

COMMITMENT TO THE ERASMUS CHARTER PRINCIPLES

Declaration

I, undersigned, declare that if my institution is awarded with an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, my institution will undertake to:

- Respect in full the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion set out in the Programme.
- Ensure equal and equitable access and opportunities to current and prospective participants from all backgrounds, paying particular attention to the inclusion of those with fewer opportunities.
- Ensure full automatic recognition of all credits (based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – ECTS) gained for learning outcomes satisfactorily achieved during a period of study/training abroad, including during blended mobility.
- Charge no fees, in the case of credit mobility, to incoming mobile students for tuition, registration, examinations or access to laboratory and library facilities.
- Ensure the quality of the mobility activities and of the cooperation projects throughout the application and implementation phases.
- Implement the priorities of the Programme:
 - By undertaking the necessary steps to implement digital mobility management in line with the technical standards of the European Student Card Initiative.
 - By promoting environmentally friendly practices in all activities related to the Programme.
 - By encouraging the participation of individuals with fewer opportunities in the Programme.
 - By promoting civic engagement and encouraging students and staff to get involved as active citizens before, during and after their participation in a mobility or project.

WHEN PARTICIPATING IN MOBILITY ACTIVITIES

Before mobility

- Ensure that selection procedures for mobility activities are fair, transparent, coherent and documented.
- Publish and regularly update the course catalogue on the website of the Institution well in advance of the mobility periods, so as to be transparent to all parties and allow mobile students to make well-informed choices about the courses they will follow.
- Publish and regularly update information on the grading system used and grade distribution tables for all study programmes. Ensure that students receive clear and transparent information on recognition and grade conversion procedures.
- Carry out mobility for the purpose of studying and teaching only within the framework

of prior agreements between institutions. These agreements establish the respective roles and responsibilities of the different parties, as well as their commitment to shared quality criteria in the selection, preparation, reception, support and integration of mobile participants.

- Ensure that outgoing mobile participants are well prepared for their activities abroad, including blended mobility, by undertaking activities to achieve the necessary level of linguistic proficiency and develop their intercultural competences.
- Ensure that student and staff mobility is based on a learning agreement for students and a mobility agreement for staff validated in advance between the sending and receiving institutions or enterprises and the mobile participants.
- Provide active support to incoming mobile participants throughout the process of finding accommodation.
- Provide assistance related to obtaining visas, when required, for incoming and outgoing mobile participants.
- Provide assistance related to obtaining insurance, when required, for incoming and outgoing mobile participants.
- Ensure that students are aware of their rights and obligations as defined in the Erasmus Student Charter.

During mobility

- Ensure equal academic treatment and the quality of services for incoming students.
- Promote measures that ensure the safety of outgoing and incoming mobile participants.
- Integrate incoming mobile participants into the wider student community and in the Institution's everyday life. Encourage them to act as ambassadors of the programme and share their mobility experience.
- Provide appropriate mentoring and support arrangements for mobile participants, including for those pursuing blended mobility.
- Provide appropriate language support to incoming mobile participants.

After mobility

- Provide incoming mobile students and their sending institutions with transcripts of records containing a full, accurate and timely record of their achievements at the end of their mobility period.
- Ensure that all ECTS credits gained for learning outcomes satisfactorily achieved during a period of study/training abroad, including during blended mobility are fully and automatically recognised as agreed in the learning agreement and confirmed by the transcript of records/traineeship certificate. They shall be transferred without delay into the student's records, shall be counted towards the student's degree without any additional work or assessment of the student and shall be traceable in the student's transcript of records and the Diploma Supplement.
- Ensure the inclusion of satisfactorily completed study and/or traineeship mobility activities in the final record of student achievements (the Diploma Supplement).

- Encourage and support mobile participants upon return to act as ambassadors of the programme, promote the benefits of mobility and actively engage in building alumni communities.
- Ensure that staff is given recognition for their teaching and training activities undertaken during the mobility period, based on a mobility agreement and in line with the institutional strategy.

