

ERASMUS CHARTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION 2021-2027

Guidelines

Erasmus+

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
Directorate B: Youth, Education and Erasmus+
Unit B1 – Higher Education

European Commission
B-1049 Brussels

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Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
2020 Erasmus+ / Higher Education EN

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ERASMUS CHARTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION 2021-2027

Any Higher Education Institution (HEI) wanting to apply and/or participate in 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport 2021-2027 (hereafter: the Programme) must have a valid Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.

The purposes of these guidelines are:

- to provide examples of ways in which the principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) can be satisfactorily implemented.
- to support HEIs in their self-assessment of the implementation of their ECHE, together with the ECHE self-assessment tool.
- to support National Agencies in their monitoring of the ECHE compliance of their HEIs based on the HEIs' Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS).

1. Fundamental Principles

Erasmus+ supports the EU's renewed agenda for higher education. In signing this Charter, the HEI confirms that its participation in Erasmus+ is part of its own strategy for modernisation and internationalisation. This strategy acknowledges the key contribution of mobile staff and students, and of participation in European and international cooperation projects, to the quality of its higher education programmes and student experience.

By signing this Charter, the HEI undertakes to further modernise its institution and contribute to the goals of a European Education Area laid down in the communication on "Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture" published ahead of the EU Leaders' meeting in Gothenburg on 17 November 2017.

By agreeing to the principles of the Charter, the Institution will work towards achieving these objectives by participating in one or several of the following activities:

- ✓ Key Action 1 "Learning Mobility": The mobility of higher education students and staff.
- ✓ Key Action 2 "Cooperation among organisations and institutions": Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices; Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities; Partnerships for Excellence – Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degrees; Partnerships for Innovation.
- ✓ Key Action 3 "Support to policy development and cooperation": networks and policy support measures.

Participation in activities under Key Action 1 and Key Action 2 should be underpinned by high quality mobility of staff and students to, and cooperation with, HEIs and other strategic partners such as enterprises, regional authorities, etc. Therefore, the HEI should make mobility and cooperation one of the central elements of its institutional policy and, to this end:

- ✓ develop cooperation with partners in other countries in the framework of a clear strategy for internationalisation;

- ✓ promote and support student and staff mobility, especially for individuals with fewer opportunities, and further develop non-discrimination policies;
- ✓ pursue a clear policy towards the development of integrated, transnational teaching activities (joint courses / modules / curricula, double / multiple / joint degrees);
- ✓ recognise the importance of, and provide visibility to, the results achieved by their staff members engaged in individual mobility or in cooperation projects with strategic partners;
- ✓ take into account the results of internal monitoring of European and international mobility and cooperation activities to date, thus further improving its international performance.

The HEI's internationalisation strategy has to be described in the Erasmus Policy Statement submitted in the application. This policy statement has to be published on the HEI's website within one month of the ECHE being awarded by the European Commission and will be utilised by Erasmus+ National Agencies as a tool for monitoring the compliance with the ECHE and these guidelines.

The Institution undertakes to:

- ❖ Respect in full the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion set out in the Programme.

The HEI has to select mobile staff and students and award grants in a fair, transparent, coherent and documented way, in line with the provisions of its contract with the National Agency. It should ensure such fair and transparent procedures throughout all stages of mobility and in the process of responding to queries/complaints from mobile students/staff.

The HEI must have measures in place to ensure that any individual or group will be treated equally and equitably, in accordance with Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. There should be no discrimination "based on sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation".

- ❖ 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.

HEIs should devise and publicise a strategy, taking into account relevant guidelines at national and European level. This strategy should actively promote mobility opportunities abroad to people with fewer opportunities, for either economic, social, cultural, geographical, health reasons or for reasons such as disability or educational difficulties and ensure that their support needs can be met and their privacy respected. HEIs should give the option to all individuals applying for a mobility to disclose that they have fewer opportunities for participation, including eligibility for additional financial support. Appropriate support should be provided by the sending and receiving HEIs / enterprises /

organisations.

Higher Education Institutions must ensure that fair and equitable opportunities are provided to all potential participants, including those from groups with fewer opportunities for participation and usually under-represented in mobility programmes. These include individuals with special needs, from lower socio-economic backgrounds, students with family responsibilities, part-time jobs or enrolled in programmes where being mobile is difficult etc. HEIs should provide supplementary support for inbound and outbound mobility participants from these groups. This can be achieved, for example, through offering top-up grants according to national / institutional requirements, appointing an inclusion officer in the HEI, appointing special counsellors, developing learning and teaching techniques within an environment adapted to students with special needs, providing for extra time during exams/coursework if necessary etc.

The notion of blended mobility is a key concept in ensuring the flexibility of and better access to the Programme. Any mobility activity can be carried out as blended mobility, including student mobilities for studies and traineeships. Blended mobility is a combination of a short term physical mobility with a virtual component. The virtual component must facilitate a collaborative online learning exchange and teamwork. The learning outcomes acquired in the framework of the virtual component will count towards the overall learning outcomes obtained for the entire blended mobility period. The credits obtained will therefore reflect the volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and the associated workload. It is extremely important that during the period of virtual mobility within a blended mobility, participants are offered the same treatment, services and opportunities as home students and staff, as well as participants who are on long-term physical mobility. The ECHE principles apply equally to blended mobility participants as to any other type of mobility.

- 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.

The Council Recommendation on Automatic Mutual Recognition recommends Member States to put in place by 2025 the necessary steps to “achieve automatic mutual recognition for the purpose of further learning without having to go through a separate recognition procedure, so that (…) the outcomes from a learning period abroad at higher education level in one Member State are automatically and fully recognised in the others, as agreed beforehand in a learning agreement and confirmed in the Transcript of Records, in line with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System.”

