Erasmus+ Policy Statement

Participation in Erasmus+

The University of Reading (UoR) is a globally engaged institution with a long-standing history of international collaboration. Our Strategic Plan (2020-26) is framed around the core purpose of delivering "*…a better world through the transformational power of quality education and research…*". Participation in the Erasmus+ programme (2021-27) will directly support this ambition by enabling us to operationalise the four key and overlapping principles of our strategy – Community, Excellence, Sustainability, and an Engaged University – through high-quality international mobility and cooperation.

Erasmus+ provides a framework through which UoR can expand the scope, scale, and impact of our mobility and partnership activity. It will form a central pillar of our renewed European engagement. Participation will enable us to broaden meaningful and high-impact mobility opportunities for students and staff; advance two of our four graduate attributes (global citizenship and subject knowledge); foster an inclusive and supportive mobility environment in which opportunities are accessible to a wider range of participants; deepen and strengthen our high-quality partnerships throughout Europe and beyond; embed sustainable education into our mobility activities and choices; and strengthen civic and global engagement through international experience and applied learning.

The University of Reading is a globally engaged institution in mindset, values, and operation. Our global presence and longstanding international engagement mean we are able to re-enter Erasmus+ with established global networks, expertise, and a proven operational capacity in managing large-scale international projects. UoR will use this experience to implement mobility

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and partnership activities within Erasmus+, focusing on Key Actions 1 (KA1) and 2 (KA2).

Erasmus+ KA1 has historically formed the backbone to our international exchanges, hence partnerships. Previous implementation of KA103 and KA107 projects has equipped us with strong systems and institutional expertise. Building on this legacy, we will participate in KA1 to support the mobility of students and staff - for study, teaching, and training. We will work with existing European and global partners and develop new institutional links to expand learning, professional development, and intercultural opportunities for our students and staff. UoR will reinstate and expand bilateral agreements with European partners within the Erasmus+ framework, streamline mobility processes through the Erasmus+ digital tools available, and further embed sustainability and inclusion principles at all stages of our operations – from promotion and selection to pre-departure support and formal recognition.

The University of Reading will also actively explore participation in Erasmus+ KA2 – 'Cooperation among organisations and institutions'. Engagement will be strategic. UoR will adopt a model in which Schools identify areas of interest and strength aligned with the principles of our International & Global Engagement Strategic Framework - community, excellence, and global engagement. The University will support in proposal development and guidance, application, and project management; the scope and scale of KA2 engagement will be as project leads or co-deliverers working with our partner institutions. We will build upon existing expertise in curriculum development and institutional alliances to forge closer collaborations with institutions and organisations that will lead to the creation of new opportunities. Our aim is to participate in appropriate and relevant KA2 projects that will help forge long-term strategic and sustained institutional relationships. These partnerships will deliver long-term value, mutually enhance institutional capabilities and reputation, and will lay the foundations for future cooperation in the new Erasmus+ cycle (2028-34).

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We will utilise the full range of academic and professional services at UoR to promote, support, and deliver our engagement with Erasmus+ at all levels. Participation will be supported by established administrative systems, digital workflows, quality assurance processes, and participant support mechanisms. These will be refreshed and expanded to meet Erasmus+ requirements, ensuring that all aspects of mobility and cooperation activity are delivered to the highest standards.

Implementation will be coordinated through integrated mobility and partnership governance structures that link academic Schools with key central professional services. This will include clearly defined roles: Academic Schools will lead on academic content, project management and programme development; the Study Abroad Office will coordinate mobility design and delivery, working with Global Partnerships to deliver strategic alignment and effective partnership management; our professional services (including Legal and Finance teams) will support KA2 applications and agreements; our Teaching & Learning support functions will oversee academic quality and credit assurance. Functions will work collaboratively to ensure consistent, effective, and compliant implementation.

The University of Reading is committed to embedding the four Erasmus+ horizontal principles of Inclusion and Diversity; Environment & Climate; Digital Transformation; Participation in Democratic Life - across all aspects of our planned Erasmus+ mobility and cooperation activities. This continuing to ensure widening access to opportunities to under-represented groups, supporting green travel and sustainable lifestyle choices, integrating digital/ hybrid learning models to enhance outreach, and strengthening opportunities for student engagement and participation. Through this approach, Erasmus+ will become a driver of our European and global ambition – supporting UoR's broader goals of deepening internationalisation, strengthening global partnerships, enhancing our educational and research excellence, and expanding opportunities for all our community.

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Strategy, objectives and impact

The University of Reading's strategic international objectives and priorities for increasing international student mobility, deepening strategic partnerships, and enhancing educational provision and research, align with the four Erasmus+ horizontal priorities of Inclusion and Diversity; Environment & Climate; Digital transformation; Democratic Participation. Through Erasmus+, the University of Reading (UoR) aims to expand international learning and teaching, deepen our European partnerships, and further integrate sustainability, inclusion, and digital innovation into every aspect of mobility and cooperation.

