



**FESC REPORT ON
ERASMUS STAFF COMPETENCES**

2019



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“FRAMEWORK FOR ERASMUS+ STAFF COMPETENCES” SURVEY REPORT

About the report

The aim of the survey is to identify the key competences for staff involved in the administration of mobility processes.

The scope of the research **only includes administrative work and academic-administrative tasks** related to international student mobility, although departmental coordinators may have additional responsibilities that are solely academic. All categories of staff/roles included deal with student mobility in at least part of the mobility process (before, during and/or after mobility), for at least one type of student mobility (Incoming/Outgoing).

The key term in the project “**competence**” is based on the definitions on *EQF (European Quality Framework)* and *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning* and reflects the various components and its comprehensive meaning widely used in European education and training policies. The existing approaches refer to a few aspects of competences and do not include the full spectrum of skills related to quality student mobility.

Survey is the part of the Erasmus+ project “Framework for Erasmus+ Staff Competencies” (FESC), which is carried out by the consortium: Philipps University Marburg, University of Warsaw, Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen, Ghent University, University of Latvia and European University Foundation. The survey was developed in collaboration with all partners in the consortium and has been edited and improved in a joint manner.

Two surveys have been designed - one for each target audience - students and university administrative staff.

Report is divided into three parts - survey analysis of university administrative staff, survey analysis of students and comparative findings of obtained data.

Dissemination of the survey

Survey was disseminated by all consortium partners through different networks including the EUF coordinators list, EUF associate partners mailing list, EUF monthly newsletter, ESN International and other social media channels. Each university held a responsibility on survey dissemination to reach the target audience and collect relevant study data.

Survey platform: SurveyMonkey

1. SURVEY ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

The target of the survey is the higher education staff involved in organising and administering student mobility. The survey investigates elements connected to staff competences, services provided and processes and tools in place for conducting quality student mobility.

The survey was composed of 5 parts: Individual information, General Characteristics, Communication, Supervision and Support, and Competence Development and had a range of the following question types: open-ended, closed-ended, rating scales, multiple choice, likert scales. Overall, 332 respondents have agreed to take part in the survey and 318 respondents have indicated their gender. Accordingly, the gender composition consists of 245 female (70%), 72 male (22.6%) and 1 not identified (0.3%) representatives.

Country representation

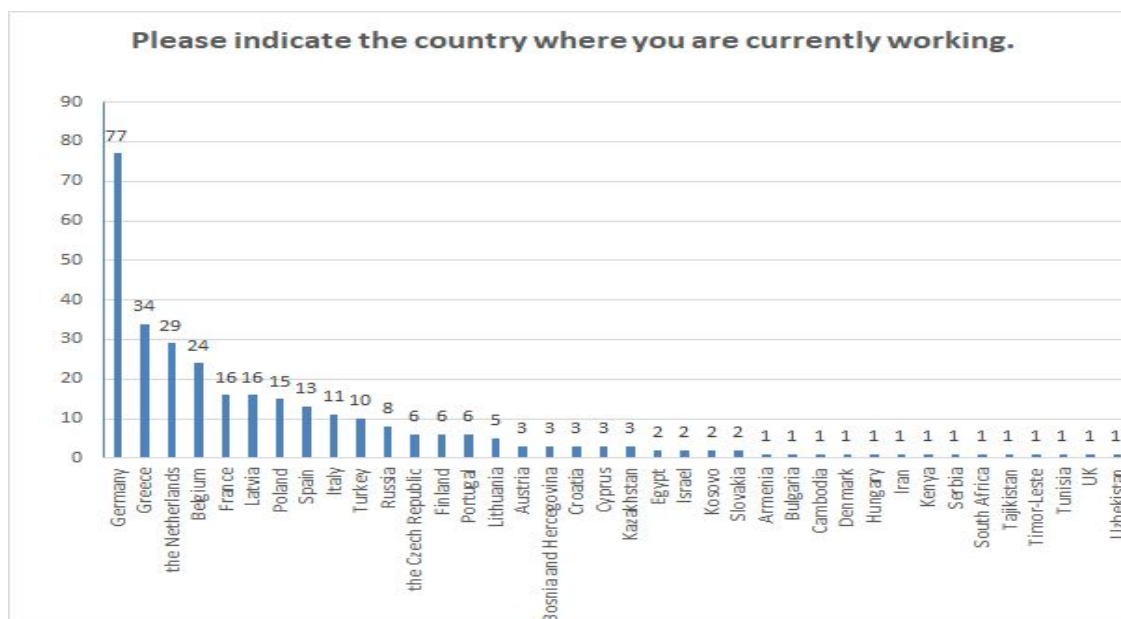


Table 1.1 Country representation

In total, survey data was collected from 38 countries and as Table 1.1 indicates, the majority of respondents came from Germany; the respondents were mainly representing Erasmus+

Programme Countries. Several representatives from the Erasmus+ Partner Countries have taken part in the survey as well, therefore, the results will include data relevant for a wider range of participating countries in the Erasmus+ programme.

Categories of staff

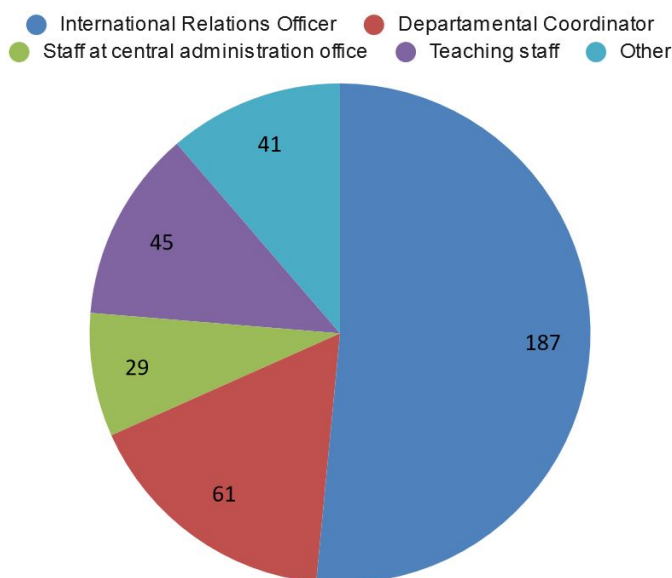


Table 1.2 Current position of respondents

Staff members are represented by 187 International Relations Officers (58.8%), 61 Departmental coordinators (19.1%), 29 representatives from the Staff at the central administration office (9.1%), 45 members of teaching staff (14.1%) and 41 “other” university staff (other students’ supporting offices, members of International Offices, other academic staff, project coordinators and heads of departments) (12.8%).



Range of experience

How many years of professional experience do you have working with student mobilities in Higher Education Institutions?

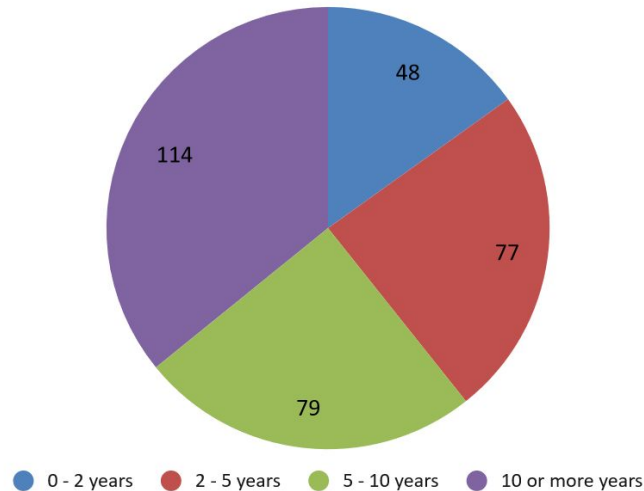


Table 1.3 Years of professional experience

In total, 318 respondents have identified years of experience in working with student mobilities in the HEI, namely, 114 respondents (35.8%) have more than 10 years of experience, 79 respondents (24.8%) have 5 to 10 years of experience, 77 respondents (24.2%) have 2 to 5 years of experience, and only 48 respondents (15%) have up to 2 years experience working with student mobilities.

