



Erasmus+



Jan Długosz  
University  
in Częstochowa

## ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE YEARS 2021-2027

Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa (JDU) is a medium-sized, dynamically developing public university consisting of 6 faculties. The university's mission is to educate students, conduct research and commercialize the results. Every year we develop the educational offer, adjusting it to needs of the current job market. One of the crucial elements of the development strategy of JDU is international cooperation. The university's authorities put emphasis on establishing cooperation with new partners, as well as strengthening already existing partnerships. The choice of international partners responds to the needs of the university's staff members regarding the strategic development of the faculties and departments. We also try to diversify the partnerships geographically and that is why we value cooperation not only with European, but also with non-EU partner institutions. The university implements modern techniques of knowledge transfer and teaching methods, such as tutoring, online and blended learning, dual studies, etc. We believe that a combination of modern education and international mobility is a key to success in broadening horizons of the next generation of 21st-century students.

Erasmus+ Programme is the most well-known mobility programme in JDU. Every academician is encouraged to benefit from the opportunities which Erasmus+ projects offer a few times a year. Thanks to the participation in the Programme we want to increase competences and skills of the projects' participants, such as: multilingualism, civic engagement, entrepreneurship, and interpersonal skills. Furthermore, blended and online learning opportunities will influence digital competences, which are desirable in the current reality.

As for the mobility of staff, we have no problem with recruiting academic teachers and administrative employees to the projects. Year by year, JDU applies for more and more funds to co-finance international exchanges for teaching and training. The staff members initiate inter-institutional agreements with new partners in and outside Europe. Due to the increasing number of the projects' applicants, it becomes necessary to apply for additional funds for the mobility in redistribution activities during the projects. At the same time, we focus on the quality of the mobility and we co-finance only these exchanges which increase organizational and didactic competences of the staff. Apart from increasing one's own competences and gaining new qualifications, the academicians involved in Erasmus+ projects shall also pay attention to strategic assumptions of the university's partner institutions regarding their functioning and international cooperation with a view to getting to know their successful practices and trying to implement them later on in JDU.

Students' mobility is currently at a good level, yet the goal for the next projects is to encourage more students to spend at least one part of their study period abroad to enable them to learn in various educational environments. International exchange should therefore become a norm, so there is a need to create a concrete entry in the university's study regulations making it necessary for every student to spend a part of one's study period abroad in a partner university, enterprise etc. At first, the obligation would be directed to graduate and PhD



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students and it would be extended to the study regulations of undergraduate students over time, as well. The Erasmus+ coordinators will emphasize added values of the mobility such as exchanging good practices and making valuable contacts both personal and professional at meetings with potential participants of the projects. Bearing in mind future employment prospects, the students will be offered a wide range of practices and internships in institutions, firms and other organizations, based in EU countries. On the other hand, we would also like to increase a number of incoming students to JDU and integrate them into the students' community, so that our local students would notice the importance of mobility in one's professional development.

What is more, Erasmus+ is going digital, so are we. In the next few years we will adopt measures necessary to implement an action plan aimed at the digitalization of the mobility in order to increase comfort of international exchange. The simplification of procedures in information systems will facilitate communication between the students and HEIs, as well as between the HEIs themselves. The management of the students' mobility will be much easier, faster and standardized. Thanks to the digitalization, new partner HEIs will be able to establish cooperation and manage inter-institutional agreements faster and easier than before, using applicable information systems. We are also in the process of preparing pre-mobility virtual exchange projects to help incoming students integrate with our academic community and learn the cultural flavour of our institution before their mobility programmes start.

In a 2020 call for proposals in a 'European Universities' initiative (call EAC-A02-2019) JDU has acted as a member of an alliance called 'Innovative European Research Universities' (iERU) (FINAL PROSPOAL'S ID: 101004031), which is to bring together six young medium-sized European universities with strong commitment to the sustainable development of their regions. The project intends to strengthen cooperation with the partner universities by establishing a joint, integrated strategy and providing high quality education linked to research, innovation and the improvement of society. iERU will promote innovation and the transfer of this knowledge to society through the creation of European multidisciplinary research teams, creating a fertile ground for even more intense faculty and student mobility.

We would also like to take part in the KA2 Erasmus+ Actions – Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices and Partnerships for Innovation. It will be the continuation of the processes started in the past. JDU has been the KA2 project partner so far yet in the future calls for proposals we are planning to act as KA2 project coordinator. Participation in these activities will contribute to achieving most of the objectives of our University strategy, e.g., intensification of international collaboration, development of European partnerships, and ICT processes and tools implementation as – the projects planned address the digital changes within the Network Societies.

All of the above-mentioned objectives are set with a vision of the European Education Area in mind. Intense mobility of students and staff is becoming commonplace in the EU countries these days, so together with the partner universities we will strive to transform our partnerships into a more advanced alliance, in which the students' qualifications will be easily recognised. The access to high-quality education will not be a privilege, but a norm for all of the students, regardless of their socio-economic background.

