

# Recommendations on effectively promoting **Teaching mobility in Europe**

## FOR ACADEMICS



Developed under the  
Teach with Erasmus+ project  
[www.teachwitherasmus.eu](http://www.teachwitherasmus.eu)

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University of Alcalá, Spain

Report author:

Viktória Csonka

Co-authors:

Anikó Makkai-Kovács and Laura Colò

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# INTRODUCTION

The mobility of academic staff, whether physical, blended or digital, is a key aspect in internationalising higher education and achieving the European Education Area by 2025. It is one of the main priorities of the European Commission in the field of education outlined in the “Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2019–2024”, published by the that-time Candidate for President, Ursula von der Leyen and in the “Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025” by the new Commission in September 2020.

Even though this view is widely shared by higher education stakeholders, student mobility has been in the forefront of action of both policymakers and higher education leaders. This has been the trend not only in recent years but since the adoption of the Bologna Declaration in 1999, which called on EU Member States to promote the mobility “for students, access to study and training opportunities and to related services, for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights”. More recently, the Rome Ministerial Communiqué, adopted in November 2020, replaced the term “virtual mobility” for students with the phrase “digitally enhanced mobility”, offering a broader and more connected concept, implicitly referring to teaching mobility as well. Focusing on students however, (unintentionally) has diverted attention away from academic (as well as from administrative) staff mobility, as a result of which there is still a lack of proper understanding of the obstacles of teaching mobility and effective solutions to existing challenges.

In 2018, the Teach with Erasmus+ project (TWE+ hereinafter) was launched with the ambition to broaden knowledge and provide a more comprehensive understanding of academic staff mobility as well as to tackle the challenges linked to the quality of the mobility of academics and support the academic staff wishing to pursue international mobility. To reach these ambitious goals, the partnership completed an international survey to better understand (mainly) junior academic staff needs, personal views, attitudes, and concerns and published its findings in the [Teach with Erasmus+ Research Report](#), as well as the paper [Quality & Impact Tool for Teaching Mobility Assessment](#), which was drafted with the aim to provide tools, templates, ideas to administration and management as well as individual academics to foster institutional quality culture regarding teaching mobility and enhance the teaching mobility experience for instructors. To strengthen the practical aspects of teaching mobility and the learning progress of students, a set of pedagogical tools have been created, including videos and detailed description of the methods. One of the main outcomes of the project is the [Erasmus+ Teaching Mobility Platform \(ETMP\)](#), a brand-new website, akin to a marketplace, where institutions/teachers can offer and find relevant mobility opportunities easily and effectively. This novel platform aims to solve many of the existing challenges, and I expected to be used across the continent. Still, policy actions should be part of the overarching solution, hence, the present document, which is the final project output developed based on the research report and experiences of the TWE+ project as well as on further policy and project papers available, has been prepared with the aim to contribute to respond to these needs and be a practical guide for the stakeholders concerned. In this sense, the paper is directed to (1) policymakers active at the European and national level, i.e. European Commission, ministries, national agencies and other national authorities, etc.; (2) higher education institutions; and (3) academic staff regardless of their experience level in teaching or training mobility.

It is worthwhile noting that the Covid-19 pandemic broke out halfway through the project and evidently it has not left international staff mobility unaffected either. Although currently few comprehensive scientific data is available about how the pandemic will shape the future of academic staff mobility, the authors strived to reflect on the developments of the past one and a half years and on possible future trends.



