

Erasmus+ Policy Statement – University of Lincoln

For many years student and staff exchange opportunities under the Erasmus scheme have provided an important and a growing part of the international offering at the University of Lincoln. More recently the Erasmus+ programme has been a key contributor to the University of Lincoln's approach to internationalisation in learning and teaching, research and employability. This document provides a policy framework for the University's engagement with Erasmus+ focusing in the establishment, monitoring, development and review of Erasmus+ partnerships.

University International Strategy

The University of Lincoln's Internationalisation Strategy was launched in the spring of 2018 and is the next step in the University's international development, building on our success and aligning with the University's Strategic Plan 2016-2021. That plan aims to serve and develop our local, national, and international communities by creating purposeful knowledge and research, confident and creative graduates and a dynamic and engaged staff team. The clearly articulated vision for the future is that the University will by 2021 be a global "thought leader" for 21st century Higher Education. It states that we will prepare our graduates for their future and we will work closely with our communities to ensure valuable impact from our research to make a meaningful contribution to our world. It confirms our intention to provide our students with a global experience by giving them the opportunity to undertake overseas placements. This will involve us growing our partnerships, placements and articulation agreements. Erasmus+ has a key role to play in bringing this about.

To achieve this, the University aims to:

- Enhance and embed a global outlook in all our staff and students through our intercultural initiatives such as Global Skills Awards for students, and intercultural competencies training workshops for staff and students, as well as internationalisation of the curriculum.
- Make the University of Lincoln a welcoming environment for international students and staff and support their integration.
- Grow internationally excellent and world-leading research.
- Support staff to engage in citizenship internally and externally, in our regional, national and international communities.
- Support staff from all parts of the University to work collaboratively outside their department or service, by promoting and actively encouraging more staff outward mobility.

In fulfilling these aims the following principles will be adopted:

Selection of Partnerships

Erasmus+ partnerships will be based on the principles of mutual esteem, reciprocity, and mutual benefit; will reflect the University's strategy, mission and vision; will be sustainable and offer the prospect of a long-term relationship; will enable the University to achieve ends which it could not achieve alone; and will contribute towards the attainment of the University's strategic objectives. The University is making every effort to consolidate its Erasmus+ partner base where possible and to grow this partner base more strategically.

Quality of Partnership Operation

All Erasmus+ partnerships must be fully in accordance with University policies on risk management, financial planning, compliance, quality assurance and financial management.

Universality in Engagement

There is a clear correlation between outward mobility and improved academic and employment outcomes. The difference in outcomes between mobile and non-mobile students is apparent across the board but is particularly pronounced for disadvantaged and black and minority ethnic students. Increasing opportunities for mobility through Erasmus+ is therefore an integral part of enhancing academic performance and employability. Best practice within the sector indicates that a flexible menu of outward mobility opportunities (ranging from a week to a year abroad) best meets the needs of students from a widening participation background.

Structural Aspects

As part of the University's continued commitment to outward mobility for both students and staff, the University has recently established a new department for Global Opportunities, combining the growing Erasmus+ and Study Abroad function together with the office for Transnational Education. It is the intention of this new department not only to give better visibility to students and staff of the opportunities offered by Erasmus+, but to also promote the widening portfolio of short-term mobilities. Each College has established a College Internationalisation Committee (CIC) where the health, development and direction of Erasmus+ partnerships can be discussed and reviewed. Representation from the Global Opportunities office on each of these Committees will enable good practice to be shared across the University.

Staff Mobility

The University Internationalisation Strategy recognises for the first time the significance of staff mobility in terms of positive effects on individual academic careers, as well as bringing significant benefits to a diverse range of professional services staff, developing their professional networks, broadening their experience of global HE, and encouraging new and innovative ways of working. The Erasmus+ framework allows professional staff to undertake staff mobility in a way which otherwise might not be possible, and feedback demonstrates that its numerable benefits are felt by both the individual and the department. The Global Opportunities Office and the Human Resources department will work together to publicise and roll out these opportunities across the University.

Promotion of Research

The Erasmus+ framework also supports the development of partnerships across Europe that promote knowledge exchange and integration of research into education, which will help inform and develop industry professionalism and working practices.

Conclusion

In summary, through our participation in the Erasmus+ programme, the University of Lincoln is able to offer opportunities for students to engage in study and work abroad outside the UK, which enriches their student experience and enhances their employability. Furthermore, the Erasmus+ programme encourages both academic and professional services staff to engage in teaching and training mobilities, which both enrich their professional careers and promote a global awareness of sharing best practice. The University encourages its participants to maximise the benefits with its rigorous preparation and debriefing of participants, which also feeds into the University's *Internationalisation at home* strategy.