

Erasmus Policy Statement

The University has been informed that it has been awarded an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) which permits it to participate in the Erasmus+ Programme from 2014 to 2021. The Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS), below, forms the basis for that award.

Please describe your institution's international (EU and non-EU) strategy. In your description please explain a) how you choose your partners, b) in which geographical area(s) and c) the most important objectives and target groups of your mobility activities (with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, including study and training, and short cycles). If applicable, also explain how your institution participates in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees.

RGU's strategy, "A Clear Future for a Leading University in a New Era" (<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/strategy-and-planning>) is a combination of the evolution of existing strengths and step change. Step change relates to commercialisation, translational research and the development of global partnerships while in terms of evolution, the University's strategy seeks further development and enhancement of current nationally recognised strengths in teaching and learning, employability and the student experience. It is within this agenda that the University's Erasmus Policy Statement will play an integral part.

RGU's Erasmus Policy Statement is designed to support the development of students and staff to enhance the employability of our graduates and to enhance the internationalisation of the curriculum. Both our Policy and infrastructures have evolved from the experience we have gained through many years of participation in mobility activities.

Outgoing students will have the opportunity to undertake academic study or a work placement abroad, both of which are central to our aspiration for employability. A period abroad will afford our students with the opportunity to broaden their learning experience in a global context and will provide both academic and personal development which is very highly rated by employers. Incoming students will bring a diverse, international and cultural mix to the campus environment in Aberdeen. Not only will this be beneficial to the mobile students, it will expose home students to an enriched academic environment and will help them have an international experience where they will have the opportunity to learn from their peers and compare learning and experiences in different countries and cultures. Ultimately, we seek to encourage all our students to be geographically mobile in order to enhance their employability.

Staff mobility, both outgoing and incoming, will allow subject specific academic and/or professional development which will subsequently lead to the enrichment of the teaching and learning experience for students through exposure to different practices and methods.

For mobility activity, partners will be chosen by ascertaining which institutions offer similar educational offerings to our own and where there is a good curriculum match which will allow our students to progress to the next stage of their course when they return to the university. It will also be essential that courses are delivered in English as our students will not have the capacity to learn in a foreign language. We will also check that the pastoral and social offerings will allow our students to maximise benefit from their period abroad both academically and personally.

In the EU, we will not target specific geographical areas for exchange activities as the curriculum and language of teaching will be most important so that students will receive maximum academic benefit from a period abroad. Outside, the EU our main targets for mobility activities will be the US, Canada and South Korea, however, it is our intention to expand our target areas to include Australia, Malaysia and Singapore and possibly India. Irrespective of the continent, it will be essential that partners are located in destinations which are attractive to students.

The main target group for mobility activities will be students who are in their first cycle – the second cycle in Scotland tends to be of only one year's duration, therefore, it will not be possible to include a full semester's study/work abroad, unless it is a mandatory part of the course. However, we already regularly send second cycle social work students and biomedical science students on mobility, and this is a trend we aspire to expand. To date, we have not had any requests from third cycle students to participate in mobility, but these would be considered if made. We will encourage any student in their first cycle to participate in mobility unless there is a concrete reason for them not doing so – e.g. some Professional Bodies will not allow students to undertake any of their degree course abroad. Students from all backgrounds and abilities will be encouraged to participate to ensure as many students take part as possible.

The University will strengthen existing partnerships, some made as a result of the Erasmus Programme, with a view to developing double degrees. Aberdeen Business School are actively involved in developing these at undergraduate level, and it is anticipated that this activity will also be undertaken by other academic Schools.

If applicable, please describe your institution's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme.

The International Exchanges Manager will be the central coordinator for all activities and projects under the Programme. In addition to providing advice and guidance to staff who wish to apply for funding, the IEM will undertake partner searches to assist in the identification of appropriate partners. Both the Project Manager and the IEM will draw on relevant expertise in the University (e.g. the Finance Department, Research and Enterprise Services, Academic Affairs, Human Resources etc.) where appropriate. Before a project can be submitted, an established sign-off procedure must be followed to ensure that all relevant parties are aware of the project and, in the event it is approved, that the resources are available to allow the project to run successfully.

If a project is approved, the IEM will continue to provide advice to the member of staff if required, however, the member of staff will be the Project Manager and therefore responsible for its management and administration. The Finance Department will assist in the financial monitoring and reporting, although the Project Manager will be responsible for ensuring all deadlines are met, that reports are submitted timeously and for all correspondence with the EC, National Agency, partners and individuals involved in the project. They will also be responsible for document retention.

Please explain the expected impact of your participation in the Programme on the modernisation of your institution (for each of the 5 priorities of the Modernisation Agenda) in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve.

RGU's participation in the Programme will be mainly in the area of student and staff mobility. Turning to Priority 1 of the Modernisation Agenda, mobility experiences will enhance both the skills and employability of our graduates and to encourage our staff to benefit from different teaching and learning practices. A greater awareness of academic colleagues of the benefits of mobility for both students and staff should result both in higher levels of student and staff mobility.

To address Priority 2, we will continue our well-established relationships with professional bodies, industrial organisations, government departments and research institutes to develop our curriculum and to ensure that our courses will be relevant and meet industry needs. As the University has a culture of continuous enhancement, participation in the Programme will allow us to carry on this culture and will allow us to learn from engagement with other institutions and individuals. As a result, the whole University will be institutionally engaged in the Programme for the benefit of all its students and staff, thereby addressing Priority 3.

With regard to Priority 4, as over 90% of our undergraduate courses currently contain compulsory work placements, it will be key for us to continue to work with industry, both regional and international, to provide as many opportunities for our students as possible. Not only will this be of benefit to the employability of our graduates, it will allow us to set up networks of contacts which could lead to stronger network development between the University and business in and outside the local region and increase the range of placements we can offer to our students.

In terms of improving governance and funding, as a UK public sector body, we are governed by a national code of practice. However, active engagement with partner institutions/organisations in other countries will allow us to compare and contrast our current practices, and where possible, implement enhancements to improve governance. Relationships with these institutions could result in collaborative networks which in turn could result in joint ventures for funding applications under this, and other Programmes.