

## Erasmus Policy statement (EPS): overall 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 Area<sup>1</sup> 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)

### **What would UT like to achieve in the coming years?**

Early 2020, we published our institutional policy *Shaping 2030*. Our point of departure: “With everything around us in flux, how can we confidently say anything about the year 2030? The 4th Industrial Revolution has come with promises of flourishing and prophecies of doom. Irrespective of our positions, we all must rethink our lives and help redesign society. For us, this calls for a reinvention of the university. One can compare the current revolution to previous industrial revolutions: a flood of changes fundamentally reshaping society, but also causing severe drawbacks, particularly in the balance between people and technologies. Right now, we are witnessing a transformation such as this, and we are not subjected to it: we shape it ourselves.” And with the ink barely dry a pandemic entered our world imposing urgency and speeding up this transformation.

We have a clear mission: “The University of Twente is a people-first university of technology. We empower society through sustainable solutions.” Being ‘people-first’ is our choice: we serve humanity, fully aware of the interdependencies between people and our planet and always aiming to make sure that people can count on us. In the choices we make, large and small, the well-being of people is our guiding principle. We are a university of technology and we are accountable to society for the ways in which we use our academic freedom, to ensure that science and technology are used to serve society optimally. Our task is to share knowledge. We empower society to achieve the goals it sets itself by making use of science and technology in a sensible manner. We provide sustainable solutions: we aim for thriving and resilient communities, with an eye for innovation opportunities, with authoritative expertise, and with a keen sensitivity to society’s needs.

In the spirit of this mission, we envision a society in 2030 in which we seize the technological opportunities of our time with confidence and wisdom. In the coming decade, society will face many challenges. It can only hope to overcome these with the full engagement of the scientific community. UT believes in a focused ambition that involves setting clear priorities in education, research and innovation at the touchpoints between these challenges and our own identity. Given UT’s mission to be a university of technology that puts people first, we direct special attention to three societal themes and the challenges they pose: we aim to contribute to the development of a digital, fair and sustainable society between now and 2030.

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<sup>1</sup> 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](https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area_en)

What does UT want to achieve by 2030? Our goal is threefold: shaping society, shaping connections, and shaping individuals. We aim to *shape society*, to be a university that serves society in an inclusive way, working towards enhanced opportunities for healthy living and better healthcare, connected communities, and sustaining the environment. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals are the reference point for our own sustainable development. As we can only realise our ambitions in collaboration with partners, and therefore our second goal is to *shape connections*, on campus and beyond. And as citizens in the rapidly changing world of 2030 need to be resilient, adaptive, inclusive and connected, we aim to function as an academic hub *shaping individuals* by fostering ownership and talent. We cherish our rich tradition of combining technical and social sciences in our five profiling themes: Improving healthcare by personalised technologies; Creating intelligent manufacturing systems; Shaping our world with smart materials; Engineering our digital society; and Engineering for a resilient world.

### **How does UT's participation in the Erasmus+ Programme fit into our institutional strategy?**

UT has a strong international profile with an international community of staff and students, excellence in research, education and our ability to make knowledge suitable for economic and/or societal use. We are known for our entrepreneurial spirit and the more than 800 spin-off companies created over the last four decades. Participation in the Erasmus+ programme has been very important in fostering opportunities for mobility, joint education and research. Erasmus+ is the programme to offer a platform for collaboration, a common terminology in a world-wide network of institutions and an important funding scheme for mobility, development and joint programmes.

The mission, vision and strategic goals are all international in itself: UT aims to contribute to sustainable development in society, at local, regional, national, European and global levels. Also, our endeavour to reach society on all these levels requires a local, regional, national and international environment and ditto co-operation. The Erasmus+ programme has been and will continue to be crucial for the realisation of the mission, vision and strategic goals. We cherish the opportunities it offers for (digital) mobility of higher education students and staff, participation in European networks and co-operation with specific European organisations and institutes, joint policy development, and the exchange of expertise. We have been active in multiple European and international credit mobility opportunities, partnerships and alliances for innovation, in the co-ordination of being a European University, and in supporting policy reforms, including Jean Monnet activities.

