

FESC Study Visits Report

November 2019 – February 2020

www.fesc-project.eu



**Framework for
Erasmus Staff
Competences**

Author: Viktoriya Terzieva

Additional Support: Isabel Catarino and João Bacelar

July 2020

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
List of Abbreviations	2
List of Figures	3
List of Tables	3
A. Introduction	4
1. About the FESC Project	4
2. About the report.....	4
3. Methodology.....	5
B. The study visits by country.....	7
1. Philips University of Marburg, Germany	8
2. Ghent University, Belgium	13
3. Hanze University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands.....	18
4. University of Warsaw, Poland.....	23
5. University of Latvia, Latvia.....	28
6. Saint Petersburg State University, Russia.....	32
C. Improvements on the framework after the study visits	38
D. Conclusions and recommendations	39



List of Abbreviations

DAAD - Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst e. V. (German Academic Exchange Service)

ESN - Erasmus Student Network

EWP - Erasmus Without Paper

Hanze UAS - Hanze University of Applied Sciences

IRO - International Relations Officer

LA - Learning Agreement

NA - National Agency

OLA - Online Learning Agreement

PD - Professional Development

QA - Quality Assurance

RO - Recruitment Office

RP - Recruitment Process

SPbU - Saint Petersburg University

UGent - Ghent University

UL- University of Latvia

UM - University of Marburg

UW - University of Warsaw



List of Figures

Figure 1: Overview of files shared _____	6
Figure 2: Workshop steps _____	6
Figure 3: Organisational structure of University of Marburg _____	9
Figure 4: Organisational structure of Ghent University _____	14
Figure 5: Organisational structure of Hanze University of Applied Sciences _____	19
Figure 6: Organisational structure of the University of Warsaw _____	23
Figure 7: Organisational structure of University of Latvia _____	28
Figure 8: Organisational structure of Saint Petersburg University _____	33

List of Tables

Table 1: List of participants by institution _____	8
Table 2: Outcomes of the workshop at UM _____	10
Table 3: Summary of the individual/small group sessions at UM _____	12
Table 4: Outcomes from the workshop at UGent _____	15
Table 5: Summary of the individual/small group sessions at UGent _____	17
Table 6: Outcomes from the workshop at Hanze UAS _____	19
Table 7: Summary of the individual/small group sessions at Hanze UAS _____	21
Table 8: Outcomes from the workshop at UW _____	25
Table 9: Summary of the individual/small group sessions at UW _____	27
Table 10: Outcomes from the workshop at UL _____	29
Table 11: Summary of the individual/small group sessions at UL _____	31
Table 12: Outcomes from the workshop at SPbU _____	35
Table 13: Summary of the individual/small group sessions at SPbU _____	37



A. Introduction

1. About the FESC Project

The Framework for Erasmus+ Staff Competencies (FESC) project aims to contribute to increasing the quality of student mobility by focusing on staff competencies of higher education professionals working with (potential) mobile students.

As the requirements for the administration of mobility programmes increase in complexity, the need for clearly structured, comprehensive guidelines, as well as practical toolkits for training and peer-group learning for staff members is rapidly increasing. Thus, the project will identify relevant skills, know-how and processes to acquire the necessary competencies for higher education staff working with student mobility, create a framework which defines quality criteria for staff members, as well as provide those necessary materials for staff to understand and improve said competences.

2. About the report

As part of the project, 6 on-site study visits have been organised to gather qualitative data during **individual interviews, small group interview sessions and workshops**, in order to help refine the [Erasmus+ Staff Competences Framework](#). Overall, 90 participants from 6 Higher Education Institutions across Europe took part in this study:

Marburg, Germany (hosting partner – University of Marburg)

Ghent, Belgium (hosting partner – Ghent University)

Groningen, Netherlands (hosting partner – Hanze University of Applied Sciences)

Warsaw, Poland (hosting partner – University of Warsaw)

Riga, Latvia (hosting partner – University of Latvia)

Saint Petersburg, Russia (hosting partner – University of Saint Petersburg)





This report is a synthesis of the study visits' results whose objectives were to:

1. Test the usability of the Framework by conducting individual and small-groups sessions and gathering qualitative data from the university staff members (international relations officers, departmental and institutional Erasmus coordinators, HR professionals, administrative staff and leadership);
2. Collect feedback and identify key elements and aspects related to competence development;
3. Improve the usability of the Framework;
4. Conclude whether the above-mentioned goals were achieved.

Each study visit was organised in close cooperation with the host University, the European University Foundation (EUF) and a guest University that accompanied the visit (selected among the project partners). In order to achieve objective and realistic results, participants with different seniority levels and positions within the universities were interviewed. They can be divided into 3 main target groups:

- Decision-makers: Heads of Institutions, Rectors, Vice-Rectors, Heads of divisions;
- Erasmus+ student mobility staff: IROs, Faculty IROs, Academic coordinators;
- Human resources professionals: Professional development staff members; Career Centre, Recruiters.

3. Methodology

In order to ensure the smooth and comparable execution of the 6 study visits, the project partners agreed on the following methodology:

The host universities are responsible for inviting colleagues from one of the above-mentioned target groups to take part in the study visits. The partners at the host University prepare the agenda with the confirmed participants and send it to the EUF's interviewer. The EUF's interviewer and the partner from the guest University prepare a list of questions for each individual/small group session. Thereafter, the interviewees are provided with a package, which is sent no later than 5 working



days before the visit, in order to give them time to familiarise themselves with the project and the nature of their contribution. It contains:

- Instructions for the visit;
- Outlines of the sessions;
- Consent for audio-visual recordings;
- PDF version of the current Framework for Erasmus + Staff Competences.

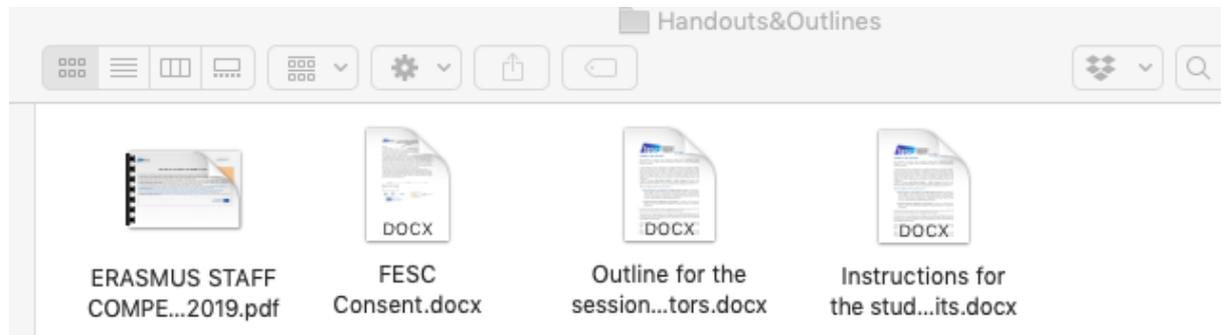


Figure 1: Overview of files shared

The workshop session has a pre-defined structure and follows this step-by-step process:

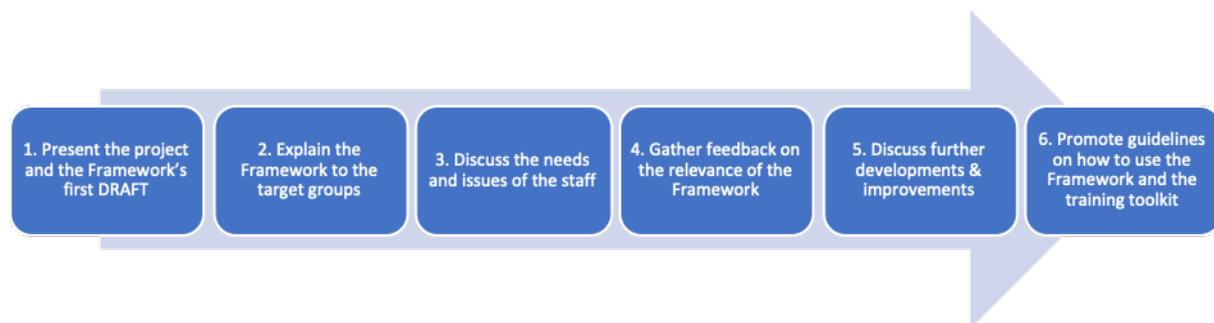


Figure 2: Workshop steps

The outlines of the sessions include definitions that apply in the context of the project. They are based on EQF1 (European Quality Framework) and Key Competences for Lifelong Learning:

Knowledge: composition of facts and figures, concepts, ideas and theories which are already established and support the understanding of a certain area or subject

Skills: the ability and capacity to carry out processes and use the existing knowledge to achieve results

Cognitive skills: use of logical and intuitive and creative thinking

Practical skills: manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments

Attitude: the disposition and mind-sets to act or react to ideas, persons or situations

Competence:

- Ability to apply learning outcomes adequately in a defined context (education, work, personal or professional development);
- Ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development
- A combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes and personal development

Responsibility: refers to tasks and working areas in different functions and roles. Both tasks and responsibility can be used interchangeably in the context of FESC. Since the term “competency” was not explicitly named in these (European) frameworks, we attempted to look into both related terms “competency” and “competence” beyond the frameworks.

Cambridge Dictionary:

Competency: an important skill that is needed to do a job

Competence: the ability to do something well

Oxford dictionary:

Competence (also competency): the ability to do something successfully or efficiently

These key terminologies in the FESC project, “**competence**”/“**competency**”, should reflect the various components and its comprehensive meaning as widely used in European education and training policies. Therefore, the above-stated extensive description will be used for the term “competence” and “competency” where both terms are interchangeable in the context of the FESC project. **Both “competence” and “competency” refer to a person’s capability to do something successfully or/and efficiently and this ability is composed of knowledge and skills.** Cross-cutting competencies can be added as competencies needed across all mobility phases that are embedded throughout the different tasks. At the end of each visit, the guest University writes an individual report. The following sections describe the results of the 6 higher education institutions.

