



#europehome

Guidelines

Project #europehome

ERASMUS+, Key Action 2

Strategic Partnership

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Project #europehome – brief overview	4
3. Concept of a Local Hub	7
3.1 Key elements of the collaboration structure for HEIs	8
3.2 Implementation of the scheme at your institution	9
3.3 Participation in the cross-border collaboration scheme	11
4. Local Hub activities: examples	13
5. Case studies	14
5.1 University of Alcalá	14
5.2 Lodz University of Technology	16
6. Annexes	19

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial skills are high on the EU agenda and it is widely recognised that investing in entrepreneurship education is one of the highest return investments European education institutions can and should make. There is an increasing need to ensure that graduates are well-educated and are equipped with the right type of knowledge and skills including transversal skills, e-skills as well as solid understanding of their chosen field.

The youth unemployment rates are reaching new historic heights and are affecting close to 6 million young people, however, despite this, there are over two million unfilled vacancies in the EU. Education can facilitate reaching the right match of skills that are required in the labour market and EU policies have identified quality, efficiency and relevance of education and training as being among the strategic objectives (Education and Training 2020).

In order to maximise the contribution of Europe's higher education systems, cooperation among education, research and business representatives is essential, therefore close cooperation between the academic and business worlds need to be facilitated.

Project #europehome has experimented a way to increase the diversity of activities that would allow students and future graduates to both increase awareness of skill demand in the labour market and gain hands-on practical experience during the study years.

2. Project #europehome – brief overview

The project #europehome was inspired by the European University Foundation (EUF) scheme called Learning Employability Place (LEP). The LEP scheme allowed students to perform part-time placements while studying abroad since 2011 and has been supporting the idea of part-time placements abroad since 2005, before it was included in the Erasmus programme, thus enabling students to gain professional experience besides the traditional academic mobility.

The LEP scheme allowed identifying several challenges which were mostly related to the degree of cooperation within the university as well as between universities and labour market actors. For instance, if a student intended to find the host organisation (company, institution, association etc.), there were two major challenges - first, the student often faced challenges due to the language barrier at the host country and second, there were no guarantees when the host company will be found (at the beginning, middle or end of mobility), therefore it considerably shortened the time available to do a placement abroad.

It was clear that a more substantial planning and (academic) integration of the scheme was needed, which would not only increase the opportunities to gain both academic and professional experience for students, but would also provide preconditions for effective and high quality university - business cooperation.

The #europehome project idea was based on the LEP scheme and proposed several innovative elements:

- close university and business collaboration on the local level, as project partner universities created local networks (=local hubs) to ensure dynamic and meaningful cooperation with companies;

- an opportunity for students to carry out part-time placements at the partner companies, either locally or internationally (as part of a "tandem").

The project #europehome has designed and tested a model of a win-win cooperation model which involved three target actors (universities, companies and students). The overall goal of the project was to address the challenge of student employability and the need to increase the relevance of education and it was done by addressing the following aspects:

Employability and international mobility:

The success and increasing demand for the Erasmus+ placements (traineeships) illustrates students' willingness to gain practical, work-relevant experience as part of their higher education studies. Despite that, there were several obstacles observed that limited student opportunities to perform placements abroad and gain truly valuable experience. In order to maximize the impact of the mobility period on personal, professional and academic level, the project #europehome explored the possibility of offering part-time placements to mobile and local students.

The created placement scheme invited Erasmus+ students from the fields of Economics and Business as well as Engineering and Computing to perform placements during their exchange studies.

Employability and internationalisation at home:

Non-mobile (local) students were encouraged to participate in the part-time placement scheme at their home country together with one international student (part-time placements in tandems).

The principle of a tandem approach allowed the local students not only to use the opportunities of the infrastructure created and benefit from the experience of collaborating with international students, but also to increase cultural awareness and gain from the international aspect of such placements.

