

## Erasmus Policy Statement 2021-2027

The participation in the Erasmus programme significantly contributes to the fulfilment of the Mission and Vision of the University of Ostrava which wants to stand as a university open to the world. The University of Ostrava is ready to bring the progressive tendencies of the European science and education to the regional environment as well as to create favourable conditions for international cooperation and an affable environment for international academics and students.

The international relations and internationalisation development belong to the long-term strategic areas of development of the University of Ostrava. These activities are focused especially on the cooperation with foreign universities through the students and staff mobilities and international projects, with research institutes, art organisations and foundations and even through the participation in the international professional conferences, symposiums and programmes.

The internationalisation efforts are reflected in the mutual exchange of knowledge and good practice, work on joint projects, increasing the competencies of academic and non-academic staff, the increase of education standards, research activities and the prestige of the University of Ostrava in Europe and in the world.

The activities of the Erasmus programme represent an important element of the modernization and internationalisation of the University of Ostrava.

The strategic goals of the University of Ostrava (UO) in the internationalisation area include:

- the development of the professional institutional base of the internationalisation and strengthening the UO position in the international education environment,
- the internationalisation of teaching and UO students' education (internationalisation of the curriculum),
- The development of the international environment at the UO and the attractiveness of the university to the international students, academics and researchers.

To fulfil these goals, the UO focuses, among others, on:

- creating conditions for the international mobility of bachelor and master students in the study plans by introducing a semester without the compulsory subjects or a semester with a compulsory international mobility,
- expanding the offer of quality European and non-European universities for student mobilities in the Erasmus and VIA programmes,
- introducing a flexible procedure for recognition of the student international mobility outcomes with the aim at the compatibility with the graduate's profile and learning outcomes,
- introducing compulsory subjects and expansion of the offer of optional subjects taught in foreign languages for students in Czech bachelor and master study programmes for the effective integration of domestic and international students in classes.
- supporting the international research-oriented traineeship of doctoral programmes' students and their interconnection with the international scientific cooperation of the UO academics,
- ensuring an equal approach to mobilities for students from all social backgrounds and for students with special needs,
- creating an offer of subjects taught jointly by an academic from UO and an academic from a foreign university using the digital teaching and mobilities (blended mobility),
- innovating the subjects' syllabi and methods of teaching in the Czech programmes so that the learning outcomes comprise even transferable skills including intercultural competencies,
- ensuring a long-term support of UO students in developing their foreign language communication competencies,



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- accreditation and implementation of joint study programmes with foreign universities (joint/double/multiple degree),
- increasing the number of international experts involved in the educational process including the visiting professors,
- supporting the UO academic and non-academic staff who undertake a teaching/training experience abroad,
- an offer expansion of study programmes taught in foreign languages that are attractive for both domestic and foreign students,
- improving the environment and care for the international students by involving the domestic students through the Buddy programme of ESN Ostravská and beyond,
- developing the UO orientation days' activities for incoming international students to get acquainted not only with the university itself but also with the city and its surroundings,
- developing the curricular and extracurricular activities supporting the integration of international students, academics and researchers at and outside of the university,
- preparation and implementation of the communication strategy aimed at the international alumni of the study, exchange and short study programmes at the UO,
- acquainting the UO academic staff with the concept of internationalisation at home and the preparation of the offer to share good practice of Czech and international universities,
- ensuring a regular courses offer for UO academic and non-academic staff to develop their intercultural competences and special skills for work with the multicultural groups of students and their teaching,
- Qualitative improvement of interuniversity cooperation through EU projects (e.g. Erasmus KA2 projects).

The key principles of the UO strategy, i.e. flexibility, diversity, affable communication and a university friendly to the natural environment, will be reflected in the implementation of the Erasmus programme and will contribute to the fulfilling of the new programme priorities which they fully comply with.