Concretely, it means applying the rule set out in the ECTS Users' Guide that states that: ‘all credits gained during the period of study abroad– as agreed in the Learning Agreement and confirmed by the Transcript of Records – should be transferred without delay and counted towards the students' degree without any additional work or assessment of the student’. This also applies to blended mobility.

The HEI should ensure full implementation of ECTS as a common tool to guarantee the quality of mobility activities and transparency of recognition procedures. This facilitates the transfer of credits between different institutions, greater student mobility and more flexible routes to gaining degrees.

60 ECTS credits should be attached to the workload of a full-time year of formal learning (academic year), with its associated learning outcomes. The student should not be expected to earn more than 60 ECTS credits, but should be allowed to exceed this number if they wish to. The following items are essential to prepare and record mobility using ECTS:

a) an up-to-date course catalogue on the website of each HEI;

b) a learning agreement (for studies and traineeships), signed by the sending and receiving HEIs / enterprise / organisation and the student, before the start of mobility;

c) a Transcript of Records indicating the number of credits earned and grades achieved (for traineeships, the corresponding document is a Transcript of Work /Traineeship Certificate);

d) proof that the work abroad has been recognised as outlined in the learning agreement.

Each HEI must have a recognition framework in place, which is published on its website. This must detail the terms, conditions and practices of recognition procedures in a transparent manner. As much as possible, it should account for special situations according to previous cases encountered by the HEI (for instance when a student chooses not to have certain credits recognised on their own initiative).

Recognition procedures must ensure that the student's mobility activities are recorded in a transparent way (indicating the original course / subject titles at the receiving HEI in the national language and English or another widely spoken language) and that the credits gained abroad have been recognised as an integral part of the student's degree programme. All the credits that the student earns during the mobility period and which were originally agreed in the Learning Agreement/ Traineeship Agreement must be recognised by the sending HEI without requiring the student to take any further courses or exams.

Mobile students are considered to be full-time students and should complete a number of credits proportional to the duration of their mobility, as per institutional regulations and in line with the ECTS User's Guide recommendation: "The student is expected to take educational components of 60 ECTS credits per full-time academic year. Completing a lower number of credits during their mobility might cause an unjustified prolongation of their studies or misbalanced workload in the future studies.

In the case of international mobility outside of the 48 countries of the European Higher Education Area, if ECTS is not used by the HEI, a compatible system should be implemented to ensure transparent recognition of study periods abroad. A compatible system is one which relies on credits based on student workload and learning outcomes.

In exceptional cases, HEIs in EU Member State or third countries associated to the Programme may use compatible systems if properly justified, but they must give details on the measures they will put in place to implement the ECTS system as soon as possible.

- Charge no fees, in the case of credit mobility, to incoming mobile students for tuition, registration, examinations or access to laboratory and library facilities**.**

The HEI which receives mobile students engaged in **credit mobility** (i.e. students who are mobile within the framework of a degree course at a different HEI) must not charge any type of fees for tutoring, registering or examining these students or for their access to laboratories, libraries or other facilities offered to local students.

In certain cases, however, mobile students may be required to pay small fees such as insurance, student unions, use of miscellaneous material such as photocopies, and laboratory products on the same basis as these are charged to local students at the receiving HEI. Details of any such costs should be provided in the receiving HEI's course catalogue on its website so that students are aware of them before the start of the mobility.

Fees may only be charged in the case of **full degree mobility** (e.g. Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees) or in the case of students registered at more than one university in the context of a joint master's degree.

Mobile participants (students and staff) should be allowed to retain any grant, loan, national disability allowances, national support broadening access to education and/or any other similar support that they currently receive from their home country for the duration of the mobility.

- Ensure the quality of the mobility activities and of the cooperation projects throughout the application and implementation phases.

The HEI must ensure a high-quality support to staff in the preparation of applications for mobility projects and cooperation projects, to follow the quality standards defined in the ECHE for mobility and cooperation activities and their participants from the HEI and to provide support and follow-up during and after the implementation phase of the mobility and cooperation projects in terms of management involvement, resources and staff recognition. In the case of traineeship mobility, the HEI needs to ensure the quality of the traineeship and the receiving organisation (workplace) in an appropriate way before and during the mobility period. If needed, this may include an advance staff visit to the workplace/employer of the future trainee funded from the organisation support grant or a monitoring and support visit during the mobility period.

The HEI must regularly assess feedback received through participant reports from both incoming and outgoing participants and take appropriate action when feedback indicates problems. It should provide a forum for discussion about quality within the institution and ensure that a clear mechanism is in place for reporting to an HEI administrative staff about problems respecting confidentiality.

- 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.

European Student Card Initiative

Ensure that relevant staff at the HEI are informed about the digitalisation roadmap as described on the initiative's website[1] and take active measures to implement minimum requirements for digital mobility management in a timely manner. Actively promote digital learning and training opportunities to administrative and other staff and relevant stakeholders within the HEI to build capacity for implementing digital mobility management.

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

Environmentally friendly practices

The sending and receiving institution must make efforts to promote environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among its participants. 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. The HEIs are encouraged to develop their own institutional strategies on sustainability and connect them with the concepts of mobility and internationalisation.

Civic engagement

Studies such as the Erasmus+ Impact Study have shown that the Programme fosters a positive attitude towards multicultural awareness and a stronger sense of European identity amongst mobile students. Moreover, the ESNsurvey 2019 (on Active Citizenship and Student Exchange in Light of the European Elections) shows that students with an exchange experience are far more engaged in civil society organisations than the average European youth. They have a higher interest in voting on an EU level, but are less likely to do so on exchange due to difficulties in accessing their voting rights.