Relevance of education:

Representatives from the partner companies were invited to several local scale events in which they could meet the academics and the students and tell about the areas where lack of qualified employees or lack of specific skills has been identified. This has allowed establishing solid ground for closer collaboration between academia and the world of work, thus paving the way towards concrete actions for addressing the identified challenges.

Moreover, in order to increase awareness of entrepreneurial skills and provide resources for students, an E-module was developed consisting of a set of online courses with free public access, and focusing on entrepreneurship skills, innovation and employability aspects.

The proposed project scheme intended to create and ensure favourable circumstances for students to earn competences, which are needed and highly valued in the labour market, this way increasing the employability of prospective graduates. Additionally, there was an overarching goal to stimulate the development of entrepreneurial skills in various disciplines and promote innovation in higher education through more interactive learning environments and strengthened knowledge-transfer infrastructure. The project intended not only to have a direct impact on participants, but also to trigger changes on the long-term among universities and companies as well as to reach out a wider impact by addressing relevant stakeholders and policy-makers on the local, regional, national and European levels.

The project was implemented by 8 partner organisations from 7 EU countries with the support of EU funding (Erasmus+, Key Action 2).

Project partners: University of Alcalá (Spain), University of Aveiro (Portugal), University of Latvia (Latvia), Lodz University of Technology (Poland), Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece), European University Foundation (Luxembourg), Erasmus Student Network (Brussels) and Collective Intelligence Research Centre (Latvia).

3. Concept of a Local Hub

Local Hub is a local level structure where administrative staff, academic staff and companies strive to promote entrepreneurial education and practical acquisition of skills at the university, faculty or department level wherewith part-time placement scheme and active collaboration with companies are among the key central elements.

The goal of Local Hub activities is to foster meaningful university-business cooperation, which results in regular and focused activities. In longer term it is foreseen to encourage collecting constructive feedback from the labour market actors on current academic programmes as well as provide a wide range of entrepreneurial activities for students.

Local Hub can either be established in cooperation with already existing structures and practices, for instance, business incubators, local university-business cooperation schemes, university career centres, schemes where employers offer topics for final degrees (BAs, MAs) and complement to the activities according to the goals and vision of the institution, or it can be a brand new structure that is set up at the university in close cooperation with the #europehome team.

Local Hub activities seek to foster and establish meaningful, mutually beneficial and sustainable collaboration structure at the Higher Education Institutions, therefore local needs and management practices should be taken into account and respected in order to find an appropriate, relevant and sustainable solution for the respective university/faculty/department.

Local Hubs are structures that ensure links and smooth information flow among all stakeholders, first locally, then internationally by

- establishing contacts and collaboration with companies (locally) therefore contributing to the active involvement of employers in the academic life;
- ensuring information flow with academics, in particular regarding active usage of challenges and practical tasks during the regular academic courses;
- encouraging students to participate (to a degree most suitable) in local activities and in part-time placements either locally or during the mobility period.

Coordinator of the Local Hub in each institution

- acts as a mediator between local enterprises and students;
- initiates and organises local scale events such as meetings between companies and university staff and/or students, discussions, interactive seminars, trainings, knowledge exchange activities, small scale entrepreneurial projects ect. ;
- shares information with the academic staff within the institution.

3.1 Key elements of the collaboration structure for HEIs

There are 4 main types of activities that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can benefit from:

- Increased cooperation with companies to diversify the course offer/content, for instance, by inviting employers for guest lectures or by organising additional activities for students.

- Usage of problem - based tasks defined by companies as part of the study process (compulsory or optional). This allows students to address practical challenges and therefore acquire relevant professional skills.
- Usage of online modules that allow adding extra content and topics related to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial skills.
- Opportunity for students to join the cross-border placement scheme.

3.2 Implementation of the scheme at your institution

In order to implement the approach at its full scale, cooperation between academic and administrative staff is crucial. While smooth internal administration is essential for organising placements (local and cross-border), the involvement of the academic staff is instrumental when applying a variety of methods and ways how the academic study process can be enriched or diversified.

