mentoring and expertise in our focus areas of education and RDI. We have experience on including non-European partners in Russia, China, Namibia, the USA in this co-operation.

The indicators of the activities and results by the development projects are defined in the quality system of SAMK, based on the European targets, the objectives of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and of the strategy of the university.

Satakunta University of Applied Sciences works to support growth and jobs in our region and with our international cooperation partners. That is an integral part of the university strategy and activities in education, research and development as well as regional cooperation activities. The European goals and the objectives and indicators of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture are integrated in our quality policy.

The strategy of the university is based on the needs of the Satakunta region. The age gap is the main challenge, as the big generations from the 1940-1950es are retiring and the younger generations active in working life are getting smaller. The role of SAMK is essential in working with the other stakeholders in the region, and with our international partners. SAMK works to provide more graduated experts, who take the responsibility for developing the businesses and services in our region and in Europe.

All students after the secondary level can apply to SAMK. We develop possibilities for immigrant students to enter the education and to seek for the European labour market after graduating. Also lower income students are supported by the no-fee studying and affordable housing options. We also develop adult and further education, so that adults may obtain higher education and skills needed in future jobs.

The quality of education and effective studying are developed further, so that all students have a possibility to obtain at least 55 ECTS credits annually, and to graduate in the planned time. This is possible also when students participate in the exchange programmes, as we work with our partner universities so that the transcripts of the credits are fully recognised in the students' curricula. SAMK has gained the Diploma

Supplement for 2013-2015, we have also passed the Finnish national universities' quality auditing, and we obtain the "Det Norske Veritas (DNV)" quality accreditation.

SAMK improves the quality and relevance of higher education, so that Satakunta region can play an active part in the European higher education area and in the economic Single Market. All students graduating from SAMK have qualifications for international activities. Satakunta is a strong industrial region with active international cooperation. That gives potential to our international activities in study and training placement activities, teacher, staff, and research mobility and international projects.

SAMK works to strengthen the cross-border cooperation with students, teaching staff, and researchers, both within Europe and with our far-off partners in China, Namibia, Russia, the USA and other countries. The online activities provide a broader access to this cooperation.

SAMK has an active model of links with enterprises and public services, and works with our international partners to introduce and develop the practices, such as our entrepreneur education further in Europe. We develop also the governance of projects with private and non-EU partners, committing the partners to work together for common goals of future growth and jobs.