ERASMUS CHARTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION 2014-2020

— ANNOTATED GUIDELINES —

Any Higher Education Institution (HEI) wanting to apply and / or participate in the 2014-2020 EU programme for education, training, youth and sport (hereafter: the Programme) needs to have a valid Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.

The purpose of these guidelines is:

- to provide examples of ways in which the principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) would be satisfactorily implemented.

- to support HEIs in their self-assessment of the implementation of their ECHE.

- to support National Agencies in their monitoring of the ECHE compliance of their HEIs, based on the HEIs' Erasmus Policy Statements.

- Fundamental Principles -

The Programme supports the European modernisation and internationalisation agenda in higher education. In signing this Charter, the Institution confirms that its participation in the Programme is part of its own strategy for modernisation and internationalisation. This strategy acknowledges the key contribution of mobile staff and students, and of participation in European and international cooperation projects, to the quality of its higher education programmes and student experience.

By signing this Charter, the Institution undertakes to contribute to the European Union's modernisation and internationalisation agenda in higher education, which includes 5 priorities:

1 - Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs

2 - Improving the quality and relevance of higher education

3 - Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation

4 - Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development

5 - Improving governance and funding

More information:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/agenda_en.htm#doc

By agreeing to the principles of the Charter, the Institution will work towards achieving these objectives by participating in one or several of the following activities:

- Key Action 1: student and staff mobility (within Europe and / or to / from Third Countries); joint master's degrees

- Key Action 2: strategic partnerships, knowledge alliances, capacity building with neighbouring countries, capacity building with Third Countries

- Key Action 3: networks and policy support measures

Participation in activities under Key Action 1 and Key Action 2 should be underpinned by high quality mobility of staff and students to, and cooperation with, HEIs and other strategic partners such as enterprises, regional authorities, etc.

Therefore, the Institution should make mobility and cooperation the central elements of its institutional policy and, to this end:

- develop cooperation with partners in other EU or non-EU countries in the framework of a clear strategy for internationalisation;

- promote and support student and staff mobility, including from under-represented groups, and further develop non-discrimination policies;

- outline a clear policy towards the development of integrated, transnational teaching activities (joint courses / modules / curricula, double / multiple / joint degrees);

- recognise the importance of, and provide visibility to, the results achieved by their staff members engaged in individual mobility or in cooperation projects with strategic partners;

- take into account the results of internal monitoring of European and international mobility and cooperation activities to date, thus further developing its international performance.

The HEI modernisation and internationalisation (EU and non-EU) strategy has to be described in the Erasmus Policy Statement submitted at the application stage. This policy statement (corresponding to the answers of the 3 last questions of the application form) has to be published on the HEI website within one month after the signature of the ECHE awarded by the European Commission.

The Institution undertakes to:

❖ Respect in full the principles of non-discrimination set out in the Programme and ensure equal access and opportunities to mobile participants from all backgrounds.

The Institution has to organise the selection of mobile staff and students and the award of grants in a fair, transparent, coherent and documented way, in line with the stipulations of its contract with the National Agency.

The Institution should have measures in place to ensure that any individual or group will be treated equally, irrespective of their characteristics. In accordance with Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, there should be no discrimination "based on sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation". For more information, see: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf

To ensure fair and equitable opportunities are provided to all potential participants, including those from groups which are usually under-represented in mobility programmes (students or staff with disabilities, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, with family responsibilities or with part-time jobs, etc.), institutions should provide supplementary support for inbound / outbound mobility participants from these groups by, for example, offering top-up grants according to national / institutional requirements, appointing special counsellors, developing learning / teaching techniques within an environment adapted to students from disadvantaged groups or promoting blended mobility (short-term physical mobility combined with virtual mobility which can be supported through strategic partnerships).

With this in mind, institutions should devise and publicise a system that actively promotes study abroad to students from disadvantaged groups and ensures that their support needs can be met and their privacy respected. Institutions should invite all students applying to the exchange programme to disclose the fact that they belong to a disadvantaged group if they wish, so that appropriate support can be provided at the host institution.

