



Erasmus Policy Statement

2021 – 2027

The Amsterdam University of the Arts (AHK) is one of the largest institutes of higher education (HEIs) in the arts in the Netherlands. It comprises six autonomous academies, each with a long and rich tradition: the Academy of Architecture, the Breitner Academy for fine art in education, the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, the Dutch Film Academy, the Reinwardt Academy for cultural heritage, and the Academy of Theatre and Dance, incorporating DAS Graduate School.

A total of 3,090 students are currently enrolled at the university (in academic year 2019/2020); the international student population comprises nearly 30 percent of this total. Half of the AHK's study programmes are taught bilingually, in Dutch and English. In 2017 the AHK was voted the best HEI for the arts by a national magazine for higher education, and many of the study programmes score as 'excellent' in national surveys conducted among graduates.

The AHK's mission is to train students as independent and internationally orientated artists and professionals in the disciplines of music, dance, choreography, theatre and theatre producing, film, architecture, urban design and cultural heritage; and as teachers in fine arts, theatre, dance and music. The university actualises its excellence-in-education philosophy in the form of intensive, small-scale, customised education that centres on the potential and talent of the individual student.

AHK's internationalisation strategy is rooted in the international practice of the arts, the future work field of the students; our graduates build national and international careers. To this end the AHK will always invest in international curriculum development, with close attention for international competencies and the individual ambitions of the students, teachers and lecturers, and always within the context of national and international developments within the professional field. AHK students are stimulated to develop international competencies within their disciplines, whether in the form of actual mobility, or through internationalisation at home and international classrooms.

The academies position themselves internationally alongside other leading arts HEIs. The AHK is a founding member of ELIA, the European network for arts HEIs, and the individual academies are active members of European and international networks such as AEC, EAS, IAJE, GEECT, CILECT, OISTAT, ICOM, EAAE, IFLA and SIEF.

The academies offer a 'laboratory' learning environment that equips its students with the 21st-century skills required for success in the often highly competitive and hybrid professional field. These skills include critical thinking and innovation, plural language skills, digital and entrepreneurial skills, and transversal skills such as adaptability, self-reflection and conflict resolution.

Several AHK study programmes focus specifically on the integration of interdisciplinarity and technology. Examples are: the IDlab (digitalisation & performance arts practices), VRacademy, Makerspace and ArtechLAB.

The AHK has embraced the Bologna Process and the EU's Modernisation Agenda, and reflects this framework in its mission and strategic goals for internationalisation. The AHK's educational practices align with the objective of the European Educational Area to apply education, arts practices and cultural heritage-based knowledge to creating jobs, contributing to social cohesion and deepening a sense of European identity in all its complexity and diversity.

As is common at arts HEIs, AHK academies typically offer programmes characterised by their small-scale setting and limited student intakes; some of the university's highly competitive study programmes admit only four to twelve students each academic year to maximise the customisability of education and align it with the work field.



The impact of the Erasmus programme within the AHK can best be expressed in terms of qualitative rather than quantitative indicators. The qualitative indicators are:

- a) Increase of student participation in outgoing mobility from all academies
- b) Enhancement of student mobility among under-represented groups (top up grant scheme)
- c) Enhancement of multi-language skills of students and staff
- d) Enhancement of student employability
- e) Increase of international cooperation and knowledge exchange

The AHK fully embraces the principles of non-discrimination and, in line with Dutch government policy for education, incorporates these principles in its mission statement and student statutes. The AHK is a signatory of the Code of Conduct for International Students (which also includes incoming exchange students), which is monitored annually by a committee appointed by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to ensure transparency and equal treatment. All the AHK's regulations pertaining to education, examination and other regulations are published online, as are the study guides and the overview of the academies' grading cultures.

AHK academies provide small-scale, customised education, and they have well-integrated practices when it comes to providing services for student wellbeing: bespoke services for students with disabilities and special needs (e.g. digital accessibility for students with dyslexia); healthcare monitoring of dancers; courses for time and stress management; individual coaching for performing in highly competitive environments (performance arts, music); peer-to-peer support with special focus on international students (Student Life); buddy systems to help new students integrate into school life; and many other examples. Each academy has a student advisor and an external counsellor.

AHK formulated a diversity framework incorporating a roadmap that the academies use to develop and implement policy. A new Action Plan for Diversity and Inclusion has been adopted in 2020. The Executive Board of the AHK is of the firm belief that learning from diverse cultural differences and working and learning in a culturally diverse environment is vital to the development of art and arts practices.

The initiatives include: increasing outreach efforts; admitting students from under-represented and underprivileged populations; providing additional language-training for students, where necessary, to minimise learning gaps; and reviewing recruitment practices. The result is a more open invitation for diversity in staff and teacher intake. All academies are implementing their diversity plans by initiating dialogue within the school community and holding bias training and other types of training/course/meeting to enhance working and learning in a diversity-friendly institution for both staff and students; others are working on the process of decolonising and diversifying their curricula.

Student-centred approach for Erasmus

The AHK took part in the 2020 pilot of the Erasmus top-up grant, with the aim of attracting under-represented and underserved groups into the student population and offering supplementary financial support for their mobility abroad and will continue to do so.

Language deficiency can lead to the unnecessary development of gaps in learning and ability to express what has been learned. The AHK has offered language courses for speaking and conversing in the required language prior to an Erasmus. This university-wide support activity aims to help students attain a degree of language proficiency to boost their overall confidence during mobility. Teachers and staff members are also encouraged to take intensive language courses with Erasmus to boost their language level wherever needed. Language coaching is now integrated in the AHK's inclusion policy.



As part of the university-wide support activities within Erasmus, AHK offers pre-mobility students financial support for a supplementary language course, to help them make up a language deficit and thereby gain the confidence to engage in everyday interactions in a European language (other than Dutch) during their internships. An AHK-customised MOOC provides all international students lessons in Dutch and an introduction to the university life.

Another activity that aims to enhance integration of incoming exchange students in the international student population is the annual holding several 'after-school' events organised by international students themselves: social gatherings that integrate intercultural awareness through playful activities.

All Erasmus grant schemes are published on the AHK website: www.ahk.nl/erasmus/
www.ahk.nl/exchange