



HANDBOOK

TEN STEPS ON HOW TO IMPLEMENT YOUR ERASMUS EXCHANGE PROGRAMME IN THE FIELD OF MUSIC

AEC ERASMUS COORDINATORS WORKING GROUP



Association Européenne
des Conservatoires,
Académies de Musique
et Musikhochschulen (AEC)



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FOREWORD

The following 'Ten Steps' are designed to help European institutions in the field of professional music training in higher education to develop, implement, and sustain their exchange activities in the framework of the ERASMUS Programme, the chapter for higher education in the Lifelong Learning Programme of the EU. This list does not pretend to cover every possibility: individual institutions may need to adjust the order or add additional components, depending on specific situations and needs. Some points might appear to be obvious, others less so: this list is simply an attempt to give guidance, especially to those with little or no experience. It will also serve as a practical resource for new members of staff taking over the task of dealing with international exchanges. One characteristic, however, makes this advisory paper unique: it addresses the special characteristics and needs of professional music training.

The main activities in the ERASMUS exchange programme can be summarized as follows:

- The mobility of students, teaching staff and other staff through study and training periods, and Intensive Programmes
- Multilateral projects for curriculum development, the modernisation of higher education and the support to large networks

These activities can take place at different levels of intensity: they can range from small-scale bilateral one-to-one exchanges with an informal character to long-lasting cooperation initiatives that include several types of activities and are supported by formal agreements. The needs and capacities of the institutions involved determine the type of activity and the level of intensity. Please note that for the organisation of mobility (OM) financial support can also be received in the framework of ERASMUS.

These 'Ten Steps' are intended for institutions interested in initiating a broad range of activities, something beyond incidental exchanges. This does not mean that informal exchanges are less valuable. However, for institutions wishing to be engaged in activities that demand a more structured approach, such as regular, long-term student exchanges, the ten steps provide a useful set of issues and questions to consider.

Please note that this handbook mainly deals with the exchanges of students and staff in music performance programmes. In relation to exchanges in music teacher training programmes, many of the ten steps will also be applicable, but additional care will have to be taken in relation to the academic courses that music teacher training students will need to follow. This means that it is particularly important to finalise the negotiations relating to the completion of the learning agreement (see step 5) before the student leaves for the exchange.

The handbook 'Ten Steps on How to Implement Your Erasmus Exchange Programme' can be divided into three phases: the *preparatory*, *implementation*, and *exit* (reporting and evaluation) phases. The target audiences for this list of practical steps are administrative or teaching staff dealing with the

ERASMUS Programme in European professional music training institutions, the so-called ERASMUS or International Relations Coordinators (IRCs). Although the international policy of the institution in general will be the responsibility of the rector, dean, director, or principal, the practical aspects will be usually delegated to another staff member.

A first version of this text was developed for the first time in the framework of the ERASMUS Thematic Network for Music 'Polifonia'. This project, coordinated by the Malmö Academy of Music and the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC), had as the main aim to study the implications of the Bologna Declaration Process for professional music training in European higher education and, in addition to its work focusing on higher education, to collect information on music education levels other than higher education and on the music profession. As mobility is one of the main issues in the Bologna Process, this 'Ten Steps' handbook was developed with the aim to support and promote the mobility between institutions for professional music training at European level.

Subsequently, the document was updated and substantially expanded in the framework of the SOCRATES Dissemination project 'Musical Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the ERASMUS Programme and the launch of the Lifelong Learning Programme', which was coordinated by the AEC. This dissemination project saw, in addition to a short revival of the ERASMUS Chamber Orchestra (one of the most successful ERASMUS Intensive Programmes in music) to mark the 20th anniversary of ERASMUS in a musical way, also a reflection and assessment on the current state of mobility in the professional music training sector. Based on this assessment, it was decided to update, further expand and translate this important '10 Steps' document with the aim to support institutions with the development of ERASMUS activities, especially in those countries where the participation in the ERASMUS Programme was found to be low in the above-mentioned assessment. The text was substantially edited to the reality of the Lifelong Learning Programme and a large amount of additional information was added by 2 highly experienced international relations coordinators: Mrs Sabine Roth at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna and Mrs Rima Rimsaite at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre in Vilnius. The document has also been circulated to several other international relations coordinators for feedback and comment. The AEC would like to extend its sincere gratitude to Mrs Roth, Mrs Rimsaite and all those international relations coordinators that have contributed to the final version of this document, and to the European Commission for supporting this work.

This handbook can be downloaded in English, German, French and Spanish on the 'DoReMiFa-SOCRATES' website², which is aimed at the promotion of and dissemination of information on European cooperation in professional music training in the framework of the SOCRATES and Lifelong Learning Programmes. This website has a substantial section with documents and practical information for international relations coordinators in the field of music.

¹ More information about this project can be found on the extensive project website www.polifonia-tn.org.

² See www.doremifasocrates.org.

Institutions interested in collaboration and exchanges with institutions in the United States should be informed that a similar 'Ten Steps' document has been developed with a specific focus on transatlantic exchanges in professional music training in the framework of the EU/USA project 'Music Study, Mobility, and Accountability'. This document can be downloaded from the extensive 'Music Study, Mobility, and Accountability' project website at <http://msma.arts-accredit.org>.

The handbook 'Ten Steps on How to Implement Your Erasmus Exchange Programme' shows the continuous commitment of the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC) to promote European mobility and cooperation. This has always been one of the main objectives of the Association and one that has been supported by various activities the AEC has initiated, ranging from the organisation of the Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators in European Conservatoires and the development of information documents and websites, to the successful establishment of several European projects funded by EU programmes³, such as the ERASMUS Thematic Network of Music 'Polifonia', which was selected by the European Commission as an 'ERASMUS Success Story' in May 2007.

³ See for more information on the AEC and its activities: www.aecinfo.org.

PREPARATORY PHASE

Preparation is critical to success. Five steps are devoted to it. This reflects a central principle in international exchange: once students/teachers start to travel, most of your work will have to be completed.

1 DEVELOP A CLEAR INTERNATIONAL POLICY

A discussion at senior management level should take place about why your institution would like to be engaged in international cooperation. Carefully weigh the pros and cons, by considering how various possibilities might affect your institution and its personnel. It will help if your initiative can be linked to the overall objectives and goals of the university or the higher education institution of which your department/faculty is a part. Listed below are several of the many benefits of international exchanges.

Enrichment of the internal culture at institutions

The presence of foreign students and/or teachers provides institutions with an ability to expand internal cultures: opinions developed by students and teachers on local, regional, and national levels can be enhanced by ideas which benefit from the perspectives of cultural diversity. Encounters (and sometimes even confrontations) with unfamiliar musical cultures and content, new styles of playing and interpretation, and especially different pedagogical approaches, can enrich the philosophies and practices of the receiving institution. Furthermore, the community in your institutions will reflect on a small scale the reality of the increasingly international music profession.

Enhancement of an institutions external image

An active and engaging portfolio of international activities may assist institutions to attract more readily potential students, teachers, and may heighten the perception of local communities and support of institutions. Opportunities for student mobility may also assist institutions whose strategic plan focuses on increased enrolment. Offering study abroad options in less populated music areas could serve to reinforce interest in such areas and therefore attract students who might not otherwise be interested. A review of student activity after participation in the ERASMUS exchange programme shows that students who have spent a short study period abroad within an exchange programme, often return as regular students after graduation in their home institution.

Benefits to students

Key benefactors of student exchange are the students. Those who travel abroad will have a unique chance to get acquainted with different cultures, musical traditions, languages, teaching approaches, but also with challenging situations and international issues. These experiences will not only have positive effects on the development of the student as a musician, but also on the development of the student as an individual contributor to society, providing a broader perspective of the world and its

multitude of cultures and diversity. Having an opportunity to attend a foreign institution, study with master teachers, living and assimilating into a foreign culture, being exposed to different languages may assist students to develop inner strength, cultural understanding, and respect for different values and methodologies. Moreover, such participation may provide the student with a new found perspective of his home-based program and country, hopefully broadening his or her perspective of the world at large.

European exchange may not be an appropriate option for all students. Institutions and the students themselves should ensure that they have the ability and desire to benefit from exchange, and the temperament and disposition to embrace diversity of thought and culture.

Student exchange can sometimes be a good way to strengthen the morale of 'lost' students or students who are having temporary difficulties. Department heads, in cooperation with major subject teachers, must play an active role in discerning the best course of action. All institutions and faculty members should be able to assess during intermediate examinations, for example, whether a student would benefit from spending some time abroad. Often, when students are having difficulties, they abandon their educational pursuits. This may not always be the best course of action. A study period abroad could help prevent these premature departures, sparking renewed enthusiasm for the study of music and importance of education. It is important that heads of department point out the possibility of studying abroad if this is appropriate for the particular student.

Students not involved in European exchange opportunities may benefit from participation at the home campus with students from other countries. Exchange opportunities should be two-way, embracing the give and take that each party in the exchange has to offer. Benefits of international experiences by bringing in foreign students and teachers, and organising international projects for those staying in the home institution can be invaluable.

Benefits to teachers

Many of the tangible benefits realized by students are the same as those available to teachers. Teachers participating in European exchange have the opportunity to enhance their own knowledge and skills through being in contact with ideas of peoples and influences of diverse cultures. In this context, it is worthwhile and beneficial to the home institution to offer teachers exchange abroad opportunities in the framework of their own continuing professional development.

Another benefit of sending teaching staff on exchanges is the opportunity for expanded international exposure, with positive effects in terms of student recruitment and institutional reputation. Some excellent teachers fail to attract foreign students simply because they are not known outside their own country or region. Exchange visits, including master classes at foreign institutions, may broaden these teachers exposure and therefore, enhance their international reputations. Such practices could result in heightened student interest in a particular teacher, consequently lead to institutional

realization of expanded enrolment. Faculty exchanges may become a conscientious part of an institutional policy to build or reinforce certain areas of study.

