

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

Author: Caroline SUNDBERG

Contributors: Christina BOHLE (Philipps-Universität Marburg), Nathalie FICK (Université de Lorraine), Alessandro BERNAZZOLI, Eleonora FERRARESI (University of Parma), Afra SCHACHER (University of Zurich), Kristina MANTASASVILI, Konstantina TOLIA (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), Marta VILKAUSA (University of Latvia), Frederik DE DECKER (Ghent University), Isabel CATARINO (European University Foundation) and members of the Steering Committee and Advisory Board who provided feedback.

Design: Nikolina Đurić

Photo: Mego-studio | Adobe Shutterstock; Freepik



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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For whom and when could these Guidelines be used?

These guidelines were developed with the support of International Relation Officers for International Relation Officers, with a touch of a European perspective. The main goal is to increase the number of mobile students who traditionally do not participate in international mobility by improving the promotional and recruitment activities conducted by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to promote outgoing student credit mobility. However, these guidelines are useful not only for those working with incoming mobility but also for colleagues dealing with international internships, work placements and traineeships.

The idea is for you to develop your own institution-specific version of the guidelines based on this general framework, as each country and each institution has its context, needs and specific challenges to address. In this document you will find the tools with standardised information and comments, while in Appendix 1 you will find the same tools without comments and ready for you to develop your version. But why should the guidelines be adapted to each HEI's context? As different HEIs offer different educational programmes, have different compositions of student

populations and different methodologies and support structures, communication must be tailored to their specific context in order to effectively reach currently underrepresented student groups. With this in mind, we suggest that you to start by reviewing the current practices in your HEI and set targets before you start focusing on the communication itself. If you only change communication, you risk not reaching the traditionally non-mobile students. If you change both yours and the student's mindset, you have better chances of increasing the number of traditionally not mobile students' participating in international mobility.

When should I do what? Begin with developing your HEI-specific versions, preferably before starting an active promotional phase. Following the review of your material and potentially newly developed tools, implement them in your promotional activities and monitor changes in the student group applying to be mobile. After three academic years, revisit the HEI-specific guidelines, review and adjust, and begin a new cycle of three years with the updated material.



Introduction

The “Social Inclusion and Engagement in Mobility” (SIEM) Erasmus+ KA3 project begun in 2019 and aims at increasing the opportunities and chances in life for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds by facilitating their participation in the Erasmus+ programme. Since early spring of 2020, Europe has been heavily impacted by the Covid-19 outbreak. Physical mobilities, of students and staff were placed on hold. Unemployment increased and has largely affected what were already vulnerable groups.

At the beginning of 2021, youth unemployment had increased, and already existing social divides have gotten deeper. Which is why these guidelines, aimed at increasing participation of underrepresented student groups in physical credit mobility, are even more important today: to bridge the gap and ease the transition of students to qualified jobs allowing for social mobility through student mobility. These guidelines will not, however, solve the lack of financial support. Nevertheless, they attempt to create awareness of how other barriers can be overcome.

These guidelines build on the SIEM research report¹ findings and focus on increasing the participation of the following four target groups in student mobility:

- Students from low-income households

- Students from rural backgrounds
- Ethnic minority students
- Students who are the first in their families to pursue higher education

These guidelines are to be understood as tools for HEIs to fulfil the SIEM research report recommendations. The aim is to understand the differences in the student population and the characteristics of the currently underrepresented student groups in international student mobility. This will allow you to recruit more students from the underrepresented groups by creating and adapting promotional activities so that they cater for the diverse student body in your HEI.

¹ SIEM Research Report 2021, Katherine ALLINSON, Wim GABRIELS



Literature review

Who are the mobile students? Why is the ivory tower taller to climb for some student groups than others? Can we change the mindset of students regarding outgoing mobility through the ways we communicate and promote opportunities? The following chapter brings insight to the questions of why the traditionally international mobile student group is rather homogeneous and why the current promotional and recruitment efforts have not reached its full potential to attract students who traditionally do not take part in international mobility.

Student mobility

The Erasmus+ Higher Education impact study from 2019 tells us that the typical Erasmus student is female, 22 years old or younger, student at a HEI in a western European programme country, doing an Erasmus credit mobility exchange at a HEI in a northern European Programme country (European Commission, 2019). The five most common reasons why they decided to take part in the programme are: the opportunity to live abroad, the opportunity to learn or improve a foreign language, the opportunity to expand the social network by meeting people from different cultures, improvement and widening of career prospects, and the opportunity to develop soft skills, such as adaptability, taking initiative or proactivity (ibid).

The typical student is also female, 22-24 years old, in western European programme countries (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020). Both the majority of

students and mobile students have parents who have obtained a tertiary degree (Hauschildt, Gwośc, Schirmer, & Cras, 2020). Hence, the mobile student population is a perfect reflection of the homogeneous student population. The issue of a homogenous student body has been known within in the European Higher Education Area for the last decade. The student population should mirror the diversity of the society at large in order to achieve social justice and equality. Changing the societal norm and increasing diversity in the student population is too great a challenge for HEIs to tackle on their own. Nonetheless, to assure that students who pursue Higher Education have equal possibilities falls within the responsibility of all HEIs.

What do we know is preventing students from taking part in mobility programmes? According to EUROSTUDENT VI data,

students with at least one parent having obtained tertiary education are more likely to be mobile than their peers (on EHEA average, only 6% of students without Higher education background have had a temporary enrolment abroad). However, what students considered to be the obstacles to being mobile differs minimally between the two groups.

Listed below are the 10 main obstacles, according to students with parents with and without a higher education background.

Obstacles	Students without higher education background	Students with higher education background
1 Additional financial burden	67%	62%
2 Separation from partner, child(ren), friends	49%	47%
3 Loss of a paid job	39%	35%
4 Lack of motivation	29%	30%
5 Difficult integration of enrolment abroad into the structure of home study programme	27%	28%
6 Low benefit for studies at home	27%	27%
7 Insufficient skills in foreign language	29%	25%
8 Problems with recognition of results achieved abroad	22%	22%
9 Lack of information provided by domestic higher education institution	22%	22%
10 Limited admittance to mobility programmes	18%	18%

Table based on the findings in (EUROSTUDENT VI Ed. DZHW, 2018, p. 234)

As illustrated in the table on the left, the ranking of obstacles by the students is similar, the difference is in how they overcome them, which seemingly is easier for students with a higher education background. What HEIs need to do is to compensate for what students without a higher education background must overcome and/or remove the obstacles. This can be done by, for example, promoting support services available, as indicated in the 2019 Erasmus+ impact study:

“ Institutional support plays a vital role for the quality of the mobility experience: the better students assess the support and services at their home institution, the larger the gain they report from their mobility experience.

(European Commission, 2019, p. 68)

Social mobility

Social mobility builds on Pierre Bourdieu's ideas of socioeconomical and sociocultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and the ways the capital can be changed.

One can increase one's socioeconomical capital by investing in, for example, a Higher Education degree as a first-generation student. By obtaining a Higher Education degree, generally one can expect a qualified job and higher future wages compared to someone who decides not to pursue Higher Education and performs a less qualified job after finishing compulsory education. Each path either increases the socioeconomical capital or remains at the same level compared to the person's parents. This is the primary explanation of social mobility.

Sociocultural capital on the other hand consists of the unwritten rules normally associated with a specific socioeconomical background. Examples are knowledge about what is *appropriate* to bring as a topic to a specific conversation and/or what to wear at a specific occasion. But it is also about what is considered to be good or not, i.e., whether student mobility is an investment or an unnecessary financial burden. Both the socioeconomical and sociocultural capital are what allows for social mobility. In order to feel a sense of

belonging and to be seen as an equal, one needs to increase the sociocultural capital along with the socioeconomical capital and vice-versa. The tools to gain more capital, both economic and cultural, need to be given simultaneously. Moving from one socioeconomical context to another is helped by education, however, education does not always ease sociocultural mobility, nor can education policy solve all inequalities.