Within the framework of the Programme, institutions will be able to further develop and advance their non-discrimination policies, thereby widening access to mobility for under-represented groups, notably through strategic partnerships that promote blended mobility.

❖ Ensure full recognition for satisfactorily completed activities of study mobility and, where possible, traineeships in terms of credits awarded (ECTS or compatible system). Ensure the inclusion of satisfactorily completed study and / or traineeship mobility activities in the final record of student achievements (Diploma Supplement or equivalent).

The Institution should apply an academic credit transfer system (ECTS or compatible system) to give transparency to the recognition procedures. When ECTS is used, the principles set out in the ECTS Users' Guide should be respected (the ECTS Users' Guide is going to be revised in 2014). The institution should ensure the full implementation of ECTS (or compatible system) as a common tool to guarantee the quality of mobility activities and transparency of recognition procedures, thereby facilitating the transfer of learning experiences between different institutions, greater

student mobility and more flexible routes to gaining degrees.

The basic ECTS principle that 60 ECTS credits are attached to the workload of a full-time year of formal learning (academic year), with associated learning outcomes, should be respected. The following items are essential to prepare and record mobility with an ECTS (or compatible system) component:

a) an annually updated Course Catalogue on the Institution's website (a good practice would be to keep reference to any changes made during the degree course of any registered student;

b) a Learning Agreement (for studies and traineeships), signed by the sending and receiving institutions / enterprise / organisation and the student, before the start of mobility;

c) a Transcript of Records indicating the number of credits earned and grades achieved (for traineeships, the corresponding document is a transcript of work / traineeship certificate).

The local grading scale should be clearly explained, with a statistical distribution of local grades, to provide transparency and understanding of grading practices at the host institution. Where appropriate, use should be made of the ECTS grading table. It is particularly important to use pre-established conversion tables within the framework of integrated double / multiple / joint degree courses. Each institution should have a recognition framework in place which is explained and published on the website. This should detail the terms, conditions and practices of recognition procedures.

Recognition / transfer procedures should ensure that the student's mobile activities at the partner institution are recorded in a transparent way (indicating the original course / subject titles at the host institution in the national language and English) and that the credits gained abroad have been recognised as an integral part of the student's degree programmes. All the credits that the student earns during the mobility period and which were originally agreed in the Learning Agreement should be recognised by the home institution without the need for the student to take any further courses or exams.

Students should be encouraged by the sending institution to complete at least 15 ECTS per trimester.

If ECTS is not used by the Institution, a compatible system should be implemented to ensure transparent recognition of study periods abroad. A compatible system is one which relies on credits based on student workload and / or learning outcomes.

ECTS Users' Guide:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

The institution should issue a Diploma Supplement (or equivalent) to accompany every degree successfully completed by a student, using where applicable the template developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO / CEPES. This Supplement should include a record of the period of mobility under the Programme.

The 48 European countries taking part in the Bologna Process have agreed that each mobile graduate in their respective country should receive the Diploma Supplement (DS) automatically, free of charge and in a major European language. Therefore, each institution from a signatory country of the Bologna Declaration which applies for a Charter should issue a Diploma Supplement for each of their mobile graduate students under the above-mentioned conditions. The Institution's policy on issuing the Diploma

Supplement should be published on its website.

Any mobility activity abroad should be made explicit in the relevant part of the Diploma Supplement: alongside modules / units taken at the home institution, the Diploma Supplement should list recognised modules / units / training activities undertaken during the student's mobility period and indicate the location of these mobility activities.

In the case of double / multiple / joint degrees, the Diploma Supplement should indicate the name and status of the partner institutions awarding the degree and explain the respective language(s) of instruction / examination. In addition, an explanation should be provided about the grading / classification scheme agreed by the double / multiple / joint degree-awarding institutions.

The template for the Diploma Supplement is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ds/ds_en.pdf

Further information on the Diploma Supplement is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/ds_en.htm

❖ Charge no fees, in the case of credit mobility, to incoming mobile students for tuition, registration, examinations or access to laboratory and library facilities.

