

Erasmus Policy Statement of the Medical University of Bialystok for the years 2021-2027

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Strategy of the Medical University of Bialystok (hereinafter: MUB) involves developing cooperation with the international environment, especially with foreign universities and clinical hospitals, among others, by organizing internships at high-quality clinical and teaching centres, for example in the USA and Europe. For cooperation to develop, it is necessary to ensure the conditions for mobility of employees: academic teachers and administrative staff, as well as students of first, second and third degree studies. Erasmus program is an optimal tool for developing various forms of mobility, due to the provision of funding of mobility at different levels of education, as well as mobility for different time periods, which will ensure the achievement of complex goals. In the case of staff mobility, it will ensure the implementation of the strategic goal of staff training and international exchange of experience, taking into account the needs of the University. Possibility of achieving the University's strategic goals through mobility will be reflected already at the stage of recruitment and selection of participants. The mobilities will be implemented in cooperation with Erasmus+ countries, as well as Erasmus+ partner countries, as international mobilities. The implementation of mobilities, also in cooperation with partner countries, results from the Internationalisation Strategy of the Medical University of Bialystok for the years 2021 – 2030 and is consistent with the following strategic aims:

1. Development of the MUB offer and relation network facilitating the building of international environment.
4. Establishing the MUB international Reputation

At present, the Internationalisation of universities occurs globally, without limitation to countries of a given region or continent, especially that many of the world's best and most internationalised universities, according to global rankings, are located outside of Europe, for example in North America, Australia or Asia. In regards to the above and due to the fact that the new framework of Erasmus+ programme enables the implementation of international mobilities practically to any country of the world, the Medical University of Bialystok wishes to use this opportunity to strengthen international relations on the global scale, in order to better incorporate into the global relation network between higher education institutions.

From the perspective of implementing the MUB Strategy, the possibility of mobility through cooperation not only with foreign universities, but also with business institutions (e.g. enterprises, especially innovative ones) or clinics is important. These forms of trips (other than to foreign universities) are becoming more and more popular. Selection of foreign institutions will result from the MUB Strategy and will not be limited only to Erasmus+ countries, but also include global perspective. Authorities of MUB and representatives of all three faculties of the University, who are experts in specific fields, will be involved in the selection of institutions. International institutional agreements will be signed by the Rector, after prior opinion of the University Erasmus Program Commission and the Rector's Plenipotentiary for International Cooperation. Selection of partner institutions will also take into account the implementation of one of the strategic goals of MUB, which

is the transfer of knowledge and technology between science and business. Here, a special scope of action opens at the intersection of MUB's cooperation with innovative enterprises, operating e.g. in the field of advanced medical technologies, artificial intelligence, HD Medicine, large-scale statistical calculations, medical simulations, personalized diagnostics, modern pharmacy, etc. Cooperation with enterprises will contribute to increasing the University's innovativeness and practicality of education.

The university plans to strengthen cooperation with countries or institutions which it has cooperated with so far and where this cooperation was particularly fruitful (Germany, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy), as well as to establish new forms of cooperation with institutions from countries which cooperation was insignificant (especially partner countries). This action is dictated by, among others, the fact that English-language students of MUB represent a growing number of countries, in addition, the university also conducts prestigious PhD studies in English: International Interdisciplinary PhD Studies in Biomedicine Research and Biostatistics, whose participants come from a dozen countries around the world.

In accordance with the Strategy and mission of the MUB, an important place in the international activity of the University takes the intensive cooperation with institutions from countries located in the geographical region of Central and Eastern Europe. For many years, cooperation with universities or clinics from neighbouring countries: Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania has been particularly intense and the University's aspiration is to strengthen it further. The university sees great interest in mobility between Poland and the countries of the region, in particular arrivals at the MUB; this applies especially to student arrivals for internships. Nonetheless, the emphasis will also be placed on cooperation with countries, which can be especially prospective (Asian countries, Arabic countries, North America countries).

Selection of participants will result from the assumptions of the MUB Strategy and the most important development directions. Participation of people representing the key knowledge domains for MUB, such as personalized medicine, experimental medicine, applications of medical simulations, applications of artificial intelligence in medicine or innovative cohort studies allowing detection of civilization diseases in the early stages of their development will be important. Participation in the Program will also contribute to improving the quality of education. It will be ensured by The Vice-Rector for Education. Improving the quality of education will be possible thanks to the intensification of the exchange of research and teaching staff, which will result in the implementation of the best, internationally proven models and the latest knowledge in the field of teaching, health care and conducting scientific research at the highest global level. This will contribute to increasing the innovativeness of teaching methods, conduct of scientific research and implementation of innovative application solutions.

In relation to first degree students, the MUB Strategy will be implemented mainly through participation in foreign student internships and study visits. Thanks to this, education will be more practical, as well as practical skills and competences will be acquired through internships in laboratories, institutes and clinical hospitals. It is assumed that first degree students of the Faculty of Health Sciences will be particularly interested in participating in the Erasmus Program.

