

## WU Erasmus+ Policy Statement

### General strategy

#### WU International

WU's Erasmus+ policy is integrated into the university's general internationalization strategy, which rests on the following main pillars:

- Positioning WU as a leading international university: WU's further development as an organization is based on international quality standards, to which WU is an active contributor. The international accreditations from EQUIS, AACSB, and AMBA are particularly relevant in this context, as they allow for targeted benchmarking and peer learning among leading universities.
- An international network with 240 partner universities around the world and membership in networks like CEMS, PIM, GBSN, and THEMIS: These are key for the development of joint activities, for student, faculty, and staff exchange programs, and for the implementation of joint degree programs.
- A comprehensive portfolio of internationally oriented degree programs: The programs' contents prepare students to work in an international business and economics environment. In addition, mobility programs, joint/double degree programs, and joint teaching programs with partner universities allow students to gain international and intercultural skills. Targeted recruiting of international students contributes to the diversity of WU's student community.
- WU's active participation in international academic discourse: WU's researchers are in constant exchange with their respective scientific communities and contribute actively to them. ERC grants confirm the excellence of WU's research. WU is working to further internationalize its research through active recruiting of researchers with relevant international experience, the inclusion of visiting researchers, and programs for allowing high-potential WU researchers to spend time at partner universities abroad.
- Creating attractive conditions for internationally oriented research and teaching with a diverse and intercultural campus: International teaching and research at WU are based on a genuinely welcoming atmosphere, orientation programs, and the necessary infrastructure (bilingual information and support services).

## **WU in the European Education Area**

Participation in the Erasmus+ program is an essential basis for the achievement and implementation of WU's internationalization goals and allows WU to contribute to the development of the common European Higher Education Area.

As part of the Erasmus+ program, WU maintains its cooperations in Europe and works closely with selected strategic international partners.

The focus is on the mobility of university students, faculty, and staff, with the goal of maintaining and further expanding this high degree of mobility among graduates. Erasmus+ encourages the mobility of WU faculty and allows WU to invite guest researchers and guest lecturers, which supports active exchange within the scientific communities and contributes to both the exchange of knowledge and the generation of new knowledge. To encourage inclusion, the Erasmus+ program also offers options for addressing different target groups and supporting mobility in these groups through targeted funding.

The different forms of cooperation offered by the Erasmus+ program enable participants to develop new, transnational, European degree programs or joint teaching modules, which contribute to the transfer of knowledge within the European Higher Education Area. Overall, considerable effort is required to maintain or even improve WU's high standards in research and teaching in light of the dynamic developments in tertiary education (e.g. increasing internationalization, digitalization, flexibility). In the future, it will be a matter of rethinking the concept of internationalization. The Erasmus+ program helps make international programs more flexible and diverse, which in turn increases the number of Erasmus participants.

Sustainability and long-term success depend on a certain level of compatibility between WU and its partner universities. The establishment of mandatory quality standards by Erasmus+ is a key factor for success.

As a European university, WU aims to offer new, attractive programs and cooperation formats to attract students from other European countries to WU and to promote a more permeable European Education Area.

## **WU and the modernization of higher education**

Integration in an international network and active participation in the Erasmus+ program are key factors contributing to WU's high quality standards and further development. Helping to shape the modernization of higher education and upholding its reputation as an innovative university are important priorities for WU. Regular exchange with partner institutions and cooperation in networks allow targeted benchmarking and help participating universities to learn from and with each other.

In particular, Erasmus+ cooperation projects open up new opportunities for WU in everything it does: education, research, and third mission. Collaboration with partners helps us develop new, innovative teaching and learning methods. Erasmus+ allows WU to extend its reach to many different regions together with its partners, and it gives WU the opportunity to contribute to the positive development of European society.

As a responsible university, WU has a role to play in this modernization and further development process, based on the goals outlined in the renewed EU agenda for higher education. In its degree programs, WU imparts a comprehensive understanding of business- and economics-related issues, academic approaches, and a wide variety of social and communications skills. WU is committed to social inclusion and to imparting knowledge, even beyond its campus borders. WU is a member of numerous networks for the promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship and contributes to the competitiveness of Europe's economy.

