APPROVED
by Order of the Director of Vilnius College of Design
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PROCEDURE FOR THE SELECTION AND SUPPORT OF ERASMUS+ MOBILITY PARTICIPANTS WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Procedure for the Selection and Support of Erasmus+ Mobility Participants with Fewer Opportunities (hereinafter referred to as the *Procedure*) establishes the principles for the classification, selection, and provision of additional support for students and graduates of Vilnius College of Design (hereinafter referred to as *VCD*), as well as academic and administrative staff members (hereinafter collectively referred to as *staff*), participating in Erasmus+ mobility activities (for students and graduates: study mobility, traineeship mobility, graduate traineeships, short-term and blended mobility; for staff: teaching and training mobility), as participants with fewer opportunities. The Procedure also applies to incoming Erasmus+ mobility participants at VCD (students, graduates and staff) where additional support may be awarded to them under the Programme and National Agency rules.
2. This Procedure has been prepared in accordance with the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE), the current edition of the European Commission Erasmus+ Programme Guide, the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, the financial and contractual rules published by the Education Exchanges Support Foundation, the Erasmus+ National Agency in Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the *National Agency*), the Procedure for the Administration and Financial Management of Erasmus+ Higher Education Mobility Projects for Participants with Fewer Opportunities, the VCD Study Regulations, the Vilnius College of Design Regulations for the Organisation of Erasmus+ Study and Traineeship Mobility (hereinafter referred to as the *Erasmus+ Mobility Regulations*), the VCD Procedure for Incoming Erasmus+ Student Mobility (hereinafter referred to as the Incoming Students Procedure), and the Vilnius College of Design Regulations for the Participation of Academic and Administrative Staff in the Erasmus+ Programme (hereinafter referred to as the *Staff Mobility Regulations*).
3. A person with fewer opportunities is a person who, due to economic, social, cultural, geographical, or health-related reasons, disability, learning difficulties, or other circumstances, is unable to effectively benefit from the mobility opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ Programme on an equal basis with others.
4. Guided by the principles of non-discrimination, transparency, and inclusion, VCD ensures equal opportunities to participate in Erasmus+ mobility activities and, taking into account the individual needs of participants and the Programme's funding rules, provides information, financial support, and non-financial assistance.
5. The implementation of this Procedure, the provision of information, and the counselling of participants with fewer opportunities shall be the responsibility of the International Relations and Project Management Office (hereinafter referred to as the *IRPMO*) and the Institutional Erasmus Projects Coordinator (hereinafter referred to as the *Coordinator*).

II. GROUPS OF PARTICIPANTS WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES

6. A VCD student, graduate, academic staff member, or administrative staff member, as well as an incoming participant referred to in Clause 1, may be recognised as an Erasmus+ mobility participant with fewer opportunities if they face one or more of the following barriers:
   6.1 **Disability** – physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that may hinder full and effective participation in mobility activities on an equal basis with others.
   6.2 **Health Problems** – severe or chronic illnesses, medical conditions, or other circumstances related to physical or mental health that make participation in mobility activities more difficult.

6.3 **Educational Difficulties** – learning difficulties or other circumstances related to education and learning that limit opportunities to participate in mobility activities.

6.4 **Cultural Differences** – migrant or refugee background, belonging to a national or ethnic minority, or facing linguistic or cultural barriers.

6.5 **Social Barriers** – family or guardianship circumstances, single parents or guardians, orphan status, experience of institutional care, or other social circumstances that may limit participation in mobility activities.

6.6 **Economic Barriers** – low socio-economic status, low income, the need for social assistance, the necessity to work in order to support oneself during studies, long-term unemployment, or other significant financial circumstances.

6.7 **Discrimination-Related Barriers** – circumstances that may expose a person to discrimination and consequently result in fewer opportunities to participate in Programme activities.

6.8 **Geographical Barriers** – living in remote, rural, peripheral, or other areas where participation in mobility activities is made more difficult due to limited transport connections, infrastructure, or other geographical circumstances.

7. When assessing the individual circumstances of students and staff, consideration may also be given to:
   7.1 raising children or caring for other dependants;
   7.2 combining studies and employment where employment and financial circumstances limit opportunities to participate in mobility activities (primarily applicable to students);
   7.3 engaging in professional sports or other individual circumstances that significantly limit opportunities to participate in mobility activities;
   7.4 a field of study whose students may be underrepresented in mobility activities;
   7.5 the student's age, where the student is over 30 years old.
8. The list of circumstances set out in this Section is not exhaustive. A person may also be recognised as a participant with fewer opportunities due to other objective circumstances, provided that they significantly limit their opportunities to participate in Erasmus+ mobility activities and comply with the applicable Programme requirements.

III. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

9. A person’s eligibility as a participant with fewer opportunities shall be substantiated by supporting documents, taking into account the individual circumstances of the person concerned.
10. Eligibility may be demonstrated by:
    10.1 a document confirming disability (e.g., a disability certificate or a document issued by a competent authority);
    10.2 a valid medical extract or a medical certificate signed by a healthcare professional confirming the individual's health condition and specific needs;
    10.3 a document confirming social support, social benefits, or other socio-economic circumstances (e.g., a document confirming eligibility to receive social assistance);
    10.4 a document confirming the birth of a child, guardianship, custody, the death of a parent, or other family-related circumstances;
    10.5 a document confirming refugee status, beneficiary of asylum status, or another relevant status;
    10.6 a document confirming place of residence or geographical circumstances;
    10.7 a document confirming the combination of studies and employment (applicable to students);
    10.8 in the case of an incoming participant from a third country not associated to the Programme, a document issued by the sending institution confirming the person's socially disadvantaged or other relevant status in accordance with the national requirements of the sending country;
    10.9 any other official document supporting circumstances that result in fewer opportunities to participate in mobility activities.
11. Where specific circumstances cannot be substantiated by an official document but objectively limit a person's ability to participate in a mobility activity, VCD may request a reasoned written explanation and any other available information necessary to assess the individual's situation.

12. Only such information and documentation as is necessary to determine a person's eligibility and assess the need for additional support shall be requested.
13. Information relating to a person's health condition, disability, social, economic, or other individual circumstances shall be processed confidentially in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the VCD regulations governing the processing of personal data and shall be used only to the extent necessary for the implementation of this Procedure and compliance with Erasmus+ Programme requirements. Documents supporting eligibility and costs shall be kept in the IRPMO project records for the period set out in the grant agreement with the National Agency and made available during checks carried out by the National Agency.

IV. SELECTION PROCEDURE AND AWARD OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

14. Students meeting the eligibility requirements of the call for applications shall participate in the general Erasmus+ mobility selection process conducted in accordance with the **Vilnius College of Design Regulations for the Organisation of Erasmus+ Study and Traineeship Mobility**. Staff selection shall be carried out in accordance with the **Vilnius College of Design Regulations for the Participation of Academic and Administrative Staff in the Erasmus+ Programme**. Applications submitted by participants with fewer opportunities shall be assessed according to the same selection criteria. Belonging to the group of participants with fewer opportunities shall not constitute an obstacle to participation in the selection process. In the case of applications of equal quality, priority may be given to participants with fewer opportunities (see Clause 21).
15. A student, graduate, or staff member wishing to be recognised as an Erasmus+ mobility participant with fewer opportunities and/or to receive additional support applicable to their situation shall inform the IRPMO and submit documents supporting their circumstances. Where necessary, the IRPMO shall provide an individual consultation regarding available support opportunities.
16. Documents shall be submitted:
    16.1 for additional individual support based on a fixed amount, no later than one month before the start of the mobility period;
    16.2 for inclusion support based on actual costs incurred, no later than five weeks before the start of the mobility period (see Clause 27);
    16.3 at a later stage only where the need for support arises due to circumstances beyond the participant's control or where the Programme or the National Agency rules provide for a different deadline;
    16.4 the same deadlines shall apply to staff members and employees of foreign partner institutions invited by VCD.
17. The submitted documents and the applicant's compliance with the criteria established in this Procedure shall be assessed by the IRPMO, together with (where necessary, the Head of Department or the College psychological support specialist may be involved, subject to confidentiality requirements):
    17.1the Head of the Study Department, where a student's or graduate's application is being assessed;
    17.2a representative of the VCD administration, where an academic staff member's or other employee's application is being assessed.
18. In assessing an application, consideration shall be given to the documents submitted by the individual, their personal circumstances, the impact of those circumstances on their ability to participate in mobility activities, and the Programme requirements applicable to the specific project.
19. Where the information provided is insufficient to make a decision, the participant may be requested to submit additional information or supporting documents.
20. A decision on a person's recognition as a participant with fewer opportunities shall be taken jointly by the persons referred to in Clause 17 within five working days of receipt of all required documents and shall be documented together with the mobility selection and/or grant documentation. The participant shall be informed of the decision in writing (including electronically).
21. In the event of student and graduate applications of equal quality, the Selection Committee shall give priority to students who have not previously participated in the Erasmus+ Programme and to participants with fewer opportunities. Where staff applications are equally assessed, priority may be given to staff

members with fewer opportunities. Where all other circumstances are equal, preference shall be given to the participant whose individual circumstances create greater barriers to participation in mobility activities.

