

# ECHE-Erasmus Policy VHL UAS; 2013

Date 14 May 2013  
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## **VHL Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)**

*As stated in the Charter-application May 2013*

VHL is an international education institute. We provide international undergraduate and Master programs. Our students participate in internships and projects abroad, we have international field advisory committees, international research and cooperate with educational institutions abroad. VHL is cooperating with universities and colleges in Europe such as Germany, England, Greece, Finland, and the Balkan, mainly in elements of study programs or double degrees. We also have international cooperation with universities in China, India, Thailand and Vietnam, where undergraduate students from those countries also receive a VHL diploma.

Up to now, each degree program maintains long term contacts with partner institutions for dual (and joint) degree programmes, and exchange of knowledge and staff. As well, systematic contacts are maintained to enable study and placements abroad. Where possible, multilateral projects are implemented with these partner institutions. VHL is focussing on the institution's key domains such as environment, animal health, animal management, entrepreneurship, life science, food security, integral area development, forestry, water and landscape architecture.

Beside partnerships on program level, VHL intends to improve our strategic partner policy in the coming years. The basic principle of international cooperation will be that we select our partners based on complementarity and quality. International partnerships and networks play a crucial role in our internationalization strategy. From the idea of mutual reinforcement of qualities, we want to cooperate with a small amount of international partners at institutional level, our strategic partners. With this strategic partners we want to develop joint activities in the field of education and research on several areas, and preferably on several themes. These are for example, joint (research) projects and mutual mobility of staff and students. In the coming months a partner policy will be developed where will be described what the focus will be concerning partnerships in the coming years.

## **VHL Strategy for Erasmus-projects**

In 2011 VHL focused both on geographically desirable regions, as on thematic partners. This trend was reinforced in 2012. English-language education and international projects are increasingly linked to strategic international partnerships.

Traditionally VHL has partnerships with institutions in Africa and the Far East. Nowadays partnerships are also cited in the Balkans. Each degree programme maintains long term contacts with partner institutions. Where possible multilateral projects are implemented with these partner institutions. The focus for such projects is provided by the institution's key domains such as environment, animal health, animal management, entrepreneurship, life science, food security, integral area development, forestry, water and landscape architecture.

VHL stimulates the development of international education projects (like IP projects) by making co-funding available. The activities must meet the following criteria:

- Dutch and foreign students work together in study activities, or Dutch students have almost constantly interaction with foreign teachers / supervisors (in English)
- The duration of the learning activity is between 1 and 4 weeks,
- The activity is part of the study programme and students receive ECTS credits
- The event will usually take place abroad, but also events in the Netherlands with a varied group of foreign students is also possible.

In the coming years, VHL also wants to pay more attention to short courses and training programmes.

The international program office will play a facilitating role for international projects. Furthermore, VHL is currently working on the professionalization of its project management (for both EU and other projects). This will be further developed in the coming years.

## **VHL objectives for participation in the Erasmus programme**

1. VHL aims to improve the preparation of students for the international work field, as requested by the work field.

The participation of VHL in the ECHE program contributes to the increase of mobility, international exchange, working in international projects, international classroom and therefore prepare students for the international work field.

2. Improving the quality and relevance of higher education.

By participating in ECHE, VHL has the opportunity to learn from institutes abroad, which can have a positive impact on the quality of its education and research.

3. Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation.

VHL wants every student to gain international skills and be prepared for the international field. Student and staff mobility and international projects will contribute to this.

4. Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development. VHL is a university of applied sciences and is already connected to the SMEs and organizations in the region. VHL has also connections to the international work field, this will be improved by participating in ECHE. VHL participates also in several projects and Centers of Expertise, where research, education and projects are to promote regional, national and international expertise development.

5. Improving governance and funding.

ECHE encourages by its funding the increase of quality of internationalization and thereby contributes to achieving the objectives of internationalization of the board of VHL.