

Erasmus Policy Statement (2014-2020)

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/erasmus-charter-for-higher-education-2014-2020_en

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

One of the priorities of the new Strategic Plan is to define solid partnerships in well-defined regions. The need for more quality in the bilateral and institutional cooperation inside and outside Europe is a response to the changing global academic world. The relation between research and education is crucial in all activities. The Ghent University policy starts from a bottom up approach. The faculties define their different needs and wishes with a view to possible co-operations. One of the starting points is the search for complementarity in partnerships. Different layers and degrees of cooperation are possible going from very intensive to less intensive according to the specific needs of a certain cooperation. The Central IRO responds to these different requests where possible. It can consist of institutional support to region-related projects and partnerships called regional Platforms. Those platforms (China Platform, India Platform, Africa Platform) are a forum for consultation, policy development and advice relating to a specific region with stakeholders inside and outside the institution.

Another way of cooperation is under the form of strategic partnerships. Strategic partnerships are institutional, long-term and project-related co-operations between two or more equal and complementary institutions. Strategic partnerships aim to strengthen the (international) education and research fields through a preferential, but not exclusive partnership with international projects and joint initiatives in education, research and institutional management. Ghent University is at the heart of several strategic partnerships such as the U4 with Ghent, Groningen, Göttingen, Uppsala; the Santander Group; EUniverCities; the Global Initiative Partnership;... Another possibility for cooperation are cross border regional partnerships with Lille and Kent. Ghent University also supports on a bilateral institutional basis cooperation agreements with over 80 partners outside Europe. Of course Ghent University is also a full and active partner in the current Erasmus programme. Bilateral Erasmus partners for mobility of students and staff are screened based on a set of criteria such as degree of exchange activities, study achievements of students, student facilities, recognition procedures, geographical balance. Ghent University is aiming at a more structural embedding of a mobility period in the curriculum which enables students to opt for an international exchange. This can happen in all cycles. Ghent University will also strengthen its efforts towards more international internships in order to give students an ideal opportunity to acquire the necessary skills for a future job. An important part of our cooperation is development cooperation. It is based on Ghent University's international solidarity and mutual collaboration between academics in the North and the South is actively promoted. A maximum degree of synergy and complementarity is sought with other donors and actors. It aims at the development of expertise in both North and South on topics

related to developing countries. There are funding opportunities for students and researchers from developing countries. Ghent University also actively responds to opportunities for international mobility and external financing channels such as Erasmus Mundus Action 2 Mobility programmes. Ghent University coordinates at this moment 3 such programmes: Basileus (Western Balkans), Lotus (South-East Asia) and Svaagata (India). In these projects Ghent University contributes also to provide good students from vulnerable groups (i.e. refugees, displaced populations, disabled foreign students, economically disadvantaged groups and indigenous populations etc.) with further education and professional development and empowerment for leadership.

Ghent University has in recent years built up a strong reputation regarding the development of 9 international double/joint Master and 2 Joint PhD Courses in the framework of Erasmus Mundus Action 1. Within the courses coordinated by Ghent University, all students follow courses as Ghent University students and are trained at various institutions in Europe. The international experience is therefore structurally embedded in the curriculum. In this way such programs are the ideal model for increased outgoing mobility. In addition to the EU-funded programs, however, the range of joint international programs at Ghent are very limited. Beyond the political objectives of the European Commission and the individual motives of project promoters to respond to this (e.g. EU funding, prestige, existing network, ...), there are good reasons for developing joint programmes, whether or not in the context of Erasmus Mundus. Through cooperation with (reputable) institutions Ghent University receives more visibility amongst international prospective students. The recruitment of good international students is important for a possible PhD research at Ghent University and the creation of international alumni and research networks.

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

Ghent University develops its own policy concerning active participation in international and European Projects and looks for the best opportunities to realize this. Several projects are the result of a bottom up approach from individual faculty members who want to undertake a project in specific subject areas. In the next years Ghent University wants to be involved in projects which contribute to enhancing the quality of teaching in Ghent University, defining and developing an international dimension within a given academic discipline. Ghent University will focus on projects enhancing innovation and exchanging methodologies and good practices. Ghent University wants to support bottom up activities that help attune curricula to current and emerging labor market demands. In that option Ghent University will continue to focus on the development of excellent joint masters that are unique compared to (existing) national programs and provide added value on top of the common exchanges (Erasmus and others).

Ghent University also has a strong expertise in projects involving the management of the university. Through the close collaboration with different partners from inside and outside Europe, Ghent University wants to continue international cooperation and exchanges of best practices regarding the organization, quality improvement, recruitment and training of international students, ECTS, international recognition of diplomas, funding, etc... Ghent University will support projects to develop innovative strategies to boost mobility or ways to remove obstacles to mobility in higher education.

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

Priority 1

Ghent University puts the emphasis very much on quality. Ghent University wants to increase the number of higher education degrees with a special attention for diversity as reflection of society. While Ghent University aims to attract excellent students and researchers, participation from students from disadvantaged backgrounds and regions will continue to be actively promoted through a range of bursaries, scholarships and development cooperation programmes. Ghent University currently coordinates the Erasmus Multilateral Project on widening access Expando (Expanding Opportunities in European HE through peer learning). The Gender and Diversity Policy Unit was established in 2008 in order to actively establish a diversity policy for students and staff at Ghent University through policy measures and targeted projects.

Priority 2

The quality assurance system of Ghent University is a combination of both a bottom up and bottom down approach. The programmes in the different faculties are responsible for the quality assurance and of the improvement of the teaching and learning of the curriculum. However they are supported by a number of centrally driven initiatives in order to be consistent with the external QA and accreditation obligations.

Priority 3

The Strategic Plan of the university foresees different actions to ensure that 25% of the students do a part of their studies abroad. Ghent University also supports the objective of the Flemish Mobility Action Plan to achieve with 33% with an emphasis on the acquirement of competences.

Priority 4

Scientific research is the indispensable support for education and service to society. Ghent University wants to ensure the full benefits from investment in any of the three elements. Ghent University TechTransfer enables and facilitates the transfer of the university's research results towards the socio-economic environment. Ghent University will also continue to invest in PhD training within the Doctoral Schools. High level doctoral education is the bridge linking the EHEA and the ERA and will be crucial in determining the attractiveness Ghent University.

Priority 5

At Ghent University effective Governance determines the internal processes of finance and staff allocation. The importance of effective governance is echoed in a.o. Ghent University's research spearhead policy, monitored by international juries. The international dimension of governance is further developed and strengthened through benchmarks with partner institutions and other projects allowing for in-depth knowledge exchange of best practices.