European Commission

Recommendations on the inclusion of higher education students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions in the Erasmus+ programme

for Higher Education Institutions

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Erasmus+

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Education and Culture
Unit B.1 – Higher Education
Rue Joseph II, 70
B-1040 – Brussels/Belgium
http://ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus

European Commission
B-1049 Brussels

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Erasmus+, the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport for 2014-2020, will provide over 2 million higher education students the opportunity to study or train abroad. These exchanges play a major role in providing young European citizens with the skills they need to find their place in society and build a creative, innovative and cohesive Europe.

Article 23 of the Erasmus+ legal basis emphasises the importance of ensuring fair and equitable opportunities to all potential participants, including those from groups which are usually under-represented in mobility programmes: "When implementing the Programme, inter alia as regards the selection of participants and the award of scholarships, the Commission and the Member States shall ensure that particular efforts are made to promote social inclusion and the participation of people with special needs or with fewer opportunities."

These recommendations have been written by a group of Erasmus+ National Agencies (NAs), representatives from higher education institutions (HEIs), practitioners, stakeholders and Erasmus+ participants to support the inclusion of higher education students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions in the programme. They could be applied, by analogy, to mobility in other sectors of the Erasmus+ programme.

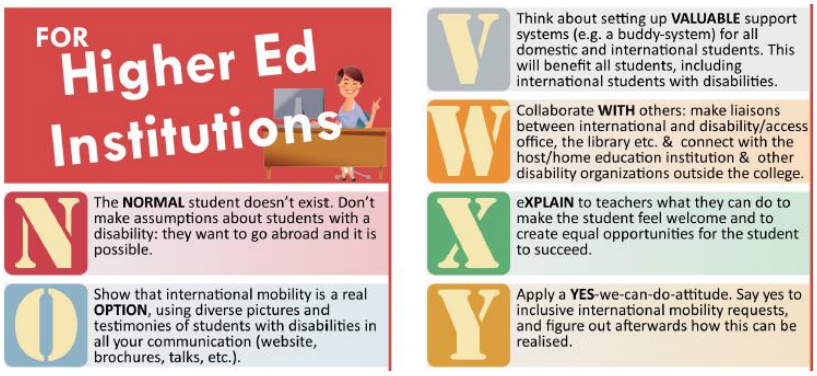
Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions participating in Erasmus+

By signing the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE), over 5000 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have committed to respect in full the principles of non-discrimination set out in the Erasmus+ programme and ensure equal access and opportunities to mobile participants from all backgrounds. These practical recommendations for HEIs have been developed to facilitate the inclusion in Erasmus+ of higher education students and staff whose physical, mental or health-related conditions is such that their participation in the programme would not be possible without extra financial support (from here on referred to as "students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions").

Promotion and guidance

Place the information for Erasmus+ students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions prominently on your webpage and other communication channels in an accessible format. This information should include how students and staff can request the special needs support. As a starting point, you can use the draft website text at the end of this document to inform your students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions about Erasmus+ mobility opportunities and support. You can take further inspiration by the webpages of University of Jyväskylä (Finland) with information for both outgoing and incoming Erasmus+ students, Frederick University Students (Cyprus) or İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi (Turkey) for outgoing students and Ludwig Maximilians Universität (LMU) München (Germany) for incoming students.

Provide support to your students and staff, taking inspiration from other higher education institutions and networks. For example, the A-Z Guide to inclusive international mobility is designed to give you some tips for improving the experience of students with disabilities on study abroad programmes.



The Guide for Students with Disabilities on Professional Placement, developed by the Trinity College Dublin (University of Dublin, Ireland) provides useful guidance and information in relation to supporting students with disabilities during a traineeship. The EAIE Access & Diversity platform provides relevant information on access and diversity in study abroad.

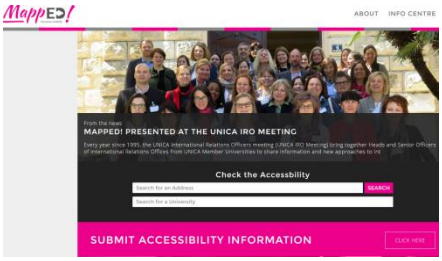
The platform allows discussing how to achieve equal participation of students and staff with disabilities in higher education and mobility.

