



ERASMUS Policy Statement by the Catholic University Freiburg, state-recognised university

As a university of the Catholic Church and its Caritas Association, the Catholic University Freiburg is part of a worldwide network. This affiliation offers manifold possibilities for strategic cooperation in science, research and development. In addition to promising exchange between lecturers and students, this international network provides the basis for various international courses and lectures as well as for activities such as binational seminars, workshops and summer schools.

The Catholic University Freiburg focuses on universities that share its qualitative and value-oriented standards. International cooperation entails a willingness to support foreign universities in the development of innovative concepts in teaching and research and to learn from their conceptions and perspectives. The guiding principles for internationalising the Catholic University Freiburg are the following:

- We rely on reliable, international contacts with committed partners for mutual benefit.
- We emphasize qualitative, not quantitative cooperation with regard to our cooperation in study programmes.
- We make use of the international network of the Church and Caritas as well as contacts within international universities, to promote international mobility and activities.

The International Office keeps a systematic central record of all contributions in university partnership activities. We strive for a diverse campus culture and the possibility of an “at home” intercultural experience.

The University is especially committed to equal opportunities for disadvantaged people.

a) With regard to our choice of cooperation partners, the following criteria must be adhered to:

Interdisciplinarity: the selected university should provide at least two study fields of the same or similar kind offered by the Catholic University Freiburg (such as Social Work, Inclusive Education or Health Management). This is to make sure that students from at least two study fields can participate in international exchange activities.

Accessibility: partner universities must offer courses taught in English, German, French, or Spanish.

Practical semester: the university should offer the possibility of supervision for students in their practical semesters.

Sustainability: new contacts should be made with a view to sustainability. This can be measured according to the following criteria:

- a joint bi- or trilateral seminar for at least 3 consecutive years
- an annual exchange of lecturers

- at least one student per year in the incoming or outgoing programme

b) In addition to various successful cooperation partners in Europe, the Catholic University pursues cooperation with at least one university from

- East Europe
- outside Europe
- and the Islamic world

c) The goal of mobility activities is academic and personal benefit for all members of the university. The amount of mobile students and lecturers should be increased in both directions (incomings and outgoings) and cooperation with partner universities, intensified. The Catholic University Freiburg also wants to support the mobility of its administration staff. Increased development of joint curricula and thematic networks with other partner institutions is planned for the future.

The strategy for the organisation and implementation of international cooperation projects

The implementation of the internationalisation strategy has so far been an essential part of the ERASMUS programme and will continue to be in the future. Numerous projects with ERASMUS partners have already been an inherent part of the curriculum of the Catholic University Freiburg. For instance, since 1991, the Catholic University Freiburg has been involved in the European Social Work network formed by universities in the EU. Here, the Catholic University Freiburg coordinates the study programme “Europäische Soziale Arbeit ESA” (European Social Work) which is offered in cooperation with universities in Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands.

The Catholic University Freiburg is a member of the “Konföderation der Fachhochschulen des Sozialwesens in der Regio / Confédération des Ecoles Supérieures en Travail Social de la Regio (RECOS)” (Confederation of the Universities of Applied Sciences in Social Work of the *Regio*) which universities in the tri-border region (Switzerland, France and Germany) have formed. In the confederation, universities provide joint binational and trinational seminars and projects, coordinate concepts in terms of curriculum, and offer an integrated, 6-semester international study programme “Regio-Akademie für Soziale Arbeit / Regio-Pôle de formation sur le travail social” (Regio Academy for Social Work) .

In the course of every academic year, binational seminars take place in the exchange with partner institutions in Barcelona, Rome and Groningen. These seminars are led by two professors over a two week period and regularly include small-group excursions to practical institutions.

Five priorities on the modernisation agenda

1. In the European and international cooperation activities, equal opportunity for all people is guaranteed. The Catholic University Freiburg has installed equal opportunities officers who are newly elected every two years. Students with severe financial problems can receive financial assistance from the social fund of the Catholic University Freiburg. The Catholic University Freiburg is designed as a barrier-free university. All rooms and floors

are wheelchair accessible. Educational cooperation on a European and international level is a convincing instrument to fight prejudices, racism and xenophobia and to support open-minded, independent thinking. It offers students the chance to qualify in their profession, acquire linguistic and cultural competence, and, not least, to develop their personalities in order to become global, European citizens.

2. Our university views quality management as an integral part and the basic function of management. Since 2010, the Catholic University Freiburg has been a member of the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management). All core processes in teaching, research and further education as well as the supporting processes in management, service and administration are thereby put to the test. In October 2012, the Catholic University Freiburg reached the first level of the EFQM system and was awarded the Committed to Excellence. In the sense of this commitment, the Catholic University Freiburg will continue to assure and further develop quality in the future.
3. The introduction of a stay abroad to the curriculum, as already practised in the study programme of Social Work, is aimed for in other study programmes. By using the ECTS, the recognition of credit points achieved abroad is ensured. In order to make the university more attractive, activities and lectures in English are being promoted. Supporting international cooperation and networks at all levels of the university is an important element of international university profiles.
4. The IAF, the Institute for Applied Research, Development and Further Education of the Catholic University Freiburg, makes an important contribution to supporting knowledge transfer in the region, to cooperating with business partners and the communities as well as to cooperating with other universities on a national and international scale.
5. Through third-party funded programmes such as ERASMUS, the scope for qualitative and innovative international activities of the Catholic University Freiburg is being increased and assured.