WHEN PARTICIPATING IN EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION PROJECTS

- Ensure that cooperation activities contribute towards the fulfilment of the institutional strategy.
- Promote the opportunities offered by the cooperation projects and provide relevant support to staff and students interested in participating in these activities throughout the application and implementation phase.
- Ensure that cooperation activities lead to sustainable outcomes and that their impact benefits all partners.
- Encourage peer-learning activities and exploit the results of the projects in a way that will maximise their impact on individuals, other participating institutions and the wider academic community.

FOR THE PURPOSES OF IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- Ensure that the long-term institutional strategy and its relevance to the objectives and priorities of the Programme are described in the Erasmus Policy Statement.
- Ensure that the principles of the Charter are well communicated and are applied by staff at all levels of the Institution.
- Make use of the "ECHE guidelines" and of the "ECHE self-assessment" to ensure the full implementation of the principles of this Charter.
- Regularly promote activities supported by the Programme, along with their results.
- Display this Charter and the related Erasmus Policy Statement prominently on the Institution's website and on all other relevant channels.

On behalf of the Institution, I acknowledge that the implementation of the Charter will be monitored by the Erasmus National Agencies and that a violation of the above principles and commitments may lead to its withdrawal by the European Commission.

On behalf of the institution, I commit to publishing the Erasmus Policy Statement on the institution website.

Legal representative of the institution

Rector of the University of Szczecin

prof. dr hab. Edward Włodarczyk

Signature of the legal representative

R E K T O R
E. Włodarczyk
prof. dr hab. Edward Włodarczyk



In the following sections of the application form, you will need to explain how your institution will fulfil the ECHE principles if the Charter is awarded. You are encouraged to consult the [ECHE Guidelines](#) for support in completing this application.

Please note that your Erasmus+ National Agency will monitor your Erasmus Policy Statement and your answers to the questions given in the application. The Erasmus+ National Agency reserves the right to request more information on your activities and propose supplementary measures, for the purposes of monitoring and implementing the Charter principles by your institution.

1. ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)

1.1 Erasmus activities included in your EPS

In this section, you need to tick the Erasmus activities covered by your Erasmus Policy Statement. Please select those activities that your HEI intends to implement during the entire duration of the Programme.

Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility:

The mobility of higher education students and staff ☒

Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions:

Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices ☒

Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities ☒

Partnerships for Excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees ☒

Partnerships for Innovation ☒

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3):

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3) - Support to policy development and cooperation: ☒

1.2 Erasmus Policy statement (EPS): your strategy

Your Erasmus Policy Statement should reflect how you intended to implement Erasmus after the award of the ECHE. Should you wish to add additional activities in the future, you will need to amend your Erasmus Policy Statement and inform your Erasmus National Agency.

What would you like to achieve by participating in the Erasmus Programme? How does your participation in the Erasmus Programme fit into your institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy?

(Please reflect on the objectives of your participation. Please explain how you expect the participation in Erasmus to contribute towards modernising your institution, as well as on the

goal of building a European Education Area¹ and explain the policy objectives you intend to pursue).

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

The University of Szczecin (the US) is a public comprehensive university that creates environment to enable academic success of its student and professional achievements of its staff. Mission and aspirations of the University of Szczecin are expressed in the Strategic Plan for 2019-2028 that outlines objectives coherent with ideals promoted by Erasmus programme. Core values expressed in the Plan will contribute towards modernising in order to meet the challenges of today according to international standards.

1. strategic goal: maintaining a position as a strong research centre; operational goals: intensifying cooperation with foreign research centres.

2. strategic goal: providing high-quality education at bachelor, master and doctoral level; operational goals: improvement of educational offer and new opportunities such as dual studies and increased volume of online and distant learning, developing various ways of cooperation, including new full study programmes in foreign languages;

3. strategic goal: efficient cooperation in education and research with European and non-European HEIs; operational goals: reinforcing among students and staff active civic roles, accommodating needs of various groups of students, including seniors and participants with fewer opportunities, initiating and developing cross-border and international cooperation;

4. strategic goal: efficient functioning of the university; operational goals: introducing electronic documents flow.

