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Ekonomikas un kulturas augstskola
EKA University of Applied Sciences
INTERNATIONALISATION AND MODERNISATION STRATEGY
2021-2023

Internationalisation and modernisation Strategy 2021-2023 of
the EKA University of Applied Sciences/ J. Titko - Riga, 2021

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INTRODUCTION

- [1] The strategic objective for the development of higher education (HE) in Latvia is the establishment of a HE system based on cooperation among public, private and academic environment, in order to ensure the competitiveness of Latvia as a country, its national economy and higher education system in the common European space. The achievement of this objective requires internationalization of the HE system as a whole and each individual higher education institution (HEI).
- [2] The Internationalisation and Modernisation Strategy of the EKA University of Applied Sciences (EKA) 2021-2023 (in Latvian - *Ekonomikas un kultūras augstskolas Internacionalizācijas un modernizācijas stratēģija 2021.-2023. gadam*, acronym- IMS2023) is a university-level medium term planning document, which has been developed within the framework of a higher level planning document *Development Strategy of the University of Economics and Culture* (in Latvian - *Ekonomikas un kultūras augstskolas attīstības stratēģija 2019.-2023.*, acronym - EKAAS).
- [3] In the EKAAS 2019-2023, EKA proclaims its strong commitment to science and research, and readiness to build a university reputation through research-based studies, innovation and teachers-researchers whose scientific work is recognized at a global level and provides a practical contribution to the industry. This, in turn, is aligned with objectives and planned activities within IMS2023.
- [4] Participation in Erasmus+ Programme is a crucially important prerequisite for successful implementation of IMS2023.
- [5] In achieving objectives of EKA-IMS2023, EKA undertakes to contribute to the goals of a European Education Area, and to perform in line with EU's renewed agenda for higher education.
- [6] An implementation plan is developed to monitor the progress in the achievement of IMS2023 goals.
- [7] The Vice Rector for Science and International Cooperation at EKA is responsible for the development of IMS2023 and its Implementation plan, as well as for monitoring the progress.

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF INTERNACIONALISATION AND MODERNISATION STRATEGY

IMS2023 was developed on the conceptual basis of the strategy for the previous period (Internationalization strategy of the EKA University of Applied Sciences 2018-2020: IS2020), following the EKA Erasmus+ Policy Statement (<https://www.augstskola.lv/?parent=686&lng=lva>), and taking into account recommendations from Accreditation Commission statements for the study directions of Economics, Management and Law in 2021.

Several stakeholders have been involved in the IMS2023 development process: EKA administration, EKA academic staff and representatives of administrative staff, and EKA students.

On 10 August 2021, EKA management meeting was held, attended by the Chairperson of EKA Board, EKA Rector and EKA Vice Rector for Science and International Cooperation. During the meeting, amendments and additions to the initial versions of IMS2023 and its action plan were discussed and made.

The meeting of EKA academic staff, EKA Programme Directors and EKA students took place on 15 September 2021, during which the participants analysed the strengths and weaknesses of EKA in the area of internationalization and modernization. Strengths and weaknesses were analysed also at the meeting between EKA Erasmus+ Coordinator and representative of EKA International Student Department. The information in Table 1 summarizes the findings of the meetings and the comments made by experts of the Accreditation Commissions.

On 17 November 2021, IMS2023, 2021 was approved by the EKA Senate meeting (Protocol No 164).

Table 1. EKA strengths and weaknesses in the field of internationalisation and modernisation

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular international events• EKA has a diverse International scientific conference with the high brand value• Large number of international participants attending EKA conference etECH• Large number of foreign lecturers during International Academic Week• Large interest of foreign students to Erasmus+ opportunities• Large number of teaching staff members use specific ICT solutions/tools during the course• Large number of international partners within Erasmus+ programme• EKA staff members attend international conferences and seminars	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low interest of local students about Erasmus+ opportunities• Low number of foreign teaching staff members• Low number of guest lectures from foreign Professors• Low understanding about innovative teaching methods and their practical application• No training about innovative teaching methods• Low cooperation with foreign employers• No projects for IT and Law study directions• Low cooperation with many of international partners• Low number of international mobilities in IT and Law study directions• No inter-institutional agreements for study programme "Digital game design and graphics"• Foreign students need more proactive involvement in the local student community life

PRIORITIES OF THE EKA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES IN THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONALISATION AND MODERNISATION

The EKA vision has been defined in the EKA Development Strategy 2019-2023:

"The EKA is developing as an interdisciplinary multicultural university, which prepares knowledgeable, creative and independent personalities for the global labour market who are excellent professional leaders in their industries."