Given this context, there is a clear opportunity to create added value by actively promoting and organising activities that allow mobile participants to be civically engaged, develop their skills beyond the formal education setting, volunteer and take active part in their local society. This not only fosters mobile participants' integration in the host society, but is important for the local students/staff and community

[1] More information will regularly be published here: https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-student-card-initiative_en

members as well, as it ensures internationalisation at home, helps overcome prejudice and leads to the acceptance of cultural diversity.

The involvement of students and staff through volunteering and active citizenship should also be an essential aspect of the institution's inclusion strategy. One way of doing this could be 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.

HEIs should organise or promote activities/projects that enhance the active citizenship skills and competences of students and staff, for instance the Erasmus Student Network's SocialErasmus Project. This project aims to better integrate international exchange students in the local society by organising 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 WE AfriHug, which aims to promote European and international understanding through the Erasmus+ Programme.

The Institution further undertakes to:

2. When Participating in Mobility Activities

Learning mobility helps individuals increase their professional, social and intercultural skills and employability. This is the cornerstone of the internationalisation and modernisation of education and the main tool for the further development of the European Education Area. In order to achieve successful, cost-efficient and sustainable results of a sufficiently high quality, it is necessary to organise clearly defined activities - before, during and after mobility - within the framework of an institutional mobility culture, which involves the whole academic community.

2.1 Before Mobility

- Ensure that selection procedures for mobility activities are fair, transparent, coherent and documented.

The institution must ensure the quality of selection procedures according to the above-mentioned principle. In defining these procedures, they must ensure equitable access to all potential participants, especially those with fewer opportunities and they must have in place clear complaint procedures for mobile participants and prospective applicants. In the case of international credit mobility, the institution should arrange travels or provide a pre-financing of the student grant in advance to allow for more inclusive mobility.

- Publish and regularly update the course catalogue on the website of the Institution 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.

Each HEI must produce a Course Catalogue, available on its website, which is updated at least annually, containing three main parts: information on the HEI, information on programmes (general description and description of individual course units) and general information for students. The complete check-list of the items to be included in the Course Catalogue is available in the ECTS Users' Guide.

The HEI should clearly indicate in which language the course units are taught and specify to what extent they are open to mobile students (indicating any prerequisites, such as the minimum linguistic level). Institutions should at least indicate clearly the course units not taught in the host language and those which are not open to mobile students. Any relevant information on programme requirements for traineeships should also be indicated, along with the number of credits.

While all the above information should be included in the Course Catalogue, each HEI can decide on its precise format, taking into account specific technical (IT, editorial, linguistic, etc.) aspects. Whatever the style adopted, the online course catalogue should be user-friendly. A good practice is to have an archive section containing earlier editions, thus making it easy to track any changes in study programmes / examination regulations.

Ideally, the course catalogue for the upcoming academic year should be available by the early spring of the preceding academic year, in order to allow prospective participants to prepare their learning agreements well in advance of their mobility.

- Publish and regularly update information on the grading system used and grade distribution tables for all study programmes. Ensure that students receive clear and transparent information on recognition and grade conversion procedures.

When grades are converted, it is important to ensure transparency regarding different national practices, so that grades awarded in all countries, subject areas or institutions can be properly understood and correctly compared. Furthermore, students should be made aware of the existence of different grading system and practices and they should receive explanations regarding recognition procedures in this regard.

The local grading system should be clearly explained, and include information on the statistical distribution of grades in the various faculties or degree programmes. It is particularly important to use pre-established conversion tables within the framework of integrated double / multiple / joint degree courses.

HEIs should use the digital mobility management tools developed in the context of the European Student Card Initiative. This may include using the EGRACONS platform linked to the Erasmus Without Paper Network, which further facilitates fully digitalised and automatic recognition procedures.

For more information surrounding grade conversion and grade distribution tables, HEIs should consult the ECTS User's Guide.

- ❖ 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.

The basis for carrying out successful Erasmus+ mobility activities (required for student mobility for studies and staff mobility for teaching) is the Inter-Institutional agreements between HEIs which are holders of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.

These Inter-Institutional agreements should be based on a comprehensive understanding of the partner HEI, compatibility of academic profiles (level / standards considered adequate for mobility activities) and a relationship of trust between the HEIs in making academic decisions. Each HEI should decide who is responsible for initiating, signing and implementing these agreements and the list of responsible people should be available on their website for contact and consultation. Agreements, once signed, must be actively honoured. They should therefore be realistic and signed only after consultations have taken place at relevant levels within the HEIs. It is important:

a) to avoid signing agreements which are not going to be active;

b) to ensure that a balance is struck between academic interests and other factors influencing institutional decisions (e.g. geographical and subject area balance)

The agreement should identify shared quality requirements specific to the planned exchanges (e.g. mobility numbers per academic year, recommended language levels, information on grading systems, visa, insurance and housing as well as additional requirements, if applicable, like selection criteria for the nomination of students and staff or measures for preparing, receiving and integrating Erasmus+ participants) as well as basic timelines (e.g. calendar for the nomination of mobile students by the sending HEI, the acceptance of nominees and the issuing of the Transcript of Records after the study period abroad by the receiving HEI, which normally should not be more than **five weeks** after the end date of the mobility period). HEIs should also specify whether they have the infrastructure to welcome students and staff with disabilities, providing contact details and indications about what services are available. The information in the Inter-Institutional Agreements must be kept up-to-date.

Quality requirements might differ from one subject area to another; ideally in this case they should be listed in the same inter-institutional agreement covering all disciplines concerned. Each agreement should indicate the contact details of those responsible for Erasmus+ at the institution, in case of a complaint by a participant. The HEI should regularly monitor the number of existing agreements and, according to its needs, take strategic decisions in order to update and optimise its mobility offer.

