

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)

2021-2027

1 STRATEGY OF EPS

VSM is a private not-for-profit institution of higher education. Its mission is to change lives for good by offering high quality and relevant lifelong education to anyone with the desire to learn. The important tool for realization of the mission of our institution is the internationalization strategy. The internationalization of education shall to support improving of education. We see the participating in the Erasmus programme projects, mainly in mobility projects as one from the most effective tools of internationalization of education contributing to the higher quality of the education offered by the involved higher education institutions and so as relevant part of their internationalization strategy. It can improve the education results of all involved partner institutions and finally to lead to the better educated graduates. The participating in the Erasmus programme projects contributes to cooperation among the EU countries and also contributes to cooperation between the EU and partner countries outside of EU and supports the EU external action objectives, for example the enhance the attractiveness of higher education in Europe and support European higher education institutions in competing on the higher education market worldwide and modernization of higher education institutions outside Europe in view of promoting the development of partner countries outside of EU.

The main objectives as regards participating students in the Erasmus mobility projects are following: improving of learning performance, enhancing of employability and improved career prospects, increasing of sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, increasing of self-empowerment and self-esteem, improving of foreign language competences, enhancing of intercultural awareness, more active participating in society, supporting of better awareness of the European project and the EU values, increasing motivation for taking part in future education or training after the mobility period abroad and supporting of better awareness of the possibilities of studying at our university in the partner countries from EU and from outside of EU.

The main objectives as regards participating staff are following: improving of competences linked to their professional profiles, broader understanding of practices, policies and systems in education, training or youth work across countries, increasing of capacity to trigger changes in terms of modernization and international opening within their educational organizations, greater understanding of interconnections between formal and non-formal education, vocational training and the labor market respectively, improving of quality of their work and activities in favor of students, greater understanding and responsiveness to social, linguistic and cultural diversity, increasing support for and promotion of mobility activities for learners, increasing of opportunities for professional and career development, improving foreign language competences, increasing of motivation and satisfaction in their daily work, supporting of better awareness in the partner countries of the study opportunities on our university.

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1.1 Implementation in practice

Our school is interested mainly in mobility of students and staff in the framework of Erasmus mobility projects. We will respect in full the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion set out in the Programme, ensure equal and equitable access and opportunities to current and prospective participants from all backgrounds, paying particular attention to the inclusion of those with fewer opportunities, ensure full automatic recognition of all credits (based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System - ECTS) gained for learning outcomes satisfactorily achieved during a period of study/training abroad, including during blended mobility, charge no fees, in the case of credit mobility, to incoming mobile students for tuition, registration, examinations or access to laboratory and library facilities, ensure the quality of the mobility activities and of the cooperation projects throughout the application and implementation phases and implement the priorities of the Programme by undertaking the necessary steps to implement digital mobility management in line with the technical standards of the European Student Card Initiative, by promoting environmentally friendly practices in all activities related to the Programme, by encouraging the participation of individuals with fewer opportunities in the Programme, by promoting civic engagement and encouraging students and staff to get involved as active citizens before, during and after their participation in a mobility or project.

Before mobility, we will publish and regularly update the course catalogue on the website of our school well in advance of the mobility periods, so as to be transparent to all parties and allow mobile students to make well-informed choices about the courses they will follow, we will publish and regularly update information on the grading system used and grade distribution tables for all study programs. We will ensure that students receive clear and transparent information on recognition and grade conversion procedures, carry out mobility for the purpose of studying and teaching only within the framework of prior agreements between institutions. These agreements establish the respective roles and responsibilities of the different parties, as well as their commitment to shared quality criteria in the selection, preparation, reception, support and integration of mobile participants. We will ensure that outgoing mobile participants are well prepared for their activities abroad, including blended mobility, by undertaking activities to achieve the necessary level of linguistic proficiency and develop their intercultural competences, that student and staff mobility is based on a learning agreement for students and a mobility agreement for staff validated in advance between the sending and receiving institutions or enterprises and the mobile participants, we will provide active support to incoming mobile participants throughout the process of finding accommodation, assistance related to obtaining visas, when required, for incoming and outgoing mobile participants, assistance related to obtaining insurance, when required, for incoming and outgoing mobile participants. We will ensure that students are aware of their rights and obligations as defined in the Erasmus Student Charter.

