

Background

Scottish universities are proud that the UK has participated in the Erasmus programme (European Regional Action Scheme for Mobility of University Students) since its inception in 1987, 30 years ago. We recognise the benefit for our students to travel internationally but also the benefit that visiting students bring, not just to our campuses but our Scottish domiciled students too. By hosting Erasmus+ students we enhance the vibrant, global community on our campuses which benefits all.

We are concerned that the UK's decision to leave the European Union will impact on the sector's ability to participate, shape and prosper from the scheme.

Our priority

We would appreciate clarity from the UK Government about its plans for Erasmus+. We want the UK Government to commit to maintaining participation in the Erasmus+ programme after the UK leaves the EU.

Scottish Higher Education and Erasmus+: a mutually beneficial relationship

There is strong evidence underpinning the benefits of participation in Erasmus+

- A noticeable correlation between periods of mobility and enhanced students' academic achievement, skills and employability¹.
- Over 50% of HEIs state that Erasmus has the largest impact on establishing new contacts, cooperation, and improving the quality of teaching.
- 93% of learners agree that they see the value of different cultures after participation².

The new Erasmus+ programme has supported strong growth in outward student mobility in the Scottish HE sector in recent years. In 2015, 2,098 students at Scottish HEIs studied abroad in Europe, up from 1,558 in 2014 – an increase of 35% in one year alone.

Scottish HEIs have also engaged strongly with the new International Credit Mobility strand of Erasmus+. In its first year (2015), the Scottish HE sector punched well above its weight, winning €1.2M, i.e. 21% of the total funding allocated UK-wide, sending students and staff all over the world.

¹ http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/International/Documents/Gone%20International_expanding%20opportunities_digital.pdf

² <https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/erasmus-plus/eval/swd-e-plus-mte.pdf>



In 2017, in addition to the decentralised Erasmus+ funding (intra-European mobility, international credit mobility and strategic partnerships), an additional €9,643,175 was awarded to Scottish HEIs directly by the European Commission for the centralised actions (Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees, Capacity Building in Higher Education, Knowledge Alliances and Jean Monet)

Scottish HEIs are particularly successful in receiving funding to coordinate Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree projects. The UK is one of the top 3 countries coordinating such projects, and between 2014 and 2017 over 85% of these are led by universities in Scotland.

We also wish to highlight [Gone International](#), a report on student mobility published by our colleagues at UUKi in March, as a key new national-level source of data on the impact of Erasmus+ in the UK. It showed, amongst other things, that as of 2014-15:

- 9.7% of students at Scottish institutions study abroad, vs. 6.9% in England and 7.2% UK-wide.
- UK-wide, Erasmus+ accounts for over half (55%) of outward mobility
- Students who go abroad, including via Erasmus+, have significantly better employment / further study outcomes (even when controlling for academic performance)

ENDS

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