## **Participation in Erasmus+ activities**

### **KA1: Mobility**

Encouraging student and faculty mobility is a key element of WU's internationalization strategy. Around 35% of all WU graduates have spent time abroad during their studies. Individual mobility is one of the main pillars of WU's Erasmus+ activities.

To support this mobility, WU already has an extensive network of Erasmus+ partner universities throughout Europe. The successful cooperation with these institutions is based on inter-institutional agreements and the principles of Erasmus+. WU has established structures to support students, faculty, and staff before, during, and after international mobility activities. The WU International Office is the central service center responsible for coordinating international partnerships and individual mobility.

The goal is to continue to promote student, faculty, and staff mobility with program countries as well as partner countries as part of the Erasmus+ program. In addition to the usual mobility formats (exchange semesters abroad for students or teaching and training stays for faculty and staff), the main aim here is to take advantage of blended learning opportunities. WU has a long tradition of developing and organizing short joint programs in cooperation with partner institutions in Europe and beyond in the form of Summer University programs. These programs are intended to strengthen the cooperation with individual partner universities and develop innovative, intensive programs involving both faculty and students.

### **KA2: Cooperations**

WU's collaborations with partner schools go beyond mere mobility.

The exchange of good practices, the development of new teaching and learning methods, joint academic programs in the form of joint or double degree programs, knowledge and innovation transfer, and capacity building characterize WU's cooperations and contribute to its international quality development.

Many projects have already been successfully carried out as part of the Erasmus+ program. In line with its broad spectrum of expertise, WU plans to participate in numerous collaborative activities in the next generation of the Erasmus+ program.

WU is striving to join a European University alliance with the goal of institutional integration and intensive exchange with other schools in Europe. The aim is to work closely together to develop innovative degree programs and modules and to make a sustainable contribution to the development of European society. One key component is citizen science, i.e. encouraging the increased involvement of civil society and strengthening academia's dialog with the public to address social challenges. As a partnership with an impact on the university as a whole, the European University alliance is being developed under the direct responsibility of the Rector's Council and with a high level of input from the WU community.

At least one Erasmus Mundus partnership will emphasize the international orientation of WU's degree programs and complement our current portfolio of joint/double degree programs. Erasmus Mundus programs are established and implemented in close coordination between the academic directors and the team of the Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs.

Cooperation partnerships are intended to strengthen the exchange of good practices and the development of new teaching and learning methods. The members of the WU community are involved according to their expertise and are responsible for the implementation of their work packages.

Entrepreneurship and innovation are a core teaching and research area at WU, and the university belongs to numerous innovation networks. Working together with partners in the business community, society, and government facilitates knowledge transfer in both directions: Not only is the business- and economics-related knowledge generated at WU used to help shape social systems, but WU is also provided with valuable feedback on the practical relevance of its research and teaching. With the help of its innovation experts, WU aims to establish European innovation partnerships.

## **The impact of Erasmus+**

The main reason to participate in the Erasmus+ program is to promote quality and increase innovation within the university and among the WU community. At an institutional level, WU aims to facilitate a broader and mutually beneficial collaboration with partner universities, from which students, researchers, faculty, and administrative staff will profit. The knowledge space created by the Erasmus+ program enables institutions to learn as a whole. This will support the further development of international programs and allow us to provide students with a high-quality, integrative, and practice-oriented business education. WU's orientation as an open-minded, international university contributes significantly to its attractiveness for students and researchers.

The impact on individual members of the WU community is also an important factor. New experiences are the driving force of innovation. Faculty and staff are encouraged to spend time at partner universities and acquire new knowledge and skills that they can apply to their jobs back at WU. International and intercultural learning experiences are an important and integral part of WU's academic programs. In addition to acquiring knowledge and expertise, this gives students the opportunity to also strengthen their transversal skills. The goal is to help students develop into internationally responsible citizens. Graduates are provided with the tools and knowledge required

to develop sustainable solutions to different types of problems and to take on responsible positions in business, economics, society, and academics.

The priorities of the Erasmus+ program also support WU's fundamental principles as a responsible university. The digital transformation of economies and societies is fundamentally changing national, regional, and global structures. As a responsible university, WU lives up to its social responsibility in all areas of its activities, striving for a positive impact on society and the business community. Its actions are based on the principles of economy, sustainability, barrier-free accessibility in a broad sense, and it is committed to anti-discrimination and inclusion.

