

Erasmus Policy Statement

As pointed out in its 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, the aims of Boğaziçi University (BU) are threefold. The first one is to maintain its research university identity, while the second one is to continue its perfectionist education approach existing since the foundation of the university. The third aim is to satisfy various needs of the society by planning activities such as talks, conferences, seminars and carrying out projects that improve the well-being of the society. As can be seen easily, the success in the third aim is a consequence of the achievements in the first two. Hence, BU considers itself as both a research-oriented and education-oriented higher education institution (HEI) by placing equal emphasis on both areas. Another implicit area based on research and education is entrepreneurship orientation. Therefore, any benefit BU can derive in terms of these areas from participating in the Erasmus Programme is an additional asset to the organization. Since BU is a state university with no tuition involved, and the enrolment to BU is based solely on a nation-wide exam open to all high school graduates in Turkey, BU helps in fact towards the initiative of European Education Area one which aims that everyone should be able to access high-quality education, irrespective of their socio-economic background.

US News & World Report ranks the higher education institutions from the U.S. and more than 80 other countries worldwide based on 13 indicators that measure their academic research performance, and their global and regional reputations. In the Best Global Universities 2020 report, BU ranked 186th among the world's top 1,500 universities being the highest ranking university in Turkey. Moreover, according to the evaluation of YÖK (Higher Education Council of Turkey) BU becomes the second highest performing university among 11 research universities and five candidate research universities for the period of 2017 and 2018. This evaluation was carried out to monitor the performance of these universities using three criteria which are "Research Capacity", "Research Quality", and "Interaction and Cooperation". We would like to note that the third criterion "Interaction and Cooperation" involves as a subcriterion among others the ratio of international students, the ratio of international faculty members, the number of exchange faculty and students, and the percentage of publications with international collaboration. In order to keep this successful position, BU intends to increase the number of BU students/faculty participating in the Erasmus Programme as well as the number of students coming into BU as exchange students, which obviously requires to increase the agreements with other HEIs in Europe.

As a matter of fact, BU started its first student mobility activities in the 2004/2005 academic year. The number of Erasmus bilateral agreements, which was 24 in our first year of operation, has reached 279 in 2020. With the addition of 82 agreements with HEIs outside Europe, this makes a total of 361. A similar increase was witnessed in the number of BU students participating in the Erasmus+ Programme, which amounts to an average of 400 during the last several years. When the BU students participating in an exchange program outside the Erasmus+ Programme are included, we can easily say that around 500 students spend at least one semester at a partner HEI. The number of incoming students has been traditionally larger than this even though a decline has been observed during the last two years.

Based on this background information, we can conclude that BU wants to maintain its leading-edge position and reputation as a research and education oriented HEI in Turkey. Recall that one of the approaches to promote key competences identified by the European Commission is to provide highquality education, training and lifelong learning for all. The participation in the Erasmus Programme fits the institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy of BU as can be observed by the specific performance measures set in the 2020-2024 strategic plan. One of the goals is to strengthen education and training activities and enrich them with innovative/creative approaches. A specific, measurable objective to achieve this goal is to sustain the qualified education offered and to establish mechanisms to develop and diversify students' academic knowledge and skills. Under this objective, we have the following performance measure: The proportion of students benefiting from student exchange programs to all students enrolled at BU. The current value of this measure is 3.1%, which is targeted as 4.1% in 2024. A related strategy towards this target is to increase the Exchange agreements and the quotas of incoming students.

The primary target group of mobility activities are the undergraduate students who participate in both study and traineeship programs. These activities provide invaluable opportunities to them, especially to those that plan to apply for postgraduate studies at international institutions. Having the opportunity in participating at the Erasmus+ programme, they will have a chance to test both their academic performance and their social skills in competitive international environments.

The traineeship mobility has also proved to be a very valuable learning experience but unfortunately, due mainly to visa and permit requirements for Turkish nationals, such

traineeship activities have not led to many employment opportunities in the EU. Knowing the importance of this mobility type, BU will place more emphasis to this type of mobility in the next cycle. An objective set in the BU's 2020-2024 strategic plan is the diversification of international research, education, and training funds. One of the initiatives related to this objective is to develop support mechanisms for academic units so that they benefit more from international research and education funds.

The participation of BU in the Erasmus+ Programme fits perfectly into this internationalisation and modernisation strategy because the cooperation among organisations and institutions can be triggered by the short-term visits of academic staff made possible by the teaching mobility grant of the Erasmus+ Programme. These visits will help BU to increase the number of collaborations with other universities, and research centers.

The Recommendation of the European Council describes eight key competences needed for personal fulfilment, a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, employability, active citizenship and social inclusion. Among these competences, we see numerical, scientific and engineering skills, multilingualism, entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression. BU has a very strong engineering school, and all the six departments either rank the first or second in the country. The official language of instruction is English and a variety of languages are taught including French, German, Italian, Latin, Portuguese, Spanish, Modern Greek, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Russian. This not only enhances its students' exchange experiences but also facilitates their becoming truly global citizens by providing them opportunities for being multilinguals and having cultural awareness and expression. One of the goals in the strategic plan is to strengthen research, innovation culture and entrepreneurship, increase research resources and effectiveness in accordance with the identity of being a research university. One of the objectives related to this goal is to increase entrepreneurship activities for which BU defined three performance measures as follows: BU's place in the Entrepreneurial and Innovative Index announced every year (BU ranked 5th in 2018), the number of entrepreneurship projects, and the number of participants who received entrepreneurship certificate.

Boğaziçi University is a member of several international university networks that share the same goal of enhancing academic cooperation among its members. These are IAU-International Association of Universities, Magna Charta Universitatum, EUA-European University

Association, UNIMED-Mediterranean Universities Union, The Utrecht Network, Black Sea Universities Network, SEFI-European Society for Engineering Education. BU is indeed working hard to strengthen strategic partnerships across the EU and thus submitted a proposal along with other seven universities to the second call of the 2020 European Universities Initiative. This will enable students to obtain a degree by combining studies in several EU countries and contribute to the international competitiveness of European universities.

Erasmus Policy Statement of the Previous Period