



BRIEFING PAPER

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The Turing Scheme

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Contents:

1. Background
2. The announcement of the Turing Scheme
3. The launch of the website
4. Responses to the new scheme
5. Issues
6. Comment



Contents

Summary	3
1. Background	4
1.1 Erasmus+	4
1.2 Brexit	5
2. The announcement of the Turing Scheme	6
2.1 Further details	6
3. The launch of the website	9
3.1 About the scheme	9
3.2 Who is eligible?	10
3.3 Widening access	11
4. Responses to the new scheme	13
4.1 The devolved administrations	13
4.2 Sector responses	13
5. Issues	15
5.1 Inward mobility	15
6. Comment	17

Summary

The Erasmus programme was launched in 1987 with 11 participating member states, including the UK. It has enabled students to study in another European country – or a ‘partner country’ elsewhere in the world – by funding their grants and waiving their tuition fees. In 2014, the programme became Erasmus+ and expanded to include apprentices, volunteers, staff and youth exchanges, and jobseekers.

The UK’s decision to leave the European Union following the 2016 referendum did not necessarily mean that it had to end its involvement with the Erasmus+ programme.

The UK government, however, have said that the terms for continued participation offered by the EU were not in the interests of the UK taxpayer.

On 24 December 2020, the Prime Minister announced that the UK would no longer participate in the Erasmus+ programme, and it would be replaced by the Turing Scheme.

The scheme will be backed by £110 million, and will provide funding for around 35,000 participants in universities, colleges, and schools to go on placements and exchanges across the world from September 2021.

On 6 February 2021, the website for the Turing Scheme was launched and it provides details about funding and eligibility to enable organisations to prepare for bids to open in March 2021 for six weeks.

Projects must focus on four main objectives:

- Global Britain
- Levelling up
- Developing key skills
- Value for UK taxpayers

Organisational funding will help to cover the administrative costs of a placement, while grants will help to cover the living and travel costs of participants. In both cases, the support available is broadly in line with what was on offer under Erasmus+.

In order to widen access to groups underrepresented in international placements, there is also additional financial support available to participants from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Scottish and Welsh governments have expressed their disappointment at both the decision to leave the Erasmus+ programme and the nature of its replacement.

The announcement of the Turing Scheme has been welcomed within the education sector, but there are concerns that the decision not to fund inward mobilities will lead to a decrease in the number of students coming to the UK and the loss of benefits that they bring.

1. Background

1.1 Erasmus+

The Erasmus programme was launched in 1987 with 11 participating member states, including the UK. Since then, the programme has enabled more than four million students to study in another European country by funding their grants and waiving their tuition fees.

In 2014, the programme became Erasmus+ and expanded to include apprentices, volunteers, staff and youth exchanges, and jobseekers. Today, Erasmus has 34 full members, including several non-EU nations such as Norway and Iceland, as well as more than 160 partner countries.

The guide *Erasmus+: An introduction* provides an overview of the programme's purpose:

Erasmus+ helps people at all stages of their life, from school through to adulthood, to pursue stimulating opportunities for learning and enabling them to gain the valuable life-skills and international experience they need to succeed in today's world.¹

Although Erasmus+ is funded via the EU, each country involved manages most of the funding decisions via a National Agency. In the UK, the Erasmus+ programme was delivered by the [UK National Agency](#), a partnership between the British Council and Ecorys UK, which reported to the Department for Education (DfE).

Erasmus+ is run on seven-yearly cycles and the last cycle in which the UK participated ended in 2020. The total value of all Erasmus+ projects funded in the UK increased each year from €112million in the 2014 'call' (application period) to **€145million in 2018**.²

10,133 students in higher education (HE) in the UK participated in the 2018 call for study placements abroad through Erasmus+, while a further **8,172** students participated in work placements.³ In terms of study placements taken up by HE students in 2018, the UK was the **6th highest participating country** in the programme.

When compared to the general student population in 2013/14 (the most recent year that data is available), Erasmus+ participants from the UK were:

- more likely to be white
- around half as likely to be Black and around one-third as likely to be Asian
- slightly less likely to have a physical or mental disability
- more likely to be from 'higher' socio-economic backgrounds.⁴

¹ Erasmus+, UK National Agency, and the Department of Education, *Erasmus: An Introduction*, January 2020. Available at <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/publications>

² [Erasmus statistics](#).

³ [Erasmus+ annual report 2019](#) – statistical annex, EC (annex 15).

⁴ [Statistics and results for Erasmus](#).

In 2018, **29,797** students came to the UK on study and work placements, which was **64% more than the total number of UK participants** in the programme that year.

