

Erasmus Policy Statement

2021-2027

Objectives

The University of Stavanger is a young, entrepreneurial university with 11 500 students and 1 700 staff providing research-based education in areas of education, engineering and technology, business, health sciences, humanities and social sciences, performing arts and media studies. Our vision is to be a driving force for regional innovation and sustainable development by connecting high quality education to research and creating mutually beneficial cooperation with business and the public sector. Having a long tradition of close interaction and collaboration with regional businesses and other stakeholders, our focus is still on enhancing these relations and our core activities through stakeholder input and engagement with society. As a university in a city transformed from a fishing industry into an energy hub with high demand for highly skilled workers, we enjoy the significant presence of international students and staff. They are an invaluable contribution to our international learning and working environment, helping us achieve our goal of becoming an attractive destination for global learners and academics.

UiS considers international cooperation between universities and society more important than ever. We wish to be a significant contributor to helping solve global challenges as expressed in the agenda of the UN Sustainable Development Goals towards 2030. At the basis of our strategy is the development of high quality and relevance in education, by providing research-based education to students at all levels and connecting it to enterprise and society. Our objectives for providing knowledgeable, highly skilled, and engaged candidates requires that we commit to partnerships, organize learning mobility and create an international working and learning environment both on our campus and through our online presence.

By participating in the Erasmus programme, we gain access to unique resources and networks to create academic and enterprise partnerships. Through these networks we develop mobility opportunities for all learners and staff and strengthen our position to contribute to tackle future challenges to innovation and active engagement with society. In addition to resources, the Erasmus programme provides a unique framework for developing quality and relevance in our educational programmes, and it allows us to build bridges between education and research by creating synergies with Horizon Europe. Finally, Erasmus enhances cultural acceptance for democratic citizenship among students and staff, which is key to strengthening the fundamental values of our society.

Contribution to UiS international strategy

Participation in all actions of the Erasmus programme is a pillar of the UiS' internationalization strategy; from the individual mobility and small-scale cooperation project via larger alliances to highly ambitious endeavours like Erasmus Mundus and European Universities. In 2019, the UiS together with our ECIU network was among the first 17 awarded European Universities alliances with the project ECIU University. This alliance is promoting mobility and international experiences for all, exploring learning through interdisciplinary teams in challenge-based education and developing new models for integrating education, research and innovation. As one of the pillars of the European

Education Area, our alliance is ambitious and ready to challenge existing obstacles to true European cooperation on knowledge and skills development, programme delivery and recognition as well as active engagement with communities and regions. The ECIU University not only provides a testing ground for new flexible learning modalities and a significant boost in mobility numbers, but also helps to connect the Erasmus programme to UiS strategy and integrate it into our work programmes. The momentum of the ECIU University gives us a singular advantage when promoting the opportunities of the Erasmus programme. We maintain the position that when all actions of the Erasmus programme are given a chance to interact with each other in the institutional framework, we create more opportunities and enhance our role in service to society.

KA1 Mobility

European mobility is the backbone of our international learning and cultural experience for our students and staff. Our goal for the new programme period and towards 2030 is to increase significantly the number of outbound students at all levels through the Erasmus mobility scheme. We will also encourage staff to use Erasmus mobility to build new and enhance existing partnerships which both researchers and students can benefit from. At UiS the faculties are responsible for the partnerships, course programmes and recognition of studies, and cooperate with a central International office, which provides the necessary support for all aspects of organization of mobility and promoting the Erasmus experience. The partnerships are maintained by a network of academic coordinators who are encouraged to share their experiences and who receive administrative support from the Erasmus team in the International office. Our Erasmus team has dedicated staff responsible for assistance to students during all phases of mobility, as well as information campaigns, online support and the implementation of the European Student Card Initiative. Our HR division's Euraxess Mobility Centre is responsible for the organization and support for mobility of staff and is part of the Erasmus team.

Mutual mobility flows also provide us with an international student body and incoming guest lecturers and support staff which enhances quality of studies for non-mobile students as well as the work environment of our staff. Inbound participants are also supported by the Erasmus team of the International office. We provide academic and social integration services together with student organizations and provide support for all mobile students throughout their mobility period either abroad or with us. For the new blended mobility mode envisaged in the Erasmus programme from 2021, we will collaborate with our e-learning centre to survey and analyse needs, and develop the best possible solutions for an online presence and follow-up.

Blended mobility will be integral to the ECIU University project, where challenge-based learning is organized in four different categories depending on the level of ambition and consequently the length of stay abroad. This allows us to explore modalities of combining virtual learning experiences with physical exchanges which will have an impact on institutional strategy for mobility.

Based on our connections with enterprise and society, we want to increase the number of international placements abroad as part of our learning experience. Erasmus placements are possible both in disciplinary and in professional programmes, and we will explore all opportunities to link placements abroad with the institutional engagement in innovation partnerships.

KA2 Cooperation with organisations and institutions

Partnerships for development of new educational programmes, teaching methods, innovation and connection to research and society are necessary to develop and enhance quality and relevance. Key Action 2 partnerships are essential tools for the UiS to provide academic staff with the resources to connect with students, society and enterprises at European level for the benefit of all involved and the larger European community. At UiS, our Erasmus team supports project development and cooperation through dedicated staff who are part of a larger institutional network of project support for educational development. This network headed by the Erasmus institutional coordinator organizes information sessions and supports project funding from both national and European programmes, focusing on Erasmus as well as programmes for digitalization, internationalization and quality development in education. In order to connect our education with research, our Erasmus team and project development network works very closely with the EU research support office at UiS, both at the level of information sharing and in strategic planning and project support.

