



# STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

A College of Queen's University Belfast

## **INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH POLICY STATEMENT**

Stranmillis University College is a College of the Queen's University of Belfast. The University College was founded in 1922 to provide Initial Teacher Education in Northern Ireland. In the last number of years while providing substantial initial teacher education and further professional development, the University College has diversified into a number of vocational degree programmes. At present these include a BA Early Childhood Studies and BSc Health and Leisure Studies. There are plans to further extend this diversified programme into other vocational areas. The College has a target enrolment of 1000 full-time students following BEd degrees, a range of in-service teacher education courses including an MEd – MSc, a PGCE and a BA and BSc.

It is part of the mission of Stranmillis University College to pursue the enhancement of the personal and professional experiences of its students and staff through an International Outreach programme. As part of its academic policy, the University College's strategic plan indicates that students are actively encouraged to study for a period not less than three months at a partner institution in Europe. At present the University College has 22 active partners in 10 countries of the European Union. The University College has set a business target of 20% of second level students undertaking a period of study at a partner institution of not less than three months. In the last period of the business plan the University College achieved this objective and it can now report that 20% of all BEd students have undertaken outward mobility. The

University College also facilitates a number of short period staff mobility and has 10% of the student numbers outwardly mobile on teaching practice assignments.

The University College's business plan has facilitated the setting up of institutional contracts with the European Commission through the Erasmus programme to facilitate staff and student mobility with 22 partner institutions across Europe.

The University College will in the next three year period cement its relationships with active partners to further enhance student experience on outward mobility, while further developing staff exchanges for short teaching visits to partner institutions. It is felt that during the next three years the University College will address curriculum development in a European context and begin to look at the development of European modules and to develop a European Masters programme. The emphasis will become a more balanced one between the needs of students and staff development in the University College in the next three years.

Stranmillis University College is a significant contributor to the Erasmus programme in teacher education and has the largest proportion of teacher education students throughout the United Kingdom undertaking outward mobility. Besides the Erasmus programme the University College is active in Comenius and additional special measures including the Violence in Schools Project. In the next three years the University College will consider its contribution under the Comenius Chapter of Socrates and the development of new networks across its diversified programmes.

In Stranmillis University College Outreach is part of the responsibility of the Director Education Studies. An Erasmus Officer manages the Erasmus programme and the Comenius programme is facilitated by academic staff facilitating contributions to Comenius, complementary and special measures. The short periods of school experience are managed by the academic responsible for School-Based Work in the University College.

Outreach policy and its implementation are the responsibility of a University College Outreach Committee serviced by an Administrative Officer.

The University College presently provides opportunities for students to consider studying abroad in partner institutions in the second year of their degree programmes. The University College is also attractive to European students and regularly recruits more inwardly mobile students than those who choose to work abroad.

The University College will facilitate further staff mobility in the next three years. Members of staff are currently working in the field of education in Pedagogy in English, Early Years Education and in education. Members of staff are planning to work with a number of institutions in the development of European modules in the future and to look at the possibilities of developing a European Masters with collaboration. It is further considered that the University College will attempt to expand its mobility programme and is at present making applications to the EU/US programme for further development.

Given the large number of full-time students enrolled at the University College in teacher education, the college tends to use the special measures within teacher education in the Erasmus programme to further develop outward and inward mobility with some of its partner institution. In this instance in addition to the 20% target the University College will encourage a further 10% of students who have not availed of the full Erasmus programme to undertake a month's placement at a school where mobility is managed by a partner university. Special efforts will be made in the University College to encourage full-time students outside the teacher education programmes to avail of the opportunities provided and to encourage part-time students where possible to undertake mobility.

The European dimension is a part of the University College's academic programme for students and staff. It avails of core funding from the University College, which is used to complement and support work in Europe. This work includes student mobility, staff mobility, European based research and the development of In-service courses for teachers. All academic staff at the University College are encouraged to develop links with partner institutions, to manage and maintain those links and to develop them into good working relationships. The emphasis in the next triennium will be on supporting teaching and learning in the University College through developing enrichment programmes with partner institution to complement and

support mobility. The University College has developed a non-specialist language facility for both students and staff. Further language modules are available at the Queen's University of Belfast.

Every effort is made to ensure an open and equal approach is adapted to all issues within the Outreach programme. The mission of the University College in this area is to facilitate equal opportunities for all, irrespective of gender, religion, race or disability and examples are readily available of the application of these principles within the Erasmus programme.

The University College is exploring partner institutions in Africa and Asia. It is actively building a network of international universities where students can spend a month long period of mobility concentrating on school experience.

There are three main areas within the University College's European Outreach Programme. Firstly, the provision of opportunities to develop students professionally and academically within the context of the European dimension, using the Erasmus programmes. Secondly, an attempt is made to broaden the experience of academic staff through the provision of opportunities to visit and to teach at a range of European partner institutions. Thirdly, a renewed effort will be made to develop common modules in teacher education at initial and post-graduate levels, to facilitate the use of the ETCS scheme for complementary learning with partner institutions. In the next triennium an effort will be made by the University College to develop international networks within its diversified programme to enable its students to develop their professional and personal competence in an international context.

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