



## **ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT**

The main aim of American University of Cyprus (AUCY) is to create an international culture. Thus, AUCY acknowledges the importance of gaining experience abroad for both students and staff allowing them to acquire skills necessary to be active participants in the changing society and globalized world.

AUCY will be participating in the following Erasmus+ Actions:

1. **Key Action 1 (KA1) – Learning mobility for individuals.** As a newly established University, AUCY will make all steps required to implement all the activities which are part of Key Action 1. For instance, Inter-Institutional agreements will be signed with partner institutions in order for AUCY students to be able to participate in student mobility for studies and traineeships as well as for AUCY staff to be involved in staff mobility for teaching and training. Additionally, AUCY will establish further blended programs. Participating in KA1 will be the means for the institution to engage in integrated teaching activities and also provide the opportunity to students and staff to acquire key global competences as encouraged by the European Education Area and more particularly quality higher education with adequate knowledge and skills required to succeed after graduation.
2. **Key Action 2 (KA2) – Cooperation among organizations and institutions.** Research activity is highly valued at AUCY, therefore, participating in KA2 is of great importance for the institution. Academic staff across all faculties are active in terms of research and any opportunities to participate in Partnerships for Cooperation and Partnerships for Excellence will open further avenues for research activities and networking. The research policy at AUCY covers various components such as developing and enhancing research activities through strengthening the partnerships with other local research institutes, organizations and universities of international reputation and attracting external research funding through the submission of research proposals in national and international funding organizations. Additionally, the research policy addresses the issue of exploitation and dissemination of research results through publications in well-known scientific journals and presentations of research results in conferences and seminars in Cyprus and abroad and collaborations with local companies and the industry. It is undoubtedly the case that participating in Erasmus+ projects under KA2 will enable AUCY to achieve its objectives related to its research policy.
3. **Key Action 3 (KA3) – Support to Policy Development and Cooperation**  
AUCY will explore the prospect of participating in KA3 at a later stage acknowledging the importance of being involved in projects which contribute to the implementation of policies or development of new ones.

American University of Cyprus (AUCY) has developed an Erasmus Policy Statement that clearly includes several objectives which reflect and respect the Erasmus Charter principles. These objectives are definitely aligned with the internationalization and modernization strategy of the University which are reflected in its vision and mission. The University has already developed and will continue to develop international partnerships as it acknowledges the importance of internationalization and modernization activities. The overarching aim of AUCY is to promote academic excellence through the high-quality teaching and innovative research which will be enriched through strategic partnerships, learning mobility activities and cooperation with other organizations and institutions. This aim will be strengthened by

participating in Erasmus+ activities and hence, expanding the teaching and research collaborations with other institutions.

AUCY aims at offering high quality undergraduate and graduate education that is internationally recognized. Furthermore, the institution highly considers the development of integrated, transnational teaching activities (i.e. joint/double degree programs) which will be offered in collaboration with European/international partnerships. These programs will provide learners both traditional and online modes of teaching and learning, acknowledging one of the Charter's principles about equal and equitable access and opportunities. Besides the development of joint interdisciplinary programs, AUCY aims at providing the opportunity to its students and staff for academic and professional development opportunities through collaborating with other Higher Education institutions. The development of integrated, transnational teaching will positively impact students and staff through promoting international mobility, fostering network opportunities and strengthening the internationalization/modernization strategy of the University. As a newly established institution without prior Erasmus+ activity, AUCY will aim at increasing the number of students and staff mobility (both incoming and outgoing) each year. Furthermore, AUCY will attempt to maintain a high satisfaction rate for incoming and outgoing students. Inclusion and diversity are both a priority for AUCY to ensure that all students and staff have equal opportunities to participate in Erasmus+ activities. Thus, all individuals will be equally treated through the selection process and the program will be promoted through face-to-face presentations and updated information will be provided on the institutional website for both incoming and outgoing mobility. Additionally, AUCY will gradually increase the number of partnerships and maintain continuous communication with partners.

Besides teaching, the AUCY strategy reflects the promotion of science and knowledge through research for the benefit of the society. Precisely, the University will be involved in innovative research through participating in Partnerships for Cooperation and Partnerships for Excellence with an immediate impact on the institution in terms of research activity, research outcomes and networking. The University and its academic staff are in the process of exploring the possibilities to join several networks (i.e. European Office of Cyprus) to become aware about open calls for proposals and collaboration opportunities. Academic staff members are part of research networks internationally across different European countries and therefore involved in research activities. Additionally, academic staff at AUCY will seek to address global issues in their research and contribute to global challenges. Therefore, AUCY aims at advancing conceptual knowledge, establishing partnerships to conduct research with local as well as European/international institutions and encouraging both dissemination activities and development of students and staff in terms of research allowing AUCY to be part of transnational and interdisciplinary projects. In fact, this objective will be reinforced through the Erasmus+ program as it highlights peer-learning through the exchange of knowledge and best practices with partner institutions and institutions participating in consortiums. Information sessions for funding opportunities will be provided to all faculties to increase the chances of being involved in projects. Also, open information sessions sharing experiences and results on ongoing and completed projects will be encouraged so as to open up further interdisciplinary cooperation.