In relation to students of second degree studies (supplementary master's studies, uniform studies), the MUB Strategy will be implemented mainly through participation in longer forms of mobility, usually lasting one semester or the entire academic year. Due to the nature of education, participation in the exchange will provide the opportunity to participate in clinical subjects, and thus contact with the patient. Certainly, a large number of students will also take part in shorter forms of mobility. This applies in particular to English-language MUB students from the medical studies, whom the Program will give the opportunity to participate in student internships in their countries of origin, for example in hospitals or clinics.

In relation to students of third degree studies, it is predicted to implement mobility mainly in the period of one semester. The University Erasmus Program Coordinator will ensure that they are the best academic centres recognized internationally, providing the opportunity to participate in an education program at a very high professional level.

One of the strategic goals of MUB is to develop international cooperation involving participation in multilateral projects. The university will promote the participation of both MUB students and employees in these projects. Decision on the university's participation in a multilateral project will be made by the Rector. The university will in a special way develop and strengthen cooperation with institutions in case of which cooperation had already been initiated and has been successful. Cooperation with institutions, in particular universities from Germany, Spain, Portugal, Croatia, France, Sweden and Great Britain will be of special importance here. While implementing multilateral projects, the University will pay attention that they contribute to the implementation of the MUB mission. The implementation of multilateral projects with institutions from Eastern European countries will play a particularly important role. Participation in multilateral projects will ensure the achievement of one of the objectives set out in the Internationalization Strategy, which is to include scientists from MUB in international research teams and networks.

Inviting foreign scientists to give lectures at MUB will play an important role in multilateral projects. Lectures given by foreign scientists have so far been conducted and financed from various sources. Due to the great interest in participating in such classes of both academic staff and students, MUB recognizes the need to offer more such classes. The university also wants multilateral projects to include not only lectures, but also practical classes conducted by foreign lecturers (for example in a laboratory or with the use of reagents and small laboratory equipment), which will increase the practicality of education.

Accelerating internationalization is one of the University's priorities set out in both the Development Strategy and the Internationalization Strategy. Over the past year, MUB has taken a number of strategic actions concerning internationalization. Rector's Plenipotentiary for International Cooperation which is responsible for coordinating internationalization has been appointed. The University Senate approved the Internationalization Strategy, which defines the main directions of internationalization of the university in the coming years. International Cooperation Office was established, responsible for implementing the actions specified in the Internationalization Strategy. Welcome Centre has been launched which aims to provide comprehensive support for foreign

students and foreign staff. Comprehensive bilingual campus labelling system is under preparation, which will increase the comfort of functioning of people from abroad.

Thanks to the Program, the level of internationalization of MUB will increase, including due to the increase of the number of foreign students. Its implementation will increase the mobility of international academic staff, administration employees and students, which will contribute to building an international academic environment at the University. This is one of the goals defined in the MUB Internationalization Strategy. The university will ensure the full inclusion of mobility participants of the Erasmus Program, among others, by periodically organizing international integration events at MUB, which they will be encouraged to participate in. Program participants will be encouraged to participate in civic activities, e.g. participation in actions directed at local communities or aiming to help the sick. MUB will ensure transparency in terms of participation in the Program: clear criteria for participation in mobility will be developed, cyclical information meetings on the principles of participation in the Erasmus Program will be organized, all documents will be available and published on the University's website in both Polish and English versions. Enormous importance will be attached to the implementation of a non-discrimination policy for any reason, including discrimination due to origin, race, religion, beliefs. Access will be provided to disadvantaged people, e.g. people with disabilities (thanks to the activities of the Office for Persons with Disabilities and numerous amenities, e.g. ramps, adaptation of the website to the visually impaired persons).

The institutional goal is not only to increase the percentage of foreign students, but also foreign research and teaching staff. Thanks to the arrival of academic staff from abroad, academic teachers from MUB will have a unique opportunity to cooperate in international research teams, familiarize themselves with the tools and methods of work used abroad, use English in scientific work, prepare scientific publications by international teams, and the awareness of benefits brought by international cooperation will also increase. Awareness will also increase regarding obtaining sources of financing various undertakings from foreign funds. Ultimately, establishing cooperation will open the way to joint application for international grants (including European Union funds). Established contacts will result in future involvement in activities of international teams of experts from various fields of knowledge. Thanks to the increase of the internationalization of MUB academic staff, the quality of the MUB education offer will increase. It is worth adding that the internationalization of the academic staff is an important element of the University's assessment in key international rankings of higher education. Development of international scientific cooperation is one of the main development directions indicated in the MUB Strategy.

An important institutional goal of MUB possible to achieve through the participation in the Program will be to develop cooperation with foreign business and science institutions, e.g. enterprises. Thanks to this, it will be possible to increase the practicality of education at the University, e.g. by student participating in internships and placements in foreign enterprises or employee off-site trainings, as well as introduce changes to study programs by enriching the curriculum content with practical elements.

Developing various forms of international cooperation will also affect the possibility of achieving the strategic goal of improving management quality at MUB. An important role here will be played by the exchange of administrative staff, including persons in managerial positions. Thanks to participant observation and learning about management or organizational solutions used at foreign universities, awareness of the directions of organizational changes in higher education in Europe will increase, and thus it will be possible to implement proven and effective solutions at MUB, e.g. in organizational structure, IT solutions, international management, employee remuneration and motivation policies, etc.