

# Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS)

In order to complete this section, please refer to the instructions given below. Please note that your EPS shall be given wide visibility in your institution and must be published on the web page of your institution. The EPS should set out the overall Erasmus co-operation strategy of your institution in relation with its mission statement, underlying its Erasmus cooperation plan as well as any other activities to be proposed in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP).

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)?

a) The University of Ioannina (UoI) embraces the notion that physical mobility is the core element of Erasmus. Our strategic aim is to raise our outgoing and incoming student mobility. The pursuit of other key aspects of the LLP, such as mobility of academic and administrative staff, transfer of ideas, culture, curriculum and knowledge, reinforcement of academic and research linkages are also high on our agenda. We target an integrated strategy which focuses on successfully entering the EHEA and adopting the educational reform of the Bologna process: life-long learning, compatibility, transferability, transparency, mobility, quality assurance, employability, competitiveness. Most of these issues require the removal of legislative barriers and highlight the importance of national policies. In Greece, the implementation of the ECTS and the DS, evaluation and quality assurance issues have recently become legal obligations. We aspire to couple these national policies with specific institutional structures. An ad hoc executive committee will be set up to avoid missing out on opportunities presented in the context of LLP and ensure that UoI becomes part of the EHEA. Institutional measures will include: enhancement of study conditions and services, gradual introduction of study programmes taught in major EU languages, participation in networks, but also promotion on non-European markets, academic linkages with (non-)European HEIs and research centres, competition with other continents through strategic networking within Europe. b) The UoI has invested in a publicity strategy which promotes its European orientation. The International Relations Office (IRO) and the University Press Office are in the front line of this scheme. This effort is consolidated by the local media which offer coverage of the regular output of activities via press releases, radio and television broadcasts. Attracting however wider and possibly national publicity is a high priority for the near future. Our European visibility is promoted outside our national borders via our University's English Prospectus and webpage, but is also communicated to our partners through the mutual exchange visits. With regard to social politics the UoI has planned strategic action which is reinforced yearly and includes the following key points: Free health care, full-board (on a daily basis) and low-rent accommodation for all students; No fees for tuition, examinations, access to laboratory - library facilities, distribution of textbooks and materials, and attendance of Greek language courses; Scholarships; Confidential support services to students by the Counselling Centre; Support to students in terms of career planning and further study through the Careers Office; Ongoing modernisation of the campus to facilitate individuals with a disability; Provisions for individuals with visual loss or severe visual impairment; Development of gender equality policies; Lectures against xenophobia and racism.

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.

Compatibility, transferability, transparency and accumulation are key issues in student mobility and are guaranteed with the extension of the ECTS implementation in all our academic departments, the publication of information packages describing the learning outcomes of our courses and the issuing of the DS (by May 2007). We have achieved a gradual qualitative rise in outgoing mobility as the outcome of an effective endeavour which includes: Erasmus printed promotional material, numerous counselling sessions with prospective Erasmus students to select the host Institution and fill in the application forms, workstations (at the IRO) with free access to the Internet and printers, and establishment of the UoI section of ESN. Intrinsic to this effort is the support of our faculty who eagerly encourage students to cross our national borders and consult them in selecting a study programme which will be fully recognised upon their return to UoI. Our prospective Erasmus students reluctantly participate in the EILC courses, but we aim at compensating for this disadvantage by motivating them to learn or refresh a foreign language through language classes we will organise on our premises. Our thriving incoming Erasmus community is the result of a well-organised group of services: low-rent housing, tutorials in widely-spoken languages, access to one of the largest libraries in the Balkans, personal guidance and counselling, assistance with paperwork, no tuition fees for study, no tuition for the Greek language classes, numerous cultural activities, free health insurance, full-board free of charge, meet-and-greet services, free e-mail and internet access, sports centre, student associations. Finally, faculty and staff mobility is encouraged both because it is acknowledged and enhances the individuals' advancement in the ranking, but most importantly because it reinforces academic and research linkages and contributes to the notion of 'internationalisation at home'.

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.

Work placements undeniably develop students' communication skills and flexibility in a professional multicultural environment and contribute to the modernisation of the university curricula by making them more flexible and responsive to the needs of the society. The high quality of student placements can be ensured by a profound cooperation between the HEI and the receiving enterprises, whose operational area is interrelated to the students' educational background. The selection of the appropriate host country, organisation, placement duration and content is made according to the placement objective set by the University of Ioannina (UoI). The selected beneficiaries are adequately prepared in collaboration with the host organisations for the practical, professional and cultural life of the host country. Practical arrangements (transport, accommodation, work permit arrangements, social security insurance) are dealt with by the UoI and, if necessary, in collaboration with the host organisation. A tailor-made programme is provided for each student. The establishment of a permanent communication channel with the receiving organisation is integral for the success of the placements. A tutor assists the students' integration into the new social and professional environment, while a mentor supervises their learning progress. Both collaborate with the UoI to ensure that the training objectives are satisfactorily achieved and take appropriate action when necessary. Upon completion of their placements students receive the Europass-Mobility and a Report-Letter of Reference issued by the receiving organisation with a detailed description of the students' activities, occupational, linguistic and personal progress achieved. Students also prepare and submit to the UoI a report describing their educational and social experience. The UoI is committed to ensuring that the working period abroad is an officially integral part of the students' academic studies.