The institution which receives mobile students engaged on **credit mobility** (i.e. students who are mobile within the framework of a degree course at a different institution) must not charge any type of fees for the tuition, registration or examination of these students or for their access to laboratory, library and other facilities offered to local students.

In certain cases, however, mobile students may be required to pay small fees such as insurance, student unions, use of miscellaneous material such as photocopies, laboratory products on the same basis as these are charged to local students at the host institution. Details of any such costs should be provided on the host institution's website so that students are aware of them before the start of mobility.

Fees may only be charged in the case of **full degree mobility** or in the case of students registered in more than one university in the context of a joint master's degree).

The Institution further undertakes to:

- When Participating in Mobility Activities -

Learning mobility helps individuals increase their professional, social and intercultural skills and employability. This is the cornerstone of the internationalisation and modernisation of education and the main tool for the further development of the European Higher Education Area. In order to achieve successful, cost-efficient and sustainable results of a sufficiently high quality, it is necessary to organise clearly

defined activities - before, during and after mobility - within the framework of an institutional mobility culture which involves the whole academic community.

Before Mobility

❖ Publish and regularly update the course catalogue on the website of the Institution well in advance of the mobility periods, so as to be transparent to all parties and allow mobile students to make well-informed choices about the courses they will follow.

Each institution should produce a course catalogue, available on its website, which is updated at least on an annual basis, containing three main parts: information on the institution, information on programmes (general description and description of individual course units) and general information for students. The check-list for the complete list of items to be referred to in the Course Catalogue is available in the ECTS Users' Guide:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

The Institution should clearly indicate in which language the course units are taught and specify to what extent they are open to mobile students (indicating any prerequisites when applicable, such as the minimum linguistic level for example). The minimum should be at least to indicate clearly the course units not taught in the host language and those which are not open to mobile students. Any relevant information on programme requirements for traineeships should also be indicated, along with the number of credits allocated.

While all the above information should be included in the Course Catalogue, each institution can decide on its precise format, taking into account specific technical (IT, editorial, linguistic, etc.) aspects. Whatever the style adopted, the on-line Course Catalogue should be user-friendly. A good practice is to have an archive section containing earlier editions, thus making it easy to track any changes in study programmes / examination regulations.

Ideally, the edition of the Course Catalogue for the upcoming academic year should be available by the early spring of the preceding academic year.

❖ Carry out mobility only within the framework of prior agreements between institutions. These agreements establish the respective roles and responsibilities of the different parties, as well as their commitment to shared quality criteria in the selection, preparation, reception and integration of mobile participants.

The basis to be able to start successful Erasmus mobility activities (required for student mobility for studies and staff mobility for teaching) is the prior signing of inter-institutional agreements between institutions which are holders of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.

These inter-institutional agreements should be based on a comprehensive understanding of the partner institution, compatibility of academic profiles (level / standards considered adequate for mobility activities) and a relationship of trust between the institutions in making academic decisions. Each institution should decide who is responsible for initiating, signing and implementing these agreements and the list of responsible persons should be available on the website for contact and consultation purposes. Agreements, once signed, should be actively honoured. They should therefore be realistic and signed only after consultations have taken place at relevant levels within the Institution. It is important:

a) to avoid signing agreements which are not going to be active;

b) to ensure a balance is struck between academic interests and other factors influencing institutional decisions (e.g. geographical and subject area balance etc.).

The agreement should identify shared quality requirements specific to the planned exchanges (e.g. selection criteria for the nomination of students / teaching staff by the sending institution, including the necessary level of linguistic proficiency to be attained before departure, etc.) as well as basic time-lines (e.g. for the nomination of mobile students by the sending institution, the acceptance of nominees and the issuing of the Transcript of Records after the study period abroad by the receiving institution, which normally should not be more than five weeks after the end date of the mobility period).

The quality requirements might be different from one subject area to another; ideally in this case they should be listed within the same inter-institutional agreement covering all the disciplines concerned. Each agreement should indicate the contact details of those responsible for its implementation and in case of a complaint by a participant. The Institution should regularly monitor the number of existing agreements and, according to its needs, take necessary strategic decisions in order to update and optimise its offer of mobility places.

