

## Erasmus Policy Statement

Goals of Mendel University in Brno (MENDELU) in the area of international cooperation arise from MENDELU efforts to **(1) enhance the quality of outputs** and to **(2) keep pace with trends of European development**, defined by two milestones; building of the European Research Area and European Higher Education Area. The selection of foreign partners must correspond with these strategic goals for educational, scientific, research and project activity in the international context.

Two main criteria are important for geographical identification of international partners:

Firstly, it is the competitiveness of academic activities of the University within the European educational area. The University tries to achieve balanced representation of partner institutions from all EU and North American countries, while observing whether requirements for expertise and quality of foreign partners have been met.

Secondly, the other criterion for geographical identification of partners is based on the historical development of Mendel University, which holds a dominant position in providing education in agricultural, horticultural and forestry disciplines in the Czech Republic. Due to the social and economic development, importance of these disciplines in the Czech Republic has recently declined, whereas in the developing countries, agriculture, horticulture and forestry are the subjects of primary social concern. Mendel University in Brno sees this as a significant opportunity to implement its educational, research and project expertise in the developing world. Therefore, the priority countries outside the EU are Sub-Saharan Africa, South-East Asia and Latin America.

Most importantly, targets and measures to increase **student mobility** include:

1. Increasing the number of students participating in student mobilities and placements abroad by at least 10 % in both academic semesters.
2. Establishing a stay of third cycle students at a university abroad as a compulsory part of their individual study plans.
3. For students enrolled in study programmes taught in English, a stay abroad shall be an integral part of study. Students studying in Czech shall be enabled to study part of their programme at a foreign institution.
4. Creating a balance between the number of outgoing and incoming students. As a primary measure for the support of incoming students, the goal is to extend the offer of integrated study programmes taught in English.

5. Following the ECTS credit system which was developed and implemented for all Bachelor and Master programmes, and for which the university was awarded with the ECTS Label and DS Label certificates in 2012.

Furthermore, targets and measures to increase **faculty mobility** include:

1. Establishing the requirement for candidates for habilitation to participate in one (long-term) mobility and to deliver lectures in English.
2. Claiming a proof of language proficiency on the level enabling teaching in the given language, in the selection procedure of new academic staff.

The University reserved its own finances within development funds to support the development of joint/double degree programmes. Following this further, creation of joint/double degree study programmes with foreign universities is one of the priorities of MENDELU internationalization. In order to foster the development of joint/double degree programmes and courses taught in English, MENDELU has been financially supporting creation of conditions for stays of foreign experts as well as visiting scholars and permanent employees.

The MENDELU strategy is to actively support, organize and implement international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in the area of teaching and training. Participation in the LLP Erasmus/Erasmus+ mobility is and will be considered a cornerstone of further cooperation in more complex international projects. MENDELU shall create suitable material conditions to support top-quality research and encourage staff to present gained results on conferences, fairs and other international events.

Consequently, MENDELU's expectations of the impact of its participation in the Programme on modernization of the University are of key importance. Being a part of its own strategy for modernization and internationalization increases the quality of education programmes and contributes to the student and staff experience. The University expects to make self-reflection resulting in progressive changes in organization of future international activities.

We intend to follow **the 5 priorities of Modernization Agenda** and to achieve the expected goals. We aspire to:

1. Increase attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers needed in Europe: The participation in the Programme should help us to prepare new specialized programmes reflecting the needs of the labor market and practical experience.
2. Improve the quality and relevance of higher education. In order to do so, it is necessary to improve and increase the quality of higher education, to promote it as much as possible to be able to educate professional experts and thus react to the labor market demands.
3. Strengthen the quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation. To support and promote the Programme, therefore to increase the number of mobility exchanges, to provide necessary service and feedback evaluation, resulting in improving the mobility quality. To make the Programme attractive and to enable students and staff to get to know

diverse countries and continents and open the mind to become multiculturally competent experts.

4. Link higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development:

Forming a closer connection with practical sphere is one of MENDELU long-term goals. Along with Masaryk University, Brno University of Technology, University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Czech Academy of Sciences and Veterinary Research Institute, MENDELU is a partner of the Central European Institute of Technology CEITEC, which is a leading world-class research center, a focus of Czech and international companies. CEITEC cooperates with more than 200 companies and the potential of its research contracts exceeds 1.6 milliard Czech crowns in the first five years. The university also participates in many projects aiming at interconnecting teaching, science and research with practice, e.g. (1) ESF - OP Education for Competitiveness project NIKAZAM (finished), (2) project CID (ongoing) for placements of students and teachers in developing countries with potential for development aid, and many others.

5. Improve governance and funding

The staff members' experience of international mobility and further involvement in subsequent cross-border activities is of great importance to their career progress and competitiveness of the university in today's globalized world, with beneficial impacts on the quality of university governance and administration.



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