



**SILESIAN
UNIVERSITY
IN OPAVA**

Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS)

What we would like to achieve by participating in the Erasmus Programme

How our participation in the Erasmus Programme fits into our institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy.

The development of internationalization is one of the priority areas of the Long-term Plan of educational, scientific, research, development and innovation, artistic and other creative activities of the Silesian University in Opava 2016-2020 (hereinafter referred to as the LSP). An integral part of the University's mission is to participate in international cooperation and preparation of international and European projects, both through international mobility of students, educators and researchers, as well as as a respected partner of a number of foreign institutions. In LSP, the University undertakes to continue to maintain and expand the international character of its educational, scientific and creative artistic activities, including direct cooperation with foreign universities and to promote the involvement of individual educational and research teams in international scientific networks and international projects. LSP also supports study and teaching stays of students and staff at foreign universities or research institutions, both on the basis of bilateral contracts and under the Erasmus+ programme.

It is in Erasmus+ programme that the University sees a key tool for achieving greater openness deepening the internationalisation of its educational activities and increasing attractiveness for international students, academics and non-academics.

By participating in the various key Erasmus actions, the University will seek to continue cooperation with traditional partners as well as to attract new partners. The implementation of projects within the programme enables an exchange of experience, transfer of good practice from foreign partners, thereby contributing to the implementation of innovative procedures and modernisation of the University environment.

In addition to traditional partners, which are institutions from geographically close regions of Central Europe, and institutions to which it is close in pedagogical and scientific focus, the University is seeking to acquire new partnerships. These new partnerships can greatly help to support incoming students and educators, leading to the development of internationalisation at home and enabling SU students and staff to gain international experience directly on home soil.

Participation in the Erasmus+ programme enables the fulfilment of the individual measures of the LSP, which are: improving the language skills of academic, scientific and administrative staff,

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improving the conditions for the integration of foreign students and educators, or promoting the short-term hosting of foreign workers domestic academic staff at foreign institutions.

By participating in the Erasmus+ programme, the University strives to continuously and smoothly strengthen international character, which is evaluated on the basis of the number of formally or informally cooperating foreign institutions, increasing the percentage of graduates of bachelor's and master's studies who have been sent on student mobility or traineeships abroad as part of their studies, and the proportion of credits imported from student mobility that have been recognised as a substitute for of the student's home study plan.

The University will continue to implement its objectives and develop these measures in the coming years so that they become part of its new strategic plan prepared for the period from 2021 onwards.

In implementing Erasmus+ and ECHE provisions, the University will build on an established mobility management system based on the experience gained by years of participation in the programme. The University has defined in its internal regulations the rights and obligations of individual staff involved in the implementation of the programme. Each part of the University has an Office for foreign relations, which is directly subordinate to the Vice-Dean for Foreign Relations and where faculty coordinators operate, who provide all agendas related to selection, nomination of participants in mobility, the process of entering into a learning agreement and updates and availability of the course catalogue. During mobility, they are available to participants to address potential problems and possible changes. After the end of mobility, they administer the processes associated with the recognition of their results. They provide assistance to arriving and departing students for visa processing and accommodation arrangements. In the area of Learning Agreement approval, the process also includes professional guarantors from the ranks of educators (departmental coordinators), who assess the content of LA in relation to the student's study plan and whose approval is a guarantee for subsequent seamless recognition of mobility. These coordinators also have the opportunity to comment on the interinstitutional agreements concluded so as to ensure that partnerships are concluded only with those institutions whose pedagogical or scientific focus corresponds with that of the University. This guarantees that partnerships will really be active and functioning. For concluded contracts, regular revisions and evaluations are carried out for this purpose.

Financial matters related to the implementation of the programme, as well as the processing of applications and reports towards the National Agency, are provided at the level of the Rector's office of the University, namely by the institutional coordinator of the programme, who is subordinate to the Vice-Rector for Science and Foreign Relations.

The experience of all these staff in the management and implementation of the programme is also used in projects carried out in other key Erasmus activities.

