

## **Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)**

*1. Describe NI's international strategy. Explain how you choose partners, in which geographical area(s), the most important objectives and target groups of NI's mobility activities with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, and short cycles. If applicable, also explain how NI participates in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees.*

The Newman Institute is situated in Uppsala, the oldest university town in Scandinavia. It is an autonomous, young Jesuit college, founded in 2001, and it is the only Catholic university college in the Nordic countries. Since 2010, the Institute is accredited by the Swedish Government for granting a Bachelor's degree in theology, including also philosophy and cultural studies. International cooperation and strategies for internationalisation form the basis of its milieu for higher education, and the Institute is part of a wide network of Jesuit institutions for higher education.

With theology and philosophy as its core competencies, the Institute is especially interested in the relationship between religion and science and the phenomenon of religious secularisation that marks the countries of Northwestern Europe. The Jesuit character of the Newman institute expresses itself in the international dimension of all our work, in the ongoing intellectual dialogue with the surrounding culture, and in the willingness to contribute to the development of the society in which we live.

A central part of the mission of the Newman Institute is to integrate student and staff mobility into its educational programme. Some of its students, namely those studying for the priesthood in the Catholic Church in Sweden, are obliged to study at least one year abroad. We also strongly recommend all of our students to spend at least one semester at a partner institution outside of Sweden. For teachers at the Newman Institute, it is not only inspiring but also considered a merit to have taught at a partner institution abroad. To further the mobility of both students and staff, the Newman Institute has at present agreements with the following partners in Northern and Central Europe:

- **The Munich School of Philosophy, Munich, Germany**
- **Hochschule St. Georgen, Frankfurt, Germany**
- **TU Dortmund University, Dortmund, Germany**
- **The University of John Paul II, Krakow, Poland**
- **The Tilburg School of Catholic Theology, Tilburg, Netherlands**
- **Pontifical University St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Ireland**

The Newman Institute honours these agreements actively. However, up to 2020, the ambition was to initiate at least two more inter-institutional agreements, a goal of which we have now reached. The intention is to be flexible and open, to meet the desiderata of our outgoing students, and to be able to respond to enquiries from potential partner institutions and their students in Southern and Eastern Europe, provided that there is a shared interest in the study of theology and philosophy in secularised contexts.

Being a young and growing institution, the Newman Institute welcomes cooperation with universities that are more well-established and able to contribute to our partnership with a longer experience. The Newman Institute is especially open to cooperation partners who share both our starting points and our philosophical and theological interest in the phenomenon of secularisation in Western societies. Based on prior agreements, we welcome them to send first cycle students to our institution in order to study in Sweden, and to send faculty to teach at our institution. Being convinced that the cultural context in which we live affects the way how theological and philosophical reasoning is formed, we want to offer the particular opportunities of both the secularised Swedish context as well as the democratic traditions of Sweden as a specific study context to our visitors.

As most young people in Sweden are English-speaking, we prefer cooperation partners where English is the language predominantly used in teaching and research. We are, however, also open to cooperation with partners having for example German, French, Slavic or Scandinavian languages as their working languages, as seen by the various nationalities of the present partner institutions mentioned above. The working language at the Newman Institute is Swedish, but courses taught in English are offered each semester, and several teachers and students are bilingual in Swedish and English, German, French, Spanish or Slavic languages. Scandinavian languages are furthermore equalled to Swedish in all respects in this milieu, which as a whole offers rich possibilities of multilingual practice.

By 2020, developing a vibrant exchange program, where long-term strategic partnerships and the development of joint degrees will play an important role, is of vital interest for the Newman Institute.

*2. If applicable, describe NI's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme.*

During 2014–2020, the strategy of the Newman Institute is to take an active role in creating transnational strategic partnerships as a part of cooperation projects in teaching related to the Programme. The aim is to support, develop and implement joint

initiatives and joint capacity building with regard to higher education, to promote exchanges of knowledge and experience, and to further regional integration and cooperation.

Our intention is to strengthen and develop the existing cooperations with with the aforementioned partner institutions, to implement a transnational strategic partnership. In the near future, it would be desirable to extend this strategic partnership in the Northwestern part of Europe, to be able to include other HEI's sharing the Catholic or broader Christian profile of our institutions, as well as sharing our theological and philosophical competence. Such a strategic partnership intends to further both regional integration in Northwestern Europe and joint capacity building.

Our plans for strategic partnerships concerns peer learning as well as the education of students. Possible activities may include staff training events, joint study programmes including intensive programmes, and a joint development and implementation of various study modes, such as distance and part-time courses.

*3. Explain the expected impact of your participation in the Programme on the modernisation of your institution in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve.*

Issues of modernisation come naturally to the Newman Institute, as it is a recently founded and still a very young university college. The priority areas of the Modernisation Agenda, concerning the attractiveness, improvement and cross-border cooperation of higher education, form the basis of the strategies of the Newman Institute as well.

By participating in the Programme, the Newman Institute intends to increase the number of graduates by attracting a broader cross-section of society into higher education. Especially addressed are those who need further professional development in their field and those seeking to complete their education in another discipline, for example teachers, priests and lay workers, journalists, businessmen, doctors and nursing staff, psychologists and social workers. To this end NI offers a variety of courses in theology, philosophy and cultural studies from a historical as well as a contemporary perspective, together with the possibility to carry through a study period abroad.

Furthermore, the Newman Institute intends to improve the quality and relevance of higher education, so that curricula meet the needs of individuals, the labour market and possible future careers. The programme profile design of NI offers, accordingly, a common spine of courses which all students take, but it is also flexible, in order to meet individual desiderata of competences the students need to succeed in high-skill occupations. A rich selection of courses is offered, and several opportunities of

specialisations are at hand. The aim for international mobility further strengthens these objectives. Such a programme profile, together with the possibility of mobility for the staff, is also stimulating and rewarding for teachers when striving for excellence. Another policy objective the Newman Institute intends to achieve is to provide more opportunities for students to gain additional skills through study abroad. In the interest of boosting higher education performance, the aim is also to initiate and implement cross-border cooperation in the form of strategic partnerships with a few partner institutions in Northwestern Europe. The hope is to establish joint degrees and a common Master's programme in a near future.