

Erasmus Policy Statement of Bern University of Applied Sciences

Participation in Erasmus+

Participation in Erasmus+ Key Action 1

The Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH) plans to develop its active participation in Erasmus+ Key Action 1 (KA1) – Learning Mobility of Individuals as a core element of its internationalisation strategy. Erasmus+ mobility is understood as a strategic instrument to enhance educational quality, foster intercultural competences, and strengthen European cooperation in higher education.

Student Mobility for Studies

BFH will continue to promote student mobility for studies as an integral and recognised component of its degree programmes. Mobility windows are embedded in curricula to ensure academic coherence and timely progression of studies. Students are supported through comprehensive information, individual advising, and clear academic procedures, including the conclusion of a Learning Agreement prior to the mobility period and full automatic recognition of credits upon successful completion.

Objective: Increase the number and diversity of students participating in study mobility while ensuring full academic recognition.

KPIs:

- Number of outgoing students participating in study mobility per academic year
- Number of incoming exchange students hosted per academic year
- Percentage of learning outputs fully recognised upon return (target: 100 %)
- Share of participants from underrepresented or disadvantaged groups (target: ≥ 10%)
- Student satisfaction with mobility experience (survey, target: ≥85 % positive responses)

Student Mobility for Traineeships

Student mobility for traineeships is further strengthened through close cooperation with international partner institutions, enterprises and organisations. Traineeships are embedded in study programmes where possible and supported by academic supervision, quality assurance measures and clear learning outcomes. Particular emphasis is placed on promoting inclusive access and supporting students with fewer opportunities.

Objective: Expand student mobility for traineeships with clear learning outcomes and inclusion of students with fewer opportunities.

KPIs:

- Number of outgoing students completing international traineeships per year
- Number of partner organisations providing traineeship placements
- Percentage of traineeships integrated into the curriculum (target: ≥80 %)
- Student satisfaction with the quality of supervision and mentoring (target: ≥85 %)
- Number and percentage of participants from underrepresented groups (target: ≥ 10%)

Staff Mobility for Teaching

BFH encourages staff mobility for teaching to enhance the international dimension of curricula and to strengthen long-term academic partnerships. Teaching mobility is aligned with institutional priorities and partnership strategies, including cooperation within European University Alliances. Incoming and

outgoing teaching staff are supported through standardised administrative processes and academic coordination.

Objective: Strengthen international cooperation and curriculum development through teaching mobility.

KPIs:

- Number of outgoing teaching staff participating in mobility per year
- Number of incoming teaching staff hosted per year
- Number of joint courses, modules, or lectures delivered with international partners
- Staff satisfaction with mobility experience and institutional support (survey, target: ≥80 % positive)
- Number of new or strengthened partnerships resulting from teaching mobility

Staff Mobility for Training

Staff mobility for training is promoted to support professional development, organisational learning and institutional innovation. BFH enables academic and administrative staff to participate in training activities abroad in order to exchange best practices, develop international competences and contribute to continuous improvement across the institution.

Objective: Promote professional development and institutional innovation through international staff training.

KPIs:

- Number of staff participating in training mobility per year
- Number of training programmes completed or certifications obtained
- Number of best practices or innovative approaches implemented at BFH after mobility
- Staff feedback on training relevance and institutional impact (target: ≥85 % positive)
- Number of interdepartmental or cross-institutional projects initiated post-training

Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs)

BFH plans to further develop and implement Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) as innovative and inclusive mobility formats combining short-term physical mobility with virtual collaboration. BIPs are implemented in close cooperation with European partners, within the PIONEER European University Alliance, and are embedded in study programmes where possible. Dedicated financial, pedagogical and administrative support is provided to academic staff for the design and delivery of BIPs.

Objective: Develop and scale innovative blended mobility formats combining virtual and short-term physical mobility.

KPIs:

- Number of BIPs implemented per year
- Number of students and staff participating in BIPs
- Percentage of BIPs integrated into degree programmes (target: ≥50 %)
- Feedback on learning outputs and intercultural competence development (survey, target: ≥85 % positive)
- Number of European or international partner institutions actively collaborating in BIPs

Practical Implementation

The implementation of Erasmus+ KA1 activities at BFH is supported by clear institutional structures, defined responsibilities and close cooperation between academic units and central support services.

Digital tools such as Erasmus Without Paper and the European Student Card Initiative are used to streamline administrative processes and ensure transparency and efficiency. Continuous monitoring, feedback mechanisms and quality assurance procedures ensure that Erasmus+ mobility activities are implemented consistently and contribute to the institution's strategic objectives.

