

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)

The Oberursel Lutheran Theological Seminary (LThH) near Frankfurt a. M. is a higher educational institution of the Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche (SELK) recognised by the state of Hesse with two accredited degree programmes. It is a member of the Higher Education Rectors' Conference (HRK | <https://www.hrk.de>) and the German Protestant Theological Faculty Association (E-TFT | <http://www.evtheol.fakultaetentag.de>). With its 5 professors, 6 staff members and usually about 20-30 students, it is a comparatively small seminary.

By signing the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, the LThH commits itself to the following strategic goals in the area of "Key Action 1 Mobility":

- a) Increasing student mobility
- b) Promoting the mobility of teaching staff

The LThH aims to strengthen international academic discourse at all levels and to promote cooperation in student and teaching staff mobility. It supports stronger networking of research projects, an increase in international conferences, improvement of study content, of teaching and learning methods, and of intercultural learning.

Regarding a) The LThH has been cultivating international exchange of students and teachers for many years. The LThH strives to expand cooperation with international partners and to further promote partnerships within Europe in particular.

The proportion of foreign students at LThH is comparatively high, as is the number of students who have spent at least one semester abroad. Foreign students come mainly from Northern and Eastern Europe, South Africa, North America and Brazil. Cooperation agreements and exchange fundings already exist with seminaries and internship institutions in the USA, Brazil, Eastern Europe and South Africa. The LThH supports foreign students with individual support services that enable optimal integration into the seminary and the campus community.

The LThH encourages all students to study abroad for at least one or two semesters. Students are regularly informed about funding programmes, application deadlines and application requirements in good time by the Coordinator Mobility / International Office. The Mobility Coordinator monitors the complete and automatic recognition of equivalent learning outcomes and grades after the time abroad.

LThH attaches great importance to strengthening intercultural competences and improving language and communication skills. The LThH cooperates with the nearby International Study and Language Centre (ISZ) of the Goethe University Frankfurt (https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/43663284/Bewerbung_und_Zulassung) for the acquisition of necessary linguistic and intercultural competences of domestic and foreign students.

Regarding b) The LThH cultivates the international exchange of teaching staff but would like to promote this even more than before. Active and emeritus lecturers at the LThH already hold lectureships at partner institutions, currently in North America and South Africa. The LThH regularly hosts international guest lectures in German or English.

There is a closely knit network of international contacts as the result of research cooperation, regular international conferences, and contact with alumni who were exchange students at the LThH and now teach at universities abroad. The LThH wants to actively strengthen the exchange of teaching staff, both with European and non-European partners, and aims for teaching stays of several weeks in international exchange. The new library building, which will be completed in 2021, provides the necessary space and infrastructure. In the course of its internationalisation, the LThH encourages and supports students and teachers to improve their language skills through language courses and semesters as well as internships abroad.

The targeted Erasmus Actions are initially in the area of Key Action 1 and concern the mobility of individuals among teachers and students, including under-represented groups for the purposes of study, teaching, education, and internships.

For its own work, the LThH hopes for a strengthening of internationalisation and an improvement in its mobility management, an improved exchange of ideas through cooperation with partners from other countries, a more competent acquisition of third-party funding and improvements in the selection and implementation of third-party funded projects, as well as a more attractive design of its own research and training programmes. This also includes careful preparation and follow-up of individual mobility measures, the recognition of results achieved and their presentation for the seminary, but also beyond.

Participation in the Erasmus programme should serve to promote the flow of ideas and sustainable cooperation between higher education institutions and thus strengthen the excellence of research and teaching. It should promote networking with other institutions and thus serve the faster implementation of innovative ideas. It should make existing partnerships more effective and efficient and facilitate new cooperation partnerships, especially in Europe. Finally, it also serves social cohesion, mobility and a fairer society in Europe. It should contribute to make young people take on responsibility, become active citizens, promote common values and stand up for the goals of European integration. Intercultural learning serves not only to strengthen communication skills, but also language skills in the transmission of values and norms.

Last but not least, our participation should strengthen the international compatibility of study and examination achievements, promote innovative teaching and learning methods and create an awareness of the advantages of multilateral cooperation. The LThH also sees an important component in the close linking of theory and practice and welcomes the internationalisation of internships relevant to studies. In the longer term, the LThH also hopes that Erasmus participation will strengthen its international project work and promote at least a partial English-language teaching offer.

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