

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)

Salus Coop V. is a training center with more than 35 years of experience in the field of vocational training in the health sector. As a worker cooperative, 16 out of the 18 workers are worker-members, which ensures a long-term stable workforce, which is committed to the process of internationalization and modernization of the training center. One of our objectives is to take an active role in the creation of a common European educational space.

Our *training offer* includes:

- Intermediate and Advanced Training Cycles organized jointly with the Regional Department of Education, Research, Culture and Sport (CEICE) of the Valencian Community (Dual Vocational Training modality), and Private Training Cycles:
 - ✓ Intermediate Level Training Course in Auxiliary Nursing Care.
 - ✓ Intermediate Level Training Course in Pharmacy and Parapharmacy.
 - ✓ Advanced Level Training Course in Dietetics.
 - ✓ Advanced Level Training Course in Oral Hygiene.
- Vocational Training for Employment which allows for the obtaining of Certificates of Professionalism (level 2 and 3) for, preferably, unemployed people. We have been an accredited institution by the Valencian Service for Employment and Training since 1987. Some subjects which are taught along the academic year are: care for multiple victims and victims in disasters, health care for dependent people in social institutions, development of applications using web technologies, teaching of vocational training for the employment, yoga training, lifeguarding in swimming pools and water parks and health transportation services.
- Continuing Training Courses for Healthcare Personnel accredited by the Valencian School of Health Studies (EVES).
- Continuing Training for students and teachers, as well as company-programmed training.

The aim of our training project is to attain the integral training of the students, that is, to maximize the results of their learning in order to reach a higher degree of professionalism, thus improving their future work prospects. To this end, we emphasize the importance of the development of autonomous behavior, the capacity for cooperative work and continuous training as competencies that increase the employability of all students.

Our *European Development Plan* groups different actions according to their field of action:

- *Erasmus+ programme.* We are certified by the ECHE Charter 2017 - 2020 (E CASTELL 26) and we are aiming at continuing with the Erasmus+ projects. Therefore, we have taken part in the call with the view to obtaining the ECHE Charter 2021 - 2027.

We have satisfactorily carried out our first two Erasmus+ projects: 2017-1-ES01-KA102-037207 (partial completion of the FCT for students in intermediate level training cycles and job shadowing periods for teaching staff) and 2017-1-ES01-KA103-035897 (partial completion of the FCT for students in higher level training cycles).

We currently have other projects underway for middle and high school students and staff. Due to the health emergency caused by COVID-19, we have not been able to develop the mobilities programmed for this course, but we have requested a 12 month extension, which has been successfully granted, in order to be able to carry them out satisfactorily.

- We offer our students the opportunity to participate in the *FCT in Europe* selection process of the *Consellería de Educación* (CEICE).
- We are registered in different platforms, such as *Erasmobility*, in order to look for partners with whom we can expand and carry out new projects. We are also open to the possibility of hosting Erasmus+ mobility participants from the social and health sector with the aim of creating a network of contacts at a European level to continue growing and gaining momentum within the European context.
- Our Governing Board draws up an annual *Continuing Education Plan* for staff in order to ensure the quality of teaching work. This plan includes training in different fields: professional (depending on the staff's qualifications), methodological/ICTs, cooperative and linguistic.
- The school complies with the Law 4/2018 of the Valencian Government which regulates and promotes *multilingualism* in the Valencian educational system. This regulation includes, among other aspects, that the language used in the training is a minimum of 25% in Valencian, and a minimum of 10% in English.

One of the main characteristics of the health sector is its continuous need and/or demand for professionals not only at national but also at European level. In order to secure a comprehensive training, it is essential, besides the incorporation of new methodologies and ICTs to the learning process, that a direct contact with the working world be produced. An example of our involvement in maintaining direct contact with the labor market is the implementation of the Dual Vocational Training modality in our training cycles, both intermediate and advanced.

Being able to participate in all those activities that allow direct contact with companies in their different fields (activity carried out, geographical area, etc.) will undoubtedly influence the learning process of both students and staff. From a training and professional point of view, the Erasmus+ Program provides us with a connection to the European health labor market. Mobilities also allow us to actively participate through the performance of professional skills in the health sector of a different country.

The mobilities in our sector and environment are not very well known, so carrying them out allows us to increase their diffusion and simultaneously increase the degree of internationalization and modernization of our educational offer, thus differentiating us from the rest of the existing educational offer. They are also a source of motivation for the students and provide an added value of quality to the teaching of Health Professional Training.

In order to collaborate in the attainment of the objectives of the *European Higher Education Area* regarding the mutual recognition of studies between the different member states of the European Union (EU), we consider that it is essential to know and unify the different Higher Level Vocational Training qualifications, and especially those in the health sector, where there are still many cross-country differences. The Erasmus+ program offers the possibility of exchanging information and promoting reciprocal learning between centers and companies in the socio-health sector, facilitating the international mobility of students and teaching staff across all member countries. Therefore, we aim at promoting knowledge exchange between Higher Level Vocational Training and companies, so that this cooperation results in the improvement of our educational project and in the mutual recognition of training.

