

University College Absalon – Erasmus Policy Statement 2021 - 2027

1.0 Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS)

1.1 Erasmus activities included in your EPS

In this section, you need to tick the Erasmus activities covered by your Erasmus Policy Statement. Please select those activities that your HEI intends to implement during the entire duration of the Programme.

Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility:

The mobility of higher education students and staff X

Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions:

Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices X

Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities

Partnerships for Excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

Partnerships for Innovation X

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3):

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3) - Support to policy development and cooperation:

1.2 Erasmus Policy statement (EPS): your strategy

Your Erasmus Policy Statement should reflect how you intended to implement Erasmus after the award of the ECHE. Should you wish to add additional activities in the future, you will need to amend your Erasmus Policy Statement and inform your Erasmus National Agency.

What would you like to achieve by participating in the Erasmus Programme? How does your participation in the Erasmus Programme fit into your institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy?

(Please reflect on the objectives of your participation. Please explain how you expect the participation in Erasmus to contribute towards modernising your institution, as well as on the goal of building a European Education Area and explain the policy objectives you intend to pursue).

At University College Absalon our aim is to achieve a high degree of diversity, intercultural collaboration and understanding as well as notable academic results through our participation in the Erasmus Programme. Stays at European partner institutions have a profound impact on the development of both professional and personal competencies, as well as outlook and understanding for students and staff and the presence of incoming students and staff from other European countries through the Erasmus Programme are an invaluable part of everyday life at Absalon's campuses.

The aims of the International Action Plan at Absalon are inextricably linked to our participation in the Erasmus Programme, namely increased outgoing mobility and regional partnerships, Internationalisation at Home and high quality services for international students. These goals are in turn linked to the modernisation agenda at Absalon, which among other areas focuses on student centred learning

activities, vibrant campus environments and education as a regional driving force. Below we describe how we see these agendas align with our participation in the Erasmus Programme:

- 1) In terms of increased outgoing mobility for students and staff as well as ensuring the continued development of student centered learning, this is heavily dependant on our Erasmus partnerships. The framework of the Erasmus Programme, particularly the high standards set in the Erasmus+ Charter for Higher Education as well as the European Education Area Agenda, will ensure that these mobilities take place under high academic standards with particular emphasis on equality and diversity.
- 2) As an institution where theory and practical training go hand-in-hand, it is essential to have strong European partners that also prioritise practical training and know-how, thus enabling development of a variety of joint projects as well as mobilities. Through the Erasmus Programme we can find the right partners for these activities, knowing that we are already in agreement about the importance of international collaboration as a positive influence upon regional development.
- 3) In order to ensure an intercultural and diverse study environment, Absalon highly values the presence of international students and staff at our campuses. IaH activities are essential to us in order to ensure that non-mobile students also experience being part of a greater educational and cultural community, particularly within a European framework. It is therefore also a high priority for us that our incoming students and staff feel welcome and at ease navigating our campuses as well as our various study activities.
- 4) The development of digital skills and online education has been for several years a hallmark of Absalon's academic programmes and the virtual linking of classroom activities with Erasmus partners has enabled both the development of professional knowledge and innovative solutions to common challenges. Collaborating online with European partners has also helped us to develop new approaches to digital education, for example with respect to simulation of practice learning activities. Online international collaboration has also inspired students to participate in international exchanges to partner institutions, thus enabling further insight into the importance of European cooperation both during and after completed studies.

Please reflect on the Erasmus actions you would like to take part in and explain how they will be implemented in practice at your institution. Please explain how your institution's participation in these actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of your institutional strategy.

At Absalon we intend to participate in Key Action 1 – Learning Mobility and Key Action 2 – Partnerships for Cooperation and the exchanges of practices as well as Partnerships for Innovation.