Through these measures, BFH ensures the sustainable and high-quality implementation of Erasmus+ learning mobility activities and reinforces its long-term commitment to the European Education Area.

Participation in Erasmus+ Key Action 2: Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities

The Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH) is an active member of the **PIONEER European University Alliance**, a transnational partnership supported by Erasmus+ that brings together leading European universities to foster innovation, cooperation, and excellence in higher education. Through this participation, BFH contributes strategically to the Alliance's objectives while leveraging its own institutional strengths to drive impact across multiple work packages.

During the four-year project, BFH assumes **leadership roles in four key work packages**:

1. **Challenge-Based Education (CBE):** BFH brings its expertise in practice-oriented, challenge-based learning to develop innovative curricula and pedagogical frameworks that connect academic learning with real-world societal and industry challenges. This approach ensures that students acquire not only disciplinary knowledge but also transversal competences such as problem-solving, collaboration, and entrepreneurial thinking.
Objective: Develop and implement innovative, practice-oriented curricula that connect academic learning with societal and industry challenges.

KPIs:

- Number of joint CBE modules or courses developed within the Alliance until 2028 (threshold 8 joint courses in total)
 - Number of students enrolled in Alliance CBE courses
2. **Internationalisation:** Building on its long-standing engagement in international education, BFH coordinates initiatives to enhance student and staff mobility, intercultural competence development, and global partnerships. Tools and platforms such as the **Swiss Global Competence Lab**, regional country focus areas, and structured mobility frameworks support the Alliance's goal of embedding internationalisation at all levels of teaching, research, and institutional strategy.

Objectives and KPIs: The same as described for Key Action 1 (cf. page 8)

3. **Strategic Development and Open Science:** BFH contributes its expertise in **Open Science**, led by the institutional Open Science Office, to promote transparent, collaborative and reproducible research practices across the Alliance. In addition, BFH applies its entrepreneurial mindset to guide strategic development processes, aligning Alliance initiatives with societal needs, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable institutional growth.

Objective: Promote Open Science practices and strategic institutional development across the Alliance.

KPIs:

- Number of Open Science training sessions or workshops
 - Number of cross-institutional initiatives or policies implemented to support transparency, reproducibility, and collaboration
4. **Ecosystem Co-Creation:** BFH leverages its strengths as an entrepreneurial, applied sciences university to foster collaboration with external stakeholders, including industry, public sector partners, and civil society. Through co-creation activities, BFH facilitates knowledge exchange, innovation, and socially relevant solutions that integrate academic excellence with practical impact.

Objective: Enhance collaboration with external stakeholders to foster innovation and societal impact.

KPIs:

- Number of co-creation projects involving industry, public sector, or civil society partners
- Number of participants (students and staff) actively engaged in co-creation activities
- Stakeholder satisfaction with co-creation collaboration (survey, target: ≥80 % positive)
- Number of long-term partnerships established or strengthened with external organisations

Participation in KA2 allows BFH to strengthen its **European and global visibility**, advance its mission as a modern and responsible institution, and enhance its capacities for collaborative innovation, interdisciplinary learning, and societal impact. By leading critical work packages, BFH ensures that its **institutional expertise in challenge-based learning, Open Science, stakeholder collaboration, and internationalisation** directly contributes to the Alliance's objectives, while also reinforcing BFH's own strategic priorities and long-term commitment to the **European Education Area**.

Strategy, objectives and impact

The Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH) understands internationalisation as a core element of its academic, societal and ethical responsibility. In its Strategy 2023–2026, BFH has formally committed itself to active participation in international academic and scientific networks and to fostering transnational and intercultural competences and cooperation. Through this strategic commitment, BFH has established a binding framework to position itself as an attractive, open-minded and responsible institution within the international higher education landscape.

Attractiveness and Marketing

BFH strengthens its international visibility through its website, social media presence and targeted English-language communication. Testimonials, videos and communication campaigns featuring international students and staff are actively promoted in order to enhance the institution's international profile and attractiveness.

Global Competence and Intercultural Learning

BFH contributes to the development of the [Swiss Global Competence Lab](#) as a platform for intercultural networking, continuing professional development in global competences and exchange. Training opportunities are provided for teaching staff to support learning and teaching in multicultural classrooms and to foster inclusive and interculturally sensitive pedagogical approaches.

Cooperation and Mobility

BFH participates in the European Universities Initiative as a member of the [PIONEER Alliance](#), thereby demonstrating a clear strategic and institutional commitment to European cooperation and educational mobility.

