

SiEM

Social Inclusion &
Engagement in Mobility



Guidelines for Inclusive Mobility Promotion

Supporting in- and outbound
student mobility



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Title: Guidelines for Inclusive Mobility Promotion

Subtitle: Supporting in- and outbound student mobility

Published by: Erasmus Student Network AISBL

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Photo: Prostock-Studio | Getty Images, Canva

Current version updated in September 2022



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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Introduction

In 2019, the “Social Inclusion and Engagement in Mobility” (SIEM) project consortium set out to increase the opportunities and chances in life of young people with fewer opportunities by facilitating their active participation in the Erasmus+ programme. The topic of social inclusion and diversity has been at the forefront of higher education policy in the last few years but little data is available on how to effectively improve access and participation of students with fewer opportunities to the Erasmus+ programme.

Since early spring of 2020, authorities around the world have been acting to contain the Covid-19 pandemic, which brought serious challenges to higher education systems. Two years after the first Covid-19 outbreak, the sanitary situation remains unstable, and physical mobilities of students and staff continue to be affected to different degrees. In addition, the measures in place to withstand the pandemic have triggered a significant increase in the number of unemployed young people in Europe¹, ultimately affecting the most vulnerable groups. In this context, the deep social divisions that have been accentuated by the Covid-19 pandemic position these guidelines about inclusive mobility promotion particularly relevant nowadays.

The general aim of the guidelines is to ease current barriers to mobility and to increase the participation of underrepresented student groups in physical credit mobility at European higher education institutions.

The guidelines will allow International Relations Officers (IROs) and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to better understand the differences in the student population at local level and the characteristics of the currently underrepresented student groups in international student mobility. This knowledge will allow institutions to recruit more students from underrepresented groups by creating and adapting promotional activities so that they cater for the diverse student body at institutional level.

The current document forms the second version of the Guidelines for Inclusive Mobility Promotion and has been updated based on the feedback received at a workshop on social inclusion that took place in November 2021.

¹ [Eurostat: Youth unemployment \(2008-2021\)](#)

Methodology

The Guidelines are one of the main outputs in the SIEM project and build on multiple data sources. More concretely:

- A Working Group (WG) with members from International Relations Offices;
- Key findings and Recommendations included in [SIEM Research Report](#);
- Feedback collected during a [training session for HEIs](#) held in November 2021.

The decision to build on different sources was taken to first identify the needs of institutions, discuss them and elaborate on potential solutions based on current practices implemented at European HEIs.

Working Group

The Working group (WG) met online four times between July and November 2020 with the purpose of conducting a needs-based analysis and evaluating the utility of the tools proposed. It was composed of members from the International Relations Offices at Philipps University of Marburg, University of Lorraine, University of Parma, University of Zurich, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, University of Latvia and Ghent University. The Working Group was led by EUF, and all four meetings followed the same structure. The members were invited to prepare presentations on a pre-set issue prior to the meetings. Those presentations were given and later compiled in a repository to guide the drafting procedures of the tools. At the meetings, the WG also discussed what could be a common recommendation to achieve greater inclusion.

SIEM Research Report

The [SIEM Research Report](#) includes the main results gathered through different primary data sources, namely:

- Student and Staff surveys;
- Focus group with students across 4 EU countries;
- Study visits with IROs representatives.

Students and Staff surveys

SIEM Student and Staff surveys were open between February and June 2020 and disseminated online by the project's consortium. Universities UK

International designed the survey and developed the questions. The Staff survey received 786 responses from 23 out of 33 Erasmus+ programme countries, and the student survey received 12,820 responses from 30 out of 33 Erasmus+ programme countries.

Focus group with students

A total of 10 Focus Groups were conducted with 36 mobile and non-mobile students in Belgium, the Czech Republic, France and Latvia. The aim of the focus groups was to:

- Better understand why students decide to study, work or volunteer abroad;
- Identify existing barriers to participation in mobility programmes;
- Discuss possible solutions to barriers, and ways to increase participation in mobility programmes.

Study Visits

A total of 6 online Study Visits were conducted between October and December 2020. The Guidelines have been shaped by the visits which were held in the format of online informal interviews with central and faculty IRO representatives, support services and student representatives. The interviews confirmed the trends found in the SIEM Staff survey (included in the Research Report), provided insights and best practices, which informed the design of the tools.

SIEM Research Report Recommendations

The first section of [SIEM Research Report](#) includes a set of recommendations calling on HEIs, International Student Organisations, National Agencies and National Authorities as well as the European Commission to act. In response to this request, the Guidelines outlines specific actions to:

1. Recognise main differences in student population at institutional level and identify the characteristics of students with fewer opportunities.
2. Allow institutions to recruit more students with fewer opportunities by adapting and creating new promotional activities.

