

Methodological Sheet No. 6 – Erasmus+ Inter-Institutional Agreements

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1. Basic Information

The Erasmus+ program focuses on higher education, cooperation between higher education institutions, vocational education at the university level, and collaboration between universities and businesses. The program is primarily intended for students, teachers, and staff of higher education institutions, but also for trainees from businesses and other entities. Mendel University in Brno participates in the Erasmus+ program based on grant agreements with the National Agency, following its commitments outlined in the Erasmus+ Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) and the rules provided in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide.

This methodological sheet focuses on Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIAs). IIAs are agreements between two or more higher education institutions that set out the terms of cooperation under the Erasmus+ programme and provide the basis for student and staff mobility.

1.1. Conditions for Study Stays

- Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIAs) under the Erasmus+ programme is a key instrument for formally establishing cooperation between partner institutions. These agreements are concluded at **university-wide level**, enabling centralised coordination and ensuring alignment with the university's overall strategic internationalisation objectives.
- Each IIA **specifies the organisational units** involved in mobility activities. At our university, these are the individual faculties and the Institute of Lifelong Learning (ILL). IIAs therefore reflect the specific needs and requirements of the different parts of the university.
- IIAs are generally concluded for the entire Erasmus+ programme period. In the current Erasmus+ period, IIAs cover the academic years from **2022/2023 to 2028/2029**. This timeframe reflects the fact that funds awarded to beneficiaries under the final call of the programme period in 2027 may be used for up to a further 26 months.
- However, partner institutions may agree on a **shorter period of validity**. In such cases, the IIA must specify the starting and ending academic years within the programme period. The agreement must always cover consecutive academic years, ensuring continuity in mobility planning and implementation.
- In exceptional cases, for example when partners agree **to suspend the agreement's validity** (e.g., when students are accepted every other academic year), these specific conditions must be stated in the "Additional Requirements" section. This section allows the periods during which no mobility will take place to be clearly specified, ensuring transparency and clear rules for both parties.
- Since **2023**, all IIAs have been concluded digitally through the **EWP network**. Our university uses an in-house solution developed by **IS4U** for this purpose, which is fully integrated into the University Information System (**UIS**).
- Until 2023, IIAs were concluded exclusively in paper form. However, according to European Commission rules, IIAs concluded during the 2014–2020 programme period remains valid until they are renewed through EWP. This ensures that these agreements remain valid during the transition to the digital platform.
- IIAs must be concluded for the **SMS (Student Mobility for Studies)** and **STA (Staff Mobility for Teaching)** mobility types. For **SMP (Student Mobility for Traineeships)** and **STT (Staff Mobility for Training)**, an IIA is concluded only if required by the partner institution. MENDEL.U does not require IIAs for these mobility types. Under the Erasmus+ programme rules, an IIA is not mandatory for SMP and STT.
- **Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility IIAs** are concluded in paper form directly with partner institutions for the duration of the specific project. Further information is provided in the methodological document on Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility.

1.2. Division of Roles

- **IIA Coordinator**

- Communicates with international partners during the conclusion of IIAs, including negotiating mobility conditions and ensuring alignment with the objectives of both institutions.
- Cooperates with relevant university staff who initiate new forms of collaboration.
- As part of the assessment of new cooperation, consults the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility Coordinator and the relevant Vice-Dean for Internationalisation / Director of the Institute of Lifelong Learning (hereinafter “ICV Director”) on the possibility of concluding an IIA.
- Cooperates with faculty officers to review the partner institution’s course offering and propose mobility places, ensuring high-quality conditions for students and teaching staff.
- Concludes IIAs through the EWP network and maintains records of them.
- In cooperation with the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility Coordinator, the Vice-Dean and the ICV Director, assesses the suitability of concluding an IIA and its compatibility with MENDELU, and establishes new partnerships.
- Is authorised to sign IIAs under a power of attorney granted by the Rector.
- Regularly updates the Factsheet, which forms part of the IIA.
- **Head of the International Relations Office**
 - Is authorised to sign IIAs under a power of attorney granted by the Rector.
- **Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator**
 - In cooperation with the IIA Coordinator and the Head of the International Relations and Internationalisation Office, assesses the suitability of concluding an IIA.
 - Deputises for the IIA Coordinator in their absence and ensures all necessary processes related to the conclusion of IIAs.
 - Is authorised to sign IIAs under a power of attorney granted by the Rector.
- **Vice-Dean for Internationalisation**
 - Assesses the compatibility of study programmes at MENDELU and the partner institution.
 - Contributes to the decision on whether to approve the partner institution and conclude a new IIA.
- **Faculty IRO Coordinator**
 - Proposes mobility places under the IIA.
 - Reviews the relevance of the partner institution’s course offering to ensure that it meets the requirements of the faculty’s study programmes.
 - Provides the IIA Coordinator with the information needed to assess the conclusion of the IIA.