”Education policy cannot be expected to solve issues such as child poverty alone, in the short term, or even at all. This means that education policy has to be humbler, but it still has important roles to play – in ensuring that inequalities are not worsened by the education system, and by promoting structures and interventions that can ‘compensate for society’, to some extent (Pring, 2009; Gorard, 2010f). Pushing for quality and equality are in union here, and it is much more efficient to invest in disadvantaged rather than already advantaged learners (Chiu and Khoo, 2005)” (Gorard, 2018, p. 205)

Nevertheless, more needs to be done in order to achieve greater diversity in student mobility. According to Magali Ballatore and Martha Ferede’s study *The Erasmus Programme in France, Italy and the United Kingdom: Student Mobility as a Signal of Distinction and Privilege* from 2013,

“(…) participation in Erasmus is skewed.

Erasmus students are disproportionately more privileged (higher socio-economic status) than their sedentary counterparts and have a richer history of family and study travel. We suggest that the programme participation is used to signal privilege and a way to mark distinction.”

(Ballatore & Ferede, 2013, p. 525)

“Nonetheless, there seems to be a slight widening of participation over time. In the same study, Souto-Otero (2008) found that the profile of students participating in Erasmus has shifted between 1997 and 2005, with a moderate increase in participation from children of parents with lower-than-average incomes and children of parents not working in high-level positions. However, having highly educated parents mattered nearly as much for Erasmus participation in 2005 as it did in 1997.”

(Ballatore & Ferede, 2013, p. 527)

”Participation in study-exchange schemes holds important implications for future opportunities. Studies find that students who have taken part in institutionalised mobility often have a better and easier entry into the labour market, better jobs and higher responsibilities compared with their ‘sedentary’ peers (Opper et al, 1990; Maiworm & Teichler, 1996; Messer & Wolter, 2005).”

(ibid.)

Higher Education policy could thus do more to unlock the full potential of social

mobility for all students, by investing in finding ways to increase the participation of underrepresented groups in student mobility and extracurricular activities, which are known to have a positive impact on career perspectives post-graduation.

Representation

A message can be received in a multitude of ways: words, images and emojis represent different things for different individuals. The person who understands a message closest to its intended meaning, is the one who shares the same or the most similar social and cultural capital as the author of the message. This is the basis of the representation theory and signifying practices (Hall, 1997). The representation and signifying practices theory is meant to bring consciousness to bias, creating self-awareness of what one represents and hence communicates subconsciously. It also aims to ease ways to compensate for the cultural bias in order to avoid unintentional “self” replication. This is further explained by the Discourse Representation Theory:

“Discourse Representation Theory, or DRT, is one of a number of theories of dynamic semantics, which have come upon the scene in the course of the past twenty years. The central concern of these theories

is to account for the context dependence of meaning. It is a ubiquitous feature of natural languages that utterances are interpretable only when the interpreter takes account of the contexts in which they are made – utterance meaning depends on context. Moreover, the interaction between context and utterance is reciprocal.”

(Kamp, Genabith, & Reyle, 2011, p. 125)

Working actively to visualise what one’s discourse represents help us to understand how our communication is understood. In the case of promotion and recruitment for outgoing student mobility, we can understand why some student groups understand themselves to be more targeted by mobility promotion than others.

Moving from the theoretical aspects to concrete terms, by the knowledge of “someone like me” doing something, I become more confident that I too, can do it. Which is what Tehmina N. Basit’s article “I’ve never known someone like me go to university: class, ethnicity and access to higher education” from 2012 argues for. It is therefore a good investment to review the promotional activities that you use in order to identify whether the target groups are represented in your communication.



Methodology

These guidelines build on the outcomes of a Working Group (WG) composed of members from International Relations Offices, the SIEM Student and Staff surveys, the SIEM research report recommendations and online study visits. The decision to have multiple sources of data to build on was taken in order to both identify the needs, discuss those needs and elaborate on potential solutions and tools based on current practices. Keeping in mind that these guidelines will, in its future editions, be adapted in accordance with feedback received from users who have piloted them.

Working Group

The WG met online four times between July and November 2020 with the purpose of conducting a needs-based analysis and to evaluate if the tools presented could be useful. The WG validated the first draft of the literature review and initial outline for these guidelines. The WG was composed of members from the International Relations Offices at: Philipps-Universität Marburg, Université de Lorraine, University of Parma, University of Zurich, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, University of Latvia and Ghent University. The WG was led by the EUF and all four meetings followed the same structure of members being invited to prepare presentations on a pre-set issue prior to the meetings. The 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 in order to achieve greater inclusion.

SIEM Surveys

The two SIEM Surveys were open between February and June 2020 and disseminated online by the project's consortium. University UK International designed the survey and prepared the narrative for the questions of interest for these guidelines concerning communication and mobility promotion. The Staff survey received 786 responses from 23 out of 33 Erasmus+ programme countries², and the student survey received 12,820 responses from 30 out of 33 Erasmus+ programme countries.

SIEM Research Report Recommendations

Guided by the research report recommendations calling on HEIs to act, the guidelines serve as tools for IROs to take action. The Research report builds on the full SIEM survey dataset; hence, the recommendations do not only call on actions for HEIs but also International Student Organisations, the European Commission, National Agencies and National Authorities. The guidelines can ease collaboration among HEIs and other stakeholders, by initiating a dialogue and further developing the checklists for collaboration to meet the recommendations.

Study visits

Six 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 informal interviews with central and faculty IRO representatives, support services and student representatives. The interviews confirmed the trends found in the SIEM staff survey, provided insights and best practices, which informed the design of the tools.







Definitions


The definitions of target groups for the SIEM project are based on a common European approach, which means that they disregard national definitions of target groups, different demographical compositions and potential national recognition of minorities.

“Nevertheless, some common themes are inevitable across countries: low socio-economic background (in the form of low income or the low educational background of parents), gender, immigrant status and disability are often taken as main aspects of disadvantage. Furthermore, mature students are specifically targeted in many countries, as students from under-represented groups often enter higher education with a delay.” (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020, p. 101)

To develop targeted measures for the groups that are underrepresented in your regional context, start from the common European characteristics and move towards your national contexts. This can be done with the help of EUROSTUDENT database³.


In the framework of the SIEM project, for which these guidelines have been developed based on the research and discussions conducted, the following definitions have been created for the project’s target groups:

Low-income students



Project definition: 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



Project definition: 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.

3 <http://database.eurostudent.eu/>

Ethnic Minority students

Project definition: the student survey asked respondents to confirm their ethnicity or cultural background. The survey offered a range of regional categories, for example North Africa, South Asia, in addition to some named groups, for example First Nations, for participants to select. 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

Project definition: 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.

Furthermore, identity is approached from an intersectional perspective, which means that attention is paid to the fact that no person is only a gender nor an ethnicity and depending on the combination of characteristics and societal stereotypes one is both given access to parts of society but also restricted from others (Crenshaw, 1991). To paint an example:

“Immigrant groups vary considerably in their access to and success in HE, and some face clear barriers (Erisman and Looney, 2007) while others do not. It is not clear that being a recent immigrant is necessarily an indication of educational or social disadvantage. A student from an English-speaking professional family moving to the UK from the US, for example, would not be considered disadvantaged but would be a recent immigrant.”

(Gorard, 2018, p. 153)

It all comes back to the question of constructed societal norms, and the work to counter them in moving forward towards greater inclusion.





Guidelines

The guidelines for collaboration, visualisation and communication below follow the structure of an introduction, the issues that have been identified and describe the tools developed to tackle them. They conclude with checklists of actions for solutions that could be taken. You can find all tools and templates ready for use as well as examples in Appendix 1.

Collaboration: within the HEI and with external stakeholders

Introduction

The 21st century HEIs invest in attracting students to apply for their programmes, sometimes with targets and tailored entry routes, and sometimes even with additional scholarships to enable students to enrol. These targeted measures, developed by the admissions and recruitment offices, foster knowledge about the prospective student population, underrepresented groups and how to reach them. However, this knowledge is not always systematically reapplied in the outreach work and promotion of outgoing student mobility. Based on the hypothesis that a lot is done to widen recruitment and participation in Higher Education admissions, more

collaboration between the IRO and other units/partners would enable a greater inclusion in the outgoing student mobility. Hence, if you learn about your context through collaboration within and outside your HEI, specific targeted measures to reach the underrepresented groups can be developed on the foundation of collective experience. In the process, more units, offices and partners will learn more and gather more information, therefore being able to facilitate and ease the promotion of student mobility by providing a new space to communicate about mobility opportunities.