HEIs Social Inclusion Workshop

The HEIs Social Inclusion Workshop took place online in November 2021 and gathered International Relation Officers interested in piloting the first version of the Guidelines at their institution. The purpose of the training was to provide

participants with a clear understanding and tools on how to increase the inclusive recruitment of students with fewer opportunities in international student mobility and collect their feedback on the first version of the Guidelines, published in March 2021. Different activities were carried out to facilitate knowledge-sharing and jointly create concrete avenues of action.

Definitions

Due to the diversity of student populations, definitions are relevant as they enable us to have a common understanding of the terms being used. In the framework of the SIEM project, a set of definitions was adopted, referring to the project's main target groups. Namely:

- Low-income students;
- Rural students;
- Ethic Minority students;
- First generation students.

Low-income students

The student survey asked respondents about the income level of their family household. The low-income student group were students who identified themselves as being from a below average or slightly below average income household. For the staff survey, definitions for low low-income students were defined by institutions.

Rural students

For the student survey, the project asked respondents to self-identify if they were from a rural area, a town or suburban area, or an urban area. The rural students were those who indicated they were from a rural area. For the staff survey, definitions for rural students were defined by institutions.

Particular attention should be paid when dealing with definitions on "students' ethnic origin", mainly because there are two commonly accepted ways to define and classify individuals on the basis of their ethnic origin: nationality (e.g., in France, Germany, and most southern European countries) and ethnic origin/foreign origin of the population (e.g., the UK, the Netherlands).²

² Jacobs, D. and Rea, A. (2012) "'Allochthones" in the Netherlands and Belgium', *International Migration* 50(6): 42-57.

Ethnic Minority students

The student survey asked respondents to confirm their ethnicity or cultural background. The survey offered a range of regional categories for students to select, for example North Africa, South Asia, in addition to some named groups, for example First Nations. Students were able to select all backgrounds that applied to them. In addition, there was an “other” option for respondents with an open text box in which they could define their ethnicity. In excess of 150 different ethnicities or cultural backgrounds were reported by participants, a clear example of the complexity of definition. Respondents who did not report their ethnicity to be fully White/Caucasian/Europid were added to the board ethnic minority group. For the staff survey, definitions for ethnic minority students were defined by institutions.

First generation students

For the student survey, we asked respondents if their parents or guardians had pursued or obtained higher education qualifications. For the staff survey, definitions for first generation students were defined by institutions.

Further, throughout these Guidelines *identity* is approached from an intersectional perspective. Concretely, this means that no person is only defined by gender, ethnicity, class, or sexual orientation as separate units; it is instead their interaction that shapes individual experiences.³ Depending on the combination of those characteristics and societal stereotypes, one can be given access to certain parts of society but also be restricted from others.

The Guidelines: for whom and when can they be used?

The Guidelines for Inclusive Mobility Promotion will provide IROs – and staff dealing with international internships at higher education institutions – with practical tools to fulfil SIEM Research Report recommendations, ultimately to increase the number of mobile students who are not traditionally mobile by improving the promotional and recruitment activities carried out to promote outgoing student credit mobility. These guidelines also provide simple and effective tools and exercises to help ease collaboration among HEIs and

³ Crenshaw, K. (1991) 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color'. *Stanford Law Review* 43(6): 1241-1299.

other stakeholders involved in student mobility, by fostering dialogue and exploring current and future opportunities for fruitful collaboration.

As European HEIs offer a variety of educational programmes, present differences in the student body composition, and are bounded by their own local context, it is important to tailor the tools and general framework included in this document to the **specific needs of each institution**.

The guidelines will not solve the lack of financial support in student mobility but it attempts to raise awareness on how to effectively ease other key barriers and increase access and participation in the mobility opportunities that student mobility programmes offer, in particular, the Erasmus+ programme.

Barriers to mobility

One of the first steps within the SIEM project was to better frame the main barriers students experience when considering participating in mobility programmes. The complete description of those barriers is included in the SIEM Research Report⁴.

