



**Åbo Akademi University (SF TURKU02)**

## **Erasmus Charter 2014-2020**

**29376-LA-1-2014-1-FI-E4AKA1-ECHE**

### **General Organisation**

**Describe the structure at your institution for the implementation and organisation of European and international mobility (division of tasks, operational and communicational methods).**

The University has a centralized International Office. The Erasmus coordinators are responsible for outgoing students, teacher and staff exchanges, budgeting, applying for funding and reporting. One person is responsible for processing the applications of incoming students. Everyone at the office serves the students upon arrival. Student tutors welcome the students upon arrival and keep in touch with them throughout their stay in Finland. Academic coordinators approve the study plans made by the incoming and outgoing students and they are also responsible for the credit transfer. At the career services one person is in charge of the traineeships. Important issues and strategic aspects of the international activities are handled by the working group for international affairs, which consists of representatives from different departments and independent institutions. All individuals and groups receive equal treatment. <https://www.abo.fi/student/en/contact>

**Explain the academic credit system and the methodology you use to allocate credits to the different course units followed by your students abroad.**

All courses are measured in credits, studiepoäng. Credits are a value allocated to course units and they describe the workload required to complete the course/module. One credit is equivalent to one ECTS credit. A full-time study load is 60 credits for one academic year. The course load for one academic year equals 1600 hours of work. (One credit equals 25-28 hours of work). The grading system used at Åbo Akademi University corresponds to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). <http://www.abo.fi/student/courses>

The professor, the head of subject or the head of the department is responsible for the credit transfer. The aim is to have a credit transfer corresponding to 100%. The courses studied abroad are included in the transcript of records and the study abroad period is mentioned in the degree diploma and in the Diploma Supplement.

<http://www.abo.fi/student/sv/studerautomlands/>

<http://web.abo.fi/fa/ie/forms/tillgodorakning.pdf>

<http://www.abo.fi/student/avfard>

### **Before mobility**

**Explain if all courses taught at your institution are described in the course catalogue and in which languages they are taught.**

The courses in English (and German and French) are described in the English course database, which is updated annually. <http://www.abo.fi/student/courses>

There is a course database which consists of all the courses taught in Swedish.

<http://www.abo.fi/student/undervisningsprogram>

The detailed course information is found in MinPlan (requires log-in).

[http://web.abo.fi/lc/minplan/introstud\\_eng/](http://web.abo.fi/lc/minplan/introstud_eng/)

**Describe the institutional procedure for the approval and monitoring of inter-institutional agreements for study and teaching mobility and/or learning agreements in case of traineeships.**

The “Strategic Plan for International Activities at Åbo Akademi University 2012-16” states the following: “Åbo Akademi University should develop cooperation and long-standing bilateral agreements with universities from different parts of the world based on how they fit the University’s teaching and research profile. The agreements would be appropriate for both students and researchers. The agreements would seek to achieve a reciprocal and balanced exchange over time. Strategic cooperation partners of high quality shall be appointed.”

The working group for international affairs will develop a new strategic plan during autumn 2016.

The Erasmus agreements are based upon close contacts between the professors and staff at the different departments with colleagues at the partner universities. Once the contacts have been established, the main Erasmus coordinator agrees upon the details of the agreement together with the colleague at the partner university. The agreements identify the quality requirements. The academic coordinators for the agreements are listed on the university web page

<http://www.abo.fi/student/sv/studerautomlands/>

**Describe your institution's language policy for preparing participants for mobility, e.g.: course providers within or outside the HEI.**

All students and staff may participate in the language courses offered by the Centre for Language and Communication at Åbo Akademi University. <http://www.abo.fi/stodenhet/cskenglish>

Language courses are integrated parts of the degree studies. Students who are going abroad for a mobility period have to possess a level of B2 or C1 (CEFR) in the language of instruction in the country of destination. The staff also needs to possess language proficiency high enough in order to be able to teach or do their training abroad.

The Language policy program (Språkpolitiskt program för Åbo Akademi) can be found at <https://www.abo.fi/personal/policydokument>

**During mobility**

**Describe mentoring and support arrangements for incoming mobile participants and outgoing students for study and traineeships.**

Among other things, the following services are offered to the incoming students; Information material available on-line before and upon arrival, course database, orientation week, language courses, social events, student tutors, housing, student health care centre services, student union and ESN activities, social integration, mentoring by departmental coordinators.

For the outgoing students the following services are offered; information sessions about exchange study possibilities and traineeships throughout the academic year, information material, guidance when applying for a mobility period abroad, mentoring concerning the course selection and credit transfer by departmental coordinators, pre-departure information sessions, welcome back events.

