Erasmus Without Paper Onboarding guide

WHO IS THIS DOCUMENT FOR?

If you have recently been tasked with managing Erasmus+ student mobility in a higher education institution, then this onboarding guide is for you.

It helps newcomers understand the Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) network, used to exchange necessary data with partner institutions, and navigate the available resources that will help you get the most out of participating in the network.

WHAT IS THE ERASMUS WITHOUT PAPER NETWORK?

As an Erasmus+ student mobility coordinator, your tasks can entail applying for Erasmus+ funding, establishing inter-institutional agreements with partner institutions, selecting and nominating students to your partner institutions, allocating student grants, and ensuring learning agreements are approved for the ECTS credits earned abroad to be automatically recognised as part of the student's degree.

One of the policy priorities of the European Commission is building a Europe fit for the digital age, with a focus on digitalising and simplifying administration. Institutions with an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, a pre-requisite to have access to Erasmus+, are committed to this goal by undertaking the necessary steps to start using the Erasmus Without Paper network to manage Erasmus+ administrative tasks progressively. Erasmus Without Paper aims to connect all institutions digitally and simplify administration while fully adhering to the Erasmus+ programme rules, set by the Commission and monitored by the Erasmus+ National Agency in each participating country.

> **See how Erasmus Without paper is part of the European Student Card Initiative** ☑

SPEAK THE "EWP LANGUAGE"!

Application programming interface (API) – a technical solution that allows institutions to exchange data through the network (e.g. LA API enabling LA exchange)

Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) – accreditation by the European Commission enabling higher education institutions from the EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme to apply for Erasmus+ funding

European Student Card Initiative (ESCI) - an umbrella term for EWP, Erasmus+ App, and the European Student Card

European Student Identifier (ESI) - a unique technical identifier generated for mobile students to enable sending and receiving institutions to consistently link digital records in their systems to the right students throughout the Erasmus+ student mobility cycle

EWP Dashboard – a platform developed for small HEIs and HEIs that presently do not have an in-house or third-party software to connect to the EWP network. The platform is funded by the European Commission.

HEI – higher education institution

Inter-institutional agreement (IIA) - an agreement between two (or more) ECHE holder institutions setting the framework conditions for the mobilities (student and staff). Note that currently, you cannot create multilateral agreements via EWP

IRO - international relations office

Learning agreement (LA) – an agreement between the student, sending and receiving institution outlining the programme of study during the mobility period and its recognition as part of the student's degree at the sending institution.

Transcript of records (ToR) – a document issued by the receiving institution confirming the completion of educational components by a student during the mobility (according to the LA)

WHAT DOES EWP DO?

Currently, EWP is focused on supporting necessary data exchanges between sending and receiving institutions to manage student mobility for studies (between EU Member States and third countries associated to the Erasmus+ programme). which is one of the mobility activities funded by the Erasmus+ programme. Learn about the Erasmus+ mobility project cycle and discover how EWP can support your daily tasks!

Before you can start sending students on Erasmus+ mobilities, your institution needs to apply for an Erasmus+ mobility project to receive EU funding and report on its use. This is managed outside EWP in the EU digital platforms. The projects are managed in the Beneficiary Module which is an EU tool outside EWP. In case of any problems with the Beneficiary Module, please report it directly to your Erasmus+ National Agency.

ERASMUS+ PROJECT CYCLE

HEI applies for an Erasmus+ mobility project through the Erasmus+ application portal

National Agency allocates funds to the HEI and opens the project in the Beneficiary Module

Mobilities take place and Erasmus+ grants are allocated to students

HEI reports on progress in the Beneficiary Module until all activities are finalised

The project ends, and the HEI submits the final report in Beneficiary Module

STUDENT MOBILITY CYCLE

HEI sets and/or renews inter-institutional agreements with partner institutions

Internal application and selection within the portfolio of valid agreements

Selected students are nominated to the partner institutions

Students complete any necessary administrative steps regarding mobility at the receiving and sending institution (e.g. formal enrolment at the receiving institutions, confirmation of arrival, grant agreement)

Learning agreement approved by the student, sending and receiving institution, and updated as needed

End of the mobility: the receiving institution issues a transcript of records for the mobile students

Formal recognition of the ECTS credits earned abroad by the sending institution

Some processes for student mobilities are ready and widely used in EWP and some are being prepared for a full roll-out.