EKA main values are competitive education, internationally recognized study programmes, excellent teaching staff and satisfied, highly skilled students.

The key objective of the internationalisation of the EKA is to enhance its international competitiveness by promoting students and academic staff mobility, strengthening international cooperation and providing its sustainability, involving foreign academic staff and supporting integration of international students into the university, thus contributing to the international reputation of the university and providing high quality multicultural learning environment.

The vision of EKA internationalisation: EKA is an internationally competitive and recognised, sciencebased and innovation-oriented higher education institution:

- where internationally recognised and qualified employees are attracted to perform scientific and academic activities;
- where multicultural environment has been provided, and students and academic staff are competitive both in the local and international labour markets;
- where international scientific and creative activities take place on regular basis;
- which actively cooperates with other universities, institutions and employers in Latvia and abroad in the field of research and study process.

Internationalization is an integral part of EKA Development strategy. Internationalization and Strategic partnership are two of six priority directions for EKA activities (https://www.augstskola.lv/upload/EKA_Strategy_2023_ENG.pdf). EKA main goals stated in IMS2023 are aligned with Erasmus+ programme goals:

- To enhance the quality of the study and research process at EKA by attracting internationally recognised and qualified teachers and researchers to perform scientific and academic activities.
- To support EKA staff excellence by providing opportunities to participate in international mobility and engaging staff into international research and creative projects.
- To support tolerance and diversity in the classroom by maintaining a multicultural environment at EKA and providing training opportunities to develop language skills and intercultural communication skills among students and staff.
- To promote the implementation of innovative teaching methods into the study process in order to develop students' creativity, problem-solving skills, entrepreneurship and innovation skills, and digital literacy.
- To increase the number of programmes taught in English and to develop new study programmes in the field of ICT, arts and social sciences.
- To strengthen the existing and to expand the cooperation with other universities, institutions and employers in Europe, Asia, Africa and North America in the field of research and creative activities.
- To increase international recognition of EKA and raise its reputational value in the academic and scientific environment.

IMS2023 goals are aligned with the priorities of the Erasmus+ Programme:

- Inclusion and diversity
- Digital transformation
- Participation in democratic life
- Environment and fight against climate change

The development and implementation of EKA IMS2023 is based on the future vision of education described in the *Education Development Guidelines 2021-2027* (project version https://www.izm.gov.lv/sites/izm/files/iap2027_projekta_versija_apspriesana_160720201_2.p

df). The Guidelines emphasize the necessity to strengthen lifelong learning opportunities and skills, specifically digital skills. Social skills (civic engagement, openness to different views and cultures, ability to change) are also treated as very important for the future.

The goals of the IMS2023 support the improvement of EKA staff and students' competencies. In defining the core competencies to focus on, EKA committed to the Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/council-recommendation-on-key-competences-for-lifelong-learning_en), Communication from the European Commission on achieving the European Education Area by 2025 (<https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/communication-european-education-area.pdf>), and A New Skills Agenda for Europe (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0381&from=EN>). Thus, the goals of IMS2023 are stated towards improvement of language skills (Pr3 Goal 2), Digital and technology-based competences (Pr3 Goal 5), active citizenship (Pr3 Goal 3, Pr3 Goal 4), and cultural awareness and multicultural communication competences (Pr3 Goal 1).

The EKA University of Applied Sciences also focuses on the integration of the international dimension in the study process ("internationalization at home") in order to provide the opportunity for those who do not participate in international mobility to acquire skills that are required for the international environment and globalized world.

