

# DELIVERABLE D7.5 – COMMON STANDARDS FOR MOBILITIES OF STUDENTS WITH SEN (M22)

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<b>Abstract</b>	This document describes standards which the EDUC alliance supports and implements in order to provide adequate services for students with special educational needs (SEN) on mobilities.
<b>Keywords</b>	Mobilities; physical mobility; special educational needs; students with special educational needs

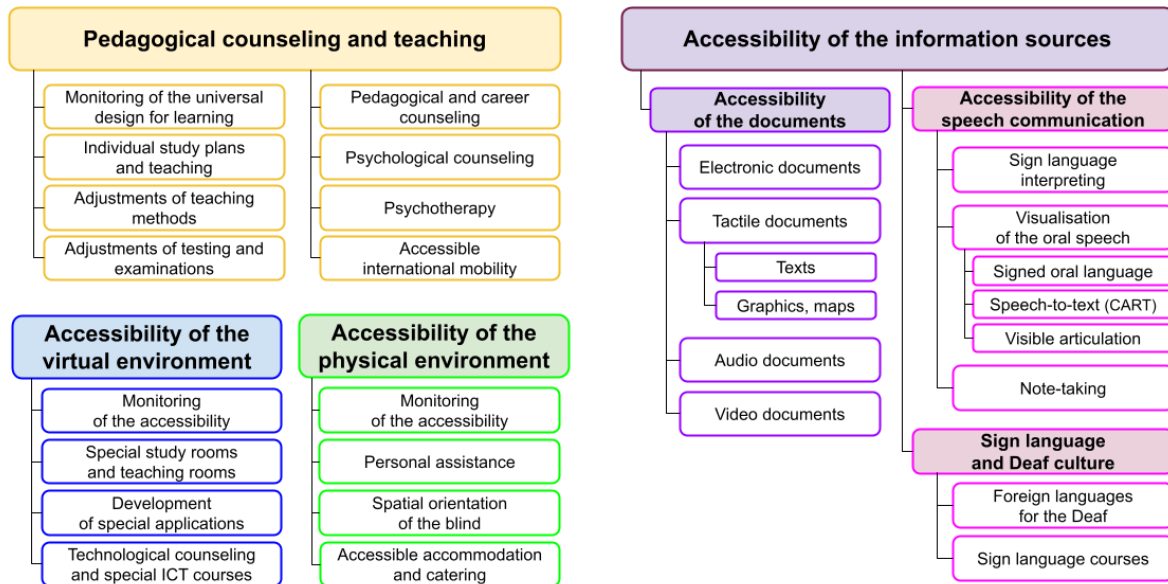
## Common standards for mobility of students with special educational needs

### 1. Preamble

- 1.1. In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability, every student is considered eligible to participate in academic mobility, regardless of their financial situation, ethnic background, sexual orientation or disability, and to be included in student life in the host community regardless of the obstacles the student experiences. Since the actual participation of students with special needs does not correspond to their numbers within the academic community, the presumption is that there are objective obstacles preventing them from participating in the international mobility. The following standards have been formulated to minimize the occurrence of these obstacles. Further presumption is that these obstacles are more prominent among students for whom the [principles of universal design](#), thus far incorporated at the partner institutions, are not enough when it comes to participating in the academic life; thus, these students require reasonable individual adjustments. This is the case for students with serious sensory and physical impairment, hereinafter referred to in this document as students with special needs.
- 1.2. The document features areas of common mobility standards for students with special needs participating in international mobility. These should be viewed as the foundations for providing adequate services for international students at host institutions. The EDUC alliance partners have agreed to strive to create an environment where students with special needs have little difficulties when deciding to participate in international mobility, because they can easily identify whom, when, and how to contact and where to get the necessary information from.

### 2. Keeping records of the students with special needs

- 2.1. One of the principal pillars in providing adequate and good quality services to students with special needs is to encourage students to disclose their disability to both their home as well as host institutions. Furthermore, respective institutions should be in close contact with their students to be able to assess their needs and proactively offer and provide necessary services.
- 2.2. In regard to the international mobility, records of students with special needs helps in promoting the mobility while it also helps in negotiating reasonable adjustments to the study environment. Knowing the students at one's home institution significantly improves the chances of lowering barriers for these students. This way, the institution can directly address the specific needs of these students, needs that are usually not addressed when offering mobility to a wider audience. As some experience shows, students who require individual adjustments, oftentimes, do not deem the offered mobility options to be meant for them. This is for several reasons, such as the fear of the unknown, but also because they lack the necessary information regarding the service provisions.
- 2.3. Establishing services for students with special needs requires extensive communication with several participants, such as disability units, various members of staff, external partners etc. In order to ensure the mobility is a success and the students receive adequate services at the host institution, a unit should be formed to serve as the primary point of contact for both the incoming/outgoing students and the partner institution (for more, see section [Standards in communication](#)).

