Policy framework


The OeAD GmbH is the central service centre for European and international mobility and cooperation programmes in the fields of education, science and research. The OeAD GmbH advises, promotes and provides support to strategic development and provides guidance to implementation measures. It analyses international development and uses this information to form recommendations and measures.

The federal law for incorporating the OeAD GmbH (Bundesgesetz zur Errichtung der „OeAD-Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung“, BGBl. I Nr. 99/2008 [3]) describes all relevant tasks and topics of the OeAD. All shares in the OeAD are owned by the federal government. The Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy is tasked with exercising the shareholder rights.

- **Identity & areas of focus**

The OeAD is the central service point for European and international mobility and cooperation programmes in education, science and research. As a full-service provider, they deal with the creation and implementation of the programmes. They coordinate international higher education marketing and represent Austria as a location for learning and research around the world. They are expert partners for strategic tasks in international cooperation.

- **Core business**
The core business is the exchange of people across the age and educational spectrum. In doing this they support institutional cooperation in Europe and worldwide, manage international cooperation programmes and coordinate and support their implementation. For example, there is a special focus on development cooperation and on exporting education.

**Main cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education**

The OeAd provides the following information online:

**Mobility projects in Erasmus+**

Mobility projects in Erasmus+ support study and training periods abroad in general education and vocational education and training. The aim is to achieve positive and sustainable effects for the participants and the participating organisations.

This is the sub-programme with the highest budget within the Erasmus+ programme: From 2014 to 2020 the European Union wants to support up to five million stays abroad throughout Europe.

In Austria alone, some 14,000 people become mobile by means of Erasmus+ every year.

Institutions working in the field of education can submit mobility projects. The projects support the mobility of learners, teachers and staff at educational institutions.

It has been proved that education-related stays abroad contribute to an improvement of people’s vocational, social and foreign language abilities and skills. The experience gained not only enriches people on the personal level but also enters educational institutions and the labour market. It contributes to internationalisation, an increase in quality and innovation of the national education systems.

Students can spend part of their studies or do an internship in another European country by means of Erasmus+. Graduates, as well as pupils in initial vocational education and apprentices, also have the possibility to do on-the-job training abroad. Teachers and staff of educational institutions of all educational sectors can benefit from further education activities abroad or teach abroad for a certain period of time. International mobility in higher education to and from partner countries worldwide as well as “Erasmus Mundus Joint Master’s Degrees” are also supported.

- Erasmus+ mobility projects in school education [4] (for (nursery school) teachers, teachers and other educational staff at schools)
- Erasmus+ mobility projects in vocational education and training [5] (for people in initial vocational education and training and specialists in vocational education and training)
- Erasmus+ mobility projects in higher education [6] (for students, graduates, lecturers and staff at higher education institutions)
- Erasmus+ mobility projects in adult education [7] (for adult educators and other adult education staff)

**OeAD supports for pupils, teachers and the school system** [8]:

A whole series of OeAD programmes and initiatives focus on schools and kindergartens.

Erasmus+, the educational programme [9] of the European Commission, supports

- further education of teachers and other school staff
- cooperation of actors in education (higher education institutions, schools, authorities, NGOs,
companies, ...) to learn from each other or try something new
- partnerships between schools and kindergartens from different countries
- learning periods of youngsters (14 years or older) at partner schools abroad (this is only possible within the framework of school partnerships)
- networking of teachers and cooperation of schools on a web platform all over Europe.

Sparkling Science and Young Science support cooperation between science and schools by means of:

- research projects in which scientists and pupils carry out research together
- the research contest Citizen Science Award, in which school classes send data, pictures or evaluations to research teams
- school visits of researchers
- the awarding of the Young Science Quality Label for research partner schools
- information about cooperation possibilities and events

The projects for cooperation between science and schools are funded by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research.

Additionally, the international organisations AFS and EF provide pupil exchange programmes abroad for young people in Austria.

OeAD support for vocational education and training and further education:

People in initial vocational education: The European programme Erasmus+ provides financial support options for pupils at schools of vocational education who want to gain experience abroad at a comparable institution. This also applies to apprentices who want to do part of their training at a company in another European country.

School leavers and apprentices who have completed their apprenticeship can apply for financial support within the framework of Erasmus+ provided that they complete their internship abroad within one year of completing their school education or their apprenticeship.

Specialists in vocational education and training, e.g. teachers and trainers as well as career counsellors and personnel managers in companies can apply for funded stays abroad for vocational further education and training in the form of teaching assignments, job shadowing, etc.

Vocational education and training institutions can submit innovative project ideas in Erasmus+; the exchange of good practice between them can also be funded. European project partners - e.g. educational institutions, companies, social partners, authorities, research institutions, etc. - will, for example, develop new curricula together. In this way e.g. a virtual platform to document the work of dance instructors, courses for teachers and trainers who want to prevent young people from dropping out of their education or training, or materials to facilitate access of deaf youngsters to the labour market will be developed with the participation of Austrian institutions.

Quality development in vocational education and training

One of the departments of the OeAD is the Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (ARQA-VET).

ARQA-VET has three central tasks:

- As a network node in the EU network EQAVET, ARQA-VET acts as a link and communication
interface to the European Union and thus enhance quality in vocational education and training on the European level.

