UNIVERSITY OF BORÅS

# Erasmus Policy Statement 2021-2027

The UB's vision is "Together, we take responsibility for the future. Through continually developing distinctive education and research, we make a difference." The Erasmus+ programme supports and contributes to the UB's general strategy of providing quality and relevance in not only education and research, but also campus life, cooperation and civic engagement. Participating in the Erasmus+ programme equips participants with valuable knowledge, skills and experiences that are relevant in the global society. Internationalisation is integrated into all of the UB's activities and contributes to continually improving its quality and relevance, with new perspectives and ways of thinking as the result. The UB's research stems from six prioritised areas embedded in the study programmes. The UB's activities are performed in partnership with actors both within and outside of academia, and strategic networks benefit its development. The quality of the university's education and research, as well as its societal relevance, are strengthened by global, national, and local strategic collaborations. Academic freedom and democracy form the basis for all collaboration with the university. Focus is placed on long-term internationalisation, taking into account social, economic and ecological aspects of sustainable development. The collaboration and exchange of ideas between the UB and partners in different parts of the world contribute towards global solutions to collective challenges.

The UB's Internationalisation Policy is grounded in international frameworks, such as Agenda 2030 and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the European Union's overall goals, priority areas for higher education and Swedish national strategy for internationalisation of higher education. Internationalisation, including a global perspective and international partnerships, is a prerequisite for making meaningful contributions to the SDGs. This is exemplified by taking ethical responsibility and exchanging knowledge and resources. The UB is currently revising its goals for internationalisation. The work is based on UB's policy for internationalisation as well as on the objectives of the university as a whole. Mobilities and exchange are prioritised and encouraged at the UB, and staff exchange is seen as a merit for academic advancement. A central tenet in internationalisation at the UB is the ambition to provide students and staff with international insights and global experiences. The Erasmus+ programme contributes to this ambition by supporting an increased European identity combined with knowledge that contributes to societal development. Furthermore, the UB's educational programmes (both on-campus and distance) are increasingly characterised by internationalisation at home. The university has an educational environment that attracts and welcomes international students and staff.

The objective of taking part in the Erasmus+ programme is to further integrate internationalisation and cooperation in all areas of the UB's activities, and the programme functions as an integral part in reaching the UB's overarching objectives. It will contribute to the integration of internationalisation in education, research and innovation, decision-making, staff policy, campus life and engagement in the local community. Wider international exchange and cooperation contribute to participants learning from each other, gaining input and inspiration. Incoming participants add greatly to educational programmes by highlighting educational, social, cultural and language differences. Everyone learns from each other and a palette of possible techniques and opportunities increases and develops – an advantage for all.

UB is a modern university with a campus area in the city centre and was chosen as Sweden's Student City 2020/2021 by the Swedish National Union of Students. The UB strives to be an attractive choice for students, teachers and researchers globally who wish to contribute to the development of society. Participation in the Erasmus+ programme increases the quality in education and promotes key competencies for lifelong learning, such as interpersonal skills, cultural awareness and active citizenship. This equips students with knowledge and skills relevant to the labour market, both nationally and internationally. Participating in an Erasmus+ exchange enables improvement of language skills for students and staff. Multilingualism is further promoted through language courses for incoming students and the opportunities in the OLS for outgoing students. The UB has a focus on digital development in education, research and support services. Different forms of digitalisation include digital exams, distance learning and virtual learning environments. In order to increase the pedagogical quality, in-service training in digital skills and tools is offered at the UB.

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**Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility**

The UB aims at an increasing and inclusive internationalisation in regards to both students and staff (academic and non-academic). The UB understands the importance of mobility for staff and students in all academic cycles for continued improvement in the quality of education and research. It is of strategic importance for the UB to continue to increase mobility numbers as this provides participants with knowledge valuable to their future careers. It also contributes to internationalisation at home and an attractive study environment. Participation in the programme enables pedagogical development and strengthened international networks for staff.

Support systems are in place with the International Office at its core. Organised into two teams, the International Office handles the daily operations related to Erasmus+ mobility and the participants. Team IN manages incoming mobility and Team OUT focuses on outgoing mobility. The International Office makes sure the practical and administrative elements of the mobilities are dealt with in a supportive, transparent and structured way. Erasmus+ coordinators manage the mobility projects, for example documentation for participants, registration in Mobility Tool+, budget planning, final reports and contact with the National Agency. They also support the International Coordinators and the participants in questions specific to Erasmus+, such as the European Student Card Initiative.

The three faculties at the UB are responsible for academic matters and for entering into and evaluating inter-institutional agreements. The agreements form the basis of all exchanges and the UB has many successful mobility collaborations with higher education institutions all over Europe. Furthermore, the UB has many years of experience of collaborations outside Europe and has bilateral agreements with a number of partner universities around the world. During 2020, the UB applied for Erasmus International Credit Mobility for the first time, with the aim of developing new and deepened collaborations with selected partners.

The faculties are responsible for the design of the educational programmes at the UB, including mobility windows for outgoing students and availability of joint classes with incoming students. The mobility window serves as an integrated tool for increased European and international mobility and is already well integrated in the university's activities. International advisors at all faculties also play a vital role for the integration of Erasmus+ mobility. Deans of Faculties, Heads of Departments and Study Directors are engaged in planning and following up activities.

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

1. Partnerships for Cooperation and Exchanges of Practices

International perspectives, strategic international collaborations and international mobility characterise the research conducted at the UB and are fundamental to contributing to the UN's SDGs. The UB has experience of strategic partnerships within several of the prioritised research areas, both as partner and coordinator. This has created a breeding ground for continued development. KA2 Partnerships for Cooperation and Exchange of Practices contributes to the exchange of experience and pedagogical development. In the long run, it is expected to contribute to research and the UB's ambition of increasing international co-authored publication as well as other forms of collaborations, such as the exchange of mobility participants. At the UB, strategic partnerships are handled at a decentralised level and managed by selected project coordinators. Each project has its own aims and objectives contributing to the UB's overall objectives. Promotion and dissemination of the projects are established in the project group and supported by the Communications Office.