### **How UT is actively building a European Education Area**

Our participation in Erasmus+ programmes will continue in the way we chose to decades ago. In the field of education and research, we focus on existing contacts of our researchers with their international colleagues and combine these with student interests for exchange destinations and exchange programmes. These contacts form the basis of future co-operation for research as well as for education. This has been supported by E+ via European and international credit mobility. Where joint education is concerned, UT aims to offer challenging network programmes that result in internationally recognised joint degrees. Furthermore, we run projects from capacity development perspectives. We consider it of great importance to view educational projects from a research perspective as well, in order to make sure that we can let education, research and innovation feed on each other. At this point, we already anticipate participating in the future Erasmus+, as may be expected from our background in enhancing mobility.

UT was amongst the first Dutch universities to offer an elective semester: almost all bachelor level programmes offer a 30 ECTS credit opening in which students can study abroad. Where some programmes set basic academic criteria for mobility, others work towards pre-approved mobility. In the

majority of our master programmes, an (international) internship has been incorporated. Erasmus+ has been the largest scholarship scheme to support student mobility for coursework and placement and as such will continue to be co-funded by UT in order to increase its growth. Apart from European mobility schemes, our projects with Armenia, Australia, Brazil, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Russia, Serbia, Surinam and Uganda have been rewarded with funding for international credit mobility. In order to support mobility, semester exchange packages have been generated, as well as a designated brochure for incoming exchange students. In joint programmes, Erasmus Mundus has been of great importance, as it supports enrolment of excellent students due to the prestigious Erasmus+ brand. Therefore, Erasmus Mundus envisioned to continue playing an important role in the future. Various initiatives in E+ KA2 and 3 projects have been rewarded over the years.

Finally, our ECIU-university initiative cannot be left unmentioned. UT is one of the founding members of The European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU), which was set up in 1997. In the former Erasmus Policy Statement, ECIU was already mentioned as one of the main focus points of exchange. Not only was there an active exchange of students and staff between the partners of the consortium in the past, which we aim to continue doing, the consortium also is one of the 17 alliances that has been given the status of a European University. In September 2019, the ECIU university was granted full funding by the E+ programme. The ECIU University will build a ground breaking, innovative, virtual university, with mobility of students, staff and stakeholders at its core. Once the project has finished, the ECIU University will continue. The consortium has already investigated ways of creating synergies between the various actions of the E+ programme. It is therefore crucial that we see project development in Erasmus+ as a strategic durable tool to enhance and maintain the quality of courses, programmes, degrees, systems and procedures, as well as the quality of events and products for the public good.

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.

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**Which Erasmus+ actions does UT plan to take part in?**

Because UT is working on a new internationalisation strategy, the exact activities will be defined by the end of 2020. UT has been active in all three Erasmus+ key actions and it is expected that we will continue to do so. Mobility of students and staff has given a boost to the internationalisation of UT through our partnerships: it has enabled our students and staff to develop international and intercultural skills in order to become the global citizens that society needs. Incoming staff and students have contributed to the international campus, to the development of international curricula and to the international classroom. Collaboration with people from other cultures makes them aware of other perspectives, broadens their minds and leads to different perspectives on suitable solutions for societal problems. UT aims for an increasing influx of high-tech talent from Europe and beyond, to make our university more visible because of its participation in European programmes. Companies in our region see this increase as a possibility to fill up many high-tech positions that are vacant. This influx is welcomed by this sector as it increases opportunities to work on solutions for regional problems with UT in a EU setting strengthening its position. Spin-off companies originating at the university help develop employment possibilities in the region of Twente. As explained before, sustainability is an increasingly important factor. Physical mobility will remain equally important to the growth that is expected in the digital domain: digital co-operation, knowledge transfer and dissemination in mixed international student project groups and online meetings will become an alternative to physical travel.