**Describe your institution's language support for incoming students and staff with a minimum of 2-month mobility period.**

Incoming students and staff can participate in language courses (5 ects) provided they come for a full exchange term. An incoming student or staff member coming for a shorter exchange can take half of a language course (2 ects) if the student/staff member arrives at the beginning of the course.

<http://www.abo.fi/stodenhet/en/cskenglish>

## **After mobility**

**Regarding the above two Charter principles, please describe the mechanisms your institution has in place to recognize mobility achievements for study and traineeships in enterprises.**

The students make learning or training agreements before departure. If changes have to be made during the mobility period, the student informs the academic coordinator. Based upon the original and amended agreement, the recognition takes place once the student has received the transcript of records or the traineeship certification. The achievements are mentioned in the student's transcript of records and in the degree diploma (+ Diploma supplement).

<http://www.abo.fi/student/sv/studerautomlands/>

<http://www.abo.fi/student/avfard>

<http://www.abo.fi/student/hemkomst>

<http://www.abo.fi/student/studieinformation>

**Describe your institution's measures to support, to promote and to recognise staff mobility.**

The university supports staff mobility and especially teaching staff mobility as it is a part of the university funding model in Finland. The university staff can still choose between teaching and staff mobility. The internal information about application, booking and reporting procedures is made as clear and simple as possible in order to encourage the staff to participate in a mobility period. The staff also shares their mobility experiences with their colleagues, in the university blogs and sometimes in the university bulletin. Information is sent to the staff in the beginning of the new academic year and there is no deadline for applying for funding. The aim is to make the staff mobility as flexible as possible. <http://www.abo.fi/personal/utbyte>

**Describe your institutional measures to support, promote and recognise the participation of your own institution's staff and students in European and international cooperation projects under the Programme.**

Both the university staff and students are encouraged to participate in international cooperation projects. The staff at the International Affairs informs about the different programme activities and gives support to the personnel or the students willing to participate in different actions, both in the project application phase and during the project period. The strategic partnerships will be given more visibility during the years to come. The projects will have to be based on sustainability or lead to a sustainable cooperation. Preferably, several staff members or students should be involved in the projects in order to build in a natural back up. There are also some additional financial resources allocated for participating in projects.

## Strategy

**Describe your institution's international (EU and non-EU) strategy. In your description, please explain**

- a) **How to choose your partners**
- b) **In which geographical area(s)**
- 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**

Åbo Akademi University is the only comprehensive Swedish-speaking University in Finland. Its principal task is top-class research and high-quality education based on that research. As a stage in its constantly expanding international responsibility, Åbo Akademi University continues its efforts to develop an internationally competitive research and study environment. Collaboration with universities abroad is being intensified, partly within the framework of existing agreements, partly through more extensive exchange and cooperation programs.

The graduates of Åbo Akademi University should possess the capacity to the global labour market, providing them with necessary knowledge, skills and adaptability to work as active public actors within different national and cultural environments and with global responsibilities. Knowledge of languages and a strong linguistic is a central element of the education. The university increases the number of opportunities available to its students, researchers and teachers in order for them to obtain unique, high quality international experiences without academic or financial obstacles. Åbo Akademi University's international activities reflect the university's unique strength in integrating teaching and services with research. International activities are strongly integrated even at the subject level. The university strives to utilize foreign researchers more often as teachers and in giving thematic lectures.

Åbo Akademi University develops cooperation and long-standing bilateral agreements with universities from different parts of the world based on how they fit the university's teaching and research profile. The agreements would be appropriate for both the students and researchers. The agreements should seek to achieve a reciprocal and balanced exchange over time. Strategic cooperation partners of high quality have been appointed in the Nordic countries, especially Sweden and in Europe in general, particularly among the other Coimbra Group member universities.

Åbo Akademi University strives to offer more attractive and effective education in English for incoming students, as well as for domestic students. Greater integration is called for. Courses in English should be given within larger and more appropriate course packages and given at such level that our incoming exchange students can participate in them. This requires that more courses in English would also be provided at the bachelor's level. Investments in guidance and counselling should be made within the subject areas in order to assist students with plans for an exchange abroad at a sufficiently early stage at their studies. Departmental coordinators and teachers shall more efficiently awaken the students' interest in studying abroad. Opportunities for international internships will be encouraged and developed.

