

Erasmus Policy Statement

West Lothian College's International Strategy is designed to support more students into a positive destination. We do not recruit international students as we are a regional College for the region of West Lothian and focus our provision on local need. Therefore all international activity is focussed on exchanges and strategic partnerships to improve the quality of our outputs and learner achievements.

Our local area is twinned with Cran Gevrier in the Rhone-Alpes region and the College has strong partnerships with schools and colleges in that region. There are established exchange programmes with this area as well as outbound mobilities every year to various countries. We send two students each year on long term internships to Grapevine in Texas, our other twin town. Motor Vehicle students are involved in pan-European rallies involving the maintenance and repair of elderly vehicles as they travel around the continent. a) We choose our partners through established links and introductions. We also make approaches of our own based upon recommendation or through research. b) We are open to the geographic location of our partners within reason. We avoid war zones or areas not recommended for travel by FCO. We have partners in most European countries as well as the USA and MENA countries. We are less open to partners further afield due to the increased cost, time involved and other barriers we have encountered in the past.

We organise these projects through a Steering Committee, which meets monthly and is headed up by our Principal. Projects are managed following PRINCE 2 Project Management methodologies and are broken down into work packages, which have clear timelines and task responsibilities. Overall control of the project remains with the Steering Committee and policies and procedures are in place to agree changes, communication, risk, publicity and dissemination.

1 – Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs – Our participation in KA1 and KA2 projects for our Higher Education projects will allow them to benefit from new levels of exposure to international experiences, impacting on their motivation levels and inspiring them to achieve better results.

2 – Improving the quality and relevance of Higher Education – Strategic Partnerships have quality and relevance of the provision at the heart of what they do. West Lothian College is very keen to get involved. We already have 4 stars on the European Framework for Quality Management and want to improve further. Participation in these projects will have the impact of assisting us to do so. By involving our Higher Education Students in the programmes we will have the impact of raising the impact of the programmes for Higher Education overall.

3 – Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border co-operation – Quality will be raised because of the international co-operation and sharing of best practice and agreement of procedures within partnerships. All partners will learn from each other and introduce procedures, which enhance quality as a result of the partnership.

4 – Linking Higher Education, research and business for excellence and regional development – Strategic Partnerships in more than one field allow us to link our initiatives and ideas for improvement to organisations in others fields and to build links to employers and industry through Erasmus Plus. The impact of this is to provide new progression routes for students, which can then also be followed up in-country by following a similar mechanism to the ones developed by the project. The ultimate impact is a higher rate of positive destination for our students and enhanced skills for our staff.

5 – Improving governance and funding – These projects only work well when governance and funding are well managed. When Higher Education institutions get involved in these projects this provides a great opportunity to benchmark the governance and funding requirements of the project against what already exists. Our College already adheres to very high standards and is regularly internally and externally audited, we have 4 stars on the EFQM. This Agenda though has the impact of allowing us to share our expertise in this area with overseas partners and learn from them in return techniques which can help us to further improve our own procedures.