UT would like to continue its efforts to participate in all different elements of Erasmus+. First, Key Action 1 mobility projects for collaboration with the programme, as well as with partner countries (e.g. Indonesia, sub-Saharan countries), will most certainly be applied for. As the potential of blended mobility (projects with a combination of physical and virtual mobility) could be of interest to students who prefer or are only able to stay abroad for a short period of time, we envision participation in this new scheme. Ideas that spring to mind in using the scheme include e.g. its use in the 'Transdisciplinary Master Insert', a 30-credit module across disciplines. It could also be an opportunity to fund the short-term mobility that is part of the European University project. Consultation of academics and research groups involved in previous and current KA2 projects indicates a pro-active attitude towards participating in upcoming new calls in the E+ field of co-operation and exchange of good practices. We anticipate involvement in the still tentative 'collaboration', 'innovation', and 'excellence' wings of the new programme. One of our faculties focuses on capacity building; in other faculties, innovation in education is the subject of (international) collaboration. Specific examples of projects that could be brought forward for funding are research projects on innovative methods to teach technical academia and on how to go about lab research components through distance learning. Even though COVID-19 developments make it harder to look into the future, we do expect to become active in future European Universities as well as in new Erasmus Mundus projects. Participation in KA3 will most likely consist of individual staff members participating in actions to support policy development and co-operation, as it is anticipated that the main role in this action will be at governmental level.

#### **How will these actions contribute to achieving the objectives of UT's institutional strategy?**

The Erasmus+ programme will be an important instrument in *shaping society*, *shaping connections* and *shaping individuals*. As internationalisation is at the core of these goals, the programme will relate to all three of them. One of the goals of shaping society is to put a challenge-based signature to 30% of our education, research and innovation and support, with a focus on sustainability. The international component of challenge-based education could be project-based blended mobility. One of the goals of shaping connections is to complete the development of ECIU University successfully, and to explore the possibility of creating a European University of Innovation. In shaping connections in general, partnerships will provide an important vehicle for establishing networks for developing joint education and research. One of the goals of shaping individuals is to intensify the institution as an academic ecosystem with a personalised approach to talent development. Among the instruments to achieve this are the mobility schemes for staff members in order for any staff member (academic or support) to be empowered to lifelong learning. A central Contact Centre will be set up as an information hub for any questions on internationalisation.

The ECIU university is also an example of innovative policy development. This network is one of the global leaders in higher education through its collective expertise and commitment to innovation in teaching and learning. It will function through the exchange of knowledge on university education, through the dialogue on national policies and through the lobby on new policies at a European level (which might lead to a new legal European framework). The ECIU university encompasses challenge-based education, research and innovation at a European level. Each participating university will set up an Innovation of Education Lab to support the development of the university and to support innovation. Furthermore, UT offers challenging programmes leading to internationally recognised joint or double degrees, with an international co-accreditation or European accreditation. Bachelor, master and PhD programmes are to focus on the strategic research and education partners. A joint programme partner will provide excellence in education and research and will complement to UT specialisations. The Erasmus Mundus scheme is expected to continue to play a role in this.

#### **How will these actions be implemented in practice?**

Information about the Erasmus+ opportunities is communicated within the institution by the Institutional Erasmus Coordinator. The internal infrastructure mirrors the European Commission's way of working: some projects are prepared by the central offices and others in a decentralised manner within the faculties. During the preparatory phase of any E+ project writing, a supporting infrastructure is in place for giving advice on its content and on guidance within UT's infrastructure. The Executive Board signs off on E+ project applications and there is a mechanism in place that ensures the involvement of the designated faculty board. In case a project is successful, it depends on the projects nature how it is implemented. In case UT is acting as co-ordinator, an infrastructure for running the project is already installed during the preparatory phase. In case UT is partnering in a project, only divisions relevant to the project will be active. Important results are shared by the project manager and can be communicated via various channels. After completion, dependent on the action the final report on content and finances is drawn up by the staff, in order to guarantee a thorough and transparent way of working.