Promote the added value of a mobility experience towards the employability of graduates to your prospective students, and track your graduates in their future careers. Involve former Erasmus+ participants (students and staff) with physical, mental or health-related conditions as Ambassadors for the programme to share their experience with relevant parties and stakeholders.

Jessica Gough, a former participant, said: "I decided to go. As someone who does not give up, I wanted to rise to the challenge. I didn't let my disability hold me back. I think in fact it made me even more determined to make my Erasmus experience a success."

Promote diversity in the use of images, icons and other visual emblems in printed and electronic formats, for example by including students/staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions. An example by the University of Malta is provided below.

Raise the visibility of your institution by joining MappED!, an online tool developed by the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), mapping the accessibility of higher education institutions.



Student and Staff Selection

Designate one person to establish a liaison and cooperation between the International Relations Office and Disability Office(r) at your institution, to promote and support the programme to students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions. Inviting the Disability Office(r) and other relevant stakeholders to Erasmus+ promotion weeks at your institution can help with sharing knowledge and expertise. An example by Erasmus Student Network (ESN) Spain and Fundación ONCE is available online.

Include the following optional question in the standard Erasmus+ application form for outgoing students and staff, to invite them to disclose their individual needs: "Do you have access needs (physical, mental or health-related conditions)? *Yes/No (optional).* If yes, we invite you to disclose this

information so that your needs can be addressed and you can apply for an additional grant in order to cover the extra costs which may incur during your Erasmus+ mobility. In accordance with Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of this information."

Have a look at A Guide to Disclosure for Students, Graduates, Employers and Support Staff. For a person with disability it is often a difficult question, whether to disclose. The Guide released by AHEAD (Association for Higher Education Access and Disability) can support them in this decision. Provide the members of your institution with the link or spread the document.

Specify in the Inter-Institutional Agreements what measures your institution is implementing to create an inclusive environment and what infrastructure and support services it provides to students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions. Use the information from your partner institutions in the Inter-Institutional Agreements to best orient your students and staff to make informed choices about their mobility destination. Some examples of HEIs already doing this are provided below.

Additional requirements

[Please specify whether the institutions have the infrastructure to welcome students and staff with disabilities.]

University of Valencia (Spain)	The Unit for the integration of people with disabilities at the University of Valencia promotes equal opportunities for people with disabilities. Both students and staff with disabilities or special needs can access to the services provided by this Unit. Website: http://www.fundaciouv.es/upd/index.asp?idioma=eng
University of Gothenburg (Sweden)	The University of Gothenburg has the appropriate infrastructure to accept students and staff with special needs. Information and assistance can be provided by *email address* and *phone number*. Website: http://studentportal.gu.se/english/help-and-guidance/disability

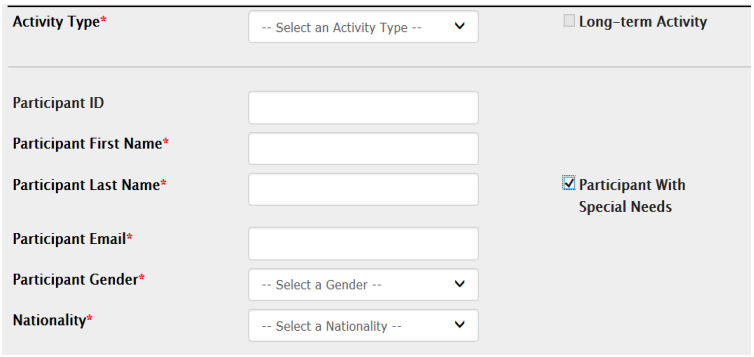
Keep a close cooperation with your Erasmus+ participants and partner institutions at all stages of the mobility concerning their accessibility needs.

Monitoring and Support

Explore the possibility of using Erasmus+ staff mobility for training for your International Relations Office (IRO), Disability Office(r), or other administrative staff to learn more about the way receiving institutions work with students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions and create synergies. This can be done, for example, by carrying out job-shadowing activities or attending Erasmus+ Staff Training Weeks, such as the ones regularly organised by Masaryk University (Czech Republic).