The template with the minimum requirements to be included can be found soon at:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus

In the case of HEIs located in a non-participating country to the programme, they are not required to apply to the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education. However, they must sign an extended inter-institutional agreement with a HEI located in a participating country. By signing this agreement, the third-country partner institutions undertake to respect the principles contained in the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.

The template with the minimum requirements to be included can be found soon at:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus

While prior inter-institutional agreements are compulsory for exchanges within the Programme between HEIs (for studying and teaching), they are not a prerequisite for mobilities between HEIs and other stakeholders such as enterprises (including HEIs acting as a host organisation for student and staff trainees). In this case all provisions to ensure a mobility of high quality must be settled in the learning agreement for students or mobility programme for staff.

❖ Ensure that outgoing mobile participants are well prepared for the mobility, including having attained the necessary level of linguistic proficiency.

Sending institutions should ensure that their mobile staff and students are given sufficient preparation for their mobility periods. This includes preparation for the differences between sending and receiving institutions / enterprises and traditions between home and host countries, as well as for cultural and linguistic challenges which will be encountered during mobility. This preparation can take different forms, such as lectures on intercultural communication, meetings / discussion groups with former mobile staff / students, an on-line archive with feedback from former mobility participants, social networking, etc.

Language preparation is a crucial element to ensure success in mobility outcomes (staff / student satisfaction, coping with everyday challenges and pressure during the study / training period and improved exam success rates). Both partner institutions / organisations should agree on the proficiency level required in the language of instruction or the workplace and (if different) the local language at the start of the mobility (the proficiency level should be defined in the course catalogue and / or inter-institutional agreement, or in the learning agreement in the case of traineeships and in the mobility programme in the case of invited staff from enterprise or staff training at an organisation that is not an HEI).

Staff should have the minimum required proficiency level at the selection stage. Student selection criteria should, however, take into account both the relevant language skills at the selection stage and the capacity of the students to improve their language skills (through on-line tools or any other type of support) to achieve the required minimum level at the start of the mobility abroad (level to be specified and agreed on in the learning agreement). When required, the sending institution should ensure any necessary pre-departure language instruction.

Ideally, this instruction should be provided in the semester directly before mobility takes place, within the framework of the sending institution's general foreign language instruction policy. It is the sending institution's responsibility to ensure that outbound mobile participants have attained the necessary level of proficiency before departure, which should be measurable against the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Where applicable, the sending institution should organise language courses at different levels and for specific fields of study. The Programme will provide financial and technical support (through on-line tools where available) to sending and receiving institutions.

❖ Ensure that student and staff mobility for education or training purposes is based on a learning agreement for students and a mobility agreement for staff validated in advance between the home and host institutions or enterprises and the mobile participants.

1. Student mobility

A cornerstone for successful student mobility (for studies, traineeships and / or a combination of both) and a smooth and transparent transfer of credits in the future is the Learning Agreement. This must be signed by the three parties involved: the student, the sending institution and the receiving institution / enterprise / organisation

before the mobility takes place.

a) Student mobility for studies

The sending institution should appoint a responsible academic staff member who will advise students in choosing modules at the partner institutions. Ideally, one and the same person should sign the Learning Agreement and, on the students' return, recognise the credits earned during mobility. In any case the institution should ensure that the person responsible for recognition respects the decision made by the colleague(s) having signed the Learning Agreement. The institution should also guarantee transparency and reliability of the procedure for mobile students.

Within the framework of the Learning Agreements, all parties should do their utmost in order to minimise changes to the pre-established selection of study choices by the mobile participant at the receiving institution. To this end, the receiving institution should provide transparent information on the choices offered and be very clear about the deadlines for registration in the chosen courses (and about any restrictions on place numbers, etc. which might be applicable). Changes in the Course Catalogue of the receiving institution while students have already started their studies should be avoided as much as possible.