22. Selection results for students and graduates with fewer opportunities shall be announced under the same conditions as for other participants. Staff selection results shall be communicated by the IRPMO in accordance with the Staff Mobility Regulations. Information regarding a participant's status as a person with fewer opportunities shall be disclosed to Selection Committee members only to the extent necessary for decision-making.
23. Where the award of additional support under Erasmus+ Programme rules requires a decision by the National Agency, VCD shall assist the participant in preparing and submitting the required documents. The decision regarding such support shall be taken in accordance with the procedures established by the National Agency.
24. Recognition as a participant with fewer opportunities does not in itself entitle the participant to additional financial support; such support shall be awarded only where and to the extent provided for by the Erasmus+ Programme and National Agency rules.

V. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

25. Where permitted under the funding rules applicable to a specific Erasmus+ project, a mobility participant with fewer opportunities may receive:
    25.1 additional individual support (*top-up*) in the form of a fixed amount established under the Programme;
    25.2 additional inclusion support (*inclusion support*) based on actual and duly justified costs incurred where participation in a mobility activity gives rise to additional expenses due to disability, health conditions, or other individual needs;
    25.3 other financial and non-financial support for participants with fewer opportunities provided for under Erasmus+ Programme rules.
26. **Additional Individual Support Based on a Fixed Amount.** Students and graduates with fewer opportunities may be awarded EUR 250 per month in the case of long-term mobility; EUR 100 in the case of short-term mobility (5–14 days); and EUR 150 in the case of short-term mobility (15–30 days). The amounts shall be applied in accordance with the current provisions of the National Agency and the Erasmus+ Programme Guide. Additional support based on a fixed amount does not apply to staff; staff members may apply for inclusion support based on actual costs incurred (Clause 27).
27. **Inclusion Support Based on Actual Costs Incurred.** Persons with disabilities or health conditions (students, graduates, and staff) may apply for an additional grant based on actual costs incurred. The need for such support must be substantiated by medical documentation, and its award shall depend on the nature of the disability and/or health condition. The following documents shall be submitted to the **International Relations and Project Management Office** no later than five weeks before the start of the mobility period:
    27.1 a detailed budget for the additional grant;
    27.2 documents supporting the amount of funding requested (doctor's visits, medical rehabilitation services, travel and subsistence costs of an accompanying person, other services), indicating the cost of the services in the mobility destination country;
    27.3 documentation supporting the rental of accommodation adapted for persons with disabilities, indicating the cost in the mobility destination country (if applicable);
    27.4 a disability certificate (if applicable);
    27.5 a valid medical extract or medical certificate signed by a healthcare professional specifying the type of disability and/or illness, individual needs, the impact of the disability or illness on participation in mobility activities, and the frequency and type of measures or services required for successful studies (for students and graduates) or full participation in teaching or training mobility (for staff);
    27.6 a letter or e-mail from the receiving institution confirming that it has been informed about the individual's specific needs.
28. The IRPMO shall prepare the application and submit it to the National Agency by e-mail at **HEKA1papildomadotacija@smpf.lt** no later than one month before the participant's departure, in accordance with the procedure published on the National Agency website (**erasmus-plius.lt**). Applications

for additional support shall be assessed by the National Agency. A student or graduate shall submit a report and supporting documents for the costs incurred (invoices, receipts, rental agreements, payment orders, etc.) within 30 days after the end of the mobility period, while a staff member shall do so within the deadline specified in the grant agreement.

