

# Policy

## Recommendations

►► Erasmus Jobs



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# About the ErasmusJobs project

The project “Mobility ErasmusJobs- Bridging the skills gap of the Erasmus Generation” (ErasmusJobs) has created a state-of-art review of skills and competencies that experience abroad, in particular the Erasmus mobilities may bring to students. The project focuses on Erasmus mobilities, therefore other formats are out of scope.

The ErasmusJobs project seeks to identify the students’ transversal skills, the needs of employers, and seeks to provide mapping that allows to increase the awareness of both sides. The ErasmusJobs Project, in particular the task of IO1 - A comprehensive Competence Profile, is devoted to define which skills are provided by an Erasmus+ mobility abroad, map the skills employers seek and make a comparative analysis of the two, highlighting the concrete benefits that Erasmus+ brings for participants.

Acquisition of transversal skills,

including those acquired through mobility periods abroad, is not the prerogative of the higher education students and other fields/sectors of education may find the tools and materials developed within the project relevant.

The link of Erasmus+ graduates with the labor market involved the following stakeholders: Erasmus+ alumni, career officers (academia), and employers. Additionally, institutions like the European Commission and Country Governments may also take actions to raise awareness and promote the mobility experience.



## From Erasmus+ mobility experience to enhanced CV/skills/competences

This section addresses some of the root issues in presenting Erasmus+ competences: visibility and recognition of mobility experiences by recruiters.

### Which factors impact recognition of mobility experiences?

Different factors may impact the recognition of the Erasmus+ mobility experience. The first factor is the time of stay abroad ranging from short stays to a full academic year. The next factor is the foreign country of Erasmus+ stay related to the origin country, which brings more or fewer difficulties to overpass or not. There are countries with a similar lifestyle and cultural behavior, wherewith cultural gains from the experience might be of a lesser extent. Additionally, the skills gained strongly depend on the level of involvement students have chosen to take in student or societal activities during their studies and/or mobility experience and the way students experiences/shapes hies/her mobility experience.

### Why does this lack of recognition still exist?

Erasmus+ mobility is usually presented as an isolated entry in the graduate's CV. Although Erasmus students are in a better position to find their first job and to enhance their career development, often there is no reference specifically to the skills that were obtained during the stay abroad and graduates are often not emphasizing/highlighting the value of this experience.

Youth unemployment rates vary across Europe and depending on their skill-set and background, young people often struggle to find a job after graduating from university. Often neither the career officers nor students are sufficiently aware of the transversal skills Erasmus+ mobilities may bring to their career path. No reference points on how to measure transversal skills during the mobility period is offered to students by home and host university, which is essential to raise awareness of the competences gained

towards various stakeholders.

The recognition of skills gained through non-formal learning is usually seen as arbitrary, subjective, and not well-stated; there are often no tangible evidence and/or explicit confirmations/evaluation.

## Recommendations on how to better support Erasmus+ Alumni

Core points elaborated targeting

- EC** European Commission
- GA** Graduate Alumni Erasmus Students
- LM** Labour market actors/employers
- CO** Career Officers - Universities



## Increasing awareness about skills gained while Erasmus mobility

While various studies<sup>1</sup> increasingly prove that the Erasmus+ mobility experience has a significant impact on gaining skills that are highly valued in the labour market, it is often challenging to identify these skills due to their transversal nature, lack of formal recognition or relevant reference points for objective comparisons before and after the mobility period.



ErasmusJobs research results, based on the opinion of 55 Europe-based companies of various sizes and various sectors, also confirmed that prior international experience mattered when recruiting (80%).

To mitigate that, relevant data gathering tools and streamlined methodologies allowing to obtain high quality data are crucial for raising awareness among all involved actors in a meaningful manner, in particular drawing attention to the transversal skill-set that mobility experience may contribute towards and skills Alumni Erasmus students can offer in addition to any field-specific know-how and knowledge.

This may only be achieved by conducting comprehensive Europe-wide surveys and in-depth analysis of the data acquired, as well as by systematically tracking the career paths of Erasmus graduates. This in turn would allow raising awareness about the skill-set/gains from the mobility period that had allowed Erasmus Alumni to advance in their careers and valuing/recognising the mobility experience and its influence on their career path and long-term employability.

