

Žilinská univerzita v Žiline

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT 2021-2027

The University of Žilina in Žilina (Žilinská univerzita v Žiline - UNIZA) has an important position in the Slovak and international education area for its more than 67 years of operation. Participation in international educational projects and involvement in Erasmus mobility activities was of great importance in building this position. UNIZA's Erasmus activities to date have had an impact on the modernisation of education and management processes at UNIZA, and have been and continue to be the basis for international cooperation.

In a nationwide comparison, UNIZA is one of the most successful Slovak universities in the number of Erasmus outgoing and incoming students and is the most successful university in the number of sent and accepted employees in general. Employee participation in mobility activities, whether in lecture stays/teaching or employee trainings, had a direct impact on other activities in creating partnerships for the preparation of KA2 projects. In the last programming period, UNIZA is one of the most successful Slovak universities in the number of submitted and approved Erasmus+ projects.

Twenty years of experience in coordinating Erasmus activities and the results achieved by the university during this period entitle it to enter a new programming period and implement other activities. The internal quality assurance system of mobility activities, the organisational and coordination structure of activity management and the staffing of Erasmus processes at the university are a guarantee of the fulfilment of UNIZA's goals, the achievement of results and their sustainability.

Long-Term Plan of the University – Internationalisation Strategy – Erasmus+ Policy Statement

<https://www.uniza.sk/document/ErasmusPolicyStatement.pdf>

In 2014, the Long-Term Development Plan of the University for the period 2014 – 2020 was prepared, on which the Internationalisation Strategy - Erasmus+ Policy Statement 2014 – 2020 was based. In the 2014 – 2020 programming period, processes and organisational structure of coordination at UNIZA were set up according to the requirements of the programme. The staffing process of the rector's and faculty's departments for international relations was completed. The university's processes for supporting the quality of mobility activities in all phases of mobility at the rectorate and faculty level were also analysed and described.

The long-term priority of the university management is:

- To enable all UNIZA students to participate in an Erasmus+ study stay or internship.
- To enable UNIZA employees to experience the international environment by participating in training and teaching.
- Further development of internationalization at home and increasing the number of study programmes and subjects in foreign languages.
- Increasing the number of accepted incoming foreign students and employees from partner universities.
- Support for UNIZA workplaces in the preparation and implementation of projects aimed at the internationalisation and modernisation of educational processes.

The goal of UNIZA is to support and participate in all Erasmus+ activities for higher education institutions in the next programming period, as well as within the University's Long-Term Plan for 2021 – 2027. The expected results in mobility activities and participation in KA2 projects will enable UNIZA to meet the priorities of the European Higher Education

Area, to contribute to the further development of international cooperation and the modernisation of all university workplaces in line with the four EU headline objectives for European cooperation in higher education. The results of the cooperation from the implemented activities will help to strengthen the competitive position of UNIZA in the changing conditions and new and inspiring challenges in the field of education and research in the international area.

The internationalisation strategy “UNIZA Erasmus+ Policy Statement” for the period 2021 – 2027 builds on the previous Erasmus Policy Statement 2014 – 2020 and focuses on the following targets:

- Mobility activities of UNIZA students and staff and mobility activities of incoming students and staff will continue to be important activities of UNIZA - the priority will be to increase the number of mobilities as well as their quality in line with Erasmus priorities and principles of building the European Education Area and UNIZA Long-Term Plan for 2021 – 2027.
- Conclusion of the Erasmus+ IIA agreements on cooperation in mobility activities and creating partnerships with universities and higher education institutions with a similar focus. Regular evaluation and promotion of results from implemented activities.
- Support for the participation of UNIZA workplaces in educational projects, focusing on the modernisation of education, new forms of education that will contribute to the development of UNIZA's international cooperation and thus increase UNIZA's competitiveness in the national and European education area.
- Redesign of study programs based on research results using new forms of teaching and learning with a compulsory semester at a partner university with the main goal of preparing graduates for the needs of practice and society for the future.
- Creation of partnerships with proven higher education institutions in order to exchange experience in order to prepare a new generation of highly qualified students / graduates and researchers open to inclusive values as well as technological and societal innovations.
- Continuous improvement of processes and procedures to support quality assurance of mobility activities, simplification and efficiency of administrative processes by implementing information systems in accordance with programme priorities and EU Erasmus Without Papers (European student card initiative, use of IS Dashboard functionalities, rules for automatic recognition of mobility results).

Under the Internationalisation Strategy of the UNIZA Long-Term Plan for 2021 – 2027, UNIZA will strive to strengthen its competitiveness at an international level.

