

DELIVERABLE D7.2 – REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN (M24)

Project Acronym	EDUC
Project Full Name	European Digital UniverCity
Grant Agreement No.	612442-EPP-1-2019-1-DE-EPPKA2-EUR-UNIV
Programme	Erasmus +
Instrument	European Universities
Start date of Project	01/10/2019
Duration	36 months
Deliverable No.	7.2
Document name	Deliverable D7.2 Report on the implementation of the action plan
Work Package	7
Associated Task	Task 7.1: Design of an action plan for harmonization of the mobility infrastructures and its implementation
Dissemination Level	'Public' dissemination
Contractual Submission Date	M24 (September 2021)
Actual Submission Date	M28 (January 2022)
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Abstract	Partners regularly meet to discuss the progress in implementing the action plan for harmonization of mobility infrastructure. This deliverable maps out the progress made at all partner universities during the first year of the implementation.
Keywords	Physical mobility; Mobility infrastructure; Mobility administration; Implementation report; Action plan

INTRODUCTION

The presented document is the first implementation report of the action plan for the harmonization of the mobility infrastructure within the European Digital UniverCity (EDUC) alliance. It is a part of work package 7 (WP7) of the pilot phase of the project. WP7 “Reducing barriers for physical mobility” is focused on streamlining and harmonizing mobility procedures in such manner that existing barriers preventing students or staff going on mobilities are reduced as much as possible. The first reporting period covers August 2020 – November 2021.

The action plan is the result of task 7.1 (Harmonization of the mobility infrastructure) and includes suggestions for improving several key areas in mobility administration: 1) policies and mobility regulations, 2) funding, 3) strong recommendation for international experience in EDUC, 4) EDUC Fast track, 5) study and teaching offer, 6) student services, 7) promotion. The action plan was approved by the EDUC Steering Committee in July 2020 and is being implemented at each university since at their own pace.

The following report provides a listing of each of the key areas and explanation of progress made by each partner.

Partner universities in the EDUC alliance and their abbreviations

University of Potsdam – UP

Université de Rennes 1 – UR1

Université Paris Nanterre – UPN

Masaryk University – MU

University of Pécs – PTE

University of Cagliari – UNICA

OVERVIEW OF EACH PART OF THE 7.1 ACTION PLAN AND PARTNERS’ PROGRESS:

1. Official regulations and policies

In progress

The majority of partners have their **mobility policies** published at this moment, including information on inclusion, transparent mobility process and language preparation for outgoing students.

- **UNICA** has all mobility related information and guidelines published on the website.
- **UPN** has taken the approval of the 7.1 action plan as an opportunity to revisit and update their existing charter for international mobilities.
- **UP** has provided an addendum to the SEN standards paper (WP 7.3) and has an inclusion policy.

UP has no joint policy for mobility as study regulations have individual policies but common websites outlining mobility administration process, language preparation etc.:

<https://www.uni-potsdam.de/de/international/outgoing/uebersicht>

- **MU** has all mobility administration related guidelines and rules published in the internal information system, as issued by the director of the Centre of International Cooperation, the vice rector for internationalization or the rector of the university.
- **PTE** also has all mobility related information and guidelines published on their website.

Regarding **safety and security rules for international mobilities**, partners have focused mainly on informing students about Covid-19 measures at their university given the current circumstances. All have Covid-19 related information published on their websites.

- **UP** has safety and security rules published for Covid-19, housing and general security.
- **MU** has general security rules and recommendations published, as well as Covid-19 related safety information.
- **UR1** does not have S and S rules for international mobility, however, specific working session is planned in December 2021 in order to publish an S and S section on the website for international students.
- **PTE** has rules, codes and safety instructions, as well as Covid-19 site available in English.
- **UPN** has recommendations related to Covid-19 and gender-based and sexual violence. There are no general or international focused security rules at UPN yet.
- **UNICA** has safety and security rules published for Covid-19.

2. Strong recommendation for international experience in EDUC

In progress

As it is clear from the deadline in the action plan (30 Sep 2022, end of the first funding period), it is considered to be a task the partners will work on continuously, as far as there are any international opportunities offered within EDUC. The consortium has promoted widely all the opportunities that have arisen until this moment, however, as also the university management and other key stakeholders need to be involved, the work is still in progress. The main progress of the alliance in this regard is seen in enriching and extending the existing offer of international experience: language courses, various forms of mobilities (short term, virtual, physical, etc.), opportunities for staff.

3. Funding

Done

All EDUC partners can guarantee additional funding for mobilities besides Erasmus+ funds.

4. EDUC Fast track

In progress

The EDUC fast track consists of several parts:

A) Inter-institutional agreements on university level signed between EDUC partners

In progress

Partners have some agreements signed on faculty/department level, but so far, the only institutional level IIA is signed between MU and UP. Partners are waiting to sign the IIAs electronically when Erasmus Without Papers will enable it for next Erasmus+ cycle. Due to recent opening of EWP portal (Dec 2021), the consortium expects to have the IIAs signed by February 2022.

B) Availability of international offices and EDUC contact person

In progress

All international offices in EDUC alliance are open most days of the working week and also available through e-mail and phone, doing their best to reply to all messages and requests in timely manner (within 2 working days as agreed in the action plan).

