

Erasmus+ Policy Statement

Taken from Section D of Erasmus charter application

Erasmus+ offers the University of Reading the chance to re-evaluate and augment our commitment to European activities and to continue to develop the work which we have started in the Lifelong Learning Programme. Our wish to maintain our reputation as a Global institution will necessitate collaborative activities with institutions and organisations across the world. Europe remains an important region and an area where more focussed institutional effort will be invested. However our institution's participation in Erasmus+ offers the opportunity to actively engage more fully with other institutions throughout the world to forge partnerships that will provide students and staff with the necessary skills and experience for living and working in a globalised world, but also to contribute significantly to the wider European knowledge economy. Our International Strategy publicly reconfirms our desire to remain a world-class, research-intensive university.

We realise the need for collaborative research and the provision of support for the growth of higher education across the world. We believe that a global university is one in which teaching, research and enterprise are conceived, planned and delivered with explicit relevance to global needs and issues. The University's mission is to educate talented people well, to conduct outstanding research, and to promote the responsible application of new knowledge. The University has pledged to pursue its mission by committing the maximum possible resources to support areas of established academic strength and emerging excellence. We have committed to engage students in research and enquiry in the curriculum; develop highly employable graduates; evolve and modernise our approach to teaching and learning; and continue to recruit, develop and value well qualified, professional academic staff.

Through the Erasmus+ programme Reading will:

- Strive to increase attainment levels in order to provide graduates and researchers capable of working and excelling with EU through globalised curricula aimed to develop outstanding graduates
- Continue to work towards the improvement in quality and relevance of Higher Education by equipping our staff and students with the values, skills and experience for living and working in a globalised world
- Increase and develop sustainable multi-layered partnerships with key institutions to deliver transnational opportunities for student and staff mobility cooperation and research
- Enhance and widen our research collaboration with Industry and Business through our Knowledge Transfer Partnerships providing practical solutions to solve issues of global importance
- Use our autonomy in governance to set strategic direction for our international engagement and to provide to support to encourage greater involvement

The University of Reading has an international (EU and non-EU) strategy that builds on the university's long-standing global reputation, led by the Pro Vice Chancellor (International). The strategy is based around four key objectives:

- 1) increase our contributions to sustainable global development and understanding;
- 2) further enhance the depth, breadth and worldwide impact of our research;
- 3) better equip our staff and students with the values, skills and experience for living and working in a globalised world;
- 4) increase the number and diversity of our students, coming from countries throughout the world. The international strategy pervades all areas of activity within the university, seeking to ensure that all of our students gain an appropriate educational experience for global citizenship.

A key element of this strategy, one that contributes to all four aims, is the development of partnerships with overseas universities.

Partners are selected on the basis of:

- (1) their quality with regard to teaching and research;
- (2) their own international reputation and strategy;
- (3) their academic fit for the University of Reading; and
- (4) the opportunity to develop point activities of mutual benefit for both institutions.

All potential partners are scrutinised by a senior committee of the University (the International Project Board, IPB) to ensure they meet such criteria. Any proposals for teaching, research and mobility partnerships are scrutinised by the appropriate committees of the university, while our Quality Support Office undertakes site visits to ensure appropriate quality assurance procedures are in place before any agreements are formalised. The IPB has an annual monitoring process to ensure that appropriate levels of activity with our partnerships are maintained.

Partnerships are sought and developed with countries throughout the world, working together in many varied ways. We currently participate in student and staff mobility agreements with over 200 institutions throughout the world. Recent developments have involved expanding our partnerships in the top-rated universities institutions in China, South America and Europe. There has been increased emphasis in SE Asia where we are expanding our partnership network to enhance the activity of University of Reading Malaysia. Some partnership activities relate to capacity-building projects, such as the provision of English language teaching in Sudan and Kurdistan. In Europe, we are expanding our partnerships to include with universities, establishing students / staff mobility arrangements, as well as Dual degrees, Joint programmes of study, research collaboration, and working in certain countries to create collaborative curricula informed by industry and with students undertaking industrial placement opportunities within the degree.

The Reading International Office, through expert Regional Managers, work closely with academic departments at the University, together with the Erasmus & Study Abroad Office, to ensure effective and successful institutional international collaboration, which will help support and develop Reading's involvement with Erasmus+.

As a University we place as much emphasis on supporting and encouraging Reading students to gain overseas study experience in the EU and at other international destinations as attracting overseas students to study at Reading, either during the academic year for credit-bearing courses or as participants in our International Summer School. Staff exchanges are especially important as these provide a means for the development of research collaborations. We are developing the provision of double and joint degrees, at Undergraduate and postgraduate levels, with our partners with leading to either a University of Reading degree or a joint degree. Reading also has provision for joint PhDs with overseas universities and a PhD partnership scheme to support Faculty in overseas universities to gain PhD qualifications.

As part of our International strategy Reading publicly commits to continue to develop international collaborations with global universities, research institutes and organisations with the aim to modernise and globalise our curriculum in order to better equip our students and staff to live and work in a globalised world. The possibilities for improvement and modernisation provided through the Erasmus + programme are fully recognised, and it is envisaged that greater effort will be made to engage with the various aspects of Erasmus + in the future for the benefit of our students and the institution. We will use management structures to disseminate information within the university and to identify strategic activities that can be fully supported and successfully implemented. Participation in all international cooperative activities must be compatible with our institutional mission, and will be fully scrutinised and endorsed by Senior Management to ensure successful participation.

We strive to create alliances with key partners within participating countries to develop multi-layered relationships including joint degrees, student and staff mobility and research activities. Our partners are selected on the basis of academic compatibility and common benefit, and must demonstrate comparable commitment to the expected outcomes of the activity.

The various resources at the university will be combined to increase participation in Erasmus+ thereby enhancing the student / staff experience within its various activities. We are actively engaging in the development of our academic curricula to be more responsive to the ever-changing needs of students and global issues.

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