

Erasmus Policy Statement

The University of Abertay Dundee (Abertay) is an adventurous and successful institution, proud of its reputation for being focussed on social, cultural and economic outcomes which are relevant regionally, nationally and globally. Abertay aims to be internationally recognised in research, knowledge exchange and teaching. An integral aspect of this goal is to further develop international collaborations that will enhance learning and teaching, research, and professional practice. Abertay firmly believes in the value of learning from others and recognises that collaborations enrich the University. Building partnerships internationally and encouraging participation in international exchanges are key strategic objectives consistent with the University's values, vision and strategic priorities.

a) Abertay partners with universities and institutions based on compatibility of academic strengths, subject area, research interests, mission and values. The aim is to develop a network of contact points and activities between Abertay and partner institutions to ensure sustainable partnerships that share a number of common goals and interests. These activities include staff and student exchange, workshops, research projects, knowledge exchange and continuing professional development (CPD). Central to achieving this aim is the identification of partners that offer complementary, rather than identical, skill-sets to those at Abertay. Such partners broaden the range of accessible expertise and skills available to both partners; this is culturally and academically enriching to the communities. Abertay has internationally recognised strengths in areas such as computer games, digital security and environmental science among others. In 2014-2020, Abertay will continue to enhance existing links, create and sustain new ones, and embed a programme of internationalisation and modernisation that includes further developing global relationships, including two-way mobility for students and staff. Abertay will seek to extend the range of partners for Erasmus mobility based upon complementary academic strengths and institutional interests.

b) The University actively assesses its academic strengths and investigates where there is a demand for these strengths. Partnerships are explored in these areas and Abertay does not constrain its activities to particular geographic regions. In exploring an assortment of areas for mobility and collaborations, Abertay aims to provide varied opportunities for students and staff to benefit from different perspectives and further knowledge of language, culture, and social and economic circumstances.

c) The University values and encourages mobility for all groups of student and staff. Our degree portfolio is made up of first (undergraduate), second (postgraduate) and third (doctoral) cycle programmes of study and there are many opportunities for mobility across all three cycles. Erasmus Mundus has

widened opportunities for second and third cycle mobility in particular and we intend to continue developing these links. Short cycle courses are generally not a target for mobility as students often have an intensive focus on building a foundation for further study. Our priority is to strengthen our existing partnerships in both depth and breadth as well as to create new links for mobility. The most important objective is to support students and staff in their desire for mobility opportunities in all cycles. Abertay currently offers double degrees in collaboration with a long-standing partner in Malaysia. These awards are based on detailed curriculum mapping exercises to allow particular Abertay awards to be equated with degree programmes offered by our partner institution. Quality Assurance (QA) processes are very similar in both countries and the relevant national QA agencies operate a Memorandum of Understanding; it is thus possible to approach QA in a collaborative fashion. In practical terms this means assessment instruments are agreed prior to release and all grading is moderated; both institutions appoint external examiners to ensure standards are commensurate with each jurisdiction. Students may study entirely in Malaysia but are encouraged to study at Abertay for at least one year of their programme. An important founding principle of an Abertay double degree is that the student experience of a double-award student can be clearly identified as an Abertay experience. In order for this to be achieved for students studying only in Malaysia, students are exposed to the Abertay experience through a number of enhancement/staff development activities such as staff exchanges, workshops and other means of sharing good practice. In addition to double degrees, the Abertay experience will also be promoted through 3+1 or 2+2 articulation agreements. Abertay is keen to work with other partners to develop further collaborations and the University continues to explore additional opportunities.

Abertay continues to formulate networks of cooperation based on the University's unique strengths as part of the overall internationalisation and modernisation strategy. These demand-driven networks are fostered with a view to identification and potential development of projects which can be mutually beneficial to all involved parties.

Abertay will explore strategic partnerships that offer complementary strengths; currently, the University is developing a network of national and international collaborations with stakeholders (including industry and SMES) for knowledge exchange. This knowledge exchange includes major business sectors, most noticeably digital creative, environment and food and drink. Starting in September 2013, Abertay is also offering Abertay College Partners Associate Lecturers the opportunity to undertake CPD training through the University's PG Cert Higher Education Teaching. As networks and expertise are further developed, Abertay aims to draw upon the knowledge and relationships attained to enhance research, teaching and training in all areas. Abertay plans to utilize these networks of cooperation and experience to enhance current projects implemented under the Programme as well as explore new possibilities for potential Programme projects as they become available.

Abertay believes Programme participation is integral to our modernisation and internationalisation strategy. Participation greatly contributes to innovative learning and develops graduates who can shape future society; it helps Abertay provide a high-quality education to empower students and staff. The University's expected impact of participation and priorities under the Programme, in line with the Modernisation Agenda, are outlined below.

1) Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs; Abertay is confident exposure to different cultures enriches and supports both student and staff development. Students who spend time in overseas institutions develop higher independence and self-motivation; students in the host institution also benefit from a diverse student body. The Programme is vital to Abertay and we aim to substantially increase student participation.

2) Improving the quality and relevance of higher education; Abertay believes universities have a dual responsibility to local communities as well as the global community. Abertay is responsible for preparing students so they benefit both society and themselves to the best of their capabilities; students must be prepared to engage and interact with both communities. The Programme is invaluable in broadening student horizons and experiences.

3) Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation; Abertay aims to enhance staff mobility as members of staff benefit through exposure to different pedagogical approaches as well as specialist knowledge that may not be available in the home institution. Internationalising the curriculum substantially benefits and improves student experience.

4) Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development; Establishing strong partnerships helps develop research opportunities, especially through funding opportunities such as Horizon 2020. Abertay is actively pursuing further opportunities and we anticipate funding proposals to increase substantially. By forming strategic partnerships to build complementary skill sets and produce more robust submissions, more complete research capabilities are provided. Abertay is actively identifying potential research partners and aims to expand its research network further through Programme participation.

5) Improving governance and funding; The Programme helps improve access to funding a number of ways; research funds are discussed above. In funding for students, a university the size of Abertay will not realistically be able to supply all possible specialist programmes. However, through strategic university partnerships with complementary expertise and support for exchanges, students can receive specialist education for a more complete educational experience. Abertay also firmly advocates interdisciplinary research and education; such partnerships contribute significantly to expanding our teaching and learning capabilities.