

Sakarya University (SAU), founded in 1992, is one of public higher education institutions in Turkey. At SAU, we believe that higher education is a power for good and provides a significant economic, intellectual, and cultural contribution to the World. International cooperation is expected to improve the quality of the basic processes in higher education. Therefore, internationalization in higher education is one of the spearheads of SAU's institutional policy, not only as a goal in itself but also as an essential component of the instruction and research process.

More specifically, cooperation with so many institutions under the framework of the EU Programs testifies to this goal. Hence, the University acknowledges that continued close participation in the Erasmus programme is essential to underpin and further develop its European strategy in a dynamic way. The current internationalization policy of our university focuses on the effort to increase student and staff mobility; increasing internationalization of curricula; active participation in European research and educational projects within Erasmus+ and active participation in Erasmus+ Intensive Programs.

In this vein, SAU is among Turkey's most successful universities in the exchange program of the EU. It has had a good experience in participating in the ERASMUS program especially in terms of student and staff mobility. Many of the objectives stated in the (2004-2006), (2007-2013) and (2014-2020) programs have been achieved. There is an increased awareness of the European experience and identity, with more balanced incoming and outgoing student mobility and greater development for language training. The introduction of ECTS in undergraduate programs has facilitated accreditation and the goals under curricula development have been achieved.

The Rector, Vice-Rector for Teaching and Learning, Secretary the General, and International Affairs Office have overarching responsibility for all such programs based on the principles of non-discrimination, transparency, and inclusion. Therefore, SAU ensures equal access and opportunities to all participants. Especially, it actively encourages its students to participate in EU students exchange programs and specifically tries to remove obstacles by providing in particular additional financial support and points to those with fewer opportunities, disables, and underrepresented groups. It also recognizes all activities in the learning agreement and ensures full recognition of the credits for the study and traineeship without additional workload. We will also continue to contribute to staff mobility under Erasmus with additional support.

The Equal Opportunity Policies of the University apply not only to the selection of outgoing students but also to the teaching and learning experience of incoming students. The University provides a high level of support to incoming ERASMUS students like all students enrolled at SAU. This means that orientation programs, Buddy System, and all other support are provided both by the University and by the individual. The incoming students have access to personal tutors and have the same teaching contract as their peers. Our exchange club, whose activities are carried out by our students at SAU, was authorized to join ESN (Erasmus Student Network) and took its place in this network as ESN Sakarya in 2020. ESN Sakarya assists our incoming students in accommodation, traveling, bureaucratic issues, etc. During their Erasmus mobility, the incoming Erasmus students can also apply for the Turkish Language Course for both terms (5 ETCS each). Besides, SAU meets all the special needs of incoming students with disabilities in order to benefit from each facility at university.

We will also continue to promote incoming staff mobility at Sakarya University, welcoming staff to teach on our programs and accepting invitations from partners to teach on their programs. Every year, new exchanges have developed in this area and these will be encouraged. New subject areas and mobility to different countries will be emphasized in order to generate interest in a wider range of departments. In order to maximize impact; we will support teaching exchanges with partners with whom we have student mobility and link international research

activities to education programs in the areas that are already successful. Within the scope of International Week activities, which we find useful to intercultural interaction and plan to organize, universities abroad will get to know our university more closely and foreign students will be more likely to choose our university.

SAU will take a role for the replacement of the incoming students from the institutions we actively cooperate under the Erasmus+ Exchange Program. In order to have high quality in student placement activities; SAU complies with the following: it recognizes that the student placement program brings a unique, flexible and quite an unbeatable solution to the staff requirements. Sakarya is one of the industrialized cities of Turkey and there are many large and medium-sized enterprises in the city. We will, therefore, provide high-quality staff at extremely low costs through the placement of exchange students in Sakarya businesses. The university has close cooperation with the industrial environment and with Sakarya Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SATSO). Sakarya University Placement Service (SPS) assists students who look for a placement position. We will also get in touch with foreign enterprises for training opportunities for outgoing students. We have contacts with our partners within the scope of KA 130 consortium projects that have been implemented previously at our university. We are also planning to implement new obtained consortium projects. Students who have enrolled in such programs will be observed by their departments and Erasmus+ Coordinatorship. We will also provide a Europass Document for internship students.

In regard to mobility we are committed to extend the range and nature of the opportunities we can offer to our students and staff such as KA 171, Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) and doctorate mobilities. This will include both study and teaching in participating and non-participating countries. We will continue to explore short-term mobility in order to encourage participation by a more diverse student body and to introduce new and less familiar study destinations in non-participating countries.

Our institution is dedicated to provide a comprehensive and globally inclusive educational experience for our students and staff. As it is mentioned above, this commitment extends to various mobility programs, including KA 171, BIPs, and doctorate mobilities. The goal is to enhance the overall educational journey by offering diverse opportunities for learning, working, and strengthening cultural interaction.

Short-Term Mobility Initiatives:

1. Diversity in Student Participation:

Our institution recognizes the value of a diverse student body and is actively promoting short-term mobility options to encourage broader participation. Financial support and logistical assistance will be provided to ensure inclusivity and equal access to global opportunities.

2. Introduction of New Study Destinations:

A key focus will be on introducing students and staff to new and less familiar study destinations in non-participating countries. This initiative aims to broaden horizons, expose participants to different cultures, and create a more globally aware and adaptable community.

In conclusion, these internationalization steps underscore our University's commitment to advance global mobility opportunities. By participating in KA 171, BIPs, and doctorate mobilities, we aim to create a dynamic and inclusive educational environment. The exploration of short-term mobility initiatives strengthens our dedication to diversity, ensuring that students and staff can benefit from a well-rounded and globally enriched educational experience. Through these

efforts, we aspire to prepare every member of our University for success in an interconnected and rapidly evolving world.

Institutional coordinator and the international office are responsible for carrying out mobility activities accordingly with bilateral agreements. All proposals for new partnerships will also be approved also by the relevant Faculty and Departmental Erasmus Coordinators whether they satisfy the requirements of the University's policy document on the quality control of placements, including exchanges. In addition to the individual contacts between scientists, which are inherent in scientific practice, SAU has institutionalized internationalization policies since its first participation in the ERASMUS+ Program in 2004-2005. The incentive policies of the European Commission and the Turkish Government have greatly boosted cooperation at the European level, focusing on student and staff mobility and internationalization of the curriculum. During the ERASMUS+ Program, this development will continue with the emphasis on shifting to the quality of the partnering institutions and stakeholders.

In order to have high quality in academic mobility activities, SAU has established a tradition in the field of international cooperation. Based on this experience; for the 2021-2027 Erasmus period; the programme will be implemented according to its priorities such as digital mobility management, environmentally friendly practices, the participation of individuals with fewer opportunities, and civic engagement (active citizenship) of participants. It has taken steps in the digitalization process in order to manage mobility at every step. Especially, Online Learning Agreement (OLA), Egracons (Grade Conversion), ESC (European Student Card Initiative) under Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) will be an important agenda of Sakarya University Erasmus program.

Sakarya University will support the EU Modernization and Internationalization Agenda for Higher Education and the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education will be a component of the realization of our institutional plans, strategies, and intentions.