

Erasmus Policy Statement

Description of the University's international (EU & non-EU) strategy. Explaining;

- a) How does University of South Wales choose partners?**
- b) Which geographical area(s) do partners come from?**
- c) The most important objectives and target groups of the University's mobility activities.**

The University of South Wales is strategically committed to enhancing its reputation globally and contributing to the expansion of internal education opportunities. The University aims to be "locally rooted, globally connected" with multi-campus, multi-city and multi-country activity in its delivery of learning to students. As part of this commitment the University will look to maximise meaningful engagement in EU mobility and wider European funded Programmes.

University staff are actively encouraged to increase international partnerships by establishing new academic relationships with global organisations, engaging in open innovation to the benefit of our staff, students and key stakeholders. The new University will build on the strengths and experiences of its merged Institutions - the University of Glamorgan and University of Wales, Newport. Both of the merged Institutions held an Erasmus Charter, and had a strong track record of mobility and cooperative project activity with international partners. The new Institution aims to build on these existing successful relationships and develop new strategic partnerships around areas of common academic, research and corporate interest.

Key objectives for the coming period include:

- Build on successful partnerships and projects developed during the 2007 – 2013 Programme, extending the scope of collaboration, while focusing closely on the quality, reciprocity and sustainability of all mobility and collaborative activity
- Promote mobility (study and training) opportunities to all staff and students
- Continue to encourage the growth of staff and teacher mobility as a vehicle for professional development, sharing best practice, further collaborative working, including joint curriculum development, research and innovation, and possible commercial activity
- Further strengthen guidance support for incoming/outgoing mobility participants – focus on visibility of opportunity, improved language provision, and pastoral care.
- Work with colleagues to integrate principles of mobility and internationalisation into all aspects of academic offer and student experience
- Encourage staff to develop experience of participation in EU / non-EU cooperation projects, specifically those funded through the successor to the Lifelong Learning

Programme. This will build on existing experience of Grundtvig, Leonardo, Erasmus Mundus, KA2, etc.

The Erasmus and Lifelong Learning Programmes provide an essential mechanism for building strategic relationships with academic partners. Strategic partners are selected on the basis of the quality of their academic and research output, and their ability to successfully participate in reciprocal collaborative activity. Erasmus collaborative agreements are closely scrutinised to ensure that partner institutions have the necessary academic and pastoral infrastructure to ensure positive placement experiences for mobility participants. These agreements are reviewed annually to oversee progress, measure the quality of provision, and consider scope for further collaboration between the Institutions (for example cooperative projects, joint curriculum development, research/commercial activity).

Partner selection is largely driven by the shared academic/research interest of the two Institutions, although occasionally geographical factors may be considered where the University wishes to develop a presence and build visibility in a new area. The University's commitment to mobility and internationalisation extends to all student and staff groupings. For students in particular, widening access has been a major focus in recent years, helping students from underrepresented socio-economic groups benefit from the experience of studying abroad. The use of the British Council's 'Widening Access' bursary has helped in this regard, and we would look to build on this approach over the coming Charter period.

The University mission is also driven by a commitment to regional economic development, job creation and boosting the employability of students. Erasmus mobility activity contributes directly to this mission; boosting the employability of students and helping them stand out in the workplace. Equally, staff mobility and cooperative working on EU/Non EU projects also promotes continual professional development and can lead to further collaboration on best practice exchange, curriculum development, joint research, knowledge transfer, innovation and entrepreneurship, and spin out commercial activity – all of which contribute directly to our regional and international mission.

The University aims to increase its International activities over the period 2014-2020, using the Erasmus Programme and other EU and non/EU cooperative projects to develop strategic partnerships and provide valuable opportunities for staff and student mobility. The newly formed University of South Wales, will draw on the expertise and experiences held by its merged partners, with a view to developing an enhanced global profile and meeting its strategic objectives at a local, regional and international level.

Describe the University of South Wales' strategy for the organization and implementation of international (EU & non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the programme.