B. The study visits by country

The following table reveals the participants that took part in the study from each institution:

Institutions	Participants
 University of Marburg	1 Student Assistant at central level 1 Student Assistant at decentral level 1 Head of Unit within the International Relations Office (IRO) 1 Head of Unit at Faculty level 1 Head of Human Resources Department 4 Erasmus+ Departmental Coordinators 1 ECTS Representative 2 Directors of Centres at Faculty level
 Ghent University	1 Head of IRO 1 Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator 3 Vice-Deans 1 Head of Career Office 1 Head of Recruitment Office 1 Policy Advisor IRO 6 Faculty Erasmus+ Coordinators 4 IRO officers
 Hanze University of Applied Sciences	1 Vice-President 1 IRO/Erasmus Institutional Coordinator 2 Human Resources professionals 4 International Coordinators of Schools 2 International Service Desk officers 3 International mobility officers

	2 Professors
 University of Warsaw	1 Head of IRO 1 Deputy Head of IRO 1 Human Resources professional 1 Head of Welcome Point 1 Head of ESN 1 Student Union, International Cooperation Section representative 1 Officer from the Office for Persons with Disabilities 4 Institutional IROs 2 Faculty IROs
 University of Latvia	1 Acting Vice-Rector 1 Head of International Relations Office 1 Head of Mobility Division 1 Personnel management professional 2 Student Services department officers 1 Student Council representative 2 ESN Riga and ESN Latvia representatives 2 Career centre consultants 4 International Departmental Coordinators
 Saint Petersburg State University	1 Head of International Academic Cooperation Department 1 Deputy Vice-Rector for International Affairs 2 University mobility Coordinators 3 International Departmental coordinators 1 Staff Mobility coordinator 1 Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator 1 Deputy Head of the International Academic Cooperation Department 2 ESN SPbU representatives

Table 1: List of participants by institution

1. Philips University of Marburg, Germany

The University of Marburg (UM) has overall 27,000 students in 16 faculties; 7,5% of its students are international.

Internationalisation is a longstanding priority of the UM, and the Vice-President for Internationalisation chairs a working group consisting of professors from different faculties that have been monitoring and developing the internationalisation strategy on a continuous basis for more than 5 years. The University is also undergoing a voluntary audit by the [German Rectors' Conference \(HRK\)](#), which is expected to inform a dialogue about how the quality and quantity of mobility staff can be enhanced further.

Some of the barriers discussed regarding mobility staff development and internationalisation are rooted in German law, which stipulates that the native speaking students cannot be obliged to follow courses in English. It is felt this hinders some internationalisation efforts that could be carried out at UM. Moreover, the University experiences a certain degree of resistance from professors on the benefits of internationalisation.

The interviewees are aware that internationalisation is not a process which lends itself to quick results and that the resistance related to the creation of study programmes in English, as well as other constraints such as budget and time, add to the challenge of fully implementing the current internationalisation strategy. However, they all consider that the University is undertaking the necessary efforts to improve the situation.

The organisational structure of the UM below helps to better understand the composition of the University units and the centrality of the IROs:

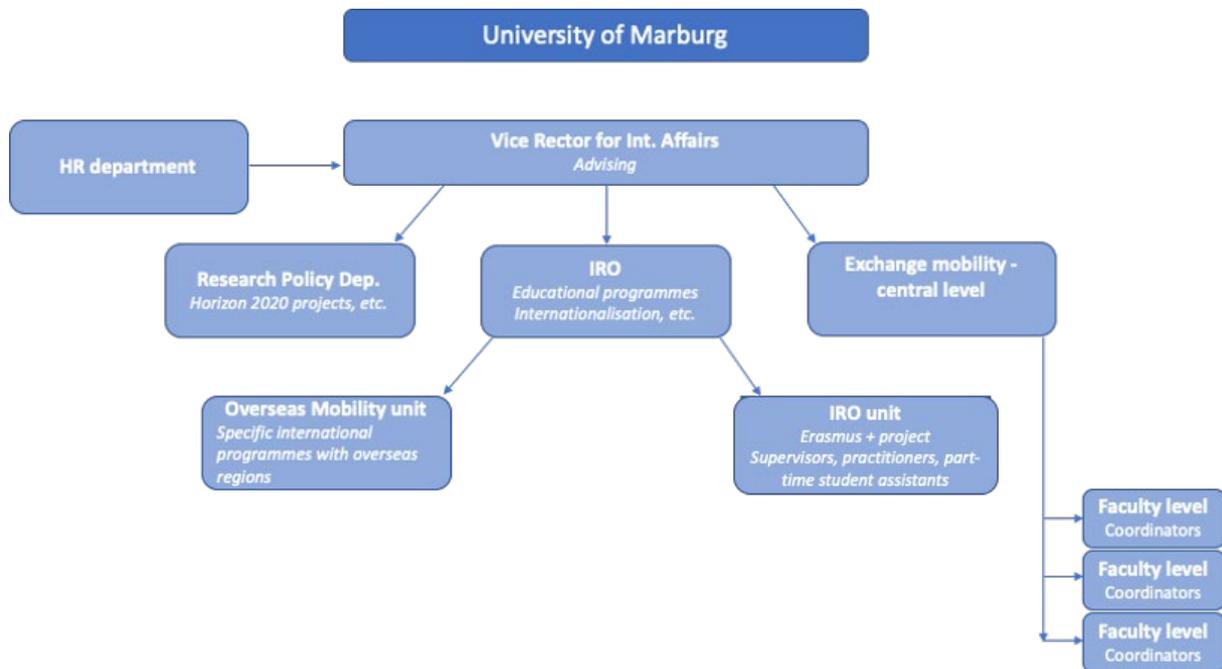


Figure 3: Organisational structure of University of Marburg

i. Workshop session – discussion on the framework and staff mobility competences

On November 12th 2019, Viktoriya (EUF) and An (UGent) organised a workshop on the draft framework for Erasmus+ Staff Competences. The workshop was attended by 4 participants: the Erasmus+ Departmental Coordinator of Social Sciences and Philosophy; IUSP and Fulbright Coordinator; the Incoming Welcome Centre Head of Unit and the Erasmus+ Departmental Coordinator of Education.

The workshop consisted of 4 parts:

1. Presentation of the project
2. Getting to know the participants
3. Presentation of the (draft) framework
4. Feedback on the (draft) framework

The table below summarises the discussion in 3 main categories: key success competences of staff dealing with international students, as well as comments and recommendations on the framework.

<p>Key competences and tasks from the Framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills (presentation skills) – the outgoing and incoming students have to understand well what is expected from them in the new institution. Mobility staff needs to be able to communicate and present such matters clearly. This also serves to encourage and reassure them that the mobility procedures are under control. • Language skills: English, sometimes another language is an advantage (e.g. Turkish to better provide support to the number of Turkish students at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Philosophy). • Networking skills • International/intercultural skills: this topic engendered an interesting and extensive debate about the fact that intercultural skills need to equip both the international student who will be looking to navigate and feel comfortable in a new cultural context, as well as try to make sure its hosts acknowledge and are able to support such a transition, making international students feel at ease in a new setting. • Open-mindedness • Knowledge of the programme (e.g. funding rules) <p>The satisfaction of students is now an important indicator for staff members. It is a measure of a well-performed job.</p>
<p>Comments on the framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In general, a very useful tool that allows for an in-depth self-reflection. • It is good that it is made generalist because it strikes a good balance defining an overarching framework which can nonetheless be adapted to the specificities of individual HEIs. • If used for self-auditing purposes, it would need to have a grading system to allow evaluation. • The language skills should not focus only on English. More and more often IRO positions require more than one foreign language. • It is not clear how to measure the level of acquisition of intercultural competences.

Table 2: Outcomes of the workshop at UM

ii. Small group sessions

During the Study Visit at UM 9 individual and small group sessions were carried out by Viktoriya (EUF) and An (UGENT). In total, 12 staff members took part from different staff categories and different departments within the University.

For the purposes of this report, the different staff categories have been clustered in 5 groups: **IRO staff, faculty leadership staff, Erasmus+ academic coordinators, HR and Student Assistants.**

The table below shows a summary of the inputs collected during the sessions per group.

Questions	Erasmus coordinator	Heads of Units & Centres	Head of unit Incoming Students	HR staff	Student Assistants
Roles and department structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning agreements - Communication with partners - Student orientation and counselling - Coordinating application procedures for outgoing students - School of Business & Economy: 1 responsible person, 1 professor and 2 student assistants for 100 students - Mathematics & Computer science: 1 coordinator - Psychology: 1 coordinator 		<p>Incoming students' office: 5 colleagues and student assistants (number may vary)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liaising with HR on staff recruitment - Finding and distributing funds to staff (e.g. European Social funds, Erasmus+, projects funded by DAAD) - Student orientation and counselling (3 staff members working full-time on students' advising) - Setting up learning agreements - Making an instruction video for students - Working with the Erasmus+ Mobility Tool - Organising the orientation week (information on health insurance, how to schedule your studies...) 	<p>The HR department is composed of 3 staff who handle the HR related aspects for 4500 employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dealing with executives, professors and technical and administration staff - Recruitment - Payroll 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing website content and design - Assisting students with general information - Handling of Transcript of Records - Preparing learning agreements - Email correspondence with students
Seniority of teams	1-5 years		The IRO office was created in 2011. Full-time staff generally has a permanent contract and turnover is low.		
Learning and adaptation period	6 months		1 academic year		6 months
Starting procedures	Training provided by colleagues & learning by doing		Training provided by colleagues & learning by doing		
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of time to do all tasks - Lack of specific knowledge - Insufficient formal training & documentation - Differences in the course programmes and ECTS allocation between University partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student visa problems - Risk of losing German students if internationalisation increases - Lack of time as Erasmus coordinators are often full-time professors - Very few courses in English at Bachelor level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student visa problems - Nominations by the home University sometimes happen randomly - Students' insufficient English proficiency - Courses are not offered in English in some fields - Finding courses for incoming and outgoing students - Answering emails in due time when the responsible person is on 	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Matching the two curricula of the host and home universities.

			holidays or busy with other obligations (it can take more than 48 hours to reply)		
Competences that mobility staff members should have	As mobility staff member: - Openness - Intercultural skills - Knowledge of the University systems, Erasmus and the partners' systems - Organisation - Experience abroad - English skills	As mobility staff member: - Empathy - Counselling - Organisation skills - Knowledge of the whole process - Awareness of the UM overall situation with international students and strategy - English proficiency	As mobility staff member: - Responsibility - Reliability - Patience - Good attitude - Open-mindedness - Intercultural skills - English skills		As student assistant: - Responsibility
Interactions before & during mobility	- Information on websites - Presentations - Consultations - Emails				
Enough digital skills for going digital post 2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lifelong training	Offered: Not very frequent, but offered (e.g. coping with difficult people, language courses) Needed: Digital skills improvement, teamwork, effective communication, teaching with international students,	Needed: Intercultural skills		HR sends newsletters about the available trainings (about 40 general new courses for a larger target group per year are offered).	
Recruitment	In general, the recruitment process takes place within the faculty and is handled by the responsible person. One of the requirements is having international experience.		The recruitment process takes place within the Office with the support of HR for formalities, following a strict formal procedure (open call). There is a lot of competitiveness for the job position and special attention is paid to ensuring an inclusive work environment.		

Table 3: Summary of the individual/small group sessions at UM

iii. Remarks and Recommendations for improving mobility staff competences

In terms of administration issues, the online learning agreement platform (OLA) will render the registration process more efficient.



Likewise, decreasing teaching hours would allow teachers to develop their English skills so more English taught courses are available.

Creating more double or joint degrees should be part of the international strategy for the mid- long-term.

Internationalisation

Every faculty should be aware of the advantages of welcoming international students. The University's leadership should work towards the common understanding of this aspect. Comprehensive internationalisation becomes possible only when people truly believe in it.