Support services

Respondents were asked to evaluate the support provided to students by the respective home university. 262 staff members have expressed their evaluation in the scale from 1 to 5 (5-fully available; 1– not available). Table 1.4 shows that the majority of university representatives 180 (68.7%) confirm the full availability of early information about Erasmus+ mobility possibilities. Only 82 respondents (31.3%) indicate the full availability to access to feedback from previous students. Regular receipt of the up-to-date instructions regarding upcoming deadlines, tasks



and activities are fully supported by 136 respondents (51.9%) and followed by 89 respondents (33.9%) almost fully supporting such services.

| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | TOTAL |
|---|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------|
| Early information about ERASMUS+ mobility possibilities. | 68.70% 180 | 22.52% 59 | 7.63% 20 | 0.76% 2 | 0.38% 1 | 262 |
| Access to feedback from students who have spent a study mobility period in the selected university. | 31.30% 82 | 33.21% 87 | 24.05% 63 | 9.54% 25 | 1.91% 5 | 262 |
| Regular receipt of the up-to-date instructions regarding upcoming deadlines, tasks and activities. | 51.91% 136 | 33.97% 89 | 11.07% 29 | 2.29% 6 | 0.76% 2 | 262 |
| Assistance with practical issues (insurance, visa, accommodation, etc.). | 43.13% 113 | 35.50% 93 | 14.89% 39 | 5.73% 15 | 0.76% 2 | 262 |
| Receipt of clear and well structured information about the required documents to be submitted after the mobility. | 64.12% 168 | 27.10% 71 | 8.02% 21 | 0.38% 1 | 0.38% 1 | 262 |

Table 1.4 Support provided to students by home university (5 - fully available; 1 - not available)

43.1% have indicated that university offers full availability of assistance with practical issues (insurance, visa, accommodation, etc.), 35.5% offers almost full availability and 14.8 % offers partial availability of assistance in practical issues. The major part of respondents offers either full (64.1%) or almost full (27.1%) support regarding the receipt of clear and well-structured information about the required documents to be submitted after the mobility.

Communication skills

| | STRONGLY AGREE | RATHER AGREE | NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE | RATHER DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A | TOTAL |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------|-------|
| Ability to communicate in oral and written forms in both local and foreign languages | 84.73% 222 | 11.45% 30 | 1.91% 5 | 1.15% 3 | 0.00% 0 | 0.76% 2 | 262 |
| Capacity to provide information on time | 82.44% 216 | 15.27% 40 | 1.15% 3 | 0.38% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 0.76% 2 | 262 |
| Ability to present clear information | 88.17% 231 | 10.69% 28 | 0.00% 0 | 1.15% 3 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 262 |
| Polite response in disagreement situations | 74.05% 194 | 23.28% 61 | 1.91% 5 | 0.38% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 0.38% 1 | 262 |
| Awareness of data privacy | 64.89% 170 | 29.01% 76 | 5.34% 14 | 0.76% 2 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 262 |
| Possibility to easily be reached through digital channels such as social media | 22.52% 59 | 39.31% 103 | 19.08% 50 | 16.41% 43 | 2.29% 6 | 0.38% 1 | 262 |
| Respectful/tactful about cultural diversity | 83.97% 220 | 14.50% 38 | 1.15% 3 | 0.38% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 262 |

Table 1.5 Importance of listed skills for university staff members

The survey focused on evaluating 7 qualities to be considered as important communication skills for staff members in the scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The majority of respondents have agreed that the ability to communicate in oral and written forms in both local and foreign languages 222 (84.7%), capacity to provide information in time 216 (82.4%), ability to present clear information 231 (88.1%), polite response in disagreement situations 194 (74%), awareness of data privacy 170 (64.8%) and being respectful/tactful about cultural diversity 220 (83.9%) are very important communication skills, whereas the opinions differ in relation to the possibility to easily be reached through digital channels such as social media. Namely, 103 (39.1%) respondents rather agree, 59 (22.5%) strongly agree, 50 (19%) neither agree or disagree, 43 (16.4%) rather disagree and 6 (2.2%) strongly disagree that staff members should be easily reached via social media.

Impact of university website

| | STRONGLY AGREE | RATHER AGREE | NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE | RATHER DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A | TOTAL |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------|-------|
| Well structured and understandable information | 94.66% 248 | 4.58% 12 | 0.38% 1 | 0.38% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 262 |
| Complete information in different languages | 51.53% 135 | 37.79% 99 | 7.63% 20 | 3.05% 8 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 262 |
| Visually attractive | 60.54% 158 | 32.95% 86 | 5.75% 15 | 0.77% 2 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 261 |
| Successfully integrated social media | 37.02% 97 | 41.60% 109 | 16.03% 42 | 4.58% 12 | 0.76% 2 | 0.00% 0 | 262 |
| Smartphone friendliness | 62.84% 164 | 27.20% 71 | 8.43% 22 | 1.53% 4 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 261 |
| Adjusted to visually impaired users | 58.02% 152 | 33.97% 89 | 5.34% 14 | 1.53% 4 | 0.00% 0 | 1.15% 3 | 262 |

Table 1.6 Important aspects in creating outstanding university websites

Regarding the creation of an outstanding university website, the following six aspects have been evaluated by the university staff in the scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. 248 respondents (94.6%) strongly agree that university website shall contain well-structured and understandable information, 135 (51.5%) strongly agree that complete information shall be available in different languages, 158 (60.5%) strongly agree on the importance of visual attractiveness of the university website. 109 respondents (41.6%) rather agree and 97 (37%) strongly agree that university website shall contain successfully integrated social media, 164 (62.8%) strongly agree and 71 (27.2%) rather agree on the smartphone friendliness, and 125 (58%) strongly agree and 89 (33.9%) rather agree that university websites shall be adjusted to visually impaired users. In the creation of outstanding website, the university staff places the biggest emphasis on well structured and understandable information.

Self-evaluation on work performance

257 respondents have evaluated 5 important aspects of their work performance in the scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

| | STRONGLY AGREE | RATHER AGREE | NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE | RATHER DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A | TOTAL |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------|
| Give clear instructions for the expected result once the mobility is finished. | 55.25% 142 | 32.68% 84 | 5.45% 14 | 1.56% 4 | 0.00% 0 | 5.06% 13 | 257 |
| Have available time for counselling. | 61.48% 158 | 31.52% 81 | 4.67% 12 | 0.78% 2 | 0.39% 1 | 1.17% 3 | 257 |
| Offer different solutions to problems. | 55.64% 143 | 32.68% 84 | 9.34% 24 | 0.78% 2 | 0.39% 1 | 1.17% 3 | 257 |
| Act immediately when a quick decision is required. | 69.65% 179 | 24.90% 64 | 3.11% 8 | 0.78% 2 | 0.39% 1 | 1.17% 3 | 257 |
| Take responsibility for a mistake. | 72.76% 187 | 20.62% 53 | 3.89% 10 | 0.78% 2 | 0.39% 1 | 1.56% 4 | 257 |

Table 1.7 Important aspects of work performance

142 representatives (55.2%) strongly agree and 84 (32.6%) rather agree on the importance to give clear instructions for the expected result once the mobility is finished, 125 (61.4%) strongly agree and 81 (31.5%) rather agree on the importance of having available time for counselling. 143 respondents (55.6%) strongly agree and 84 (32.6%) rather agree on the importance of offering different solutions to problems, 179 (69.6%) strongly agree and 64 (24.9%) rather agree on the importance of the ability to act immediately once a quick decision is required, and 187 (72.7%) strongly agree and 53 (20.6%) rather agree on the importance of ability to take responsibility for a mistake. To sum up, the majority of respondents consider that one's ability to take responsibility for a mistake is the most important aspect among the listed competences.

Moral support to mobile students

In order to estimate the moral support offered by the university staff to mobile students, 257

respondents have evaluated in the scale from 1 to 5 (5-very important; 1– not important) the importance of moral support in each mobility phase.

