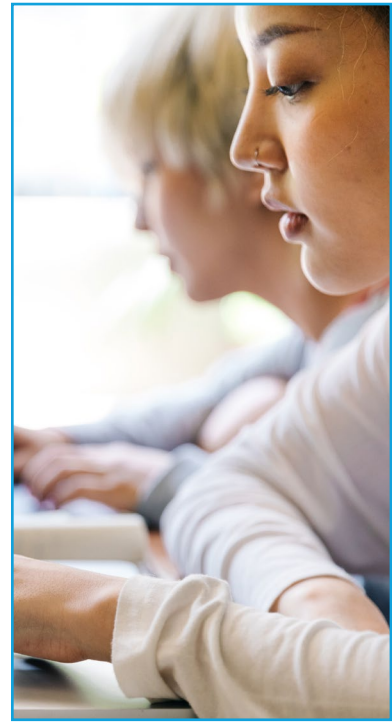


Online Learning Agreement Survey Report



2017-
2019



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June 2020

Executive Summary

This survey was carried out in the context of the Online Learning Agreement+ (OLA+) project 2017-1-LU01-KA203-023932 funded by the Luxembourg National Agency. Its purpose was to assess the fitness for purpose of the OLA platform and the new Erasmus Dashboard, which are the OLA+ key deliverables.

With regards to the OLA, 90.72% of the students would recommend its usage to other peers. What is mostly liked about the OLA is its ease of use, how fast it is completed, the minimisation of paperwork, the fact that involved people are notified automatically, and the accessibility of the tool (Q9). In the eyes of the students, areas of improvement are the guidelines for students to better understand the Learning Agreement procedure as such, as well as certain features of the digital infrastructure. They also note that the awareness of the tool among staff members is the key to success and under current conditions call for more options to send notifications to the coordinators and the ability for making more specific changes to the OLA throughout the document finalisation and updating process. They also highlight the reliability of the technological infrastructure (Q6, Q8).

With regards to the Dashboard, 76% of the International Relations Office (IRO) staff would recommend its usage: the discrepancy in the level of appreciation between the OLA/students and Dashboard/IROs is consistent with the fact the Erasmus Dashboard was launched only later and has only undergone one development cycle. What is most liked about

the Dashboard is that by reducing paperwork it's also environmentally friendly, the efficiency gains it allows, and the clarity and transparency it affords. In the eyes of the coordinators, areas for further improvement are the user-interface, adding as many mobility management steps to the tool as possible (single point of entry) and ensuring it can better handle higher volumes of students. Around 15% of users surveyed have adopted these tools officially in their institutions, with a further 28% actively testing them.

Overall, both students and IRO staff strongly support the digitalisation of the programme, whose perceived workload remains very high. Furthermore, the OLA has reached a positive level of maturity by the end of the current project, recording a higher than 90% satisfaction rate of students. The Dashboard has also been well received by IRO personnel, with more than 76% satisfaction rate. Taken together this suggests that the tools central to the ESCI roadmap are meeting fitness for purpose requirements, with the number of users highlighting positive traits of the systems vastly outnumbered those who reported issues or suggested changes. The need to provide clear guidance regarding the digitalisation of the Erasmus administrative procedures to HEIs and ensuring their preparedness are also highlighted by the respondents, and such aspects can be enhanced by further engaging National Agencies in the transition process to the new programme.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|--------------------------------------|
| ECHE | Erasmus Charter for Higher Education |
| ESCI | European Student Card Initiative |
| EUF | European University Foundation |
| EWP | Erasmus Without Paper |
| GDPR | General Data Protection Regulation |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| IIA | Inter-institutional Agreement |
| IRO | International Relations Office |
| LA | Learning Agreement |
| MyAID | MyAcademicID |
| NA | National Agency |
| OLA | Online Learning Agreement |

1 Introduction

In March 2019, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture announced a roadmap for the digitalisation of the Erasmus programme, foreseeing all the holders of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) to gradually adopt the Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) standards for exchanging data related to student mobility. This represents a turning point for a programme whose management procedures have remained largely unchanged and paper-based since its inception more than 30 years ago. The first milestone is set for 2021, when the management of both inter-institutional agreements (IIAs) and learning agreements (LAs) is to take place fully online among ECHE holders¹.

The digitalisation of the Erasmus programme is part of the larger European Student Card Initiative² (ESCI) spearheaded by the European Commission. The ESCI aims at enabling the seamless and secure exchange of electronic student information among higher education institutions (HEIs) and putting essential information at the fingertips of the students, ultimately allowing them 'to easily and safely identify and register themselves electronically at HEIs within Europe when moving abroad for studies, eliminating the need to complete onsite registration procedures and paperwork'.

The Online Learning Agreement (OLA) is one of the building blocks of the ESCI for the digitalisation of LAs. The platform was first launched in 2015 and has since supported the creation of almost 80,000 OLAs. Over the last years, it has been extensively tested and improved, thanks in large part to the user feedback received.

The OLA+ project has allowed not only for the further development of the OLA student interface but it added another critical component: the Erasmus Dashboard, which is a platform through which HEI staff can better manage the OLA processes.³ This platform is cloud-based and free of charge for all

ECHE users. Today more than 2000 ECHE holders have requested access to the Erasmus Dashboard. In order to take stock of its strengths and weaknesses and consider how it can be further advanced, in late 2019, the European University Foundation (EUF) and the OLA project consortium sent out two distinct questionnaires addressed to students and International Relations Office (IRO) staff to collect feedback on their user experience.

The aim of the surveys was to collect both qualitative and quantitative data on the positive aspects of the tools, bottlenecks, technical limitations, and issues that users have run into, as well as information that can help to improve the tools to ensure their optimal functioning and a good user-experience. The feedback gathered comes at the right time, as it can help inform discussions on how the digitalisation of Erasmus workflows can help increase the efficiency, transparency and quality of Erasmus exchanges in the upcoming Erasmus Programme framework (2021-2027).

As mentioned above, both the Erasmus Dashboard and the OLA platform are open, public infrastructure made freely available to all ECHE holders and constitute a reference implementation for the management of OLAs, in line with the official template approved by the European Commission. In some cases, the internal processes at HEIs differ from the official guidelines; in this sense the survey also illustrates these diverse practices, helping to pinpoint those processes that could hinder student mobility or recognition.

Digital change is also cultural change. The authors acknowledge that more research will be needed in the future to continue to capture how switching to fully digitalised processes impacts users and how to better support them. The actors behind the OLA project look forward to further exploring the potential of digitalisation to improve the quality of student mobility in Europe and beyond.

¹ On the 1st of June 2020, the European Commission announced adjustments to the roadmap in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and extended the IIA validity, therefore postponing the introduction of the digital IIA to 2022. The timeline for OLAs remains unchanged.

² For more information see https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-student-card-initiative_en.

³ Since March 2020, the Dashboard also enables access to an Inter-Institutional Agreement Manager that was developed under the aegis of the EWP 2.0 project; it is foreseen to add more functionalities over the next 1-2 years.

2 Results

2.1 Students

What do you like the most about the OLA Platform? 'Its existence' (Q9)

Disclaimer: Much of the content listed below comes from open-ended questions, which the authors have interpreted as objectively as possible.

Via email invitation, the EUF collected a total of 2,690 responses between October 11th 2019 and March 2nd 2020. The respondents were students who had used the OLA in 2017, 2018, or 2019. At the time of completing the survey, most students were enrolled in a HEI based in either Italy, Germany, Spain, the UK, the Netherlands, or France (Q29) (see Figure 1). Almost correspondingly, the host HEIs of said students were, to a large extent, based in Spain, France, Germany, Norway, and Italy (Q31) (see Figure 2).

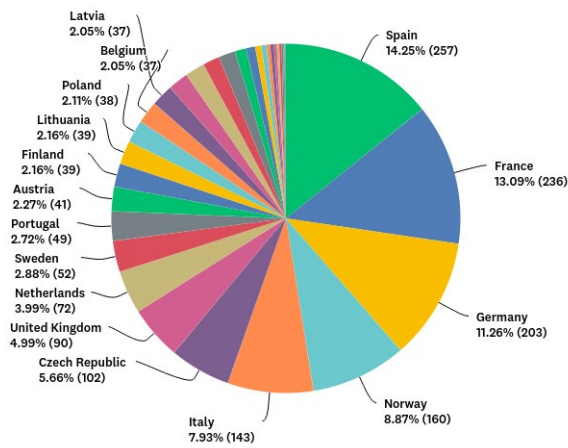


Figure 1: Country of students' home institution

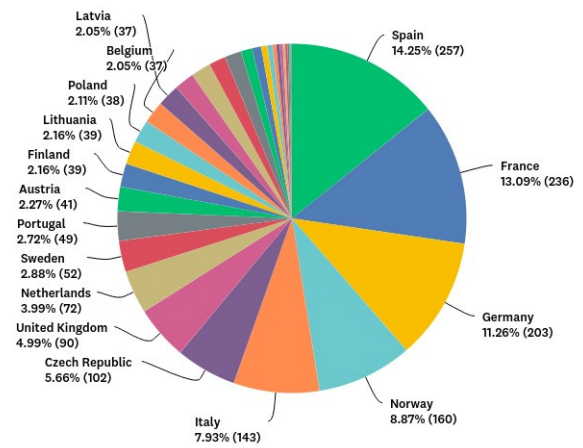


Figure 2: Country of students' host institution

Both the size of home and host institutions, as stated by the students, is normally distributed and the median value is between 10,000 and 30,000 students (Q30, Q32) (see Figure 3 and 4).

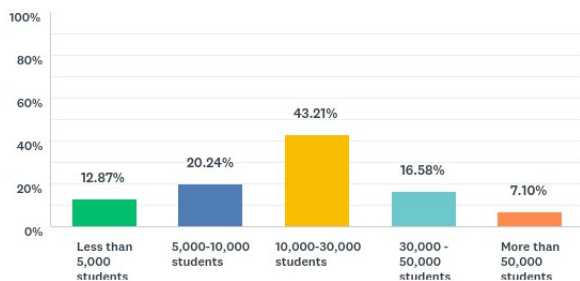


Figure 3: Size of home institution

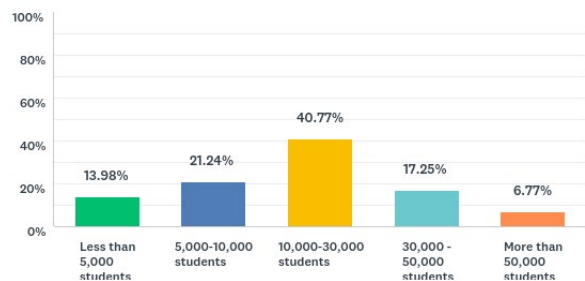


Figure 4: Size of host institution

Do students like the OLA?

When the students were asked to rate the ease of managing the OLA from 1 (very hard) to 5 (very easy), the average response was 3.65, which indicates an overall above-average positive perception of the tool. As can be seen in Figure 5, the tool is especially appreciated by students coming from institutions based in Lithuania, Slovenia, and Czechia, and the tool is found to be appreciated below the average of 3.65 by students based in the UK, Sweden, and Norway. (Q3)

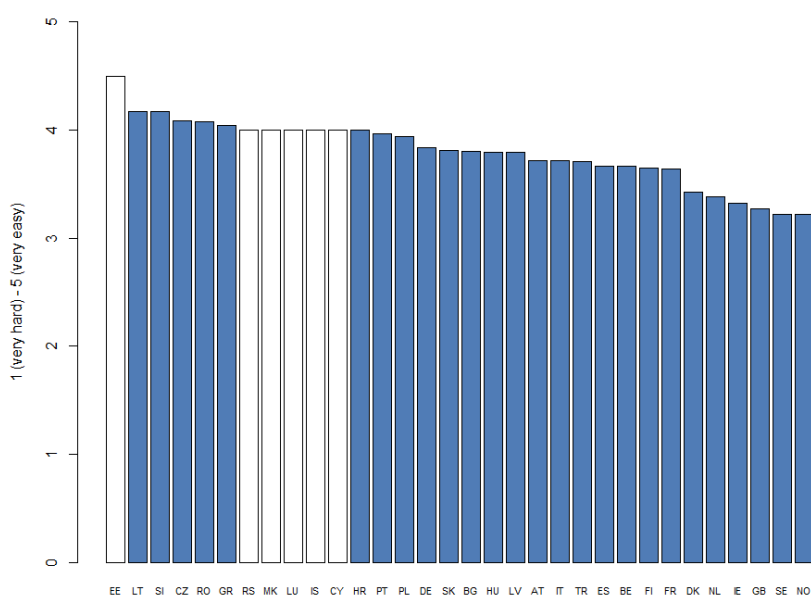


Figure 5: Ease of managing the OLA by country of home institution (countries with fewer than or equal to five observations in white)

Of those students who indicated that they had enough experience in using the tool to answer the question, 90.73% said that they would recommend the OLA to other students, whereas only 9.27% stated that they would not recommend it. As illustrated in Figure 6, in countries like Denmark, Serbia, and Slovenia, 100.0% of surveyed students would recommend the OLA. On the other hand, in countries like the UK and the Republic of Ireland, 77.0% and 77.9% respectively would recommend the OLA to other students. (Q5)

