

## HAN Erasmus Policy Statement

### **HAN Institutional Plan**

The HAN 2022-2028 Institutional Plan charts the institutional course for the coming years. It is the guiding principle of HAN University of Applied Sciences and shows the direction HAN wants to head in: to make direct and indirect contributions to a smart, green and socially-responsible world. That is why education and research at HAN are closely connected to the region and professional field and focus on pushing frontiers with digital technology, on reducing carbon emissions and on narrowing socio-economic health disparities.

This focus is expressed in HAN's three key areas Smart Region, Sustainable Energy and Environment and Fair Health, and further defined in six strategic goals for the coming years:

- 1. *Students evolve into reflective and socially engaged global citizens***
2. Students and staff develop into digital and data savvy professionals
3. We adopt a flexible approach to organising our education
- 4. *We enter into lasting connection with our partners***
5. We align our lifelong learning portfolio for professionals with the professional field in the region
6. Students feel a lifelong connection to the HAN

### **Policy plan Internationalisation**

Internationalization has been on HAN's strategic agenda for years. One, by embedding it in the curriculum so that all students develop international competencies. Second, by giving students and lecturers an extra opportunity to spend time abroad. HAN's Institutional Plan has led to a new vision statement on internationalisation (2024). It defines HAN's position and ambition around internationalisation, serves as an inspiring framework for staff members and enables them to work together on the bigger picture. It goes as follows:

*'Internationalisation is a strategic instrument for HAN to enrich education and research in order to contribute optimally to the labour market and society'.*

A number of pillars on internationalisation have been formulated accordingly. These are:

**Education programmes:** with the objective of elevating education through the presence of international elements, by facilitating; incoming and outgoing student mobility, internationalisation of the curriculum, the international classroom, the presence of international degree seeking students.

**Research and innovation:** with the objective of developing and exchanging knowledge and thus having an impact on practice-oriented research by focusing more on European project applications, strengthening partner relations and reinforcing the existing international networks.

**Labour market:** with the objective of giving students the intercultural skills and opportunities they need for the labour market by offering modules and courses such as Social Dutch, Global Citizenship

and job application trainings. Furthermore, strengthen the relationship with expat centres and regional (labour) networks.

**Social contribution:** with the objective of taking responsibility as a Higher Educational Institution around social issues by, for example, working on the Sustainable Development Goals in education and research, training students to be global citizens, and actively working on inclusion and diversity in education and research, but also in our (quality) processes within the institution as a whole.

### **Erasmus+ vehicle for internationalisation**

The Erasmus+ programme remains very important to further boost internationalisation within the institution. It is easier for students and lecturers to participate in the programme through support from Erasmus+ and the International Office in the orientation, application and organisation of their stay abroad at a partner university or company. Furthermore, the values expressed in the ECHE align closely with HAN's own strategic goals, which makes Erasmus+ a vehicle for more than internationalisation; the programme drives development in all of HAN's key areas.

The ECHE principles from the European Commission are also leading in the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme. Erasmus Without Papers (EWP), such as the Digital Learning Agreements and the Inter Institutional Agreements, but also inclusion and transparency on the websites further define how HAN can give a quality boost to the Erasmus+ programme. The International Office is working closely with programmes and schools, IT services and student counsellors to make this even more visible. Processes are further standardised and simplified, to give even more students and lecturers the opportunity to make use of the Erasmus programme.

The new possibility of blended and short mobilities, and Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) in particular, is a wonderful opportunity for study programmes to further embed internationalisation and cooperation with foreign institutions in the curriculum. Study programmes embrace this opportunity, and BIPs can be considered an accelerator for further internationalisation of the curriculum, promoting cooperation between lecturers and strengthening international relations. HAN aims to continue the development of blended and short mobilities, as the flexibility these options provide leads to further understanding between people and innovation of education.

### **Global Citizenship, sustainable connections and innovation**

As reflected in the very first goal of the institutional plan, HAN wants to educate its students to become global citizens with good critical-thinking skills. Elements associated with achieving these competencies are: values and ethics, leadership, collaboration, intercultural accountability, inclusion and diversity, lifelong learning, critical consciousness, social responsibility and environmental responsibility. These elements should lead to students who not only acquire knowledge and practical skills to shape the future, but are also developing on a personal and social level and can reflect on how they can make a difference.