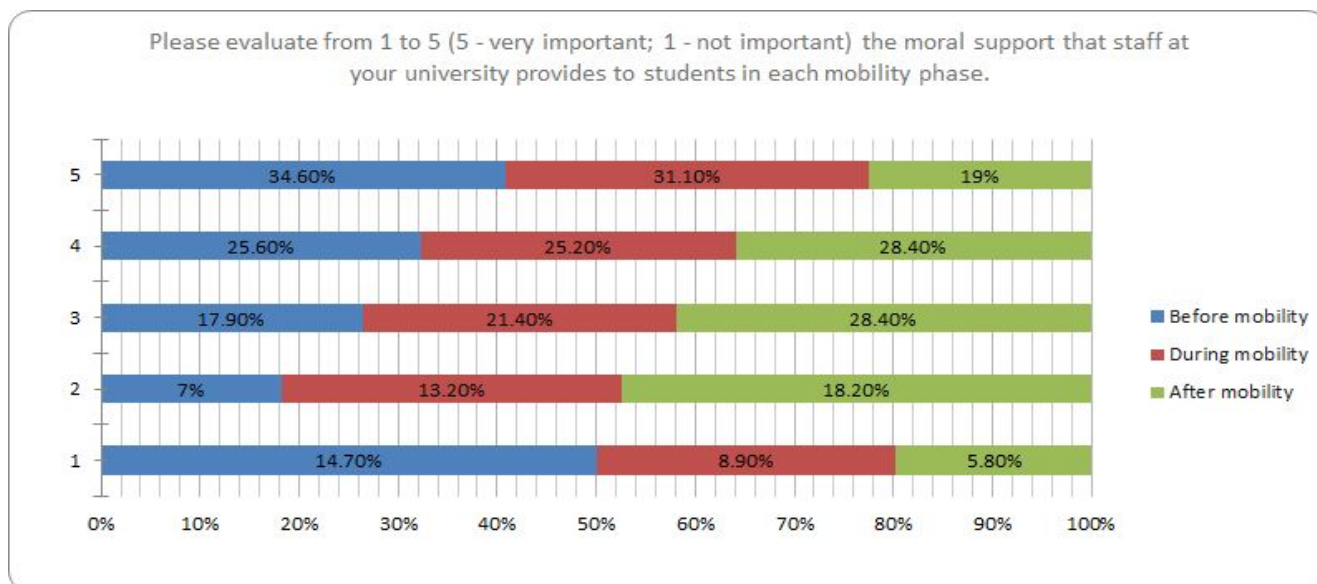


Table 1.8 Moral support for students in each mobility phase

Accordingly, 89 respondents (34.6%) consider it to be very important to morally support the student in the 'before mobility' phase whereas 38 respondents (14.7%) consider that moral support 'before mobility' is not important; 80 staff members (31.3%) consider the moral support 'during mobility' as very important and 65 (25.2%) as an important aspect. 'After mobility' phase is equally evaluated by 73 representatives (28.4%) with the level of importance of 3 and 4 thus reducing the importance of the need of moral support during this phase of mobility. Interestingly, similar results are represented for the 'after mobility' phase (level of importance 2 and 5) indicating contrary views. According to respondents, it is vital that moral support is provided before and during the mobility period.

Administrative support to mobile students

University representatives were asked to evaluate in which mobility phase the administrative support by university staff is of great importance for students. 162 respondents (63%) consider that administrative support 'before mobility' is very important whereas one fifth does not consider the administrative support to be important 'before mobility' phase.

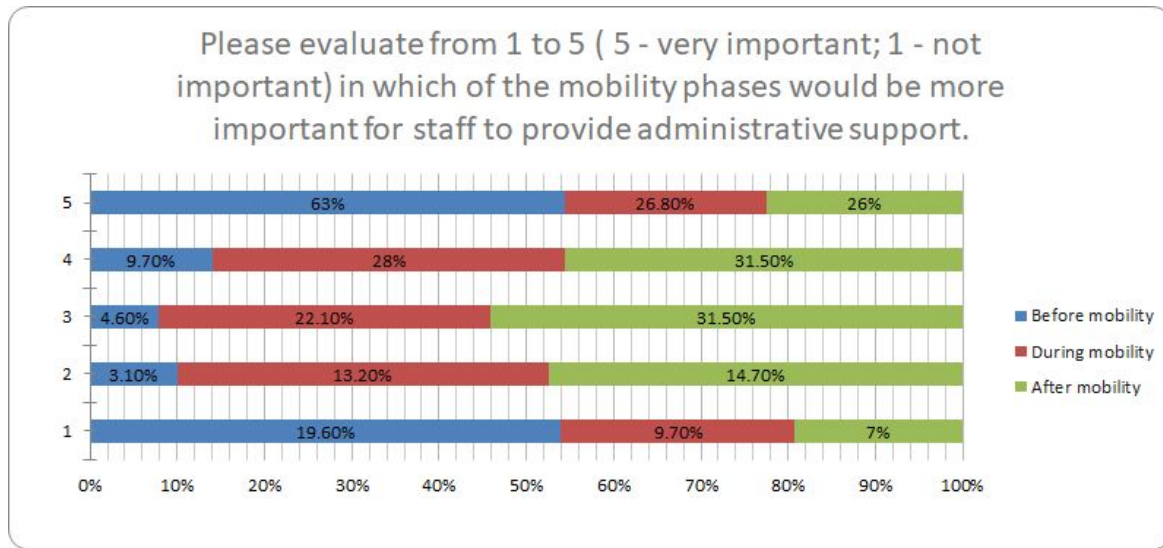


Table 1.9 Administrative support for students in each mobility phase

Administrative support 'during mobility' is considered to be important (level of importance 4-5), however, the results are not indicating one leading opinion. 81 respondents (31.5%) consider important and 67 (26%) as very important to provide administrative support 'after mobility' period.

According to results, the most important administrative support by university staff shall be provided 'before mobility' period.

Most relevant competences for university staff

244 respondents have selected 5 out of 17 competences they consider the most relevant for university staff members working with student mobility. The top 5 competences selected and considered as most relevant for university staff are the following: knowledgeable (122 respondents (50%)), supportive (120 respondents (49.1%)), problem-solver (111 respondents (45.4%)), accessible (107 respondents (43.8%)) and organised (102 respondents (41.8%)). The next competence with only 2 votes less, however, still important is one's ability of being communicative (100 respondents (40.9%)). The least relevant competences are being creative, understandable, proactive and accurate.

Please select the 5 competences that you consider most relevant for university staff members working with student mobility.

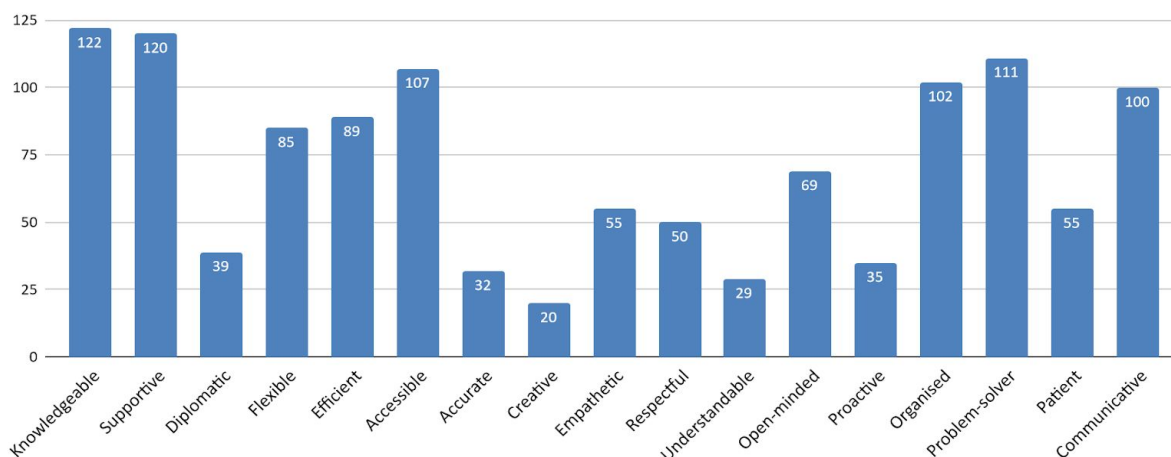


Table 1.10 Competences considered most relevant for university staff members dealing with student mobility

Competences to be developed

244 university representatives have selected 3 out of 14 competences they would like to develop and apply in daily work with student mobility. The three most essential selected competences are as follows: stress management (106 respondents (43.4%)), conflict management (92 respondents (37.7%)) and digital skills (89 respondents (36.4%)). Tolerance and active listening skills have been supported by the smallest number of staff members.

Please select 3 competences that you would like to develop and apply in your daily work.

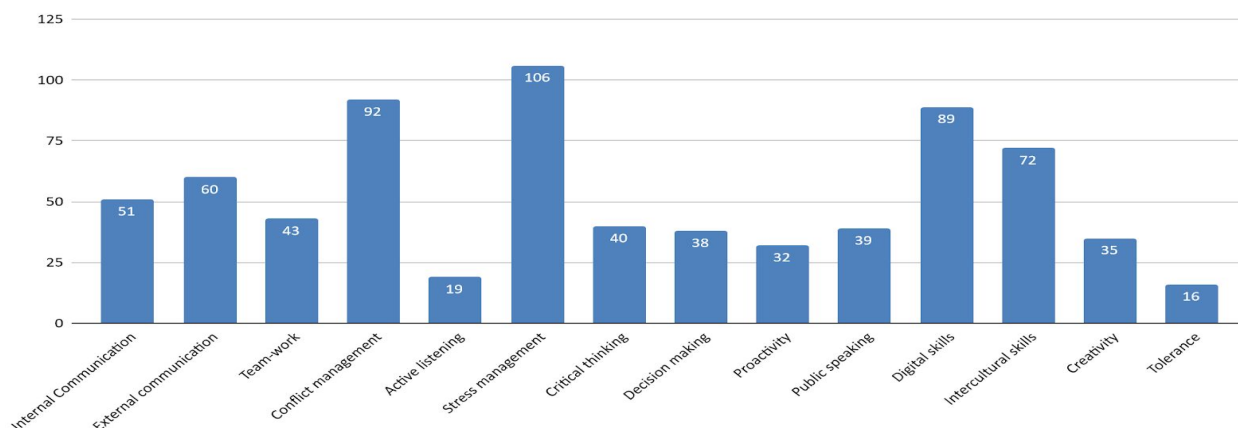


Table 1.11 Top 3 competences to be developed and applied in daily work

Suggestions for HR

Please describe the top 5 competences that from your view, HR staff should consider important for staff members working with mobility programmes.

