

Design School Kolding (DSKD) is a leading cultural and educational institution rooted in the Danish cultural heritage with a special commitment to the issues of sustainability, social inclusion, cultural diversity, and to creating responsible economic growth.

Design School Kolding offers 5 different Bachelor programs in Fashion, Textiles, Accessory Design, Communication and Industrial Design. On MA students have to select either MA in Design for People (social innovation), MA in Design for Planet (sustainability) or MA in Design for Play. All three are essential programs for the development of our societies. We work with companies, people (from children to senior citizens), NGOs and public offices focusing on improving societies and our surroundings. Many of our activities are supported by funding through the EU foundations.

The international strategy says: "DSKD wants to inspire, challenge and develop Danish design and the role, relevance and reach of the designer in a global world, and function as a progressive and creative knowledge- and innovation capacity with local roots and international format".

Training professional designers means preparing students for a globally oriented profession with high focus on practical experience and business network. With globalization, global market, long distance production, multicultural societies, the designer's workplace has expanded and it is no longer enough to be able to react to your local market. Therefore, it is essential for the school to give our students an education preparing them for global action and providing them with intercultural competences. For these reasons, internationalisation and thereby the Erasmus program is a strong part of the general objectives of the school.

Design School Kolding divides its international work into four different levels:

- Overseas, where we focus on institutional collaboration in China and Ghana.
- European/Erasmus+, where we focus on student and teacher exchange and research activities. In Europe the research is strong so we have special partnerships with e.g. Politecnico di Milano, London College of Fashion and University of Borås.
- Scandinavian, where we are part of a Nordplus network called Cirrus where we focus on student (both one semester exchange and Express Mobility) and teacher exchange and joint projects.
- Local - Internationalization at Home, which consists of inviting international students and teachers to our institution and also a co-operation with international companies in Denmark. E.g. we have several EU financed projects where we combine companies, students, teachers, researchers and NGOs to solve a specific topic.

All these four focus levels bear connection to the Erasmus program either through KA103, KA107 and other EU funding opportunities.

In our curriculum we focus on international collaborations included in every study year. Our first year Bachelor students have the possibility for a one month stay in Kumasi, Ghana, where they focus on learning different design methods together with Ghanaian students at our partner university in Kumasi. Second year Bachelor students go on exchange to partner universities for one semester. Third year Bachelor students go on either Danish or international internships.

On Master level we offer an international design camp where students from 15 top international design institutions send their best students to work with our students and Danish companies on a specific topic. Several students join the masterclass through the Nordplus Express Mobility scheme. The final semester consists of a graduation project often done with international companies.



The international activities supported by Erasmus+ are important for harnessing the full potential of education and culture as drivers for job creation, economic growth and improved social cohesion, as well as a means to experience European identity in all its diversity based on the European Education Area. We have a focus on Lifelong Learning where we conduct teaching for professionals in companies in design methodologies, supported by European foundations. Also, quality and efficiency of education and training are strongly rooted in our institution through accreditation systems and evaluations of our programs.

The EU cooperation is of special importance for DSKD due to the design tradition being very strong here. The objectives and priorities for the EU cooperation are: The exchange of students and staff. The co-operation within the school network and participation in development of new networks within education, research, business and benchmarking with a focus on inclusion, sustainability, play and digital skills. Network based collaborations with selected companies, containing both internships and collaborative projects. Securing the evaluation and qualification of our education and student services. Over the next following years, we will look into double/multiple/joint degrees.

In the previous years it has not been possible for the school due to Danish legislation and a consolidation of the school. We will work on the legislation part over the next years. We shall also look into if the European Universities is a possibility for our institution.

We intend to follow these directions over the coming years with a strong focus on partnering within the European and surrounding neighboring countries and team up with support our students to become active citizens.

Reflection on the Erasmus actions

It is the strategy of the school to be one of the top design institutions in Europe. An institution that provides the best possible education for our students. We are focused on People, Planet, Play – all in partnerships with national and international companies, NGOs, and organisations.

In order to achieve this, we need to be an attractive collaborative partner that understands the importance of international experiences and partnerships.

During the new Erasmus+ program we plan to:

- Enhance the quality and visibility of our international activities, including those undertaken by networks of which DSKD is a member, such as the Desis Network: <https://www.desisnetwork.org> - the Cumulus Association: <https://www.cumulusassociation.org/> - the Nordic network Cirrus: <https://cirrus.artun.ee/> - Design Research Society (DRS): <https://www.designresearchsociety.org> and Nordes: <https://nordes.org/> all important networks dealing with education, design for social innovation, sustainability, research or politics.
- Furthermore, we will enhance our activities under the KA107 actions to work with emergent markets. The school's educations and strategies call for activities in these areas as Design is a profession that collaborates and designs with/for the global communities.
- Ensure all programs always have with an international dimension, as already implemented.
- Work to improve students' and employees' language skills, also international students and staff in the need of learning Danish
- Work to create better knowledge about digital skills as they are an important part of the design education
- Ensure and support international experiences for students and staff, also because design is a global profession.
- Improve the students' business understanding by improving and increasing the external partnerships for students and remove internal academic and administrative barriers to any such mobility, e.g. by implementing the Erasmus without Papers. The latter will be implemented in the process for new partnership in the new Erasmus+ program.
- Continue our search for partnerships with European and Non-European universities with common strongholds in order to make strong partnerships to conduct research and projects under the different Erasmus+ programs. This must be done through setting the right team and make sure they are supported the best way possible. This will make our education and research even stronger in the benefit of our students
- Improve the students' possibilities in participating in international design competitions and curated exhibitions as they are part of the designer's toolbox and our students need to learn how they can participate. Furthermore, several of our students will in their future jobs work within these areas.