Based on the cornerstone of the internationalization and modernization of education and the development of European Education Area, AUCY prioritizes the development of global competences, transferable skills and attitudes acknowledging the importance in relation to employment prospects and personal development. This priority also reflects the vision and mission of the University to equip students with the knowledge but also skills in order to evolve as indispensable members of the community that they will be functioning in. Aligning with the priorities of the Erasmus+ Program and the digital resources provided by the European Commission (i.e. implementing digital mobility management, Erasmus Without Paper Network, encouraging the European Student Card Initiative, promoting civic engagement etc.)

AUCY will encourage the development of digital skills and promote various values such as gender equality and environmentally friendly approaches. Additionally, full implementation of the digital management tools of the Erasmus+ Program is planned by 2025.

As mentioned above, it is anticipated that participating in the Erasmus+ Program will have a positive impact on the institution both in relation to learning mobility activities (for students and staff) as well as for research cooperation with other organizations and institutions.

In order to measure achievement, AUCY will utilize both qualitative and quantitative indicators with clearly defined targets:

### **Learning Mobility of Individuals (KA1)**

As a newly established University with no prior Erasmus+ activity, AUCY has set a central target to begin with an adequate number of student and staff mobility, with the aim of increasing this number year by year. One of the ways to achieve this, will be by intensively promoting the Erasmus+ Program to both students and staff, highlighting its benefits. Therefore, promoting the Program and highlighting its benefits is closely relevant to one of the objectives mentioned in the Policy Statement about developing partnerships with European/International institutions as a way to open up avenues and make the Program attractive to students and staff for collaboration, networking and learning/research opportunities.

The quality of implementation will be monitored through qualitative indicators. In order to achieve successful results, it is significant to adequately organize activities before, during and after each mobility. The institution ensures that all activities **before the mobility** will be adequately implemented. Consequently, all procedures will be fair, transparent and well-documented considering the issue of equitable access to all interested participants. A regular update of the course catalogue will be part of the institution's activities making sure that it provides all relevant information to any participant. Additionally, prospective participants will be fully informed about recognition procedures, maintaining transparency. The institution will be committed to use the digital mobility management tools as required by the Program, making it easier to manage all mobility procedures, secure personal data and reduce workload.

Any Inter-Institutional Agreements will be developed according to the criteria set by the institution across quality standards. All agreements will be monitored regularly. All learning agreements and mobility agreements will be prepared, approved and signed before each mobility. In order to ensure quality of implementation, specific individuals have been assigned by the Erasmus+ Committee as responsible for the preparation of these documents (administrative assistant in collaboration with the Head of Erasmus and the representatives of each Faculty). Any details/changes included in the learning agreements will be agreed among all parties that is, the sending institution, the host institution and the participant. It is highlighted that any mobilities concerning staff training will be approved in accordance to the Human Resource Development policy in collaboration with the Erasmus+ Committee.

As far as incoming students, the University has appointed a contact person responsible for providing support in terms of accommodation options (details are provided on the institutional website). All outgoing students will be informed about their rights and obligations and will be provided with the Erasmus Student Charter. Additionally, they will be informed about obtaining insurance.

Ensuring quality of implementation **during the mobility**, the University acknowledges the rights of incoming students in terms of equal academic treatment, access to facilities and quality services. Erasmus+ Committee members have been assigned to provide assistance and guidance during the mobility in relation to risks and threats. Incoming students will be invited to University's events in order to ensure their well-being and full inclusion. The University will also maintain the 'ambassadors' and 'buddy system' initiatives. More precisely,

the incoming students will serve as ambassadors, sharing their experiences with other potential participants. Additionally, local students will form the buddy system and thus act as assistants to incoming students for transportation/accommodation issues etc.

**After the mobility**, the University will provide the transcripts including transparent recognition of the study period abroad. All credits gained abroad/traineeship certificate received are automatically recognized and transferred to the records of the student. The students who complete a mobility will become 'ambassadors' of the Program and therefore share their experiences and promote the Program and its benefits to other potential participants. Additionally, the formerly mobile students will have the chance to be involved in the 'buddy system' and provide support to incoming participants.

### **Cooperation among Organizations and Institutions (KA2)**

One of the objectives stated above is relevant to the priority set by AUCY to engage in innovative research through cooperating with other organizations and institutions. In order to ensure the achievement of this objective, the University will provide all the support to staff participating in research projects such as adequate time for conducting the project, sufficient administrative support and resources to support the project.

Maximizing the impact and increasing the chances of achievement for KA2, the University will make sure to clearly specify all benefits of any cooperation from the beginning of each project highlighting the issue of sustainability of the results. The University will also make sure that any research results are well disseminated through various channels ensuring, in this way, the visibility of the project implementation and outcomes. Additionally, outcomes from joint projects will be disseminated through participating in academic conferences, sharing experiences with the academic community and expanding networking.