

European Policy Statement – Dorset College Dublin

Participation in Erasmus+

Dorset College is a leading Irish independent third-level college offering a range of programmes from Computing, Business Studies, Accounting and Finance, Information Technology, Business Administration, Childcare, Montessori, Nursing Studies and Healthcare from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Our programmes are ECTS credit bearing and the College also comprises an English Language School. The College annually welcomes learners from over 64 countries worldwide. Dorset College has seen exponential growth in recent years and has built significantly on our global engagement objectives which the College sees as part of our strategic internationalisation and appropriate to future world challenges and opportunities.

The College aims to be global in its range of disciplines engendering a holistic educational and cultural experience. The College engages a diverse learner community through engagement with industry and the wider community where reciprocal, diverse and international engagement is crucial to the strive for best practice in educational delivery and overall excellence across the College.

The Higher Educational Authority (HEA) through The National Strategy for Higher Education 20301 (The Hunt Report) states that *“internationalization... includes...attracting more international students, making it easier for staff and students to study and engage in research abroad, making Ireland attractive to international staff, establishing more collaborative institutional links, internationalising curricula, developing trans-national education, and participating in EU programmes”*. Dorset College recognises that continued and increased learner and staff mobility will lead to flexible and diverse engagement with global issues and awareness of diversity and global engagement.

The Hunt Report outlined the policy and aspirations for international education in Ireland and through government supports in assisting educational institutes. Dorset College has benefited from an increase in international learners studying in Higher Education and EFL and the support has ensured internationalisation is a key priority for Dorset College as we continue to build our reputation in stated discipline priorities (business, computing and healthcare). Dorset College pursues international engagement and internationalisation within the context of key territories and partnerships with organisations and universities that reflect our mission and vision of an international campus with cultural mix and exchanges leading to key reciprocal engagements.

The College engages in internationalisation through:

- Key Engagements – with Education in Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, The IDA (Industrial Development Authority Ireland), The Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and consulates worldwide;
- Partnerships – Dorset College has in excess of twenty partnerships globally not only in the EU/EEA (France and Germany) but also in Korea, Turkey and Russia, India, Japan and Algeria;
- Inward Learner Mobility – Dorset College is committed to internationalisation building significant partnerships which sees over 500 semester abroad learners (inward mobility of learners) take our ECTS credit bearing programmes each year.

Existing strives for such internationalisation are visible in Dorset College through:

- Joint Ventures – existing partnerships and formal connections with HEIs overseas and joint ventures developing undergraduate and postgraduate programmes for 2022/2023;
- Staff Mobility – positive support for staff mobility with existing partners taking place on an annual basis.

Moreover, Dorset College recognises the role of global engagement within the overall institutional strategy as underpinning the strategy for innovation and internationalisation. The College has Four Key Strategic Pillars as part of the strategic internationalisation of the College and innovation namely:

1. *Learning Mobility* – to afford and support for greater mobility of its learners and staff enriching their experience and instilling a sense of global citizenship. Mobility will expose individuals and cohorts to professional and educational opportunities for learners, upskilling opportunities for staff and partnership opportunities for Dorset College and reciprocal contributions to teaching, learning, innovation and enterprise.
2. *Cooperation amongst organisations and institutions* – to pursue and further develop relationships with academic peers and industry experts regionally, nationally and internationally through formal and informal collaborative alliances and opening progression pathways for learners within the global environment within which we operate.
3. *Partnerships for Excellence* – to further develop partnerships seeking new opportunities to collaborate and work together as well as advancing mobility inward and outward from EU/EEA and Non-EEA countries of learners and staff where Dorset College will become a partner of choice.

4. *Transforming through digital Technology* – Dorset College has seen the digital transformation of education in 2020/2021 and will develop exciting innovations in digital culture and embed innovative approaches in its teaching and learning to maximise learner experiences and streamline technical solutions for mobility and inclusive education and shared values globally.

Dorset College sees internationalisation, innovation and a contemporary approach to education as core and fundamental in our drive for excellence in educational delivery. We benchmark nationally and internationally and participation in the Erasmus + project will ensure we sustain and grow our global participation through a strong international focus and awareness.

Strategy, objectives and impact

Dorset College's strategy on internationalisation sees full commitment to international collaborations and we have seen exponential growth in our cooperation among organisations and institutions and partnerships for excellence. The College is committed to expanding mobility globally and to attract learners and staff from overseas as well as send Dorset College learners and staff to receiving institutions.

Dorset College believes that cooperative and collaborative practices will see an increased capacity to participate constructively regarding internationalisation and related benefits to the global community. International experiences ensure excellence in education and employability. The College will actively support and encourage such exchanges insofar as such initiatives are compatible with our institutional strategic priorities in terms of discipline, the international dimension to curricula and the demand for inward and outward mobility for learners and staff.

As things stand Dorset College engages in joint international projects which promote learners and staff who can view the world from vantage points that reach beyond their own backgrounds to pool resources and talent building on existing relationships and creating new global partnerships. We see participation in the Erasmus + programme as furthering this objective for continued success and diversity of benefactors.

Through existing and future co-operations and partnerships Dorset College sees the creation of new mobility initiatives, both virtually and physically allowing for an international experience which promotes their academic, personal and professional development as well as intercultural competencies which is integral to future success.

Dorset College is currently moving, with existing trusted European partners towards an entrepreneurial, digital, global and ethical alliance consisting of a bottom-up network sharing a joint long-term development strategy with a commitment to excellence and common

European values. Participation in the Erasmus+ programme would be key part of this alliance building and would help to promote Dorset College as attractive for international learners and increase international competitiveness. In particular, this initiative if supported by Erasmus+, will bring invite innovation and change to shared academic communities, curricula, community impact and an international campus culture.