- Increase the pedagogical competences of our teaching staff. This can be done through both KA103 and KA107 activities.
 - Keep and strengthening our focus on inviting international guest teachers as our students and staff can learn from experts coming in with the newest knowledge.
- In order to increase our competitiveness, DSKD aims to increase the number of strategic partnerships with national and international partners and thereby improve our research and education. We do have strategic partnerships with companies such as ECCO or public authorities. These are of extreme importance and we intend to increase the number of partnerships in the years to come.
- Many of the above-mentioned activities are supported through the Erasmus+ program and different kinds of EU financed research programs.

Envisaged Impact

Once a year all major activities are evaluated at the school in a yearly status report. This is done by staff members responsible for the individual activities and then gathered in one major report such as Head of Education, the research committee and the Heads of Departments. This is done under the strategic contract between DSKD and the Ministry of Education and Research between 2018-2021. In the contract there are 3 strategic goals, each of them have qualitative and quantitative indicators. Several of the activities will be part of the new Erasmus+ program as stated above. Here we shall only comment on the international activities.

The first strategic goal is improvement of the quality of the education and increased learning outcome for the students. That is measured through increasing the pedagogical competences of the teachers, increasing the culture of evaluation and through participation in important design competitions and curated exhibitions. The Heads of Departments make overviews of important competitions and exhibitions and plan courses that support these activities. The evaluation takes place once a year in spring time before next year study plan is made. An overview of results is also conducted in order to see the quality of our education when compared to other university programs.

Concerning pedagogical competences, it is important for our teachers to go abroad and learn from other teachers at other universities besides taking classes in pedagogical teaching. Going abroad through Erasmus+ KA103 scholarships is a strategic tool for the institution in order to achieve new knowledge. It is therefore strongly supported.

The evaluation process is run through the department, the management to the joint consultative committee to secure that we gain the correct knowledge and can plan ahead. The number of staff mobility has increased the past couple of years and it has influenced the number of staff members who find interest in achieving knowledge this way. The best practice would be if half of the VIP staff went on Erasmus+ staff teaching or training each year and 1/4 of the administrative staff would go. We keep statistics visible and will work to achieve this. It would increase the job satisfaction of the staff but also increase the quality of the work of the whole staff, not just the teachers/researchers.

Goal 2 is Improvement of the education's relevance so the graduating students quickly find jobs. That goal is achieved by improving the students' competences within business which relate to their digital skills, business understanding and communication. The number of partnerships in the graduating projects has increased over the years. Our students are obliged to conduct their final project in a partnership. They have also been given the possibility to enter into the partnerships DSKD has within our Labs. Furthermore, the internship period has gone from 3 months to 6 months in the academic year 2020/2021. The digital competences have been improved by creating DigiHUB which is a partnership with companies working within the digital area. When the students evaluate their study year they evaluate their improvement in these areas as well as the teachers and examiners evaluate the students at exams. Even the companies are asked to evaluate the students in these areas when they are doing internships or collaborate on different projects.

Goal 3 is Improvement of the knowledge foundation in order for the benefit of the education, the profession and the surrounding society. This is done by hiring 3 new professors and Assisting Professors, one in each of our 3 programs – People, Planet, Play. It is also evaluated according to how many per reviews our researchers produce as well as how many workshops and presentations they give abroad. This is important for our wish to strengthen our partnerships with international companies and universities in order to improve our research and education and also secure that interested students and staff can participate in the activities. Furthermore, we have conducted teaching for companies in design methodology under



the D2i framework, <https://danskdesigncenter.dk/da/d2i-design-innovate-er-blevet-til-danskdesign-center> which is supported by EU.

The school has appointed staff members who focus specifically on international collaborations and communication to make sure that the implemented activities contribute towards the fulfilment of our international strategy.

Internationalisation will stay important during the whole time of the Erasmus+ program where we will focus more on staff mobility and finding the right partners. The school is quite small as we have chosen to invite international guest lecturers. Therefore, we bring the international environment into the house and also participate in international research projects mainly focusing on sustainability and play. DSKS distinguishes itself by exemplarily combining education with the surrounding society through working with political councils, bodies and institutions as well as industry on issues of design and aesthetics, thus contributing to decisions and developments relating to design strategy and design education.

Since Denmark is a small country, we need international relations and bigger strategic markets in order to increase the level of innovation. Our institution needs international relations in order to conduct the best education where we can obtain innovative collaborative partners at the highest possible level. Our graduates live by their innovative skills and they must be able to put these skills into action. They can do that by participating in the international society. The original setting for the school is the link between higher education, research and the surrounding businesses.

DSKD's unique competences within design research and education must benefit society at large. Our students must collaborate with companies and face the same demands that professional designers do. We also want the business community to experience the creative and innovative potential that a student/company collaboration holds. The tradition for collaborating with local, regional and international companies, institutions and organisations is strong. Therefore, we have set up 3 Laboratories gathering the school's collaborations; across departments, trades and interests. These Labs take their starting point in the values and vision of the school. In these Labs collaboration projects between students, researchers, companies and NGOs take place. Some of the major projects are financed by different EU programs. Through these projects we strengthen the link between academia, business and international communities and seek to expand the funding through participation in different EU programs and support from the business community.

The impact from EU and the possibilities created in the programs are of huge importance for the future development of the design education, research, links between nationalities and thereby the quality of the innovation skills of future graduates from DSKD.

The results from collaborative projects almost always end out in exhibitions and prototyping which are used for maximising their impact on individuals and participating partners. New knowledge is shared with anybody interested in the findings. This is done at workshops and conferences.