D. Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

The Institution agrees to publish this overall strategy (all three parts) on its website within one month after the signature of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education by the European Commission.

Please describe your institution's international (EU and non-EU) strategy. In your description please explain a) how you choose your partners, b) in which geographical area(s) and c) the most important objectives and target groups of your mobility activities (with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, including study and training, and short cycles). If applicable, also explain how your institution participates in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees. (max. 5000 characters)

Original language [EN]
Internationalisation is an integrated part of Aalborg University's core values and methods.

We wish to cooperate with the growth economy countries. These countries are making large-scale investments in research and development and constitute interesting and attractive partners. We focus especially on the ongoing cooperation with China, India and Southeast Asia; and we will enhance our focus on the countries in South and Central America which are showing great growth potential in R&D these years.

We will continue to cooperate extensively with the highly industrialised countries, focusing on the development of excellence in research, education and innovation, talent recruitment and the development of excellence.

We will continue to develop our cooperation within EU. The Horizon 2020 and Erasmus for All provide a strategic aim and a focus on global challenges which constitute an excellent match for AAU’s Problem-Based Learning profile, the university’s solution-oriented research and innovation and its tradition for close collaboration with companies. At AAU we will pursue and match the new European focus on innovation integrated in educational and research programmes in order to realise its potential value.

AAU already has an international strategy in place for the university and launched in 2012 an implementation of the existing AAU Strategy 2010-2015 as regards internationalisation and globalization. The AAU Strategy 2010-2015 contains the following strategic goals: 1) Encourage further development of international cooperation relating to education and research and the exchange of students, researchers and research results, as well as other relevant staff; 2) Offer study programmes, build up units and establish networks abroad in fields that will enhance the university's research and education. 3) Maintain Danish and English as parallel languages. In addition, the specific Implementation Plan of 2012 has 14 specific actions and efforts that will, once implemented, have a significant and positive impact on the internationalization work of the university, including students' mobility and staff and teacher exchange. Plans for partner engagement such as choice of partners, geographical coverage and objectives and target groups of our mobility activities are made locally at each faculty and not as a wider strategy for the whole university. Since 2012 the International Office has been involved in the strategic selection of Erasmus partners, and the university has developed a more general approach to criteria for partner selection and signing of exchange agreements.

The following are five indicators at the strategic value of any given agreement: real mutual exchange, relevant geographical coverage, potential for joint publications, potential for accessing research potential to recruit PhDs and degree students, basis for closer project works such as Erasmus Mundus projects and Joint/double degrees.

Aalborg University participates in some double/joint degrees and aims to be involved in more in the future. The University therefore developed in 2012 a new set of guidelines to make it easier for faculties to engage in these types of partnerships, but also to ensure that the responsibility and quality assurance were no longer in hands of an individual lecturer, but was placed at a more strategic level. As part of the quality assurance of the programs offered in collaboration with foreign universities, a standard cooperation agreement was developed and will be used to sign a contract with the foreign university. The new Standard agreement outlines responsibilities and which rules apply when, and is in general a roadmap for how cooperation in training and supervising the students take place. The responsibility for these agreements is now placed at the level of Study Director. The administrative responsibility is equivalent uniquely located on the faculty office. In addition, the International Office has developed a set of guidelines on the practical aspect of how to enroll and welcome students at these special programs and an overview of the services offered. Aalborg University has chosen to give priority service to international students in joint degree programs, as it is important to support and strengthen the exchange of students between European and non-European universities.

If applicable, please describe your institution's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme. (max. 2000 characters)

Original language [EN]
Aalborg University has a clear intention of engaging in an increasing number of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects. Today the university is active in a number of these projects, but AAU does not have a specific, overall institutional strategy for organization and implementation of international cooperation projects. This effort is left to the individual faculties, who approach it very differently, and who design their individual plans. Some of the faculties have set up new staff functions to organize the administrative and educational aspects of engaging in these projects. At the moment, AAU has done the following at central level:

1) As part of the Implementation Plan of the existing AAU Strategy 2010-2015, the University developed a new set of guidelines to make it easier for faculties to engage in these types of partnerships, and to ensure it was done in a consistent way with focus on quality assurance and adherence to rules. A standard cooperation agreement has been developed, which is now starting to be used.

2) At the administrative level, a 'One-Stop Shop' has been set up as part of the International Office. This one-stop shop will help to ensure the expedient handling of grants payments to international students in special study programmes and a general improvement of services during their study period at Aalborg University. As part of this service, the International Office has developed a set of guidelines on the practical aspect of how to enroll and welcome students at these special programs.

It has been a topic whether the university would develop an overriding strategy of this kind of project participation, with a central office administrating and offering support to those entities engaging in international projects. This effort will most likely be part of the next phase of the internationalization strategy for the period 2015 - 2020.

Please explain the expected impact of your participation in the Programme on the modernisation of your institution (for each of the 5 priorities of the Modernisation Agenda*) in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve. (max. 3000 characters)

Original language [EN]
AAU's overall 'policy' goals are inherently modern such as being a young, internationally orientated network university. The participation in the Programme has long had a positive impact on our University's growth and international outlook. Goals include stronger student and staff exchange and close academic cooperation across borders. This helps us educate better students and our researches to help create jobs. The 5 priorities of the modernization Agenda of 2011 have been addressed by AAU in the current implementation plan:

1. Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates researches that Europe needs
AAU has had a record intake of students the last five years. Currently approx. 18,000 students are enrolled of which 12% are international students. 10% of staff are international. We offer 6 English BA courses and 70 English MA courses. We therefore contribute to the provision of graduates and researchers in Europe.

I. Improve quality and relevance of education
AAU practices the pedagogical model of Problem-Based Learning (PBL). We have achieved international recognition as a leading university within PBL. The unique focus is on interdisciplinary, real-life projects of educational and societal relevance that ensures the relevance of the education is always at the forefront. International students and staff participate in these activities.

II. Strengthen quality through mobility and cross border cooperation
AAU is working on different schemes to make it easier to recognize credits from abroad and to make it easier for our own students going abroad to get pre-approved credits; we have a Task Force on diploma supplement and are implementing ICT driven improvements. AAU is also working with the relevant public ministries to make it easier for students and staff to obtain visa and work permit. The overhaul of the procedures has had a positive impact on mobility and modernization.

III. Making the knowledge triangle work
AAU is the country's leading university in terms of knowledge transfer between university and industry. We place great emphasis on collaboration with business communities, both nationally and internationally and extensive network. AAU Matchmaking and other services at the university help businesses link up with staff, students and campus. AAU is a locally oriented university and the matchmaking initiatives ensure a strong knowledge hub in this part of Europe.

IV. Improve governance and funding
As part of the implementation plan of the AAU Strategy, the university has developed an international funding strategy. This strategy is focused on ensuring funds both for research as well as for continuous mobility and exchange. Matchmaking and leverage of public funds are the backbone of the university. Ensuring diverse kinds of funds, often in new types of partnerships across borders and between enterprises and public institutions help us deliver on the modernization agenda and achieve our wider policy goals.