

## **Erasmus Policy Statement (2020-2027)**

The Silesian University of Technology is one of the best technical universities in Poland. For over 75 years it has been educating engineering and managerial staff for the needs of the domestic and foreign labour market. At the end of 2019, the Silesian University of Technology received the status of a research university. Our University was included in the group of the top 10 Polish universities which have won the competition in the “Excellence Initiative – Research University” programme. Placing the Silesian University of Technology in this elite group is a great prestige and distinction, but above all a huge challenge and opportunity for the development. Joining the elite group of Polish research universities involves changing the internationalisation strategy and defining new goals and priorities in foreign cooperation. The status of a research unit means also greater funding which will be received in the next seven years. This allows us to effectively compete with academic centres in Europe and in the world.

This success is the result of the implementation of a new SUT strategy started in 2016 by the new university authorities. As part of this strategy, the Silesian University of Technology has defined the most important goals in the fields of science, education, social mission and internationalisation.

As part of the development of science, SUT has indicated six priority research areas for the coming years. These are: computational oncology and personalized medicine, artificial intelligence and data processing, materials of the future, smart cities and future mobility, process automation and industry 4.0, climate and environmental protection, modern energy.

As far as the process of education is concerned: modern content and forms of education tailored to the needs of the labour market are developed and implemented in close cooperation with the socio-economic environment. In particular: dual studies (with industrial partners), double diploma (with foreign partners), implementation doctorates (thesis defined by the industry).

The strategy also anticipates significant increase in the internationalisation of the university in both scientific and didactic areas. The planned activities assume to build sustainable and effective international partnerships with world-class universities which have similar or complementary areas of interest.

Internationalisation enables to:

- broaden our students’ horizons,
- improve the quality of education,
- develop intercultural competences,
- develop Internationalisation@Home,
- ensure scientific and didactic development of the staff,
- efficient exchange of good practices,
- digitisation of administrative processes,
- improve fluency in foreign languages,
- increase the university's recognition in the international environment,
- increase the university's position in international rankings,
- build permanent framework for cooperation with top universities.

In international cooperation policy, the University concentrates mainly on developing the high level of teaching and conducting international scientific research with partner universities. The university has already established significant cooperation with numerous institutions from around the world (EU and non-EU countries). The basic principle is cultivation and tightening of existing cooperation and its sustainable development through careful selection of new partners.

When choosing foreign partners, we always intend to look for the possibility of implementing long-term, effective cooperation, resulting in obtaining specific goals and supporting the implementation of the development strategy of all partners.

The university intends to increase the networking with partner institutions from both EU and non-EU countries which represent fields of science and education similar to the SUT's areas of interest, taking into account also the geographical diversity.

The implementation of such a strategy should:

- lead to a significant increase in student and staff mobility,
- improve the quality of education,
- establish long-term cooperation between institutions in the field of education and research,
- increase the university's international recognition,
- improve innovation and exchange of good practices.

The strategy and goals of the Silesian University of Technology are compatible with the initiative to create the European Education Area. We have introduced a number of measures into our business regarding, among others, key competences in the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLL), digital skills, shared values and education for integration.

International trips for lectures, studies and internships have become a standard practice at our university and our university qualifications are recognized in the EU. Each member of the academic community has access to the high-quality education, regardless of their socio-economic status, which directly affects the sense of European identity and allows us to appreciate the cultural heritage and diversity of Europe and the world.

The Erasmus Programme has been significantly supporting the internationalisation of our university for many years and is still the key source of funding for the academic mobility. Effective use of funds from various Erasmus Programme actions enables the multilevel development of the academic community. It also gives the opportunity to support universities from less developed countries and share our knowledge and professional experience with them. The Erasmus Programme enables the achievement of many goals set out in the strategy, in particular these related to internationalisation.

Individual actions of the Erasmus Programme will enable the continuous development of our university and the achievement of the goals set out in the strategy.

The Silesian University of Technology intends to intensively use all opportunities offered by the Erasmus Programmes, encouraging the academic community to participate in projects and programmes.

The current activities in KA1 will be continued and developed within the available funds. The international exchange of students and employees is an effective mechanism for the development of education, innovation, creativity and technology transfer, ensuring the Silesian University of Technology a place at the forefront of technical universities and achieving the status of a leading research centre. SUT is continuously increasing the internationalisation of the education process by extending offer of studies in foreign languages (both for full-time candidates and for exchange students) and increasing the number of foreign students and exchange of lecturers with renowned universities. In our exchange programmes we have always followed the rule of equal opportunities for everyone regardless of gender, race, religion, disability or socio-economic conditions. We fully recognise ECTS points obtained abroad and ensure durability of results and increasing at the same time the competences of graduates.

SUT has already participated in KA2 action programmes and intends to continue its involvement. This type of programme enables us to cooperate internationally and helps us in the implementation of joint international projects, such as: Strategic Partnerships, Knowledge Alliances or Capacity Building in Higher Education. All these projects are very attractive for the Silesian University of Technology because they strongly influence the development of international cooperation and mutual exchange of good practices.

So far, the Silesian University of Technology has participated in one KA3 action programme - as a partner. However, we would like to develop this area by supporting dialogue and building relationships between young people and those responsible for youth policy. In this area we have identified great potential for activities in non-formal education, i.e. what young people learn in their free time. It also allows the youth to build their relations with the university a long time before the applications process.

There is a special supporting administrative unit at the university dedicated to education programmes. It is the Educational Projects Office (CZP5) that is part of the Project Management Centre of the Silesian University of Technology. The CZP5 office conducts information and advisory activities for project managers both at the stage of preparing applications for co-financing and during their implementation.

