

## ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT of AGORA UNIVERSITY

### Objectives

We strongly believe that the participation of The Agora University in Oradea (AUO) in the Erasmus+ Program will have a beneficial impact on the modernization of our institution and its pursuit of further internationalization. The general objectives of the said strategy are to increase the degree of internationalization at AUO and to make the university a desirable and modern institution. To meet these strategic aims, a number specific objectives have been formulated, all of which being tackled by our institution's participation in the Erasmus+ programme:

- To consolidate the on-going relations with traditional partners – especially at EU level - with which we have student and staff exchanges and other international projects;
- To develop relationships with new partners, including from, but not limited to the EU, through the use of several key actions available in the Erasmus+ program;
- To attract more highschool graduates through the advertisement of mobility activities for study and traineeship;
- To encourage Bachelor's graduates to continue with Master's studies at our institution by offering double/multiple/ and joint masters programmes;
- To continue the Agora scholarships plan and to find additional financial support, in order to encourage students from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups to successfully finish AUO study programs;
- To continue to adapt the AUO academic curricula and research to current and emerging labour market needs, by strengthening and initiating new communications channels with the regional business sector;
- To enable virtual mobility and research programs through the use of "Agora University Moodle" e-learning platform and other online resources;
- To involve a large number of AUO students in international mobility activities;
- To recognize, in accordance with the national in European legal framework, the courses followed and academic qualifications gained abroad by students;
- To encourage and to support the continuous professional development of AUO staff by offering new opportunities for continuing professional development, including through mobility activities at partnering institutions, research projects and projects which develop or embed best practices;
- To attract students, academic staff and researchers from outside the EU through mobility programs, joint master programs, knowledge alliances and international cooperation projects;
- To stimulate the development of entrepreneurial, creative and innovation skills in all disciplines taught at all AUO study programs, through access to the expertise of incoming staff;
- To apply for EU and national competition-based funding programs;
- To recognize the importance and ensure the full visibility of results obtained by staff involved in individual mobility activities or cooperation projects with strategic partners;
- To analyse the results of the internal monitoring of international mobility and cooperation activities carried out, thus improving our university's international performance.

By achieving the set objectives, we expect to contribute to the desideratum of creating a European Education Area, the objectives contributing (partially or totally) to the fulfilment of goals related to: the establishment of time spent abroad as a norm, the recognition of qualifications across the EU, and granting free access to high-quality education regardless of socio-economic background. In addition, by participating

in the Erasmus + program, we will be able to encourage the accumulation competences for lifelong learning, as well as digital skills for beneficiaries.

## **Actions**

Through the use of programs integrated in KA1, we, as an institution, will be able to pursue the objectives stated above – which are a part of the AUO Internationalization strategy - as all the said objectives are dependent on the realization of mobility activities for students and staff or the creation of joint master programmes. In short, the participation of staff (incoming and outgoing) to mobility activities will aid solidify existing partnerships. The constant search for KA1 partners, via direct (re)search done by the AUO Erasmus+ Office, and by tapping into the existing professional networks of the staff, will lead to the setting up of new partnerships. The option of participating in periods of abroad study should determine more highschool students to choose to further their education at AUO; and the establishment of joint master should bolster the number of interested own and external students to choose AUO. Partnerships with regional and international businesses, marked by constant communication, should translate in an adaptation of the curricula to fit employer requests; and placement mobility will incentivize businesses to recruit students as permanent employees. By adding virtual mobility to the educational offer, students reluctant or unable to participate in a classical mobility will have another option available to them, which, in turn, will increase the overall number of mobile students. The automatic recognition of learning outcomes, done in a speedy and transparent fashion by the Erasmus+ Office, will both raise the number of mobility activities and the quality of our educational offer. By using the expertise of incoming staff (teachers, administrative staff and researchers), we plan to stimulate innovation and creativity, as own students and staff alike will have the possibility to discover new practices and ideas, which they can later develop. Through yearly successful applications for KA1 funding, submitted by the Erasmus+ Office, all the above activities will be made possible. The Erasmus + Office will further ensure that the results of the KA1 projects it participates in are visible internally, via intra-institutional dissemination (at meetings, via newsletters and Rector's addresses, on the AUO website and via other digital platforms, and by transforming mobile staff and students into active promoters of the program) and externally, by participating to conferences organized by the RO Erasmus+ National Agency, and to other events with partners. As participation to KA1 projects will be internally monitored by the Erasmus+ Office and the International Relations Department, we will make sure that procedures and internal regulations are constantly updated in order to achieve the best results.

Through the participation in programs integrated in KA2, we will further be able to tackle building partnerships that will develop well beyond the Erasmus+ framework. We will be enabled to aid our researchers and academic staff in furthering their research and disseminating results through the usage of conferences, meetings with peers and teaching activities made available as future project activities. Moreover, as we will participate in projects which have AUO as a beneficiary, our students and staff will benefit from the activities of said cooperation projects.