HEIs in non-associated third countries[2] are not required to apply for the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education. However, they must sign an **extended** inter-institutional agreement with an HEI located in a EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme[3]. By signing this agreement, partner country HEIs undertake to respect the principles contained in the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.

[2] These are known as “Partner countries” under the Erasmus+ Programme.

[3] These are known as “Programme countries” under the Erasmus+ Programme. More information on Partner and Programme countries can be found at the following link: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/who-can-take-part_en

While prior inter-institutional agreements are compulsory for exchanges under Erasmus+ between HEIs (for studying and teaching), they are not a prerequisite for mobility between HEIs and other stakeholders such as enterprises (including HEIs acting as a receiving organisation for student and staff trainees). In this case, all provisions to ensure high quality mobility must be settled in the learning agreement for traineeships or mobility agreements for staff training.

- ❖ 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.

Sending HEIs should ensure that their mobile staff and students are sufficiently prepared for their mobility periods, including when it comes to the new blended mobility format. This includes preparation for the differences between sending and receiving HEIs / enterprises and practices between sending and receiving countries, as well as for cultural and linguistic challenges which will be encountered during mobility. In the case of exchanges with non-associated third countries, an emphasis should be placed on the development of global citizenship skills.

This preparation can take different forms, such as

- lectures on intercultural communication,
- meetings / discussion groups with former mobile staff / students,
- an online archive with feedback from former mobility participants, social networking,
- encouraging the participation of alumni in offering support through a variety of activities,
- promoting and supporting student organisations who organise projects and activities in this regard, e.g. the Erasmus Student Network, Erasmus Mundus Association, garagErasmus, Oceans, ESAA, student unions, ESU, AIESEC, AEGEE etc.
- encouraging students to identify their skills prior to mobility and follow-up their development during and after the mobility period, in order to better understand the added value of mobility on improving intercultural skills (e.g. see Erasmus Skills project)

Language preparation is a crucial element to ensure success in mobility outcomes (staff / student satisfaction, coping with everyday challenges and pressure during the study / training period and improved exam success rates). Both partner HEIs / organisations should agree on the proficiency level required in the language of instruction or the workplace and (if different) the local language that the participant should have at the start of the mobility (the proficiency level should be defined in the course catalogue and / or inter-institutional agreement; or in the learning or grant agreement in the case of traineeships and in the mobility agreement in the case of invited staff from enterprise or staff training at an organisation that is not an HEI).

Staff should at least have the minimum required proficiency level at the selection stage. Student selection criteria should, however, take into account both the relevant language

skills at the selection stage and the capacity of the students to improve their language skills (through online tools such as the linguistic assessment and support offered by the European Commission or any other type of support) to achieve the required minimum level at the start of the mobility abroad (level to be specified and agreed on in the learning agreement). When required, the sending HEI should ensure that any necessary pre-departure language instruction actually takes place.

Ideally, this instruction should be provided in the semester directly before the mobility takes place, within the framework of the sending HEI's general foreign language instruction policy. It is the sending HEI's responsibility to ensure that outbound mobile participants have attained the necessary level of proficiency before departure, which should be measurable against the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages[4]. Where applicable, the sending HEI should organise language courses at different levels and for specific fields of study. In addition, the Erasmus+ Programme provides the language assessment and support offered by the European Commission, so that participants can better prepare for and make the most out of their period abroad.

When using the language assessment and support offered by the European Commission, it is encouraged to allow beneficiaries to learn any other language next to the main language of instruction abroad.

- Ensure 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.

1. Student mobility

A cornerstone for successful student mobility (for studies, traineeships and / or a combination of both) and a smooth and transparent transfer of credits is the Learning Agreement. This must be signed by the three parties involved: the student, the sending HEI and the receiving HEI / enterprise / organisation before the mobility takes place.

a) Student mobility for studies

The sending HEI should appoint a member of staff who will advise students in choosing specific modules or other learning/training activities at the partner HEIs. Ideally, the same person should have the authority to sign the Learning Agreement and, on the students' return, recognise the credits earned during mobility. In any case the HEI should ensure that the person responsible for recognition respects the decision made by the colleague(s) having signed the Learning Agreement. The HEI should also guarantee transparency and reliability of the procedure for mobile students.

All parties should do their utmost to minimise changes to the original learning components outlined in learning agreements. To this end, the receiving HEI should provide transparent information on the choices offered and be very clear about the deadlines for registration in the chosen courses (and about any restrictions on place numbers, etc. which might be applicable). Changes to the receiving HEI's course catalogue when students have already started their studies should be avoided as much as possible.

The sending HEI should be well-informed about the requirements at the receiving HEI and should provide sufficient guidance to students so that they can make choices acceptable to both partner HEIs. In addition, alternative choices should be explored before the start

[4] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp

of the mobility period. Students should be informed that they have to respect deadlines and understand that changes to the learning agreement are only possible in exceptional cases. It is good practice to offer incoming students a 2-week period after regular classes have started at the receiving HEI to make appropriate modifications to their learning agreements. Any changes have to be agreed and validated (e.g. via email, scanned or digital signatures, etc.) by the three parties.

Learning agreements are binding for all three parties and require that, on successfully completing the mobility period, the sending **HEI recognises the credits earned by the student** and documents these credits in the student's records, so that they can be identified in a transparent way. All credits that the student earns towards their degree during the mobility period and which were originally agreed on in the learning agreement (or an agreed revised version of it) must be recognised by the sending HEI and counted towards the student's degree without requiring the student to take any further courses or exams.

Contact details of those responsible for signing and recognising learning agreements should be featured on the HEI's website.