Furthermore, the internationalisation strategy should also include initiatives to further stimulate outgoing student mobility.

Professional Development

One of the aspects that would strongly contribute to enhancing the competence of mobility staff is more cooperation between faculty staff members. Investing in professional development also translates into a smooth good practice exchange between coordinators while increasing collaboration and well-being in the workplace.

Furthermore, the University has enough budget for staff to attend external courses. Staff is not particularly encouraged to attend competence development courses, but it is possible, and staff should explore the different training offers of the DAAD and the State of Hesse, which offers a vast programme of courses as well.

Another aspect is related to knowledge management, for example developing proper documentation for new colleagues to read through (including a list of abbreviations). Colleagues from different generations also use social media differently. The IRO office has its own Facebook account, separate from the University's Facebook account. Every colleague is invited to hand in posts for publication. This is not part of the regular responsibilities of the IROs. However, everyone is encouraged to contribute to the Facebook page. Input from the student assistants is especially valued since they are closer to the target group - the students - in terms of age and can be more familiar with the usage of social media. The importance of social media nowadays is increasing as it facilitates good communication with international students.

Exchanging experiences and knowledge will allow staff to communicate with students in the most effective way while increasing work efficiency.

Work Environment

Decreasing the administration burden will free time to increase the competence development of mobility staff.

2. Ghent University, Belgium

Ghent University (UGent) has 11 faculties with an overall 42,000 students. 11% of the students are international and in the faculties of Veterinary Medicine, Bioscience Engineering and Sciences more than 20% of students are international students.

The barriers that the UGent faces towards the development and well-being of mobility staff are often connected to an insufficient understanding by other units of the tasks and responsibilities of the IRO staff, which can cause frustration and even lead to conflicts. Therefore, the framework could help clarify these tasks and responsibilities.



The internationalisation strategy is created at central level and it is used by the faculties as a guideline for their own strategies. However, faculties have a fairly large amount of freedom and are not expected to follow the central policy in all respects. The following structure represents the University's international units:

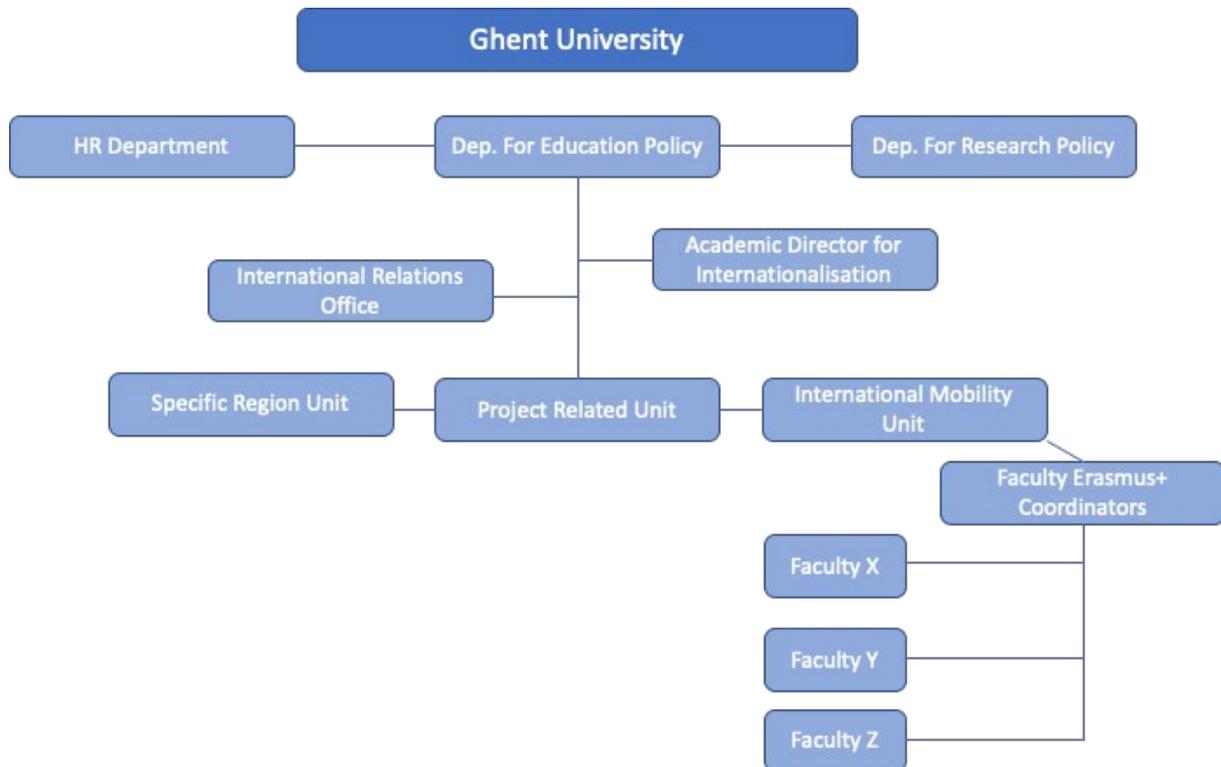


Figure 4: Organisational structure of Ghent University

i. Workshop session – discussion on the framework and staff mobility competences

On 10 December 2019, Viktoriya (EUF) and Els (Hanze UAS) organised a workshop on the draft framework for Erasmus+ Staff Competences. The workshop was attended by 8 participants, employed as international mobility coordinator, either at central level, or within one of the faculties: Coordinator at the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences; Coordinator of the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences; Coordinator of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture; Coordinator of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine; 3 advisors from the International Relations Office advisor; Coordinator of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture.

The workshop consisted of 4 parts:

1. Presentation of the project
2. Getting to know the participants
3. Presentation of the (draft) framework
4. Feedback on the (draft) framework

Participants were divided into 3 groups. Each group was asked to look at a particular part of the framework and to list their comments and observations. After approximately 20 minutes, the groups

were asked for their feedback. This resulted in a lot of (very) detailed comments and suggestions for improvement.

Below a summary of the main observations during the training.

<p>Key competences: Before Mobility - infrastructural tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first two tasks of this category can be merged: “Build-up, support and maintain a network of partner institutions (and organisations/companies) including negotiating the content of collaboration agreements” and “Advise on, set up, and maintain the administration of collaboration agreements with partner institutions” • The term “legal” is too technical. It concerns specialised knowledge and is not the responsibility of IRO employees • Attitude: it is an essential component of the framework and it is well described • Advise on, set up, and maintain an administrative system: The skills description under Intercultural skills needs to be revised
<p>Key competences: Before, During and After Mobility – student- related tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language level: the required level seems a little arbitrary. Level B2 seems rather low for an IRO • Intercultural Skills: the description of the required skills is sometimes too “soft”, e.g. when using the phrase “deal with”. Intercultural skills are essential and should not be regarded as a “soft skill” • The division of tasks over the various stages of the mobility process is understandable, but not always particularly relevant for this purpose • No need to specify incoming or outgoing students in most cases • Instead of using “Erasmus and other mobility programmes” to write only mobility programmes
<p>Key competences: Cross-cutting tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to use it within an institution, one would have to add information on how things are organised within the institution • Digital Skills could specify and refer also to open access tools • Attitudes: Confidence is important. Working with colleagues in and out of the institution. Each department has its own culture and you have to be able to work with and communicate with colleagues across departments
<p>General comments on the framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very comprehensive and good overview of the tasks that staff working with mobility students is dealing with • Can be used as a tool for other departments and colleagues to visualise what people working in international mobility are doing • Willingness to use it as a self-assessment tool, for which a measuring part would be required

Table 4: Outcomes from the workshop at UGent

ii. Individual sessions

During the study visit (9 and 10 December 2019) at UGent, 7 individual sessions were carried out by Viktoriya (EUF) and Els (Hanze UAS). In total, 7 staff members were interviewed from different staff categories and different departments within the University.

Questions	Head of IRO	IRO staff	HR staff	Head of Units
Roles and department structure	The department is part of the Directorate for Educational policy (IRO, QA & educational development, Student Advice Centre, Registration office, Policy Advisory). It has 30 employees. The head is directly responsible for all. The Head is responsible for liaising with the NAs, the digitisation strategy, EWP, crisis situations, staff mobility for non-teaching staff and recruitment of new personnel for the team.	The IRO team is responsible for the partnerships, the selection of students and destinations, and the LA. The team collaborates closely with colleagues in the Research Department.	<u>Head of Recruitment office:</u> Is not in charge of the entire recruitment process but plays a crucial role in the recruitment and selection of administrative and technical staff.	Faculty Vice-Deans are responsible for the faculty internationalisation strategy; the day-to-day running of student mobilities and the increasing research cooperation. <u>Vice-Dean of Faculty of Law and Criminology:</u> 1 full-time, 1 part-time employee working with international students. <u>Vice-Dean of Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Chair of the Comm. on Int.:</u> The committee has representatives from 11 departments of the faculty <u>Vice-Dean of Faculty of Arts and Philosophy and Chair of the Committee on Internationalisation:</u> 2 full-time employees 2 part-time employees
Starting procedures		A handbook with general information is provided in the beginning and then learning by doing.		
Challenges	Other departments think that the IRO should be responsible for everything related to international relations but the IRO does not have the expertise to handle every situation.			Adapting the courses within the universities and the ECTS.
Competences that mobility staff members should have	As mobility staff member: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaged - Open-minded - Interested in their job - Accurate - Good communication skills - Language skills - Good attitude - Digital skills - Broad perspective 	As mobility staff member: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsibility - Reliability - Patience - Good attitude - Open-mindedness - Intercultural skills - English skills 	As mobility staff member: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language skills - Intercultural skills - Diversity - Sensitivity - Conflict management - International experience is a plus 	As mobility staff member: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience abroad - Flexibility - Open-mindedness - Good & clear communication skills - Being independent - Experience with Erasmus, other mobility is a plus - Supervisory - Administration skills - Digital skills - Ability to work in a team - Interpersonal skills
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes



Enough digital skills for going digital post 2021				
Lifelong training	Offered: A broad range of professional development activities that staff can choose from is offered. Staff members are strongly advised to invest in professional development, including staff mobility, which is formally seen and registered as a PD activity.			
Recruitment	The IRO, in cooperation with the HR department, prepares the job profile and the HR department is responsible for selecting the first group of candidates.		The manager contacts the HR office and together they discuss the profile of the candidate. The IRO drafts the job description, which will be used in the recruitment process (RP). For the definition of competences of a new staff member, the RO uses the (online) Competence Dictionary of the Flemish Community (2013). A number of tools are used in the RP, such as online tests, role playing exercises, interviews, etc. In the RP, at least 3 of the available tools have to be used to assess the competencies needed for a particular job. The procedure is rigorous.	

