



APPROVED

by the Senate of Luther Academy

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Erasmus Policy Statement 2021- 2027

Participation in Erasmus+

Luther Academy (LA) is an institution of higher education founded on 1 February 1997 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL) aimed at preparing pastors and laymen for service in spiritual care and education at congregations of ELCL as well as public, local and non-governmental institutions. **LA's mission** is to make academic theological education, that is based on the Holy Scripture and is practically applicable, more accessible in association with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia as well as other churches and partners around the world. For implementing the Strategy 2021-2025 LA implements its role at a local, national, and global level, therefore, LA is developing as:

1. ELCL education center.
2. Builder of the ecosystem of theological higher education in Latvia.
3. Partner in the global ecosystem of Lutheran theological education.

LA is committed to fostering international cooperation and promoting excellence in education, training, research and youth and adult development. As part of this commitment, we endorse the principles and objectives of the Erasmus+ program, recognizing its significant contribution to the enhancement of skills, intercultural understanding, and collaboration across borders. At LA, we are committed to active participation in various Erasmus+ actions to enhance the quality of education, foster internationalization, and promote modernization strategies. We plan to engage in both Key Action 1 (KA1) and Key Action 2 (KA2) activities by facilitating learning mobility for students and staff and establishing strategic partnerships for cooperation and innovation. LA has international ambitions and targets focusing on the international mix of students and staff, development of international partnerships to support and build the institution's capacity and capability, carrying out research of international relevance and scope, building strong corporate connections as well as raising the profile. We are sure, that there will be a successful cooperation on all levels that will give a remarkable contribution to the exchange of ideas and academic experience for:

- the professors - by participation in the academic process of European Universities and establishing long lasting contacts.

- the students - by gaining unique multicultural experience of studies and practice in European Institutions and after their return applying this knowledge in their field of activity in Latvia.
- the staff - by learning the ways of organizing better academic and human environments.

Within Erasmus+ KA1 action the cooperation will be maintained with the HEIs from Program and Partner countries. The goal for Erasmus+ is to strengthen the cooperation with existing partners and to expand the network, paying attention to geographical expansion. Our priority regions are Europe, Asia, Africa and North and South America (LA has signed 7 bilateral cooperation contracts with higher education institutions in Estonia, Germany, USA, Finland, and Sweden). This choice is reasoned for the existing successful partnership in these regions. We plan to work actively with Partner countries, starting with our first Erasmus+ experience. LA will welcome incoming students for all possible ways of mobility for students. We are interested in broadening the experience of our teaching and non-teaching staff, which will be possible by participating in staff mobilities. That includes teaching, staff training or blended mobilities. The incoming professors are most welcomed in LA. We are sure they will make a great contribution to the quality and variety of the study process in LA.

LA acknowledges the importance of mobility, learning opportunities, and the exchange of best practices for individuals, organizations, and communities. We embrace the Erasmus+ program's core values of inclusivity, diversity, and equal opportunities, striving to create an environment that encourages active participation and mutual respect.

Strategy, objectives and impact

The LA development strategy (2021- 2025) defines six areas of activities ensuring achievement of the aims defined for these priorities:

1. quality assurance.
2. staff development.
3. partnership/cooperation.
4. Internationalization.
5. resources.
6. image.

Internationalization and partnership are two of six priority directions for LA activities. In turn, participation in Erasmus+ Program is a crucially important prerequisite for successful implementation of LA Strategy (2021-2025).

By participating in Erasmus, **LA plan to reach the following objectives:**

1. increase the level of internationalization by increasing the number of mobilities and expanding network.

2. improve teaching methodology and practices and thus the quality of education and training.
3. foster digitalization processes.
4. enhance international research and faculty collaboration on international level.
5. build up social dialogue and contribute to regional development.

The objectives are defined within **priorities**:

1. improvement of international experience of LA students and staff.
2. creation of an international environment in LA.
3. development of intercultural, social, and civic competences of LA students and staff.
4. internationalization and modernization of curricula.
5. LA's international profile and recognition.

