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# ATU Erasmus Policy Statement

## Participation in Erasmus+

### **(Overall Strategy – Erasmus+ as a driver of internationalisation and research)**

Current Irish Government policy for higher education places considerable emphasis on international activity as a key determinant of future growth and development. ATU recognises its responsibility for the continuing economic development of its region and beyond and therefore aligns its international strategy with national policy in this regard. Erasmus+ is a vital component of international strategy which is built around the pillars of internationalisation at home and abroad and the internationalisation of research and which incorporates wider participation in European initiatives such as the European Institute of Technology and the European Universities Initiative.

## Partnerships

In the 2021-2027 programme lifetime, ATU will continue to develop and maintain high-quality strategic partnerships which align with the university's innovation, research, and entrepreneurship ecosystem. Priority will be given to signing inter-institutional agreements with HEIs where there is a strong potential for balanced two-way mobility, and for “added value” collaborations, such as mutually interesting research and curriculum development areas, as well as valuable industry training opportunities for students and staff.

Our objective will be to reduce the overall number of individual partnerships and to focus on a smaller number of more strategically aligned and productive relationships. We will substantially grow the number of our students and staff who participate in Erasmus+ programme by active leadership.

This will be aided by the broader range of mobility models available under KA1 such as blended mobility and doctoral mobility. These additions to the programme will make a cross-European experience possible for those students who were previously unable to participate.

### **Alignment with Research**

Strategic compatibility of research activities is a key factor in the selection of partners as we move towards broad and sustainable cooperative relationships that function at undergraduate, postgraduate and staff levels. While we aim to deepen our linkages with existing partners to provide further mobility opportunities for students and staff, we are also mindful of the scope that exists to expand international representation among our student population, and to attract high-calibre Master and PhD students from overseas.

### **Global Citizenship**

ATU seeks to promote a sense of European and global citizenship in its students by fostering a culture of internationalization and by incorporating elements into its programmes that will help students understand the global context of their studies and enable them to operate effectively in intercultural and international professional, social and cultural environments. The provision and recognition of accessible and inclusive mobility opportunities in a wide range of disciplines for both students and staff are vital. Mobility must be underpinned by training and support in achieving intercultural competence.

A large proportion of our Erasmus activity takes place at undergraduate level and within the framework of degree programmes where international work-placements are a key component, but we also ensure that a broader cross-section of our student population can benefit from relevant



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academic opportunities abroad, and this is facilitated by an increasing number of study-abroad options on many programmes.

The university recognises that the traditional model of students completing their full degree abroad is not always feasible and has engaged with several international partners to deliver joint/double degrees, and such arrangements for example, are in place with Chinese, Malaysian and Canadian partners. The process involves extensive curriculum mapping between relevant academic units in the partner universities, as well as academic, logistical, and legal input from various Institute offices. Blended learning and alternative delivery mechanisms have been explored and several courses and modules are available via these options. Following the Covid 19 outbreak it is likely that many academic partnerships will be enhanced by digital means and/or virtual exchanges of students and staff, which should broaden access to mobility programmes for all students. The significant growth in demand for study abroad and work-based learning opportunities among the domestic student population in recent years alone warrants the inclusion of study abroad opportunities for all students on online programmes. Attention to less represented groups will be a particular focus. ATU is participating in a consortium aiming to make a Cooperation Partnership application focusing on diversity and inclusion in Erasmus+.

ATU will adopt a portfolio approach to mobility, aiming for access to mobility that is suitable for the diverse needs of both students and staff. A mobility development trajectory will support the next generation of staff and students to engage with the programme. This will allow students and staff to gain familiarity and confidence in moving from invited guest lectures to collaborative online learning through to Cooperation Partnerships and Partnerships for Excellence.

In a spirit of solidarity, and in keeping with one of the key elements of its international strategy, ATU is keen to engage with joint projects for capacity building with developing countries.