Further information about Erasmus and the UK's participation in the programme is available in the Commons Briefing Paper [The Erasmus Programme, 6 January 2020](#).

1.2 Brexit

The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020. During the post-Brexit transition (or implementation) period, which ended on 31 December 2020, details of the UK's future relationship with the EU were negotiated, including the UK's participation in EU programmes like Erasmus+.

During this period, the UK's involvement in Erasmus+ continued as planned, and any funding agreed was honoured, including for future placements that were due to take place after the end of the transition period.⁵

The decision to leave the European Union did not necessarily mean that the UK had to leave the Erasmus+ programme, and the government have said that say they would have considered participating in certain elements on a time-limited basis if the terms had proved favourable to the UK.⁶

Box 1: Participant countries in Erasmus+

Programme Countries are eligible for all the benefits of the Erasmus+ programme, and this a category that includes all full member states of the EU, as well as Norway, Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, and Liechtenstein.

Partner Countries are eligible for some parts of Erasmus+ subject to specific criteria or conditions being met, and this a category that includes non-EU states on the European continent, such as Albania, and many other countries across the world including Australia, Japan, India, China, Brazil, and Nigeria.

Having calculated that continued involvement would have entailed a net cost in the region of **£2 billion over the next seven-year cycle**, the government said that they did not believe these arrangements offered value-for-money, and so were not in the interests of the UK taxpayer.⁷

⁵ [PQ 108312](#) [Erasmus+ Programme] 25 October 2017.

⁶ [PQ 136453](#) [Erasmus+ Programme] 20 January 2021.

⁷ [PQ 133977](#) [Turing Scheme] 15 January 2021. This would have comprised a GDP-based contribution and a new participation fee: [PQ 132973](#) [Turing Scheme] 13 January 2021.

2. The announcement of the Turing Scheme

On 24 December 2020, the Prime Minister announced that the UK would no longer participate in the Erasmus+ scheme, and that it would be replaced by the **Turing Scheme**, named after the Mathematician Alan Turing.

The Prime Minister said that leaving Erasmus had been a “tough decision”, but that a new scheme would give students the opportunity “not just to go to European universities, but to go to the best universities in the world”.⁸

A DfE [press release](#) from 26 December 2020 provided a brief overview of the government’s intentions for the new scheme:

The Turing Scheme will be backed by over **£100 million**, providing funding for around **35,000 students in universities, colleges and schools** to go on placements and exchanges overseas, starting in **September 2021**.⁹

It is hoped that UK organisations will be able to bid into the scheme from early 2021. Those organisations who are successful will receive funding for administering the scheme, while participants will receive grants to help cover their costs.

Funding decisions for subsequent years will be subject to future spending reviews, but the stated aim of the DfE is to deliver greater value-for-money to taxpayers.

The DfE said that the new scheme would target students from disadvantaged backgrounds to “make life-changing opportunities accessible to everyone across the country”.

2.1 Further details

On 4 February 2021, the Turing Scheme was brought within the scope of the Student Support Regulations, which are due to come into force on 1 March 2021.¹⁰ The regulations allow students participating in the Turing Scheme to receive the same support as students on Erasmus+ placements:

There is a change in the definition of “Erasmus year” so that it covers both the EU’s Erasmus scheme and the UK’s new domestic alternative to Erasmus, the Turing Scheme. Students on either scheme will be entitled to the same levels of support.¹¹

Since the announcement of the scheme, additional information has been outlined in parliamentary questions and debates.

⁸ “[Erasmus: What could happen to the scheme after Brexit?](#)”, *BBC News*, 25 December 2020 (accessed 12 February 2021).

⁹ DfE Press Release, [New Turing scheme to support thousands of students to study and work abroad](#), 26 December 2020.

¹⁰ [The Education \(Student Fees, Awards and Support\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021](#)

¹¹ [The Education \(Student Fees, Awards and Support\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021, Explanatory Memoranda](#) p. 6, para 7.12.

Scope of the scheme

The UK government have said that the new scheme is underpinned by a desire to **promote social mobility** and **provide value-for-money for the UK taxpayer**.¹² Speaking in a debate on the subject in the House of Lords on 4 January 2021, Lord Parkinson said that:

we want to ensure that part of the new Turing Scheme is a focus on disadvantaged students—those who may not have had the opportunity to benefit from programmes such as Erasmus+ in the past. We are working directly with educational institutions to make sure that people are able to take up those opportunities and we will provide additional funding for disadvantaged students to cover, for instance, the cost of passports or visas, or for students with disabilities to undertake preparatory visits to make sure that all the necessary accommodations can be made for them.¹³

The government have said that the new scheme will be **global**, and participation will be **open to students of all subjects and nationalities studying at UK universities, colleges, and schools**.¹⁴