- As a national expertise centre, ARQA-VET provides information and cross-link the Austrian stakeholders, e.g. by means of the annual quality network conference.

**Other international co-operations in higher education**

‘While scholarship programmes support stays abroad of individuals, project support enables transnational cooperation in scientific projects. People can apply for project support within the framework of bilateral agreements or within multilateral networks. Funding is provided mainly for accommodation expenses and travel expenses. There are different foci in project funding, both thematic and regional ones, and both project terms and funding sums vary.’

- **Bilateral "Aktionen" (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary)**

  ‘The "Aktionen" between Austria and the neighbouring countries Slovakia, Hungary and Czech Republic enable scientific exchange between the neighbouring countries and support the learning of each other’s language. Different scholarships for students, lecturers and researchers as well as project funding support bilateral cooperation with the aim of creating sustainable relationships.’

  - [Aktion Austria – Slovakia][21]
  - [Aktion Austria – Hungary][22]

- **ASEAN-European Academic University Network (ASEA-UNINET)**

  ‘The higher education institutions network’s aim is to support research and teaching activities between the member universities in Europe and South-East Asia (in Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam).

  ASEA-Uninet Austria receives funds from the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research [15]. Approximately 100 bilateral and multilateral cooperation projects between Austrian and Southeast Asian member universities are funded each year.

  The main focus is on research projects in which scientists as of the post-doc level can take part. Training/teaching courses, workshops and summer schools are also supported.

  Project funding is available for travel costs and/or accommodation costs according to the ASEA-UNINET terms. A financial contribution of the Asian partner university in the relevant project is desired.’

- **Eurasia-Pacific Uninet (EPU)**

  ‘The Eurasia-Pacific Uninet (EPU) was established in 2000 with the objective of creating an educational network for Austrian universities, universities of applied sciences and educational institutions in Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific area. It comprises a great number of international partners of all fields of research and supports projects in the areas of research, research-based teaching and art as well as technology cooperations. For the academic year 2015/16, the EPU approved approx. 60 projects with a total funding volume of 325,000 euros. Only scientists at Austrian
EPU member institutions can submit project applications. The funds serve exclusively to cover travel and accommodation costs. The amount of the funding depends on the individual projects (Guideline: 1500 euros/person for travel costs and accommodation).

- **HERAS Scholarship Programme**

  ‘The HERAS scholarship programme offers (prospective) PhD students and PostDocs a grant for their studies and/or research in Austria. The target group are staff members of Kosovan public higher education institutions, which are not in Austria yet. Scholarship amount and age limits for PhD: € 1050,-/month; max. 35 years old (exceptionally 40 years old in case of considerable care responsibilities); for PostDoc: € 1150,-/month; max. 40 years old or max. 5 years after award of the PhD degree.’

- **IMPULSE Iran - Austria**

  IMPULSE Iran - Austria is based on a mutual interest to considerably improve knowledge exchange on an international level and to strengthen the international profile of the institutions involved. The aim of the programme is to stimulate joint activities and contribute to direct collaboration among universities, higher education and research institutions of both countries. Thus, the OeAD-GmbH and the MSRT will support the initiating phase of sustainable partnerships financially with means from their respective funds. The Centre for International Cooperation and Mobility at the OeAD-GmbH will be in charge of administering all relevant programme procedures on the Austrian side. The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research [15] will be in charge of the administration of all relevant programme procedures on the Iranian side.

- **Scientific & Technological Cooperation (S&T Cooperation)**

  ‘The Scientific & Technological Cooperation (S&T Cooperation) is based on inter-governmental and bilateral agreements for co-operations in the fields of science and technology. The financial support is intended for research visits within the framework of concrete scientific cooperation projects with researchers from partner countries of the Scientific & Technological Cooperation; the basic funding of the research projects must be secured from other sources. Funding is available mainly for travel and accommodation costs. Active bilateral agreements are currently in place with Argentina, Albania, Bulgaria, China, France, India, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Hungary and Vietnam.’

  **Promoting mobility in the context of non-formal learning, and of youth work**

  „Erasmus +: Youth in action“

  Within the scope of „Erasmus +: Youth in action,” it is possible to take part in different training and continuing education measures.

  Further information on mobility projects can be found in chapter 2. Voluntary activities [23] and Chapter 9, Youth and the world [24].

**Quality assurance**

**Quality Management at the OeAD**

‘Since 2006 the OeAD has been running a quality and process management system, which aims to guarantee continuous improvement, development and optimisation of its services and internal
processes. In the same year, the OeAD was certified for the first time according to the international quality standard ISO 9001. Since then the effectiveness of the quality management system has been confirmed every year by external audits.

The system of internal quality assurance and improvement is based on the business processes that are documented in a transparent and uniform manner. Thanks to the regular evaluation of process performances and workflows by those responsible for the processes, on the one hand through the annual internal audit undertaken by the designated QM officer and on the other hand procedural errors and implementation risks, structural failures and deviations from the goals can be identified early and the corresponding corrective or preventative measures can be brought about. The expansion of the internal control system for compliance management is especially helpful in ensuring the business’ legal compliance and reducing the corresponding risks.

To complement the system, critical feedback, complaints and suggestions from both the service recipient as well as from the contracting entity are promptly captured and analysed in order to be able to take pick up on the trends and concerns voiced by our customers.’