



## Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS)

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a) Please describe briefly your institution's strategy, objectives and priorities for its Erasmus activities (mobility, multilateral projects and thematic networks, etc.) and any other actions in the context of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007 – 2013)

b) Please also provide information on the following points:

- What specific actions are planned to give visibility to Erasmus activities and what type of publicity will be given to the Erasmus University Charter and the EPS?
- What kind of arrangements, if any, does the Institution ensure to comply with non-discrimination objectives (e.g. actions related to gender equality, integration of disabled students and staff, enhancement of social and economic cohesion and combating xenophobia and racism)?

a)

The University remains strongly committed to the integration and support of European activities. Embracing the opportunities that are offered by the LLP will strengthen the University's international standing in terms of teaching and research whilst promoting its position within existing and new markets.

STRATEGY: In the University's corporate plan, we aim to "provide a global learning and teaching environment in which our students benefit from an international dimension in their studies". We also aspire to "enable our students to experience, as part of their University environment, an international dimension to their personal and academic development." The Erasmus scheme plays a vital part in realising this aim and commitment.

OBJECTIVES: There has been a considerable growth in student and staff exchanges under the Erasmus scheme: in 1999/00 32 departments had exchange links and we sent less than 200 students abroad, whereas in 2006/07 38 departments have 270 Bilateral Agreements and we sent 270 students abroad. Teaching Mobility is also going strong with single figures in the early years to 40 members of staff wishing to go this academic year. Our aim is to continue to increase the number of outgoing students and staff.

PRIORITIES: The emphasis during the period from 2007/08 to 2012/13 will be on student and staff mobility while continuing to participate in Erasmus projects. The majority of students, therefore, have the opportunity to study abroad; in addition to modern languages students, we actively encourage students from non language degrees to participate in the Erasmus scheme and to study abroad for one semester as part of their single honours degree course. Students of any discipline are encouraged to take French, German, Spanish or Italian as optional modules through the University's Modern Language Teaching Centre and language preparation classes for non-linguists are well established.

Sheffield has developed a distinctive policy on foreign languages: not only are the most widely-spoken European languages taught but there is particular provision for linguists to study many languages which should be considered 'minority' languages within the context of UK Higher Education.

The range of degree courses on offer demonstrates the importance of the European dimension. Undergraduate courses include 'International History and International Politics', 'European, International and Comparative Law' and 'German with Dutch'. Masters programmes include

'International Studies', an LLM in 'International and European Law' and Erasmus Mundus Masters such as 'Crossways in European Humanities'. A growing number of dual degrees such as Engineering, Law, Business or Computer Science with a Modern Language now exist. Under the University's validation procedures any proposed new degree programme must include a period of study abroad or a module relating to European study; otherwise, the absence of these must be justified.

The numbers of incoming students have also increased over the years; during 2002/03 we received 350 students, whereas during 2006/07 we have welcomed 470.

b)

We will do the following to ensure visibility of Erasmus activities

- have information on the University's web pages
- regularly deliver promotional talks to students in departments
- brief departmental Erasmus tutors to increase awareness of the scheme and to promote staff mobility
- hold departmental socials for prospective students and invite returning students along
- produce leaflets and posters aimed at Sheffield students
- promote the scheme at University and departmental Open Days and at UCAS conventions
- send a mailing to all 1<sup>st</sup> year students when they start at the University
- have a stall at the University's Orientation week which is aimed at new students
- work closely with other central administrative departments
- hold drop-in sessions for interested students and staff

Both the EUC and the EPS will be on the web. They will also be circulated to all Heads of departments. The University has established an Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plans with the aim to achieve excellence through inclusion. The plan is to work towards eliminating all forms of discrimination by promoting the highest standards of behaviour including respect, integrity and personal responsibility. Student and staff disability is fully supported within HR and the student welfare team. The University's firm commitment to equality and diversity extends to proactively engaging with currently under-represented groups in Higher Education. Our Outreach Section works with schools, colleges and community groups to deliver aspiration and attainment raising activities, promoting the benefits of Higher Education level study to those who may otherwise not consider it as an option.