Åbo Akademi University currently has several agreements regarding double degrees and joint degree programmes on the master and doctoral level. These agreements are based on mutual interest to

develop academically strong programmes and a viable cooperation between the higher education institutions involved. When a double, multiple or joint programme is established, an academic and an administrative coordinator is always appointed in order to provide a solid foundation for the programme. The faculty board must approve all agreements and the rector of Åbo Akademi University signs all cooperation agreements. At the Education Services, there is an officer responsible for monitoring the development of these types of degrees, to follow the legal framework and guide the staff at the departments in relation to establishing and running such programmes. The university lawyer also checks all agreements. When establishing these types of programmes the following aspects must be looked at: the added value that the programme brings to the already existing studies, the benefits for the institutions involved, the international perspective, quality assurance and continuity of the programme.

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

The strategy is to participate in international cooperation projects in the areas where the university has cooperation partners and where there is a general interest among the university staff to be involved in development projects. The staff at the International Affairs is often involved in project applications during the initial stage. During the project period, the International Affairs continues to support the involved personnel and departments. It is, however, important that the knowledge about the cooperation projects is spread widely at the institution. The Rector of the University regularly appoints a new working group for international affairs. This group consists of representatives from different departments and independent institutions. It is the group's task to assist and advise the staff of the International Affairs and to draw up guidelines for the processes of internationalization at the university. A more comprehensive international strategy has been drawn up and adopted by the University senate.

Åbo Akademi University has participated in 18 Tempus projects since 1993 and has coordinated five of them. The university has also been active in LLP projects. Now the university is active in different projects under the Erasmus+ programme. The university is also coordinating or participating in North-South-South projects with African universities and in the FIRST program with Russian partners, mainly funded by the Finnish government. Furthermore, the university has welcomed students and researchers from Brazil within Science without Borders. The university intends to continue participating in cooperation projects including both EU and non-EU institutions.

**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.**

Åbo Akademi University is going to turn 100 in 2018. Our statutory social responsibility is to be the university that makes Swedish language education and research in Finland visible. The university is currently taking extensive measures to significantly reform and improve structures and processes in all areas. Efforts have been made regarding flexible learning paths in education. Personalized learning and new teaching techniques are constantly developed. Extensive measures are currently taken to stifle dropout rates. The compensation of courses taken abroad is good at ÅAU. The Finnish Education

Evaluation Centre conducted an audit of Åbo Akademi University autumn 2015 and awarded the university a quality label that is valid for six years from 14 March 2016.

Currently, for profiling purposes, Åbo Akademi University has identified three focal areas of research: 1) Minority research, 2) Molecular process and material technology and 3) Drug development and diagnostics. ÅAU takes part in two national Centres of Excellence appointed by the Academy of Finland: History of Society: Re-thinking Finland 1400–2000 (2012–2017) and The Centre of Excellence for Cardiovascular and Metabolic disease (2008–2019). Furthermore, ÅAU has four internal Centres of Excellence (2015–2018): 1) Brain Training: taking the next step, 2) YARG– Young adults and religion in a global perspective: A cross-cultural, comparative and mixed-method study of religious subjectivities and values in their context, 3) Future Refining of Forest Biomass and 4) Functional Materials at Biological Interfaces.

Enhanced information is made available on mobility programs and opportunities for mobility of young researchers. The number of graduate students that study abroad for at least three months is expected to rise during the program period. While the constraints for mobility have been eliminated, the university still has to increase the attractiveness of researchers' mobility. The goal is to recruit more researchers, but this is dependent on available funding. Students from lower income backgrounds have equal possibilities to study at universities, as we do not have tuition fees.

New attractive master level programs will be launched autumn 2018 and the project “Education in Innovation” with the Turku Innovation Team is preparing the university with new methods in education and research.

ÅAU implements an e-learning environment as well as e-examination. Extensive measures are taken to increase cooperation with alumni within education. As a result of the Finnish University ACT (2010) the ÅAU graduate school has been significantly re-organized to ensure the completion of doctoral theses work in four years. Special courses for continuous education of personnel are constantly developed. ÅAU constantly seeks to deepen collaboration with industry and society and especially internships abroad within the Erasmus+ programme have been increasing in number during the past year.

ÅAU has taken measures to manage IPR. The Business School offers courses across campus in basic business acumen and advanced ones. Research in science and technology as well as business is done in close cooperation with business. ÅAU collaborates with domestic municipalities, the City of Turku and Turku Science Park to enhance collaboration with the St. Petersburg region and as well as Baltic regions. ÅAU has extensive cooperation with universities in the Nordic countries and will intensify this.

The ratio government funding/corporate funding is 60/40% and is expected to remain so. A private funding campaign 2010-2011 generated €45 million. As part of the public finances plan for 2015–2018, the state is prepared to invest a maximum of three euro for each euro of private donations to the universities, up to 150 million euro in total. The state's matched funding is allocated to the universities in proportion to the private capital that each university has raised between 1 November 2014 and 30 June 2017.