

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

The European University Institute (EUI), set up in 1972 by the then six Member States of the European Community, is from its birth, a research institute with an international framework, hosting a doctoral training programme among the most important in Europe in the social sciences. It has four departments, Economics, History & Civilization, Law and Political & Social Sciences.

Besides its postgraduate training programme, there is a specialized interdisciplinary research centre, the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, bringing together academics from the four disciplines to develop research on important issues confronting contemporary European society.

Since 2006, the EUI has hosted the EU Commission's post-doctoral Max Weber programme. The EUI also manages the Historical Archives of the European Union.

The Convention of 1972 states explicitly that the goal of the EUI is "to contribute to the intellectual life of Europe through its activities and to influence the development of Europe's cultural and academic heritage in its unity and diversity".

Within this unique European setting, the EUI is constantly extending its horizons through networks and selective recruitment. While most research students are from the EU, agreements exist for students from E. Europe, Russia and the CIS, USA, Australia, and the Far East, and most recently China.

Over the past decade, co-operation agreements have been set up with many European universities under various EU schemes including Socrates, Tempus, Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus (China) Jean Monnet/Marie-Curie Fellowships, 5th and 6th and 7th Frameworks.

Currently, in terms of collaborative research, the EUI is involved with an ever-increasing number of partners (c 40) representing academia, research institutes and the private sector, all identified as key role players in the Social Sciences and all having compatible research interests.

Cooperation agreements exist for student and teacher mobility and placement in the EU and student mobility in the USA, Russia, the Far East and Australia.

Over the next decade, the EUI plans to expand co-operation at the level of doctoral and post-doctoral mobility, placement, intensive programmes, summer schools and networks, particularly in Asia and Latin America.

With regards to double/multiple/joint degrees, owing to its very nature and the way the doctorate is structured, it is difficult for the EUI to develop such programs with national universities. Having said that, it has recently signed an agreement for a joint programme with the European University at St. Petersburg, whereby the Russian students alone are awarded a degree from both their home university and the EUI.

Cooperation projects in teaching and training

The EUI is very much aware of the need to assist and support its researchers in their integration into the job market and as a result, increasingly, teaching and training projects are being introduced to the curricula. Activities focus on the teaching of academic teaching, and skills of a more generic nature. i.e. university teaching, how to make a presentation, interviews, interview techniques, and public speaking. Information seminars address cv and application letter writing, publishing research findings, applying for research grants or managing the job search.

But in addition to theoretical training, practical experience is a requisite. To this end, the Careers Development Office has drawn up agreements with pertinent HEI s, particularly within Europe, whereby our researchers are offered short term teaching opportunities within the field of the social sciences. It has also forged links with an increasing number of legal firms where the lawyers can have a hands-on experience. And finally, a fair number of researchers apply for traineeships with international and European institutions.

The Placement programmes available under the Erasmus umbrella can only enhance and complement the existing strategic policy.

Erasmus and the Modernisation Agenda

The EUI today epitomizes in many ways the objectives as laid down in the Modernization Agenda. To review but a few:

- Equality is embraced at all levels, for gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief. With reference in particular to gender, the ratio between men and women be they doctoral, post-docs or staff is roughly 50:50. It should also be added that any action which is deemed discriminatory is regarded very seriously and may constitute grounds for disciplinary action by either the Harassment or Disciplinary Committee.
- As none of the professors have life tenure, academic staff are forever changing, and as a result the curricula too, which mutates in response to the needs and demands of the outside world. Integral to this is a flexible and innovative approach to learning particularly in ICT, whereby ensuring a high class and ever developing research ambience. Regular reviews to analyze the EUI's overall strategy serves only to endorse this.
- contact and the making of bridges with Alumni is recognized as being essential. The alumni network continues to grow world-wide and not only in academia. The alumni regularly take part in and support career activities, as well as recognizing and rewarding excellence within the walls of its Alma Mater (e.g. Prize for Best Interdisciplinary Thesis on a Relevant European Issue).
- transparency, particularly in recruitment, has ever been a moral commitment.
- the nature of the EUI is per se cross-border and as a result is ever seeking to extend and consolidate its international mobility profile especially now in Asia and Latin America.

- for many years the Institute has successfully applied for and been awarded alternative funding sources for specific projects and / or Chairs. This pertains in particular to the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies but also the departments (SPS).

So, to conclude, the principles and mechanisms of modernization are an integral part of the EUI. Participation in the Erasmus Plus Programme can only strengthen and develop these policy objectives.