Suggested role of the administrative staff

- To establish contacts with companies and maintain cooperation active (in close cooperation with career centre, placement office at the university or any other relevant infrastructure);
- To establish and facilitate further contacts with universities that apply the scheme across the European universities;
- To share information with students and academic staff;
- To follow the success of placements and support students (if needed).

Academic staff members can benefit from the #europehome project results the following way:

- By actively using the online modules and including entrepreneurship aspects in the courses/workshops/seminars/lectures both as a compulsory or optional material;
- By organizing guest lectures and targeted cooperation with employers (from local and international contacts) in close cooperation with the colleagues;
- By using/ applying practical tools and task-based learning approach at the classes and/or lectures.

In order to increase the possibilities for students to gain professional experience during their study period, placements can be offered to students both as curricula and extra curricula activity.

2 suggested types of placement are as follows:

- Part-time placements (in parallel to studies) during the study semester
- Full-time placements during the summer months (study breaks)

Placements are offered both to the local students and international students (usually to the incoming students of the Erasmus+ programme).

In order to successfully facilitate the implementation of the placements, a four-step approach is suggested:

Step 1

- Collect and share information about the partner companies that have agreed to host local and international students
- Collect information about the mobility flows (incoming students)

Step 2

- Promote the part-time placement scheme to the students (local students and incoming exchange students)
- Collect profiles of students and share with the respective companies

Step 3

- Student selection (preferably done by the hosting company)
- Creation of a student tandem (if possible)

Step 4

- Administration of the placements
- Follow up activities

3.3 Participation in the cross-border collaboration scheme

If your institution is interested to participate, there are three simple steps:

- Contact europehome@uah.es and express your interest to collaborate
- Nominate a contact person (for placements scheme) and establish contacts with academic staff interested to collaborate within the institution
- Follow further information about the application and management procedure provided by the coordinators of the project (at the international level).

Each institution can select priorities and use elements that are most suitable. The scheme offers full flexibility and various combinations are possible – either



participating in the placement scheme, or using the online content and organizing local level activities or all 3 elements and therefore a full set of entrepreneurial activities proposed by #europehome.

The proposed framework is open for further suggestions and modifications in order to increase the added value of the scheme and ensure desired impact on a local and international scale.

4. Local Hub activities: examples

Several examples of events that took place in the framework of the project #europehome

- Presentations of big-size, mid-size and small-size companies and discussions with the represented companies (usually at the Faculties of Economics and Engineering taking place several times per year),
- Erasmus meetings: Information meetings at each Faculty for Erasmus+ outgoing students, where placement opportunities were presented to the students to encourage considering professional experience abroad in addition to academic studies.
- Academic Job Fair organized at the Lodz University of Technology jointly with the Career Office. 120 exhibitors and 3500 students were visiting the fair and all #europehome collaborating companies were present.
- Party "Chance of Success": An organized meeting with alumni who have achieved success in their work and shared their experience. About 500 students were present and had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss any outstanding questions.



5. Case studies

5.1 University of Alcalá

Organisation of placements for students in brief

Step 1

Appointment of the Local Hub Leader and his/her team (at various faculties).

Step 2

Creation of the list of companies that are able to offer internships to international and local students.

Step 3

Provision of information through the International Relations Office (IRO) to all partner universities about placement possibility in the fields of Economics and Business as well as Engineering and Computing for incoming Erasmus students. Placements can be done both during the Erasmus+ mobility period (throughout the semester) while studying, as well as after the final exams as a full-time traineeship.

Step 4

Nominated incoming and outgoing Erasmus+ students are communicated by the International Relations Office (IRO) to the Local Hub Leader, who then informs all the related students by email about the placement programme.

Step 5

Interested students present CV, current grades and motivation letter. This information is then delivered to the respective list of partner companies in the area (in Alcalá de Henares and/or Madrid).

