

University of Silesia in Katowice
Erasmus Policy Statement
25th May 2020

For University of Silesia, the objective of participation in the Erasmus programme is both the University's development and playing an active part in the creation of the European Education Area. Apart from strengthening its own potential, role and position, the University, as an active and responsible institutional participant in the public life, aims at achieving objectives which constitute the common good. They include the strengthening of European identity in all its richness, thanks to education and culture. Another objective is to support sustainable economic growth, development of civilisation and joint and several and just distribution of benefits of such development. The establishment of the European Education Area and, in particular, participation of higher education institutions in this process, will consist mainly in the promotion of the idea of education (including lifelong learning) and science as the fundamental grounds for sustainable economic, social and civilisational growth. The University will continue to be active in co-developing inter-university joint education forms.

The University will support the widest possible popularisation of the idea of mobility, elimination of barriers which hinder participation in exchange, for instance by unification, simplification and digitisation of administrative procedures, increasing the flexibility of the offer of exchange programmes, introduction and popularisation of blended mobility, further improvement of the methods of automatic mutual recognition of credits, diplomas and stages of education, documentation of gained skills and qualifications, further development of competence in foreign languages and participation in networks of European universities.

The Mission Statement of University of Silesia in Katowice provides that the University popularises knowledge through high-quality teaching which meets the needs of the society, participates in global science and fosters equal academic contacts and exchange. Teaching programmes serve not only to acquire professional knowledge, but, most of all, they are to shape creative attitudes towards the world. Study programmes should encompass all sorts of opportunities for gaining knowledge, according to the needs of the labour market, but they should also develop the sense of intellectual and professional flexibility combined with openness to the necessity of continued education and readiness to requalify or broaden one's knowledge depending on life's or professional context.

The University believes that the way to co-create the future leads through internationalisation of research and education, through increasingly dense network of connections between Polish and foreign higher education institutions, and between the University and its environment. Through partnership with secondary schools of various types, the University can help not only facilitate the difficult moment of transition from secondary to higher education, but also influence the development of elements of curricula. Along with providing education, the University aims to encourage students' participation in the life of academia and support their involvement in academic, cultural and local government activity so as to make them sensitive to prosocial attitudes and thus prepare future graduates for taking part in public life. The

University believes that its role is to train not only specialists in particular disciplines but also future participants in public life, as well as leaders of smaller or larger communities. Therefore, the University must make it possible to acquire an appropriate level of knowledge and foster the conviction that people should not shun public and civic duties, and their co-responsibility for the whole community.

The University serves civic society by building the attitude of activity, responsibility and engagement for the common good. The Strategy for the Development of University of Silesia in Katowice for the years 2020-2025 specifies the key tasks, priorities and objectives of the University. The Strategy points to a very high degree of conformity between the priorities and principles of the University and the Erasmus programme in a very wide scope of the University's operations. Therefore, the University's participation in the Erasmus programme will contribute both to achieving universal goals of the programme and building the European Education Area, as well as to meeting objectives of the University, its modernisation and improvement, and performance of the Strategy. In detail, the Strategy stresses the necessity of intensification of the internationalisation of scientific research and education as one of the key tasks. According to the Strategy, it is necessary to attract outstanding scientists, PhD students and students from all over the world, who want to fulfil their aspirations at a higher education institution. It translates into the necessity of intensification of international academic exchange. The Strategy provides that it is vital to monitor the didactic offer, degree of internationalisation of studies and directions of promotion activities of the University, including those aimed at popularisation of scientific and didactic activity of the University, and update, on an ongoing basis, the policy regarding the functioning of the University in the media, including social media, and internationalisation of scientific research, artistic work and education of students and PhD students. It means constant extension of the study offer in foreign languages, improvement of administrative services, modernisation of procedures for generating documents, development of language competence of staff and its internationalisation.

The Strategy also provides for:

- Constant extension of the study offer in foreign languages with the use of proven practices and experiences.
- Constant improvement, through a cycle of courses and trainings, of language competence of academic staff and employees involved in student services.
- Classes conducted by outstanding visiting staff from renowned universities and institutions.
- Development and extension of international education leading to the award of a double or joint diploma.
- Increase in the participation of all units of the University in student and staff exchange programmes (Erasmus+ and others).

In accordance with the Strategy, University of Silesia facilitates organisation of courses and regular classes conducted by specialists from outside the University. Students are free to select study modules from the faculty offer and may establish scientific cooperation with

mentors. Class modules and interdisciplinary education programmes in foreign languages are created, which increases the level of internationalisation of the University.