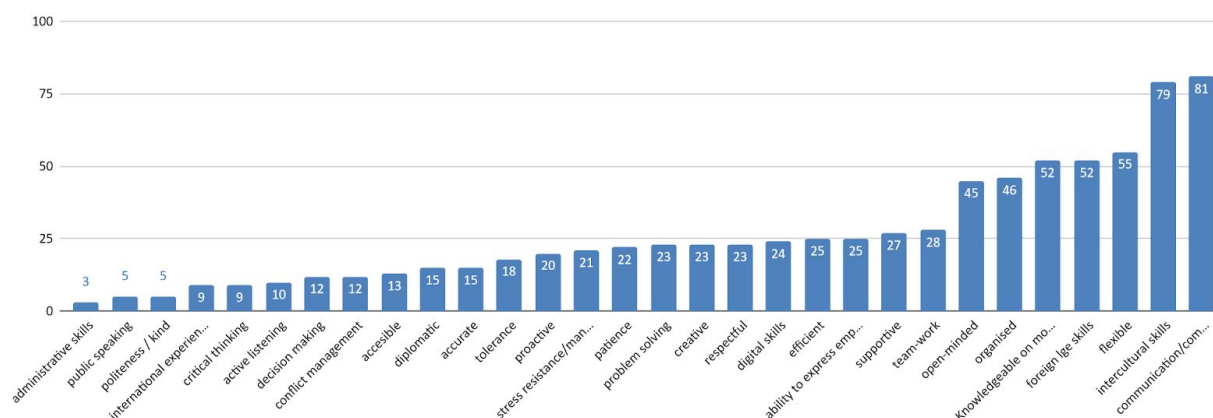


Table 1.12 Top 5 competences HR should consider important

244 respondents have taken part in open-ended question and proposed top 5 competences the HR staff should consider important for staff members working with mobility programmes. The following competences have been identified as the most important for staff recruitment: communication skills (81 respondents (25.3%)), intercultural skills (79 respondents (24.7%)), flexibility (55 respondents (17.2%)), foreign language skills (52 respondents (16.3%)) and knowledgeable (on mobility programmes and procedures (52 respondents (16.3%)). Table 1.12 indicates that in total, 30 different competences have been proposed. The least important competences have been identified as administrative skills, public speaking, politeness, international experience and critical thinking.

Training experience

In total, 177 (72.5%) staff members have confirmed they have taken part in training activities to develop professional competences, namely, 88 (38.1%) have participated in Erasmus+ Staff Mobility for Training (STT), 42 (18.1%) in-house training, 39 (16.8%) external training, 24 (10.3%) intercultural training, 19 (8.2%) language courses and 19 (8.2%) in conferences and other workshops. Overall, the majority of staff members had an opportunity to take part in training activities and professionally develop their professional skills.

Please specify training activities you have been involved in:

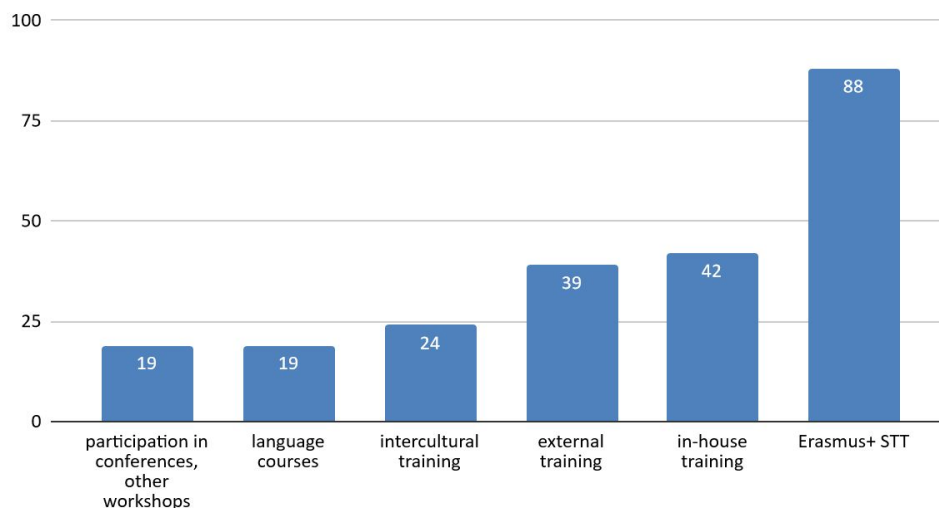


Table 1.13 Training activities staff has participated

University initiatives to support professional development of staff members

Please provide examples of university initiatives to develop the knowledge and competences of staff to increase performance in the workplace.

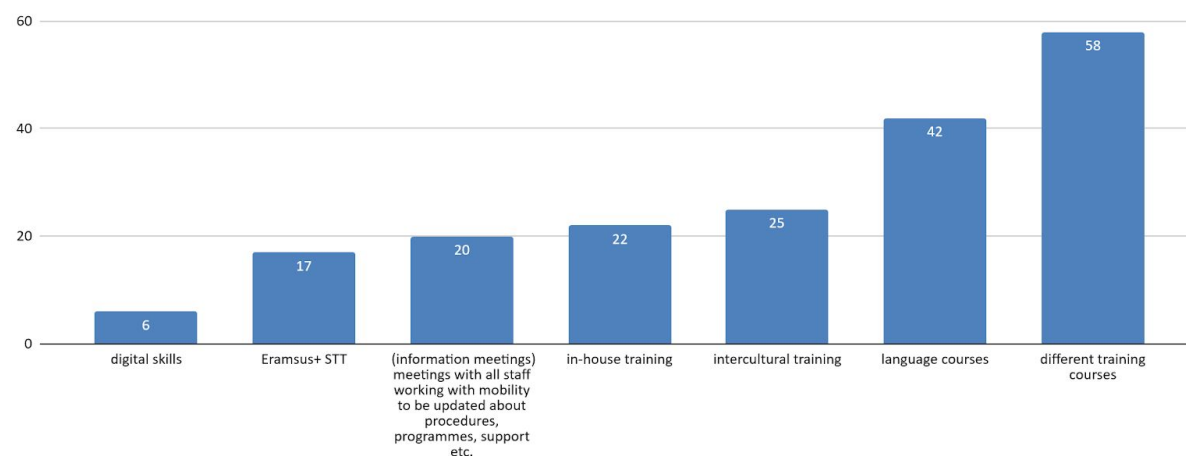


Table 1.14 University initiatives to support professional development of university staff



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Framework for
Erasmus Staff
Competences

241 respondents have evaluated the university initiatives and 174 (72.2%) university staff members have confirmed their university is making efforts to develop the knowledge and competences of staff to increase performance in the workplace. Accordingly, the following examples of initiatives implemented by the university to support the professional development of staff members have been identified: different training courses (not further specified) 58 (30.5%), language courses 42 (22.1%), intercultural training 25 (13.1%), in-house training 22 (11.5%), (information meetings) with all staff working with mobility to be updated about procedures, programmes, support etc. 20 (10.5%), Erasmus+ STT 17 (8.9%) and courses to improve digital skills 6 (3.1%). Obtained data confirms the majority of universities represented in the survey offers various training options for staff to develop their professional competences.



Recommendations

Only 73 respondents have provided recommendations to improve the services offered by university staff members dealing with student mobility. However, based on gathered data we could make general conclusions related to current atmosphere and overall organisation and procedures in HEI.

Main recommendations proposed by the university staff include the following aspects:

- Reduced bureaucratic procedures;
- Improved internal communication among different units within the university;
- Common understanding of internationalization and importance of international students within all offices, all teaching staff;
- Use of new social media;
- Careful selection of staff dealing with mobility;
- Support from leadership;
- Digitalization;
- Training.

Open-ended question gave unlimited space for feedback and recommendations, therefore, some of the above mentioned aspects were discussed in more detail. The major part of comments were related to the **leadership and its support** to the university staff dealing with student mobility. The following sub-points are highlighting the demand for active support from the leadership.

- Sufficient human resources (would help to deal with workload and stress, and would allow to take holidays);
- Developed infrastructure and efficient procedures and IT solutions (would facilitate higher level services);
- IRO shall be granted budget for training IRO officers (to ensure the quality of the services provided);
- Well paid job positions (to justify stress and workload);
- Respect, tolerance, understanding and support to IRO officers.



Another aspect widely discussed was the **digitalization** and its benefits in order to save time and work more efficiently. The following suggestions have been proposed:

- Common online platform (partner universities can share ideas, access updated information about partner universities' deadlines, academic calendars, grading system etc.);
- Common nomination platform for Erasmus+ programme (including both Partner and Programme countries);
- Well organized information for students on webinar software thus leaving more time for face-to-face meetings, if necessary.

