

Erasmus Policy Statement of the Technical University of Liberec

The Technical University of Liberec is a top centre of education, independent knowledge and creative activity and plays a key role in the scientific, cultural, social and economic development of society. The Technical University of Liberec is an internationally anchored and internationalized institution. It is an integral part of the TUL Strategy to develop international, especially European cooperation as an essential dimension of its activities, to support joint projects with similar institutions abroad and the exchange of academic as well as non-academic staff and students. TUL strives to create a reputation of a dynamic institution of the Central European region, given the importance attached to individual European regions within the European Union.

In the current dynamically changing environment, the Technical University of Liberec in the field of science, research and other creative activities sets itself a vision for the period 2020-2030 to be an independent, internationally anchored research, development and innovation institution of European significance, actively seeking key societal challenges and research tasks, and bringing their comprehensive solutions. The Technical University of Liberec defines its main objectives in accordance with the policy of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Bologna Process, the integration of TUL into the European Higher Education Area, the European Research Area and in some areas in the field of research on a global scale.

The TUL strategy for internationalization is thus directly in line with the objectives of the Erasmus+ program and the agenda for the modernization of higher education. The Erasmus Charter of Higher Education is an integral part of the implementation of institutional plans, strategies and aspirations, and its implementation supports the development of modernization and internationalization of the whole institution. Through participation in the Erasmus+ program, it will be possible to fulfil the strategic goals of TUL, where TUL aims to build relationships with universities and research institutes abroad and to establish itself in the international environment through project cooperation, creative activities of academics and student and employee mobility; provide a wide range of study abroad opportunities, including joint-degree and double-degree programs.

Internationalization based on long-term supported activities has been and is constantly carried out by TUL faculties and an institute and focuses on projects in the field of education, research and development. TUL's priority is to create mobility opportunities for the largest percentage of quality students and academics, so that the experience of mobility is perceived as a natural part of university education and academic work. In this way, TUL wants to support and increase the ability of students and employees to implement outcomes, increase their linguistic, professional, social and cultural competence and to enhance the students' chances at the labour market after graduation. TUL has one of its immediate goals to increase the percentage of graduates who have participated in international mobility during their studies, and the Erasmus + program serves as a basic means of achieving this goal through all key activities.

The mobilities of academic as well as non-academic staff are aimed at developing professional knowledge, increasing the quality of language skills, improving analytical skills, expanding personal development, establishing contacts, and also consolidating existing contacts for further joint research and pedagogical activities. Finally, they support intercultural communication.

Involvement in the Erasmus+ program will make it easier for TUL to adopt new trends that need to be strengthened and supported in educational activities and to integrate them fully into its functioning. It is a wider use of sophisticated teaching methods, modern technologies and communication networks to improve educational activities and strengthen its international dimension in cooperation with renowned institution abroad.

An important strategic objective of the TUL is to further develop and encourage mobility programs at all levels and to allow students to enhance their academic experience and future employability.

TUL regularly implements mobilities within KA103, which build on long-term partnerships with more than 200 universities within Europe and also enable the establishment of new partnerships; these activities are crucial for TUL and are perceived as a natural part of the university experience and university life. Students also increasingly prefer practical traineeships within KA103, where they have the opportunity to verify the



acquired theoretical knowledge in practice, either in companies or in research centres of partner universities. This strongly supports one of the goals of TUL to increase the chances of graduate students in the labour market.

Since 2016, TUL has also been implementing activities within KA107. These projects support the development and increase of the intensity of cooperation with partners from all over the world. Thanks to the possibility to invite students and experts from abroad to TUL, the international environment of the university is enriched and thus significantly supports the so-called internationalization at home. It mediates experience exchange around the world. Cooperation with partners on other continents is attractive for students, therefore, the study at TUL becomes more attractive. Thanks to the interaction with participants from more distant cultures, the global competencies of all the involved participants are developed, which is one of the invaluable outcomes of the Erasmus+ program.

One of TUL's main priorities is to recruit experts with international work experience who could encourage a greater international perspective on TUL students and academics. TUL aims to increase the number of foreign visiting professors. TUL is also involved in a number of KA2 projects and other project applications are being submitted. Employees of various faculties across the TUL and, more recently, non-faculty workplaces are involved. Contact with students, teachers and researchers from all over the world enables the exchange of experience and best practices and, as a result, TUL is constantly reaching higher. Erasmus+ thus serves as the preparation and search for contacts for other more thorough research projects with foreign institutions. Building strategic partnerships with foreign universities aims at increasing the international reputation and attractiveness of studies at the Technical University of Liberec. The next step, which logically follows from the previous activities, is the involvement of TUL in the European Universities project. TUL intends to find partners from among the ranks of similarly large and similarly focused universities and to create a transnational alliance in the spirit of the principles of the European Universities initiative together with them.