Issue

It is likely that the IRO have established partnerships and collaborations with other

units, offices and partners, however, are these collaborations formalised and are they reviewed from a learning-centred perspective of information exchange? The lack of internal and external established collaborations could be one of the reasons that explains why underrepresented student groups do not participate in international mobility. In order to increase and establish formal collaborations with other units within and outside your institution the following tools have been developed: Collaboration mapping and matters of collaboration, Diversity and Inclusion in Student Mobility Review Form and template for Topics to include in the promotion of outgoing student mobility.

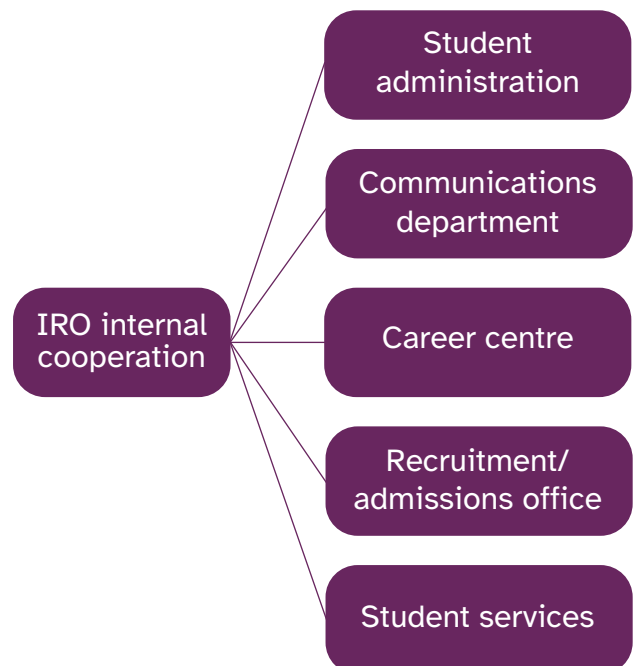
Tools for Collaboration

1. Collaboration mapping and matters of collaboration checklists

Internal and external maps to base your own mapping on in order to find units and external organisations that could help to define target groups. Once you have identified the target groups, you might realise that more collaboration with partners is necessary in order to develop the adequate tools to reach those target groups.

1.1 Internal map

A map to explore whom to collaborate with both for the IRO to learn about the underrepresented groups, and for the other units/centres to access resources and information about mobilities from the IRO. Look at the example below, are there more internal units with whom you collaborate with? Add those. Are there less? Reflect on why it is the case and if you would find it of value to establish new collaborations within the HEI.



Matters of collaboration.

Start by a review of the checklists, then, adjust in line with your practices and the practices you would like to establish.

Student administration



Design and validate learning agreements



Transfer of records

Career centre



Internships



Alumni relations (alumni can act as ambassadors for the HEI towards mobile students)



Knowledge about the financial/career value of mobility

Student services



Accessibility and disability support



Financial support



Student health care



Study guidance, can advise students on mobilities

Communications department



Disseminate correct information regarding mobility



Ensure promotion of mobility in various foras



Targeted communication

Admissions office



Identify target groups



Contact with prospective students



Knowledge about the demographics



Widening Participation, including in international mobility



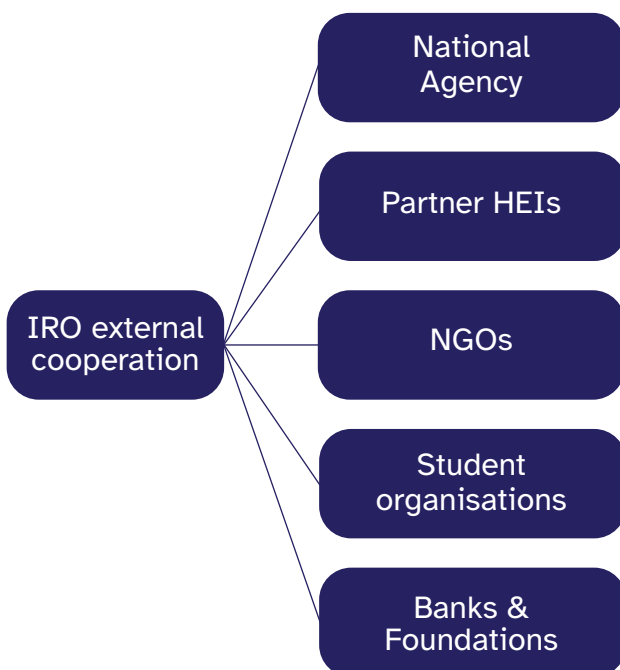
Outreach team, who could promote mobility



Share strategic vision for recruitment

1.2 External map

The same principles used in the internal map apply to the external map. This is a map to explore whom to collaborate with both for the IRO to learn about the underrepresented groups, and for external partners to access resources and information about mobilities from the IRO. Look at the example below, are there more external partners with whom you collaborate with? Add those. Are there less? Reflect on why it is the case and if you would find it of value to establish new collaborations.



Matters of collaboration.

Start by a review of the checklists, then, adjust in line with your practices and the practices you would like to establish.

National Agency

- Erasmus+ Programme
- Streamlined communication

Banks & Foundations

- Scholarships
- Grants available
- Loans

NGOs

- Needs-based analysis
- Tailored communication
- Learn from interest groups who represent your target groups

Partner HEIs

- Learning Agreement
- Exchange of information regarding issues that students perceive as barriers
- Exchange of the 3.Topics to communicate about when promoting outgoing student mobility: 3.1 Promotion of your institution form

Student organisations

- Erasmus Student Network (ESN)
- Students' Union
- Student associations representing the interests of the target group(s)

2. Diversity and Inclusion in Student Mobility Review Form

The following form was originally developed for the SIEM Survey and Study Visits, however, after a discussion within the Working Group, it was further developed into a reflection exercise to find what needs to be done at the institution to help identify diversity and inclusion measures which can be used in the promotion and recruitment to student mobility. The form further guides the collaborations you have identified in the exercises above.

Less advantaged and Underrepresented Groups

Which student groups are considered to be less advantaged or underrepresented by the institution?

- Students from low-income households
- Students from rural areas
- Students from minority ethnic groups or with a migration background
- Students from Roma or Traveller communities
- Students who are the first in their family to go to university
- Students living with disabilities
- Students who are care providers
- Students with religious beliefs
- LGBT+ students
- Mature students, lifelong learners
- Other, please specify:

Notes:

Comment:

This question is aimed at finding if there are any currently set targets at your Institution. If there currently no targets identified, these could be examples of groups that are underrepresented in your institution and that you could target in the recruitment and promotion of mobilities.

Diversity Strategy

Does the institution have a strategic focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in its institutional strategy?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

Does the institution have a Diversity and Inclusion policy?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

Does the institution have a Diversity and Inclusion team?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

Notes:

Comment:

Familiarise and potentially mainstream the diversity, equity and inclusion policies in the internationalisation and mobility work.

Internationalisation Strategy

Is international mobility included in the institution's strategic plan?

- Yes
 No
 I do not know

Is international mobility included in the institution's internationalisation strategy?

- Yes
 No
 I do not know

Does the institution have a specific mobility strategy?

- Yes
 No
 I do not know

Notes:

Comment:

Familiarise and update current practices.

Less advantaged or Underrepresented Groups

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?

- Yes
 No
 I do not know

Notes:

Targeted measures increase diversity. Regardless of if your institution currently works with targets or not, you can evaluate if more can be done.

<p>Barriers to Mobility</p>	<p>What are the main challenges, or barriers, to mobility reported by students at the institution?</p> <p>Notes:</p>	<p>Comment:</p> <hr/> <p><i>Which ones can be tackled by a change of mindset?</i></p>
<p>Support Structures Funding, Pedagogical Support, Language</p>	<p>Please briefly describe which structures are currently in place at the institution to support widening participation.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	<p><i>Have there been any benchmarking or stocktaking exercises to explore the impact?</i></p>
<p>Internal Funding</p>	<p>Are there any internal funds available to outgoing students, and if so, are these targeted?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know</p> <p>Notes:</p>	<p><i>Targeted funds have proven to be more successful and even more so if the knowledge about them is widespread.</i></p>

3. Topics to communicate about when promoting outgoing student mobility

Below, you will find two templates of topics to include in the promotion of outgoing student mobility, based on the major concerns of the students choosing not to be mobile. The forms might be basic, but students have indicated in the Survey and Study visits that this information is crucial for them to decide whether a mobility period at your institution would be suitable for them.