The development of international cooperation in the field of education and research will include:

- Continuation of efforts on involvement in the international educational projects,

- Support for the establishment and accreditation of international joint study programmes and activities leading to double/multiple or joint degrees,
- In cooperation with international partner's implementation of multiple educational activities, such as mutual supervision of the final theses, reports, study and exchange of educational and research materials,
- Further support and development of international mobility of students of all degrees of study at UNIZA under various mobility programmes,
- Further promotion of international contacts and short-term study and placements of students, both within and outside of the EU framework of mobility programmes,
- Promotion of the improvement of conditions at UNIZA, aiming at recruitment of more EU and non-EU international students, either within the mobility programmes of study or by comprehensive curriculum by providing support for quality teaching in the English language, ensuring appropriate information resources and study supporting materials, accommodation for incoming students and teachers, in collaboration with student organisations,
- Support for activities aimed at development of new international partners' contacts and the conclusion of bilateral agreements in the EU and beyond,
- Creation of a system of support and stimulation of all UNIZA staff for their international activities and mobility; an increasing number of invitations of foreign experts for lecture stays at UNIZA, as well as other professional staff from foreign partner institutions,
- Initiative and a project of the European Universities with our strategic partners.

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.

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

In the new programming period, the university management is interested in further increasing the number of all types of Erasmus+ mobilities, increasing the quality of implemented mobilities and involving UNIZA workplaces in KA2 projects in accordance with the Erasmus+ Charter, priorities for creating the European Education Area and the UNIZA Long-Term Plan for the years 2021 – 2027.

The university management will continue to support and value mobility activities that will have an impact on the creation of partnerships for the preparation of projects aimed at creation of new study programmes based on research results and practice needs. Projects aimed at further modernisation of education will be supported with the aim of introduction of new forms of education with an emphasis on the use of ICT and the digitisation of education. Projects will be supported to establish partnerships with countries outside the EU for the exchange of students and staff, as well as the transfer of experience with EU education reform to partner institutions.

An important strategic objective for 2021 – 2027 is to develop the University Science Park and Research Centre on a sustainable basis and to further develop the established Centres of Excellence, Centres of Competence and Institutes based on interdisciplinary teams, with strong involvement of Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D. degree students and postdocs. Their successful operation cannot be imagined without the participation of foreign researchers and cooperation with foreign university and non-university institutions.

The main contribution will include:

- Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility: The mobility of higher education students and staff.
- Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions: Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices, Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities, Partnerships for Excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees, Partnerships for Innovation.
- Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3): Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3) - Support to policy development and cooperation.

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.

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

For the enhancement of international cooperation, UNIZA will encourage and support the development of language skills of its staff to become more attractive and friendly for foreign students, teachers and other international visitors.

Since joining the Erasmus programme in 1998, UNIZA has gradually built an organizational structure for the coordination and management of Erasmus+ mobility activities and EU education projects, with increasing activities and increasing funding.

The university's twenty years of experience in coordinating Erasmus activities and the results achieved by the university during this period are the basis for the implementation of further activities in the new programming period 2021 – 2027. The internal quality assurance system for mobility, the organisational and coordination structure of activity management and the staffing of Erasmus processes at the university are a guarantee of the fulfilment of UNIZA's goals, the achievement of results and their sustainability.

Levels of quality assurance of Erasmus activities management:

The organizational structure of the coordination of Erasmus activities of UNIZA has got two levels – the rectorate level (whole-university) and the faculty level (7 faculties and one

institute). Faculty staff are responsible for activities related to the content of mobilities of outgoing and incoming mobility participants. They are responsible for direct contact with mobility participants and recognition of mobility results. Rector's staff are responsible for the whole-university coordination of activities within the academic year schedule and for the management of funds allocated to mobility activities, in accordance with the Erasmus plan of activities in the relevant academic year.

Erasmus+ activities are coordinated by the Vice-Rector for International Relations and Marketing. The Vice-Rector is also Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator. Within his competences, he manages the Erasmus+ UNIZA Council. The Council decides on important issues related to the activities of the programme - approval of the coordination procedure and schedule of activities within the academic year, the strategy for the selection of students, teachers and staff, and the allocation of mobility grants. The Erasmus+ Council approves faculty mobility nominations and grant amounts for mobility participants. The Vice-Rector convenes the Erasmus+ Council at least twice a year. The members of the Erasmus Council are the vice-deans for international cooperation.