Likewise, by promoting the mobility of students and higher-level professional training staff, we will be able to attain remarkable development on both an educational/professional and a linguistic, social and cultural level. To encourage participation, we will propose flexible formats through the design of short duration mobilities (less than 90 days), with the possibility of carrying them out simultaneously in small groups, that is, with other colleagues. We aim at increasing the level of success of our students through the recognition of learning both at national and European level, improvement of their linguistic competence, knowledge of a different culture and motivation for continuous training, avoiding school failure. In other words, the Erasmus+ program allows us, through mobilities and their dissemination, to empower our students and encourage them to participate more actively in society. With regard to the school staff, their participation in the Erasmus+ program will be part of the process of professional and personal improvement and promotion of lifelong learning.

Travelling allows you not only to learn, but also to get to know and discover Europe. It should be noted that, in a globalized world, knowledge of other languages (in addition to the mother tongue) is increasingly important. Integrating for a time in a different country and its culture undoubtedly helps to learn or improve your language, but also to highlight Europe's cultural heritage and diversity, which helps to improve social cohesion by fostering a sense of identity of European citizenship and its values.

The experience gained will help us to innovate and improve our social work as a training center, since the resources invested in this type of action are profitable not only for the personal and professional development it entails, but also in the improvement of society. Over time, our goal is to create a network of contacts with European centers and companies with which we can work together, eliminating barriers, which will increase the international dimension of the health vocational training sector.

Salus Coop V. holds the ISO 9000:2015 Quality Certificate, which certifies that we work in compliance with quality standards in the provision of our services. In our commitment to continuous improvement, we have identified the need to increase the level of linguistic and socio-cultural skills of our students in order to ensure a comprehensive training as well as an increase in their employability level. Therefore, we intend to carry out short term mobilities for the students, in which they can develop their professional skills (depending on the specialty) in a European workplace. In addition, we want to design short term mobilities for teachers which allow them to know -through job shadowing- the professional performance of the different specialties in different European health centers first-hand.

As we have mentioned before, we have been granted the ECHE Charter 2017 - 2020. We have satisfactorily managed our first Erasmus+ projects in both intermediate and advanced vocational training, mobilizing students and staff. We currently have two other projects underway. So far we have carried out the mobilities in Italy, but we would like to expand the partner countries in the mid-term, after consolidating our knowledge in the management of this type of projects.

Our projects have to be adjusted to the size of the center and our management capacity. Having the ECHE Charter 2021 - 2027 will allow us to offer part of our students the possibility of carrying out short term mobilities to carry out the Workplace Training (WT) module practices. As for our staff, mobilities would allow them to carry out job shadowing periods (maximum one week) in a European Union member country, getting some first-hand knowledge on how its health system is designed and works. Therefore, initially 8 students and 2 workers per course could participate.

To carry out the development of the projects we count on the partner-workers, who mostly make teaching compatible with various functions within the cooperative structure. Many of them have over 15 years' experience in the performance of their duties:

- *Administration Department:* in charge of the economic management of the project: justification and control of expenses.
- *Secretary:* Participating in the dissemination of the project as a contact and information point. This area is responsible for the dissemination through leaflets/posters and the bulletin board of the center, as well as for the filing and custody of all the documentation related to the development of the project and of the accreditation of the mobilities of the participants in the Erasmus + Project.
- *Training management and Head of Studies:* they analyze the needs of the center, approve -together with the *School Board*- the Internalization Project and carry out supervision tasks.
- *Erasmus+ Department:* there are currently two coordinators in charge of the management of the active Erasmus+ projects. They are in charge of attending information days, preparing project proposals, looking for partners, processing the application and, after approval, coordinating their development and doing the follow-up. They also collaborate in the dissemination and promotion of the experiences.
- *Visibility Department:* in charge of making the whole educational community aware of the Erasmus Policy Statement, the ECHE Charter and the projects carried out. This dissemination is carried out through a specific section created on the center's website as well as on the various social networks (Instagram, Twitter and Facebook) and other media such as local and/or regional publications.
- *Orientation Department:* it collaborates in the selection of students.
- *Teacher of the FOL module* (Training and Career Guidance) and *Head of the Insertion Bureau:* they collaborate in the elaboration/updating of the Europass CV and the Language Passport.
- *Tutors of FCT* (Training in the Workplace): they develop the training program and collaborate in the monitoring, evaluation and accreditation of the student's mobility learning.
- *Teacher - tutor:* they are in charge of informing their respective class about the Erasmus+ Project and encouraging student participation.

The Erasmus+ Program allows our center to come into contact with the European labor market, thus being able to compare procedures, functions of health personnel, etc. It then allows us to learn about new work approaches and different health system organizations and then to include this knowledge in our teaching-learning process. In addition, it enables us to establish new contacts and promote the international opening of the center.

Contact with European health centers also allows us to collaborate in the progress of the recognition of health professional training qualifications at a European level, since there is currently a wide diversity and therefore a difficult homologation or direct recognition. This will help to meet the high demand for health professionals at a European level.

