

European Policy Statement (EPS)

Evangelische Hochschule Ludwigsburg – International Profil

The EHL carries a historical profile as an institute of higher learning specializing in related disciplines in social service such as social work, religious pedagogy, education of preschoolers and groups with special needs. The EHL is a state recognized institute of higher learning operating under the auspices of the protestant church of Württemberg. It traces a tradition of social deaconry, which is the professional practice of social work within church related social service organizations to 1876. The EHL has optimized the strength of this profile in its international program to win collaboration from partner organizations and universities. The EHL has progressively expanded by utilizing its social service alliances with local governments, private institutions and church related global networks to establish an international and intercultural profile. Institutional partnerships are developed on the basis of shared strategic objectives in international social service. Partners share in the international view that recognizes the link between European development and global processes. The EHL collaborates with institutional partners in a mutual effort of developing and enriching our academic degree programs on both curricular and extra-curricular levels to address the reality that the world is becoming more and more interconnected through the social issues experienced by countries in all continents.

Key Institutional Objectives

Our continuing expansion will correspond with the EU vision of promoting quality of life for all, through committed work in protecting the interest of vulnerable groups in Germany and Europe, as well as in other countries where the reach of the EHL is possible through international partnership and project collaboration. The EHL's commitment to educating and training future professionals, corresponds to the European strategic objective of promoting social equity, social cohesion and active citizenship. These strategic objectives integrate into this institution's educational mission of promoting social justice and human rights which then guarantees quality of life for all. In its mobility program EHL targets students and teachers in the first and second cycle social service discipline. This is carried out with the strategy of reaching organizations and universities that strengthen and complement our institutional goals in the education and training of professionals for an internationally and interculturally oriented employment market. This follows procedures that ensure inclusion of diverse students and staff. The international educational strategy of the EHL follows the orientation that a borderless university is strategically positioned in its sustainability, because it can equip students with professional skills and cross-cultural competences to work with diverse sectors of globalizing populations. Institutional partnerships are developed on the basis of shared strategic objectives in international social service. Partners share in the international view that recognizes the link between European development and global processes. Our global partnership in mobility program include the continents of Asia, Australia, Latin America, North America and Africa. A relationship of trust and mutual support exists among partners. This is with the conscious policy in the International Office of this university to maintain partnerships on the basis of institutional comparability and compatibility to ensure dynamic cross fertilization of program content and maintain active relationship through mutual support.

International Outreach

The most specific target groups are students and professionals in the broad areas of social work and
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social service disciplines, as well as in the teaching of children and groups with special needs. Student and staff exchange has to be continually promoted because this is a structurally effective manner of comparing and enriching curricular content and methodology so as to adapt to new areas of professional competences. The international strategy of the EHL considers the nature of target organizations and groups that specialize in social service, deaconry, religious education, pre-school teaching and special needs education. All these sectors require new competences that can not be achieved within national borders alone. The Erasmus mobility program worldwide contributes to our strategic objective of opening the EHL to international influences with the knowledge, networks and professional influences that are brought back by students and teachers. Concomitantly, the EHL reciprocates towards partners by internationalizing its curricular offerings; providing professional practice experience; and upgrading personnel competences and service facilities to respond to the needs of international incoming students and teachers.

Cooperation Worldwide

The EHL will pursue its plan to initiate a double degree program starting 2014. A project is underway in International Social Work and Social Service with European institutional colleagues. The Erasmus mobility program complements resources in this double degree. The emphasis of the foreseen double bachelors degree is the training of students who will have the professional recognition to work across Europe among specially segregated groups such as migrants, disabled peoples, refugees and sexual minorities. This double degree program sets into motion our standing commitment to continually develop academic programs that respond to the reality that social policies and social problems are interconnected across European national borders and thus, the training of professionals in the social service sector has to respond to this reality. The EHL having six years of experience both as coordinator and as partner in two Erasmus intensive projects, a proposal for funding a third project is submitted for implementation starting 2014. A longitudinal research project with east European partners has also been submitted for proposed funding starting 2014. With the foreseen expansion of the EHL in international project collaboration, the upgrading of teaching skills, specifically in language proficiency among teachers is being systematically implemented through budgetary outlays and other incentives. Sustainable partnerships with international partners will be developed when teachers and staff have the competence to communicate across cultures and national divides.

Institutional Priorities – Inclusive Policy in Student and Personnel Recruitment

The EHL gears towards the educational inclusion of sectors in the population, who very often may not have their rightful access to higher education. These policies hinge on a very clear commitment to diversity and inclusionary principles. The university profiles itself in international, intercultural and interreligious spheres. The policy of promoting inclusionary practices that is respectful of the resources that diverse student populations bring to the EHL, increases the quality and number of higher education graduates across a wide section of our society.

Quality of Teaching/Research

The expansion of the EHL into related social service disciplines is made possible through academic rigor in research, teaching and cutting edge practice. Students are trained in a breadth of theoretical approaches and rigorous practical experiences to guarantee their employability in professions that demand highest competence and personal commitment. The academic areas of specialization in

social service such as health, migration, social care and welfare development are foreseen as the occupations in the future given the demographic changes happening in European societies.

Study and Training Abroad

International linkages with social service organizations and partner universities is our sustainable strategy in providing opportunities for students with globally comparative relevant skills. Students in their practical placements will be challenged to undertake international experiences for their individual careers and future employability. The resources they bring back to the EHL will be basis for networking and strengthening collaborative linkages.

Knowledge Alliances

New models in knowledge alliances have to be evolved by the EHL as a university of applied science specializing in various disciplines related to social service. Quality of life for all does not have a sole reliance on economically determined models such as in business. Curricular programs are planned according to the demands of organizations in the social service sector. Responding to social needs on European and global levels are the driving forces from where knowledge and practice alliances will be forged by this institution with other collaborating partners.

Effective Governance

Institutional governance will be based on leadership that is participative and supportive of both individual and collective interest. This ensures organizational stability over a sustained period and encourages excellence and meritocratic reward system. It is institutional governance that aligns itself with regional, European and global growth. Fiscal prudence through sound fiscal planning should ensure deliberated institutional growth. While the EHL is supported by the protestant church and the state of Baden Württemberg, it has installed its own fund raising efforts through a university based educational foundation.