GOALS AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OF THE EKA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES IN THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONALISATION AND MODERNISATION

IMS2023 PRIORITY 1 (Pr1): IMPROVEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF EKA STUDENTS AND STAFF

Pr1 GOAL 1: To support EKA staff and students' excellence by providing opportunities and motivating to participate in international mobility

Pr1 GOAL 2: To promote participation of staff and students in international mobility and international events

Pr1 GOAL 3: To increase number of staff and students participating in international mobility and international academic and research events abroad

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr1_G1_KPI):

Pr1_G1_KPI1: Number of Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIA) with higher education institutions (HEI) and organisations from Programme and Partner countries within Erasmus+ programme

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr1_G2_KPI):

Pr1_G2_KPI1: Number of EKA organized Erasmus+ promoting events for students and staff and events to share education abroad experiences

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr1_G3_KPI):

Pr1_G3_KPI1: Share of EKA students participating in international mobility for studies/internship

Pr1_G3_KPI2: Share of EKA staff members participating in international teaching/training mobility

Pr1_G3_KPI3: Share of academic staff participating in international academic or scientific events (except of EKA organized)

IMS2023 PRIORITY 2 (Pr2): CREATION OF INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AT EKA ("INTERNATIONALISATION AT HOME")

Pr2 GOAL 1: To enhance the quality of the study process at EKA by attracting internationally recognized and qualified teachers to perform academic activities.

Pr2 GOAL 2: To ensure the multicultural environment at EKA

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr2_G1_KPI):

Pr2_G1_KPI1: Number of incoming teaching staff mobilities

Pr2_G1_KPI2: Share of foreign teaching staff engaged in implementation of study programmes at EKA

Pr2_G1_KPI3: Number of guest lectures conducted by foreign teaching staff

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr2_G2_KPI):

Pr2_G2_KPI1: Number of incoming mobility students

Pr2_G2_KPI2: Foreign students' proportion, as a percentage of the total number of students

Pr2_G2_KPI3: Number of international events organized at EKA for staff

Pr2_G2_KPI4: Number of international events organized at EKA for students

IMS2023 PRIORITY 3 (Pr3): IMPROVEMENT OF COMPETENCES OF EKA STUDENTS AND STAFF

Pr3 GOAL 1: To support tolerance and diversity in the classroom by providing training opportunities to develop intercultural and social communication skills among students and staff

Pr3 GOAL 2: To improve language skills of EKA staff and students in each study programme

Pr3 GOAL 3: To raise awareness about environmental and climate-change challenges among students and staff and increase interest in social entrepreneurship in the field of circular economy and environment protection

Pr3 GOAL 4: To promote civic engagement and active citizenship among students and staff

Pr3 GOAL 5: To increase digital and technology-based competences of EKA students and staff

Pr3 GOAL 6: To increase research and project competences of EKA students and staff

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr3_G1_KPI):

Pr3_G1_KPI1: Number of organized events devoted to the intercultural communication issues, tolerance and diversity in the classroom, as well as events to share traditions of different cultures

Pr3_G1_KPI2: Share of students participating in the events devoted to the intercultural communication issues, tolerance and diversity in the classroom

Pr3_G1_KPI3: Share of staff members participating in the events devoted to the intercultural communication issues, tolerance and diversity in the classroom

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr3_G2_KPI):

Pr3_G2_KPI1: Number of language hours for students

Pr3_G2_KPI2: Number of language hours for staff

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr3_G3_KPI):

Pr3_G3_KPI1: Number of environment protection oriented activities at EKA, incl. awareness-raising activities

Pr3_G3_KPI2: Share of students participating in the environment protection oriented activities

Pr3_G3_KPI3: Share of staff members participating in the environment protection oriented activities

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr3_G4_KPI):

Pr3_G4_KPI1: Share of students participated in visits to social enterprises

Pr3_G4_KPI2: Number of guest lectures delivered by social entrepreneurs or lectures on socially important topics

Pr3_G4_KPI3: Number of foreign students participating in EKA Student Union

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr3_G5_KPI):

Pr3_G5_KPI1: Share of EKA staff members who utilize specific ICT tools

Pr3_G5_KPI2: Number of training events for staff on development of digital skills

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr3_G6_KPI):