The selection of students for an Erasmus action - as well as the procedure for awarding them a grant - will be fair, transparent, coherent and documented and will be made available to all parties involved in the selection process. The selection criteria will be for example: the academic performance of the candidate, the previous mobility experiences, the motivation, the previous experience in the receiving country (i.e. return to country of origin) etc., but for

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applicants with equivalent academic level, preference will be assigned to students from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds (including refugees, asylum seekers and migrants). The given selection criteria will be made public. Prior to their departure, each selected student must sign an agreement which includes also a "learning agreement" setting out the Programme of studies to be followed, as agreed by the student, the sending and the receiving organization. The selection of teachers and higher education institution staff will be carried out by the higher education institution.

During mobility, we will ensure equal academic treatment and the quality of services for incoming students, we will promote measures that ensure the safety of outgoing and incoming mobile participants, we will assist to the integration of incoming mobile participants into the wider student community and to the Institution's everyday life. We will encourage them to act as ambassadors of the programme and share their mobility experience. We will provide appropriate mentoring and support arrangements for mobile participants, including for those pursuing blended mobility and appropriate language support to incoming mobile participants

After mobility, we will provide incoming mobile students and their sending institutions with transcripts of records containing a full, accurate and timely record of their achievements at the end of their mobility period. We will ensure that all ECTS credits gained for learning outcomes satisfactorily achieved during a period of study/training abroad, including during blended mobility are fully and automatically recognized as agreed in the learning agreement and confirmed by the transcript of records/traineeship certificate. They will be transferred without delay into the student's records, will be counted towards the student's degree without any additional work or assessment of the student and will be traceable in the student's transcript of records and the Diploma Supplement. We will ensure the inclusion of satisfactorily completed study and/or traineeship mobility activities in the final record of student achievements (the Diploma Supplement). We will encourage and support mobile participants upon return to act as ambassadors of the Programme, promote the benefits of mobility and actively engage in building alumni communities. We will ensure that staff is given recognition for their teaching and training activities undertaken during the mobility period, based on a mobility agreement and in line with the institutional strategy. We will actively promote and organize activities that allow mobility participants to be civically engaged, develop their skills beyond the formal education setting, volunteer and take active part in their local society.

We will fully respect all principles of the "Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE). The Charter will be well communicated and applied by staff at all levels of the Institution. We will make use of the "Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) guidelines" and of the "ECHE self-assessment" to ensure the full implementation of the principles of this Charter. We will display this Charter and the related Erasmus Policy Statement prominently on the Institution's website and eventually on all other relevant channels.

We will take into account the results of internal monitoring of European and international mobility and cooperation activities to date, thus further improving its international performance.

1.2 Envisaged impact of our participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on our school

The participation of our school in the Erasmus Programme projects should contribute towards the fulfilment of the institutional strategy in a way that will maximize their positive impact on individuals, other participating institutions and the wider academic community.

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The envisaged impact of the participation in the Erasmus Programme projects on our school may be of diverse nature and consist of both concrete (tangible) results as well as of skills and personal experiences that both project organizers and participants to the activities will acquire (intangible results) such as knowledge and experience gained by participants, learners or staff; increased skills or achievements; improved cultural awareness; better language skills.

It is probable that also some tangible results will be obtained, such as for example: an approach or a model to solve a problem; a practical tool or product, such as handbooks, curricula, e-learning tools; research reports or studies; good practice guides or case studies; evaluation reports; recognition certificates; newsletters or information leaflets. The obtained results will be documented.

2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

2.1 Implementation of the new principles

Our school will take the necessary measures to prevent any conflict of interest with regard to persons who may be invited to take part in the selection bodies or process of students' selection.

