

Inclusion and Diversity Strategy of the University of Primorska in the Framework of Mobility Programmes until 2027

1 Starting points and approach to the development of the strategy

1.1 Starting points for the development of the UP Inclusion and Diversity Strategy

The UP Inclusion and Diversity Strategy in the Framework of Mobility Programmes until 2027 (hereafter: SVRPM27 – 'Strategija vključevanja in raznolikosti UP v okviru programov mobilnosti do leta 2027') is based on the following conceptual starting points:

- Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing Erasmus+, the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport,
- Regulation (EU) 2021/888 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the European Solidarity Corps programme and repealing Regulations (EU) 2018/1475 and (EU) 375/2014,
- Inclusion and Diversity Strategy for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps: Guidelines for implementation,
- Guidance Note "Inclusive Erasmus+",
- Erasmus+ 2022 Guide for Applicants,
- Medium-term Development Strategy of the University of Primorska 2021-2027,
- Action Plan for the Medium-Term Development Strategy of the University of Primorska 2021-2027,
- UP Human Resources Strategy for Researchers 2022-2027 (HRS4R) and
- Gender Equality Plan for UP 2021-2027.

1.2 Approach for the development of the UP Inclusion and Diversity Strategy

The approach is based on the guidelines for the implementation of the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy under the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, which identify eight main categories of barriers that are most often encountered in preventing full inclusion. Within each category of barriers, individuals with fewer opportunities are identified:

Category 1: Special Needs. Special needs include physical, mental, intellectual or sensory deficits which, in combination with various barriers, may prevent an individual from participating fully and effectively in society on an equal basis with others.

Category 2: Health problems. Barriers may occur due to health problems, including severe or chronic illnesses or any other physical or mental conditions that prevent participation in the programmes.

Category 3: Barriers related to education and training systems. Individuals facing difficulties in education and training systems for various reasons, early leavers from education and training systems, NEETS (individuals not in education, employment or training) and low-skilled adults may face different barriers. Although other factors may also play a role, educational difficulties, which may also be linked to personal circumstances, are mostly the result of education systems that create structural barriers or do not fully take into account the specific needs of the individual. They may also face barriers when the structure of the curriculum makes it difficult to participate in learning or training abroad as part of their studies.

Category 4: Cultural differences. Cultural differences may be perceived as barriers by individuals from different backgrounds, but they have a particularly negative impact on those with fewer opportunities. Such differences can present significant barriers to learning in general, especially for individuals with a migrant or refugee background, and especially for newly arrived migrants, members of a national or ethnic minority, sign language users, individuals with difficulties in language adaptation and cultural integration, etc. Exposure to foreign languages and cultural differences when taking part in any of the programme's activities can put individuals off and in some way limit the benefits of their participation. Such cultural differences may even prevent potential participants from applying for support through the programmes and thus constitute a barrier to entry altogether.

Category 5: Social barriers. Difficulties in social adjustment, such as limited social competences, antisocial or high-risk behaviours, (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol users or social marginalisation, can be a barrier. Other social barriers may stem from family circumstances, for example if the individual is the first in the family to have access to higher education or is a parent (especially a single parent), carer, foster parent, orphan or has lived or is living in institutional care.

Category 6: Economic barriers. Economic disadvantages such as low standard of living, low income, and people who have to work for a living while in education, are dependent on the social welfare system, are long-term unemployed, live in precarious conditions or poverty, are homeless, in debt or have financial difficulties, etc. can constitute a barrier. Other problems may arise from the limited portability of services (in particular support for individuals with fewer opportunities), which have to be "mobile" with the participants when they go to more distant places or even abroad.

Category 7: Barriers related to discrimination. Barriers may arise from discrimination related to gender (gender identity, gender expression, etc.), age, ethnicity, religion, belief, sexual orientation, disability or intersecting factors (a combination of one or more of these discriminatory barriers).

Category 8: Geographical barriers. A geographical barrier can be living in remote or rural areas, on small islands or in peripheral/remote regions, in suburbs, in areas with fewer services (limited public transport, poor infrastructure) or in less developed areas in third countries, etc.

2 The vision of inclusion and diversity at UP

Through its scientific, research, educational and artistic activities, and through its involvement in both the local and wider environment, UP is building and consolidating its position as a distinguished and excellent university in the global academic space. It achieves high-quality, inclusive and sustainable scientific, research, education and artistic work in line with the needs of Society 2050 by adhering to the principles of participatory science and balancing the humanities, social sciences and arts with the natural sciences and (bio)engineering.

The values of the UP are rooted in the constitutionally guaranteed autonomy and the Declaration on Human Rights, which define both the relationship of the University to the State and to the external environment in general, and its internal organisation and the free scientific, research, educational and artistic activity of its entire academic community: students, teachers and staff, researchers and professional associates. These values are in harmony with the universally valid premises that define the functioning of universities in the world at large, and also take into account all the specificities of the Slovenian national space. UP puts its values into practice through five principles of action: flexibility, openness, responsibility, innovation and self-correction.

