



## ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

The Medical University of Graz was listed in the 2019 Nature Index as one of the top 30 academic institutions under 30, i.e., it is one of the best "young" universities worldwide. As part of its internationalization strategy, Med Uni Graz has committed itself to further developing its position as an attractive research location and to preparing its students and staff for careers in an international context as best as it can. Promoting outstanding achievements in competence development is a matter of great concern in this process.

Incoming and outgoing mobility are an integral component of internationalization at Med Uni Graz: Students and staff are eligible for a large number of services and scholarships and encouraged to plan a stay abroad. The university has bilateral partnerships in research and teaching with excellent universities on nearly all continents, and according to the objectives of the EC, stays abroad for the purpose of studying and teaching should also become the norm at Med Uni Graz. Nearly 50% of students have participated in at least one stay abroad at destinations in Europe and beyond during their studies. Mobility outside of Europe, which was previously organized within the context of bilateral partnerships and since 2019 has also been possible through the KA171 program, will be promoted in the new generation of programs. Furthermore, Med Uni Graz is active in the European EURAXESS—Researchers in Motion network.

For many years, participation in an Erasmus+ program has been a key component of this strategy and the central element of semester- and year-long student mobility. It is important to Med Uni Graz that these opportunities are available to all students, independent of their social and economic background. KA131 and KA171 mobility provide the basis for transnational learning and are an important impetus for advancing studies and teaching. Currently, teaching mobility is only sponsored by Erasmus+, which supports international exchange of knowledge and best practice in medicine. The experiences gained during mobility contribute to the creation of study programs and lead to increased transparency and comparability of learning goals and consequently educational qualifications in medicine. General professional development for staff promotes the structural cooperation of European educational institutions as well as the competencies of individuals (e.g., language training).

In "Internationalization at Home," the Medical University of Graz offers its students and staff a wide range of services through the International Office including a Welcome Center for international guests and other English-language services and processes. PhD programs offered in English also contribute to the internationalization of the education and research community. In the area of cooperations, the university is active in global networks and always interested in additional partnerships to enrich its research and teaching, which has been expanded through the KA171 program line since 2019. Med Uni Graz researchers are members of transnational networks and also participate in the initiatives of the European research framework programs. This guarantees that the university significantly contributes to societal innovation.

The Center for Knowledge and Technology Transfer in Medicine (ZWT) is the first Austrian technology and research center that is completely integrated into the infrastructure and organization of a university campus. The central office of the European Commission infrastructure for biobanking (BBMRI-ERIC ) is located at the center.

The Medical University of Graz plans to participate in the *Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) – Learning Mobility of Individuals: Mobility of higher education students and staff*, as it was

successfully carried out in 2014–2020. This key action is coordinated by the International Office at Med Uni Graz. Furthermore, measures are supported by the university as part of *Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) – Cooperation between organisations and institutions*, which is being implemented on the level of the departments/divisions/organizational units. The Rectorate establishes project teams according to responsibilities that are entrusted with implementing the project goals.

During the Erasmus+ period 2014–2020, it appeared that student mobility as part of Erasmus+ KA131 was the central element of internationalization efforts by the Medical University of Graz. In the contract years 2014–2019, a total of 467 students of the Medical University of Graz completed an Erasmus+ stay as part of the programs Erasmus+ SMS and Erasmus+ SMT. The majority of students, namely 320, completed an Erasmus+ SMS stay; 147 students obtained international experience at European hospitals and universities through the program Erasmus+ SMT. It should be noted that given the strict organization of the medical program and the different design of the curricula within Europe, an average number of over 50 Erasmus+ students per contract year is a very positive figure. During medical education, short stays of less than 2 months are very popular since they are a good opportunity to acquire practical experience with the healthcare system of another country. The introduction of short mobility stays of less than 2 months would definitely increase the level of mobility in the medical field. In return, 584 Erasmus+ incoming students were hosted by the Medical University of Graz during the same time span. 191 were Erasmus+ SMS students and 393 were Erasmus+ SMT students.

The first KA171 project was approved in 2019. In the future, such projects should also contribute to the internationalization of the university and subsequently of the European Higher Education Area. In January and February 2020, the first incoming SMT students were welcomed in Graz as part of KA171, and Med Uni Graz intends to expand this type of mobility.

