

## **Erasmus Policy Statement for Bergen School of Architecture**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Bergen School of Architecture (BAS) is a private University College with a recognized higher education study program. Its Quality Assurance System was evaluated and approved by The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education in 2010. The level of qualification is a Second cycle/level 7/(one-tier) master degree. Master in Architecture is awarded in relation to the Directive of Degrees and training of Professional study, protected title and standardized study at Universities and Colleges of 16.12.2005. The nominal length of study is 5 years, and has a scope of 300 ECTS credits.

BAS has a Strategy Plan for Research & Development for the period 2009-14 which aims to raise the institution's profile on the international stage through extended collaborations. Furthermore, the Strategy Plan looks to draw on internationally recognized architects to contribute to a continuing dialogue on contemporary place-making and space reflection. Additionally, the development of a new overall strategy for the institution is in progress, and the Erasmus Policy Statement will contribute with fundamental incentives towards this new plan. International activity is seen as a major contribution to reach the goals we are setting for the institution. We take into account the EUROPE 2020 strategy and the goals set in the Bologna Process. The 3 focus areas in the "Erasmus for all" program will be an important guideline for our mobility activities.

### **HOW WE CHOOSE NEW PARTNERS:**

BAS has a dynamic structure for the teaching staff. Approx. 50% of the staff will at any time be from abroad, and will come to BAS to teach for shorter or longer periods. We also have a relatively high number of international guest lecturers. These international professionals suggest new partners. Likewise the students propose new partner schools. The leadership of BAS has the final word on what to proceed with, as it should support the strategy for BAS.

### **GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS:**

We have a number of exchange partners in place, but for the future we want to focus on developing new agreements in the following countries: UK, Germany, Romania, Poland, Russia and Japan. We further want to find partners in the following continents: North America/Canada, Africa. We are taking part in the Quota Scheme, where a number of students admitted to BAS from certain developing countries have their education covered by the Norwegian State Education Loan Fund. Provided these candidates return to their home country after completing a degree, they will have their debt cancelled. BAS would like to explore more institutional agreements in developing countries that would be covered by the Quota Scheme.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

BAS is a small school, and we depend upon our students and staff being exposed to new ideas found outside the confines of our own institution. Student and staff mobility is a key strategic action to help these individuals strengthen their professional, social and intercultural skills and employability. In addition, it helps create discussion and reflection around the profession and exposes participants to an international network and new

approaches to the field of study capable of furthering their personal development. Mobility also helps to strengthen the quality and overall capacity of our institution through external collaborations and new knowledge alliances, while contributing to new impulses and perspectives on the profession. Our goal is to have increased student and staff mobility, reciprocity in the mobility and more institutional cooperation to strengthen the knowledge platform. We will continue to encourage work placements, and work towards establishing more agreements with enterprises.

#### TARGET GROUPS:

Students are entitled to an exchange period of one semester abroad after they have completed their first three years of study at BAS, as an integral part of their degree. We admit incoming exchange students into the fourth year for one or two semesters. A major limitation on the number of international students we are able to admit is the amount of teaching space we currently have available within our school building. A long term goal is to increase the teaching space, allowing more students to be admitted. More focus will be placed on staff mobility, both in and outgoing, as well as staff mobility from enterprises to BAS. We will continue to organize work placements for students and develop more sustainable agreements with enterprises through our international network.

#### QUALITY OF ACADEMIC MOBILITY ACTIVITIES in brief:

Outgoing students: Information on web/regular meetings held by the international coordinator. International day every semester. Reports by previous exchange students used to improve quality on all levels. All students are allowed to apply for exchange. In case of poor academic standing a student will be advised against applying. No selection process, except where there are several applicants to one destination, in which case BAS will nominate. Information about EILC in the host country, and about funding option through the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund for language course. Mandatory for outgoing students to make a report of their exchange stay.

Incoming students: Buddy system. Exchange students join small master classes (approx. 20 students). This ensures good social integration. Teachers are informed about new students. All master courses are taught in English. All int.students are guaranteed housing if they apply before a fixed deadline. BAS can assist in picking up the keys. Welcome/orientation meeting where practical and academic implementation is prepared. General information folder for foreign students in Norway and Norwegian classes outside BAS available. Transcript of Record issued before leaving. Evaluation form before departure.

Work placement: BAS has several agreements with enterprises where teachers at BAS work, this is quality assurance. Training agreement signed in advance. Receive grant. Not full credit load, but minor free credits can be integrated in degree and listed in Diploma Suppl. Report delivered.

Staff mobility: Encouraged and considered part of developing professional and individual competence. Salary compensation, integrated work plan. Incoming staff introduced in suitable course based on competence and interest.

For all: Int.coordinator is always available for counseling, and handles procedures with Learning agreement, Transcript of Records and Diploma supplements. Vice-rector is the academic contact person.

International activity is an important way for BAS to strengthen our pedagogic platform. We join knowledge networks and access facilities to complement what we have at BAS. A global perspective in our profession is crucial in order to meet the challenges that the world is facing in the years to come. And a broader international discussion gives us better quality in our curriculum/teaching methods. Such an example is how it supports one of our main goals at BAS which is to provide our staff and students with time and space to understand and engage in work processes which are contextualized from the local to the international levels.

BAS wants to develop and participate in unconventional and leading networks and knowledge alliances, advocate their voices and explore their nuances. We want to expose our students and staff to these various influences. Given the dynamic structure of the school, with practicing staff from all over the world, new networks are introduced into BAS. Many of our networks originate in individual initiatives, which is something we wish to nurture and enhance. We evaluate and formalize some of these connections continuously. Formal networks are in place with the Nordic Academy of Architecture, European Association for Architectural Education (EAAE), Nordic Forum for Development Studies at the Schools of Architecture (NOFUA) as well as with the Norwegian schools of architecture Oslo School of Architecture (AHO) and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

BAS initiates master courses that engage real clients at the local, municipal, county and state level. This link between education and regional development provides motivation for the students involved and contributes to our engagement in society and public discourse. We have a series of master courses in the category "Architect in an unknown culture", where the students do on-site research, design and often build within many countries such as Nepal, Cuba, Iran, Mozambique and China. During these courses, we often cooperate with HEIs, research centers and local authorities. Recently, we have started cooperation on master level with Vestlandsforskning, a research institute based in Western Norway. It is a clear goal for BAS to publish more of the research results produced in the master courses.

We see the importance of, and will continue to strengthen the dialogue with the Norwegian Architectural Association, to enable an education of architects that challenges society.

The international activity at BAS is increasing yearly as reflected in the high number of international applicants, teaching staff and projects. Thus far, the scale of these activities is manageable. We see such participation as a valuable part of how we run our school, and therefore funding for such international activity is integrated into our regular budgets. Various external funding opportunities are a strong incentive to further increase this activity.