

**Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027**

**Call 2021**

**Higher Education Mobility  
Handbook**

**For Higher Education Institutions  
(Grant Applicants and Beneficiaries)**

**Version 1**

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Purpose of this handbook**

The successful implementation of Erasmus+ mobility in the field of higher education in the past programming period 2014-2020 has built a good basis to further develop the higher education mobility scheme aiming at more relevant skills for a wider range of participants. The design of the new opportunities was guided by the recent policy developments and priorities – more digitalisation of higher education, more inclusion, more interconnectedness and more environmental sustainability. The novelties also reflect the three horizontal objectives of the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 – digital Erasmus+, inclusive Erasmus+ and green Erasmus+.

This handbook elaborates the novelties of the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 in the field of higher education mobility and its objective is to support higher education institutions (HEIs) in the implementation of these novelties.

It provides practical information and advice for HEIs and mobility consortia (Erasmus+ grant applicants and beneficiaries), in complement to the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, for the call 2021 and has to be read together with this Guide.

## **1.2 Introduction to the novelties of the KA131 higher education mobility action**

The guiding principle for introducing new opportunities in Erasmus+ higher education mobility (the KA131 action of the Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027) was the need to make mobility opportunities more accessible to students and staff who were previously not able to benefit from them due to, for instance, the nature of their study programme, their caring responsibilities, their employment status as working students, their disability or others. In addition, they had to be adapted to the digitalisation of teaching and learning that is taking place in Europe's higher education and the rapid growth of virtual exchanges. Besides that, the aim was also to expand opportunities whenever the previous programme had placed certain restrictions (such as mobility length requirements or the rule on earliest possible time for a student to benefit from mobility etc.).

The handbook concentrates on the following new features of KA131 student and staff mobility:

- Blended mobility
- Blended intensive programmes
- International mobility
- Doctoral mobility
- Digital skills mobility for staff

The conceptual framework of the existing mobility activities has been maintained while the new opportunities outlined above have been added to the existing mobility activities. The four standard mobility activities (student mobility for studies or traineeships and staff mobility for teaching or training) continue under KA131. Therefore, novelties such as blended mobility or international mobility do not lead to new mobility activity types but are novel features of mobility that enhance flexibility, accessibility and relevance of the mobility experience.

## **2 KA131 blended mobility and blended intensive programmes**

The Erasmus+ programme for the period 2021-2027 supports, even more than its predecessor, the take-up of digital technologies, innovative and open pedagogies in education and training. The programme is also designed to reach out to a larger and more diverse group of students and staff in higher education, for example by a greater use of information, communication and technology tools, as well as a combined use of physical mobility, online learning and cooperation. Ultimately, this shall lead to the development and improvement of digital skills and competences of students, teaching and administrative staff participating in the programme.

While long-term physical mobility is strongly encouraged, the higher education mobility action offers a more flexible physical mobility duration to ensure the programme is accessible to students from all backgrounds, circumstances, study fields and study levels.

### **2.1 Blended mobility**

#### **2.1.1 Definitions and concepts**

Blended learning activities are a combination of virtual/online learning activities and physical learning activities. Blended mobility, therefore, is a combination of a physical mobility and a virtual activity (or component) before, during or after the physical mobility.

The objective is to *facilitate* collaborative online learning exchange and teamwork. For example, the virtual component can bring learners from different countries and study fields together online to follow online courses or work collectively and simultaneously on assignments that are recognised as part of their degree.

As a rule, any mobility that was previously an exclusively physical mobility can now be organised as a combination of a physical mobility abroad and of a learning period online either before or after the physical part.

For students, study mobility and traineeship mobility are available in blended format. In addition to students, teaching and administrative staff in higher education institutions can also use blended mobility for teaching and training purposes.

Under the new Erasmus+ programme, there are two ways of organising blended mobility under KA131 from the perspective of the grant beneficiary:

1. Sending an individual student or staff member on a bilateral blended mobility organised like any traditional student and staff mobility, only in a blended format.
2. Organising a group blended learning experience called a blended intensive programme, where groups of students or staff jointly participate in an intensive blended learning and training programme.

From the perspective of the participant, there are also two possible scenarios of blended mobility with different durations of physical mobility:

1. Blended mobility with long-term physical presence abroad – minimum 2 months physical presence abroad complemented by any volume of virtual learning before or after the physical mobility (for students on study mobility or traineeship mobility)
2. Blended mobility with short-term physical presence abroad - minimum 5 days and a maximum of 30 days abroad complemented by any volume of virtual learning before or after the physical mobility (for students on study mobility or traineeships, or staff mobility whereby the physical part ranges from 1 to 60 days). This can take place within a Blended Intensive Programme or an alternative short programme.

### **2.1.2 Target group**

Blended mobility, in the same way as a fully physical mobility, is open to all potential participants, but the blended short-term student mobility is primarily targeted at those who have reasons not to go on a fully physical long-term mobility.

Blended mobility can be any mobility (both long-term and short-term), but the novelty in the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 is the short-term blended student mobility. This opportunity should be taken up in particular by those students who cannot go on a long-term physical mobility. It is up to the higher education institutions to assess the appropriateness of students' choice and to make sure that long-term physical mobilities remain the norm.

Blended intensive programmes are not limited to those with fewer opportunities and are expected to attract a wider range of learners not only thanks to their short-term and blended character, but also thanks to the content and innovative way of providing education.

### **2.1.3 Funding rules and requirements**

Because there were no short-term physical mobility possibilities for students under Key Action 1 (mobility actions) in Erasmus+ 2014-2020, the rules related to duration and funding were revised to take account of a blended student mobility (and short-term doctoral mobility) option for Erasmus+ 2021-2027. For details, see the Programme Guide.

In contrast to the standard student mobility, as staff mobility has already been a short-term mobility in the previous 2014-2020 programme, no changes to the duration and funding rules were needed for a virtual mobility to be carried out as part of blended staff mobility.

## 2.1.4 Recommended workload

Concerning blended short-term student mobility, physical mobility must last between 5 days and 30 days and be combined with a compulsory virtual component. A blended mobility for studies as a whole must award a minimum of 3 ECTS credits (the physical and virtual component combined) while no additional requirements are set for the virtual component of blended mobility. Where the recognition of the awarded ECTS credits is not possible, for instance in the case of some doctoral programmes, the 3 ECTS credit feature should be considered as a guideline for workload.

It is recommended that a blended short-term traineeship mobility also awards a minimum of 3 ECTS credits, in case of a mandatory traineeship as part of the home curriculum. In case of a voluntary blended short-term traineeship, the minimum equivalent workload should be 3 ECTS credits.

## 2.1.5 Good practice when organising blended mobility

Good practices from projects funded by Erasmus+, such as Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education, can be a good source of inspiration and information for higher education institutions organising blended mobility for their students and staff. By visiting the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform, you will be able to learn from a wide range of projects that have produced, e.g., guidelines, concepts and materials that can support HEIs in organising blended mobility activities. Below are just two of the many project examples higher education institutions can benefit from.

### **Blended Mobility Project**

The project provides comprehensive guidelines and a toolkit to help design blended traineeship programmes. The project partners have developed an innovative concept for blended mobility where students from different institutions work on real life problems suggested by companies. Participants meet the companies physically twice for one week during the course of the blended mobility and the rest of the work on the assignments is done remotely online.