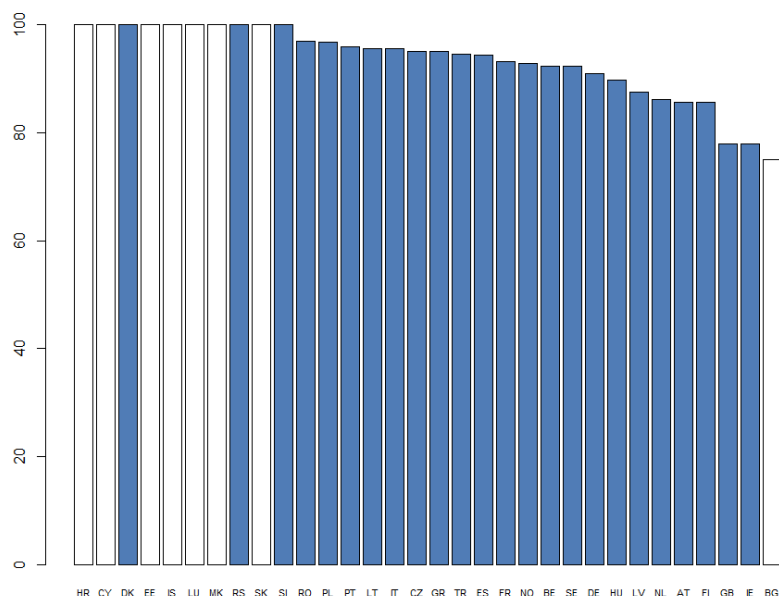


Figure 6: Share of respondents who would recommend the OLA to other Erasmus+ students by country of home institution (answers 'don't have enough experience to tell' have not been considered, countries with fewer than 5 observations in white)

When asked to rate specific attributes of the OLA, the average varies among attributes. Arranged from the highest average score to the lowest, the attributes are the following: 'clarity of the steps to fill in the OLA' (3.84), 'interface' (3.82), 'overall usability of the tool' (3.77), 'diversity of functionalities offered' (3.67), and lastly, 'support materials' (3.55). This indicates that students especially need further and more sophisticated support material focusing on both the explanation of the LA as a key document in the Erasmus mobility process and the usage of the platform, and would like to have even more functionalities in the OLA (for a graphical depiction of this information see also Table 1 and Figure 7). It is important to note that the question on diversity of functionalities was asked at a time when other cycles of Erasmus management, such as application for mobility or Transcript of Records were already in the pipeline, so the score reflects that the students wish to include other parts of the process in the digital infrastructure. (Q4)

| Characteristic | Perception (1-5) |
|---|------------------|
| Clarity of the steps to fill in the OLA | 3.84 |
| Interface | 3.82 |
| Overall usability of the tool | 3.77 |
| Diversity of functionalities offered | 3.67 |
| Support materials | 3.55 |

Table 1: Characteristics of the OLA rated by students

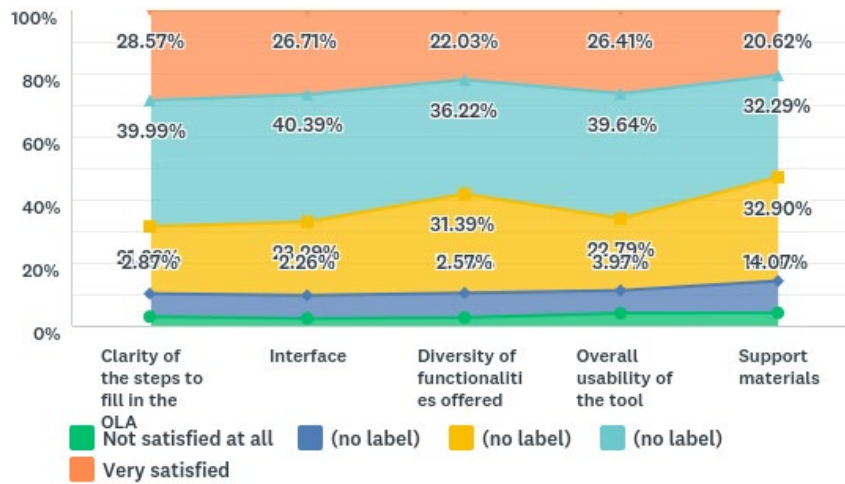


Figure 7: Perception of specific attributes of the OLA

The average perceived satisfaction with the 5 indicators noted above is of 74.6%; meanwhile 74.35% of the students would advise against having to fill in the LA on a PDF and have it sent by email to the various mobility coordinators. As illustrated in Figure 8, in countries like the Republic of Ireland, the UK, and Finland between 40.6% (Ireland) and 35.3% (Finland) prefer a PDF, whereas in countries like Poland, Denmark, and Czechia fewer than 10% prefer a PDF. (Q7)

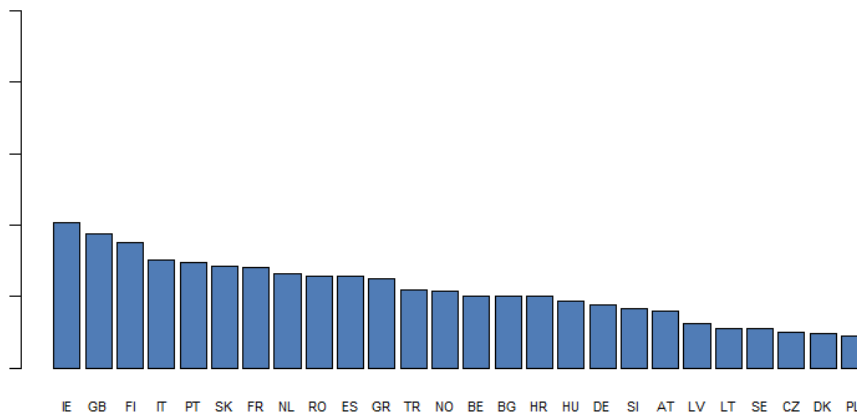


Figure 8: Percentage of students who think that it would be better to fill in the LA on a PDF by home country

What students liked the most about the platform is how easy to use, simple, convenient, straight-forward, and more efficient than the paper-based version it is. 522 out of 1184 relevant responses named one of the above-mentioned characteristics. In second place, with a frequency of 200, students said they found the process to be very fast and less time-consuming. Thirdly, the fact that the OLA *minimised* the *paperwork* and the amount of printing and scanning, thus being more eco-friendly was mentioned by 130 students. The fourth place is taken up with the fact that the OLA *automatically* notifies the involved parties and students do not have to send emails themselves (99 mentions). Moreover, students highly value the *accessibility* and availability of the OLA no matter the time, place, or device and that the OLA is stored on the platform (81 mentions). Students also appreciate that they do not have to send anything by mail nor make appointments and go to various offices (30). Lastly, students appreciate the fact that they can manage everything in one place, as can be seen in 22 responses (for an overview see Table 2). (Q9)

| Characteristic | Frequency (1184 total answers) |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Ease of use | 522 |
| Rapidity | 200 |
| Minimisation of paperwork | 130 |
| Automation | 99 |
| Accessibility | 81 |
| No need to go anywhere | 30 |
| Everything in one place | 22 |

Table 2: Characteristics of the OLA appreciated by students

User stories:

'Incredibly easy, much better than spending time getting signatures and then scanning documents. Processed and signed by both parties on the second day.'

'I didn't have to print anything, and this is very important nowadays, considering all the environmental problems. Moreover, it was super easy to use. I highly recommend it!'

'It is so much easier than printing, signing, and scanning a document and then sending it to other people to do the same as well. It saves time and paper; consider how much paper is used purely through Erasmus documents when we could do it all online!'

How can the OLA improve?

As can be seen in the information and quotations above, the OLA is very much appreciated by students. Nevertheless, students encountered some issues that can be summarised in two categories: *information* and *staff-readiness* and *OLA features* and *infrastructure* (for a detailed overview of the frequency of occurrences see also Table 3). It should be emphasized that the number of respondents raising concerns is as small as about a third of those who gave positive feedback. (Q6, Q8)

| | Issue | Frequency of occurrence (of 387) |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Information and staff-readiness | Information | 137 |
| | Unpreparedness of HEI staff | 63 |
| OLA features and infrastructure | Automated notifications | 78 |
| | Flexibility | 71 |
| | Technological infrastructure | 24 |
| | Online signing solution | 16 |

Table 3: Frequency of issues encountered by students

Room for improvements: Information and staff-readiness

Whereas many students (522) felt that enough explanations were given and that the process was clearly described, 117 (out of a total of 387 relevant answers to Q6 and Q8) described the OLA as complicated, time-consuming, or *not easy to complete*. 20 people claimed that there was no clear explanation of steps to be undertaken, that the website lacked guidelines, or that no support was provided. The fact that this was reported by only 5% of the users who provided feedback to the question is regarded positively by the project's team.

Furthermore, 36 respondents stated that their *HEI/IRO staff did not understand* how the OLA works and that it took time for staff to adapt to the new process which prolonged the completion of their OLA. Furthermore, 27 students said that the coordinators were either not willing to use the tool or they preferred the paper-based version. 62.23% of the students who (also) had to fill out the paper-based version of the LA said that this was due to the lack of willingness from either their host (27.29%) or home institutions (34.94%) (see also Figure 9) (Q12). 51.41% of students stated that it took their home institution between 1 and 5 days to sign the OLA and similarly, 42.15% said it took their host institution between 1 and 5 days to sign it. Both distributions are left-skewed, indicating a relatively fast response by the HEI (see Figure 10) (Q15, Q17).

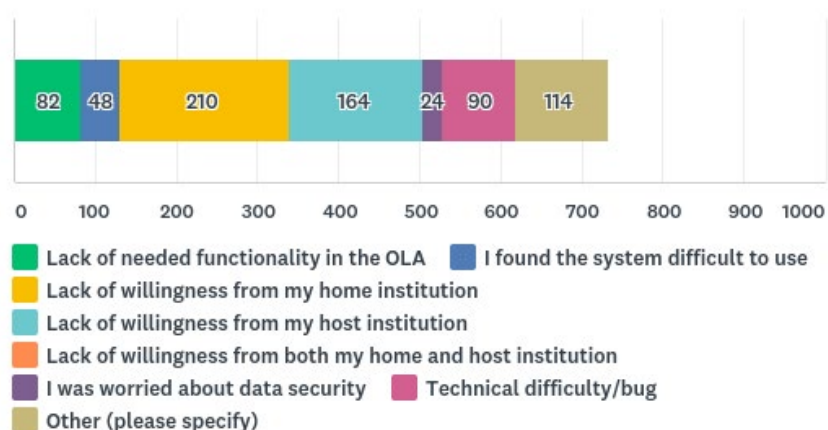


Figure 9: Reasons for falling back to the paper-based LA

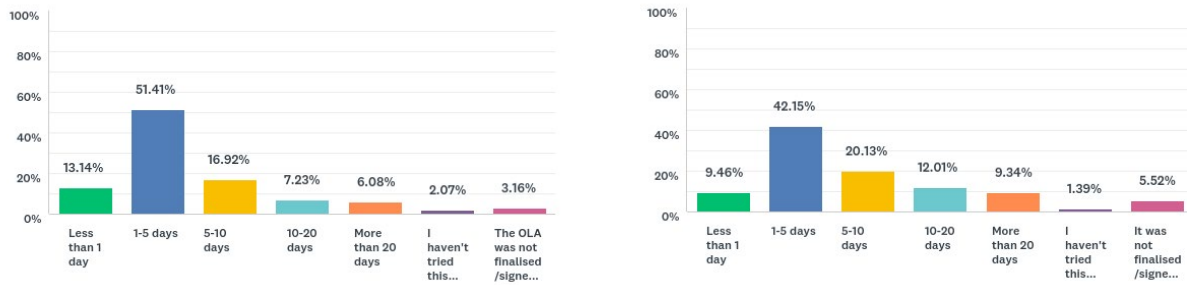


Figure 10: Time it took home (left) and host (right) institution to react to signature request

User stories:

'[...] I think there needs to be more support in terms of filling out subjects etc because I was quite lost.'

'Because none of the professors know how to use it so I had to explain it to them and hope that it works out, which was very stressful.'

'Professors and secretaries still don't have enough 'technology' knowledge to deal with this. A PDF would be better and [would cause] less problems for us students.'

Recommendations by students (Q10)

In order to address the above-mentioned issues, students put forward a number of suggestions.

In order to ensure that students receive enough *information*, possible solutions mentioned by respondents include the development of a guide/toolkit directly accessible on the OLA website after logging in. The guide could be a PDF or in the form of a video tutorial. The guide could also include details about what is required of students over the process of filling out the OLA, especially regarding the implementation of changes in the future and the people involved in the process. An example of a filled-out form or a FAQ section would also be appreciated. Furthermore, flag-up boxes highlighting incomplete or incorrect data would be a nice feature. A '?' button could also be added next to each box leading to basic guidelines upon clicking. Additionally, two respondents suggested that a forum for students could be a valuable addition. Since some students seem to be struggling with certain terminology, the simplification of the language used would be helpful.

The information required by the students needs to be explained simply, precisely, and in a straight-forward way. Additionally, it should be stated more clearly who to contact for help.

Discussion

Students call for *simplification* of the administrative procedures as well as *clarity* of the steps to be taken, and there is indeed space for introducing more student-friendly terminology. A key challenge is to make sure that contact points at the home and host HEIs are up-to-date and available to the Erasmus students.

When it comes to *HEI staff preparedness*, support materials for HEIs are part of the [Erasmus Without Paper - Competence Centre](#), next to the numerous dissemination events taking place across the EU. And yet staff trainings are indispensable for a good implementation of the system on a pan-European level, alongside clear communication from the European Commission and the National Agencies. HEIs can also consider to cooperate with one another to exchange know-how about how to successfully adapt their internal procedures.