# Recommendations SUMMARY

for academic staff (individual level)



Expand your network



Get prepared to your mobility experience and enhance your relevant skills



Improve your language skills



Foster an inclusive, intercultural mindset



Plan your courses – constructive alignment



Get to know your students – Intercultural Understanding Inventory



Create a Course Portfolio



Get useful feedback from students – student evaluation of teaching



Support your junior colleague in finding mobility opportunities



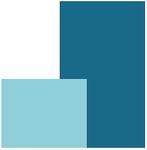
# Recommendations for academic staff (individual level)



## Expand your network

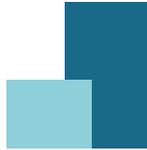
To be able to go on teaching or training mobility, it is necessary to develop your professional network, which can be done easier by participating in international conferences and events, even online. The network of mobile academics improves substantially after carrying out mobility, therefore it is easier to get invited to the next teaching assignment. According to the TWE+ research, the most important result of mobility is the expansion of the professional network with 71.2 percent of the academics reporting it as a direct result of their mobility. (TWE+ research report, p. 14)

We encourage you to exploit the opportunities offered by the [Erasmus+ Teaching Mobility Platform](#), which supports academics in finding the best teaching or training mobility opportunity, whether they would like to go abroad or host a guest lecturer. The platform specifically supports junior academics in finding the very first mobility opportunity. This first step is essential to enter the world of mobile academics.



## Get prepared to your mobility experience and enhance your relevant skills

Based on our research, applying a step-by-step approach to competence and skill development proves to be useful to boost confidence, self-efficacy, language and pedagogic skills. Presenting at a conference in a foreign language at home or abroad can be an ideal start to gain more confidence. This also allows you to expand your network. Taking online classes to enhance your presentation skills can be helpful too. Next, you can teach a lecture for international students at your own institution, followed by your own class for a whole semester. At this point, you are probably ready to take up mobility. Also, you can ask a colleague to observe your class and provide feedback to you to be able to develop your pedagogical skills.



## Improve your language skills

Proper language skills and confidence are indispensable for a successful mobility experience.

To be able to improve your general and scientific language skills, you can participate in trainings organised by your home institution, or join online courses offered by several language teaching institutions and associations. It is also advisable to apply and/or take part in international conferences and research as well as practice teaching in classes with international students at your home institution to gain more confidence in academic language. These practices will help you to get prepared for mobility and also will ensure a successful mobility experience.

# Recommendations for academic staff (individual level)



## Foster an inclusive, intercultural mindset

Students in the 21st century university campus come from many different backgrounds and circumstances, and they differ in terms of ethnicity, religion or belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, children or other caring responsibilities, disability, chronic illness, mental health and well-being, low-income/socio-economic background, work responsibilities, mature students, or coming back to education after a long break, etc. Before taking up mobility, try to gather as much information as possible from the host institution not just about cultural issues of your destination but also about your students that allow you to design your classes in an inclusive way and embed intercultural aspects.



## Plan your courses – constructive alignment

We recommend using this tool to plan your courses held during mobility. The aim of this tool is to help you better plan your lecture or course by prompting you to think around basic curriculum design principles. Please click on [this link](#) for more information about this tool:



## Create a Course Portfolio

This is a long-term strategic tool that can be used to capture and document all the insights that you have over the course of the semester, which can be used in the next semester to enhance and enrich the course. Course portfolios also help you reflect on your teaching and learning practices, and act as a vehicle to give structure to the process of developing or enhancing your courses. Please click on [this link](#) for more information about this tool



## Get to know your students – Intercultural Understanding Inventory

The aim of this tool is to help assess students' diverse cultural background for intercultural understanding. You can use this tool in various ways to help you better understand your students which is a key in a teaching and learning process. To find out more about this tool please click on [this link](#).



# Recommendations for academic staff (individual level)

## Get useful feedback from students – student evaluation of teaching

The research conducted in the Teach with Erasmus+ project also highlighted the importance of meaningful feedback from students in enhancing the teaching mobility experience. Students' voices are an important source of information regarding teaching quality, although it is not without bias. Researchers of the TWE+ consortium created a simple tool that you can use to gather feedback from students. For more information about the tool please [click here](#).

## Support your junior colleague in finding mobility opportunities

Our research showed that the majority of current participants of teaching mobility tend to have a higher position, longer work experience and senior level. Younger teachers seem to lack time, network and opportunity to take advantage of mobility, therefore we encourage senior academics to support and motivate the mobility of younger colleagues.



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