For outgoing students the first criterion for selecting will be academic merit, but with equivalent academic level, preference should be assigned to students from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds (including refugees, asylum seekers and migrants).

Staff taking part in a mobility project will be selected in a fair and transparent way. The selection and grant award procedure will be fair, transparent, coherent and documented and will be made available to all parties involved in the selection process. The selection criteria (for example priority given to staff going abroad for the first time, limitation on the possible number of mobility activities per staff member during a given time period, etc.) will be made public. Our institution will take the necessary measures to prevent any conflict of interest with regard to persons who may be invited to take part in the selection bodies or selection process of individual beneficiaries.

2.1.1 Implementation the European Student Card Initiative and environmentally friendly practices

We will undertake the necessary steps to implement digital mobility management in line with the technical standards of the European Student Card Initiative.

We will ensure that relevant staff at our school are informed about the digitalization roadmap as described on the initiative's website (https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-student-card-initiative_en) and we will take active measures to implement minimum requirements for digital mobility management in a timely manner. We will actively promote digital learning and training opportunities to administrative and other staff and relevant stakeholders within the school to build capacity for implementing digital mobility management.

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We will promote the use of the Erasmus+ Mobile App to incoming and outgoing students and to the extent possible, we will ensure that useful information about the HEI and the host community are accessible via the Erasmus+ Mobile App for incoming students.

We will make efforts to promote environmentally sustainable and responsible behavior among the participants of Erasmus actions. They should make use of the opportunities provided by the programme to support sustainable means of travel and reduce the negative impact of mobility on the environment.

2.1.2 Promotion civic engagement and active citizenship

We will support the student/staff ambassador schemes, where incoming/outgoing participants who have been on mobility share their experiences with potential applicants or target groups with fewer opportunities. They should promote mobility and explain how envisaged obstacles to mobility can be overcome under the Programme.

We will promote activities/projects that enhance the active citizenship skills and competences of students and staff, for instance the Erasmus Student Network's Social Erasmus Project WE AfriHug. This project aims to better integrate international exchange students in the local society by organizing volunteer opportunities to ensure an exchange of values takes place between the international students and the local community. Another example is the ESAA-funded project, which aims to promote European and international understanding through the Erasmus+ Programme.

2.2 Commitment to implement full automatic recognition and measures to support, promote and recognize staff mobility

We will provide the sending HEI with a transcript of records within a period stipulated in the inter-institutional agreement (not longer than **five weeks** after the mobile student's evaluation is completed at the receiving HEI). Once the sending HEI has received the transcript of records, it must carry out the recognition procedures and inform the mobile student of their outcomes. The transcript of records template will be part of the learning agreement template.

Given the diversity of practice in communicating information about higher education in Europe, the format of the transcript of records can be adapted according to the HEI's requirements, provided that all items of information to be found in the standard form are contained in any adapted version.

The information in the transcript of records will ensure transparent recognition of the study period abroad, providing the title of the course units / modules / subjects, with the respective course codes (as referred to in the course catalogue), duration of the course units, local grades and ECTS credits. The institutional grading system will be clearly explained and the ECTS grade distribution tables for the department or study programme will be included. The transcript of records will be duly signed, stamped and dated in order for it to be considered a legally valid document. We will decide who should prepare the document, and designate a person responsible for signing it. Mobile students will have clear information about who is responsible and will be able to contact them in case of unforeseen circumstances or delays.

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We will, according to legal requirements, keep records of the mobile participants' academic achievements for a statutory period, providing information whenever requested by the mobile participant or official bodies on their behalf.

We will systematically use the results of staff mobility for structural reform. We will actively support staff mobility by establishing a strategy, which underpins this activity, identifying staff members' professional development needs and the necessary preparation.

The staff mobility will be part of the regular workload. Staff working schedules will be adapted to meet the demands of mobility and, whenever possible, temporary replacements will be found during the mobility period, additional cultural / language preparation will be available to mobile staff and teaching and training mobility activities will be recognized as a component in any evaluation / assessment of staff members.

