

1. ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)

1.1 Erasmus activities included in your EPS

In this section, you need to tick the Erasmus activities covered by your Erasmus Policy Statement. Please select those activities that your HEI intends to implement during the entire duration of the Programme.

Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility:

The mobility of higher education students and staff ☒

Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions:

Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices ☒

Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities ☒

Partnerships for Excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees ☒

Partnerships for Innovation ☒

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3):

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3) - Support to policy development and cooperation: ☐

1.2 Erasmus Policy statement (EPS): your strategy

Your Erasmus Policy Statement should reflect how you intended to implement Erasmus after the award of the ECHE. Should you wish to add additional activities in the future, you will need to amend your Erasmus Policy Statement and inform your Erasmus National Agency.

What would you like to achieve by participating in the Erasmus Programme? How does your participation in the Erasmus Programme fit into your institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy?

(Please reflect on the objectives of your participation. Please explain how you expect the participation in Erasmus to contribute towards modernising your institution, as well as on the goal of building a European Education Area¹ and explain the policy objectives you intend to pursue).

¹ For more information on the priorities of the European Education Area, such as recognition, digital skills, common values and inclusive education, please consult the following website:
https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area_en

At Siedlce University of Natural Sciences and Humanities (UPH) we are fully aware of the need for internationalisation of our university. Therefore, internationalisation is an integral part of the university's strategy, as it is a prerequisite to the development of any higher education institution. It is the key contributor to the quality of education, which is seen as a driver for economic growth, job creation, and improved social cohesion. Participation in The Erasmus+ Programme will help our community to experience and strengthen European identity in all its diversity. Internationalisation is also perceived as a path towards modernising our university and building a European Education Area. Our aim is to enable all our students to receive the best education and training, and to find employment all over Europe. By pursuing this aim, we will educate creative Europeans able to cooperate across languages, borders and disciplines and prepare our students to address societal challenges and skills shortages in Europe. We will ensure that a growing number of our students will be provided with the opportunity to spend some time at foreign universities to study and learn, and to access high-quality education, irrespective of their socio-economic background. We will also emphasise the importance of foreign languages teaching to make sure our students speak at least two foreign languages.

To achieve the above goals, we will have renewed our Inter-Institutional Agreements by the end of May 2021 to ensure that we create possibilities for our academic community to participate in mobility projects. However, prior to the renewal of the agreements in question, they will all be reviewed in terms of our mobility objectives. So, the study programmes offered by our potential partners and our university will be compared to verify if they ensure the acquisition of the right competencies. As both our staff and students have mainly been visiting universities in Central and Eastern Europe, we would like to strengthen and expand our cooperation in those regions. However, we will also try to establish cooperation with universities based across Europe whose long and rich tradition in research and teaching may help us enrich our research and modernise our education process. In the next few years the university intends to take further measures to modernise its activities. Providing good quality courses in English is a step towards this goal. The university can become an educational centre for students from European and non-European countries. Studies abroad are useful for all students, regardless of their field of study, as they prepare them for future work in international, multicultural, and competitive working environments. We will organize student placements abroad, because such an experience allows them to acquire higher professional competence and gives them better start-up conditions. Therefore, our objectives for the period 2021 – 2027 include:

- providing high quality education;
- developing research and transferring its findings into business;
- internationalising university's curriculum, targeting both domestic and international students;
- enhancing university's marketing activities to attract new partners and students also from non-European countries;
- extending collaboration beyond the scope of Inter-Institutional Agreements towards joint research projects.

Enhancing social and economic cohesion will be underpinned in all our actions taken under the Programme. We will respect the rule of equality between men and women. Disabled students and teachers will be given an equal opportunity to participate in all projects implemented at the university. In all our endeavours we will foster the development of a strong sense of our students' identity as Europeans, of Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity. Following the Council's recommendation, we will reinforce the development of key competences, including knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by all for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion and active citizenship, entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression, digital and technology-based competences, and the ability to adopt new competences. Providing high-quality education, training and lifelong learning for our students, and local communities will be the university's goal in the years to come. We shall further endeavour to:

- establish collaborative links with partner universities within our strategy for internationalisation and modernisation;
- continually modernise, contributing to the goals of a European Education Area
- recognise qualifications gained abroad;
- foster learning foreign languages so that our students know two languages in addition to Polish;
- provide equal access to education irrespective of socio-economic background;
- promote a strong sense of the community's European identity;
- provide for opportunities for spending time abroad to study and learn;

- promote and enhance staff mobility, developing non-discrimination policies;
- develop and implement a policy for transnational teaching activities;
- recognise the significance of the findings achieved by our staff involved in individual mobility or cooperation projects with strategic partners, ensuring the quality of the mobility activities and of the cooperation projects throughout all the stages.

Please reflect on the Erasmus actions you would like to take part in and explain how they will be implemented in practice at your institution. Please explain how your institution's participation in these actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of your institutional strategy.