Standardised processes for incoming and outgoing visiting scholars are being introduced, alongside the development of structured mobility windows for students. International sabbaticals and double-degree programmes are actively promoted. BFH organises the BFH International Staff Week and encourages increased participation in international conferences, symposia and summer schools.

Administrative processes related to mobility are continuously simplified through participation in **Erasmus Without Paper** and the **European Student Card Initiative**, including procedures for approval, recognition and documentation. BFH provides financial support schemes for the development of international virtual learning formats (COIL) and **Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs)**, as well as institutional funding to support mobility of mid-career academic staff. Participation in the [Swiss-European Mobility Programme \(SEMP\)](#) further complements BFH's mobility portfolio.

Political and Ethical Foundations

BFH develops guidelines for risk management in cooperation with partner countries and integrates internationalisation visibly into its institutional profile and official communication. Partnerships aligned with BFH's strategic regional and thematic priorities are actively fostered, ensuring value-based, responsible and sustainable international cooperation.

Implementation and Resources

BFH establishes institutional frameworks that provide teaching and research staff with adequate time, financial resources and administrative support for international activities. Close coordination between departments, human resources, communication, research and teaching units ensures coherence and effective implementation. Synergies between mobility, research and continuing education are systematically leveraged.

Monitoring and Evaluation

An indicator system is being developed to measure progress in internationalisation. Regular reporting to the university leadership and departments ensures transparency and accountability. Measures are continuously adjusted on the basis of evaluations and feedback from international stakeholders.

Impact of Internationalisation as Contribution to [BFH's Guiding Principles](#)

1. In the Midst of Society ("Inmitten der Gesellschaft")

Internationalisation strengthens BFH's societal engagement by enabling students and staff to engage with global challenges and cross-cultural perspectives. Participation in Erasmus+ and European networks allows BFH to incorporate transnational societal questions into curricula, research and innovation projects. Through international collaborations, students and staff develop forward-looking solutions that generate sustainable impact, contribute to public discourse, and reinforce BFH as a dynamic actor in societal transformation.

2. Diverse and Connecting ("Vielfältig und verbindend")

Internationalisation fosters diversity, multiperspectivity, and inclusion. Student and staff mobility, international joint programmes, and intercultural learning environments bring together individuals from multiple disciplines, languages, and cultures. This connectivity enables the co-creation of knowledge across academic and professional boundaries, reflecting BFH's goal of connecting people and practices to address complex, ambiguous challenges in society.

3. Shaping and Moving ("Gestaltend und bewegend")

Mobility and international cooperation encourage exploratory and innovative thinking among students and staff. Exposure to different academic systems, pedagogical approaches, and societal contexts promotes independent, critical and engaged action. By participating in European and global projects, BFH strengthens its capacity to pioneer new ideas, test novel approaches, and make its expertise visible in research, education, and societal discourse.

4. Responsible and Entrepreneurial ("Verantwortungsvoll und unternehmerisch")

Internationalisation cultivates responsibility and initiative by providing opportunities for students and staff to navigate complex, ethically challenging contexts abroad. Erasmus+ mobility and transnational projects develop ethical reflection, decision-making skills, and a proactive mindset. BFH thereby nurtures humanistic values and entrepreneurial capabilities, encouraging participants to act responsibly, anticipate future societal needs, and contribute to both personal and collective growth.

5. Rooted and Connected ("Verwurzelt und vernetzt")

By engaging in European and international networks, BFH reinforces its regional, national, and global profile. Internationalisation ensures that BFH remains rooted in Switzerland's political, economic and cultural centres while participating actively in global higher education and research communities.

Through Erasmus+ and PIONEER Alliance initiatives, BFH strengthens long-term connections and knowledge exchange, enhancing its influence and visibility at multiple scales.

6. Open and Enabling (“Offen und ermöglichend”)

Internationalisation fosters an open, collaborative and enabling culture. Mobility programmes, intercultural projects, and joint European initiatives encourage dialogue, mutual support, and the sharing of ideas and resources. Students and staff benefit from inclusive learning environments that value diversity, curiosity, and constructive engagement, reflecting BFH’s commitment to openness and enabling individuals to reach their full potential.

Overall Impact

Through these contributions, internationalisation directly advances BFH’s strategic vision of **“Horizonte erweitern – Wandel gestalten” (Expanding Horizons – Shaping Change)**. Participation in Erasmus+ and related European activities strengthens the university’s ability to modernise its teaching and learning, enhance intercultural competence, foster societal impact, and reinforce its global and European engagement. By embedding mobility and international collaboration across all strategic dimensions, BFH becomes a **more modern, more international, and more socially impactful institution**, fully aligned with its mission, vision, and guiding principles.