

European Policy Statement of Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

ERASMUS as part of the internationalisation strategy

The character of a European university is deeply ingrained in JGU against the historical backdrop of its reopening by the French military regime in 1946. With its new internationalisation strategy the university acknowledges the indispensability of international cooperation in the face of global challenges and takes a stand against tendencies toward national isolation and promotes freedom of thought and the transfer of knowledge. JGU's internationalisation strategy identifies 6 important objectives: 1) expanding partnerships and networks, 2) expanding the international „Gutenberg Campus“ as part of internationalisation at home, 3) increase of mobility of all university's members, 4) fostering/enhancing recruitment of foreign students, researchers, artists and staff, 5) improvement of services and starting conditions for these groups, and 6) monitoring of all internationalisation measures. The ERASMUS funding is the guarantor and driving force for nearly 80% of all international mobility activities throughout the university. The mobility activities, in turn, foster the development of innovative concepts in teaching, research and administration. The major goals of the above mentioned internationalisation strategy cannot be achieved without the continuous funding by ERASMUS.

JGU is actively contributing to the creation of a European Education Area, in which international mobility and stays abroad are taken for granted, qualifications are being recognized in line with the Bologna standards and guidelines, multilingualism is being promoted, everyone has access to education regardless of their social and economic background, and all of the university's members are aware of their European identity. With JGU's 'Recognition Regulations' of July 2015, the university has taken important steps to implement the Lisbon Convention and has reduced mobility barriers for its students. The overarching focus of JGU's participation in the ERASMUS programme for 2021 onwards is on the following four aspects: 1) digitalisation of mobility management 2) sustainability regarding programme administration, practical administration and strategic direction of mobility 3) inclusion of disadvantaged target groups and 4) support of civic engagement and joint European values. Synergies between these four fields are used wherever possible.

All of these aspects are being pursued both by JGU independently and within the FORTHEM Alliance (Fostering Outreach within European Regions, Transnational Higher Education and Mobility, see <https://www.forthem-alliance.eu/en/>). JGU is leading the consortium which is recognized as a "European University". The partner universities are Dijon, Jyväskylä, Opole, Palermo, Riga und Valencia. The European university network FORTHEM is an effective tool for taking additional concrete steps to realize the European Education Area. It allows us to test innovative concepts on a smaller scale, apply them on a larger scale in a second step, and, finally, to extend the best practice examples also to partnerships beyond the alliance. Examples for innovative measures which are now becoming possible by pooling the expertise of all of our partners and benefitting from new funding through the ERASMUS "European Universi-

ties” programme are: The introduction of the “European Student Card”, student data portability, cross-departmental consolidation of cooperation agreements, establishment of new physical and virtual 'international classrooms', increase in foreign-language courses, development of new exchange concepts like the “FORTHEM Campus”, establishment of a cross-border internship network, an incentive system for the recognition of teaching achievements in an international context, and massive promotion of short mobility programmes. Last but not least, FORTHEM allows us to enhance our universities’ societal involvement and the civic engagement of our students and to transfer research-based knowledge into society. Together with our FORTHEM partner universities and our other key partners within ERASMUS we will be able to educate active and skilled European citizens and to make an important contribution to creating a more competitive, more innovative European Higher Education Area.

Implementation of Erasmus Actions

The most important Erasmus actions for Johannes Gutenberg University are “Mobility projects for students and staff (Key Action 1)” and “European Universities (Key Action 2)”. In regard to mobility projects with programme countries, we can draw on our many years of experience and well-developed infrastructure, which includes the faculties’ ERASMUS coordinators. Mobility with non-ERASMUS partner countries contributes, among other things, to increasing worldwide mobility and will therefore play an important role to further intensify exchanges with partner countries outside of Europe. Various partnerships already exist (s.a. in Asia and Africa), which are to be integrated to a greater extent into the already existing European networks. In addition, JGU has often benefitted from the actions “Strategic Partnerships”, “Erasmus Mundus Joint Master’s Degrees”, and “Jean Monnet Activities”. As JGU’s new internationalisation strategy recommends the reinforcement of partnerships with universities of the global south, the action “Capacity Building in the Field of Higher Education” could also become important.

