

*International mobility – opportunity and problem.
Proper preparation for studying at a foreign university*

Project number: 2018-1-PL01-KA203-050756

NEWSLETTER

Intellectual outputs of the project (Manuals)

The need to implement the project is primarily due to the enormous importance of university internationalization to improve their current functioning. Universities are now interested in expanding their offer and accepting a growing number of foreign students, they also strive to maintain contacts with foreign universities and conduct foreign mobility of their employees and students. Universities are assessed for this type of activity. Activities in the area of internationalization are highly ranked in all university rankings indicating the place of a given university on the domestic or international market. Hence the high interest of the university in this subject and undertaking many actions to provide an interesting offer for potential foreign students. However, when preparing to receive foreign students, universities mainly undertake activities in the area of substantive preparation of the study offer, improve the subject matter, adapt it to current trends, and increase proportion of courses offered in foreign languages, most often in English.

The main goal of this project was to better prepare the universities for the internationalization process, also help to prepare foreign students to adapt to the new environment.

Two target groups of the project were:

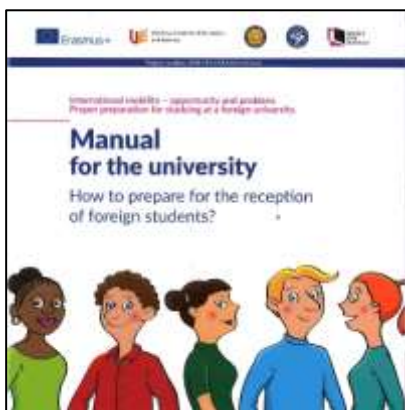
- Administrative, scientific and didactic employees of the universities;
- Students who are studying at foreign universities (in full degree or exchange programme).

The problem of proper university preparation has existed been for a long time. Studying at a university in another country has always been accompanied by issues of the need to adapt to cultural differences - even in the case of geographically close universities.

The main goal of the project is to find good solutions for both the students and the universities. The **universities** need to be well prepared for the internationalization process. There is also a great demand for giving a helping hand to the prospective international **students** planning to study abroad. In order to achieve the better implementation of these objectives the members of this project have worked out **two manuals**.

1. Manual for the university – How to prepare for the reception of foreign students

The publication was created with the objective of preparing universities for better reception of their foreign students. An equally important aim was also to indicate the key areas within which universities equip their students before leaving to a foreign university with necessary knowledge and skills. The development of the manual was preceded by extensive primary and secondary research. In the preparation phase, all partners conducted initial research in a group of foreign students studying in the EU partner counties (Poland, Greece and Hungary) and among Ukrainian current or graduated students who studied abroad and in the group of university representatives (administrative staff, researchers and teachings staff).



The **primary research** had two types:

- **Quantitative** research in the form of a questionnaire survey on a sample of 400 people. Each partner university surveyed 50 students and 50 employees. The analyses was carried out by the Polish partner.
- **Qualitative** research in the form of individual in-depth interviews on a sample of 20 foreign students. Each research partners surveyed 5 students and sent the result for further analyses to the Polish partner. In the selection of the interviewed students we paid special attention to ensuring that the different cultures we represented as widely as possible because the expectations and the language skills shows great difference.

The aim of the **secondary research** was mainly searching and collecting good practices by other EU universities. The desk research - carried out by each partners - analysed existing solutions of European universities regarding the availability of information for the international students.

Based on the results of the analyses the research partners strived to create a simple manual with **6 chapters** and with universal characteristic that can be used by most universities in Europe:

1. Before arriving
2. Accepting foreign students
3. Language adaptation within the university
4. Integration in a new environment
5. Organisation of the students service process
6. Information for students leaving for a partner university

The responsible partner was the **Wrocław University of Economics and Business**. The manual is going to be available online and also in printed version with lovely graphic design which made the manual more expressive.

2. Manual for the student – What should I know before I go to study abroad?

The available guidebooks for international students generally focus on strictly formal issues related to the choice of the proper university, study programme, orientation, accommodation, fees and prices. The publication that was created in the framework of the project is recommended to international students with the aim to improve their reception and adaptation in a foreign environment. It provides important information on how to prepare for their journey abroad.



The preparation of the manual was also preceded by initial research carried out in three groups of respondents bearing the differences at each partner universities in Poland, Greece, Ukraine and Hungary. The first group was the university administrative staff having contact

with the international students. The second was the lecturers teaching international students. The third was the group of local (national) students having classes together with the foreign students.

The research identified all potential barriers that result from the lack of proper preparation of students in the preceding period of their study abroad and makes their adaptation very slow and difficult.

The development of the manual was based on the **primary research** which was carried out in three different ways:

- **Qualitative** research in the form of **in-depth interviews** with the non-academic staff members of the universities (5 interviews were organised by each partners);
- **Qualitative** research in the form of **focus group interviews** with the academic staff members of the universities (1 focus group by each partners)
- **Quantitative** research in the form of online **questionnaires** filled out by a total of 200 local students.

The partners also conducted **secondary research** analyses of problems which description that could be found in available sources that could benefit from the existing experience and insights of the partners own institutions and other national universities.

Based on the results of the primary and desk research the project partners strived to create a simple manual with 4 chapters and universal character that can be used by the international students:

1. Prepare yourself at home
2. Integration in a new environment
3. Research on everyday life
4. General advice

The responsible partner was the **University of Pannonia** but the content has been created by a common work and idea sharing of all the research partners. This manual is similar to the first guidebook and is going to be made available online and in printed version with lovely graphic design which made the manual more expressive. The graphic design was drawn by a Polish designer.

We hope that the readers find the information included in these manuals both interesting and useful.