In broad terms, students experience three different types of barriers:

Institutional barriers	<p>Institutional barriers reflect procedures and regulations at programme, faculty or institutional level that may impact the access to mobility opportunities.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> lack of flexibility in degree structure or lack of mobility windows.</p>
Environmental barriers	<p>Environmental barriers include environmental and societal factors that influence students' decision to participate in mobility.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> loss of income while abroad, issues to find accommodation abroad or visa application procedures (for mobilities taking place outside the European Union).</p>

⁴ [SIEM Research Report 2021, Katherine ALLINSON, Wim GABRIELS](#)

<p>Attitudinal barriers</p>	<p>Attitudinal barriers encompass perceptions, beliefs and emotions that can prevent a student from participating in mobility programmes.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> feeling lonely/isolated while abroad, or being afraid to leave family and friends behind.</p>
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Financial concerns are broad in nature and include a lack of funding available and the risk of losing income in the home country. These types of concerns are transversal to the different types of barriers identified above.

Guidelines

Tools for Collaboration: *within the HEI and with external stakeholders*

Admissions and international offices often gather data and develop target measures to encourage students from around the globe to apply for the programmes or mobility opportunities offered by their institutions. While these same efforts of admissions and international offices can be used and extended to promote mobility opportunities to underrepresented students, information about data and initiatives is rarely shared across departments and units, therefore hindering the effective use of this information to support Diversity and Inclusion measures within the institution.

The tools outlined in the next sections (Phases 1-4) can be used to overcome this barrier and promote mobility opportunities and support measures to underrepresented groups.

In particular:

- 1) *Phase 1: Diversity and Inclusion in student mobility review form:* this tool supports the identification of strategies and support structures available at your institution, and encourages to think about how they can be used and expanded to support underrepresented students before and during their mobility

- 2) *Phase 2: Identifying barriers to mobility:* this tool helps pinpointing the factors that hinder that participation of underrepresented students in mobility programmes
- 3) *Phase 3: Fostering student outgoing mobility: Action Plan:* this tool provides advice on how to create mobility-related promotion and communication materials targeting underrepresented groups
- 4) *Phase 4: Collaboration mapping and activities:* this tool supports the mapping of internal and external units/teams that can help identify underrepresented groups and support targeted promotion of mobility.

Phase 1: Diversity and Inclusion in Student Mobility Review Form

Purpose: this exercise aims at providing a comprehensive overview of the current frameworks, strategies and support structures at institutional level that have the potential to directly impact the promotion and recruitment of outgoing student mobility.

The tool is designed around one (or several) questions on student mobility related-topics with a space for including action points to trigger future actions. The form can be adapted to specific institutional contexts and initiatives.

This exercise further guides the collaborations that have been identified in the previous collaboration mapping and collaboration activities section.

How to complete the Review Form?

Step 1 - Complete all questions within all categories;

Step 2 - Based on the answers collected, outline specific action points taking into consideration the institutional context. In the table below you can find examples of suggested action points per section.

Step 3 - Devise an internal implementation plan to carry out the action points established before.

If necessary, reach out to other departments or units to acquire the most accurate information.

A blank version of the Review Form is available in Annex X.

Topic 1: Map underrepresented groups at your institution

Objective	Evaluate whether the institution has identified specific underrepresented groups to be targeted.
Questions	<p>Q1: Which student groups are considered to be less advantaged or underrepresented by the institution?</p> <p>Select one or more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students from low-income households <input type="checkbox"/> Students from rural areas <input type="checkbox"/> Students from minority ethnic groups or with a migration background <input type="checkbox"/> Students from Roma or Traveller communities <input type="checkbox"/> Students who are the first in their family to go to university <input type="checkbox"/> Students living with disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Students who are care providers <input type="checkbox"/> Students with religious beliefs <input type="checkbox"/> LGBT+ students <input type="checkbox"/> Mature students, lifelong learners <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <p>Q2: Why were these student groups classified as less advantaged/underrepresented by the institution?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Q3: If no groups have been identified, are there tools available (e.g., demographic data) that can help the institution identify less advantaged/underrepresented groups?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> No
Suggested action point	<p>If no groups have been identified, use the available tools to identify underrepresented groups that could be targeted in the recruitment and promotion of outgoing mobility.</p> <p>If no tools are available, consider developing them for future mapping (see Phase 2 and Phase 4 of this document for suggested actions)</p>
Topic 2: Learn more about the diversity strategy of your institution	
Objective	Get familiar with the institutional frameworks and units dealing with diversity and inclusion matters.
Questions	Q4: Does the institution have a strategic focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in its institutional strategy?

