

**ERASMUS+**

**Erasmus Policy Statement**

**Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague**

**2021-2027**

1. **Strategy**

During last two decades the student mobility has considerably contributed to the main mission of our school – to provide universal education for artists, designers, architects or theoreticians who are able to respond creatively to the present and future global challenges. VŠUP´s participation in the new European mobility program will equip students and graduates with variety of skills and knowledge which would be impossible to acquire elsewhere.

Similarly staff mobility will considerably improve our faculty´s expertise and intercultural awareness and contribute to international spirit of the school. Our aim is to support both teacher exchange and non-academic staff training and job-shadowing.
VŠUP is also highly motivated to start and implement strategic cooperation with international organizations and institutions focused on exchange of practices, excellence and innovation.
VSUP´s objectives in the new Programme are fully in line with the institutional strategy for modernisation and internationalisation. This can be clearly seen in our Long-term Strategic Plan for 2016-2020. Most of priorities are connected with internationalisation (quality and relevance of study programs, research, cooperation with industries, international cooperation, presentation of artistic and research outcomes. The chapter Internationalisation itself clearly reflects the objectives by stressing following priorities: academy´s involvement in relevant international organisations, projects and programs; quality improvement of tuition provided in English, support of international student and staff mobility, internationalisation of academic environment, regular presentation of achievements resulting from creative activities at both local and international level. Similarly the Implementation Plan for 2020 emphasises the importance of internationalisation and modernisation. The areas to be developed are intensive cooperation with excellent international art schools, participation of international faculty in both tuition and assessment commissions, recognition of diplomas and other learning outcomes, further support of digitalisation, improvement of language competences of students and staff, more intensive involvement of doctorate students and many other measures. The fact, that internationalisation and modernisation will remain priorities also in the next decade is testified by the recent SWOT analysis prepared for the follow-up strategic long-term plan of our school.

1. **Implementation**

VŠUP has always seen student and staff mobility as the key element in the process of institutional internationalisation and modernisation. Our objective is to send at least 30 outgoing students to the renowned European partner schools each year, while we are open to host about 60 incoming Erasmus students at the same time. Another objective is to support about 30 traineeships abroad per academic year. These quantitative objectives are proportionate and realistic regarding the size of our school and total number of students.

VŠUP students are encouraged to study or work abroad during their bachelor´s, master´s, even doctorate´s studies as well as to participate in recent graduates´traineeships. Our objective is also to support faculty exchange which would lead to long-term cooperation in relevant areas. Successful teacher mobilities wil prepare the ground for higher forms of cooperation like common exhibitions, projects of material or virtual nature, research or publication activities, thematic workshops, multidisciplinary projects, thematic conferences. We expect that also non-academic staff responsible for mobility management, guidance, integration of international students, monitoring and evaluation will continuously be provided with relevant training and support. Important will be also the exchange of practices among departments like study administration, finances, fund-raising, research, PR, IT, cooperation with creative industries and corresponding work units abroad.

1. **Envisaged impact**

Our participation in the new European mobillity program will continue to foster the academic, professional and personal growth of mobility participants as well as transfer of acquired experience and knowledge to all institutional levels in the proces of modernisation of study programs and strategic management of internationalisation.

The ratio of mobile students towards total number of VŠUP students is traditionally high (more than 10%). Our aim is to keep it, to support the growing interest in traineeship abroad and foster study abroad by different ways like comprehensive information and guidance in selection of the right host institution, submission of multiple applications to raise students´chances for acceptance, assistance in writing high quality cover letters and preparation of excellent artistic portfolios, etc. We offer a variety of integration activites and attentively monitor students´well-being and progress during their exchange studies. We fully support both local and international students in follow-up activities (common exhibitions, publications, projects of virtual nature, cooperation with recent graduates with Erasmus+ experience, especially those who became teachers afterwards, etc.) Besides immediate assessment of learning outcomes we monitor long-term effects on mobility participants and their success in their future professional life. Being quite a small academy with relatively low number of students this target seems to be feasible.

Different tools (questionaires, surveys, social media, targeted analyses, reports) are being used for monitoring the Programme´s impact. Quality of implementation, evaluation of learning outcomes and visibility of results are the key aspects. We follow such indicators like number of applicants, number of completed student and staff mobilities, emerging trends, mutual mobility balance with our partner schools.

Our aim is to exchange ten teachers and five non-academic staff per year. Pedagogues share the results and experience from their teaching mobilities in respective departments and working sessions. They suggest enhancement of existing practice in organisation of student mobilities (for example in the selection and preparation of exchange candidates). They organise follow-up visits of lecturers in highly perspective areas, suggest innovations in tuition, initiate new research themes, involve other collegues. Our aim is also to deepen cooperation in quality assessment of diploma projects with chosen partner schools.

With non-academic mobility we expect especially the exchange of good practice and language knowledge improvement. Mobility coordinators will focus on new ideas for better integration of international students and overal higher quality in all stages of student and staff mobility.