Table 5: Summary of the individual/small group sessions at UGent

iii. Remarks and Recommendations on the support of the mobility staff

Policy

It is recommended to improve internal communication about internationalisation activities, both within the faculty and within the University and more information should be shared with a wider range of colleagues on the internationalisation strategy.

Internationalisation

It would be beneficial to improve support in the different study programmes and to embed the intercultural competences in the curricula to foster internationalisation.

A good website with clear and thorough information can help avoid a lot of questions and save time.

Moreover, as the Erasmus+ programme becomes more professionalised and grows in terms of numbers of participants, it is important to not lose sight of the human factor and the learning experience in general and avoid focusing exclusively on the formal procedures.

Recruitment



It is important that the role of Erasmus+ faculty coordinator is clearly defined.

25-30% of all vacancies are filled by internal applicants and job rotation is stimulated and facilitated. UGent does not do a lot of recruitment abroad, mainly because of language barriers. Most of the international personnel members are researchers. For professors, it is compulsory to have Dutch language skills at a B2 level.

Professional Development

The IRO staff have to be involved in the whole mobility process and not only partially. It is important to provide information gradually, especially for staff who are new to the mobility world and for Erasmus+ faculty coordinators. Their professional development should also involve a component of the new digitalisation strategies and EWP.

The new Erasmus programme will possibly bring changes to the tasks of IROs. The focus might shift from physical mobility to blended mobility for a much larger group of students, which would require different skills with regard to embedding international competences in the curricula.

Work Environment

For the moment there is enough staff to do the tasks that have been assigned to the IRO, but if new (types of) tasks appear the IRO might become understaffed.

The strategy implemented several years ago to achieve a smooth work environment is to ensure that all members of the IRO team know the basics of the general mobility process and are specialised in a particular area. This way they should be able to take over each other's tasks in case of sick leave or during annual leave.

Moreover, with a view to raise motivation, avoid burnouts and encourage the learning of new skills, recently tasks allocated to staff are more diverse and less repetitive.

Organisational Structure

The Head of IRO department suggests implementing a management structure with more intermediate decision-makers to avoid decision delays coming from only one person.

3. Hanze University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands

Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Hanze UAS) has 18 schools in total and overall 30,000 students. 8% of the students are international. The image below represents the organisational structure of Hanze UAS:



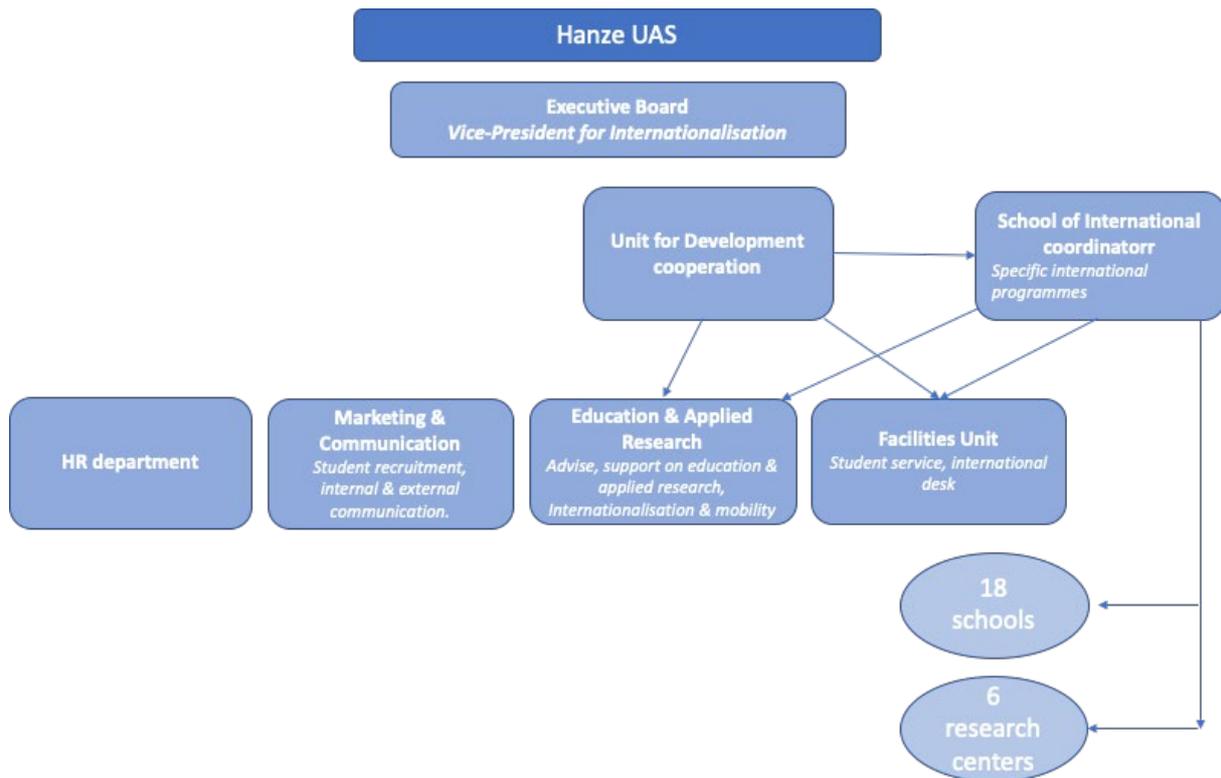


Figure 5: Organisational structure of Hanze University of Applied Sciences

i. Workshop session – discussion on the framework and staff mobility competences

On 14 January 2020, Viktoriya (EUF) and Klementyna (UW) organised a workshop on the draft framework for Erasmus+ Staff Competences. The workshop was attended by 8 participants: employees from the International Service Desk, Team International Mobility, Student Administration and faculty coordinators from the Schools of Social Studies and Health Care.

The workshop consisted of 4 parts and followed the same structure as the previous study visits in Marburg and Ghent. The table below describes the main comments of the participants.

<p>Comments on the framework</p>	<p>It is crucial to provide staff with incentives to use the framework and there needs to be a proper strategy for its implementation, starting with embedding the framework in the strategy of the institution and digitising the framework would be advisable. Translating competences into learning trajectories would render the framework more applicable and appealing. Self-assessment, raising awareness of skills and competences, training options, professional development could all be a follow up to the framework. The biggest impact would be a connection between the framework and officially accredited professional development courses.</p>
---	--

Table 6: Outcomes from the workshop at Hanze UAS

ii. Individual group sessions

Questions	International Coordinator	HR staff	Team manager advisors	Vice-President for Internationalisation
Roles and department structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintaining the partner network - Involvement in shaping the internationalisation policy of the unit - Advising students on the study programmes - Giving presentations - Individual meetings with students - Administration and support for students - Hosting international guests 	<p>The HR department has over 60 employees; 7 of them form the Learning and Development team.</p> <p>2 participants from this department took part in the FESC sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HR consultant on Learning and Development - project leader of a project on internationalisation - Team leader: In charge of 35 consultants including 6 International Mobility Team members and 6 Advisors on Internationalisation. Her responsibilities include management of staff members and expertise on matters related to internationalisation and research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advisory on internationalisation - Providing expertise to the management and other units and schools - Development of the strategic policy - Overseeing the Erasmus+ programme strategies at the institution - Maintaining regular communication with international coordinators within the schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member of the Board of Hanze UAS - Responsible for Education, Research, Internationalisation and Quality Assurance - Responsible for the Internationalisation strategy - Responsible for making sure that internationalisation is embedded in all activities of the institution and that the internationalisation activities are made easy for students and staff to find
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finding mobility destinations that match students' expectations - Getting students excited about the international possibilities - Finding appropriate communication channels to reach students, since students prefer individual contact instead of reading the available information material 			
Competences that mobility staff members should have	<p>As mobility staff member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good communication skills - English skills - Intercultural competences/cultural awareness (theoretical knowledge to apply in real contexts, for example the Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework). - Patience when communicating with students - Social skills when networking with partners - Being business-oriented - Analytical skills - Problem-solving skills - Presentation skills - Empathy - Planning and time management skills 		<p>As team manager advisor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some knowledge of the higher education systems, awareness of developments in higher education both nationally and internationally - Intercultural competences - Language competences - Advisory skills - Effective communication with the different target groups - Knowledge of international policy-making processes - Networking skills - Accuracy (especially when dealing with finances and reporting) 	<p>As mobility staff member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language skills - A prior mobility experience - Empathy - Intercultural awareness

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having some knowledge of the higher education system can be helpful although it can also be learned - Digital competences - Awareness of the internal structures and processes within the institution 			
Lifelong learning	<p>Offered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International weeks at Hanze - A wide range of PD courses offered by Hanze Academy <p>Needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trainings on how to communicate with students - Communication skills - Presentation skills - Communication with different target groups - Good online communication (e.g. email writing) - Digital skills required in the new Erasmus+ programme 	<p>Offered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trainings on work-life balance and wellbeing - Development of the management to e.g. help motivate staff - “Professionalisation of Internationalisation” project: different learning pathways for teachers abroad - Courses for staff members: “Internationalisation of curricula”, “Internationalisation of courses”, “Intercultural Competences”, language courses - Staff members have some hours they can use to focus on their professional development according to their needs 	<p>Offered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trainings on international communication and competences widely available. <p>Needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trainings on internationalisation recommended for all personnel. 	<p>Offered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hanze Business School offers courses on International Competences - Hanze Academy offers a wide range of courses such as languages, international competences, etc. - HR supports the staff in their career development plan, including offering a variety of trainings to achieve goals.
Recruitment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recurring theme: Hanze values its employees. - Motto “Share your talent, move the World.” <p>The first step of recruitment includes an internal call within the IRO department and then within other units at the University. Priority is given to internal recruitment. The following step is a meeting with an HR consultant. There is a specific HR consultant for each department. For example, the recruitment of a new Director was done as a result of consultations between the board, HR and staff members. All the perspectives were taken into consideration when drafting the call.</p> <p>There are a lot of mobility opportunities within the institution.</p>		

Table 7: Summary of the individual/small group sessions at Hanze UAS

iii. Remarks and Recommendations for improving mobility staff competences

Policy

It would be very useful to have only one Learning Agreement form used by all institutions. The implementation of the OLA by all institutions would be very beneficial to improve the work of mobility staff, allowing them to be more effective while wasting less time with repetitive tasks.



Internationalisation

The implementation of the internationalisation strategy relies on the good communication and close collaboration between parties from all levels. The individuals involved in preparing the internationalisation strategy should take into consideration that changes occur at a fast pace and help staff members to adapt to them as quickly as possible. A good advantage of Hanze UAS is that information on the developments in the Erasmus+ programme and other mobility programmes is provided by the International Mobility Team on a regular basis.

Recruitment

When recruiting new mobility staff members, it is advisable to hire someone with prior experience in Higher Education and more specifically with international collaboration experience. A person without any background in international relations would need at least 6 months to get themselves familiarised with the international programmes, procedures and operations. An International coordinator or assistant can achieve full proficiency within 2 years, as this timeframe allows the individual to run through the whole cycle of mobility.