For many years the Erasmus Programme has been a strong support for the implementation of the university's strategy and for reaching the goals and tasks especially these related to internationalisation. Thanks to the programme funds, it is possible to significantly accelerate the pace of university development.

The main goals set up by the Silesian University of Technology for the coming years (resulting from the University's development strategy and participation in the Excellence Initiative – Research University programme) are:

- to increase the quality and internationalisation of science and education,
- to increase the recognition of the Silesian University of Technology,
- to build the University's prestige among world-class universities and its position in renowned international rankings.

In order to achieve these goals, a schedule of actions has been prepared. The most important of them are:

1. Increasing the mobility of students, employees and doctoral students in order to establish cooperation and undertake research with leading research centres. Increase in the number of long-term scientific internships in the best foreign centres (up to a minimum of 30 per year) – internal grant for financing 3-month internships at universities from the first 150 places in the top rankings lists (ARWU, QS, THE).
2. Active participation in international university associations, cooperation networks and scientific societies - increasing involvement in the European University Association (EUA), European Society for Engineering Education (SEFI), Santander Univesidades, European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN), Sino-Polish University Consortium, European Association for International Education - supporting employees performing functions on management boards of international societies.
3. Creating a network with foreign research universities and acting as a bridge between universities from Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe.
4. Increase in the percentage of scientific publications written in cooperation with the best research centres (at least 40% after 6 years) - a grant supporting publication with the authors of the first 150 places in the lists of top rankings (ARWU, QS, THE).
5. Acting as a consortium leader or partner in international projects, especially H2020 and ERC – internal grant for preparation of project applications, including participation in off-site meetings and inviting partners to prepare applications.

6. Exploiting the possibilities arising from approximately 250 international agreements on cooperation with specific universities and industrial partners - identifying and empowering academic teachers to be responsible for coordinating cooperation; ongoing monitoring of contract performance; including international cooperation as part of the periodic assessment and promotion of employees.
7. Promotion of the University and its offer and achievements in the international environment - promoting employees' activity on international portals (e.g. LinkedIn, ResearchGate); launching and systematic update of content in the integrated system, development of new e-services system (project called e-Politechnika).

The University authorities support and motivate University staff in activities leading to achieve the above goals. There are many pro-quality programmes awarding staff members for the activities. At the same time international involvement is one of the important criterion for employee's evaluation at the University. Staff mobility is very valuable for academics and their career paths. University regulations support it by motivating system, using the interim assessment of academics and rewarding them for some activities. International mobility/lecturing abroad gives 4 points (as for international conference accepted paper); lecturing at home in English gives 2 points. Remuneration for delivering lectures in English is 50% higher than for the same course delivered in Polish language.

Acquiring research projects financed by the European Commission as a coordinator/team leader from the University as a consortium member/contractor listed in the application for funding, gives respectively 80/40/30 points. For every 2 weeks of internship at a foreign university listed in the first hundred lists of ARWU, THE, QS - 15 points are given. Internship in another foreign university or enterprise conducting development activities - 6 points.

Importance of these aspects has been recently significantly increased comparing to previous regulations and is multidimensionally promoted. These activities are reported to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (supervising HEIs) and affect directly the amount of subsidy received by the HEI.

The Silesian University of Technology intends to effectively and efficiently supervise the implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in the field of teaching and training under the Erasmus Programme. We intend to take part in the preparation of new, improved educational programmes meeting social and labour needs, using online learning (e-learning modules), interdisciplinary and new assessment models. We plan to develop a system to monitor future careers of graduates participating in foreign exchange. We also intend to develop teacher training and exchange of experience aimed at improving the quality of teaching and a new pedagogical approach. We will increase the emphasis to ensure high standards of education by improving the social, didactic and laboratory base. We will create an inter-faculty centre for the implementation of student technical projects, thus facilitating all students, including foreign students, free access to technical infrastructure and equipment necessary to implement the results of their work. An important factor in promoting and building the prestige of the research teams is personal participation in international meetings. In order to support this activity we intend to increase the number of international congresses and scientific meetings organised at the University. We will create the university's scientific-research development, bearing in mind the effects in the perspective of many years, and not just those resulting from the current trends. The rational development of scientific-research and implementation activities, combined with effective international cooperation, will ensure the increase of University's scientific position. We also want to develop a system for disseminating information about available projects as well as to provide assistance in applying for new projects and implementing the existing ones. The implementation and organisation of international projects of the Erasmus programme will be verified and monitored by the University on the regular basis in order to control the actions taken. We hope this will lead to balanced and long lasting results. We will monitor the above (qualitatively and quantitatively) by



collecting the opinions of Beneficiaries and Programme Participants (through various types of questionnaires, interviews, observations and assessments). We plan to regularly prepare and analyse reports on project progress, monitor mobility and student results (in terms of activities carried out, ECTS points obtained, titles awarded or joint research work). We also plan to organise and attend thematic group meetings to support the exchange of good practices and mutual learning.

One of the important platforms of exchange of experiences are International Staff Training Weeks (ISTW). For many years, university has been organising events of this type that are conducive to raising professional qualifications, soft skills and internationalisation of universities. The programme usually offers workshops, presentations and discussion panels in the thematic areas important for international cooperation (e.g. Virtual Exchange, telecollaboration, online tools and resources, interdisciplinary collaboration between teachers of different subject areas in order to develop students' competences for employability (PBL), good practices in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), development of transferable skills for living and working globally, intercultural competences, and many others).

The idea of the SUT International Staff Training Week is to learn from each other, so we encourage all the international participants to present and share their good practices and project results. The ISTW programme includes networking with the faculty and staff of the Silesian University of Technology. The participants have also the opportunity to discover the SUT campus and explore the region.