Continuing a long-standing tradition of Erasmus mobility within Absalon is essential to meeting the goals set out in our international action plan as well as our modernisation agenda. By participating in KA1 Learning Mobility activities, we aim to ensure that our students have ample opportunity to develop their professional skills in a multicultural setting, whether participating in a mobility experience abroad, or benefiting from the presence of international students at home. Learning to navigate in social and professional environments with focus on equality for all and the benefits of diversity is essential to our students, who will primarily be employed in jobs related to the Danish welfare sector. It is thus also essential that our staff through mobility experiences of their own are able to promote the benefits of an international experience. Furthermore, collaboration between staff at Absalon and our European partners often results in the development of projects relevant to the improvement of our institutions and the work that we do in our regions.



Projects funded via Erasmus where Absalon is the lead partner or participates, reflect the overall Erasmus goals for strengthening education and Absalon's set goals for educational development. Thus, projects supporting digitalisation of education, the rights of young people, innovation and entrepreneurship, social inclusion and intercultural understanding, etc. have been in focus in recent years. At Absalon we strive to foster critically reflective individuals that will be able to contribute constructively to the regional, national and international challenges that professionals face. Involvement in Erasmus projects allows students and staff to examine more deeply their values and via cooperation with others to develop their professional competencies. Often, the establishment of professional cooperation during a project develops later on into cooperation in new areas, thus promoting a potential platform for a continuing life long learning process.

What is the envisaged impact of your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on your institution?

Please reflect on targets, as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators in monitoring this impact (such as mobility targets for student/staff mobility, quality of the implementation, support for participants on mobility, increased involvement in cooperation projects (under the KA2 action), sustainability/long-term impact of projects etc.) You are encouraged to offer an indicative timeline for achieving the targets related to the Erasmus+ actions.

It is our ambition that participation in the Erasmus+ Programme will enable us to meet the following targets:

- Learning mobility a reality for all with a particular emphasis on equal access, inclusion and diversity
- Developing digital solutions
- Driving innovation in education
- Improving language learning

We will monitor and measure the impact of these efforts by assessing the following areas:

- We aim to continually increase outgoing mobility. Several initiatives are already in place to promote mobility among students (including those with disadvantaged backgrounds or disabilities) and staff. In the future we will further increase our student takeovers of Absalon's Social Media accounts. This has so far been a useful way to communicate with students and further showcase the benefits and opportunities of mobility experiences for all. We will thus continually monitor interaction in connection with these takeovers in order to assess their impact.
Furthermore, we will make yearly evaluations of the number of mobile students as well as those participating in laH activities in order to follow the development and implement additional initiatives to support access to mobility for all. Yearly monitoring of student as well as staff mobilities will also be carried out through examination of final reports, as well as qualitative evaluations during meetings upon their return to Absalon.
- In terms of developing digital managerial solutions we will use several of the Erasmus tools in order to monitor impact. This will particularly include the Erasmus+ App, which we aim to ensure that all outbound students make use of within the next few years.
- Absalon will also increasingly strive to include digital solutions in the international classroom, thus ensuring that students have increased opportunities for virtual cooperation with students from Erasmus partner institutions.



- In order to be a key player in the assurance of healthy regional development Absalon must foster students that are innovative with respect to the professional challenges faced. Therefore, in our partner and project selection we will aim to increase cooperation with partners working on the development of innovative competencies.

Strong language skills are essential to successful mobility experiences as well as IaH activities. We will thus continue to follow up on student's language tests as well as promoting the language courses offered through the OLS.

2. Implementation of the Fundamental Principles

2.1 Implementation of the New Principles

Please explain the measures taken in your institution to respect the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion of students and staff. Describe how your institution ensures full and equitable access to participants from all backgrounds, paying particular attention to the inclusion of those with fewer opportunities.

From an international perspective, University College Absalon has focused upon making Erasmus+ project finances available to support talented students and staff from middle and low-income countries interested in participating in international opportunities at Absalon. When relevant Absalon also provides alternative funding of selected students and educators not eligible for Erasmus grants. In order to ensure that participants are selected based upon their abilities contra their status in an organisation, motivated applications/CVs have been reviewed, this practice is applicable for both incoming and outgoing mobilities connected to projects. Developing digital educational solutions that are accessible to students in isolated and economically challenged areas has also been in focus in these projects. Teaching and learning resources focusing upon illiterate sectors of the population have been developed, thus striving to include segments of populations that traditionally have fewer opportunities.