Step 6

Companies decide which students they would like to accept and inform the Local Hub Leader, who then informs the students and they can start negotiations about further steps (for instance, starting date and any other practical matters). Selected exchange students are allowed to adapt and modify their Learning Agreement if necessary.

Step 7

When a company accepts an international student, the Local Hub Leader proposes to consider a second student in order to create a tandem with a local student.

Step 8

For every placement that is arranged, the Local Hub Leader informs the central Placement Office of the university, in order to sign the required Internship Agreement with the company and ensure proper administration of the placement (according to the internal rules).

Step 9

If the company is able to provide a salary to the international student (optional), then the student is informed about the extra official documents that he/she must obtain and the detailed procedure how to obtain them (according to the national legislation and rules).

Step 10

The final evaluation and recognition of the internship for the international students can be done by the host university or by the home university, or not done at all if the student does not need it. Each student receives a project certificate confirming the period of placement and tasks carried out.

5.2 Lodz University of Technology

Organisation of student training at Lodz University of Technology

The practical training of students at the Lodz University of Technology is a compulsory part of curricula both at the bachelor and master study levels. Normally four or six-month long trainings take place during the summer break period and students are not remunerated for their work though recently, due to the shortage of skilled workforces at the labour market in Poland, companies do sign individual work contracts with students. At each Faculty there is a person appointed by the Dean who is responsible for the verification of the documentation certifying the training period and crediting students with ECTS points for the training.

Companies send their letters of intent and training offers either to the dedicated organisational unit of the Rectorate, called "Career Office", or directly to the Deans of particular faculties for posts requiring specific professional skills. Recently, in order to render possible for students combining their studies with part time trainings throughout the entire academic year, several companies constructed or rented offices in nearby business parks. Some companies sponsored even laboratory equipment so that students could learn specific skills required by local employers. Moreover, each year the University together with companies and various 'head hunting' agencies organize job fairs. The University itself in close cooperation with the local business representatives has also audited the contents of current curricula adjusting selected syllabuses according to company specifications. In this way, the skills of University graduates can match better the needs of local companies.

The University itself, in order to promote the internationalization of education and facilitate student international mobility, established the International Faculty of Engineering where the entire curricula are taught in English or even in French. These curricula encompass (at the sixth semester of studies) the international

mobility semester when all students are expected to take their Erasmus mobility. Furthermore, the curricula include the Project Based Learning subject during which students work in small groups learning how to solve complex engineering problems while working in an international team together with Erasmus exchange students. Some of these real life problems are suggested by local business representatives so that to prepare students for their future jobs. The company representatives also take part in the juries assessing these student projects. This solution is beneficial for students since they can meet their prospective employers already during their studies and learn about the expectations of local businesses.

The government also plays an important role in shaping the profile of university graduates. First of all, the Ministry for Science and Higher Education, as a body supervising over all Polish state owned and private universities, certifies all study programs in Poland and consequently they can influence the contents of the curricula. Local authorities, theoretically, could suggest some changes in the study programs, but finally all the modifications have to be agreed by the Ministry.

Moreover, knowing the future needs of national labour market the Ministry can either increase official student limits, and at the same the amount of money assigned to the universities through the so-called didactic subvention, or even commission entire study programs to provide graduates having specific skills required on the market. Such a case was the creation of new study programs in civil and environmental engineering, where all students have additional governmental grants. The introduction of these new study programs was related to the extensive construction works aimed at the development of infrastructure undertaken in the frames of the coherence fund after the accession of Poland to the EU.

Local governments try to attract companies by creating business parks where they can invest on preferential terms. Together with employers and state



employment agencies as well as the HEIs they form local chambers of commerce, where effective local business plans can be developed.

The University itself can also respond to the current needs of local labour market. The faculty of Mechanical Engineering, for instance, has created new study programs related to aeronautics as well as turbine and jet engines knowing that the government plans to open new aircraft maintenance and repair plants in Lodz. Also the Faculty of Electrical, Electronic, Computer and Control Engineering, recognizing the serious lack of IT specialists, has increased their admission limits even without the consent of the Ministry.

