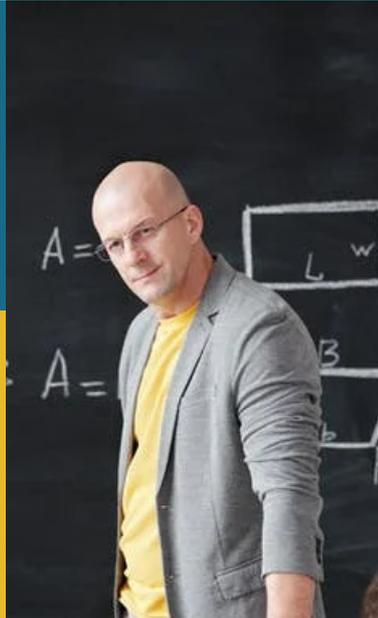
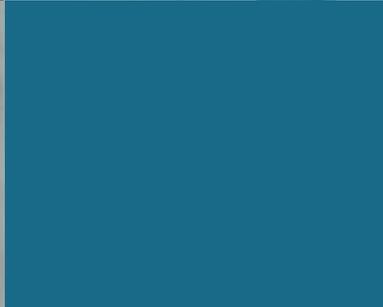
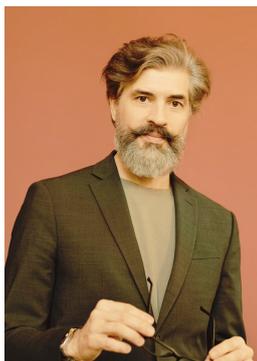


Recommendations on effectively promoting **Teaching mobility in Europe**

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL



Developed under the
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Recommendations

SUMMARY

for Higher Education Institutions

Adopt a **strategic approach** to teaching mobility

Promote teaching mobility among junior staff with strategic partner institutions

Improve and formalise **recognition schemes**

Make teaching mobility **greener and more sustainable**

Promote new spaces of **digital networking**

Encourage blended and virtual forms of teaching mobility

Provide **assistance** in administration

Provide **preparatory training** before applying to and taking up mobility

Encourage teachers to make use of **innovative and inclusive digital solutions**

Design and implement clear, **inclusive and targeted communication and promotion**

Promote an inclusive outreach and engagement strategy to academic staff and inclusive teaching and learning environment

Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions

Adopt a strategic approach to teaching mobility

Teaching mobility is an important tool to improve the quality of study programmes both in the sending and the host institutions and have a positive impact on the individual teaching skills and the career development of academic staff. Thus, higher education institutions are encouraged to embrace the added value of teaching mobility and adopt a strategic, whole institution approach. This could ensure an established framework for the outgoing and incoming teaching staff and give a major boost to the number, types, and quality of mobilities. Teaching mobility is also connected to the motivation and resilience of academic staff, which are important predictors of increasing the quality and the performance of teaching and learning.

Ideally, teaching mobility (together with other kinds of mobilities) are included in institutional internationalisation strategies. The TWE+ research has found that academic staff from institutions with an organisational strategy for internationalisation reported better results of teaching mobilities (TWE+ research report, p. 9, 36). This is probably due to the fact that internationalisation strategies provide a clear vision about teaching mobility and put performance management and incentive systems with SMART indicators in place. Similarly, having a new strategic approach to institutional leadership of teaching and learning, which is based on the valorisation of the educational performance of teachers and their motivation to dedicate themselves to facilitating learning processes, can be a guarantee for an active, coherent and well-founded mobility system based on real training needs. Stimulating mobility and achieving the expected performance in this field will also depend on institutional leadership, which supports continuous professional development, motivation and career satisfaction of university teachers. Such a strategic approach, which is based on institutional leadership of teaching and learning, empowers teaching mobility as well.

Measures, when properly designed and implemented, are mutually reinforcing, and take the needs of both the outgoing and incoming teachers into consideration by creating appropriate conditions to facilitate, encourage and promote teachers' mobility, on the one hand, and become attractive destinations, on the other.

A large share of the respondents of the TWE+ survey (TWE+ research report, p. 40, 58) identified hindering factors related to organisational issues that fall within the competence of the higher education institutions, both as sending and host universities. Such impressions are underlined by further studies conducted in the field (REALISE, p. 32). As outlined above, it favours the teaching staff when higher education institutions or departments formulate clear guidelines about their expectations towards them as well as provide tools and adopt concrete measures that help organise mobilities in a more efficient way. Such good practices include clustering mobilities for a particular period of the year (e.g. for an international week) and opening mobility windows. Considering the prospective rise in the number of teaching mobilities resulting from the strong commitment of the European Commission (European Universities, Erasmus+ Teacher Academies, etc.), higher education institutions will be increasingly pressed to find solutions to this challenge. Embedding incoming and outgoing teaching mobilities into the study programmes seems to be a way forward, as it would offer effective solutions to many of the existing obstacles.

