



ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

Åland Polytechnic was founded in 1997 by the Åland Provincial Government as a co-operative network for vocational higher education certified with a polytechnic diploma. On 1 January 2003 the Åland Polytechnic became permanent, when it merged with the Åland Open University and changed its Swedish name into "Högskolan på Åland".

The polytechnic offers seven degree programmes. In addition to that, the open polytechnic offers around 100 academic courses, lectures and seminars annually. Close cooperation and interaction with working life and society is essential.

Åland Polytechnic aims at continuing the encouragement of student and staff mobility and participation in Erasmus intensive programmes. Particular importance is attached to academic and placement mobility of students and teaching and other staff within the frames of the new Lifelong Learning Programme and Åland Polytechnic strives to increase the volume of students and teaching staff mobility to and from its higher education partner institutions and enterprises in Europe.

The Polytechnic proceeds with its continuous work concerning improvement of mobility activities and cooperation with other higher education institutions in Europe. Particular focus will be given the enhancement of the volume of cooperation with other European higher education institutions and enterprises in order to contribute to the development of innovation in education and training. The Polytechnic emphasizes the development of quality long-term partnerships with enterprises in view of life long learning strategies in order to increase the quality, innovation and attractiveness of the education. Activities given priority are promotion of placements of students and academic staff in industry (and vice versa).

The Erasmus Policy Statement will be given wide visibility at the Åland Polytechnic. The EPS will be published on the Polytechnics homepage and in the Polytechnics internal and external newspaper. The staff members will be informed about the EPS and the outcome of the Erasmus University Charter application.

The Polytechnic treats all students (home and Erasmus students) equally irrespective of gender, religion, home country, and language or sexual preferences. Incoming exchange students are provided the same service as home students. The Polytechnic supports the integration of its incoming students in the activities. Quality awareness permeates all activities at the Polytechnic and extensive quality assurance documentation contains actions to ensure gender equality and the combat of xenophobia and racism.

A number of informational occasions are given to students and staff interested in going abroad. All outgoing students take part in language courses and courses in intercultural communication before leaving for studies or placements abroad.

Mandatory language courses ensure that outgoing students possess a good level of the language spoken at the host institution.

The Åland Polytechnic encourages staff mobility and a personal plan concerning teaching mobility abroad is made for every full-time teacher. Travel and living expenses are covered by the Polytechnic and teaching mobility abroad is acknowledged as part of the academic career and the teaching obligation. The international office helps with all practical arrangements concerning staff mobility between Åland Polytechnic and other European institutions.

In order to encourage international experience, study or placement periods abroad are fully recognised at Åland Polytechnic. Åland Polytechnic uses ECTS as credit system (ECTS credits, learning agreements, transcript of records) and the Polytechnic has committed itself to the Bologna action programme. Information on curricula is transparent, up to date and easily accessible. The international office makes sure that transcripts and information are provided in time for its incoming students.

Åland Polytechnic has a student tutor service for both Finnish and international students. All tutors are trained during the academic school year. The international student tutors pick up the incoming students, welcome them and guide them on studies at the Åland Polytechnic as well as on the surroundings and living on Åland and in Finland. The main idea is that all students (including incoming students) always have a fellow tutor to turn to. All incoming students receive a survival kit at their arrival.

The student association, Skåhla, is the interest group of all students at Åland Polytechnic and it works for the rights and the opinions of the students. In close cooperation with the student tutors, the student association organizes all kind of student activities (trips, parties etc.) during the academic school year.

Student accommodation is provided by a private company on Åland. The international coordinator at Åland Polytechnic arranges for accommodation for its incoming students.

All study programmes at Åland Polytechnic include placement periods, some of them even require placement periods abroad. Full recognition is given by the Polytechnic for the placement period spent abroad.

Åland Polytechnic works in close cooperation with the industry on Åland and enterprises are frequently asked about their possibilities of receiving students. To insure the quality of placements on Åland, the Polytechnic organizes every year study programme specific courses (one to three days) in supervision/guidance for enterprises or training institutions taking on students. Students are also supposed to evaluate their placement period on Åland. The quality assurance of monitoring and evaluation of placement periods is already quite extensive because of the Polytechnics long history of placement activities within each study programme.

Åland Polytechnic provides its outgoing students with individual preparation, linguistic and cultural competences. Incoming students are also allowed to participate in language and cultural courses at the Polytechnic.

In order to ensure quality in student placements, incoming and outgoing students are provided with a training agreement regarding the placement; the agreement is signed by the home institution, the host institution as well as the incoming or outgoing student. The training agreement includes a distinct description of objectives, needs, content and duration of the placement period abroad or on Åland. The international office at Åland Polytechnic also makes sure that the placement is covered by a placement contract endorsed by the sending institution (the sending consortium), the host organisation and the student.

Due to its smallness, the Polytechnic provides all incoming students with logistic support (travel recommendations, student accommodation). The student association, the student service (including the international office) and the international tutors are always to the incoming students' disposition during their placement period on Åland.