- Website: <https://blendedmobility.com/en>
- Toolkit: <https://blendedmobility.com/en/toolkit>
- Guide for setting up a BlendEd Mobility course:  
[https://www.dropbox.com/s/rt6vu3r1ssi5f6y/BM\\_CourseGuide\\_EN.pdf](https://www.dropbox.com/s/rt6vu3r1ssi5f6y/BM_CourseGuide_EN.pdf)

### **BEST+ (Blended Erasmus+ Staff Training)**

The BEST+ project provides a way for university staff members working in international relations to engage in staff trainings and to develop their competences. To achieve this goal, an efficient approach has been piloted, combining traditional on-site staff mobility with online activities.

An online platform was also developed to serve as a learning platform for staff trainings that can be shared by all university staff members working in international relations: <http://blendedmobility.eu>. BEST+ partners have created three courses on relevant topics, oriented to develop staff competences and enhance the quality of staff mobility.

- Project sheet and results: <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details/#project/2016-1-ES01-KA203-025594>
- Website: <http://blendedmobility.eu>

- Guidelines for learning material for blended staff mobility: [https://uni-foundation.eu/uploads/2018\\_Guidelines\\_Blended\\_Staff\\_Mobility.pdf](https://uni-foundation.eu/uploads/2018_Guidelines_Blended_Staff_Mobility.pdf)

## 2.2 Blended Intensive Programmes

### 2.2.1 Definitions and concepts

In addition to mobility of individuals, the KA131 also supports blended intensive programmes (BIPs), which encourage groups of higher education institutions to jointly develop programmes of learning, teaching and training for groups of students or teaching and administrative staff and use innovative and digital ways of delivering it.

The concept of the blended intensive programmes has been inspired by the intensive study programmes under the Erasmus+ Programme (2014-2020), the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013) and its predecessors, as well as the learning and training activities “short-term joint staff training events” and “blended mobility of learners”, piloted under the Erasmus+ Key Action 2 Strategic Partnerships action (2014-2020).

Blended intensive programmes aim to open up more opportunities for learners to take part in blended mobilities. They will foster the development of transnational and transdisciplinary curricula, as well as innovative ways of learning and teaching, including online collaboration, research-based learning and challenge-based approaches in order to tackle societal challenges.

BIPs can be part of the HEIs’ curricula or complementary to them. They can be an entirely new programme or they can be an enhancement of an existing programme with additional features such as the delivery mode in a blended format.

In addition, BIPs can be a good opportunity to reach out to new groups of students, for example those in study fields where mobility opportunities have been limited or those who lack confidence to go abroad alone, potentially paving the way for their participation in long-term individual mobility later in their studies.

### 2.2.2 Good practice with organising BIPs

Based on guidance from the intensive study programmes under the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education action and the experience with Erasmus intensive programmes pre-2014, the following good practice elements emerge:

- BIPs should have an **added value** compared to existing programmes or courses:
  - consisting of specialised content not taught somewhere else, or
  - not taught/delivered in this way somewhere else;

- enable the students or staff to gain new perspectives on the topic being studied.
- They should encourage **transdisciplinary** and **multinational** teaching and training and benefit from special learning and teaching conditions not available in a single institution.
- They should ensure transnational participation: individual participants or groups from at least three countries.
- They may include **challenge-based** learning where transnational and transdisciplinary teams work together (transdisciplinarity: linking more than one subject / study area).
- They have to comprise **full-time** workload for learners.
- They can allow members of the teaching staff to exchange views on teaching **content**, new curricula approaches, to test innovative teaching methods that could eventually become part of a newly devised joint course or curriculum in an international classroom environment.
- They should provide significantly new **learning** opportunities, skills development, access to information and to state-of-the art research results and other knowledge for the participating teachers and student/learners.
- The **ratio** of teaching/training staff to students/learners should guarantee active classroom participation.
- A **balance** should be kept between the participation of transnational and national students/learners and teaching/training staff.
- In addition to the learning outcomes on subject-related competences, it should help develop **transversal** competences.
- The number of teaching and training **hours** must ensure that the majority of time spent abroad is related to education and training, and not to research or any other activity.
- Participating institutions should plan to send a sufficient number of participants in order to ensure reaching the minimum requirement, even with cancellations/drop outs.

### 2.2.3 Different partnership roles

A blended intensive programme partnership is defined as follows in the Erasmus+ Programme guide:

*A blended intensive programme has to be developed and implemented by at least 3 higher education institutions (HEIs) awarded with an ECHE coming from at least 3 Programme Countries.*

*In addition, any other HEI or organisation located in a Programme or Partner Country may participate.*

The term "organisation" referred to in the above rule may, for instance, mean enterprises, NGOs or research organisations. They can also participate and receive participants for specific assignments and practical work and training during the blended intensive programme. Or they can send trainees as "invited staff from enterprises" to participate in the BIP.

The partnership can be formalised through a multilateral inter-institutional agreement, if the parties wish so. Once the institutions start renewing their inter-institutional agreements digitally via Erasmus Without Papers, the mobility of students for BIP will be included in the study mobility covered by these IIAs. The participating HEIs can divide the responsibilities and tasks between them.



What are the different roles in a blended intensive programme partnership?

- **Coordinating higher education institution:** This HEI, awarded with an ECHE, coordinates the organisation, receives and manages the organisational support for the blended intensive programme. The coordinating HEI is by default the receiving HEI (host) for the student and staff mobility, unless otherwise decided by the partnership. Other options include the situation where the coordinating HEI may be the sending HEI (in the case where the receiving HEI is another HEI from the partnership) or just be the coordinator without a role in mobility (where other partner HEIs assume both the hosting and the sending roles). There can be only one HEI coordinating the whole of the BIP.

There are two approaches:

- If the coordinating HEI applies as an individual institution, they are the applicant for Erasmus+ KA131 funding and become the grant beneficiary.
- If the coordinating HEI is a coordinator or a member of a mobility consortium, the consortium coordinator applies for KA131 funding on their behalf and the consortium becomes the grant beneficiary. The mobility consortium coordinator can be any type of organisation. The coordinating HEI can be any HEI in the consortium.
- **Receiving higher education institution:** This HEI, awarded with an ECHE, receives the BIP participants either at its premises or at a different venue/hosting organisation in the same country in which it is located. The receiving HEI has to be part of the blended intensive programme partnership. The coordinating HEI is by default the receiving HEI (host) for the student and staff mobility, unless otherwise decided by the partnership. The receiving HEI can also be part of the same mobility consortium as the coordinating HEI, if relevant.
- **Sending higher education institution /organisation:** Any HEI awarded with the ECHE. A sending HEI can be any HEI from the blended intensive programme partnership or outside it. It can be expected that the majority of participants come from sending HEIs which are part of the partnership. Invited staff can come from any organisation in Programme Countries. The coordinating institution can be a sending institution too if the venue of the activity is in another country.
- **Co-hosting organisation:** In addition to the (main) receiving HEI, there may also a co-hosting organisation. This organisation can be an enterprise, association or public body (in the same country) hosting participants for practical training as part of the programme. This organisation can also be an HEI.

## 2.2.4 Blended intensive programme participants

Participants in a blended intensive programme fall under two categories:

1. Participants attending the blended intensive programme to learn or be trained can be any:
  - Higher education students (EQF levels 5 to 8); or
  - Higher education staff (teaching or administrative staff).
2. Participants (involved in) delivering the programme can be:
  - Teachers and trainers from the receiving HEI;
  - Teachers and trainers who are incoming staff from other HEIs; or

- Trainers who are “invited staff” from non-HEI organisations such as enterprises, associations or research institutes).