Visiting teachers are important aspect of the international character of the entire institution, giving students and teachers not able to travel the benefit of contact with new perspectives and impulses. Experiences with the ERASMUS exchanges situation seem to indicate, however, that few institutions of higher education have succeeded in combining their programmes for guest teachers and master classes with the activities in their exchange programmes. There are many reasons: complexity, the nature of personal interaction among various music specialists, availability, preparatory time, and organizational structures and cultures all are factors. Department heads and staff are usually responsible for the guest teachers/master classes, while ERASMUS or international relations coordinators make arrangements for students and teachers who participate within exchange programmes. If the master classes can be organised to take into account the framework of the ERASMUS exchange programme, several content and financial advantages can be gained.

Visiting artist series and guest lectures within the context of foreign exchange may provide extensive benefits from new opportunities they create. Through lectures and meetings, guest teacher can develop contacts with well established local teachers who may be able to repay the visit in the guest teacher's country. The exchange programme may finance a reciprocal visit. Moreover, the students of the local teacher may decide to spend a study period abroad at the guest teacher's studio. If the teachers can develop and cultivate an ongoing rapport, they can freely discuss the progress of the mutual exchange student, focusing specifically on the student and not associated worries such as loss of student from a private studio. Thus a much closer and more permanent contact between the guest teacher and local teacher is established. Students may especially benefit from a regular guest teacher, who possibly visits once a year. For example, the guest teacher will have a different perspective on student progress because of the passage of time between lessons or evaluations.

Inviting well-known artists to give master classes provides many attractive benefits. A formal exchange programme may provide few opportunities for this type of interaction; however, such initiatives can be encouraged concurrently. Although the visits of these artist do not usually result in the possibility for an exchange of students or teachers, such visits can be useful in many respects including the exchange of culture, thought and idea at highest level of intellectual discourse. Examination committees, juries, or boards may also benefit by inviting external experts from abroad to provide broader perspectives and whose costs may be covered by an exchange program.

Benefits to Curriculum

One of the main benefits of structural international cooperation (as opposed to incidental international activities) could be lasting positive effects on the development of study programs. By comparing curricular content and teaching methods, new insights and perspectives may be gained. In Europe, joint curriculum development has been pursued through European cooperation programmes and through bilateral relationships outside the framework of the programmes. Many lasting developments

have been realized in terms of new modules, new teaching techniques, and even entirely new study programmes. The latest development in this area is the establishment of the first joint European programmes in the field of music at the Master and PhD level. These are integrated programmes developed by small consortia of institutions that include substantial mobility components and a far-reaching cooperation in terms of content and the organisation of the study programme. To support this unique possibility provided by European cooperation, the AEC has published a handbook entitled 'How to develop a Joint Master in Music?'⁴ in cooperation with the Prince Clause Conservatoire in Groningen, which is the coordinator of the Joint European Master Programme 'Musical Master for New Audiences and Innovative Practice'⁵.

Financial Benefits

Setting up structural links with one or more partner institutions through ERASMUS might also provide financial benefits. By developing a cooperation agreement to which both institutions have to contribute financially, costs of the various activities can be shared and therefore lessened for each participating institution. Typically, the incidental master classes are the most expensive of all: usually the hosting institution has to cover all costs, ranging from travel and subsistence expenses to sometimes hefty teaching fees.

Decide what *kinds of activities* you would like to and can be engaged in. Would you like to: exchange students or teachers or both, send students for placements in professional music organisations, train your staff through training visits or by inviting trainers from professional music organisations, initiate a multilateral project or develop one or more aspect(s) of your current study programme with foreign partners? Would you like to do all these activities at the same time or in a series? Set goals over a number of years, preferably starting small and expanding each year as aspirations and conditions warrant. Work according to a plan.

Decide specifically *with whom* you would like to cooperate.

a) Make an inventory of all international informal personal contacts that already exist among your teaching faculty. Your teachers may have personal contacts in institutions abroad that might be useful when shaping your international contacts and activities. It is also important to mention that the new ERASMUS programme in the Lifelong Learning Programme of the EU offers students the opportunity to realise placements in professional music organisations abroad, in addition to the normal study abroad period in another higher education institution. It can therefore be helpful that many teachers have contacts on international level, but beware of the following:

- Individuals who see international exchanges primarily as a way to promote their own master classes, performance opportunities, or research agendas abroad. There can be problems of sensitivity to the exchange principles and operational plans of your ERASMUS activities.

⁴ This handbook can be found at www.doremifasocrates.org/coordinators.

⁵ See for more information www.jointmusicmasters.org.

- A scope of action that is beyond your capacity to manage. Make priorities according to your international policy. Focus your efforts on specific countries or regions. However, if a teacher offers an interesting contact in a country with a lower priority in your international policy, always consider it carefully.
- b) It can also be helpful to use contacts that already exist in the community in which your institution is located: contacts in the framework of town twinning and contacts through local ethnic population or business networks can turn out to be very useful. Another valuable source of information could be alumni who have moved abroad.
- c) It also may be important to inform yourself in more detail about the national system for higher music education of the country in which your potential cooperation partner is located with the aim to gain understanding of how this institution is working and in which structure it is placed. The AEC has developed such national descriptions of professional music training systems and music teacher training systems in 30 European countries, which can be found on the AEC 'Bologna' website⁶.

Consider *the number of partner institutions and/or professional music organisations* you would like to work with, but be realistic: remember that some institutions might not be interested in yet another cooperation partner, as they might have several already. They may not be willing to add your institution to their portfolio of international activities unless you have something that interests them, such as specific expertise, a specific teacher or promising business connections. Try to inform yourself about the institutions and professional music organisations abroad. The following criteria will help you in your research on prospective partners for cooperation:

- Purposes: mission, goals, and objectives
- Size
- Local, regional, national, or international profile
- Educational structure: kinds of departments, courses, curricula, etc.
- (Artistic) character: kinds of musical activities, levels, approaches, styles, etc.
- The unique selling points of your institution and the extent to which they are or could be of interest to a particular prospective partner

Ideally, your institution will have a mixed portfolio of partners with a variety of sizes, profiles, and (educational) approaches in order to profit from their various types of expertise and backgrounds. However, experiences show that, in general, similar institutions work better together.

Consider a number of *issues associated with level and quality* for the exchange activities:

⁶ These national descriptions can be found at www.bologna-and-music.org/countryoverviews.

- Specific subject matter, repertoires, techniques, technologies, disciplines, or issues of continuing education and/or matters to be addressed outside the formal curricula, including the needs of your teaching and administrative staff.
- Personnel responsible for delivering instruction, evaluating results, and overseeing the fulfilment of goals and objectives.
- Content, methods, and perspectives to be used to reach goals and objectives regarding subject matter, techniques, technologies, disciplines or other issues.
- Specific expectations regarding breadth and depth, including degree of specialization.
- Expectations regarding problem setting and solving.
- Aspirations for specific artistic and intellectual engagement.
- Based on the first five items in this list, the specific level of competence that is expected with the content to be studied upon (a) entry and (b) completion.
- Mechanisms used to assess (student) achievements and competencies against expectations.
- Means for reporting and documenting expectations and achievements for students, teachers, staff and experts returning to their home country after an exchange or placement.
- Guidance, counselling, or mentoring services available to ensure that students stay on track.

Do *research on existing examples of good practice*. Avoid reinventing the wheel by contacting colleagues who already have experience with ERASMUS exchanges (for example: university offices at central level of large universities or higher education institutions, colleagues at other institutions that have already established such an exchange programme or organisations specialised in establishing networks with professional organisations for organising student placements) and look for useful websites. Consult existing documents and publications, such as the DoReMiFaSOCRATES website of the AEC⁷.

Make sure that a *budget* is allocated to international programme development. International work is time consuming and therefore requires resources, particularly staff. At the same time, during the preparatory stage, experience shows that the budget for travel needs not be very high. During this preparatory stage, you must also start exploring possibilities for financial support for the exchange activities themselves: collect information about the ERASMUS Programme, but also on national, regional (such as the NORDPLUS Programme for the Nordic countries⁸ and the CEEPUS Programme for the Central-European countries⁹) and international cooperation programmes (such as ERASMUS MUNDUS¹⁰) that could be used to finance your activities. In any case, always keep in mind that the ERASMUS Programme (similar to many other programmes) will never cover all your costs and is based on the co-financing principle. It will therefore be necessary for your institution to reserve some budget for the international exchange activities.

⁷ See www.doremifasocrates.org.

⁸ See for more information <http://www.nordplusonline.org/>.

⁹ See for more information <http://www.ceepus.info/>.

¹⁰ See for more information http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/index_en.html.

Assess possibilities in your own institution and the community in which your institution is located regarding *practical issues*. Will housing be available for exchange students, teachers and experts? What kinds of support mechanisms for international work are already in place, for example at the central university or higher education institution level, the departmental level or at the level of public bodies (embassies, cultural organisations)? What are the views of the student administration officers on international exchanges? Is there an organisation locally that could help you with some practical support in developing and operating exchanges? What support is there for language study?

When you decide to participate in the ERASMUS Programme, your institution has to apply to the European Commission for an *ERASMUS University Charter* (EUC)¹¹, which is the entry ticket for higher education institutions to participate in the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) of the EU. Two types of the EUC exist: *a Standard and an Extended Charter*.

When your institution has applied for and has been awarded *the Standard EUC*, it will give your institution the right:

- To participate in the *centralised actions* of the Lifelong Learning Programme until 2013. These centralised actions are mainly multilateral projects, such as curriculum development projects, networks, projects for the modernisation of higher education, virtual campuses and accompanying measures¹².
- To apply to your National Agency (NA) for funding for the *decentralised (mobility) activities*: these are student mobility [SMS], teaching staff assignment [TA], staff training mobility [STT] and Intensive Projects [IP]. Some support to the organisation of mobility [OM] is also provided in the ERASMUS programme.

