Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS)

One of the key tasks defined in the young Hochschule Geisenheim University's strategic plan for the future is to ensure that study, teaching and research have a strong international dimension in order to achieve the intended innovative character in education and research.

Hochschule Geisenheim University is a “New Type” Hochschule (Higher Education Institution) offering a characteristic, “dual value creation chain” from vocational training across a tiered system of academic degrees right up to doctoral awards. The areas of teaching, research and practical application are closely interlinked. The particular thematic focus (“green degrees”) and the new institution’s relatively small size make it necessary to forge broad and multi-faceted links with the higher education and science communities by means of cross-border co-operations.

The German Council of Science and Humanities (Wissenschaftsrat) strongly encourages the new Hochschule to further expand its existing excellent network based on the traditional co-operations and contacts established by its two predecessor institutions (Hochschule RheinMain and Forschungsanstalt Geisenheim).

With its policy of internationalisation, Hochschule Geisenheim University is pursuing three strategic objectives:
- To improve the international mobility of students, doctoral students and teaching staff;
- To increase participation in international degree programs;
- To further develop international networks for education, research and knowledge transfer.

In the light of these objectives, lifelong learning is a key element in the internationalisation strategy of Hochschule Geisenheim University. In the area of “Erasmus Study” (SMS), the predecessor institution (the Geisenheim faculty of the RheinMain University of Applied Sciences) has a legacy of 34 Erasmus partner higher education institutions for 1150 students. Thanks to the strong practical bias of the Geisenheim degree programs, which include a large number of work placements, the “Erasmus Placement” program (SMP) is already well used through the inclusion of a practical project in the curriculum.

Our aim is to further increase student mobility in both areas and, particularly, to institutionalise international mobility in those degree programs that currently have comparatively low internationality rates.
Besides intensifying student mobility, Hochschule Geisenheim University has set itself the goal of establishing international mobility for its administration staff and of increasing that of its teaching staff in particular.

Teaching staff mobility (STA) is already intensively practised within the context of the Vinifera EuroMaster joint degree (ErasmusMundus-Program).
In the long term and in addition to the existing Vinifera EuroMaster program and the double-bachelor program run in conjunction with Italian partners, Hochschule Geisenheim University seeks to develop and expand new cooperation programs with other European higher education institutions and thus to promote the pan-European transfer of knowledge through greater mobility. One of our plans is to participate in multilateral projects (goal: a virtual institute with European higher education and research partners). In addition, we are planning a wider range of English-taught study programs and the introduction of regular summer schools in conjunction with partners (participation in Erasmus Intensive Programs), in order to enhance our appeal to incoming students.

Easily accessible, continually updated information on our Erasmus activities is available on our website under the “INTERNATIONAL” tab. The Erasmus University Charter and EPS are displayed in a prominent position on the web page. The campus screens are another source of information. Lecturers and staff receive regular e-mail circulars about Erasmus activities. An information session for students is held at the beginning of each academic year. There are flyers available with general information.

We have a women’s representative who is responsible for the promotion and implementation of gender equality at the University. The disability representative looks after the particular interests of people with disabilities. For the most part, the campus is adapted to the needs of disabled people and all new building projects are designed to be barrier-free. The Hochschule Geisenheim University considers itself a family-friendly institution and is committed to the values of an open cosmopolitan outlook, tolerance and respect. In the organisation of student excursions, due consideration is given to the social and economic circumstances of the students.

All study programs have a modular structure in accordance with the Bologna process. As was the case with the predecessor institutions, study progress information, modules and study and assessment regulations are all made available on the website of the new institution. ECTS credits are used in all degree programs. The Diploma Supplements are issued in German and English.

Advice for outgoing students is available from the International Office. In one-to-one interviews they receive information about the Erasmus partner higher education institutions, organisational preparation and how to contact former Erasmus students. For academic guidance, students also have the support of the Heads of Degree Programs (Studiengangsleiter/in), who provide help and advice on drawing up the Learning Agreement and recognition of academic achievement. Any necessary agreements with the Examination Board take place prior to the period abroad. Students can also take advantage of intensive language courses offered by the Language Centre in preparation for their time abroad.

Well before their arrival, incoming students receive a detailed information pack from our International Office staff, who also provide support in finding accommodation and arranging visas. Prior to the study period abroad, Learning Agreements are concluded in consultation with the Heads of Degree Programs from both institutions. Intensive German courses take place before lectures begin and there are further
German courses of different levels available throughout the semester. At the end of their study period abroad, incoming students receive a Transcript of Records as confirmation of the modules completed.

Teaching staff mobility is used particularly within the context of the Vinifera EuroMaster joint degree program. Before the mobility period abroad, the sending and receiving institutions agree on a so-called ‘Teaching Program’. In addition, the teaching staff undertake to submit a report about their teaching activities at the host institution. Our institution seeks to increase teaching staff mobility in the other degree programs. The International Office will support these endeavours by increasing the volume of relevant information it provides.

Work placements are an important, often compulsory component of all our degree programs. Students complete these particularly during the lecture-free periods, but also as part of a practical vocational semester (BPS). Increasing numbers of students are being motivated to spend time abroad and one of the primary concerns of Hochschule Geisenheim University is to further increase the number of foreign internships.

The Heads of Degree Programs are responsible for the implementation of the compulsory internships. The Internship Coordinators and lecturers of the individual degree programs prepare the students for the practical phase in seminars and one-to-one interviews and offer individual advice on the choice of company/organisation. In many cases Hochschule Geisenheim University will seek personal contact with the companies prior to the internship, to make sure they fulfil the subject-specific requirements. Before the internship begins students must submit an Internship Confirmation and proof of language proficiency, which will be verified by Hochschule Geisenheim University. Before the internship period commences, the rights and obligations of all parties involved (student, higher education institution and employer) are contractually agreed (Training Agreement, Placement Contract).

During the practical phase, academic supervision is provided by the Heads of Degree Programs and/or Internship Coordinators, whilst the International Office is responsible for the organizational aspects.

The student completes the practical placement with two pieces of work:

A written report must be submitted upon completion of the internship.

In a compulsory seminar talk, students must present their practical phase from both an academic point of view and from the perspective of their own personal and intercultural experiences. These talks are presented to an audience of younger students, who in turn use the information gained from them to prepare for their own internships. The practical phase carries ECTS credits and is recorded in the examination certificate.