Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

The Institution agrees to publish this overall strategy (all three parts) on its website within one month after the signature of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education by the European Commission.

Please describe your institution’s international (EU and non-EU) strategy. In your description please explain a) how you choose your partners, b) in which geographical area(s) and c) the most important objectives and target groups of your mobility activities (with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, including study and training, and short cycles). If applicable, also explain how your institution participates in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees. (max. 5000 characters)

Internationalisation is a prerequisite for excellent research and education. Radboud University’s international strategy is based on the following principles: quality, focus and sustainability. This means that when RU chooses its partners, for example, it is very active in building sustainable international networks of HEI’s in Europe and outside Europe. At this very moment RU has implemented the International Research University Network (IRUN) in which 10 European universities actively participate. This IRUN was originally initiated at central level but has been heavily supported by the different faculties. On faculty level there are additional research based European and non-European networks built on long-lasting collaborations. All other relations with university partners (RU has more than 200 inter-institutional agreements in place) are guided by complementarity, mutual benefit and student needs.

The inter-institutional cooperation is not restrictive and selective to specific geographical regions although a great deal of cooperation is related to Europe with a certain focus on Scandinavian countries, Russia, Asia (Indonesia, China, and Taiwan), North America (USA and Canada), South America (Brazil) and Australia. But overall it is wide-spread. With the preferred partners in these countries the cooperation is mostly based on research and education including exchange of students and teachers.

All the mobility activities for students and staff have the aim of enhancing the quality of the education in all three cycles. The main objective of the mobility in the first cycle is achieving the enriching experience of studying and working in a different international, intercultural setting, which is really an opportunity of a lifetime for students in that phase of their study. For the second cycle the main objective is the academic added value of the study abroad since the Master’s student in an international setting is primarily motivated by his or her academic needs of deepening and specialisation. In the third cycle the main added value for a stay abroad is to meet and satisfy specific research needs. The stay abroad is mostly initiated and conducted by the academic supervisor who involves his or her colleague professor from abroad in the (joint) doctorate degree. Staff mobility is mostly originated by common research or other common activities such as conference participation, etc. Most of the time it varies between incidental teaching abroad and long-lasting teaching periods where it sometimes lead to the development of common curriculum or double and joint degrees.

Radboud University is active but selective when it comes to the development of double, multiple or joint degrees.

If applicable, please describe your institution’s strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme. (max. 2000 characters)

The current strategy for organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training is to encourage the accumulation of (Erasmus) projects under the present LLP. The main reason for this strategy is that Radboud University (RU) wants to place focus on and achieve sustainability in the teaching and training projects. In practice it means that RU encourages the combination of teacher and student mobility for EU projects together with curriculum mapping for certain programmes with preferred European partners. If successful this should lead to common curriculum development programmes or Intensive Programmes (IP’s), which in some cases could culminate in Erasmus Mundus Master’s programmes if it relates to common programmes. It could also lead to Erasmus Mundus action 2 in regard to signing in for lots together with preferred European partners restricted to certain (RU)-target regions. The same strategy and policy is applicable to the cooperation with non-European partners and non-European teaching and training projects. Radboud
University encourages the combination of already existing Memoranda of Understanding with non-European universities with action 2 lots. This can be facilitated by the Radboud Scholarship Programme, if applicable or additional grants for non-European students. This overall strategy of accumulation of teaching and training projects does not intend to discourage (spontaneous) initiatives of the individual teachers and researchers to enter European and non-European education projects. On the contrary, after a quality check on faculty level these initiatives will be actively supported and facilitated at the central level. And during the monitoring of these projects (which is a combined action on central and faculty central level) they will be supported in combining these projects with other teaching and training projects just to place focus on and achieve sustainability in these projects.

Please explain the expected impact of your participation in the Programme on the modernisation of your institution (for each of the 5 priorities of the Modernisation Agenda*) in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve. (max. 3000 characters)

Radboud University as a research based, student-oriented university is always driven by ambition for enhancing their research and education quality. This principle is also laid down in Radboud’s strategic plan, titled: “Radboud University: inspired by quality and focused on the future”. Participating in the Programme means that Radboud University’s (RU) objectives with respect to the quality of research and higher education will be supported.

Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs. RU is not in favour of selecting students at the beginning of their study programme: every (inter)national student who meets the requirements for the study programme he or she wants to take is eligible for this programme. In order to increase the efficiency of these study programmes every student will have during his or her first year of study mandatory progress meetings with teachers and staff leading to a “binding recommendation regarding the continuation of studies” at the end of the first year with respect to whether to continue to study.

Improving the quality and relevance of higher education. The starting point for the RU with respect to internationalisation is that “Internationalisation is a quality strategy”. This means that RU participates in the Programme because the RU is convinced that internationalisation will contribute to the quality of its education and its graduates in terms of societal needs including employability.

Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation. One of the main reasons to promote mobility of students and teachers is that via these mobility programmes, which are carefully chosen together with preferred partners, the education programmes will gain quality and diversity. This will lead to added value in terms of employability of the students and quality of existing education programmes.

Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development. The RU is a strong proponent of the idea that education and research should be intertwined. This means that in initiating international projects the intertwining of research and education is one of the main issues for initiating these programmes or projects. The long-lasting cooperation with business is reflected by a common strategy and policy with respect to technology transfer and valorisation. The RU is situated in one of the Euregions which also implies that the RU is very active in cross-border programmes together with other (Eu)regional HEI’s and companies (cohesion funds). Excellence for education, research and employability is a central issue at the RU which is reflected by the establishment of the Radboud Honours Academy and the recently submitted EU-project: “Excellence for Employability”.

Improving governance and funding. Good governance and sustainable funding is the central strategy of RU. The modernisation and internationalisation agenda in higher education, therefore, has the full support of the RU.