

Erasmus Policy Statement - International Strategy

International Strategy of the College of Social Work (VSSR) is a comprehensive and long-term strategy that sets priorities and goals for all aspects of quality education. It aims at raising the quality of the study programmes, mobility of students, teaching and non-teaching staff, and supports training, participation in international projects as means of continuous improvement of the quality.

The focus of the international strategy is on cooperation and mobility as they guide institutional actions in teaching, research and outreach to the global community. The ERASMUS network is an important part of the internationalization strategy.

The College of Social Work (VSSR) cooperates with other scientific and educational institutions coming from united Europe, but it is equally open to cooperation with institutions in other parts of the world. In choosing partners for cooperation, mobility and other strategic activities, the College has four main criteria: compatibility of study programs, commitment to quality education, mobility and project development; a long-term view of the projects to be developed; the principles of mutual benefit. The College of Social Work implements its mission in the field of science, education and knowledge transfer in accordance with a system of values that is generally accepted in developed European countries and applies academic standards established by international agreements signed and ratified by the Republic of Serbia. The selection of partners would also be carried out in accordance with the educational programs of the College of Social Work. Primarily, the focus is based not on geographic location but on the activities planned under the partnership. The geographic area would encompass all EU countries and non-EU countries, as well as the neighbouring countries. The most important objectives are cooperation, sharing and acquisition of experience and knowledge. For students, mobility activities aim to build international competencies (including language) and employability for both the College and incoming graduates.

Staff mobility has two focuses: developing international research and cooperation projects, and supporting student mobility activities with partner institutions. Both of these focuses aim to further develop the capacity of staff to improve the quality and relevance of the College teaching and research. Training projects have a strong focus on capacity development and sustainable outcomes with a balance between EU and non-EU (developing country) participants and partners.

According to the Statute of the College of Social Work, the usage of ECTS facilitates implementation and participation in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees. Double degree is an area of priority for mobility and cooperation in the future, especially in first and second cycles.

Strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects within the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme

The College of Social Work (VSSR) aims at strengthening its strategic partnerships in order to increase the quality of student and staff mobility as required by the EU. One of the primary strategies in cooperation is investing in the projects and networks to strengthen the sustainability of outcomes for all participants.

The College has well staffed and resourced service office in charge of promotion and implementation of international cooperation of mobility. The College Council provides the quality insurance criteria, closely monitors participation in exchanges and supports mobility at all levels.

In future the College intends to implement further measures to create conditions for involving more immigrants staying in the Republic of Serbia and former Yugoslavia in the educational process that is being carried out within the College, establish broader cooperation with top lecturers from other countries and their engagement as visiting professors, support students with family commitments and students with special needs in participating in exchange programmes.

The College invests in five special Centres to focus on cooperation projects: The Centre for International Cooperation and Career Development, The Centre for Science and Research Development, Centre for Publishing, Centre for Lifelong Education. Through these centers, the College conducts, disseminates and applies research expertise in solving social and scientific problems in Serbia and partner countries. The College teaching and non-teaching staff and students are the key resources in this process.

One of the key strength of the College is entrepreneurship specially focused on cooperation projects. The projects focus on empowering individuals and communities to develop sustainable business enterprises within their local environment. An instrument to reach this sustainable outcome is to invest in research within local communities to connect the academic and business sectors.

Furthermore, the College is particularly dedicated to the promotion of joint study programmes. It has established a section for dealing with the legal aspects of cross-border agreements with the neighboring countries. The College teaching staff is also motivated and closely involved in promoting international corporation and mobility via participation at international conferences and establishing academic links with universities worldwide.

The expected impact of the participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on the modernisation of the College of the Social Work

The major expected impact is contribution to the modernisation of the College of Social Work (VSSR) by taking part in helping students become globally competent graduates, internationally engaged researchers, and by improving the quality and relevance of our programs. Also, mobility will strengthen the entrepreneurial endeavours of both students and teaching and non-teaching staff. It will have a strong impact on development of the capacities of our students and researchers to participate in important international knowledge communities. Mobility provides VSSR with the opportunity of incorporation of new learning into already existed academic curricula, thereby continuously improving the quality and relevance of VSSR education.

VSSR is also recognised as an academic institution attempting to be in tune with the ever changing needs of employers in all industries. Thus, VSSR seeks to strengthen related professions by organizing lifelong educations and offering career guidance and counselling. It mediates between research, practice oriented academic institutions and businesses in order to stimulate and implement innovation. Mobility increases the chances of becoming familiar with the best practices of universities with similar agenda and their application in Serbia.

One of the expected impacts on modernization of VSSR is broadening knowledge in the field of application of digital technologies and long distance learning to teaching, pedagogical and assessment methods. VSSR recognises the impact of cutting edge technologies and is willing to take an advantage of their use in the manner of other universities abroad. By becoming part of the mobility programmes, VSSR students and staff are given an opportunity to understand how universities operate in other countries. Thus, the integration of internationalisation strategies into the VSSR academic activities will be more successful, resulting in the raising awareness of the necessity for high quality education level in general.

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