3.1 Promotion of your institution

A checklist of Information to include when promoting outgoing student mobility to counter what students consider as barriers to being mobile. The list is about your institution and context for your partner institution to use in their promotion of your institution as a potential destination.

The checklist is to be completed collaboratively in your HEI, to be shared and further developed when cooperating with a partner HEI. The text following the titles in *italic* indicates matters that could be covered in the open answer but should not be understood as limiting.

Student financial support

Have you got available funds to finance incoming student mobility and/or are there any banks and/or foundations that can fund it?

Student accommodation

How is the student accommodation market structured? Is the student responsible for finding accommodation or the HEI? Are there any websites, groups or services that the student can visit or contact?

Links and references to further reading

Language learning

What is the recommended language level prior to departure and which languages are used during curricular and extracurricular activities?

Links and references to further reading

Student work

Can an international student work in the city of the HEI while studying? What are the requirements? Are there any particular issues that require special attention, i.e., visa, taxation?

Healthcare and student healthcare

General remarks regarding the healthcare system. Is there anything students should be aware of? Is additional private insurance required? Do you offer students psychological support and in which languages?

Welcome programme

When does it take place during the academic year/semester (e.g., start of both semesters or only at the beginning of the fall semester)? Do you organise welcome sessions? Who is in charge of them (the HEI or the student organisations, etc.) and what is the purpose of the welcoming activities (to learn about the HEI, social, practical information about the city/country)?

Student support services

Contact information of the student support services and what are the procedures needed to receive support at your institution for students with a documented disability (i.e., should the student contact you prior to arrival or will you contact the student?).

3.2 Promotion of International student mobility

A checklist of information to include when promoting international student mobility to students at your institution. The previous checklist is for your partner institution to promote your Institution, context and practices, the checklist below is about your institution and what you offer to your students.

Student financial support

Have you got available funds to finance outgoing student mobility and/or are there any banks and/or foundations who can fund it?

Student academic support

Do you provide any support in identifying a mobility window? Do you offer consultations with students regarding recommended courses to follow at the partner institution?

Language learning

Supporting courses prior to departure.

Administrative support

Compiling the portfolio for applying.

<p>Available mobility opportunities Programmes on offer, requirements and deadlines</p>
<p>Information session Type of event (students reported a preference for social gatherings)</p>

Actions for solution

1. Once you have mapped and filled out the background information form – start the collaboration! For a common understanding of who are the students underrepresented in your institutional context and how to act collaboratively, **develop a mobility strategy with target goals and different assigned roles**. For example, set a goal: X% of Ba students graduating should have been mobile within their degree and out of those, X% should be students from one of the underrepresented target groups.
2. Work collaboratively to **update and disseminate** the Internal topics to be communicated in the promotion of outgoing student mobility.
3. Investigate how to **diversify the offer of mobility programmes available**, including other forms of mobility other than traditional credit mobility.
4. Develop a **streamlined process for students to search and apply** for mobility experiences. This search engine could include information compiled in the Topics to be communicated when promoting student mobility, since procedures for recruitment should be transparent, equitable and public for students.
5. Develop a timeline with milestones for students to understand which steps should be taken to be eligible for international mobility.

Visualisation: Student mobility - a possibility for all

Introduction

Think about publicity in mainstream media. What makes you understand that you are the target customer of a product? What makes you understand that you are not the target customer?

Belonging to a target group and therefore seeing yourself represented in the communication (textual and graphical) makes it possible for you to relate to it. Traditionally, commercials use stereotypes, which is the easiest accessible way to reach a target group. A good example of stereotyping in product design and commercials is razors. It is a gender-neutral hair removal utility, however, depending on the colour, pink or blue, the setting in the commercial and the actor's appearance one understands if a specific razor is for them or if it is not. In the same way as we analyse the example of the razor commercial, we can analyse the promotion of student mobility. With visualisation, the ideas of the representation theory are translated into practice. Problematising what is said, mainly between the lines, in

order to make the right choices in terms of the message that is communicated directly and indirectly.

Issues

Unintended bias and lack of adapted and targeted communication results in the promotional material and information being understood as less relevant for some students than others. As described in the literature review, social mobility and representation theory, the way international student mobility is understood depends on a student's socioeconomical and sociocultural capital. As communication has traditionally portrayed and been a representation of students with more advantaged socioeconomical and sociocultural backgrounds, students with lower socioeconomical backgrounds do not feel that the communication is addressed to them.

Visualisation Matrix

The visualisation matrix has been developed to identify bias in the promotional material. The matrix is intended to guide the IRO in reviewing both textual and graphic content as both types of content play a crucial role when trying to reach different groups in different ways. Before using the matrix, start by assessing yourself, your team and your institution:

- How do you identify yourself? Which information would you find important to have if you should consider being mobile?
- What is the composition of your HEI's student population? What do the ones currently not mobile find important?

Based on the answers to the questions above you might now be able to understand what the bias in your promotional material is, if any. The **Visualisation Matrix** review of the promotional material helps you to identify who currently understand themselves as being part of the target group.

The matrix below is developed to analyse the promotional material for outgoing student mobility. The purpose of the analysis is to map the status quo and

identify any unintentional stereotypes in the promotional material, to adapt the communication and achieve greater inclusion.

Start by compiling the material you have recently used. Posters, presentations, social media posts, newsletter and website articles, etc. Observe and assess the material using the matrix.

Graphically	Graphically & Textually	Textually
<p>Who is illustrated? Age, ethnicity, gender, etc.</p>	<p>What are the support mechanisms? How do you make them visible to the students? Do you mainstream accessibility information, i.e., the existence of additional financial support, student support services? If not, why?</p>	<p>Who is your intended reader? Age, ethnicity, gender etc. Target group?</p>
<p>What feeling does the visual convey? Invited? “This is for me”?</p>	<p>What is the impact of international mobility? Do you tell the students that they can achieve social mobility through student mobility? I.e., academic value and /or employability If not, why not?</p>	<p>What references are made? From a socio cultural- and economical perspective, are there any coded messages requiring a shared background?</p>
<p>What is the setting? Inside/outside? Do you illustrate the academic environment and/or social?</p>	<p>Who is the target audience? Back to the example of commercials, who do you foresee understanding themselves as the target?</p>	<p>Whose story is being told? Only the trouble-free success story or also how someone overcame issues and concerns?</p>
<p>Does the image reflect your HEI? Can one recognise your HEI by the image shown? The profile and values your institution shows.</p>	<p>What communication format is more appropriate for each platform? Do you use other means of communication, i.e., video and sound? Do you stream this in a different channel than the traditional ones to reach new targets?</p>	<p>What would you need to know in order to understand the message? What is assumed to be understood but not specifically written?</p>

During this exercise you will ideally find that your target group is the one targeted by your promotional activities, or, conversely, you will find the reason why communication is not reaching your target group (bias, stereotypes, etc.). If your target group is not being reached, it can be useful to create focus groups or discuss with organisations or representatives of these students to learn how to communicate more effectively with them. Together, you can develop promotional material in which more students see themselves represented and understand that communication is addressed to them.

Actions for solution

1. Who do you want to reach and what is important for that specific target group? **Make the group visible** and ensure that their **priorities are reflected** in the information communicated. This should help you move from a situation where only some students see themselves as being addressed by the promotional material to all **students believing in themselves that they can be mobile**.
2. Adjust/develop promotional material, visual and graphical, taking the reflection from the visualisation

matrix in consideration. Instead of stereotypes, highlight and elaborate on **role models** for the underrepresented groups. This is useful to create material in which the currently underrepresented groups see themselves represented.

3. In line with the findings of the European Commission's Erasmus+ Higher Education Impact Study from 2019, the **knowledge** of a grant being available is crucial for underrepresented groups when deciding to take part in international mobility (European Commission, 2019, p. 68). Therefore, start piloting mainstreamed communication of issues that are not usually highlighted, namely support structures and mechanisms. This will allow you to both reach more students and to break the taboo regarding support structures when they are communicated separately from the rest.

