**Please describe your institution's international (EU and non-EU) strategy. In your description please explain a) how you choose your partners, b) in which geographical area(s) and c) the most important objectives and target groups of your mobility activities (with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, including study and training, and short cycles). If applicable, also explain how your institution participates in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees. (max. 5000 characters)**

Birkbeck is a world-class research institution, and the UK’s leading provider of part-time, evening education for mature students.

The principal aims of Birkbeck are:

• To provide part-time courses of study to meet the changing educational, cultural, and training needs of adults who are engaged in earning their livelihood

• To enable adult students from diverse social and educational backgrounds to participate in our courses

Over the years we have developed links with a number of international universities, this has supported and developed our understanding and commitment to international students through knowledge exchange.

We are currently running an exchange scheme with our Chinese partners to support students who wish to work internationally or develop their understanding and experience of other cultures . Birkbeck is also involved in the Executive Master programme in European Sport Governance (MESGO).

Many of our Erasmus partnership have grown up organically There has been no deliberate plan of cultiuvation and the establishment of these alliances has been ad hoc, but they are rational because scholars clustered around certain interests have set them up and populated them.

We focus mainly on staff exchanges, given the nature of our part-time student body. With full time students, though, in future this might be a route to explore.

Hence Staff exchanges are at the heart of the mobility activities as they promote both the internationalization of Birkbeck's curriculum by bringing the outstanding European scholars in the field to Birkbeck, and by enabling Birkbeck academic staff to develop their understanding of the wider European environment by teaching in the partner institutions, and by laying the foundation for the development of future research relationships. PhD student exchanges will help to enrich the quality of the research environment at Birkbeck by hosting high quality PhD researchers from peer institutions at Birkbeck, and by allowing Birkbeck’s own PhD students to develop their international research networks.

Erasmus has enabled us to benefit from the scholarship of colleagues in Europe.

**Please explain the expected impact of your participation in the Programme on the modernisation of your institution (for each of the 5 priorities of the Modernisation Agenda\*) in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve. (max. 3000 characters)**

During 2011-12, a strategic decision was taken to change the business model of employer engagement at Birkbeck in order to increase the effectiveness of the knowledge triangle.

To develop a more cohesive platform for knowledge exchange activity, responsibility for business engagement and knowledge transfer was devolved to our five schools and individuals were recruited who had a background in the relevant disciplines and could perform a conduit role between HE and business. Examples of current projects linking HE, research and business are as follows:

**Employability**

• Collaborating with professional bodies to produce qualifications which enable students to gain both technical expertise and soft skills to support them at work.

• Delivering taster sessions on workplace well-being within central and local government to encourage staff to engage with learning

**Research and Innovation**

• Collaborating with local employers, particularly in computer science, where students have delivered in-house projects in and we are also developing proposals for the commercialisation of products.

**Widening Participation**

• We continue to develop our flexible pathways for work based learning along with collaboration with the unions to encourage members to develop their careers through higher education.

Our Erasmus work has led to discussions and practical knowledge relating to the bologna process and its implications for both us and for the European universities that are our partners. We believe that these discussions and the exposure of our partners to our working practices has facilitated the introduction of Bologna's agreements here and broad. We are acutely aware of the increased internationalisatio of education and the Erasmus scheme has helped us to make links with bodies of international students and academics.

We aim to increase mobility of staff, and then, wherever possible, of students, as part of our modernisation agenda.

By enhancing the quality of the curriculum though incorporating the teaching input of the best international scholars in the field, and by enhancing the international mobility of Birkbeck academics and PhD researchers, the following “modernization” agenda objectives are achieved:

• Enhances the research training of PhD Researchers

• Graduate employment is enhanced through a higher quality curriculum

• Enhances the professional development of those academic staff participating in the Erasmus Exchange

• Encourages the building of learning mobility more systematically into the curriculum