

Erasmus Policy Statement 2021-2027

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

STRATEGY

CZU Prague is highly committed to the internationalisation of higher education institutions and the EHEA. The university emphasizes internationalisation in its Long-Term Strategy Plan 2015-2020 (one of 7 priority areas is addressing internationalisation) as well as in the yet to be approved Strategic Plan for the period of 2021-2025 (which assumes a separate Internationalisation Strategy of CZU). The Erasmus Programme is in the core of the CZU strategy resulting in a fully internationalised university. A standalone Internationalisation Strategy of CZU Prague will address regular local as well as regular international students and staff members, but also short term and long-term exchange of students and staff (academic and non-academic). CZU aspires to become an institution, where internationalisation is not an ongoing effort, but an everyday reality very much natural to the university environment (implemented under the slogan living internationalisation). Internationalisation is at the transversal throughout all the activities at CZU and it contributes to the overall goal to become a leading European and global life sciences university engaged in the sustainable development of the global society.

- as stated in the Strategic Plan, CZU is committed to the strengthening of the European identity and European citizenship through the mobility; better awareness of the European values, rights and citizenship is strongly perceived and encouraged, therefore international mobility is an essential pillar of the university effort; Erasmus Programme is the backbone allowing the university to spread the experience and the message to both students and staff, to develop intercultural and language skills and through bettering the awareness of cultural differences to mitigate xenophobic and various discriminatory tendencies

- in accordance with the Strategic Plan, the university supports mobility of individuals and targets to increase the number of outgoing students and staff by 50% by 2027 in comparison with an average number of outgoing students and staff in the previous programme period, an important aim is to increase participation of incoming as well as outgoing students from disadvantaged socio-economic groups and students and staff with specific needs, special attention must be delivered to marginalized groups
- CZU encourages new forms of teaching mobility (e.g. short term mixed mobility) and focuses on increasing involvement in training mobility amongst administrative staff from all sections and units of the university; primarily through mobility experience, administrative staff learns about the impact of their job and services offered to the international community of the university, CZU staff are encouraged to engage in international activities and to take part in training abroad
- all students of CZU already have the opportunity to include the study or training abroad into their study programme, and CZU encourages the mobility window approach in newly accredited and already existing study programmes taught in Czech and also in the English language
- incoming students and staff with specific needs are supported by the Counselling Centre for Students with Special Needs and by the Welcome Centre for International Scholars, which is being newly established to provide full support to all international academics
- CZU encourages the continuation of already established and successful partnerships with European and non-European institutions including those, where students and staff may gain practical experience or conduct internships; long-term cooperation is valued greatly and active exchange of ideas, mobility participants and good practices is important for successful implementation of our Internationalisation Strategy
- CZU is committed to establishing new partnerships and increasing the number of strategic international partners, CZU proactively identifies international partners that match the university profile, in accordance with the Strategy, CZU focuses on:
 - a. increasing the number of joint and double degree programmes (including PhD level of study) as global job markets value graduates of these programmes; CZU aspires to interact more closely with the best universities in its profile areas, Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees and other frameworks (e.g. CEEPUS based, bilateral) of close collaboration are especially targeted based on previous experience
 - b. finding new partner institutions in priority regions of Europe, East and South-East Asia, Israel, North and South America
 - c. further support of existing collaboration with key partners typically embedded in the form of international alliances and networks of universities (e.g. Euroleague for Life Sciences /ELLS/, the Association of European Life Sciences Universities /ICA/, European University Association /EUA/, the ICA Regional Network for Central and South-Eastern Europe /CASEE/)
 - d. CZU aims to be directly involved in the European Universities initiative and to become a role model for other Czech universities (CZU within the consortium already submitted a project in February 2020)

- e. CZU focuses particularly on partners linked to the areas of life sciences, economics, management and social sciences, environmental sciences and engineering, in which the partners are chosen based on their quality (international reputation, research achievements and offer of study programmes suitable for exchange of students and staff)
 - f. finding new strategic international partners for practical training of students and transfer of practice-oriented knowledge and skills, particularly through teaching mobility of experts from companies and national or regional authorities and decision-making bodies
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- strong commitment towards automatic recognition of learning outcomes will increase modernisation of the institution and together with ongoing support for the adoption of digital tools makes CZU an attractive and more competitive institution as desired in the overall Strategy; all students should have the opportunity to implement full credit transfer from their study or training mobility
 - CZU aims for a coordinating role in KA2 (capacity building) projects in the new programme period and aims to share good practices which it has gained through the coordination of previous successful Erasmus KA2 projects; the university strives to keep the role of an active participant in Erasmus projects both as partner or coordinator whenever relevant for the improvement of the university international reputation and profile
 - following the CZU Strategy, the university should have a policy-making approach; through involvement in political or administrative bodies, namely the Czech Rectors Conference and the advisory boards of the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, or the Czech Government, the university should actively participate in debates shaping EU policies and strategies on research, education or innovation (frequently having impact also outside of Europe); every university is aware of its societal impact and at CZU there is a direct commitment to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
 - CZU acknowledges the importance and benefits of international mobility amongst scholars and administrative staff on all levels, it is encouraged that a mobility experience is embedded in the career plans of academics and relevant non-academic personnel of the university
 - The Erasmus Programme is key to improvement of the quality of teaching, research activities and societal impacts providing necessary flexibility and freedom through which it contributes significantly to the modern academic environment and allows CZU to improve its position, international research activity and study programmes and their curricula

Please reflect on the Erasmus actions you would like to take part in and explain how they will be implemented in practice at your institution. Please explain how your institution's participation in these actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of your institutional strategy.