In the new generation of programs in 2021–2027, the Medical University of Graz aims to offer more courses in English in order to attract a greater number of incoming students. This is planned for both the regular Erasmus+ SMS stays as well as the SMT internships. Efforts are also being made to expand the existing curriculum to include a "mobility window" to increase the attractiveness of semesters abroad for Med Uni Graz students and to facilitate the transfer of credits for achievements in other countries in Europe.

In the area of Erasmus+ staff mobility, the Medical University of Graz aims to increase the previous numbers in the new Erasmus+ period. In the 2014–2020 time period, 54 staff members took advantage of the opportunity to stay at a partner institution as part of KA131 and two staff members as a part of KA171. The Medical University of Graz plans to do more promotion of staff mobility in the future (e.g., internal professional development) and also to push more strongly for exchange in the clinical area. The organization of a staff week in 2021 should make staff of our partner institutions aware of the opportunity for staff mobility at Med Uni Graz.

The plans for the Erasmus period 2021–2027 should be seen as being in complete agreement with the university development plan and the resulting Med Uni Graz internationalization strategy. Consistently implemented, they will contribute to sustainable networking of international experts, the enrichment of scientific discourse in research and teaching, internationalization at home and the development of international, strategic partnerships.

The measures planned by the Medical University of Graz support the 4 main fields of action in the internationalization strategy, which are:

- Optimized outgoing mobility that allows sustainable networking with international experts
- Optimized incoming mobility that increases the international perception of Med Uni Graz as an attractive research location and educational institution
- A raising of the awareness of all university members of the meaning of "internationalization at home"
- Consistent acquisition and cultivation of national and international strategic partnerships in teaching and research

During Erasmus period 2021–2027, the Medical University of Graz plans to achieve a quantitative and qualitative increase in mobility as part of KA1 as well as to promote greater participation in projects in KA2. Med Uni Graz follows the principle of creating sustainable partnerships.

In the area of student mobility, Med Uni Graz is in close coordination with partner institutions to guarantee the optimal transfer of credits. Before the upcoming renewal of existing interinstitutional agreements, all partnerships are subject to an audit to discover which partnerships will be key in the next period. Both a balanced exchange between partners and the experiences with course credit transfer carry weight.

The interests of (potential) outgoing students are examined in detail in the university-wide student mobility survey conducted every 2 years. Questions regard the compatibility of study programs mentioned above as well as personal interests, country categories and types of mobility. To guarantee maximum output, Med Uni Graz plans to integrate different university stakeholders into this process.

Outgoing students should receive mandatory intercultural training as a preparation for their stay abroad and the best support before, during and after their stay. Maximum exposure to the culture and language of the host country will promote the sustainability of the stay. Continuous contact with the students and partner institutions during the stay and the writing of a narrative report at the end of the stay assist in monitoring.

Incoming students should also have to participate in intercultural training and introductory events. Furthermore, the development of short courses (short-term study programs lasting about 4 weeks) in English including the awarding of ECTS credits is planned. The current short course in pediatric medicine has been excellently received by Erasmus+ SMT incoming students. In conjunction with a second short course, it would offer a complete program for a two-month stay at Med Uni Graz. In the long term, this would also allow us to strengthen ties with important partner institutions of the Medical University of Graz whose students are very interested in short-term stays.

In the area of staff mobility, we would like to maintain cooperations through programs such as regularly held staff weeks and job shadowing and to exploit and expand existing contact with research institutions. An attractive presentation of these opportunities on the Med Uni Graz intranet provides employees with easy access to information.

### Timetable for KA1

- 2020–2021: Evaluation of existing partnerships and innovation of the IIAs
- Starting in 2021/2022: Mandatory intercultural training for incoming and outgoing students
- Until academic year 2022/2023: Design of a short course to complement existing offerings; implementation of courses in English; incoming "Mobility Window"



- 2021–2027: Organization of an Erasmus+ incoming staff week every 2–3 years

As for the activities in KA2, Med Uni Graz offers applicants the support they need for project conception and execution of projects as part of International Office and technology transfer services so that they are planned according to the Erasmus+ guidelines.