The Strategy of University of Silesia also defines clearly the plan of promotion of the University and communication with the environment. The University uses its own media on a large scale and actively presents and promotes achievements of its staff, PhD students and students.

The Strategy for the Development of University of Silesia in Katowice provides for active participation in educational exchange, partnerships for excellence, cooperation and exchange of good practices, development, as well as support of development policy and cooperation. With regard to educational exchange, the University aims to achieve at least 100% performance of the number of mobility activities available within the programmes and subsequent calls, and, if necessary, to use additional funds, maximise the number of mobility activities and, depending on available resources, carry out all mobility activities which meet formal and qualitative criteria.

University of Silesia in Katowice strives to participate as actively as possible in all forms of activity available in the Erasmus programme. As indicated in the University's strategy for development and the mission statement, the University is focused on development, improvement and, in consequence, better preparation for meeting the needs of closer and further environment, as well as on actions contributing to the development of higher education in the country and in Europe, and the entire, widely understood, field of education, including particularly secondary education and lifelong learning education. It is the University's objective to contribute to the development of innovation, develop cooperation, including intersectoral cooperation, support social dialogue, transfer knowledge and good practices, develop joint education forms, including full degree programmes, and develop institutional networks in the field of higher education as well as all forms of cooperation, also with non-European countries. The key action, both for the development of the University itself and for the performance of all objectives of the European Education Area, is mobility of higher education students and staff.

Without intensive educational exchange in higher education the performance of other actions offered by the programme would be at least much more difficult, and the achievement of goals and priorities of the programme as well as the performance of tasks set for European higher education – impossible. University of Silesia has participated in mobility of higher education students and staff since the moment when this form of cooperation was made available to Polish higher education institutions in 1997. University of Silesia is one of the higher education institutions which introduced the Erasmus programme to Poland. The University constantly monitors the interest in the exchange programme and its performance, and responds on an ongoing basis to any challenges which may arise. The University has a network of faculty coordinators for the Erasmus programme, who coordinate actions at the level of individual didactic units and fields of education. The faculty coordinators constantly inform about and promote mobility of higher education students and staff. They are in charge of concluding inter-institutional agreements, preparing and accepting individual mobility

programmes for outgoing individual participants in the programme, recruiting individual participants, accepting mobility programmes of individual participants in the programme coming to University of Silesia, integrating the teaching programmes of incoming staff with the University's programme, coordinating the recognition of study / traineeship period as well as outcomes and results obtained by outgoing students, providing academic and practical support to individual participants in the programme as well as substantive and practical supervision of students participating in the programme.

At the University level, performance of the project of mobility of higher education students and staff is coordinated by the International Relations Department – International Exchange Office. This unit collects and analyses data, demand and plans across the University, prepares application forms for project calls for individual years, conducts information and promotion actions for the whole University, provides administrative services necessary to perform the project and individual mobility activities, takes responsibility for the formal correctness of the performance of the project, coordinates substantive actions and monitors achievement of priorities, prepares the University's rules of recruitment and performance of individual mobility activities, administers inter-institutional agreements, provides practical support to individual participants, and submits reports. The University's rules of recruitment and performance of mobility, which are uniform and apply to all units of the University, and which are in conformity with the general principles of the Erasmus programme, are approved by the University's authorities. All academic units of the University are obliged to observe the rules of the programme, including the principle of full and automatic academic recognition.

The University provides individual participants with language and practical support, allows them to be accommodated at the University's dormitories and hotels, and helps them obtain a visa, organise transport and take out insurance. Individual mobility participants, promotion and information actions concerning the programme, integration of incoming and reintegration of returning individual participants are supported, with the cooperation, assistance and inspiration provided by the University, by student organisations, the student government and the Erasmus Student Network. The University organises orientation courses and integration programmes for incoming individual participants. The Erasmus programme and mobility of higher education students and staff are performed in full conformity with the formal rules of the programme. Special emphasis is placed on integration of individual mobility programmes with the University's programme, full recognition of completed programmes of studies and traineeships, treating incoming students the same as the University's students, ban on tuition fees, correct conversion of marks, as well as prevention of all forms of discrimination and favouritism. The above actions are carried out with the participation of other units of the University and coordinators for internationalisation within the scope of their competence. The University's aim is to achieve at least 100% performance of the mobility activities available to the University under subsequent Erasmus Key Action 1 calls. The University is going to continue its involvement in Erasmus Key Action 2 projects, including: Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices, Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities, Partnerships for Excellence – Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees, Partnerships for Innovation, and join Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3) – Support to policy development and cooperation. Information and promotion actions as well as

support in preparation and performance of projects are the responsibility of the Department of Projects, whereas other units of the University provide support within the scope of their operation.