When awarded *the Extended EUC*, your institution has the right to participate in the actions listed above and, in addition, to apply to the National Agency for funding of the student mobility for placements [SMP] in professional companies, training or research centres and other organisations.

The *EUC application form*, which can be made on-line only and must be submitted in two languages (your national language and one of the three official EU languages - EN, FR or DE), asks for some statistical data on your institution, information about the compliance with the fundamental LLP principles, and includes questions on the organisation of mobility. The application for the EUC also requires developing a so-called *European Policy Statement [EPS]* for your institution. This is an integral part of the EUC application and should describe the following issues:

- Your institution's strategy, objectives and priorities for ERASMUS and other actions in the context of the LLP activities of your institution, the visibility of your international activities, EUC and the EPS, and information about the compliance with non-discriminative objectives (max. 3000 characters).

¹¹ See for more information http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/static/en/llp/Erasmus/index_en.htm.

¹² See for more information http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/erasmus/index_en.html.

- Information about the quality of academic mobility activities (max. 2000 characters).
- Information about the quality of student placement activities to be completed by institutions applying for an Extended EUC (max. 2000 characters).

In answering these questions you should set out the overall ERASMUS co-operation plan in coherence with the strategy defined in the mission statement of the institution. The plan concerns notably your ERASMUS activities, such as the involvement of your institution in student and teaching staff mobility, curriculum development, co-operation projects and networks. International relations coordinators having to develop such an EPS for the first time are advised to contact colleagues in institutions already having been awarded a EUC in the past or address themselves to the AEC to obtain examples of existing European Policy Statements¹³.

Once your application is approved by the European Commission by email (and later by a formal document) and your institution is awarded an EUC, you can start with:

- Negotiating with potential partner institutions to sign so-called *Inter-institutional* or *Bilateral Agreements* (see section 2)
- Negotiating with professional music organisations companies or consortia to agree on student placements and/or training of your staff. In some cases, consortia organise and manage student placements acting on behalf of several partner HEIs and help to place the students through their own networks abroad. Such consortia may include a group of HEIs or a network of HEIs as well as associations, training institutions, enterprises, public bodies, Chambers of Commerce, etc. For the moment, such consortia in the field of music exists do not yet exist.
- Applying to your ERASMUS National Agency (NA)¹⁴ for ***funding for the decentralised ERASMUS mobility actions*** (such as the above-mentioned OM, SMS, SMP, TA, STT and IP) by signing a so-called *Mobility Contract* with the NA between 1 March and 31 May of that year; please note that exact deadlines will vary from country to country and are communicated in good time by the NAs. Consequently, you will be receiving a separate document (*Contract with the Beneficiary*) for the granted actions. In this document, the NA will (among others) inform you about the allocation of the grant, its financial management rules and deadlines, and give you samples (draft documents) on the implementation of the action(s), including rights and duties of both parties and others.
- Applying to the European Commission for the above-mentioned ***centralized ERASMUS actions***. Please note that for institutions interested in setting up a joint curriculum project in the framework of ERASMUS, the AEC has developed a Handbook for the Development of a Joint Master Programme in Music¹⁵.

¹³ A list of higher education institutions which are EUC holders in 2007 can be found at http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/ltp/erasmus/index_en.htm.

¹⁴ For a list of all ERASMUS NAs, please visit the links section of the DoReMiFaSOCRATES website at www.doremifasocrates.org.

¹⁵ This document can be found at www.doremifasocrates.org/coordinators.

2 DEVELOP YOUR INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS

Once the international policy is developed and your institution has been awarded an EUC, you are ready to *begin or continue your search for suitable partner institutions*. You can inform yourself about potential international cooperation partners through the following means:

- Your own internal inventory of already existing contacts in your institution.
- Meeting representatives of other institutions at events that bring together large groups of conservatoire officials, such as the Annual Congress and the Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators organised by the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC)¹⁶.
- Visit websites with useful information on institutions you are interested in. Links to websites with useful information on individual member institutions can be found on the website of the AEC.
- Your external contacts with public and private bodies like embassies, cultural associations, career centres, professional music organisations, research centres and other representatives of working life concerned with lifelong learning issues.

Once one or more organisations have been chosen, a *first formal contact* should be made, usually by exchanging letters and information (brochures, study guides, recordings, etc.) at the level of the senior management or the head of the institution. This formal contact will indicate the interest of the partner organisation. If clearly no interest is shown, it is wise to look for an alternative immediately.

As a next step, institutions are strongly encouraged *to arrange visits* to establish closer personal contacts with colleagues in the institutions and professional music organisations abroad. It is vital to stress that successful international relations between institutions are strongly dependent on the personal relations between conservatoire and organisational leaders, international relations coordinators/officers, or teachers and experts. Do invest in this personal connection by making a visit to the organisation or, if budgets and time are limited, meet in person during another occasion, such as a congress or a similar event. Another good way to establish a first contact is to send a student ensemble to give a performance combined with a visit.

For *a first visit*, it is important to prepare well in advance, particularly to ensure meetings with key people. Relevant printed information (brochures, study guides, recordings, etc.) should be exchanged beforehand. During a first visit, make sure you:

- Ask for appointments with as many people as possible: officials dealing with international relations at all levels (not only departmental level), heads of department, teachers, senior managers of the company, etc.

¹⁶ Please visit the AEC website www.aecinfo.org for more information about these annual events.

- Try to make an appointment with the director or a member of the senior management staff in the organisation, even if you are not a dean or principal yourself. Knowing the senior management might be useful in the future.
- Always ask for a tour of the building, so you can get an impression of the local infrastructure (concert hall, library, studios, practice facilities, student facilities, infrastructure, working conditions etc.).
- Attend performances of students and/or teachers (if available) or observe work in process. Visits should preferably be held during a period when the organisation is in full operation, so that an impression can be gained regarding the overall dynamism of the institution or professional music organisation.
- Try to exchange questions beforehand and inform yourself in which field you are particularly interested in for a future cooperation so that you and your colleague in the visited institution or professional music organisation are able to give answers to these questions during the visit.
- Make clear that you have vital interest in cooperation to avoid the impression of realizing a 'pro-forma' visit without any consequences but 'stealing time' from the host institution or professional music organisation.

When having discussions with your colleagues during the visit, take note of the following:

- Make sure that both partners profit from your visit: offer information material on your home institution and exchange information on general (e.g. country related) and particular (specific to your institution) issues.
- Exchange information on curriculum matters: how is your institution similar to and different from the potential partner institution? If there is an interest to follow academic courses as part of the study abroad: how will this be dealt with during the exchange?
- Discuss the types of activity you would like to initiate.
- Find out whether and with what results similar activities already were implemented.
- Ask about practical issues: housing, use of language, finances, selection procedures, semester timing including holiday periods, and recognition issues. Detailed information about housing arrangements for exchange students is critical.
- If both parties express their interest in working together, discuss if and how you would like to formalise your activity. For example: Has the institution been awarded an Erasmus University

Charter (EUC) by the European Commission? Who will be signing the formal bilateral agreement? Will the student placements be organized with the help of any consortium or with a single enterprise? Who will be responsible for signing the training agreement for the student placements and the working plans for the staff trainings?

- If you visit the professional music organisation and discuss your student placements, clearly discuss which tasks would match the student's interest and give the student the opportunities to develop required professional and work competencies, ask about requested visa/work permits and insurance issues (health, liability, social security cover), possible placement periods, monitoring, and recognition requirements.
- Agree on a clear structure of communication: a direct contact between only two officials (one on each side) and responsible for a particular exchange works best. If an official in one institution has to deal with several officials in the other institution, things might get complicated and mistakes could be made.
- Always take cultural differences seriously: the partner institution will work differently from the way you do in your home institution or in enterprises that have a similar profile in your home country, which is exactly the reason why you want to send students or teachers or staff. Be very sensitive to cultural differences and avoid judgemental remarks or unfavourable comparisons.

Usually, a first personal visit forms a good basis for further development of the collaboration. However, be realistic: if, after your discussions, you have the feeling that the institution or organisation is not really enthusiastic about working with you, consider looking for another partner. Finding a partner committed to cooperation from the beginning is the key to success.

At this stage, it is critical *to start deepening mutual trust*. The most important factor in achieving overall programme success, and in developing successful recognition of study or training periods abroad, is establishing strong professional trust between partners. Think of the following issues:

This matter requires coordination and reciprocity among faculty colleagues and programme administrators; as well as between leadership and concerned experts.

Trust is built on a clear understanding of one another's educational, artistic and professional goals and contexts; it is based on mutual basic knowledge about assessment procedures, credit point systems, educational methods, as well as on the profile of the enterprise.

Regular contact by e-mail and telephone is essential; telephone calls are more personal than e-mails. Participants also need to have background knowledge regarding the cultural and historical differences among countries, differences that shape institutional and individual thinking and practice.

If information and aspiration sharing, programmatic investigations, and trust building have gone well, institutions are encouraged to develop a *Bilateral or Inter-Institutional agreement or (in cases of work placements) a working plan or training agreement*. Some negotiation about the content is usually necessary and once both sides have agreed on the content, the authorised officials should sign the agreement. A model bilateral or inter-institutional agreement form, developed by the AEC for use by professional music training institutions, and samples of training agreements can be found in the section for international relations coordinators in the DoReMiFaSOCRATES website¹⁷.

For all mobility activities (SMS, SMP, TA, STT) between two eligible higher education institutes with EUCs a valid Bilateral or Inter-Institutional agreement is a *conditio sine qua non*. Each of the two partners is advised to hold an original of the document. In order to avoid extra work, it makes sense to agree first on the contents of the agreement (number of students and teachers to exchange bilaterally or unilaterally, amount of months for the study abroad, deadlines for submitting students application to partner institution, minimum number of teaching hours during the visit, etc) and then fill in the form. Ideally, the Bilateral agreement is made out in two originals by one of the two partners, who then sends the two originals (after having them signed and sealed by the representative of his/her own institution) to the partner with the request to have the agreements signed and sealed. This partner subsequently sends back one of the two documents to the institution that originally made out the agreements.