## Recommendations



Continuing and expanding impact studies and gathering of quality data both on skills/competences gained while abroad as well as the impact/bridges it creates towards the labour market

<sup>1</sup> [Erasmus+ Higher Education Impact Study](#), Final report (2019); [Literature Study Through Desk Research](#) (2020)



Fostering closer cooperation with career officers regarding job offers and recognition of skills gained while on a mobility via targeted tools, for instance, ErasmusJobs platform, and by applying tools/methodologies that allow translating mobility experience into competitive CV entries



**EC/CO:** Promote in the student's career planning that a mobility experience increases students' long-term employability with data, experience, and E+ alumni employees.

**GA/CO:** Promote that a mobility experience increase students' long-term employability with data, experience, and alumni employees.

**GA/CO/LM:** Related labor market offers will be highlighted and better disseminated in the Career Offices

## On recognition of skills gained during the mobility period

One of the reasons why skills gained abroad may largely be/appear 'invisible' is the lack of recognition. While employers are often keen to see formal proof of a variety of hard skills (certificates, course completion statements etc.), formal confirmation of skills gained during the mobility period is challenging. Therefore further research and investment in relevant tools that support development and application of tools to enable tracking and recognition of skills is crucial. [Erasmus Skills self-reflection tool](#)/methodology for students may be mentioned as one of the examples on how to foster self-reflection prior and after the mobility period for the mobile students and examples like this may pave the way towards creation of a solid framework for recognition of skills.

## Recommendations



Development of meaningful tools and practical materials both for career centres and for students to enable assessing/reflecting upon/evaluating and translating mobility experience into skills (tools that are also recognised/valued/ applied by employers)



Developing concrete recognition pathways for the skills/competences gained during the mobility period abroad (institutional and EU-wide)

## On increased Erasmus+ funding and grants for students

For many years, financial obstacles have been proven to be the single biggest deterrent to participation in mobility programmes<sup>2</sup>, moreover, approximately half of all European students work while they study and those who rely on that income to meet their living expenses find themselves structurally excluded from participating in Erasmus, as the financial support they would receive is too low.

Seeing the positive impact of the Erasmus programme, including on employability, it is crucial to increase efforts to secure more funding as well as a high degree of inclusiveness for mobility opportunities. The new Erasmus+ programme period has increased emphasis on inclusiveness and accessibility of the programme enabling steps in this direction and Higher Education institutions should apply all available measures to ensure that students from disadvantaged backgrounds may have access to the programme, therefore in turn - potential improvement of their employment prospects in the future.

## On competence profile (expected by employers) and ways to increase alumni/graduates' employability

Unemployment rates among young people vary depending on the country and area. Employers/labour market actors are drawing attention to the skill-set of young graduates and (mis)matches in skills that are highly needed/demanded in the labour market. Raising awareness of existing skills gaps both in the respective countries and across Europe is crucial as well as setting concrete measures in place to attain the skills needed.

<sup>2</sup> Sundberg, C., Koppel, K., Schwitters, H., Patricolo, C., Gajek, A., Susnjak, A., Prihoda, F., Hovhannisyanyan, G. (2018) Bologna with Student Eyes 2018 [Online]. European Students' Union. Retrieved [here](#).



Out of the 55 companies that were surveyed, 80%<sup>3</sup> considered that a prior international experience mattered and listed ability to work in multicultural environments/ working with different cultures/teamworking skills (36%), Adaptability and flexibility (25%), Language skills (English) (25%), Open mindedness / broader perspective / tolerance (18%) as being among the core skills gained through mobility experience and as being important for recruitment.

Even though Erasmus students gain a wide variety of transversal skills through their experience during their mobility programme - and project research results show these skills are highly valued by employers - the transversal skills and capabilities are usually vaguely presented by Erasmus alumni.

## Recommendations



Increase/ foster university collaboration with employers (via career centre activities, and not exclusively) in various formats and in particular foster collaboration with companies that work in an international context.



