

Erasmus+ TCA – Transnational Cooperation Activities Blended mobility for Higher Education

Brussels, 7-9 June 2023

EUROPEAN UNION



**Challenges,
opportunities and
concrete implementation**

Summary from the reporting of
the workshops



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Introduction

This document is the synthesis of the reporting session of the *Transnational Cooperation Activities*, organized by the *Agence francophone pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie* (AEF-Europe, BE01 NA), in Brussels in June 2023.

During this session, rapporteurs from 6 different workshops presented the results of their discussions over themes related to blended mobility and its implementation in Higher Education Institutions

Information was collected by a live sketchnoting, as well as regular notetaking.

This report will highlight challenges and needs identified by the participants for the 6 themes presented below:

- Blended mobility: administrative management
- Blended mobility: how to promote and collaborate internally, within your HEI, with all departments (teachers, management, international relations, communication...)
- Blended mobility: how to ensure innovative content and multidisciplinary approaches
- Virtual component of blended mobility: tools and pedagogical approaches
- Evaluation and recognition of blended mobility
- Blended mobility: how to ensure proper collaboration between HEIs in Europe, but also with other stakeholders (local authorities, enterprises, museums, ...)

Blended mobility: Administrative management

Difficulties

Guidelines

- Lack of clarity in the rules, e.g.: *guidelines, green traveling (not always possible)*
- BIPs: clear rules but strict rules

Workload

- Management of BIPs is a lot of work
- BIPs are proportionally more expensive and can have a high impact on the budget

Budget

- Funding is not always sufficient → HEIs have to choose which projects will be funded
- OS funding: how to use it? How to share it?
- How to use the supplements for fewer opportunities?
- Staff and students treated differently for the budget

Tools

- IT tools not functional

How to answer these challenges: ideas & good practices

Guidelines

- Create and evaluate guidelines to share with the partners
- Prepare the learning agreement beforehand so they can compare with the partners
- Create a list (database) of all the BIPs in Europe
- Use the same methods and documentation for short duration as for long duration (learning agreement, grant agreement...)
- Have a clear definition of inclusivity between partners
- Have a unique European definition for *fewer opportunities* and allocated funding for the top-up
- Decide on deadlines collectively

Workload

- On how to manage the workload: Launch a call for blended mobility ideas and expectations → only the BIPs who will be implemented are worked on

- Keep a list of all short duration programmes → management of budgets and logistics on this basis

OR

- International relations office applies for a number of BIPs → once they get approval, launch a call for projects and pick the best ones

Budget

- Use funding for
 - Catering
 - Supporting their own students
 - Sharing with the other partners
 - Hiring an expert
- Be flexible in the way funding is used, according to what is needed and what is wanted
- Explain clearly how the budget works to the teachers
- Discuss how to spend the budget transparently with the partners
- Evaluate the needs of the students
- Evaluate the needs according to the countries they are going to: e.g.: *17 euros is not a lot in Sweden*
- Have a separate allocated funding for BIPs to avoid competition with other mobilities

Blended mobility: how to promote and collaborate internally, within your HEI, with all departments

Difficulties

Guidelines

- Difficulty to find the right educational method (formal v.s. non formal)
- Lack of clear understanding

Workload

- Extra workload and lack of time, especially for teachers
- Recognition of teaching
- Lack of involvement from the management
- Too many administrative requirements

Budget

- Funding differences between students and staff members

Relational and communication

- Difficulty to find the right partners
- Motivation of the students (hard to pass information, personal problems)
- Management focuses too much on budget
- Too many emails and information

How to answer these challenges: ideas & good practices

Guidelines

- Training seminar and pedagogical training for the teachers
- Provide clear guidelines for teachers
- Share educational guidelines and approaches between partners
- Provide clear boundaries between the academic work and the international relations office work