- processes ready for wide-scale usage
- processes not ready for wide-scale usage
- processes outside the scope of EWP

Want to learn more about how processes become ready for use? Go to the EWP Knowledge Base.

LA may come at earlier stages. It may require updates during the mobility period due to timetable conflicts, component changes, prolonged stay for another term etc.

MY INSTITUTION IN EWP

Digitalisation can be a challenging process, and institutions progress at their own pace. However, for the EWP network to reach its full potential, all HEIs need to be connected. This way, double work is avoided and the benefits of streamlined processes across the sector are felt.

It is important that you understand the state of readiness at your institution and have a roadmap towards exchanging data via the network. You can consider the proposed action points for the next steps in this guide to help your HEI smoothly exchange data via the network.

How do I know the state of readiness at my HEI?

You can check the status of your HEI in the EWP network by looking it up by its name or Erasmus code (as on the ECHE list) in the EWP Stats Portal. The portal shows the statistical data in EWP of all HEIs that are ECHE holders. You can also check if your partner HEI is connected to the network and which data they are ready to exchange. You can learn more about how to use the EWP Stats Portal via this guide.

Map the needs of your institution

Before you decide on what type of system to use to connect to the network, determine what your institution's needs are in the context of digitalisation. Consider the size of your institution, the type of Erasmus+ project management (centralised/decentralised/mixed), and the number of students going on mobility each academic year.

EWP Knowledge Base *might be helpful in this step.*

1

Review your internal processes

Digitalisation is an opportunity to review your internal administrative processes and optimise them by making use of the possibilities offered by digital processes (as illustrated in the user guides). Discuss this step internally with the leadership, and make sure you have the mandate to modify internal procedures if necessary.

Digitalisation can be a chance to simplify internal procedures and streamline the work of IRO.

2

Decide how to connect to EWP

Read about possible solutions for connecting to EWP. Discuss with the leadership and the IT department of your institution to assess different options, their costs, resources required for set-up and maintenance. Be aware that the EWP Dashboard is designed for smaller institutions and only provides basic functionality that may not be sufficient for large institutions. Become familiar with the ESI. Check if your institution is already issuing ESI and if not, discuss with your IT the readiness to issue it.

Check which system providers offer connections to EWP verified by the EWP technical team. In case of further questions, get in touch with users of the solution you are interested in via EWP User Groups.

3

Determine who is the key EWP contact

To function well in the network and to ensure information does not get lost, it is important that your institution has a key contact person for EWP. This person will need to have the authority to confirm how your institution is represented in the network. It is recommended to have a functional mailbox for EWP matters so that there is continuity in case the key person changes overtime.

Read more about the EWP Admin and who could take the role at your institution.

4

Start exchanging via EWP

Before you start exchanging data via EWP, read the Comprehensive user guides to understand how to handle to handle both standard and less common scenarios in the EWP network.

If your institution manages large numbers of mobilities with many staff involved, you may want to consider starting with a smaller pilot group. This will give you the chance to refine and optimise your approach before implementing it on a broader scale.

Check in the EWP Stats Portal if your partner is ready for data exchange and contact them directly to ask for support during pilot data exchange.
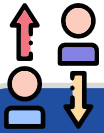
CONNECTED – NOT EXCHANGING DATA

Understand how your system works

Knowing your system's functionalities will help you design the digitalisation of your current administrative processes. Make sure that the staff involved in the mobility have access to the system. Consider conducting training sessions.

Instructions for the EWP Dashboard are available at the Knowledge Base. If you use a commercial or in-house solution, ask your provider for guidance.