If mobility is planned to take place between a higher education institute and a professional music organisation (for example in case of SMP and STT activities), as a rule the sending institution is the higher education institute. Therefore the higher education institute is advised to work out a draft of the relevant contract (for SMP a training agreement and for STT a working plan) and fill in from its side how the action should be ideally implemented. After reaching an agreement about form and content of the contract document with the receiving professional music organisation, the official paper must be signed by all three parties – the student or staff, the sending institution and the host institution/professional music organisation. The Training Agreement is an essential document and includes a training plan (or job description) and the quality commitment on mobility. The commitment contains quality standards to be known and respected by all parties and describes the tasks of the sending institution, the host enterprise and the student with regards to the programme, monitoring, mentoring arrangements, validation and recognition, preparation of students, language learning and logistic support.

In case of Staff Training (STT), the higher education institute may also wish to invite an expert from a specialized professional music organisation to hold a training course within this action. In this case, all eligible costs will be covered by the inviting higher education institute and the necessary paper work will have to be realised by the institution as well.

¹⁷ This document can be found at www.doremifasocrates.org/coordinators.

When you have concluded the agreements with your partners, when your application to your National Agency for funding for decentralized ERASMUS actions has been approved, and the respective financial contract with your National Agency has been signed, you may start implementing your ERASMUS students, teachers and staff mobility, as well as other programme activities.

3 BUILD UP INTERNAL SUPPORT

In order to implement successfully your planned and prepared internationalisation activities, it could be helpful to have some advice on how to build up internal support and to develop the subsequent internal and external procedures. In the following chapter we discuss how to develop internal support for your activities.

It is critical to ***build broad support within your institution for the international activities*** you agree to pursue. Think of the following strategies:

Make sure you have the ***full backing of the senior management*** for the details as well as the concept, especially if support was given in earlier stages, when the institution's international relations policy was developed.

In addition to obtaining the backing of senior management, ***engage*** as many ***faculty members*** and heads of departments as possible to develop an institutional culture that ***supports*** exchange ***at departmental level***. Programme success and sustainability, as well as student involvement, require a critical mass of faculty committed to a culture of internationalisation in your institution. Find allies. Convince students, teachers and staff of the benefits mentioned in Step 1.

Do not be afraid of opposition or scepticism. Here are some typical responses from students, teachers, and administrative staff regarding an international exchange programme:

- *“Why these international programmes: aren't we already international enough?”*
Because a conservatoire has many foreign students, it does not necessarily have an active international exchange policy. Just as it is important to receive students, it is also important to be able to send out students, teachers and staff.
- *“Exchanges do not work in professional music training because of its highly individual character!”*
The individual character of professional music training can make working with exchanges more complicated, especially with regard to long-term exchanges. However, students and teachers have been exchanged between conservatoires for many years. This shows that the exchanges can work and produces a basis for confidence in higher levels of cooperation among institutions.
- *“Our students come to study with a specific teacher, so they are not interested in studying abroad.”*
Although it is true that students often come to study with one particular teacher, this should not necessarily mean that in the course of their studies (three, four, five or even six years) they should not be stimulated to go abroad for a study period. It is healthy for students to have contacts with different approaches and perspectives.

- *“How can we control what the student is doing when he/she is abroad? We cannot support academic tourism!”*

Student exchanges are based on mutual trust among participating institutions: before the student is sent somewhere, the institutions must be in close contact about the content of study period. The institutions should always be able to show what is being studied, how participating students will be evaluated, and how time abroad will be spent.

- *“Our institution cannot support another administrator dealing with an exchange programme!”*

It is true that exchange programmes can produce additional administrative burdens. However, an additional full-time administrative official is not always necessary, except for large institutions. Often, the officials dealing with exchange programmes are teaching or administrative staff with other duties.

- *“The student will never come back!”*

Normally, students return to their home institution after the period abroad. In fact, experiences seem to indicate that exchange students return, graduate, and then sometimes enrol in the foreign institution at a later stage as a regular student. In some countries, where student numbers are dropping and where there are fears that participation in exchange programmes will lower the numbers even further, student mobility becomes an issue. If a student suddenly decides to transfer to a different institution at his/her own initiative, the home institution simply loses; however, if students are widening their horizons within an exchange programme, the home institution keeps them, since the exchange is organized by the home institution and students remain registered there. Students are also encouraged to return to the home institution after the study abroad period according to the basic principles of the ERASMUS programme.

- *Why should students go abroad for a study placement? Can't he/she do this here?*

A work placement abroad gives young people important experiences of combining living, studying and working abroad. Work experiences are not only enjoyable but also increase knowledge and practical skills, improve understanding of the social culture in the context of work experiences and thus enable students to compete more successfully in the global labour market.

Another vital point is ***to make a clear connection to existing activities within your institution***. As a basic principle, there should always be a clear connection among international activities, existing study programmes, and regular activities. If this connection is not achieved, the international programme activities will always have the reputation of being luxurious, expensive, and not really necessary.

Make sure as soon as possible that ***the international activities become part of regular activities*** or part of already scheduled operations and projects, such as ensembles or master classes.

Use ***all public relation tools*** at your disposal to disseminate information about your plans and expected outcomes. Discuss your plans with students, teachers and administrative staff and ask for their advice and opinions. Adjust your plans as necessary.

4 DEVELOP INTERNAL PROCEDURES

Having informed everyone what is about to happen, now is the time to think carefully about internal procedures. The following internal procedures are relevant:

4.1 INTERNAL SELECTION PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WANTING TO GO ON AN EXCHANGE OR DO A PLACEMENT

In collaboration with your partner organisations abroad, develop *a standard application* procedure, exchange, respectively update your application deadlines and specific requirements and make sure that the rules relevant for the ERASMUS programme are respected. Although procedures and requirements will vary, a standard application should contain the following components:

- A standard ERASMUS student application form (obligatory)
- A transcript of previously finished courses or qualifications obtained, also called Transcript of Records (obligatory)
- A Learning Agreement (obligatory)
- A Curriculum Vitae (if required)
- A audio or video recording or portfolio showing the artistic qualifications of the applicant (obligatory), including a confirmation of the authenticity of the material (if required)
- A letter of motivation (if required)
- Letter(s) of recommendation (if required)
- A placement application form (if required)

If there are any specific regulations in relation to the choice of study subjects (e.g. specific instruments), study year or a preference given to a live audition instead of a recording, make sure that this information is circulated in time.

Cooperation partners are strongly advised to use the same application form for both institutions: for study exchanges it is strongly recommended to use the AEC model student application form and the AEC model learning agreement form. These forms can be downloaded in the section for international relations coordinators of the DoReMiFaSOCRATES website¹⁸. Ensure that students, teaching and administrative staff in your institution are familiar with these forms and know where to find and how to use them.

Cooperation partners considering student placement periods are advised to agree with their partners or with the consortium on the use of a placement application form, the level of student performance and application requirements, the placement programme, monitoring of activities, and using the standard Training Agreement¹⁹.

¹⁸ See www.doremifasocrates.org/coordinators.

¹⁹ See www.doremifasocrates.org/coordinators.

Once applications from students are received, an internal *selection or a confirmation procedure* takes place. Even if the actual number of applications is quite low, always be careful in making choices. Prepare information about internal requirements for outgoing ERASMUS candidates for study purposes or for placements in which you describe the formal eligibility criteria for an exchange (e.g. study year, no loss in progress, knowledge of foreign languages, etc), and the internal application and selection/confirmation procedure(s) with their timeline.

Make sure that your institution has implemented the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and is ready to use the relevant tools like the ECTS course catalogue, the Learning Agreement form and the Transcript of Records form. ECTS is a useful tool for facilitating ERASMUS student exchanges and a reliable means for qualified recognition of study and placement abroad periods. As mentioned above, the AEC has developed model ECTS forms for use in the higher music education sector, which can be downloaded in the section for international relations coordinators of the DoReMiFaSOCRATES website²⁰. If your institution is not using ECTS yet, you are strongly advised to start the necessary internal procedures to describe your study modules and learning outcomes, to develop valid transcript of records and to measure the student workload. More information on this issue can be found in the ECTS User 's Guide of the European Commission²¹. The AEC has also developed a handbook for the use of credit points in higher music education in general, entitled Handbook for the Use and Implementation of Credit Points in Higher Music Education²².

In the ERASMUS Programme, student placements are considered to be part of the regular study course. As such, they have to be treated likewise: formal requirements have to be respected, selection or confirmation procedure/s adopted, monitoring of the undertaken activities organised, the quality of the placement evaluated, and finally ECTS points awarded. Examples of placements of music students could be: music therapy student placement periods in a hospital, music technology or sound design student placements in a research/technology centre or in appropriate professional companies, and placements for music pedagogy students in international music schools, for musicology or ethnomusicology students in research centres and libraries, for music management students in concert agencies, festivals or music associations, and for music performance students in ensembles and orchestras.

Once the student is pre-selected or confirmed for an ERASMUS exchange or placement, *start the external application procedure* with the partner institution/s. In doing so, consider the following:

- Who needs to approve the student's period of study or work placement abroad? Normally, the principal study teacher must approve in any case, but is additional approval from senior management required? Here it is important to work out internally a procedure that involves all interested parties (student, main instrument teacher/s, head of department/institute) and (academic) bodies

²⁰ These forms can be found at www.doremifasocrates.org/coordinators.

²¹ This document can be found at http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/ects/doc/guide_en.pdf.

²² This document can be found in English, German and French at www.bologna-and-music.org/creditpoints.

(registrar, dean, department for studies and examination, international relations coordinator). The procedure should be efficient, transparent and applicable for all types of mobility within the ERASMUS programme.

