

Hogeschool van Amsterdam

Creating tomorrow, let's start today: the Hogeschool van Amsterdam (HvA) educates the professionals of tomorrow. HvA inspires students to develop creative solutions and sustainable innovations to address future problems and challenges. In this context connection is key: connection between theory and practice, between learning and working, between students and society, and between the local community and the world. In cooperation with regional and international partners HvA fosters quality, creativity and entrepreneurship and prepares students for an active role in society.

HvA is based in the Netherlands, in the city of Amsterdam. Amsterdam is a very diverse, cosmopolitan city, where people of more than 175 different nationalities live and work alongside each other and where the English language is largely spoken. Moreover, the city is home to a multitude of international companies and organisations. HvA strives to benefit of this wealth of international opportunities in order to provide the best possible education and produce relevant, practically oriented research.

As a result of Amsterdam's international profile, the Amsterdam labour market requires graduates who have sufficient intercultural and international (study/placement) experience to work within an intercultural and international setting. For this reason HvA works hard to ensure that internationalisation is integrated in its educational programmes and research activities, offering students and staff a basis to develop international and intercultural professional competences and prepare for a career in an international working environment. To achieve this HvA places a strong emphasis on incoming and outgoing international mobility. Through international mobility HvA aims to create an international setting (classroom) for students and staff in which to practice and develop their international and intercultural skills. By means of practical placements and the introduction of the major-minor structure HvA ensures all students a standard mobility window, granting them the opportunity for a study period abroad with a minimum study load of 30 ECTS.

Although HvA offers a number of associate and master degree courses, the main focus of HvA's educational activities is on students in first cycle education (bachelor level). Hence, HvA's internationalisation activities are mainly directed at students in first cycle education.

Located throughout Amsterdam, HvA consists of seven schools, offering a wide range of degree programmes. Each of HvA's schools is specialized in its own particular field of study. As a result of the diversity of these fields of study, every school has its own specific goals, objectives, opportunities and possibilities for internationalisation. In order to accommodate these differences, HvA applies a largely decentralized approach with regard to internationalisation. Within the context of HvA's overall policy, described above, the schools develop their own specific internationalisation activities, and build their own networks of partner institutes. The schools select their partner institutions worldwide, but with a distinct emphasis on Europe. Their selection criteria are based on their particular subject specific ambitions and requirements. Each school formulates specific criteria with regard to study subject(s), language, level & quality of education and logistic arrangements. All schools have an International Office (IO) that, in consultation with the school's programme managers, initiates, coordinates, promotes and supports internationalisation activities and manages the school's partner network. The school's IO serves as a front desk for students and staff (both from HvA and regional and international partners) in all affairs concerning internationalisation.

HvA's overall internationalisation policy is monitored by the central International Office. The central IO keeps track of national and international developments with regard to internationalisation and advises and supports the schools in the adaptation and implementation of such developments within their education and organisation. Furthermore, the central IO organises the overall implementation, administration and monitoring of international mobility programmes, visa procedures and diploma recognition. Finally, the central IO is working on the development of an institution wide European network of strategic and sustainable partnerships on the topic of current urban challenges and opportunities. HvA thus aims to form a consortium of higher education institutions in European major cities to share knowledge on urban issues, develop research & education and foster mobility of students and staff.

Strategy for the organisation and implementation of international cooperation projects

At the Hogeschool van Amsterdam international cooperation projects (i.e. international partnerships and teaching and training projects) are highly valued for their opportunities for educational innovation and curriculum development. The international aspects of these projects offer new (and international) insights and ideas on educational techniques and subject-specific approaches that can be adopted and incorporated in the curricula of HvA's regular study programmes. To enhance this adoption, result of international cooperation projects are to be disseminated within the school and the institution overall.

With regard to international cooperation projects HvA applies a decentralised organisation. For purposes of subject specific quality criteria and relevance, international cooperation is initiated and developed at the level of the study programme. The International Offices at HvA's seven schools support and facilitate the organisation and implementation of international cooperation projects at their school. Often, two or more of HvA's schools work together on an international project, blending study areas and developing new interdisciplinary knowledge and skills.

Modernisation of the institution

The expected impact of HvA's participation in the programme contributes to the five priorities of the EU's modernisation and internationalisation agenda.

1. Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs:
By participating in the programme HvA is required to support and maintain an organisational and administrative infrastructure to receive international students, thus increasing the accessibility of its study programmes for non-Dutch students. Moreover, through participation in the programme HvA staff will develop new, intercultural insights on teaching and learning, enabling them to offer more diverse education, tailoring to the diverse needs and cultural backgrounds of students in Dutch higher education and thus increasing the students' chances of success.
2. Improving the quality and relevance of higher education:
As a result of globalisation, society and labour markets require graduates who are capable to function and work within an intercultural and international environment. Through participation in the programme HvA aims to prepare students for a future (both professionally and socially) in such an intercultural and international environment.
3. Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border education:
Through participation in international projects HvA's teachers are stimulated to cooperate with international peers, thereby developing new ideas on educational techniques and subject-specific approaches which can be applied in the education of both international and home students. Through international student mobility, HvA can create international settings in which students can practice and develop their international and intercultural skills. By facilitating outgoing international mobility HvA's student are also given the opportunity to participate in a wider range of study subjects, enabling them to make very specific choices based on their particular professional ambitions.
4. Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development:
Under the programme HvA aims to set up a strategic partnership network with higher education institutions in several European major cities. Objectives of this network are to share knowledge and initiate international research into the challenges and opportunities of the urban environments of the participating institutions, thus linking regional networks of higher education and businesses into an overarching international network.
5. Improving governance and funding:
The programme provides a clear framework and regulations for the organisation of international activities. The programme's criteria help to regulate international mobility and can be applied to mobility both within and outside the programme in order to guarantee quality. The funding provided through the programme not only stimulates mobility, but also helps the institution to improve its facilities for incoming and outgoing students and staff.