Relational and communication

- Formal acknowledgement of teaching and administrative staff's workload, from the management
- Encourage teachers to participate to the BIPs
- Promote blended mobility from the beginning of the study program (1st year)
- Survey for students and teachers at the end of their blended mobility, for communication purposes as well as improvement
- Communicate clearly with the partners, e.g.: *budget allocation*
- Include blended mobility in the internationalization strategy
- Schedule regular meetings to keep internal staff and external partners up to date
- Inform teachers about the support they can get and how organizing BIPs can help advance their career, e.g.: *including it in their resume, networking...*
- Inform students of the opportunities of short duration blended mobility and BIPs
- Explain blended mobility and share guides instead of email spamming
- International relations office should offer appointment to inform interested students and teachers

Budget

- Policy pressure for more funding

Inclusion

- Allow students to go on a BIP during summer, if they finished both semester of their 3rd years of bachelor

Blended mobility: how to ensure innovative content and multidisciplinary approaches

Difficulties

Workload

- Lack of commitment from the faculties
- Need of motivation to work extra hours

Relational and communication

- Language barriers

How to answer these challenges: ideas & good practices

Guidelines

- Use teachers as project managers
- Use experts as consultants
- Link the themes of the blended mobility to societal problems → identify expert and stakeholders tied to that societal problem
- Themes must be inspiring → motivation
- Provide an agile curriculum within the institution, based on creativity, collaborative learning and feedback from the students
- Plan in advance and collaboratively
- Have clear learning outcomes and avoid grading as an evaluation method

Workload

- Find enthusiastic colleagues that will not count their hours

Tools

- Research innovative and different tools for teaching
- Challenge-based learning
- Interactive activities

Relational and communication

- Raise awareness and share information → improve faculty commitment and openness
- Allow students and teachers to improve their language skills, e.g.: *extra classes*

Virtual component of blended mobility: tools and pedagogical approaches

Difficulties

Guidelines

- Choice of when to plan the virtual component
- Differences in grading culture

Tools

- Need for virtual soft skills (Teams, Zoom...)
- Data protection: can't use software with data protection

How to answer these challenges: ideas & good practices

Guidelines

- Use the virtual component as an introduction

Tools

- Offer IT help
- Keep it simple: use programs (softwares) relatively known by everyone

Relational and communication

- Use icebreakers to get to know each other at the beginning of the virtual component
- Get people to work together during the virtual component

Evaluation and recognition of blended mobility

Difficulties

Guidelines

- ECTS (European Credit Transfer and accumulation System) need to be written a year in advance (between 3 and 5 ECTS)
- Some curricula's are very strict in what you can include, e.g.: *law*

- Need to evaluate students
- Need of quality enhancement for BIPs
- Need for a recognition of blended mobility

Inclusion

- Gap between grants given to regular students and those with special needs

How to answer these challenges: ideas & good practices

Guidelines

- Remain broad while writing the ECTS to keep flexibility and/or write different propositions
- Make Blended mobility extracurricular and not mandatory
- Evaluate students with an oral presentation, that can also serve as feedback to improve the blended mobility programme
- Evaluate the blended mobility programme as a whole instead of focusing on either physical or virtual component
- Recognition via virtual badge you can put on your LinkedIn profile

Inclusion

- On the gap mentioned above: adapt the travel grant

Blended mobility: how to ensure proper collaboration between HEIs in Europe, but also with other stakeholders (local authorities, enterprises, museums ...)

Difficulties

Guidelines

- Choosing how to share the tasks

Relational and communication

- Difficulty to choose the right partners
- Need for an agreement
- Involvement of local community

How to answer these challenges: ideas & good practices

Guidelines

- “Organizer organizes and senders send”
- Turn over each year for BIPs

- Agreement:
 - Can be written or oral
 - Plan it as a 3 years programme for BIPs
 - Possible to bring more than 3 partners together for BIPs: it can be interesting but it can also be complicated and costly

Relational and communication

- Picking partners:
 - Known and trusted partners → safety
 - Partners on the same fields or able to complete the subjects
 - Partners on the same level (universities, university colleges, schools of art,...) as you
- Need for a win-win situation
 - Local community: need a win-win situation for the locals and the school: e.g.: BIP's students *finding a solution for a local problem in an enterprise/municipality in exchange for a visit/input in a BIP*