Actions under the Erasmus programme will be carried out paying special attention to the following principles:

- non-discrimination, transparency, full and equitable access to participants from all backgrounds, inclusion of the participants with fewer opportunities,
- implementation of the European Student Card Initiative and promotion of the use of Erasmus Without Paper activities and Erasmus+ Mobile App,
- promotion of environmentally friendly practices, civic engagement and active citizenship, digital skills development and digitalisation,
- full, automatic recognition within ECTS for student mobility and recognition for staff mobility, implementation of the blended mobility.

The objectives specified in the Strategy for the Development of University of Silesia and the University's Mission Statement are consistent with the objectives and actions of the Erasmus programme. Participation in the said programme actions will influence, in a direct and significant way, the performance of specific tasks defined in the Strategy:

- increase in the number of students and staff participating in international educational exchange (outgoing and incoming students and staff).
- increase in the number of study programmes in Foreign languages.
- increase in the number of staff actively participating in courses and training aimed at development of professional competence.
- increase in the number of study programmes ending with the award of a double or joint diploma.
- increase in the number of foreigners taking up studies at University of Silesia.
- intensification of the University's participation in international research projects and projects promoting innovation, including particularly those in the field of education, digital technologies and other advanced technologies.
- intensification of the exchange of experiences and good practices.
- intensification of the University's support for the development of the region, country and whole Europe, and strengthening the position of the University as a modern, open and effective institution of science and education.

Participation in the programme will considerably strengthen the potential and position of the University, and, in consequence, its ability to support the development of the European Education Area as well as the region, the country and Europe. The number of mobility activities performed under KA 1 depends, first of all, on the number of mobility activities available in the programme calls in subsequent years. It is the University's objective to achieve at least 100% performance of the mobility activities awarded in the next calls. The

University will strive to maximise the exchange, for instance by making use of additional funds, in conformity with the qualitative and formal requirements and rules of the programme, including those concerning management of the programme budget. Assuming that the level of financing and the number of mobility activities awarded to the University under KA 1 will be maintained, the University's goal is to increase by 20% the number of mobility activities. The University aims to motivate staff and students as much as possible and increase the number of mobility activities, while ensuring at the same time high quality and constant improvement of the exchange.

The level of quality of the performed actions and satisfaction of individual participants will be constantly monitored. The objective is to meet the qualitative requirements at a more than satisfactory level, and provide full support to mobility participants. The University undertakes to implement, on an ongoing basis, the prepared improvement plans in the event of detection of any potential problems. With respect to projects KA 2, the University assumes that in the period 2021-2027 the level of participation will also increase by 20%, with the observance of all qualitative requirements, provided that the level of funding is not decreased. The condition which will be definitely met is full conformity with the formal requirements of the programme. The Erasmus programme is focused on constant development and improvement. Project effects are thus a starting point for further development. The results obtained must remain fully accessible until they are replaced with new, better effects of subsequent actions.

The University has introduced a network of faculty Development Offices, which are responsible, among others, for promoting actions available under KA 2, inspiring and motivating to take part in the programme, as well as providing support in the selection of the form of action and preparation of the application form. At the central level, preparation of projects, submission of the application form and performance of projects are supported by the Department of Projects of University of Silesia. For KA 2 similarly to KA 1, the University has implemented procedures which standardise the procedural path, facilitate the process of application, implementation and performance of projects, and guarantee that formal and qualitative requirements are fulfilled.

The University aims to enable all students and staff to implement mobility or participate in internationalization at home. In some cases, blended mobility is the solution. Monitoring of results is carried out at the central and departmental levels. At the central level, this monitoring is carried out by the International Relations Department - the International Exchange Office (KA1) and by the Project Department (other projects). At the faculty level, the results are monitored by the faculty Erasmus coordinators and coordinators for internationalisation. The Erasmus + program coordinators also provide individual support and monitoring, including educational support, for student mobility, both outgoing and incoming, as well as support and monitoring for staff mobility, also both outgoing and incoming. The university also implements IT solutions supporting indicator monitoring. It is the University's binding and fundamental objective to implement the priorities defined in the Erasmus programme in accordance with the schedule and within the deadlines imposed by the programme.