Food for thought regarding next steps

- *How could students across the EU be better supported while preparing for Erasmus mobility? How could students receive updated information on destinations, requirements, their rights and duties when participating in Erasmus mobility?*
- *What would be the most useful way to support universities to adapt to the cultural change brought about by new technologies?*
- *How could the ESCI allow for more transparency as to the infrastructure used at each HEI?*

Room for improvements: OLA features and infrastructure

As stated above, a significant number of students (99) liked the automated notification system because they did not have to contact the responsible people themselves and it allowed mobility coordinators to sign immediately. Thus, no correspondence between IROs and students was required, as the process was centralised and automatised. Yet, such an *automated system* works best when all parties have the latest contact information, which is still something that HEIs and students often are struggling with, and 41 out of 387 students report having difficulties with it. There were also instances when the automated email did not arrive at the receiving/sending institution or was marked as spam and thus never looked at. Furthermore, 37 students feel like they are not in control and do not trust the system because they are unaware of whether the notification emails with the invitation to sign the OLA have really reached the coordinator (despite the updated document status in the Erasmus+ App and OLA platform informing that the OLA has been sent to the home or host coordinator for review). They would like to have more transparency and options to track the status of their OLA. Some perceive the automated notifications to be unnecessary since they had to write emails to their professors/coordinators anyway in order to have the signatures on time.

Furthermore, 71 students wished for more *flexibility*. Of these 71 respondents, 31 students stated that they did not know how to make changes to the OLA or that it was very complicated to make them and they were not sure they had been saved. Some of them reported having had to fill out the whole form a second time in order to make changes. 19 students perceived the OLA in general to be too restrictive. Four respondents also mentioned that it was hard to tell the edited version from the original version. Furthermore, two students complained about the fact that, once one party has signed the agreement, no changes can be made until the second party has signed/declined it as well. In addition, 13 students stated that it was impossible for them to change the email address and the name of the responsible coordinator. Moreover, two students were bothered by the fact that it is not possible to add more than one coordinator per institution, despite the fact that the official LA template foresees only one signature per institution.

Furthermore, 16 students claim that one or more parties were unable or found it complicated to *sign the agreement online*.

Lastly, in regard to the *technological stability*, 19 students stated that they had issues regarding the availability and reliability of the website and report log-in difficulties, an overall slow website, and in a specific case, in May 2018, an error screen. Almost 15% of the students who (also) had to fill out the paper-based version of the LA said that this was due to a technical difficulty or bug (see also Figure 9) (Q12). Distinctly fewer (3 students) believe the interface of the website to be rather outdated and a bit chaotic. Furthermore, according to two students, it is vital to create a visible difference between the OLA for students and the OLA for trainees.

User stories:

"My OLA did not reach my receiving institution and therefore I was unable to have it signed. I am dissatisfied with the system as once the agreement is sent to the receiving institution, there is no way to retrieve it until it is signed. My host university could not find the OLA and could not sign it, this was stressful as I need the agreement in order to get my ERASMUS grant."

"Problems with emails, not knowing who the appropriate person is. If a mistake in filling in the contact was made, one had to start over. Takes time to find out if the coordinators [haven't] received it or just haven't yet filled it out. Had to email everyone anyway."

"[...] my home university for some reasons wasn't able to sign it so it took a lot of time for the whole procedure to end."

Recommendations by students (Q10)

As a solution to the issues described above, students have proposed the following ideas (some have partially already been implemented or are in the pipeline; see the following section for details).

To solve problems related to *the automated notifications*, the platform could allow for reminders to be sent to the relevant people either manually by students or automatically by the system after a certain time. Furthermore, receiving a *confirmation* when the agreement is signed by the sending institution as well would be appreciated.

Furthermore, in regards to having more *flexibility*, students think it should be easier to make changes to the OLA even after it has been sent or signed by any of the parties, without having to fill in the whole form a second time. This applies to both stages of the OLA: before and during the mobility. There could, for instance, be an option to withdraw the OLA that was sent once the student has noticed a mistake (even just a typo). An option to update the name and contact details of the responsible person and the students' own email is to be considered. Furthermore, adding the possibility to comment on the OLA would bring the flexibility that specific cases require (mobilities that differ from the usual academic period, double degrees, etc.). More detailed requests made by students include dividing the section for courses into multiple semesters (e.g. in the case of a one-year exchange), the possibility of adding multiple responsible persons, having fewer compulsory boxes to fill out, having clear information about HEI-specific deadlines directly on the OLA website, and allowing for more flexibility regarding the ECTS equivalences (adaptable to all universities and credit types).

In regard to the *online signing solution*, a link could be inserted on the page of the online signature to a tutorial on how it should be done. The possibility to upload a digital signature could also be an option.

When it comes to the *technological infrastructure*, for processes to run smoothly, the website needs to have the capacity to deal with a great number of users. Furthermore, it is important to ensure high delivery rates for all email addresses irrespective of the service provider. In order to make the website more user-friendly, the interface could be simpler, 'less overwhelming', and more readable (e.g. big-enough fonts) for all devices. Moreover, an automatic save feature of filled in information would be appreciated. Lastly, the interfaces of the OLA of trainees and students should be notably different.

Other *suggestions* put forward are that all necessary documents required to go on Erasmus+ mobility can be found on one platform, that all HEI course systems are interconnected in order to omit the manual typing and that a timeline is added on the first page with the progress of the OLA. Furthermore, students would appreciate it if the platform was easier to be found on search engines, if it would automatically fill in certain details, if authorisation options (e.g. Facebook) were added, and if the OLA would be automatically merged with the Transcript of Records.

Discussion

Reminders: the project's team has discussed the deployment of this functionality with the IROs and there is reluctance to move forward with the idea since it could be used in a spam-like way.

Notifications: students are already notified when the document is signed or declined; coordinators are always notified when an OLA requires review.

Flexibility: this is a key issue, and it is true that the direct translation of pen and paper processes into digital ones has caused unnecessary rigidity and frustration. The project's team feels strongly that the way forward in this respect is to enable the versioning of the OLA; which would make all changes traceable and more transparent to all parties.

Comments: there is some reluctance to enable comments because most IROs are aware of cases where comments that were added to paper-based LAs have weakened the underlying recognition commitment. Accordingly, open-ended comment boxes have been avoided in the OLA.

Signature: the system currently in place will be superseded by a newer and simpler solution, which will be enabled by authentication solutions developed by the MyAcademicID project (which precludes the usage of Facebook for authentication purposes, since it does not allow for the academic identify of the student to be validated in any way or form).

Course catalogues: the OLA+ project has developed a solution to connect the OLA to course catalogues and prevent the need to type course details into the template (since this is relatively error-prone). This solution was the object of a live demo during the project's closing conference and there was very good feedback from HEIs in attendance, whereas its usage will gradually become commonplace.

Assorted issues: the number of signees is determined by the official template and should not (can not) vary per student or HEI; the notion of making all mobility documents available on a single platform is very interesting, although it goes somewhat beyond the scope of the OLA. It could however find its home on the Erasmus+ App as a single point of entry in the Erasmus+ Programme. This approach could enable certain details to be automatically filled in, as suggested (once-only principle).

Reliability of the online infrastructure: in May 2018 the OLA platform experienced significant performance issues at its peak usage times, when students found it difficult to access and finalise the agreements. The reliability of the platform is of paramount importance, and, therefore, further work has been invested and no similar issues have been observed since then. In addition, the OLA platform is currently being revamped and re-designed to ensure scalability and stability and the updates will be launched by the end of 2020.

Next steps - Food for Thought

- *How to ensure that partner institutions and students always have easy access to the most up-to-date information regarding the Erasmus mobility management (contact person, requirements, support information, etc.)?*
- *How to rethink the mobility management process and ensure transparency to diminish the need for (email) reminders?*
- *How could digital processes further support the steps that take place after the mobility (recognition, quality assurance, audits)?*

OLA for traineeships

The OLA for traineeships was rated 3.76 on average (Q24). As noted above, the similarities between the interface of the OLA for students and trainees are confusing to users. Here as well, more extensive guidelines would be appreciated and minor bug fixes need to be implemented. (Q25)

It is also key to mention that this part of the infrastructure was launched as a beta, insofar it was not foreseen in the original project application or deliverables.

2.2 Coordinators

What is your favourite aspect of the Erasmus Dashboard? 'Allows to focus the IRO energy on more meaningful/quality-oriented tasks' (Q24)

Disclaimer: Much of the content listed below comes from open-ended questions, which the authors have interpreted as objectively as possible.

Via email invitation, the EUF collected a total of 1,171 responses of which 451 were by main institutional account holders and 720 by staff members between 2 October 2019 and 5 March 2020. The coordinators came from HEIs with an average (median) student body of between 5,000 and 10,000 students (Q2) (see Figure 11).

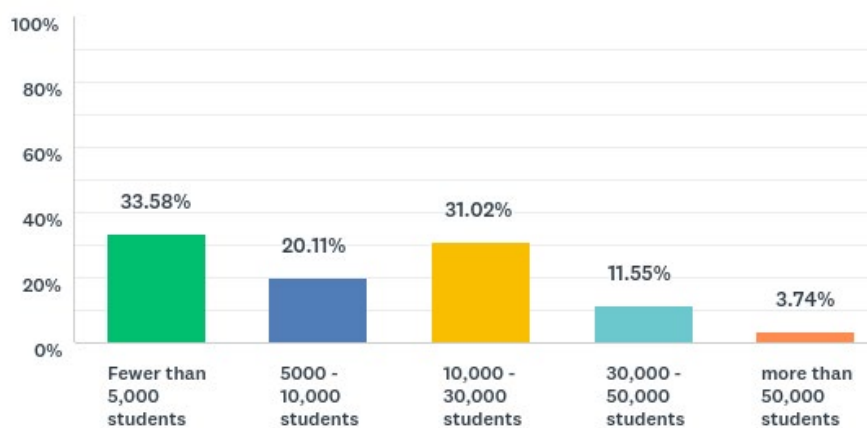


Figure 11: Size of the HEI

On average, the queried universities receive and send abroad between 50 and 200 Erasmus+ students each semester (Q3, Q4) (see Figure 12 and 13).

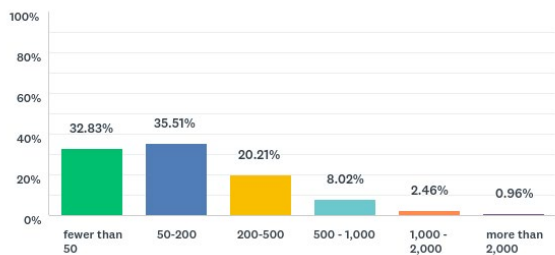


Figure 12: Incoming students body

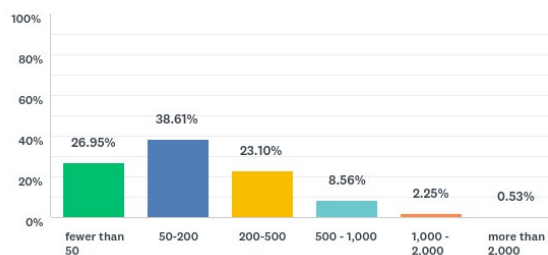


Figure 13: Outgoing students body

More than half of the answers to the survey questions were given by coordinators from Germany, Italy, Spain, France, and Sweden (Q5) (see Figure 14). As such, 4 out of 5 countries with the most answers correspond to those with the largest population of ECHE holders: Out of 5650 ECHE holders in February 2020, 1697 are based in Spain, 1352 in France, 382 in Germany, and 291 in Italy⁴.

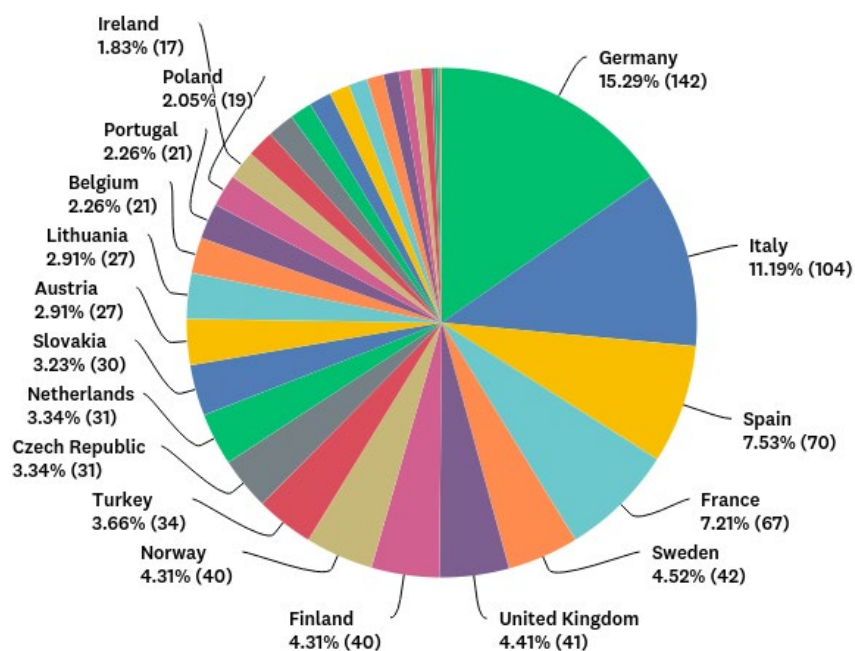


Figure 14: Country of HEI

More than 5% of IRO staff who have answered the survey have already processed more than 300 OLAs, 9.09% state to have processed between 100 and 300 OLAs, and 10.52% between 50 and 100. Almost three quarters (74.15%) have processed fewer than 50 (see Figure 15). (Q12, option 'Other' was not considered when calculating the percentages)

⁴ Official ECHE holders data as of April 2020. See most up-to-date information here: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/erasmus-charter_en