Communication: key messages

Introduction

Where, what and how we promote international student mobility is key to the success of reaching the students, if they are aligned with what the students perceive as being good channels for communication, useful information, and high attractiveness of the communication material. In order to evaluate the IRO’s student mobility promotion efforts, in the SIEM Student and Staff surveys respondents were asked about promotion of international student mobility.

Starting with how outgoing mobility programmes are marketed to students, according to the Staff survey, the website, social media and email campaigns are the three most common tools used to market outgoing mobility.

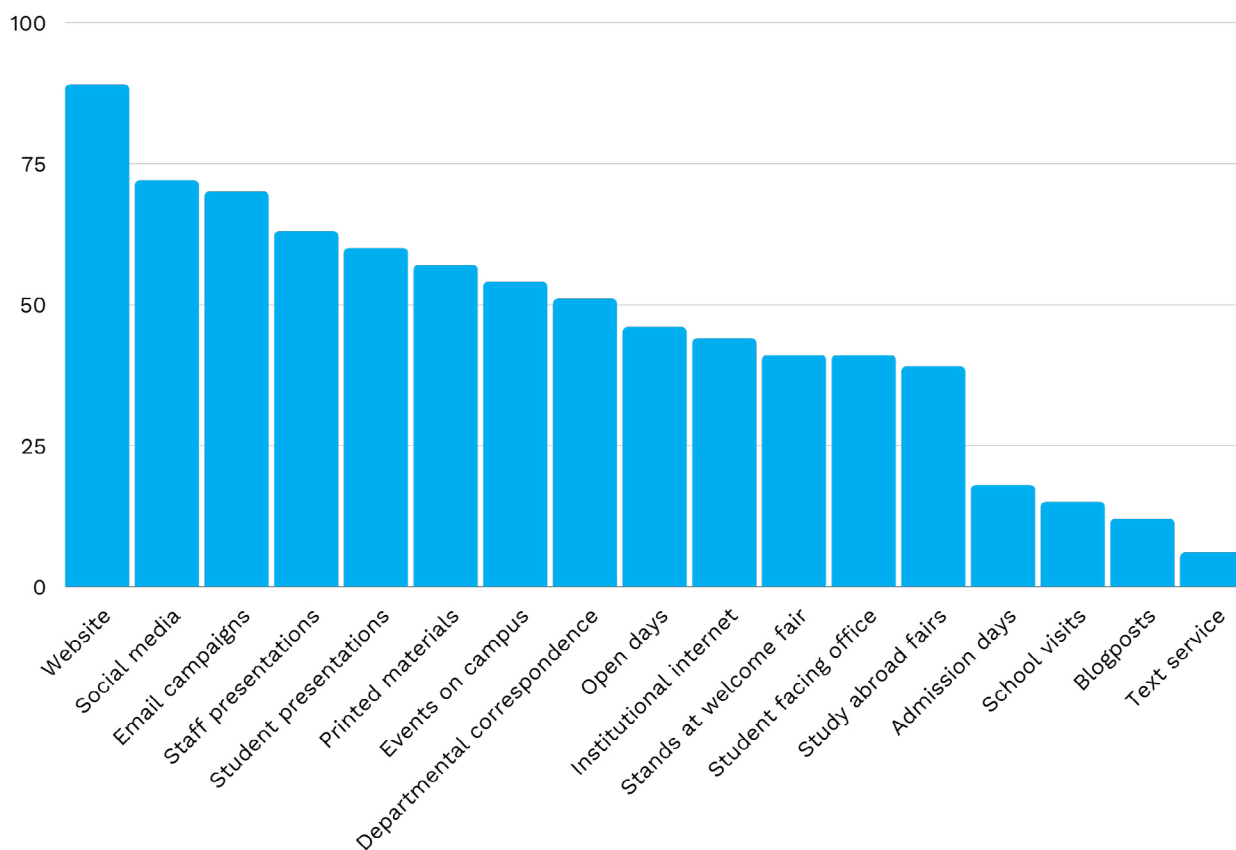


Figure 1. Tools used for mobility promotion

Contrasting the Staff survey answers with the Student survey, and the question of rating the usefulness of different channels of communication, email was listed as the preferred channel of communication for students to receive information about mobility opportunities. 44% of the students considered it to be a very useful way to communicate, while 39% of the students found email a useful communication tool.

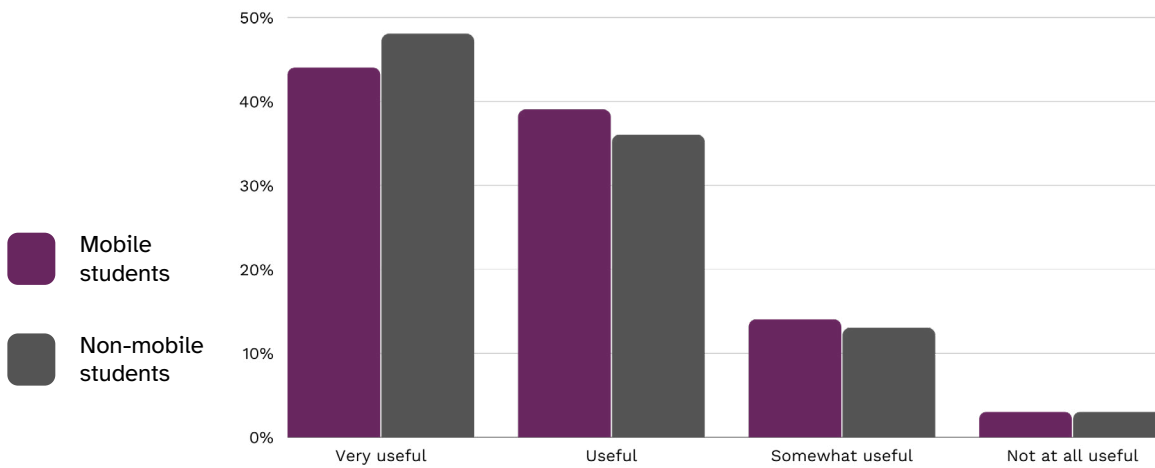


Figure 2. Usefulness of Email as means of communication regarding mobility programmes

According to the Students, social media was the second highest valued mean of communication. 48% of the non-mobile and 43% of the mobile students considered it a very useful tool, 35% the non-mobile and 37% of the mobile considered it a useful tool.

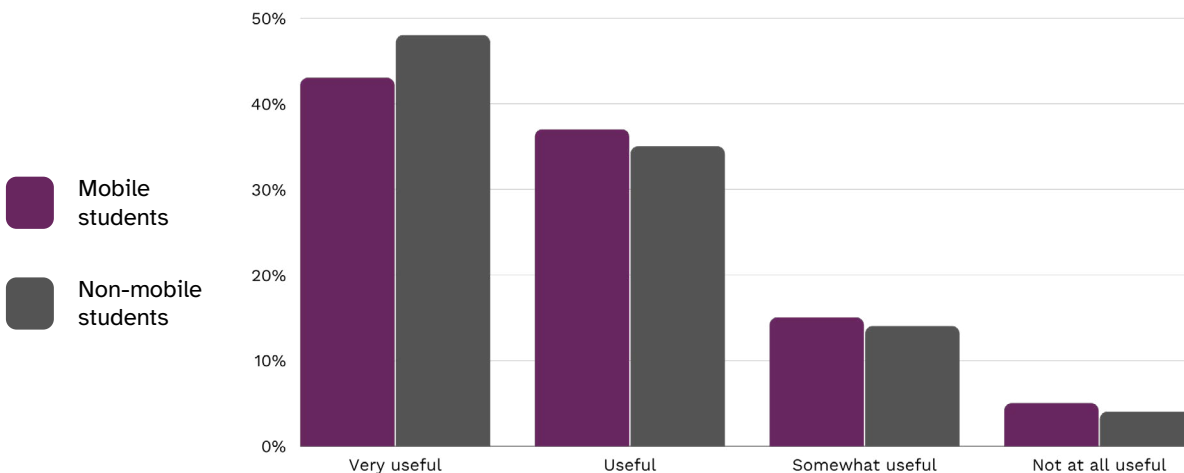


Figure 3. Usefulness of social media as means of communication regarding mobility programmes

However, students from average and lower socioeconomic backgrounds preferred social media over email, in contrast to students from above average income backgrounds who preferred email as the primary tool.

