

Zagreb School of Business- Erasmus Policy Statement 2021-2027

Zagreb School of Business (ZSB hereafter) is a city owned higher education institution located in Croatia's capitol Zagreb. We are university of applied Sciences offering undergraduate and graduate professional degrees in social and technical fields of study. We have been a part of Erasmus+ programme since 2014, opened up in 2006, while our founder Open University of Zagreb was founded in the 1950s. We are a prominent institution located in the city center, surrounded with other universities and a business district.

Zagreb School of Business acknowledges the importance of international mobilities/education. In the age of technology, knowledge is advanced at an unprecedentedly fast pace, which makes international cooperation and learning a must in order to keep up with the world. Exchange studies are a crucial part of knowledge transfer; by carrying out exchange mobilities/projects individuals (both academic staff/faculty and students) have the opportunity to synthesize their own learning with the learning achieved at a host institution.

By participating in Erasmus+ programme, Zagreb School of Business wants to achieve a higher level of internationalization. When applying for our first Erasmus+ Charter back in 2014, Erasmus+ programme was our only means of internalization. Six years later, by continuing to be a part of Erasmus+ family, we expect a continuation in funding for our increasing internationalization efforts as we plan on applying for Erasmus Key actions 2 and 3. So far we have successfully used the funds provided under KA1 (103 & 107) for the exchange of students and staff with programme and partner countries. The next stage we envision from 2021 until 2027 entails the use of funds to create joint research partnerships, joint degrees with trusted partner institutions, as well as form partnerships for cooperation and exchange of practices. Having experience in applying and using Erasmus+ funds from 2014, our institutions is looking into new ways of broadening our use of available funds, now that we have gained enough experience and broadened our partner list, as well as intensified our capabilities to successfully, but gradually use funds to propel and deepen our internationalization efforts.

Internationalization and modernization is one of four pillars of our institutional strategy, with an aim to internationalize both our students and staff through mobility projects, as well as other projects that result from international cooperation. By internationalizing, ZSB aims at bettering and improving our teaching and research standards. As a result, we hope to make our students active citizens who are successful competitors in the ever-changing international job's market.

Erasmus+ also fits into our second strategic goal, to ensure high quality of teaching. Erasmus+ programme supports it in many ways: by collaborating with other foreign institutions, having international staff and faculty incoming and outgoing mobilities, developing curricula in English language, offering and teaching an increasing number of courses in English language. All the before mentioned only improves the quality of our institution which reflects in teaching and research, as well as in the use of English as a second language. In order to welcome and treat incoming students as our own, all the practices and procedures are reviewed to facilitate students from wherever they come. Our expanding list of partners includes institutions from programme countries (Spain, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Serbia, Turkey, North Macedonia) and partner countries (Brazil, Albania, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro). Full academic recognition is given to all incoming students who are treated as our own students, for study/placement periods under the European framework, having the tuition waived and transcript of records delivered in a timely manner. Our third strategic goal, to innovate for the purpose of sustainable development, is something we want to achieve partly through Erasmus+ programme. By increasing international cooperation, we hope to spark innovation through collaborative work, exchange of ideas, student and faculty/staff projects, and through mobilities to experience it first-hand. Our last strategic goal deals with improving research through joint projects and collaboration with both academic and non-academic institutions, supported by both Erasmus+ and our institution.

Universities of Applied Sciences in Croatia are focused on the practice, rather than theory, aiming to serve the needs of local workforce. Therefore, objectives and needs of local companies are closely monitored in order to educate their future employees.

Zagreb School of Business has a number of well-established Erasmus and other cooperation agreements, and focuses on the quality of those agreements rather than the quantity. When considering new partner institutions and signing new agreements, the following is taken into consideration: comparable curricula, the fields of study and number of courses or modules provided in English, and potential reciprocity in mobilities based on the forecast of demand. The evaluation should result in a beneficial partnership relationship. When renewing existing agreements the statistics are checked (students/teacher exchange) as well as the qualitative facts: how well does the mobility procedure work, how fast the transcript of records and other documents are delivered. Student feedback is also taken into consideration as well as the feedback received from our departments.

European programs and projects will continue to be one of our main strategies for internationalization. The local demand for workforce strongly emphasizes other parts of the world. ZSB has already several partner universities in Erasmus+ partner countries outside of Europe, mainly in South America (Brasil). In the near future the plan is to create stronger networks in that area and expand to new areas, mainly China.

ZSB's objective is to increase the mobility of teachers as well as the mobility of students in all cycles we provide (1st and 2nd cycle). ZSB is committed to offer male and female students and staff, as well as disabled students and staff, equal opportunities to participate in LLP or other international activities. Our aim is to either remove or at least decrease the obstacles which may prevent students and staff members from participating in mobility activities. Students are equally encouraged to participate either in studies or training abroad whichever suits better for students curriculum and his/her own ambitions.

Our internationalization strategic goals are increasing student and staff participation in mobilities, projects and collaboration activities through KA1, KA2, and KA3. Also, we plan to increase the quality of our institution through increased student involvement, using different teaching methods and practices that came from collaboration activities to better teaching quality, support innovation through Erasmus+ projects and promote environmentally friendly practices by raising awareness, choosing green partners and using renewable resources and recycled and reused materials. The following actions are a few ways of operationalizing internationalization strategic goals:

Education:

Enhance employability and student communications skills by participating and actively encouraging both incoming and outgoing SMS and SMP student mobilities / Encourage lifelong learning through partnership with Public Open University Zagreb, its founder, and through projects with domestic and international partners / Support incoming and outgoing students financially and logistically / Encourage the development of joint degree programmes with other institutions / Increase the number of classes taught in foreign languages in order to develop new study programmes to be taught in English language / Improve our offer in teaching classes in more than two languages currently used at Zagreb School of Business / Accelerate the creation of new Masters programmes to be offered in English language / Financially support academic staff during their international assignments to improve teaching experience and encourage teaching staff exchanges / Work on continuously updating, promoting, and improving educational offer for incoming international students / Organize student cooperation meetings by actively encouraging socialization of international students and participation student projects / Work with international partners to improve teaching materials, curricula, and administrative procedures / Offer introductory and advanced courses in Croatian language for international students as part of the Language centre programme / Organize international student orientation and welcome gatherings / Attract international students with unique programmes and curricula / Improve collaboration efforts with schools in the region (Central and Eastern Europe) / Better orientate our students in preparation

towards international opportunities / Teach and promote innovative courses in emerging fields related to our major areas of study to increase student competitiveness on the job market

Science:

Encourage academic staff and student research by continuing to organize a conference every two years with emphasis on covering all our fields of study / Promote staff and student participation in international conferences and conventions by continuing to financially support such efforts / Support professional and scientific publications of school's academic staff and students to increase institution's visibility and impact / Support teaching and scientific mobility of the faculty / Suggest measures to strengthen collaborations with other institutions in the same field, and to encourage interdisciplinary projects / Support international projects in innovation / Zagreb School of Business partners with schools in related fields based on recommendations of its staff and their previous experiences and collaborations with other institutions.