The programme defines the minimum participation as follows:

*The minimum number of participants in a blended intensive programme is 15 (not including teaching/training staff involved in the delivery of the programme) in order for the programme to be eligible for funding.*

As a minimum, a BIP needs to involve 15 participants who go on an Erasmus+ funded physical mobility from sending institutions to the receiving institution to attend the programme. Additional students beyond the minimum 15 participants can join from any Programme Countries or could come from the coordinating (if in the same country as the receiving HEI) or receiving HEI. The local students from the receiving institution are not eligible for an Erasmus+ grant, as they do not take part in a physical mobility abroad and are therefore not counted towards the minimum of 15 participants. Additional participants could also come from HEIs in Partner Countries but as they will not be funded through Erasmus+ they do not count towards the minimum of 15 participants. .

The group of participants can be composed of students and staff (learners) in the same BIP.

While there is no maximum participation in terms of learners, the efficiency of learning and training and the organisation of the programme has to be taken into account when designing the blended intensive programme. As a guiding figure, under the Lifelong Learning Programme, the maximum number of students participating in an intensive programme was 60.

As the coordinating HEI receives the Erasmus+ funds for organising the programme, the participants must not pay tuition/course fees. The organisers may, however, charge fees for extra-curricular activities, such as cultural visits, not directly related or relevant to the topic of the programme.

### **2.2.5 Quality assurance in blended intensive programmes**

The quality of the programmes is ensured by the recurring project life cycle during award, implementation and reporting, but not during the application stage (as in other actions).

During KA131 project implementation, the NAs may monitor the implementation of programmes.

At the final reporting stage, the grant beneficiary will report on the implemented blended intensive programmes as part of the final report. The assessment of the final report will therefore take account of the successful implementation of the programme(s). If programmes are badly implemented, it will be reflected in the final score of the KA131 project and negatively influence the future grant allocations for this action to recurrent beneficiaries. This in turn should create a virtuous circle to encourage good practice and successful achievement of the planned blended intensive programmes.

## 2.2.6 Overview of necessary steps from the idea to the closing of the project

- **Idea:** An HEI, either individually or as part of a mobility consortium (in this case together with the consortium coordinator), develops the idea of a blended intensive programme in terms of content, target audience and partnership. This is the coordinating HEI. The concept development requires the cooperation between the international office and the faculties/departments, where a person will be assigned as blended intensive programme coordinator.
- **Partner search/participants:** The coordinating HEI finds partner HEIs in at least two other Programme Countries, the minimum configuration to receive Erasmus+ funding for the organisation and delivery of the programme. The coordinating HEI has to make sure that, together with the partner HEIs, they will have enough Erasmus+ or other funds to cover the mobility grants for the minimum number required of the BIP's participants who are learners (not teachers or trainers ensuring the delivery of the programme). In the case of mobility consortia, the coordinating HEI who is a consortium member will need to coordinate the funding and management issues with the consortium coordinator.
- **Funding of the programmes:** The coordinating HEI submits a funding request for organisational support for the planned blended intensive programmes to its Erasmus+ national agency under the annual call for the KA131 action, either as an individual HEI grant application or as part of a mobility consortium grant application. The national agency will solely use the criterion of management capacity to check whether or not to award the organisational support funds to the applicant ("Does the HEI correctly estimate its capability and capacity to organise this programme?").
- **Mobility grants:** On their part, the sending HEIs include in their overall KA131 grant application to their national agency the anticipated demand for mobility grants for students and staff to participate in one or more BIPs (see the two steps above). For student mobility for studies and for staff mobility for teaching regarding mobile participants in BIPs, inter-institutional agreements have to be signed with the receiving HEI before the mobilities take place.
- **Grant award:** The coordinating HEI is informed about the awarded funding for organisational support and the number of granted BIPs (either directly by the national agency or through the consortium coordinator, if relevant).
- **Contract:** A grant agreement for a KA131 project is signed between the Erasmus+ grant beneficiary (individual HEI or mobility consortium) and the national agency. Funding for organisational support for the granted blended intensive programmes is included in the overall project grant, each programme being identified with an identifier in the budget of the grant agreement.
- **Project data:** After the grant agreement signature, a KA131 project is created in the IT Beneficiary Module (BM). Within such a project, each granted blended intensive programme is listed as a separate activity. This allows the beneficiary (coordinating HEI or consortium coordinator together with the coordinating HEI) to manage the BIP and related data and to report on its achievement.

- **Organisation:** The partnership develops, prepares and organises the blended intensive programme. The coordinating HEI supervises and reports on the delivery of the physical and the online activities.
- **Mobilities:** The sending HEIs enter the mobilities of the blended intensive programme participants in their respective granted projects in the BM and link them to the relevant BIP (to be selected from the active BIP list in BM). As a result, the beneficiary/coordinating HEI will see the incoming participants listed as part of the blended intensive programme data and will have direct access to their participant reports.
- **Reports:** After the blended intensive programme has taken place, the beneficiary (coordinating HEI or consortium coordinator together with the coordinating HEI) reports in the interim and final beneficiary report on the achievement in terms of funding and in the final report on the achievements related to the content and cooperation arrangements within the partnership.

In the following sections, the details of these steps are explained.

### ***2.2.6.1 Application for funding***

Erasmus+ funding for blended intensive programmes consists of organisational support and mobility support. Funding has to be requested in a distributed manner by the involved HEIs according to their role through the KA131 grant application:

- The coordinating higher education institution applies for organisational support for each blended intensive programme as part of its overall grant application;
- The sending higher education institutions in Programme Countries apply for mobility grants for their students and staff as part of their overall grant application;
- The receiving higher education institution in Programme Countries applies for mobility grants for invited teaching/training staff from enterprises/organisations as part of its overall grant application.

The coordinating HEI can be also a sending HEI if it is different from the receiving HEI and/or located in a different country. If the venue is located in the same country, the support for in-country mobility has to be borne by the HEI or participants, but not by Erasmus+ funds.

The coordinating and receiving HEIs can jointly organise accommodation and catering, as well as local transport and other activities for all or part of the participants. They can charge participants for these services (excluding tuition fees). The use of the services will, however, not be mandatory for the participants.

The details of the application are provided below.

An institution can apply for organisational support for any number of distinct BIPs in one project cycle, however, the number of requested and granted blended intensive programmes has to be proportional to the organisational capacity of the coordinating HEI.

However, an HEI can apply for only one edition of the same BIP (with the same title, learning outcomes and partnership composition) per call year. Coordinators can reapply under the following call for the same BIP in order to receive funding for it.

If the same BIP (with the same title, learning outcomes and partnership) is organised more times during the same KA131 project under call 2021, (including a rotation of the coordinator), it will not be eligible to receive additional Erasmus+ funding and therefore will not be recorded in the programme support tools (Beneficiary Module). In the latter case, however, the participants of the additional BIP editions are sent to the receiving HEI through blended short-term mobility and recorded as such. "Zero grant" BIPs are not envisaged for the moment.

#### **2.2.6.1.1 Application by the coordinating HEI**

The coordinating HEI applies for funding for the organisational support for one or several distinct blended intensive programmes under KA131.

