

Arcada's Erasmus policy statement (overall strategy)

Arcada's international (EU and non-EU) strategy

Arcada aims to be a strong university of applied sciences with a unique and dynamic image by 2015. Arcada thus strives to be one of the three most international universities in our country, in terms of students and teachers, as well as research- and educational cooperation and to become a leading Nordic university of applied sciences within our selected competencies. Part of Arcada's mission is to increase the vitality of the Nordic society through internationally competitive education and research. The aim is to be one of the top 5 universities of applied sciences when it comes to the number of applicants to our English degree programmes.

As Arcada has high quality goals the institution has chosen to focus on four strategic competence areas: Sustainable Materials and Energy Systems, Digital Services, Culture and Media Production and Health Promotion and Patient Safety. In choosing of international partners we therefore prefer co-operation within these competence areas. In addition to the strategic competence areas Arcada has also focused on four strategic development areas: effective studies and active learning, internationalisation as part of education, R&D for innovation and knowledge accumulation, development and training for staff in order to maintain skilled and quality orientated teachers and researchers.

An international expert group has been established a few years ago at Arcada. The international expert group contains of 13 members both from the teaching and the administrative departments. The group works cross the different Degree programs. The aim of the group is to support the institution with implementing the international strategy.

At the moment Arcada is strategically focusing on Nordic and Baltic cooperation, but the international cooperation also include the rest of Europe as well as non-European countries. As a result of the Nordic cooperation Arcada was the first University of Applied Sciences in Finland to launch a Master's degree programme in English with focus on the Nordic business environment. The Master's degree programme in International Business Management started in January 2013.

Other concrete examples on strategy implementation are the work connected to intensified international cooperation with partner institutions (competence alliances) within teaching, research and mobility and the implementation of internationalization modules in all Degree programs. The aim is to establish Competence alliances with a few already existing or new partner institutions. The cooperation would involve development of curricula and R&D activities. The idea behind the implementation of internationalization modules in all Degree programs is to develop the international competences of the students. The module can be carried into effect through a course, student mobility or practical training abroad or through a project.

At the moment student mobility is focused to the bachelor level while the R&D cooperation is more linked to the master level.

Arcada is strengthening its international identity through using already established international cooperation networks with other HEI's. At the moment Arcada has a Double Degree agreement with FH Frankfurt am Main and is working on establishing a few more.

Arcada appointed an Integration Coordinator during the autumn of 2011, tasked with the strategic development of services for international degree students specifically. This includes coordinating and improving in-house practices, but also communicating with authorities and other relevant and concerned parties. Naturally, an active dialogue with international students, both current and graduated, is pursued, in order to understand the specific needs and challenges of these. As a complement, results of international research on immigration are applied and implemented as guidelines in planning work. A first result of this work is an integration plan for Arcada, finished during the summer of 2012. The overall goal of the integration work is to provide a tailored framework at Arcada within which international students can culturally and socially integrate into Finnish life and thus ultimately, upon graduation, make a smoother transition into working life with improved employability.

Over all it is known that Finnish higher education institutions are attractive and reliable co-operation partners who engage in high-quality and mutually beneficial international research, education and cultural co-operation. Higher education and expertise are nationally significant exports. As a relatively small HEI Arcada has not focused on educational export.

Arcada's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme

Our projects are linked to our international strategy and our strategic competences. They are usually based on long-term strategic general agreements and are based on defined needs and expected to produce concrete solutions. Management supports R&D activities on a broad basis.

Please find below an example of projects that we recently have applied funding for:

Skills2Work North-East-West-South (S2W NEWS) - The partners in this project share the vision that developing students' transversal skills is vital and see the need to integrate employability skills training into the curriculum as a continuous support process. Educational factors are seen as the key to employment, economic success and allowing people to participate fully in society. In its Communication (20.11.2012), the Commission reinforces the need for education to increase standards, and equip young people with transversal skills to match labour-market demand. The Skills2Work North-East-West-South (S2W NEWS) project will improve the quality and efficiency of education, and enhance creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. S2W specifically targets transversal skills to bridge the gap between education and work, to ensure students are entrepreneurial, and to promote job mobility. The partner institutions of this project are: AGH University of Science and Technology, Krakow, Poland/ Catholic University of Portugal-Porto/ International University College, Sofia, Bulgaria/ State University of Library Studies & Information Technologies, Sofia, Bulgaria/ Salzburg University of Applied Sciences, Austria.

Please find below two examples on projects implemented under the Programme:

WASI: Arcada is the project coordinator for WASI, a project that focus on improving well-being at work among persons working with Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Sweden. <http://info.arcada.fi/sv/wasi/project-overview>

Skill2e: Arcada is a project partner in Skill2e, a project that was initiated based on the need for universities and enterprises to integrate education and workplace demands. Its aim is to turn the experience of students in transnational work placements into a sustainable competence gain by providing pre-departure training, an opportunity for reflection in an online communication scenario and on-site cultural mentoring in the enterprises. <http://skill2e.fh-salzburg.ac.at/index.php?id=2>

The expected impact of the participation in the Programme on the modernisation of Arcada.

Arcada focuses on the priorities 3 and 4.

1. Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs

The Finnish educational level is high and Pisa results show that the difference of educational level depending on social status is low. Higher education is free and there are several national programs for reducing drop-outs. One of Arcadas strategic projects aims on supporting active learning and preventing drop-outs.

The Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009–2015 published by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2009, provides guidelines for the internationalization of higher education institutions. In accordance with that strategy and priority 1 of the Modernisation Agenda, Arcada has made practices of recognition and accreditation of prior learning and competence uniform so that they are unambiguous and consistent for both Finnish and non-Finnish students. One focus area in both the strategy of the Ministry as well as the strategy of Arcada is R&D for innovation and knowledge accumulation.

Arcada educates attractive professionals for the labour market. Both the study setting and the structure of the studies promote an interdisciplinary and innovative dimension to education. In test laboratories and Living Labs our students can practise skills and create new knowledge for the labour market together with teachers, researchers and external partners.

2. Improving the quality and relevance of higher education

The curricula of the institution are competence and learning outcome based and follows the criteria of the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning level 6&7.

Arcada works according to the idea of lifelong learning for the students as for the staff. A sustainable higher education needs qualified staff and therefore one strategic development area is the continuing possibility for career advancement with the project Tenior track as a path to increase the level of teachers having a PhD and therewith also to ensure the enhancement of research. The

project is aimed for full-time lecturers who are interested in improving their competence within our specific strategic competence areas.

A variety of study methods (eLearning, blended learning, virtual learning platforms) are used in our everyday teaching and learning. The institution offer part time master studies. A Master's degree from a university of applied sciences requires the combination of a Bachelor's degree and a minimum of 3 years of relevant work experience. It is intended for practitioners in working life, who wish to deepen and broaden their professional skills.

Alumni are important for Arcada. One of the goals for our alumni relations is to enhance networking. They can contribute with valuable working life contacts. As Arcada want to know about our alumni's working situation, a placement survey is performed regularly.

3. Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border co-operation

A student who completes part of their degree at a university abroad must make a Learning Agreement (LA) in advance. If the Transcript of Records issued by the foreign university matches the LA, the student does not have to apply for accreditation. The student only submits these documents to the Student Affairs Office for registration. If the courses performed differ from the LA, the student must apply for accreditation in normal order. All students graduating from Arcada automatically obtain an appendix to the degree certificate intended for international use (Diploma Supplement). Arcada received the ECTS Label in 2004 and 2009 and the Diploma Supplement Label in 2009.

The aim of implementation of internationalisation modules in all Degree programs is to develop the international competences of the students. The module can be carried into effect through a course, student mobility or practical training abroad or through a project.

In order to be eligible for applying to Arcada as a degree student, applicants should have completed a degree or qualification that gives eligibility for higher education in the degree awarding country. Polytechnics/UAS accept only final certificates awarded by national and regional bodies granting educational certificates. In addition, non EU/EEA-applicants are required to prove their skills in English. All applicants who have proven their eligibility must take part in and pass an entrance exam in order to be considered for admission. Entrance exams are usually arranged in Finland but some programmes also arrange exams outside of Finland. There are no tuition fees at Arcada but we do not offer scholarships to our students.

The institution aims to intensify international cooperation with partner institutions (competence alliances) within teaching, research and mobility. The idea is to establish Competence alliances with a few already existing or new partner institutions. The cooperation would involve development of curricula and R&D activities. Competence alliances can for example include:

- Courses that are created and delivered jointly by teachers in the partner universities (blended learning and e-learning pedagogy will be applied)
- Focused staff mobility including visiting professors
- Joint R&D projects

- Double/joint degrees
- Course exchange within the Competence alliance consortia as part of the individual study plan

An example of a competence alliance is the strategic cooperation with Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Science in Estonia. The aim with the cooperation is to reach new student groups and markets. The cooperation touch three areas which are; competence exchange (staff exchange) within programs with a focus on Master programs, cooperation within research that support the education and the development of open online courses (web based) through blended learning virtual learning (e.g. MOOC).

4. Making the knowledge triangle work: Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development

Our functions within research, development and innovation are utilitarian; Our research projects are based on defined needs and expected to produce concrete solutions. We believe that the interaction between instruction and research enhances innovation.

Arcada educates attractive professionals for the labour market. Both the study setting and the structure of the studies promote an interdisciplinary and innovative dimension to education. In test laboratories and Living Labs our students can practise skills and create new knowledge for the labour market together with teachers, researchers and external partners.

All students are given the opportunity to study entrepreneurship and try out business ideas which can safely be tried out in the laboratories at Arcada. The in-house innovation consultants support students with business ideas. The elective studies enable students to tailor their studies according to their personal interests and to take courses from other degree programmes. We want to promote pro-activity and self-employment through entrepreneurship and believe that this will promote economic growth and employability.

5. Improving governance and funding

Part of governance and funding is regulated by legislation. There will be a new act for Universities of applied sciences in Finland from 2014 in which a goal-oriented government steering is the base for funding. Internationalization is one of the funding indicators and Arcada has a systematic follow-up on the indicators as a quality assurance method.

For alternative sources of funding Arcada aims to further develop partnerships within international R&D projects with external project funding.

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