

Erasmus Charter Policy Statement (EPS)

Part I

Questions:

a) Please describe briefly your institution's strategy, objectives and priorities for its Erasmus activities (mobility, multilateral projects and thematic networks, etc.) and any other actions in the context of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007 2013).

b) Please also provide information on the following points:

What specific actions are planned to give visibility to Erasmus activities and what type of publicity will be given to the Erasmus University Charter and the EPS?

What kind of arrangements, if any, does the Institution ensure to comply with non-discrimination objectives (e.g. actions related to gender equality, integration of disabled students and staff, enhancement of social and economic cohesion and combating of xenophobia and racism)?

Answer:

The mission of the University of Bath is to advance learning and knowledge by teaching and research, particularly in science and technology and in close association with industry and commerce. We will continue to develop our distinctive academic style based on quality, balance and diversity, and to set ourselves ever more firmly in an international context. Our International and Learning and Teaching Strategies take these principles further.

In the European context our Erasmus priority is student mobility through study and work placements. Our objective is to enrich students' degrees by strengthening the opportunities for study and work placements in Europe within the supportive framework of the Erasmus programme. Our strategy is to build upon our existing excellence in academic mobility, work based learning and institutional and employer partnerships. By doing so we aim to maintain the high quality opportunities and good level of participation which we have already developed, while reaching out to encourage and support more students to take up the challenge of adding a European experience to their degree. Erasmus work placement grants will enable more students to choose Europe.

We will give visibility to Erasmus activities through our network of Exchange Coordinators and Placement Teams in each department, who will promote and support the specific opportunities offered in their subject areas and ensure that all students are informed of what is possible. We will emphasise Erasmus opportunities through our Undergraduate Prospectus, and contact new first year undergraduates on arrival with encouragement to consider Erasmus and prepare using the language courses and facilities which we provide free to all students. We will publish the Erasmus University Charter and EPS in the prominent International Office section of our website.

The University is committed to a policy of equal opportunities and has established Codes of Practice to ensure that potential and actual students and staff are treated fairly and equally, regardless of diversity aspects. The integration of students with disabilities is facilitated by our specialist Learning Support Service. Equality and Diversity are well supported, through efforts ranging from our formal Equalities and Diversity Committee to our more informal Bath One World Society, which fosters the sense of an international community and encourages the sharing of culture and roots.

The University's Widening Participation activities reach out to inform and encourage young people from socio-economic groups which are under-represented in Higher Education. The University provides financial assistance to students from lower income backgrounds through its Bath Bursaries Scheme.

Part II

Questions about the quality of academic mobility activities:

What kind of specific measures are implemented in the institution to ensure high quality in academic mobility activities?

Details should be provided on: recognition and credit systems, the provision of information on curricula, information and counselling of outgoing students, tutoring and integration of incoming students, provision of student services (in particular accommodation), preparatory and refresher language courses, support and acknowledgement of staff mobility.

Answer:

Academic mobility activities are governed by the University's academic framework, agreed by Senate, which locates responsibility and mechanisms for ensuring and monitoring quality with the Senate, Quality Assurance Committee and Faculty Boards of Studies.

Full information on the curriculum is provided in our online Unit Catalogue. This lists the units which make up each programme and describes their content, ECTS credits and method of assessment. Outgoing students receive academic recognition as laid down by the regulations for their programme. Each department has an approval process to ensure that students' course choices are acceptable for recognition and progression. Outgoing students are counselled by the Exchange Coordinator at departmental level, where the greatest experience and knowledge of specific host institutions resides. Incoming students are counselled and tutored by their Departmental Exchange Coordinator. They have the same access to staff and facilities and the same rights and responsibilities as home students. The International Office provides orientation events to help integrate new students.

All students have access to a wide range of support services including accommodation, careers advice, counselling, finance, healthcare and learning support, and to the International Office and Students' Union. Half of incoming students live in University halls of residence and half in private housing. The Accommodation Office provides a private housing information service.

Incoming students have access to free in-session English language courses. Outgoing students benefit from free language courses and use of the Self Access Language Centre.

Staff mobility is supported by the allowance of time away from normal duties and the topping up of Erasmus funding to cover travel and subsistence expenses. Staff would normally receive acknowledgement for teaching abroad within the annual appraisal process.

Part III

Questions about the quality of student placement activities:

What kind of specific measures are implemented to ensure high quality in student placements? Give details on how the work-programme and the placement agreement are prepared and implemented. Please describe the practical arrangements agreed between the parties. Please specify also the monitoring and evaluation of the placement period as well as its recognition in the curriculum.

Answer:

Work placements are embedded within programmes of study and so are governed by the University's academic framework for ensuring high quality. They are administered by Placement Teams in each academic department according to the Code of Practice on Placement Learning.

The Team briefs students early in their programme so that they have time to plan ahead.

All placement opportunities are evaluated and approved before being advertised to students. Evaluation includes the work programme and learning opportunities, support, anti-discrimination and health and safety policies and the working environment. The Team briefs the hosts and ensures that they understand their responsibilities and role and the expected learning outcomes.

The Team assists students through the application, interview and selection process, and ensures that an appropriate placement agreement is signed between the host and the student.

The Team briefs the students on a wide range of professional, cultural and practical issues and ensures that they understand their rights and responsibilities and the requirements which they must fulfil in order to receive academic recognition. This advice is also provided in a Placements Handbook.

The Team maintains contact with the students and their host companies to monitor their progress and ensure that the work programme is implemented and the agreement fulfilled. An Officer may visit the student on site mid-way through the placement, or the student is supported through an online resource or alternative arrangements.

At the end of the placement, the Employer provides a written appraisal of the student and the student completes a report on the experience. These documents form the basis for assessing satisfactory performance in accordance with the requirements of the curriculum for the award of credit.

On their return to Bath, students attend a debriefing session and their feedback contributes to the programme quality monitoring process.