Having gained a certain level of experience through a strong focus on Strategic partnerships in the previous programme period, we will prioritize developing larger scale alliances for innovation and excellence in the new programme. Supporting initiatives in the ECIU University alliance, this will allow us to keep the momentum of integrating education, research and innovation. Our strong connections with regional partner such as public organizations, schools, cultural organizations and enterprises still requires an active engagement in all KA2 sub-actions. We will therefore continue to participate in smaller scale partnerships and networks with our stakeholders.

KA3 Policy development and cooperation

As with KA2 cooperation projects, the KA3 projects are important to reaching the goals of our strategy relating to policy developments, the broader engagement with society and the social dimension. As we are entering uncharted territory in a post-pandemic world, increased polarization of public discourse and public spending under pressure, we need to engage in cooperation that looks ahead and drives policy development for the public good and puts equity and inclusion at the heart of our activities. KA3 projects helps us to engage in transnational networks that support sustainable development and change built on universal rights and values of the European community.

Impact on our institution

As a Charter holder we commit not only to provide opportunities for students and staff, and our partners, but to create an impact which has a direct effect on all levels of our core activities.

At individual level, the profound impact we expect on mobile students and staff will be to develop relevant academic and transversal skills for the future society of Europe. We know through the Erasmus Impact Study and similar surveys that students who have had a mobility period abroad are more employable and overall have a set of skills that set them apart from their peers. It allows them to become more entrepreneurial, better teamworkers, independent critical thinkers and risk takers, which are what employers are increasingly looking for. However, the social networking and the experience of immersion in a foreign culture is just as an important part of the mobility period as the academic learning outcome. Hence, we expect mobile students to be active citizens and take part in cultural arenas outside of their comfort zone, which will lead to a greater intercultural acceptance.

For blended mobility experiences, we expect the same impact, however as the modality allows a different preparation and post-mobility follow-up, it will help students develop better digital skills and develop a comparative, critical understanding of the different learning modalities.

At institutional level, the impact of Erasmus participation can hardly be overestimated, and we expect great results from both mobility and cooperation projects in the new programme. With a significant increase in mobility numbers we expect this to become a new normal state of affairs, that will contribute to create expectations of higher quality to the study programmes. In turn, this will require education leaders to integrate international perspectives and intercultural and global affairs into both the student environment and the curriculum. As we continue to explore the possibilities of the programme and our ECIU University alliance, we will experience a new momentum of international culture around many of our studies.

Erasmus is also a strong catalyst for enhancing recognition practices, both because of the framework and its tools, but also because of the increased focus on full automatic recognition in the Europea Education Area. As we participate in the Erasmus programme, we expect to be able to provide full automatic recognition of study periods abroad for all outbound students, and thus build a higher level of trust in partners and other countries' educational systems. Trust begins with people, and in academic cooperation we can start expecting results.

A strengthened connection between education and research and innovation is also a clear expectation of the impact that Erasmus will have on our institution. As we build bridges to research and innovation projects and networks, we expect to be able to use Erasmus, Horizon Europe and other programmes in synergy with each other to be able to integrate these programmes into the policies and daily work at the university. Integrating these opportunities into our programmes and research activities will open up previously unseen opportunities for both students and staff. Students are expected to become active in research projects and researchers can use Erasmus to develop educational outcomes for greater sustainability in their area and our institution. Erasmus is also considered a stepping stone for researchers towards bigger projects and networks by opening academic networks through learning and teaching.

Targets

By the end of the programme period,

- outbound student exchange: 30% of all graduates (including blended mobility)
- inbound student exchange: 20% of the degree student body
- outbound staff exchange: 20% of staff
- full automatic recognition: implemented and sustainable
- inclusion measures: implemented and sustainable
- European Student Card Initiative: Implemented and fully active for all students
- develop a system to promote and reward environmentally friendly practices
- increased number of partnerships for cooperation, innovation and excellence

Indicators (quantitative)

- Number of outbound students and staff
- Number of inbound students
- Percentage of fully recognized periods of study

- Percentage of students actively using the Erasmus+ App
- Number of KA2 projects as coordinator
 - Cooperation: Double the current number
 - Innovation: Triple the current number
 - Excellence: Triple the current number
 - Number of KA3 projects as a) coordinator and b) partner
- satisfaction with Erasmus experience abroad
- an action plan for inclusion measures

Timeline for achieving targets

2020:

- EWP: Full implementation of the IIA Manager and OLA tool
- Establish European Forum for sharing experiences
- Training session on full automatic recognition

2021:

- EWP: Full implementation of nomination and acceptance procedures
- Erasmus+ App: Full implementation and use by the organizational structure
- Mapping and development of inclusion policies
- First training series on full automatic recognition

2022:

- EWP: Full exchange of Transcript of records
- Action plan on inclusion measures active
- Second training series on full automatic recognition

2023

- Mid-term monitoring of charter performance: self-assessment and monitoring student satisfaction, Erasmus+ App, blended mobility
- Third training series on full automatic recognition