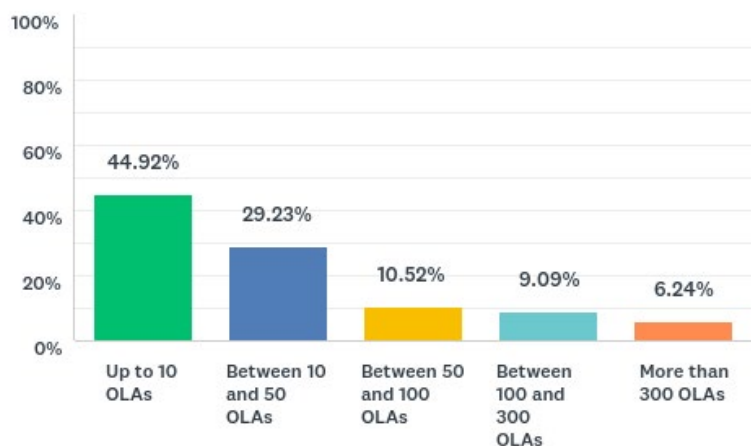


Figure 15: Number of OLAs processed at the time of completing the survey

In 73.27% of the institutions, the management of Erasmus+ mobility is done exclusively or predominantly by the university's central IRO. In more detail, the management of Erasmus+ mobilities is done by the faculties/departments in 6.74% of HEIs, only by the central IRO in 41.18% of HEIs, predominantly by the central IRO in 32.09% of HEIs, and predominantly by faculties/departments in 12.83% of HEIs (see Figure 16). (Q7)

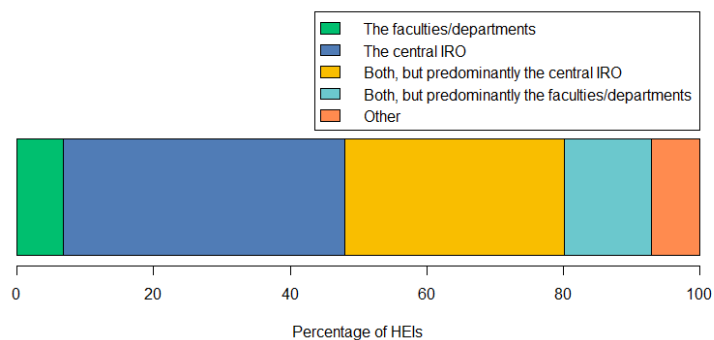


Figure 16: Responsibility of Erasmus+ mobility management

As can be seen in Figure 17, 12.66% of main institutional account holders⁵ indicated that their HEI has officially adopted the OLA infrastructure (Erasmus Dashboard and OLA) to manage Erasmus+ mobilities at the entire institution, while 2.23% reported that certain faculties/departments have adopted it. Furthermore, 14.89% have been testing the tool with a pilot group of students/faculties. 12.90% of respondents stated that they are currently testing the OLA at the whole HEI or in certain faculties without the involvement of students. 38.46% have made an account but have not yet tried it out. Lastly, 18.86% gave a different answer to the question: 12 coordinators (2.98%) stated that they used the OLA whenever it was required by the partner HEI, 7 (1.74%) stated that the OLA has either been officially adopted for all or is being used for some incoming students, and 3 (0.74%) respondents said that it has either been officially adopted or is being used for some outgoing students. As can be seen in Figure 18, the highest rates of official adoption among respondents are observed in the following countries: Ireland (60.0%), the Netherlands (57.1%), and Czechia (40.0%). (Q9)

⁵ The sample was restricted here in order to avoid duplicates and to ensure being as truthful and representative as possible, as the main institutional account holders have the most accurate information available about the adoption state of the infrastructure.

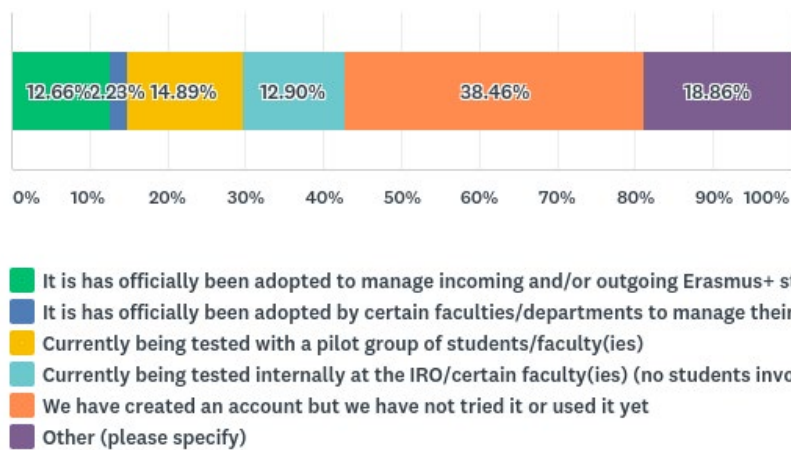


Figure 17: Usage of OLA infrastructure at HEI (only main institutional accounts)

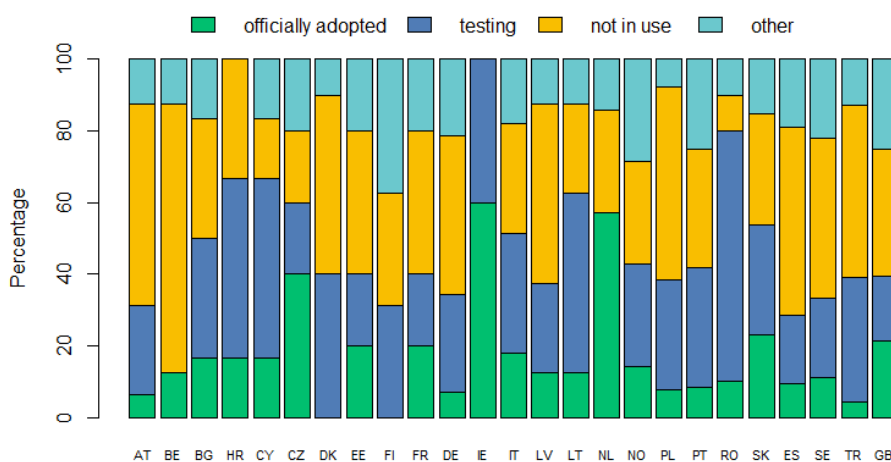


Figure 18: Usage of OLA infrastructure at HEI by country of HEI (only answers of main institutional account holders considered, countries with fewer than 5 observations were not added)

When asked to indicate up to three reasons why they had introduced the OLA in their HEI, most respondents (87.24%) stated that they had done so in order to reduce the workload, 42.39% did it out of curiosity, 11.52% were pressured by their partner HEIs, and 10.29% thought it was financially appealing. Additional reasons for introducing the OLA are the reduction of paper-based administration and environmental reasons (10.29%), the simplification, streamlining, and increased speed (9.88%), wanting to digitalise as much as possible (2.88%), being ready for when the OLA becomes mandatory in 2021 (2.06%), pressure from students (1.65%), pressure from National Agencies (NAs) (0.82%), and HEI internal strategy (0.41%). (Q10)

Trying to map what the current status and approach towards digital Erasmus at the institutions is, Figure 19 illustrates that 35.39% of respondents do not use any other system to manage mobilities besides the Erasmus Dashboard and OLA. Moreover, 32.87% are using a system provided by a third-party, 16.01% an in-house system, and 7.58% a mix of the two. (Q11)

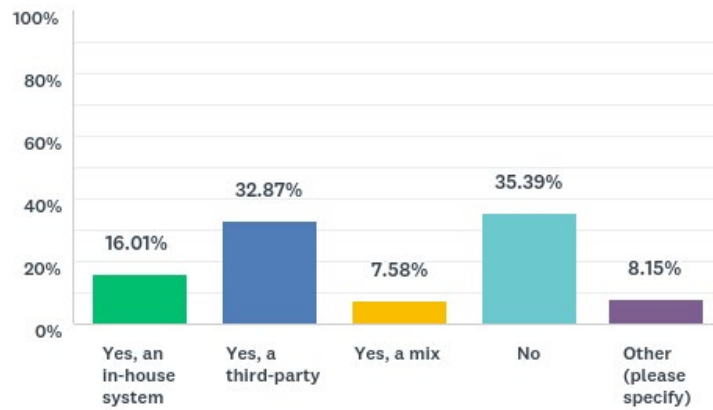


Figure 19: State of IT systems for managing student mobilities (only main institutional accounts)

On the topic of perceived workload, coordinators were asked to rate the workload surrounding the management of Erasmus+ exchanges on a scale of 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). The results can be seen in Figure 20, where the mean value is 4.18 (4 being 'high'), which is an indicator for the need of further streamlining the Erasmus+ mobility management. These numbers are consistent with the EWP desk-research findings⁶, where less than 2% of IROs considered the workload to be low or very low (a figure that has not fundamentally changed since). As Figure 21 depicts, especially IRO staff in countries like Romania, Portugal, and Greece perceive the workload to be very high. On the other hand, Czechia and Slovenia have a below average perception of the workload. (Q6)

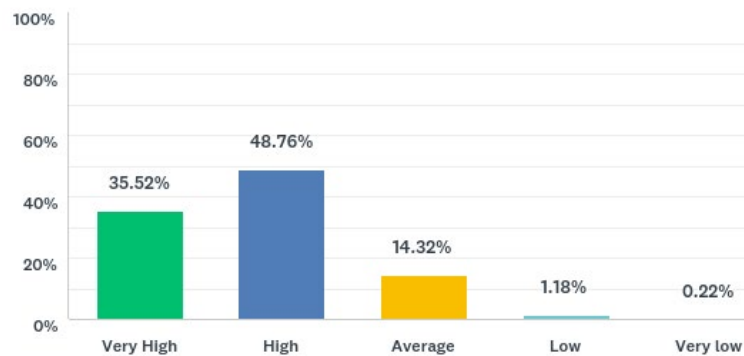


Figure 20: Perceived workload regarding Erasmus+ exchanges

⁶ See Desk Research - Erasmus Without Paper (EUF 2017) <https://www.erasmuswithoutpaper.eu/sites/default/files/pages/EWP%20desk%20research%20final%20version.pdf>

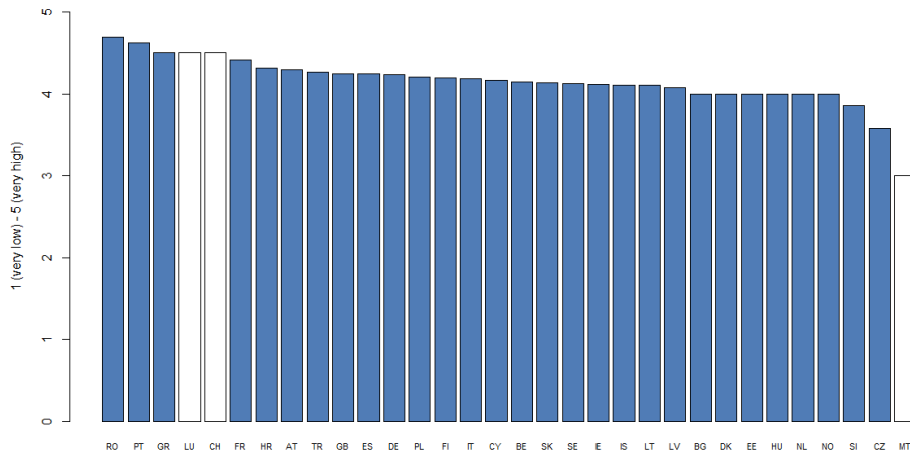


Figure 21: Perceived workload average of Erasmus+ exchanges by country of the HEI (countries with fewer than 5 observations in white)

On average (median), coordinators estimated that it takes between 15 and 30 minutes to finalise a paper-based LA. 26.91% state that it takes them more than 30 minutes to complete a paper-based LA. This estimation needs to be analysed with caution as it might not take into consideration the time needed by faculty members working on LAs (Q19, option 'Other' was not considered when calculating the percentages).

Regarding outgoing mobilities, of those HEIs who have officially adopted the OLA infrastructure by either all or some of their faculties (official adopters)⁷, 35.15% have said that more than 75% of their OLAs have been finalised online successfully, 21.29% claimed to have successfully finalised between 50% and 75%, 20.78% claimed 25-50%, and lastly, 22.77% said they finalised less than 25% successfully (see Figure 22). (Q13, option 'Other' was not considered when calculating the percentages)

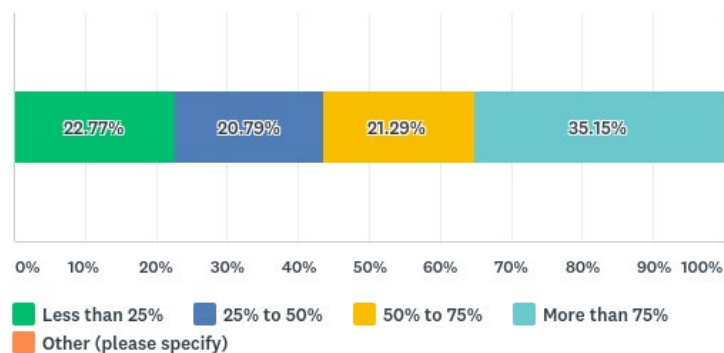


Figure 22: Share of successfully finalised OLAs among outgoing mobilities by official adopters

⁷ Hereafter, 'official adopters' denotes those respondents who have officially adopted the OLA infrastructure by either all or some of their faculties and, thus, have responded to Q9 with either 'It has officially been adopted to manage incoming and/or outgoing Erasmus+ students' or 'It has officially been adopted by certain faculties/departments to manage their incoming and/or outgoing students'. This group amounts to 27.53% of all respondents.