## Basic participation goals

The following goals have been formulated for WU's participation in the 2021–2027 period:

**Partner universities and inter-institutional agreements:** The focus of cooperation in program countries is on further developing and strengthening existing partnerships and on intensifying collaborations with selected Prime Partners (e.g. through joint academic programs, teaching modules, or other forms of cooperation up to and including a European University alliance). In partner countries, a selective expansion to include new, strategically important partner institutions is planned, subject to available budgetary means.

The establishment and further development of partnerships is based on the quality criteria WU has set for partner universities.

**Student mobility and international experience:** The high level of WU graduates who have spent time abroad during their studies (currently about 35%) is to be maintained and, if possible, increased by offering more diverse programs. Beyond the mobility experience, the international exposure of WU students is particularly relevant. By the end of the program, the number of graduates with some form of international learning experience should be up to 100%. Key elements for achieving this goal include a combination of virtual, blended, and physical mobility, increased support of student internships, and international teaching formats on campus.

**Faculty and staff mobility:** Faculty mobility is a valuable tool for further development, especially for junior faculty. Staff mobility supports the exchange of good/best practices on an international level. Inviting guest lecturers in international teaching formats and holding International Staff Weeks for colleagues from partner institutions have also proven successful. As part of the new program generation, faculty and staff mobility will be expanded further for both WU and its partner universities. Integration into appropriate structures and their ongoing development ensure the high quality of the mobility experiences and contribute to visibility and dissemination. Increased attention should be given to blended learning formats when inviting guest lecturers.

**Cooperations:** In line with its broad expertise, WU also plans to participate in numerous Key Action 2 cooperation activities in the upcoming Erasmus+ generation. WU's planned participation in a European University consortium is particularly important. The importance of joint degree programs will be emphasized by participating in at least one Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters program. As a leading university for business and economics, WU contributes its expertise to

cooperation partnerships for the exchange of best practices and helps shape Europe's social and economic development through innovation partnerships.

The quantitative and qualitative indicators for achieving the objectives are described in further detail in Annex I, cf.: <https://short.wu.ac.at/annex-eps-2020>.

## Monitoring and evaluation

WU is committed to the high quality and ongoing further development of its international programs. The following instruments are key components of WU's international quality management system:

- International accreditations (EQUIS, AACSB, AMBA)

International accreditations and related processes ensure that WU meets the highest international quality standards and that WU's internationalization goals are continuously subject to critical peer review. WU regularly undergoes self-assessment and reaccreditation processes.

- Partner university evaluation

To ensure the high quality of its partnerships, WU conducts an evaluation of its university partnerships every five years, based on quantitative and qualitative parameters. Quantitative analysis focuses especially on mobility statistics, demand for individual universities, and whether exchange numbers are balanced. The quality of a partner university is measured on the one hand by its accreditations, rankings, and memberships in networks, and on the other hand by the courses offered and the feedback provided by mobility participants.

- Surveying mobility participants

Mobility participants are surveyed about their experiences abroad after returning to their home institution. The results of these surveys are analyzed together with feedback from the Erasmus+ Online Survey at the end of each semester. This data and the relevant mobility statistics allow us to perform an evaluation at the end of each academic year at the overall institutional level. This evaluation is intended mainly to assess the following dimensions: Attractiveness of the mobility programs, satisfaction of the mobility participants with the administrative support, satisfaction of the mobility participants with regard to the academic experience, recognition of achievements during the stay abroad.

- Course and program evaluations

Course evaluations at WU are intended to get students involved in the quality assurance process and further development of WU's teaching, encouraging them to act as co-producers of their own learning success. The feedback provided by students in the course evaluations can initiate further discussion on teaching quality. Reflecting on learning progress, which also includes international and intercultural contextual knowledge, is particularly important in the area of international teaching.

In addition to the evaluation of individual courses, degree programs are also evaluated as a whole at the university level. This is particularly important to help evaluate the programs' strategic orientation, including their international focus, as well as the programs' content and the intended learning outcomes.

This also includes the regular evaluation of WU's international short programs, which are organized and held in cooperation with partner universities. Evaluations focus on the organizational and academic quality of the programs as well as the cooperation between the participating universities.