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.

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**What is the envisioned impact of our participation in Erasmus+?**

*Shaping 2030* builds on the results of our previous policy: *Vision 2020*. In 2014, we identified four core values that we still cherish today: internationalisation, impact, synergy and entrepreneurship. We have achieved many of the goals that we set and looking ahead, we will continue to use the skills that we have mastered and exert ourselves where we need to adapt. One of the goals we have not yet met is the 75% student mobility rate. As all students who applied for Erasmus+ credit mobility have been rewarded a scholarship, the funding scheme is certainly not to blame for not achieving the goal. Being explicit about the 75% was also about the positive impact of setting a target. The percentage functioned as the so-called dot at the horizon increasing enthusiasm for mobility and working on high quality exchange what certainly did happen. In applying for the ECHE 2021-2027, faculty representatives have indicated that Erasmus+ is a necessity in their continuous efforts to facilitate and promote mobility. A new internationalisation strategy will be developed in 2020. It will be compiled working from *Shaping 2030*, will take the results of the planned evaluation of *Vision 2020* into consideration, and will relate to the recent COVID-19 developments. As this strategy is not yet completed, we are not able to give quantitative targets at this point.

Even though the strategy has not been completed, we are certain that participation in Erasmus+ will continue to be crucial to realise our 2030 goals. Individual experiences lead towards training 'global citizens': it will create opportunities for academic and support staff, increase employability of the participants, support development of teaching methods, intensify and widen co-operation in research, improve our international profile as well as a enlarge our (worldwide) alumni network. The impact of participation in any of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ opportunities cannot be underestimated as it reaches individuals at local, national and international levels. As such it will help shaping our institution the way we envision it to. The implementation of the *Fundamental Principles* and the continuous attention to the Erasmus+ programme with respect to new calls, intermediary and final reporting, as well as investigating student and staff evaluations, also generates recurrent momentum for improving our services.

In our leadership in the ECIU Universities project, we commit to the following main deliverables:

- 72 challenges with 576 learner mobilities
- 61 micro-courses leading to micro-credentials providing mobility for a minimum of 576 learners
- Increasing available exchange packages with 10% and 10 new ECIU minors
- Traineeships with a minimum of 400 student mobilities and 100 staff mobilities
- One European challenge master programme on SDG 11
- Three Innovation Hubs and an online and offline infrastructure for learning about and working on challenges
- Innovation of Education labs for challenge-based learning

Next to what is on offer academically, learners will experience the student life at UT and may rely on high-quality student services to maintain their motivation and active participation, both as students and as citizens. All European partners in the project are Erasmus Charter for Higher Education holders, the Charter which lays down the duties and obligations that higher education institutions must offer to mobile participants, students and staff alike. In addition, all partners need to adhere to the European Charter for Researchers and need to subscribe to the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. This means that they have to commit to developing new solutions based on virtual and digital tools which are suitable for all learners and also pay special attention to social inclusion. Existing *Euraxess* service centres will be the backbone for building the support structures necessary. A necessary review of existing practices of all ECIU University partners towards (social) inclusion of learners will lead to a report with the best practices and measures to be implemented by the alliance.

Special focus on inclusion means scrutinising measures for universal design, for accessibility to guidance and transport services, as well as to information systems and welfare possibilities. The review will not only look at these practices, but also assess the last 3 years of Erasmus+ mobility reports for students and staff satisfaction. One of the difficulties and obvious necessities in organising mobility for students and staff is finding a place to live during their stay abroad. As this is an essential service to mobile students and staff, we propose to establish a joint ECIU *Euraxess* platform for students and staff. This office will operate in the virtual space and take as a point of departure the various needs relating to finding accommodation for all forms of mobility that the alliance will offer.