6. Annexes

Several samples of documentation for placement-management are available below.

[Task proposal template for companies:](#)

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Part-time placements

Task proposed by (*insert company*)

Full title of the company:

Address:

Contact person:

Contact information (email, phone):

Tasks proposal

Task description in brief	
The background and problem	
The solution needed	
Deadline by when the idea/ proposals can be submitted (if any)	
Other comments (if any)	

Part-time placement reporting template (suggestion)

#europehome
Part-time placements
(Mid or Final) Report/Achievement log

Name/Surname of the student:	
Phone number	
Email	
Country of origin	
Area of studies	
Exchange student (yes/no)	
Name/surname of the tandem partner	
Name of the enterprise or institution:	
Address	
Location (country)	
Name/Surname of the supervisor:	
Phone number	
Email	
Position and department	

Period of internship: From date:		to date:	
Timetable (if relevant): From hour:		to hour:	
Hours per week:			
Any other comments:			

The achievement log should be updated regularly (monthly) and should provide an overview of the main tasks accomplished and developments over the part-time placement period.

This description will allow allocating ECTS points for the placement you have done and will be basis for recognising the experience at your home university (if applicable).

The achievement log is a full responsibility of the student and should be provided to the coordinator at the home institution according to the internal deadlines set. (contact details provided)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS

The part-time placements are performed in frame of the #europehome project and are complementary activities in addition to the academic studies.

#europehome team undertakes the responsibility of providing an opportunity to do the part-time placement and student is responsible for providing reports and feedback questionnaires as requested by the local coordinators.

By completing the reports and providing them to the local coordinator, the successful participation in the placement can be recognised by the home university according to the internal procedures and student can be awarded ECTS points (if applicable).

If possible, the student does the part-time placement in tandem with a local or international student and engages in tasks suggested and defined by the supervisor.

The weekly working hours should not exceed 20 hours (4 hours/day) and by no means should negatively influence the academic studies.

The part-time placement should take place between X to XX months.

Any incident or development that may occur during the part-time placement should be communicated to the coordinator at the home university, or the project coordinator via e-mail europehome@uah.es

At the beginning of the part-time placement, the student should sign an agreement with the host company provided by the coordinator and will send a copy of the agreement to the local coordinator. The agreement will be binding for the placement period.

General information about the part-time placement

Area of the host company and a brief description of the focus of the company.

Please, list the tasks and activities you are expected to perform.

Analysis of the placement

Make a chronological account of tasks performed during the period in practice. Indicate what were the working tools and means used (computer programmes, specific tools etc.) and in each case, provide a critical reflection on what you have learnt and what skills developed.

Time frame (monthly updates)	Activities accomplished	Comments/reflections
October		
November		
December		

The main skills employers are seeking when hiring graduates are listed below – please mention what skills you have improved and give examples how it happened.

Competences developed	Examples
Team-work	1. 2. 3.
Communication	1. 2. 3.
Decision making	1. 2. 3.
Leadership skills	1. 2. 3.
Language skills	1. 2. 3.
Technical competences	1. 2. 3.
Other (please specify)	

Which of the subjects you have studied at the university were the most useful and relevant and why? Please describe.



What other knowledge or subjects would have been useful, but are currently not in your study programme/curricula? What skills were you lacking? Please describe.

Indicate the degree of relevance of this part-time placement
- professionally
- personally.

Agreement sample

#europehome

Part-time placements

Agreement

Period of internship: From date:		to date:	
Hours per week:			

- A) The part-time placements are performed in frame of the #europehome project and are complementary activities in addition to the academic studies.
- B) If possible, the student does the part-time placement in tandem with a local or international student and engages in tasks suggested and defined by the supervisor.
- C) The weekly working hours should not exceed 20 hours (4 hours/day) and by no means should negatively influence the academic studies.
- D) The student, university representative and the company shall agree on concrete tasks to be done and developed during the part-time placement
- E) Any incident or development that may occur during the part-time placement should be communicated to the coordinator at the home university, or the project coordinator via e-mail europehome@uah.es
- F) At the beginning of the part-time placement, the student will sign an agreement with the host company provided by the coordinator and will send a copy of the agreement to the local coordinator. The agreement will be binding for the placement period.
- G) By completing the reports and providing them to the local coordinator, the successful participation in the placement can be recognised by the home university according to the internal procedures and student can be awarded a number of ECTS points according with the total number of hours worked.