The University of South Wales supports broad engagement from staff in International (EU and Non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training, and has extensive experience in working on Lifelong Learning Programme projects through the involvement of the University of Glamorgan and University of Wales, Newport. The guiding principles driving this activity are enshrined within our broader commitment to internationalisation and achieving

excellence in teaching and research.

The organization and implementation of this activity is supported by a dedicated European Office, who actively promote and disseminate opportunities across the University structure. Staff receive information on specific Programmes, funding calls, and guidance on how to develop successful proposals. More intensive assistance is available for proposals at development stage, with tailored support that addresses all aspects of project design, compliance, financial engineering, resourcing and quality assurance.

The University is committed to ensuring that all cooperative projects demonstrate clear relevance to strategic objectives and as such all bids have to gain approval from Senior Management prior to submission. Lead academics are asked to demonstrate strategic relevance, cost effectiveness, sustainability and address issues relating to impact, before sign off can be given. This approach aims to ensure that all international cooperation activity is of the highest quality, and achieves the best possible outcomes. The European Office also works with projects post-approval to ensure effective delivery, implementation, monitoring and reporting. Projects are also asked to report quarterly on their progress and achievements to University ICEG Committee. Part of the role of this group is to look at how projects can maximise their potential, and whether they should lead to further collaborative opportunities.

Explain the expected impact of the University of South Wales' participation in the Programme on the modernization of the institution in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve?

The Erasmus Programme contributes directly to the goals set out in the Bologna Process and the Higher Education Modernisation Agenda. The University recognises that it has a part to play in meeting these goals, and believes that participation in the Programme will have an impact in all 5 of the Priority Area:

- Increase number of Higher Education graduates: We are committed to educating our students to the highest standards, and helping produce graduates that are highly skilled, knowledgeable and innovative, and who are highly employable and capable of making Wales/Europe more competitive. Through integrating mobility opportunities into our student offer, the student experience is significantly improved and the appeal of courses increased. Also, the University is firmly committed to a widening participation agenda, making higher education as accessible as possible. This approach will widen opportunity for all and help further stimulate student numbers.
- Improve quality and relevance of teaching and researcher training, and to equip graduates with the knowledge and core transferable competences needed to success in high skill occupations: Opportunities to participate in mobility and cooperation projects supports the ongoing professional development of teaching staff. Placements at partner Institutions help staff develop new perspectives on their role, as well as facilitating a two way exchange of knowledge and best practice. The University has also participated in a range of cooperative projects funded under the LLP, which have helped develop best practice in teaching and training. The mobility and training experiences that students gain from participation are highly positive and contribute to improving their confidence, skill set, and employability.
- Provide more opportunities for students to gain additional skills through study or training abroad, and to encourage cross border cooperation to boost higher

education performance: The Erasmus Programme is one of our primary mechanisms for enabling students to undertake study or training abroad. The University intends to build on our experiences to date and further integrate these opportunities into our general student and curriculum offer. Staff are also encouraged to undertake mobility as part of their professional development and their internationalisation targets, with a view to stimulating joint working, collaborative research, commercial opportunities and well as an overall improvement in our performance as a Higher Education Institution.

- Strengthen the “knowledge triangle”, linking education, research and business. Erasmus provides a vehicle for facilitating collaboration with other Universities and developing links with industry on projects and research activity. European training placements advance these aims directly, helping students develop new skills, and forming relationships that have the potential to lead to further research collaboration or employment. We view the links developed through Erasmus as a ‘stepping stone’ towards deeper, more advanced collaboration – be that through cooperative ‘LLP’ type projects, or more extensive research collaborations (with industry) through Horizon 2020.
- Create effective governance and funding mechanisms in support of excellence: The Programme helps promote better governance through best practice exchange and an improved understanding of different approaches to Higher Education. Shared experiences on projects inform approaches to the organisation and financing of HE activities. As a newly formed Institution, the University is striving for excellence, and intends making the most of opportunities to learn from other excellent Universities across Europe and beyond.