



UEF European Policy Statement for the years 2021-2027

University of Eastern Finland (UEF) considers the new Erasmus Programme as a key to educational cooperation with its EU and non-EU partners. Via high quality international mobility with other higher education institutions, UEF aims to help students and staff to increase their professional, social, and intercultural skills by offering internationalisation experience.

UEF strategy 2030 Seizing a sustainable future is rooted in global challenges to which we seek solutions in our profile areas through interdisciplinary research and education. In doing so, we build a responsible and sustainable future with focus on modernisation of research and education. The high standard of research and education of our university builds a global future and strengthens the vitality of Eastern Finland. We foster education and culture by making research-based knowledge available to everyone.

Internationalisation is one of the cornerstones of the strategy of University of Eastern Finland. Key aims of internationalisation are performing high quality interdisciplinary science as a part of global development and to train international experts with stronger mobility and educational immigration. These long-term institutional strategy goals, including modernisation and internationalisation goals, will be reached by detailed, jointly formulated action plan implemented by the UEF academic and administrative staff, as well as students. Research, education, and sustainability goals are pursued in collaboration with local, national, and international public and private sector partners.

UEF strategy 2030 includes actions to enhance co-operation with other higher education institutions locally, nationally and internationally. UEF considers Europe as its main strategic area. UEF's other strategic areas of cooperation are North America and the BRICS countries, and other emerging economies. In international cooperation, UEF gives preference to distinguished research universities complementing UEF's special areas of expertise. UEF has concluded bilateral and Erasmus agreements of cooperation with 500 universities all over the world. To participate in global responsibility actions, UEF is an active member in networks like SANORD and Nordic Centre in India and collaborates with universities in developing countries. Faculties and departments collaborate actively in field specific research, education, and development networks. While fostering UEF's existing fruitful partnerships, we simultaneously actively seek for new, exciting collaborating possibilities.

To raise the quality of educational cooperation to a new level, UEF has a clear policy towards the development of integrated transnational teaching activities by participating actively in a variety of curriculum development projects, drawing from its experience in the Erasmus Mundus programmes (currently five) and other joint MSc programmes. Special emphasis is placed on the implementation of double and joint degree programmes, at both master's and doctoral levels, with partners in both EU and non-EU countries, and with enterprises. Transnational education actions also include the export of educational products/modules to other countries both as business and as part of global development.

University of Eastern Finland is planning to take part in the actions of Mobility for students and staff, European University Alliances and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees. Mobility of students and staff will help students and staff to increase their professional, social, and intercultural skills by offering internationalisation experience. International mobility also enhances tolerance and understanding of different cultures, and the quality of teaching.

For incoming students UEF provides as a default an up-to-date, user-friendly course catalogue including ECTS credits accessible via the UEF website. Learning agreements are required prior to the start of mobility. Official transcripts of records show credits and grades formulated in transparent way in terms of titles and language, and proof that the studies at UEF have been recognised according to the learning agreement. After the mobility, students receive transcripts of records within the given timeline, in some cases even at the departure. The grading system is described at the UEF website and information on recognition and grade conversion procedures is provided for incoming students and partner institutions.

UEF aims at improving the employability of students by encouraging them to look for Erasmus placements. Students not participating in mobility will be able to benefit from the multicultural environment created on their home campuses through the presence of international Erasmus students and staff.

Virtual and blended exchange possibilities have been explored and will be implemented to ensure internationalisation possibilities also when lack of resources or physical restraints hinder participation in traditional mobility. Virtual mobility will already be in action this year within YUFE in the form of on-line courses. This will promote internationalisation of all UEF students and especially those with fewer opportunities. Attention is paid on virtual components so that they facilitate collaboration in online learning and teamwork, and that all participants are offered the same treatment, services and opportunities as home students and staff.

UEF ensures support to staff in the preparation of applications for mobility and cooperation projects, and to follow the quality standards defined in the ECHE for mobility and cooperation activities. UEF provides support and follow-up during and after the implementation phase of the mobility and cooperate on projects in terms of management involvement, resources and staff recognition.

UEF considers Europe as its main strategic area of cooperation and is one of the founder members of

European University Alliance YUFE. YUFE was ranked the best in the first call for European University Initiatives where 17 networks were selected for funding. All YUFE actions, led by the institutional coordinator, are ongoing at UEF. UEF is committed to YUFE aims and contributes actively to the contents and implementation of its European wide actions like modernisation of teaching, European joint degrees, promotion of active citizenship. YUFE actions are actively disseminated at UEF and students and staff have shown interest in developing education and research via this new, exciting possibility. Already YUFE is seen as a part of everyday actions at the UEF.

UEF currently coordinates two and participates in three Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's degree programmes; European Forestry (coordinator), Computational Color and Spectral Imaging, COSI (coordinator), Imaging and Light in Extended Reality, IMLEX, Photonics for Security Reliability and Safety, PSRS, and European Master's Degree Programme in Clinical Linguistics, EMCL. These and future Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes are led and implemented according to the programme and UEF guidelines aiming for high quality of teaching and learning. We aim to offer truly unique programmes based on high quality international top-level research and networks within to attract gifted students globally and train experts in fields that contribute to the success of Europe. Collaboration with companies ensures high and relevant skills and employment after graduation.