Jan Dlugosz University intends to participate in Erasmus Actions including KA1 and KA2. More specifically, KA1, the mobility of higher education students and staff, and KA2 – cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, as well as ‘European Universities’ initiative will be the core of activities targeting our objectives.

International mobility is realized in JDU at the central level, in the Department for Research and International Relations, as well as at the faculty level. The Department, which coordinates all of the activities, maintains documentation and carries out project reporting, employs experienced specialists for foreign relations and international projects and institutional coordinators of Erasmus+ Programme. The recruitment processes in JDU are announced by the Department, in which the Erasmus+ coordinators prepare all the necessary documents for the applicants. The institutional coordinators contact faculty Erasmus+ coordinators, who are responsible for organizing the recruitment at their faculties. They also perform duties regarding organizational issues, such as providing support to potential outgoing students, collecting their application documents and forwarding them to the Department later on, as well as helping incoming students in obtaining visas, insurance and finding accommodation prior to their arrival in Czestochowa. If necessary, they contact other units of the university, including the Department for Students’ Affairs, the university’s students’ house, etc.

The staff members who are qualified to participate in Erasmus+ projects and specialists for foreign relations initiate cooperation with new partner institutions. After a thorough analysis of online resources of a potential partner and making initial contact with its employees, one of them visits the institution in order to become acquainted with its profile, as well as to discuss the action plan for the future of the mobility and finally sign an inter-institutional agreement. An academic teacher who performs classes in a new partner institution gives a presentation about JDU during one’s classes and invite the students and staff members to JDU by means of Erasmus+ Programme. Then, once they come back to JDU, the local community is informed about opportunities, which the partner institution offers in terms students’ and staff mobility. This way, the number of international partners of JDU increases, making the offer of exchanges and international mobility more attractive to the students and staff members of JDU. Furthermore, after taking part in a project, a participant is required to inform one’s management about good practices learnt abroad and think about ways of implementing them in one’s unit of JDU.

Apart from the staff, outgoing students act as the university’s ambassadors, too. They promote JDU with their positive attitudes and knowledge gained at their university, including their foreign language proficiency – we make a comprehension selection of applicants during the recruitment process at JDU, enabling students who are well-motivated and linguistically fluent to participate in the Programme. Furthermore, they are provided with promo materials of JDU and are asked to present Poland and their home university during the classes and extracurricular activities for international students, which they attend. They share the practices learnt abroad and the experiences gained there with the rest of the students and staff members of JDU after the participation in the Programme.

The university’s information systems are being adjusted to the new EU platforms in accordance with the principles of the Erasmus Without Paper network. The Erasmus+



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coordinators at JDU have already gathered information regarding previously signed inter-institutional agreements in order to digitalize their contents and be ready to contact the partner universities prior to the beginning of a 2021 project. After the first successful renewal of agreements, the Erasmus+ institutional coordinators will send students' nominations and online learning agreements to the partner universities directly through Erasmus Dashboard.

A particular amount of funding in a KA1 project is considered as organizational support for a beneficiary. In order to improve exchange at JDU a part of the support will be allocated to a modern promotion campaign of the Programme in and outside of JDU, which will target university's students and staff members, as well as the university candidates and foreign partner institutions. It will include promotion in social media, the recording of video clips about the university's research and educational potential, interviews with university's alumni who have taken part in the Programme, contests with prizes for the academics involved in Erasmus+ associated activities. The most recent plans address the current difficulties in the realization of physical mobility programmes and, therefore, promote blended and virtual mobility. This includes the allocation of extra funds for the preparation and implementation of intercultural Virtual Exchange courses as part of Erasmus mobility.

As for the university's potential participation in the 'European University' initiative, the authorities are planning to create an inter-university European campus. One of the aims of forming the alliance in terms of the university's modernisation is to enable the students to participate in blended learning courses, prepared and implemented jointly by the members of the consortium. Learning would therefore take place in a traditional classroom setting and in virtual educational platforms not only at JDU, but also at other partner universities. The idea is to encourage students to spend at least one part of their study period abroad and to prepare the courses in such a way as to complement knowledge and competences gained earlier in one's home university. The students will be able to choose a university that matches their current study programme the most. Another advantage of JDU entering the alliance will be consolidation of the university's cooperation with the local industry. JDU could organize practical activities, including paid internships for the students in any of the affiliated entities of the consortium and at the same time specialists from these institutions could be invited to give classes to the students of JDU. Furthermore, researchers from the consortium could complete their scientific studies in associated institutions, using modern research infrastructure. Thanks to this cooperation, local industries will be promoted not only in their own countries, but also worldwide.

In the 2020 call for 'Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices and Partnerships for Innovation', we submitted a project proposal as the project's coordinator. Information about the project: Strategic Partnerships for adult education (KA204) "Generation: Smart. Social competences transmedia bridge to cultivate a new culture for cross-generational collaboration.", form ID: KA204-83D867E1. Apart from that, we are at the path to continue our long-lasting collaborations with Erasmus+ European Partners. In the call 2020 we were also invited by our Partner from Spain (CIDET) to take part in their project, as partners – Strategic Partnerships for adult education (KA204) "Wikisenior.eu: Creating Knowledge", form ID: KA204-D8EA7456. The activities mentioned above constitute the examples of how future Erasmus+ actions will be implemented at JDU.