The applicant indicates in the KA131 application form for each requested BIP the indicative/estimated number of participants, which are not teachers/trainers involved in the delivery of the programme, i.e., the number of learners expected to participate (students or staff). The minimum number of these participants has to be 15. There is no maximum number as such but funding is capped (see below).

The indicative number of participants will be used by the NA to award funds for the organisational support of the BIPs to the grant beneficiary. It can be amended (adjusted) collectively at the interim reporting/funding redistribution stage or through an individual grant agreement amendment. The organisational support sum for the programmes is calculated as 400 EUR per participant, with a minimum of 15 participants (i.e., a minimum of 6,000 EUR), up to a total of 8,000 EUR (i.e. the funding is capped with 20 participants).

In this action, organisational support for BIPs is intended to cover costs related to the preparation, design, development, implementation and follow-up of the programme and delivery of virtual/remote activities as well as the overall management and coordination. Costs may include: production of documents or educational material, rental of rooms, rental of equipment, field trips, excursions, communication activities, translation and interpretation, preparatory visits and administrative tasks.

#### **2.2.6.1.2 Sending HEIs and HEIs funding mobility participants**

The prospective sending HEIs or receiving HEIs, located in Programme Countries, should include the following categories in their funding request of mobility grants to participate in a blended intensive programme:

- Participants (students and staff) sent from the sending HEI;
- Invited teaching/training staff by the receiving HEI from enterprises/organisations delivering the programme.

In the KA131 application form, under mobility activities, the estimated number of participants (students, staff) participating for learning or training purposes must be filled in under the following activity types:

- Students: “Student mobility for studies”
- Staff (learners): “Staff mobility for training”

The estimated number of teachers/trainers involved in delivering the programme must be filled in under the following activity type:

- Staff: “Staff mobility for teaching”

### **2.2.6.2 Venue**

The programme states as follows:

*The physical activity can take place at the receiving HEI or at any other venue in the country of the receiving HEI.*

A venue outside the receiving HEI can for example be a seminar hotel or accommodation during a field trip, a research institution, an enterprise or any other organisation that provides benefit to the blended intensive programme and helps participants achieve the expected learning outcomes.

### **2.2.6.3 Identifying the BIP and participants - encoding in the IT system Beneficiary Module**

The Beneficiary Module (BM) will display the list of granted blended intensive programmes with their Blended Intensive Programme ID (counter) and the number of participants (learners) as part of a KA131 project.

The beneficiary will need to enter the following data for each BIP:

- Title of the blended intensive programme.
- Type of participants targeted (students, staff).
- Subject/topic of the programme.
- Objectives and description of the programme
- Learning and teachings methods and expected learning/training outcomes
- Virtual component description
- Field of education targeted (students)
- Education level targeted (students)
- Start and end date of the physical activity
- Number of ECTS credits awarded
- Main teaching/training language
- City of the venue

BIP partnership and the roles of each partner. The eligibility rule for a blended intensive programme partnership (3 HEIs minimum) is checked in the BM before a mobility can be encoded by the sending HEIs.

When encoding the blended mobility of the mobile participants, the sending HEI selects the blended intensive programme from a list in BM (and thus the related receiving HEI). Teaching mobility can be blended or only delivered in a physical mode. The encoded mobilities will be visible to the coordinating HEI and listed as part of the BIP's data in the BM.

#### ***2.2.6.4 Interim reporting***

During the interim reporting stage, the number of blended intensive programmes funded and the number of participants (learners) and the resulting funding can be adjusted (increased or decreased).

KA131 funds cannot be transferred from mobility grants to organisational support for BIPs but require a grant agreement amendment based on the beneficiary's request in the interim report. However, vice versa, unused BIP organisational support may be transferred to mobility grants.

#### ***2.2.6.5 Final reporting***

As a precondition for submitting the final report, the blended intensive programme has to be eligible. The following three eligibility criteria for a BIP, defining the minimum set in terms of participation, have to be fulfilled:

1. Minimum number of **countries**: 3 Programme Countries;
2. Minimum number of **institutions**: 3 HEIs from the countries above;
3. Minimum number of **participants**: 15 participants (on a funded Erasmus+ mobility and not involved in delivery of the programme).

In concrete terms, the blended intensive programme is ultimately validated if the minimum number of participants (learners) is completely and correctly encoded and if these participants have submitted their participant report. The first two criteria above are already the precondition for encoding the participants.

The beneficiary, in cooperation with the coordinating HEI in case of a mobility consortium, will report succinctly on the achievement of the Blended Intensive Programme.

## **3 KA131 international mobility**

### **3.1 Introduction and definitions**

The classic Erasmus scheme goes international, by mainstreaming international mobility into the existing higher education mobility framework that has proven its worth.

“International mobility” is the mobility of students and staff between Programme Countries and Partner Countries. “Partner Countries” means the “third countries not associated to the Erasmus+ programme”, which is the official term. ‘Outgoing’ (mobility) means going from Programme Countries to Partner Countries, ‘incoming’ (mobility) means going from Partner Countries to Programme Countries.

Erasmus intra-European mobility (the KA103 action under Erasmus+ 2014-2021) has already been supporting aspects of worldwide mobility, as it has also included mobility to and from outermost EU regions, as well as Overseas Countries and Territories associated to the EU. At the same time, more Partner Countries have joined the group of Programme Countries. After the first international mobility and cooperation within the TEMPUS programme, the 2004-launched Erasmus Mundus programme funded mobility within closed international consortia of HEIs, while International Credit (and Staff) Mobility (KA107 under Erasmus+) was opened up to many more institutions individually. In addition, International Credit Mobility (ICM) action received KA103 funds for outgoing student mobility at bachelor and master level to certain development cooperation countries, which were non-eligible for ICM funding; a first sign of the possible complementarity and synergy between the two schemes.

The international opening of Erasmus+ higher education represents a new stage in the development of international mobility and related cooperation as from 2021 onwards all ECHE holders by default will have the possibility of engaging in international mobility.

### **3.2 The international opening of KA131**

In the 2020 European Commission’s communication on the European Education Area, the international dimension occupied an important place. The Commission stated how changes in the global area called for strengthening the EU’s role as a global player, including in education. ‘High-quality international cooperation in education and training’ was underlined as ‘essential for the achievement of the Union’s geopolitical priorities’<sup>1</sup>.

In fact, global challenges require global experience, while at the same time require the participation of students and staff in international mobility opportunities by ensuring the access to such opportunities for all HEIs.

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<sup>1</sup>Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on achieving the European Education Area by 2025: COM(2020) 625 final



International student and staff mobility under KA131 shares the well-established objective of the action towards achieving skills development and institutional capacity in the Programme Countries.

The **objective** of opening KA131 to international mobility is twofold:

1. On the one hand, it will give more opportunities to students and staff to have an international experience and acquire relevant forward-looking competences, skills and knowledge worldwide; such education and training experiences are instrumental in gaining global perspectives and insights to enable individuals and organisations to address global challenges.
2. On the other hand, it will enable higher education institutions to establish long-term sustainable international cooperation with partner institutions of their choice.

The following are the **main features** of international mobility in KA131:

- All HEIs holding the ECHE have the possibility of carrying out international mobility and to do so every year of the programme.
- All students and staff of these HEIs have the possibility of going on mobility to all countries worldwide (any Partner Country in the world – Regions 1 to 14).
- The grant rates of international mobility in KA131 are aligned with or based on those of KA107/ICM except for regions 5 and 14 for which the rates have been aligned to the intra-EU mobility rates.
- In the first call year of the new programme, only outgoing international mobility is eligible.
- The international mobility budget is capped at 20% of the latest awarded project grant and should involve several international partners within a diversified geographical mix.

