

RIAM ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT: ERASMUS+ 2014 – 2020

RIAM bases its international strategy on the European Commission's agenda for higher education (2011) which sets out its priorities for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems. The main areas for reform identified both by the Commission and by RIAM as strategic aims include:

1. To increase the number of higher education graduates;
 2. To improve the quality and relevance of teaching and researcher training
 3. To provide more opportunities for students to gain additional skills through study or training abroad
- (a) Suitable partners are identified through the following means:
1. Networking by the International Relations Coordinator and RIAM academic staff at international conferences such as those organised by the Association of European Conservatoires (AEC) and National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) in the USA
 2. Recommendations by RIAM staff, alumni and music professionals
 3. Review of institutions who apply to make bi-lateral agreements
 4. Research into sector leaders, who have skills and specialisms which complement RIAM activities

All proposed institutions are reviewed by the RIAM Board of Studies for formal approval and the core criteria for evaluation include:

1. Does the institution offer adequate descriptions of their programmes, including credits, learning outcomes, teaching/learning approaches and assessment methods?
 2. Are the institution's standards adequate for our students, so that we can accept their teaching and assessment procedures without requiring any further work or assessment?
 3. Can RIAM identify, within the partner institutions, departments or curricula where similar, complementary and coherent learning outcomes could be achieved?
- (b) A wide range of geographical areas are targeted according to different musical specialisms and cultures. Currently within Europe, RIAM has 26 agreements with 11 countries which include: Austria, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

<http://www.riam.ie/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/ERASMUS-bi-lateral-agreements-with-RIAM.pdf>

- (c) The most important objectives of RIAM's mobility activities are:
1. To use international staff exchange as a networking and professional development opportunity to refresh their practice
 2. To promote RIAM and the Irish education system abroad to attract more international students, based on positive experiences of incoming/outgoing students and staff
 3. To give RIAM students the opportunity to learn additional skills and experience new cultures
 4. To keep abreast of educational developments in the music performance education sector through exchange of knowledge and experience

(d) The target groups of our mobility activities includes but is not limited to

1. Music conservatoires
2. Universities containing music programmes
3. Sector-specific conferences
4. Professional development courses/on-site learning experiences for academic and administrative staff

Double/multiple/joint degrees are currently not applicable to RIAM.

(e) The Modernisation Agenda includes the following 5 points

1. To increase the number of higher education graduates;
RIAM hopes to increase its own number of higher education students by 20% over the next 5 years. It will achieve this by attracting international students through the positive learning and cultural experiences of incoming students experienced at RIAM. In addition, the calibre of exchange agreements made between RIAM and other institutions will serve as an attractive feature to Irish students, considering their options in higher education courses in Ireland, in their decision to apply to RIAM.
2. To improve the quality and relevance of teaching and researcher training, to equip graduates with the knowledge and core transferable competences they need to succeed in high-skill occupations;
Staff exchanges between RIAM and international institutions under Erasmus have served to develop and refresh professional skills by accessing best practice work in the international arena. RIAM is committed to contributing to this virtuous circle of continuing professional development.
RIAM students who are challenged to study in a different context can test the transferability of their skills which is an excellent preparation for life after the RIAM. Performance students who experience a new teacher benefit by stepping out and proving themselves in a fresh location. This is hugely important for their development.
3. To provide more opportunities for students to gain additional skills through study or training abroad, and to encourage cross-border co-operation to boost higher education performance;
Outgoing RIAM students will have the unique experience of studying certain musical styles in the country of origin, giving them additional specialist skills not available in Ireland. This new cultural perspective will enhance their development as interpreters of music.
4. To strengthen the "knowledge triangle", linking education, research and business.
RIAM staff who are on professional working groups run by the Association of European Conservatoires (AEC) will share their knowledge of best practice with colleagues, contributing to RIAM's quality assurance processes in relation to curriculum development. Researching, for instance, trends in the music profession will enable RIAM to prioritise certain business and entrepreneurial skills in professional practice seminars and links this 'triangle' in musical terms.
5. To create effective governance and funding mechanisms in support of excellence.
The accountability and monitoring already taken on by the RIAM International team and the Higher Education Authority of Ireland will ensure that all Erasmus funds used will be accounted for and will go towards high value education and development experiences.