



Erasmus Policy Statement 2021-2027 **Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem**

In compliance with the Statute of UJEP, the promotion of development of international environment at Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem (hereinafter UJEP) is one of the fundamental missions of the University and it is contained in all the current strategic documents of UJEP, which include the 2010-2020 UJEP Strategy, 2016-2020 Long-term Plan, and the 2020-2023 Strategic Measures to Promote Internationalisation, which are currently being updated for the following ten year period (namely the UJEP Strategic Plan 21+). Internationalisation includes all the procedures, measures and activities aimed at strengthening the international dimension of the University in the area of studies, and scientific, research, artistic and other creative activities. Internationalisation has become their integral part and thus contributes to improving the quality of activities of the University and its development. UJEP follows the generally valid principles in all areas of international cooperation (such as transparency, evidence, openness etc.) that correspond with the rules of European programmes.

UJEP has held the authorisation to participate in the Erasmus programme for more than twenty years and it has been implementing student and employee mobilities within the Erasmus programme continuously since the 1999/2000 academic year.

It uses all types of the offered mobilities and it also has experience with sending socially-disadvantaged students abroad, graduates to practical internships, or receiving experts at educational residencies. Since 2015, UJEP has also participated in the Erasmus international credit mobility via several projects. Every year, UJEP gets involved in other projects of international cooperation in the area of educational and other programmes.

The basic and individual principles of mobilities within the Erasmus+ programme are incorporated in all UJEP's activities they concern and they are regulated by an internal standard, which is the Rector's Directive on Organisation of International Mobilities at UJEP (hereinafter the Directive). The Directive includes all individual activities related to the organisation of mobilities, from the people involved and their roles, through the conclusions of inter-institutional contracts, financial administration, selective procedures, mobility documentation and recognition, up to keeping records on mobility. The Directive is going to be revised at the beginning of the new programme period of 2021-2027 and it shall be updated so that it is in compliance with the principles of the Erasmus+ programme with consideration of new priorities and other changes in the new programme period.

The implementation of the Erasmus+ programme is provided by an institutional Erasmus+ programme coordinator and by the Department for External Relations, managed by the vice-rector for external relations. Every faculty has a vice-dean who is in charge of external relations and a faculty coordinator, who participate in the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme at the faculty level. The implementation of mobilities and other activities within international cooperation also requires the engagement of other departments or other offices at UJEP, such as the study department, the economic and employee division, the information technology centre, the counselling centre, or the dormitory and cafeteria administration. The volunteer association of the Erasmus Student Network Ústí nad Labem (hereinafter ESN Usti) is provides considerable assistance, especially in the area of supporting foreign students and employees of universities.

UJEP currently cooperates with more than 310 foreign universities in almost 40 countries in the world on the basis of general agreements on cooperation or inter-institutional contracts within the Erasmus+ programme. As to the general agreements on cooperation, of which UJEP has currently concluded with 41 partners in fifteen countries, the objective of UJEP is to establish cooperation with other foreign universities in Europe, United States and China. The start of the next seven-year Erasmus+ programme

period will be an opportunity to revise all the currently concluded inter-institutional contracts, to assess mutual cooperation, and to renew those that bring geographic diversity, that offer as similar study programmes as possible, and that are expected to bring at least partial fulfilment.