The Strategic Plan acknowledges the key contribution of mobile staff and students, and of participation in European and international cooperation projects, to the quality of its higher education programmes and student experience. Facing the necessity of providing a high quality of education to all social groups, modernization, and adjustment of the infrastructure, University of Szczecin wishes to fulfil those objectives with respect to the principles of humanism and democracy in accordance with the cultural heritage of the united Europe.

The priorities of the European Education Area, such as digital skills, common values, inclusive education and full automatic recognition are major themes of our Strategic Plan which emphasises necessity to provide high-quality education, constant innovation and adjustment to increasingly global setting.

The US wishes to achieve the operational objectives described in the Strategic Plan by participating in the Erasmus Programme. The US wants to be ambitious in its aims and seeks to develop and intensify cooperation with foreign research centres by participating in European and international cooperation projects. We will seek through Key Actions 1 and 2 initiatives that enable new opportunities such as dual studies and full study programmes in foreign languages. University of Szczecin will strive to obtain international accreditation to support quality of education and strengthen capacity to cooperate with diverse partner institutions. The US will continue to grow its international network of partners selected on the basis of their institutional strength and excellence in specific fields, taking into account the diversity reflecting the different needs and priorities of our students and staff.

The US in its actions acknowledges the key contribution of mobile staff and students, and of participation in European and international cooperation projects, to the quality of its higher education programmes and student experience. In regard to mobility, we are committed to extend the range of the opportunities we can offer to our students, which is an integral part of the improvement of our educational offer. University of Szczecin will pursue to increase the number of students who experience a mobility during their programme of study. Therefore, achieving an automatic mutual recognition is necessary to facilitate a beneficial participation in the Programme. University of Szczecin provides access to knowledge to the wide and age-diverse social groups, including students with fewer opportunities or at risk of exclusion. Blended mobility is a perfect measure for increasing volume of online learning possibilities. A combination of a short-term physical mobility with a virtual component accommodates needs of various groups of students who otherwise have a limited possibility to complete an entire semester abroad. We express a strong commitment to equality of opportunity, offering assistance to those from disadvantaged backgrounds. We will build on our experience and develop inclusive policies in regard to all aspects of mobility participation. Staff exchanges need to be deeply rooted in academic subjects to ensure that both staff and the students can benefit from them. The administrative staff mobilities should be in line with the institutional strategy of internationalisation in order to gain knowledge and experience allowing them to steer the university through a process of modernisation. An important role of the European and international projects and the mobilities ought to be mirrored in the institutional human resources policy. The US's new HR strategy is built on the incentive scheme for the staff who carries out the international project workload. Additionally, the annual academic and administrative staff evaluation will recognise mobility participation as an integral part of professional development.

In order to introduce the European Student Card Initiative measures, as well as to undertake necessary steps to implement overall digitalization, the US is introducing electronic documents flow at the institution in effort to facilitate

¹ For more information on the priorities of the European Education Area, such as recognition, digital skills, common values and inclusive education, please consult the following website:
https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area_en

open access to university's resources and apply more environmentally friendly practices.

University of Szczecin commits to respect in full the principles of Erasmus Charter for Higher Education and European Education Area by applying the rules of non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion, ensuring equal and equitable access to participants from all backgrounds, assuring full automatic recognition and the quality of the mobility activities and of the cooperation projects throughout the application and implementation phases.

Please reflect on the Erasmus actions you would like to take part in and explain how they will be implemented in practice at your institution. Please explain how your institution's participation in these actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of your institutional strategy.

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

University of Szczecin will endeavour to engage in all three Erasmus key actions as they are integral to the realisation of our institutional plans. The US will continue to participate in international partnerships with Higher Education Institutions, research centres, enterprises, local authorities, and other institutions for the implementation of learning mobility and partnerships projects funded under the Programme.

