

Erasmus Charter for Higher Education – Erasmus+ Policy Statement

Maastricht University (UM) is the youngest and most international university in the Netherlands.

UM distinguishes itself by its innovative problem-based learning (PBL) education model, international character and multidisciplinary approach to research and education.

Located in the heart of Europe, UM sees itself as the European university of the Netherlands, an open and inclusive academic community, incorporating European and global perspectives in its education and research.

Over the years, thousands of our students, staff, and researchers have benefited from our participation in the Erasmus+ programme, offering them a unique international exchange experience. With the majority of our students, staff and researchers reporting a significant positive impact in terms of enhanced professional development, international outlook and employability, the Erasmus+ programme functions as an incredibly valuable addition to our internationalisation strategy and international classroom.

In the ECHE period 2021-2027, UM strives to maintain its position as (one of) the largest budget recipients for Erasmus+ KA131 student mobility in the Netherlands. Via a UM-wide Erasmus+ Staff Mobility Policy, in which Erasmus+ budget is topped up with UM funds, support staff and early career researchers will additionally be stimulated to strengthen their personal and professional development, and exchange relevant knowledge in their fields.

As of call 2023, UM also participates in the Erasmus+ Key Action 171 programme, with the aim to further diversify its International Classroom through the cooperation with a select number of global partners with complementary academic expertise.

Finally, within the context of Erasmus+, flagship projects such as the YUFE multi-campus European University will be further developed to provide a truly European educational experience, complemented by new Erasmus+ activities such as the Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs).

In line with the priorities of the Erasmus+ programme in the period 2021-2027, UM is paying specific attention to accommodate students with special needs and fewer opportunities (e.g. via dedicated selection processes and support during the mobility), digitalisation (e.g. via the optimisation of our digital student and staff exchange processes and the incorporation of the Erasmus Without Papers initiative) and sustainability (e.g. by promoting sustainable modes of travel and by exposing our exchange students and staff to sustainability initiatives via our Green Network and Green Teams).

The overarching aim of UM's participation in the Erasmus+ programme is to support as many students, staff, and researchers as possible to take part in both outgoing and incoming mobility activities. In this process, we strive to guarantee a geographical and gender balance in the cohort of participants. We continuously evaluate and enhance our administrative processes in order to provide a high-quality international experience at UM, attributing importance to our principles of inclusivity and accessibility. This implies training our staff in intercultural competencies and languages and discussing with our partners and at the national level how operational processes such as visa provision, credit recognition and housing can be improved.

By creating a welcoming atmosphere, we facilitate the rapid integration of our incoming Erasmus+ participants in our academic community. We do this by, for example:

- Providing a buddy programme, for and by students.
- Extending our language course offer to our exchange students, staff, and researchers.
- Stimulating ambassadorship and the sharing of mobility experiences within the University and beyond.

Furthermore, the Erasmus+ programme allows us to tap into new joint research possibilities with partner universities abroad and enables the sharing of our expertise in teaching and research, hereby strengthening our international profile and quality of education. Collaboration with institutions abroad has and always will be a core element of our strategy. The Erasmus+ policy framework further strengthens our academic networks, such as the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN) and Young European Research Universities (YERUN), with some of our colleagues taking part in activities such as international staff weeks and exchanges, sharing best practices, and intensifying bilateral contact between our institutions.

We celebrate the achievements of the Erasmus+ programme, pride ourselves on having been part of a grant scheme that has empowered millions of people to take part in the programme's activities and look forward to continuing our strong involvement in all components of the programme.

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