The sending institution should be well-informed about the requirements at the receiving institution and should provide sufficient guidance to the students so that they can make choices acceptable to both partner institutions. In addition, alternative choices should be explored before the start of the mobility period. Students should be informed that they have to respect deadlines and understand that changes to the Learning Agreement are only possible in exceptional cases. A good practice could be to offer to incoming students a 2-week period after regular classes have started at the host institution in order to make the appropriate modifications in their learning agreement. Any such changes would have to be agreed and validated by the three parties.

Learning Agreements are binding for all the parties and require that, on successful completion of the mobility period, the sending institution recognises credits earned by the student and documents these credits in the student records, so that they can be identified in a transparent way. All the credits that the student earns during the mobility period and which were originally agreed on in the Learning Agreement (or a revised version to it) should be recognised by the home institution without the need for the student to take any further courses or exams.

The contact details of those responsible for signing Learning Agreements should be featured on the website of the Institution.

The template for the Learning Agreement can be found soon at:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus

If necessary, the template may be adapted. It should, however, contain all the elements and, as far as possible, respect the given sequence.

In the case of integrated double / multiple / joint degrees, the issue of a Learning Agreement for mobility within the degree partnership is not a prerequisite, since this mobility follows pre-established and agreed study paths which are a compulsory component of the degree structure.

b) Student mobility for traineeships

Learning Agreements for traineeships abroad follow similar procedures. However,

greater care is required in drafting the Learning Agreement for traineeships, as tasks to be performed in a particular workplace should be listed and corresponding learning outcomes, which are relevant to the final degree, should be agreed to. In addition, monitoring of traineeship activities should be ensured and carried out by the sending institution.

2. Staff mobility

The compulsory mobility agreement between the sending and receiving institutions / organisations for the purpose of teaching or receiving training should stipulate the activities to be undertaken by the staff member. This agreement should be reached after discussions between the two institutions / organisations, taking into account the institutional requirements / strategy, academic rationale, foreseen outcomes and the staff member's competences.

❖ Provide assistance related to obtaining visas, when required, for incoming and outgoing mobile participants.

The sending institution should assist those of their outbound mobile staff / students and the receiving institution should assist those of their incoming mobile staff / students who need a visa by issuing, in a timely manner, the documentation required by the staff / students (i.e. letters confirming the staff / students' status at the institution) for the visa application. The website of the receiving institution should provide mobile participants with information about visa requirements and the time necessary for a visa application. In addition, details should be provided on the website of the contact person (title, function) at the receiving institution who can assist in solving visa-related issues, with a description of the services offered and the support that can be provided, where possible.

In cases in which it proves difficult to obtain visas (e.g. where diplomatic missions are not located in the countries of residence, in situations where postal applications are not accepted, etc.), institutions should attempt to provide assistance in contacting diplomatic representations in order to help ease the procedure. It is clear, however, that the application for the visa is the responsibility of the mobile participant her- / himself.

❖ Provide assistance related to obtaining insurance, when required, for incoming and outgoing mobile participants.

As a general rule, insurance cover is the responsibility of the mobile participant, although the receiving institution should inform mobile participants of cases in which insurance cover is not automatically provided. In those cases where specific types of insurance are required within the framework of mobility activities (e.g. medical insurance in those countries not covered by reciprocal national medical insurance agreements, or accident / third party insurance where such insurance is required for the planned mobility activities), the sending and receiving institutions should provide the necessary assistance in order to be certain that mobile participants have sufficient insurance cover. The agreed solution should be mentioned in the inter-institutional

agreement (student mobility for studies / staff mobility for teaching) or in the learning agreement (student mobility for traineeship) or the mobility agreement for staff on training.

❖ Provide guidance to incoming mobile participants in finding accommodation.

The receiving institution / enterprise / organisation should explain clearly to the mobile participants what accommodation options are open to them at the institution (or in its vicinity) and what the conditions for renting accommodation are (i.e. costs, registration and accommodation contract details, responsibilities), so as to minimise any problems on their arrival. This should be done well in advance of the mobility period. Necessary information should be available, where applicable, on the receiving institution's website, along with the contact details of the accommodation officer at the institution. The local student organisation can also be an important source of information. Where applicable, their contact details should be available on the receiving institution website.