In concrete terms, that means:

At the level of individuals, all types of learners from any study cycle can participate in international mobility.

At the level of institutions, international mobility, is becoming accessible to all ECHE holders in a non-competitive way, by being built into their KA1 grant applications. HEIs can apply for funding every year, for every call, and thus ensure stable funding for international mobility. HEIs are encouraged to diversify their offer of destination countries, partner HEIs and other host organisations.

The **quality** of international mobility is ensured by the proven quality elements carried over from the KA131 predecessor scheme (KA103) and by the established good practices of implementing KA107/ICM. On the one hand, this includes KA103 elements such as a past performance-based grant allocation policy, ECHE monitoring and a flexible grant system including interim reporting/funding redistribution mechanisms. On the other hand, KA107 and its beneficiaries since 2015 have gained experience with international inter-institutional agreements, ensuring adherence of Partner Countries' HEIs to the ECHE principles, building project-based strategic partnerships to perform international mobility of all types, and other practical aspects, such as visa handling.

The main difference between KA131 and KA107 is the priority focus of international mobility which follows the logic of the source of funding and is therefore primarily internal EU development of skills for KA131 and external cooperation and aid for KA107 (cfr. specific section below).

### 3.3 Target groups

At institutional level, international mobility helps all HEIs holding an ECHE, by using funds individually or through mobility consortia, to build up or strengthen their capacity to act with international partners and enrich their educational and training offer to students.

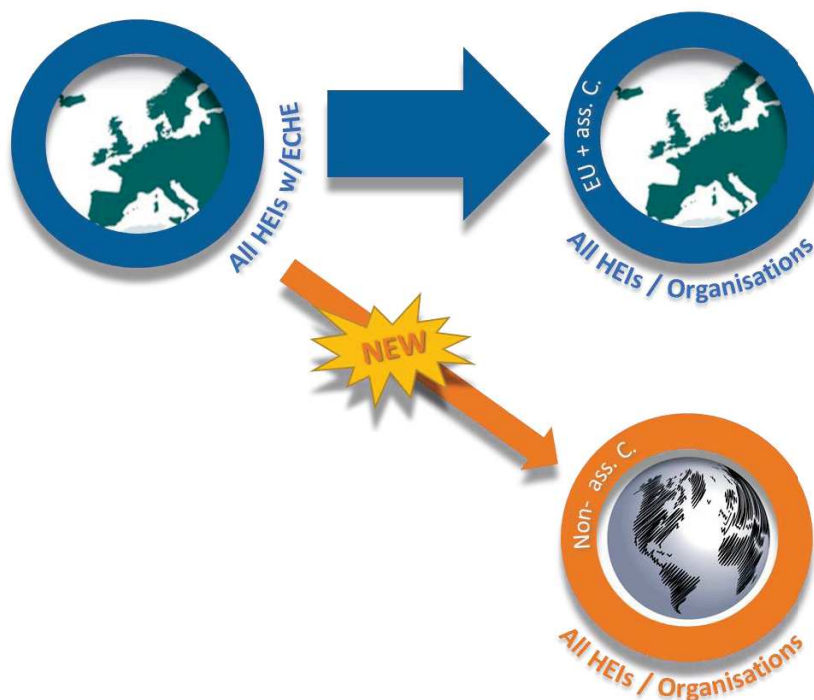
The main target groups benefiting from international mobility in KA131 are the following:

- Higher education students and staff in HEIs in Programme Countries in terms of skills development and experience.
- Higher education students and staff in HEIs in Partner Countries, in terms of internationalisation at home and cooperation opportunities.

### 3.4 Activities undertaken in international mobility

All outgoing mobility activities are eligible (student mobility for studies and traineeships as well as staff mobility for teaching and training).

The graphic below gives a schematic overview of the international opening of KA131 (“assoc. C.” mean third countries associated to the Erasmus+ Programme, “non- assoc. C.” means third countries not associated to the Erasmus+ Programme).



International mobility is open to any Partner Country (Regions 1 to 14). Beneficiaries are encouraged to send participants to several countries and these countries are expected to be from the widest geographical area, if possible.

As **blended intensive programmes** can only be coordinated by HEIs in Programme Countries (who receive the organisational support funds for the programmes) and have to take place in Programme Countries, HEIs in Partner Countries can take part in such programmes at their own costs. Their participation does not count towards the minimum number of partners nor participants (learners).

### **3.5 Implementing international mobility**

The opening of KA131 to international mobility entails that up to 20% of funds awarded to each mobility project by the NAs may be used by the beneficiary to fund mobility activities from Programme to non-associated third countries (Partner Countries). This will ensure sustainable international cooperation year after year, as well as greater involvement and accessibility.

The principle is that the budget for international mobility will be used to fund outgoing mobility of students and staff from the HEIs located in Programme Countries to HEIs located in Partner Countries.

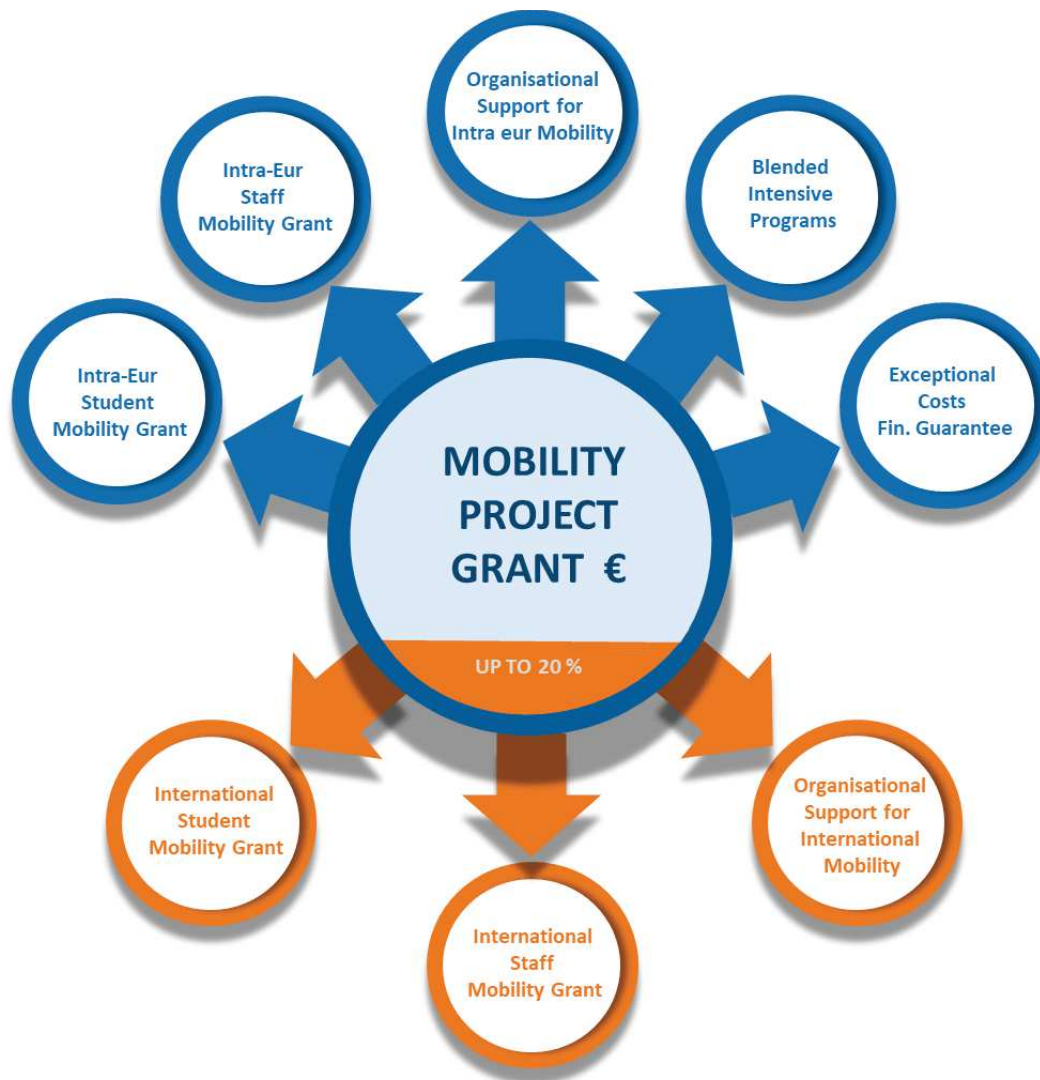
Therefore, the basic condition attached to international mobility is that up to 20% of the awarded KA131 project budget/grant in the latest grant agreement (initial agreement or an amendment) may be used for international student and staff mobility.