With the help of ERASMUS funds, JGU will continue to be able to increase its mobility numbers (in the areas SMS, SMP, STA und STT) and expand its international networks. The participation in ERASMUS programmes will furthermore be explicitly used for allowing previously disadvantaged target groups to be able to participate in international mobility. Inclusion and diversity are already a special focus at JGU (see, for example, the Equality and Diversity Office: <https://www.blogs.uni-mainz.de/diversity/>).

JGU’s participation in the ERASMUS programme “European Universities” is exemplified by our active work on the internationalisation strategy’s goals “Expanding Partnerships and Networks”, “Internationalisation at Home”, as well as “Increasing International Mobility”. The FORTHEM Alliance has already developed an in-depth and extensive dynamic, as JGU as a whole and many of its faculties are involved in it. It therefore offers us the chance to infuse new topics into our “European university”.

Implementing its three key missions, Mobility Mission, FORTHEM Labs Mission and Outreach Mission, the FORTHEM Alliance seeks to institutionalize an environment of permanent and

deeper academic cooperation and to build up a joint campus which allows seamless physical, virtual and blended mobility and joint teaching. Since student and staff mobility is an essential part of FORTHEM activities, a growing part of our university's learning mobility activities will be implemented through individual mobilities in the European Universities framework. The following concrete actions of the three FORTHEM missions will strengthen the institutional capacity to achieve strategic aims for internationalisation, education, and civic engagement at JGU:

- Implementing new innovative forms of long-term and short-term student and staff mobility, including an increase in virtual and blended mobility
- Launching the FORTHEM Campus –concept with jointly organised semester-long programmes on rotating host campuses for students from all seven universities
- Developing new English-medium modules in fields of special expertise and new joint degree programmes in relevant topics
- Increasing students' internship opportunities and volunteer work projects
- Developing digital competencies of academics with jointly implemented training
- Multiplying the connections, concrete cooperation projects and knowledge circulation with civic partners within Outreach and Lab Missions

Benefits from participating in the ERASMUS programme

In the past years and decades, the most important goals and indicators were purely quantitative – the focus was on increases in people and offers supported by ERASMUS funding lines. This will remain an important aspect; additionally, however, more attention will be paid to qualitative indicators, by developing and applying tools to assess the quality of physical, virtual and blended forms of mobility – from application to implementation. Quality assurance is done through a combination of personal interviews with program participants and data analysis, including the data available in reports or surveys.

JGU strongly supports the initiative for "ERASMUS without paper" and hopes that it contributes to further simplify program administration and increase service orientation toward the members of the university as well as toward guests. JGU consistently follows the EU's roadmap for the step-by-step implementation of ERASMUS without paper between 2021 and 2025. In exchanges with colleagues from other institutions (from the FORTHEM network, for example) and through continuing education, JGU constantly endeavors to play an active role in shaping this process. Our successes regarding the implementation of EWP can be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively using process monitoring and user questionnaires, including all persons involved in the process. Beyond student and staff mobility, JGU's main goal in participating in ERASMUS is to further advance the internationalisation of its curricula. In the last years, there is a growing interest in the establishment of international study programs in many faculties. With regard to this development, the "ERASMUS Mundus joint master degrees" offer ideal funding conditions.

The most important network project of JGU, the FORTHEM Alliance, is committed to increasing international mobility, including physical, blended and virtual mobility, to involve 30% of students and staff by 2022 and 50% of students and staff by 2025. However, the joint goals of FORTHEM are not only quantitative: Driven by a strong belief in the benefits of multilingualism and multiculturalism, we will ensure that all collective and individual mobilities are meaningful both pedagogically and professionally and can be implemented as seamlessly as possible. The content quality of a mobility is measured by whether it contributes to the following goals:

- Increased number of joint degree programmes
- Increased virtual exchange and virtual mobility activities
- Increased employability of students
- Increased civic engagement
- Closer cooperation with local schools (“bringing Europe to our classrooms”) and local employers
- Tested models for creating solutions for societal problems using research-based data

Active use of Erasmus programmes, including the new short-term mobility funding, the funding for PhD students, and new blended mobility support, will be a crucial tool for reaching these aims.