- Is the student in the appropriate phase of his/her study to spend time abroad? Acknowledge that it might not be the right moment for the student to go. The opinion of the teacher will be important in this regard.
- Does the student possess sufficient language skills to manage in a country where the students' native language is not the main language? If the answer is no, investigate if there is something that can be done before the student leaves, or if the partner institution abroad offers short intensive language courses before or upon arrival. Take also in consideration the European Intensive Language Courses (EILC) organized for less taught languages²³.
- Are the wishes of the student in relation to the destination, the study or the work programme realistic and appropriate? Consider differences in study programmes of both sending and receiving institutions and make sure that the outgoing student follows a similar or equivalent study course and cycle.
- Is your student ready to work in a professional music organisation abroad? Does he/she possess the skills required for the particular working experience offered? Is the work/training programme offered by the company relevant for the development of the competences required by her/his study programme?
- The Learning Agreement is an important tool, which allows home and host institutions to agree beforehand on the student's study programme with the help of the relevant academic bodies; it is a formal document on which the exchange student can rely during the recognition process following the Erasmus study abroad²⁴.
- For the same purposes as described above in connection to the Learning Agreement, in the case of placements a Training Agreement must be made and signed by all three involved parties, namely the trainee/student, the home institution and the hosting institution or enterprise. In case placements are organised with the help of a consortium, additional agreements between home institution, host institution and the consortium.
- Make sure the exchange student's questions about practical issues, such as accommodation, health insurance, residence permit and/or visa and others, are answered, and provide him/her with sufficient information on studying/practicing facilities, activities of the students union (mentor system, pick-up service, international student card) and more.

²³ For further information, please contact your National Agency

²⁴ For more information on the Learning Agreement, see chapter 5.

- In addition to musical and instrumental skills, does the student possess sufficient personal attributes and social skills to 'survive' the study or placement period abroad? Not all students will be able to handle the challenges connected to a mobility period in a foreign country.
- Will the student be able to serve as an 'ambassador' of your institution abroad? This could be an important point, as you certainly want to send out students who can make a good impression for your institution in many ways.
- Try to foresee all the possible conflicting interests. A student exchange could be opposed by a teacher or by the senior management. Teachers may take a very personal position regarding student exchanges: "*I have invested so much time in the student and now he/she wants to go on an exchange to another teacher!*" Senior management equally may have other interests: think of that good bassoon, viola, and bass trombone student you desperately need for your orchestral or big band concerts who has suddenly indicated interest in an exchange. What to do?

A student exchange should primarily benefit the development of the student. Since teachers and institutions do not 'own' students, denying a student an exchange possibility can be counterproductive. The student might simply leave your institution and never come back. After study abroad in the home institution's programme, the student will return (as he/she stays registered in the home institution), having learned a lot and usually being more committed to the home institution than if the possibility had been denied.

Once the student is selected for an ERASMUS exchange by the hosting partner (the letter of acceptance is received and the learning agreement is signed for study abroad exchanges; training agreement and quality commitment are signed for placements), an **ERASMUS financial agreement** has to be signed with the selected outgoing student for allocation and payment of her/his ERASMUS grant. The authority that signs this agreement (this could be the sending institution or the NA), as well as the amount of this grant varies from country to country. The amount also depends (among others) on the number of your projected mobility flows and periods agreed upon in your bilateral or inter-institutional agreements and in the mobility contract with your National Agency. Finally, it is also directly related with your past performance in your previous ERASMUS activities and is, last but not least, also influenced by the national strategy (the so-called National Plan [NP]) of the LLP Programme in your country. For information about the exact amounts of the grants, please contact your ERASMUS National Agency.

The eligible period for both types of ERASMUS student mobility (SMS or SMP - study or placement) is from 3 to 12 months; combined mobility (study and placement mobility) is also eligible. A single student may take an advantage of both types of ERASMUS mobility – SMS and SMP. The total of the ERASMUS mobility grant period should not exceed 24 months.

An ERASMUS student or placement grant should be paid to the ERASMUS student before he/she leaves for the study period abroad, although some institutions pay an 80% instalment at departure, with the remaining 20% being paid after the return of the student.

4.2 INTERNAL SELECTION OF TEACHERS WANTING TO GO ON A TEACHING EXCHANGE

Teachers might be interested in your ERASMUS programme, as they are often eager to travel. The question, “*Can you organize master classes for me abroad?*” will be often asked to international exchange officials²⁵. Although it could be a part of your ERASMUS programme to organize teaching abroad for the teaching staff, this does not necessarily have to be in the form of a high profile and well-paid master classes, especially if organised in the framework of the ERASMUS programme as a teaching assignment [TA]. Therefore internationally famous teachers might be less interested in this kind of exchanges. Think more of excellent teachers (for example: young assistants) who have not yet reached ‘celebrity status’, but who are nevertheless challenged by the idea of teaching at a different institution for a specified period.

It is important to realise that during an ERASMUS exchange teaching fees are usually not paid at all; often only travel and accommodation costs are covered or reimbursed. However, at times, even renowned musicians are willing to teach a colleague’s class for a day or so without receiving a fee. Sometimes exchanges present a solution to the problem that develops for institutions when teachers are on tour: a substitute teacher can be arranged, whose travel and accommodation costs are covered by the exchange programme. However, it is vital to be clear about these unfavourable financial conditions at an early stage. Do remember that co-financing is a “*conditio sine qua non*” in the ERASMUS teaching mobility programme, as the ERASMUS grant will not cover all your costs. Carefully consider therefore your financial, structural and personnel resources.

The main minimum requirements for the implementation of a teaching mobility under ERASMUS are: a ‘contract’ to be signed between teacher and home institution, a minimum amount of at least 5 teaching hours, the requirement that the teaching exchange should be integrated in the curriculum of the host institution, and various obligations of reporting back or confirming and publicising the actual realisation of the exchange. In addition, since the study year 2007/08 a so-called ‘teaching programme or teaching plan’ must be made, and signed by the home and host institutions, and by the teacher him-/herself. All ERASMUS teacher exchanges must be based on a valid Bilateral/Inter-Institutional Agreement signed by two EUC holders.

Be prepared that not all teaching exchanges you are suggesting to your partners abroad are going to be realised in the end. It might occur that partner institutions are not showing the expected enthusiasm for the person or the subject that you are offering to exchange.

Whenever an institution sends out a teacher in an exchange programme, consider how the institution will benefit:

- Will the teacher exchange be reciprocal, and if so, within what kind of time limit?
- Will the teacher exchange lead to other activities, such as student exchanges or common projects?

²⁵ For a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for teachers interested in an exchange, please visit the section for music teachers of the DoReMiFaSOCRATES website at www.doremifasocrates.org/teachers.

- Can the exchange be part of a larger continuing professional development or a research assignment for the teacher?
- Can the exchange be connected to a specific task in relation to curriculum development?
- Can the exchange promote a certain studio, department, or the institution as a whole, possibly attracting future (exchange or regular) students? At the same time, be sensitive about 'recruitment' aspects of such teacher visits and consider possible consequences for the reputation of your institution and the maintenance of mutual trust with your partner institution.
- What are the financial arrangements?

Answering such questions might define the character and length of teaching staff exchange. Experience shows that teachers of performance mostly favour short visits, because they accommodate teaching and other professional engagements best.

Institutions interested in establishing this kind of exchange activities are highly recommended to provide transparent and well-advertised information about the internal selection procedures, as well as about additional financial means for co-financing outgoing teaching staff (if available).

4.3 INTERNAL SELECTION PROCEDURES OF STAFF WANTING TO REALIZE A TRAINING ABROAD

The new generation of the ERASMUS programme in the LLP also offers a continuing education component, the so-called 'Staff Training' (STT) for teaching and other types of staff of higher education institutions and professional music organisations for the purpose of training. According to the guidelines of this new activity, the selection of the staff should be done on the basis of a work plan submitted by the applicant. The essential elements in this work plan should be: overall aim and objectives, expected results in terms of training or learning, activities to be carried out and - if possible- a programme of the period.

In view of the fact that the grant awarded by the National Agency can only be a contribution to the actual travel and subsistence costs of a staff training period abroad (similar to the TA activities), the sending institution will have to provide co-financing. In that light, every institution will have to decide on how to organise its internal selection and/or confirmation process of valuable candidates who qualify for a staff training period abroad. It is strongly advised to work out a clear and transparent procedure.

Be aware that the best 'advocate' for a training initiative is the applicant him-/herself. Staff interested in such training periods should therefore be encouraged to established contacts with the relevant organisations or institutions themselves to discuss content and practical planning. Ideally, the staff member should include a confirmation of the training period with the above-mentioned work plan, which has to be signed by all three involved parties: the staff member, the home institution and the host institution or organisation.

Whenever an institution sends out a staff member in an exchange programme, consider how the institution (or the outgoing staff, his/her colleagues) will benefit:

- Can the training be part of a larger continuing professional development of the mobile staff?
- Can the training be connected to specific needs in the institution's development or to particular future challenges?
- Will the training lead to other activities, such as (common) pilot projects?
- Can the training lead to re-considering certain aspects of the professional formation and start a discussion on re-defining learning outcomes in the formal education process?
- What are the financial arrangements?

Answering such questions might influence the character and length of approved staff trainings. As in the case of teaching mobility, staff going for a training period abroad will be in favour of short visits as well, as they accommodate regular professional commitments and other engagements best.

It is important to realise that the organisation of professional training periods demands additional preparation by the host institution to reach satisfying results. Therefore a concrete application with clearly defined aims and described planned activities will be considered as being helpful by the receiving institution or professional music organisation, and create an atmosphere that allows for unlimited exchange of information and open discussion.