The KA131 project duration was harmonised with a fixed single duration of 26 months to accommodate international mobility, spanning two full academic years.

Mobility consortia will be more flexible with regard to the maximum grant share for international student and staff mobility. As the maximum is set per KA131 project and not per consortium member HEI, the share of the grant used for international mobility for individual member HEIs may exceed the maximum as long as the maximum is respected at the level of the mobility consortium project.

See the graphics below to illustrate the funding arrangements.

Graphic: KA131 international mobility funds



### 3.6 Funding of KA131 international mobility

The table below presents a synoptic overview of the applicable grant rates as set out in the Programme Guide. The origin of the grant rates is as follows:

- The individual support base amounts for long-term student mobility and for (short-term) staff mobility are those of call 2020 KA107/ ICM and those of the Programme Countries (for Regions 5 and 14).
- The individual support top-up amounts and the base amounts for short-term student mobility are the same as for mobility between Programme Countries and are adapted rates based on Erasmus+ 2014-2020 rates.
- The travel support rates are the same for the new Erasmus+ programme as a whole.

There is a small division of third countries not associated to the programme into macro-regions under KA131 in terms of funding rates but there are no separate budgets as it is the case of action funded by

EU external financial instruments. Therefore, there is no geographical political priority in KA131 expressed in terms of funding. Priority is bottom-up driven by the HEI strategy combined with horizontal top-down EU-level priorities (twin green and digital transitions, promoting the European way of life).

At mobility level, the beneficiary may apply the same flexibility of KA131 intra-European mobility to its international mobility:

- Full-zero grant mobility;
- Partial zero grant mobility (it is recommended to fund at least the average European duration in case the mobility is longer: five months for studies, four months for traineeships and five days for staff mobility; the minimum funding duration is the minimum mobility duration);
- In all cases, participants with fewer opportunities receive the grant for the full mobility duration.

The budget transfer rules of the grant agreement equally apply to international mobility funds.

**Table: Funding rules for KA131 international mobility, amounts in EUR**

Grant items	Conditions of eligibility	Student mobility	Staff mobility
<b>Long-term mobility</b>		<i>Per month</i>	
<b>Individual support – base amount</b>	<b>Outgoing</b>	700€ (Regions 1 to 4, 6-13) Programme Country rates and groups (Regions 5 and 14)	
<b>Individual support – top-up for fewer opportunities</b>	<b>Outgoing</b> – participants with fewer opportunities	250€	
<b>Individual support – top-up for traineeships</b>			
<b>Short-term mobility</b>		<i>Per day</i>	<i>Per day</i>
<b>Individual support – base amount</b>	<b>Outgoing</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> day of physical activity 15 <sup>th</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup> day of physical activity	70€ 50€	
	<b>Outgoing</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> day of physical activity 15 <sup>th</sup> -60 <sup>th</sup> day of physical activity (70% of the previous rate)		180€ 126€ Programme Country rates and groups (Regions 5 and 14)
<b>Individual support – top-up for fewer opportunities</b>	<b>Outgoing</b> – participants with fewer opportunities 5-14 days of physical activity 15-30 days of physical activity	<i>Per mobility</i> 100€ 150€	
<b>Long-term &amp; short-term mobility</b>			
<b>Individual support – green travel top-up</b>	The beneficiary HEI opted out of the travel support grant (which includes the green travel amounts) Or does not receive travel support	<i>Per mobility</i> 50€	

<b>Travel support – standard or green travel</b>	See Programme Guide, For Regions 5 and 14 the same conditions as for Programme Countries	See Programme Guide	See Programme Guide
<b>Exceptional costs for expensive travel</b>	Travel support < 80% of costs	Real costs 80% of eligible travel costs	Real costs
<b>Inclusion support for participants</b>	Participants in particular having a physical, mental or health related condition	Real costs 100% of eligible costs	Real costs

International mobility to Regions 5 and 14 have been integrated into the system of grant levels for Erasmus+ Programme Countries. This means that:

- Travel support, which is normally available to those traveling from Programme to Partner Countries is *not* available for student mobility from Programme Countries to Region 5 and Region 14 Partner Countries.
- However, all the financial means (top-ups for fewer opportunities, for traineeships, for green travel, higher individual support grants/travel support for those from outermost regions/countries) *are* available to those going to Region 5 and Region 14 Partner Countries.

Partner Countries from Regions 5 and 14 (which are only receiving countries) belong to the following groups, as per Programme Guide:

<b>Group 1</b> Partner Countries with higher living costs	Region 14: Faroe Islands, Switzerland, United Kingdom.
<b>Group 2</b> Partner Countries with medium living costs	Region 5: Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, Vatican City State.

### 3.7 Differences between KA131 and KA107/ICM

While International Credit (and Staff) Mobility (KA107 /ICM) continues, there will be no call in 2021 for KA171, the successor of KA107.

International mobility in KA131 will not replace ICM because their objectives/purpose are different and complementary.

Synergies and complementarities with KA131 international mobility funded with EU external policy funds (ICM – KA107 / KA171) will be possible, as the KA131 international opening will enable higher education institutions to use the funds for international mobility according to their own

internationalisation strategy and the specific needs of their students and staff, while not being limited to any study cycle and without geographical limitations.

For instance, higher education institutions from Programme Countries will be able

- to initiate their international cooperation and then complement it through ICM projects,
- to fund international mobility to countries or HEIs or host companies not covered by ongoing ICM projects, or
- to fund mobility as a complement to ongoing ICM projects.

The table below illustrates the main differences and complementarities between the two higher education mobility actions.

