

KTK Erasmus Policy Statement 2021 - 2027

Kauno technikos kolegija / University of Applied Engineering Sciences (hereinafter – the KTK) is a higher education institution conducting first cycle college studies. During the hundred years of its existence, the KTK has established itself as an institution that grows and strengthens Lithuania's engineering potential, and is organically integrated not only into the network of Lithuanian, but also into the network of higher education institutions of the Baltic States. Considering the new challenges for society, the globalization processes taking place in the world, and the dynamic changes in the economy, technology and other fields, the KTK seeks to remain competitive in the education market and continues the tradition of being a school leader. The commitment to quality assurance and continuous improvement is reflected in the KTK's 2016-2030 strategy, the provisions regarding quality and its continuous improvement are codified in the vision and mission of the KTK.

To be a leader in engineering studies in the Baltic region, actively sharing knowledge and contributing to the advanced development of society and industry is the main strategic objective of the KTK. Implementing this strategic objective, the main international cooperation priorities are the internationalization and modernisation of study programmes, introduction of innovations, realization, dissemination and multiplication of applied research results, guarantee of graduates' competitiveness in the international labour market, and development of staff competences.

This program will allow us to encourage the mobility of students and staff, international cooperation with other higher education institutions and business enterprises, to continuously improve the study quality and seek for internationalization and modernization of study programmes via different forms of mobility, joint programs, distance learning, the integration of flexible learning environment and different types of practical and scientific activities.

In order to maximize the opportunities to prepare highly-skilled specialists, the main criteria of international cooperation partner selection is specialization. The KTK seeks to develop partnership with similar institutions that develop study programmes in the field of mechanics, transport, civil engineering, electrical power, electronics, aeronautics engineering.

The KTK seeks to contribute to the European higher education modernization agenda, therefore Europe is perceived as a main strategic partner, and individual regions are not identified. Student and staff mobility, the development and implementation of international projects, international cooperation, and cooperation in applied research activities - all this serves as a complex development of study programmes applying the experience and research results obtained during the international cooperation and thus making the training of specialist to meet the needs of European labour market.

The essential objectives of international cooperation are: modernization of study programmes, development of environment appropriate for studies, guarantee of teachers' academic, methodological, vocational, educational potential, partnership networks via the dissemination of innovations and experience. The main target groups of international cooperation are full time first cycle students and the KTK staff.

The international cooperation will provide conditions to join the European higher education area developing joint and double degree programmes, full-time study programmes that will ensure better possibilities of graduates' competitiveness, self-realization and career opportunities in the European

One of the main features of modern higher education in the global world is the participation of a higher education institution in internationalization processes. The internationalization of higher education is a very broad term that covers all aspects of the KTK activities: the implementation of student and academic staff exchanges through the acquisition of additional competencies; knowledge transfer; development of a double-degree system; application of modern good practice in the study process; participation in international programs and projects.

The main objectives and target groups of the KTK's mobility activities are:

Student mobility for academic and training purposes. The main aim of mobility is to provide students with a broad education in the chosen study programme, to expand the students' knowledge in all areas of European culture, to increase their competitiveness in the labour market and to contribute to young people's active participation in social life. The participation of students in academic mobility or training abroad increases their level of professionalism and helps to gain new experience, as well as to establish contacts for future cooperation.

Staff (academic and non-academic) mobility. The KTK pays close attention to the academic mobility of both incoming and outgoing staff. New opportunities for staff mobility will help the KTK to gain new experience, new teaching methods and new knowledge. The KTK teachers will have the opportunity to share their experience and examples of good practice in science and research with both teachers and students. Academic mobility will allow new contacts to be established for further cooperation in international projects, joint research and other activities.

To develop integrated, international teaching activities (joint courses / modules / study programmes, double / multiple / joint degrees), including remote platforms / tools. By forming cooperation networks with academic and business partners, the KTK seeks to ensure the quality of studies, bringing it as close as possible to the changing needs of the labour market, using the potential of the latest scientific knowledge, increasing the impact on the region by expanding applied research, increasing graduates' career opportunities, attracting motivated schoolchildren to studies, promoting engineering sciences.