- **UP, UPN and UNICA** have successfully established a first point contact service for students and staff and appointed an EDUC contact person.
- **UR1** has created a generic EDUC e-mail address for EDUC oriented requests - 4 members of the staff in charge of answering the requests but so far has no specific EDUC appointed person.
- **PTE** treats EDUC as a priority in each of the mobility sectors and has an Institutional EDUC Office since the beginning at the International Centre of the university.
- **MU** is working on establishing an EDUC generic e-mail address but has no specific EDUC contact person appointed so far.

C) Advance payment of mobility grant

Done

Most partners provide their students a major part of their grant in advance to ensure the student has enough resources to cover their basic needs in the country they will travel to. Students can rely on receiving their grants after they complete the necessary administrative steps.

- **UP** guarantees 80% of grant being paid as soon as the student hands in the Certificate of arrival.
- **UNICA** pays 100% of the grant ahead of mobility.
- **UR1** - Due to calendar constraint in relation with the French regulation for student grant awarding to which the awarding committee refers to for the Erasmus+ grants, most students don't get their grant in advance. However, a special effort is dedicated now for gap-year scholarships being paid ASAP once administrative work is completed by the student and university.
- **UPN** pays the grant in advance only for EDUC grants (gap year so far). In other cases, 70% as soon as the student hands in certificate of arrival.
- **MU** pays 100% of grant in advance in case of spring mobilities; in case of autumn mobilities, in 90% cases the students also receive 100% of the grant (unless continuing the mobility after the end of the calendar year).

- **PTE** provides the students with 100% of the grant if the student completes the necessary administration before the mobility, on the start of the mobility period the latest or upon the receipt of the certificate of arrival.

D) Joint policy for course recognition

In progress

This task ties in with task 7.2 in WP7, which focuses on the harmonization of study programs.

- **UP, PTE** and **MU** have a guideline or policy on study recognition published.
- **UR1** has no common frame at the university level, however, it is a priority topic of the Student Affairs department and the International Affairs department. A specialized working group involving several stakeholders was relaunched in 2021 in order to complete the common framework for course recognition.
- **UNICA** is currently working on course recognition for short mobilities. The guidelines on study recognition for outgoing students are published on UNICA's website.
- **UPN** – Guideline for recognition will be included in the document which will replace the exchange student charter (see 1.)

E) Unified deadline for nominations and publishing of course catalogue – In progress

In progress

Partners have done steps to align their deadlines better with others in the consortium, and the deadlines for nominations were moved forward where possible.

- **UP** has moved nomination deadlines forward to align better with partners (winter semester: 15th April, summer semester: 15th October); however, publication of the course catalogue for entire academic year is not possible by 31st May due to IT restraints and academic freedom/ changing course catalogue each semester.
- In **UNICA** there are difficulties with publishing the course catalogue in May as it is usually published in July every year.
- **UPN, PTE** and **MU** - establishing the nomination deadlines and publishing the course catalogue by May 31 is done.
- **UR1** – Nomination deadline for incoming students is 15th of May. The course catalogue is finalized and published in December each year for the next academic year beginning in September.

F) Full commitment to EWP

Done

Partners are fulfilling their promise to keep up with all deadlines of the European Commission. Generally speaking, the EDUC alliance is ready to move with all necessary steps required by EWP (although some partners had some delays due to their external mobility tool provider) and have their IT teams ready, although they find the global implementation of EWP rather chaotic.

G) Priority accommodation for incoming students

In progress

Students at all EDUC universities can rely on extra support and assistance when looking for accommodation on their EDUC mobility.

- **UP** has ongoing negotiations with the student dorms provider about a quota for reservations for international students.
- **UR1** provides EDUC students extra assistance but all incoming students are treated the same (provided with access to accommodation).
- **PTE** and **UPN** - EDUC and gap year students have priority in accommodation.
- **MU** is currently working on a solution to a possible situation where due to more short-term mobilities the dormitories are full. Otherwise, the accommodation is guaranteed to all incoming students.
- **UNICA** provides EDUC students and all incoming students with the same assistance for the accommodation.

5. Study and teaching offer

In progress

The majority of partners have their study catalogue published online and updated.

- **UP, UNICA, PTE** and **MU** have the study catalogue published online in English and updated.
- **UR1** – The catalogue exists in French and it is not complete yet. Each IO in faculties publishes catalogue in English or gives individual information to incoming students. Therefore, a working group on the course catalogue in English was launched in 2021.
- **UPN** – Study catalogue is published online and updated, but in French only.

Partners are also working on their offer of staff weeks and summer schools. Most of them have already provided either staff weeks, summer schools or both and the consortium is looking to enhance their offer further in the next year.

- **UP** offers summer schools and works on tutor visiting as part of regular Erasmus+ STA mobilities.
- **UR1** has organized intensive English course for staff, physical staff shadowing and virtual job shadowing. They have also organized a summer school in July 2021 with ca 30 students from the EDUC alliance participating.
- **UPN** has offered a staff week and is working on the eventual tutor visiting and summer school offer.
- **PTE** – offers Hungarian language courses.
- **MU** has organized a virtual staff week and plans to be more active with EDUC staff mobilities in the future. MU is also developing summer schools to be offered in the next months.
- **UNICA** Organizes once a year intensive language courses to promote mutual trust and confidence between EDUC staff

6. Student services

Done

All EDUC partners provide various services for student on mobilities – e.g. informative welcome sessions, social events, buddy, systems, pre-departure workshops, etc.

7. Promotion

Done

All EDUC partners have promotional activities in place in order to promote mobilities available – an informative website, social media and regular international days, fairs or similar events where mobilities are promoted.