



## **ESIEA Graduate School of Engineering**

### **Erasmus Policy Statement 2021-2027**

ESIEA Graduate School of Engineering, a private, non-profit institution founded in 1958 and based in Paris and Laval, offers a 5-year program in Digital Sciences and Technologies leading to a degree equivalent to a Master of Science. The school is a member of the “Grandes Ecoles” system, is fully accredited by the “Commission des Titres d’Ingénieurs” of France and has been granted the European label EUR-ACE. Two study paths are offered: 1) a traditional full-time study program and 2) an apprenticeship program combining work and study.

ESIEA’s mission is to train engineers in digital sciences and technologies capable of successfully leading France, and more widely, Europe, through the coming period of digital transformation, and who will thus contribute to the modernisation and improved socioeconomic conditions of the European Union and its people. The quality of the training provided by institutions such as ESIEA is of vital importance to the success of that transformation. Our graduates must not only possess top-notch scientific and technical skills; they must be able to apprehend and navigate through complex systems, they must be able to communicate effectively to federate teams around projects. In a world dominated by technology, their decisions and actions must be driven by a profound respect for their fellow human beings and for the environment.

At ESIEA, we are convinced that meaningful intercultural experiences of significant duration are vital to developing these essential qualities and competencies in our graduates: powers of observation, open-mindedness, agile thinking and problem resolution, self-confidence, and awareness of their responsibilities as European and global citizens. Providing quality intercultural experiences as an integral part of the curriculum, is thus critical to our success as an institution. It is for these reasons that ESIEA accords internationalization a central role in its strategic objectives, organization and activities. Participation in the Erasmus program is an essential component of the institution’s international development.

By renewing its Erasmus charter, ESIEA’s primary objective is to leverage existing Erasmus partnerships and develop new ones, with the aim of going beyond the Erasmus program itself to create opportunities for European and international mobilities for 100% of our students and apprentices. During the present Erasmus cycle we have focused all of our energies on creating an increasing number of opportunities for semester-long mobilities for more of our students. In addition to traditional Erasmus mobilities, we have begun creating cohort programs, financed entirely by the school, with our most trusted European partners. Thanks to this proactive, Europe-focused approach, we have increased yearly overall European study and placement mobilities from 18 (2013-14) to 130 (2019-2020). 43 of the 130 mobilities of the present year were financed by Erasmus+. As of 2021, a semester-long study experience will be mandatory for all 3rd year students (350 students). Our objective is to combine Erasmus-funded and cohort mobilities to provide a sufficient number of spaces in quality academic programs to meet that objective.

In the spirit of inclusion central to the coming Erasmus cycle, our second objective is to create more significant European and international experiences for ESIEA's apprentices (150 per year). Statistically, this target group includes more of the type of student profiles that have difficulty accessing international opportunities. Often the children of immigration, coming from families with lesser financial means, young people seize on apprenticeship programs not only to gain solid professional experience but also to secure a modest salary to ensure their subsistence while pursuing their degree. Apprenticeship programs such as ESIEA's are powerful levers of upward social mobility. Nonetheless, apprenticeship programs present specific challenges to internationalization, as apprentices' work contracts do not often provide the flexibility necessary to organize a semester-long mobility period. To meet the challenge of providing quality mobility periods of short duration for this target group, we have turned to our trusted Erasmus partners for innovative solutions. Presently the apprentices go out for a one-month experience with 6 of our European and international partners. ESIEA finances tuition fees and housing costs with its own moneys. All of the European partners in this program are ESIEA's Erasmus partners. Our ambition for the coming Erasmus cycle is to enrich the present program by creating blended mobilities, adding a period of virtual mobility before the month-long period of physical mobility already in place. We are convinced that the linguistic and intercultural skills acquired during these blended mobilities will improve the employability of the apprentices and thus accelerate their upward social mobility.

Through the implementation of mandatory international semesters for students and enhanced international experiences for our apprentices, ESIEA will ensure that 100% of its graduates possess the linguistic and intercultural competencies vital to becoming successful European and international engineers. The school's continued full and active participation in the Erasmus program will play a vital role in fulfilling this ambition.

Participation in the Erasmus program has also very much helped drive the professionalization and modernisation of our practices at ESIEA. In the past, we drew upon experience gained through managing the Erasmus program to better structure our practices with bilateral partners outside of Europe, most notably via the transfer of supports such as the Learning Agreement, to a wider use. Today, the European Student Card and Erasmus Without Paper initiatives, which are particularly challenging for smaller HEIs such as ESIEA, are helping International Relations Managers become pilots for change at the heart of their institutions. At ESIEA, we welcome this opportunity to help drive the digital transformation, and thus the modernization, of our organization's infrastructures and practices.