

# Erasmus Policy Statement 2021-2027

Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (QMUC) specializes in early childhood education and care (ECEC), and the aim is to educate early childhood education teachers. Currently, the institution offers degrees at bachelor's and master's levels. QMUC's mission is to actively ensure children's needs and rights and make children's perspectives visible to society.

Participating in the Erasmus Program and other international cooperation is an integral part of QMUC's strategy. The strategy aims at strengthening international collaboration, both with higher education institutions and ECEC institutions. QMUC shall have R&D of high international quality relevant to the education, children, and ECEC institutions. QMUC shall have a leading position within the field of ECEC in Norway, and by engaging in collaborative projects and mobility with partners through Erasmus+ and other international networks, meet the needs of a diverse society with relevance both nationally and internationally.

QMUC has ambitions of being innovative and challenging the status quo of the field ECEC and participate in international knowledge development. One important means of realizing this is through the participation in Erasmus+.

The objective of continuing to partaking in Erasmus+ is to participate in different projects, both connected to mobility and collaboration. Through this participation, QMUC aims to achieve high-quality education and research and increased competence among participants.

Participation in Erasmus is not only valuable for QMUC, but should benefit all the participating partners. Results and new insights from Erasmus project should also benefit the wider public through different means. It is important to QMUC to be an active participant in societal discussions and participate with new knowledge, innovation, and development within the field of ECEC and promote the expertise to persons and institutions responsible for children. Project results should be sustainable, i.e. results continue to be used after the project period and/or tools/methods developed can be reused by others. In this way, we support the European Higher Education Area, as well as QMUC's international involvement.

A multicultural society demands knowledge and experience among teachers of other cultures and their views on children and childhood to meet the needs of children/families with diverse backgrounds in ECEC settings. For bachelor level students, it is important that practice in a local ECEC institution is an integrated part of the exchange. Through the practice, students get hands-on experience, it enhances the quality of their studies and they acquire work-life skills. We want spending time abroad to be the norm, but will continue to develop different 'internationalization at home' measures and develop digital mobility to reach non-mobile students and staff.

We want to secure access and inclusion for all and help to develop language skills and cultural understanding. At QMUC all students are welcome and the environment is characterized by an open and engaged dialogue on issues concerning worldview, basic pedagogical views, ethics, and values.

QMUC states in its strategy that the institution shall be at the forefront when it comes to developing and communicate research-based knowledge concerning children, childhood, and ECEC institutions. QMUC will actively take part in shaping tomorrow's ECEC institutions through educating its teachers with a research-based educational offers. We believe that exchange of staff and students (KA103 and KA107) –and high-quality support – will increase the learning outcome for the students by gaining new

experiences and knowledge. It will also increase the quality of our own teaching and research through new ideas, examples, and networks. Establishing long-standing partnerships within Europe and beyond makes it possible to work long-term and develop close ties between institutions and persons. Knowing the partners well makes communication easier and it is possible to support potentially worried/concerned mobile participants with information and knowledge.

It is important to QMUC that student mobility is not just a happening, but that the students are well prepared before departure, receive support during their mobility, and have opportunities to reflect on what they have experienced to deepen their learning upon return. QMUC strives to be diverse and inclusive and receiving international students and staff is an important part of that. Finding more ways to include international students in the institution's student environment is on the top of the agenda. Receiving visitors from partner universities (including under Erasmus+) adds to the international character of our education. Opportunities for academic and administrative staff through the Erasmus+ program gives inspiration and increases cooperation and development of best practices. Reports show that it also increases the staff members' job-satisfaction.

Together with partners, we will continue to address and follow-up pressing issues within the field of ECEC with the support of KA2 projects. Early childhood education is in the international spotlight, among all mentioned in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (goal 4) and in the Council's recommendation on high-quality early childhood education and care systems. Since QMUC's expertise lays within this field, it is important to be involved in KA2 projects, and potentially KA3 projects, to be able to participate in shaping tomorrow's ECEC offer.

KA2 projects give the institution access to networks and environments that can contribute with knowledge and competence that promote quality development in our education. We will promote and support calls for applications within Strategic Partnerships, Knowledge Alliances and Capacity Building Projects. With the field of ECEC being multidisciplinary, it is a given that the projects will be multidisciplinary in their nature. It is also crucial that the research and teaching are closely connected to and relevant to practice, and therefore, involving ECEC institutions in the collaboration projects is a prerequisite.

QMUC has so far not participated in KA3 projects, but has ambitions of applying for KA3 funding in the coming Erasmus+ period. Actively participating in shaping inclusion at a policy level is closely linked to the ambitions in QMUC's strategy.

QMUC will also look for synergies between EU programs and other funding opportunities/projects

**Target:** Improved quality and increased participation in the Erasmus+ program.

**Indicators:**

- 20% outgoing students and staff. The overall target for student and staff mobility is higher, since we also work with other programs and regions.
- Offer an international master within ECEC to attract the best students to the sector
- Develop Erasmus+ mobility opportunities for all master's programs
- Staff mobility should be an integral part of professional development
- Increased involvement in cooperation projects, both as a participant and coordinator.
- Increase intercultural learning by offering joint courses for incoming and local students
- Increased focus on civic engagement and career counselling for returned mobile students.

- Create alumni community to exchange knowledge, promote learning opportunities and possible collaboration with former students
- Establish international days with the aim of deepening knowledge on different issues.
- Continue to train selected staff members in project managing skills and intercultural skills (ranging from application writing skills to how to lead international projects)
- Continue to develop robust support systems and information material for R&D and internationalization
- More student involvement in research and innovation activities
- Continue to develop internationalization at home initiatives and look into opportunities for blended mobility

**Timeline:** Within the project period