A number of comments have underlined the importance of **training** not only for the IRO staff, but all staff dealing with international mobility, for example, the departments of housing, or accountancy as usually students face additional problems outside the IRO offices related to scholarships, payments, living conditions etc. The following trainings have been suggested to develop and improve important competences for the university staff:

- soft skills (communication, intercultural skills, time-management);
- hard skills (digital skills, process management, English language and one extra language);

Moreover, university staff members consider that training abroad shall be mandatory to all staff dealing with international mobility.

Additional comments emphasized the importance of having access to clear, centralized and rationalized information regarding the filling of the Learning Agreement, request for updated partner universities' website (available information in English, easy to navigate website, use of ECTS on published course offer) and reduction of cooperation agreements thus focusing on the improvement of the quality of existing mobility agreements.



General conclusions

The major part of respondents represent International relations officers from Erasmus+ Programme countries with more than 5 years of experience working with student mobility. This range of experience increases the possibility to gather data of in-depth experience with student mobility and related processes and procedures. More than 60% of respondents confirm their university fully supports students with early information about ERASMUS+ mobility possibilities and receipt of clear and well structured information about the required documents to be submitted after the mobility. More than 80% of university representatives strongly agree that ability to communicate in oral and written forms in both local and foreign languages, capacity to provide information on time, ability to present clear information and one's being respectful/tactful about cultural diversity are the most important communication skills for staff members. Almost 95% of respondents consider that well structured and understandable information is the key concept for an outstanding university website. Nearly 73% of university staff strongly agree that taking responsibility for a mistake is a very important aspect in their work performance, and almost 70% of respondents strongly agree that acting immediately when a quick decision is required is the second most important aspect. According to survey results, the moral support for students provided by the university staff should be given before and during the mobility period; whereas the administrative support should be given before the mobility period. The top 5 out of 17 listed competences the university staff consider the most relevant for staff members working with student mobility are the following: knowledgeable, supportive, problem-solver, accessible and organised. The top 3 out of 14 competences the respondents would like to develop and apply in daily work are: stress management, conflict management and digital skills. In total, 30 different competences have been suggested to the university HR to take into consideration for staff recruitment, however, top 5 selected competences include: communication skills, intercultural skills, flexibility, foreign language skills and being knowledgeable regarding the mobility programmes and procedures. More than 70% of respondents have taken part in training activities to develop professional competences and the major part has participated in the Erasmus+ STT. The same, more than 70% have confirmed their university is making efforts to

support professional development of staff members by offering different training courses, language courses, intercultural training, in-house training, informative meetings for staff members, Erasmus+ STT and courses to improve digital skills.

The most interesting findings were in the open-ended question regarding recommendations to improve the services offered by the university staff dealing with student mobility. Main recommendations include proposals for: reduced bureaucratic procedures, improved internal communication among different units within the university, the need for common understanding of internationalization and importance of international students within all offices, all teaching staff, use of new social media, careful selection of staff dealing with mobility, support from leadership, digitalization and training. Last 3 recommendations were discussed in a more detailed manner and allow us to make more specific suggestions. Support from the leadership should include sufficient human resources, developed infrastructure and efficient procedures and IT solutions, budget for IRO training, increased salaries, and general support, respect, tolerance and understanding. Digitalization should include common online platform for sharing practical and academic questions with partner universities, common nomination platform and use of new technologies (e.g. webinars) to save time and work more efficiently. Apart from the suggestions for training of one's soft and hard skills, and mandatory trainings abroad, it has been emphasized that training shall be provided to all staff members at some stage dealing with student mobility.

2. SURVEY ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS

The target of the survey are students, who are currently studying abroad via the Erasmus+ programme, who plan to apply for exchange studies, or who have already completed study mobility abroad.

The survey investigates various aspects of staff competences, services provided and required procedures for quality study mobility to identify students' experience and administrative challenges in all study mobility phases.

The survey was composed of 5 parts: Individual information, General Characteristics, Communication, Supervision and Support, and Concluding Comments and had a range of the following question types: open-ended, closed-ended, rating scales, multiple choice, likert scales.

Overall, 2,012 students have agreed to take part in the survey and 923 respondents have indicated their gender. Accordingly, the gender composition consists of 623 female (67%), 295 male (almost 32%) and 5 not identified (0.5%) representatives.

Experience with the Erasmus+ programme

Out of 2,012 students only 923 have identified if they have participated or are currently involved in the Erasmus+ programme, namely, 785 respondents (85%) have confirmed their participation and 138 (almost 15%) have not yet participated in the Erasmus+ mobility programme.

Have you participated or are you currently involved in Erasmus+ programme?

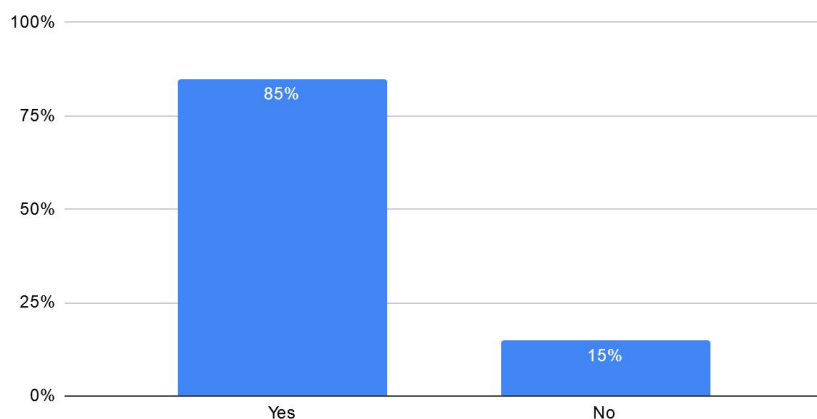


Table 2.1 Experience with the Erasmus+ programme

University representation

Representation of Host Universities

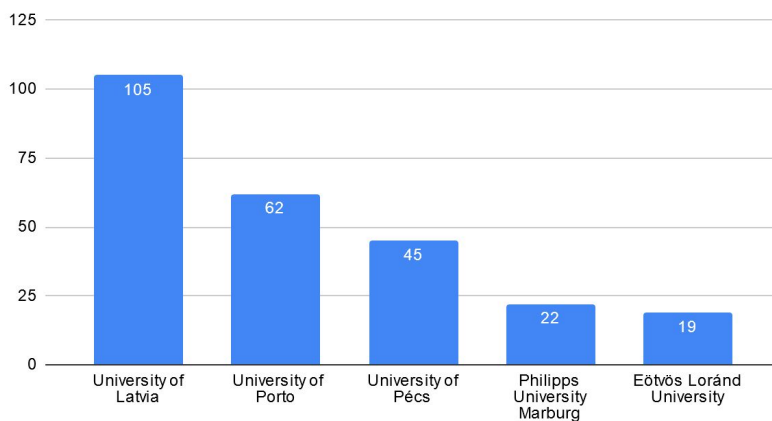


Table 2.2 Representation of host universities

According to the students' current study status, they were asked to identify their home or host university. In total, only 923 respondents have named their universities. Obtained survey data shows that 370 HEI have been identified as a host university and 275 HEI as a home university. Table 2.2 indicates the Top 5 universities students have identified as a host university, namely,

the leader position goes to the University of Latvia with 105 students and is followed by the University of Porto (62 students), University of Pécs (45 students), Philipps University Marburg (22 students) and Eötvös Loránd University (19 students). All other 365 universities were represented in the range from 9 to 1 student per university.

Table 2.3 indicates the Top 6 universities identified as home universities. Accordingly, the leader position goes to the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki with 145 students, and is followed by the University of Pécs (124 students), Ghent University (115 students), University of Latvia (76 students), National University of Public Service (30) and the Saint Petersburg University (27 students). All other 269 universities were represented in the range from 9 to 1 student per university.

Representation of Home Universities

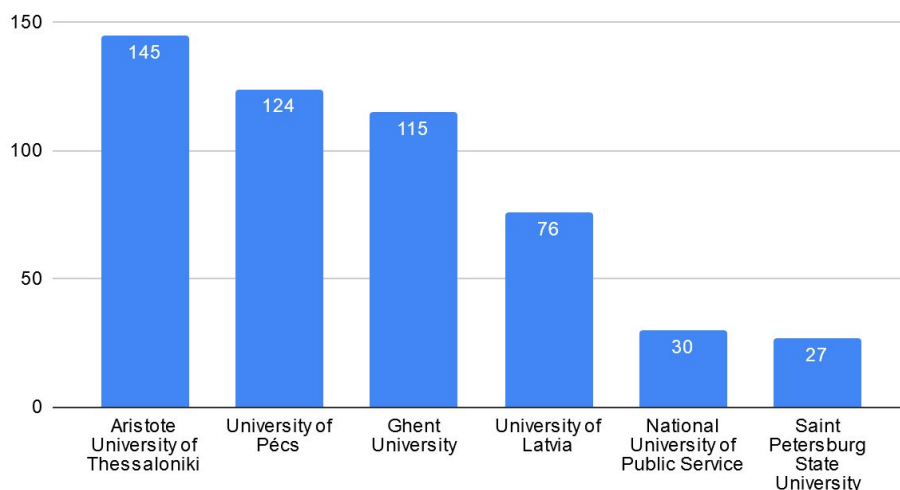


Table 2.3 Representation of home universities

Both Table 2.2 and Table 2.3 represent the universities with the highest numbers of students from the total amount of respondents. The majority of identified universities represent Erasmus+ Programme Countries, however, a number of universities from the Erasmus+ Partner Countries have been evaluated by students as well.