UJEP has recently recorded a considerable decrease in the area of student mobilities, which is also caused by objective factors, such as reduction in the total number of UJEP students due to the demographic development in the Czech Republic and a relative increase of students in the combined form of study. The objective of UJEP in this area is to focus on the quality of outgoing students or graduates. To achieve that and to improve the languages skills of selected students and graduates, there will be intense courses in English, German and Spanish, learning languages through peer programmes, or competitions in the presentation of students' works in a foreign language. Also, to better prepare students and graduates for their stay abroad, there will be a preliminary course aimed at preparing students for a stay in a different environment, being separated from their families and friends, and helping them get acclimatised easier. UJEP will support trips of students and graduates in all types and forms of study. Student mobility will take preference over graduate mobility, and students in doctoral study programmes will take preference over other types of studies. To promote student mobilities, UJEP will strive to introduce an individual study plan conditioned by completing a stay abroad in order to reduce the worries of students going abroad related to extended studies, or to recognise foreign internships of students at the bachelor level of education studies at a foreign elementary or high school en bloc, as well as all types of work experience, and preparatory and reflective seminars at the bachelor study level. If the rules permit, UJEP will strive to also make foreign mobility possible for students who, for various reasons, cannot go on a semester stay, and let them implement short-term study stays or blended mobility, which is a combination of full-time and distance form of study. UJEP shall also strive to introduce the subject of internalisation in all newly accredited master study programmes, or in those programmes approved by the Internal Assessment Board, which would include a compulsory trip of students to a foreign university, provided that there would also be other ways of completing the subject, however, always with international outreach, or to introduce foreign mobility as a part of the study plans for selected bachelor and master study programmes. UJEP wants to continue supporting student mobilities through various forms of financial bonuses. UJEP also intends to make the agenda related to trips abroad easier for students and graduates, in the form of arranging accommodation, transport etc., however, that would depend on the personnel possibilities of the faculty and the Department for External Relations, and through trip tutors, or mobility graduates, who would participate in the preparation of new outgoing students by sharing their experience. A joint supervision of dissertation theses by an UJEP expert and a foreign expert could support outgoing students of doctoral study programmes.

The situation in the area of employee outgoing mobilities has been stable in the long term. The aim is to maintain the mobility numbers, or to increase them, and to enable more UJEP employees to gain experience in educational residency or training abroad. To promote academic staff mobility, the obligation to participate in an educational residency or training at least once every five years is included in their career plan, or employees who participate in foreign mobility receive financial rewards.

In the area of incoming mobilities, UJEP aims at increasing the number of incoming students for the purpose of study or work experience and of employees for the purpose of education or training. In order to increase such mobilities, UJEP shall strive to promote UJEP abroad more intensely and more systematically, both within individual mobilities and at foreign fairs and exhibitions, on the basis of sophisticated promotional materials, such as PowerPoint presentations or video-presentations. The objective of UJEP is to participate, personally, in three student fairs every year, one in Western Europe, one in Eastern Europe, and one in Slovakia, and to be presented in the catalogue of at least two foreign fairs. The aforesaid materials will also promote study programmes of UJEP organised in a foreign language in order to recruit foreign students for degree studies. To increase the number of foreign students at UJEP, the University wants to contribute not only with the expanding offer of study

programmes and courses taught in a foreign language, including e-learning support, but also with creating logically organised units related to specific field issues with a higher number of awarded credits. For easier functioning in the Czech environment, UJEP will offer Czech language courses with awarded credits to foreign students. Also, Czech language courses for foreigners have been implemented in the long term to provide students with an opportunity to continue studying in university study programmes taught in Czech. In order to facilitate the visa procedure for foreign students, UJEP participates in the programme of the Student Mode organised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ESN Usti buddies who are in contact with foreign students prior to their arrival in the Czech Republic and who are their guides during their stay at UJEP contribute to a higher level of integration of foreign students into the academic life at UJEP, as well as into the local environment. ESN Usti organises numerous cultural, sports or social events, which are also attended by domestic students, for foreign students prior to the commencement of school, as well as during the entire academic year. The integration of foreign students into the local environment is also important for the municipal authority that organises a welcoming seminar attended by the representatives of the Counselling Centre for Integration for new incoming foreign students every semester. UJEP will continue organising all the events that promote integration of foreign students. In relation to a potential strengthening of the number of staff, a welcome centre could be created in the future that would provide foreign students and academic staff more complex assistance, also including an offer of suitable structure of the studies, finding accommodation etc.

In compliance with the UJEP Strategic Plan, the University also strives to engage the individual offices into the preparation and implementation of joint study programmes more intensely. At present, UJEP participates in two joint study programmes, completed with a double diploma. The UJEP's objective in this area is to get involved in at least five double degree study programmes.