In the case of integrated double / multiple / joint degrees, completing a learning agreement for mobility within the degree partnership is not a prerequisite, since this mobility follows pre-established and agreed study paths which are a compulsory part of the degree.

b) Student mobility for traineeships
Learning agreements for traineeships abroad follow similar procedures. However, greater care is required in drafting the learning agreement for traineeships, as tasks to be performed in a particular workplace should be listed and corresponding learning outcomes, which are relevant to the final degree, should be agreed on. In addition, a plan for monitoring traineeship activities should be outlined and specified, then carried out by the sending HEI and the mobility partner.

HEIs have developed different ways of implementing and evaluating traineeships. Therefore, the methodology adopted for the evaluation of student achievement during traineeship activities (including time and place of evaluation) should be clearly described in the learning agreements and signed by the three parties (student, sending HEI and traineeship provider).

Updated templates on both types of learning agreements will be published on the Erasmus+ website: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/

2. Staff mobility
The compulsory mobility agreement between the sending and receiving HEIs / organisations for the purpose of teaching or receiving training should stipulate the activities to be undertaken by the staff member. This agreement should be reached after discussion between the two HEIs / organisations, taking into account the institutional requirements / strategy, academic rationale, foreseen outcomes and the staff member's competences.

As one of the main obstacles to mobility for staff is their work responsibilities, the HEI can facilitate staff mobility by establishing a system to replace staff while on mobility. In the case of teaching mobility, this could be done with the receiving partner HEI by organising mutual exchanges with a teacher from that HEI. Another good practice is to organise a two-way exchange between the HEI and the world of work (business, enterprises/companies etc.) and to combine student and staff mobility. While the HEI

sends students/recent graduates for traineeships to workplaces abroad, it can also invite staff from those enterprises/employers to teach at the HEI, bring work life reality closer to (non-mobile) students and initiate projects of mutual interest.

It is recommended that staff training mobility should be part of the human resource / professional development policy of the HEI.

Good practices can also be identified in cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices projects, such as the REALISE project (Realising the potential of the international mobility of staff in higher education)[5].

- ❖ Provide active support to incoming mobile participants throughout the process of finding accommodation.

The receiving HEI / enterprise / organisation should explain clearly to the mobile participants what accommodation options are open to them and what the conditions for renting accommodation are (i.e. costs, registration and accommodation contract details, responsibilities), so as to minimise any problems upon their arrival. This should be done well in advance of the mobility period and implies that HEI/ enterprise / organisation takes stock of the housing situation for mobile students, so as to be aware of any potential obstacles in finding accommodation and how to overcome them. They should propose solutions for potential issues encountered by participants by collaborating with housing providers, student organisations or other stakeholders who offer accommodation or work on ensuring the quality and affordability of student housing.

Housing information should be available on the receiving HEI's website, along with the contact details of the accommodation officer at the HEI. This information may include details about student housing in the receiving society or on campus premises (if available), frequently asked questions, feedback from previous students' experiences and details on any potential attempted fraud or discrimination that may be encountered. Student organisations can also be an important source of information. If appropriate, their contact details should be available on the receiving HEI website.

If students experience fraud or discrimination, the HEI/ enterprise / organisation should offer guidance and support to overcome the issue.

The sending HEI should also assist the mobile participants in their search for accommodation by, whenever necessary, contacting their counterparts at the receiving HEI / enterprise / organisation or by putting former mobile participants who are willing to help finding accommodation in touch with prospective students. Sending HEIs should particularly reach out to mobile trainees, who are disproportionately affected by housing issues according to the HousErasmus+ Study.

In international credit mobility, it is good practice to use the student grant to pay for the deposit of dormitories.

- ❖ Provide assistance related to obtaining visas, when required, for incoming and outgoing mobile participants.

The sending HEI should assist their outbound mobile staff / students and the receiving HEI should assist their incoming mobile staff / students who need a visa by issuing, in a

[5] https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/2016-1-FR01-KA203-024267

timely manner, the documentation required by the staff / students (i.e. letters confirming the staff / students' status at the HEI) for the visa application. The receiving HEI's website should provide mobile participants with information about visa requirements and the time necessary for a visa application. In addition, the website should provide contact details of somebody at the receiving HEI who can assist in solving visa-related issues, with a description of the services offered and the support that can be provided.

In cases where it proves difficult to obtain visas (e.g. where diplomatic missions are not located in the countries of residence; in situations where postal applications are not accepted; etc.), HEIs should attempt to help in contacting diplomatic representations to help ease the procedure. It must be clear, however, that the visa application is the mobile participant's responsibility.

The above information holds true also in the case of residence permits.

In the case of international credit mobility, the HEI should use dedicated project funds and/or organisational support in the most inclusive way to cover costs related to the obtaining of visas, partially or in full.

- Provide assistance related to obtaining insurance, when required, for incoming and outgoing mobile participants**.**

Generally, insurance is the responsibility of the mobile participant, although the receiving HEI / enterprise / organisation should inform mobile participants of cases in which insurance cover is not automatically provided. In those cases where specific types of insurance are required within the framework of mobility activities (e.g. medical insurance in those countries not covered by reciprocal national medical insurance agreements, or accident / third party insurance where such insurance is required for the planned mobility activities), the sending and receiving HEIs / enterprises / organisations should provide the necessary assistance in order to be certain that mobile participants have sufficient insurance coverage. The agreed solution should be mentioned in the inter-institutional agreement (student mobility for studies / staff mobility for teaching) or in the learning agreement (student mobility for traineeship) or the mobility agreement for staff on training.

In the case of international credit mobility, the HEI should use dedicated project funds and/or organisational support in the most inclusive way to cover costs related to obtaining insurance, partially or in full.

- Ensure that students are aware of their rights and obligations as defined in the Erasmus Student Charter.