Support during and after mobility by Home University

| | VERY SATISFIED | RATHER SATISFIED | AVERAGE | RATHER DISSATISFIED | VERY DISSATISFIED | N/A | TOTAL |
|---|----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------|
| Accurate information of the ERASMUS+ programme | 41.53% 682 | 36.36% 597 | 14.86% 244 | 4.26% 70 | 1.71% 28 | 1.28% 21 | 1,642 |
| Access to feedback from other students who did their Erasmus+ in the same university you are interested in going to | 28.56% 469 | 27.34% 449 | 20.58% 338 | 9.81% 161 | 5.60% 92 | 8.10% 133 | 1,642 |
| Regular up-to-date instructions regarding deadlines and tasks to fulfil | 40.56% 666 | 31.49% 517 | 17.17% 282 | 6.70% 110 | 3.17% 52 | 0.91% 15 | 1,642 |
| Assistance with practical issues (accommodation, insurance, etc.) | 21.86% 359 | 23.51% 386 | 26.25% 431 | 15.90% 261 | 7.13% 117 | 5.36% 88 | 1,642 |
| Clear information about the requirements and bureaucratic activities to be done during the mobility process | 37.27% 612 | 32.40% 532 | 18.27% 300 | 7.06% 116 | 3.65% 60 | 1.34% 22 | 1,642 |

Table 2.4 Level of satisfaction with the services provided by home university during and after mobility

In total, 1,642 respondents have identified the level of satisfaction (in the scale of very satisfied to not available) with support provided during and after mobility by their home universities. The majority of students are very satisfied or rather satisfied with availability of accurate information on the Erasmus+ programme, access to feedback from other students who did their Erasmus+ in the same university the student is interested in going to, receipt of up-to-date instructions regarding deadlines and tasks to fulfil, and availability of clear information about the requirements and bureaucratic activities to be done during the mobility process. Whereas the assistance with practical issues (accommodation, insurance, etc.) is evaluated as average by the highest number of respondents in the particular service evaluation (26,2%). According to Table 2.4, the most dissatisfaction is expressed regarding the above mentioned assistance with

practical issues (117 students) and access to feedback from previous students (92 respondents). More than 200 students have not evaluated the support by the home university during and after mobility (by choosing not applicable) thus indicating that they are not currently experiencing this mobility phase.

Support during mobility by the Host University

| | VERY SATISFIED | RATHER SATISFIED | AVERAGE | RATHER DISSATISFIED | VERY DISSATISFIED | N/A | TOTAL |
|---|----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------|
| Availability of mentor/buddy programme | 40.50% 665 | 26.19% 430 | 13.22% 217 | 7.25% 119 | 5.30% 87 | 7.55% 124 | 1,642 |
| Regular up-to-date instructions regarding deadlines and tasks to fulfil | 42.39% 696 | 33.98% 558 | 13.34% 219 | 5.24% 86 | 2.86% 47 | 2.19% 36 | 1,642 |
| Assistance with practical issues (accommodation, insurance, activities, etc.) | 36.66% 602 | 27.22% 447 | 18.64% 306 | 8.77% 144 | 4.87% 80 | 3.84% 63 | 1,642 |
| Clear and personalised information to take into account in terms of bureaucracy to be fulfilled | 39.16% 643 | 30.82% 506 | 17.90% 294 | 6.33% 104 | 2.80% 46 | 2.98% 49 | 1,642 |

Table 2.5 Level of satisfaction with the services provided by host university during mobility

Overall, 1,642 respondents have identified the level of satisfaction (in the scale of very satisfied to not applicable) of provided support by the host university during their mobility. Table 2.5 indicates that the majority of students are very satisfied or rather satisfied with the availability of mentor/buddy programme, receipt of regular up-to-date instructions regarding deadlines and tasks to fulfil, assistance of practical issues (accommodation, insurance, activities, etc.) and availability of clear and personalised information to take into account in terms of bureaucracy to be fulfilled. More than 200 students have marked 'not applicable' regarding the listed services provided by the host university thus indicating that they are not currently experiencing this mobility phase.

More detailed comments about Table 2.4 and Table 2.5 are expected to be found in the open-ended questions regarding the suggestions to improve the services offered by university administrative staff.

Competences to improve communication and support

| | VERY IMPORTANT | RATHER IMPORTANT | AVERAGE | RATHER NOT RELEVANT | IRRELEVANT | TOTAL |
|---|-----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------|-------|
| Ability to communicate in other languages orally and in written forms | 64.36% 1,015 | 23.97% 378 | 8.05% 127 | 3.17% 50 | 0.44% 7 | 1,577 |
| Capacity to give information in a timely manner | 68.42% 1,079 | 26.82% 423 | 4.12% 65 | 0.44% 7 | 0.19% 3 | 1,577 |
| Mastered skills to clearly formulate information | 52.69% 831 | 36.84% 581 | 9.83% 155 | 0.63% 10 | 0.00% 0 | 1,577 |
| Polite and empathic attitude in disagreement situations | 57.32% 904 | 31.83% 502 | 9.64% 152 | 0.89% 14 | 0.32% 5 | 1,577 |
| Ability to find solutions in an efficient and creative way | 57.58% 908 | 32.02% 505 | 9.32% 147 | 1.01% 16 | 0.06% 1 | 1,577 |
| Awareness of data privacy | 41.92% 661 | 32.09% 506 | 20.74% 327 | 4.44% 70 | 0.82% 13 | 1,577 |
| Possibility to easily reach staff member through e-mails, social media and other channels | 68.86% 1,086 | 22.70% 358 | 7.23% 114 | 1.01% 16 | 0.19% 3 | 1,577 |
| Respectful/tactful to cultural diversity | 63.60% 1,003 | 24.98% 394 | 9.00% 142 | 1.71% 27 | 0.70% 11 | 1,577 |

Table 2.6 Evaluation of importance of competences to improve communication and support

In total 1,577 students have evaluated the level of importance of 8 competences in the scale of very important to irrelevant. Namely, the ability to communicate in other languages orally and in



written forms, capacity to give information in a timely manner, mastered skills to clearly formulate information, polite and empathic attitude in disagreement situations, ability to find solutions in an efficient and creative way, awareness of data privacy, possibility to easily reach staff members through emails, social media and other channels, and competence of being respectful/tactful to cultural diversity.

Obtained data shows that the most important factor in improving the communication and support evaluated by 1,086 students (68,8%) is the possibility to easily reach staff members through emails, social media and other channels. The second most important factor assessed as almost as important is the capacity to give information in a timely manner; this competence is indicated as very important by 1,079 students (68.4%). More than 60% of respondents consider the ability to communicate in other languages orally and in written forms and being respectful/tactful to cultural diversity as very important competences. Only a bit more than 50% of respondents consider mastered skills to clearly formulate information, polite and empathic attitude in disagreement situations, and the ability to find solutions in an efficient and creative way as very important competences to increase the communication and support of administrative staff. Only 661 respondents (41.9%) consider the awareness of data policy as very important competence whereas 327 students (20.7%) consider it as of average importance and 4.4% as rather not relevant competence.

Important factors for university website

1,577 respondents have evaluated 5 different factors they consider the most relevant to be included in the university website (several answers possible). Table 2.7 indicates the most important aspects on the university website according to their relevance: well structured and understandable information (1,361 student 83.6%), the availability of complete information provided in different languages (965 students 61.1%), smartphone friendliness (509 students 32.2%), visual attractiveness (458 students 29%) and successfully integrated social media (349 students 22.1%).

What kind of factors you consider would be the most relevant to include at your university website?