Administration and costs

The Turing Scheme will be backed by **over £100 million** for the academic year 2021-22 – **a figure which includes the costs of administering the scheme**.¹⁵

The government considered whether to fund students coming to the UK as part of the scheme design, but ultimately decided not to in order to ensure value-for-money.¹⁶

The new scheme will be administered by the **British Council and Ecorys**, a [consortium](#) which had previously delivered the Erasmus+ scheme in the UK.¹⁷

The government have encouraged UK institutions to maintain and build upon existing relationships with their counterparts, and they have said that they are also promoting the Turing Scheme through government-to-government engagement.¹⁸

In a written answer on 19 January 2021, Michelle Donelan, the Universities Minister, said that **applications will open in the coming weeks for placements to begin from September 2021**.

Further information on how applications will be assessed and how funding will be allocated would be made available shortly, but the Minister said that the government envisaged a call for bids much like Erasmus+: “the scheme will be demand-led and will be open to bids from providers across the UK”.¹⁹

¹² [PO 133977](#) [Turing Scheme] 15 January 2021.

¹³ HL Deb, [Education: Turing Scheme](#), 5 January, c12.

¹⁴ [PO 143123](#) [Languages: Teachers] 5 February 2021; [PO 137193](#) [Turing Scheme] 22 January 2021.

¹⁵ [PO 132973](#) [Turing Scheme] 13 January 2021.

¹⁶ [PO 133977](#) [Turing Scheme] 15 January 2021.

¹⁷ [PO 139112](#) [Turing Scheme] 27 January 2021.

¹⁸ [PO 137193](#) [Turing Scheme] 22 January 2021.

¹⁹ [PO 138016](#) [Turing Scheme] 19 January 2021.

She went on to say that **the government expects tuition fees to be waived for those participating in the Turing Scheme**, in line with the previous arrangements for Erasmus+.

The devolved administrations

In a written answer on 11 January 2021, Michelle Donelan said that the government had worked closely with the devolved administrations in designing the new scheme:

We have worked closely with the Welsh Government as well as the other Devolved Administrations in designing the Turing Scheme and I plan to continue doing so as we move towards delivery.

With over £100 million allocated for the 2021/22 academic year, Turing will be a UK-wide scheme which students from the entire UK will be able to benefit from.²⁰

The principle of a UK-wide scheme was confirmed on 20 January 2021, when, in response to a written question in the House of Lords about whether students in Northern Ireland will be able to participate in the Turing Scheme, Lord Parkinson stated that:

The Turing Scheme will be UK-wide. Universities, colleges, and schools in Northern Ireland will be eligible to bid for funding under the scheme, so that students in Northern Ireland can benefit from the opportunities of study and work placements abroad.²¹

Under an arrangement with the Irish government, **students in Northern Ireland will also still be able to participate in the Erasmus+ scheme**.²²

In response to a number of parliamentary questions about the participation of Welsh students in the Turing Scheme, the Universities Minister has also noted that **“there is no projection as to the number of students from each nation or specific limits for any specific region”**.²³

²⁰ [PO 132856](#) [Turing Scheme] 11 January 2021.

²¹ [PO HL11826](#) [Turing Scheme: Northern Ireland] 20 January 2021.

²² [“Erasmus: NI students with British passports can access funding”](#), *BBC News*, 26 December 2020.

²³ [PO 138012](#); [PO 138014](#); [PO 138015](#) [Turing Scheme: Wales] 19 January 2021.

3. The launch of the website

On 6 February 2021, the next phase of the Turing Scheme was announced, including a new [website](#) which provides funding and eligibility details so that universities, colleges, and schools can prepare for bids to open in spring.²⁴

The Universities Minister made the following comment:

We are committed to making sure our students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can benefit from studying and working abroad. Working with the British Council, we will open up the globe to our young people, and I look forward to seeing the exciting and enriching opportunities the Turing Scheme will bring.

The website notes that **support and guidance information relating to the scheme will be made available in the coming weeks.**

3.1 About the scheme

Funding will be open to organisations in the higher education, schools, further education, and vocational education and training sectors in the UK and British Overseas Territories.

Organisations will be able to apply for funding that offers opportunities to study or gain work experience abroad – projects must focus on **four main objectives**:

- **Global Britain** – In line with the UK Government’s vision of a Global Britain, Turing Scheme projects support high-quality placements, enhance existing partnerships, and encourage the forging of new relationships across the world.
- **Levelling up** – Turing Scheme projects widen participation and support social mobility across the UK. They should help and promote equal access and opportunities to all students, learners and pupils regardless of background.
- **Developing key skills** – These projects offer unique, career-building opportunities. They give participants the hard and soft skills sought by employers, and bridge the gap between education and work.
- **Value for UK taxpayers** – These projects optimise social value in terms of potential costs, benefits, and risks.

