

**Guidelines on staff mobility in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA):  
Recommendations on how to enhance high quality staff mobility**

High quality mobility of all groups of staff (academic, administrative, technical) in higher education institutions is a key factor when it comes to internationalising higher education systems and institutions. High quality mobility of staff is related to knowledge circulation and pursues a variety of general aims. Depending on the position and the field of work of a member of staff as well as the type of receiving institution, some aims can differ.

From the perspective of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the **general aims of academic staff mobility** are to assure and increase the quality of education and research. Staff mobility fosters learning mobility as well as sustainability within exchanges between institutions and has a multiplier role for the overall mobility of students and staff. Staff mobility in the EHEA plays a crucial role in the exchange of knowledge and ideas, encourages the personal and professional development of staff and is a necessary condition for internationalisation at home. It contributes to foreign language proficiency, furthers intercultural skills and strengthens employability of students and staff. High quality mobility is essential for sustainable international networks and cooperation and makes the EHEA more attractive and competitive. A mobility period of academic staff at a **higher education institution** abroad increases the quality of teaching and helps to integrate the global dimension in the curricula. When academic staff undertake a mobility period at a **research institution, enterprise or other organisation** abroad, this may facilitate working relations between academia and businesses or research institutions and lead to new placement/research opportunities for students.

The mobility of **administrative or technical staff** increases and assures the quality of administration, management and student services. It provides help to better understand different administrative structures and thus to overcome existing barriers for mobile staff.

The following recommendations serve to promote and encourage staff mobility. They are directed towards all **member countries** of the EHEA, **higher education institutions** as well as **academic, administrative and technical staff** at higher education institutions.

**1. Definition of staff mobility**

Staff mobility comprises **all groups of staff** - academic, administrative and technical staff<sup>1</sup> - that is mobile either **between higher education institutions** or between a **higher education institution and a research institution, an enterprise or another organisation**. Those guidelines refer to high quality mobility of staff as **physical cross-border mobility**. The mobility may take place on a **temporary basis**, i.e. with an intended return to the home institution or for an **indefinite period**, i.e. including a change of employer.

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<sup>1</sup> Academic staff are staff mainly engaged in teaching and/or research which is also the purpose of mobility. Administrative or technical staff are mainly engaged in administration, governance and/or management or carry out technical tasks. The purpose of mobility is linked to those fields of activity.

## **2. Recommendations to overcome mobility obstacles and to achieve a high quality of mobility**

### **2.1 All member countries of the EHEA are called upon to**

- **Ensure that the national legal framework encourages staff mobility**
  - National immigration laws should allow partners or family members of mobile staff to obtain visas and to have access to the labour market while accompanying mobile staff.
  - For mobility periods which include a change of employer, mobile staff should have the possibility to have their time abroad recognised for pension purposes as if he/she had been working at the home institution.
- **Encourage and support staff mobility and appreciation of its value**
  - Include staff mobility in the national internationalisation strategies for higher education.
  - Provide funds for institutions and agencies promoting staff mobility, mobility programmes and their outcomes as well as positive examples, especially for administrative and technical staff.
  - Encourage the use of existing networks in this area and assess if they could be extended to other member countries of the EHEA.
  - To ease financial difficulties at the institutions when staff are abroad, staff mobility could be included in the agreements on financing of higher education institutions.
  - Provide sufficient funds for mobility of academic, administrative and technical staff, including European funding sources, e.g. ERASMUS+.
  - A sufficient offer of places at international schools for children of mobile staff should be provided. This is particularly relevant for longer mobility periods.
- **Encourage attractive and transparent working conditions as well as transparency of opportunities and of selection procedures for staff at national and international level**
- **Improve data collection on staff mobility in order to better assess its quantity and quality**
  - Invite Eurostat in cooperation with the relevant national data collectors in the EHEA to develop and establish a coherent system of data collection based on the above mentioned definition on staff mobility. This also includes defining the technical conditions for data collection, e.g. the minimum duration of the mobility period.
  - Encourage higher education institutions to collect data on staff mobility based on these indicators.

### **2.2 All higher education institutions in the EHEA are called upon to**

**Create a supporting environment for staff mobility.** Ways in which such a supporting environment can be achieved are that the sending and/or receiving institution

- **Provide information on mobility opportunities for staff**, taking into account the individual needs of staff and the fact that staff mobility is to a high extent life-cycle dependent. Outcomes of staff mobility as well as positive examples can be helpful in this context.
- **Ensure a high quality and a maximum impact of the mobility period**
  - Evaluate the mobility period as well as the existing partnerships and monitor them.
  - Define the purpose and aims of staff mobility in cooperation with the receiving institution as well as the mobile staff before the mobility period.
  - Encourage managers to ensure that the mobility period has clear objectives.

- **Ensure framework conditions conducive to staff mobility and create a culture of welcome**  
Embed staff mobility in a comprehensive institutional strategy for internationalisation with the aim that the institution takes the initiative for mobility, not only the staff. The institutional strategy should also allow for individuals to be mobile on their own initiative and ensure a better internal communication on staff mobility. Measures of this institutional strategy may be to:
  - Create the necessary financial means and capacity for staff mobility in relation to the institution's profile.
  - Make better use of existing international cooperation in the field of student mobility and extend them to staff mobility.
  - Look for flexible solutions to replace mobile staff without negative consequences for the students. One possibility could be to introduce windows of mobility for staff to allow them to have enough time for mobility. This should be taken into account in the human resources planning.
  - Develop a service-oriented approach towards incoming and outgoing staff:
    - Establish adequate and efficient structures and processes to minimise the administrative and organisational burden.
    - Provide welcome and support structures and make them known.
  - Establish a language policy and provide courses for foreign languages and intercultural competence to ensure the smooth integration of mobile staff at the host institution.
- **Integrate staff mobility into career management and development**
  - Include international activities in human resources development plans.
  - Cooperate with the respective partner institution to ensure that mobility has a positive impact on career management.
  - Provide information and offer support on dual career opportunities.
  - In order to increase the personal motivation and the interest of academic, administrative and technical staff for a period of mobility, develop incentives such as career opportunities, recognition of teaching/working abroad and, if applicable, performance-based salary components. Positively reflect staff mobility in professional appraisals.
  - Advertise job offers for academic, administrative and technical staff internationally.

### **2.3 Academic, administrative and technical staff in higher education institutions are called upon to**

- **Show more openness towards international activities and use the existing opportunities for mobility.**
- **Act as multipliers to promote the benefits of mobility among fellow staff and students**
  - Share experience via workshops, reports in magazines of the higher education institution or discipline.
  - Join and actively participate in existing networks.
  - Provide practical information to colleagues.