

## **Erasmus Policy Statement**

### **DOBA Faculty**

DOBA Faculty was established and accredited in 2003 as an independent higher education institution and is a part of the DOBA Business Group. DOBA Faculty is privately owned and organised as a non-profit institution offering only part time studies since the majority of our students are employed. Students study online.

DOBA Faculty can be regarded as a pioneer in online distance education and the largest online distance education provider in Slovenian higher education. We offer 5 Bachelor programmes, 5 Master's programmes and 1 Doctoral programme. Already in the academic year 2006/2007 we upgraded our offer in the field of online learning by international virtual mobility. In 2008 DOBA Faculty started to expand its distance educational offer to the markets of former Yugoslavia.

DOBA Faculty has concluded agreements with Slovene and European higher education institutions, and has established ties with various other organisations in order to actively promote academic co-operation. International cooperation has been further strengthened through the joint preparation and implementation of development and research projects, guest lectures and study visits.

DOBA Faculty's main development and research work focus lies online learning, virtual mobility, curricula development and quality assurance. For topics about development and implementation of online learning, we have established the international Advisory Council for Development of Distance Learning (established in 2011).

DOBA is a specialist for online learning, that it has been implementing and developing for the last 21 years. E-learning is an integral part of the institutional strategy and is incorporated into defined main strategic aims. In October 2013, DOBA was awarded the UNIQUe (European University Quality in e-Learning) international quality certification for outstanding use of ICT in learning and teaching, which is awarded by the European Foundation for Quality in e-Learning (EFQUEL). In May 2018, DOBA was awarded the second international certification for quality in online learning, i.e. EOCCS – Online Course Certification System, which is awarded by the EFMD (European Foundation for Management Development). The school is therefore the only higher education institution in SE Europe with two international certifications in online learning.

The online learning strategy at DOBA Faculty aims to enhance the development and virtualisation of distance learning to enable better access to and flexibility of study programmes via the use of innovative ICT based pedagogical approaches, new media and technologies to support the implementation of distance learning and blended learning for the enhancement of the student learning experience. The online learning strategy supports the internationalisation of DOBA Faculty: enrolment of foreign students; virtual mobility courses offered in English during the annual virtual summer school; (funding for) research and development through international partnerships and projects.

The National Agency Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes (CMEPIUS) and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, of the Republic of Slovenia have bestowed DOBA Faculty, as the first private higher education institution in Slovenia, with the national award APPLE OF QUALITY 2019 in the segment of higher education institutions (for international mobility). This is a great recognition of our work and the standard we want to obtain,

especially being a smaller and independent HEI with significantly less students and staff as other public Slovene HEI.

Since June 2018 DOBA Faculty has an Internationalization strategy and a corresponding action plan that in-depth describes the steps toward an internationalization in every aspect.

Strategic objectives:

- To include internationalisation in all activities and all systems of the institution and in its organisational culture, which will be reflected in all activities of the expert and academic staff, in the implementation of study programmes, in cooperation, research, and knowledge exchange.
- To ensure internationalisation of learning and teaching that allows students to develop as global citizens.
- To increase the number of programmes in foreign languages and attract international students who would study at the school in one of the offered study modes: conventional, blended or online.
- To conduct research that provides solutions to economic and social challenges in the context of international partnerships and activities.

The strategy focuses on several major fields and below is only a part of it, focusing on the elements that are tied with Erasmus+ programmes.

### **International reputation of DOBA Faculty**

The key to the successful implementation of the strategy for internationalisation is the reputation of the institution. International reputation is essential for the realisation of all other dimensions of the strategy, especially the development of international partnerships, the implementation of programmes in a foreign language, the recruitment of international students, and teacher, staff and student mobility. In light of that, it is of a great importance to DOBA to use Erasmus+ programme as a key enabler, helping us to strengthen international scientific and research work, staff, teacher and student mobility, and work on international projects with renowned higher education institutions and networks. We see Erasmus activities as a platform to present DOBA as a reliable and innovative HEI.

### **International cooperation and collaboration with international institutions**

The internationalisation of the research and the educational process of a higher education institution requires international partners. One of the priority fields will include participation in international projects with the inclusion of academic staff and students in various applicative and research projects.

Objectives:

- To strengthen and facilitate partnerships and exchanges with international institutions that offer international programmes so as to facilitate the school's development.
- To increase participation in international projects of the Erasmus+ programme that offer other possibilities of participation (e.g. blended and virtual mobility, exchange of best practices, joint implementation of programmes).

## **Internationalisation at home and the development of cross-cultural competencies**

DOBA Faculty will provide all its students with an international and cross-cultural experience. It will facilitate a high quality and global learning experience regardless of the geographic location of students, their cultural background or physical disability. It will systematically develop and strengthen approaches for the realisation of internationalisation at home. The curriculum of study programmes and the teaching model of implementation will be designed so as to include elements of internationalisation. So as to implement the approaches for the realisation of internationalisation at home, the school will systematically use the possibilities and opportunities offered by modern information and communication technologies and its over 20 years of experience in the implementation of online learning.

Objectives:

- To intensify the development of various models and forms of blended and virtual mobility with various international institutions in order to engage students regardless of their geographic location, cultural background or physical disability (DOBA Faculty is already implementing 24h international virtual hackathons, several virtual projects, virtual summer school open to all, ...)
- To prepare and maintain the current internationalised curriculum that responds to the diverse needs of students and encourages active cooperation with a globally connected society.
- To encourage cross-cultural awareness of students and all employees using various approaches, forms, and methods.
- To develop the digital, linguistic and cross-cultural competency of students, academic and expert staff in the form of workshops, courses abroad, study visits to partner institutions, and mobility programmes in the context of Erasmus+.
- To recognize the digital, social, linguistic, etc. competencies of the participants not only in a diploma supplement but also through a badging systems, innovative certifications based on a blockchain technology ...)

## **International mobility of students, teachers, and staff**

International physical mobility of students, teachers, and staff is one of the most widely used and important means of internationalisation. It brings numerous benefits to institutions and individuals alike. DOBA Faculty recognises mobility as one of the main elements for strengthening the school's internationalisation and international openness. The school will continue systematically developing mobility as a key part of an open higher education arena of a high quality; however, due to the specific nature of the student body and models of implementation of the teaching process, it will primarily focus on strengthening and developing various forms of blended and virtual mobility. The school will predominantly develop physical mobility in the context of funds granted through Erasmus+ and partially also from own funds as a part of international institutional partnerships.

Objectives:

- To maintain outgoing physical mobility students (for studies and traineeship) in order to develop their knowledge, competencies and contribute to their EU identity and to fully and automatically recognize their reached mobility goals (courses or traineeship).

- To maintain outgoing physical mobility of teachers and staff so as to transfer best practices from international institutions and establish international connections and continue to formally and non-formally recognize their mobility.
- To increase incoming teacher mobility.
- To digitalize the Erasmus process through European Student Card initiative (Erasmus without paper, Erasmus mobile app, ...)
- To develop blended and virtual mobility as a complementary form of physical mobility of students, teachers, and staff. (Connecting to the strategy field above: Internationalisation at home and the development of cross-cultural competencies).

Maribor 6 May 2021