	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know Q5: Does the institution have a specific Diversity and Inclusion policy ⁵ ? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know Q6: Does the institution have a Diversity and Inclusion team? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know
Suggested action point	Mainstream the diversity, equity and inclusion policies in internationalisation and student outgoing mobility activities.
Topic 3: Learn more about the internationalisation strategy of your institution	
Objective	Familiarise yourself with current practices and working frameworks regarding internationalisation activities.
Questions	Q7: Is international mobility included in the institution's strategic plan? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know Q8: Is international outgoing mobility included in the institution's internationalisation strategy? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know Q9: Does the institution have a specific mobility strategy? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know
Suggested action point	If the institution does not have a specific mobility strategy, consider developing one. Mobility strategies can support diversity and inclusion efforts because they: 1) ensure the financing and support of mobility teams, who can in turn assist incoming and outgoing mobile students, 2) promote the creation of standardised protocols and activities, which can help promote diversity and inclusion efforts (e.g., by facilitating the mapping of incoming and outgoing practices, by evaluating the success of targeted initiatives targeting mobile students).

⁵ *Strategy* refers to the plan that the institution sets to achieve goals and objectives, while *policy* refers to guiding principles that the institution uses to make decisions and take action.

Topic 4: Find out whether the internationalisation strategy at your institution includes references to less advantaged or underrepresented groups	
Objective	Evaluate what the institution and IRO are currently doing to ensure the promotion and recruitment of underrepresented students in outgoing mobility.
Questions	Q10: If international mobility is included in the institution's strategic plan or internationalisation strategy, does this include any specific reference to less advantaged or underrepresented groups? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know
Suggested action point	If necessary, establish targeted measures to increase diversity. For suggestions and specific policy recommendations, please refer to Phase 4 of this document and Allinson and Gabriels (2021) ⁶ .
Topic 5: Learn more about the support structures (pedagogical support, language, student services) available at your institution.	
Objective	Understand the role of support structures in fostering the participation of underrepresented groups in outgoing student mobility.
Questions	Q11: Which support structures are currently in place at the institution to support widening participation in outgoing mobility? <input type="checkbox"/> General support available at International Relation Offices or other offices <input type="checkbox"/> Language support <input type="checkbox"/> Pedagogical support <input type="checkbox"/> Financial advice <input type="checkbox"/> Other, _____ specify:
Suggested action point	Look into previous activities and initiatives of your institution to evaluate the importance of support structures for underrepresented groups and to improve them, if needed. If your institution does not offer any activities/initiatives, consider establishing them (see Phase 3 and Phase 4 of this document for suggested actions).
Topic 6: Learn more about the availability and promotion of internal funding for outgoing students from underrepresented groups.	
Objective	Collect information about targeted funds at institutional level for underrepresented groups.

⁶ Allinson K., Gabriels W.,(2021). Maybe it will be different abroad; student and staff perspectives on diversity and inclusion in student exchanges. SIEM Research Report, siem-project.eu

	Targeted funds have proven to be successful and even more so if the information about them is widely spread and shared, also for outgoing student mobility.
Questions	<p>Q12: Are there any internal funds available to outgoing students, and if so, are these targeted to less advantaged/underrepresented groups?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, targeted <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, not targeted <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Q13: For which underrepresented groups are these funds available?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Students from low-income households <input type="checkbox"/> Students from rural areas <input type="checkbox"/> Students from minority ethnic groups or with a migration background <input type="checkbox"/> Students from Roma or Traveller communities <input type="checkbox"/> Students who are the first in their family to go to university <input type="checkbox"/> Students living with disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Students who are care providers <input type="checkbox"/> Students with religious beliefs <input type="checkbox"/> LGBT+ students <input type="checkbox"/> Mature students, lifelong learners <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____</p> <p>Q14: if funds for disadvantaged/underrepresented students are available, is information about them easily accessible (e.g., on institution website)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> To some extent <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
Suggested action point	If information about available funds for outgoing underrepresented groups is not easily available and accessible, streamline the communication efforts.y.

Phase 2: Identifying barriers to mobility

Purpose: In order to ensure barriers for students are correctly identified, it is important to understand the underlying factors that impact the participation of the students in opportunities for mobility and study abroad.

Background: This tool is based on the Social Model for Inclusion, applied from the social model to disabilities developed by Mike Oliver in 1983^[7] and implemented on the topic of inclusion in mobility.