Draw student attention (before and after mobility period) to the competitive skill-set (including transversal skills) and enable designing pathways to acquire them (locally or while abroad).



**CO:** Offer non-formal learning activities for international students to be included in the learning agreement, usually done in E+ stays but currently done inadvertently.

**GA/CO:** Generate on-site-courses that provides additional non-formal transferable skills with the participation of E+ students.

<sup>3</sup> [ErasmusJobs: Skills needed by employers](#) (page 8)

# On creating an effective feedback loop with the labor market actors and mainstreaming the use of the relevant/available tools

Universities have various ways to collaborate with companies and practices range from creating vice-rectorats for employability and entrepreneurship and therefore strategic internal planning of collaboration to direct and specific cooperation patterns implemented by academic staff members or career officers (via career fairs).

## Recommendations

1

To foster increased involvement/consultations with employers when designing internalisation strategies.

2

To increase traineeship opportunities via various platforms ([erasmusintern.org](http://erasmusintern.org), [erasmusjobs.org](http://erasmusjobs.org) platform).

3

Use/ foster wider usage of existing tools (Europass CV) and skills classifications (ESCO skills/competencies classification and definition, with special highlight to transversal skills related to E+ graduates)










**CO:** Generate a specific category of companies looking for E+ alumni. This will promote and focus their attention on E+ alumni.

**EC/CO/LM:** Generate yearly-basis employability data with separated ratios for E+ and non-E+ students graduates. Include incomes and possibilities of job internationalization.

# References

## Increase awareness about skills gained while on Erasmus mobility

-  Transnational learning mobility is one of the major objectives of the European Education Area, the E+ mobilities should improve EU citizenship with mandatory related activities on the institution abroad. While this is typical in E+ in primary and secondary levels is not the case for E+ undergraduate students.
-  Promote in the student's career planning that a mobility experience increases students' long-term employability with data, experience, and E+ alumni employees.
-  Related labor market offers will be highlighted and better disseminated in the Career Offices.
-  Promote that a mobility experience increases students' long-term employability with data, experience, and E+ alumni employees.
-  Generate on-site-courses that provide additional non-formal transferable skills making some assimilation with several competencies that E+ students gain in the mobility.
-  Generate workshops, prizes, awards, etc. for E+ participants that make a distinction from national peers.
-  Generate specific country certifications issued at a local level, so E+ students will have direct access to obtain these diplomas (e.g. country cultural knowledge).



It is not only to raise awareness about skills gained but also to go against any predator or information with bad-news and yellow-press taking down the efforts done in E+ mobilities.



Promote the E+ mobilities through students from disadvantaged backgrounds as study abroad programs improve the employment prospects of these type of graduates largely.

## Competence profile (expected by employers) and ways to best ensure alumni/graduates' employability



Offer non-formal learning activities for international students to be included in the learning agreement, usually done in E+ stays but currently done inadvertently.



Specific E+ offers for excellent talented students. The E+ stays will provide additional benefits, competences to the applicants.



Increase the amount of funding for E+ stays depending on the number of ECTS abroad plus other non-formal learning activities offered for international students and included in the learning agreement.



Include a complimentary evaluation assessment of transferable skills based on Erasmus+ mobility data (time, courses, abroad activities involvement, etc) to be later included in the CVs.



Generate on-site-courses that provides additional non-formal transferable skills with the participation of E+ students.



Raise awareness in E+ candidates to meet the required skills that abroad stay will bring and complement best the origin institution & country specifically related to non-formal transferable skills.



Improve the connection with the hosting institution after the E+ mobility, fostering the gained competencies, certifications, etc.



Include pro-Erasmus companies in workshops and CV preparation to help graduates find a (better) job.



Analyze the employability of E+ and non-E+ graduates in studies that have traditional low-levels of employability, looking forward to relating mobility with finding a job.

## Employer awareness/understanding/attitude and creating an effective feedback loop with the labor market actors



Generate a specific category of companies looking for E+ alumni. This will promote and focus their attention on E+ alumni.