Thanks to its involvement in all key Erasmus+ activities, TUL manages to implement a number of tools and means to meet the objectives of the institutional strategy, in particular: intensify foreign language teaching and usage across faculties, study programs and levels of education; continuously improve services supporting student mobility; motivate educators for professional growth and lifelong learning; build strategic partnerships with foreign universities; increase international reputation and attractiveness of study at the Technical University of Liberec, especially within the European educational area; support the development of global competencies of all participants involved in the projects. In the new period, special emphasis will be placed on the digitization of mobility administration, support for new types of mobility (blended, virtual), internationalization of the curriculum, language support for participants, support for environmentally friendly practices and civic engagement and ensuring equal access to all program activities for participants with fewer opportunities.

Internationalization contributes to greater awareness and involvement of teachers in current global trends in university education and provides larger scope for interdisciplinary international cooperation. The presence of foreign teachers at TUL enriches the curriculum of study programs and brings new methods and approaches to education. The experience from study stays of TUL students abroad are an invaluable benefit for their studies. The students will use the experience gained by studying abroad in their professional lives with regard to the process of European unification. The presence of foreign students at TUL brings new international experience and a broader view of the world to those Czech students who do not study/have not studied abroad (and who will most likely continue to be in the majority). The goal of TUL is for every student to experience the international dimension of the university, whether through mobility, virtual mobility, blended mobility or internationalization at home. TUL intends to strengthen teaching in English in all forms of studies. The aim is the automatic integration of a language element in regular lessons conducted in Czech, the participation of students in subjects taught in English even as a part of study programs accredited in Czech so that their professional terminology in the field studied is at a level that allows them to draw information from foreign literature in their forthcoming professional career. Thus, compulsory and optional specialized subjects in



English are gradually being introduced into study programs taught in Czech during the process of accreditation and re-accreditation. We strive for the integration of foreign students with students studying in Czech.

The goal of all TUL units is to facilitate the acquisition of other foreign partner workplaces, foreign students and researchers for joint projects.

The TUL Institutional Strategy sets as an aim that at least 20% of all graduates of Bachelor and Master study programs and 80% of PhD graduates will have completed a study period or a traineeship abroad by the time of graduation; in some PhD programs, traineeship abroad has already been set as obligatory. TUL aims to further increase the number of international student mobility (both incoming and outgoing). Another goal of TUL is to create such international atmosphere in which most academics consider the experience of foreign mobility, with all the benefits that can be gained from it, as an automatic and necessary part of their work as a teacher and scientist at TUL. It is TUL's effort to support academic staff in carrying out mobilities repeatedly. TUL supports and will continue to support also non-academic staff to take part in mobilities, because getting experience from abroad will initiate change and consequently improve the quality of all administrative and other supporting activities at the university.

The quality of involvement is ensured by multi-level control mechanisms at the level of departments, faculties and rector's departments, administrative and organizational support of the International Office at the rectorate, support of language teaching for incoming and outgoing participants, annual processing of final reports. The cooperation of the International Office at the rectorate - the department for Erasmus+ and the faculty Erasmus+ coordinators is also intensive, which ensures an adequate background for the quality implementation of all activities.

The participants are also supported by the Academic Counselling Centre and the TUL Support Centre, which assists in finding solutions to learning difficulties or obstacles, career advice, personal problems, social problems, emergencies, etc.

TUL also wants to increase its involvement in KA2, both in the position of grant co-beneficiaries and as applicants and grant researchers. Participation in national events organized by the National Agency for Erasmus+ supports the motivation to participate in more complex applications for the KA2 grant. TUL's aim is to gradually increase the involvement of academics in various faculties in KA2 projects. In the past period, TUL's larger faculties successfully joined (Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Science, Humanities and Education), now for the next programme period, we want to support their continuous involvement, but also to motivate younger and smaller faculties to gain sufficient motivation and confidence so that they aspire to join these projects with the support of the International Office.

By participating in the Erasmus+ program, TUL becomes more competitive in the international context and becomes more successful when applying for international grants, participating in international competitions, etc.

The Erasmus+ program supports European modernization and internationalization in higher education. By signing and adopting the Charter, TUL confirms that participation in the Erasmus+ program is part of the TUL modernization and internationalization strategy.