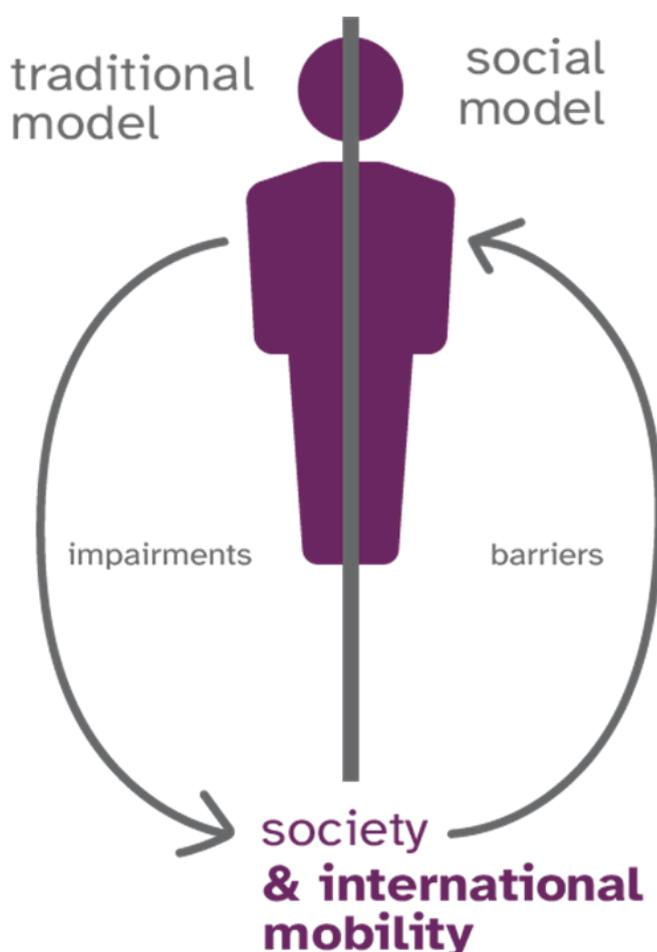
The social model poses that inequality will always be present in society, and that it is society's role to ensure that all people are included.

It therefore considers it the role of the society to ensure everyone can participate regardless of their background, and that the barriers experienced by students need to be overcome by those organising the mobility experiences.

We identify 3 types of barriers:

Institutional: barriers that reflect the programmes that are being offered and the regulations that coincide with these programmes that may impact the access of specific student groups to mobility opportunities.

Environmental: Environmental and societal factors that influence the person's decisions to take part in a mobility. Access to information as well as personal backgrounds impact mobility participation.



Applied from the Social Model to disability (Oliver, 1983)

⁷ Oliver M, (2013), The Social Model of disability: thirty years on.

Attitudinal: Attitudinal barriers tackle the belief system and emotions around the topic of mobility opportunities, to see how they influence their participation rates.

internalised barriers can severely impact their identification with the opportunity.

Example of barrier types:

Institutional	Environmental	Attitudinal
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Insufficient funding in the grants● Advancing initial costs due to late payments of grants.● Loss of financial support if scholarships are not portable.● No recognition of credits obtained abroad.● Information about mobility opportunities & funding● Difficult application processes ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Family● Low income / loss of income● Society does not value mobility● Low involvement on campus due to other commitments / commuter student	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Erasmus seems like an opportunity for wealthier students.● Society does not value competences gained abroad● Family / friends don't support studying abroad.

Exercise:

Based on **6 different student personas** we want you to reflect on the barriers that students experience, and how they are impacted by institutional, environmental and attitudinal barriers.

Rafael 19 Language student From a rural area First in Higher Education Many siblings dyslexia	Mira 27 Pharmacy student Person of colour Middle class family Rural area	Peter 20 Music student Autism spectrum Highly educated parents	Julia 20 IT studies From an island LGBTQI+ community Sufficient financial resources	Flora 22 Arts student Urban low income area Has a student job to make ends meet. Non-binary gender identity	Max 24 Learning difficulties From an urban background Expat community Psychology student
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Step 1: read through the different profiles. Reflect individually what might be this persons' barriers to participate. **How are you doing the exercise? In group or individually? In group:** each person focuses on the experience of 1 individual. **Individually:** go through the profiles one by one,

Step 2: reflect on potential problems, and identify how this interacts with the institutional, environmental or attitudinal element.

Step 3: Define which are barriers that are institutional

Step 4: Identify what it is that you would have to change in the regulations to overcome institutional barriers, what structural support you might need to give to students to overcome their environmental barriers and identify how to change your communication so that you students feel more spoken too.

Phase 3: Fostering student outgoing mobility: Action Plan

Purpose: this exercise aims to support IROs and other staff members working with international student mobility to prepare a successful and reflective outgoing mobility promotion and communication strategy targeting underrepresented student groups.

This tool is deeply rooted in the mobility barriers students experience to participate in outgoing mobility (see section X) as well as in other exercises included in the guidelines. Hence, it is advised to carry out this exercise once all the previous exercises have been completed.

