

Erasmus Policy Statement

Pallas UAS's international strategy

Pallas University of Applied Sciences (Pallas UAS) intends to assure that there would be a progeny of creatively thinking and responsible applied artists that are open to the world. Pallas UAS's aim is to give the students an education which guarantees their competitiveness in Estonian and European labour market. For that, Pallas UAS intensively develops cooperation with both Estonian and foreign higher education institutions to enrich art education with different skills and values.

In order to enrich the study process and ensure quality Pallas UAS regularly invites lecturers from partner institutions to teach at Pallas UAS. Every year Pallas UAS includes at least one foreign expert in every committee for evaluating students' final projects. In addition, joint exhibition projects with partner institutions' staff and students are supported and actively promoted.

The four main strategic directions for developing international relations are: international study opportunities, international scientific, developmental and creative activities, creating an environment that supports internationalization and setting up transparent action plans and financing.

How we choose our partners

For all international activities Pallas UAS chooses partners based on common interests, study fields, competences offered and the level of instruction. Partners are chosen on the initiative and/or approval of specialty departments or Pallas UAS management. Firstly, it is established which are the needs of cooperation of the school in general and of each department as an independent unit—the fields of study, type of cooperation, country, language, other competences etc. Then, research in the field to find possible partners that would suit these criteria is conducted or existing contacts are evaluated. The most important criterion for choosing partners is the potential and openness to either very specialized or on the contrary versatile cooperation. If the initiative of becoming partners comes from another institution the same criteria is used to evaluate the appropriateness and the departments' willingness for cooperation.

Therefore, partners are not chosen on the basis of preferring specific geographical areas but taking into account the competences, knowledge etc. that possible partner institutions have to offer. Pallas UAS for example, develops cooperation with high-level art schools in Russia because a classical direction in art education, especially in drawing and painting that has started to disappear in Estonia is represented there.

Most important objectives and target groups

The most important objective regarding mobility is to develop further international student and staff mobility. So far the results have been very good – Pallas UAS has been the HEI

with the highest percentage of outgoing Erasmus students per academic year in Estonia for several years in a row. Pallas UAS intends to maintain this position. In addition, Pallas UAS promotes mobility opportunities for its staff. Pallas UAS's priority is the mobility of academic staff, while the main objective is to ensure a balance between mobility opportunities of specialty departments. Pallas UAS supports its staff's mobility in different programs and projects. Every year around 20% of Pallas UAS staff participates in training mobility or teaches in a partner institution abroad. Pallas UAS also provides support to its staff in learning languages and whenever possible encourages them to develop their language skills.

Moreover, Pallas UAS aims to provide the students with possibilities most adequate for their studies and ensure the quality of both, student placement and study mobility and staff teaching and training mobility. For the latter, Pallas UAS wishes to develop an exhaustive feedback system in order to evaluate the quality of cooperation with other institutions or organizations and to map best opportunities for intensive and satisfying cooperation in the future for all parties involved.

Another important target group is incoming students and staff from partner institutions. Pallas UAS aims to provide instruction in most important areas for incoming staff and students in English and Estonian and, if possible, other languages. Whenever possible, courses in English are offered. In addition, the tutoring system is constantly being developed and improved.

When developing curricula the best practices in every field in foreign countries are taken into account. Therefore, it is deemed necessary that staff and students share their experience in that matter after their mobility period.

In annual action plans the priorities for internationalization and courses of action are determined. In the framework of these activities Pallas UAS as a whole is being introduced in other countries.

Pallas UAS's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme

As Pallas UAS has not participated in any cooperation projects under the Programme yet, we currently do not have a strategy for its organisation and implementation. It can be said, however, that Pallas UAS is very interested in participating in such projects as a partner in the near future. The best way to start doing that would be consulting with our existing partners and learning from their experience first. Moreover, Pallas UAS is definitely interested in cooperation projects for example, in areas of restoration and design. In addition to that, Pallas UAS is interested in participating in projects that focus on cooperation between higher education institutions and businesses and cohesion. Therefore, if an opportunity to join a cooperation projects under the Programme that meets Pallas UAS's needs and aims should come up, we would definitely consider joining in. We do agree that the participation in cooperation projects should be organized in a pro-active way, which means that the objective, school's role and expected results should be very clear from the very beginning. Moreover, participation in such projects should be first and foremost based on specific needs and priorities set for international cooperation on the whole.

Expected impact of participation in the Programme on the modernisation of Pallas UAS

Pallas UAS Strategy for International Relations 2017-2020, Erasmus+ Regulation, Erasmus Policy Statement and the main objectives determined in these documents correspond to European Union's modernisation and internationalisation agenda in higher education.

- 1) Although Estonian national education policy is not currently aiming to increase the number of graduates from HEIs, Pallas UAS strongly emphasises the importance of International mobility as it encourages Pallas UAS graduates to continue their studies on Master's level abroad. We believe that international mobility helps to ensure that students who graduate from Pallas UAS are creatively thinking, responsible artists competitive in Estonian and European labour market. We completely agree that learning mobility helps students (and staff) increase their professional, social and intercultural skills and employability.
- 2) The key to the quality and relevance of higher education lies in highly qualified teachers, motivated students and strong support system. Every year ~20% of Pallas UAS staff participates in training mobility or teaches in a partner HEI abroad; around ~9% of Pallas UAS students participate in Erasmus mobility. When developing curricula best practices in other countries in every field are taken into account. It is deemed necessary that staff and students share their experience in that matter after their mobility period. Foreign experts participate in the evaluation of students' final projects which helps to assure the high level of our graduates.
- 3) Strategic partnerships formed for and strengthened through mobility activities enable to exchange experience and share best practices with other HEIs. As our aim is to continuously develop and improve the offered study programmes. Cooperation with strong partners provides the necessary knowledge and support for that but also information about equipment, materials, techniques that are not available in Estonia. Pallas UAS wishes to develop an exhaustive feedback system to evaluate quality of cooperation with other HEIs or organizations and to map best opportunities for satisfying cooperation in the future long run.
- 4) Placements of students are a compulsory part of curricula of Pallas UAS. As training is student's first step to meet the future employer, it is essential to continue enabling practice in Estonia and foreign countries. Also, Pallas UAS has created an enterprise and development centre which will write projects for (international) cooperation with businesses and applied research in order to strengthen the links between these areas and provide new opportunities for our students and staff.
- 5) In managing the finances Pallas UAS takes into account the aims of its development plan and national priorities. Pallas UAS's support and whenever possible, financial contribution to mobility activities has given our staff and students extra motivation to participate in training or knowledge sharing abroad. We do expect this trend to continue. However, the Programme funding for most of these activities is essential.