From a Danish perspective, involvement in European Erasmus projects addressing issues of inclusion in the educational system can generate knowledge that can inform recruitment and teaching practices at Absalon. Absalon has in its cooperation with international partners among other areas, focused upon the area of special needs. Collaborating with partners with respect to this and related areas can forward a more inclusive approach to education not only in the public school system but also with respect to our own student body. These forms of educational cooperation are expected to continue being a priority at Absalon, and are thus expected to be further developed in the coming years.

Though our region is small, there exist economic disparities in the area. Students from wealthier areas in the region tend to be more international in their outlook and thus more interested in participating in international activities. The benefits of international experience have been documented by among others the Erasmus agency, and at Absalon we strive to ensure that all of our students are well informed regarding their options and possibilities of financial support. Locally held international information days, the availability of international coordinators at all campuses and locally held Internationalisation at Home Activities ensure that all students have information regarding their international possibilities and that said options are affordable and manageable.



Please explain what measures your institution will put in place to implement the European Student Card Initiative, and promote the use of the programme's Erasmus+ mobile App to students. Please refer to the timeline indicated on the European Student Card Initiative website.

At University College Absalon, we follow the development with respect to the European Student Card Initiative closely, and we are aware of the different steps in the Erasmus Without Paper timeline. A great part of our internationalisation process is already digital as we are using MoveON, a third-party provider, to manage our mobilities for both students and staff. In order to be ready to create digital inter-institutional agreements and online learning agreements by 2021, we are planning to start testing the digital tools in the spring 2020 and even more in the second half of 2020. Here we will be testing both the Erasmus Dashboard, which we are already connected to, as well as the tools within MoveON. In this testing phase, we will make sure to involve our international coordinators in order to in the best possible way prepare them for a more digitalised Erasmus Programme.

In order to be ready for the 2022 deadline for sending and receiving nominations and acceptances, and the 2023 deadline for exchanging transcripts of records, we are planning to test these functions well in advance and at least half a year before the deadlines. In our preparation for the Erasmus going digital process, we have participated in conferences and webinars to learn about the functionalities and prepare for the specific requirements. Absalon is also member of a sector network in Denmark, where we discuss the new possibilities, challenges, and best practice solutions with respect to the new requirements set out in the Erasmus Student Card Initiative.

At Absalon we are continuously working towards making the Erasmus Programme more accessible for all, and in order to ease the administrative processes for the students, Absalon will make sure to inform them early in the process about the Erasmus+ mobile app both on our website, but also in our direct communication to students who are planning an Erasmus exchange.

Please explain how your institutions will implement and promote environmentally friendly practices in the context of the Erasmus+ programme.

The United Nation's 2030 Sustainability Goals are in focus at Absalon, accordingly Absalon organised in 2019 the yearly Danish University College International Conference that focused upon these goals, where among other areas, environmentally friendly practices were in focus. Goal 11 concerning sustainable cities and communities was in focus with among other things presentations referring to how students can be involved in engineering solutions to waste challenge and the transformation of city campuses to more sustainable environments. Several of the conference presentations were held by lecturers from Absalon's partner institutions.

In our choice of partners, hereunder Erasmus+ partners, we consider parameters relating to the UN sustainability goals, as we have an interest in cooperating in projects that incorporate environmental perspectives. Absalon has previously focused upon projects concerning the local production of food, alternative sources of protein, etc. and we expect that interest in the area of environmentally friendly practice will grow. Initiatives concerning innovative practice are in focus and are an area currently under development. Absalon's health educations offer an international semester course called Innovative Health Solutions. Here students can analyse and develop solutions to health care problems - some of which are undoubtedly related to environmental issues. Many of our educations will continue to benefit from Erasmus+ cooperation as a source of mutual inspiration, whether it be for eco-tourism or the recycling of waste in production, etc.