4.4 INTERNAL SELECTION AND PLACEMENT PROCEDURES FOR INCOMING EXCHANGE STUDENTS

It is essential to develop a transparent procedure, which will ensure that whenever an *application* package arrives from the partner institution abroad, the institution will be able to notify the partner institution in a relatively short time whether or not the student can be accepted. Relevant issues are:

- Does the student show sufficient technical and musical ability to be admitted to your institution? Even when a strong mutual trust has been developed between the partners, institutions are advised to ask for audio or video recordings of the potential exchange students; live auditions should be asked only in exceptional cases or if asked for by applicant. Decisions must be made about who will assess these recordings: will an individual teacher or a selection committee do this? Ideally, institutions are advised to involve both individual teachers and the responsible academic and management staff in decisions about student placements.
- If the student asks in the application form for a specific teacher, will this teacher have space in his/her studio and be willing to accept the student? If not, an alternative should be offered and the applying student should be notified about this as soon as possible, and certainly before arrival.
- How are internal placement procedures organized? As a result of the individual character of music training, problems often occur with student exchanges because of the numbers of students in a

certain class or studio. This is especially relevant in institutions that pay teachers for the actual number of students in their class. If this is the case in your institution, determine beforehand how to deal with this situation. Some institutions have a special budget for paying teachers extra for the study period of an exchange student. Other institutions might favour one-to-one exchange: one student goes out; another one from the same class comes in. This does not necessarily have to be at the same time or even in the same class. Much will depend on the capabilities of the institutions involved. One-to-one exchanges, however, are often difficult to realise, but when both collaborating institutions make a special effort could also work out well. In some institutions, when teachers are given a fixed sum independent of the number of students they teach, teachers might not mind taking on an extra student for a period of time. Negotiations between the teacher and the institution resolve these questions. It is vital to decide how to deal with the placement of the exchange student in your institution. In any case, institutions should be aware that the ERASMUS programme does not allow institutions to charge any tuition fees to incoming exchange students.

- Can the institution fulfil the needs of the student in terms of specific courses the student asks for in the application and/or in the Learning Agreement? For example: if a student asks specifically for chamber music or ensemble work, will the institution be able to organize this? If not, the student should be notified about this as soon as possible.
- Does the student possess sufficient language skills to be able to follow the courses he/she is asking for? Are there any classes in the local language as a second language, and, if not, could a short intensive language course be offered to the student? Organise language support for incoming exchange students and contact your National Agency about the European Intensive Language Courses (EILC) where applicable.
- Can the institution fulfil the necessary requirements regarding the recognition of the study period? Will a Transcript of Records²⁶ be made in time at the end of the exchange period? Will credit points be used and, if so, are the numbers of credits required by the student comparable to the numbers of credits in the study plan you can offer, and in case of differences, who will be answering questions related to this issue and take a commitment? Will a confirmation of the actual study period be issued at the end of the exchange period?
- Is the time period in which the student would like to come appropriate? Avoid holidays or examination periods, leaving the exchange student with very little to do. Ensure that your academic calendar is known at your partner institutions.
- How are internal procedures for practical matters organized? Who will be responsible for housing? Who will deal with applications with regard to student life? Think also of all the services

²⁶ For further information on the transcript of records, see chapter 5.

regular students receive and find out if and how all these could be offered to exchange students as well (e.g., library, sports facilities, student cards, computer accounts, practise rooms, recording studios). Make a list of items including the names of officials responsible for these items, so that whenever an exchange student arrives, the relevant people are informed and practicalities are prepared. Once you have made an inventory of all the steps to be made internally and a list of responsible persons, it helps to make a diagram that lays out the various steps to be taken (a) once an application form is received and (b) when students arrive.

- Who will be responsible for informing the partner institution about the outcome of his application? Should this notification be sent to the student directly with a copy to the ERASMUS coordinator in the partner institution or to the coordinator only? Will this answer be binding to all involved parties inside your institution? Who should be contacted before sending out an official letter of acceptance or refusal?
- How is the exchange student going to be registered? What will be his/her *internal admission status*? It is critical to develop an internal mechanism to ensure that foreign exchange students, once they have been selected, will be fully registered and eligible for the benefits of full registration. In some cases, exchange students are officially registered as regular students, even when they come for a short period of time. In some cases, some kind of 'special' status is developed. In other cases, the students will only be registered in the home institution. Approaches might differ from institution to institution, but it is important that, the exchange students, regardless of their status, receive the same benefits as much as possible that regular students have and that they are given access to all services of the institution.

It might be necessary for the ERASMUS coordinator to consult with his/her colleague abroad about these issues several times. Remember that the more issues regarding the student study periods are clarified beforehand, the greater the chance of success will be.

4.5 INTERNAL SELECTION OF INCOMING TEACHING EXCHANGES

It is essential to develop a transparent procedure, which will ensure that whenever an *suggestion for a short teaching assignment* arrives from the partner institution abroad, the institution will be able to inform the partner institution in a relatively short time if the teaching assignment can take place or not. Relevant issues are:

- Is the teacher being proposed to give an ERASMUS master class or other teaching activities on exchange known to any of the faculty working in your institution? What is his/her reputation? What makes him/her becoming so particular?
- Does the content of the offered course meet your expectations? Is it of interest and what is its added value (even if fitting into the concerned curriculum)?

- Is the time period in which the exchange teacher would like to come appropriate? Avoid holidays, as this would contradict one of the EU rules for the TA that requires integration of exchange teaching activities into the regular study course. Examination periods can be interesting because they offer an extra insight for the incoming teacher in the teaching/learning environment of the receiving institution and on the qualification level. Ensure that your academic calendar is known at your partner institutions.
- Is there any aspect of sustainability? Is it appropriate to repeat the teaching experience with which aim? Are there any perspectives for a more intensive cooperation in future?
- Which language will be used? Is the audience able to follow the course if not hold in the usual working language? Who covers costs of a translator or interpreter?
- Who decides upon acceptance or refusal and who informs the host teacher about this decision?
- Who will be responsible for the overall organisation? Who coordinates dates and travelling, cares for housing, organises a social programme (if offered)? How are internal procedures for practical matters organized?
- Who will coordinate the teaching matters (including informing students and teaching colleague and – where appropriate – external audiences, preparing teaching rooms including needed equipment, organise feed-back)?
- Who will check whether all programme related issues are taken care of (invitation letter, confirmation about successful realization, teaching programme signed by all three parties)?
- Who is responsible for financial questions?

As in the case of incoming students, it might be necessary for the ERASMUS coordinator to consult with his/her colleague abroad about these issues several times.

4.6 INTERNAL SELECTION OF INCOMING STAFF WANTING TO REALIZE A TRAINING AT YOUR INSTITUTION

It is also essential to develop a transparent procedure, which will ensure that whenever an *application for a training period* arrives from the partner institution abroad, the institution will be able to notify the partner institution whether or not a training period for its staff can be organised. Relevant issues are:

- Is the topic the candidate wants to work on an issue that is of interest? Is it a relevant topic within your institution at all? Is it something you want to discuss externally, taking the current stage of realisation into account?

- Who could be the expert, guiding the host within your institution? Is this person available and ready to take over this extra task? Is there free space within the regular working time and willingness to dedicate it to a hosting colleague?
- Which will be the common working language?
- Will results of the training be made available to the host? What will be done with outcomes?
- Is the time period in which the staff would like to come appropriate? Avoid the beginning or the end of the academic year, because these are periods where regular staff has little time to dedicate to hosts. Carefully coordinate the best timing in direct contact with those colleague(s) who will mainly be at your assistance during your training period.

It might be necessary for the host institution to consult internally about some of the above-mentioned issues. Remember that if you express your wishes and expected outcomes regarding your training clearly, the chance of coming to satisfying results for all involved will be greater. At the moment, staff training is still quite unusual and probably does not need to become institutionalised internally, as it will be possible to clarify most issues on a case to case basis.

5 DEVELOP EXTERNAL PROCEDURES

In cooperation with the foreign partner, *external procedures* need to be developed to facilitate the exchange of students and teachers. When doing so, please keep in mind the following issues.

It is important to develop common standard forms, starting with a standard *application form* as already mentioned. Standard forms promote clarity and will keep bureaucracy to a minimum. Please note that the AEC has developed several model forms to facilitate student exchange, including a student application form²⁷.

Partners are also strongly advised to jointly use a learning agreement form that formalises all details regarding the actual content of the study programme the student will be following. It is strongly recommended to use the model AEC learning agreement form²⁸. A well-designed learning agreement form should not only list the courses, but also the amount of credit points, in order to facilitate the recognition of study period. The learning agreement should ideally be sent with the application form, being one of the fundamental formal components of a complete ERASMUS application. The (ECTS) course catalogue of the host institution should enable the applicant to choose subjects appropriate for his/her study abroad. In case of acceptance of an ERASMUS candidate, the receiving institution might wish to revise the list of subjects available for the exchange student in the learning agreement and send it back to the sending institution along with a letter of acceptance. The sending institution and the exchange student will then accept the offer or start negotiating on further course opportunities. Once an agreement is concluded, the Learning Agreement should be handed to the student, possibly before his/her departure. During the first weeks of the exchange study period any necessary changes can be made at the request of the student after approval by the sending institution²⁹. The final version of the learning agreement should reflect what is confirmed later in the transcript of records form given to the exchange student out at the end of his/her study period.

At completion of the study period abroad the student should be provided with a *confirmation of study period and transcript of records* in order to facilitate the recognition of the study results achieved during his/her exchange period. It is strongly recommended to use the model AEC transcript of records form³⁰. The transcript of records includes: information on the sending (home) institution and on the student's personal data, the receiving (host) institution, a list of the courses taken, the duration of the course unit, ECTS credits awarded and a course assessment (pass/fail).

It is strongly recommended to set *clear and compatible deadlines on both sides*, taking into consideration the time the internal procedures will take for the selection and admission of the student.

²⁷ This form can be downloaded at www.doremifasocrates.org/coordinators.

²⁸ This form can be downloaded at www.doremifasocrates.org/coordinators.

²⁹ Although this period differs from country to country, ERASMUS rules do ask to respect such deadlines.

³⁰ This form can be downloaded at www.doremifasocrates.org/coordinators.