Invite to employment fairs to international companies (best if located both in origin and foreign countries) to increase the E+ stay value related to the employability of E+ students.



Participation of companies in selecting excellent E+ students, prizes, contests related to E+ stays, etc.



Additional funding grants for E+ students in local companies, with a win-win approach.



Newsletter of Career services to companies related E+ graduates' mastery and possible use of their gained competencies.



Invite companies to participate in the universities Internationalization strategy, also considering non-formal learning and transferable skills offered abroad.



Workshops for companies consuming university graduates and highlighting the students in E+ mobilities.



Generate international employment fairs, looking for employers that seek specific competencies that E+ graduates have.

## Mainstreaming the use of the relevant and available tools



Direct the Europass CV My Skills section to include a specific section about E+ stays, and skills/competencies gained related to mobility.



Promote that other online CVs include a section related to E+ stays and skills/competencies gained in abroad mobilities.



Relate an amount of the funding for the institutions involved in E+ mobilities to promote the E+ stays and participation among universities.



Generate mixed learning experiences and research objectives among E+ participant institutions with many student mobilities.



Dissemination of new ESCO skills/competencies classification and definition, with special highlight to non-formal skills related to E+ graduates.



Generate yearly-basis employability data with separated ratios for E+ and non-E+ students graduates. Include incomes and possibilities of job internationalization.



Obtain data differentiated by countries and relating E+ graduates with imports/exports balance, unemployment level, etc.



Promote new types of mobilities, virtual stays, and highlight the gained competences in such cases.

EC/CO/LM

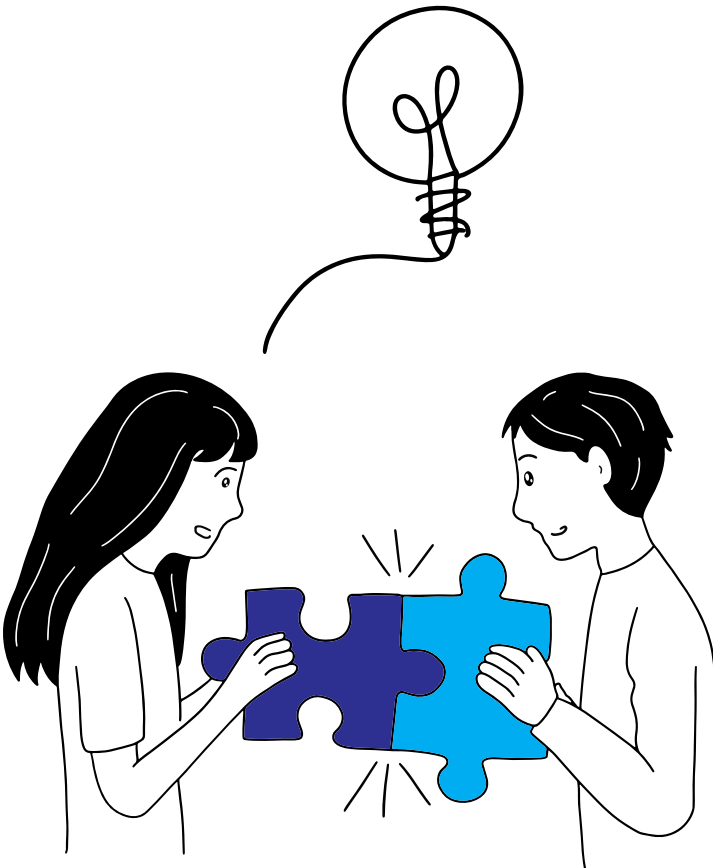


Promote E+ internships as this type of practiceships abroad are not so implemented.

CO



Promote international joint studies program, short courses, joint international blended-learning, micro-credential with short stays, and other types of (virtual) mobilities to increase the international relation and globalization of the institution.



	Increase awareness about skills gained while on Erasmus mobility	Competence profile (expected by employers) and ways to best ensure alumni/graduates' employability	Employer awareness/ understanding/ attitude and creating an effective feedback loop with the labor market actors	Mainstreaming the use of the relevant and available tools
EC - European Commission				
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