

Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange

Get Your University Involved

"One can even say that online intercultural exchange combines the best of internationalization at home and abroad and certainly in a blended learning form that contributes to the realization of global citizenship for all students and academic staff" (Hans de Wit, 2015).

Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange is a ground-breaking project enabling youth in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean to engage in meaningful intercultural experiences online as part of their formal or non-formal education. There are several activities available for universities in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean to involve students and staff in virtual exchange and thus enhance their internationalization-at-home strategies. Virtual Exchange within universities is particularly successful when it becomes part of a university's strategy, with the support of high level decision-makers.

Training to Develop a Virtual Exchange Project

What?

Embedding Virtual Exchange components into existing courses is one way to enrich existing programmes and promote internationalisation at home. In order to prepare educators to design and implement a Transnational [Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Project](#) (TEP) several training courses are available that provide participants (ideally lecturers and technical and administrative support staff) with the knowledge, experience and tools needed to successfully design and embed Virtual Exchange into existing courses.

When?

The [training courses](#) are currently running (**May-July 2018**) but further training courses will be offered later this year:

- **Basic Training:** From **23 September to 20 October 2018**. The deadline to apply is **20 July 2018**.
- **Advanced Training:** From **23 September to 17 November 2018**. The deadline to apply is **20 July 2018**.

How?

If you are interested in joining the training, you can apply directly through this [online form](#). Support in finding partner educators is available, and applicants for the training should indicate this in the application form.

Information about training courses could be sent to University Centres for Professional Development, directors of joint Master's programmes, University Language Centres, International Offices, Heads of Departments, for dissemination.

Online Facilitated Dialogue

What?

The goal of Online Facilitated Discussion is to enable your students to establish a deeper understanding for the perspectives of their global peers on important issues that matter to youth today, and develop employability skills, such as self-reflection, active listening, respect, critical thinking, effective communication including language practice, and collaboration across differences. The Connect Programme comes in multiple models that vary in length and thematic focus but share the same goals. Participants meet online once a week for 4-8 weeks, depending on the module, to discuss important global and social challenges. Topics are chosen collectively by each group and while they may vary for each dialogue group common topics include cultural stereotypes, youth aspirations, religion, poverty, migration, gender, climate change, media, politics, and daily life, among others.

For participation, your students will need access to internet, a computer, and a headset; intermediate level conversation English; commitment to the full duration of the program; and enthusiasm for dialoguing with peers from around the world. Participants will log into the Exchange Portal, a custom-built video-conferencing platform, to engage in live face-to-face dialogue. Key to the dialogue process is the presence of 1-2 facilitators in each group who are trained to ensure that dialogue remains respectful, meaningful and that all group members feel heard. Dialogue sessions are complemented with asynchronous activities including readings, small assignments, and collaborative projects. Participants who successfully complete the programme will receive a certificate of completion and an Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Badge.

When?

The next Online Facilitation Dialogue programmes will run between **15 October and 6 December**. The deadline to apply is **20 July 2018**

How?

If your institution is interested in having students enrol for [Online Facilitated Dialogue](#) that will take place in autumn 2018, it should identify professors who can integrate the Connect Programme into existing or new courses. Interested professors should fill out the [expression of interest form](#) and will be contacted about participation modalities.

The project promoter will work with the university and implementing professor(s) to set up a feasible integration model into the curriculum, and an appropriate incentive structures for students' participation. The project promoter will lead the Online Facilitated Dialogue by providing the technical platform for students' synchronous and asynchronous engagement, the curriculum and facilitation for the dialogue, and finally monitoring and evaluation reporting submitted to the professor weekly and end of semester.

The International Office, University Language Centre, Student Support/Inclusion offices may be good starting points for identifying interested staff and students.

Interactive Open Online Course on Nationalism and Diversity

What?

This online course aims at engaging students from Europe and the Southern Mediterranean to consider the perspectives of newcomers in Europe and those that are moving towards a more nationalistic and anti-European sentiment. This Interactive Open Online Course will be composed of three elements: video lectures by experts; facilitated online seminars where students from a wide range of national and cultural backgrounds discuss their views, experiences and ideas; and an outreach assignment where they learn more about sentiments in their own communities.

The programme lasts for 10 weeks.

When?

The course will run from **1 October to 7 December 2018**. The deadline for registration is **30 June 2018**.

How?

Learn more about this course and other opportunities for [Interactive Open Online Courses](#) which will be available in the future, and send your expression of interest through the [online form](#).

Recognition

Students and professors completing the different Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange activities will be awarded Open Badges and/or Certificates. Your higher education institution is encouraged to recognise the value of this Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange activity and the Open Badges awarded, for example by offering students applying for Erasmus mobility with extra points in their application if they have an Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange badge, or the same for students who apply to become Erasmus Buddies, or providing the possibility to obtain official credits that can count towards obtaining a degree.

Inclusion

Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange is an important international opportunity for students who are not able to have a physical mobility experience, including students with special needs. We strongly recommend disseminating information about the opportunities available to university centres/offices that support students with special needs and/or those that address social inclusion.