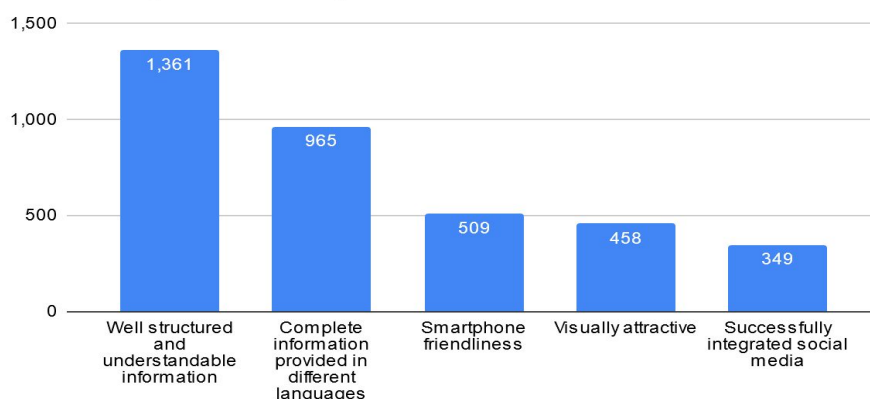


Table 2.7 Important factors for university website

Relevance of ways of communication and support

| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | TOTAL |
|---|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------|
| Receiving the course catalogue before your study mobility | 64.87% 1,023 | 19.85% 313 | 9.00% 142 | 3.11% 49 | 3.17% 50 | 1,577 |
| Up-to-date application procedure | 57.77% 911 | 29.11% 459 | 8.05% 127 | 2.16% 34 | 2.92% 46 | 1,577 |
| Environment friendly (less paper-based) for application/administrative procedures | 39.89% 629 | 31.45% 496 | 18.26% 288 | 6.15% 97 | 4.25% 67 | 1,577 |
| Face to face appointments with university staff members | 23.08% 364 | 29.17% 460 | 28.85% 455 | 12.62% 199 | 6.28% 99 | 1,577 |
| Online appointments (email, phone, Skype, social media) with university staff | 25.49% 402 | 30.50% 481 | 25.43% 401 | 11.48% 181 | 7.10% 112 | 1,577 |

Table 2.8 Relevance of provided communication and support

Students were asked to evaluate the level of importance of provided communication and support by university administrative staff. Five different aspects were evaluated (in the scale of 1-not important to 5-very important) by 1.577 students. The most important aspect evaluated by



1.023 students (64.8%) is the receipt of course catalogue before the mobility period. The up-to-date application procedure is evaluated as very important by 911 students (57.7%) and the environment friendly administrative/application procedures are evaluated as very important by 629 students (39.8%). Similar results are obtained regarding the face to face appointments with university staff members, namely, 460 students (29.1%) have assessed it as important and 455 students (28.8%) as rather important; whereas face to face appointment are evaluated as very important only by 364 students (23%). Only 402 students (25.4%) have indicated online appointments with university staff as very important aspects, however, the majority 481 respondent (30.5%) have evaluated online appointments as important.

Evaluation of selected university staff competences

1,551 respondents have evaluated 5 competences they consider university staff member shall possess (in the scale from strongly agree to not available). According to the Table 2.9, more than 50% of respondents strongly agree that university staff shall act immediately once a quick decision is required (851 respondents (54.8%)), take responsibility for a mistake (798 respondents (51.4%)) and give clear instructions for the expected result once the mobility is finished (792 respondents (51%)). Similar results are obtained regarding the available time for counselling and offering different solutions for problems, however, the majority of students rather agree that available time for counselling (698 respondents (45%)) and offering different solutions for problems (650 respondents (41.9%)) are important competences for university staff members.



| | STRONGLY AGREE | RATHER AGREE | NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE | RATHER DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | N/A | TOTAL |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------|
| Give clear instructions for the expected result once the mobility is finished | 51.06% 792 | 35.33% 548 | 10.57% 164 | 1.29% 20 | 0.58% 9 | 1.16% 18 | 1,551 |
| Have available time for counselling | 42.36% 657 | 45.00% 698 | 10.44% 162 | 1.03% 16 | 0.39% 6 | 0.77% 12 | 1,551 |
| Offer different solutions for problems | 41.59% 645 | 41.91% 650 | 13.54% 210 | 1.35% 21 | 0.45% 7 | 1.16% 18 | 1,551 |
| Act immediately once a quick decision is required | 54.87% 851 | 36.11% 560 | 7.29% 113 | 0.71% 11 | 0.58% 9 | 0.45% 7 | 1,551 |
| Take responsibility for a mistake | 51.45% 798 | 32.56% 505 | 12.44% 193 | 1.35% 21 | 0.64% 10 | 1.55% 24 | 1,551 |

Table 2.9 Evaluation of university staff competences

Five most important competences for university administrative staff

In order to increase the quality of the students' mobility experience, please select the competences (maximum 5) you consider the most important to be adopted by university administrative staff:

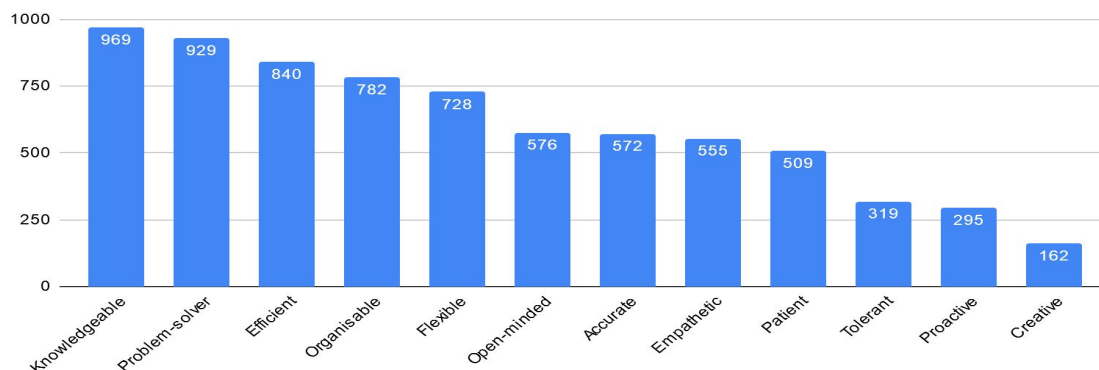


Table 2.10 Most important competences for university administrative staff



In total, 1,531 students have evaluated 12 different competences and have identified 5 most important competences the university administrative staff should have. According to the Table 2.10, they are the following: being knowledgeable (969 respondents 63.2%), problem-solver (929 respondents 60.6%), efficient (840 respondents 54.8%), organisable (782 respondents 51%), and flexible (728 respondents 47.5%). Very similar results are related to the open-mindedness (576 respondents 37.6%), accuracy (572 respondents 37.3%) and empathy (555 respondents 36.2%) thus proving their equal importance in the students' point of view. Creativity has been evaluated with the lowest number of respondents (only 162 respondents; 10.5%).

Suggestions

Only 217 respondents have indicated additional suggestions to improve the services offered by university administrative staff. Obtained data allows to identify the common problems and suggestions for improvement in HEIs involved in the Erasmus+ programme.

Main recommendations proposed by students include three following aspects:

- **General administrative work organisation in university;**
- **Work performance of administrative staff;**
- **Delivery and presentation of information.**

Each of the aspects include a wide section of feedbacks and recommendations, therefore, the analysis of obtained data is discussed separately below.

General administrative work organisation in university

Several problems have been identified regarding the lack of communication between the home and host HEIs, but also within the same office, between IRO and departmental coordinators, and between coordinators and teaching staff. Moreover, several respondents have identified their experience with receipt of contradictory information within one university thus leading to misunderstandings in further communication and arrangement of study mobility. Additional emphasis is put on the lack of sufficient number of office hours thus decreasing the possibility to receive support and deal with administrative procedures. Lack of human resources and high level of bureaucracy are also reducing the accessibility of university administrative staff thus lowering the quality of services provided, making it difficult to offer the individual approach that students are looking for.

University administrative staff shall address students with empathy and patience as for many students study mobility is the first study experience abroad, namely, each question asked by the student is of a great value for him or her no matter the fact that administrative staff considers it asked repeatedly. Interestingly, the above mentioned competences were ranked rather low in Table 2.10 (8th and 9th position out of 12). Respondents have also expressed their dissatisfaction with processes regarding the Learning Agreement. For example, they suggest

that there should be more than one person able to provide advice regarding course selection as well as authorised to sign the Learning Agreement. In addition, the host university shall provide the same registration procedure to courses in all faculties/departments within one HEI in order to reduce the confusion once the student has arrived. It has been identified that a clear division of responsibilities of departmental coordinators and IRO officers shall be made thus limiting confusion and saving time.

Work performance of administrative staff

According to data obtained, university staff is suggested to be more flexible, express willingness to help, take responsibility for own mistakes and show willingness to solve the issues, improve patience and ability to communicate in English. In general, administrative staff member shall “love the work he or she does”. The majority of recommendations related to work performance are regarding the availability and responsiveness as a great number of respondents have indicated the lack of response to email in a timely manner. Moreover, lack of response to emails is perceived badly by students. Some respondents mentioned that they would appreciate more frequent monitoring/email communication by the administrative staff.