**Table: Comparison between international student and staff mobility under KA131 and ICM /KA107**

Dimension	Aspects	KA131 international mobility	ICM / KA107)
Why?	Objective	EU internal policy: European Education Area	EU external policy: Internationalisation of higher education, people-to-people contacts and – for some regions – development and cooperation.
What for?	Priorities	Focus on Programme Countries' capacity	Focus on Partner Countries' capacity
What?	Activities	Student and staff mobility	Student and staff mobility
Who for?	Participants	Outgoing students and staff from Programme Countries	Both incoming students and staff from Partner Countries and outgoing from Programme Countries, with incoming participants as a priority
Who for?	Student study cycles	Students from all study cycles. No restrictions.	For students from all study cycles, restrictions apply to outgoing student mobility of the first and second study cycle to developing countries
Who?	Coverage of the higher education landscape	All active HEIs holding the ECHE: 4800+	HEIs with successful applications: 1300 (individual HEI and mobility consortium applications)
Where (to)?	Geographical scope	All Partner Countries: HEIs to determine the geographical scope most relevant in the framework of their internationalisation strategy. No breakdown of budget per region. Diversification of destination countries encouraged.	All Partner Countries; covered by the EU external policy instruments (excl. Regions 5 and 14 – Region 12 had been excluded only for financial reasons in the previous programme period); breakdown of budget per region
How?	Funding sources	EU internal policy funds (EU budget heading 2)	EU external policy instruments (EU budget heading 6)
How?	Funding stream + Quality	Recurring, sustainable funding: based on quality of previous implementation (past performance); Simple application	Competitive funding; quality assessment of project-based application
How?	Choice of partners	During project implementation	At project application stage with the possibility of adjustments during project implementation
How much?	Grants	Same student and staff grant levels as KA107 for individual support except to Region 5 and 14; travel support; and higher top-up grant for students with fewer opportunities.	Students and staff receive individual support + travel support



### 3.8 Quality assurance in international mobility

International mobility is embedded and carried out within the KA131 quality framework, consisting of the following quality elements:

- Erasmus Charter for Higher Education

The Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) provides the framework of quality standards for mobility, including international mobility.

- ECHE guidelines

The ECHE guidelines provide explanations of ECHE principles for mobility and related good practices for their implementation.

- Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS)

The EPS of each participating HEI holding the ECHE sets out the HEI's institutional internationalisation strategy and how it intends to use the different elements of the Erasmus+ programme within its strategy, including international mobility. It is therefore the overarching document for the implementation of international mobility by the HEI.

- Mobility consortium accreditation

Mobility consortia describe in their consortium accreditation application how they intend to organise (international) mobility as a group of sending HEIs, in complement to the ECHE application for the individual HEI.

- Grant allocation policy

The grant allocation policy is based on past performance (quality, quantity) and on the KA131 grant application. All grant beneficiaries are accredited organisations.

- ICM Handbook (relevant parts)

Written for KA107, most parts also apply to KA131 international mobility.

- Monitoring tools

Monitoring tools (ECHE monitoring and systems' checks including monitoring), programme support tools (Beneficiary Module, Project Results Platform), participant and beneficiary reports are instruments to monitor the implementation at different levels and to collect the outcomes at individual and institutional levels.

Monitoring is a basis for past performance.

- Interim reporting

The interim reporting serves to redistribute funds between beneficiaries for optimum grant allocation and take-up where the funding need is highest.

- Final beneficiary report

The final report of a KA131 project is the main basis for past performance. It relates the project achievements reported to the strategy (EPS), planned quantitative activities (grant application and agreement) and quality standards of the accreditations (ECHE, mobility consortium accreditation).

## **3.9 Guidance for applicants and grant beneficiaries**

### **3.9.1 Application**

#### ***3.9.1.1 KA130 Erasmus accreditation for higher education mobility consortia***

If a mobility consortium intends to organise international mobility, through KA131 and/or KA171, it has to indicate it in the application for the Erasmus accreditation for higher education mobility consortia (KA130). All consortium accreditations have to be renewed for Erasmus+ post-2020 (call 2021).

Under call 2021, the KA130 application is to be submitted before submitting the KA131 grant application in order to be able to select the submitted KA130 application in the KA131 form. From call 2022 onwards, existing valid KA130 accreditations can be selected in KA131 application forms.

#### ***3.9.1.2 KA131 grant application for higher education mobility***

Erasmus+ grant beneficiaries will be able to use between 0% and 20% of their awarded KA131 mobility project budget/grant to fund international mobility. Given the higher grant rates for international mobility, the chosen budget share may not translate into the same share of mobilities.

In the KA131 grant application form, the applicant – an individual HEI or a mobility consortium – is requested to provide an estimated share of the to-be-awarded project grant that the applicant intends to use for international mobility (between 0 and 20%).

This projected share will not constitute a target nor will it be used in the grant award for the project. It will be displayed in the project budget in the grant agreement. It provides an indication to the NAs and the European Commission of the general level of interest in the uptake of international mobility.

The future beneficiary is not limited to the estimated share entered in the application form, if it is lower than 20%. In order to have a good projection/forecast at national and European level, the applicant is asked to indicate a share that is a realistic estimate of the capacity to be developed in managing international mobility within the KA131 project.

Within this project budget/grant share of maximum 20%, the funds for international mobility consist of:

- Mobility grants for outgoing students and staff to Partner Countries (all budget/grant items including exceptional costs for expensive travel);
- Organisational support for all international mobilities. The average organisational support per international mobility is the same as the average reported organisation support for the whole project.

Inclusion support for participants and for its organisation is not included in the budget share limitation.

One needs to be aware when determining the number of mobilities to request that on average international student and staff mobility grants are almost twice as high as intra-European mobilities.

### ***3.9.1.3 Erasmus Policy Statement***

The Erasmus Policy Statement is submitted as part of the ECHE application.

In general, when applying for a KA131 grant with the intention of organising international mobility, the Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS) has to mention international mobility as part of the HEI's strategy and provide objectives. If this is not the case, the EPS must be updated before international mobility starts and in consultation with the Erasmus+ National Agency.

## **3.9.2 Grant award and beneficiary grant agreement**

The NA awards the applicant a grant to its KA131 project based on quantitative and qualitative past performance, with the requested number of participants per activity type being the maximum number to be granted during initial grant allocation. The applicant turns into a grant beneficiary HEI (individually or a co-beneficiary in a mobility consortium), called beneficiary HEI in short. A grant agreement for the KA131 project is signed between the granting NA and the grant beneficiary organisation.

The new mobility features will be taken into account in the NA's grant allocation policy (when setting the average grant level), including the level of interest in international mobility at national (NA) level.

There will be no funding bonus for international mobility for the individual project based on the estimated indicated budget share. A good implementation of international mobility will have a positive impact on the grant award in future grant applications.

## **3.9.3 Implementation**

By the time of the signing of the beneficiary grant agreement, the HEIs who have not signed an inter-institutional agreement with each of the partner HEIs yet, should do so at this point, and in any case before the start of the first mobility. For the moment, inter-institutional agreements with HEIs in

Partner countries are not digitalised, but will become so as part of the European Student Card Initiative in the future.

### **3.9.3.1 International inter-institutional agreements**

Before any study and teaching mobility, HEIs have to sign inter-institutional agreements according to the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE), including international ones with their partner HEIs located in Partner Countries.

For details, please see the ICM handbook, page 23.

A new model international inter-institutional agreement is available on the Erasmus+ website<sup>2</sup>.

