

Erasmus Policy Statement

UC SYD's international strategy has been written to underpin the institution's overall master strategy particularly in terms of improving the quality and relevance of the available degree courses and within the research carried out.

UC SYD has signed a framework contract with the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science and internationalisation contribute to the ongoing monitoring of indicators such as for example the knowledge basis of the lecturers and the institution's work with innovative professions.

In this way, internationalisation plays an important part in UC SYD's daily effort to develop and implement its educational and research-based environment to the benefit of students, future employers, interested parties and other partners such as for example education and research institutions at home and abroad.

There is particular focus on making international activities available to all staff and students so that internationalisation becomes an underpinning element of UC SYD's ambition to be an outward looking place of education and an attractive place of work. As part of the creation of UC SYD's international strategy we have formulated an overarching vision for the international agenda:

At UC SYD it is easy for everyone to see how to:

- Get international insight and outlook
- Participate in coproductive and dynamic international environments / communities
- Develop an international professional identity
- Participate in international research and development

In addition, the overarching goals for the international work at UC SYD have been set and are to be implemented at departmental level in accordance with relevant educational priorities and conditions:

- Increase mobility of students and staff
- Create stronger international learning environments (visible and active)
- Strengthen UC SYD's participation in international cooperation projects
- Increase satisfaction of in- and outgoing students with their mobility

Taking part in the Erasmus+ Programme is vital for UC SYD's ability to succeed with its international strategy and as a means of support to enable UC SYD to carry out its institutional strategy.

The Bologna Process provides a framework for the entire Danish higher education sector and thus also for UC SYD. It is therefore also not novel for UC SYD to identify as an integrated part of 'the European Higher Education Area' and with the areas of work prioritized by the European Commission as a means to achieve the ambition of creating a European education policy which supports young people in getting the best education and finding work in Europe.

Behind UC SYD's abovementioned goals for internationalisation are a series of institutional focus areas which are very much supported by the actions of the Erasmus+ Programme and are in line with the European policy agenda for education. Among the priority areas for UC SYD are:

- Strengthened use of digitalisation both of educational programmes and as a didactic tool in teaching
- Blended learning and blended mobility where innovation of the curriculum enables common courses with educational institutions abroad, for instance using digital platforms
- Focus on inclusion so that more young people from uneducated backgrounds get into higher education

- Lifelong learning as continued development of competences to match employers' need for qualified labour
- Development of language competences in a time when Danish young people choose not to learn foreign languages such as German, French and Spanish

UC SYD's mission is to provide students with top quality professionalism and to work together with them as learning people and equals. Thus, international knowledge and experience together form an important basis for achieving this mission so that the students are up-to-date on the most novel research and are given the possibility to see their profession in an international context. Through this work, UC SYD supports the students' professional and personal formation process and the development of their European identity where values such as freedom, equality, democracy, human rights and dignity are common denominators.

One of the overarching goals for UC SYD's international work is to increase student mobility with a view to increasing the number of graduates with international experience and competences attractive to the labour market. Therefore, UC SYD creates a good framework for the students to get international insight and outlook in order to develop an international professional identity.

In 2018 the management of UC SYD decided on a sub strategy to the international strategy to support this goal. The sub strategy is about establishing fixed mobility packages with an explicit description of the contents, destination, necessary practical measures, finances, etc. of each stay abroad. These mobility packages focus on establishing long-term cooperation partnerships offering quality learning at a top professional level. In this way, the qualitative contents of the stay abroad become the guiding element for UC SYD's student mobility rather than the destination itself.

As part of this sub strategy European networks are prioritized in order to ensure professional quality and relevance of each stay abroad and also because it is of great advantage for the students to be able to get support from the Erasmus+ Programme for their stay. In this way, UC SYD has chosen to prioritise a large part of the institution's partner portfolio under the Erasmus+ Programme. Hence activities under KA103 are very much the focus of UC SYD's funding applications and broad distribution of grants across departments.