The objective of the internationalization strategy of the KTK is to integrate into the European education system and become the leader, which belongs to the elite of technical higher education institutions of the Baltic States. These actions will contribute to the KTK's strategic objectives to develop study programmes that meet current and future market requirements and meet the highest quality standards at the national and international levels; to ensure the application of modern study models and didactic methods in the study process and to carry out studies based on close cooperation with business and industry; to organize joint business-university, university-foreign university study programmes that provide the highest quality knowledge and skills; to provide students with opportunities to have access to real internships and to provide opportunities to develop practical skills; to increase the availability of study programmes for both Lithuanian and foreign engineering students.

International student and staff mobility is the exchange of students and teachers in study, training and research activities, as well as participation in joint projects. Participation in mobility projects will allow mobility participants to gain experience of cooperation with the international academic community, get acquainted with different education systems, improve foreign language skills, increase graduates' employability, make new contacts, get to know the world and different cultures.

Cooperation between the KTK and foreign universities is based on the exchange of pedagogical staff, consulting and expert activities in the preparation of study programmes, and the dissemination of experience in the implementation of applied research. The activities of university lecturers at the KTK will ensure the direct introduction of new scientific knowledge into the study process, and the academic activities of the KTK pedagogical staff in the university science subsystem will positively improve their qualification in higher education didactics and applied research.

Internationalization objectives are integrated into the KTK's long-term strategy plan and can be planned according to both achieved and expected results.

Positive impact of the KTK participation in this program:

Objectives of student mobility - Mobility for learning or traineeships enhances knowledge, skills, competences and experiences, including personal and social competences and cultural awareness, which are crucial for active participation in society, promoting European identity and enabling future work in a multicultural European environment. It can also promote labour mobility and thus improve living standards as well as individual and economic resilience. The KTK's experience in the field of student mobility is positive, especially in the area of internship mobility. During the last six years, student mobility for study purposes is implemented in 93.2%, student mobility for training purposes is implemented in 115.6%.

Objectives of staff mobility - Staff mobility not only promotes the development of personal and subject competencies, but at the same time has a positive effect on the institution: it increases the diversity of information about study programmes and forms, integrates new socio-cultural elements. Both the outgoing lecturers for teaching or study visits and incoming foreign lecturers for teaching at the KTK encourage teachers to be interested in new methods, expand the boundaries of intercultural understanding, and improve their foreign language skills. Dynamics of staff mobility during the last six years: staff mobility for teaching is implemented in 90.15% and staff mobility for training purposes - 162.7%.

Qualitative and quantitative implementation of internationalization activities in the KTK was achieved through consistent and purposeful work, planning activities, expanding the network of academic and business partners, receiving more funding (funding increased by 400% in six years).

Evaluating the two-way nature of mobility, the aim is to increase the recognition of the KTK in the international space, so one of the main objectives of international mobility will be to increase the number of incoming students and lecturers.

Evaluating the experience gained, the need for engineering specialists not only in the European but also in the global market, the internationality of the KTK will be developed by training professional specialists who can easily and immediately integrate into the labour market, by actively participating,

solving regional and international industrial development issues, contributing with our competence and experience in improving production processes, functions, technologies, integrating students and teachers into the development of new technological processes.

In order to ensure the transparency of changes in the KTK, self-government structures have been formed as bodies for the supervision and regulation of processes: the Council of the KTK, the Academic Council of the KTK, and the Student Representation. The KTK Council consists of 9 persons: 4 external members, 4 delegated representatives of the academic community and 1 student representative. The Council operates in accordance with the Statute of the KTK and the Rules of Procedure of the Council of the KTK. The highest institution of academic self-government of the KTK - the Academic Council consists of 17 members who are delegated by academic community and the student representation. The Academic Council operates in accordance with the functions formulated in the Statute of the KTK and the Rules of Procedure of the Academic Council of the KTK. The members of the Academic Council are elected by the academic community, and the student representatives are appointed by the Student Representation. The election of the members of the Academic Council is based on the principles of impartiality, objectivity, legitimacy, publicity, academic freedom and transparency.

Implementing the KTK's academic ethics regulations, students and lecturers must follow the Code of Academic Ethics, which sets out the values to be followed by all members of the KTK's academic community (students, teachers and administrative staff) and ethical norms. If the principles are violated, students and staff have the right to apply to the Chairman of the Professional Ethics Committee and the situation is examined in accordance with the "KTK Procedure for Filing and Examining Ethical Violations Complaints" (KTK Academic Council Protocol No. V18 - 28, 28 May 2013).