Internationalisation also includes internationalisation at home. The reason for this transformation is not only the implementation of outgoing and incoming mobility that requires offering courses taught in foreign languages and enabling mobility participants to function in a foreign language environment, but also the effort to enable students who cannot participate in the mobility for any reason to strengthen their soft skills in the home environment, which include communication skills, curiosity, tolerance, empathy or problem-solving skills, i.e., qualities that are considerably enhanced by the experience with foreign mobility. This means integrating elements of internationalisation into the University's own study programmes. UJEP will thus endeavour to introduce at least two books in the basic study literature that will be in a foreign language, included in the basic theoretical study subjects of the profile base of selected fields of study, and the obligation to complete at least one subject in a foreign language, in addition to a foreign language study. The condition for completing a part of the studies in a foreign language and for better orientation of foreign students at UJEP also includes the creation of conditions for improving the language skills of the academic staff and other technical and economic staff who come in contact with foreign visitors.

All the aforesaid measures to promote internationalisation support the quality of education, its orientation to the future needs of the European society, contribute to the development of key competences required for personal fulfilment and development, employability or social inclusion, help digital learning, encourage a European dimension of education, and thus participate in the development and modernisation of UJEP and contribute to building a European educational space.

During the following stage of EU educational programmes, UJEP would like to participate in all the events offered by the Erasmus+ programme.

Key Action 1, with focus on mobility, is the most important for UJEP. In order to offer all its students and employees an opportunity to study, work, teach or train abroad in one of the programme countries

and on the other hand, to let foreign applicants to come to UJEP, UJEP is planning to get involved in the Erasmus+ programme within each individual call. Based on the requirements of its faculties, UJEP will also strive to participate in other international credit mobility projects that will broaden its partnership relations and enable it to implement mutual student and employee exchanges, also with institutions outside the programme countries. On the basis of the set institutional principles, mobility project proposals will be submitted centrally via the Department for External Relations, which then arranges all the matters related to incoming and outgoing students/graduates and employees, in compliance with valid internal regulations and in cooperation with the faculties it manages methodologically, and it also supervises the implementation of the basic and individual principles described in the charter authorising to participate in the Erasmus+ programme.

In Key Action 2 focusing on cooperation of organisations and institutions, the UJEP's priority will be to participate in projects of partnership for cooperation and exchange of practices. However, UJEP is also open to cooperation with foreign institutions within all other activities offered by the Erasmus+ programme in the next programme period, in the area of joint interests according to its current possibilities. UJEP participation in the projects will be based on the initiative of UJEP faculties and other offices whose staff will solve the corresponding projects, where the Department for External Relations will function as project service. The projects that are the joint interest of all UJEP parts will be managed centrally by a predetermined office.

The international importance of UJEP and the role of the University in the area of internationalisation is strengthened both by the implementation of foreign mobilities that continuously force UJEP to expand its offer of study programmes or courses taught in a foreign language and to improve its facilities and conditions of outgoing and incoming mobility participants, and by the participation of UJEP in other international educational projects that qualitatively enhance education and participate in improving the qualifications of the academic staff, and it considerably contributes to creating an international environment at UJEP, which is one of the objectives of UJEP's institutional strategy.

The foreign mobility of students and staff as well as their participation in educational projects with international interest considerably influences the individual participants and thus the development of UJEP in the area of internationalisation, and contributes to its overall modernisation.

Students in foreign study programmes expand their professional knowledge, explore other educational systems and new teaching methods. Students in foreign internships broaden their professional knowledge and skills and apply their theoretical knowledge acquired through work experience. Stays abroad improve language and communication skills, curiosity, tolerance, empathy or problem-solving skills, the participants get acquainted with other cultures, which creates conditions for understanding the social, cultural, economic and other differences among countries. All of that considerably contributes to the personal growth of students and increases their value and competitiveness on the labour market. The staff's participation in foreign mobilities and various international events broadens their professional contacts and lets them obtain new information and materials in their fields, or they learn new teaching methods during their educational residencies that they use in their own teaching activity, thus improving education at UJEP. The activities abroad also broaden cooperation in the field of research and development, enriching professional CV and improving the qualification of academic staff within habilitation and professor appointment procedures. The staff motivates UJEP students to go abroad and to participate in joint projects, and foreign students to study at UJEP. The staff's participation in training leads to the acquisition of new knowledge in the field where it is applied into work procedures and management of the individual UJEP departments, contributes to the implementation of student work experience in hosting organisations or educational residencies of experts at UJEP, increases their qualification and improves their opportunities on the labour market. Foreign students studying at UJEP and seminars by foreign academic staff, as well as experts in the field, help create a multicultural environment at UJEP, and together with other tools implementing the

elements of internationalisation into the UJEP study programmes, they also influence the members of the academic community who do not participate in the international mobility directly.