1

2

Optimise your internal processes

Digitalisation is an opportunity to review the internal administrative processes and optimise them making use of the opportunities offered by new digital processes (as illustrated in the user guides). Discuss this step internally with the leadership and make sure you have the mandate to modify the internal procedures if necessary.

Digitalisation can be a chance to simplify internal procedures and streamline the work of IRO.

3

Start with the pilot group exchange

A good practice, especially for institutions with large numbers of mobilities, is to start the exchange with a smaller pilot group data exchange. Find a proper partner and test if the exchange goes smoothly.

Check in the EWP Stats Portal if your partner is ready for data exchange and contact them directly to ask for support during the pilot data exchange.

4

Flag and address any issues encountered

Starting with a smaller pilot group will allow you to adjust and fine-tune your approach in the context of your system. If you encounter any system errors, it is vital to report them to the IT support team of your system or the ESCI Service Desk.

The ESCI Service Desk can offer support if you encounter issues with using EWP. Learn more about these services in the section "Where to look for help?"

Start exchanging via EWP

If you successfully completed the pilot stage, start exchanging data for all your mobile students. Monitor the progress of your institution in the EWP Stats Portal. Once you feel proficient in the EWP data exchanges, you may consider sharing your experience with the community.

Help other IRO colleagues by sharing your experience in the EWP User Groups.

CONNECTED, EXCHANGING DATA - NOT ISSUING ESI

What is ESI and what are its benefits?

A digital identifier generated in the student information system of the sending HEI. It is designed to uniquely recognise mobile students across institutions and countries throughout their study period abroad. ESI is shared between the relevant higher education institutions as part of the data exchange via the EWP network.

It consistently links information to the right students. ESI is also used in the Erasmus+ App and for the European Student Card. The ESI is stable as long as the student remains enrolled in their home institution and the receiving institution should not issue another ESI for the incoming students. Read more on the ESCI portal.

How to start issuing ESI?

Implementing the ESI is a technical task. It is generated and maintained by the IT department in the student's home institution.

Information for IT colleagues about ESI is available here.

Get inspired by these success stories!