The Vice-Rector and 4 employees of the Rector's Department for International Relations and Marketing (hereinafter referred to as DIRM) are responsible for transforming programme rules into UNIZA conditions, for individual mobility activities, coordinating the conclusion and administration of the Erasmus database of UNIZA institutional contracts, financial management and coordination of Erasmus+ working group members at faculties and UNIZA workplaces. The Erasmus+ UNIZA working group consists of members of the Erasmus UNIZA Council, administrative staff of the Rectorate DIRM and staff of UNIZA faculties and institutes entrusted with the performance of tasks arising from the coordination and implementation of mobility activities. A representative of students from ESN UNIZA is also a member of the working group. At each UNIZA faculty, the faculty activities are coordinated by the vice-dean for international cooperation, who is also the Erasmus faculty coordinator. The faculty staff member, the coordinator of mobility activities, is responsible for the administration of Erasmus activities. A total of 14 faculty staff:

<https://www.uniza.sk/index.php/erasmus-kontakty>

<https://www.uniza.sk/index.php/component/content/article/2-uncategorised/1996-vedenie-agendy-erasmus?Itemid=101> .

Erasmus results are analysed on an annual basis. Problems related to the implementation of mobility activities and the proposed measures to improve their quality are discussed with the members of the Erasmus UNIZA Council and the members of the Erasmus+ working group at the meetings of the Erasmus+ UNIZA Council. Approved solutions to problems or eventual settings for a new procedure are recorded in the minutes of the Erasmus+ UNIZA Council meeting, which is binding for UNIZA workplaces and has the character of internal legislation.

The analysis of the implemented Erasmus+ activities, the achieved results and their evaluation according to the faculties are published annually in the Annual Report on the activities of UNIZA. The report also proposes recommendations to the university management for improving the quality of mobility for the next period. After approval of the report by the university management, the report is submitted to the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. The annual report is obligatorily published on the UNIZA website:

<https://www.uniza.sk/index.php/component/content/article/2-uncategorised/29-vyrocne-spravy-o-cinnosti-uniza-archiv?Itemid=101>

Processes, procedures and tasks performed at the rectorate and faculty level in all phases and periods in student mobility, mobility of teachers and staff are regulated in the document "List of activities, competencies and responsibilities within the implementation of Erasmus+ UNIZA mobility activities".

UNIZA has set up a website with information for outgoing and incoming UNIZA students, for teachers and staff, and a subpage of the department, which contains information on tasks and agendas for which the Rectorate DIRM is responsible:

<https://www.uniza.sk/index.php/studenti/vseobecne-informacie/erasmus>

<https://www.uniza.sk/index.php/en/study/study-options/erasmus>

<https://www.uniza.sk/index.php/zamestnanci/rast-zamestnancov/mobilita-erasmus>

<https://www.uniza.sk/index.php/component/content/article/2-uncategorised/1996-vedenie-agendy-erasmus?Itemid=101>

Qualitative and quantitative indicators in monitoring this impact:

- Support for university workplaces that are responsible for ensuring the quality of mobility of outgoing and incoming students, staff and teachers. Regular monitoring and evaluation of procedures at the rectorate and faculty levels associated with the selection of mobility participants, the period of mobility, during mobility and upon return. In the next period, the priority will be to focus on advising students in connection with the selection of subjects and recognition of mobility results and the correct use of online Learning Agreement for study and internship/traineeship within the IS Dashboard.
- Providing up-to-date and clear information on the UNIZA website for all mobility participants, both domestic and foreign.
- Continue to support cooperation with ESN UNIZA in organising the stay of incoming students. Create conditions for their successful activity and representation of the university at the national and international levels. In line with the trend towards eliminating the administrative burden of mobility, continue to focus on simplifying and streamlining the procedures for equipping mobility using ICT and information systems.
- From 2020, start using the IS Dashboard to improve mobility management in accordance with the organisational structure of coordination and implementation of UNIZA mobility activities at the rectorate and faculty levels. Determine the time schedule for the gradual start of using the possibilities of the system and elaboration of UNIZA rules for the use of IS Dashboard functionalities within the internal organisational structure of the coordination of activities: conclusion of the IIA cooperation agreements and online learning agreements from 2020, student nominations and student nomination acceptances from 2022, from 2023 sending and receiving transcripts of records of the study results.
- Support for the use of the Erasmus+ mobile app by UNIZA students.
- Ensuring of automatic recognition of student mobility results in accordance with ECTS and in accordance with the principles of the European education area.
- Providing accommodation in UNIZA accommodation facilities for an increasing number of incoming students.
- Support for the participation of UNIZA staff in mobility activities - a prerequisite for their career growth.

- Quantitative indicators (per annum):
 - students complete a study stay or traineeship in the regular form of study.
 - students in an online learning form of study.
 - students in blended form.
 - employees complete a lecture stay/teaching mobility or training.
 - incoming students / per year.
 - incoming teachers and staff / per year.
 - submitted KA2 projects.