

VIRTUAL SUPPORT FOR MOBILE STUDENTS – WHAT ICT CAN DO TO ENHANCE STUDENT MOBILITY

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Abstract:

- How do universities support incoming and outgoing students by means of ICT?
- How do mobile students cope with different ICT systems and policies at home and abroad?
- How can “virtual Erasmus” be used to prepare and follow-up physical mobility?
- How could teachers support their mobile students at a distance by means of e-coaching tools?

One of the key objectives of the Bologna process is the promotion of mobility of students among all participating countries. Students should get easier access to study and training opportunities outside their home country.

The European project VICTORIOUS conducted a large-scale study on ICT support and digital services for mobile students in Europe by means of questionnaires and student interviews. More than 2000 students were asked about their experiences when studying abroad. Also more than 50 universities all over Europe provided information on how they support incoming and outgoing students by means of ICT. Based on those surveys a number of pilots or feasibility tests were conducted to find solutions to particular problems that arose or questions that came up about ways to support mobility in a digital age.

The recently started European project VM-BASE builds further upon the results of the VICTORIOUS research. VM-BASE focuses on virtual activities, which can be used to prepare and follow-up the physical mobility of students to enrich the exchange and make it even more effective and fruitful. Examples are virtual preparatory and return initiatives and the support of teachers in coaching at a distance (e-coaching). The project thus aims at enhancing the impact and efficiency of the Erasmus programme through the set-up and support of a ‘blended’ Erasmus action.

This article builds up a picture of digital services and support for European students available and presents the challenges of European universities based on the research and activities carried out by the above-mentioned projects. Both projects are part-funded by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture.

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