Participation in the actions described below will greatly contribute to achieving institutional goals (education, research, cooperation, and efficiency) mentioned in the beginning. Engaging in the projects allows an intensification of cooperation with foreign partners and will result in an improvement of education and research.

The US is compelled by student and staff mobilities to enrich and enhance educational offer every year. The study programmes composed for international exchange students are the first step towards building full foreign language instructed degree programmes and joint degrees. The University community is convinced that will benefit from building joint working groups and participation in international mobility by developing innovative and efficient teaching methods and add new content to the existing study programmes. Students' personal and professional development benefits from international mobility, especially in the context of transferable skills and competences, such as cross-cultural communication and language skills.

Academic staff who teaches foreign students and participates in the mobilities, practices teaching in a foreign language, especially in the context of content and language integrated learning. The objective for academic staff mobility is to enhance the quality of teaching methods and facilitate partnerships through the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

Administrative staff participating in the mobilities learns good practices and may introduce new approaches to handle university matters. The competent staff allows for smooth and efficient university management. The administrative staff participating in training mobility aims to learn good practices in managing day-to-day university matters, improvement of administrative procedures, financial solutions, and other supportive measures. This is especially valuable since European universities face very similar challenges and participate in common funding schemes.

Actions that aim at solving common issues by consortia of different stakeholders result in resolving the problems,

creating new ways of cooperation, and tightening bonds between European and non-European HEIs. Strong ties between the universities motivate them to learn from each other, to improve their educational offer and quality of research.

The qualitative levels of management, depending on the Key Action, are described below.

Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility:

The US handles incoming and outgoing mobility of students and staff both at central level and faculty level: International Office (IO) supervised by the relevant vice-Rector and at the exchange coordinators at the faculties appointed by Rector within assigned scientific disciplines.

Erasmus Institutional Coordinators for mobility with programme countries and mobility with partner countries at the International Office submit project applications and reports, manage project budgets and design internal rules for project participants and oversee the general course of the mobility conducted in the US. International Office staff members handle the central promotion of the programme and update the content of the university website where the procedures and documents concerning mobility are published. International Office staff members provide constant and complex support to all programme participants before, during, and after their mobility.

Exchange Coordinators appointed at the faculties are responsible for signing agreements and approving documents related to students' mobility programmes and academic recognition after the mobility. They provide information about student's outcomes that should be recorded by Students Service (Dean's Office) on the basis of Transcript of Records.

The selection process for outgoing students (for studies and for traineeship) takes place at their faculty. It is handled by the exchange coordinator who provides the student with the faculty's exchange offer and collects students' application documents. The next stages of the selection are run by International Office staff members who organize language assessment tests and later award scholarships to the selected students. The IO staff nominates the students and supervise formal procedures before the mobility starts: correct mobility programme preparation, insurance, grant agreement and scholarship payment. They provide support during the student's mobility and collect

documents necessary to complete the mobility (e.g. certificate of attendance).

The selection process of incoming students (for studies) takes place at their home institution. The IO staff receives nominations and informs the prospective participants about the application procedures (necessary documents and the study programmes). The exchange coordinators approve students' study programme to ensure that it is up-to-date and correct. The IO verifies students' obligatory insurance documents and study programme signed by three parties, issues visa invitations, if applicable and letters of acceptance. They provide the students hall administration with a list of the student interested in university's accommodation. In case of students from the partner countries, IO staff signs a grant agreement with a student and their home university and distributes a scholarship.

International Office organizes Welcome Day on a first day of the semester in order to meet all the incoming students, inform them about the general rules of the exchange, practical details of living in Szczecin, formal procedures concerning legalisation of stay and security and safety rules in Poland. Polish Language and Culture School and ESN Szczecin representatives are present at the meeting as well.

