

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava is a public educational institution of high prestige. It has a firm position among Slovak universities, academies and faculties oriented on arts. It's a school in which artistic, scientific and research activities, doctoral study and international cooperation are significantly represented.

At its departments the Academy of Fine Arts and Design provides education on all three levels of university study within the fields of study Fine Art, Design, Architectonic Creation, Conservation and Restoration and on the third level also in the field of study History and Theory of Fine Arts and Architecture as well as in a whole range of educational activities in terms of complementary education. The results of artistic, scientific and research activities make the Academy a sought-after partner for domestic and foreign academies and universities as well as for further institutions and undertakings when it comes to solutions to joint projects and participation in international programs and academic mobility. In this context the possibilities of mobility and cooperation in terms of the Erasmus program are crucial.

Among the long-term objectives of AFAD is the development of and increase in international mobility of students, pedagogues and researchers with foreign educational, research and labour institutions. The primary point is the development of partnerships with institutions of proven quality, where the coordination of agreements with the number and specialisations of the fields of study at AFAD and the priorities of individual departments is important. The decisive reason for partnership conclusion may be also an artistic and educational project or a research project shared with a foreign institution. Nowadays, we boast 53 partnership agreements in terms of the Erasmus program and 11 bilateral agreements covering also partnerships with institutions outside the EU. As far as partnerships within the Erasmus network are concerned, we focus on countries and areas with long-lasting dominance or strong tradition in the fields of study specialised in arts represented at AFAD. When planning a study visit, students of each study program may choose among several foreign academies and universities. From among non-European countries, AFAD has firm partnerships in the US, Mexico and India.

Every year AFAD sends around 65 students to take part in study visits and work placements abroad, and it accepts approximately the same number of students from abroad.

Work placement in leading companies, undertakings or institutions abroad, in terms of which we use the Erasmus program to a large extent as well, are of great importance to the professional development of students and the ability of AFAD graduates to find jobs. We pay great attention to the improvement of the conditions for full integration of placements into the training program. They are used primarily by students of the Master's Degree program, who often write their diploma theses in the host company. Thus the work placements amount to a crucial means of direct forging of contacts among educational institutions, research sector and industry.

The primary goal of AFAD for the next years is the creation of opportunities and means for a more intensive development of mobility of PhD students and complex internationalization of the third level of study. We conduct this aim chiefly by supporting individual artistic and research activities of PhD students abroad as well as by involving the school in international networks active in this area. In 2012, negotiations with the partner institution - Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague,

the Czech Republic, concerning the establishment of common study program on the third level in the field of fine arts and design were initiated.

A long-term aim of AFAD is also the support of short-term mobility of teachers and researchers for the purpose of teaching, conducting artistic and research activities and developing cooperation. So that the school achieves progress, the participation of pedagogues and researchers in international projects, e.g. participation in the organizing of international intensive programs, conferences, symposiums, workshops and summer schools, is of great importance.

Besides the Erasmus Program the students, teachers and researchers of AFAD take advantages of programs Ceepus, DAAD, Fulbright Scholarship Program, Visegrad Fund, Leonardo da Vinci and other national and international scholarship programs and foundations.

Among the strategies of AFAD in the field of international projects is the step-up of the school's attractiveness for foreign students, pedagogues and researchers, mainly through the improvement of the conditions of study visits at AFAD, the widening of the offer of subjects taught in foreign language, predominantly English, more extensive consultation and administrative service, the initiation of international workshops and summer schools, the development of cooperation in the field of professional leadership within the conduction of final theses and opponent's opinions, the implementation of greater diversity of study models, cooperation in doctoral study organisation, the creation of conditions for the conduction of study programs in English language, permanent modernisation of technical infrastructure necessary for research and artistic activity and the streamlining of scientific and educational activities, etc. Emphasis is laid also on participation in interdisciplinary and interdepartmental projects whose purpose is the acquisition of new experience and skills.

In this context AFAD became in 2012 the coordinator of IP Erasmus: "Starting a New Chapter: Intercultural visual dialog of Slovakia between art students from Slovakia, Finland and Germany", which is interesting and contributively not only due to the overlapping of two fields of study, namely photography and typography, but also thanks to its impact on educational process. The objective of the project is to enable the students to develop their individual attitude to photography and skill in the field of applied arts and to learn to present their artistic creation on the European labour market. An important step towards the forging of closer cooperation with students, teachers and researchers from countries outside the EU is the conclusion of the Agreement on Consortium Supporting Academic Cooperation between AFAD and University of Houston-Clear Lake, USA. The Agreement constitutes the framework for international dialogue and cultural exchange between the universities on several levels: presentation of artistic creation, mobility, joint educational activities. We've been planning to conclude more similar partnerships in the future.

In accordance with the Long-Term Target of AFAD, one of the priorities for the next period is the improvement of quality and relevancy of the doctoral study program with regard to the ability of graduates to find a job. More complex internationalization amounts to a significant factor in this context. Participation in the Erasmus program provides opportunities for a more intensive cooperation among academies and universities oriented on arts in the conduction of tuition on the doctoral level. However, crucial is also the creation of conditions for the development of cooperation among the university or academy, research institutions, industry as well as social and cultural sphere.

Experience obtained during a research visit or work placement extends the potential of a PhD student and prepare him or her better for practical work. The asset of participation in the Erasmus program in terms of the objectives planned for the next period can be seen in greater prestige and weight of the PhD title, not only academic but also social one, which will be reflected on the improved ability of graduates to assert themselves in practice within their field of study.

In order to promote innovation of educational methods and creation of conditions of modern, flexible education and conduction of applied research projects, AFAD has established the Educational Centre of Communication and Visualisation in Kremnica. The Centre is equipped with state-of-the-art information and communication technologies and devices providing room for the acquisition of new experience and skills, the support of personal education and new opportunities for research and artistic activity. Vast possibilities of international collaboration between AFAD and foreign educational and research institutions have been opened that way. The project will contribute to the increase in competitiveness and successfulness of AFAD in terms of national as well as international activities. Upon filling the Centre with activities, the utilization of the Erasmus program, predominantly the Intensive Program, which is suitable for the conduction of projects aimed at intensive education and artistic activities, is in the pipeline. Through international participation, a new generation of graduates, highly qualified professionals using digital processes within fine arts, design and architecture will be prepared systematically. Favourable conditions for direct cooperation between AFAD students and experts not only from the academic environment but also from social and economic sphere will be created.

Since dynamic development and modernisation of an educational institution are to a large extent dependent on the quality and competence of teachers and researchers, we place emphasis on professional growth and employees' artistic and project activities as well as on active cooperation with partners not only from the EU but also other countries. In the spirit of the new idea "Erasmus Plus", we want to use the participation in the program to intensify the exchange of teachers and researchers with educational, cultural and scientific institutions from numerous countries of the world for short-term teaching as well as for research and artistic placements in companies and undertakings. The intention is to develop also new forms of cross-border cooperation with foreign partners in development and educational projects.

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signed

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Rector