2. Administration Process

2.1. IIA Structure

- An Erasmus+ IIA consists of two parts:
 - Factsheet
 - This section contains general information about the institution that is relevant to all Erasmus+ IIAs concluded by that higher education institution.
 - The required information must be completed so that it can be made available to all partner institutions through the EWP network.
 - Factsheets are updated whenever changes occur. Updates do not require approval through the EWP network.
 - Cooperation Conditions
 - This section contains the agreed conditions of each IIA, which form the valid basis for Erasmus+ mobility between the higher education institutions.
 - Once the partners have defined the scope, conditions and rules of cooperation, this information must be shared through the EWP network and approved by both partners.
 - This section specifies:
 - Number of mobilities
 - Total number of months/days per year
 - Academic years
 - ISCED (field of cooperation)
 - Language level
 - Study cycles

2.2. Concluding a New IIA

2.2.1. Description of the IIA Conclusion Process within the EWP Network

- The IIA Coordinator enters the information in the Factsheet and updates it regularly. Factsheet information is shared with international partners when IIAs are exchanged through the EWP network using IS4U's in-house solution.
- There is therefore one Factsheet for all agreements, and the information does not need to be provided each time a new IIA is created.
- The IIA Coordinator communicates with the international partner and agrees on the terms of cooperation with the partner institution. Outside the EWP network, the partners agree on which party will initiate the process by entering the information into the system.

- The IIA Coordinator at MENDELU or the international partner enters the agreed terms in the relevant fields in their system. They then share these terms with the other partner through the EWP network. The other partner receives the agreement and imports it, depending on the system they use.
- Before the agreement is approved, either party may propose changes to its content. These changes are made in each party's own system. Once changes have been proposed, the updated version of the IIA must be shared with the partner institution to ensure that both versions match. Once both parties agree on the content of the IIA, the agreement is ready to be finalised through digital approval.
- The process of concluding an IIA may take some time, as both parties need to discuss and approve the terms agreed between them. Once the terms have been agreed, the agreement is digitally approved. Email may also be used to discuss and negotiate the terms.
- The IIA conclusion process consists of several stages leading to the final version approved by both partners. In IS4U's system, these stages are as follows:
 - **Draft:** An agreement that has not yet been shared through the EWP network. It is stored only in the system and is not visible to the partner institution.
 - **In negotiation:** An agreement for which the process has been initiated through the EWP network and which is ready for approval or amendments by the other party.
 - **Counterproposals:** This section may also contain IIA proposals whose original versions are being edited in the "Under review" tab or are awaiting signature in the "To be signed" tab, while the other party has meanwhile submitted an amended IIA proposal.
 - **Under review:** IIAs awaiting comments from MENDELU.
 - **Awaiting partner:** IIAs awaiting comments from the international partner.
 - **Concluded:** An agreement approved by both partners, which becomes a valid basis for mobility.

2.2.2. IIA Conclusion Process at MENDELU

- A proposal to conclude a new IIA may be initiated by the Vice-Dean for Internationalisation, the IIA Coordinator, the Head of the International Relations Office (IRO), or the Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator. A proposal may also be submitted by an academic staff member or a student. In that case, they must first contact their Vice-Dean, who will assess the proposal and, if appropriate, bring it to the attention of IRO. The proposal is assessed in light of the internationalisation strategy of the relevant faculty.
- If an academic staff member proposes concluding a new IIA, the proposal must be submitted at least three months before the planned mobility.
- If a student proposes concluding a new IIA, the proposal must be submitted at least three months before the selection process for study exchanges, i.e., in September.

- The IIA Coordinator communicates with the international partner and agrees on which party will initiate negotiations to conclude the IIA. They discuss the details of the cooperation, such as the range of study programmes, language requirements, fields of cooperation, etc.
- The IIA Coordinator contacts the relevant faculty coordinators at MENDELU who are involved in the cooperation and consults them on student and academic staff mobility quotas.
- The faculties are provided with information from the international partner, such as study programmes and mobility quotas.
- Based on the agreement between the faculties and the international partner, the IIA Coordinator sets the number of student and staff places on both sides. If the proposed number of places does not reflect actual needs, the IIA Coordinator may adjust it after consulting the relevant faculty officer.
- All IIA information, including mobility quotas, ISCED codes and language requirements, is entered into the IIA Manager tool (IS4U, EWP network).
- Once the proposal has been finalised, the IIA is sent to the international partner for approval. Both parties approve the IIA electronically through the EWP network (IIA Manager in the UIS).
- Once the IIA has been approved by both parties, the IIA Coordinator sets the mobility quotas in the international module (MENDELU information system).
- Information about all concluded IIAs is entered into MENDELU's internal spreadsheet.
- The IIA Coordinator monitors compliance with the IIAs through the international module (balance of incoming and outgoing students).
- Priorities for concluding and extending IIAs:
 - 1) IIAs whose conclusion or extension is required by the partner institution as a condition for accepting a MENDELU student or sending a student to MENDELU (this includes also IIAs for Blended Intensive Programmes).
 - 2) IIAs identified as priorities by individual faculties.
 - 3) Entirely new IIAs.
 - 4) Requests and needs of international partners.
 - 5) Other IIAs that do not fall under the priorities above are assessed individually.