These are the requirements per activity type:

- Student mobility for studies: international inter-institutional agreements required.
- Student mobility for traineeships: international inter-institutional agreements may include support for organising traineeships in the partner HEI (laboratory, university hospital etc.).
- Staff mobility for teaching: international inter-institutional agreements required.
- Staff mobility for training: international inter-institutional agreements may include support for organising training in the partner HEI (job shadowing, etc.).

### **3.9.3.2 Newcomers and smaller HEIs**

HEIs wishing to engage in international mobility with no prior international mobility experience within Erasmus+ or outside the programme are recommended:

- To start with staff mobility to pave the way for student mobility or monitor student mobility;
- To join mobility consortia having experienced HEIs;
- To exchange with experienced HEIs with the help of the NA;
- To start with partner HEI or traineeship hosting organisations in countries geographically closer (Western Balkans, Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood, other European countries) to be able to better support participants in need (visits, quick return) or to start with internationally experienced partner HEIs.

### **3.9.3.3 Grant agreements for participants**

Participant grant agreements contain learning/mobility agreements that can be tripartite or four party based (see also ICM Handbook page 24 to 26, 39):

Student mobility for studies: tripartite learning agreement with the partner HEI.

Student mobility for traineeships:

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<sup>2</sup> [Template inter-institutional agreement](#)

- Tripartite learning agreement with a host organisation, including a partner HEI
- Four party agreement if the partner HEI organises the traineeship in a host organisation in the Partner Country

Staff mobility for teaching: tripartite mobility agreement with the partner HEI

Staff mobility for training:

- Tripartite mobility agreement with a host organisation, including a partner HEI
- Four party mobility agreement if the partner HEI organises the staff training in a host organisation in the Partner Country

The Online Learning Agreement (OLA) as part of the ESCI will be available at a later stage for international student mobility.

### ***3.9.3.4 Funding***

Mobilities are encoded in Beneficiary Module (ex-MobilityTool+).

The share of international mobility should not exceed 20% of the awarded project grant. BM will show a warning in this case. NAs will monitor the respect of this maximum share.

There is no more risk of double funding of the same mobility by KA131 and ICM than under Erasmus+ 2014-2020. Erasmus+ has allowed overlapping project periods and dual funding channels through individual HEI and mobility consortium projects and continues to do so. The beneficiary HEIs of KA131 and KA107/171 grants always have to ensure that the same mobility is not encoded in and funded by different projects.

### ***3.9.3.5 Preparation and support of participants***

For intercultural preparation, see the ECHE guidelines.

For preparation and support of participants, including visa issues, see the [ICM Handbook](#), page 28.

### ***3.9.3.6 Encoding of international mobilities in BM***

After grant award and grant agreement signature, the KA131 project is transferred from the NA's Project Management Module to Beneficiary Module where the beneficiary will access and manage it.

The encoding of an international mobility follows the standard procedure with the following differences:

- The beneficiary sets the data flag "International Mobility".
  - The grant rates and items will be adapted.
  - The minimum duration for staff mobility will be adapted.

### **3.9.3.7 Indicators in the BM**

The Budget page should show both mobility numbers and grants:

1. Awarded grant share:
  - Warning if > 20%
  - Strong warning if > 25%
2. Number of international mobilities (student mobilities outgoing, staff mobilities outgoing)

### **3.9.3.8 Interim reporting**

Project funds including for international mobility can be redistributed.

## **3.9.4 Final reporting**

For the final beneficiary report, the assessment of the implementation of international mobility follows the overall assessment criteria and methodology. The exceptions are the qualitative and quantitative elements below.

### **3.9.4.1 Questions in the qualitative narrative part of the final beneficiary report**

Questions:

- Explain the preference given to certain countries (Partner Countries).
- If relevant, explain the preference given to certain activity types in your international mobility.
- What positive and negative outcomes for participants and the institutions? What did you learn and could be improved?

### **3.9.4.2 Quantitative part: Flexibility and margin of tolerance**

If the reported project share exceeds the maximum share, the beneficiary can

- Explain the difference, if it is within the margin of 5% (i.e; <=25%) and if the project grant is small (<=10,000€);
- Otherwise explain the difference. The NA may cut the grant at project level if it considers the use of funds as excessive and/or not contributing to the main objective of skills development in Programme Countries. The assessment of the project may be negatively impacted.

The BM will indicate the different thresholds and display warning messages.

## 4 KA131 Doctoral mobility

The new doctoral mobility feature of student mobility will help better link the world of (higher) education and the world of research and innovation.

In essence, Erasmus+ KA131 doctoral mobility focuses on education and training while Horizon Europe's MSCA<sup>3</sup> doctoral activities focus on research and innovation, while both may carry out activities of the other area to a limited extent: MSCA allows teaching and Erasmus+ allows research cooperation and skills development.

To boost skills development, doctoral candidates will have more opportunities in the new Erasmus+ programme to do student mobility in the form of short-term stays abroad, in addition to long-term mobility.

Under the new Erasmus+ programme, doctoral candidates have the option to undertake a short-term study or traineeship mobility abroad with or without a combined virtual component, giving them even more flexibility to tailor their mobility to their specific learning and training needs.

This means that any doctoral candidate will be treated equally independently of their status (student or staff) and will have the possibility of both long-term and short-term stays abroad.

In the case where doctoral candidates take part in a blended intensive programme - be it specifically targeted for the doctoral level or not - the mobility must be undertaken as a blended mobility. This means that in case of a doctoral candidates' participation in such a programme, the virtual part is compulsory, as for any other learners (i.e., participants not involved in the delivery of the programme).

The details can be found in the Programme Guide. The table below provides a synoptic view of the new opportunities spelled out by their distinctive elements and eligibility criteria per KA131 activity type.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/node\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/node_en)

**Table: KA131 doctoral mobility for doctoral candidates as either students or staff**

Activity > Aspect V	Student mobility		Staff mobility	
	Studies	Traineeship	Teaching	Training
Doctoral mobility as doctoral candidates	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible if employed at HEI/organisation	Eligible if employed at HEI
Doctoral mobility as post-docs	n/a	Eligible, applying still as doctoral candidate	Eligible if employed at HEI/organisation	Eligible if employed at HEI
Main content of the mobility	Studying / learning; skills development; thesis research and cooperation	Receiving training for transversal skills and work/non-academic experience, research skills; thesis research	Teaching/providing training	Receiving training as staff member (multiplier)
Main objective of the mobility	Individual benefits	Individual benefits	Multiplier for the institutions involved	Multiplier for the institutions involved
Duration of physical activity abroad	Short-term: 5-30d Long-term: 2-12m	Short-term: 5-30d Long-term: 2-12m	Short-term: 1/2d-2m Long-term: n/a	Short-term: 2d-2m Long-term: n/a
Blended mobility funding	Same if blended or not	Same if blended or not	Same if blended or not	Same if blended or not
Blended intensive programme participation	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
International mobility	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible



## **5 KA131 Digital skills mobility for staff**

The higher education institutions should raise awareness among their students and staff about opportunities within the Erasmus+ programme to acquire and further develop relevant digital skills in all study fields, including Digital Opportunity Traineeships (DOT) for students and recent graduates to further develop or acquire digital skills.

Building on the success of the DOT, in the programme post-2020, teaching and administrative staff can also benefit from digital skills trainings through staff mobility for training to acquire relevant digital skills for making use of digital technologies in courses and for digitalising the administration, including digital mobility management.

Such staff training mobility should be flagged in the Beneficiary Module as “digital skills”.