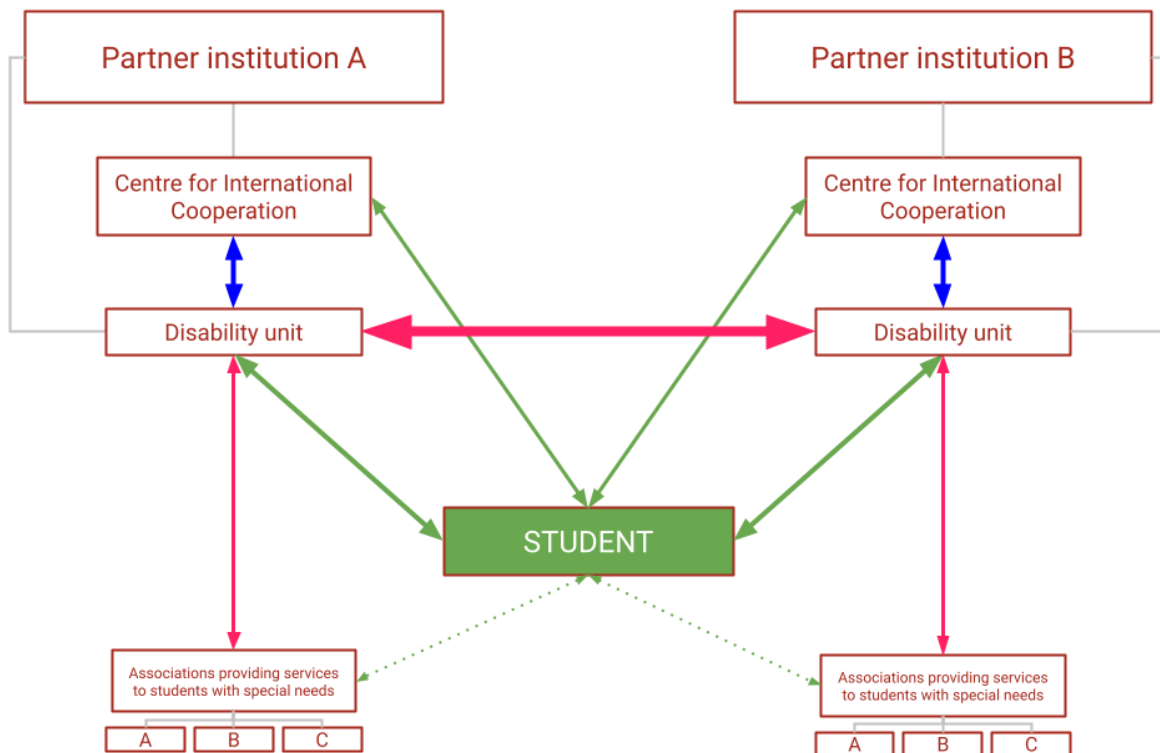


### 3. Service provision standards

- 3.1. Figure 1 shows a range of service categories that can be provided to students with special needs at a partner institution. In case, the host partner institution is unable to provide necessary service provision (e.g. adapt study materials into accessible format, produce tactile documents, provide spatial orientation for the blind, etc.), the service should be provided by an external provider. This could be a local authority or non-governmental organization. Alternatively, the sending institution itself can become the service provider, if the required support provisions are not available to provide adequate services in the destination location/country (e.g. due to the lack of expertise in the field, language barrier, or too high a cost).
- 3.2. This provision enables the students with special needs to benefit from the mobility in the same way as their peers, while also being subjected to the same academic standards. Any service provision should be provided with the aim to compensate for the students' impairment, while, at the same time, should not lower the standards when it comes to knowledge acquisition and task fulfilment within the study programme. Thus, it is deemed undesirable that, for example, a visually impaired student is given an alternative study material solely because it is thought that the printed book cannot be digitalized and provided in an accessible format. It is especially problematic in cases where the visually impaired student is the only one using the alternative study material, while the rest of the students continue using the original resources.

- 3.3. Another important aspect of the service provision to take into account is the costs. Institutions should have a clear idea about the conditions under which the students receive services and reasonable adjustments. This should include information on services that are provided to students free of charge or the students need to pay for them (whether they are outsourced or not). This is especially important in cases where the rules and practices differ when it comes to local and international students. In addition, the institutions should be able to provide clear and meaningful information on available external funding sources, which the student could utilize to cover the excessive costs (e.g. [Erasmus+ Special Needs Grant](#)). That being said, international students should not be deprived of basic service provisions in accordance with the principles of Universal Design for Learning.