Regularly exchange and update *information on selection requirements and procedures* making use of the DoReMiFaSOCRATES website of the AEC. On this website, there is an advanced restricted area available for international relations coordinators, where coordinators can post and manage information about exchanges (deadlines, ERASMUS codes, relevant documents, practical information, etc)³¹.

Frequently update your *information on courses, teachers, and other* relevant information. The ECTS course catalogue may (among others) serve as a tool to do this. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, this information can also be made available to other coordinators through the restricted area of the DoReMiFaSOCRATES website.

Develop *procedures about important practical issues* such as housing, insurances, visa or residency permit requirements and regularly update them.

Agree on recognition issues: will you be using credit transfer points (the recognition tool increasingly in use in exchanges) or will you achieve recognition of the study period through a comparison of course content, e.g. for exchanges with institutions not yet using ECTS? Will you recognise a placement period by converting the number of working hours to ECTS credits? Clearly state how many hours student shall work in order to earn one ECTS credit while developing skills and gaining work competencies described in your training agreement. Be aware that every placement needs to be recognised by the home sending institution. This is also the case with extra-curricular placements or placements that are seen as electives in the study programme; these placements should at least be mentioned in the Diploma Supplement (DS) issued to the student at the end of his degree studies.

Within the AEC, a *Code of good practice for European programme management in European conservatoires* has been developed to facilitate exchanges between institutions for professional music training. It has been specifically designed for use in the ERASMUS exchange programme of the EU and can be downloaded in the section for international relations coordinators of the DoReMiFaSOCRATES website of the AEC.

Following the regulations of the programme, higher education institutes participating in the ERASMUS Programme are obliged to report back to their ERASMUS National Agencies. Be aware that the European Commission may consequently authorize the ERASMUS National Agency to check the financial procedures and documents, and to undertake monitoring and audit visits to a certain number of institutions. You must therefore keep all original documents 5 years after the submission of your final ERASMUS report.

³¹ See www.doremifasocrates.org/coordinators.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

6 PUBLIC RELATIONS

Once most of the technical issues and procedures are in place, it is time to start to **advertise your ERASMUS exchange activities**. The success of the ERASMUS exchange programme will depend in part on how well you inform various constituencies about the possibilities offered. This can be done by:

Printing a **small brochure** with short relevant information on exchange opportunities. This brochure should ideally contain the following information:

- First points of contact;
- Types of exchange opportunities;
- Institutional eligibility;
- Reasons for considering exchanges (e.g. personal development, cultural awareness, new learning environments, assess future employment opportunities, improve languages etc.);
- Duration of studies;
- Overall costs;
- Information on arrangements related to recognition: ECTS, Learning Agreement, etc;
- Application processes;
- Current exchange partners;
- What is expected of the student following the exchange.

Disseminate the brochure several times a year and leave sufficient copies in strategic places (library, public spaces, etc.). Producing a poster with information helps as well.

Producing your institution's **Study Guide** or **ECTS Course Catalogue**. The distribution of this guide/catalogue among partners is necessary for the successful organisation of ERASMUS student mobility. The Study Guide and the ECTS Course Catalogue could be the same document, provided that the information required by the ECTS system is provided in your guide. The information required can be found in the general ECTS User's Guide of the European Commission³².

Posting information on the institution's **website** and in local and institutional networks. Remember also to insert information into the DoReMiFaSOCRATES on-line contact and information database for ERASMUS coordinators.

Talking to as many people as possible: heads of departments, students, teachers, administrative staff, etc. Be everywhere, present benefits and successes.

Liaising with colleagues from other national higher education institutes and those from supporting professional organisations (e.g. the DAAD, NUFFIC or the Austrian Exchange Service) in order to be present at **national and international education fairs**.

³² This document can be found at http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/ects/doc/guide_en.pdf.

Making sure that you have sufficient *information about your foreign partner institutions, and your partners having the same information about your institution*. This information should include general information brochures, course descriptions, ECTS course catalogue, lists of teachers and information about concert and project activities. Even in this age of Internet and beautiful websites, it is good to have materials at hand whenever a student or teacher comes for more information.

Offering access to reports of realized mobility and/or to résumés of successful completed projects.

Including written information about the ERASMUS exchange programme in the institution's *study guide, catalogue and information brochures*. Make sure you agree with your partner institution abroad about the exact content of this information. Be truthful: advertise what is possible, do not exaggerate possibilities.

Using every opportunity to contribute a short text about the ERASMUS exchange programme to *internal and external publications*.

Making use of the (possible) presence of a *public relations office* in your institution, which should be able to provide assistance. Try to be clear in all your public relations efforts that you are not intending to create additional work but to offer unique opportunities for students, teachers and administrative staff with long lasting and positive effects.

7 ASSIST INTERNAL APPLICANTS

To assist interested students and teachers wanting to participate in an exchange, you should:

Help students and teachers in your institution with the application procedure. Remind them of the deadlines and selection requirements. Help with filling in the various forms. Stay in touch with your colleagues abroad about specific questions and needs. Watch for problem areas: for example, students tend to be late with the production of sound recordings. If necessary, comment on the student's or teacher's prospective destination based on your knowledge of partner institutions, as you might be able to give advice on whether or not the institution is suitable for the needs and wishes of the student or teacher.

Take time to talk to students about their questions and wishes: a study abroad or placement period is a major undertaking for them and they will want to prepare it well. Expect many questions regarding the study or work programme, but also about practicalities such as housing, visa requirements, and how students will be welcomed and helped upon arrival. Talk about the benefits, challenges, and pitfalls of studying or working abroad, reminding the student that he/she could experience his/her 'study or placement abroad process' by going through various phases. These various phases can be described in chronological order of the mobility period as follows: application anxiety, honeymoon stage, cultural shock, initial adjustment, mental isolation, integration and autonomy, departure phase, re-entry phase, reintegration. For a list of frequently asked questions for students, please visit the student section of the DoReMiFaSOCRATES website³³. Advise your students to register at the PHILOX website, which connects European students searching for study, work, travel and other information³⁴.

Be sincere when confronted with fears concerning delays of study progress after the return from a study or placement abroad period. Recognition is a complex matter and it might cause delays in completing the studies, although this is to be avoided at all costs.

Be clear about the time-line for various internal and external selection and application procedures. Try to indicate when the student should expect a decision regarding the mobility period. Keep track of the application of the student you are sending during the selection process at the host institution.

Expect the same types of questions from teachers: How many students will I teach? What is the repertoire I am supposed to work with? Am I supposed to give a concert as well? Where will I stay? For a list of frequently asked questions for teachers, please visit the teacher section of the DoReMiFaSOCRATES website of the AEC³⁵.

³³ See www.doremifasocrates.org/students.

³⁴ See www.philox.eu.

³⁵ See www.doremifasocrates.org/teachers.

At this point in the process, it is usually wise to *establish a direct contact between teachers* to discuss forthcoming study periods of students or teaching visits. If the contact between teachers already exists, this will make consultations even easier.

Staff may ask you questions regarding the training institutions, training programme, reporting procedures, and practicalities such as travel and accommodation.

8 ASSIST EXTERNAL APPLICANTS

Assist interested students and teachers *wanting to come on an exchange* by considering the following points: help your colleague in the partner institution by giving information on your deadlines, your selection requirements, and your study programmes for individual students and your teaching activities for individual teachers. If needed, refer interested persons to the relevant person within your institution, but always inform your ERASMUS coordinator colleague that you have done so.

8.1 IF AN APPLICATION FROM AN INCOMING STUDENT ARRIVES:

- Check the application for its completeness, for example: has the application been approved by the responsible persons in the sending institution and is the learning agreement form included?
- Start the internal procedure for the selection and admission of the applicant. Contact teaching and administrative staff regarding the application and urge them to give an answer relatively soon.
- Keep track of the application of the incoming student during the selection process at your own institution.
- Once you have received an answer from the internal procedure for selection and admissions, including an offer of subjects confirmed on the learning agreement form and signed by the responsible authority(/ies) of your institution, immediately notify your partner institution of the result.
- If the procedure is taking more time than usual, inform the partner institution why and indicate when you expect to be able to give an answer. There is nothing so unsettling for a student as sending an application for an exchange and not hearing anything for a long period of time.
- If a student is accepted, write a letter of acceptance to the home institution (and copy it to the applicant) or send the letter of acceptance to the student (and copy it to the sending institution). This procedure may vary from institution to institution, but ensure in any case that the ERASMUS coordinator in the home institution is always informed about such decisions.
- If a student is accepted, send him/her a welcome package with general information.
- Exchange or, if necessary, negotiate with the partner institution the learning agreement with the participation of the student and his/her teacher, or ask the student to do so, assisted by his/her responsible authority.
- If applicable, give a deadline until when the applicant must definitively confirm whether he/she wants to accept the offered study place within the ERASMUS exchange.

- Start the internal procedure for the necessary formalities (enrolment/registration procedure) and make (preliminary) practical arrangements such as housing.

8.2 IF A PROPOSAL FOR AN INCOMING TEACHING VISIT ARRIVES:

- Collect details on the achievements of the teacher (e.g. curriculum vitae, recordings).
- Discuss with the responsible senior management the extent to which the proposal fits the need of the institution in terms of subject area and timing. Timing is crucial. Normally, short-term visits should not take place at the same time when other important projects are scheduled (unless the teacher visit is planned to be part of such projects) or during an examination period.
- Once the proposal is accepted, develop a clear division of responsibilities between you and whoever in your institution is responsible for projects and other similar activities. Think of the following items:
 - Planning the contents of the teaching visit and its connection to the existing study programme.
 - Coordinating teaching rooms and teaching hours.
 - Completing the Teaching Programme signed by home and host institution.
 - Advertising the teaching visit with the help of the public relations or event office (if available).
 - Planning a final concert or extra activities if required.
 - Arranging for accommodation and meals.
 - Organizing transportation and other logistic details such as airport transportation.
 - Informing guest teachers in time about all practical arrangements (accommodation, transfers, visiting address of the institution, etc), contact persons (including their availability) and her/his time schedule.
 - Discussing future cooperation projects.
 - Organizing meetings with senior management and with other teaching staff.
 - Keeping in contact if unexpected questions should arise during the visit.