Study programmes are free to interpret the concept of global citizen to best fit the professional profile of their graduates, but internationalisation – and by extension Erasmus+ - is always an important instrument. Be it internationalisation at home, working together virtually with partner universities, participating in and organising BIPs or having students go on study or traineeship

mobility for a period of time, they all contribute to the development of reflective, socially engaged global citizens with good critical-thinking skills.

Creating a climate where internationalisation can flourish, also entails entering into lasting connections with partners, as is reflected in the fourth objective of the institutional plan. Long lasting relationships foster innovation and add value for students in their learning process during their studies. HAN strongly believes that working with partner universities leads to improved internationalisation, as it facilitates student exchanges, joint degree programs, and cross-cultural (virtual) collaboration, enriching the educational experience for students. Moreover, working closely with partners leads to further professional development of lecturers and researchers who collaborate with peers from other institutions. HAN currently works closely with local and regional organisations, companies and centres of expertise, and has an extensive network of 325 academic partners worldwide, of which 65% is located within the EU and underpinned by an Erasmus+ agreement.

Overall, intensive collaboration between universities drives innovation, promotes academic excellence, and addresses global challenges more effectively than individual efforts. This is also reflected in the UP Universities consortium where HAN is a partner, a development which would not have been possible without Erasmus+. A consortium of seven European institutions came together to propose a project under the European Universities Initiatives Framework (EUI). The project, named 'UP University - Shaping the New World of Work, Study and Living,' aims to create a sustainable and innovative environment for work, living, and study. Goals include establishing an innovation hub where students, teachers, researchers, and external stakeholders collaborate to address European societal challenges, offering innovative joint study programs, and developing management structures to support educational activities. The project emphasizes close interaction with regional stakeholders, who actively participate in advisory boards and the hub, and focusses on addressing skills gaps, offering flexibility for disadvantaged and working students, and promoting intercultural understanding. One of the slogans of the project is 'the region as a campus', which means that the innovative solutions produced by the consortium must ultimately be a solution to issues that live in regional society, making the region an important beneficiary of the project.

### **Digitalisation, inclusion and sustainability**

Other key objectives of the Erasmus + programme that match HAN's strategic goals and focus areas include digitisation, inclusion and sustainability.

Digitalisation is one of the goals in the strategic plan (objective 2). HAN aims to have their students and staff develop skills to shape the opportunities presented by digitalisation and technological transformation. At the same time, they should be aware of the risks, for example in terms of laws and regulations or ethical dilemmas. HAN provides training with topics such as 'how to deal with AI within educational programmes?' and 'GDPR in the workplace'. Both students and staff are trained in digitalisation topics.

Inclusion and sustainability are equally important and incorporated in the Global Citizenship objective. Educational programmes are asked to incorporate these themes into the existing curriculum, matching the end qualifications of the programme. At HAN level there is a toolbox available that can help with further implementing these competencies in the study programmes. HAN also has a Green Office where a dedicated team works on sustainable development in cooperation with the industry, education and students. The Green Office also offers students a learning place

where they can work directly and actively on sustainable development through internships, practical assignments or electives.

### **Diversity Learning Community**

In 2020, HAN established a dedicated Diversity Learning Community of staff members focused on diversity and inclusion. The Community emphasizes the importance of recognizing and acknowledging multiple perspectives. They focus on raising awareness of intersectionality—the way different aspects of diversity influence each other. The mission is to embed diversity into the research and education at HAN, and aims to create a more inclusive, equitable, and effective educational environment, benefiting students, faculty, and the institution as a whole. This ensures that all HAN graduates are sensitive to diversity and capable of considering multiple viewpoints and making connections within and beyond their fields of expertise.

Peers regularly come together to discuss topics such as inclusive pedagogy and the academic success of students, considering the diverse backgrounds and perspectives within the classroom. They address the recognition and mitigation of conscious and unconscious biases, fostering a fairer and more just educational environment. Moreover, it enables lecturers and support staff to share experiences, challenges, and strategies related to teaching diverse student populations in a safe environment.