VŠUP intends to start coooperation projects in KA2 Action. Areas like architecture and applied arts show a great potential, partnerships have already been established and projects outlined. Teachers as well as students will be involved from the very beginning. Such projects are planned for the long-term horizon, three years at minimum.

1. **Implementation of the new principles**

During implementation of Erasmus+ program VŠUP adheres to the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion of students and staff. We have elaborated guidelines for the selection of participants, availability of information, measures for all mobility phases, recognition, etc.

Together with our partners VŠUP is ready to pay special attention to any mobile participants with special needs. Our staff is prepared to provide special care and time for students and staff with fewer opportunities. For the solution of unexpected problems we have created a contact network of external specialists. We offer basic technical equipment for physically handicapped persons. Online tools are being developed for virtual and blended mobilities. The recent pandemic crisis accelerated the progress in these altervative forms of tuition.

1. **Measures to be taken**

VŠUP has taken necessary steps to digital mobility management and tested functionalities available in Erasmus Without Paper platform (EWP). The required timeline of digitalisation will be kept, e.g. to manage inter-institutional agreements and online learning agreements by 2021; to send and receive student nominations and acceptances by 2022; to exchange transcripts of records related to student mobility by 2023. We will promote the use of Erasmus+ mobile app and make an effort to ensure that mobile students will benefit from European Student Card Initiative by 2025. New possibilities will be promoted among students to make them aware of easy access to online courses, course materials and services provided by other universities. They will benefit from the advantages of automatic ECTS recognition. The relevant information will be available on VŠUP´website and other media; it will be part of all information campaigns and relevant training or informative events. The necessary training provided for mobility coordinators and IT staff and special budget are the main support instruments to introduce the online management of the entire mobility process – from student selection to recognition of ECTS credits. This process should run in line with overall institutional digitalisation of administrative procedures.

1. **Environmentally friendly practices**

VŠUP makes all effort to remain environmentally friendly institution in the coming years and continues to promote this concept among its students and staff in numerous ways. It concerns not only Erasmus+ mobilities where environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour of participants is encouraged by using sustainable means of travel and other possible ways how to reduce potential negative impact of mobility on environment. VŠUP is proud to declare that environmental education is an integral part of its art and design education. Environmental approach is to be found in all degree programmes and courses. It is a component of each design assignment, architectural research study or art project. Sustainability is one of regular aspects in all students´ works assessments including diploma projects. Moreover, art education is complemented by lectures and workshops focused on different environmental issues like climatic changes, water supplies, pollution, waste, landscape degradation, biodiversity impairment. VŠUP widely supports student competitions focused on sustainability. One of examples – GREEN 2020: For a New Circular Economy, a competition announced by Cumulus International Association of Universities and Colleges in Art, Design and Media, the member of which our academy is. A circular economy is one that is restorative and regenerative by design. The Cumulus global community is uniquely positioned to make a circular economy a reality through the talent, diversity and creativity of its student body. VŠUP fully supports the idea of sustainable consumption and ethical production patterns.

Moreover, the school comes with its own environmental themes in student competitions, exhibitions and workshops. Topics like digital world and new materials, waste as a resource or no-waste production are highlighted and shared with both local and international partners.

Art education is by its nature connected with usage and consumption of different materials. Very practical contribution to the environmental issue is the establishment and maintenance of recycle bank in the school building.

1. **Civic engagement and active citizenship**

Participation in Erasmus Programme brings besides educational, social and intercultural effects also diverse opportunities for civic engagement and educates students to active citizenship. VŠUP is aware of this important aspect and promotes it in all phases of mobility cycle. The students are encouraged to go (or come from) abroad with the concrete idea of their artistic project they would like to work on in unknown environment in the host country. Such projects should always contain a component of broader impact on society and comprehension of artistic, design, architectural or theoretical solution in wider context. Art should be always engaged. Special attention is given to applicants and participants with fewer opportunities by means of additional consultation time or financial aid if needed. The student/ambassador schemes work well. Incoming and outgoing students who have been on mobility share their experiences with potential applicants during information campaigns or studio consultations; or through reports on school website or Facebook pages.

Similarly is the element of civic engagement and active citizenship supported during mobility. Especially incoming students are offered all kinds of opportunities to become involved in local life and emerging needs of wider community. This has been demonstrated clearly during recent pandemia when students had shown immense creativity in volunteering activities. Both practical and virtual activities strengthen students´ sense of European identity and global responsibility. Peer education proved to be very functional at the school of our kind and size. The opinions of international students taken into account at all academic levels. They are being represented in student part of VŠUP´ senate in growing extent.

Art students traditionally show great interest in public life and political issues and try to respond on them in their specific, creative way. Our school widely supports these initiatives

and reflects the need of civic engagement and active participation in both formal education and complementary activities (artistic intervention in public space, targeted exhibitions, reflexion of global and European problems, cultural intercultural awareness, integration of migrants, international help, volunteering, etc.)

Follow-up activities are encouraged, monitored and considered as an important part of both mobility cycles as well as internationalisation at home.