- Providing guest teacher with all required confirmations beyond arrival.
- Meeting for an evaluation of the exchange activity.
- Confirming the Completion of Teaching Assignment by writing a confirmation document.

8.3 IF A PROPOSAL FOR AN INCOMING STAFF TRAINING VISIT ARRIVES:

- Collect details on the planned training period of the visiting staff member (e.g. main topics and expected outcomes, suggested time table, dates of the visit).
- Clarify within your institution who will be the expert/(s) assisting the incoming staff member and ask them about their readiness to do so.
- Ask the responsible senior management for their approval.
- Once the proposal is accepted, develop or delegate the development of a clear division of responsibilities between whoever in your institution is involved. Think of the following items:
 - Coordinating training activities, making contacts with the staff responsible at your institution.
 - Working out a time table for the training visit, including experts from inside the institution and venues.
 - Completing the Training Programme with signature of the responsible authority.
 - Helping with all practical arrangements.
 - Meeting for an evaluation of the training activity and discussion on the future cooperation plans.
 - Internal discussion of report written by the mobile staff.

9 THE EXCHANGES/VISITS ARE TAKING PLACE

All forms have been exchanged, placements arranged, and practicalities prepared: the student, teacher or member of staff arrives. Keep in mind that the success of the exchange will depend a great deal on the adequacy of advance preparation. However, even with perfect organisation, expect problems. This is not surprising: (often young) human beings are being placed in new and challenging situations. Always take into consideration that the quality of your services may considerably influence the success of the (study) period abroad. Some advice:

Be open-minded and flexible. The person dealing with ERASMUS exchanges will need to combine the knowledge and skills of an organizer, psychologist, counsellor, parent, trouble-shooter, and communicator. Keep in mind that for students this might be one of the most challenging experiences in their lives so far.

Be welcoming. Take time and resources to prepare an appropriate event in order to make students feel welcome. You could combine such an event with an activity already scheduled for regular foreign students (i.e. foreign students that are registered as regular students, not through an exchange programme). If you are planning such an activity, consider the following actions:

- Invite senior colleagues to greet newcomers;
- Offer a tour of the building and other facilities;
- Provide written documents on your institution;
- Encourage students to ask questions;
- Show professional understanding of the particular situation of the incomings;
- Try to establish a non-intrusive but personal relationship;
- Encourage exchange students to network.

Be reasonable about limits. Be aware that there is a maximum to what you can do. Students should learn to solve some of their problems on their own. Try to be available as much as possible in the first days/weeks to help students learn how to function in your environment, but also calculate your time (and money) resources before offering additional services.

Assist the exchange student in having his/her Learning Agreement updated and adapted to the actual study/learning situation (more information on this issue can be found in 10.1)

Be connected. Stay in close contact with your contact person abroad about the achievements of your students there and the foreign students in your institution. Always keep in mind the uniqueness of the internal culture of the institution seen from an outside perspective. If a serious problem occurs, contact the home institution immediately. Also keep an eye on the exchange students in your institution: if you never see him/her, it is either because he/she does not need your help or is totally lost. Like domestic students, some exchange students need additional attention, others less. Talk to the relevant teacher(s) and departments about the progress and achievements of the exchange students, taking the learning agreement as the basis.

Keep smiling!

EXIT, EVALUATION AND REPORTING PHASE

10 ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Assessment and evaluation will need to be done throughout the exchange programme on the following levels:

10.1 INDIVIDUAL INCOMING STUDENT

- Check periodically with the relevant teacher(s) or department to determine whether the student is fulfilling his/her study programme and if the number of credit points (if applicable) originally mentioned in the learning agreement is being earned. Try to discover and understand any deviations from the original learning agreement and think of ways to resolve these deviations early in the programme. At the end of the study period, fulfilment of credits must be verified and not much can be done if the student has not made sufficient progress.
- Inform yourself about assessment. Have the relevant individual teachers assessed the student only or has he/she performed for a jury/committee? In this context it is important to stress a basic principle: in a well-developed exchange programme, the assessment of the student's study period should normally be done in the host institution. This not only requires understanding of each other's assessment procedures and levels, which should have been discussed in the preparatory phase of the exchange programme, but also a certain amount of trust between the partner institutions that the assessment of the student has been competent and fair. Avoid, almost always, the situation in which students come back into the home institution and then take an examination in order to prove sufficient progress. This practice counters a basic principle of partnership and may put the student into the unpleasant situation of having to lose study time because of problems with recognition of his/her study abroad.
- Make sure you are fully informed about study and credit recognition requirements at the partner institution in order to assist leaving exchange students to get the necessary documents (confirmed period of study visit, transcript of records, etc.) from your institution before or in right time after his/her departure.
- Invite exchange students to evaluate their study stay and ask about merits and shortfalls before they return home.
- Answer incoming exchange students' inquiries about possibilities of continuing their studies at your institution with great care. Do not use exchanges as a recruitment mechanism. Always be open about this matter to your colleague in the partner institution, and work within guidelines and protocols accepted by both institutions involved.

- Find a direct and individual way to say goodbye to your incoming exchange students.
- Encourage incoming exchange students to stay in contact with your institution and with future exchange students in their home institution.

10.2 INDIVIDUAL OUTGOING STUDENT

- Check with your partner international relations coordinator to determine whether the student has fulfilled his/her study programme and if the number of credit points (if applicable) originally mentioned in the learning agreement will be or has been awarded. Clarify the reasons for any deviations from the original learning agreement.
- Check with a tutor at the company whether the student has completed his training/placement programme in terms of competencies acquired and number of working hours completed. Ask the necessary confirmation documents required for a further recognition of student placement as a part of his/her study programme. Students are obliged to evaluate his/her placement period by submitting the final student report.
- Do not forget to evaluate the progress of the placement on an on-going basis and be ready to take appropriate action in case of some failure of the training agreement.
- Inform yourself about assessment. Have only relevant individual teachers assessed the student or has he/she performed for a jury/committee? Here, the same principle applies as in the case of the assessment of an incoming exchange student.
- Make sure you fully inform your partner institution about your own recognition in order to assist exchange students to bring the necessary documents (e.g. confirmed period of study visit, transcript of records).
- Make sure that your institution has done the recognition and assessment of the study period or placement of your returning student correctly, and has converted the appropriate credits and grades into the national system (where applicable) or working hours into credits.
- Invite your exchange students returning to your institution to evaluate their experience; ask them about merits and shortfalls. Often students are asked to write a report. If applicable and helpful, exchange these reports or summaries with your colleague in the partner institution abroad and keep these reports on file for future reference.

10.3 INDIVIDUAL TEACHER EXCHANGES

- Invite incoming exchange teachers to evaluate their stay and ask about merits and shortfalls.
- Invite comments on the exchange teacher's visits from the relevant department, teachers, and students. You may even consider handing out evaluation forms, although the outcomes of these should be handled with great care. Exchange the information with your colleague in the host institution abroad, if appropriate.
- Invite your returning exchange teachers to evaluate their stay abroad and ask about merits and shortfalls. In some cases, teachers may be asked to write a short report, which could be helpful for evaluation. In some institutions, teachers are asked to complete a quality report of teaching assignments. Such reports can be helpful for your everyday work as an ERASMUS coordinator and give you valuable information on evaluated quality of TA organisation, academic and other aspects.

10.4 INDIVIDUAL STAFF VISIT

- Invite incoming mobile staff to evaluate their stay and ask about merits and shortfalls.
- Invite them to express also criticism about working approaches of your institution and to suggest means for improvement. You may even consider handing out evaluation forms, although the outcomes of these should be handled with great care. Exchange the information with your working colleagues,
- Invite your returning staff to evaluate their stay abroad and ask about merits and shortfalls. In some cases, staff may be asked to write a short report, which could be helpful for evaluation.

10.5 OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE ERASMUS EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

- Make sure that in the case of long lasting partnerships, you take time to evaluate the programme after a certain period (e.g. every three years). Be aware that a thorough evaluation is your best tool for increasing the quality of exchanges, both for the follow-up and for learning about partner institutions.
- Make use of exit interviews of incoming students, teachers and staff participating in the exchange programme.
- Make use of evaluation interviews and reports of outgoing students, teachers and staff participating in the exchange programme and keep a file of these reports.

- Pass on praise and criticism to the relevant individuals and groups. Be ready to consider changing approaches/procedures, if these approaches/procedures are frequently criticised.
- Encourage the creation of alumni networks and tutor systems, through which the contacts with partner institutions can also be continued.
- Try to benefit from synergy effects: for example, an exchange of teachers may have a positive effect on student exchanges or a lasting implication for curriculum development.
- Evaluate the functioning of the bilateral relations, reflect on an extension or suspension of these relations, and start a dialogue, when needed.

CODA

At first sight it may seem quite a challenge to go through these Ten Steps. However, professionals working in the field of international exchanges know that once the internal and external procedures and contacts are well established, contacts can become relatively easy and the process almost automatic. At the same time, there will always be (un)pleasant surprises, which is why working with international relations is both rewarding and challenging.

In addition to the 'Ten Steps', the following documents are available on the DoReMiFaSOCRATES website (www.doremifasocrates.org) with additional information:

- 'Frequently Asked Questions: Music Students Interested in an Exchange'
- 'Frequently Asked Questions: Music Teachers Interested in an Exchange'
- 'Code of Good Practice for European Programme Management in European Conservatoires'
- A model application form for student exchanges
- A model learning agreement form
- A model transcript of records form
- A model training agreement form
- A model bilateral/inter-institutional agreement form
- Various documents on the recognition of studies and qualifications
- An on-line database of realised music projects in the framework of Lifelong Learning Programme



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