

Erasmus Policy Statement



The University of Southern Denmark (SDU) is currently revising the principles underlying its strategy and management with expected approval by the University Board of Governors by the end of 2013. A highly important and integral part of the strategy – “University of Southern Denmark moving towards 2020” - is an increased focus on internationalisation given that internationalisation is one of the four pillars in the strategy. With this purpose in mind, the declared aim of the University of Southern Denmark is to make the university an internationally acclaimed university ranking among the top 250 best universities in the world. The university will ensure this through binding international collaboration, participation in international cooperation and networks as well as through establishment and consolidation of partnerships with partner universities within Europe (primarily Erasmus) as well as with universities outside the EU/EEA.

The university specifically emphasises the further development and establishment of better frameworks and possibilities for student and teaching mobility as well as the development of an enhanced international environment at SDU (“Internationalisation at home”). Among other things, this will be ensured by:

- Increasing the international student population at the University of Southern Denmark - including full degree students - ensuring an international student population of 20 % by 2016.
- Increasing the number of students who go abroad on internships and study periods with credit transfer as a part of their educational programmes, as well as by increasing the number of incoming international students.
- Offering 30 % of all full degree bachelor programmes in English by 2016, at the latest.
- Offering 60% of all full degree master programmes in English by 2016, at the latest.
- Increasing the number of international staff at the University of Southern Denmark; aiming at an international university staff population of 20 % by 2016.
- Establishing attractive schemes for motivating staff exchange and staff mobility
- Expanding and improving the services for study abroad students/administrative and academic staff as well as for incoming students/academic as well as administrative staff.

SDU is already working determinedly towards ensuring the international dimension. Accordingly, SDU requires that all study programmes at bachelor and master level allow students to go abroad for a study period or an internship as part of their studies. Furthermore, all Ph.D. students are required to spend at least one semester at a renowned university abroad. Hence, the university will be able to use the many well-established Erasmus agreements that have been built during its long-standing inter-institutional cooperation within the Erasmus Programme to its advantage, in order to ensure the aforementioned objectives are met.

SDU is particularly focused on developing educational and research cooperation with universities which possess and are able to offer subject knowledge complementing the University of Southern Denmark’s defined areas of research strength. This in part entails a very careful screening of new partners in order to ensure a high research level at the institution, an attractive portfolio of courses from which the SDU students can choose, a wish for balance in the student exchange, and the possibility of establishing sustainable research collaborations. Moreover, SDU aims for a geographical dispersion of collaborations which both supports the aforementioned areas as well as ensures diverse opportunities for students and staff.

In relation to the above, the university focuses strongly on the countries affiliated with the Erasmus Programme, just as it is the university's vision to extend participation in Erasmus Mundus programmes as well as to establish new multiple and joint degree programmes.

SDU's International Office (DIK) is constantly working determinedly towards ensuring optimal conditions for outgoing and incoming exchange students, study abroad students, international full degree students, as well as outgoing and incoming staff. This work is carried out in close cooperation between DIK and SDU's five faculties which all have international committees and/or international coordinators. Moreover, the university has an International Staff Office. SDU is also developing a concept for establishing a comprehensive service unit which is to handle all activities related to student and staff mobility; thus enabling SDU to meet the goals of the new strategy towards 2020 as well as meet the many challenges that must be met under the new Programme. The project's working title is 'Global Lounge'. Through this lounge the university expects to be able to create a well-functioning service unit as well as an inspiring international environment where the synergy between the different activities and groups is optimised; thus underpinning the declared aim to increase mobility.

International Cooperation

The University of Southern Denmark's overall strategy for the organisation and implementation of international cooperation is implemented in close cooperation with the Education Council. The Education Council is comprised of academic representatives responsible for the education programmes and the development of these. The council is headed by the pro-vice chancellor, who has executive responsibility for internationalisation at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU).

SDU participates in other types of collaboration focusing on education and research such as the Interreg Programme which aims to develop and strengthen regional cooperation across the Danish/German border. SDU expects to participate in activities under all three 'Key Actions' in the new Programme just as the university has previously participated in Intensive Programmes, Thematic Networks, Erasmus Mundus, etc.

SDU is very focused on quality assurance and the university aims at only entering into cooperation projects with realistic objectives that will mutually benefit all participants. In addition, SDU abides to the principle 'equal opportunities for all', irrespective of age, sex, religion, or ethnicity. The university has a unit for 'Social Educational Support (SPS), to create equal opportunities for all, including students with special need for support in case of handicap or disability. SDU has a clear policy on inclusion and the university works actively on creating the best possible transition from youth education to university and to reduce the drop-out rates.

SDU is eager to utilize the ample possibilities under the new Programme to support and further develop the goals for international cooperation, mobility, and research set out in the university's new strategy. It is a clear expectation that this will help strengthen and modernise the university, just like the University of Southern Denmark with its participation hopes to contribute to the modernisation agenda of the European Union.

The EU modernization agenda

Increasing attainment levels providing the graduates and researchers Europe needs:

SDU has a proportionally large number of first-time academics. Moreover, through a decentralised campus structure, the university helps ensure higher education in regions where higher education is traditionally not pursued. Through participation in actions under the new programme, SDU expects to reinforce this development in that attractive initiatives can be developed at all campuses.

Improving the quality and relevance of higher education:

As an integral part of the accreditation of Danish university degrees, universities must be able to document the relevance of degrees through, among other things, labour market statistics. Additionally, SDU monitors the employment rate of its alumni and is able to document a very high employment rate. SDU is conscious that Denmark's small size makes SDU's participation in and the experience gained from actions under the Programme an important parameter in the development and quality assurance of up-to-date educational programmes which are competitive in a global perspective.

Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation:

SDU actively engages in the promotion of mobility with partner institutions for students, researchers and administrative staff. A substantial part of this is facilitated through participation in the Programme and is expected to increase under the new Programme. International collaboration and mobility gives SDU a substantial value increment in the form of created knowledge of other markets and motivation for development and innovation.

Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development:

SDU has centralised its business activities within a new business centre which is responsible for career guidance as well as establishing and maintaining contact with the local, regional and national business community. The administration and execution of a number of industrial support schemes are central to the centre, as they aim to connect the university and the business community, in addition to contributing to economic growth in the region as well as strengthen the possibilities for job creation.

Improving governance and funding:

SDU is subject to the Danish University Act and the rules hereof. The university has a transparent governance structure with an external Board of Governors as the highest authority. The Danish regulatory requirements regulate the financial transactions of the university, including the translation of appropriations for educational programmes. Research grants run on a three year basis allowing for long term planning. In addition, SDU must obtain a substantial part of the research funds through external funding, including the EU programmes for research. SDU's aims at increasing the external research funding among others by obtaining more substantial research grants within the new Horizon 2020 programme.