

European Policy Statement (EPS)

Declaration regarding the ERASMUS higher-education policy of Fulda Faculty of Theology

Strategies, aims and priorities of Fulda Faculty of Theology in the context of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2014–2020)

Fulda Faculty of Theology is an academic higher-education institution which is run by the Church and recognised by the state. Its priorities and aims are centred on two main aspects: firstly, providing well-grounded academic training in acting in a problem-focussed and clear-sighted way in positions of responsibility within society and the Church and, secondly, carrying out research at a high international level.

The academic discipline of “Catholic theology” is particularly intercultural in its orientation and involves a global ecclesiastical dimension. For this reason, international exchange is a particular concern of our institution. Consequently, the faculty encourages students to undertake two semesters of study elsewhere – a mandatory requirement for students studying to become priests – and these semesters are often spent in other European countries (an option chosen by over 80% of the current year group). Participation in the Erasmus programme is intended to facilitate students’ mobility and provide further support in this regard. We intend to make those institutions at which our students have had good experiences in the past our partner universities. Furthermore, we intend to boost the mobility of our teaching and other staff, which, up to now, not been particularly pronounced. Above all, our students should be enabled to undertake work experience abroad.

In the context of the Erasmus programme, we intend to create an intensive and active exchange with our future partner universities. Furthermore, a number of these mobility measures are to be implemented together with Fulda University of Applied Sciences. Contacts already exist with the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, the University of Innsbruck and with a higher-education institution in Romania (Alba Iulia), and we aim to develop these connections.

Furthermore, Fulda Faculty of Theology has ample capacity available to welcome even more students from other countries. Due to the above-average number of students (around a third) from abroad (primarily from Africa and eastern Europe), Fulda Faculty of Theology already has an international outlook.

Fulda Faculty of Theology guarantees the visibility of Erasmus activities and the distribution of the Erasmus university charter and the EPS in the following ways:

- the faculty's quality management;
- a separate section on the faculty's website;
- regular information sessions;
- press releases.

The Faculty of Theology is resolutely committed to preventing discrimination on the basis of skin colour, sex, religion, background, age or disability. The following measures are implemented in order to achieve this:

- construction measures (ground-floor access to the faculty; installation of a lift for those with impaired mobility in 2006);
- explicit support of women and foreign nationals in research (see current list of completed doctoral theses);
- advice concerning immigration laws.

Starting with the winter semester 2010, Fulda Faculty of Theology will introduce the modularisation of degrees in accordance with the Bologna Process. This also means that academic work will be accredited using credit points (ECTS), which will facilitate students' mobility within Europe. In this context, a generous approach will be taken to the recognition of work undertaken as part of a course of study.

Due to the high number of international students at our institution, we already have a designated advice centre (managed by Prof. Goebel), which attends to these students' concerns individually. One further member of staff is to be employed by the centre within the framework of the Erasmus programme so that Erasmus students can also be advised and taken care of by their own coordinator. Furthermore, the English-language website of the faculty provides initial information to assist international students; this will be extended and brought up to date in the near future.

Together with Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Fulda Faculty of Theology offers international students the possibility of attending beginners' language classes as well as language classes leading to a DSH examination. Additionally, the Faculty of Theology's cooperation agreement with Fulda University of Applied Sciences means that all students can take advantage of an accommodation service, a work placement service and social support services.

In accordance with the new, modularised course regulations of Fulda Faculty of Theology, work undertaken as part of a placement is explicitly recognised. In the context of training for the priesthood, work experience is, in fact, mandatory, and it is hoped that the Erasmus programme will facilitate and support such placements in other European countries.

There is a regional point of contact for EU work placements, run by Fulda University of Applied Sciences and the inter-research Institute; due to the cooperation agreement between Fulda Faculty of Theology and the University of Applied Sciences, students of the Faculty of Theology are also able to take advantage of this service.

Work placements in the Church are organised by a staff representative of the relevant subject area; other placements are organised by the regional point of contact for EU work placements (or by the students themselves). The selection of applicants is carried out by the individual staff representatives, who consult with the international student officer of the Faculty of Theology; the same applies to monitoring and evaluation.

The international student officer is responsible for the relevant financial processes.