Professional Development

Staff members need a self-assessment tool such as the FESC framework to better plan their career trajectory. Moreover, clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of the mobility staff can put in evidence competences that are relevant to other positions within the University and open new career opportunities for staff. Giving the ownership to staff members to shape their own careers is a good way to place each individual in the right position.

Staff members working in internationalisation in the initial stages of their careers are interested in the travel opportunities and possibilities of meeting colleagues from other universities and exchange experiences with them. At a later stage of the career, traveling is often less of a priority and they prefer to switch to advisory roles. Therefore, it is important that HR focuses on staff professional development individually, taking into account factors as age, family obligations, etc.

Mobility staff members should otherwise not look at intercultural competences as complex and hard to achieve skills and rather pay attention to the individual case of each student. By addressing each individual, they will naturally acquire general intercultural skills.

Work Environment

Appropriate time resources are needed to perform tasks well. Sometimes, emails can be a great distraction, which is why it is advisable to switch off the notifications when working on something important that demands full concentration.

Colleagues at the IRO would like to participate in regular meetings with the international schools' coordinators, based on specific topics, such as quality assurance, joint programmes, the future of the Erasmus+ programme and other trendy topics. The meetings would allow mobility staff to exchange good practices, to receive detailed information from the International Advisors and to interact with colleagues from the other schools.

Organisational Structure

After having tried several types of organisational structures within the IRO department, in the last years, the central IRO has disappeared and nowadays internationalisation is embedded within the different units of the University. All units work in synergy.

4. University of Warsaw, Poland

The University of Warsaw (UW) has 21 faculties and overall 53,000 students. 9% of them are international students.

Less than two years ago, there were only two people responsible for staff training. The HR department has been developing this capacity since, but it is still at an early stage. Furthermore, there are other units across the University that perform HR tasks but are not part of the HR department. For example, there is one specialist who is responsible for diversity who does not work in the HR department. The recruitment procedure also takes place within each unit.

In 2018, a new legal framework was introduced in Poland for Higher Education. All departments had to adapt and change basic regulations – how to run studies, how to employ staff, how to remunerate them. All the University management teams were busy implementing the new rules. This year the University is also in a transition period as new elections of the rectorate will take place. Therefore, the internationalisation strategy might change and the training development programmes will have to wait for the arrival of the new leaders at the institution.

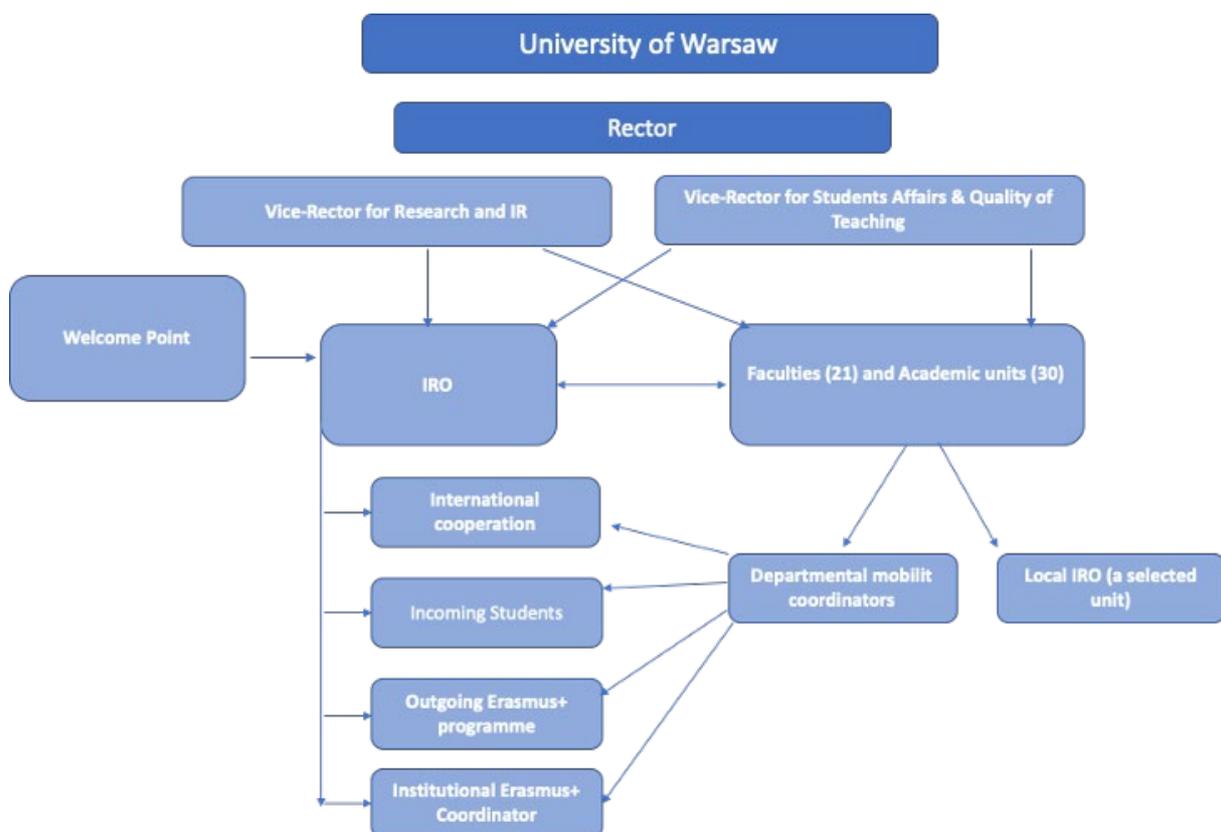


Figure 6: Organisational structure of the University of Warsaw

i. Workshop sessions – discussion on the framework and staff mobility competences

On 21 January 2020, Viktoriya (EUF) and Beate (UL) organised a workshop on the draft framework for Erasmus + Staff Competences. The workshop was attended by 6 participants, including central International Officers, Faculty coordinators and students from the Student Affairs unit.

The workshop consisted of 4 parts and followed the same structure as the previous study visits. The table below describes the main comments of the participants.

<p>Key competences: Before infrastructural tasks</p>	<p><u>Before mobility, infrastructural tasks - selected top tasks:</u></p> <p>Conduct negotiations on the content of collaboration agreements with partner institutions</p> <p>Advise on, set up and maintain the administration of collaboration agreements with partner institutions</p> <p>Apply for funding at institutional level</p> <p>Manage support and advice on international collaborative study programmes</p> <p><u>Comments on this category:</u></p> <p>The tasks “Build up, support and maintain a network of partner institutions (and organisations/companies)”; “Conduct negotiations on the content of collaboration agreements with partner institutions”; “Advise on, set up and maintain the administration of collaboration agreements with partner institutions” do not belong to the realm of competences that the faculty mobility staff should have.</p> <p>Furthermore, initiating and ensuring institutional compliance with ECTS also falls out of the scope of their competences, as does “Initiate and support curriculum reform for the purpose of mobility”.</p> <p>The level of English should be ideally C1 and minimum B2.</p>
<p>Key competences: Before, During, After Mobility – students related</p>	<p><u>Before mobility, student-related tasks - selected top tasks:</u></p> <p>Advise students about international mobility as part of the study programme</p> <p>Inform students about study programmes and their relevance</p> <p>Execute or support the selection of students for specific study places or opportunities – it is important, and it relates to faculty level coordinators within the UW.</p> <p>Provide assistance related to insurance, visa, accommodation – although coordinators are not experts in all administrative and legal procedures, they provide support to students while encouraging them to be autonomous.</p> <p><u>Comments on this category:</u></p> <p>Raising awareness about the institutional internationalisation strategy is out of the scope of competences of coordinators and IROs. A full-time Communication position with the required digital capacity should be created to fulfil such a role.</p> <p>Tasks such as informing students about mobility procedures, grants, applications, approval of students’ learning agreements are handled by faculty coordinators and not the central IRO.</p>

	<p><u>During Mobility and After mobility, student-related tasks - selected top tasks:</u></p> <p>Provide direct response and assistance in case of travel, medical, political, or crisis situations for incoming and outgoing students.</p> <p>Support the integration of incoming students into the institution and social life</p> <p>Recognition of credits obtained abroad by outgoing students and grade conversion</p> <p><u>Comments on this category:</u></p> <p>After mobility, outgoing students receive a questionnaire prepared by the faculty coordinators to ask about their experience. In some faculties, professors invite the students who have returned from their studies abroad to meet the new Erasmus candidates.</p>
<p>Key success factors – competences: Cross-cutting tasks</p>	<p><u>Cross-cutting tasks - selected top tasks:</u></p> <p>All tasks are relevant and important.</p> <p><u>Comments on this category:</u></p> <p>The first two tasks are very similar and can be merged (Task 1: Communicate and collaborate with relevant parties within the university (including student organisations) concerning the needs of incoming and outgoing students; and Task 2: Communicate and collaborate with partner institutions concerning the needs of incoming and outgoing students). They also refer more to the faculty level coordinators.</p> <p>Task 5 (Contacting embassies abroad) is very challenging and a training on this topic would be useful.</p>
<p>Comments on the whole framework</p>	<p>In general, a good tool that raises awareness about the job of staff coordinating student mobility</p> <p>Certain tasks do not reflect the job of mobility coordinators – e.g. the first 3 tasks of before mobility - infrastructural tasks are relevant for the management.</p> <p>It is recommended to define the roles of mobility coordinators in accordance with their level of seniority and allocated tasks (e.g. negotiate and build new partnerships, apply for funding, compliance with ECTS credits)</p> <p>It is advisable that the task of keeping students informed while on mobility is included, namely regarding the necessary administrative tasks they have to fulfil during their stay abroad.</p>
<p>Remarks</p>	<p>Staff members should always show themselves supportive to students and provide them with adequate assistance. They have to be aware of all procedures and possibilities for students and be well-organised. A strong teamwork spirit is important to improve well-being in the workplace.</p>

Table 8: Outcomes from the workshop at UW

ii. Individual group sessions

During the study visit at the University of Warsaw (January 20-21, 2020), 6 sessions were carried out by Viktoriya (EUF) and Beate (University of Latvia) - 5 individual sessions with mobility staff from different categories and departments of UW and 1 session with 2 representatives from the student union of UW and ESN Warsaw, respectively.



For the report, the different staff categories have been clustered in 4 groups: Head of HR, IRO staff members, Head of Welcome desk and student unions representatives/ESN.

The table below reveals the main points discussed during the sessions.