In order to ensure the appropriate quality of studies, the KTK develops activities aimed at providing all kinds of support for studies and students: financial, material, human. The main aim is the maximum availability of all types of resources and timely support for students. The provision of resources and support to students is regulated by the following documents: Regulations on the Granting of Scholarships by the KTK and Regulations on Access to IT Resources at the KTK. Financial support consists of scholarships awarded by the KTK or social and special programs, paid in accordance with the procedure established by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Academic support includes the opportunity for students to pass the subject components free of charge one week after the session, to retake the subject examination three times during the session, to repeat the subject course in the next academic year, to report externally, to study individually or on a free schedule. Social and psychological support includes the Mentoring Program - it is a set of activities related to mentoring students, revealing their potential, promoting academic progress, personal development, and improving collaboration and communication among members of the KTK community for all (including mobility) students.

The KTK participates in the European Social Fund project "Ensuring Access to Studies for Students with Special Needs" (09.3.1-ESFA-V-708-01), implemented by the State Studies Foundation with partners, which aims to improve the accessibility and conditions of studies for students with disabilities or special needs in Lithuanian higher education institutions. For those with mobility

disability, the KTK has a special staircase, and there are 3 workplaces for students with disabilities in the lecture hall. The dormitory has a special wheelchair access and a room for a disabled person. Due to the specific nature of the KTK study programmes, the number of students with disabilities is extremely small.

The new aim of the KTK is to promote various forms of mobility, which would not only ensure the activities of the Erasmus+ mobility program, but also create inter-institutional links, provide opportunities for non-formal learning through enterprises, integrate flexible learning environments and different types of practical and research activities. Virtual mobility and short-term mobility, that ensure the availability of mobility for working or students with families, would be particularly relevant.

All information related to the documents regulating the activities of the KTK, procedures, student support, etc. is publicized on the KTK intranet.

The KTK plans to move to full digitization of the Erasmus program according to the following plan:

2021 – to manage inter-institutional agreements and online learning agreements;

2022 – to send and receive student nominations and acceptances;

2023 – to exchange transcripts of records related to student mobility.

The European Student Card initiative will allow all students to easily and securely identify themselves and register electronically with European higher education institutions when studying abroad, eliminating the need for on-site registration and paperwork.

Measures to encourage students to use the Erasmus + mobile App:

Improvements of the description of the mobility procedure to include additional information on the European Student Card and the Erasmus + App;

Visual information on bulletin boards, the KTK website, social networks; during information events, in student leaflets;

Administrative assistance for mobility participants to set up and use the App;

Higher education institutions have a responsibility to help to deal with climate change. They can do this both through practical change and through the education they provide.

The strategy of the KTK is based on 4 main values: responsibility, quality, innovation, teamwork. The commitment to sustainability and environmental friendliness is clearly expressed through responsibility: “We understand that our activities have a strong impact on the environment around us, and we base our work on the principles of honesty, integrity, transparency, responsibility and high morals. We are all personalities, so we feel personally and all together a moral duty to our students, society, city, and state. We are committed and responsible for our decisions and actions”.

There is no doubt that education is one of the biggest catalysts for change, and higher education communities, especially students, could become leaders in the fight against climate change. The KTK

has included environmental subjects in all study programmes: it creates conditions for developing mature students with essential ecological and environmental knowledge, skills, values, who are able to independently choose appropriate behavioural strategies, predict the consequences of their activities on the environment and to take active steps to preserve the environment. Through its international activities, the KTK could share environmental and sustainability knowledge and good practice with other higher education institutions. The KTK students also have the opportunity to participate in lectures by invited foreign lecturers, where the latest research on environmental problems and possible solutions are presented. As the problem is global, we will promote sustainable communities, services and resource use through training, research and knowledge exchange activities.

Equally important is the creation of an environmentally friendly higher education institution - the KTK must provide the example in making practical changes to help dealing with climate change. In these activities, it is important to raise the awareness of the whole community on how to behave responsibly, conserve natural and energy resources, exchange information, disseminate good work practices, and find cooperation partners.