When talking specifically of official adopters and considering relevant answers only, 50.26% said that the OLA was not completed due to the fact that the process was interrupted at the receiving institution, which signed the LA on paper or PDF; 15.54% stated that they were not comfortable with the online signature; 10.88% said that the host institution used a different online infrastructure; 9.85% said that the OLA could not be finalised because a certain functionality was lacking (although it is unclear what this certain functionality is as coordinators did not specify a particular functionality); 5.70% said that the host institution stopped the online process without giving an explanation; 4.66% experienced issues with the automated notifications and the inability to change the responsible person; and 3.11% reported unspecified technical issues. (Q15)

Taken collectively, these numbers illustrate the difficulties of 'going digital' and the importance of a common understanding regarding the usage of certain tools/channels. In regard to incoming mobilities, within official adopters, a quarter of respondents reported having successfully finalised more than 75% of their OLAs completely online. However, more than half (56.25%) indicated a completion rate of less than or equal to 50% (see Figure 23 for more details). (Q14)

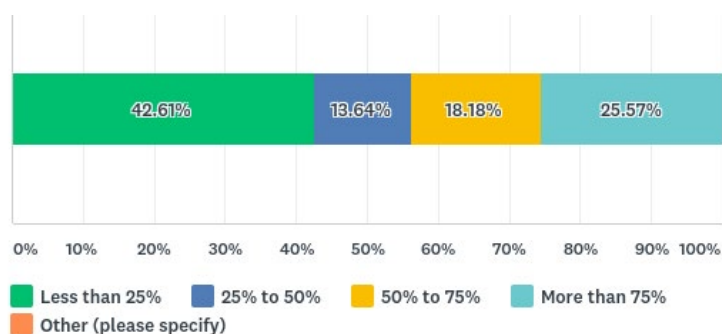


Figure 23: Share of successfully finalised OLAs among incoming mobilities by official adopters

Among those who did not manage to successfully finalise their OLA fully online (official adopters, irrelevant responses ignored), 60.59% of respondents indicated that this was because the home institution signed the LA on PDF or paper. 14.12% said that the home institution was using a different infrastructure, and another 14.12% stated that the home institution was not comfortable using the online signature. Furthermore, 8.82% said that there was a functionality missing in order to finalise the agreement. Lastly, 1.76% experienced technical issues or difficulties with the automated notification system, and 0.59% said that the home institution stopped the online process without giving an explanation. (Q16)

With regards to the time saved by official adopters (see Figure 24) roughly one third of official adopters report saving between 30 and 50% of the time, with the overall distribution curve broadly confirming results of prior research on the issue.

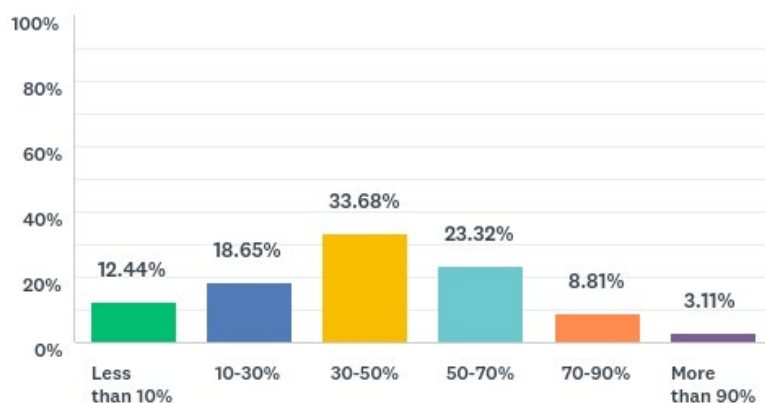


Figure 24: Time saved with OLA by official adopters⁸

How can the OLA improve?

Issues regarding the OLA can be summarised in two categories: *Information, staff-readiness and legal requirements* and *OLA infrastructure and features* (Q15, Q16, Q17):

Room for improvements: Information, staff-readiness and legal requirements

25 out of 372 respondents who gave valid answers to Q15, Q16 and Q17, *perceived that the host institution was not familiar enough* or not willing to deal with the digital infrastructure of the OLA – a point often raised by the students surveyed as well. Moreover, 16 coordinators said that the OLA has either low integration potential with internal practices or that the department coordinators require the paper-based version, or that the latter is simply preferred. One respondent said that certain academic staff are not well acquainted with the tools, and another one stated that they do not have the necessary IT support to properly learn how to use the platform.

Nine IRO staff found it rather hard to understand how the Erasmus Dashboard and the OLA work and they said that, in their perception, they did not have *enough information*. Furthermore, two respondents complained about the lack of training offered. Additionally, one coordinator described the terminology used as being non-intuitive. Lastly, one respondent stated that students are unsure whether the OLA is accepted by the host institution. Two IRO personnel were worried about *data protection* and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance. One coordinator perceived that there is a missing regulatory framework regarding digital signatures and would like to have a confirmation of the signatures' authenticity.

Furthermore, three HEI staff based in Poland, Slovenia, and Czechia stated that they are required to have a paper-based version of the LA in accordance with *national law*. This argument was often invoked in the early days of the OLA but has become a noticeably rarer issue. Further research with the support of the respective NAs would be needed in order to confirm whether this is indeed the case or if legal requirements are used as a subterfuge to avoid engaging with the tool.

User stories:

'As said before we were facing some problems in figuring out how to implement the course catalogue, the signatures etc.'

'Some academic colleagues found the OLA too difficult to use (but they also struggle with many digital advances, so this is more an indication of their ability than your system).'

'National legislation demands paper copies of all official documents pertaining to students and staff mobility.'

⁸ 'Official adopters' denotes those respondents who have officially adopted the OLA infrastructure by either all or some of their faculties and, thus, have responded to Q9 with either 'It has been officially adopted to manage incoming and/or outgoing Erasmus+ students' or 'It has been officially adopted by certain faculties/departments to manage their incoming and/or outgoing students'. This group amounts to 27.53% of all respondents.

Recommendations by coordinators

In order to assure the provision of *enough information*, coordinators suggest that a hotline or a contact for support could be introduced, and it is important that assistance is provided within a reasonable time frame. Moreover, organising more meetings and trainings, as well as creating more detailed guidance materials, such as a step-by-step guide, videos and an instruction manual, would be appreciated. Lastly, the usage of clear terminology is key.

Discussion

While it was entirely beyond the means of the project to setup a help hotline, significant efforts went into assuring that the Dashboard contained a support section with FAQs, video tutorials, and other documentation; furthermore the [Erasmus Without Paper - Competence Centre](#) also includes a toolkit, user stories, information about compliance, and more guidance materials that will be developed even further.

In regards to the *compliance* matters, the OLA project consortium strongly supports the values of the GDPR and is committed to ensuring the highest level of compliance with the GDPR 2016/67. HEIs should not feel like they are taking compliance risks when using tools such as the OLA and the Dashboard, which is why extensive materials have been added to the Competence Centre, illustrating the compliance of the tools. These materials not only illustrate the compliance of the existing tools but also a) provide guidance to the HEIs on ensuring GDPR compliance in the context of student mobility for studies and traineeships b) illustrate the basics of GDPR legislation and its application in the context of student mobility and c) allow for sharing of good practices on how HEIs can ensure compliance.

Other discussion topics have been addressed in the previous chapters.

Next steps - Food for thought

- *How could the transition to the new Erasmus+ programme (2021-2027) be undertaken without leaving anyone behind? What support is required from the European Commission, NAs, and other national stakeholders and decision-makers at each HEI?*
- *What would be the most effective training schemes to share knowledge and know-how across ECHE holders?*
- *How can all Higher Education Institutions (and public bodies for that matter) receive more support regarding GDPR compliance matters and be able to welcome and utilise the new legislation to truly ensure more transparency, as well as clear and safe data processing and storage?*

Room for improvements: OLA infrastructure and features

Regarding *flexibility*, out of 372 respondents who gave valid answers to Q15, Q16 and Q17, 26 coordinators stated that it proves difficult to change the email addresses of the staff involved, which is necessary when the wrong person was nominated or there is a change in staff. Furthermore, 9 coordinators criticise the impossibility of adding more than one signatory because their internal procedures dictate having two or more signatures on their OLA. As also remarked by students, the impossibility of adding comments is criticised by 7 respondents who deem it necessary in certain situations, e.g. when a course cannot be confirmed until a later date. As stated by 5 people, when more than one version of the OLA is filled out, due to for instance error correction, it is impossible for coordinators to see which is the latest version of the OLA. Additionally, what appears to be an issue is that making changes to the OLA is rather difficult in general: The system is described as too restrictive and 15 respondents say it is hard to change/sign the OLA for this reason. IRO staff are only able to reject or accept the LA whereas it could be more efficient if they were also allowed to make changes directly, in order to quickly correct small mistakes and thus streamline the process. The ability to reject specific courses whilst approving others would be great, according to 4 coordinators. Three people said that the system is too inflexible in general. In addition, one respondent stated that the OLA does not allow uploading the general list of courses. The manual input of courses might bring along typos, which unnecessarily delay the progress of the OLA.

Regarding the *automated notifications*, similar to what was seen in the reported experiences of students, 7 coordinators also stated that some emails did not reach their inboxes. Additionally, 3 respondents mentioned that students were not notified after they had been nominated and uploaded into the system.

Eight coordinators commented on their concerns regarding the online signature and they thus suggest a different validation system. Furthermore, specific user rights should also be introduced to the platform.

In terms of *technological stability*, 3 coordinators have experienced unspecified issues. Two IRO staff stated that they could not find certain students on the platform and that applications were missing. Furthermore, one student had problems creating an account (the system reported an already existing account with the email entered) and one was unable to change the email used for the account. Moreover, 4 coordinators had issues with the browser *compatibility*. According to one person, the platform was unable to send invitations to certain email addresses. Additionally, one coordinator had problems downloading the PDF document generated after the finalisation of the OLA.

Five HEI staff perceived the OLA to be more time consuming than the paper-based version and that it thus does not decrease workload.

User stories:

'Technical problems where students did not receive the notification email once we had uploaded the students. [...]'

'OLA requests are usually submitted to administrative staff members who are not in charge of signing OLAs. The possibility to officially forward the request to an academic staff member for online acceptance/signature should be implemented.'

'It was impossible to access the platform. We tried to send email via the dashboard, but it never reached the test students.'

Recommendations by coordinators

In terms of *flexibility*, as a solution to the signatory issue, the surveyed coordinators proposed specific roles within the OLA system with specific user rights to view, nominate, edit, and/or sign. Adding the possibility for IROs to change contact details of the relevant persons who can sign the OLA would simplify the process and it would be useful if the administrative staff could officially forward the request for the signature/redirect the OLA. Furthermore, it would be useful if students were notified when the email address of the person who is supposed to sign the OLA is incorrect or inexistent. The process would be more streamlined if each university could enter the contact details of every person allowed to use the system. It is vital that the tool clearly highlights which version of each OLA is the most updated one and that any changes are clearly identifiable.

The problem of *automated emails* ending up in the spam folder could be circumvented by allowing students/IROs to personalise the emails with tailored messages. The ability to personalise them could also prevent issues generated by language barriers. Furthermore, the possibility to send reminders would be appreciated by IROs.

When it comes to the *online signature*, a suggestion could be to introduce a digital signature solution, perhaps by ticking a box upon login or by using a verified digital signature generated by logging in with a verified account, or the possibility of uploading a digital signature.

Discussion

The majority of the reported suggestions dovetail well with the remarks made on the student section of the questions regarding flexibility, signing, and delivery of notifications.

As noted, the *call for more flexibility* and customisation of digital processes is a common request, although it should be noted that a tool used throughout Europe cannot cater to the specific needs and internal processes of individual institutions, which may require specific tools.

Most of the feedback received falls in one of three categories:

- a. **Already implemented:** oftentimes users ask for features that already exist, such as specific roles with specific user rights to view, nominate, edit, and sign the OLA; the possibility of officially forwarding the request for the signature; configurable email headers and others. In other cases, improvements have been made throughout the project, as is the case of a more resilient email notification system and the introduction of a centralised email solution, which allows HEIs to nominate a *central contact point* for incoming and outgoing students. The central contact point will also be pre-filled in OLAs initiated by the students. Lastly, small bugs (not finding students on the platform and not being able to create an account) were also solved.
- b. **Potentially implemented in the future:** many of the requests could be addressed by the introduction of versioning of the LA, which would enhance the transparency in the OLA management process by tracking and illustrating changes. Such an approach was considered earlier in the project's lifecycle but deemed risky from an audit/compliance viewpoint. However, as the next programme approaches, a window of opportunity opens to introduce such improvements, as also noted in the project's policy recommendations. Another example are changes to the OLA online signature, which will be updated in the next version.
- c. **Unlikely to be implemented:** not all user requests are easily satisfiable, and this is particularly the case when institutional users expect the OLA/Dashboard to offer more support for institution-specific internal processes.

Next steps - Food for thought

- *What are the most sophisticated pan-EU authentication solutions in the academic sphere that could be utilised in the framework of ESCI before eIDAS is actually rolled-out and actively used across the EU?*
- *How can HEIs reap the fruits of simplification and streamlining on the EU level regarding Erasmus procedures if the national regulations still require additional procedures and, thus, increase complexity?*
- *How can we minimise IRO learning curves when new changes are introduced in the OLA and Dashboard? How can we promote peer-learning to make sure new institutional users can learn from more experienced ones on how to use all of the capacities built into the system?*

Erasmus Dashboard

The Erasmus Dashboard is a tool that offers all European HEIs basic functionalities for digitally managing Erasmus+ mobilities free of charge. It is a key deliverable of the OLA+ project, and its original scope was focused on supporting the management of the OLAs.

Do coordinators like the Erasmus Dashboard?

