

Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS)

Lea Artibai Ikastetxea (www.leartik.com) is a vocational training institution and we train students in the following vocational training fields: administration, electronics, computer applications, food industry, plastics and rubber and mechanics. Lea Artibai Ikastetxea provides both initial vocational training and continuous training to employed and unemployed people in the mentioned fields. It is a member of HETEL (www.hetel.org), an association of 21 Vocational Training Schools set up in 1987 to promote and improve the vocational training provision in the Basque Country and of MONDRAGON CORPORACION COOPERATIVA, MCC (www.mcc.es). Since 1997 we have taken part in different European projects: Socrates-Lingua and Leonardo Mobility for students and teachers. Lea Artibai Ikastetxea also offers a BSc in Polymer Engineering, a degree validated and granted by the London Metropolitan University. This degree has been offered in Lea Artibai Ikastetxea since 1996.

As a member of HETEL association, Lea Artibai Ikastetxea has counted on the support of the association in order to apply for, manage and disseminate Leonardo mobility projects both as a sending and as a receiving partner. The Copenhaguen declaration defines the need for a unique European labour market. To be present in this labour market, our students need to perform in Europe. Therefore it is one of Lea Artibai Ikastetxea's objectives to offer students and teachers the opportunity to take part in European projects and we have the indicator of *number of students who do their compulsory work placement abroad* included in our Annual Plan of the school. Likewise, every year students of the Polymer Engineering degree do their industrial placement (9 months) in different companies and Research Centres across Europe.

Following this indicator, our main goal in this new Lifelong Learning Programme is to continue offering our students, with increasing quality, the possibility of carrying out their compulsory module of Practical Training at a Workshop in a European company. Every year we will apply for a project for a group of about 20 students from the different disciplines taught in our school.

The Erasmus University Charter and the Erasmus Policy Statement will be published in our web together with the school's vision, mission and values. The activities carried out within the Erasmus program every year will be published in our web page and in the HETEL magazine Lanbide (published three times a year and 1,200 copies delivered).

We are a technical institution. So far in the industrial fields, such as mechanics, electronics or plastics and rubber, there is a much bigger amount of male students so when we make the selection of the students who can enjoy an Erasmus grant, females are positively discriminated. If there are students who deserve this grant but have economic difficulties, the school provides economic support for these students.

Lea Artibai Ikastetxea is committed to implementing a Total Quality Management System based on the European Foundation for Quality

Management's model (EFQM) as a way of assessing continuous improvement . In 2003, we obtained the Silver Q-Basque Award to Management Quality (between 401-450 points in an external EFQM Assessment). In 2005 we obtained the ISO9001:2000 certificate for laboratory works in the fields of Plastics and Rubber and Food Analysis. Such a commitment is likewise reflected in our mobility activities. The coordinators of European Projects in all the polytechnics belonging to HETEL meet once a month in order to reach common agreements on how to carry out the mobility activities.

These academic mobilities are targeted in staff mobility within Leonardo and in student group exchanges within Comenius. Unfortunately, Vocational Training in Spain does not count with the ECTS-ECVET credit transfer system. In May 2005, the Ministers of Higher Education of the Bologna Signatory States confirmed the three priorities defined at the Berlin meeting in September 2003: the degree system, quality assurance and recognition of degrees and study periods. Following these priorities, Spain has published the Real Decreto 1538/2006. According to it, the ECVTs credits for Vocational Education and Training will be implemented in a maximum of two years' time. This credit transfer system will make it possible for our technical students to study in other vocational training schools abroad. Nowadays the students' training placement in a company in Europe (former Leonardo mobility framework) is already accredited by EUROPASS. It is also recognized by the Education Department and by the polytechnics as equivalent to the compulsory 400 hour Practical Training in the Company. The coordinators provide counselling for both staff and students regarding practical aspects (health, transport, accommodation, documentation,...) and offer necessary support whilst abroad. The work programme is as follows:

1. Agreements are reached and letters of intent are signed with the host organizations or polytechnics.
2. Students and teachers are informed of the terms and requirements for the placements.
3. A committee selects the students who will take part in the project.
4. The students receive extra language lessons on the target language. These lessons will be reinforced by a two week language and cultural training in the country of destination.
5. We send the host organisations information about the students' profile: the modules they have studied and the tasks they are expected to carry out in the company together with their European CV and a letter of intent. The host organisations will receive this information two months before the work placement takes place.
6. Based on this information, the host company will find a suitable work placement for the student and will put her or him into contact with the tutor in the company. They will also help the students find accommodation.

7. The coordinator, the student and the host organisation will sign a contract assuming responsibility for the project.
8. The coordinator will inform and provide the tutor in the company with the necessary tools for the monitoring and evaluation of the training.
9. The tutor and the student him/herself inform the school every two weeks.
10. The project will be assessed continuously by all the parts involved in the project before, during and at the end of the project. We will also assess the impact of the project on the employability of the students.
11. The placement is a compulsory module in the students' curriculum (a 400 hour practical training module) and it will be recognized accordingly. The students will also be certified by the host company and both the coordinator and the host company will sign the Europass certificate.
12. Dissemination of the project is carried out through our web, through HETEL association and through the local media.