2. Partnerships for Excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

The UB aims to be involved in planning and applying for joint top-class master's programmes together with partners by each HEI integrating their own expertise. These academic collaborations represent a strategic opportunity and will lead to an increased number of top international students on campus and an integration and internationalisation of the curricula. Visiting scholars and guest lecturers allow the sharing of knowledge, which broadens the spectrum of research and includes alternative approaches to teaching. These exchanges are beneficial for the institutions who acquire greater visibility and recognition, and to the students who have the opportunity to explore different perspectives on their field of study.

In 2020, for the first time, the UB is part of a consortium applying for Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees, an international study programme of excellence. At the first stage, multiple degrees are planned to be delivered. These degrees are integrated into the national and institutional academic offers of each HEI and are fully recognized and accredited by national agencies. However, the technical feasibility of a joint degree between the partners is already being discussed. This is an extensive work, which requires close cooperation between the faculties and different administrative and support units within the UB, such as Admissions Office, Degree Certification Office, Communications Office, International Office, as well as between related units from the different HEIs involved. The working experience in a multicultural environment will be an incentive to take part in international educational programmes and contribute to internationalisation at the UB.

It is essential for the UB to increase its participation in these types of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches, developing strong scientific, technical, societal and management skills, which in turn will lead to new opportunities in terms of mobility, degrees and increased employability.

3. Partnerships for Innovation

The UB has a strong cooperation with society, both locally and globally. International collaboration is a crucial part of it and, in partnership with local, regional and international stakeholders and organisations, the UB aims at further developing sustainable and innovative solutions to emerging challenges. All efforts are made against the backdrop of sustainable development. The UB plans to further engage in this action, expecting the efforts to lead not only to innovative solutions for society at large but also to modernised education.

The UB aims to become an internationally attractive institution for collaboration in research and innovation and has a solid infrastructure for these types of projects. This infrastructure, supporting different aspects of innovation, includes a platform for international cooperation and a Grants and Innovation Office. Sharing innovative research and solutions for utilisation and application in society is an important part of this endeavour, which the UB wants to further strengthen. The Science Park Borås, as part of the UB, works for a sustainable societal development, which generates many initiatives and partnerships for innovation within research, development and societal planning. There is a strong focus on technical solutions, sustainability and communication.

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

The ongoing transformation of society through the changes in media and communication culture, closely linking social development to digital issues and digitalisation, raises questions of the relationship between democracy, well-being and education. Global events, such as the ongoing pandemic with effects on all corners of the globe, additionally open up for joint efforts in education and policy development and highlight the need for integrating work with the SDGs in institutional work, research and development projects. Fundamental human rights are part of each of the SDGs. There is a close link between freedom of expression and academic freedom, areas where the UB is engaged.

The UB is involved in cooperation with partners in several regions, opening up for more projects aimed at policy development and curriculum development in education and fields linked to SDGs. The experience from these initiatives clearly shows that some issues need to be handled together with not only higher education institutions, but also with civil society and non-governmental organisations, state agencies and national authorities. The UB therefore intends to further engage in this action, not only for the sharing of best practices and tools, but also for joint discussions, implementation and policy development.

The UB has experience in development projects, and the resources and support needed for efforts within this action are established. Just as projects in KA2, projects in KA3 are managed and implemented at a decentralised level at the same time as they contribute to the UB's internationalisation policy and goals.

The envisaged impact of participation in the Erasmus+ programme includes a more integrated internationalisation in all activities and both expanded and strengthened cooperation with partner organisations in Europe and around the world. The UB strives to maintain partnerships with high quality and mutual exchange. Indicators for the quality of the inter-institutional agreements include the frequency of mobility, a clear concept of which educational programmes can utilize the agreements and the participants' qualitative assessments post-mobility. The UB aims to increase its involvement in different kinds of cooperation activities, such as joint master degrees and strategic partnerships, which will provide greater visibility and recognition at an international level within and outside of academia. A desired impact is increased competence for researchers and teachers, with new perspectives and alternative approaches in teaching as the result. One indicator of this is the number of approved and completed cooperation projects, and the long-term impact includes higher quality in education and research at the UB. The engagement in international partnerships, which seek to find innovative solutions to emergent challenges, will further make the UB an attractive partner for organisations in different sectors of society – nationally, regionally and globally.

The programme will contribute to internationally characterised education and research at the UB, and the envisaged impact is increased quality. The global environment is rapidly changing and participants must be prepared to tackle the challenges ahead. Broadened global perspectives and an increased European dimension will equip participants to work in this global environment. Participation in the programme also leads to development of useful skills, including increased active citizenship and increased employability for students.

In the following Erasmus+ programme period, the programme will serve as a tool to increase the number of both mobility participants and educational programmes that contain an international perspective and content. Erasmus+ offers many types of international mobility opportunities for students and staff that will contribute to reaching this goal. In addition, the target of offering more English-taught course packages, allowing extended incoming mobility, will contribute to internationalising education at the UB. This will benefit all students and staff at the UB.

The UB's participation in the Erasmus+ programme will further result in improved quality of mobility processes, by involvement in and evaluation of the activities carried out within the framework of this programme. Since the programme is such an important part of internationalisation at the UB, the strengthened processes and administrative routines benefit other mobility and cooperation processes at the UB. Indicators of the quality in mobility processes include how satisfied the participants are with the support, as indicated in the MT+ evaluation reports, and the evaluations made by the National Agency.