Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS) is an internationally oriented higher education institution which produces high-standard and high-quality expertise and acts as a significant agent in the internationalization in the region of Southwest Finland and its working life.

The international operations strategy of TUAS is on the other hand based on the development plan for education and research of the Ministry of Education and Culture, and the strategy for internationalization of higher education institutions in Finland, and on the other hand on the overall strategy of TUAS, and the development programme of the province of Southwest Finland and the strategy of the City of Turku. International operations at TUAS seek to enhance the visions outlined in these strategies.

The objective of international activities of TUAS is to strengthen the readiness of students and staff to work in an international environment, diversify education and applied research and development, and promote the internationalization of Southwest Finland. Thus, internationalisation of education is a way of responding to the growing demands for working life skills, and to the challenges created by multiculturalism in the Finnish society.

At TUAS international perspective is integrated into all the operations: teaching, research, development and innovation (RDI) activities as well as working life cooperation. International activities include student and trainee mobility, teacher and staff mobility, teaching in foreign languages, language and cultural studies, international cooperation in curriculum development and other types of educational collaboration, international RDI projects, strategic partnerships, export of education, internationalisation training for organisations and all the support activities which promote international development in accordance with the TUAS strategy.
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

Selection criteria
At TUAS international partner institutions and other partners are selected not only on the basis of mutual academic interest in education and RDI in the field of study in question, but also on the basis of issues such as partner’s scope and quality of international and RDI activities, other international partnerships and network memberships, commitment in reciprocal student and staff mobility, and possibilities for cooperation in terms of shared expertise, funding and working languages, for example (English being often used as a lingua franca).

Geographical area
Also the geographical area of the partner is important, as TUAS is looking for cooperation in regions that are important to local business and other organisations. The Pestel analysis – which takes into account political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors - is used especially when selecting new partners which are located outside the EU.

The main geographical area for TUAS international partnerships is still Europe, but TUAS has long-term partner institutions and organisations also in Asia (China, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand), Americas (the US, Canada, Brazil, Chile) and Africa (Kenya, Botswana, Sambia, Senegal, Swaziland), where TUAS has been involved in several development projects which have focused on global responsibility. In the future, TUAS is planning to both strengthen existing as well as develop new partnerships especially in Russia and the BRIC countries.

MOBILITY

Student mobility
TUAS strongly encourages students and staff to participate in mobility programmes and international projects. All bachelor level degree programmes include a module on internationalisation and the objective of TUAS is to offer all students good possibilities to either study or do practical training abroad during their studies. Also exchange students and trainees from the partner institutions are welcome to TUAS. They form an important part of Internationalisation at Home activities at TUAS. In addition, virtual mobility and short-term mobility - in international projects, for example - are encouraged especially for part-time master level students.
Teacher and staff mobility
Both academic and non-academic staff members at TUAS are encouraged to participate in mobility programmes, either to teach or to be trained. The target is that annually a significant number of all the staff members will participate either in exchanges or staff training programmes. Exchange teachers and administrative staff from the partner institutions are invited to the annual International Weeks or other exchange periods hosted by TUAS. Also these exchanges are seen as an important part of international activities at TUAS, because both teachers and other staff members have the possibility meet international colleagues in order to exchange experiences and plan future cooperation, for example.

DOUBLE DEGREES
TUAS has created institutional guidelines for double degree agreement process and has several double degree agreements at the bachelor level. The objective is to develop double degrees also at the master level in the near future.

INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS
To support the goals of internationalisation, TUAS gives priority to and is aiming at continuing to participate actively in international cooperation projects. Thus, the objective of TUAS is to participate also in the three project types (EU and non-EU) of the Programme.

TUAS is a member of Consortium on Applied Research and Professional Education (CARPE), a small European consortium, and is planning to broaden and deepen its network of strategic collaborators together with business and other institutions in Southwest Finland.

Innovation pedagogy
The profile of TUAS is known for its multidisciplinary innovative pedagogy, where entrepreneurship, flexible curricula, applied research and development, service operations and internationalisation are integrated with teaching in order to support innovations made on work places. Innovation pedagogy bridges the gap between studies and working life, as it provides a working life centered foundation for education and thus, better readiness for entering working life. Both knowledge alliance and capacity building projects are planned to be implemented as part of the innovation pedagogy at TUAS.
Areas of expertise
Development projects that cohere with this profile focus on the following areas: applied ICT, biocompetence and business know-how, expertise in health care and medication, lifelong well-being services, marine environment and construction expertise, working-life based approaches to creative arts and future work and HEI development.

Support services for projects
Support services for international cooperation projects are offered both at the central administration and faculty level. TUAS has the expertise and infrastructure required for managing international projects. This includes e.g. established practices in planning, implementing and measuring project activities, estimating and sharing resources, assessing possible risks and planning project dissemination, valorisation and sustainability activities.

TUAS AND ERASMUS PROGRAMME

OBJECTIVES
Participation in the Programme will contribute largely to the quality of education, internationalisation and student experience at TUAS:

1. Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs

Participation in mobility and international cooperation projects will support the professional, social and intercultural skills and competences that students, teachers and other staff members need in today’s multicultural working life. As a result, TUAS can offer its graduates and staff better competitive abilities and thus, better employability.

In order to comply with non-discrimination objectives, TUAS will not discriminate against any person in the operation or maintenance of the facilities, activities, or services. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex, national origin or the presence of any disability. The equality principles have been defined in the Equality Plan approved by the Board of TUAS.

2. Improving the quality and relevance of higher education

Participation in cooperation projects will help to strengthen the high international quality of education and applied research at TUAS. Projects will be implemented in collaboration with other competence and innovative systems in the Southwest Finland and they will focus on strategies of
the region and consider needs of the working life and businesses. This will contribute to the internationalisation and business life of the region. In addition, students will gain valuable working life experiences and create contacts with possible employers which will lead to better employability.

3. Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation

Mobility actions will enhance the quality of TUAS performance: the implementation of Learning Agreement, ECTS and Diploma Supplement as common tools will guarantee the quality of mobility activities and transparency of recognition procedures at TUAS. Traineeships and staff mobility will strengthen cooperation between working life, partner institutions and TUAS and this will facilitate the transfer of learning experiences.

4. Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development

Through participation in strategic partnerships and networks as well as capacity building and knowledge alliance projects, TUAS will support its operational environment Southwest Finland. These projects will generate readiness to innovate by integrating teaching, research and development as well as cooperation with working life. Projects can lead to new sustainable ideas, further knowledge or other practices applicable in working life.

5. Improving governance and funding

TUAS is committed to support the administration (reporting, monitoring visits etc.) required by the Programme and this will improve both the governance and cost-efficient use of funding at TUAS.