

Erasmus Policy Statement (2021-2027)

This policy statement has to be published on the HEI's website within one month of the ECHE being awarded by the European Commission.

Faculty of Information Studies in Novo mesto defines following strategic orientations in its strategic plan: excellence in research and development, excellence in education, business excellence, social responsibility, students, employee and customers satisfaction. Each strategic orientation has strategic goals that are defined for the five-year period. One of the most important strategic goals is international cooperation of the Faculty in regional and European area. As one of the key players in Slovenian Dolenjska region, Faculty has therefore defined geographical areas for its cooperation. These areas are regions of EU, especially Central Europe and Balkan region. For this reason, Faculty is spreading its knowledge pool and social network activities through staff and students from mentioned areas for its further development of cooperation. On the other hand, Faculty cooperates with educational, research and business partners from the field of its main educational and research fields, like network analysis, simulations, informatics, computer science, web technologies, data analysis and lately also digital arts. Once a year Faculty also organizes its key scientific meeting, the international conference on Information Technologies and Information Society (ITIS), to strengthen its international cooperation in the field. Nonetheless, Erasmus programme is one of the most important tools which enable Faculty's international cooperation through mobility of staff and students. The Faculty's mobility activities and target groups focus on staff employed at the Faculty as also on students from all three cycles, first, second and third. The first cycle students are mostly oriented on training mobility, the second cycle students to educational mobility, while the third cycle students (PhD) are also strongly oriented on mobilities to support their scientific research activities.

EU and non-EU cooperation projects are extremely important for performance of Faculty's international activities. Educational and research activities based on these projects are also a basic pool for strengthening faculty international networks. In this sense Erasmus programme presents crucial and unique opportunity for further development of Faculty's strategic goals and aims, as it brings new opportunities for development of education, exchange of practices, innovation and implementation of new research and project ideas. The main goals of the Erasmus programme that we will continue to follow are:

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

- Ensure fully 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.
- Charge no fees, in the case of credit mobility, to incoming mobile students for tuition, registration, examinations or access to laboratory and library facilities.
- Ensure the quality of the mobility activities and of the cooperation projects throughout the application and implementation phases.

Transparency and non-discrimination are carried in accordance with the rules on eliminating inequality and promoting equality, and on combating any discrimination. All activities within the program address all participants from different social backgrounds in the same way, as well as those with fewer opportunities, who are provided with additional incentives. In our operations, we act according to the Protection against Discrimination Act (ZVarD). When addressing various activities of the program, we do not perform any selection or discrimination, and we provide all participants with equal conditions to the access of mobility activities. As regards to our services, it is available to members of both sexes, different nationalities and social backgrounds, promptly and professionally.

To implement four general priorities of programme we will: 1) undertake the necessary steps to implement digital mobility management in line with the technical standards of the European Student Card Initiative; 2) take environmentally friendly practices in all activities related to the programme, 3) encourage students and staff to get involved as active citizens before, during and after their participation in a mobility or project and 4) encourage the participation of individuals with fewer opportunities and promote civic engagement.

For our first priority, that is taking necessary steps to implement digital mobility management in line with the technical standards of the European Student Card Initiative, we will promote digitalization of the programme and share news about this at our website. During each introductory week to the new academic year, we will promote the programme and present the purpose of using European student card to our students. Digital mobility management will also be presented at the upcoming dedicated presentations of the programme, and all upcoming general presentations of the Faculty. We will promote European student card together with the promotion of Erasmus + mobile applications and make students aware of the digitalization of programme. Using Erasmus + programme directives, we anticipate to move towards to the next goal, which is Erasmus without paper - to arrange all IIAs and LA online, to send appointments and student nominations online, and to exchange Transcripts of Records online. During the new programme period, we will promote digitization at work and strive to be able to work in fully digitalized Erasmus + program by 2025. All our students and staff will be informed about digitization and new software tools for digitized work. We will promote paperless Erasmus + programme to strength the visibility of digitalization. All data will be collected in line with EU legislation on personal data.

Our second priority refers to promotion of environmentally friendly practices in all activities related to the programme. For reaching this priority, we will promote environmentally

friendly activities by advising participants to choose environmentally friendly options during their mobility, to increase environmental awareness of programme's participants. Based on experience and trends in the field of environmentally friendly principles, we will strive to implement mobilities with environmentally friendly practices.

Third priority is 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. We will promote activities and events that allow Erasmus + outgoing and incoming students and staff to be civically engaged before, after and during mobility, to develop their skills beyond the formal educational settings. They will have opportunity to volunteer and be active in local society. We will promote activities and projects that enhance active citizenship, like ESAA funded project WE AfriHug.

Fourth priority in this programme is encouraging the participation of individuals with fewer opportunities. According to ECHE charter we provide transparent, non-discriminatory support to all. Activities within the program will address equally all participants, including those with different social backgrounds, as well as those with fewer opportunities, who are provided with additional incentives. We always promote and share news and information about activities to all potential participants through the same distribution channels. This is valid for all areas of Erasmus + programme.

The positive connotation of Erasmus + programme participants and their satisfaction and motivation will continue to be promoted to target groups and to all students and staff at our institution, to increase visibility of the programme. Namely, the effects of the program are also reflected in the newly acquired competencies of participants in mobility, improved knowledge, skills, broader horizons of participants and important experiences gained, that contribute also to the excellence of the Faculty, which is another goal of the next programme period.

For participants, the mobility Erasmus + mobility is often the first individual contact with the international environment. The implementation of higher education internationalization is also one of the major effects of the program, and at the same time, by achieving this effect, we also plan to achieve our long-term strategic goal on internationalization.

The main goals we are planning to gain with the KA1 and KA2 projects are: development of cooperation with partners in other countries in the framework of a clear strategy for internationalization; promotion and support to students and staff mobility, especially for individuals with fewer opportunities, and based on non-discrimination policies; pursue a clear policy towards the development of integrated, transnational teaching, learning and training activities; recognize the importance of and provide visibility to the results achieved by staff members engaged in individual mobilities or in cooperation projects with strategic partners; taking into account the results of internal monitoring of programme implementation, to further improve our international performance.