



Erasmus Policy Statement

Nord University - N BODO04

What we would like to achieve – Erasmus+ as a part of a greater vision for internationalisation

Nord University's institutional strategy is built around the vision "Global challenges-regional solutions". All academic and research programmes at Nord University are aimed at developing and sustaining knowledge to support regional and global communities to meet the United Nations sustainability goals. International academic collaboration forms the basis for projects and practices fostering democratic development and cross-cultural understanding and are essential for achieving these goals.

Nord University is an institution with strong academic ties to other institutions on the European continent and worldwide. During our active participation in the Erasmus programme throughout two decades, we have established partnerships with approximately 150 institutions in programme countries as well as international credit mobility cooperation projects with partners in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, USA and Brazil. Our institution has been an active participant in both mobility and strategic partnerships projects. European cooperation and the Erasmus programme are specifically emphasised in our Internationalisation strategy and will remain highest on the priority agenda for the future international development of our institution. On national level, participation in the Erasmus programme and other programmes funded by the European Union is strongly encouraged. Our geographical position and academic focus on the development of the Arctic region perfectly correlate with the European Union's Arctic policy goals, allowing us to contribute with region-specific knowledge and expertise. Nord University is home to the High North Centre, a national centre for research, education and policy development with regard to the Arctic, fostering awareness for the specifics of the arctic regions and enabling knowledge transfer between business organisations, public institutions and the academia.

During the programme period 2021-2027, Nord University will focus on the following objectives:

International collaboration

- Utilise the opportunities which lie in the new Erasmus programme to support our further academic development within our four strategic focus areas Blue and Green Growth, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Public Security and Health, Welfare and Education
- Strengthen international collaboration, with strong focus on maintaining existing partnerships in Europe and extending our academic networks to new partners
- Strengthen our collaboration with existing and new partners in USA, Canada, BRICS countries and Eastern European neighbouring countries
- Prioritise partnerships with institutions with a matching academic profile and vision, with the aim to combine academic and research collaboration and establish a long-lasting, sustainable partnership, heading towards participation in an European University of Excellence network
- Continue to develop joint educational content and degree programmes in collaboration with partner institutions in programme and partner countries

- Continue to collaborate with enterprises and organisations active in the labour market both nationally and internationally to foster employability amongst our graduates and enable knowledge transfer between the community and the academia
- Increase participation in Key Action 2 and 3 projects as a partner and initiate projects as a coordinating institution

Internationalisation and mobility

- Achieve integral internationalisation across units and academic environments
- Ensure mobility opportunities in every study programme on all levels
- Apply mechanisms for automatic recognition of results obtained through mobility activities for both students and staff
- Continue to prioritise long-term learning mobility of students and regard it as a main means to achieve internationalisation in study programmes
- Promote ecologically sustainable implementation of mobility activities and collaboration projects
- Explore synergies with civil society organisations and other local actors to promote civic engagement of the programme participants
- Implement the European Student Card Initiative following the timeline indicated by the European Commission
- Continue to encourage learning mobility of staff to support networks and increase competence, as a crucial measure for deepening existing ties to partner institution and establishing new ones
- Further develop and increase English-taught educational offers on all levels, targeting degree students of all cycles as well as mobility students from partner institutions
- Continue to implement academic staff mobility as an internationalisation-at-home measure for non-mobile students and staff and explore further opportunities to develop new internationalisation-at-home models
- Introduce flexible models of international educational cooperation activities, such as blended and digital mobility – both in order diversify the opportunities for students and the international aspects of our study programmes as well as to solve the challenge to provide suitable mobility options for traditionally non-mobile student groups.
- Support researcher mobility - specifically PhD mobility, integrated in PhD programmes through supporting participation in short PhD courses and research practice at relevant research groups at partner universities and research institutes
- Seek synergies between research and education by involving mobile students in research projects through traineeships and/or master thesis development as well as through exchange of academic staff

Erasmus+ in practice – how we aim to implement the programme

For the next programme period, we look forward to continuing collaboration with our existing partners and expanding our portfolio of European partners. New partnerships for learning mobility undergo a quality assurance process through which academic compatibility and infrastructure for mobility participants are carefully considered. During the last programme period, a set of criteria was introduced to be used in this context. We strive to maintain balance in the mobility flows and in the best case to integrate both academic and research cooperation in a potential agreement.