Key aims of internationalisation are performing high quality interdisciplinary science as a part of global development and to train international experts with stronger mobility and educational immigration. For achieving these goals, participation in Student and staff mobility, European University alliances, and Erasmus Mundus joint programmes are vitally important. Participation in mobility programmes increases the interest in international labour market and encourages mobility. High quality international training increases the quality of research by bringing talented students from other cultures and different backgrounds to the campus. Graduating Master students will contribute to research and innovation, both locally and globally, promoting expertise in the UEF areas and mobility to other countries. Partnership in

European university alliance YUFE ties UEF more closely to the European higher education network bringing new partners in science and education and new, innovative solutions to the development of research and education.

Participation in the named actions will strengthen research in the UEF profile areas in the strategy 2030 (Cultural encounters, mobilities and borders; Diversifying learning and interaction; Environmental change sustainable use of natural resources; Aging, lifestyles and health) in national and international networks.

The Erasmus+ programme is the largest mobility programme of University of Eastern Finland and it has a great significance in the scheme of internationalising students and staff of the university. It offers a wide range of partner countries and universities as well as substantial financial support.

For UEF, participation in the Erasmus Programme is a central tool for gaining our internationalization aims. Impacts of participation include increase in the number of international degree students, in incoming and outgoing student and staff mobility, in credit points gained during exchange periods and in the number of courses taught in English. New support means for local companies in hiring international trainees, starting of an internal internship programme, organisation of international services into readily accessible form, and optimising of internationalisation processes are also in focus. The goals outlined in UEF strategy 2030 will be aimed at during the whole Erasmus 2021-2027 period.

In the mobility projects for higher education students and staff with programme and partner countries (including student mobility for studies, student mobility for traineeships, staff mobility for teaching and staff mobility for training) the target is to increase the number of participants in each category. Special attention should be addressed to promoting traineeship opportunities for students and teaching assignments for staff involved in teaching. The number of incoming Erasmus+ students has been steadily increasing in the past years and the same progress should continue.

Erasmus student, trainee, teaching staff and staff training mobility shall continue based on bilateral and multilateral agreements with well-established partner institutions in both EU and non-EU countries. Global mobility shall be developed within Erasmus ICM projects, of which UEF has recognized experience, and other exchange programmes. In addition, mobility of students, teaching staff and other staff shall be realised under the Capacity Building Action of the Erasmus Programme, within projects to be carried out with universities in eligible partner countries.

Mobility of UEF students and staff are always based on prior agreements between institutions, faculties, or departments. This way it is ensured that roles and responsibilities of parties are clear, and all players are committed to the quality criteria in the selection, preparation, reception, support, and integration of mobile participants. Responsibilities in initiating, signing, and implementing agreements are in order, and the list of responsible persons is available. Agreements, which contain all required topics, will be centrally monitored to ensure quality, i.e. that only actively used agreements will be signed and that there is a balance between academic interests, geographical distribution, and subject areas.

During mobility all incoming students are entitled to same academic treatment and services as UEF students. Information on these is available on the UEF website according to the Erasmus Student Charter and explained during the orientation weeks for new students. Academic and administrative staff can be reached easily during the mobility period. Safety of exchange students and staff are of utmost importance, and issues related to safety are immediately distributed to incoming and outgoing persons and actions are taken to ensure safety at all circumstances. UEF charges no fees, in the case of credit mobility, to incoming mobile students for tuition, registration, examinations or access to laboratory and library facilities.

UEF assesses feedback received through participant reports from both incoming and outgoing participants and takes appropriate action when feedback indicates problems. Assessment is performed regularly and targets are aimed for the Erasmus 2021-2027 period.

In 2022 European University Alliance YUFE will be a multi-campus European University in the making. The YUFE governance structure, with the students in the co-lead, will be well established and become a reference model for other European Universities. The YUFE Virtual Campus will be fully operational giving students, staff and citizens information on and access to a range of opportunities that respond to their personal and professional development needs. Governance will run smoothly helping partners in their actions and bringing added value to all. Mobility of staff and students within the alliance has settled down to the agreed levels, open programmes and staff journeys actions are up and running. YUFE alliance's quality assurance system is in use, new innovations and entrepreneurship have emerged, active citizenship skills and competences have been enhanced in strong university-citizens communities, and inclusion is embedded in all activities along with equality and diversity. Sustainability of the alliance is ensured by active fundraising from European funding bodies and strong commitment of the partners.

UEF pursues to build more joint international programmes based on its international top-level research. Experience on joint programmes helps to build high quality innovative international programmes and to promote mobility and internationalisation in all student groups. It also helps internationalisation at home with groups of international students by bringing Europe and world to the campus cities. In 2030 UEF will host at least the same number of joint MSc programmes as now, along with three new international BSc programmes and several joint or MSCA Doctoral programmes.

This European Policy Statement was approved by Professor Jukka Mönkkönen, Rector of the University of Eastern Finland, on May 19, 2020.