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

In the upcoming multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 our university would like to focus on cooperation projects within Key Action 1 (KA 1) – Learning Mobility, namely the mobility of higher education students and staff and Key Action 2 - Cooperation among organisations and institutions. However, our main focus will be Action 1.

As internationalisation and modernisation of our university lies at the very heart of our institutional strategy, we will take steps to increase learning, teaching, and training mobility to enhance our students and staff professional, social and intercultural skills, competences and employability. To achieve the above goals we will implement all the Erasmus+ activities in the most efficient way at all our institutes before, during, and after the mobility. The directors of the institutes will be responsible for implementing the Programme with the support of the Erasmus Office. They will be obliged to:

1. conduct transparent and fair mobility recruitment procedures, ensuring equal access to the programme to the whole academic community; after each recruitment deadline, a recruitment committee will issue minutes of the meeting which will be publicly available;
2. update the course catalogue which will be published on the university's Erasmus website in spring each year prior to the start of the recruitment procedure for incoming students; it will be updated annually to make sure that inbound students have the most up-to-date information;
3. publish and update information on the grading system and grade distribution to ensure recognition;
4. prepare their students and mobile staff for mobility by providing training in intercultural communication, e.g. in the shape of discussion groups with former Erasmus staff and students;
5. make sure that an individual mobility is based on a learning agreement which is validated in advance by the sending and receiving institutions prior to the start of the mobility; learning agreements will be prepared carefully to limit the need for changes during the mobility;
6. make sure all inbound students and staff receive equal academic treatment and high-quality services; students and staff will have free access to our library collections, lectures, classes, and other facilities;
7. ensure a smooth transfer of the grades to the Erasmus Office so that the students are issued with timely Transcripts of Records; the grades will be entered into our internal study programmes management system USOS, and then a print-out of the grades will be signed by the relevant Vice-Dean; it will then be sent to the Erasmus Office where the TR will be issued and sent out to the student without delay;
8. ensure the mobility activities are included in the Diploma Supplement;
9. promote the Erasmus Programme by using former Erasmus students and staff as ambassadors and build Erasmus+ alumni community;
10. do their utmost to recognise Erasmus learning, teaching and training mobility, and include participation in the Programme in the university's periodic performance appraisal.

At each institute of our university there will be the Erasmus Committee appointed for the period of 2021 – 2027. The committee will be responsible for implementing Rector's Regulation on the Erasmus Programme Recruitment Procedure. This document will be drawn up based on the Programme regulations provided by the Polish National Agency. The committee will work closely with an Erasmus coordinator appointed by the Director of the Institute throughout the recruitment process. The Erasmus Coordinator at individual institutes will cooperate with the Erasmus Office, providing support to outbound and inbound students and staff. In early spring each year the course catalogue will be updated to make

sure that inbound students have the most up-to-date information. They will be assisted in the process of drawing up their learning agreements.

The Erasmus Office will be responsible for the following activities under the Programme:

1. drawing-up inter-institutional agreements to ensure that mobility for teaching and studying is conducted under the agreements;
2. making sure that staff mobility is based on a Mobility Agreement for Teaching/Training; it will remain to be one of the recruitment criteria;
3. assisting inbound and outbound students and staff in finding accommodation, obtaining visas, insurance, and integrating them into our academic community;
4. organising a two-week orientation period with cultural events and a language course titled 'Polish for Beginners';
5. issuing Transcript of Records and Confirmation of Stay in due time;
6. monitoring the implementation of the Programme at all the institutes.

Moreover, to ensure a smooth implementation of the Erasmus activities, at the central level meetings will be organised with the Erasmus coordinators to remind them about the programme regulations, the provisions of the Charter, and discuss the Erasmus + agenda, i.e. a document, outlining the Erasmus tasks to carry out in a given year. Similar meetings will then be organised at the level of each institute to pass that knowledge on to their students/staff and the Dean's Office. The meetings in question will be held annually prior to the launch of a recruitment procedure for a new academic year and publication of the above-mentioned Rector's Annual Regulation. All these actions will be taken in order to ensure a good-quality implementation of the Erasmus activities. Furthermore, each academic year we will organize meetings between former Erasmus students and staff and potential Erasmus students and staff so that they could share their experience related to studying and living abroad. For the latter ones these meetings will be a chance to learn about risks and opportunities one may face when studying abroad. The academic staff who have had some experience with teaching or training mobility will be able to provide students and their colleagues with country-specific information, which will increase their knowledge of intercultural and linguistic aspects of living abroad, raising their intercultural awareness. The meetings may encourage both students and staff to become more interested in the Programme. Being aware of the need for a constant improvement of our students' and staff members' English skills, our university will still offer them the opportunity to sit for the TOEIC exam (Test of English for International Communication). It is a tool which allows test-takers to assess their language skills at the university's premises. The TOEIC exam result is one of the documents required to confirm the minimum language competence of B1.