The exchange coordinators organize meetings at their faculties as well in order to inform the students about the timetable, answer questions concerning the study programmes and any other about the course of the exchange.

International Office and the exchange coordinators offer constant support to the international students during their mobility. International Office issues Transcript of Records with a grade distribution table in a timely manner.

The exchange coordinators handle incoming students for traineeship. They accept the students and establish their mobility programme. International Office plays a supportive role in order to make sure that all Erasmus standards are met. IO issues visa invitation and assures accommodation at the university's student hall, if needed.

The selection process for administrative staff takes at the central level of the US. International Office collects all applications and calls a committee that evaluates presented mobility programmes. The committee consists of Vice – Rector for Science and International Cooperation and a few selected exchange coordinators. The Head of International Office plays a supportive role in the commission. The committee approves the candidates on a basis of their mobility programme and assesses the following criteria: overall objectives of the mobility (in the context of university's strategy); content of the programme; expected outcomes and impact and added value of the mobility.

The selection process for academic staff takes place at their home faculty. The exchange coordinator collects all applications and evaluates presented mobility programmes according to the following criteria: overall objectives of the mobility (in the context of university's strategy); content of the programme; expected outcomes and impact and added value of the mobility. The list of the approved candidates (both academic and administrative staff) is managed by International Office where a relevant staff member distributes scholarships, informs the participants about the formal procedures that need to be followed before the mobility (e.g. signing scholarship agreement, insurance, etc.). International Office collects necessary documents after the mobility in order it to be correctly recognised, including certificate of attendance.

Incoming academic staff applies directly to exchange coordinators who accept the candidates on a basis of their mobility programme. Administrative staff applications are verified by International Office staff member and either redirected to the relevant administrative unit of the US or accepted to participate in the annual International Staff Week organized by IO.

All incoming and outgoing applications of students and staff are managed by online system which sorts and distributes applications according to the type of the mobility. It ensures that only relevant persons can verify and accept a potential candidate, it enforces a correct order of procedures and prevents one from interfering with another's competences.

International Office runs a website in Polish <https://dsm.usz.edu.pl/erasmus/> and in English <https://dsm.usz.edu.pl/en/erasmus-plus/> in order to provide clear and up-to-date information to everyone interested in Learning Mobility. The Polish version is primarily designed for students and staff of the US and the English version presents instructions for incoming participants. Both Polish and English webpage contains current application rules for students and staff, and exchange coordinators contact details. Additionally, study programmes offered to incoming students, grade distribution tables, and practical information about staying in the US are posted on the English website as well. All mentioned information is published in the relevant tabs at the websites.

International Office introduced in the 2018 online system in order to make the application process for students and staff more transparent, easy, and environmentally friendly. It is designed for both incoming and outgoing participants and supports mobility management as well. Implementation of this software has significantly reduced the amount of paper documents being circulated.

International Office is the unit that coordinates Erasmus Key Action 1 projects.

Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions:

University of Szczecin is particularly interested in an exchange of experience and know-how in order to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and employability. Cooperation with institutions from Europe and beyond, encourage modernisation and internationalisation process. It also inspires HEIs to design a long-term strategy for education, research and modernisation.

We are devoted to building and reinforcing our partner network as our previous experience proves that finding the right partner is a key to success. The US has already developed a collaboration starting from simple short-term exchanges to a dual degree based on a bilateral agreement between two institutions. We are interested to further develop this model of cooperation and establish a dual degree with another partners. We are also eager to build a consortium that will jointly deliver an international study programme under Erasmus Programme.

The last stage of institutionalised cooperation between higher education institutions is participation in the European University Initiative which is at the centre of the European Education Area concept.

The active participation in Erasmus Key Action 2 will boost the attractiveness of the US and improve the level of skills

of its graduates as well as raise competences of its academic and administrative staff.

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3) - Support to policy development and cooperation:

The University of Szczecin strives to play an active role in the life of its region. The geographical location of the US is an opportunity for successful cross-border cooperation between Poland and Germany and well as other countries in the Baltic Sea region. The US aspires to shape and stimulate innovative policy development that allows closer cooperation between HEIs, public authorities, and other stakeholders.

