

KU Erasmus+ Staff Week 2020

Leaving the comfort zone: Chances and challenges of student and staff mobility



The years since the establishment of the Erasmus program have been characterized by substantial changes, starting with the collapse of the Eastern bloc over climate change and major migration movements right to the age of digitalization. We live in a globalized world which has, purportedly, grown together: The most distant countries can be reached within hours and video conferences and permanent availability have become a prerequisite of our day-to-day business. At the same time, we witness an increasing tendency of states retreating back to their national boundaries and a decreasing willingness to operate outside the own comfort zone. This has an immediate effect on many of the International Office's most central tasks. When students decide against a stay abroad to complete an internship or part of their studies, they justify their decision with inflexible study regulations in the new BA/MA system and the high administrative burden. Also early-career researchers and other university employees are hesitant to take the plunge and spend a couple of days abroad.

The digital transformation, in particular, has also far-reaching impacts on areas such as the university library, which has gradually developed into a place where students meet to learn. This presents new challenges to the libraries' room planning concepts. At the same time, digitization has caused major changes in the reading behavior.

As the only Catholic University in the German speaking world, the KU is committed to its strong international focus. Therefore, it wants to constantly increase the number of students and employees participating in Erasmus+ programs for stays abroad and enable as many people as

possible to benefit from intercultural exchange.

In its efforts to reach this goal, the KU wants to learn from the expertise and know-how of other universities within the Erasmus+ network. This is why the KU has organized the first KU Erasmus+ Staff Week 2020.

Invitations to the KU Erasmus+ Staff Week are aimed at:

- responsible International Officers who work in the field of student and staff mobility
- librarians

Attendees can choose one of the following focus areas:

1. Leaving your comfort zone – possibilities for action in an IO context for increasing international mobility among students and employees
2. Challenges of a modern university library: the significance of digitization and the library as a place of learning