The assessment of the educational-professional level of our students by the companies where they carry out their internships is satisfactory. However, we have found out that the level of linguistic competence is very low, as is the interest/motivation for learning other languages, such as English. The Labor Exchange has also found out that, once our students are qualified, they are very reluctant to move to other jobs and/or training, which we consider to be a limitation for their employability.

The Erasmus+ Project offers the possibility to get to know Europe in a practical way. It allows us to offer a higher quality education, regardless of the socioeconomic characteristics of the participants. Our students will be able to improve their professional skills, as well as get to know a European working environment and their real productive activity. They will also be able to improve their linguistic competence by learning another language, which will serve as an element to promote linguistic diversity within the European Union. The experience will involve an entrepreneurial initiative which will improve their personal, social and cultural skills. All this will eventually lead to professional and personal enrichment which will in turn increase their employability.

Considering how successful our first Erasmus+ project was, we want to take this opportunity to improve our students' integral training and to have a motivating element for the learning of health professional training. This is also a motivating element for our staff, since being integrated into a European health center is a new challenge to be faced and will allow them to learn the "know-how", that is, their knowledge of health techniques, protocols, professional skills, etc. as well as personal, social and cultural enrichment.

Through the knowledge of other cultures and social realities, the opportunities being part of the European Union provides are made known, thus enhancing the concept of European citizenship. Furthermore, geographical, cultural and linguistic barriers are eliminated, favoring personal and/or labor mobility.

We intend to exploit the results of the projects in such a way as to maximize their impact on our environment, both on the people and on the participating centers, companies or institutions. Thus, this will have a positive impact not only at a regional level but also at an international level, since we intend to make learning two-way, considering we are dealing with related sectors which can exchange experiences and learning. In other words, during the development of the projects we want to ensure that cooperation leads to sustainable and balanced results for all partners.

In conclusion, participating in the Erasmus+ Program helps us to acquire a European dimension in order to become a reference center in the field of health and to collaborate with other educational centers or institutions, considering that it is a differentiating element of quality for both the education authorities and companies-institutions in the social-health sector.

Participating in the Erasmus+ programme has a great impact on our training center as it ensures the continuity of the internationalization process and the fulfilment of the European Development Plan incorporated in our Annual General Programme (AGP) approved by the School Board.

Thanks to it, we also increase our contact with other institutions/companies, which leads to greater projection in the educational field of health professional training and improves the perception of the companies collaborating in Workplace Training (WTC). Likewise, we increase our knowledge of the health sector labor market in other countries and, through the incorporation of such knowledge into the teaching-learning process, we see a multiplier effect on the whole student body, and not only on the participants.

On the other hand, our academic projection is increased, since the mobilities represent an added value that makes professional training more attractive. They offer the students the possibility of living an experience which comprehensively improves their training, which is undoubtedly a motivating element. Therefore, some of our students will get their degree while getting to know the international social and health care sector firsthand, since they will have been immersed in a European working environment. This will mean that participants will improve their professional, personal, linguistic, communication and cultural skills, thus increasing their employability.

We create an environment in which we encourage multilingualism, with the aim of increasing our students' interest in language learning. The Erasmus+ programme is an integrating element that helps to eliminate language and barriers by promoting personal and/or professional geographic mobility.

With the dissemination of the project, we highlight the importance of having an entrepreneurial initiative and we want it to be a motivating element for continuous improvement, that is, to encourage continuity with higher level studies, to expand knowledge and/or to carry out an active search for employment at regional, national and international level. In addition to knowing, comparing, exchanging, sharing... the Erasmus+ experience allows for the development of values such as tolerance, understanding and critical spirit, and improves the capacity for adaptation, flexibility and problem solving.

In order to evaluate the impact and monitor the projects correctly, the Erasmus+ Coordinators keep a record through the minutes of the key stages and also record different indicators (both quantitative and qualitative) for subsequent evaluation and detection of areas for improvement. The aspects to be evaluated include:

- Degree of compliance and correct timing of the designed activities.
- Evaluation of incidents and their management.
- Adequacy of the criteria used for the selection and transparency of the process.
- Adequacy of the design of the mobilities and degree of satisfaction of the different people involved in the Erasmus+ project.
- Impact on participants: self-assessment after the mobility (and one year later) to analyze the experience at professional/training, linguistic, personal and cultural level.
- Accreditation and recognition of learning.
- Number of activities for the dissemination and promotion of multilingualism.
- Relationship with collaborating partners: compliance with agreements, communication flow, quality of activities, etc.
- Degree of attainment of the center's objectives.

In conclusion, aim at strengthening the international dimension of healthcare. Carrying out our first Erasmus+ project made us more aware of the road ahead for the unification/recognition at European level of the different specialties within the health professional training sector. For this reason, we want to actively collaborate in the recognition at European level of the qualifications of Oral Hygiene and Dietetics with the aim of promoting labor mobility at European level in the social-health field. This allows us to spread the idea of belonging to a common labor market, which also contributes to social cohesion by promoting linguistic diversity within the European Union as well as intercultural awareness.