

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

The Faculty of Design is a relatively young institution, established in 2005. The study programme "Design" incorporates Bologna declaration standards and applies European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). Since the academic year 2012/2013, besides first cycle studies (Bachelor's degree), the Faculty provides also second cycle studies (Master degree) in the field of Interior design, Visual communications, Textiles and clothing and Design Management.

The Faculty of Design recognizes and embraces its responsibility in the higher education institutions area. As it is defined in our mission we strive to contribute constructively to the development of the "knowledge society" through the promotion of human curiosity and thirst for knowledge and research particularly in the primary field - the arts. The goal of the institution is to contribute to sustainable social development of the local and wider regional environment while improving the flow of knowledge, linking education, research and business - the knowledge triangle. Although we have grown in numbers we still take great pride and invest a lot of effort into the individual approach towards our students. A constructive and stimulating environment is created, a balanced set of skills is given so that the graduates are equipped with the knowledge required to enter the labour market successfully. Design is a complex field involving different expertise from the fields of sociology, technology and science. Without the intertwine of all three areas design cannot be innovative, creative and offer high added value products or solutions. According to the latter an institution offering education in design must be up to date with new teaching approaches and trends in the field. The only strategy that ensures the latter is internationalisation and modernisation. In 2007 the Faculty acquired its first Erasmus University Charter. Since then we have increased our mobility numbers, established stable and reliable partnerships and procured an upgrading of the curricula offered. We have partner institutions in almost all participating countries. The first objective when establishing a partnership is to match the study programme from the respective field. Only this way we can guarantee quality mobility and a transparent process of recognition. Besides the programme the mode of instruction is of great relevance. Our students are educated through a conceptual way of thinking, managing between design and social aspects of the final design. Since one of our long-term goals is to become reference institution of higher education of the wider international, European area we primarily search for partners in the EU partner states. This way we can also ensure financial support with available financial mechanisms and support programmes for those students eager to benefit from a study period abroad. We have a stable network of partner institutions with whom we have regular exchange and cooperate on joint projects. Such a platform and an example of good practice is the Group for International Design Education (GIDE) which celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2013 and is well incorporated in all partner institution's study programme. The geographical and educational area we do not want to ignore is the area of southeast Europe where the educational system and its characteristics are similar to ours. That is why we have established our own platform Architecture/Landscape/Interiors/Culture/Emotions (A.L.I.C.E.) associating institutions from Slovenia, Poland, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Russia thus forming a CEEPUS III network. Within the network we have already defined interested partners for the preparation and organisation of a joint degree. It is of great interest to us to offer to the students in the very near future a joint degree in the field of design. Also we are currently in the process of preparing the necessary documentation for the establishment of transnational cooperation with a

partner institution of the area. This is a form of cooperation we shall develop in the near future. Besides standard mobility, student and staff, supported by the programmes in question our primary goal in the following years is to stimulate mobility in the second cycle and mobility to/from non-HEI institutions, directly to/from industry. The strategy presented in these paragraphs outlines our most important objectives in our overall strategy of internationalisation: to ensure teaching of constantly updated and internationally revised knowledge; to educate individuals according to the principles of the knowledge triangle enabling them an easy transfer to the labour market; to establish reliable partner networks that will compel us to constantly improve the curricula; to upgrade the Course Catalogue with the offer of joint degree programmes and third cycle studies in the field of design, the field that is also one of the basic areas for a "new", Creative Europe.

The Faculty is an active member of the GIDE platform, in an international cooperation project where principal activities of the Erasmus programme are implemented. Regular exchange, student and staff, between partner institutions is maintained, project topics change every year and research into new aspects of design, a student workshop, conference and exhibition are organised annually. All these activities make the GIDE platform an example of good practice how can international cooperation projects be successfully organised and its results implemented by the Erasmus programme. Such activities support teaching and training of all participants and at the same time establish an environment of intercultural exchange, where participants are familiarized with teamwork, short deadlines, effective brainstorming and different teaching/thinking approaches. These intensive activities are rather similar to Erasmus Intensive programmes, which we would like to implement also with our other partner schools in the field of visual communications, textiles and clothing and design management. Having obtained the accreditation of the master study programme "Design" we shall implement actions to cooperate as partner institution in a Erasmus Mundus programme. Our current transnational cooperation projects are focused on teaching and knowledge transfer. Thus we are familiarizing ourselves with the procedures on national and international levels.

At the Faculty we have established three Laboratories to stimulate the process of transfer of knowledge from education to industry. A further upgrade is needed for training activities in the field of Lifelong Learning, education for employees, young people on the labour market and those that require upgrading of the qualification received. The principal goal of the strategy is to provide a profile of a designer, which will contribute to the further development and implementation of design as one of the relevant factors for a competitive economy.

The Faculty of Design will endorse with its activities and outcomes the EU Strategy "Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education system": The accreditation of the second cycle studies "Design" is of essential importance in order for the Faculty to address the first key issue of the Modernisation agenda- Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers the Europe needs. Our participation in the Programme will enable us to find suitable partners for the preparation of jointdegrees and facilitate provision of financial support for participants. Also the long-term goal is to prepare curricula for third cycle studies which we would like to prepare in the context of an international cooperation project. The development of the field of design depends directly on the development in the field of industry. Our objective is to define and regularly review curricula in order to develop active labour market policies and endorse graduate employment. In accordance with the characteristics of our area graduates will, in majority,

belong to the group of micro-enterprises that are required to be flexible on the market, offering the latest innovations to achieve higher quality and added value. According to the latter continuous education must be provided for the student and for the lecturer providing the relevant knowledge. At the Faculty we strongly believe that mobility is one of the biggest incentives and guarantees for quality studies. Interested individuals must be supported in their desire to study, train and teach abroad. Using the ECTS (and ECVET) recognition mechanisms are simple and transparent, supporting cooperation and upgrading of qualifications. Study programme "Design" was based on the principles of the knowledge triangle. Final, innovative solutions must include latest knowledge from the field of design, incorporating the results of which are based on scientific research and respond to the current needs of the market.

Design cannot exist independently from the market, since it is intended for the end-user. Within the key issue of linking HE, research and business, the Faculty, with its participation in the Programme, shall lay special importance to involve in projects that stimulate research in the field of design, research that will correspond with the identified requirements from industry. The current economic situation has forced HEI to actively participate in the global market, not only as providers of education but also as possible business partners that will help to establish a high-quality and stable economy. Supporting mechanisms in the Programme will facilitate access to funding and co-funding of different projects and at the same time encourage "healthy" management that will recognize the importance of education in the new circumstances, in the new programme period 2014-2020.