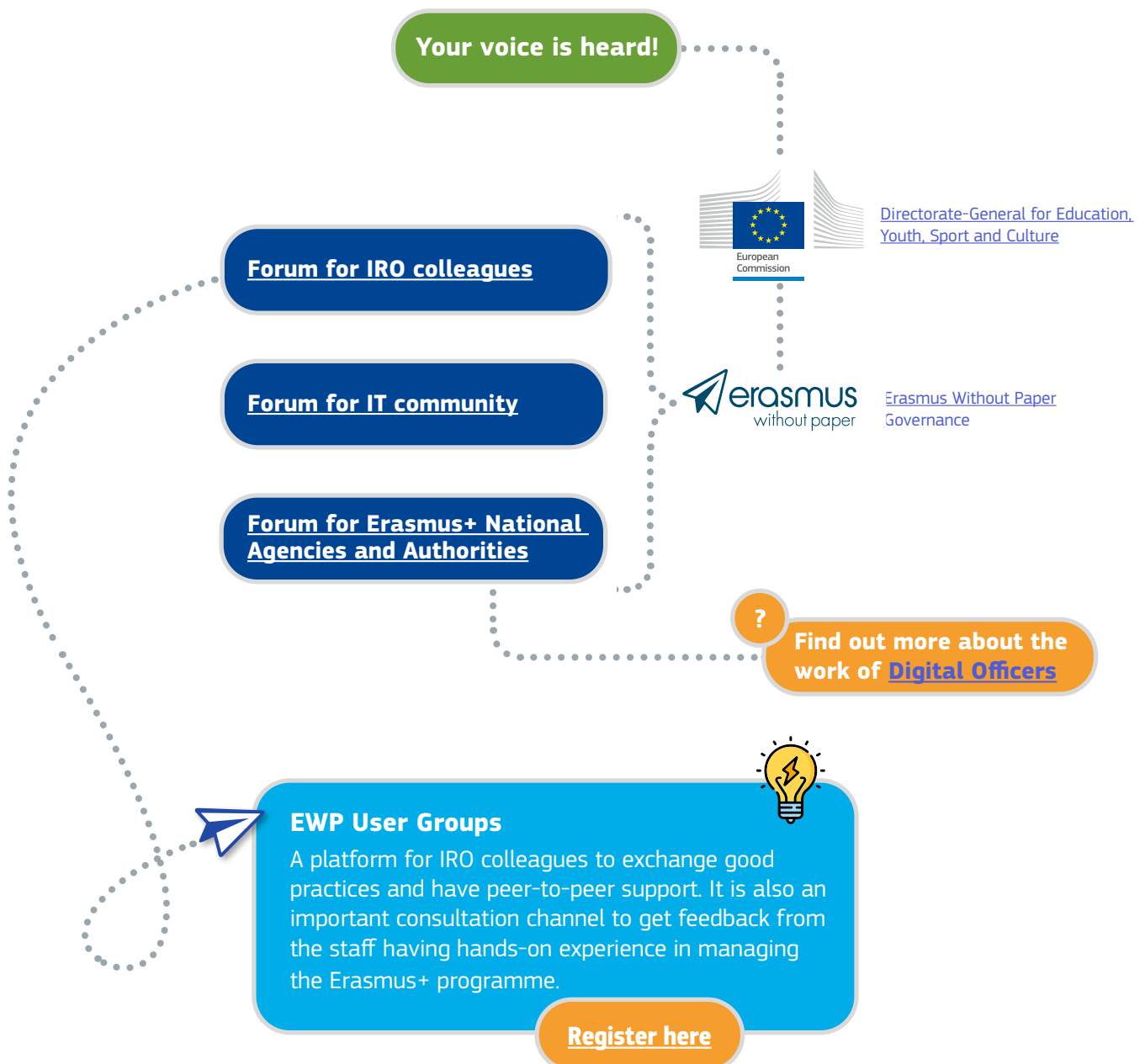Eötvös Loránd University

University of Split

Lund University

HOW ARE DECISIONS MADE IN EWP?

Digitalisation requires everyone to work together! Therefore, it is necessary to ensure all stakeholders are included in the process. The EWP Governance structure gathers feedback from the community from various perspectives: institutions using EWP, IT developers, and Erasmus+ National Agencies and Authorities. Get to know the EWP Governance structure and see how your voice is represented in the network!

Your voice is heard!

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

Forum for IRO colleagues

Forum for IT community

Erasmus Without Paper Governance

Forum for Erasmus+ National Agencies and Authorities

? Find out more about the work of **Digital Officers**

EWP User Groups

A platform for IRO colleagues to exchange good practices and have peer-to-peer support. It is also an important consultation channel to get feedback from the staff having hands-on experience in managing the Erasmus+ programme.

Register here

WHERE TO LOOK FOR A HELP?

ESCI Service Desk

The ESCI Service Desk is open to all users of EWP – students, IROs and IT staff, regardless of how their institution connects to EWP. In case you are facing any technical issue related to EWP or Erasmus+ App, please report it so the agents can investigate the problem. Reporting issues to the service desk will help to improve the network.

Student issues	**Non-student issues**	**Interoperability issues**
e.g., fixing student account/login issues	e.g., to suggest a new feature or system improvement	e.g., problems with sending and receiving data to/from your partner HEIs via EWP

In case you need additional support, e.g. assistance in general EWP implementation and change management for IROs and IT colleagues, contact EWP Relationship Managers via the service desk.

Technical documentation

If your institution has decided to connect to the EWP network with an in-house solution, the IT team should become familiar with the EWP Developers Guide. They will discover all the essential technical information about the network there.

STAY INFORMED

ESCI portal   ESCI newsletter   ESCI YouTube channel

GET INVOLVED

Join the EWP User Groups

GET INSPIRED

Participate in the EWP events   Get to know the EWP Champions