92.86% of the coordinators think that all Erasmus+ LAs should be done online through a simple-to-use tool. As can be seen in Figure 25, 100.0% of respondents from Czechia, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Romania, and Spain, which can be considered as representative of all Europe as northern, eastern, southern and western Europe are included, believe all LAs should be done online. On the other hand, only 66.7, 72.4, and 75.0% of respondents from Estonia, Sweden, and Bulgaria respectively agree. (Q33)

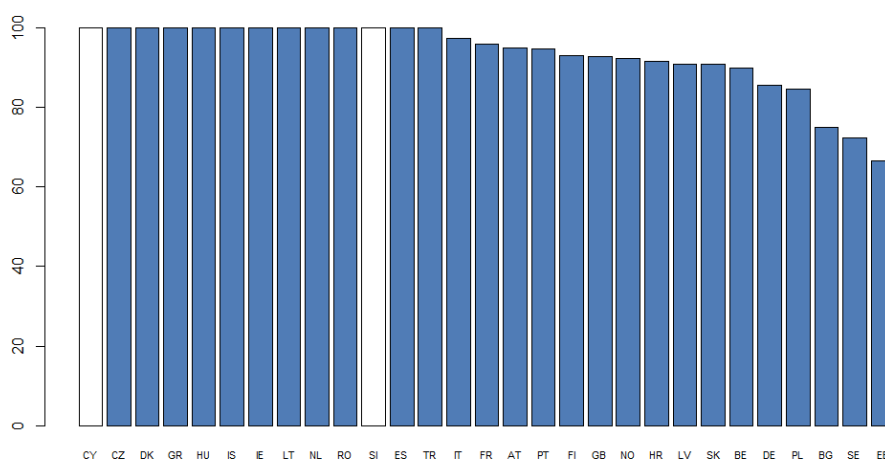


Figure 25: Share of coordinators (in %) who believe that all Erasmus+ LAs should be done online through a simple-to-use tool by country of HEI (countries with fewer than 5 observations in white)

76.38% of the coordinators would recommend the Erasmus Dashboard to other mobility coordinators. As illustrated in Figure 26, 100.0% of respondents from Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Lithuania and Romania would recommend the Dashboard to other coordinators. On the other hand, only 44.8, 54.5, and 58.3% of coordinators in Finland, Belgium, and Denmark would recommend it. This question's range of country-specific answers is the highest observed of all questions in the survey, and it is unclear what prompts the large differences between countries. (Q22)

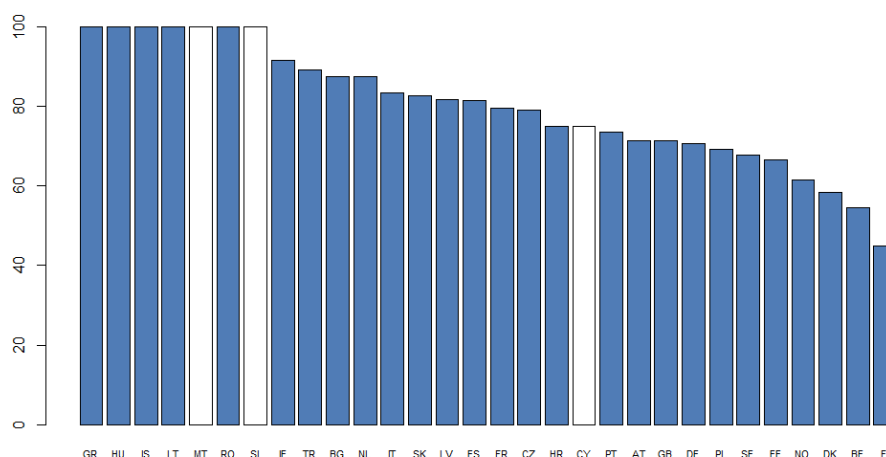


Figure 26: Share of coordinators (in %) who would recommend the Erasmus Dashboard by country of HEI (countries with fewer than or equal to 5 observations in white)

When the coordinators had to rate certain features of the Erasmus Dashboard, the following characteristics were graded from 1 (not satisfied at all) to 5 (very satisfied): 'clarity of the steps to manage the OLA' (3.27), 'reliability' (3.19), 'overall usability of the tool' (3.04), 'interface' (2.99), 'support material' (2.95) and 'diversity of the functionalities offered' (2.81). For the official adopters, those officially using OLA for LA management, the averages are higher but the order stays the same: 'clarity of the steps to manage the OLA' (3.79), 'reliability' (3.54), 'overall usability of the tool' (3.53), 'interface' (3.37), 'support material' (3.20) and 'diversity of the functionalities offered' (3.16) (see Table 4, Figure 27, and Figure 28). (Q18)

| Characteristic | Official adopters ⁹ | All coordinators |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Clarity of the steps to manage the OLA | 3.79 | 3.27 |
| Reliability | 3.54 | 3.19 |
| Overall usability of the tool | 3.53 | 3.04 |
| Interface | 3.37 | 2.99 |
| Support material | 3.20 | 2.95 |
| Diversity of functionalities offered ¹⁰ | 3.16 | 2.81 |

Table 4: Characteristics of the Erasmus Dashboard rated from 1 (not satisfied at all) to 5 (very satisfied) by coordinators

⁹ 'Official adopters' describes those coordinators who have officially adopted the OLA infrastructure by either all or some of their faculties and, thus, have responded to Q9 with either 'It has officially been adopted to manage incoming and/or outgoing Erasmus+ students' or 'It has officially been adopted by certain faculties/departments to manage their incoming and/or outgoing students'. This group amounts to 27.53% of all respondents.

¹⁰ The purpose of having coordinators rate this attribute was to understand to what extent the Erasmus Dashboard was missing key functionalities. The authors believe that the rather low score could be explained by the fact that at the time of the assessment the Erasmus Dashboard offered fewer functionalities than today. In the meantime, new features such as the Inter-Institutional Agreement Manager have been added and more are in the pipeline.

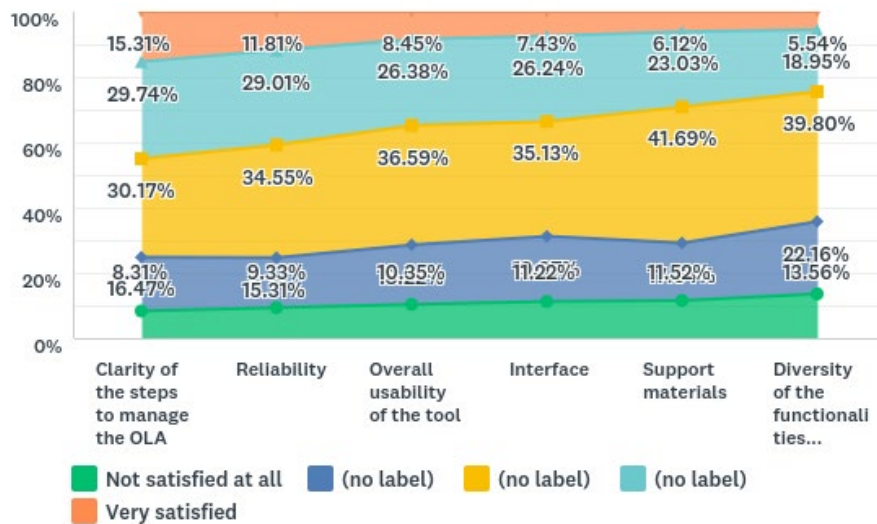


Figure 27: Satisfaction of all respondents with the features of the Erasmus Dashboard

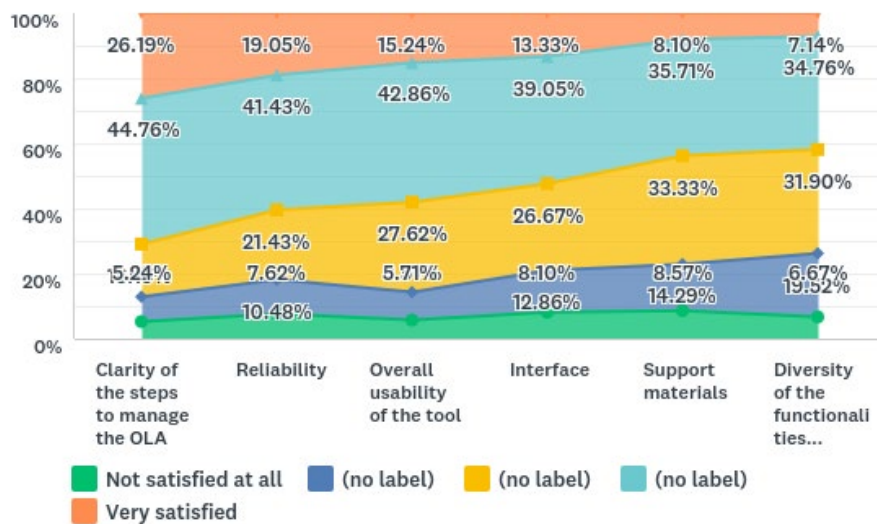


Figure 28: Satisfaction of official adopters with the features of the Erasmus Dashboard

More in-depth questions were asked to assess the satisfaction with specific aspects of the Erasmus Dashboard on a scale from 1 (do not agree at all) to 5 (fully agree) and the coordinators rated the following statements – again in descending order, average grade in brackets: ‘makes mobility management processes more transparent’ (3.51), ‘saves time in managing Erasmus+ mobilities’ (3.48), ‘allows to focus the IRO energy on more meaningful/quality-oriented tasks’ (3.32), ‘facilitates the communication with the students’ (3.20) and ‘Facilitates the communication with the partner institution’ (3.17). Here again, the averages are higher for those who have officially adopted the OLA and the order is slightly different: ‘saves time in managing Erasmus+ mobilities’ (4.07), ‘makes mobility management processes more transparent’ (3.93), ‘allows to focus the IRO energy on more meaningful/quality-oriented tasks’ (3.75), ‘facilitates the communication with the students’ (3.60) and ‘Facilitates the communication with the partner institution’ (3.40) (see Table 5). (Q21)

| Statement | Official adopters ¹¹ | All coordinators |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Makes mobility management processed more transparent | 4.07 | 3.51 |
| Saves time in managing Erasmus+ mobilities | 3.93 | 3.48 |
| Allows to focus the IRO energy on more meaningful/ quality-oriented tasks | 3.75 | 3.32 |
| Facilitates the communication with the students | 3.60 | 3.20 |
| Facilitates the communication with the partner institution | 3.40 | 3.17 |

Table 5: Statements about Erasmus Dashboard ranked by coordinators

The Erasmus Dashboard is welcomed by coordinators and several of its characteristics are believed to have a lot of potential. 101 out of 390 respondents stated that their favourite aspect of the Erasmus Dashboard is how *environmentally friendly* it is, that it reduces paper-waste or that it makes scanning and printing obsolete. Furthermore, 70 coordinators perceive the Dashboard to make everything more *efficient and faster*, which allows IRO staff to focus on other aspects increasing the quality of the mobility. Moreover, 44 respondents stated that they thought the Erasmus Dashboard is characterised by *clarity*, simplicity and ease of use. In addition, 30 stated that they highly valued the easy monitoring, tracking and *transparency* of the process. 22 liked that it is all done *digitally* or online. Furthermore, 22 respondents highlighted the advantage of having everything in one place or they liked the fact that the documents are stored on the platform. Moreover, 21 coordinators perceived the *online signing* to be especially clear and simple. The *accessibility* independent of place, time and device is highly appreciated by 11 people. Although with a lower frequency, the following characteristics were also praised: ability to filter students (5), possibility to upload a cohort of students at the same time (4), free of charge (3), the fact that coordinators have access to the LA without students having to send it to them (3), readability (3), and user-friendly interface (2) (see Table 6 for a summary). (Q24)

| Characteristic | Frequency (390 total answers) |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Environmentally friendly | 101 |
| Efficiency | 70 |
| Clarity | 44 |
| Transparency | 30 |
| Everything in one place | 22 |
| Simple online signing | 21 |
| Accessibility | 11 |

Table 6: Characteristics of the Erasmus Dashboard appreciated by coordinators

¹¹ 'Official adopters' are those coordinators who have officially adopted the OLA infrastructure by either all or some of their faculties and, thus, have responded to Q9 with either 'It has officially been adopted to manage incoming and/or outgoing Erasmus+ students' or 'It has officially been adopted by certain faculties/departments to manage their incoming and/or outgoing students'. This group amounts to 27.53% of all respondents.

User stories:

'That we do not have to print documents. Good for the environment and it saves a lot of time. I also find it very positive that we do not have to be physically present at the university in order to assess the courses.'

'If everyone would use it, it would be so much easier as you do not have to check all the different systems from different institutions and waste time to get to know them in order to be able to consult students.'

'That small universities with only a few mobilities and limited resources have a free database to also manage their mobilities digitally. That is a crucial basis that all universities can work completely digitally in the area of student mobility.'

How can the Erasmus Dashboard improve?

Nine coordinators were not satisfied with the user-friendliness of the interface, 7 stated that with a high number of mobilities the Dashboard is hard to manage and suggested that an introduction of filters could help, and 6 would appreciate more guidance on the GDPR compliance matters. Furthermore, 4 respondents stated that not all ISCED codes were made available, 2 were unable to download the OLA after completion, and 2 complained about the low adaptability to different kinds of browsers. (Q23, Q25)

User stories:

'The design of the website could be nicer and user-friendly. The student account duplicates if the student creates a new LA.'

'To me, it's an extra tool which I have to use in addition to Mobility Tool and Mobility online. It's just too much. I'd rather have the implementation of OLA in Mobility online somehow.'

'For smaller institutions the EWP Dashboard is a good solution. In case of a bigger amount of students, the handling of the EWP Dashboard is difficult due to the input of data.'

Some of the remarks above are consistent with the purpose of the Dashboard, which is not to replace own or third-party student information systems, but rather to ensure that even HEIs that lack appropriate digital infrastructure can be included in the EWP and ESCI initiatives. Meanwhile, the reason why many coordinators feel that they are not informed well enough about the functionalities of the Erasmus Dashboard may be traced back to the fact that only 34.99% say that they have used the EWP Competence Center (Q26). Therefore, overall, on a scale from 1 (not useful at all) to 5 (very useful), coordinators have perceived the support material to be somewhat useful with an average score of 3.32 (Q27). Of those who have used the EWP Competence Center, 60% would like to have 'more illustrations of the practical usage of the tools', 48.26% want 'more information on the future developments of the infrastructure and 23.48% would appreciate even more 'user stories from other HEIs'. 16.09% believe that the support material is already comprehensive enough (Q28) (see also Figure 29).