Based on the TWE+ research, one of the main disincentives of teaching mobility is substitution. Some 39.8 percent of the participants reported their own institution would not provide substitution for their classes, if they participated in teaching mobility (TWE+ research report, p. 36). Similar difficulties have been reported by the respondents of the large-scale survey carried out by the REALISE project (REALISE, p. 32). Mobility windows do not only solve this problem but provide a more organised and predictable framework for teaching mobility.

The [Erasmus+ Teaching Mobility Platform](#) developed in the framework of the TWE+ project is a powerful tool for academics and institutions to organise mobility windows by offering advertisements of "mobile academics", thus teachers who intend to go to teaching mobility, and post an advertisement on the site.

Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions

Promote teaching mobility among junior staff with strategic partner institutions

Given that international strategic partners are mostly reliable, long-standing forms of cooperation, where relations are more intense, the communication and the information flow are more predictable and steady, they can be considered “safe spaces” for junior staff who are about to gain their first teaching mobility experience. As a result of mutual trust between the host and the sending partners as well as the longer history of cooperation, many of the concerns voiced by respondents of the TWE+ survey (receiving late answers, lack of openness of partners, difficulties in finding a host, lack of information, etc.) can be overcome easier than in the case of less established partnerships. Having such “safe spaces” (e. g. partners from currently running international projects) can be of special importance also for persons with less self-confidence and difficulties in finding a host institution, as it can help temper initial uncertainty and build on the existing institutional contacts respectively.

Improve and formalise recognition schemes

23.9 percent of respondents of the survey conducted in the framework of the project did not agree with the statement that teaching mobility is a recognised activity by their institution. Similar findings were made by the REALISE project, pointing out the existence of a “negative, broad perception that [teaching] mobility has no real impact on career development” (REALISE, p. 35), especially compared to the research mobility. The lack of reward can be a demotivator for teachers, while they should feel that going on teaching mobility is not only encouraged and expected but also properly recognised. In the light of this, higher education institutions should consider all three aspects of recognition, i.e. professional development, salary and recruitment, and promotion. To support universities in this regard, in the framework of the TWE+ project, a number of good practices of institutional recognition were collected and published in a [toolbox](#) based on the participants’ responses. These practices include the recognition of mobility as training hours in the teachers’ work plan and the implementation of a “recognition table” with different grades for evaluation by the host institution regarding the performance of mobility participants, among others. Such practices would support the processes of training and professional development of the teaching staff as well as strengthen the impact of mobility in career dynamics and evolution.

Make teaching mobility greener and more sustainable

Sustainability, especially the consequences of climate change are an increasing concern for staff, not only for students, thus gradually becoming a hindering factor for teaching mobility. As a response, a growing number of higher education institutions formulate a sustainability strategy and make efforts to mainstream the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals into their daily operation. Still, such trends might imply that teachers will become less mobile, especially because foreign teaching assignments are usually short-term, thus, can be considered the least sustainable form of mobility.

Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions

In order not to renounce the benefits of teaching mobility, higher education institutions can consider providing additional incentives for staff to choose sustainable forms of travel (e.g. additional financial support, recognising the extra time spent with travel as part of the assignment, ensuring the use frequent traveller passes for trains, etc.). When it is inevitable to travel by air, higher education institutions can promote the use of carbon offsetting schemes, however the majority of universities have little or no experience in this field, which makes awareness-raising and sharing good practices even more necessary. It can be also considered to make sustainability a part of the recognition scheme of teaching mobility, ranging from material bonuses to other forms of incentives, like professional acknowledgements. In this sense, the [Erasmus+ Teaching Mobility Platform](#), developed in the framework of the project, can support teachers to plan their mobility and choose host institutions in a more conscious way.

Promote new spaces of digital networking

As a result of the pandemic situation, human, real-life contacts have lost ground, which hits junior teaching staff, whose professional networks are not well-established yet, especially hard. The lack of professional relationships and the difficulty of finding a host institution were identified as important barriers already before the pandemic (TWE+ research report, p. 10, 14). Although we have not seen any large-scale scientific investigation about how the pandemic has affected networking, access to information and forming new professional relationships, it is highly probable that with the disappearance of "traditional", offline forms of encounters, it has become more challenging, or at least different, to establish new contacts. Also, bearing in mind the current digitalisation trends and the direction global higher education seems to be evolving to, it will be especially important to put a special emphasis on creating spaces for networking in the virtual space, even if the pandemic will be over. It is also essential to acknowledge the barriers of ICT environments that hinder the full and effective participation of individuals from various backgrounds, own-lived experiences, and access needs. For this reason, the digital inclusion agenda of the European Union should be taken into account within the mobility schemes too.

The [Erasmus+ Teaching Mobility Platform](#) aims to offer a solution to networking challenges by creating opportunities for teaching staff through an online "Marketplace" or "Hub" as well as providing academic teachers with tools to adapt new and effective teaching methodologies, which improve the quality and learning outcome of the mobility.

