

## **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. 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 2015-25 where participation on the international stage plays an important part in the development and fundament of the school. BAS shall educate critically reflective architects who take social responsibility. Student-and staff mobility, together with other collaborations internationally is a key strategic action at BAS to strengthen the professional, social and intercultural skills and employability. Mobility also helps to strengthen the quality of our education, as students and staff are being exposed to new ideas, networks and knowledge. New impulses and perspectives on the profession is vital for BAS as a small institution. Mobility contributes towards creating active, engaged European citizens, with common values and intercultural understanding, knowledge, skills and competences needed to meet the global challenges we are facing in the years to come.

International activity is seen as a major contribution to reach the goals we are setting for the institution.

We take into account and support the priorities set in the new programme period for Erasmus+ 2021-2027, and they will be an important guideline for our mobility activities:

*Inclusion and diversity.*

*Digital transformation.*

*Participation in democratic life*

*Environmental understanding and challenging climate change*

**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 from all over Europe. We also have a relatively high number of international guest lecturers and international students. Together with our local students and teachers they all contribute to share their fascination for certain schools and their way of approaching architectural education. The leadership of BAS with the Academic Quality Committee has the final word on what initiatives to proceed with, as it should support the strategy for BAS.

**GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS:** Erasmus+ has provided us with a satisfactory number of partner institutions in programme countries in Europe, but we are open for new proposals as an

ongoing process. BAS has close collaborations with all the architecture schools in our neighbouring countries. In the new programme period we seek to further develop mobility with our partners in countries outside Europe.

**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 knowledgesharing. We will continue to encourage work placements, and work towards establishing more praxis agreements with enterprises abroad.

**TARGET GROUPS:** Students are entitled to an exchange period of up to two semesters 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 (shared master level with 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year students) for one or two semesters. The number of partners we have are well balanced with the capacity in our school. 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. Mobility for recent graduates offers a great opportunity to start their working career, and is something we will continue to encourage. **QUALITY OF ACADEMIC MOBILITY ACTIVITIES** in brief:

In general, the international coordinator ensures a transparent process for application and selection, both for in-and outgoing students. We strive for as few barriers as possible, and we offer support for both in-and outgoing students on a continuous basis. The recognition process is quick and flexible. We welcome students and staff with all kind of backgrounds and needs for mobility activity at BAS.

**Outgoing:** 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. We provide information about language courses and funding options. It is mandatory for outgoing students to make a report of their exchange stay.

**Incoming:** Buddy system. Exchange students join small master studios (approx. 20-25 students). This ensures good social integration. Teachers are informed about new students. All master courses are taught in English. We can provide housing guarantee for international students through the Student Welfare Organization in Bergen. Welcome/orientation meeting where practical and academic implementation is prepared, plus assistance during

the whole process to any question the incoming students might have. Transcript of Record issued before leaving. If required, BAS will convert our grades into the local grading scheme of the exchange student.

Work placement: BAS has several agreements with enterprises where teachers at BAS work. Training agreement will be signed in advance. The students or graduates receive a grant. This program do not provide a full credit load, but minor free credits can be integrated in the degree and listed in a Diploma Supplement.

Staff mobility: Staff mobility is an 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: International coordinator is always available for counselling, and handles procedures with Learning/Training agreement, Transcript of Records and Diploma supplements. Vice-rector is the academic contact person.

BAS wants to develop and participate in unconventional and leading networks and knowledge alliances, advocate their voices and explore their diversity. 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 and Baltic Academy of Architecture (NBAA), European Association for Architectural Education (EAAE), as well as with the Norwegian schools of architecture; Oslo School of Architecture (AHO) and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim.

BAS initiates master courses that engage real clients or stakeholders at the local, municipal, county and state level. This link between education and 'real life' provides relevant and motivating study conditions 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 unfamiliar 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 NGO's. It is a clear goal for BAS to publish more of the research results produced in the master courses.

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, and the Erasmus+ programme is the corner stone in this activity at BAS.