



Erasmus+ Programme (2014-2020)

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)

COOPERATION WITH EU- AND NON - EU PARTNERS. DEVELOPMENT OF DOUBLE/MULTIPLE/JOINT DEGREES

Cooperation with EU and non EU partners is a key element in TU- SOFIA general internationalization strategy. Decision-making on participation in European and international cooperation projects is preceded by debating and discussions on the objectives for its participation, the role it intends to play and expected results. A key element of the analyses is that the foreseen results should be sustainable and balanced and should lead to future development and international involvement of TU- SOFIA staff committed in the project and of the university in general. Projects integrated in the Institution's modernization and internationalization strategy of the University are considered with priority.

TU – Sofia has developed a number of projects aimed at getting profound knowledge in emerging research and economic areas and providing professional skills to students and staff:

ERASMUS (2010-2013) No. 510196-LLP-1-2010-1-IT-ERASMUS-ECDCE:
(Master Degree Modules in Nanotechnologies for Electronics);
Erasmus (2011-2013) No. 517836-LLP-1-2011-1-ES-ERASMUS-ESMO (2011-2013)
(Remote-labs access in Internet-based Performance-centred Learning Environment for ICT);
Leonardo da Vinci (2010-2013) No. 510591-2010-LLP-FR-LEONARD-LMP
(Training New Skills for the New Jobs in Nanotechnology);
Leonardo da Vinci (2012-2013) № 2012-1-BG1-LEO02-06765
(Proficiency practices in London and Portsmouth).

Since its foundation in 1945, TU- SOFIA has accumulated a huge database of partners. Using the MS DOS tools you can sort available information by geographical area, subject area, countries etc. and nominate your partners. Then you start discussions on the objectives, expected results, requested papers, deadlines etc. The final work teams are decided in spirits of mutual trust and responsibility of each partner.

Target groups of projects are students/ Ph. D. students, staff and sometimes individuals from the business.

Participants in project work teams are selected for linguistic proficiency, educational/professional background, experience and last but not least, commitment to dissemination and exploitation of project results.

Once committed to a given project, TU- SOFIA undertakes to provide relevant support to staff and students participating in it: provides time to carry out their project work, allocates additional resources to support the project, offers administrative back-up with financial management, study programme accreditation procedures, etc. and ensure space on the website for dissemination and exploitation of project results.

Participation in such international projects is seen as an important aspect/ key component/ in staff evaluation.

TU- SOFIA maintains Erasmus partnership based on inter-institutional agreements with 27 from all eligible 34 countries. The exchange Erasmus activities are related to 7 from all 16 subject areas and 5 from all 21 economic sectors.

Possibilities for studies in foreign languages at TU- SOFIA faculties (besides 3 foreign language faculties) have increased. New course units taught in English such as Mechatronic Systems (Bachelor's degree courses, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering); Telecommunications (Bachelor's degree courses, Faculty of Telecommunications); Information Technologies in Transport (Bachelor's degree courses, Faculty of Transport); Mathematics and Computer Science (Bachelor's degree courses, provided both by TU-SOFIA and Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" etc.) have been adopted. The emerging course units have been integrated in the faculties' curricula and run parallel to those of the foreign language faculties.

TU- SOFIA participates in the development of double/ multiple/ joint degrees according to mutual agreements of partner institutions. Development of the course unit could be initiated either by TU- SOFIA faculty or by a faculty of partners' HEI. Both faculties study the curricula and syllabi and make assessment of the facilities and academic capacity of the receiving institution. Current and prospective students are also on focus. Further criteria of assessment are the accreditations and the rating of the university throughout HEIs in Europe. The decision making process is discussed by the Academic councils of partner universities. The main reasons are that the new course unit be sustainable and relevant to the labour market and should lead to future development and international involvement of TU- SOFIA.

TU- SOFIA students can benefit from the development of 5 double degree courses - with HEIs from Germany, France, Denmark, Russia and Ukraine. The last one, in cooperation with Otto von Guericke University – Magdeburg/Germany has been adopted recently.

ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL EU AND NON-EU COOPERATION PROJECTS

The organization and implementation of EU and non-EU projects is in charge of different departments:

1/ Department of international integration is deeply engaged with coordination of EU programmes activities: signing the inter-institutional agreements, preparation and validation of requested documents (Learning agreements, Transcript of Records, Mobility plans etc.),

nomination and selection procedures of individuals, mentoring and support arrangements of mobility, report formalities etc.

Nomination and final selection is carried out at faculty level according to prior specified criteria: linguistic proficiency, educational background, participation in project work and faculty events, cross-cultural communications with incoming mobile participants etc.

The international integration department maintains the contacts with faculties and key offices in the University and with the National Executive Agency, EACEA and other local and international institutions.

The International integration department supports projects of general importance, provides specific arrangements for research teams to prepare the project proposals, maintains contacts with prospective partners, supplies information about open calls for proposals, organize information days for specific programmes etc.

2/ Research and development sector:

It is a separate administrative structure, which supports calls for papers, coordinates and manages projects, concludes research contracts, provides the funding and supporting activities. The most important projects are developed under 7 FP. It participates in projects with EU and non EU partners.

3/ The International Programmes and Exchange department performs the administrative side of the collaboration with EU and non – EU institutions without granted funds.

MODERNIZATION AGENDA OF EU AND TU – SOFIA

TU –SOFIA supports the agenda of the modernization of Europe’s higher education systems to boost growth and jobs.

Importance of 5 priorities of the in higher education area is well recognized by TU - Sofia. By agreeing to the principals of the Charter, TU- Sofia will work towards achieving these objectives:

- to increase the number of higher education graduates and researchers

TU - Sofia will:

Expand the recruitment strategy offering few circles of admittance exams in different towns throughout the year;

Encourage a greater variety of study modes (part-time, distance and modular learning, continuing education for adults etc.) and adapt them to the labour market.

- to improve the quality and relevance of teaching and researcher training, to equip graduates with the knowledge and core transferable competences they need to succeed in high-skill occupations;

TU - Sofia assesses the educational background of teachers and staff as decisive for improving the quality of studies with knowledge and transferable competences in high skill occupations. TU - Sofia will:

Support participation of individuals and work teams in training on new scientific topics;

Develop projects with key HEIs and strategic partners;

Introduce incentives to faculties to invest in continuous professional development of their staff, recruiting staff to develop emerging disciplines etc.

- to provide more opportunities for students to gain additional skills through study or training abroad, and to encourage cross-border co-operation to boost higher education performance;

TU - Sofia shall develop the mobility programs as crucial factor for internationalization of curriculum and syllabi and will:

Focus on HEIs, which keep stable flow of incoming and outgoing students;

Modify some templates of Erasmus site on TU- SOFIA;

Stimulate participation in international events for exchange of experience and knowledge transfer.

- to strengthen the "knowledge triangle", linking education, research and business

TU - Sofia government bodies are convinced that the "knowledge triangle" is basic prerequisite for a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. TU - Sofia will:

Enhance the capacity of the faculties to integrate the research results and innovative practices in the curricula;

Foster an exchange of knowledge, staff and expertise with employers, who provide traineeships for students and for staff.

- to create effective governance and funding mechanisms in support of excellence.

The role of the financial factor is well recognized as a driving force of all important initiatives.

TU - Sofia will:

Provide financial management to make the education in TU - Sofia accessible to under represented groups, social minorities etc.

Encourage the financial support at faculty level to mobility individuals;

Boost career development of students and researchers with outstanding results during mobility period abroad.

By application of all the above policies TU - Sofia is prepared to comply with the new target of European Area Ministers students, completing studies or training abroad to reach 20% of the general students by 2020.