Based on all the above, at UP, inclusion and diversity in the context of mobility is embedded in the core functioning of the University. For example, the Medium-Term Development Strategy of the University of Primorska 2021-2027, under the heading "Increasing the scientific research activity of all researchers", includes the objective that each researcher will undertake at least two outgoing mobilities of a duration of at least one month during the period of the strategy (Objective 3. 4), and under the heading "High student motivation and staff efficiency", the target is that every UP research assistant (excluding maintenance unit staff) will undertake at least one extended outgoing mobility during the strategy period (Objective 13.4). In the context of the UP HR Strategy for Researchers 2022-2027 (HRS4R), it is worth pointing out that five activities (18 in total) relate directly or indirectly to inclusion and diversity in mobility, namely Activities 9, 10, 12, 13 and 17. In the UP Gender Equality Plan 2021-2027, inclusion and diversity in mobility are directly included in the objectives of the section 'Reconciliation of work, study and private life within the organisational structure'. It is also worth pointing out that UP has two regulations in force covering two special groups of students (Regulations on Students with Disabilities at the University of Primorska, Regulations on Special Status of Students at the University of Primorska) and that the project "UP Personal Growth - Integrated Programme of Personal and Professional Growth at UP" was implemented in the framework of the project "UP Personal Growth - Integrated Programme of Personal and Professional Growth at UP", co-financed by the Republic of Slovenia and the EU under the ESF call for proposals "Strengthening the role of career centres in the integrated treatment of students", Guidelines for the establishment of a system for the identification of special groups of students and their support needs have been prepared.

3 Strategic objectives and orientations

The aim of this strategy is to help create fair and equal access to Erasmus+ and other mobility programmes for all students and staff:

- [SVRPM27 - Objective 1](#): Increase commitment to inclusion and acceptance of diversity of all actors involved in mobility programmes.
- [SVRPM27 - Objective 2](#): Ensure that the focus on inclusion and diversity is taken into account at all stages of the management of mobility programmes and the life cycle of projects.
- [SVRPM27 - Objective 3](#): Remove potential barriers to promote inclusion and diversity in order to trigger positive change for individuals with fewer opportunities and ultimately contribute to reduce potential inequalities.
- [SVRPM27 - Objective 4](#): Raise the profile of inclusion and diversity and its role in the quality delivery of Erasmus+ and other mobility programmes.
- [SVRPM27 - Objective 5](#): Foster an equitable and inclusive organisational culture in which students and staff feel safe and included.
- [SVRPM27 - Objective 6](#): Provide all students with equal opportunities to participate in mobility programmes.
- [SVRPM27 - Objective 7](#): Provide all staff with equal opportunities to participate in mobility programmes.

Above objectives will be achieved with the help of the following actions:

- The SVRPM27 will be integrated into the key activities of the University (in the measures for the implementation of the UP Medium-Term Development Strategy 2021-2027, in the measures for the implementation of the UP Human Resources Strategy for Researchers 2022-2027, in the measures of the UP Gender Equality Plan, etc.).
- The SVRPM27 will be an important element in setting up a system to identify specific groups of students and their support needs.
- Taking the categories identified in section 1.2 into account, a common understanding of those who may be considered as individuals with fewer opportunities will be established and set a coherent framework for action.
- All actors involved in the activities of the mobility programmes will be guided towards respecting the principles of inclusion, diversity and equality and towards a positive approach to diversity of all kinds.
- Inclusion and diversity will be a priority at all stages of programme management and project life cycle: before the project (promotion, outreach, support, evaluation, etc.), during the project (selection of participants, preparation, implementation, results, etc.) and after the project (evaluation, dissemination and use of project results, follow-up, etc.).
- Selection of participants for mobility programmes will be enabled in a fair and transparent way.
- Awareness-raising and informing will be created in such a way that all information on Erasmus+ and other mobility programmes is clearly accessible and understandable for all (publications at key information points and websites that are accessible and adapted to different users).

To achieve the objective of informing and awareness-raising, various activities will be organised, such as

- organising face-to-face meetings or events with specific target groups with fewer opportunities (i.e. dedicated information days for specific categories),
 - collaborating with organisations and individuals active in areas relevant for the inclusion of individuals with fewer opportunities, such as intermediaries who reach specific target groups where appropriate;
 - providing targeted promotional material and publications in appropriate languages, e.g. sign language, and use of appropriate formats such as large print, good legibility and Braille, with information on possible additional funding opportunities available to support individuals with fewer opportunities;
 - testimonials, 'ambassadors' and role models: former participants with fewer opportunities.
- Mentoring and follow-up will be organised for individuals from each of the categories identified in section 1.2.
 - Flexible solutions and support will be offered to members of each of the categories identified in section 1.2, including the provision of personalised mobility plans.
 - Organisation of training sessions on addressing diversity issues for university stakeholders responsible for the implementation of mobility programmes.
 - Providing assistance in the preparation of applications for mobility programmes, both for students and staff.

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