By involving ourselves in KA3 projects, we plan to use the knowledge of our staff to conduct research which will aid the development of policies in the field of education. With the help of partners, we intend to discover best-practices and develop dialogue forums (including with the involvement of students and youth) in which these practices can be disseminated, in order to be taken into account by policy makers nationally and on an international level.

The Erasmus+ Office, which is part of the International Relations Department at AUO will be either in charge of or contribute to the management all Erasmus projects, its main attributions being the following: searching for projects and applying for funding; (co)writing and (co)managing project proposal with other partners, or, in special circumstances, aiding relevant AUO bodies or staff in the writing or management of projects; searching for partners and establishing agreements, guided by the congruence of study and

placement models (KA1), or shared interests and expertise (KA2, KA3); aiding participants before the mobility with identifying the most fitting mobility activities, filling out paperwork and communicating with host institutions; aiding participants throughout the mobility by keeping close contact with them directly and mediating any problems which could arise at host institutions; aiding participants after the mobility has concluded to reintegrate and become Erasmus+ Ambassadors, who will share their experiences with others and disseminate results amongst peers and other interested parties; ensuring the automatic mutual recognition of outcomes; organizing transparent and visible selection procedures with the help of other relevant university bodies, especially of a Selection Committee established on a yearly basis by the AUO Rector.

The selection committee establishes the selection criteria and the dates for recruitment and communicates them. The recruitment dates for outgoing students and staff are in early spring the academic year prior to mobility activities. The deadlines for incoming students (receiving nominations and application forms and learning agreements) are available in our updated course catalogue and will be sent to our partners each year.

## **Impact**

We have opted to present targets and indicators in a thematic matter, rather than categorizing them according to the Key Actions they relate to.

In the pursuit of consolidating existing partnerships and developing new ones, AUO seeks to establish Interinstitutional Agreements with all KA1 partners with which it currently holds such agreement, prior to the onset of the new Erasmus+ Programme or in the first year of its implementation (2021). Although the current agreements cover all the necessary mobility needs of AUO, it will establish a minimum of one new Agreement per year, until 2027, with special emphasis on covering new geographical areas. Furthermore, AUO will apply for a minimum of two cooperation projects (KA2) per programme year, after identifying partners and project activities of interest. Each year, the projects which have not been funding will be optimized and resubmitted into competitions, granted they are still viable and there are still interested partners. We will participate at meetings with a minimum of two partners per year, in order to discuss the functioning of the partnership and its possible broadening. We will visit a minimum of one Erasmus+ partner per year and will launch invitations for visits herein. We will sign inter-institutional agreements with at least one partner from the African Region and one from the South-Asian Region by 2025. We will apply for a minimum of one KA3 project by 2027. For achieving the latter, we will identify possible partners amongst public authorities, NGOs, youth organizations and international organizations, including already-established networks we can tap into.

With the objective of ensuring a qualitative participation to Erasmus+ in mind, AUO will strive to get a satisfaction rate of over 70% amongst students and staff participating to mobility activities (KA1), based on their submitted feedback via questionnaires and reports. With the same objective in mind, AUO will create a working risk management strategy for Erasmus+ projects by 2022. We will ensure the full automatic recognition of learning or placement outcomes for students participating in mobility activities. We will provide help in improving their language skills to all outgoing students and staff through the use of our Moodle learning platform and other digital means. We will adapt our internal regulations and practices in accordance with national and international recommendations relating to Erasmus+, especially those disseminated by the RO Erasmus+ Agency. We will embed best practices which work for our partners and which have been identified by interaction with other universities at conferences or meetings. We will support project digitization processes, and will apply all Erasmus Without Paper initiatives before the deadlines issued by authorities. We will update our course catalogue once per year.

As sending more students and staff abroad is an objective, we will increase the number of outgoing students by a minimum of 5% each year, leading to 2027. The number of outgoing staff will also be

increased by a minimum of 5% on a yearly basis. Furthermore, we will create the possibility for virtual mobilities by 2025 and expect at least one virtual mobility the same year.

While fully believing that incoming staff will aid the modernization of our institution, we intend to grow the number of visiting staff to a total of 25 by 2027. We will inform partnering institutions about our availability to accept incoming staff all year round. To students, we will offer information well in advance, help with obtaining visas and insurance and provide accommodation-related information.

We will disseminate all Erasmus+ results inside our institution by organizing an Erasmus+ Days event each year and by participating to student and staff meetings. In addition, we will send regular newsletters and publish information on our website and other AUO platforms available. We will advertise our results externally, at conferences organized by the RO Erasmus+ Agency and bilateral and multilateral meetings with peers.