Implementation of projects in Key Action 2 and 3 is supported by various university units depending on the project objectives. The Projects Department obtains, collects and provides information on programmes and European funds as well as other external sources of financing. It consults project ideas, provides current guidelines and information needed in the application writing process as well as checks the proposals against formal guidelines. The Project Department supports the implementation of current projects.

The other unit that is involved in managing projects is Research Department that has its sections at every institute at the US. It allows to better cater to the specific needs of the staff researching different disciplines. In particular, it cooperates with institutes in the scope of the evaluation of scientific activities.

The International Office plays a supportive role especially in the field of international partner search and contact-making. The appointed project coordinators are responsible for project management, submitting documents, reporting, and dissemination of the results. They are supported in their role by the Project Department and International Office, if necessary. All projects are to be registered by the Projects Department before implementation according to the internal rules and checked against financial feasibility, personnel capacity, and compliance with the institutional strategy. Administrative support in handling the financial side of the projects is provided by the specific unit within the Finance and Accounting Department of the US.

What is the envisaged impact of your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on your institution?

Please reflect on targets, as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators in monitoring this impact (such as mobility targets for student/staff mobility, quality of the implementation, support for participants on mobility, increased involvement in cooperation projects (under the KA2 action), sustainability/long-term impact of projects etc.) You are encouraged to offer an indicative timeline for achieving the targets related to the Erasmus+ actions.

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

Erasmus+ Programme has always impacted University of Szczecin notably. This is by far the most-known and accessible programme that answers most of the needs of our university community. We anticipate that participation in the programme will influence quality of education provided by the US, value of conducted research, efficiency in management and greater capacity to commit to European Education Area priorities.

Personal contact with one's counterparts from partner institution is significant to maintain good relations. The US is committed to organize International Staff Weeks annually in order to provide a platform for its partners and staff to meet. Creating synergy effect that will balance weaknesses and strenghts of the participants will result in initiatives that were previously beyond the reach and access to innovative solutions and tools applied by the partner institutions.

The US wants to conduct high-quality cooperation with international partners, provide employees with development conditions in accordance with the highest standards and create a rich education offer in terms of academic content and practical relevance to the needs of international job market. International activity enforces changes at the university, it increases potential of students and staff by developing their professional, academic and interpersonal competences. Student mobility is an attractive but also essential part of studies which significantly broadens knowledge and experience of the participant. The students increase their employability by improving language competence, academic knowledge, awareness of professional requirements and flexibility adopted during their mobility period abroad.

Staff mobility positively affects professional development of the participants who use the experience gained in the partner institution in their work. All mobility participants will increase their general awareness of the cultural diversity, thereby increase their professional, social and intercultural skills. The more well-experienced staff who can function in the international environment, the bigger potential of the university to develop and improve. Taking into account this immense impact of the mobilities, the US is committed to increase their mobility flow by 10% by 2027, including blended mobilities.

International cooperation projects build institutional and academic capacity of the involved universities. Our previous experience confirms positive impact of actions taken to tackle the challenges facing higher education institutions. The US is invested in further cooperation across different regions, particularly in the projects that focus on the labour market and society or enhancing management and governance of the HEIs. Taking into account a success rate of such applications, the target that the US would like to achieve by 2027 is to become a coordinator of two projects

selected for funding. In the same time, we would like to keep a steady rate of partnering in at least two new selected for funding projects every year.

Sustainability and long-term impact will be ensured, apart from actions foreseen in the projects, by involving partners in the new initiatives while the project is still on-going. Those new projects will not only depend on Erasmus+ funding. They may be financed by the national sources. The US has already a very good experience with such cooperation under Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange in that matter. The collaboration may be also based on the bilateral agreements and financed by the partner universities or reciprocal services, eg. dual degrees, visiting professors.