KA1

Mobility (exchange of international students) is an essential pillar of the internationalisation strategy of the university as stated above. CZU will continue in the successful implementation of the Erasmus Programme being one of the most popular institutions for incoming Erasmus students to the Czech Republic and a significant supporter of outgoing mobility, where especially in the area of staff mobility it belongs amongst top Czech universities in STT mobility of academic and non-academic staff.

Our goals are to increase the number of participants by 50% by the end of the new Programme period. This applies to both groups, students and staff. The Erasmus Programme is essential for completing this ambitious goal. CZU already encourages students from disadvantaged socio-economic background or students and staff with special needs. CZU takes part in an ongoing debate with the Czech National Agency on the development of rules for supporting international students from disadvantaged socio-economic background since the currently valid regulations omit this group, and prevent successful awarding of extra scholarships to other than Czech and Slovak citizens. CZU is committed to a fair and transparent selection and support of participants.

CZU is ready to maintain an already wide network of partner institutions and expand it through new agreements. CZU focuses particularly on partners linked to the areas of life sciences, economics, management and social sciences, environmental sciences and engineering, in which the partners are chosen based on their quality (international reputation, research achievements and offer of study programmes suitable for exchange of students and staff).

The opportunities that the Erasmus Programme offers to students and staff are disseminated regularly at the university through several communication channels, such as university websites, social media, brochures and leaflets, meetings with students and staff in the form of i.e. Erasmus Day or Go Abroad Fair, and through the involvement of recent participants of the programme in sharing their experience at introductory lectures for first-year students. Information about special scholarships and support for outgoing participants with special needs is included.

Selection of participants is done by International Relations Offices of CZU faculties. Selection procedures are announced in time through already mentioned channels and also through email communication sent to all students and staff, and as an announcement in the University Information System. Criteria for selection of participants are clear and equal for all grade point average (for students), language skills, the motivation of the participant, appropriateness of the mobility aims and type to work content or supervised curricula (for staff).

Support of the mobility participants is divided between the International Relations Offices (IRO) of the CZU faculties and the central IRO of the CZU Rectorate. Faculties are responsible for the selection of participants and the guidance and preparation of Learning Agreements for studies and traineeships. The central IRO is responsible for financial agreements, for visa issues, insurance issues, language and inter-cultural support, and it manages the paying out of scholarships and mobility grants. If any problem arises during the mobility, the central and relevant faculty IROs work together in order to support the mobility participant.

After the return from the mobility, the central IRO checks the results, the confirmation of the study period and guides the participant on recognition procedures. The central IRO is also responsible for reporting to the National Agency and storing the evidence. The central IRO is responsible for support (visa, insurance, accommodation, special needs) of incoming students and staff and together with the student club, ESN CZU Prague it organizes the Welcome Week and various events at the beginning and during the whole academic year. The central IRO coordinates the activity of disseminating information and supports the faculty IROs in implementing the Erasmus Programme at CZU.

KA2

Following the institutional Strategy, CZU aims for a coordinating role in KA2 projects focused on cooperation and exchange of practices in the new programme period, and aims to share good practices which it has gained through coordination of previous successful Erasmus KA2 capacity building projects; the university strives to keep the role of an active participant in Erasmus projects both as a partner or coordinator whenever relevant for further improvement of the university international reputation and profile. KA2 is at the core of the internationalisation strategy of CZU.

Specialized teams at faculties together with the Strategy Management Office are involved in partnerships with key international institutions. As a result of this joined effort, CZU participated and also coordinated several KA2 projects (e.g. ASK Asia, the Simple Project) including Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree or capacity building projects in the area of higher education addressing regional and international cooperation. As CZU Internationalisation Strategy specifies, CZU aims to be directly involved in the European Universities initiative and to become a role model for other Czech universities (CZU within the consortium already submitted a project in February 2020).

Within existing networks of universities where CZU strategic partners are members, CZU develops and aims for Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees. Particularly in cooperation within the CASEE network of life sciences universities, it develops the Joint Master Degree Sustainability in Agriculture, Food Production and Food Technology new joint master degree in the area of landscape planning and landscape architecture, and utilizes existing experience and good practices shared by all member universities and their Erasmus projects, which have been funded in the current or previous Programme period. Both joint programmes are supported by the overall Strategy of CZU Prague for the period 2021-2025 and a new emphasis on the collaboration on PhD level is stressed in the document.

KA3

In accordance with the CZU Strategy, the university should practice policy making approach. Through involvement in political or administrative bodies, namely the Czech Rectors Conference and the advisory boards of the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports or the Czech Government, the university should actively participate in debates shaping EU policies and strategies on research, education or innovation (frequently having impact also outside of Europe); every university is aware of its societal impacts and at CZU there is a direct commitment to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The Rector of CZU is currently holding the position of President of the Czech Rectors Conference and the whole institution is being directly involved in the Czech and European policy-making processes. CZU is ready to share its experience in the field of policy development and public engagement also through Erasmus projects.