The focus upon reducing the carbon footprint has also been discussed with respect to mobilities, and it is expected that student and employee travel in connection with Erasmus+ exchanges will increasingly be via transport systems that have lower carbon emissions, i.e. travel via train and bus, contra flights. We actively encourage students and employees to engage in international exchanges in Nordic and northern European countries, countries that are often easily accessible via train or bus.

Absalon was the first Danish University College to develop a full-degree programme primarily based upon digital solutions. All of our educations offer some degree of digital education and many offer so-called digitally based degrees. This approach to education cuts down transport requirements and is therefore an environmentally friendly option. We also promote international, digital educational experiences with partner institutions. Connecting students in this manner can promote an understanding of the importance of international cooperation while reducing transport stress factors upon the environment.

Please explain how you will promote civic engagement and active citizenship amongst your outgoing and incoming students before, after and during mobility.

Outgoing students involved in international exchanges are prepared by their international coordinators for their exchanges. Interdisciplinary preparatory sessions are also held for students. Here among other areas, cultural perspectives and social issues are examined. Concrete areas of civic relevance and appropriate student involvement are discussed. Some students have concrete goals that will naturally result in their civic engagement while on an exchange, for example students may have a stipulated focus upon child rights and consequently choose to hold informative sessions on this topic. In the coming years this focus will be increasingly stressed at Absalon. Shortly after their return to Denmark, student debriefing sessions are held. At present, there is an initiative to further develop these debriefing activities, and it is hoped that this to an even greater degree will promote the development of civically engaged citizens that have a heightened awareness of the importance of democratic principles in society.

Incoming students are prior to their arrival connected with a local student buddy. These buddies are responsible for helping new students integrate into the local area and student interest in active participation in society can thus be supported. Incoming students studying at Absalon will often examine topics of civic relevance in the classroom setting. At Absalon we primarily offer so called welfare educations thus students in traineeships often come to interact professionally with clients with varying issues and perspectives upon Danish society. Through dialogue with the staff at these placements, exchange students undertaking internships can learn to critically analyse and interact with these citizens in order to offer them the best possible services. Such practical engagement can enrich Erasmus students' outlooks on solutions to social problems and encourage new solutions when returning to their home countries.

Connecting incoming students with Danish students is an important part of our strategy at Absalon. Integrating students in everyday Danish life, sharing experiences and perspectives is seen as an important way of promoting civic engagement and developing awareness regarding active citizenship. We further support the integration of incoming students in Danish life via initiatives such as our international club that promotes the development of ties between Danish and international students, social activities, a welcome dinner, etc. Activities all aiming at cultivating a fortuitous personal and academic milieu, and ultimately a greater degree of civic involvement.



2.2 When participating in Mobility Activities - After mobility

Please demonstrate your commitment to implement full automatic recognition in your Higher Education Institution.

Please describe the concrete steps you will take to ensure the full automatic recognition of all credits gained for learning outcomes achieved during a mobility period abroad/ a blended mobility, according to the Council Recommendation on Automatic Mutual Recognition.

At University College Absalon we have already implemented a full automatic recognition process for all of our outgoing students. This process is based on a well established cooperation between the international office, the study administration and academic staff at Absalon, which ensures a smooth and transparent recognition process for the students. Absalon has ensured full implementation of the ECTS grading scale in order to guarantee transparency in the recognition process.

The international coordinators at each of Absalon's educational programmes make sure that learning agreements are signed in advance of a mobility period, and that all activities are clearly described in the agreement as well. This aspect will, however, be something that Absalon will focus even more upon in the coming Erasmus period. If changes to a current mobility occur, it will always be the academic staff at the education who will be involved in the amendments, hereby ensuring that the changes can be fully recognised. Absalon records all mobilities on students' diplomas and also on the diploma supplement. Absalon has made clear procedures for the recognition process for the academic and administrative staff in order to ensure that all mobilities are recognised in a timely manner at the end of each mobility.

Absalon continuously works to promote Erasmus exchanges among our students and staff as we can vouch for the quality at our Erasmus partner institutions, thus making the recognition process quick and easy.

