

Erasmus Policy Statement

The main objective of our university's participation in the Erasmus+ Programme is to enable the academic community of University of Medical Science (Wyższa Szkoła Medyczna, WSMed), Non-State School of Higher Education in Białystok to benefit from the best education and training based on common European standards and values that would provide our students and staff with educational qualifications and skills that would be recognized across the EU.

We truly believe that this objective can be achieved only by full and active participation of all the members of our academic community in the EU education initiatives that are offered within the framework of the European Education Area policy. Irrespective of the socio-economic background, all members of our academic community deserve a fair access to the opportunities provided by Erasmus+ program that is so far the most wholesome tool fostering a comprehensive HEI internationalisation allowing WSMed to undertake activities focusing on international mobility of individuals for learning, training and teaching purposes. It is expected that by 2027, the number of persons benefiting from the project (outgoing WSMed students and staff) would amount to 120 persons, assuming the total number of the mobility per academic year results in 20 beneficiaries, taking into account that so far our University has not participated in any international exchange programme for students and academic staff. WSMed intends to make every effort to increase the number of mobility per year and to maintain the quality of the project. It is expected that the implementation of project will result in the increase of the internationalisation level of our organisation, improvement of the quality of education, transfer of knowledge and good practices, promotion of intercultural competence. The immediate outputs to be produced in the project revolve around professional development of students and staff, enhancing their employability and language competence and for the institution: improvement of management processes, digital transformation via the EWP initiative. By participating in the Erasmus Programme, WSMed would like to foster and accelerate the achievement of objectives set in the institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy, i.e.:

1. Providing university employees and students with access to scientific and educational achievements of other countries by making international mobility and cooperation one of the central elements of the internationalisation and modernisation strategy.
2. Providing university employees and students with opportunity to exchange experiences in the multicultural dimension and enriching their professional, personal

and social competence. Improving the foreign language competence of the members of academic community. Promoting international mobility among university employees and making it a significant element of staff evaluation.

3. Enabling university employees and students, irrespective of their socio-economic background, to gain the best education and training based on common European standards and values that would provide them with educational qualifications and skills that would be recognised across the EU.
4. Increasing the university's educational potential and improving the quality of education by expanding the university cooperation with other universities from EU and non-EU countries with the aim of exchanging best practices and solutions, mutual development of curricula, modules, educational resources, and undertaking joint initiatives in the framework of European Education Area policy.
5. Strengthening and building further cooperation networks and international initiatives aimed at increasing the number of opportunities for international exchanges and staying abroad periods for students and employees.
6. Increasing the number of outgoing and incoming student mobility at all levels of education and areas of study. Introducing obligatory learning and training mobility periods as part of regular curriculum and working towards ensuring full automatic recognition of all credits gained for learning outcomes. Promoting blended mobility.
7. Increasing the number of international students coming for mobility periods and full-cycle studies.
8. Expanding the number of English-taught full cycle BA and MA programmes.
9. Increasing the level of digitalisation of the university among others via the EWP initiative. Improving the digital skills of all members of the academic community.
10. Promoting and developing international educational and research projects and capitalising on their results.
11. Improvement of university governance, management of its funding devoted to internationalisation and EU projects, management of human resources by transferring best practices applied by the European partner universities.

The above mentioned aims are in line with the EC objectives set towards developing a European Education Area i.e. recognition, digital skills, common values and inclusive education. Our university hopes that by participating in the Erasmus Programme, we will contribute not only to achieving these objectives at the institutional level but also to promoting certain attitudes and behaviours among other educational institutions locally and

regionally by undertaking steps to implement digital mobility management in line with the European Student Card Initiative; by promoting environmentally friendly practices in all activities related to the Programme; by supporting inclusive education and encouraging the participation of individuals with fewer opportunities in the Programme as well as by developing non-discrimination policies; and by promoting common values, civic engagement and encouraging students and staff to get involved as active citizens at all stages of their mobility periods. We believe that participation in Erasmus will undeniably contribute to the modernisation of our university in the way that:

Participation in the new Erasmus Programme will undeniably improve the level of digitalisation of our university. Being part of EWP initiative and undertaking measures to meet the European Student Card Initiative will facilitate the process of digital transformation of our university allowing for the shift from paper-based to digital document management. Transition from paper to electronic records, greater number of online tools and systems designed to support our university with the administration of mobility allowing to manage incoming and outgoing students, sign and review their Online Learning Agreements, prepare Inter-institutional Agreements and communicate with students and partner institutions as well as promotion of blended mobility allowing to combine physical mobility with virtual exchange will provide for improvement of digital skills and literacy among the staff and students of our academic community.