The exercise is organised around 7 categories which represent the basic components when developing a promotional strategy.

Keep in mind that:

- This exercise needs to be carried out with each underrepresented group that has been identified by taking into account their own (perceived) barriers to mobility. For instance, mature students might face different barriers to mobility in comparison to students from rural areas.
- If possible, this activity needs to be completed together with all the staff members involved in the promotion of international student mobility. This exercise is a key prior step before developing tailored promotional material and disseminating relevant support initiatives.
- The content of each section needs to be as specific as possible as together, form the key steps to make the promotion of mobility opportunities successful, effective and inclusive for each target group.
- A blank version of the Action Plan is available in Annex X.

Example:

Target group: mature students.

Example barriers to mobility for mature students:

1. Student mobility is perceived for a younger public;
2. Pressure to focus on the labour market;
3. Family or care-taking responsibilities.

1. Target audience	2. Objective	3. Support
<i>Which minority groups are you targeting specifically?</i>	<i>What do you want to reach?</i>	<i>What type of support can you foresee?</i>
E.g. Mature students (Each institution outlines the specific criteria to consider a student a mature one, normally based on age).	E.g. make mature students feel included in outgoing mobility promotion, normalise student mobility at a more mature age, inform about flexible mobility formats and lengths, etc.	E.g. individual counselling, peer-to-peer support, meeting with career advisers, support mechanisms etc.
4. Information	5. Activities	6. Channels
<i>What information do potential participants need to participate? (Think about the barriers they experience)</i>	<i>What type of activities will you organise to reach your target group</i>	<i>Which communication channels will you use to reach your target group?</i>
E.g. the professional and financial impact of student mobility, mobility is “for all” financial support available, stories of previous mature students on mobility/alumni, etc.	E.g. sessions per “target groups” with tailored mobility opportunities presentation, Q&A sessions, etc.	E.g. Social Media (Instagram, etc) institutional email, online info sessions, etc.
7. Stakeholders		
<i>Internal stakeholders to work with</i>	<i>External stakeholders to work with</i>	
E.g. International relations officer at faculty level, alumni unit, marketing & communication unit, careers unit, student services, etc.	E.g. Partner universities, local student organisations, external organisations representing (mature) students, Erasmus+ national agencies, etc.	

Phase 4: Collaboration mapping and activities

Purpose: this exercise aims to help mapping internal units and external organisations that 1) could help identify underrepresented groups in outgoing mobility and that 2) could support the promotion efforts regarding mobility opportunities.

Moreover, this collaboration mapping is designed to eventually enhance the targeted promotion of outgoing mobility opportunities.

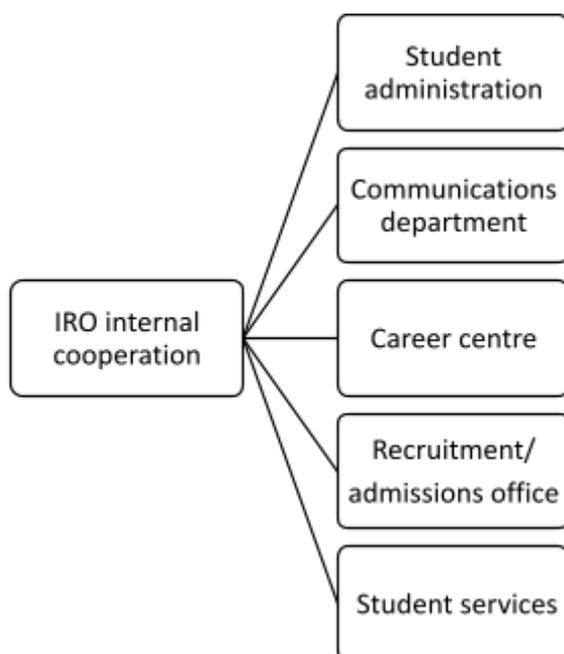
Internal mapping

Step 1: draft Internal map

Map out all internal units at your institution that could help the IRO 1) learn about underrepresented groups and 2) to better understand how and where the information about mobility opportunities is shared.

The most common identified units are: student administration, communications department, career centre, admissions office and student services.

Example:



We recommend you to use the blank template available in the Annex X to map which internal units the IRO collaborates with at your institution.

Once you have mapped out all the internal units at your institution, reflect on whether it would be of value to establish new collaborations within the HEI with the purpose of identifying underrepresented groups. If so, include those units in your map too and start the process to formalise the collaboration between the IRO and these newly identified units.

