

### **Erasmus+ Policy Statement**

For the Augustana Divinity School, where theologians from all over the world study Protestant Theology, internationalization is a constituent part of its own identity:

On the one hand, our theological school in Neuendettelsau needs special networking worldwide in order to be able to take an active part in international developments. This is realized through diverse partnerships:

- university-based with foreign universities / faculties
- such in cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria and with the Centre Mission OneWorld (MEW) world-wide
- others in which we participate via single theological institutions, such as “Study in Israel” or the theological study programs in Beirut/Libanon or Kyoto/Japan.

When it comes to financing mobility, we also cooperate with a wide variety of international institutions such as the European Commission/ERASMUS+, the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst), the Lutheran World Federation / “Bread for the World”, the Bavarian church and the MEW.

On the other hand, international experience of global ecumenism is indispensable in the field of Protestant theology. Especially today, because the challenges in politics and business, in culture and also religion / theology require global answers, personal knowledge of the international conditions of one's own subject in its global diversity is required.

In addition to the career of future theologians, it is about making a decisive contribution to professional and personal education, which is hardly imaginable without intercultural / interreligious knowledge and skills.

For our current and future internationalization strategy, these requirements result in:

1. For aspiring Protestant theologians, the network of international partnerships/collaborations should be as wide as possible. That is why we maintain close contact worldwide not only with universities / faculties of the same subject, but also with those of other denominations / religions as well as with various church institutions. Central / Eastern Europe and Asia are to be given even greater consideration in the coming years.

2. The academic value of all measures is paramount because the study of ecumenical theology is shaped by a wide variety of traditions and needs worldwide. Intensive exchange with the partners - even in the run-up to an agreement - as well as ongoing quality management during the cooperation ensure the curricular standards, which are then in concrete terms in agreements, study contracts, teaching agreements or transcripts of records. With our incomings, the full recognition of study achievements acquired at Augustana at their home universities / faculties has always been an indispensable element of internationalization.

3. Free and individual design of the measures: Our manageable campus school enables the individual design of all student and scientific projects. Based on the personal needs of the participants, from the initial idea to the evaluation after the return, intensive support is guaranteed in all questions of a mobility project, with both incomings and outgoings. In this way, a suitable and successful project has been made possible for each candidate in the past few years. The variety of worldwide cooperation and funding opportunities means that there is no need to select applicants, but international experience can be made available to anyone interested. The freedom of choice and design guaranteed in this way is reflected in every detail. Therefore, for foreign incomings, regardless of the study phase, there are no restrictions on access to Augustana courses or programs. Indispensable then, particularly in an international context, that the scientific study of Protestant theology is guaranteed to be open to students / lecturers without any external prerequisites (origin, skin color, religion / denomination, physical or mental disabilities etc.).

4. Bilaterality is a firm principle of mobility measures, individual-personal and institutional. Just as Augustana benefits from the activity of foreign students, academics in teaching, research and shared campus life, they gain insights and suggestions for their own (theological) existence from working together in the German environment. And just as German outgoings are fundamentally formed during their stay abroad, they also contribute directly to the development of the host institution and to the formation of their new environment. Mutual development is of the utmost importance in worldwide ecumenism, which says goodbye to old ideas of mission, and often gives our partnerships an eminently political character.

Despite formal obstacles that the divergent curricula of the subject entail worldwide, the instruments of the ERASMUS program should significantly increase the presence of foreign students and lecturers at the Augustana in the coming years.