The above stated principles of the strategic path of the university express its long-term efforts for a socially responsible approach to the implementation of all activities including the development of comprehensive support programmes for students from disadvantaged background and students with special needs so they would take the advantage of the mobility opportunities and other internationalisation activities without the undesirable restrictions. There is a mentoring system at the faculties that is open to the students as well as the activities of the UO Counselling Centre and the individual care of the faculty and institutional coordinators of the Erasmus+ programme. This care is available to the incoming students also in English.

UO will continue to reflect the principles and values of the European Education Area in its activities. UO actively joins the current initiatives of the European Education Area such as European Student Card Initiative or European Universities.





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To fulfil the ambitious goals of the internationalisation strategy the UO would like to take advantage of the widest possible portfolio of actions of the Erasmus programme, keep the continuity of the international cooperation established in the previous programme period and develop it further. Based on the positive experience and mutual acquaintance the UO wants to move from the students' exchanges to qualitatively higher types of cooperation in the means of joint projects with chosen partner universities. The highest form of cooperation and integration are the projects of **European universities**, which belong to the priorities of the OU and where the OU has participated as a consortium member. The individual activities will be implemented with the partners from programme and partner countries, each time in compliance with the Erasmus programme rules for particular activities. Methodological and information support will be provided to students and staff who are interested in submitting an Erasmus project.

**Mobility of Individuals** is one of the pillars of the international cooperation and its implementation is reflected into individual goals and provisions of the UO internationalisation strategy. During the students and staff participation in the mobility the UO will build on the long tradition and will make use of the established management and operational processes.

The UO aims at the accreditation and implementation of the joint study programmes with foreign universities (joint/double/multiple degree) to which it can take advantage of the support in the form of **Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees**.

The UO would like to carry out projects of **Strategic Partnerships** in order to implement new procedures leading to high quality of teaching, institutional modernization and social innovation.

The UO can develop the cooperation with enterprises using the projects of **Knowledge Alliances** aimed at innovation in education.

To develop a cooperation with partner countries the OU can together with chosen universities prepare **Capacity-building projects** and therefore, support the process of their modernization and internationalisation.





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Students' and staff mobilities, as well as the international projects, significantly contributes to increase the quality of study programmes and the development of UO students' knowledge and skills. Participation in the mobilities helps to develop professional, social and intercultural competencies and makes it easier for graduates to enter the labour market.

The UO will strive to monitor the higher education trends in the EU and CR through the volume of mobility activities. The goal for the next period will be to keep the number of mobilities, eventually increase it, especially for outgoing students. We will focus on the quality of mobility programmes, maintaining and improving the system of care for mobility participants, the development of relations with partner universities and sustainability of the cooperation. The main challenges in terms of qualitative goals will include joining the European Student Card Initiative and implementation of individual tools for digitalization into the Erasmus programmes carried out at UO.

In terms of time, in the first phase of implementation (2020-2021) the UO will focus on the renewal or new conclusion of the inter-institutional agreements including the use of digital management tools. The students and staff mobilities will be held continuously throughout the whole period of the programme. We assume that the main focus on involvement in partnership projects for cooperation will take place from 2022 after the stabilization of the partner relationships and processes for the new period.

The following indicators will be used to evaluate and monitor the implementation of the Erasmus programme:

- number of (active) inter-institutional agreements,
- number of inter-institutional agreements offering blended mobility,
- proportion (number) of students participating in the international mobilities in the total number of UO students,
- proportion (number) of academic and non-academic staff who undertake an international teaching/training experience,
- number of incoming students and staff,
- number of extracurricular events for international students,
- feedback questionnaires for mobilities participants,
- number of study programmes with a semester enabling students to undertake an international mobility,
- proportion of the compulsory subjects in the total number of subjects recognized from an international student mobility,
- number of accredited and implemented joint study programmes (joint/double/multiple degree),
- number of submitted/supported KA2 cooperation projects.

The Erasmus programme is the main mobility scheme of the UO and it plays a crucial role in achieving its internationalization goals.

