

Erasmus Policy Statement, University of Gothenburg, 2021-2027

The University of Gothenburg (GU) is applying for and will implement activities in all project types offered through the 2021-2027 Erasmus programme period for higher education institutions (HEIs). There are clear links between the GU's aims and those of the Erasmus programme. Moreover, GU welcomes and encourages participation in Erasmus projects and activities at all levels as one of the key ways to foster a more diverse, global, and open outlook in all aspects of education, research, and administration. GU also views the Erasmus programme as an important means of support for broadening and deepening ties not only with other HEIs, but also with local, national and international companies and organisations.

In its newly-adopted Vision for 2021-2030 - A University for the World, GU commits to being an international HEI that takes responsibility for societal development and contributes to a sustainable world. Key aims include to further internationally prominent education and research in all its offered academic fields; to imbue both education and research with scientific and educational collaboration in complete academic environments, and with an ethical approach; to provide quality research-based education; to enhance education and research through regional, national and international collaborations; and to work actively to counteract structural inequalities and to promote norms that foster mutual respect.

GU has been involved in the Erasmus-programme since 1993; in other words, since before Sweden officially joined the European Union in 1995. While traditional student and staff exchanges have consistently been the most visible and popular of the Erasmus scheme, GU has successfully promoted and participated in all aspects of the Erasmus programme. With the introduction of Erasmus International Credit Mobility (ICM) in 2015, GU has been able to provide financial support for student and staff mobility outside of the programme countries, too. Moreover, GU has increased its involvement in the full variety of Erasmus projects, both as coordinating and partner organisation. Looking forward, GU expects participation to become both broader and deeper across the university. Of note, GU is one of six partners in the EUTOPIA Alliance, which was awarded funding through the new European University Initiative (EUI). As a result, the EUTOPIA partner HEIs will initiate close collaborations in a variety of areas, including student and staff exchanges, collaborative course and programme development, widening participation, and more. GU views this as an ongoing process that will enable us to influence the future of higher education in Europe and that will lead to increased synergies with other EU-financed programmes.

GU aims to provide the opportunity and support for any student or staff member who requests it to be able to spend part of their higher education programme or employment as part of an Erasmus-funded project in another Member State or partner country – to study, to learn, to teach, or to work. In order for this to happen, GU will continue to promote Erasmus opportunities actively, not only through traditional methods, but also through new channels in order to ensure broadened participation. In fact, one of the EUTOPIA work packages, “Install Activities and Mechanisms to Ensure Inclusion and Balanced Societies”, is dedicated to developing a strategy for inclusion of disadvantaged student communities, and to implementing outreach and capacity building. This work package aims to reach these goals by developing a common strategy to identify exclusionary practices, challenges and obstacles as well as to foster inclusion; by developing mechanisms for monitoring and measuring effects of inclusion activities; and by launching a pilot for promoting Europe's principles of openness and inclusion to all Europe's regions, initially focusing on the

Western Balkans. GU is committed to facilitating collaboration between relevant departments, faculties, and units in order to support these efforts.

Higher education is an important factor in creating a stable society and engaged citizenry. A quality educational system facilitates social inclusion and an open society. These are values that GU, Sweden and the EU support and encourage. GU shares a common interest in initiating reforms valuable for Sweden and for Europe as a whole, and essential for progress in social inclusion and justice, growth, employment, innovation and competence. As one of the EU member states, we constitute a cultural community, based on shared values and successful integration. Through its participation, for example, in EUTOPIA and the EUI, GU is already preparing for 2025, when the European education area will be in place. GU will be at the forefront of this new European education region where learning, studying and conducting research are not hampered by borders, and where students and staff are not hampered by social or economic challenges.

In the coming period, GU will continue to lead and participate in a variety of new and ongoing collaboration projects, and to deepen existing partnerships in meaningful ways. Erasmus support is key for relevant projects involving programme and/or partner countries. Strategic links and partnerships developed in previous and current EU programme periods constitute a solid base for testing new, innovative projects. GU will also continue to develop new partnerships in future cooperations. Outside Europe, GU often cooperates closely with Low- and Middle Income Countries (LMICs) through exchange programmes such as Erasmus ICM and the Swedish national exchange programme Linnaeus-Palme (LP), as well as capacity building projects. The ICM programme has proven to be a good complement to the LP programme since it includes both PhD-level and staff training opportunities, which in turn have given an opportunity to strengthen cooperation between GU and LMIC countries.

Consistent threads throughout GU's internationalization work and collaborations are sustainability and innovation. One example is the Global Sustainable Futures network created by GU, together with Chalmers University of Technology. This cooperation is a platform for staff working with sustainable development on a global scale; one aim is to foster new project ideas in both education and research in collaboration with LMICs. The Mirai network, a collaboration between Swedish and Japanese universities, includes both sustainability and innovation as two of its focus areas. Digitalisation is another aspect of sustainability that GU continues to be active in, both from research and practical perspectives. These extend to education formats, programme syllabi, meeting types, travel policies, and more. The Erasmus programme provides necessary support for GU to pursue and implement its strategy of being an international HEI known for its commitment to quality-driven, sustainable and equal access research and education.