

Staff exchange:

**‘Don’t be**

**afraid of obstacles’**



Why go on vacation when work is so much more fun? Within ECIU, supporting staff can go on exchange to other universities. There is even a special Staff Mobility Programme, including local coordinators who can help you out. Programme coordinator Lise Thorup-Pedersen (Aalborg University) shares her view on staff mobility: ‘It truly is a rewarding experience for both guests and hosts.’

An enriching new experience in a different environment, but also work that’s similar to what you do at your own university. According to Lise Thorup-Pedersen, staff exchange gives you the best of both worlds. ‘It’s a great way to get to know people and practices outside of your own university bubble. More often than not, staff exchange can lead to revelations for both guests and hosts. When you’re visiting another university, you can learn from their best practices. But they can also learn from you as a guest. In a way, it’s a moment for everyone involved to reflect on what they are doing.’

Usually, a stay for one workweek is a kind of sweet spot, says Thorup-Pedersen. ‘As a guest, you don’t want to overstay your welcome. In my ten years’ experience with the Staff Mobility Programme, I’ve learned that one week

works best for both parties. Hosts don’t get annoyed by you as a guest and they can prepare a program or project for you to work on. And as a guest, it’s quite well manageable to be away from home for one week.’

Thorup-Pedersen believes that a lot more people within the ECIU network can make use of the Staff Mobility Programme. ‘But I’ve noticed that many people see obstacles that are quite easy to overcome, especially on the practical side of things. Think for instance of language barriers. Or leaving your home, family and possibly pet behind. Don’t be afraid of those obstacles, would be my main message. Communication and expectation management is key, it’ll alleviate any concerns people might have. In the end, staff exchange truly is a rewarding experience for both guests and hosts.’



**Corrie Huijs**

**From University of Twente to Dublin City University:**

‘I went to Dublin for five weeks, a good experience to see how other people work. For people who want to participate in the program, I would recommend to have a clear goal to work towards or a project you can work on. My visit was mostly focused on online education and distance learning. It became clear to me that preparation is key: scripts have to be written out and you need to make sure that nothing goes wrong on the technical side. There’s more to it than meets the eye. Of course, I loved the city of Dublin. Everyone was very hospitable and kind to me. Because my stay started out with a two-day seminar, it was a great opportunity to get to know a lot of people. I would definitely recommend the program. Suffice to say, make sure you prepare well for your visit. Especially regarding the small practical stuff that easily gets overlooked. That goes for both guests and hosts.’



**‘It’s a great way to get to know people and practices outside of your own university bubble’**



**Vilma Karoblienė**

**From Kaunas University of Technology to University of Twente:**

‘I had a great opportunity to visit the University of Twente and to find out how colleagues are working on activities related to research and innovation projects. I was certainly impressed by their experience and I am eager to visit another ECIU university. These visits can help to combine all the strengths of ECIU members in order to have as much possibilities in R&I project activities and other common fields. It really helps to have programs for sharing good practices, in order to combine competences and implement future joint innovative and multidisciplinary projects of ECIU members.’

**How to apply?**

Visit the ECIU website: [www.eciu.org/for-staff/staff-mobility-programme](http://www.eciu.org/for-staff/staff-mobility-programme) to download the application form and get in touch with your local coordinator.

**‘We perceive the Researcher Mobility Fund as an excellent tool to accelerate knowledge and experience’**

**How to apply?**

Visit the ECIU website: [www.eciu.org/for-staff/research-mobility-fund](http://www.eciu.org/for-staff/research-mobility-fund)

**What about the academic staff?**

ECIU recently launched a Research Mobility Fund, aiming to increase collaboration amongst its researchers. This mobility fund is an incentive for early career researchers to explore and deepen collaboration within the ECIU network. Prof. Asta Pundziene, Vice Rector for Research and Professor at Kaunas University of Technology, is one of the initiators.

**What is the importance of a special fund for young researchers?**

‘Spreading of diverse knowledge and experience is most of the time a stimulus for innovation. Innovation is within the DNA of ECIU, and as well as in each member university. We perceive the Researcher Mobility Fund as an excellent tool to accelerate knowledge and experience diffusion among the researchers, especially those of early career, resulting with joint research activities that leads to their career advancement as well as breakthrough innovations.’

**What do you expect of the fund?**

My personal expectations are very high in terms of the number of researchers applying to the fund, number of the scholar visits as well as the number of joint research initiatives springing from the visits. I also see the Research Mobility Fund as a first step in warming up ECIU member universities research and innovation collaboration, building researchers’ liaisons and networks in identified research areas common to all ECIU member universities. A next step? Designing ECIU support framework for joint small scale or “seed” research and innovation projects, that could become a relevant starting point for greater research and innovation ambitions.’