2.2 During Mobility

- Ensure equal academic treatment and the quality of services for incoming students.

The receiving HEI should ensure that incoming mobile participants are offered the same academic treatment (i.e. rights and responsibilities with regard to teaching and tutoring,

exams, marking and grading, complaints procedures, etc.) and access to facilities as regular home students. Details of these rights and responsibilities must be published on the website in the language of instruction by taking into account the Erasmus Student Charter and explained during the mobile students' induction week (which should be organised for all new incoming mobile participants at the beginning of each term / semester / year). In addition, academic and administrative contact persons should be available during the whole of the mobility period to provide any further explanations which might be necessary and to help solve any problems which might arise.

In the case of incoming mobility from non-associated third countries, HEIs should provide students with their grant as soon as possible upon their arrival.

It is important to ensure the quality of activities and services for students, not only through quality assurance mechanisms at the level of mobility for studies, but also when it comes to mobility for traineeships and staff mobility periods, in particular hosted at workplaces outside higher education, by ensuring a good learning experience and beneficial outcomes of the period abroad. The receiving HEI/ enterprise / organisation should define clear learning objectives and outcomes for the trainee and offer support in achieving them during the traineeship or staff training period, as well as support in settling into their host society. The sending HEI should ensure clear learning objectives are set and follow-up with the student or staff member, supporting them if any issues appear during their mobility period.

- ❖ Promote measures that ensure the safety of outgoing and incoming mobile participants.

HEIs must communicate to incoming and outgoing students and staff any potential risks or threats to their safety that could be encountered during their mobility and offer guidance on how to prevent them, as well as what to do in case of emergency. They must offer information on health, accident and theft insurance schemes and strongly encourage students to sign up for them. Ideally, HEIs should develop an institutional strategy on safety and prevention on exchange (e.g. see Guidelines for Coimbra Group universities on safety protocols for mobility).

- Integrate incoming mobile participants into the wider student community and in the Institution's everyday life. Encourage them to act as ambassadors of the programme and share their mobility experience.

The receiving HEI / enterprise / organisation should make every effort to ensure that all incoming mobile participants are made to feel part of the student and academic community/ HEI / enterprise / organisation, by integrating them fully into its academic / work and social activities and by not segregating them in, for example, their accommodation options (i.e. by not putting all mobile students / staff in the same halls of residence). In addition, the receiving HEI should create the conditions for mobile students to join social organisations (student associations, sports clubs, music or theatre groups, debating societies, etc.) at the HEI. It should also encourage mobile students to initiate and organise their own social events, which would lead to wider interaction with local students. Details on part-time job positions on campus could also be made available to mobile students.
It is strongly encouraged that the HEI puts in place schemes that support Erasmus+ participants to become ambassadors of mobility, by sharing their experiences further with students interested in going on exchange or prospective students who are still

engaged in school education. These schemes may focus on the values of mobility, social engagement and active citizenship as promoted through Erasmus+. Alternatively, the HEI can support already existing schemes of such sorts, for instance the Erasmus Student Network's SocialErasmus scheme.

- Provide appropriate mentoring and support arrangements for mobile participants, including for those pursuing blended mobility.

a) Student mobility for studies

Mentoring and support arrangements should already be outlined in the receiving HEI's course catalogue in the section on general information for students, with contact persons / addresses in the respective areas. Information on the website should also include details on the receiving country's culture and everyday life.

The welcome / orientation week is an important part of support arrangements, and a good way to provide incoming students with necessary information on practical / administrative arrangements while allowing them to meet local and other mobile students. This welcome / orientation week is a vital opportunity to address concerns among the incoming students and to reduce any psychological pressure they might feel during their first encounters at the receiving HEI.

HEIs should make every effort to integrate mobile students, for example, through a 'buddy system', where local students assist incoming mobile students both before and during the mobility period. Local students could, for example, assist incoming students by meeting them at the airport, helping them to find accommodation and explaining everyday cultural challenges they might meet in the receiving country. In order to institutionalise this support for mobile students, it is strongly recommended that the receiving HEI establishes a student network (such examples may be the Erasmus Student Network, student unions, ESU, AEGEE, AIESEC, as well as other relevant networks operating in different national contexts) which could run the buddy system and share good practice with other sections around Europe. The services provided under the buddy system could also be adapted to mobile staff members.

In addition, the receiving HEI should appoint academic mentors to deal with problems related to academic issues (course timetables, student attendance, coursework, relationship with academic staff, student participation and follow-up of on-line activities in the case of blended mobility etc.)

The HEI's website should give details of the whole (academic, administrative, social, etc.) support system which is available to the mobile participants.

b) Student mobility for traineeships

A mentor, different from the supervisor, should be nominated to support the mobile student while in the enterprise / organisation. His / her role is to provide support, encouragement and information to the trainee on life and experience at the enterprise / organisation (culture of the enterprise, informal code of conduct etc.). Contact details for both the supervisor and the mentor should be specified in the learning agreement.

c) All mobility types

Mobile participants should be made aware of whom they can contact in case of problems. HEIs / enterprises / organisations should designate staff members to deal with social and psychological questions the mobile students/staff might have. They should also provide details of professional centres dealing with health / psychological issues.

- Provide appropriate language support to incoming mobile participants**.**

The receiving HEI should be aware of the needs of the mobile students and provide adequate language support in this regard. This support should be tailored to differences in mobile participants and could be offered online, as intensive courses during the orientation week ("survival" level) or as semester / annual courses (in groups, as individual tuition or as subject-specific courses).