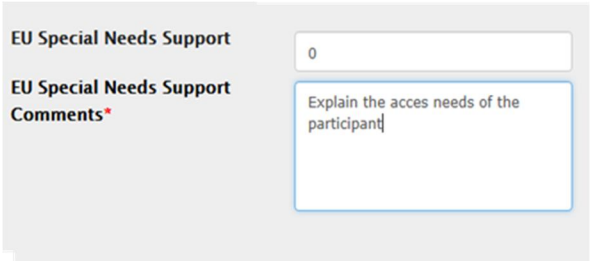
Draw from the Erasmus+ Organisational Support grant to support promotional activities in this area and/or to organise short preparatory visits to best prepare students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions for their upcoming mobility.

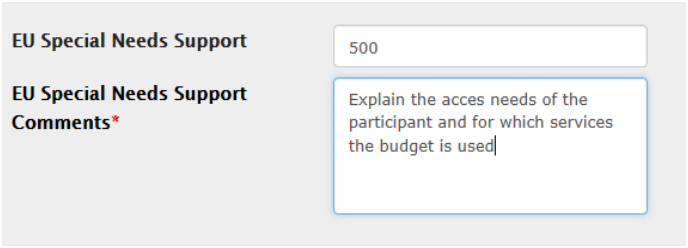
Using the flags for special needs in the MobilityTool+ (the EU reporting tool for Erasmus+) according to the following principles is important to monitor the indicators on access and inclusion of the Erasmus+ programme:



Tick the flag "Participant with Special Needs" in case the student or staff has disclosed the information that they have physical, mental or health-related conditions. The flag should be ticked even if the participant does not receive EU budget (in which case, the "EU Special needs support" field should remain at zero).

If the participant doesn't receive the EU Special Needs Support (e.g. because additional budget was not needed to accommodate for their access needs, such as for participants who need more time during exams), write a comment in the EU Special Needs Support section, explaining the access needs of the participant, and leave 0 (zero) as a value.





If the participant receives the EU Special Needs Support, write the amount and explain in the comments the access needs of the participant and for which services this budget is used.

Draft website text for Higher Education Institutions participating in Erasmus+ to inform their higher education students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions about mobility opportunities and support [if relevant, Erasmus+ National Agencies to translate and/or adapt it at national level]

Erasmus+ Programme special needs support

Erasmus+ pays particular attention to guidance, reception, physical accessibility, pedagogical and technical support services, and, especially, financing the extra costs for students and staff whose physical, mental or health-related conditions are such that their participation in Erasmus+ would not be possible without extra financial support (from here on referred to as "students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions"). This is to ensure that you can take full advantage of an Erasmus+ mobility experience.

Each higher education institution (HEI), by signing the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE), commits to ensuring equal access and opportunities to participants from all backgrounds. Therefore, students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions can benefit from the support services that the receiving institution offers to its local students and staff.

Additional grant

For your access needs during your mobility, you can apply for an Erasmus+ grant for students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions in addition to the regular Erasmus+ study or traineeship or staff mobility grant. In preparation of your Erasmus+ mobility, you should indicate your needs and foreseen extra costs linked to your physical, mental or health-related conditions, in order to apply for the Erasmus+ special needs support grant.

What are your access needs?

Areas that could be eligible for support linked to your Erasmus+ mobility, according to individual needs, include but are not limited to: adapted accommodation, travel assistance, medical attendance, supportive equipment, adaption of learning material, an accompanying person, etc.

How to apply?

Ask at the International Relations Office or Erasmus+ Coordinator at your Faculty or equivalents to help you with the Erasmus+ special needs support application form.

Information for outgoing students and staff is available at the International Relations Office and at the Disability Office(r) or equivalents at your institution.

[HEI to provide link to information for outgoing students]

Have a look at MappED!, an online tool developed by the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) mapping the accessibility of higher education institutions and their services, to make informed choices about your mobility destination.

The Student toolkit has been designed by students for students, and contains tips and advice to support your learning journey.

Information for incoming students and staff with physical, mental or health-related conditions

[HEI to provide link to information for incoming students]

Data protection *(to be adapted by national context)*

Personal data are **confidential** and will only be treated with regards to your application and participation in the Erasmus+ programme according to the national law**.**

Contact:
[contact person]
[Email address]
[phone number]
[department/office]

Further information:

Erasmus+ testimonials:

- ExchangeAbility project
- ExchangeAbility videos
- Erasmus+ Ambassadors
- *Success stories of your own institution* [HEI to provide links]

Disability office(r) of your institution [HEI to provide links]

European Commission – Erasmus+

Erasmus+ National Agency [NA to provide links]

Good practices at national level [NA to provide links]

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