The proper implementation of the basic and individual principles of the Erasmus+ programme in the area of mobility organisation is ensured by the Rector's Directive on Organisation of International Mobilities at UJEP that describes all the process requirements, the roles of people involved in the mobility organisation, as well as financial matters. All UJEP parts that deal with the issue of international mobility contributed to the preparation of the Directive and it also went through a commenting procedure in the legal department and the internal audit department. All the aspects of international student and staff mobility, both outgoing and incoming, the implementation of their rules in the UJEP environment, as well as the measures taken for their support are regularly, and in a great detail, checked and assessed at the meetings of the Department for External Relations with faculty coordinators, and any problems or ambiguities are resolved operatively. The organisation of international mobility and adherence to some individual rules of the Erasmus+ programme are audited internally in regular intervals. UJEP implements various questionnaire surveys to determine the reasons for any reduced interest and other obstacles preventing students from participating in foreign mobility.

With respect to the provision of a qualitative contribution of foreign mobility, UJEP considers it crucial to provide outgoing students and staff with a sufficient number of partner universities for their study and educational residencies, providing quality study/educational, as well as extracurricular facilities that would ensure a subject-area and geographical diversity, however, above all, a similarity in the study programmes. In order to better prepare outgoing students, UJEP has introduced intense language courses and courses to strengthen resilience and critical communication for selected mobility participants. UJEP offers English language courses to improve the language skills of students as well as its staff, both those who are planning to participate in international mobility and those who are in regular contact with foreign students and staff.

UJEP also strives to continuously improve its services for outgoing and incoming mobility participants and to facilitate the acceptance procedure, completion of required documents, as well as their adaptation in a foreign environment. For this purpose, UJEP continuously introduces various digitalisation tools that reduce the administrative load of mobility participants, as well as of the staff that participate in the mobility organisation. Some faculties also encourage their students who meet all the study requirements during their foreign mobility with motivational scholarships. In cooperation with the Erasmus Student Network Ústí nad Labem (hereinafter ESN Usti), UJEP organises welcome seminars for foreign students where they receive all the important information concerning their stay at UJEP. The members of ESN Usti are in contact with foreign students prior to their arrival in the Czech Republic, they are at their disposal during their stay at UJEP, and they organise various social events for them during the semester. UJEP offers and arranges accommodation at the university dormitories to all foreign students who are interested. UJEP also arranges accommodation at the university dormitories for foreign university staff who come to teach or train at UJEP and who are interested. UJEP provides relevant information via its website and issues visa-related documents to those invited mobility participants who are required to have a visa. UJEP also provides accommodation scholarship to students accepted within the Erasmus+ programme. Also, all foreign students are issued a student identity card upon arrival that gives them access to all university facilities and allows them to purchase discounted public transport tickets. Foreign students are also invited to a meeting with the representatives of the municipal authority of Ústí nad Labem where they are informed of various events organised by the city and by the employees of the Counselling Centre for Integration, as well as of the activities of the Centre that is available to them and also organises various events to help integration of foreigners into the local environment for citizens of other countries. In the case of the staff reinforcement of the faculties and of the Department for External Relations, UJEP would like to improve its service for the outgoing mobility participants in the form of arranging accommodation,

transport etc., and for incoming visitors by building a centre that would provide more complex services (a welcome centre). There are employees available to all mobility participants at the faculties and at the Rectorate that can be contacted in any queries regarding international mobility by e-mail, phone, or personally.

To spread awareness of the potential project cooperation within the Erasmus+ programme, an informative seminar for the UJEP staff will be organised, just like in the previous stage of the programme, in order to inform the participants of the structure of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme and of its key actions and individual activities. An information leaflet shall be published for the same purpose and it will be distributed to the individual Rectorate and faculty offices. The vice-deans for external/foreign relations and faculty coordinators will be informed of the project cooperation within the Erasmus+ programme as well as the individual calls to submit projects through regular meetings of the vice-rector, and by the Department for External Relations.