

Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS)

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

The main concern of the University of Balıkesir is primarily to reach a quality level that will ensure its contribution to the development of the sciences, humanities, and technology in order to disseminate knowledge and to conduct research serving not only academia but also the community at large. In order to reach these goals at the international level, The University is committed to the Bologna Declaration and is continuously searching ways of implementing the goals of this process. We believe that with the developing International Office, we are ready to take an important and active part in the new period of LLP, Erasmus for All. Therefore, we are determined to use the opportunities to help fulfil mobility and exchanges. University of Balıkesir has developed 130 inter-institutional agreements within the framework of Erasmus Programme until now. It also has bilateral agreements on sharing the scientific knowledge and exchange of staff and students with 10 universities outside Europe. The university believes in the importance of effective research and education networks to share expertise and experience with other European institutions committed to the same challenging mission of the Bologna Declaration. Within the framework of the European Union Projects; University of Balıkesir has carried out 10 Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig projects. The University has shown interest in the disadvantaged people in projects designed for disadvantaged rural kids and projects in which the participation of disabled and disadvantaged has been encouraged. Therefore, with the specific goals of creating opportunities for exchange and collaboration in European context, the university facilitates international mobility for its students, teaching, and administrative staff. The University makes no discrimination on the issues of geography, religion, ethnicity, gender, background, etc. while choosing participants, partners, staff, and students. However, we pay attention to the content and outcomes of the exchanges. While choosing our participants we try to be transparent and we announce every result online together with the required description of the selection procedure. For the mobility programmes, our aim is to improve the understanding of people about other cultures and education systems, providing them with a multicultural learning environment so that they can eliminate their prejudices and become more aware and respectful towards the people from other countries. University of Balıkesir is in cooperation with all European Union countries and we are willing to make new connections and agreements on a quality basis which will guarantee a fair treatment for the participants of both sides. In this respect we have planned to:

- Increase the number of students, academic and administrative staff who participate in the Lifelong Learning Programmes. However, to increase the number of participants, we are searching new partners to raise the quota and within the new agreements we are trying to include not only students at first, second and third cycle but also administrative and teaching staff. We aim to increase the number of both outgoing and incoming students by 20% every year. International mobility is one of the top priorities for the University of Balıkesir.
- Participate in the educational fairs throughout the world to be able to make new cooperation agreements and learn about the scientific and social developments of other institutions.
- Apply for the ECTS label and thus eliminate all the obstacles on our way to get a full recognition for the students at our institution. In 2011 the University was awarded the Diploma Supplement Label from the European Commission and now one of our main concerns is to get the ECTS label.
- Join European networks and consortium for the promotion of the internationalization of education.
- Go on participating in international projects, fostering of multinational and multicultural learning, teaching and partnership. In this respect, youth projects are also crucial for us. We are very keen on sending and receiving young people from around the world for the integration of a global understanding of life.

To achieve these goals, we are more than ready to present and promote Erasmus activities in all units of the university; the students and staff will be encouraged to take part in the exchanges in the meetings and information sessions carried out by the International Office. In these meetings and information sessions we will try to increase the awareness of the people about the new Erasmus for All Programmes and provide guidance on how to participate in them. These activities will also be advertised and promoted in the web site of the International Office and throughout the campus. The International Office will set up booths within the campus during the registration period to be able to reach new students from the time they first enrol to the university. University of Balıkesir will also go on taking active part in the projects for the disabled and disadvantaged people as we have been very glad to see how these programmes contribute to the mirth of these people by the experiences they had.

University of Balıkesir has a successful internal management practice and the staff responsible for the organisation and implementation of international cooperation projects is working in coordination with all the faculties, institutes, vocational schools at the university, non-governmental organisations, vocational high schools and organisations for the physically disabled and socially disadvantaged throughout the city. Our main strategy is to expand the environment and area that we can reach and integrate in teaching and training. We would like to be more visible. University of Balıkesir has a Centre for European Union Programmes since 2001 and the centre is working to promote all types of academic and research activities on EU and with EU member states. This centre will go on dealing with any kind of mobility regarding Erasmus for All. We will increase the number of activities for the representation of the programme. University of Balıkesir has decided on the main areas of structural and individual responsibilities under the International Office for Erasmus mobility and international projects. This office is in charge of the management, administration, providing the communication and postal services, preparation and approval of agreements, and any kind of individual support for all kinds of mobility. To be able to contribute to these strategies, the tasks of the workers at the International Office have been made clear according to their skills and competencies. The International Office also has coordinators within institutes, faculties and departments to help the students and staff find ways of making international studies, projects, placement, and exchanges.

With the participation of the University in the programme, we are expecting to contribute to the support of jobs and personal, smart, sustainable, inclusive growth. The results of the researches and innovations are of great importance to us for individual and societal advancement. With highly skilled humans and clearly defined citizens, it will be easier to create job opportunities, obtain economic growth and prosperity, and reach a social welfare. Thus, we will have the necessary grounds for the industries of tomorrow. And with the internationalisation of higher education, these objectives will reach beyond borders. We would like to attract more young people from different backgrounds, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and integrate them into the social network of a broader society. Also with the programmes and projects that we are willing to carry out, we would like to contribute to the forthcoming generations and reduce the number of social conflicts. While increasing the number of participants, we are also expecting the sharing of new, innovative learning approaches to improve quality. The competence and motivation of teachers, researchers, students and staff is crucial for the modernisation of higher education and these programmes are vital for this reason. The participants will have access to different learning platforms and this will enhance their capacity, they will be able to use their skills more effectively and graduate employment will be promoted. Through incentives for higher education institutes and international cooperation, the participants will have more opportunities for career guidance, close links between education, research and business. With the implementation of ECTS, our institution has ensured an efficient recognition of the credits in all three cycles and we are promoting EU as a study, research and training destination. The participants feel more self-confident and can get a different scientific and cultural vantage point thanks to their experiences abroad. University of Balıkesir is expecting to make use of existing partnerships at best to facilitate exchanges of participants so that the graduates can fit into the labour market more easily. University of Balıkesir also regards these programmes as an important incentive to follow the Bologna Process. We will go on updating our curricula and thus provide our students with qualitative educational activities. Our participation will enable us and our participants with the necessary environment for cultural dialog and the respect for cultural diversity regardless of language, ethnicity, background, gender, etc. With these expectations in our minds, we believe that we will reach an international level of recognition and have a scientific and social identity, our students will have different educational opportunities, and this programme is an indispensable component for us.