#### 4. Standards in communication



- 4.1. Figure 2 illustrates the ideal model of communication patterns when it comes to international mobility of students with special needs and negotiations of service provisions at the host institution. Each of the institutions should have a disability unit to oversee the service provision and exchange information with local and international partners as well as with the students. Said unit can be a well-equipped support centre with a substantive number of employees, a small team, or, in rare cases, a single staff member. In any case, it should help establish an environment, which is welcoming and easy to navigate for both students with special needs and the staff members who provide services to these students.
- 4.2. In terms of the communication patterns, on the one hand, the host institution unit is in close contact with the unit that is providing services to students with special needs at the student's home institution. On the other hand, this unit is also communicating with other units, which are responsible for the administrative part of the mobility, such as the international office or the mobility coordinator. In this regard, the information should flow in an easier manner, thus limiting the chance for misunderstanding, constant repetition of questions, requests and explanations, and it also helps to lower the required time to negotiate the necessary adjustments at the host institution. Moreover, it makes the mobility far easier to manage for the students themselves.
- 4.3. When arranging the mobility, the participating institutions have to engage in negotiations about the prospective reasonable adjustments. They should include a detailed outline of the available services at the host institution together with the financial requirements, which the incoming students will have to cover from their own funding. For the range of services see section [Service provision standards](#)).
- 4.4. In situations where the host institution is not the provider of the required adjustments to the study environment, they can be outsourced to external providers (local authority, non-governmental organization). Nevertheless, the unit at the host institution should be the primary point of contact and the principal negotiator of the services with the external partners. It should not be the students themselves who address the providers individually with their requests for service provision. The range of services and their costs should be disclosed during the negotiation stage, as stated in [section 4.3](#).
- 4.5. Since there can be a number of different service providers, it is vital that all involved parties (i.e. student's home institution, student, and host institution) agree on the range and terms of service provision, as well as their costs before the mobility is initiated. This approach should ensure the student will benefit from international mobility, receive reasonable adjustments, while retaining the quality of the education and enjoying the stay abroad without the fear of not receiving the necessary service. Following situations might emerge:
  - 4.5.1. Service provision will be provided in **full scope** by the host institution (either on its own or with the cooperation of the local providers) at an agreed cost.
  - 4.5.2. Service provision will be **partially** provided by the host institution (either on its own or with the cooperation of the local providers) at an agreed cost. Required, but unavailable, services will be supplemented by the student's home institution.

- 4.5.3. Service provision will be provided **solely** by the student's home institution, if neither the host institution, nor the local authority or non-governmental organizations has the human and technological resources to secure the adequate services for the incoming students.

## Addendum A - General information on the services

General information on the services for students with special needs available at universities within the EDUC consortium is available at these websites:

- [University of Potsdam](#)
- [University of Cagliari](#)
- [University of Rennes 1](#)
- [University of Paris Nanterre](#)
- [University of Pécs](#)
- [Masaryk University](#)

## Addendum B - Specifics of services at individual partner HEI

University of Potsdam specifics

### Regarding 2.3

There is no “unit” in the sense of a division or department at the UP for students with disabilities. The UP has a Commissioner for Students with Disabilities. The commissioner is appointed for a two-year term by the Senate of the UP and works in an honorary capacity. The Central Student Advisory Service can answer questions regarding organisational aspects of university studies. They also offer [counselling with a focus on the inclusive organization of university studies](#). Counselling for international students is offered by the International Office. However, the commissioner would act as an initial point of contact for students so that he can refer them to the colleagues in charge.

### Regarding 3.1

In Germany, students with impairments receive financial support or personal assistance to participate in education through a so-called “Eingliederungshilfe” (integration assistance). For example, assistants may be made available to students with autism, or writing support may be provided to students with motor impairments. The team of the commissioner also includes student employees who offer support and counselling. They will, for example, act as exam proctors or assist students during an exam.

### Regarding 3.2

At the UP, instructors are urged to provide accessible teaching materials. For example, the Centre for Information Technology (ZIM) has a Braille printer and Braille displays or screen readers for students with visual impairments. If it is not possible to make documents accessible from a technical point of view, the student employees of the commissioner will offer their assistance. There is usually no need to provide alternative study materials.

### Regarding 4.4

At the UP, there is an Advisory Service for Students with Disabilities which students can contact. Applications for financial aid or compensation for disadvantages must be submitted by the students themselves to the relevant organisations.