Moving further into details of the students' preferred Social Media channels compared with the most frequently used social media channels by staff, illustrated in figure 4 below, staff uses Facebook more frequently

than students consider it a preferred social media channel to receive mobility information. Conversely, students value Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube channels more than staff report to be using them. The largest difference between the mobile and non-mobile students' preferences is regarding YouTube, 55% of the non-mobile in contrast to 46% of the mobile lists the platform as a preferred channel for communication.

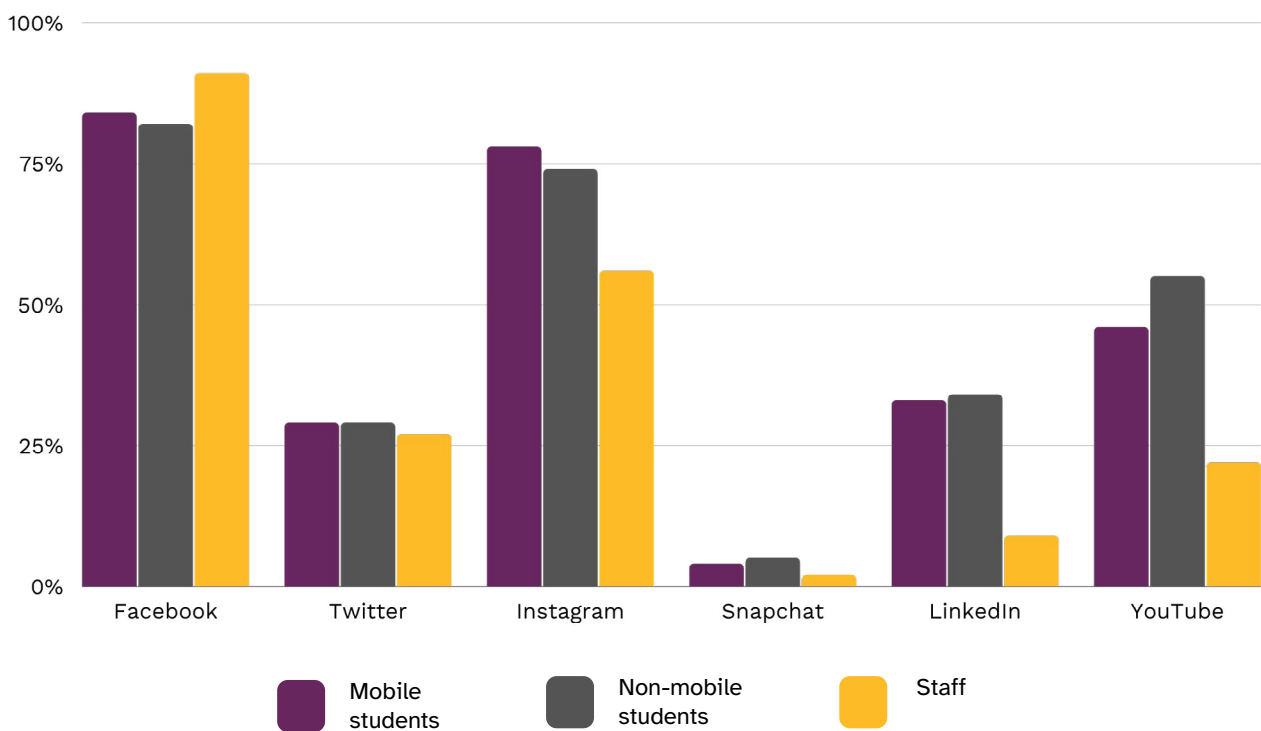


Figure 4. Preferred social media channels of the students versus most frequently used channels by the staff when promoting mobility programmes.

As the third most useful channel of communication for mobility promotion, the students rank events on campus. 36% of the mobile and 42% of the non-mobile students consider it to be a very useful channel, where 40% of the mobile and 41% of the non-mobile consider this to be useful to find out more about mobility opportunities.

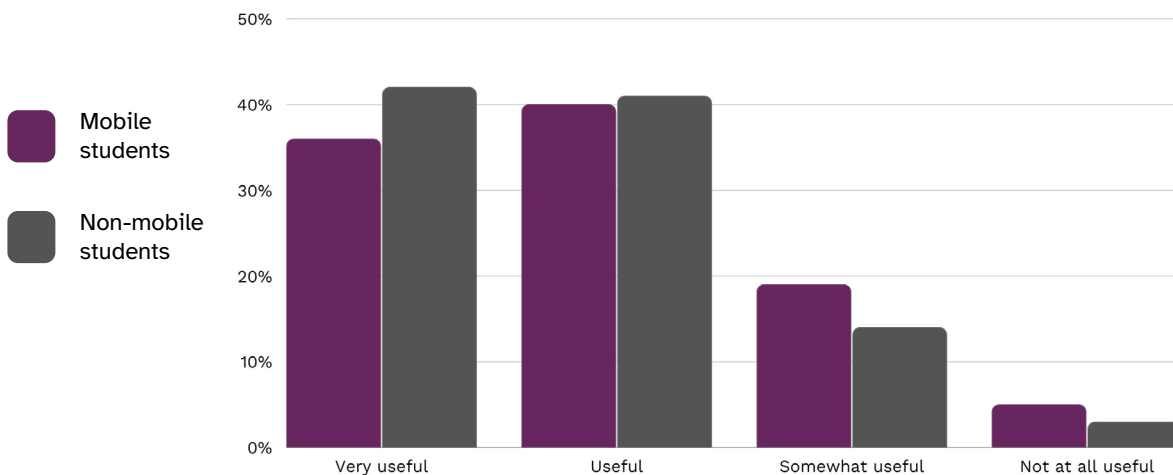


Figure 5. Usefulness of Events on Campus as means of communication regarding mobility programmes

Lastly, student presentations trump staff presentations, with 31% of the students considering student presentations a very useful channel to find out more information about mobility opportunities, compared to 26% of students indicating they considered staff presentations to be a very useful tool to learn more about mobility opportunities.

Illustrated in the tables above is the small difference between students and staff as to where communication should be carried out, but not the information and messages that students value to learn through promotion in order to dare to take the first step and apply to go abroad. The Student survey went further in asking about

what, according to the students, is the most important information to be promoted in the communication regarding mobility possibilities.

For both student groups, mobile and non-mobile, the most compelling information are messages and communication regarding the possibility of personal development: messages that clearly convey to students the positive impact that a mobility period abroad would have on their lives.