The sending institution should also assist the mobile participants in their search for accommodation by, whenever necessary, contacting their counterparts at the receiving institution or by providing contact details of former mobile participants with experience of finding accommodation at the respective institution / location.

During Mobility

❖ Ensure equal academic treatment and services for home students and staff and incoming mobile participants.

The receiving institution should ensure that incoming mobile participants are afforded the same academic treatment (i.e. rights and responsibilities with regard to teaching and tutoring, exams, marking and grading, complaints procedures, etc.) and access to facilities as regular home students. Details of these rights and responsibilities should be publicised on the website in the language of instruction and explained during the mobile students' induction week (which should be organised for all new incoming mobile participants at the beginning of each term / semester / year). In addition, academic and administrative contact persons should be available during the whole of the mobility period to provide any further explanations which might be necessary and to help solve any problems which might arise.

❖ Integrate incoming mobile participants into the Institution's everyday life.

The receiving institution / enterprise / organisation should make every effort to ensure that all incoming mobile participants are made to feel a part of the institution by integrating them fully into its academic / work and social activities and by avoiding the

segregation of these participants in, for example, their accommodation options (i.e. by not putting all mobile students / staff in the same halls of residence). In addition, the receiving institution should create conditions for mobile students to join social organisations (student associations, sports clubs, music or theatre groups, debating societies, etc.) within the institution. It should also encourage mobile students to initiate and organise their own social events which would lead to wider interaction with local students. Conditions permitting part-time job positions on campus could also be made available to mobile students.

❖ Have in place appropriate mentoring and support arrangements for mobile participants.

a) Student mobility for studies

Mentoring and support arrangements should already be outlined in the Course Catalogue of the receiving institution, in the section on general information for students, with contact persons / addresses in the respective areas. Information available on the website should also include details regarding the culture and everyday life of the host country.

An important aspect of the support arrangements is the welcome / orientation week, which should provide the incoming students with necessary information on practical / administrative arrangements and allow them to meet local and other mobile students. This welcome / orientation week is a vital opportunity to address concerns among the incoming students and to reduce any psychological pressure they might feel during their first contacts at the host institution.

Institutions should make every effort to foster integration of mobile students, for example, by initiating a system, whereby volunteer local students (who have been approved by a designated body) assist the incoming mobile students both before and during the mobility period. Local students could, for example, assist the incoming students by meeting them at the airport, helping them to find accommodation and explaining everyday cultural challenges they might meet in the host country. In order to institutionalise this support for mobile students, it is strongly recommended that the receiving institution establishes a student network, such as an ESN (Erasmus Student Network) section which could run the buddy system and share good practice with other sections around Europe. The services provided within the framework of the buddy system could also be made available, after any necessary adaptation, to mobile staff members.

In addition, the receiving institution should appoint academic mentors who are responsible for dealing with problems related to the academic issues (course timetables, student attendance, coursework, relationship with academic staff, etc.)

The institution's website should give details of the whole (academic, administrative, social, etc.) support system which is available to the mobile participants.

b) Student mobility for traineeships

A mentor, different from the supervisor, should be nominated to support the mobile student while in the enterprise. His / her role is to provide support, encouragement and information to the trainee on the life and experience relative to the enterprise (culture of the enterprise, informal codes and conducts, etc.). The contact details of

both the supervisor and the mentor should be specified in the learning agreement.

c) Both

Mobile participants should be made aware of whom they can contact in case of problems. Institutions / enterprises / organisations should designate staff members to deal with social and psychological questions the mobile students might have, also indicating professional centres dealing with health / psychological issues.

❖ Provide appropriate linguistic support to incoming mobile participants.

In cases where the language of instruction is not the language of the host country, the receiving institution should be aware of the needs (and also the time limitations) of the mobile students and, when deemed necessary, provide adequate linguistic support. This support should be tailored to differences in the needs of the mobile participants and could be offered on-line, as intensive courses during the orientation week ("survival" level) or as semester / annual courses (in groups, as individual tuition or as subject-specific courses).