The University of Reading's commitment within Erasmus+ will be to focus on achieving the following shared strategic goals:

1. Increasing participation in student and staff mobility (whilst maintaining quality).
2. Increasing opportunity through high-quality partnerships.
3. Delivering greater inclusivity in mobility activities.
4. Enhancing sustainability in our mobility operations and learning.

These goals directly advance our Strategic Principles (2020-26) and align with the International & Global Engagement Strategic Framework aims of growing our international community, delivering excellence, and strengthening global engagement. These goals overlap but are core to our planned Erasmus+ engagement.

Goal 1: Increasing participation in student and staff mobility activities (whilst maintaining quality)

Learning mobilities enable participants to develop their personal and professional skills and employability. We will use the Erasmus+ framework to identify and expand opportunities that enable students and staff to gain meaningful international experiences, develop global perspectives, and enhance personal and professional skills. WE plan to:

- increase by ≥20% from a 2026/27 baseline the number of UoR students studying / working in Europe, helping them develop their global awareness and citizenship, develop transferable skills, and increase subject knowledge.
- develop new, sustainable, and recognised pathways for third-cycle students to be mobile, enabling them to develop their academic networks and international connections, whilst supporting their academic development and progression (in line with European Charter for Researchers).
- redevelop our staff mobility scheme to create opportunities within Europe for 50+ members of UoR staff. For academic staff, these can help build upon existing research connections to help develop projects and investigate future curriculum developments and new joint programmes; for administrative, operational, and professional staff, these can create opportunities to develop networks where they can learn from best practice and innovations in other HE contexts which can be transferred back to UoR – especially around Blended Intensive Programmes.

These will enhance graduate outcomes, staff capability, and participant satisfaction. These activities will fully utilise digital and technological developments to maximise efficient and effective delivery of opportunity.

Goal 2: Increasing opportunity through high-quality partnerships

Partnerships with institutions and organisations are fundamental to delivering meaningful educational opportunities to our students and staff. To achieve our ambitions, we must collaborate more closely with existing partners and develop new links with institutions and organisations that share our values and aspirations. We plan to:

- establish new partnerships to ensure all academic Schools have credit-bearing Erasmus+ opportunities available to their students.
- identify European HEIs that are aligned with our institutional academic strengths and shared values to create opportunity for disciplinary or wider institutional collaboration in KA1 and KA2.

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- work with institutions and organisations to increase the number of training placement opportunities available both at UoR and for UoR students abroad.

These partnerships must be sustainable and mutually beneficial. We want any relationships forged under the existing Erasmus+ framework to have longevity into the next Erasmus+ cycle (2028-34), providing an ongoing legacy.

Goal 3: Delivering greater inclusivity in mobility activities

By widening access, the Erasmus+ framework will support ongoing efforts to diversify participation and reduce structural barriers UoR remains committed to ensuring that all students and staff can benefit from these opportunities. WE commit:

- that ≥30% of outbound credit-bearing Erasmus+ funded mobilities are taken by students who meet the national and institutional definitions of disadvantaged and/or under-represented in international mobilities. Funding will be prioritised to support those from low-income households; students who are either care-leavers or have caring responsibilities; students with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND); students with asylum or refugee status; and students from ethnic minority backgrounds. Tailored promotion and support will be delivered to help ensure that these students are aware of the opportunity.
- to leverage digital developments to enhance accessibility across all communications, processes, and guidance materials, to ensure that they are clear, consistent, and user-friendly.
- to ensure that priority for staff mobility is given to junior staff who may not have had the opportunity to participate in similar mobility schemes previously; staff who may not otherwise have access to funding for such schemes; and relevant support is given to staff members, irrespective of challenges they might face, to be able to participate.
- to develop Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) with select European partners so as to create opportunities for students who cannot commit to the 60+ days credit-bearing opportunities, but can benefit from

enhanced digital skills and shorter, structured physical mobilities complementing the online learning.

Goal 4: Enhancing sustainability in our mobility operations and learning

We want to build upon our national and global reputation for climate science research, environmental leadership, and sustainable practices. We will:

- increase the number of students taking credit-bearing mobilities who are utilising the additional Green Travel grants available – Erasmus+ grants and those offered at UoR. This will help reduce carbon emissions.
- provide administrative, technical, and teaching & learning (T&L) support for the development of BIPs.
- embed sustainability across all mobility processes and participant behaviours. This includes maintaining paperless mobility practices, and more fully embedding sustainability guidance into predeparture and new student orientation sessions to support low-impact lifestyle choices while abroad. UoR will explore the full range of digital opportunities that Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) and the Erasmus+ app can provide to partners and participants.
- apply sustainable travel policies and our 'digital-first' principles to Erasmus+ engagement. Building upon UoR's sustainable travel policy, future Erasmus+ mobility and cooperation activities will require use of the lowest carbon travel options available, full consideration of digital cooperation over physical travel, and aligning environmental priorities with responsible decision-making (while balancing accessibility needs).