With respect to our incoming students, we make sure to send transcripts of records to our partner institutions no later than five weeks after a mobility has ended. Here we also include an explanation of the Danish grading system compared to the ECTS grading scale.

Please describe your institution's measures to support, promote and recognise staff mobility:

In terms of promotion, staff are notified about mobility opportunities several times a year. This takes place through direct contact with management as well as international coordinators at Absalon, who are responsible for sharing this information with staff at each educational programme. Notifications and reminders about Erasmus opportunities and application deadlines are shared on Absalon's internal communication platform, and are also communicated directly to our future assistant professors as part of their mandatory training programme. When educational programs or individual employees are interested in developing a special area of knowledge, the International Office often provides advice to the management and lecturers regarding which Erasmus partners are especially well-suited with respect to the designated area of development. This is done in order to help assure maximum organisational benefit from employee exchanges. Furthermore, the International Office is present at an 'Erasmus staff opportunities'-booth at our yearly 'Absalon Day' for all our staff members. Here we are able to communicate with both staff and management in a more informal setting, which typically leads to several Erasmus applications from staff members.



In terms of support and recognition, there is an ongoing conversation between the International Office and management at our educational programmes. When meeting with management and international coordinators approximately twice a year, the International Office staff make sure to emphasize the importance of staff mobility - for staff professional development as well as their ability to convey to students the benefits of participating in a mobility experience of their own. When staff members are accepted to do an Erasmus mobility, their management is always required to sign their teaching or training agreement - ensuring that management recognise the outcome of the mobility.

2.3 For the Purposes of Visibility

Please provide the web link where you will host the Erasmus Policy statement in the future. Please reflect on how you plan to regularly promote the activities supported by the Programme.

The Erasmus Policy Statement will be visible on Absalon's website <https://phabsalon.dk/english/about-university-college-absalon/>.

At University College Absalon we are already doing a number of things to promote the opportunities that lie within the Erasmus+ Programme. Detailed information about the programme is available on our website for both incoming students and staff as well as for Absalon's own students wishing to travel abroad. The website informs students about grant opportunities, destinations, benefits of an Erasmus stay, etc. Information about Erasmus opportunities for staff members is displayed on Absalon's intranet.

At Absalon we are in general focused on promoting international opportunities early on the academic process, also before students have actually been accepted to Absalon. Therefore, staff from the international office three times a year participate in Open House events targeting future students. Here visitors can, even before they start their education, receive information about some of the options that exist within the Erasmus Programme. Once students have been enrolled at Absalon, the international coordinators make sure to visit all 1st semester classes in order to inform the students about the international possibilities that exist, so that students have time to consider their options and plan a stay abroad.

Another way in which we promote Erasmus activities is by organising international information days twice a year on all campuses for all of the educational programmes. Here students can receive inspiration to go on an exchange and meet the international coordinators that will support them. The international days concept will be further developed in the future, with a greater focus upon presentations from both the international office and students who have already participated in an Erasmus activity.

Social media is also something that we currently use at Absalon to promote internationalisation and inspire more students to go abroad, and it is something that will be increasingly used in the future. We are e.g. using Instagram in order to promote Erasmus activities, and this is done by having student takeovers while they are abroad on an Erasmus exchange. In the future Absalon is planning to initiate more campaigns on e.g. Facebook, and on the local information screens on campus in order to promote the possibilities within the Erasmus Programme further.



In general, Absalon uses social media channels in order to reach as many students as possible, hereby ensuring equal opportunities for students to gain information.

Please describe how you will ensure that the principles of this Charter will be well communicated and applied by staff at all levels of the institution.

Once Absalon is awarded an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, this will be shared on our internal communication platform and will be available to all staff members. Furthermore, the Charter and its principles will be communicated via email to management as well as international coordinators at all our educational programmes. Throughout the duration of the Erasmus Programme, the main principles of the Charter will naturally be conveyed to staff participating in activities, ensuring their understanding of the framework for international partnerships and opportunities provided by this programme.