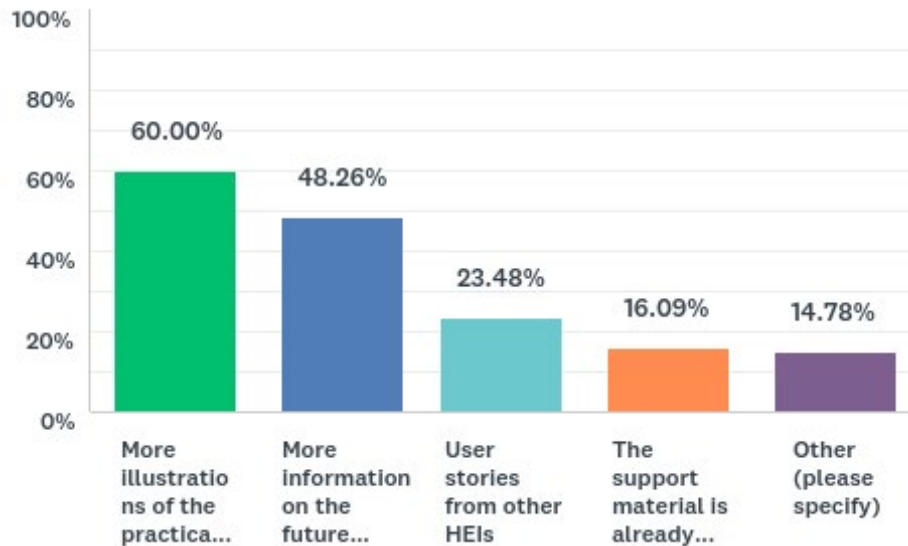


Figure 29: Types of support material additionally needed according to IROs who have already explored the EWP Competence Center

Recommendations by coordinators:

Regarding the above-mentioned issues with the Erasmus Dashboard, coordinators themselves phrased a few ideas.

Firstly, they call for a more intuitive and user-friendly interface, and they stated the need of interoperability between the Erasmus Dashboard and existing platforms such as the Mobility Tool or in-house and third-party solutions.

Furthermore, coordinators think that all mobility management processes should be incorporated into the Erasmus Dashboard platform (student and staff, Erasmus, International Credit Mobility (ICM) and non-Erasmus, documentation concerning academic aspects as well as financial (Grant Agreements)). Coordinators believe it is important that documents such as the Transcript of Records, completion of Study Certificate, or Application Form, are available on the platform as well.

Moreover, respondents believe it is necessary to revise the formatting of the final document and to address the download feature issues (error message when downloading).

Additionally, coordinators also think that there should be a reliable archive function for certain OLAs and that it should be easier to upload a list of students. The upload function should also support more formats such as .csv or .xlsx.

Discussion

Several of the points raised can undoubtedly inform the further development of the Dashboard, a good example of it being an improved user interface.

Steps are also being taken to expand the Dashboard functionality, notably through the addition of an IIA manager (made possible by synergies with the EWP project). Ensuring that all mobility management processes can be incorporated in the Dashboard is a much taller order, of course. Regarding the upload functionality, the current implementation is an evolution of a csv/xls upload which existed previously in the Dashboard and now offers much better data validation and has been broadly well-received.

Overall, this survey provides the project's team and EU authorities with a good sense of what kind of further developments would be welcomed by the academic community.

Next steps - Food for thought:

- *What is the potential for the initiatives on sharing and reusing the technical solutions with the community, such as Open Source University Alliance?*
- *How could digital Erasmus mobility management empower students to have more ownership over their curriculum and learning experiences in the situation of abundance of information?*
- *How could the existing digital infrastructure be further advanced to foster cooperation between the HEIs beyond administrative procedures?*

Upcoming digital changes

Looking into the future, and in the context of the ESCI, to ensure that their institution stays up-to-speed with implementing the upcoming digital changes IRO staff perceive the following aspects to be necessary: other than the already voiced need for support in the form of training of IRO personnel and IT staff, accessible information material, and a support contact point, 14.5% of respondents to Q29 describe the need to receive exhaustive information and clear communication at a sufficiently early point in time about future developments, deadlines and timelines, and the related implementation processes.

Additionally, 10% of coordinators perceive a lack of support from NAs. In this regard, they would appreciate clear communications of timelines and deadlines, giving the IRO staff enough time to adapt, and prior clarification of legal and data protection issues. Furthermore, 9.5% of coordinators experience a deficiency in internal support and commitment from the IT department and/or management. Concerning this, they claim to require more staff, financial means, and a higher degree of support from the decision-makers within the HEI. The IRO, the IT department and the management need to be better connected. 3.5% state that they specifically need more IT support. (Q29)

User stories:

'The design of the website could be nicer and user-friendly. The student account duplicates if the student creates a new LA.'

'To me, it's an extra tool which I have to use in addition to Mobility Tool and Mobility online. It's just too much. I'd rather have the implementation of OLA in Mobility online somehow.'

'For smaller institutions the EWP Dashboard is a good solution. In case of a bigger amount of students, the handling of the EWP Dashboard is difficult due to the input of data.'

Assorted topics

In addition, more than half of the coordinators stated that they do not receive support from their legal department regarding the implementation of GDPR compliance in their mobility processes (Q30).

Surprisingly, coordinators estimated the students' satisfaction with the OLA to be 2.887 (Q35), which is much lower than what the students themselves reported (3.651).

Finally, multiple coordinators (10 in Q25) expressed that every HEI involved in Erasmus+ should adopt the OLA, which should indeed be the case starting in 2021.

3 Conclusions

The current survey provided the OLA+ project team with extensive insight on the strengths and weaknesses of the infrastructure developed in the context of the current EU-funded project. The key takeaways are:

1. The OLA is very well received by the Erasmus student population, with recommendation rates above 90%. The continued development of the tool is informed by the feedback received as well as in line with the core needs and priorities of the Erasmus Programme.
2. The idea of digital LAs is equally well received by IROs, with more than 90% supporting its digitisation. However, both students and staff are aware that the digital transition remains a challenge for some, which is confirmed by a high proportion of agreements that are not completed digitally.
3. The Dashboard is well received by IROs, with more than 75% recommending its usage. This is a very encouraging score for a tool that is still in its first version, and there is clearly a huge interest in the notion of a digital one-stop-shop for managing as many aspects of the programme as possible.
4. There is vast room for improvement with regards to cooperation among all actors and national authorities in particular, namely regarding the sharing of information and good practices in the field of digitisation.
5. An assertive framework for the digitalisation of Erasmus is clearly needed. In this regard, the ESCI roadmap¹² announced in March 2019 is of critical importance.

¹² See more information here:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/events/webinar-inter-institutional-agreement-manager-higher-education-institutions_en

4 Policy Recommendations

Recommendations for the new Erasmus+ Programme (2021-2027)

The next Erasmus+ programme heralds an evolutionary approach to the betterment of student mobility, with digitisation providing a remedy for several tedious parts of mobility administration. In order to make the most of the transition ahead, paper-based processes need to be tweaked for the digital age, so to enable more transparency, easier reporting, better quality assurance and significant efficiency gains.

The EUF and the OLA+ project consortium highly value the vast amount of feedback collected in these two surveys. As can be concluded from the positive results of this research, the OLA and the Erasmus Dashboard are seen as efficient tools to streamline the processes surrounding Erasmus+ mobility management.

The recommendations that follow stem from the results of the OLA+ project, taking into account the project's team expertise, the survey results, the feedback received through multiplier events and email exchanges with hundreds, if not thousands, of colleagues already using the project results.

The recommendations are put forward by the OLA+ project consortium, composed of the EUF (coordinating institution), the Erasmus Student Network and eight universities: the University of Luxembourg (Luxembourg), Lodz University of Technology (Poland), the University of Vienna (Austria), the University of Marburg (Germany), the University of Alcalá (Spain), the University of Bergen (Norway), the Erasmus University Rotterdam (the Netherlands), and Panthéon-Sorbonne University (France).

The document below will present and debate some ideas on how the new Erasmus+ Programme can be made more student and staff-friendly while promoting better cooperation, mobility, inclusion, recognition and transparency.

Clear and genuine commitments

In line with the Recommendation from the Council on full automatic recognition¹³, more clarity is needed over the commitments and their implications among all parties involved in signing LAs to ensure the process is transparent and cannot be contested.

By adjusting the wording of the existing parts of the LA in the following way

1. Before Mobility LA → Preliminary LA
2. During Mobility LA → Final LA
3. After Mobility LA → Transcript of Records

the document would reflect processes more realistically and there would be no need for the additional comments from the home or the host HEI when signing the LA.

These adjustments could pave the way for a very important *simplification* of the LA process: the mandatory signature from the host institution in the before the mobility part would no longer be needed. The *Preliminary* LA would essentially express the commitment of the sending institutions to recognising the ECTS that students will earn abroad. Currently, the host signature is not regarded as neither meaningful nor iron-clad in any case. The Preliminary LA would then become the Final LA if no changes are made upon arrival. Such status update could be triggered automatically after a specific time frame, after arrival and enrollment in the courses. Alternatively, if changes do occur (as is still often the case) the LA would become Final once validated by the host institution.

¹³ See more information here:
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32018H1210%2801%29>

Radical transparency as a baseline for the new programme

Students would benefit enormously if the LA would indicate simply and clearly what learning outcomes will be automatically recognised towards their degree – something which could be fixed by adding a simple tick box on Table B.

In such a way, the automatic recognition of courses that are successfully completed can take place without further delay upon their return. Additionally, when a commitment to recognise courses automatically is part of the Inter-institutional Agreement between the institutions, a connection between the IIA and the OLA could ensure that these tick boxes would be automatically filled, providing students with a higher level of trust regarding the recognition of their studies abroad.

Provisions

Currently, a separate field with an URL is part of the template to illustrate the provisions in case a student does not successfully complete the Learning Outcomes agreed upon in the LA, yet such consequences are already implied in the commitment text, and the URL should not be used for disclaimers in the process of recognition.

Making the LA work more smoothly

Connecting the LA and the IIA

One of the current flaws of the LA process is ascertaining who the right person to validate the agreement is, whether at the sending or, perhaps more critically, the receiving institution. In some cases, this data could be contained in the IIA, and linking the OLA to the IIA would make it possible to bypass the need to enter such details.

From signing to validation

As the transition from paper to digital LA is nearing its end, the solutions used until now for signing LAs need to be reviewed, as scanned signatures were a mere stepping stone for the usage of more appropriate digital signatures.

From 2021 onwards, the paradigm should shift from 'signing' to 'validating'. In practice, this means LAs will be validated by a simple click of a button, which will invoke the authentication credentials of the person performing this action. This will be an important step to ease the administrative burden by removing once and for all the creation, signing, stamping and storing of paper copies. This must be accompanied by a firm statement in the programme guidelines that paper copies are obsolete and an OLA process that is machine-readable is all that is needed for fulfilling the administrative, quality assurance and audit requirements of the programme.

The implications of requesting more than one signature per HEI, even in the double degree programmes, is not a recommended practice because it increases the administrative burden and can create obstacles in the recognition process.

Contact and Responsible person

The field of Contact person is not always used and in the digital format could be replaced by a specific contact point in every HEI for incoming and outgoing students that would always be kept up to date. Connection with the data from IIA can also be leveraged for this purpose, as noted above.

For the sake of clarity towards the student, the Responsible person could be renamed as 'Responsible Person for Signing the Learning Agreement' to make sure there is a mutual understanding of the weight of the commitment and correspondingly recognition procedures.

It is also key to foresee potential changes of the Responsible Person for Signing the Learning Agreement in the Preliminary and Final LA. Changes occur frequently due to high turnover of staff members and should be possible as per template design. However, clarity needs to be added to the fact that recognition processes should not be endangered due to such changes and previous commitments made by the Responsible Person for Signing the Final Learning Agreement are legally binding.

No more annexes

Currently annexes are used to convey information that goes beyond the LA structure. However, simplifying and streamlining the LA entails a better approach where all relevant data fields are incorporated in the LA structure. A digital LA cannot cater to the usage of annexes for reasons of security and transparency.

Course catalogue API connections

Searching and copy-pasting course details onto the LA remains a source of errors and inaccuracies. In order to render the review of LAs simpler and more accurate steps must be taken to make the course catalogue information more easily available.

In the context of the OLA project, we have developed low-cost solutions for the course catalogues to be connected to the OLA tool directly, with a view to improve usability. From a mid-term perspective, it would be reasonable to expect such a connection to be requested to every HEI that handles a certain volume of Erasmus mobilities, which would amount to a substantial improvement of the current URL field.

Dates of the mobility period

The LA should not serve the purpose of the Grant Agreement for the calculation of the exact dates and length of the mobility. Therefore, to ease the process when potential changes would need to be introduced in the mobility time frame, we suggest mentioning only the academic year/semester/trimester.

Versioning

As the LA becomes a digital tool, it should evolve beyond the paper format limitations. Practically speaking, this means that instead of a 'before' and 'during' section we could simply allow versioning of the LA. This would have the merit of making the students' current status more transparent to them, while allowing a history of all changes to be readily available to all parties involved in the agreement.

Faculty/Department

At the moment, both fields are merged together, yet to ensure a clean and smooth data exchange, the fields should be updated according to the organisational units used in the Inter-institutional agreement.

ICM

The same template for the ICM and non-Erasmus mobilities should be applied to keep the deviations to the minimum.

Data minimisation

Unique student ID

The introduction of a European Student Identifier, following the ambition of the ESCI and the work carried out under the [MyAcademicID](#) project, will eventually allow to discard many of the personal data fields, as such information would be embedded in the European Student Identifier and therefore would not be needed on the Agreement as such.

The same applies to the basic data of HEIs.

