

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

The mission and primary goals of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts have remained the same throughout its 140 years of history: to preserve Hungary's living traditions of fine arts, while also creating new values through offering courses in state of the art media and entering international discourse with an openness - and in reflection - to trends in contemporary art. The latter is evidenced by our departments established in recent decades, which began their operation in congruity with fresh trends in the contemporary art. In addition to practical training, theoretical subjects comprise a fundamental component of education at HUFA.

As one of the unique characteristics of HUFA – which is also partly what makes it attractive to international students – the practical component of most of its programs is taught in a traditional formulation of students gathered around professors (tutor system), making continuous cooperation in a seminar-like setting possible. Mid-year and year-end public exhibitions, presentations, art competitions and degree shows allow for not only in-house evaluation, but also for tests of talent and skills beyond university walls.

The Hungarian University of Fine Arts considers the advancement of its internationalization strategy, especially as through the Erasmus program, one of its primary goals. After well over a decade of steadily growing student, teaching – and more recently, staff – mobility, as well as the successful coordination of such IP projects as the currently running Correspondences and Interventions, HUFA wishes to further expand its mobility and continue to place greater emphasis on multilateral projects and thematic networks.

The Erasmus program constitutes a crucial aspect of HUFA's international activity. Our university has over 50 bilateral agreements in 24 countries. The process of partner selection and monitoring has recently become a focal point of strategy making within the university. In establishing active, mutually beneficial and productive partnerships, finding the right balance between academic interests, geographical factors and subject area considerations is of prime importance. HUFA seeks partner institutions with a research and education profile similar to its own. As most of our programs run on a single cycle basis, we are primarily looking to establish partnerships with institutions that offer both BA and MA programs. In addition, our Doctoral School is also planning to expand its network of international partnerships.

Teaching mobility initiatives are prioritized in HUFA's Erasmus activity, since they are considered not only to facilitate the international sharing of knowledge, expertise and good academic practice, but to also serve as the basis for further collaboration, quality mobility and project building within the Erasmus program. For this reason, the HUFA places great emphasis on encouraging and supporting academic staff mobility as sees it as a crucial element in its internationalization scheme. In addition to expanding its student and teaching mobility activities, the HUFA also sees it necessary to further develop its staff mobility.

In the past seven years, HUFA has extended its partner network to include more universities from Central-Eastern Europe and more recently joined Member States of the region. In addition, at the departmental level, the university has longstanding ties with partners from such non-EU countries as the United States, Canada and China, among others. As part of its internationalization and modernization strategy, the HUFA aims to further expand the scope of these partnerships, and to encourage and facilitate mobility and thematic network collaboration with non-EU partners, via – for instance – collaborative relationships involving exhibitions, workshops and symposia with the active participation of both Hungarian and international students.

Offering semester and year-long programs for non-EU students is among the longer term plans of the university. Discussions are presently underway with potential partners regarding course structure and conditions for issuing joint degrees.

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In particular, the one major goal of the currently running, three-year Erasmus IP Correspondences and Interventions, initiated and coordinated by HUFA with schools in the UK, Poland and Germany is to strengthen existing working partnerships and, secondly, to develop pedagogical paradigms with implications, in general, for other fine arts and media and arts focused institutions and particularly in schools where multidisciplinary practices exist or are developing. The ability to introduce, and fulfil these goals is essential within today's global educational arena. HUFA has anticipated these challenges and is striving both internally and through developing institutional partnerships to formulate innovative methods of cooperation based upon practical and effective educational programs.

With these unfolding realities, new creative possibilities and teaching methods can be developed that will influence the participating institutions. The influence is twofold: students share and discuss the IP learning experience in their home schools. Secondly, teachers expand their knowledge base by discussing and implementing new areas of study and methods of teaching. Thus, both teachers and students return to their institutions with increased transferable knowledge and resources.

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The development of innovative educational practices is a result of a combination of factors. Access to a broad range of teaching experiences and an instructional environment in which new ideas can be developed and applied are both critical factors in fostering innovation and competitiveness in an international arena. Drawing upon existing and developing relationships with other arts institutions in the European Union, the objective is to develop pedagogical tools that take advantage of a broadening educational practices implemented that are at the highest possible level and that originate in a multiplicity of educational environments. In this context the objective of those Erasmus fostered and supported educational partnerships is to initiate and develop pedagogical paradigms with implications, in general, for other fine arts and media and arts focused institutions.

A typical art student entering university brings with them a variety of creative vocabularies drawn from a range of experiences and skills which, on the most profound levels, influences basic aspects of the educational process. In this manner, a student's creative capacities extend beyond the boundaries of the institutional environment and include the home, the internet, the city or town plus a vast global landscape. The challenge for any university then is to combine the teaching of the various disciplinary skills, historical knowledge and the development of innovative educational practices that arise from an understanding of how all these learning environments interact with one another. The various learning tools and educational practices which are part of the Erasmus program are essential elements in HUFA's ability to both fulfil and broaden its educational mandate.

Today, there are significant inter-related national and European dimensions to the educational concepts and teaching methodologies of a fine arts education. The range of artistic vocabularies and their applications are multi-dimensional and global. They arise from particular cultural realities and histories. Their definition is not fixed but changing in relationship to local conditions and an evolving European identity. Most importantly, Erasmus student and teacher initiatives innervate educational practices and encourage the articulation of the characteristics or qualities of the European dimension which then becomes discernible and beneficial for a society's cultural actors.