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International cooperation plays one of key roles in strategic development of Jan Dlugosz University. European and non-EU cooperation contains the exchange of students of all levels, teachers and researchers supported by the EC programs, especially by Erasmus + Programme. Participation in the Erasmus + Programme will have a significant impact on the following priorities of the university:

1. Increase in the number of Higher Education graduates. We are committed to educating our students to the highest standards, and producing graduates that are knowledgeable, innovative, highly employable and capable of making Poland and Europe more competitive. Through the integration of mobility opportunities into our academic offer, student academic experience is significantly improved and the appeal of our academic courses increase. Also, our university is firmly committed to widening participation in mobility programmes, making higher education as accessible as possible.

2. Improve quality and relevance of teaching and research training, and to equip graduates with the knowledge and core transferable competences needed to success in high skill occupations. By participating in the Erasmus + Programme students and staff increasing their professional, social and intellectual skills and employability. In addition, individuals participating in the mobility projects via Erasmus+ Programme will be perceived as more valuable in the today's job market. Via the Erasmus+ Programme we wish to attract more talented students, academics and researchers from both inside and outside the EU and developing new forms of cross-border cooperation to improve quality of teaching and learning. Study or training periods abroad are very useful to students allowing them to get specific knowledge or training in fields not available or not sufficiently developed at Jan Dlugosz University. Having many agreements with European and non-European higher education institutions, we offer a very wide choice to our students. Moreover, with student mobility programs, our students will greatly improve their main competences and contribute in high-skill occupations. Through participation in staff mobility, faculty members will be exposed to students and educational systems of other member states. Faculty members benefiting from mobility experience guarantees the openness to new ideas, creative problem solving and team work skills. This experience, as well as the interaction with partners from other universities will invariably improve teaching and research. By receiving important feedback from participants' reports from both incoming and outgoing participants, JDU can take all appropriate measures to improve its academic offer and teaching, research, and administrative services. Thanks to the discussions about quality of mobility, JDU can prepare a clear procedure of reporting any problems to the projects' staff in a confidential way.

3. Increase involvement in cooperation projects under the Key Action 2. As for the impact of the KA2 action on our university, we would like to focus on three main factors: (1) International collaboration, (2) Development of European partnerships, and (3) ICT processes and tools implementation – the changes that digitalization brings on for the contemporary societies. We will measure the impact in the field of quality implementation (e.g., online surveys to get feedback from the project partners and participants), and increased involvement on cooperation projects (e.g., the latest activity of ours to become the project coordinator). We would also like to become actively involved in the implementation and development of online forms of education and communication. It will help us sustain the

impact of the projects for a much longer time. We hope to achieve the goals mentioned above in the nearest future, as we either submitted our application or were invited as partners to take part in the international project – in the latest 2020 KA204 call.

JDU sees instant potential for implementation of new partnerships, which would allow the university and its partners to collaborate in knowledge alliances. JDU regards this as the ideal opportunity to strengthen partnerships between higher education institutions and enterprises to promote creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. By offering new digital formats, innovative learning experiences, and blended learning opportunities, the university can provide even more flexibility for students while ensuring the highest academic standards. Developing regional business contacts aims at creating and commercializing innovations, constructing curricula that comply with the needs of employers. Active participation in breaking the barriers for the cooperation between science and business will continue with actions intensifying the cooperation with Silesian and international companies. JDU plans to: introduce mechanisms for ordering teaching programmes by enterprises; widen the opportunities to use technical and laboratory equipment of enterprises; implement the university's research/development outcomes for the benefit of enterprises.

Further improvement of the university's international performance, which is possible after the detailed analysis of the results of internal monitoring of the university's international mobility, will influence:

- further promotion of the mobility among students, enriched with new features resulting from answers to questionnaires filled in by the projects' participants voluntarily at the end of their mobility, as well as in-depth interviews with the participants;
- attractiveness and quality of education in JDU, thanks to monitoring of educational achievements and academic performance of former participants of the projects;
- increase in the university's interest in participation in subsequent international projects, being continuations of the previous initiatives taken by JDU;
- further development of distance education, e-learning tools and methods, as well as modernisation of information and communication technology facilities after detailed assessment of particular solutions and practices by the university's authorities, specialists in IT and experts in virtual and blended learning, as well as by the university's partner institutions before the final implementation;
- increase in the number of international students, thanks to a more attractive academic offer of courses offered in English and other foreign languages, adjusted to the demands of the current labour market, through developing active cooperation with institutions based in Programme and Partner Countries;
- increase in the number of staff from foreign universities and enterprises invited to JDU providing trainings/workshops to students in order to make JDU programmes more practical and business-oriented.