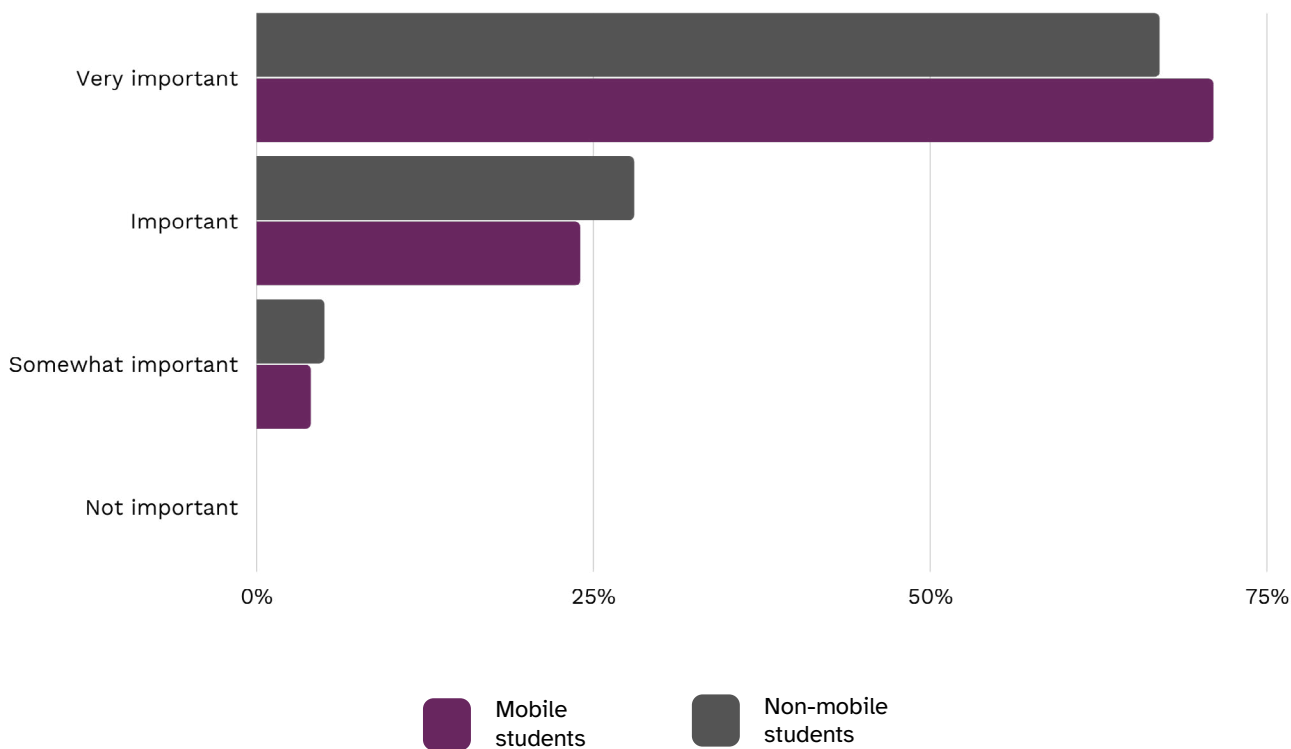


Figure 6. Importance to communicate the Possibility of personal development

Secondly, students prioritised communication and messages regarding potential impact on their future career goals.

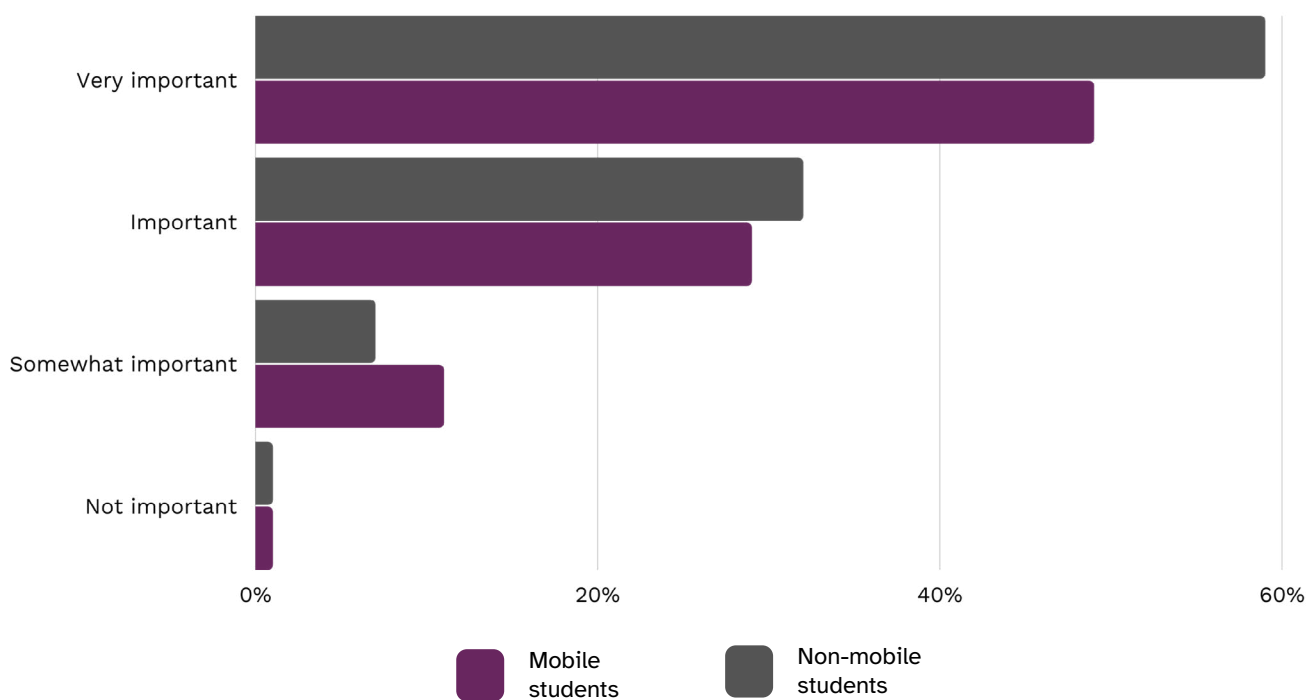


Figure 7. Importance to communicate the impact on career goals

Thirdly, mobility activities on offer were listed by both student groups.

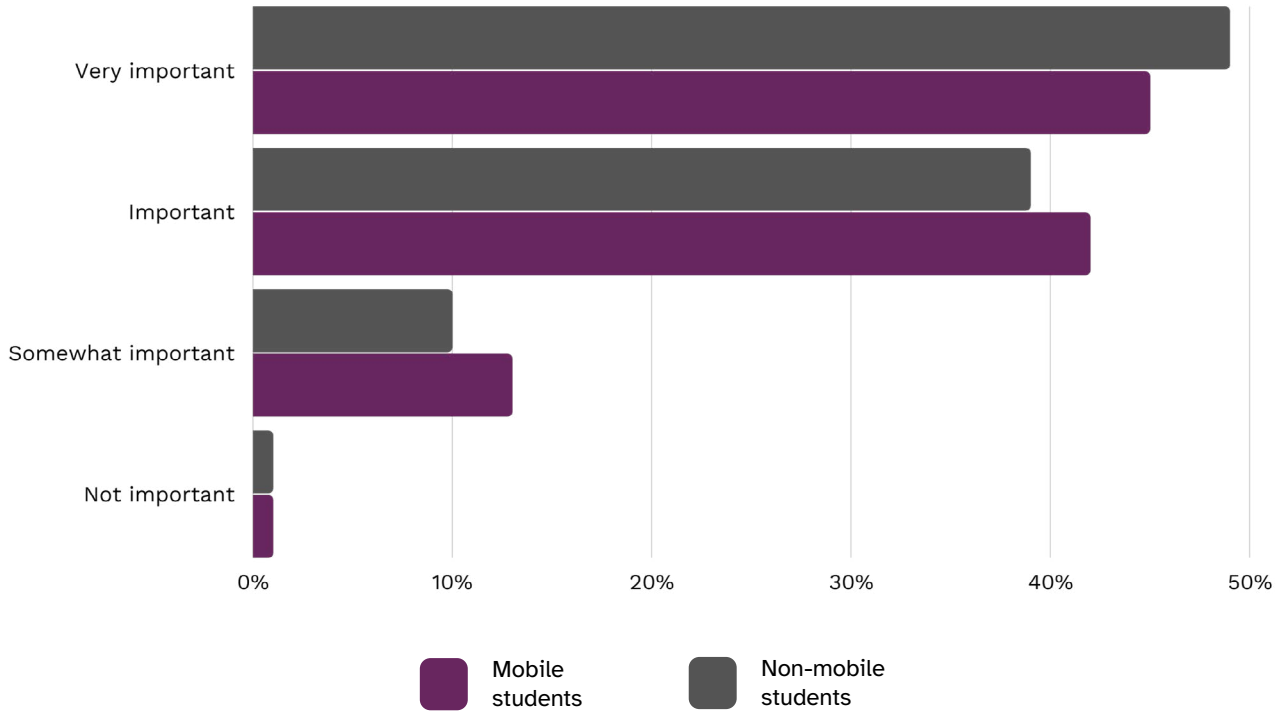


Figure 8. Importance to communicate the Mobility activities on offer

Fourthly, impact on the academic achievement.