Our current institutional internationalisation strategy has a clear emphasis on student and staff mobility as a means for maintaining and fostering internationalisation in the institution. We aim and are prepared to implement all mobility types stipulated by the programme, including blended mobility. Student mobility forms the core of our international activity. International experience opportunities are essential for maintaining high quality in our study programmes and is one of the fast criteria in the accreditation process of study programmes at our institution. Mobility options have to be defined before accreditation and integrated in the curriculum to form a mobility window. Staff mobility is highly encouraged by the management of all five faculties of our institution and at central level. Erasmus staff mobility grants are in high demand especially amongst academic staff and have been heavily promoted during the last programme

period. The funding for staff mobility has been and will continue to be used strategically to foster collaboration with partner institutions. Exchange of experience and good practice, especially with regard to teaching and research methods and curriculum design have been the most valuable outcomes of outgoing academic staff mobility, contributing to the further development of our study programmes and enriching our academic networks. At the same time, incoming staff mobility is our most important tool for internationalisation at home, offering an international teaching experience to our non-mobile students and an opportunity for networking and exchange of experience to academic staff at the institution. Staff mobility will be strongly connected to the internationalisation measures undertaken at each faculty. Faculty management and advisory boards will play a major role in the outgoing participants selection process to ensure a target-oriented, strategic use of the programme opportunities. In this process, the internationalisation of degree programmes at the respective faculty and its priorities for further academic development will form the base for the selection decision.

Mobility activities of students and staff will be implemented in close cooperation between the central unit for internationalisation – the International Office – and the responsible administration and study programme coordinators at the faculties. The main responsibilities have been clearly divided between the International Office and faculties when it comes to student mobility. All practical matters in connection to the mobility for both incoming and outgoing students, including grant payments where applicable, are the responsibility of the coordinators at the International Office, while academic recognition and support is handled at the respective faculty. Student organisations, such as the International Student Union, will continue to be a part in the implementation of student mobility, taking over tasks of integration in the community, personal support and programme promotion.

We welcome the introduction of flexible types of mobility, which will open up a completely new dimension of international cooperation for our institution. The combination of virtual and short-term physical mobility will be attractive for both academic groups and students, diversifying the opportunities for international experience in our study programmes and offering traditionally non-mobile student groups an opportunity for international experience. We will use this action systematically to support the development of international study opportunities to be integrated in our distance-learning programmes and encourage students with family responsibilities or in full employment to make use of the opportunities at hand. Nord University is already experienced at offering online education to students spread around the globe through the study programme Bachelor in Circumpolar Studies and various single courses and has the capacity and expertise to expand the variety of already existing online course offers. Blended mobility opportunities will be developed in close cooperation with the Competence Centre for Learning and Technology (KOLT) at our institution, a department which will have a major role in the planning and technical implementation of the activities. The role of this department is to foster the use of technology in a pedagogical context and to support Nord University's flexible study offers on all levels by running all digital platforms for online teaching and examinations and offering training and practical support to both students and staff. Our experience and technical capacity will make us a valuable partner institution for cooperation within blended mobility projects.

Key Action 2 and 3 activities will be implemented directly on the level of the participating faculty or unit, with involvement of the International Office if student mobility is included in the project. These projects will commence on the basis of mutual academic interests at the collaborating departments, upon approval of the central faculty management at Nord. Clear preference will be given to projects in line with Nord's strategic academic and international orientation. Practical support be given on institutional level by establishing a working group with experts from all relevant units, which will carry out promotion of the programme opportunities, guide the development of project applications and offer relevant competence development measures for academic and administrative staff. This group will be constituted of advisors from the International Office, Research and Development Unit, other relevant administration units and the respective academic department involved in the application. During the last programme period, Nord University participated in several Strategic Partnerships projects as partner and submitted an application for a project within Capacity Building in Higher Education. Our institution has initiated and participated in various academic projects through other funding schemes, including capacity building projects with partner countries in Asia and

Africa. Being a member in several international academic and research networks, amongst others the University of the Arctic, Barents Euro Arctic Research, Norwegian-Ukrainian University Alliance, we are prepared to take the next step and extend our participation within Key Action 2 and possibly Key Action 3. The interest for international cooperation projects has been greatest within the Strategic Partnerships action during the last programme period. We will continue to participate in similar projects in the future under the new action Partnerships for Cooperation and the Exchange of Practices. Nord University is a partner in two Centres for Excellent Education: Centre for Excellent IT Education (EXiTED) and Centre for Engaged Education through Entrepreneurship (ENGAGE). Entrepreneurship and Innovation are one of the three main focus areas for research and education at our institution. It is a natural choice for us to attempt to transmit our knowledge to other institutions and regions through international collaboration through projects within the action Partnerships for Innovation.

