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Unlocking the full potential of BIPs: practical tips and recommendations

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Transnational Cooperation Activities
*Blended mobility for Higher Education:
Challenges, opportunities and concrete
implementation*

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Administrative management

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Difficulties

- **Lack of clarity** in the rules (guidelines, green traveling,..)
- Management of BIPs is **a lot of work**
- BIPs are **expensive** and can have a high impact on the budget of HEIs
- If funding not sufficient → HEIs have to choose which projects will be funded
- OS funding : how to use it ? How to split it between EU partners ?
- **Difference** between fewer opportunities grant and others
- **Big difference** between grants of staff and students
- IT tools not always functional

Tips and good practices

- Create a **database** of all the BIPs in Europe
- Use OS funding for: catering/supporting their own students/sharing with the other partners/hiring an expert
- **Adapt** the travel grant so it is offered to anyone (participants with *fewer opportunities* or not)
- Discuss how to spend the budget **transparently** with the partners
- Put **pressure** at EU level in order to have more budget for BIPs
- Have a separate allocated funding for BIPs to **avoid competition** with other mobilities
- Try to have at least 20 learners as rule is min. 15 in case of last minute cancellation

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How to promote and collaborate internally, within your HEI,
with all departments

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Difficulties

- **Lack of involvement** from the management
- **Lack of involvement** from some faculties
- **Lack of recognition** of teachers' work
- **Lack of communication** towards students



Tips and good practices

- HEIs could include blended mobility in their **internationalization strategy**
- Should be a **formal acknowledgement** of teaching and administrative staff's **workload** from the management
- Schedule **regular meetings** to keep internal staff and management up to date
- Be **flexible** regarding the integration of BIPs in curricula
- **Training seminars** and **pedagogical training** for the teachers on how to manage BIPs
- **Inform** teachers about support they can get and how organizing BIPs can help advance their career (resume, networking)
- **Inform** students of the opportunities of BIPs & promote BIPs from 1st year
- **Survey** for students & teachers at the end of the BIP (for communication & improvement)



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How to ensure innovative content and multidisciplinary approaches

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Difficulties

- **Lack of clarity** in the guidelines regarding the pedagogical approach
- **Extra workload** for teachers to organize BIPs (need to create more content)
- **Language barriers**



Tips and good practices

- **Link** the themes of the blended mobility to societal problems → identify expert and stakeholders tied to that societal problem
- Themes must be **inspiring** → motivation
- Have clear **learning outcomes**
- Promote **interactive activities**
- Allow students and teachers to **improve** their language skills (extra classes, tools,..)
- Research **innovative** and different tools for teaching

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Virtual component of blended mobility: tools and pedagogical approaches



Difficulties

- **When** to plan the virtual component ? Before or after the mobility?
- **No guidelines** regarding the virtual component (min. hours, evaluation method,...)
- Need for virtual **soft skills** (Teams, Zoom...)
- **Data protection**: can make the use of some softwares more complicated

Tips and good practices

- Use the virtual component as an **introduction** : to get to know each other before working together and discover societal problems
- Use the virtual component at the end to **summarize** the BIP & to create a delivery
- Offer **IT help**
- Keep it simple: use **softwares** relatively **known** by everyone



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Evaluation and recognition of blended mobility

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Difficulties

- Differences in **grading culture**
- ECTS need to be written **well in advance**
- Some **curricula** are very **strict** in what you can include
- How to **evaluate** a BIP? On which basis ? What kind of evaluation ?

Tips and good practices

- 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
- Evaluation can be based on a presentation of the **results of the team work**
- No written evaluation to **avoid** the use of **chat GPT**
- **Evaluate** the blended mobility programme as a **whole** instead of focusing on either physical or virtual component
- Recognition via **virtual badges/certificates** you can put on your LinkedIn profile for example



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



Difficulties

- Difficulty to find the **right partners**
- How to **share the tasks** between partners?
- What **type of agreement** between partners (bilateral or multilateral ?)



Tips and good practices

- **Communicate**: gather around common objectives and **agree** on common guidelines
- Elaborate a **common calendar** for the implementation of the BIP
- Have a **clear discussion** on how to share & use the budget
- Prepare the LAs together in order to have the **same approach** (a template already filled and sent to all the partners)
- Schedule **regular meetings** to keep European partners up to date
- Plan a **3 years agreement** : turn over each year for tasks between HEIs (who send, who organizes,..)
- **Picking partners** known or of the same fields is safe method but interesting to have complementary partners
- Possible to bring more than 3 partners together for BIPs
- Need of a **win-win situation** for HEI & partners (BIP's students finding a solution for a local problem in an enterprise/municipality in exchange for a visit/input in a BIP)
- Learn to **be flexible** regarding different approaches (« *Learn to love frustration* »)



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**Thanks for your
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