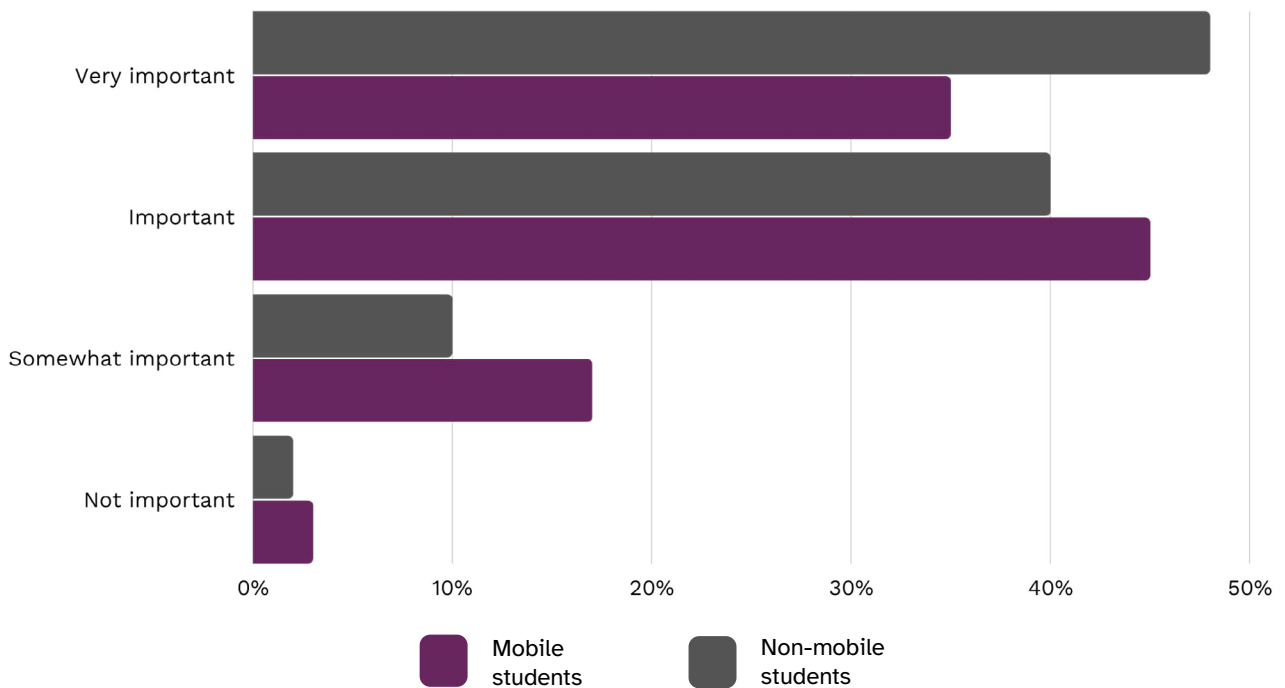


Figure 9. Importance to communicate the impact on academic achievement

Lastly, but still highly valued by both groups was the promotion of destination countries on offer.

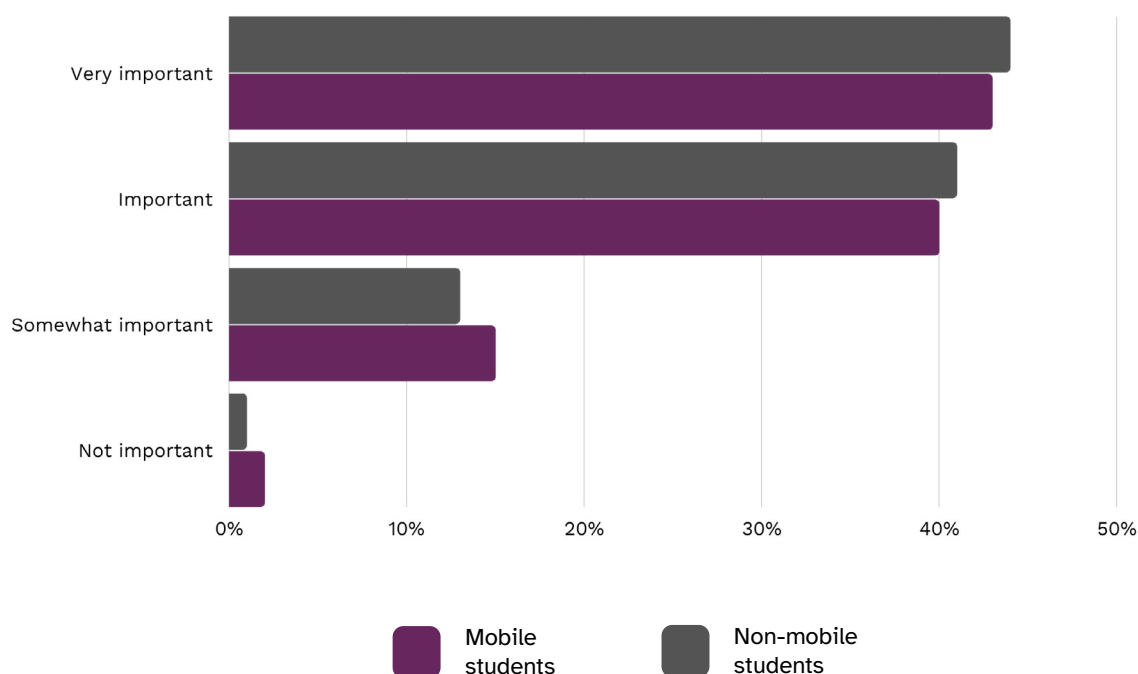


Figure 10. Importance to communicate the Destination Countries

Issue

The main issue is not where the promotion and communication are disseminated, the issue is what is disseminated indirectly.

Irrespective of the platforms used, the lack of targeted and adapted communication without strong key messages – including key messages to compensate for diverse sociocultural references – appears to explain why not all students are effectively reached by the communication. As discussed in the previous guidelines for collaboration and visualisation, to develop targets is key. For the different target groups illustrated above, the key messages

may differ. As a starting point, it is advisable to build your communication on the following three steppingstones.

1. Key messages:

About the opportunity

- Create and promote Mobility Windows. Consider diversifying the mobility offer and promote each of the mobility opportunities sufficiently.
- Offer Guidance, in multiple ways. Online, offline, through mentors and buddy programmes.

- Highlight how and what is required for Recognition of credits.
- Mainstream the information from the Support structures. This includes both information regarding additional financial support to underrepresented groups and disability support mechanisms.

About the value

- Emphasise the Academic value of mobility for the student and ease the development of Learning outcomes linked with student mobility. Read more and get inspired by the Academic Value of Mobility from 2018 by the Swedish National Agency (UHR, 2018).
- Highlight how student mobility is viewed by the Labour market and what value it may have for the student. For example, the eased transition into employment after graduation, increased entry salary and faster career path. For more examples, read the Erasmus+ Higher Education Impact Study and consult your alumni network.
- Put emphasis on Personal development and transversal skills. The Erasmus+ Higher Education Impact Study from 2019 found that “(...) students who complete an Erasmus+ mobility for studying or training boost their employability skills, with a large majority (72%) saying it had been beneficial or

highly beneficial in finding their first job. Their mobilities increased their technical, inter-personal and inter-cultural skills and competences, as well as their self-confidence, ability to achieve goals, and social and cultural openness.” (European Commission, 2019, p. 1).

2. Identify and work with Communicators- multipliers:

- Following the mapping exercise and increased collaboration, support the partners identified in promoting mobility in places that the IRO is not able to reach.
- Support representatives of the target groups identified as underrepresented. Ensure that they have access to the necessary information to calm concerns and strengthen role models in promoting and showcasing opportunities.
- Collect and update Alumni testimonials for the static communication. Furthermore, alumni can serve as ambassadors and contact persons for students planning to choose the same destination.
- Invite exchange students to participate in Social Media “takeovers” (granting posting privileges to a person of interest to your Social Media) to promote their experience in real time.

3. Learn more about inclusive communication:

For practical examples of inclusive communication, the Erasmus Student Network have developed an [Inclusive Communication Manual](#) for how to communicate inclusively with international youth. For more inspiration and advice on how to become more inclusive in your communication and mobility promotion, we invite you to read the manual enclosed as Appendix 2 to these guidelines.

Actions for solution

1. Through dialogue with the identified partners, make sure that they have the relevant information needed to disseminate correct and targeted communication and act as multipliers.
2. Plan for follow-up meetings on bi- or annual basis to evaluate, review and adjust the communication.
3. Monitor developments and changes in the student population at large and in the one participating in outgoing student mobility.

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Appendixes

1. Tools for Collaboration and Visualisation
2. Inclusive Communication Manual

