

## **Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)**

### ***D. Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)***

The Institution agrees to publish this overall strategy (all three parts) on its website within one month after the signature of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education by the European Commission.

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. (max. 5000 characters)

Original language [EN]

The University of Essex (UofE) is proud of its success in attracting the most able international students and staff, and we recognize the role that internationalization plays in enhancing excellence in research, excellence in education, the student experience and graduate employability. UofE's targets for internationalization are guided by the University Strategic Plan 2013-2019. At the heart of the international activities lies the goal to further develop the international reputation of UofE by creating a vibrant international community; increasing student and staff mobility; creating high quality partnerships and collaborations world-wide that provide positive contributions to the our research; enhancing the educational experience of our students and; the visibility of our University.

The institutional strategy emphasizes the importance of mobility of students (15% of the UG cohort by 2017) and of academic and administrative staff.

Mobility partnerships are either initiated by an academic department in the case of discipline specific relationships, or by Essex Abroad in regards to multi-discipline or university wide agreements. Partners are chosen in some cases for a particular subject area but in other cases for their breadth of subjects. Partnerships are formed in cities, regions or countries where there is demonstrable demand from our students and staff to go.

In all cases, partnerships are developed with institutions abroad which have a high degree of academic and research synergy and compatibility with UofE programmes and research. Additionally, Essex looks at the international reputation of the partner university, as well as other considerations, such as: the level of support provided to students, accommodation options, safety and security issues, and the level and types of extra curricula activities available to students. This later point is an important consideration as it ties into the employability agenda for our students.

Recognizing that partnerships are two way, when establishing a new agreement, or evaluating an existing relationship, Essex also looks at issues such as what can UofE provide to enhance the partner university, such as ways to assist the modernization or Europeanization of the partner university. UofE always views a mobility agreement as the first stage in potential wider academic and research engagement with the partner university.

Essex Abroad has developed a clear process for establishing new partnerships. Agreements are initiated by an academic department, or in rare cases by Essex Abroad. The initiating staff submit an Agreement Proposal form to outline the nature of the relationship, how it will fit into the departmental or institutional strategic priorities and describe the partner in detail. Due diligence and service quality checks are undertaken, with the department responsible for ensuring research and/or curricula matching is completed. All relationships are evaluated on an annual basis. Evaluations are based on the academic and student support experiences of the participants, the quality of outcomes and potential for continued collaboration between the two universities.

In regards to the geographic focus for the mobility partnerships, this is driven by departments, and to a certain extent student demand. Western Europe remains a core region for UofE, due mainly to our popular Modern Language degrees, Joint language major degrees (German, French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese) and European Studies degrees. Additionally, the English speaking world (USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore) is a major draw for many students. Increasingly we have seen demand for exchanges to Japan, Korea, Latin America and Central Europe (Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary) increase.

1st cycle, 3rd cycle and staff mobility take priority for UofE's mobility schemes. In part this is due to the fact that the one-year masters programmes limit the opportunities for mobility. Reflecting the key employability gains to be achieved through a period of work or study abroad, within the Strategic Plan, UofE has set itself a target of 15% of Undergraduates to have had an international experience by the time they graduate. Therefore, 1st cycle students are a key target group for mobility programmes. In addition, UofE recognizes the benefits of mobility to career development for early career researchers and new staff, this is further reflected in the University's adherence to the UK Concordat on Research Career Development and the EU Charter for Researchers.

The decision to engage in degree programmes involving other HEIs is made by the Department through their Faculty. At present, UofE offers a dual LLB (English & French Laws), and three dual Masters (2nd Cycle) degrees are being developed. UofE is aiming to increase the number of joint and dual degree programmes and co-tutelle doctoral degrees in the coming years.

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. (max. 2000 characters)

Original language [EN]

UofE sees international cooperation projects as a significant avenue to enhance bilateral and multilateral partnerships, share good practice, enhance human resource and institutional capacity within the partnership and to develop long lasting activities in teaching, training and education. The University engages in international cooperation projects where the project aligns with the overall strategy of UofE and where tangible benefits to research or teaching at the University of Essex can be demonstrated. Participation in EU and international cooperation projects has been minimal to date, and involves only a few staff members. At present UofE is involved in 2 LLP projects and 2 TEMPUS projects. UofE has not lead on any international cooperation projects in the past, although recently the university has submitted proposals under the last TEMPUS and Erasmus Mundus programmes.

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. (max. 3000 characters)

Original language [EN]

Quantity: widening access etc.

UofE recognises the importance of research and innovation to meet Europe 2020 goals of a knowledge economy and youth employment. UofE has a dedicated team responsible for outreach and widening participation [www.essex.ac.uk/outreach](http://www.essex.ac.uk/outreach). Widening Participation mobility grants are available for eligible students. UofE firmly supports the training and development of early career researchers [www.essex.ac.uk/research/working](http://www.essex.ac.uk/research/working)

Quality & Relevance

UofE is embarking on an ambitious strategy to improve the employability of our graduates. This involves a thorough review of curriculum, teaching methodologies and expected learning outcomes to ensure relevance in the employment market. We are committed to internationalization, which includes mobility but also internationalization of the curriculum ([www.essex.ac.uk/ldev/muse/itc\\_toolkit\\_final.pdf](http://www.essex.ac.uk/ldev/muse/itc_toolkit_final.pdf)). Mobility is firmly embedded in the Employability agenda and we are developing work-based learning options to include placement abroad.

International Cooperation & Mobility

UofE is committed to providing mobility opportunities to all students for either study research, or work. By 2017, the University aims to have at least 15% of undergraduate students completing an international mobility experience before graduation. UofE is working towards embedding mobility within the curricula and has created mobility windows for all UG degrees. Essex also encourages staff to interact on both research and teaching with academics from other HEIs both in the UK and abroad.

Knowledge Triangle

As an international centre for knowledge, expertise and innovation, Essex plays a significant role in regional economic development. With the Knowledge Gateway development [www.essex.ac.uk/knowledge\\_gateway](http://www.essex.ac.uk/knowledge_gateway) UofE aims to create an innovative environment for talented people to harness regional strengths for global impact. UofE engages in teaching, research and knowledge transfer through its academic staff supported by a range of professional services. Through knowledge transfer, UofE academics participate in rewarding and on-going collaboration with innovative businesses, improve understanding of business requirements and operations, apply knowledge and expertise to important problems and develop relevant teaching and research material.

Improving governance and funding

UofE is committed to developing centers of excellence and is undertaking structural reforms to streamline governance and administration and remove barriers to innovation and progress. In an era of austerity and decreasing public funding UofE looks to diversify funding streams through a variety of means: increase the number of international students to around 50% of the student body; develop a suite of new innovative international dual and joint degree programmes across a range of disciplines and; further engagement in externally funded international cooperation projects. UofE also aims to enhancing research and commercial income.

\* COM (2011) 567 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0567:FIN:EN:PDF>)

**E**

## Endorsement of the application

*I, the undersigned, legal representative of the applicant institution,*

*certify that the information contained in this application is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. All Programme activities will be implemented on the basis of written agreements with the relevant authorities of the partner institutions;*

*agree to the content of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) application outlined above and commit my institution to respect and observe these obligations;*

*agree to the publication of the Erasmus Policy Statement by the European Commission*

*Place: Colchester*

*Name: Mr Bryn Morris*

*Date (dd/mm/yyyy):*

*I have read and accept the Privacy statement*

*Original signature of the legal representative of the Institution (as identified in section A.2 above)*

*Original stamp or seal of the Institution*