

Erasmus Policy Statement University of Nyíregyháza

The University of Nyíregyháza has been developing its international relations for decades, and the most important cornerstone of this internationalization process is the Erasmus programme. The management of the University of Nyíregyháza regards the further strengthening of the internationalization of the institution as a key strategic goal in the future.

Our university is the largest and most prestigious higher education institution in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County. The origins of the University of Nyíregyháza and its legal predecessors go back to 1914 when the Royal Hungarian Institute for Schoolhouse Teachers in Nyíregyháza was established. Since then, our institution has always been a reputable teacher training centre, but numerous other academic programmes have also been launched during the past decades. In 2000, the College of Nyíregyháza was established with the integration of the Teacher Training College and the College of Agricultural Sciences. Since 1 January 2016, our institution has been operating as the University of Nyíregyháza, a university of applied sciences.

The mission of our university is to become a catalyst for the region in the future and to fulfil its role as a centre of intellectual knowledge in cooperation with domestic and international higher education institutions. The geographical location of the institution, the history of our country and the joint cross-border tenders carried out in the last decade have established significant links with the higher education institutions in the region. The university also develops its international relations under the county's development concepts. Our institution aims to create realistic conditions for participating in more and more European and international cooperation in the coming years. Due to the unfavourable social and economic background, that is, the relatively underdeveloped status of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, both at national and European levels, our university undertakes a great responsibility when participating in the Erasmus programmes. As one of the priorities of the mobilities is more social inclusion during the 2021-2027 period, we, at the University of Nyíregyháza, believe that the mobilities are especially important for people with fewer opportunities.

The most important objective of our university within the framework of the Erasmus programmes is to advance the modernisation and internationalization strategy of the institution. Modernisation of higher education is the continuous incremental improvement of organizational and educational practices, whereas internationalization of higher education is the ever-growing cooperation and exchange of ideas and good practices between higher education institutions. Modernisation and internationalization go hand in hand as they complement and reinforce each other. The backbone of modernisation and internationalization is the mobility of people as this could act as the main facilitator of the development of higher education. The subjects of the English language courses, the expansion and development of the courses may be an additional attraction for Erasmus students taking up the subjects. Enhancing research collaborations may open further contacts and opportunities while increasing the number of Erasmus students and concluding new bilateral agreements.

During the years, the variety of partners has become an important strategy of our university, we endeavour to make our international relations geographically balanced. We have, therefore, established Erasmus inter-institutional agreements with partners in different countries which represent nearly all main regions of Europe: Romania, Poland, Finland, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Germany, Croatia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom, to name but a few of the countries with which we have had active student and staff mobility exchanges for years. We also have very successful mobility exchanges with Turkish universities, and in 2019, we successfully applied for a KA107 project with the Tianjin Foreign Studies University in China. During the 2021-

2027 Erasmus programme, on one hand, we will intend to go beyond Europe with the establishment of new cooperation agreements with selected non-European higher education institutions, on the other hand, we will further expand the range of our inter-institutional agreements. The proposed involvement of Partner Countries in KA103 projects also opens up new possibilities for our university to advance our internationalisation and modernisation strategies.

Nevertheless, the mainstay of our international mobility programmes is still the cooperation with our partners from neighbouring Romania, and it remains our priority to sustain and develop the good cross-border and regional academic relations with those universities.

Therefore, our university intends to further participate in the Erasmus programme as it offers the best opportunities for modernisation and internationalization. We undertake to actively promote and support student and staff mobility by the inclusion and non-discrimination policies of the programme. Erasmus mobilities offer the possibility to our students and staff to broaden their thinking and practice their foreign language knowledge. For students, mobilities also provide opportunities to gain a competitive advantage in the labour market as graduates with international experiences are more employable because of their improved foreign language and intercultural skills. For staff, mobilities provide chances to get acquainted with the latest developments of the higher education institutions at an international level. Mobilities can also serve as the starting point for possible later joint research projects. We, at the University of Nyíregyháza, believe that by our active participation in the Erasmus programmes, we can contribute to the goal of building European Education Area, which can open up possibilities and create synergies for the benefit of students and staff alike. We also believe that thus our university can contribute even more to the cultural, material and academic development of our region.

One of the most important undertakings of our institution is to successfully attract the disabled students to participate in mobility programmes with establishing excellent cooperation with the Equal Opportunity Group of our university. The buildings of our university are fully accessible to the disabled, and the Equal Opportunities Group offers personal guidance and mentoring to students with disabilities. Our Erasmus programmes are conducted transparently and inclusively, paying special attention to people with fewer opportunities.

Another important part of our strategy is to increase the quality and quantity of student traineeship mobilities. As we are a university of applied sciences, the academic emphasis of our institution lies in the practical utilisation of skills and competences. Accordingly, our university has established cooperation agreements with several companies and enterprises in the region. These agreements can also serve as the basis of future internationalization projects.

Since our university was originally established as a teacher training centre, we have a well-known academic tradition in pedagogical programmes. Another strength of our university is agricultural sciences as we are also an important agricultural research centre. Further academic fields in which our institution excels are Environmental Sciences, Linguistics, Biology, Music, and Psychology. We aim to utilize the strengths of these academic fields in our future international cooperations.

During the 2021-2027 Erasmus programme, our university will endeavour to engage in KA2 programmes, that is, cooperation among organisations and institutions. We believe that the first step in this direction is to establish Partnerships for Cooperation and Exchanges of Practices. These partnerships should be relevant to the academic profiles of the participating HEIs and should also be geographically balanced. The partnerships can also serve as the starting point of further possible KA2 projects.

To increase the number of students participating in Erasmus programmes, our university will launch blended mobilities in cooperation with our partner institutions. Our university will also take measures to encourage student participation by establishing mobility windows and other new innovative ways to make the recognition of ECTS credits more convenient. We will make new efforts to integrate incoming students into our university life through the buddy system and by organising events in cooperation with ESN. All incoming students will have the chance to learn the basics of the Hungarian language and get acquainted with Hungarian culture in an organised way. For outgoing students, we will introduce new ways to help them prepare for their mobilities, e.g. psychological assistance and student mentoring.

In the case of staff mobility, our university will recognize participation in Erasmus programmes as a part of their professional development. We will endeavour to give the opportunity of participating in mobilities to as many of our colleagues as possible because we are convinced that staff mobilities are beneficial to the human resource development of our university. During the 2021-2027 Erasmus programme, our university intends to organise international staff weeks, which can further vitalize inter-personal and inter-institutional relationships.

Following the objectives of Erasmus 2021-2027, our university will endeavour to lower the carbon footprint of the Erasmus programme by encouraging carbon-neutral mobilities, that is, promoting environment-friendly ways of travelling and participating in the Erasmus Without Paper (EWS) project. Our institution will also take part in the European student Card initiative and promote civic engagement and active citizenship among students.