The agreement is concluded between:

Student

Name/surname

Address

representative

Signature and date

University

Full name and abbreviation

Address

Name/Surname of the representative

Signature and date

Company

Full name and abbreviation

Address

Name/surname of the

Signature and date

Annex 1

A brief description of the task to be done/developed during the part-time placement period and expected outcomes.

Sample of the evaluation questionnaire

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Part time placements

Name of the student:	
Name of the enterprise or institution:	
Name of the person who has done the evaluation:	
Function of this person in the enterprise:	

Period of internship: From date:		to date:	
Daily timetable (if relevant): From hour:		to hour:	

Signature and stamp of evaluator

IMPORTANT:

This document must be signed, stamped and then scanned and sent by the evaluator in digital format to the University of XXX to the following email address: XXX.YYYYY@cc.



Please evaluate the student and his/her performance by giving score from 1-5, where 5 is the best and 1 is the least positive evaluation.

ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
ACCEPTANCE: the attitude of respect and understanding towards the people with whom the student has to work.					
FORCEFULNESS: the student's capacity to initiate tasks, overcoming resistance and achieving advantages without provoking hostility.					
ADAPTABILITY: the student's capacity to adjust to change and new situations.					
MENTAL AGILITY: the student's capacity to grasp and understand quickly facts and situations.					
PROBLEM ANALYSIS: the student's ability to divide a problem into its essential parts logically and systematically.					
ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY: the student's commitment to attending work and his/her punctuality when entering and leaving.					
MULTITASKING: the student's capacity to cope efficiently with several different issues simultaneously.					
QUALITY OF WORK: the absence of errors: the student's ability to adapt the task or outcome's requirements.					
QUANTITY OF WORK: the volume of the student's activity, his/her speed of execution and his/her ability to meet deadlines.					
COMMUNICATION: the student's ability to express his/her points of view clearly, concisely, logically and convincingly in both oral and written communications.					
KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORK: the student's mastery of the techniques, methods and procedures involved in the work.					
CONSISTENCY: the student's ability to make a sustained effort in order to achieve objectives.					
COOPERATION: the student's willingness to think and act, not for individual gain, but with the aim of facilitating the work of his/her colleagues or work teams.					
METICULOUSNESS: the student's ability to pay special attention to the small details and his/her interest in achieving a perfect result.					
ORGANISATION: the student's ability to organise things, thoughts and action. His/her ability to organise work practically and systematically.					
PLANNING: the student's ability to design systematic and practical work plans, establishing priorities with the objective of gaining maximum efficiency.					
RESISTANCE IN TERMS OF ROUTINE TASKS: the degree to which the student is able to adapt to such work and activities.					
RESPECT FOR THE RULES: the student's ability to accept cheerfully the established norms and procedures					



GLOBAL EVALUATION: Please, briefly describe the activities carried out during the part-time placement.

FURTHER COMMENTS:

Thank you for your collaboration

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Sample of certificate of attendance

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

Name of the host Enterprise:

.....

IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED THAT:

Mr./Ms

.....

from.....(full
name of the home institution)

has been a #europehome student doing a part-time placement at our organisation (full name of the organisation between dd, mm, yyyy and dd, mm, yyyy developing the following tasks:

-
-
-
-

Date:

Stamp and Signature:

Name of the signatory:

Position:

To be sent to: (email or postal address indicated)

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Please note, all files can be provided in a digital format upon request.

Contact: europehome@uah.es

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