As supplement to the European partnerships, UC SYD has chosen to prioritise cooperation with a few select overseas partners under the international dimension of the Erasmus+ Programme. Partners are selected by departments based on professional, cultural and lingual considerations. Hence, UC SYD shall continue to apply for funding for and implement activities under KA107 in those departments where these are considered to contribute to increased professional quality and relevance.

UC SYD aims to make exchange available to all students at the institution – also the disadvantaged students. All students must have the opportunity to develop an international professional identity, intercultural understanding and improved foreign language competences. This is best done through mobility and it is therefore important to UC SYD to prioritise short as well as long mobilities that take into account the individual student's wishes and possibilities.

Both study and practical/training mobility are a priority and depend on the individual department's options and the students' wishes. The possibilities for inclusion of all students within the Erasmus+ Programme shall be rolled out in all departments as part of the effort to make exchange widely accessible, albeit always provided that a period abroad will not delay the students in finishing their degree.

When UC SYD sends students out on exchange they are prepared for the foreign culture and for being on their own. Being well prepared contributes to a successful stay both on the professional and on the personal level. When the students return to UC SYD the lecturers ensure that knowledge is fed back into the classroom when students systematically share their experiences with their fellow students. In turn, this sharing of knowledge kick starts a process of self-reflection which helps the students getting a new perspective on their own professionalism, professional identity and cultural values.

UC SYD also needs to send more staff into international mobility. This is firstly because teaching and/or training abroad helps to ensure the quality of the institution's knowledge base, and secondly because lecturers are the best ambassadors for the students. Staff mobility is primarily implemented as teaching and training stays under Erasmus+ KA103 and KA107 to the same partner institutions which are part of our student mobility packages. The ambition is to create strong international networks where lecturers and researchers at UC SYD among other things contribute to maintain and expand the institution's contacts to places that are attractive to students. Opportunities for staff mobility are promoted through the departmental International Coordinators as well as through a continued dialogue between each member of staff and their manager. By anchoring staff mobility

within the managerial level, it also becomes recognized as development of professional and personal competences.

The implementation of Erasmus+ activities under KA103 og KA107 happens through continued development and quality assurance of UC SYD's international cooperation agreements. The aim is to maintain a balance within the agreements for both students and staff so that incoming and outgoing mobility numbers balance as far as possible. Agreements must be active and must be of sufficient quality as specified by UC SYD. The institution's goal to ensure quality and relevance within education and research carried out at the institution is underpinned by this strategic approach to cooperation where partnership agreements are maintained and continually developed with a focus on diversity and a high level of quality within international activities.

It is the case for both student and staff mobility that UC SYD's central International Department support the educational departments in applying for and managing Erasmus+ funds as well as providing continual knowledge dissemination about opportunities, regulations and guidelines of the Erasmus+ Programme. In this way, quality assurance of international activities is organizationally placed in the International Department, although in close dialogue with the departments which implement the activities. Individual stays expect to become supplemented by several other types of stays where students and staff become mobile together centred around communal teaching/learning activities. How these mobility types are eventually implemented depends on the opportunities available through the new Erasmus+ Programme.

Another overarching goal for UC SYD's international work is to increase participation of staff and students in international projects and networks. Working with innovative professions is a strategic focus area for UC SYD and with a view to this it is essential to be a part of international networks where communal development enables not only testing of own knowledge and experiences in different cultural contexts but also acquiring new inspiration to develop educational and teaching practices. The Erasmus+ Programme's KA2 og KA3 activities already form the basis of UC SYD's participation of such networks. Thus, the goal is to continue applying for new projects both as project manager and as project participant to be able to take full advantage of opportunities within the Erasmus+ Programme. Development projects are an enriching way for lecturers and students to work together and often also a good opportunity to draw in praxis and the educational policy level in a combined effort. In so far as it is possible, partners who are part of UC SYD's mobility packages shall also be prioritized as partners for these types of projects.

Upon the start of the new Programme period in 2021, UC SYD's International Department shall ensure to invite all relevant staff from all departments to present in detail the new Erasmus Charter as well as the opportunities under the new Erasmus+ Programme. This will contribute to underpin the importance which the activities will have for the institution and also to ensure the quality and relevance of activities when implemented.