1. **Steps to full automatic recognition**

VŠUP provides transcript of records within five weeksafter the incoming student’s evaluation is completed. The information on courses and modules with respective course codes, course catalogue, local grades and ECTS credits is available on the school website and our credit and grading system is clearly explained together with ECTS conversion table. There is enough flexibility for incoming students to be able to gain 30 ECTS credits per semester or more. Incoming student advisor is responsible for preparation of transcript of records, signature, date, stamp and preferably online delivery and digital archiving.

VŠUP has taken necessary steps to carry out the procedure for full automatic recognition of credits achieved during a mobility period abroad. The school administration is also ready to set clear rules for blended mobility well in time before these become a reality. The recognition information is available on the school website and it will be delivered by both international and study offices as a part of their counselling activities. EWP platform will be in full use. Once the transcript of records or traineeship certificate is received, it is processed without any delay by outgoing mobility coordinator. The students are informed about their learning outcomes recognition and have the possibility to raise complaints in case of doubts. The traineeship providers are encouraged to issue certificates attesting the trainee 's work experience abroad (duration, tasks, competences developed).

All ECTS credits achieved during mobility shall be counted towards the student´s degree without any addition work or assessment and shall be included in the student´s transcript of records and the Diploma Supplement. The policy on issuing Diploma Supplement will be published on the VŠUP website. It is understood that the template developed by the European Commission will be used, the issue is free of charge and automatic, the document is bilingual, e.g. in Czech and English. Any mobility activity abroad and recognised modules, units or training activities undertaken during the student´s mobility period will be visible in the relevant part of the Diploma Supplement.

1. **Staff mobility**

VŠUP´staff is being informed well in advance through its formal and informal channels about opportunities to participate in the international mobility (website, intranet, staff meetings, calls for applications, etc.). The selection procedure is clearly described in publicly available guidlines. The selection itself is made by rector´s board on the basis of individual applications. The selection criteria are relevance and benefits for the staff member and his/her department, coherence with institutional internationalisation and modernisation as well as with the running or future international projects, command of working language, previous participation in Erasmus+ programme. Teachers or other staff with no previous mobility experience will be prioritised. Additional language training will be offered. Pedagogues will have to present clearly defined objectives and indicate timeline and follow-up for their mobility. Non-academic staff members should specify expected mobility outcomes for his/her professional growth and expected assets for respective unit.

In case of academic mobility the overall organisational and promotional support is offered to both incoming and outgoing mobile participants. Sharing of results is essential. It is done by follow-up lectures, reports or other forms of presentation. Common research is encouraged in both department of art theory and history and in other departments or research centres.

Staff and teaching and training mobility activities are being recognised as a component in regular evaluation of staff members. Pedagogical mobility is considered as an important criterion in the proces of academic habilitations. Their assets manifest themselves in long-term horizon.

1. **Presentation of result, Programme visibility**

<https://www-new.umprum.cz/en/web/student/international/erasmus> is the web link where our Erasmus Policy Statement and European Charter for Higher Education will be hosted. The link to Erasmus+ Project Results Platform will be highlighted as well. VŠUP´s website is bilingual and presents targeted information on activities supported by the Programme, along with their results and outcomes. The regular update is ensured by different staff members responsible for international relations, international programs, mobility management and PR and is closely monitored by the school management which sets the strategy and support tools and continuously improves internal communication system.

The support of mobile participants upon their return to act as ambassadors of the Programme has been practised for many years. They are a valuable resourse for VŠUP´s buddy system and encouragement for mobility. These students or graduates are being invited to promotional activities or share their experience directly in the studios and departments. Similarly, the establishment of alumni community is being encouraged to promote the benefits of mobility. Both online tools and networks as well as different festive, professional or informative events are being used for this purpose. VŠUP is a very open institution which organises regularly a number of open days, student exhibitions, studio presentations, end-of-semester and diploma shows, lectures for public, public academic habilitations. These are opportunities where benefits of the Programme can be both explicitely or indirectely promoted. However, mobile students´ semestral art works seem to be the most visible outcome as well as sharing of good practices by mobile staff through different channels available. Former mobile participants are obliged to describe their Erasmus+ experience in written reports which are broadly shared and appreciated.

VŠUP is aware of its commitment to communicate the Programme´s benefits to wider public.

1. **EPS as integral part of VŠUP´s long-term institutional strategy**

The Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS) reflects VŠUP´s long-term institutional strategy for internationalisation as well as principles of Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE). It has been drawn-up in mutual cooperation of academic and administrative staff responsible for international cooperation and in context with ECHE Self-Assessment Tool. The students´ voice has been considered after discussions in VŠUP´s Senate and recent SWOT analysis. The document contains objectives for mobility and cooperation activities and projects to be achieved by the participation in the new Programme. The principles of the Charter will be, where possible and applicable, incorporated into the standard VŠUP´s documents and other means of communication to raise awareness of the Programme. The ECHE Guidelines have been respected when drafting VŠUP´s EPS and will be considered in the future to solve potential problems or when introducing new Programme activities.