Questions	Head of HR	Deputy Head of IRO office	Head of Welcome desk	ESN representative
Roles and department structure	The HR department is split into 2 teams: a “soft” team dealing with recruitment and trainings, and a “hard” team dealing with HR administration, agreements, working time register, etc. The department is composed of 5 staff in total.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dealing with strategic matters of the office - Welcoming incoming students - Preparing partnerships <p>20 employees are responsible for over 2000 mobility students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website administration, - Creating leaflets - Informing students on basic mobility questions - Orienting students to the right responsible person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organising the buddy programme - Organising various events to ease the integration of international students - Informing students through social media and emails
Learning and adaptation period		12 months to 2 years to reach full potential.		6 months
Challenges		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finding accommodation for students - Finding matching courses at host universities - Communicating with students - Dealing with the fast pace of social media evolution - Collaborating with partners (adaptation to digital technologies) - Finding solutions to deal with insufficient human resources for the website development - Communicating with other departments and their understanding of IRO tasks - Solving issues related to ECTS recognition, as sometimes the academic coordinators at the faculties and the central coordinators of the IRO department have different opinions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating job descriptions and handling recruitment tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finding accommodation for students - Motivating short-term students to adapt to their new environment - Looking after students in general
Competences that mobility staff	-	<p>As mobility staff member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of the systems and procedures - Open-mindedness 	<p>As mobility staff member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication skills - Intercultural skills - Open-mindedness 	<p>As student assistant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open-mindedness - Tolerance - Team spirit

members should have		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empathy - Team spirit - Good cooperation and communication skills - Active listening skills - Flexibility - Experience abroad - Intercultural skills - English skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - C1 proficiency of English - Other foreign language is a plus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience abroad - English language skills <p>As mobility staff member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patience - Empathy - Intercultural skills - Knowledge about ESN and student unions
Enough digital Skills for going digital post 2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lifelong learning	<p>Offered: Not very common but offered (e.g. coping with difficult people). There is no specific training for IROs but the training team is open to organise trainings upon request.</p> <p>Needed: Intercultural skills</p>	<p>Offered: Intercultural skills, how to communicate with new generations, organisational skills for student mobility, professional development training for 6-12 months for administrative/research teaching staff, conflict resolution, foreign language skills, digital systems trainings.</p>	<p>Needed: Public speaking, advanced English written and spoken communication, training in social media usage.</p>	
Recruitment	<p>Recruitment for the IRO is supported by the HR department and an external agency. The IRO analyses the CVs and holds interviews with the candidates. The candidates are then approved by the Deputy Provost.</p>			

Table 9: Summary of the individual/small group sessions at UW

iii. Remarks and Recommendations for improving mobility staff competences

Policy

It would be worthwhile to invest on the development of communication skills, notably regarding social media and digital communication in general, so staff can effectively handle communication campaigns and promote student mobility programmes. More collaboration between leadership and professors and the IRO would also be beneficial.

In regard to the FESC framework, the universities in Poland in general will probably not be able to implement such frameworks currently, because of lack of resources. In the near future, however, the universities should focus more on talent identification, key competences identification and on developing tactics to reduce stress levels and improve the general work conditions of mobility staff members. Once this happens, the FESC framework will become very useful.

It is important to develop and strengthen the HR department in order to be able to support the other University departments, in particular the IRO department. It is essential to be able to exchange experience with the HR teams from other fields (e.g. the private sector) and adapt their experience to the Higher Education sector.

Internationalisation

It is important to have the right communication strategy with students, combining email, social media and face-to-face conversations.

Furthermore, increasing the number of staff mobility programmes will help mobility staff to align their competences with other colleagues abroad and improve the work quality.

Professional Development

Occasional group sessions with a coach are particularly beneficial for mobility staff. Staff members need to work on more structured ways to improve the efficiency of the team and regular sessions with a professional facilitator pave the way for improvement. These coaching sessions also give staff members the opportunity to discuss openly.

Work Environment

It is recommended to keep organising the bi-weekly meeting discussions and to speak openly of any issues to maintain a pleasant work environment.

5. University of Latvia, Latvia

The University of Latvia has 13 faculties and overall 34,000 students. 20% of them are international students.

The organisational structure of the University can be found below:

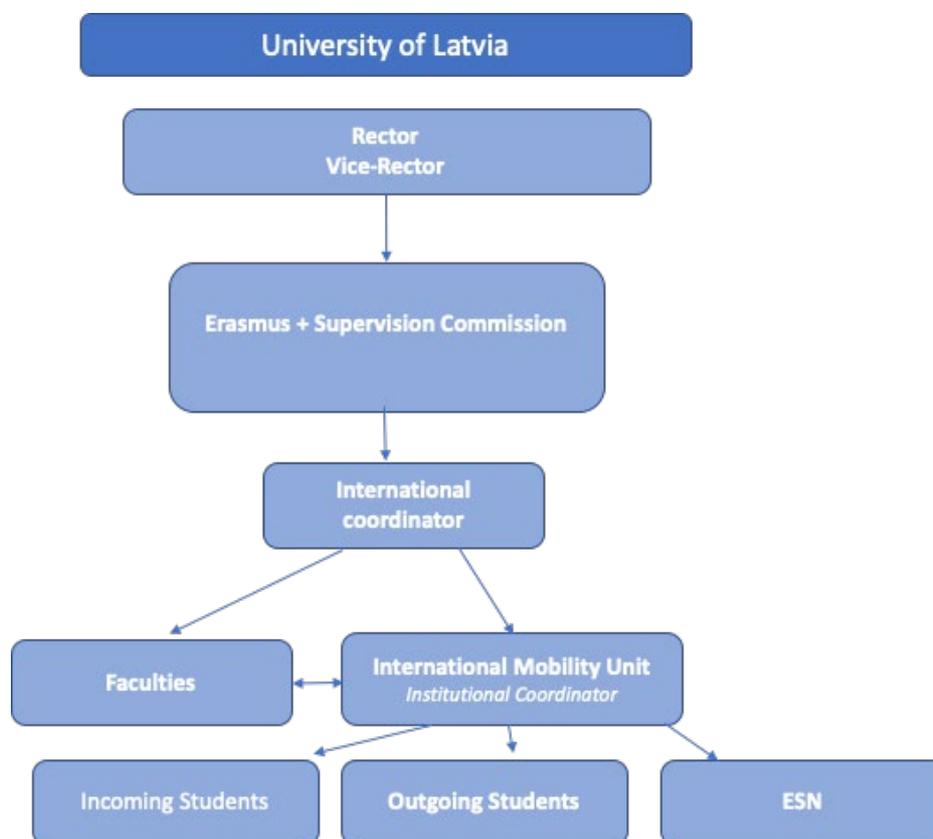


Figure 7: Organisational structure of University of Latvia



i. Workshop sessions – discussion on the framework and staff mobility competences

On 3rd February 2020, Viktoriya (EUF) and Saruul (UM) organised a workshop on the draft framework for Erasmus + Staff Competences. The workshop was attended by 6 participants, including 3 International Faculty coordinators, 1 International coordinator of the Mobility Division, 2 Student Service, Career centre consultants.

The workshop consisted of 4 parts and followed the same structure as the previous study visits. The table below describes the main comments of the participants.

<p>Key competences: Before mobility, infrastructural tasks</p>	<p><u>Before mobility, infrastructural tasks - selected top tasks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner communication • Flexibility in contacting and communicating with students and partners • Digitalisation skills - especially regarding the OLA and the other Erasmus+ tools
<p>Key competences: Before, During, After Mobility – student- related tasks</p>	<p>The first task of Before mobility (student-related tasks), is not related to the coordinators and IROs. It refers to the Management Team: “Build up support and maintain a network of partner institutions (and organisations/companies) including negotiating the content of collaboration agreements”.</p>
<p>Key success factors – competences: Cross-cutting tasks</p>	<p><u>Cross-cutting tasks - selected top tasks:</u></p> <p>All competences/tasks are very important.</p> <p><u>Comments on this category:</u></p> <p>Overall more clarification with examples is needed. Organisational skills are missing, such as time management (as a cross-cutting skill).</p> <p>Overall it is a good tool for mobility staff to know in advance what is expected from them and it also useful for recruitment purposes.</p>
<p>Comments on the whole framework</p>	<p>The framework should better reflect the reality of the departmental Erasmus coordinators.</p> <p>In the sentence “recognise and interpret relevant legal issues that may influence international collaboration”, “legal issues” has to be explained in a clearer manner.</p> <p>The text under each competence and task should be formulated in a way that reflects a measurement; the usage of abstract verbs does not clarify how one can measure the acquisition of competences (e.g. “Take into account” is not enough). For example, the intercultural skills can be classified and precisely explained, e.g. written (etiquette), verbal (greetings, initiate a conversation and contact), non-verbal.</p> <p>The attitudes should be defined more precisely, for example terms such as “empathy” and “confidence” can have more than one meaning. It is important to mention the context in which the term is used in the framework. The focus should be on how to apply these attitudes in real work settings/situations.</p>

Table 10: Outcomes from the workshop at UL

ii. Small groups sessions

During the study visit at the University of Latvia (February 3-4, 2020), 6 sessions were carried out by Viktoriya (EUF) and Saruul (UM) - 4 individual sessions with the Head of International Relations, a manager at the Personnel Management department, the Acting Vice-Rector at UL and the Head of Mobility division. The 2 small groups sessions were with the Admissions division – full time international students and ESN representatives.

The table below reveals the main points discussed during the sessions.

Questions	Head of IRO	Vice-Rector	Student Service staff	Student Unions - ESN	HR staff
Roles and department structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for the partnership network - Development of strategies and organisational structure - Recruitment of staff - Assistant at the Rector's office 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Admission of full-time international students - Processing and managing applications - Handling visa issues - Email communication with applicants - Instructing students on the immigration procedure - Skype interviews, managing the University Facebook page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organising the buddy programme - Organising various events to ease the integration of international students - Informing students through social media, emails 	HR department: 10 staff (2 focusing on personnel development) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handling work permits for foreign staff - Responsible for staff development - Responsible for recruitment at unit level - Drafting policy and guidelines for career development - Identifying training needs
Seniority of teams			Usually stable, low turnover		
Learning and adaptation period	12 months			6 months	
Procedures of starting			3 weeks at least with a colleague/predecessor. Learning by doing		
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managing the high workload with the number of staff available - Managing stress levels at peak times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficient courses in English for incoming students - Faculty mobility coordinators are often full time Academics or Researchers - More IRO staff needed - Incoming students and newly hired staff understanding of the University's structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explaining the procedure to applicants - Managing emotional pressure - High/increasing workload 		-

<p>Competences that mobility staff members should have</p>	<p>As mobility staff member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication skills - Digital knowledge - Experience abroad - Flexibility - Open-mindedness - Creativity - Reactivity 		<p>As mobility staff member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of procedures - Flexibility - Adaptability - Patience - Stress management - Conflict management - Confidence - Coaching - Organisational skills - English/Russian language - Autonomy - Diplomacy 	<p>As ESN-er:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media marketing - Communication skills - Relationship management - Promotion - Negotiation skills - Organisational skills - Time management - Crisis management <p>As mobility staff member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open-mindedness - Communication skills - Empathy (energetic & motivated) 	<p>As mobility staff member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intercultural skills - English courses in formal and informal communication
<p>Enough digital Skills for going digital post 2021</p>			<p>More training is needed</p>		
<p>Lifelong learning</p>	<p>Offered: For newly-hired persons there are special integration workshops organised by the HR department.</p> <p>Needed: Organising team building activities in cooperation with the IRO department and the academic staff, to raise awareness about the roles and responsibilities of the mobility staff and stimulate internal communication, and exchange of information and experience.</p>	<p>Needed: Digital skills as they are evolving rapidly.</p>	<p>Offered: Course on Microsoft Office</p> <p>Needed: Improving the knowledge about mobility programmes and procedures; regular updates</p>		<p>Offered: Professional development tools are offered to administrative staff. A needs analysis is done on an annual basis. The training offers are prepared by the career centre and approved by HR.</p>
<p>Recruitment</p>	<p>Recruitment is handled by the IRO with the support of the HR department. Firstly, there is an internal announcement (internal staff and graduating students); then the offer is published externally. Pre-selected candidates are interviewed. 85% of staff is hired internally.</p>				

Table 11: Summary of the individual/small group sessions at UL



iii. Remarks and Recommendations for improving mobility staff competences

Policy

The languages on which some courses are held should be revised, as increasing the offer of English courses will attract more incoming students. This, however, should not stop the University from promoting the Latvian language as the local language learning is also a part of the internationalisation strategy of UL.

