



Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

Imperial College London has agreed to publish the overall strategy (comprising three parts) which formed part of its application for an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education. An ECHÉ is a pre-requisite for participation (of an institution of higher education) in the [Erasmus +](#) programme (2014-2020)

Part 1

Please describe your institution's international (EU and non-EU) strategy. In your description please explain a) how you choose your partners, b) in which geographical area(s) and c) the most important objectives and target groups of your mobility activities (with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, including study and training, and short cycles). If applicable, also explain how your institution participates in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees.

Imperial College London is one of the leading universities internationally, delivering world class scholarship, education and research in science, engineering, medicine and business, with particular regard to their application in industry, commerce and healthcare. With some 50 percent of its students and c.35% of staff originating from outside the UK, the College is thoroughly international in its outlook, composition and collaborations. To fulfil its academic mission, the College collaborates widely with other universities, research institutions and business and has, and is developing further, a range of strategically important partnerships across the globe.

The College recognises the role which Erasmus and other EU programmes, most notably the Framework Programme, have played thus far in the development of the College's international outlook. The College welcomes the ambition of Erasmus + and Horizon 2020 and anticipates that they will play an important role in developing further the College's European and wider international engagement. The College recognises the importance of the EU Commission's modernisation agenda for European HE.

The majority of Imperial's collaborations are 'bottom up' focusing as they do on the links between individual academic groups. The basis for educational collaboration is normally the department, extending occasionally to embrace a Faculty or, more rarely, the entire university. The more extensive the engagement, the more rigorous is the assessment of the benefits of such collaborations for the College's core mission and its sustainability. Such engagements are subject to rigorous approval processes, including due diligence checks and scrutiny by the most senior College committees.

The College invests significantly in its innovative and highly regarded doctoral training programmes, which are naturally the key connectors between the worlds of education and research. The overwhelming majority of PhDs are single institution awards. An example of collaborative activity on a transnational scale is a small number of joint PhD programmes which the College has recently augmented with long-standing and academically excellent partners in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Brazil. Two of these programmes are open to all Faculties within the College while two are more narrowly focused in a particular area of research. These niche programmes have the potential to further develop existing academic links with the partner institutions and the

College will evaluate these programmes over the coming years. At this stage, the College has no intention to expand further its joint PhD provision.

The College has recently broken new ground by collaborating with Nanyang Technological University in Singapore in the formation of a joint medical school (the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine) opening in Singapore in 2013. The first cohort of medical students will begin their programme in August 2013 and will graduate with a joint medical degree.

Traditional forms of mobility remain important aspects of both the undergraduate and postgraduate student experience. Mobility of individuals or groups abroad, in the same way as graduates returning home, is central to increasing Imperial's international engagement, impact and reputation. The role of the ambassador (Erasmus or otherwise; student or staff) is crucial to perceptions of what Imperial stands for in terms of its education and research output. The international composition of our academic staff encourages the development of international collaborations and student exchanges.

The UK government has recently made changes to its support to the Higher Education sector which might constrain its ability to develop and extend some modes of student mobility. Nevertheless, within the period 2014-2020 the College intends to enhance the range of opportunities available to all students and increase the percentage of the student population who participate in active mobility. The College recognises the role Erasmus + will play in enabling it to achieve this aim both within Europe and globally. The College is therefore committed to improving the student experience and benefit from such mobility.

While the place of the higher education sector in delivering traditional study placements and internship opportunities will continue to be at the centre of the College's approach, the College also recognises that developing its partnerships and placement programmes with industry and other relevant organisations will be increasingly important in helping to produce future graduates with the skills and experience required by employers, for further study and for pursuing a career in research.

The College recognises a need to enhance the role mobility has in the development of staff (academic & administrative). It also will monitor closely technological developments and their potential to support further internationalisation of the student experience.

Part 2

If applicable, please describe your institution's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Erasmus + Programme.

International cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme are developed by individual academic departments with the support of the relevant Faculty and College staff, notably the Vice Provost for Education and subject to the UK quality assurance (QAA) procedures. Since the requirements vary considerably across Faculties, the College has so far decided not to engage in College-wide collaborative projects in this area.

Part 3

Please explain the expected impact of your participation in the Programme on the modernisation of your institution (for each of the 5 priorities of the [Modernisation Agenda](#)) in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve.*

Priority 1 (**Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs**): While the College admits only students who are appropriately qualified it seeks to do so from a broad cross-section of society. At undergraduate (UG) level it is assisted by an access agreement with the UK Office for Fair Access (includes an active outreach programme and student financial support package). The College's approach to admissions and the attractiveness of our degree programmes at all levels (based on learning outcomes) assists with keeping drop-out rates low. Mobility opportunities influence decision making vis-à-vis a research or tertiary teaching career. The College recognises that participation in Erasmus + will help students (all levels) graduate with the skills and experience required by employers, for further study and for pursuing a career in research.

Priority 2 (**Improving the quality and relevance of higher education**): The College is already highly international and competes in a global market place for the best staff and students. Indeed students select Imperial to experience the dynamic environment of a top university in one of the world's most exciting and vibrant cities. Students are increasingly keen to participate in mobility programmes, but are extremely selective about mobility partners. In terms of traditional mobility programmes, Imperial nonetheless has a long record of contributing to mobility in STEM subjects, for example, specific degrees which incorporate a year abroad have long existed at UG level. Erasmus + will encourage the College to consider further how it can maximise the availability of mobility programmes within and alongside curricula (all levels), and how best to support participating students. The College recognises that the benefits of mobility require to be experienced by all students and not just those who are physically mobile. Therefore, the College also recognises the opportunity Erasmus + affords to enhance existing contributions from visiting academics and industrial partners, and of its own staff in an international context. In a broader context the stimulus exists to consider the development of novel approaches (e.g. virtual delivery for external collaborators; further internationalisation of the curriculum/student experience.)

Priority 3 (**Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border co-operation**): The College uses ECTS as an accumulation system and to assist credit transfer while also issuing Diploma Supplements. Given the College only offers degrees recognised by the UK Qualifications Credit Framework (which in turn is referenced by the European Qualifications Framework) it is well placed to ensure that mobility of students both within degrees and amongst graduates is unhindered.

Priority 4 (**Making the knowledge triangle work: Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development**): The College welcomes the opportunity to consider the benefits of engaging with the proposed high-level strategic partnerships, knowledge alliances & sector skills alliances.

Priority 5 (**Improving governance and funding**): The College will seek to consider any opportunity afforded by Erasmus + which helps it achieve progress in this area.