Intended impact of Erasmus:

1. Participation in the Erasmus program will help to provide students and staff with the opportunity to master their skills demanded internationally, thus enhancing their competitiveness in Latvia and abroad, by promoting their participation in international mobility, as well as by maintaining a multicultural environment at LA.
2. Studying abroad and getting benefits from international experience is a prerequisite to improve language skills and acquire new knowledge about European culture and its diversity (priorities of the European Education Area by 2025).
3. LA participation in the Program will contribute to modernizing LA through collecting new teaching experience and acquiring knowledge about innovative teaching methods from foreign partners. As a result, LA can provide opportunities for students to acquire advanced transversal skills and key competencies to prepare them for a highly competitive multicultural job environment.
4. Erasmus digitalization will encourage faster and qualitative digital transformation of LA. Digitalization of Erasmus procedures and LA provided flexible study forms will create an environment adapted for participants from disadvantaged groups (people with disabilities or from lower social-economic backgrounds), that is also a priority of the European Education Area by 2025.

LA's contribution:

1. Respecting the values of the LA:
 - Mission and responsibility,
 - Tradition and openness,
 - Relationship and belonging,
 - Individuality and togetherness,

we will embrace and share the Erasmus+ program's core values of inclusivity, diversity, and equal opportunities, striving to create an environment that encourages active participation and mutual respect.

2. Following the strategic goal of the LA - to ensure a modern, quality and research-based higher education in theology and using Erasmus partners' best practices we will help to build inclusive and cohesive societies, and in sustaining European competitiveness.
3. By implementing bachelor study program "Theology" and Life-long programs, offered by Open Academy, LA will work towards enhancing the quality of our educational and training activities by leveraging Erasmus+ opportunities to foster innovation, exchange methodologies, and share experiences with partners across Europe and beyond.
4. LA is working on modernization of technologies and methods used in the academic process and is searching for ways to apply them in broadening the field of communication with its Erasmus cooperation partners.
5. LA will actively encourage and support the mobility of students, educators, trainers, and staff members, facilitating experiences that broaden horizons, develop competencies, and nurture global citizenship.
6. LA will ensure equal access and opportunities for all individuals, irrespective of their background, and we will embrace diversity as a driver of excellence and enrichment.
7. Participation in the Erasmus+ program aligns with LA's commitment to sustainable development goals, aiming for a lasting, positive impact on our institution, local communities, and the broader society.
8. LA is committed to continually evaluating and improving our engagement in the Erasmus+ program, seeking feedback, and adapting our strategies to maximize the benefits for all participants.

Indicators

Set mobility target is to start Erasmus activities and get global experience, keeping the balance of outgoing and incoming mobilities. By involving faculty in Erasmus activities, the transnational faculty collaboration will be enhanced, bringing international research as part of project outcomes. Participation in the Erasmus program will also stimulate the policy dialogue between different stakeholders in the field of education and theology.

By participating in the Erasmus program LA plans to reach the the following **indicators**:

1. Number of cooperation agreements with foreign universities and organizations- at least 4;
2. Number of international partners in implementing projects of lifelong learning- at least 3;
3. Facilitating involvement of strategic partners in implementing fields of study (number of partners)- 5.
4. Number of joint research / projects per year- at least 1;
5. Number of international partners in the implementation of LA's summer school- at least 2.

6. Number of scientists from partner universities who participate in LA's conferences in the strategic period -10.
7. The proportion of foreign lecturers reaches 20%.
8. The number of lecturers from foreign universities who participate in LA's conferences in the strategic period increases by 25%.
9. Number of international projects at the Open Academy- at least 1.
10. Implementation of study programs in a foreign language -at least 1.
11. Number of international lecturers in LA's Summer school - at least 2.
12. Proportion of students who have taken advantage of Erasmus - 5%;
13. LA's participation in international projects incl. conferences -minimum number per year- 3.
14. Involvement of international lecturers in implementing certain study courses at the Open Academy-at least 4.
15. Proportion of lecturers who have done internships and/or participated in upskilling events abroad-10%.
16. Number of partners for international mobility at least 5.