Many Latvian students cannot go abroad as they work to pay for their education – there is a lack of state-funded scholarships which limits the number of outgoing students and national authorities should intervene so more students can experience mobility.

It has been noticed that even though more projects, agreements, partner countries' visits and work conferences have been taking place, expected results have not grown in the same proportion. One of the solutions would be to increase the capacity of the IRO and distribute the workload more effectively. IT support and/or the digital competences of mobility staff should increase in the near future.

Internationalisation

The internationalisation strategy involves not only students on exchange programmes, but also European programmes and the collaboration with partner universities. Being members of European networks such as the European University Foundation or the European University Alliance is not only about joining; instead active participation is key for the University's internationalisation. The UL should focus on increasing the number of students and staff on exchange to meet the internationalisation goals.

Professional Development

It would be more beneficial to send employees to staff training weeks in pairs – one newly-hired person with one experienced staff member to make the most out of the mobility. This peer-to-peer approach will facilitate the learning process because the more experienced colleagues will guide their newly hired pairs therefore accelerating their learning outcomes. Furthermore, staff attending staff mobility programmes enjoys an international and diversified experience that translates into many ideas and inspirational feedback that enrich student services. Attending more trainings on communication with international students and visiting the countries of the incoming students (e.g. staff mobility/exchange) will also help acquire or improve mobility staff competences.

From an administrative point of view, time could be saved by creating reply templates to repetitive questions.

Work Environment

The work pressure is increasing in the same proportion as the workload and time management is becoming increasingly challenging.

From an organisational point of view, it would be beneficial if mobility and academic staff could collaborate more with each other. Likewise, a clarification of the necessary knowledge and skills at different career levels would contribute to better staff management, regarding both effectiveness and well-being.

6. Saint Petersburg State University, Russia

Saint Petersburg State University (SPbU) hosts more than 3875 international students from 103 countries, which is 14% of the university student capacity. According to Rossotrudnichestvo, the

Russian Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation, in 2019 SPbU was named the most popular university in Russia among foreign applicants.

SPbU has 485 partner universities from 85 countries, among which are China, Germany, USA, France, Finland, Japan, Republic of Korea. More than 25 international summer and winter schools are organised every year.

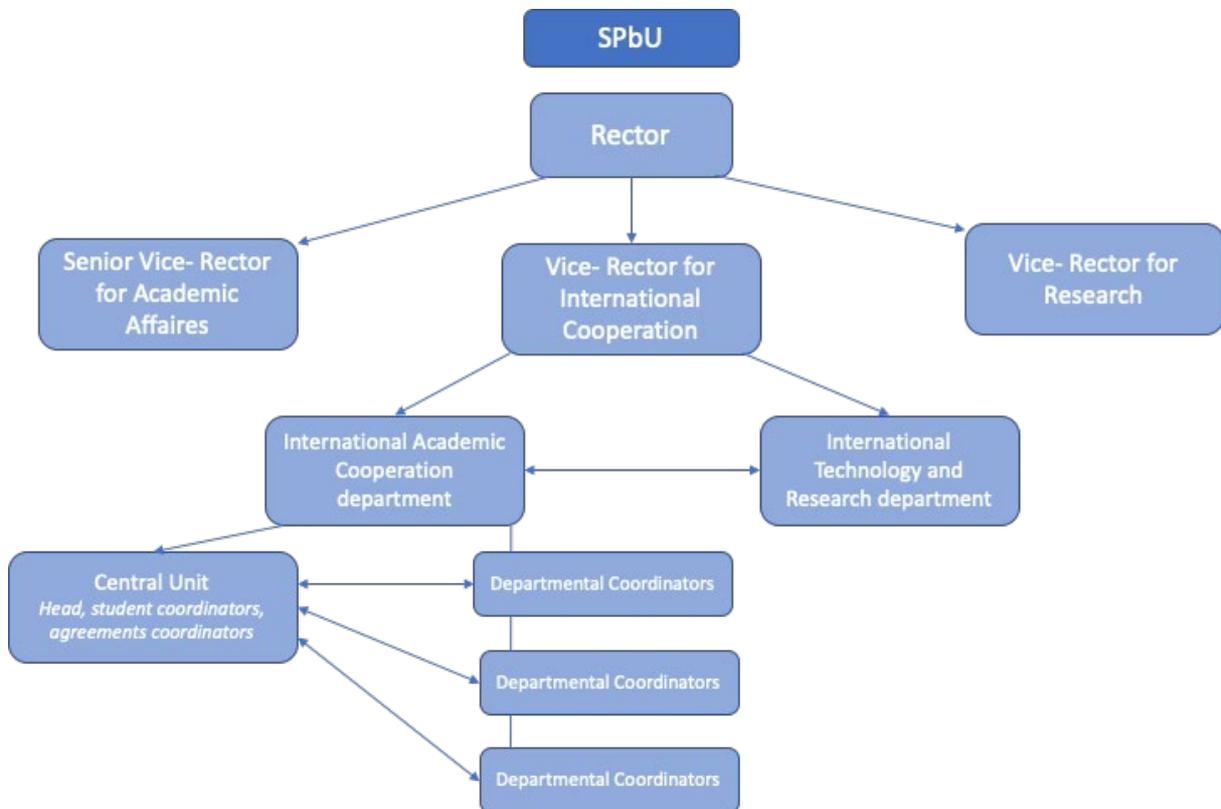


Figure 8: Organisational structure of Saint Petersburg University

i. Workshop session

On 28 February 2020, Viktoriya (EUF) and Christina (UM) organised a workshop on the draft framework for Erasmus+ Staff Competences. The workshop was attended by 8 participants. For the discussion of the framework, the group was split in 2 smaller working groups. Each of them focused the discussion on different categories of the framework.

Group 1: category “Before Mobility – student-related tasks”

Group 2: categories “During Mobility-” and “After Mobility - student-related tasks”

Both groups were asked to discuss the overarching category “Cross-cutting tasks”. The speakers of each group presented their discussions to the whole group.

Key competences:	<u>Before mobility – student-related tasks</u>
-------------------------	--

<p>Before Mobility – student-related tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform students about mobility opportunities abroad • Provide assistance to incoming students (visa, insurance, etc.) • Inform students about scholarships and learning agreements <p><u>Comments on this category:</u></p> <p>Raising awareness about the internationalisation strategy is not within the scope of the IRO. It is more important to raise awareness about the internationalisation strategy among the other departments that do not deal with mobility.</p> <p>For coordinators of outgoing students, it is important to mention that it is essential to know how to provide information on mobility programmes (i.e. communication skills).</p> <p>For coordinators of incoming students, the administrative and organisational support are the most important competences.</p>
<p>Key competences: During Mobility- student-related tasks</p>	<p><u>During mobility, student-related tasks - selected top tasks:</u></p> <p>Providing assistance in case of political, social, or personal crisis is one of the major tasks during mobility for incoming and outgoing students and mobility staff</p> <p>Regarding incoming students only, the most important tasks are providing assistance and support upon arrival.</p>
<p>Key competences: After Mobility – student-related tasks</p>	<p><u>Comments on this category:</u></p> <p>The recognition of ECTS credits is relevant, but it depends on the faculty, the study programme, and the specific case of the student.</p> <p>There is no specific support for the re-integration of outgoing students when they return from mobility.</p>
<p>Key competences: Cross-cutting tasks</p>	<p><u>Comments on this category:</u></p> <p>Communication (target-specific) on individual level.</p> <p>Language skills: English B2/B2+ is sufficient – it is not clear how the English level is defined for the tasks (B2 in some and C1 in other).</p> <p>“Raising awareness about internationalisation strategy” is not relevant towards students, but maybe towards other units of the institution. The phrase should rather say “Raising awareness about mobility opportunities”, as informing students about opportunities is one of the most relevant tasks related to the before mobility part.</p> <p>There is not sufficient focus on “cooperation with other units”. Also, flexibility is not mentioned enough and it is an important skill for the mobility staff. There is a difference in the level of language on different tasks that are performed by the same level of seniority of mobility staff – it is recommended to be clarified how the English level is selected for the particular task in the framework.</p>
<p>Remarks</p>	<p>Mobility windows do not exist in the Russian law.</p>
<p>Comments on the whole framework</p>	

	<p>In general, it is a well-structured document and it reflects the procedures in their real context, though the descriptions are too general and should be further distinguished</p> <p>Some tasks (e.g. compliance with ECTS, initiate curriculum reform, etc.) are not relevant for the partner countries.</p> <p>Patience is an important quality that is not mentioned in the framework.</p>
--	---

Table 12: Outcomes from the workshop at SPbU

ii. Small group sessions

It is important to acknowledge that the structures of the international department at SPbU differ when compared to EU countries: faculty coordinators are part of the central IRO and are responsible for the coordination of mobility programmes on a decentralised level. They divide their responsibility among the different faculties. The faculty coordinators have been categorised in this analysis as decentralised staff for the sake of comparability, but the specifics of the structure should be considered relevant for the analysis. There are 22 staff members working with international students: 3 in the main office, cooperating directly with the partner universities and the other faculties, and 19 departmental coordinators, attached to the central unit but working locally, who are responsible for one or several study fields and in direct contact with the students.

Until 2014 there were very heterogeneous structures in place, such as separate faculty coordinators. Since then, the centralised department has gained capacity and the structure is now more homogenous, as described above.

