

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

Participation in Erasmus+

At THIM University, we strongly believe in the benefits of international experience for both our students and our staff. We aim to give our students and staff as many opportunities as possible to develop international competences and skills, in order to optimise not only their international career opportunities as a physiotherapist, but also their personal growth. To this end, we organise an English-taught international Bachelor's programme in Physiotherapy, international minor programs and internship opportunities, and internationally orientated course components in both the Dutch- and English-spoken curriculum. We participate in ENPHE, the European cooperation between educators in Physiotherapy.

By offering international/intercultural experiences either abroad or at home, THIM believes to hand students and staff opportunities to gain invaluable knowledge, skills and attitudes that are essential to not only be (come) a more complete professional, but also a more active member of society. In today's and tomorrow's pan-European society, looking across borders, and thus learning new viewpoints and different approaches, gaining understanding of different cultures and making new friends and connections, is invaluable for personal and professional growth. Student and staff mobility through Erasmus participation enables participants to become aware of their own international and intercultural competencies that are essential in their (future) professional field and will essentially make graduates and staff more social, integrated, and employable within Europe.

Participation in the Programme is initially integrated in the internationalisation strategy of THIM to stimulate mobility of students and staff members among universities within Europe (Key action 1). In the future THIM would like to explore the possibilities of implementing actions for Key action 2 (Cooperation with other organisations and institutions).

Key Action 1 clearly has four different dimensions which are relevant to THIM:

- **Outgoing student mobility:** This enables THIM students to include an international and intercultural experience to their study programme that not only focuses on the increase of international knowledge and skills in their study area, but also has an impact on their personal development and growth as an active member of society gaining new insights about their role in personal and professional life and become more aware of the consequences of their actions.
- **Outgoing staff mobility:** This allows both teaching and non-teaching staff to engage with experts in their own fields of expertise and exchange knowledge and create new and innovative concepts that can be used to enhance the international and/or intercultural dimension of their own educational programmes or tasks, thereby stimulating their own personal development and professionalisation.
- **Incoming student mobility:** THIM offers both a Dutch-spoken Bachelor's programme in physiotherapy, and an English-spoken one. The English programme attracts students from all over the world. We strive to mix students and staff from both programmes as much as possible, stimulating active participation and cooperation between all different nationalities. We stimulate all to join in THIM's extracurricular activities, to promote cooperation and the so-called "THIM family feel". Incoming students will not only benefit

from their international study experience, but also contribute to the internationalisation at THIM.

- Incoming staff mobility: Incoming staff mobility adds an international and/or intercultural dimension to THIM's education and processes and increases the possibility for students and staff that stay at home to gain international and intercultural insights.

These four dimensions are implemented into the organisational structure of THIM by an international office (IO) that initiates, coordinates, promotes and supports internationalisation activities and manages the school's partner network. Next to an incoming and outgoing student - and staff mobility, THIM would like to investigate possibilities for a blended mobility programme.

Strategy, objectives and impact

THIM strives to make internationalisation a fundamental part of the programme for all our students and staff, be it through studying or courses abroad, short term blended mobility or digital exchange from the home country. Within the framework of the programme, our goal is to create more blended mobility activities that will engage more participants in either long or short term international and/or intercultural mobilities. For example, as of 2021 we've organised a digital international exchange assignment between first-year students from THIM in the Netherlands and its school in Switzerland (www.physioschule.ch), which has become a fixed part of the curriculum. The product of this assignment of 2021 can be found [here](#).

THIM University's timeline of objectives is as follows:

- 2021-2022: setting up a structure for European student and staff mobility, renewing existing partnerships, establishing new partnerships to aid mobility
- 2021 & onwards: creating more activities related to more civic engagement before, during, after and without mobility
- 2022-2023: first incoming and outgoing student mobilities using the Programme.
- 2022 & onwards: implementation of digital mobility management according to the timeline of Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) and European Student Card (ESC) Initiative
- 2023-2027: incoming and outgoing student and staff mobility increases per year
- 2023-2024: first blended mobility minor programme
- 2024-2025: exploring possibilities of implementing actions for Key action 2 (Cooperation with other organisations and institutions).
- 2021-2027 – ongoing: annual monitoring of charter principles in order to maintain achieved successes in the ECHE by using the Self-Assessment Tool and Impact Tool of Erasmus.

The Charter is a fundamental part of student and staff mobility process and is common knowledge to those engaged in activities supported by the Programme. Furthermore, all staff involved in any of the processes that are linked to activities in the Programme know about the principles of the Charter and act upon those principles accordingly to ensure that the quality of the Programme is guaranteed.

The impact of student mobility is, undoubtedly, the opportunity to live abroad and meet new people and new cultures, improve foreign language proficiency, and develop transversal skills fundamental to their personal and professional development, such as the ability to solve issues



autonomously, to organize their tasks independently, to face new challenges in the future, to develop ideas and put them into practice, as well as to acquire creative expression or analytical capacity. These aspects will undoubtedly have a very positive impact on their subsequent professional development and will therefore result in a higher quality of future European professionals.

The impact of staff mobility is an increased professional development of staff by sharing expertise with peers abroad, experience new teaching environments, acquire new innovative pedagogical and curriculum design skills and develop an international view. In addition, incoming staff mobility from universities abroad will better prepare students better for an international labour market, which increases the appearance of THIM as an international University. Thereby, the extra knowledge gained increases the quality of the content of education or the organisation.

As an intensification of international student and staff mobility and cooperation for the future is planned, participation in the Erasmus Programme is of utmost importance. The funding provided through the Programme not only stimulates mobility, but also helps the institution to improve its facilities for incoming and outgoing students and staff.

Indicators

Although THIM has been organising an international (English taught) programme for several years, we're only now taking our first steps towards increasing student and staff mobility via Erasmus+. Therefore, at this moment THIM cannot identify a fixed percentage of these mobilities. The initial focus will be on quality of mobility rather than quantity ensuring that process, outcomes, and impact become more visible to those that participate(d) and need to act as ambassadors for future participants. However, it is our goal to increase student and staff mobility yearly up to at least 2027.

An important element of the internationalisation strategy would also be to establish partnerships with other Universities. THIM already has a partnership with its school in Switzerland (THIM-AG: www.physioschule.ch) and with DEUSTO University in Spain (www.deusto.es) and is working on the realisation of new international partnerships.