## **II Quality of academic mobility activities:**

**What kind of specific measurements are implemented in the institution to ensure high quality in academic mobility activities? Details should be provided on: recognition and credit systems, the provision of information on curricula, information and counselling of outgoing students, tutoring and integration of incoming students, provision of student services (in particular accommodation), preparatory and refresher language courses, support and acknowledgement of staff mobility.**

The University is committed to maintaining the highest possible standards in its teaching and learning. It has an established mechanism for assuring the quality of teaching provided for all students studying on-campus, the success of which is reflected in its record in external reviews conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The principal internal mechanism for annual programme monitoring is the Annual Review of Learning and Teaching (ARLT) which requires all academic departments to evaluate the effectiveness with which their programmes are delivered and to reflect critically on the overall quality of the student learning experience in the preceding academic year, drawing upon a range of information sources. All our partner institutions are selected very carefully and departments are given a list of points that they should check prior to entering an exchange agreement. There is also a handbook for departments with guidelines on placement learning (including study in an overseas institution). The time studied abroad forms an integral part of the students' degree course and does not add to the length of the course. Credits brought back from abroad count towards the Sheffield degree and are given full recognition.

All Erasmus co-operation project applications must have the approval of the Registrar and the relevant Head of Department who will ensure that the project application is in line with departmental and University wide plans.

Outgoing students can gain information and advice through student report forms, their departmental Erasmus tutor, the Erasmus Office, and information provided on the University's web pages. Incoming students are fully integrated and are treated like all other registered students. Information on the curriculum is available for all students on the University's web pages and from individual departments. We provide them with a pre-arrival mailing, a welcome and registration meeting on arrival, drop-in sessions throughout the academic year and student socials. Free English language classes are available to all exchange students. Students are supported in their introduction to the University by participation in the pre-sessional orientation week and are able to seek advice and help during their studies via their department, the Erasmus Office and Student Services.

Staff mobility is very important to the University and supports departmental research activities. It allows departments to prepare new exchanges and cement existing ones effectively. These visits also give staff valuable experience of academic teaching at foreign universities; they give them professionally helpful opportunities to deliver research papers and disseminate their research at partner institutions. Academics from our partner universities contribute regularly to our own research seminars as well as to teaching. This impacts significantly on the departmental research environment and profile.

### III Quality of student placement activities:

**What kind of specific measures are implemented to ensure high quality in student placements? Give details on how the work-programme and the placement agreement are prepared and implemented. Please describe the practical arrangements agreed between the parties. Please specify also the monitoring and evaluation of the placement period as well as its recognition in the curriculum.**

In order to ensure a high quality work placement experience The University of Sheffield adheres to the QAA code of practice section 9: Placement learning and follows the UCEA health and safety guidelines for HE students on placement.

Departments are advised to vet placements to ensure the role being undertaken by the student is of an appropriate level and will clearly contribute to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the students degree programme.

Prior to the placement commencing, a placement agreement is issued by the university. This forms a contract between the university, student and placement provider, this document outlines the responsibilities in terms of health and safety, intended learning outcomes and the assessment criteria for the year as well as terms and conditions of employment. The agreement is written in consultation with the student and the placement provider.

Regular contact between the University of Sheffield, student and placement provider takes place throughout the placement and it is ensured that each party has the appropriate contact details to facilitate this communication. Prior to the placement commencing students are made aware of the university support systems available to them and the feedback procedure that exists in case of problems. The placement provider is also made aware of the feedback procedure.

The placement year is assessed by the university to demonstrate that the learning outcomes of the placement have been achieved; this is measured on a pass/fail basis. Written evaluation from both the student and the placement provider is sought at the end of the placement period.

The overall aims of the placement, the intended learning outcomes and the assessment criteria are documented either within the programme specification for individual degree programmes or as a supplement to a programme specification. Pre placement guidance and post placement evaluation are scheduled within the teaching timetable.