It is considered good practice to allocate credits to these language classes and describe outcomes within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. However, this does not negate the sending institution's responsibility to ensure that their outgoing mobile participants are properly prepared from a linguistic point of view according to the specifications indicated in the inter-institutional agreement. The Programme will provide financial and technical support to sending institutions (including an on-line tool where available).

After Mobility

❖ Accept all activities indicated in the learning agreement as counting towards the degree, provided these have been satisfactorily completed by the mobile students.

The sending institution should, upon receipt of the Transcript of Records / Training Certificates:

a) certify that the mobile student has fulfilled all requirements stipulated in the Learning Agreement;

b) ensure recognition of the mobility period abroad within the time-scale and according to the conditions stipulated in the institutional recognition framework.

Given the rich diversity of higher education traditions in Europe and the different approaches to recognition practices, HEIs are free to follow the recognition procedures established within their institutions. However, the sending institution should ensure that all the credits earned by the mobile student during the mobility period are recognised and counted towards the final degree in such a way that it is apparent in the student's records and documents issued to the student (Diploma Supplement or equivalent). An appeal procedure should be in place and published on the website of

the sending institution. Failure to ensure that the mobile student receives recognition for the study / traineeship period abroad, as stipulated in the Learning Agreement, may result in the withdrawal of the Charter.

❖ Provide incoming mobile participants and their home institutions with transcripts containing a full, accurate and timely record of their achievements at the end of their mobility period.

a) Student mobility for studies

The receiving institution should, according to legal requirements, keep records of the mobile participants' academic achievements for a statutory period, providing information whenever requested by the mobile participant or official bodies on her / his behalf.

It is the receiving institution's obligation to provide the sending institution and the mobile student with a Transcript of Records within a period stipulated in the inter-institutional agreement (and normally not longer than five weeks after the mobile student's evaluation has finished at the host HEI). The template of the standard form of the Transcript of Records will soon be available at

http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus

However, given the diversity of practice in communicating information about higher education in Europe, this document can be adapted according to the requirements of the institution, while taking care that all items of information to be found in the standard form are contained in any adapted version.

The information contained in the Transcript of Records should ensure a transparent recognition of the study period abroad, providing details of the title of the course unit / module / subject, with the respective course code (referred to in the Course Catalogue), duration of the course unit, local grade and ECTS credits. It is important that a clear explanation be provided of the institutional grading system and grade distribution in the department or programme. The Transcript of Records must be duly signed, stamped and dated in order for it to be considered a legally valid document. The Institution should decide who should prepare the document, as well as designating a person responsible for signing it. The mobile students should be informed of those responsible and should be able to contact them in case of unforeseen circumstances or delays.

a) Student mobility for traineeships

It should be noted that HEIs have developed different forms / practices for implementing and evaluating traineeships. Therefore, the methodology adopted for evaluation of student achievement during traineeship activities (including time and place of evaluation) should be clearly described in the Learning Agreements and signed by the three parties (student, sending institution and traineeship provider). In any case, the traineeship provider should always issue a certification attesting to the mobile participant's traineeship activities (duration, traineeship tasks and, wherever possible, competences developed).

❖ Support the reintegration of mobile participants and give them the opportunity, upon return, to build on their experiences for the benefit of the Institution and their peers.

The sending institution should make every effort to ensure that mobile participants are not penalised, either in terms of grading or career progression, for their study / training / teaching period abroad. Instead, their experience should be valued and shared as an inspiration to others, by for example organising meetings / publishing articles where the mobile participants could share their experience and the impact of mobility on their personal / professional development, as well as on the sending institution.

To this end, the sending institution should provide administrative and academic counselling to assess the outcomes of the mobility and advice participants on their return how best to use the competences acquired abroad. Furthermore, the sending institution should assist participants back into their social, educational or professional environments by, for example, providing mentoring and social platforms, by creating group activities and by involving the formerly mobile students in situations which require inter-cultural competences (e.g. within the "buddy system"). Local student organisations could play an important role in this respect.

