

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

The Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA) is a PhD-granting research institution dedicated to cutting-edge research in the physical, mathematical, computer, and life sciences. The Institute was established in 2006, and the founding principles of ISTA remain valid today and continue to guide the growth and development of the Institute in its second decade as it works toward excelling in its core missions: to perform world-class basic research, to train the next generation of scientific leaders, to support science education and technology transfer, and to implement best practices in science management. These two goals are complemented by active institutional support for our scientists in exploring technology-transfer ideas of their work and supporting visionary science start-ups.

Scientific excellence is an important criterion in scientific staff recruitment at ISTA. International recruitment allows for a steady flow of talent from the whole world (PhD students, postdocs, professors, staff scientists, visiting students and professors), which is imperative for an institution like ISTA that has no undergraduate program. The working language at ISTA is English, which contributes to the international and intercultural exposure of all members of ISTA. Furthermore, recruitment efforts by ISTA are sensitive towards equity, diversity, and inclusion. Periodical diversity monitoring reports contribute to understanding gender- and diversity-related issues and further advance equity, diversity, and inclusion across the Institute.

In our PhD program, we aim to educate a new generation of international researchers who are fluent in the languages of both the experimental and the theoretical sciences, and are able to approach scientific questions from a variety of angles. International exchange is a key component of this mission, and our long-term ambition is to create partnerships that contribute to optimal training and career opportunities for our academic and non-academic staff.

ISTA will explore different programs for its academic and non-academic staff within the Erasmus+ framework. Our choice of partners is based, above all, on quality and excellence. We favor a

bottom-up approach based on the research focus of our scientists, the tasks and aims of our scientific support and research administration units, and contacts with institutions comparable to ISTA in structure and content.

We will foster currently existing informal international networks and explore how training and - to a lesser extent - study opportunities can be integrated into the graduate education of our PhD students. We will also investigate further training options for academic and non-academic staff and incoming students at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The framework of Erasmus+ gives us the opportunity to explore the different possibilities of potential strategic partnerships and cooperation between institutions of higher education as well as enterprises. We want to evaluate current informal partnerships and will work to strengthen links between education, research and business. We will consider engaging in projects where such participation will contribute to our strategic objectives and ensure mutual benefits.

For incoming students and staff, we will ensure equal academic treatment and service with full access to the infrastructure and benefits similar to regular ISTA employees. For outgoing participants, we will ensure that they receive full documentation and academic recognition for their work.

By participating in the Erasmus+ program and adding international mobility components, ISTA intends to enhance further and complement its current international set-up and outlook. We aim to improve the quality of learning and teaching for our students and staff members alike, complement their skill sets with an additional international component, and increase the international visibility of the Institute.

ISTA is a modern institution that strives to incorporate and implement best-practice models and innovative ideas on the educational and administrative levels. Increased exposure to international models will contribute to making our governance structure more effective.

Small research groups ensure regular contact between the student and the supervisor and enable a high graduation rate of our students. As the Institute grows, we will strive to improve the quality of supervision and the support for professional development and career services for our scientists and staff on all levels, particularly for our students.

Participation in the Erasmus+ program will contribute to these dimensions.