The university has already fully adopted and uses the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and Diploma Supplement as standard. It will continue to work towards deepening the automatic process of recognition of the results of studies at a foreign university. Furthermore, in the context of joining the European Student Card initiative, it expects this process to be facilitated towards its digitisation and the removal of administrative burden to all subjects involved.

The Erasmus+ programme, as well as the involvement of the University in projects supported by European funds or the accession to the European Student Card initiative, is a tool for the University to support the achievement of the objectives of the European Education Area. In view of the measures to create the EEA presented by the European Commission, the University will support the development of key competences for lifelong learning, digital skills, common values and inclusive learning among its students.

How the Erasmus actions we would like to take part in will be implemented in practice at our institution.

How our participation in these actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of our institutional strategy.

The University expects involvement in all key actions of the programme. The priority is participation in key action 1 Educational mobility of individuals and key action 2 Partnership for collaboration and exchange of practice, which is based on the experience from projects implemented so far, in which it has acted as a partner - on the basis of previous long-term cooperation. Participation in these projects gives the University the opportunity to actively participate in the transfer of knowledge and skills between institutions, both from EU member states and from other countries around the world. Sharing knowledge, experience and good practice with foreign partners leads to innovation not only in the education process, but also in other scientific and research and creative activities, and enables the participants involved to gain experience working in international teams, thereby contributing to the achievement of the University's LSP objectives and measures as mentioned in the previous section of the text.

Participation in other key actions of the programme is seen by the University as an objective in the long term, the concrete form of which will be considered only after the evaluation of administrative, organisational and financial complexity and on the basis of experience with the implementation of this activity by large established universities.

The university has built the system necessary for the administration and management of international cooperation projects and, in particular, projects under the Erasmus+ programme.

Coordinators who operate at each part of the University have sufficient qualifications and experience for the administration of projects of each key action of the programme and offer consulting possibilities to all employees or students interested in participating in all key actions of the programme. Their activities are managed by the relevant Vice-Deans for Foreign Relations. Similarly, these activities are organised at the level of the Rector's office of the University, where they are managed by the Vice-Rector for Science and Foreign Relations. University staff regularly participate in mobility, workshops, intensive programmes, "International Weeks", information seminars organized by the National Agency, thereby obtaining the information, knowledge, skills and competences necessary for the implementation of projects at all stages.

In order to disseminate the activities carried out within the framework of each key programme action, these employees prepare and organise information seminars for those interested in Erasmus mobility, and events such as Global Village are regularly held, presenting opportunities offered by Erasmus. The "International Week" is also regularly held, which allows meetings with representatives of partners and provides room for evaluation of cooperation. The university will continue to evolve in all these activities, and further develop them according to the current needs and requirements of the future.

Evaluation of activities carried out under the programme is closely related to the recognition of these activities, which takes place, particularly with university staff, on the basis of a travel report. Thus, the outcomes are shared not only with the programme's administrative staff, but in particular with the heads of institutes/departments and components who further evaluate them. The possibility of discussing the results of activities or their quality is then provided at regular meetings of institutes/departments, where participants in mobility report on them in person.

After the end of mobility, the outgoing students visit the offices for foreign relations, where they are interviewed to provide feedback. In connection with the launch of the new mobility management information system, the University is preparing a questionnaire for incoming participants, which will give them scope to evaluate the conditions of the programme at the

University and will serve as a basis for evaluation and further improvement of the quality of the programme.

Practical traineeships of students are evaluated on the basis of a report received by each student at the end of their mobility. It happens that students begin to travel to some institutions repeatedly, thus deepening cooperation with them. If this trend continues and cooperation continues to develop, it is possible to consider carrying out a monitoring visit in the future.

With a view to ensuring the quality of Erasmus management and implementation, the University and all its staff involved in the implementation of the programme are preparing for the gradual implementation of all measures in the context of the Erasmus Student Card initiative. The University now has a mobility information system, with the functionality of which the staff are now familiarizing, and which creates a fundamental condition for accession to the Erasmus Student Card initiative. The active use of the information system is calculated from the academic year 2020/2021.