2.2.3. Criteria for Concluding a New IIA

- The criteria for selecting partner institutions cover several aspects:
 - **Academic compatibility** – the range of study programmes and courses matching student profiles and their curricula.
 - **Institutional quality** – assessment based on international rankings.

- **Practical aspects** – language support and the availability of student support services.
- Consistency with the **university's Internationalisation Strategy and the internationalisation strategies of individual faculties/the institute**.
- **Experience in international cooperation** – track record of collaboration with the institution, its capacity to support students and teaching staff, and its willingness to develop mobility and innovate.
- Evaluating partner institution selection criteria is a comprehensive process coordinated by the IIA Coordinator in cooperation with the Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator, the Faculty Vice-Deans, and the ILL Director.
- As part of this process, the IIA Coordinator cooperates with the Vice-Deans for Internationalisation of individual faculties and the ILL Director, who assess the compatibility of fields of study between MENDELU and the partner institution, thereby participating in the decision to approve the partner institution.
- Another crucial step is assessing the compatibility of the course catalogue. This task is carried out by the relevant faculty officers, who review the partner institution's course offering and submit it to the IIA Coordinator for consideration.

2.3. Modification of an IIA

- In the case of one-off changes (such as an increase in mobility quotas), these changes do not need to be recorded in the EWP system.
- One-off changes are arranged via email correspondence between the international partner and the IIA Coordinator at MENDELU. The amendment request must always specify the relevant field of education according to the ISCED classification and the study cycle for which the change is proposed.
- In the event of permanent changes (as agreed between MENDELU and the partner institution), the IIA must be amended in the EWP system.
- Permanent changes must be incorporated into the existing IIAs within the EWP system.
- These permanent amendments must be made no later than January of the preceding academic year.
- When the partners agree on a formal amendment to an already bilaterally approved IIA in the EWP system, a record of the previous approved version of the agreement must be preserved in both systems.
- The new version must be approved by both parties before the new terms of cooperation enter into force.
- IIA reviews are conducted at the mid-term and at the end of each Erasmus+ programme period. The review also includes an evaluation of the utilisation of the respective agreement,

particularly the number of mobilities completed under the agreement in individual academic years.

- If the quotas under an IIA are not being utilised, the IIA Coordinator, together with the Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator, may propose terminating the agreement. Likewise, they may propose increasing or reducing the quotas for individual IIAs.
- If quotas under certain IIAs are not being met, but the faculty remains interested in maintaining the cooperation, it has the opportunity to revitalise the partnership. The remaining half of the Erasmus+ programme period (3 years) serves this purpose.

2.4. Termination of an IIA

- The partners may decide to terminate an IIA prematurely.
- In the event of unilateral termination, a notice period of at least one academic year must be given (a unilateral decision to discontinue exchanges, notified to the other party by 1 September 20XX, will take effect only as of 1 September 20XX+1).
- The partner must be notified of the termination of the IIA by email. Subsequently, the termination is processed through the EWP network as the final step.
- The requirement to notify the partner at least one academic year in advance applies to the initial notification, not to the actual termination via the EWP network.
- Upon termination, the IIA must be retained in the records of both institutions, particularly if mobilities funded under the Erasmus+ programme (SMS + STA) were carried out during its validity period.
- The early termination of cooperation is communicated to the international partner by **the IIA Coordinator (IRO)**.
- Early termination may take place in justified cases, such as non-compliance with the terms set out in the IIA or prolonged failure to achieve its main objective, namely student or staff exchange.
- If the quotas under a given IIA are not being utilised, the IIA Coordinator, together with the Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator, may propose the termination of the agreement.

2.5. IIA Record-Keeping

- IIAs from the 2014–2020 Erasmus+ programme period are maintained in paper form as scanned copies stored in MS Teams.
- Since 2023, IIAs have been recorded in the “**Concluded**” tab of the **in-house IS4U solution**, accessed through the UIS (EWP network).
- Once an IIA has been concluded in the in-house IS4U solution, it is linked to the **UIS international module**. The IIA Coordinator enters all relevant details there, including the

validity period, mobility quotas, ISCED codes and responsible persons. The module is accessible to OMVI staff and the relevant faculty international officers.

- For ease of reference, IIAs are also recorded in an **Excel spreadsheet** stored in **MS Teams**, which is accessible to the IIA Coordinator, the Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator and the relevant faculty IRO coordinators.

3. Contact Details

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