Gender

The merit of requesting the gender to be indicated in the current LA template is questionable, particularly when only binary answer options are considered.

Sync with Mobility Tool+ – potential updates in the LA for Traineeships

The new template should contain the same data fields that will actually be collected in the reports in the Mobility Tool+, which means that there are some fields that would need to be reviewed and/or removed or added to the LA for Traineeships template. For example, if the European Commission requires the fields of

type and symbol of the organisation, public organisation/public body (y/n), non-profit (y/n) in the Mobility Tool+, then these should be added to the LA template.

Furthermore, the template currently foresees three different types of contact persons: 'Contact person', 'Mentor' and 'Supervisor'. To avoid misunderstandings and to strengthen the single point of contact, the field 'Mentor' could be removed.

Information on all types of insurance should be merged in one place for greater clarity and transparency.

Application for mobility stage

As the application to go abroad is the first step to participate in Erasmus, ideally all the matters concerning the GDPR compliance have to be clarified either during this process or even before (e.g. upon enrolling at the HEI). Upon applying for mobility the student should therefore already be aware of how their data will be processed through the lifetime of their mobility (and beyond that as the documentation needs to be stored for audit purposes). As such, any GDPR compliance mentions could be removed from the LA template.

Appendix

Original questions

Students survey

Welcome to the Online Learning Agreement Survey

Dear Student,

Firstly, thank you for your trust and readiness to try out the Online Learning Agreement (OLA).

To further advance the tool, we would very much appreciate your feedback to make it more useful and user-friendly.

The data is gathered and analysed by the EU-funded Online Learning Agreement+ project consortium – and will be used only in an anonymised form.

Should you have any questions, please contact - support@erasmusapp.eu.

The survey will take approximately 5-10 min and you can also resume filling it in at a later stage.

With kindest regards,

Online Learning Agreement team

Online Learning Agreement Survey

1. By agreeing to participate in this survey, you give your consent to have your personal data collected and processed by EUF for the purposes of analysing input on the quality of the OLA+. Any personal data collected by the EU-funded Online Learning Agreement+ project consortium will be deleted as soon as our research activities for this study are over. By filling in the survey, you agree to SurveyMonkey's privacy statement.

- Yes (continue to the survey)
- No (leave the survey)

Student status confirmation

2. Are you/were you a student who has used/is using the Online Learning Agreement?

- Yes
- No

Experience with the Online Learning Agreement

3. How easy did you find managing your Online Learning Agreement? (1 - very hard and 5 - very easy)

- 1 (very hard) - 5 (very easy)

4. Please evaluate the Online Learning Agreement tool according to the given categories (1-not satisfied at all and 5-very satisfied).

- Clarity of the steps to fill in the OLA
- Interface
- Diversity of functionalities offered
- Overall usability of the tool
- Support materials

5. Would you recommend the OLA to other Erasmus+ students?

- Yes
- No
- Don't have enough experience to tell

6. If your answer was no, please explain why.

7. Do you think it would be better to fill in your Learning Agreement on a PDF and have it sent by email to the various mobility coordinators?

- Yes
- No

8. If yes, please tell us why.

Online Learning Agreement - Usability

9. What do you like the most about the Online Learning Agreement platform?

10. What could be improved (changed or added) to the Online Learning Agreement?

Usage of the OLA

11. The Online Learning Agreement is meant to digitise this step of your mobility process. However, we are aware that sometimes users fall back to the paper-based version. Please indicate in which format you managed your Learning Agreement.

- Online, on the Online Learning Agreement platform only
- Online, using both the Online Learning Agreement platform and another online tool
- On the Online Learning Agreement platform for my home institution, but on paper/pdf for my host institution
- On paper/pdf for my home institution, but on the Online Learning Agreement platform for my host institution
- Only on paper/pdf
- Other (please specify)

LA fully on paper/pdf

12. Why was the Online Learning Agreement process (also) on paper? (Choose all that apply)

Lack of needed functionality in the OLA

- I found the system difficult to use
- Lack of willingness from my home institution
- Lack of willingness from my host institution
- I was worried about data security
- Technical difficulty/bug
- Other (please specify)

Finalisation of OLA

13. Did you manage to finalise the Online Learning Agreement (get it signed by both your home and host institution) on time?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

Additional features

14. Have you used the OLA to make changes to your Learning Agreement?

- Yes
- No

Changes to OLA

15. How satisfied were you with the functionality to make changes to your Online Learning Agreement?

- 1 (not satisfied at all) - 5 (very satisfied)

16. What could be improved (changed or added) in the functionality to make changes to your Online Learning Agreement?

OLA for Traineeships

17. Have you used the OLA for Traineeships?

- Yes
- No

18. How satisfied were you with the OLA for Traineeships?

- 1 (not satisfied at all) - 5 (very satisfied)

19. What could be improved (changed or added) in the OLA for Traineeships?

Erasmus+ App

20. Have you used the Erasmus+ Mobile App alongside the Online Learning Agreement?

- Yes
- No

21. How satisfied were you with the functionality to interact with the Online Learning Agreement via the Erasmus+ App?

- 1 (not satisfied at all) - 5 (very satisfied)

22. What could be improved (changed or added) in the Erasmus+ App?

Background info

23. Country of your home institution

- Drop-down selection

24. How big is your home institution?

- Less than 5,000 students
- 5,000-10,000 students
- 10,000-30,000 students
- 30,000 - 50,000 students
- More than 50,000 students

25. Country of your host institution

- Drop-down selection

26. How big is your host institution?

- Less than 5,000 students
- 5,000-10,000 students
- 10,000-30,000 students
- 30,000 - 50,000 students
- More than 50,000 students

27. You are almost done! Do you have any other comments/questions/suggestions?

Coordinators survey

Welcome to the OLA Survey

Dear Coordinators/Mobility-without-paper facilitators,

Firstly, thank you for your readiness to try out the Online Learning Agreement (OLA) and the Erasmus Dashboard. To further advance the tools, we would very much appreciate your feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the tools.

The data is gathered and analysed by the consortium of the EU-funded Online Learning Agreement+ project (2017-1-LU01-KA203-023932) in an anonymised form.

Please see more information in the Competence Centre here and should you have any questions, please contact us at dashboard@uni-foundation.eu.

The survey will take approximately 10-15 min and you can also resume filling it in at a later stage.

Thank you for your feedback and kind regards,
Online Learning Agreement project consortium

Online Learning Agreement survey - Coordinators

1. By agreeing to participate in this survey, you give your consent to have your personal data collected and processed by the Online Learning Agreement+ project consortium for the purposes of analysing input on the quality of the OLA and Erasmus Dashboard. Any personal data collected by the Online Learning Agreement+ project consortium will be deleted as soon as our research activities for this study are over. By filling in the survey, you agree to the SurveyMonkey's privacy statement.

- Yes (continue to the survey)
- No (leave the survey)

Background info

2. How many students are enrolled in your higher education institution (HEI)?

Fewer than 5,000 students

- 5000 - 10,000 students
- 10,000 - 30,000 students
- 30,000 - 50,000 students
- More than 50,000 students

3. On average, how many incoming Erasmus+ students does your higher education institution receive each semester?

- Fewer than 50
- 50 - 200
- 200 - 500
- 500 - 1,000
- 1,000 - 2,000
- More than 2,000

4. On average, how many outgoing Erasmus+ students does your higher education institution send abroad each semester?

- Fewer than 50
- 50 - 200
- 200 - 500
- 500 - 1,000
- 1,000 - 2,000
- More than 2,000

5. In which country is your institution based?

- Drop-down box

6. In your opinion, the workload surrounding the management of Erasmus+ exchanges is

- Very High
- High
- Average
- Low
- Very low

7. Is the management of Erasmus+ mobility at your institution the main responsibility of

- The faculties/departments
- The central IRO
- Both, but predominantly the faculties/departments
- Both, but predominantly the central IRO
- Other (please specify)

8. How many signatures are needed from your side (for the outgoing students) for the Learning Agreement to be confirmed?

Usage of the OLA

9. How is the Online Learning Agreement infrastructure (Erasmus Dashboard and Online Learning Agreement) being used at your institution?

- It is has officially been adopted to manage incoming and/or outgoing Erasmus+ students
- It is has officially been adopted by certain faculties/departments to manage their incoming and/or outgoing students
- Currently being tested with a pilot group of students/faculty(ies)
- Currently being tested internally at the IRO/certain faculty(ies) (no students involved)
- We have created an account but we have not tried it or used it yet
- Other (please specify)

10. What were the main reasons that led your HEI to introduce OLA in its official workflows? (Maximum three main reasons)

- Attempt to further decrease the workload
- Pressure from partner HEIs to use OLA
- Pressure from students to use OLA
- Financially appealing alternative to commercial or in-house mobility management system
- Curiosity to try out new approaches
- Other (please specify)

11. Besides the Erasmus Dashboard and OLA, are you currently using another online system to manage student mobility?

- Yes, an in-house system
- Yes, a third-party service provider
- Yes, a mix of in-house and third-party providers
- No other specialised IT tool
- Other (please specify)

12. Since you started using the Online Learning Agreement, how many OLAs (both outgoing and/or incoming) have you processed (reviewed, signed or declined)?

- Up to 10 OLAs
- Between 10 and 50 OLAs
- Between 50 and 100 OLAs
- Between 100 and 300 OLAs
- More than 300 OLAs
- Other (please specify)

13. Approximately, what is the share of all the OLAs that were successfully finalised online among outgoing mobilities? (i.e. no paper-based versions of the given Learning Agreement were introduced along the way)

- Less than 25%
- 25% to 50%
- 50% to 75%
- More than 75%
- Other (please specify)

14. Approximately, what is the share of all the OLAs that were successfully finalised online among incoming mobilities? (i.e. no paper-based versions of the given Learning Agreement were introduced along the way)

- Less than 25%
- 25% to 50%
- 50% to 75%
- More than 75%
- Other (please specify)

15. If you had to fall back to the paper-based version of the Learning Agreement for outgoing mobilities, what were the main reasons?

- Host institution is using another online infrastructure
- Host institution signed the LA on paper/pdf
- Host institution was not comfortable with the signature solution in OLA
- Functionality missing to finalise the LA on Online Learning Agreement/ Erasmus Dashboard platform
- The host institution stopped the online process and gave no explanation
- Other (please specify)

16. If you had to fall back to the paper-based version of the Learning Agreement for incoming mobilities, what were the main reasons?

- Home institution is using other online infrastructure
- Home institution signed the LA on paper/pdf
- Home institution was not comfortable with the signature solution in OLA
- Functionality missing to finalise the LA on Online Learning Agreement/ Erasmus Dashboard platform
- Other (please specify)

17. Please specify which functionalities were missing to successfully finalise the Learning Agreement on Online Learning Agreement/ Erasmus Dashboard platform.

Evaluation of OLA - generic

18. Please tell us how satisfied you are with each of the following features of the Erasmus Dashboard on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = not satisfied at all and 5 = very satisfied)

- Clarity of the steps to manage the OLA
- Interface
- Reliability
- Diversity of the functionalities offered
- Overall usability of the tool
- Support materials

19. How much time do you estimate it takes for a staff member to finalise a paper-based learning agreement for an outgoing student from your institution (on average, in minutes per Learning Agreement)?

- Less than 15 min
- 15 to 30 min
- 30 to 60 min
- 60 to 90 min
- 90 to 120 min
- More than 120 min
- Other (please specify)

20. In the case you found the usage of the OLA to be more efficient than other methods of managing the Learning Agreements, how would you estimate the % of the time saved (e.g. minutes per Learning Agreement)?

- Less than 10%
- 10-30%
- 30-50%
- 50-70%
- 70-90%
- More than 90%
- Other (please specify)

21. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the Erasmus Dashboard? (1 = do not agree at all, 5 = fully agree)

- Saves time in managing Erasmus+ mobilities
- Allows to focus the IRO energy on more meaningful/quality-oriented tasks
- Makes mobility management processes more transparent
- Facilitates the communication with the partner institution
- Facilitates the communication with the students

22. Would you recommend the Erasmus Dashboard to other mobility coordinators?

- Yes
- No

23. If not, please explain why

24. What is your favourite aspect of the Erasmus Dashboard?

25. And if you could change two things, what would it be?

Support materials

26. Have you used the Erasmus Dashboard support material (Competence Center)?

- Yes
- No

27. Please indicate how useful you have found the support material to be on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is not useful at all and 5 is very useful)

- 1 (not useful at all) - 5 (very useful)

28. What should be added to the support material available?

- More illustrations of the practical usage of the tools
- More information on the future developments of the infrastructure (e.g. connection to the EWP)
- User stories from other HEIs
- The support material is already comprehensive
- Other (please specify)

29. Looking into the future, and in the context of the European Student Card Initiative, what kind of support would you require to ensure that your institution stays up-to-speed with implementing the upcoming digital changes?

30. Do you receive support from your legal department regarding implementation of GDPR compliance in your mobility management processes?

- Yes
- No

Connection to the Erasmus+ App

31. Have you interacted with your incoming and/or outgoing students via the Erasmus+ App?

- Yes
- No

32. How satisfied are you with the connection from the Erasmus Dashboard to the Erasmus+ App in the following aspects (1-not satisfied at all and 5-very satisfied)

- Clarity of the steps to interact with the Erasmus+ App
- Diversity of the functionalities offered
- Reliability
- Overall usability of the features
- Support materials
- Other (please specify)

Future steps

33. Do you think all Erasmus+ Learning Agreements should be done online through a simple-to-use tool?

- Yes
- No

34. If your answer was no, what are the limitations and arguments for not doing all Erasmus+ Learning Agreements online?

35. How satisfied are your students with the Online Learning Agreement platform? (where 1- not satisfied at all and 5-very satisfied)

- Not satisfied at all - Very satisfied

36. Before finishing the survey - any other comments/questions/suggestions



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