Questions	Faculty Coordinators	Central IRO staff	Leadership staff at central level	Student Unions
Roles and department structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for student mobility, staff and researchers - In charge of all processes related to outgoing and incoming students, including visa, immigration, enrolment and administration (although visa procedures are formally handled by the Passport and Visa Department, it is a cross-cutting function) - Communication: availability 24/7, reachable by phone and via email - Available from 9am-6pm for signatures and stamps - Communication with central level IRO via different ways of communication: email, telephone and WhatsApp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination of staff mobility under the Erasmus+ programme - Assistance to incoming/outgoing students - Organising orientation programmes - Organising the staff training week - Coordinating projects under EUF 	<p><u>Head of International Academic Cooperation department:</u> creates the internationalisation strategies and works mainly with the Vice-Rector of International Affairs. Responsible for 900 outgoing and 1100 incoming students per year and over 320 partner institutions. The majority of incoming students are from Germany, Japan, South Korea, China, France and Italy. Other responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signing agreements - Negotiating partnerships with other universities - Making grant agreements - Hosting delegations - Hosting guest lectures - Visiting partners - Communicating with different target groups (students as well as partner institutions, faculties, teachers, researchers' units). <p><u>Deputy Head of IRO:</u> supports the Head of IRO in the strategic planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Before mobility, there are mentors responsible for a given country - For the spring term, communication with prospective students starts in December until February, giving information & tips - Buddies: they are in contact with the incoming students at least 2 weeks before their arrival - For incoming students, buddies meet them at the airport and organise transportation - Buddies provide help with accommodation, visa, study programme, etc. - Chats are organised with students to share information and answer specific questions - Managing Social Media during Orientation Week



			<u>Vice-Rector</u> : coordinates the work of all sub-units.	12 ESN mentors in St. Petersburg, each being responsible for specific regions/faculties
Learning and adaptation period	6 months for outgoing processes			6 months
Procedures of starting	Instructions are given by senior colleagues & learning by doing	Instructions are given by senior colleagues & learning by doing		
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be understanding of the students' needs and problems, while still having to follow the rules, which are often not very flexible - Setting the limits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bureaucracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intercultural communication - Geopolitical questions - Everyday challenges: lost passports, visa issues, organising the buddy programme - Individual student support/crisis management: the coordinator of the Faculty of Psychology indicates to the arriving students what public services are available for different occasions and the buddy accompanies them if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unpredictable situations - Irresponsible behaviours from students - Reacting to difficult situations, e.g. injustice, racism
Competences that mobility staff members should have	<p>As mobility staff member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect for colleagues, students, partners and cultures - Responsibility - Involvement - Patience - Communication skills - Knowledge of procedures - IT skills - Language skills - Open-mindedness - Intercultural skills - Tolerance - Stress management - Time management 	<p>As mobility staff member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language skills: Information mainly in Russian, partly in English - Attention to detail (complex procedures, many documents) - Communication skills - Adaptability - Stress-/conflict management - Respect to others - Patience 	<p>As mobility staff member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication - Flexibility - Language skills - Enthusiasm to work in the field, to communicate with partners, target groups - Own mobility experience - Intercultural skills - Knowledge of programme, procedures, regulations - Digital skills (for administration & communication) - More and more courses on digital skills for students and for staff, e.g. for digital teaching - One unit responsible for MOOCs 	<p>As Student Union member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivation (through all the events and activities) - Responsibility - Flexibility - Confidence (e.g. speaking in front of an audience) - Time-management - Conflict-management, problem-solving - Trust/teamwork - Stress management - Language competence to be able to communicate with international students
Enough digital Skills for going digital post 2021	Yes	Yes, staff is well trained to adapt the new IT developments		
Lifelong learning	<p>Needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public speaking, as not all have the required background/experience - Computer skills as they become more and more complex 	<p>Needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stress management courses - Training to better cooperate with international partners 	<p>Needed:</p> <p>workshops on how to write a project application (especially for partner countries, this is not available); other training formats, e.g. online trainings, would be very relevant, as they give</p>	



	- Improvement of intercultural competences		flexibility, can fit in the working hours, and can be easily attended by several colleagues.	
Recruitment			<p>The University tries to recruit former students of SPbU. Usually an internal recruitment procedure is sufficient and HR intervenes for the formal procedures. HR does not have a specific process regarding assessing relevant competences for IRO but basic requirements are language competences and holding a graduate degree.</p> <p>The School of Management has their own HR department with a clear assessment structure, more or less independent from the central unit. They have their own established rules & structures for recruitment.</p>	

Table 13: Summary of the individual/small group sessions at SPbU

iii. Remarks and Recommendations for improving mobility staff competences

Internationalisation

Regular meetings to assess the staff and students' needs have contributed to the success of the internationalisation strategy in the past several years. They are devoted to identifying challenging issues and comparing situations between faculties. At University level, the HR department does not have a specific role in internationalisation and/or international activities, even though it is one of the University's priorities. However, the HR department publishes general opportunities for professional development as well as specific opportunities within given units.

Professional Development

Colleagues share the opinion that staff mobility helps significantly to increase their professional development and work quality. The good practice exchange with other European partners is perceived as very beneficial, while also being fruitful regarding networking or exchanging information on relevant topics such as EWP. Furthermore, the departmental staff suggested adding more peer-to-peer exchange practices with colleagues, as well as trainings at least once per year on strategic areas such as change management, stress management, conflict management, time management, etc. SPbU does not really offer relevant training in these fields but departmental coordinators meet every 2-3 months as part of the sharing experience strategy of the University. Mobility staff would also welcome more online courses, which they could attend during working hours.

Work Environment

Communication between the central level and faculty level IROs is very heterogeneous and complicated sometimes for the faculty coordinators as they have to be always available online.



Organisational Structure

The IRO staff recognises the important contributions of the ESN and especially the support provided on a psychological level with the ESN's buddy programme. The Psychological Department takes the lead in more serious cases.

C. Improvements on the framework after the study visits

Following the feedback given during the study visits, the working group on the framework Els van der Werf (Hanze UAS), Frederick De Decker (UGent) and An Van Laeken (UGent) identified and enhanced 6 key topics in the final version of the framework:

1. Competences that are not measurable

It became clear during the study visits that it was not an accepted practice in all universities and/or in all countries to discuss professional development in terms of competences that staff members should have or should have the opportunity to develop. It was therefore necessary to discuss the function of the framework at some length: what is it for, how can it be used, how should the competence descriptions be interpreted, but also, what it is not and how should it should not be used. Participants argued that the competences were (often) not measurable and could therefore not be used as a tool to test staff members. It was explained that the framework is not intended to be a tool to test staff members, but that it can be used as a basis for a self-assessment tool. These topics will be addressed in more detail in the guidelines of the framework (FESC project, intellectual output 5).

2. Vagueness: be more explicit by using more action verbs and concrete examples

- “Anticipate and handle”, instead of “take into account”;
- “Communicate in writing and orally with”, instead of “correspond”;
- “Identify the needs and expectations of your outgoing students with regard to intercultural skills”, instead of “Be able to make the transfer between your own intercultural skills and the needs and expectations of your outgoing students”;
- “Demonstrate familiarity/awareness”, instead of “be familiar/aware”;
- “Anticipate and respond to...”, instead of “deal with or manage...”;
- “Identify with students”, instead of “put yourself in the shoes of..”.

3. Combine tasks 1 & 2 of the “Before mobility - infrastructural tasks” category

4. Language Skills - only English language skills are mentioned

The working group on the framework discussed adding different languages, by for example adding another column in the framework. However, it was decided not to do this, but to instead include the following sentence in the introduction text of the framework: *“The FESC gives guidelines for proficiency of staff members in the English language. This is not to suggest that other languages, including the language of the home country, are not important. It is, however, to highlight that English language is a must.”*

5. Division of tasks over the various stages before, during and after mobility are not necessary

The working group on the framework discussed this topic in depth - a suggestion was made to move the category “Before mobility - infrastructural tasks” under “Cross-cutting tasks”. However, we decided against this, as these infrastructural tasks provide the “institutional framework” for mobility within the institution. Therefore, it was decided to change the title of this category from “Before mobility - infrastructural tasks” to “Policy-related tasks” and keep the various stages (before, during, after).

6. The term “legal” was not clear to the users:

This issue was mentioned by 2 persons. However, the working groups decided to keep this term, as the description clarifies that the individual is not expected to have legal knowledge but has to be able to recognise and interpret legal issues that may have influence on international collaboration.

D. Conclusions and recommendations

In total, 86 participants took part in the qualitative analysis of the FESC project. This qualitative analysis was carried out in the form of study visits with individual and group sessions, as well as workshops focusing on the presentation and analysis of the framework. Participants from all key stakeholder groups related to internationalisation took part in the study visits – Rectors, Vice-Rectors, Heads of departments, Human Resources departments, International Relations Office representatives, student mobility coordinators and student unions. They all contributed with invaluable feedback, personal experience and insights about the nature of the job of staff facilitating student mobility, the success factors for high performing teams and potential ways to increase job performance. The importance of a robust internationalisation strategy within each HEI which clearly describes the actions to be taken by each stakeholder group was emphasised time and again.

A key success factor for universities looking to enact internationalisation strategies with maximum impact and efficiency is their ability to adequately structure the work of IRO; this is to say, ensure all relevant skills and competences required for reaching their goals are available and used to their fullest extent. This is where the work carried out by FESC comes into play, and the visits and workshops allowed to validate its relevance with regards to:

1. The way in which the FESC competence framework clearly defines key knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs) for mobility staff. These comprise knowledge of education in a national and global context, in particular regarding internationalisation; knowledge of structures, strategies and procedures of the home institution regarding internationalisation, intercultural, communication, English language and digital skills; attitudes of responsiveness, pro-activity, flexibility, confidence, empathy and openness. The framework combines these KSAs with detailed summaries of the tasks executed by mobility staff at different levels of seniority and positions, effectively providing university and IRO leaders with a useful tool to access their capacity and ability to reach strategic goals.

2. The FESC competence framework is also very important for individual staff members, in that it allows them to evaluate their current competences and set up professional development goals in a way that contributes to enhancing professional and personal well-being. Participants stressed how an increased level of competence among mobility staff can impact the students' satisfaction with their exchange experience, as summarised by the tables on individual and small group sessions. In connection with these points the visits and workshops also suggest FESC can be further leveraged to design professional development programmes, which is a matter that requires a more in-depth analysis.

3. The FESC competence framework can also play a key role with regards to the recruitment of staff, by supporting HR in describing the job tasks and required competencies in a more accurate way. A clear profile and defined criteria for new positions are essential to ensure a successful selection process; therefore, a process whereby a new position is profiled should identify the behaviours, motivations and types of knowledge that are critical for the position.

The information gathered during these study visits informed the further development of the [Erasmus+ Staff Competences Framework](#), which was deemed a useful supporting tool for mobility staff who desire to self-check their competences, as well as a relevant utensil for decision- and policy-makers who want to identify more clearly the tasks and competences related to mobility staff. These visits and workshops clearly showed that it is possible to improve the skills and well-being of mobility staff through the kind of analysis and planning that the FESC framework means to support.