It is anticipated that UC SYD's taking part in the Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027 will have much influence on the institution's international work as has been the case for the Programme period 2014-2020. The vision and set targets for the international work at UC SYD are based on the institution's engagement in Erasmus+ and the established partner alliances are mainly concentrated around Erasmus+ partners. Long term partner alliances are created to ensure high quality professionalism and relevance for both mobility activities and project cooperation.

UC SYD has an expressed aim to increase mobility activities and hence continually monitor student and staff mobility at each department. However, there are no specific target numbers listed in UC SYD's institutional or international strategy. This decision has been made to avoid that quantitative targets in themselves become the driving force of mobility rather than the quality of the activities undertaken. However, the overall target of the Bologna Process of 20% student mobility provides the framework for UC SYD and is expected to be met over the duration of the Programme period by also including shorter mobilities such as for instance activities involving staff and students together. The contents of the final Programme Guide will be vital for how such international activities can be implemented and count towards internationalisation.

Hence, a high degree of professional quality and relevance are the defining factors for UC SYD's mobility and the mobility packages are expected to contribute to getting more students to travel abroad during the 2021-2027 Programme period – including students from disadvantaged backgrounds – because the way the packages are described supports planning of the mobilities. Student mobility is expected to make up approx. 10% and staff mobility approx. 15% when the current period comes to an end in 2021. The results of continued monitoring of mobility numbers of students and staff are discussed at meetings between international coordinators and heads of studies / departments.

Another essential monitoring element carried out continually by the International Department is surveys of the students' satisfaction with their mobility for both incoming and outgoing students. This tool supplements the

Erasmus+ Programme's surveys and are used in particular to ensure the quality of the students training or study periods abroad. Professionalism, support and learning environment are all indicators being measured. Survey responses, together with education/subject specific evaluation and systematic knowledge sharing, contribute to continual improvement of the entire process surrounding student mobility at UC SYD from planning the stay to the final evaluation upon returning home. Knowledge sharing is also used widely as part of completing staff mobility with the purpose of disseminating knowledge and experience acquired whilst abroad.

The various initiatives for continued monitoring of quality relevance and satisfaction contribute to ensuring that the activities under the Erasmus+ Programme KA103 and KA107 are implemented to a high standard at UC SYD. The higher the standard of quality of the implemented activities, the greater the importance of the mobility activities for the staff's teaching and the students' education.

UC SYD's aim to increase the institution's participation in international cooperation projects will be measured as number of staff and students involved in this type of activity which to a large degree – but not exclusively – are carried out through the Erasmus+ Programme's KA2 and KA3. It is continually assessed in all UC SYD's departments and research how many and which projects the institution's resources can support. Hence, it is important to be able to put the correct competences into play in order to ensure the professional quality and relevance within the institution's focus areas.

Integrating knowledge into the degree courses and departments at UC SYD is high priority and therefore emphasis is on ensuring that knowledge from international projects can be fed into all teaching and learning activities. This intentional sustainability of experience and results borne out of project work underpins UC SYD's institutional targets of increased quality of education and research.

In 2019 a project unit was set up with the purpose of ensuring an overview of all current projects and project applications as well as contributing to assuring quality of the latter. This is part of the process of professionalisation of handling projects which UC SYD is working on. Hence, we do not set quantitative measures for how many Erasmus+ projects UC SYD's departments intend to involve themselves in in the future because we constantly weigh up resources and other priority activities. Nevertheless, getting a greater number and a more varied group of students and staff involved in KA2 and KA3 projects is a target in the same way as it is UC SYD's ambition to get a more varied group of staff and students in mobility in general.

Therefore, there is focus on accessibility in the current as well as in the future Programme period so that internationalisation is not reserved for a few diehards but also an option for the wider group of staff and students. Being successful in this approach is the only way to ensure that internationalisation – not least through the Erasmus+ Programme – achieves the effect on UC SYD's educational and research environment intended and desired as per the international strategy.