



ERASMUS Policy Statement:

Edge Hill University has a strong commitment to the student experience, broadening international perspectives and cultural inclusion, and its internationalisation strategy reflects this ethos. The University wishes to develop and sustain successful, high quality partnerships with higher education providers and other organisations, both within and beyond the European Union. It wishes to broaden mutual understanding and provide students with a high quality learning experience enhancing employability. The University has strong links to China and the US, and a number within Europe which it wishes to significantly deepen. We seek partners with similar core values, in particular a focus on strong and supportive learning and teaching; we have a broad academic offering, also including training for education, health and other professionals.

Current partners include universities in Spain, Italy, Germany, Czech Republic, Greece and France. These links often arise from personal contacts; we are seeking to deepen these relationships to encompass more staff exchanges, and perhaps shared research projects. We believe deeper engagement will lead to greater familiarity, more staff and student exchanges, placement opportunities, and an improved student experience. The University is largely interested in undergraduate exchange and also short study cycles which we believe can be very beneficial.

To achieve these aims we will:

- Encourage incoming and outgoing mobility of both students and staff
- Provide tailored support for both streams of students, enhancing our language provision and cultural awareness Programmes
- Seek deeper and more effective relationships with a core of existing and new partner institutions and organisations via projects and exchanges

ERASMUS for ALL is at the core of our European strategy. The University has a particular expertise and interest in the public sector, which it wishes to understand in a pan-European context. It has also invested heavily in the creative arts and in particular its relationship with the economy and job creation linked to 'creative' enterprise and SMEs. In addition to transnational academic and professional development we also wish to strengthen and share best practice in the administrative and support areas. We shall continue to review our partnerships to ensure we have a broad offer in terms of subject and location, engaging particularly with relatively recent member states of the EU community.

We will encourage participation from all members of the University community with an emphasis on those undergraduate and postgraduate students from a widening participation background, a key constituency of our student body. We shall actively support staff participation, particularly from relatively recent entrants to the sector, enabling them to gain a broader perspective, experience other higher education systems and contribute to curriculum development which enriches the student experience.

While responsibility for overseeing teaching and training mobility sits centrally with the International Office, the University encourages and supports projects which emerge from Faculties and Departments since this is where collaboration is rooted. The initial identification of opportunities often arise from individuals within Departments but also from the International Office. Mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that all new partnerships are fully appraised. Academic Departments frame proposals, which are assessed by the relevant Faculty and following their approval are formally considered by the University's senior management team. It is recognised that teaching and training opportunities may arise at short notice and approval processes can be expedited. A cross University Working Group provides a forum for planning and the evaluation of partnerships and projects, identifying those areas where further cooperation would be beneficial.

Whilst ultimate responsibility for compliance lies with the International Office and the ERASMUS Coordinator, this Working Group also addresses and monitors compliance issues. Increasing staff and student participation in European exchanges is clearly identified in the University's international strategy, so full consideration has been given to the support and recognition of such participation. The University positively promotes these activities to both staff and students at enrolment and induction. Staff are encouraged to participate through staff development sessions, and financial support and leave is offered to facilitate participation, which is recorded through the performance review process and taken account of in career development. Teaching and training opportunities are fully promoted and publicised via the internal website and at dissemination events for staff from across the University, ensuring all are aware that such opportunities are available.

Expected impact includes:

1. To improve our students' awareness of cultural differences and the impact of globalisation
2. To provide opportunities for students to gain additional skills through study, training or work abroad
3. To broaden our understanding of international curricula and seek to learn from the content and teaching and learning of partners
4. Through these partnerships to strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the 'knowledge triangle', linking education, research and business

Through Erasmus Programmes our students are encouraged to experience higher education and learning opportunities in other countries. At Edge Hill University they can also strongly benefit from the presence of overseas students in their classroom, bringing different perspectives and experiences to the learning process. Both experiences allow them to draw on a broader knowledge base, widen their perspective, and inevitably this makes them more employable. There is very strong evidence to suggest that exchanges have a deep and lasting effect on attitudes, encouraging students to reflect on their own culture, and frequently leading to a long lasting engagement with their host country. Central to the University's learning strategy is encouraging the capacity to innovate, initiate and respond to change, and the challenge and benefits of study abroad addresses all three very effectively.

This university is particularly interested in issues related to employability. With high unemployment rates amongst young people across the EU, and significant debts amongst new graduates, the need to relate education to employment has never been stronger. The creation of 'knowledge triangles' will widen scope for students to develop their employability skills in a learning environment, allowing them to gain work experience, while being exposed to innovative, creative approaches in the sector of their choice. It also helps students set their academic studies in a work context. The capacity to combine work experience with study abroad would significantly enhance employment prospects, and these are opportunities we would wish to pursue. The education, health and creative industries are areas of particular interest for the University, and our staff and students would benefit greatly from participating in projects and work placements in these fields.

In-coming students also challenge academic staffs' traditional approach to content and delivery in programmes, leading to courses which reflect a more global environment and embrace a greater range of learning styles. Visits abroad for staff further improve their global awareness, and can lead to joint research of a subject or pedagogical nature. Sharing approaches to employability with partner institutions would be particular interest. In areas such as education and health, exposure to the work place will also naturally provide the opportunity for comparative studies and reflections on professional practice.