Participation in the Programme will contribute to the improvement of quality of education provided by our university. Allowing for the international mobility of teaching staff and their active participation in teaching and training assignments at partner universities will expose them to educational systems, academic achievements and standards of teaching of other member states. International mobility provides for invaluable experiences, improvement of soft skills, improvement of foreign language competence, exchange of scientific interests and projects proposals, establishing long-lasting scientific and educational contacts resulting in undertaking joint transnational teaching initiatives and activities such as joint courses or modules, especially the ones that involve online learning, double or joint degrees, which apart from the improvement of the quality of education, will result in the increase in the number and attractiveness of the programmes offered by our university.

Participation in the Programme will lead to the improvement of university's governance system. The obligations of the university referring to maintaining high quality of undertaken

activities as expressed in the ECHE charter, will undeniably improve the system of university management at various levels and will contribute to developing internal policies rooted in the framework of the European Education Area in order to meet the required standards. The new or further developed internal policies will refer to, among others, communication management (in order to promote and support students and staff mobility, human resources management (inclusive education, non-discrimination policies; employees recognition); policies referring to university financial management of EU projects.

University of Medical Science (Wyższa Szkoła Medyczna, WSMed), Non-State School of Higher Education in Białystok would like to participate in Erasmus+ Key Action 1: Learning Mobility of higher education students and staff. For our university Erasmus+ is the most wholesome tool fostering a comprehensive internationalisation and allowing us to undertake activities focusing on international mobility of individuals for learning (SMS), traineeship (SMP), training (STT) and teaching (STA) purposes. University of Medical Science (Wyższa Szkoła Medyczna, WSMed), Non-State School of Higher Education in Białystok believes that gaining learning, training or teaching experience abroad helps individuals increase their professional, social and intercultural, language skills and employability. International mobility of individuals is the cornerstone of the internationalisation and modernisation of education and constitutes the measure through which the development of the European Education Area can be achieved. In order to undertake the abovementioned mobility activities and achieve their results, it is necessary to organise clearly defined activities at all stages of each type of mobility i.e. before, during and after, that would involve the whole academic community. Mobility will be undertaken respecting and obeying the provisions of Erasmus Charter and based on fair, explicit, non-discriminative university regulations made available to all members of the academic community. As for students mobility, our university commits to prepare and publish a user-friendly Course Catalogue that will be easily accessible and available on the university website. To make sure that the Learning Agreements prepared for the students won't be a subject to change, the Course Catalogue will be updated annually and will include information on the university, general description of programmes and description of individual course units and general information for students as well as information about the language the course units are taught and their availability to mobile students. The mobility will be realized based on prior conclusion of Learning/ traineeship Agreements with the receiving organisations and only in cooperation with universities with which Inter-institutional Agreements were concluded. In line with the Erasmus Charter principles, the participants will receive all the necessary support, guidance and mentoring throughout the

entire process of their preparation for, going and staying, coming from abroad. The same services and support will be provided for incoming participants. University will make sure to integrate the incoming participants into the academic community and everyday life of the university as well as mark their presence and importance via their participation in social actions and encouraging them to act as ambassadors of the programme. The university commits to ensure full recognition of all the successfully achieved learning and training outcomes and to provide participating students with documents confirming their outcomes and acquired qualifications. Mobility of students will allow our university to increase the level of internationalisation by increasing the number of international students coming for a mobility period, it will allow to increase the level of digitalisation of the institution as well as improvement of the digital skills and literacy among the students, finally participation in a mobility will allow them to gain the best education and training based on common European standards and values that would provide them with universal qualifications and skills that would be recognised across the EU. As for employees, the implementation of staff activities will be performed respecting the Erasmus charter principles and will be based on previously concluded teaching/training agreements and will be undertaken in cooperation with partners in other countries in the framework of our strategy for internationalisation allowing for the achievement of our university's objectives that is increasing the quality of education by providing university employees with opportunity to exchange experiences in the multicultural dimension and enriching their professional, personal and social competence and improving their foreign language competence and digital skills.

