



Erasmus Policy Statement

The University of Amsterdam has been awarded the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education for the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027. The Erasmus Policy Statement (below) sets out the institutional strategy in relation to the Charter.

As a global university in a multicultural European capital, the University of Amsterdam (hereafter UvA) plays a pioneering role in developing an international study and work culture. It considers awareness raising amongst students and staff about European identities an indispensable component in its academic programmes. The UvA strongly believes that gaining experience abroad contributes in large part to students' education, preparing them more effectively for taking an active part in a changing society, and a career in the European and global labour market. In turn, participation of inbound Erasmus exchange students in the UvA's study programmes is an asset to shaping the international classroom experience on our campuses in Amsterdam.

In addition to the commitment to enhance physical mobility, the UvA will be boosting inclusiveness in student mobility by exploring opportunities in the area of blended and virtual mobility. The UvA therefore welcomes the Erasmus+ instruments supporting forms of blended and virtual mobility in the new Erasmus+, allowing even more students to benefit from mobility opportunities.

Inclusion and Diversity

To ensure equal access for UvA students and staff to participate in Erasmus+ programmes, the UvA will enclose questions in the application procedure so that students and staff have the opportunity to express that they belong to a specific or underrepresented group via self-reporting. The UvA arranges travels or will provide a pre-financing of the student grant in advance to allow for more inclusive mobility. For students that do not have to option to go abroad, the UvA is developing multiple virtual and blended mobility programmes, which offers students options for internationalization at home as well. In creating effective virtual learning pathways and diversifying the portfolio of mobility programmes, the UvA is aiming to widen participation and support all students to benefit more from their mobility experience.

Furthermore, the institution has a code of conduct that targets the ethical practices of the UvA and equal treatment of all UvA staff and her student population, stating guidelines of behaviour towards each other and third parties related to the UvA. Through her Diversity Office the institution focuses on ethnic diversity and the equality and inclusion of people from all manner of social and cultural backgrounds, genders, faiths, sexual orientations and degrees of ability.

UvA does not only trains her Erasmus Student Ambassadors on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). The UvA also offers workshops for staff on EDI multiple times a year. The Erasmus+ programme contributes to the development, since it enables the UvA to work closely together with other strategic partners, UvA staff and students to further enhance the EDI training programme and so to create awareness among all.

Promoting civic engagement and active citizenship amongst our students

The UvA has an award-winning ambassadors programme where incoming and outgoing students are offered the chance to share their experiences with potential applicants or target groups with fewer opportunities. As mentioned before the students are trained on equity, diversity and inclusion and during the programme, with specific tasks (reviewed every year), ambassadors are challenged to tackle multiple obstacles that students can encounter before, during and after their mobility programmes so that they can help other students overcoming these obstacles. They help creating our predeparture sessions for outgoing students & goodbye events for incoming students that are about to return back home and review and form our exchange brochure and start newsletter for international students.

Students participating in the Erasmus+ KA2 NICE project will not only complete online modules in intercultural competence and entrepreneurship, but also build an innovative business solution for a global challenge (like the UN SDG's). This mobility experience places students into international collaborative teams promoting and enabling civic action and providing an opportunity for students to develop key skillsets which will improve their employability.

The UvA funds and works closely with the International Student Network (ISN), a part of the Erasmus Student Network. The aim of ISN is to help foster student mobility through optimizing the social and cultural integration of international students in Amsterdam. They try to achieve this by organizing introduction days, gatherings, weekend trips, excursions and other cultural activities. They also promote contact with Dutch students by their buddy and coach system.

Furthermore, the UvA is renewing the collaboration between the university and the city. The UvA wants to enter into structural partnerships with companies, social institutions, museums, citizens - and especially with the municipality of Amsterdam so that UvA students and staff have the opportunity to be more involved with the city of Amsterdam.

Promoting environmentally friendly Erasmus+ practices

No issue is more relevant for future leaders than sustainability. The UvA aims to equip her students with specialist knowledge of sustainability issues in order to prepare the leaders of tomorrow. This begins with raising awareness about sustainability issues among students and staff. Through debates, discussions and various initiatives, ideas, visions, and best practices will be developed and disseminated (e.g. Community of Practice). That way it will elucidate what sustainability entails for UvA students and staff. Student-led initiatives such as the Green Office will be involved in the Erasmus+ programme. This office is aiming to promote sustainability at the UvA and raising awareness of the issue among students and employees. Within the institution it will be discussed what extra grant opportunities will be available for more sustainable trips. The UvA is also participating in blended and virtual mobility programmes, which offers more sustainable mobility options for students.

To further enhance the sustainability of the campus and the city of Amsterdam, the UvA is part of an institutional partnership called the Amsterdam Green Campus. This partnership focuses on projects and initiatives that take shape within a triple helix context (education, government and entrepreneurs). It often concerns subjects related to sustainable developments and the transition to a circular society. The aim here is to keep the Amsterdam metropolitan region innovative and sustainable.

Digital Transformation

The UvA believes in the importance of straightforward and secure online administrative procedures, where data can easily be accessed by students. First, staff involved with the Erasmus+ programme will be informed and trained in multiple sessions during the 2020-2021 academic year. In these sessions the need of the initiative will be addressed. Therefore, the UvA will have her digitalisation roadmap ready at the start of 2020-2021 academic year. The goal is to be paperless and making use of all digital resources provided by the European Commission through the European Student Card Initiative, the mobile app and the Erasmus without papers network. Where needed the UvA will help staff enhancing and developing their digital skills needed for the transition. Moreover, the UvA will work closely together with our Higher Education Institution partners to ensure the seamless transition of student information and student exchanges.

Cooperation partnerships

In addition to improving access to student mobility, the UvA is committed to improve the quality of the support structure for students and staff involved in student mobility. Acknowledging the different needs of staff and students, UvA is focusing with her partnerships on creating virtual mobility programme and developing intercultural skills and entrepreneurship (NICE), developing a virtual environment to support students and staff throughout each stage of the mobility lifecycle (DIGIPASS), and providing academics and professional staff with holistic skills in intercultural competence that will allow them to enhance internationalisation and improve social-educational delivery across the higher education sector (TICKET).

Moreover, to the UvA's commitment to enhance both physical and virtual mobility in the context of learning mobility, the UvA is a proud partner in one of the pioneering alliances in the context of the Erasmus+ European Universities alliances scheme, the EPICUR alliance. The UvA is strongly committed to making EPICUR and the entire family of European Universities alliances a success and would like to reiterate its commitment to this innovative form of structural collaboration between European universities.

In the new Erasmus+ programme the UvA aims at expanding its participation in these types of strategic actions aimed at supporting and innovating student and staff mobility, as the outcomes of the other projects have been highly beneficial for improving the internal structures in support of student and staff mobility across the UvA and diversifying the existing portfolio of student mobility experiences.