Particular attention should be paid to learning the local language, whether or not it is not the language of instruction, in order to ensure better social integration.
It is good practice to allocate credits to these language classes and describe outcomes against the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. However, this does not affect the sending HEI's responsibility to ensure that their outgoing mobile participants are properly prepared linguistically according to the specifications indicated in the inter-institutional agreement. In addition, the European Commission will provide language assessment and support under the new Programme. The mobile participants should be encouraged to make use of this tool in order to learn other languages that are relevant to them if they wish to do so.

2.3 After Mobility

- 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**.**

a) Student mobility for studies

The receiving HEI must provide the sending HEI with a transcript of records within a period stipulated in the inter-institutional agreement (and normally 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 is 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 should 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 should be clearly explained and the ECTS grade distribution tables for the department or study programme should be included. The transcript of records must be duly signed, stamped and dated in order for it to be considered a legally valid document. The HEI should decide who should prepare the document, and designate a person responsible for signing it. Mobile students

should have clear information about who is responsible and should be able to contact them in case of unforeseen circumstances or delays.

The receiving HEI should, 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.

b) Student mobility for traineeships

The traineeship provider should always issue a certificate attesting the mobile participant's traineeship activities (duration, traineeship tasks and, wherever possible, competences developed).

- 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 recognised as agreed in the learning agreement and confirmed by the transcript of records/traineeship certificate. They shall be transferred without delay into the student's records, shall be counted towards the student's degree without any additional work or assessment of the student and shall be traceable in the student's transcript of records and the Diploma Supplement.

- Ensure the inclusion of satisfactorily completed study and/or traineeship mobility activities in the final record of student achievements (the Diploma Supplement).

The HEI should issue a Diploma Supplement to accompany every degree awarded to a student, using the template developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO. The 48 European countries that belong to the European Higher Education Area have agreed that each graduate in their respective country should receive the Diploma Supplement (DS) automatically, free of charge and in at least one of the major European languages in addition to the national language. The HEI's policy on issuing the Diploma Supplement should be published on its website.

Any mobility activity abroad should be made explicit in the relevant part of the Diploma Supplement: alongside modules / units taken at the sending HEI, the Diploma Supplement should list recognised modules / units / training activities undertaken during the student's mobility period and indicate where these mobility activities were carried out.

In the case of double / multiple / joint degrees, the Diploma Supplement should indicate the name and status of the partner HEIs awarding the degree and explain the respective language(s) of instruction / examination. In addition, an explanation should be provided about the grading / classification scheme agreed by the double / multiple / joint degree-awarding HEIs.

- 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.

The sending HEI should make every effort to ensure that mobile participants are not penalised, either in terms of grading or career progression, for their study / training / teaching period abroad. Instead, their experience should be valued and shared as an

inspiration to others, by encouraging them to become ambassadors of the programme. For example, this can be done through organising meetings or events where the mobile participants could share their experience and the impact of mobility on their personal / professional development, as well as on the HEI. Former participants may also write/record testimonials, as well as participating in fairs, Erasmus Days or volunteer activities.

To this end, the sending HEI should first provide administrative and academic counselling to assess the outcomes of the mobility and advise participants on their return how best to use the competences acquired abroad. Furthermore, the sending HEI should assist participants in reintegrating in their social, educational or professional environments by, for example, providing mentoring and social platforms, by creating group activities and by involving the formerly mobile students in situations that require intercultural competences (e.g. the "buddy system" for incoming participants). Once students are aware of what they have gained from their experience abroad, they are ready to share this experience further through the above-mentioned ambassador activities.

The sending HEI should support the formation of communities of alumni by reaching out to their students who have been on Erasmus+ and engaging them to improve the experience of forthcoming generations, encouraging them to promote the Programme and organising activities where they can “give back” the benefits of their exchange. It is strongly encouraged that local student organisations who have experience with such activities or with alumni network building are involved and supported in this respect.

- ❖ 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**.**

The HEI should systematically use the results of staff mobility for structural reform. Therefore, international staff mobility should become an integral part of professional development. The HEI should actively support staff mobility by establishing a strategy which underpins this activity, identifying staff members' professional development needs and the necessary preparation.

This strategy should include different measures encouraging mobility. For example, staff mobility should be part of the regular workload. Staff working schedules should be adapted to meet the demands of mobility and, whenever possible, temporary replacements should be found during the mobility period, additional cultural / language preparation should be available to mobile staff and teaching and training mobility activities should be recognised as a component in any evaluation / assessment of staff members.

2.4 When Participating in European and International Cooperation Projects

- ❖ Ensure that cooperation activities contribute towards the fulfilment of the institutional strategy

The purpose of cooperation projects is for higher education institutions to work together across borders with other stakeholders in order to achieve common objectives in the field of education and training. In the case of European projects, the main beneficiary is in the

EU Member States or third countries associated to the Programme, whereas when it comes to international projects, the main beneficiary is in non-associated third countries.

HEIs and other partners should make informed decisions about the strategic or ad-hoc partnerships which they intend to form by taking into account relevant European policy priorities, geographical and subject area priorities, outcomes from previous projects and the institutional capacity to participate. HEIs should actively contribute to the project outcomes, as well as ensure their wide-scale embedment at their own institution.

Participation in European and/or international projects should be seen as a central aspect of the institution's internationalisation and modernisation strategy and should be based on a specific needs analysis. The foreseen results of any participation in cooperation projects should be sustainable and balanced and should therefore lead to the future development of the HEI's international involvement.

- Promote the opportunities offered by the cooperation projects and provide relevant support to staff and students interested in participating in these activities throughout the application and implementation phase.

The HEI should be open and supportive to project ideas brought forward by their staff. Once committed to a given project, the HEI undertakes, both as coordinator or as partner, to support participation at all levels of the institution. Relevant support should be provided to staff involved in project management and participation by other members of staff should be considered a key component in their evaluation.