The KTK community contributes to an environmentally friendly and ecological lifestyle by creating a healthy and sustainable environment through the development of ecological initiatives to achieve real results and practical application of activities:

- Efficient use of electricity and water in the KTK premises and dormitory;
- Paper consumption is reduced by eliminating overprinting (documents are digitized where possible);
- Use of electronic resources (promoting distance learning through the use of innovative information and communication technologies, organizing the study process in a virtual learning environment or by video conferencing);
- The moderate use of learning and work tools is encouraged by considering their exact need, reusing them or sharing them with each other;
- Effective use of waste sorting opportunities in the KTK;
- The use of environmentally friendly or public transport is encouraged (the dormitory is close to the KTK building, so students go to lectures on foot, no transport is required; incoming students are helped to purchase regular public transport tickets with 80% discount);

The successful functioning of any democratic state depends on the participation of active, responsible and fully educated citizens in the life of the state and a strong civil society. Therefore, the development of citizenship, which allows each person to become an active member of society, able to take responsibility for their own and the state's life, seek new knowledge and experience, foster cultural and national identity and human values, is one of the most important aims of mobility visits.

Citizenship is important not only for mobility participants but also for the host community by developing the following attitudes and skills:

Recognize, respect and uphold the fundamental values and principles of democracy: the rights of the individual and the nation, freedoms, justice, equality, solidarity, responsibility, etc. Commit to spreading them in personal and social life.

Recognize and respect each other's rights and freedoms. Be determined to exercise the rights actively and to perform civic duties in good faith.

Respect the traditions of the nation and the state, its interests; contribute to the fostering of the values of its nation. Be responsible for the preservation of the nation's heritage.

Cherish the political independence of the nation, realize that the well-being and survival of a nation also depends on personal contribution.

Constantly be interested in current problems of Lithuanian and world society, search for solutions to social, cultural, economic and political issues. Strive to be a responsible, committed, informed and active member of civil society.

Follow the principles of civic culture in daily activities: responsibility, tolerance, critical thinking and participation.

Strive for independence, do not lose self-esteem and human dignity.

Be honest, fulfil your civic responsibilities responsibly.

Recognize the uniqueness of each culture, tolerantly appreciate cultural diversity.

Respect the other, tolerate different values and attitudes.

Activities aimed at citizenship of mobility participants:

Cognition and research of the public:

International Week events during which participants have the opportunity to get to know the country;

Information events for the community, during which opportunities are provided to present their country, resort and university;

Lithuanian language courses for incoming mobility participants (this practice is offered by choosing an additional Lithuanian language subject, including it in the learning agreement);

Preparation of an information package in digital form on the main political, cultural, national, social and economic aspects of the country;

Integration of citizenship education into the taught subjects, especially the block of social sciences and humanities.

Volunteering initiatives to spread the ideas of a Europe without borders, Green Europe, etc.

Participating and initiating change in the community:

Active participation in the activities of the student representative body;

Opportunity for mobility participants to participate in and organize social activities and events;

Providing opportunities to participate in relevant events in the home country (e.g. elections);

A curator and mentoring program to facilitate integration, helping to find the information needed for civic life;

These activities are not entirely new, they have already been implemented and applied in the activities of incoming and outgoing mobility participants.

The KTK provides opportunities for students with various previous experiences to study: it is possible to recognize competencies previously acquired through formal education, competencies acquired through non-formal and informal learning, persons with university or college education can study in postgraduate studies.

The assessment of competencies acquired through non-formal and informal learning and the recognition of competencies acquired in this way in the KTK is carried out in accordance with the “Procedure for Assessment and Recognition of Competences Acquired through Non-formal and Informal Learning” approved by the KTK Academic Council. The KTK assesses and recognizes the acquired competencies of individuals in accordance with its established procedure, following the following general principles: accessibility, flexibility, transparency and objectivity, comparability, voluntariness.

The applicant can apply for the assessment and recognition of competencies acquired: courses, seminars, internships, projects, etc. years; non-formal education programs; in work activities; unpaid or voluntary work; self-study, etc. No more than 75 % of the volume of subjects of the study field (branch) of the study program to be studied may be recognized, the final work and (or) final examination shall not be recognized.

The results of part-time studies or previous learning acquired through formal learning are recognized in accordance with the “Description of the Procedure for Recognition of Competences Acquired through Formal Education as a Part of the Study Program” prepared by the KTK and approved by the Academic Council Protocol No. V18-107 (28 November, 2017). When coordinating the study content, the competencies provided by the vocational training program are recognized as learning outcomes of the study programme and study subjects are recognized, if the competencies substantially correspond to the learning outcomes of a similar subject(s) and the scope of the programme subject (in credits or hours) is not less than 50% of the respective study subject of the study programme.