The envisaged impact of our participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on our institution.

The targets as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators in monitoring this impact (such as mobility targets for student/staff mobility, quality of the implementation, support for participants on mobility, increased involvement in cooperation projects (under the KA2 action), sustainability/long-term impact of projects etc)

An indicative timeline for achieving the targets related to the Erasmus+ actions.

Participation in the Erasmus+ programme is a key tool for the University to develop internationalisation. Participation in the programme reflects the University's objectives of promoting student and employee mobilities and creating quality conditions for their implementation.

The University strives both for quantitative growth of mobilities and for the growth of their qualitative provisions. While growth in the quantitative fulfilment of mobility is seen as ongoing, the University sees the greatest room for growth in the quality of the programme in its digitisation, i.e. in the successful implementation of the Erasmus Student Card measures. While the use of the Erasmus Mobil App will facilitate and streamline participation in the programme to its participants, especially students, the Erasmus without Paper measures will deliver a shift in the quality of administration for programme coordinators.

The university has already taken advantage of the mobility management information system, which facilitates and digitalizes a number of steps related to the management of the programme. Furthermore, the system will be developed in close cooperation with its supplier to ensure that the Erasmus without Paper sub-objectives are met in accordance with the set schedule:

2021: management of inter-institutional contracts and online Learning Agreements

2022: management of student nominations and their admission to mobility

2023: Exchange of Transcript of Records

2025: Erasmus student Card including QR code and hologram

In terms of further growth in quantity and quality of mobility, the implementation of blended mobility appears to be important, giving the possibility of easier access to mobility for disadvantaged groups and leading to an increase in the flexibility of the programme. The foundations for blended mobility were laid at the University already in the summer semester of

2019/2020, when, under the influence of external circumstances, the University was forced to move to online education at all its levels, including mobilities. Further development and implementation of blended mobility will take place at the University continuously during the entire period of implementation of the programme.

The achievement of the quantitative and qualitative growth targets will be continuously evaluated, in particular with respect to time schedule of the Erasmus Student Card initiative measures.

In order to evaluate the achievement of the objectives on a regular annual basis, the number of inter-institutional contracts concluded and their active performance, the number of students and educators seconded and recruited for mobility, or the proportion of graduates who participated in mobility during their studies, will be monitored. In terms of quantitative fulfilment of the targets, the proportion of students using Erasmus Mobil App, and subsequently the Erasmus Student Card, for information and mobility management will be monitored. The share of realized "blended mobility" in the total number of mobilities, as well as the share of credits earned in this form, both for outgoing and incoming students, will also be significant.

Another aspect affecting the quantitative and qualitative implementation of the programme is the support of mobility participants at all stages. To this end, the University creates and implements courses containing cultural and linguistic preparation of students before the mobility. It also organizes and arranges language courses, and courses focused on orientation and work in an intercultural environment, for incoming students.

The On-line Linguistic Support database is also used for language support and preparation for mobility, which the University will continue to do, especially in the area of compulsory language evaluation of each student. In its practice, the University shall take into account the change in the conditions of abandoning the compulsory final language evaluation. Students are already informed by e-mail about the benefits, possibilities and offer of language courses. Similarly, the information is published on the University's website.

To the incoming students, the University offers not only support in the field of administrative provisions (faculty coordinators) or in the performance of academic duties (departmental coordinators), but also a functioning buddy system.

The number of KA2 projects in which the University is involved as a partner is also growing. Increasing the level of participation in KA 2 projects will also be an integral part of the University's activities in the next period. In the future, the University would also like to use the network of partner institutions to submit the project from the position of principal investigator.

The increase in the number of international projects in which the University is involved, as well as the growth in the proportion of study programmes in which at least one course is offered in a foreign language, or study programmes directly accredited in a foreign language, an increase in the number of foreign students enrolled in university study programmes, or the creation of joint and double-degree programmes with foreign partner universities, are among the factors that its long-term participation in the Erasmus+ programme has brought to the University, and progress in these indicators will also be evaluated.