Step 2: outline collaborative activities

Based on the internal units that you have identified in the previous step, continue the exercise by outlining which activities and tasks within each identified unit can 1) help identify underrepresented groups and/or 2) contribute to the promotion of mobility opportunities.

We recommend you to use the blank template available in the Annex X to list the corresponding activities within each internal unit.

Keep in mind that you might need to outline the activities in collaboration with the corresponding unit to ensure an accurate allocation of tasks.

Examples⁸:

Careers unit

The *careers unit* is responsible for managing alumni relations. **Alumni can play a key role as “ambassadors” of student mobility towards potentially mobile students.** Moreover, this unit has extensive knowledge and experience about the **financial/career value of study and traineeship mobilities abroad.**

Admissions unit

The *admissions unit* can **help the IRO to identify underrepresented groups of students** through targeted recruitment measures, **provide advice on how to better contact them** and **engage their outreach team to promote mobility opportunities.**

All tasks and activities within units differ from institution to institution, so be mindful to map the activities that best represent your local reality.

⁸ For more examples with different internal units, go to Annex X.

External mapping

Step 1: draft external map

Map out all the external organisations that could help the IRO 1) learn about underrepresented groups at local level and 2) better understand how and where the information about mobility opportunities is shared outside the institution.

The most commonly identified external organisations are: national agencies (Erasmus+), partner HEIs, NGOs in the education sector, student organisations, banks and foundations.

Example:



We recommend you to use the blank template available in the Annex X to map which external organisation the IRO collaborates with.

Once you have mapped out all the external organisations, reflect on whether it would be of value to establish collaborations with new organisations with the purpose of identifying underrepresented groups. If so, include those organisations in your map too and start the process to formalise the collaboration between the IRO and those new organisations.

Step 2: outline collaborative activities

Based on the external organisations that you have identified before, continue the exercise by outlining which activities within each identified organisation can 1) help identify underrepresented groups and 2) contribute to the promotion of mobility opportunities.

We recommend you to use the blank template available in the Annex X to list the corresponding activities within each external organisation.

Keep in mind that you might need to outline the activities in collaboration with the corresponding external organisation to ensure an accurate assignment of activities.

Examples⁹:

National agencies

The Erasmus+ national agency of each programme country can provide the IRO with accurate **information about underrepresented groups at national level** in accordance with their national Diversity and Inclusion plans.

Banks and foundations

These types of organisations can **provide information about available scholarships, grants, loans or other type of funding for mobile students**.

Conclusion

The mapping of internal units, external organisations and activities provide HEIs with a simple visual representation of the current and future collaborations within and outside the institution, affording them a better understanding of how and where the promotional efforts for outgoing student credit mobility take place. This exercise not only allows the IRO to better understand how the promotional efforts are distributed, but also it provides invaluable insight into the profile of underrepresented students.

We advise HEIs to take the time to engage in this activity and to update the internal and external maps and collaborative activities as soon as new collaborations are identified.

⁹ For more examples with different external organisations, go to Annex X.

Assess your mobility promotion

Targeted promotion of mobility opportunities to underrepresented groups is paramount, since

'*Seeing yourself*' represented in both textual and graphical communication makes it possible for students to feel addressed and respond to the message. At the same time, it is important to ensure that the communication materials are stereotype- and bias-free, as this could negatively affect and hinder promotion efforts.

- 1) Staff involved in mobility promotion can use the *bias matrix* described below to improve their communication materials and identify any biases.

Bias Matrix

Purpose: this exercise aims to guide the IRO and other support staff on how to review and identify bias in the communication material that has been used for the promotion of outgoing student mobility, both graphically and textually.

In essence, the purpose of the task is to map the status quo and identify any biases in the promotional material and to adjust the communication material to eventually achieve greater inclusion and diversity in mobility.

Bias can be defined¹⁰ as 'the action of supporting or opposing a particular person or thing in an unfair way, because of allowing personal opinions to influence judgement'. Since biases can be both conscious and unconscious it is important to start the exercise with some self-reflection questions:

- With which social group do you identify yourself?
- Which information would you find important to have if you considered being mobile?
- What do you think the currently non-mobile students find important?

This brief pre-exercise intends to demonstrate that we all have our own perceptions and opinions heavily influenced by personal biases and that what we might find important for us, will not be as important for the specific

¹⁰ [Definition of bias \(Cambridge dictionary\)](#).

student group that we are targeting. As a result, taking this insight into consideration and based on the answers to the questions above you might now be able to have a primary understanding of the biases that are present in the current promotional material being used.