In the upcoming financial perspective we will also continue to organise a Polish language course for the incoming students to increase their Polish language competence. The Erasmus Office will have frequent email and telephone contact with both outbound and inbound participants before, during, and after the mobility, responding to all the problems. Moreover, the staff visiting partner universities will be asked to contact our outgoing Erasmus students to check their living and studying conditions. The students will be requested to make some observations about studying and living abroad. This information will be published on the university's Erasmus website. Additionally, assistance will be provided to the incoming students and to the outgoing ones related to obtaining visas, getting the right insurance, and finding comfortable accommodation. Inbound students will also have free access to the library and other university's facilities. We will make sure that the Erasmus activities implemented in the years to come are in line with our internationalisation strategy, and that they promote international cooperation and mobility of the academic community. Siedlce University's institutional strategy underpins the importance of international cooperation in teaching, learning and research. We would like to form strategic partnerships after considering our policy priorities, geographical and subject area priorities. Those strategic partnerships are perceived as a way to internationalise and modernise our institution. To promote our university's involvement in international cooperation projects, the university will provide support to staff and students to ensure that they have sufficient time to complete their project work and have sufficient resources, supporting the project. The participation in international projects will be one of the key components in their periodical performance evaluation. Actions will be taken to disseminate the results of the projects amongst individuals, all the participating institutions and the academic communities.

In conclusion, the following principles will be taken into account when planning and implementing mobility programmes:

1. information and guidance - clear and reliable access to information and guidance on mobility;
2. learning plan - objectives of mobility, its expected outcomes, activities to carry out, evaluation procedures;
3. personalization, including personal learning pathways;
4. general preparation – linguistic, intercultural aspects;

5. logistical support- travel arrangements, accommodation, insurance;
6. mentoring advice and help provided to all the participants to ensure their integration;
7. assistance regarding recognition and certification procedures.
8. reintegration and evaluation guidance on how to make use of the competences acquired during the mobility.

What is the envisaged impact of your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on your institution?

Please reflect on 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.) You are encouraged to offer an indicative timeline for achieving the targets related to the Erasmus+ actions.

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Student and staff mobility under the Erasmus Programme, will contribute to our institution's internationalisation and modernisation. Moreover, it will attract more students to our university, especially those who are interested in short-term studies at another European university. It is also believed that quality of education will significantly rise, as mobile students and staff members will gain priceless experience through being exposed to varied education systems of other countries. It will also improve research carried out at our university. Furthermore, our students will develop their core competencies thanks to the Erasmus mobility, which will increase their employability. Given our location, namely Eastern Poland, which is a rather poor region, with a high number of disadvantaged families, the Erasmus Programme will offer students from this background the chance to travel abroad, which would otherwise be impossible for them for economic reasons. We will keep providing students from all backgrounds with the opportunity to take part in the Erasmus Programme. Our university respects and will respect the principle of non-discrimination set out in the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education and will ensure equal access and opportunities to participants from all backgrounds. At Siedlce University we have been supporting disadvantaged groups of students, especially those with various disabilities, ensuring the right learning and working environment for them. Access to the Erasmus Programme will certainly give them better start-up conditions in the future.

At Siedlce University we fully understand the importance of strengthening links between education, research and business, as this leads to innovation and societal advancement. In the years to come our university will increase its efforts towards the above goal. Student and staff mobility will foster the development of stronger ties between academic communities in research, education, and business. To foster exchange of knowledge and expertise, the university will develop cooperation with industry and business in the areas such as management, environment conservation, humanities, agriculture, etc. The following forms of cooperation will be pursued: research projects, individual and group trainings, scientific conferences and traineeships.

The university's mission is to:

- educate entrepreneurial and knowledgeable citizens;
- create and disseminate knowledge and expertise;
- pursue scientific and cultural excellence within a framework of the international quality standards.

1. In all its endeavours to implement the principles of the Charter, Siedlce University will do its utmost to ensure high quality mobility of students and staff as well as high quality of cooperation with its strategic partners. The university's goal is to equip students with the knowledge and skills relevant to the current labour market. To this end, the university has been adjusting its curricula to reflect the market requirements. This process has been supported by training, teaching and learning mobility. The university would also like to attract students, academics and researchers from outside the EU, so it will continuously enhance the quality of studies, expand its ECTS

course catalogue, improve mobility recognition and transparency of its recruitment procedures. The university will try to increase mobility numbers, especially for individuals coming from disadvantaged backgrounds to give them more opportunities for advancement. So we would like to achieve a target of 60 outgoing students and 60 inbound ones. As far as staff mobility is concerned, we wish to have 100 outgoing staff members each year and about the same number of inbound ones. Mobility experience abroad will definitely improve all the participants' foreign language skills. By 2027 they may have reached a C1 level in English and B2+ in another foreign language.