Key objectives include:

- Entrepreneurship
- Digital Transformation
- Global Engagement
- Ethical Citizenship

This alliance combines the efforts of Dorset College and our partners to boost innovations and entrepreneurship following an ethical path and code of conduct in all higher education domains and activities bringing up ethical and active citizens and running ethical and responsible organisations and increased global posterity. This integrated long-term strategy which the alliance is developing will foster diversity and inclusion promoting seamless mobility including virtual exchanges embedded across our programmes and shared deliverables.

Moreover, such an alliance will offer innovative and flexible curricula with a focus on transdisciplinary and quality driven learner experiences and Erasmus+ would compliment our endeavors and align with such strategies.

A key objective of the Dorset College strategy is to develop our staff through training and development opportunities which should include international experiences which would contribute greatly to professional development and the exchange of good practice ignited through exposure to diverse practices globally. Dorset College has actively participated in teaching exchanges particularly with the strong and active partnerships with EU universities from whom we receive learners inwards. Moreover, in recent years (2020) the College has seen a steady growth in staff training mobility (mobility inward) and would like to expand this staff training mobility outward thereby further opening up shared international best practice and personal networks to staff working in all areas of the College and empower them to build their knowledge and skills.

Dorset College has a vision to bring the best in the world to Ireland and to let the world see the best from Ireland with shared educational, cultural and professional acumen and experiences advancing the development of a global culture through the prism of education. The co-operation and mobility will provide learners and staff from Dorset College and collaborating organisations and universities to develop interpersonal, intercultural and life skills within and outside the classroom.

Through ongoing digital transformation and streamlining of systems Dorset College will operationalise the strategy for internationalisation and related mobility programmes and cooperation. Successful participation in international cooperation requires commitment to the preparation and monitoring of learners and staff, fulfilling the terms of institutional agreements and reporting on the outcomes of the programme.

We will appropriately publicise the partnerships and cooperation programmes to the relevant audiences and educational partners to raise awareness as well as providing information on our website, marketing brochures, social media channels as well as our Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle).

Indicators

Dorset College expects participation in Erasmus + will add value to our existing network of international partnerships and enable the creation of further partnerships and mobility of learners and staff engendering ongoing modernisation, innovation and creativity in our approach to education through dissemination and exploitation of strategic partnership internationally.

Mobility adds to the value of our academic offering and attainment levels. Further international mobility sees a marked improvement in participants' confidence, intercultural skills and professional opportunities by taking them out of their local areas and into an international environment. Participation in the Erasmus + programme will further enable Dorset College to immerse in exchanges of learners, staff and educational projects thus impacting a wider community. Participation will ensure a commitment to developing international networks and developing appropriate curricula and exchanges leading to best practice and mutual benefits

such as increased innovation, improved employability through academic experiences driven by digital transformation and social inclusion.

Dorset College would see participation in this programme as driving our commitment to internationalisation and mutual access to academic ECTS and cultural experiences thus strengthening cross-border collaboration and cooperation with a network of like-minded organisations and universities.

Part of the strategic objectives of the College is to attract a diverse community of learners thus expanding the experience and overall outcomes. We have already seen positive results from the immersion of international learners and semester abroad students in creating a multicultural campus where diversity and inclusion are key to an overall positive experience. Participation in a programme such as Erasmus+ will boost our already visible international profile and open up opportunities to more learners as well as enabling mobility outwards of Dorset College learners and staff.

For learner mobility inward, we have welcomed over 500 learners from partner universities in 2020/2021 and we welcome additional mobility inwards as the College continues to grow and pivot to a fully international campus. Participation in Erasmus+ in conjunction with our intention to participate in the European Universities initiative will see this mobility continuing and hopefully growing in 2021 and thereafter in line with appropriate resourcing from the College. Moreover, we see such a streamline approach to internationalisation as increasing our partnerships and digital transformation in line with international developments and learner needs.

We have welcomed staff and faculty mobility inward with over 20 members of a university partner spending time in Dorset College in March 2020 and members of Dorset faculty travelling (virtually) in 2021 to partake in international programmes of teaching and learning. We would like to achieve a 50% increase in staff mobility outward and inward in 2021 and further in 2022 as we see such mobility as key to our future as a leading provider of education.

As previously mentioned herein, Dorset College is part of an alliance with our partners to elevate European education and traditions and raise international visibility to a new level. Building on the concept that together we are stronger we see such key joint long-term development strategies as finely attuned to participation in the Erasmus+ programme.

Indicators of success will include quantitative and qualitative data showing how learners who are equipped, through participation in the Erasmus+ programme, with entrepreneurial, digital and global skills including intercultural competence, and ethical values instilled throughout the learner experience achieve successful outcomes; academically, culturally, personally and professionally.

As Dorset College is already accepting semester abroad learners through partnerships throughout Europe we would be in a position to accept our first participants on the Erasmus+ programme in Autumn 2020 pending successful application of the ECHE application.

As a small Higher Educational Institute, we will dedicate specific resources to the operation and implementation of Erasmus + programmes and additional support and resources to ensure full participation in such a programme. We have significant experience welcoming learners from over 64 countries annually and we would extend a bespoke and appropriate programme delivery to ensure successful outcomes.

Through further development of existing and future partnerships and related mobility inclusion in the Erasmus+ programme will unlock the potential to build on collective knowledge, expertise and diversity.