Erasmus+ Policy Statement

With almost 26,000 of the brightest students from around 120 countries, learning alongside over 1,200 of the best academics from across the globe, the University of Sheffield is one of the world’s leading universities.

The University’s internationalisation strategy supports our vision that we will be one of the best universities in the world, renowned for the excellence, impact and distinctiveness both of its research and its research-led learning and teaching. The four key themes are: ensuring global visibility of the University and what it stands for, developing a truly international University community, promoting our research globally and enhancing knowledge transfer opportunities through our international engagements, and celebrating, promoting and increasing the volume of the work that we do to improve the lives of others through our international relationships, locally and abroad. The Erasmus+ scheme plays an important part in realising these aims.

In addressing each of these themes, we put particular emphasis on the extent to which we establish, develop and maintain effective international partnerships and work collaboratively across the institution to foster and raise the profile of these. Starting point for most partnerships is the existence or potential of academic to academic collaboration. We strive to ensure high quality of partners, institutional capacity to participate, sustainable cooperation and, ultimately, positive outcomes and maximisation of impact for all participating parties concerned.

We aim for multiple layers with key partners to build a more comprehensive and sustainable relationship which is rooted in a thorough understanding of each other’s teaching, research and overall set up. Through a number of task groups, we can pro-actively seek new international opportunities with a group of senior colleagues from across the University and disseminate information accordingly.

Implementation of the strategy is further enhanced through promotion of the aims by the Vice-Chancellor, The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Director Sheffield International and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning &Teaching.

To raise awareness and increase impact amongst students and staff, we celebrate our international achievements and activities across the institution. The experience of both home and international students is of great importance to us and we promote cultural agility and encourage an international ethos. We strongly support all our students to participate in a mobility period and have managed to increase participation over the last five years. Staff are also encouraged to participate in a teaching or training mobility period to embrace cooperation with colleagues around the world and to expand the knowledge of their chosen field. Staff who have experienced a mobility period abroad make the best ambassadors for the scheme and promote the opportunities to students.

Through our internationalisation work we aim to add value to our core business; improving teaching, research and overall service. In order to achieve this we endeavour to attract and work with the best international researchers, and to increase our awareness of and engagement with EU and other international research funds, sponsors and partners.
The University is involved in Erasmus+ Mundus programmes and has a wide range of collaborative taught and research programmes with international partners including dual awards and jointly-delivered degrees. In terms of student mobility, geographic decisions are largely dictated by the respective degree programmes that students are enrolled on and the largest number of our over 300 bilateral agreements are with France, Spain and Germany due to students studying the language as part of their degree. Where the degree does not entail a compulsory period abroad, the decision is based on the best fit in terms of subject area concerned, and if we already have an existing relationship in terms of research or other staff cooperation.

The opportunities offered through our participation in the 2014-2020 EU programme for education, training, youth and sport further strengthen the University's international standing and capabilities in terms of teaching and research whilst also supporting academic and leadership capacity building of other institutions abroad through knowledge and transfer opportunities.

In developing an international University community, we aim to provide a global learning and teaching environment in which our students benefit from an international dimension in their studies. This involves providing students with an international dimension to their personal and academic development to support the development of cultural agility and the skills required by employers on the global labour market. International networks and collaborations with a range of partners in Europe and beyond will allow us to develop the quality and relevance of teaching and research by combining expertise and strengths to the benefit of all involved. We aim to further increase the number of outgoing students (study and work), as well as staff teaching, training and research opportunities. We are reaching out to engage students from under-represented groups, too. The University’s Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plans aim to achieve excellence through inclusion. We wish to eliminate all forms of discrimination by promoting the highest standards of behaviour including respect, integrity and personal responsibility. Student and staff disability is fully supported by HR and the student welfare team. Commitment to diversity extends to proactively engaging with currently under-represented groups in HE through activities targeting schools, colleges and community groups. Most of our students have an opportunity to study abroad; we actively encourage students from non-language degrees to participate in the Erasmus+ scheme and to study abroad for a semester as part of their course.