As part of the HEI's internationalisation strategy, concrete support measures should be foreseen which would allow participating staff and students adequate time to carry out their project work. In addition, sufficient resources should be allocated to support the project, by providing adequate administrative back up (e.g. with logistical and financial management).

Good practice examples suggest that institutions should have transparent staff development, evaluation and promotion systems whereby participation in transnational/international activities and European projects contribute to the professional recognition of staff (including, where applicable, staff promotion) and academic recognition for students.

- Ensure that cooperation activities and their outcomes are sustainable and that their impact benefits all partners.

When the HEI participates in European and international cooperation projects, it should do so in a pro-active way, by establishing from the very beginning the objectives for its participation, deciding what role it intends to play and which results it expects to achieve.

Participation in such projects should be integrated in the HEI's modernisation and internationalisation strategy and based on a specific needs analysis. They should be undertaken with a view not only to benefitting the institution itself, but also to benefitting other participating institutions and wider academia (the higher education policy and system at national and/or European levels).

The foreseen results of any participation in cooperation projects should be sustainable (i.e., results continue to be used by the partnership after the project ends, the results are reusable or the partnership engages in other future activities) and balanced (i.e., that

the results benefit all partners) and should, therefore, lead to further development of the European Higher Education Area, in general, and the HEI's international involvement, in particular.

- Encourage peer-learning activities and exploit the results of the projects in a way that will maximise their impact on individuals, other participating institutions and the wider academic community.

The HEI should make adequate arrangements to ensure that project dissemination takes place from the very beginning of the project activities (e.g. making space available on the website for an individual project, holding presentations, posting news items etc.). In addition, the project results should be disseminated and benefited from both within the participating institution(s) and further afield. General dissemination and visibility policies adopted by the institution should include pro-active measures to ensure the visibility of the project implementation and outcomes. For instance, the institutional webpage could have an easily accessible page where one can access the outcomes already achieved in all the projects the institution has been part of. This should include clear mention of the staff participating in the project. The HEI should regularly contribute to the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform throughout the project lifecycle, as well as at the finalisation stage.

2.5 For the Purposes of Implementation and Monitoring

- Ensure that the long-term institutional strategy and its relevance to the objectives and priorities of the Programme are described in the Erasmus Policy Statement.

The Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS) should not be seen or developed as a stand-alone document for the ECHE. The institution's EPS should be informed by the HEI's individual profile and its working culture: as it is a document of strategic importance for the institution, representative academic and administrative staff with international experience should be involved when it is drawn-up. The EPS should be based on a wider, long-term, institutional strategy of internationalisation that takes into account, on the one hand, the institution's profile, strengths and weaknesses and, on the other, European policy priorities for higher education.

The EPS should clearly reflect a good understanding of the objectives and priorities of the Erasmus+ Programme, contain objectives for mobility and cooperation activities and projects, but be realistic with regard to the institution's goals in participating in the Programme: it should be discussed at all levels in the institution (management, staff and students should all be allowed to voice their opinions and make suggestions).

- Ensure that the principles of the Charter are well communicated and are applied by staff at all levels of the Institution.

The Charter text must be made visible and easily accessible for consultation by students and staff. It should be displayed on the institutional webpage in the home language(s) and in English (or in another widely spoken language). The principles of the Charter should, where possible and applicable, be incorporated into the standard documents of the institution (e.g. with regard to credit accumulation, staff and student mobility, staff development, etc.).

- Make use of the "ECHE guidelines" and of the "ECHE self-assessment" to ensure the full implementation of the principles of this Charter.

As the ECHE Guidelines are based on the good practice of various institutions in Europe, the staff responsible for the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme and internationalisation strategy within an institution should consult and follow them.

Each institution, depending on its profile and working culture, should find its own solutions for any problems that might arise. However, it is desirable that the common framework suggested by the Guidelines should be preserved in order to reach the best possible implementation of institutional and Programme goals, as well understanding and compatibility across Europe.

The ECHE Self-Assessment Tool should be used within the institution on all (faculty departmental, etc.) levels, to achieve better awareness of the Programme's aims and objectives, and its impact on the development of internationalisation within the institution. In addition, the ECHE Self-Assessment Tool should be used as a benchmark to set short and long-term goals and whenever new Programme activities are introduced within the institution. Such benchmarking activities should be undertaken in a structured way and with the concrete aim of raising staff awareness, as well as demonstrating institutional development.

- Regularly promote activities supported by the Programme, along with their results.

Each institution should have a clear strategy and the necessary tools to promote both Programme activities and results/outcomes. Good practice suggests that a bilingual webpage should be devoted to Erasmus+ Programme activities. In addition, information on the Programme, which must be clearly identified and acknowledged, should be embedded within everyday institutional information flows.

- Display this Charter and the related Erasmus Policy Statement prominently on the Institution's website and all other relevant channels.

As a prerequisite, the Charter and the related Erasmus Policy Statement must be displayed on the institution's website in a place that is easily accessible from the HEI's main page, thereby demonstrating that the whole HEI is committed to the Charter. The web link must also be provided for the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform.

On behalf of the Institution, I acknowledge that the implementation of the Charter will be monitored and that a violation of any of the above principles and commitments may lead to its withdrawal by the European Commission.

The relevant National Agency for Erasmus+ will monitor the HEI's compliance with the Charter through visits, reporting, reviewing the commitments stated in the ECHE application and Erasmus Policy Statement, asking for more information, reviewing participant reports etc. When non-compliance is identified, an action plan will be agreed between the HEI and the National Agency to solve the problematic issues. If the action plan is not implemented by the HEI within the agreed timeline, this will be reported to the European Commission and may lead to the ECHE being withdrawn.