Pr3_G6_KPI1: Number of EKA students participating in international projects

Pr3_G6_KPI2: Share of EKA staff members participating in international projects

Pr3_G6_KPI3: Share of EKA staff members involved in research teams with foreign researchers

IMS2023 PRIORITY 4 (Pr4): INTERNATIONALISATION AND MODERNIZATION OF CURRICULA

Pr4 GOAL 1: To increase the number of study programmes taught in English

Pr4 GOAL 2: To develop and launch joint study modules/joint study programmes

Pr4 GOAL 3: To promote the implementation of innovative teaching methods into the study process in order to develop students' creativity, problem-solving skills, entrepreneurship and innovation skills, and digital literacy.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr4_G1_KPI):

Pr4_G1_KPI1: Number of study programmes delivered in English, total at EKA

Pr4_G1_KPI2: Number of study modules or individual courses in English in each study direction

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr4_G2_KPI):

Pr4_G2_KPI1: Number of joint study programmes

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr4_G3_KPI):

Pr4_G3_KPI1: Number of staff training events devoted to the implementation of innovative teaching methods into the study process

Pr4_G3_KPI2: Share of staff members who apply innovative teaching methods

IMS2023 PRIORITY 5 (Pr5): EKA INTERNATIONAL PROFILE AND RECOGNITION

Pr5 GOAL 1: To increase international recognition of EKA and raise its reputational value in the academic and scientific environment

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr5_G1_KPI):

Pr5_G1_KPI1: Number of international ratings EKA takes place in

Pr5_G1_KPI2: Number of memberships in international organizations and associations

Pr5_G1_KPI3: Number of students of foreign universities participating in the EKA Student conference

Pr5_G1_KPI4: Participation rate of external stakeholders in EKA International Scientific conference etECH, as a percentage of the total number of participants

Pr5_G1_KPI5: Number of staff members representing foreign institutions participating in EKA organized international events (International Academic Week, Staff Training Week).

Pr5_G1_KPI6: Share of staff members invited as section leaders or keynote speakers to international events

IMS2023 PRIORITY 6 (Pr6): INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN ACADEMIC, RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Pr6 GOAL 1: To strengthen the existing and to expand the cooperation with other universities, institutions and employers in Europe, Asia, Africa and North America in the field of research and creative activities.

Pr6 GOAL 2: To enhance the quality of research process at EKA by attracting internationally recognised and qualified researchers to perform scientific activities.

Pr6 GOAL 3: To maintain active cooperation with HEIs and other institutions within the framework of international projects

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr6_G1_KPI):

Pr6_G1_KPI1: Number of cooperation agreements with higher educational institutions and organizations in Europe in the field of research and creative activities.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr6_G2_KPI):

Pr6_G2_KPI1: Number of foreign researchers involved in scientific cooperation with EKA researchers

Pr6_G2_KPI2: Number of joint scientific publications with foreign researchers

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Pr6_G3_KPI):

Pr6_G3_KPI1: Number of international projects' applications

Pr6_G3_KPI2: Number of international projects where EKA acts as a coordinator or partner

THE IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESS OF THE INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY

At the end of each academic year, EKA Vice-Rector for Science and International Cooperation assesses the progress of the IMS2023, based on results expressed in key performance indicators and target values described in IMS2023 Action plan.

The Action Plan is developed, following the structure shown in Table 2:

Table 2. IMS2023 Action plan report (example)

Goal	Key Performance Indicators		Person in charge
	KPI	Target value	
Pr1 GOAL 1 To support EKA staff and students' excellence by providing opportunities and motivating to participate in international mobility	Pr1_G1_KPI1: Number of Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIA) with HEI and organisations from Programme and Partner countries within Erasmus+ programme	At least 20 for each study direction	Erasmus Coordinator

EKA staff members responsible for data collection to complete the report of the IMS2023 Action plan:

- Erasmus+ coordinator
- Quality coordinator
- Research coordinators
- Directors of study programmes

EKA staff members responsible for achievement of IMS2023 goals:

- Erasmus+ coordinator
- Project coordinator
- Research coordinators
- Directors of study programmes
- Heads of study directions
- Vice Rector for Science and International Cooperation