The envisaged impact on our institution's participation in the Erasmus+ Programme focuses mainly on the achievement of the following targets:

Our university is convinced that participation in international mobility project will undeniably add value to our institution. Making it possible for the members of our academic community and prospective students to acquire new competences and skills in an international environment and allowing them to gain the best education and training based on common European standards and values that would provide them with universal qualifications and skills that would be recognised across the EU, raises the prestige of our university locally, regionally and internationally, it increases the attractiveness of the programmes offered and thus makes it more attractive for prospective, future students.

Participation in Erasmus, for our institution, will have a significant impact on the use of teaching methods and curriculum development. Allowing for the international mobility of

teaching staff and their active participation in teaching and training assignments at partner universities will expose them to educational systems, academic achievements and standards of teaching of other member states. International mobility provides for invaluable experiences, inspiration for new teaching methods, improvement of soft skills, improvement of foreign language competence, exchange of scientific interests and projects proposals, establishing long-lasting scientific and educational contacts resulting in undertaking joint transnational teaching initiatives and activities such as joint courses or modules, especially the ones that involve online learning, double or joint degrees, which apart from the improvement of the quality of education, will result in the increase in the number and attractiveness of the programmes offered by our university.

Another impact participation in Erasmus will have on our institution refers to the improvement of support services and quality of the services offered. In order to meet all the qualitative requirements set in the Erasmus Charter principles, our university will undergo several adjustments, including digital transformation, improvement of support services and internal policies to better serve the needs of disadvantaged or individuals with fewer opportunities in the programme and providing all members of the academic community with required support before, during and after their coming back from the mobility. Moreover, we hope that with respect to training mobility of administrative staff, especially in the form of job shadowings in international organization units providing support services at partner universities, the new knowledge and improvement of skills and competence gained abroad and transferred to our university environment afterwards, will contribute to the quality of service and incorporation of improvements and new ideas, including new technology and digital systems will contribute to the improvement of support services in general.

Participation in Erasmus will contribute to the increase in the level of internationalization of our institution. Providing university employees and students with access to scientific and educational achievements of other countries by making international mobility and cooperation one of the central activity of our university will lead to the increase of the internationalisation of our university and the promotion of attitudes of tolerance, common European values, acquisition of universal skills and language competence by all members of our academic community. Increasing the number of international students coming for mobility periods will lead to intensification of actions aimed at expanding the number of English-taught courses, modules and eventually full cycle BA and MA programmes. Expanding the university cooperation with other universities from EU and non-EU countries and the network of

international contacts will allow for the development and execution of joint educational and research projects and capitalising on their results

Finally, participation in Erasmus will allow our university to establish cooperation with foreign enterprises and companies. Making it possible for the students to undergo a traineeship and for the employees training period abroad, as well as inviting experts and representatives from foreign enterprises will allow our university to establish long-lasting cooperation and build the link between education, research and business world in Europe which will have a significant long-term impact on our innovation and entrepreneurship as well as it will grant us access to other cooperation projects under the Key Action 2 initiative such as Capacity Building, Knowledge Alliances.

Our university is convinced that achievement of the abovementioned targets is only possible upon accession to the Erasmus Programme. We hope that all targets related to Erasmus+ actions will be successfully achieved during the Programme implementation. Our university intends to make every effort to increase the number of mobility per year and to maintain the quality of the project by obeying to and constantly monitoring the execution of the mobilities in line with the declaration to the commitment to the Erasmus Charter principles.