Nord University has developed a large number of joint and double degree programmes with partner institutions throughout its history. Currently, we offer three second cycle degree programmes jointly developed with partner institutions and are in the process of developing a fourth programme. Our faculties maintain academic expertise and administrative experience to continue on this course. Double and joint degrees developed by our institution have mostly been bilateral – so far in collaboration with universities in Slovakia, Russia, Ukraine, Canada and a double degree programme with an institution in Germany in its final development phase. In recent years, multi-lateral joint degrees have been developed with Scandinavian partners as well as a double degree programme with two institutions in Russia and China respectively. Our institution has the experience and expertise needed to enter collaboration for an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree project during the next programme period.

Erasmus+ makes a difference: targets and impact

By providing financial support and an operational framework for cooperation, the Erasmus programme will contribute significantly to achieving both institutional and national mobility goals. Our institutional internationalisation strategy specifically addresses the profile of our bachelor and master programmes as well as the exchange of knowledge and good practices through academic collaboration and staff exchange. By actively supporting mobility and cooperation projects, the Erasmus programme provides a funding framework tailored to our needs, backing our efforts towards reaching these goals. We expect that new formats such as blended mobility and short-term mobility will support the internationalisation of distance-learning study programmes which offer education to students in employment and/or students with families. Students who cannot afford to spend a longer mobility period abroad due to family or employment reasons constitute a relatively large part of the student body at several of our faculties. We would welcome the introduction of more flexible mobility formats which will provide an opportunity to include traditionally non-mobile student groups in international cooperation activities.

Our overall institutional goal is to increase international activity, especially mobility activity, to a significant extent. In order to complete our quantitative mobility objectives, our institution will strengthen collaboration with existing partners and expand its European partner portfolio. All study programmes at any level will offer long-term mobility opportunities to Erasmus partner institutions or organisations active in the labour market in partner countries tentatively by 2023 and will be encouraged to further increase the number of available partners or introduce other mobility formats in their programmes in addition. An opportunity for international experience at home, e.g. through inviting guest lecturers, integration activity with international students, etc. will be implemented in all study programmes by 2023 as well.

Nord University's quantitative objectives follow national mobility parameters, with the overall aim to achieve at least 20% outgoing long-term student mobility amongst our graduates by the end of the programme period in 2027. Since balance in mobility numbers is desirable, a reciprocal increase in incoming student mobility is expected and encouraged. Blended mobility options for students of our three largest study programmes

Primary School Teacher Training, Secondary School Teacher Training and Nursing are expected to be achieved by 2023, with other academic areas following by 2026. When taking all mobility formats into consideration, we will achieve at least 30% mobile graduates by the end of the programme period.

It is common practice to record and monitor mobility numbers through the tools provided by the EU Commission (Mobility tool+) and the mobility reporting module in the national Student Information System FS. Quantitative indicators for mobility are presented and evaluated at committees for international cooperation both on central and faculty level each semester and become a part of our institution's annual report. Our institution has introduced a system for quality assessment and control encompassing the workflow of our university on all levels – both academic, administrative and operational. Processes and routines are thoroughly documented and revised on annual basis. For mobility projects, we will continue to use participant surveys to monitor the quality of our services and academic offers at different phases of the mobility. In addition to evaluating the Erasmus+ participant reports of both incoming and outgoing participants, we will continue to employ frequent online surveys to measure the degree of satisfaction of mobile students. Online surveys will be distributed to both incoming and outgoing students at different phases of the mobility and will refer to the services and support offered specifically in the context of our institution. Parameters for evaluation are amongst others the degree and experienced quality of support and information provided by different key actors, the implementation of events, the experienced degree of integration at the institution and the overall mobility experience of the participants. Possible indicators to measure quality is a high student satisfaction (90%) specifically with the reliability and quality of the provided information and support in connection to practical issues (admission process, visa, insurance, etc.), predictability of the mobility process in all phases (including the course offer), the degree of academic support provided as well as the degree of integration with the local society. We will monitor the same indicators not only for incoming, but also for outgoing student participants and use the results for the further evaluation of our partner portfolio of host institutions and organisations for our students. In the case of staff, personal interviews will form the basis for qualitative evaluation with similar indicators, in addition to the Erasmus+ participant report. Feedback surveys on mobility experience issues will be prepared and evaluated by the International office, whereas academic monitoring and quality assessment will commence at the respective faculty through regular surveys and interviews with the student participants.