Delivery and presentation of information

The main feedback refers to the lack of receipt of clear instructions in a timely manner regarding application procedures at the home University. Students reported receiving information at the last moment which causes additional stress in order to complete the administrative procedures on time. In addition, host universities shall provide students with clear, structured and updated website and course catalogue in English with updated course list indicating ECTS thus saving time in course search and calculation of credit points. Availability of feedback from previous exchange students would help in application and organisational procedures necessary for students going abroad, therefore, it is important for the university to provide access to the feedback.

In addition, respondents suggest to create detailed guidelines on possible problems students may face (e.g. FAQ) in order to reduce the workload of administrative staff. Obtained data shows the need for easy and clearly explained procedures regarding the timeline of administrative tasks to be carried in all mobility phases, receipt of Transcript of Records, and



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recognition procedure and credit transfer (already before the mobility). In order to facilitate the easy communication among the students, 7% of respondents suggest creating an online platform for all Erasmus+ participants within one university.

General conclusions

In total, 2,012 students have taken part in the survey from which only 923 respondents have identified their experience, namely 785 students have participated or are currently involved in the Erasmus+ programme and 138 have not yet had experience in the study mobility programme.

The highest level of satisfaction regarding the support during and after mobility by home university refers to accurate information about the Erasmus+ programme and regular up-to-date instructions regarding deadlines and tasks to fulfill. The lowest level of satisfaction refers to the receipt of assistance with practical issues (accommodation, insurance, etc.). This issue should be analysed further in some other project as it would be interesting to see what expectations students have towards their home university.

The majority of respondents are mainly satisfied with the support provided by host university during their mobility. The highest level of satisfaction refers to the receipt of regular up-to-date instructions regarding deadlines and tasks to fulfil.

The most important aspects in improving communication and support by the university with almost equal results refers to the possibility to easily reach staff members through emails, social media and other channels and the capacity to give information in a timely manner. Respondents put the least emphasis on the awareness of data privacy when assessing factors that improve communication and support.

According to the data obtained, well structured and understandable information is perceived as vital when it comes to the university website; whereas the successfully integrated social media is evaluated as the least important aspect.

The most important aspects in communication and support by administrative staff are related to the receipt of course catalogue before the mobility period (however, it is not just the task of the administrative staff) and to the up-to-date application procedure. The lowest level of relevance is given to online appointments with university staff (via email, phone, Skype, social media).



More than a half of respondents strongly agree that university staff shall act immediately once a quick decision is required, take responsibility for a mistake, and give clear instructions for the expected result once the mobility is finished.

Survey results have identified 5 most important competences to be adopted by the university administrative staff, namely, being knowledgeable (969 respondents 63.2%), problem-solver (929 respondents 60.6%), efficient (840 respondents 54.8%), organisable (782 respondents 51%), and flexible (728 respondents 47.5%).

Open-ended question regarding the suggestions to improve the services offered by university administrative staff have identified 3 main problems students face in different phases of their mobility. Three following aspects have been analysed more profoundly – general administrative work organisation in university, work performance of administrative staff, and delivery and presentation of information. In order to improve the general administrative work organisation in university, additional emphasis should be put on the internal communication within the university and with partner university, availability on sufficient amount of office hours, and receipt of academic support when filling the Learning Agreement. The main lack in work performance of the administrative staff refers to delayed email communication. Several suggestions like the improvement of flexibility, patience, language skills etc. have been proposed as well. The urgent need for clear instructions in a timely manner regarding the application procedure and receipt of timeline of administrative tasks to be carried in all mobility phases have been identified. Overall, students are looking for clear and easy understandable information with reduced amount of bureaucratic procedures.

COMPARATIVE FINDINGS

Obtained data allows us to identify the key competences one should take into consideration when planning to improve the services and work performance of the university administrative staff dealing with student mobility.

Both, students and university administrative staff agrees that sufficient human resources would improve the overall services for mobile students. Staff members would offer full support - dedicate full attention to problem-solving, work efficiency, responsiveness and individual approach to students. Reduction of bureaucratic procedures would increase the accessibility and availability for counselling; digitalization would allow to reduce bureaucratic challenges and would improve the communication between home/host university and mobile students. Introduction of webinars and FAQ charts would increase work efficiency and allow to focus on problem-solving. We should note that university administrative staff has confirmed the Top 3 competences to be developed in daily work: stress management, conflict-management and digital skills thus highlighting the awareness of the need for competence improvement.

It is agreed that the most important aspect on the university website refers to the availability of well structured and understandable information. Students consider that the next most important aspect refers to availability of complete information provided in different languages, whereas the university staff believes that smartphone friendliness is the second most important factor on the university website. Both agree that successfully integrated social media is of least importance. Obtained survey results regarding the creation of outstanding university website have indicated the need for improved communication competences, namely, written communication skills in foreign languages and ability to present clear information, organisational and digital skills.



Work performance

| WORK PERFORMANCE OF UNIVERSITY STAFF | |
|---|---|
| STUDENT EVALUATION | STAFF EVALUATION |
| 1. Take immediate action once a quick decision is required. | 1. Take a responsibility for a mistake. |
| 2. Take a responsibility for a mistake. | 2. Take immediate action once a quick decision is required. |
| 3. Give clear instructions for the expected result once the mobility is finished. | 3. Available time for counselling. |

The first two aspects of work performance of administrative staff, namely, taking immediate action once a quick decision is required, taking responsibility for a mistake are the same though vice versa and are considered as the most important by both. This evaluation highlights the dynamic of work, ability to work in stressful situations and ability to acknowledge one's mistake. Students consider that giving clear instructions for the expected result once the mobility is finished is the third most important aspect of the work performance of the administrative staff thus emphasizing the need for guidance in the 'after mobility' period. Whereas the university staff considers that available time for counselling is the third most important aspect of their work performance in this way emphasizing the urgent need of extra human resources and improved time-management skills.

Communication

| COMMUNICATION OF UNIVERSITY STAFF | |
|--|---|
| STUDENT EVALUATION | STAFF EVALUATION |
| 1. Easy access to university staff via e-mails and social media. | 1. Ability to present clear information. |
| 2. Receipt of information in a timely manner. | 2. Ability to communicate in other languages. |
| 3. Ability to communicate in other languages. | 3. Ability to be respectful/tactful about cultural diversity. |



Students consider that the most important aspect of communication of university administrative staff refer to easy access to university staff via emails and social media. Regarding the survey data, we shall remember that students were complaining about insufficient communication with university staff and the lack of response to email in a timely manner. This coincides with the second students' evaluated aspect - receipt of information in a timely manner thus emphasizing that university staff shall improve their accessibility and responsiveness. 60% of university staff considers its importance, however, only 23% strongly agrees to easy access to university staff via emails and social media. Both have assessed the ability to communicate in other languages as very important aspect of communication of university staff - students have listed this competence in third, but staff in second place. University staff considers that the most important aspect of communication refers to the ability to present clear information thus ensuring successful completion of bureaucratic procedures and decrease possible misunderstandings and delays. Ability to be respectful/tactful about cultural diversity is assessed at the third most important competence by the university staff and as the fourth most important competence evaluated by students in this way emphasizing its relevance.

Top 5 competences

| TOP 5 COMPETENCES OF UNIVERSITY STAFF | |
|--|---------------------|
| STUDENT EVALUATION | STAFF EVALUATION |
| 1. Knowledgeable | 1. Knowledgeable |
| 2. Problem-solver | 2. Supportive |
| 3. Efficient | 3. Problem-solver |
| 4. Organised | 4. Accessible |
| 5. Flexible | 5. Organised |

Survey data shows that both have identified 3 the same competences among the top 5 most important competences for the university administrative staff though in a different order (1-the most important) . Students and administrative staff agree that the key competence for qualitative services requires good knowledge of the programme and related processes thus ensuring the receipt/support of clear instructions and assistance. Problem solving skills are evaluated



accordingly - second position by students and third position by university staff confirming that problem-solving competence is of great importance for work performance as staff deals with various problems and it should be competent to solve issues efficiently. Students consider that efficiency is the third most important competence for the university staff member whereas university staff has evaluated efficiency with 7th position out of 14. This result shows that students are more likely to receive fast and immediate support/service. Organisational skills are assessed similarly - in the fourth position by students and fifth position by university staff confirming the relevance of time-management and prioritising. Flexibility is evaluated by students as fifth and by university staff as the eighth most important competence for university staff. This may lead to the idea that students expect to receive flexible attitude towards bureaucratic challenges while university staff has to follow strict procedures with limited flexibility. This might be further investigated regarding the perception of flexibility in administrative work. University staff considers that being supportive is the second most important competence. Survey data confirms that students consider administrative support 'during mobility' and moral support 'before mobility' and 'during mobility' period as important aspects in services provided to mobile students. Accessibility is evaluated as the fourth most important competence by university administrative staff. Students suggest that sufficient number of human resources and decreased level of bureaucracy would improve the accessibility of university administrative staff and provide individual approach.