❖ Ensure that staff are given recognition for their teaching and training activities undertaken during the mobility period, based on a mobility agreement.

The institution should systematically use the results of staff mobility for structural reform. Therefore, international staff mobility should become an integral part of human resources development schemes. The institution should actively support staff mobility by establishing a strategy which underpins this activity, identifying the professional development needs of the staff at the institution and the necessary preparation.

This strategy should include different measures encouraging mobility. For example, staff mobility should be acknowledged as part of the regular workload, staff working schedules should be adapted to meet requirements and, whenever possible, temporary replacements should be found during the mobility period, additional cultural / language preparation should be available to mobile staff and teaching and training mobility activities should be recognised as a component in any evaluation / assessment of the staff.

- When Participating in European and International Cooperation Projects -

❖ Ensure that cooperation leads to sustainable and balanced outcomes for all partners

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When the Institution participates in European and international cooperation projects, it should do so in a pro-active way, establishing from the very beginning the objectives for its participation, the role it intends to play and the results which it expects to achieve. Participation in such projects should be integrated in the Institution's modernisation and internationalisation strategy and should be based on a specific needs analysis.

The foreseen results of any participation in cooperation projects should be sustainable and balanced and should, therefore, lead to future development of the Institution's international involvement. In particular, institutions should make decisions about the strategic partnerships which they intend to form, by taking into account geographical and subject area priorities and the institutional capacity to participate actively and implement the project outcomes. Therefore, institutions should make informed decisions before committing themselves to participating in particular projects.

❖ Provide relevant support to staff and students participating in these activities.

Once committed to a given project, the Institution undertakes to support fully any student and staff participating in it, both as coordinator and partner. As part of the Institution's modernisation and internationalisation strategy, concrete support measures should be foreseen at both institutional and departmental levels allowing participating staff / students adequate time to carry out their project work, allocating additional resources to support the project, providing administrative back-up (e.g. with financial management, study programme accreditation procedures, etc.) and ensuring space on the website for dissemination and exploitation of project results.

Participation in such international projects should be seen as an important aspect of the professional development of the staff and of the modernisation of the Institution and should, therefore, be considered a key component in staff evaluation.

❖ Exploit the results of the projects in a way that will maximise their impact on individuals and participating institutions and encourage peer learning with the wider academic community.

The Institution should implement any outcomes which result from participation in projects either as a long-term strategy or a short-term solution. Once committed to a project, the Institution should ensure that the visibility of project activities and results is a priority in order to exploit and maximise the products in the Institution itself and beyond, particularly through the partnerships with other HEIs and organisations. By making use of the Internet, presentations at meetings, posters, and other dissemination activities, the Institution should raise awareness within the academic community and beyond not only of the project results, but also of the funding possibilities of such activities which could therefore lead to spin-offs and other initiatives.

- For the Purposes of Visibility -

❖ Display this Charter and the related Erasmus Policy Statement prominently on the Institution's website.

> It is a prerequisite that the Charter and the related Erasmus Policy Statement are displayed on the institutional website in a place which is easily accessible from the Institution's main page, thereby demonstrating that the whole institution is committed to the Charter.

❖ Promote consistently activities supported by the Programme, along with their results.

> The Institution is committed to expressing its support for the Programme by providing information on activities in all Programme actions, with the indication of respective contact persons, and using all possible opportunities (mass media, scientific meetings, academic journals, etc.) to inform the wider community of new initiatives, on-going activities and final results

On behalf of the Institution, I recognise that the implementation of the Charter will be monitored and that a violation of any of the above principles and commitments may lead to its withdrawal by the European Commission.

> The compliance of the HEI with this Charter will be monitored by the National Agency through visits, HEI reporting, participant reports, etc. In case non-compliance is identified, an action plan will be agreed between the HEI and the National Agency to solve the problematic issues. If the action plan is not implemented by the HEI within the agreed timeline, this will be reported to the European Commission and may lead to the withdrawal of the ECHE.