## Strategy, Objectives & Impact

ATU is developing an International Strategy to reflect its mission and vision. The strategy will seek to ensure that the importance and relevance of internationalisation is made explicit in all key university policies and strategies, is incorporated into planning processes, and is delivered by leadership and line management routes across academic and corporate services. The strategy will include formal and informal curriculum, international mobility, student diversity and cross-border programmes, student support and guidance, academic and support staff engagement, development and reward, partnerships, resources and monitoring, evaluation, and review processes.

To support the process by which we will enhance ATU participation as active members in networks, consortia, and projects, we propose the collaboration trajectory outlines in Model 1 below. This trajectory builds from a low risk, peer to peer-based engagement on collaborative online international education (COIL). It scaffolds a developmental process of international engagement the objective of which is to build structural and organisational capacity to participate in KA2 actions – (Partnerships for Cooperation, Innovation and Excellence and the KA1 Blended Intensive Programmes which involve collaborations with higher education institutions and other organisations at a European and international level).

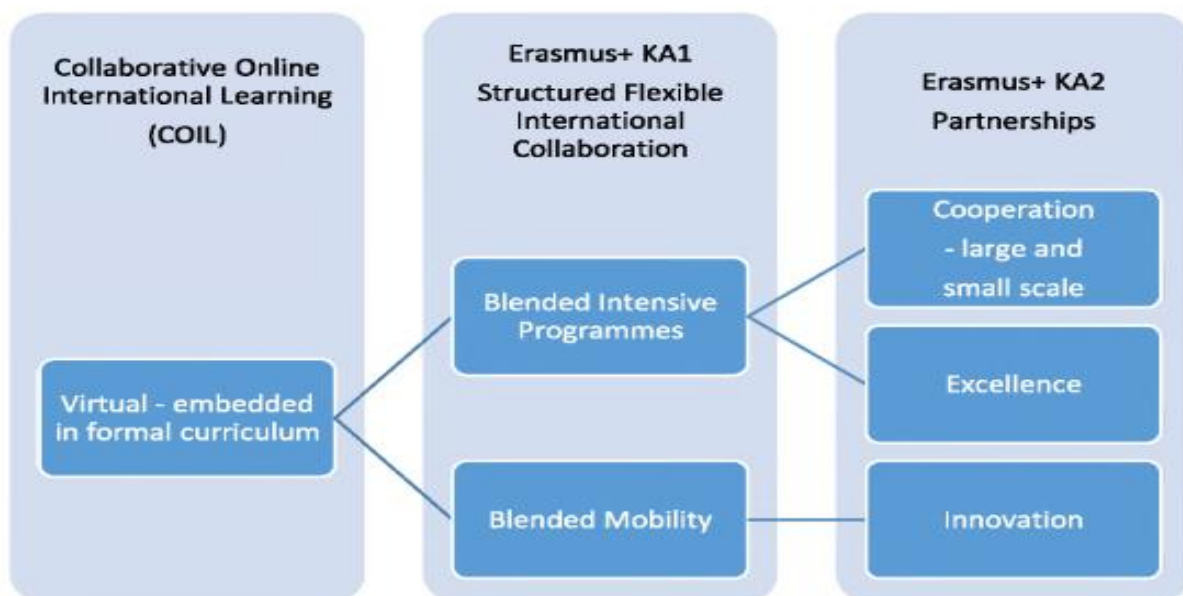
Moving from large numbers of partners to networks tailored to meet specific objectives (i.e., student mobility, doctoral mobility, specific projects, etc) facilitates deeper and integrated relationships. The relationship model fosters a supportive environment and facilitates both student and staff participation.

Model 2: Portfolio of Participation, puts forward an approach to inclusion and participation which seeks to address participants requirements and/or barriers within a typology of international which



echoes the development trajectory proposed in Model 1. Developing an inclusive approach will necessitate an interdisciplinary approach with input from *inter alia* faculty staff, access, disability, careers, and student support staff along with the International Office. Support mechanisms to aid the understanding and articulation of the benefits of international experience from both personal and professional perspectives will be developed along the trajectory with input from Student Success, Teaching and Learning and Careers functions.

**Model 1: Inclusive international cooperation development trajectory**





## Model 2: Portfolio of participation