Encourage teachers to make use of innovative and inclusive digital solutions

One of the indisputable benefits of the pandemic has been the digitalisation boost of global higher education that had been hard to imagine before. Digitalisation can not only make classes more interactive, inclusive or resources better available for students but also provide teachers with flexibility never seen before. Holding classes in a blended form can offer a solution to substitution that seems to be a substantial challenge for many academics, as classes can be held online during a mobility period, would substitution not be possible. Digitalisation goes hand in hand with the rise of innovative pedagogies, which are naturally and methodologically linked to digitally enhanced mobility. However, to fully exploit this potential, teachers need support both from their peers and home institutions. This should have various forms, ranging from sharing good practices to providing suitable IT equipment, training, or extra allocated time and positive feedback, bearing in mind that experimenting with innovative solutions requires motivation, curiosity, dedication, time, and involves the risk of failing.

Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions

Encourage blended and virtual forms of teaching mobility

Blended and virtual activities, as defined in the new Erasmus+ Programme (2021-2027) may also be used as a parallel path through which higher education institutions can boost teaching mobility with their partners. The innovative short-term blended mobilities, including the so-called intensive academic programmes, shall help forging education schemes with the idea in mind that joint classes of teachers working at different institutions can be a great way of starting or further developing cooperation between teachers of the sending and the host institutions, as it enables participants to build mutual trust, get to know each other and the students as well as develop competencies, like intercultural communication.

Provide preparatory training before applying to and taking up mobility

Based on the TWE survey, it has proved to be crucial that teachers participating in mobility feel self-confident and trust in their abilities and skills, like self-efficacy, tolerance for ambiguity, intercultural sensitivity or positive attitude development. Findings of the TWE+ research indicate that such personality factors are highly represented among those who participate in a teaching mobility scheme. Also, the more positive attitude participants have, the fewer difficulties they face. Therefore, organising institutional level preparatory training prior to the take-up of the mobility that focuses on the above-mentioned topics could equip them with necessary skills, resulting in an increasing number of applicants and higher-quality mobility. (TWE+ research report, p. 9.) Beside these skills and attitudes, additional training on pedagogical competence and language skills can be provided as well. Also, designing this type of pre-mobility experiences can contribute to develop the sense of belonging and create the learning readiness in an emotional and motivational way.

Provide assistance in administration

Based on the TWE+ research, 30.55 percent of respondents stated the most important obstacle when participating in Erasmus+ teaching mobility is the administrative and organisational red tape. (TWE+ research report, p. 40.) Making mobility paperless (at a policy level) would be a major step forward but would not solve the problem alone. It is recommended that institutions analyse their business processes and make them more user-friendly and accessible. Digitalising wherever possible is a great way forward, in line with the European Union's Web Accessibility Directive

(5) <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/web-accessibility>. (Accessed: 12 June 2021)



Recommendations

for Higher Education Institutions

Design and implement clear, inclusive and targeted communication and promotion

Providing clear and accessible information about teaching and training mobility is essential to successfully promoting this opportunity to academic staff. The TWE+ research showed that at institutions where respondents had insufficient access to information about the mobility scheme, respondents reported more difficulties with regards to the lack of time, financial support or the lack of benefits. (TWE+ research report, p. 69) This shows the crucial role of dissemination, which provides relevant and first-hand information to lectures interested in mobility. Similarly, activities linked to inclusion and diversity, that are often part of higher education institutions' vision and strategies, are not always directly communicated with a proactive approach, so they are not sufficiently visible to the academic community. Ensuring specific and targeted communication in this respect would contribute to creating a more inclusive higher education environment. Also, creating communities of practice, which provide space for reflection, knowledge sharing, and exchanging good practices among peers, could be an important tool of tailor-made communication with meaningful impacts on the quality of mobility.

Promote an inclusive outreach and engagement strategy to academic staff and inclusive teaching and learning environment

Academic staff at the early stage of their career, with caregiving responsibilities, families or from various backgrounds often remain at the margins of outreach plans and engagement strategies, or any promotion, communication and dissemination strategies. Hence, it is recommended that higher education institutions apply a proactive approach towards these individuals and create support structures, such as mentoring, peer-to-peer support and provide professional acknowledgements. Outreach should highlight information about special financial allowances, e.g. the Erasmus+ Supplementary Grant, which is still a concern for a significant proportion of the teaching staff. Whenever possible, higher education institutions should provide additional financial aids and support mechanisms for individuals.

In many cases, aspects of inclusive teaching and learning and their implementation are vague in institutional policies and practices. Therefore, higher education institutions should provide direct support, in other terms, regular professional development opportunities to academic staff about these issues, including attitudes, skills, and knowledge, so that they can become inclusive in the teaching and learning environment during their mobility as well. It is recommended that higher education institutions equip academic staff (both non-mobile and mobile academic staff) with an inclusiveness checklist, which offers a set of orientation points that foster critical reflection and guidance for the design and delivery processes.

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