In addition to the self-reflection questions, to take full advantage of the bias matrix we recommend following these steps:

Step 1: gather current promotional materials

Start by compiling the promotional material you are actively using, such as posters, presentations, social media posts, newsletters, website articles, FAQs, informational booklets and leaflets, etc.

Step 2: assess promotional material against the bias matrix

The bias matrix is designed to analyse the promotional material from the graphical and textual viewpoint, as both perspectives have the potential to enhance or diminish the target message.

Be mindful that to avoid generalising the communication efforts, it is crucial to review the communication material through the lenses of each underrepresented targeted group¹¹. Therefore, in accordance with your local reality, the first element that needs to be decided is the target group with which the bias matrix will be compared against.

We recommend starting the exercise with the graphical material (left column) and continuing with the textual analysis (right column).

Keep in mind that:

- The graphical material refers to the context represented in the communication resources, while the textual material reflects how an individual self-perceives the material.
- Each section of the table below includes a question and examples of potential answers. When completing the table avoid one-word responses and strive for exhaustive answers.

¹¹ The previous exercises included in this document provide several tools to identify underrepresented student groups in mobility at institutional level.

Graphical material	Textual material
<p>Who is portrayed?</p> <p><i>E.g. Age, ethnicity, gender, etc.</i></p>	<p>Who is your intended reader?</p> <p><i>E.g. Age, ethnicity, gender etc. Which student group are you targeting?</i></p>
<p>What feeling does the visual convey?</p> <p><i>E.g. Invited? "This is for me"? Excluded?</i></p>	<p>What references are made?</p> <p><i>E.g. From a socio-cultural and economical perspective, are there any implicit messages requiring a shared background?</i></p>
<p>What is the setting?</p> <p><i>E.g. Inside/outside? Do you illustrate the academic or social environment? Both?</i></p>	<p>What would you need to know in order to understand the message?</p> <p><i>E.g. What is implicitly perceived but not specifically written? (if any)</i></p>
<p>Does the image reflect your HEI?</p> <p><i>E.g. Can one recognise your HEI by the image shown? If so, which elements represent the institution's values?</i></p>	<p>Whose story is being told?</p> <p><i>E.g. Only the trouble-free success story or also how someone overcame issues and concerns to go on mobility?</i></p>

Step 3: adapt the promotional material

After the comparison exercise has been carried out, the answers collected from the bias matrix will reveal if a certain chosen target student group has been appropriately targeted or not.

If a mismatch between the intended communication and the actual conveyed message is found, the promotional material will need to be adapted and updated in order to align the message that you want to convey with the promotional material for outgoing credit mobility.

If needed, reach out to internal or external departments or organisations which work with the target group of students to learn how to communicate more effectively with them.

In addition, the organisation of focus groups with representatives from the target group of students is an equally suitable opportunity to co-develop new material and test if the changes that have been implemented are aligned with their needs and perceived barriers to mobility.

In essence, these initiatives can foster the visibility of a certain target group and ensure that their priorities are reflected in the revised promotional material.

Step 4: revise the promotional material every 3 academic years

Self-perception is a dynamic construct, especially taking into consideration the intersectional approach to identity. Therefore, it is advisable to assess, revise and update the promotional material every three academic years to ensure that the material continues to attract already identified underrepresented student groups at institutional level and potentially new underrepresented student groups in mobility as well.

Conclusion

In recent years, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has highlighted the need to strengthen the social dimension of higher education¹².

In this scenario, higher education institutions (HEIs) across Europe have been investing time and resources to adjust their institutional practices and strategies at all levels to become more inclusive and diverse, reflecting Europe's societal reality.

Particularly in the framework of student mobility, sustained efforts have been carried out to foster the participation of groups of students with fewer opportunities, but more coordinated and targeted actions are deemed necessary. Achieving inclusion and diversity in student mobility calls for a long-term commitment from practitioners and institutions as well as financial and administrative support from national and supranational public bodies.

In this scenario, we hope that these guidelines will become a supporting tool for International Relations Officers (IROs) and other professionals working directly or indirectly with mobile students in their endeavour to contribute to mainstreaming diversity and inclusion measures, initiatives and strategies for student mobility by better understanding each institution's local context.

¹² [As stated in the Paris Communiqué \(2018\)](#) and [Rome Communiqué Annex II \(2020\)](#).

Annex 1: examples collaborative activities

Examples collaborative activities: internal units

Examples collaborative activities: external organisations

Annex 2: exercises templates

Internal units mapping template

External organisations mapping template

Internal units task distribution's template

External organisations task distribution's template

Diversity and Inclusion in Student Mobility Review Form template

Identify barriers to mobility template

Action plan template

Bias matrix template