Through these measures Erasmus+ will contribute to our institutional carbon net zero ambitions, support European and Erasmus+ goals, while also educating and equipping students and staff with the capacity to make sustainable choices.

Participation in Erasmus+ will strengthen digital infrastructures, further embed sustainability at all levels, expand inclusive mobility and opportunity, and deepen our partnerships and engagement with the European Education Area.

It will enhance the quality, relevance and international reach of our education and research, supporting UoR's ambition to be a globally engaged, transformational institution.

Indicators

The University of Reading (UoR) will use a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators to assess progress against each strategic objective, providing a clear framework to monitor delivery and assess institutional success. These will be benchmarked against a 2026/27 mobility baseline and will be reviewed throughout the duration of Erasmus+ participation through established governance structures and feedback mechanisms both during and after the project.

Goal 1: Increasing participation in student and staff mobility UoR will track growth and quality by measuring:

- a ≥20% increase in outgoing credit-bearing mobilities to Europe by the end of the project. This supports our institutional goal of the development of global citizenship, subject knowledge, and development of personal and transferable skills.
- at least 50 UoR mobilities (teaching or training) with participation across academic, administrative, operational, and professional staff.
- student and staff satisfaction rates of ≥85%, captured through post-mobility surveys and EUC Erasmus+ evaluations.
- timely and accurate credit transfer and recognition for all students. These indicators will demonstrate increased participation rates, while ensuring quality assurance and academic relevance.

Goal 2: Increasing opportunity through high-quality partnerships

We will assess the development of increased opportunities that can facilitate broader future collaboration within the next Erasmus+ cycle (2028-34), assessed at the end of the programme period:

- establishment of at least 10 new Erasmus+ partnerships that will enable UoR to achieve its student and staff mobility ambitions. (as articulated in Goal 1)
- concentration of activities with a number of European institutions that share complementary or shared academic strengths and / or values.
- ensuring that all Schools have access to at least one credit-bearing Erasmus+ opportunity.
- review of reciprocity, participant satisfaction, student attainment, and long-term value.

These indicators will demonstrate greater institutional engagement with European institutions and the development of a more strategic partnership network that can be leveraged to support UoR's international cooperation and teaching-enhancement goals.

Goal 3: Delivering greater inclusivity in mobility activities

We will track the impact of Erasmus+ funding and digital systems by measuring:

- ≥30% of outbound Erasmus+ participants meet EU, national, and / or institutional definitions of being disadvantaged and / or under-represented in international mobilities.
- full use accessibility-compliant digital tools, including those provided through Erasmus+ App and EWP, to ensure that communication and guidance materials are accessible to the whole UoR community.
- active investigation into the development or piloting of ≥2 Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) with European partners to widen access for students who cannot commit to long duration mobilities - to take place in the existing Erasmus+ framework, or to provide the foundations for delivering in Erasmus+ 2028-34.
- evidence of increased participation among early-career and administrative, operational, and professional staff.

These indicators will track inclusion progress, demonstrating the alignment between UoR strategy and Erasmus+ priorities.

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Goal 4: Enhancing sustainability in our mobility operations and learning

We will measure progress in further embedding of sustainable principles into mobility activities through:

- increase in uptake of Green Mobility / Travel grants, hence supporting students to choose low-carbon transport options.
- evidence of participants adopting of low-impact behaviours while abroad (through reflective tasks, feedback tasks, RED Sustainable Action award engagement, testimonials etc)
- ≥30% increase in engagement with the sustainable component of pre-mobility learning units.
- a greater engagement with UoR's sustainable travel principles – including travel to/from destination but also travel at the location (to be confirmed within UoR Sustainability reporting).
- utilisation of Erasmus digital systems to complement existing UoR services in ensuring continued development of paperless / digital processes.

We want to better educate mobility participants on green practices, on ways to reduce their carbon footprint, and by fostering more sustainability-conscious students and staff.

These indicators showcase the University of Reading's commitment to sustainability, climate action, and behaviour change. It will also demonstrate modernisation through the use of enhanced digital systems alongside embedding sustainability and inclusion into institutional practice.

Through the measurement of these four goals UoR will demonstrate tangible progress across mobility, partnership development, inclusion, and sustainability, ensuring that Erasmus+ delivers a lasting institutional legacy and that UoR will have made a meaningful contribution to the European Education Area ambitions.