The KTK actively supports and implements the idea that the results obtained during studies abroad at a higher education institution in one Member State should be automatically and fully recognized in other Member States, as agreed in advance in the learning agreement and confirmed by data extracts under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System.

Steps to be taken to ensure that all credits obtained for learning outcomes achieved during a period of mobility abroad / mixed mobility are fully automatically recognized:

- To provide studies that fully comply with the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework (approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania Resolution No. 535 of 4 May 2010) and are linked to the qualification systems of other European Union countries;

- Include conditions for the automatic recognition of results in the study contract in line with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS);

- Prepare an up-to-date course catalogue with descriptions of the individual education subjects and scoring tables for the degree programs;

The KTK will carry out preparatory actions to issue graduate diploma supplements in digital format.

The description of the mobility arrangements should be supplemented by points providing for transparent and uniform criteria for all groups of persons, according to which all credits acquired during study abroad or virtual mobility, as agreed in the learning agreement and confirmed in the transcripts, should be transferred and credited immediately, without any additional work or student evaluation.

Staff competence, knowledge and skills are one of the key factors in the quality of studies at the KTK. The KTK is always open to the best professionals in their field who are able to create a motivating study and work environment. International cooperation: student exchange, in-service training of lecturers and administrative staff in foreign institutions, lecturing in a foreign language, etc., are one of the most important aspects for the internationalization of the study process, in the study quality assurance process in the KTK.

Erasmus+ staff mobility for teaching and training activities gives the KTK teachers and non-academic staff the opportunity to teach at a foreign higher education institution, participate in learning events (excluding conferences), seminars, courses, workshops, study visits to higher education institutions (with an Erasmus Higher Education Charter) or in other companies / organizations. Erasmus + activities are carried out in accordance with the "Description of the Procedure for Organizing Erasmus + Staff Mobility for Teaching and Training" approved by the KTK. Information on mobility opportunities is published on the KTK's website, on information boards, in the teacher's guide, in the quality guide, and sent by e-mail in consultation with the International Relations Coordinator. The International Relations Coordinator and the Heads of the Study Programmes provide assistance in planning teaching or training visits, coordinating the content and administrative aspects of the visit, and completing documents.

Staff mobility is particularly encouraged and supported, as it facilitates networking and contributes to the exchange of knowledge and experience internationally. Staff mobility has a positive impact on their career prospects and strengthens relationships with partners. When recruiting new lecturers, participation in international exchange programs is considered as additional indicator that gives priority to be employed (Regulations on the Organization and Certification of Teacher Competitions for Positions for Teachers. KTK Academic Council Protocol No. V18-80 (12 September 2017)).

The experience gained during teacher mobility visits is seen as professional development, in which employees are invited to share not only by publicizing their activities, but also by organizing trainings that transfer the acquired good practice. Knowledge sharing practice ensures the development of the KTK as a learning community and the qualitative growth of the study process.

Mobility visits are funded not only by the European Commission but also by the State Budget and the institution. The competition for staff mobility is announced at least twice a year, responding flexibly to needs. Recognition shall be based on a certificate of participation and an individual report issued by the host institution. Dissemination of the results of mobility activities is also carried out through staff meetings, conferences, social networks and the e-newspaper of the KTK.

The mobility of incoming staff is also encouraged by assessing the exchange of good practice and the contribution of newcomers to curricula and curriculum development. Incoming mobility participants are provided with the following types of assistance: accommodation, logistics, acquisition of work equipment, organized cultural and educational activities.

The Erasmus policy statement will be posted on the KTK website www.ktk.lt in both the Lithuanian and English versions. Publicity of the activities supported by the program is an on-going process involving the staff of the KTK administration of the different services.

The principles of the Charter and all information related to international activities are made public and made available to staff in a variety of accessible ways:

1. Teacher's guide - an instrument designed for the teacher to work effectively and use professional development opportunities;
2. On the internal website (intranet) of the KTK, the section "International Relations";
3. On the external website of the KTK, the section "Internationality";
4. During meetings;
5. During the annual activity reports of the KTK;
6. Information boards;

The application of the principles of the Charter is ensured in accordance with the "Description of the organization of the KTK ERASMUS + program for staff mobility for teaching and training", which regulates the selection, duration and funding of staff, reporting on mobility visits and publicity activities.