29. The amounts of additional support, eligible costs, and conditions for the award of support shall be determined in accordance with the current Erasmus+ Programme and National Agency funding rules applicable to the relevant project. Staff mobility implemented as an official business trip shall additionally be administered in accordance with the Staff Mobility Regulations and other applicable legal acts.
30. Where a participant may be eligible for several types of additional support, such support may be combined, provided that this is permitted under the Programme rules applicable to the relevant project and that the support is not intended to cover the same costs. A grant shall not be awarded where the mobility activity is funded under another European Union-funded programme.
31. Where necessary, participants with fewer opportunities shall additionally be provided with non-financial support:
    31.1 an individual study plan enabling assessments to be completed under adapted conditions (for students);
    31.2 a mentor to assist with study planning and integration;
    31.3 access to study materials in various formats and other reasonable accommodations;
    31.4 a preparatory visit, where provided for in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide;
    31.5 psychological support and the opportunity to use language preparation tools (including Erasmus+ Online Language Support (OLS));
    31.6 for academic and administrative staff members, assistance in arranging compensation for missed teaching activities or organising work responsibilities with the Head of Department or direct supervisor.
32. Participants shall be informed about national support measures administered by the State Studies Foundation and the Department for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, insofar as such measures are applicable during the mobility period.
33. Information regarding available types of additional support, support amounts, eligibility conditions, and application procedures shall be published on the VCD website in Lithuanian and English.

VI. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

34. A student, graduate, or staff member (hereinafter referred to as the *Applicant*) shall have the right to submit a reasoned complaint or appeal regarding:
    34.1 inclusion or non-inclusion in the group of participants with fewer opportunities;
    34.2 the selection results and procedures applicable to participants with fewer opportunities;
    34.3 the award, amount, or payment of additional support;
    34.4 any alleged inappropriate treatment or discrimination related to belonging to the group of participants with fewer opportunities.
35. A complaint or appeal shall be submitted in writing (including electronically) to the IRPMO or by e-mail to erasmus@vcd.lt. The submission shall include the Applicant's name, surname, contact details, the subject of the complaint or appeal, relevant circumstances, the requested remedy, and any available supporting evidence. Deadlines for submitting complaints are set out in the Erasmus+ Mobility Regulations (for students and graduates) and the Staff Mobility Regulations (for staff).
36. Appeals by staff members regarding selection results shall be submitted and examined in accordance with the Staff Mobility Regulations. Disagreement of students and graduates with selection results or procedures shall be handled as a complaint under Clauses 35 and 37.
37. Complaints shall first be addressed through an informal resolution process. The IRPMO shall contact the Applicant. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the complaint shall be examined in accordance with the procedure and time limits set out in the Erasmus+ Mobility Regulations (complaints by students and graduates) or the Staff Mobility Regulations (complaints by staff). The decision shall be communicated to the Applicant in writing, indicating the decision, the reasons for it, and the applicable appeal procedure.

38. Upon exhaustion of the internal procedures of VCD, the Applicant may submit a complaint to the **National Agency**, the **Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson**, the **Ombudsperson for Academic Ethics and Procedures**, or a court in accordance with the procedure established by applicable legislation.
39. Complaints and appeals shall be handled confidentially. No Applicant shall suffer adverse consequences as a result of submitting a complaint or appeal.

VII. FINAL PROVISIONS

40. VCD seeks to actively inform students, graduates, academic staff members, and other employees with fewer opportunities about Erasmus+ mobility opportunities, additional support, and individual assistance available to them. Information on these opportunities shall be provided during mobility calls for applications and information sessions.
41. Information regarding participation opportunities and additional support shall be provided by the IRPMO.
42. This Procedure shall be applied in conjunction with the **Vilnius College of Design Regulations for the Organisation of Erasmus+ Study and Traineeship Mobility**, the **Vilnius College of Design Regulations for the Participation of Academic and Administrative Staff in the Erasmus+ Programme**, the Incoming Students Procedure and the VCD Study Regulations. The provisions governing additional support for staff members with fewer opportunities set out in the Staff Mobility Regulations shall apply together with this Procedure, and the Staff Mobility Regulations may refer to the provisions of this Procedure.
43. In the event of amendments to Erasmus+ Programme requirements or the requirements of the **National Agency**, the applicable Programme requirements in force at the time shall prevail, and this Procedure shall be reviewed and, where necessary, updated accordingly.
44. Matters not regulated by this Procedure shall be resolved in accordance with the applicable Erasmus+ Programme documents, National Agency requirements, and the internal regulations of VCD.
45. This Procedure may be amended or supplemented by an order of the Director of VCD.