The application process will be a **call for bids** and will **open in March 2021 and last for six weeks**. The application form will ask organisations to provide an overview of their project, including the project activities, how participants will be chosen, and the budget.

It is envisaged that a **helpline email will be opened by mid-February**, and **Q&A webinars will be launched in March** alongside the application form and programme guidance.

²⁴ DfE Press Release, [Measures announced to boost international study and global opportunities](#), 6 February 2021.

Applications will be assessed according to how well they demonstrate that the project will achieve the core objectives of the scheme. **Funding decisions are expected to be issued in July**, and **placements** will begin at the **start of the 2021-22 academic year**.

The website also notes that **if Covid-19 persists into Autumn 2021 and beyond, then funding alternative contingency arrangements will be considered**.

3.2 Who is eligible?

Higher Education

To take part in higher education projects in the new scheme, organisations must be an **officially recognised HE provider registered in the UK or a British Overseas Territory**.

Participants do not need to be UK nationals and can be studying full time or part time. Recent graduates within 12 months of graduating are also eligible for the scheme.

Organisations can send participants to a non-UK HE provider or any non-UK public or private organisation active in the labour market, or in the fields of education and training.

Placements can last from four weeks to 12 months, and grant rates will be broadly in line with what was on offer under Erasmus+. Further information is available on the [HE funding page](#).

Further Education

To take part in further education (FE) and vocational education and training (VET) projects, organisations must be registered in the UK or a British Overseas Territory and either:

- an FE college or school active in the field of FE and VET
- a local or regional public authority, coordination body, or other organisation with a role in the field of FE and VET
- a company or other public or private organisation hosting, training, or otherwise working with learners and apprentices in FE and VET
- a company or other public or private organisation applying on behalf of a consortium of FE and/or VET providers.

Participants do not need to be UK nationals but should be:

- full-time or part-time FE learners and VET learners (including apprentices)
- recent graduates of a VET provider (within 12 months of graduating)
- an individual not in permanent education or training, but who may be re-training through a college or school.

Placements can last from two weeks to 12 months. Organisations can also send learners to take part in **skills competitions** abroad

lasting between one and 10 days. Further information is available on the [FE and VET funding page](#).

Schools

To apply for schools projects, organisations must be registered in the UK or a British Overseas Territory and should be:

- a school providing general, vocational, or technical education on any level from primary school to upper secondary education
- a national school consortium applying on behalf of a number of schools.

Schools can send participants on **short-term placements**, which are for pupils of any age and are accompanied by school staff, or **long-term placements**, which are open to pupils aged at least 14 years old.

Further information is available on the [schools funding page](#).

Box 2: Turing Scheme grant rates

For **all projects**, organisational support will help to cover the **costs directly linked to the administration and implementation** of a placement. Under each project:

- £315 will be provided per participant for the first 100 participants.
- From the 101st participant onwards, £180 will be provided per participant.

Funding to cover the **cost of living** is also available for **all projects**, but the amount will vary depending on the participant and the destination country. For example, students on a HE placement will receive:

- For placements lasting between four and eight weeks:
 - To Group 1 destinations: £136 per week
 - To Group 2 and 3 destinations: £120 per week
- For placements lasting over eight weeks:
 - To Group 1 destinations: £380 per month
 - To Group 2 and 3 destinations: £335 per month

Participants on FE, VET, and schools projects will also receive funding towards the **cost of travel**. The amount will depend on the distance between the home and destination provider, and will support the cost of a round trip. In all cases, further information is available on the [funding opportunities page](#).

3.3 Widening access

One of the stated objectives of the Turing Scheme is to **increase the participation of disadvantaged groups**, with the following measures intended to help address this issue:

- When bidding, providers will need to demonstrate how their project will support widening access. The assessment criteria will be heavily weighted towards this criterion.
- Maintaining parity with Erasmus+ grant rates and existing student finance support as well as providing additional financial support for those from disadvantaged backgrounds by reimbursing travel-related costs.

12 The Turing Scheme

- We will actively target and promote the scheme in those geographical areas of disadvantage, thereby helping to level up the country.
- We will reduce the minimum duration of a HE placement to four weeks to make going abroad more accessible to a wider group of students particularly those with other commitments.
- The global nature of the Turing Scheme will remove the language barrier for students who are not studying languages by vastly increasing the opportunities in English speaking countries.

For the purposes of the scheme, **established definitions of ‘disadvantaged groups’ – as agreed by each of the UK’s four nations’ respective governments – will be used**, but there will also be some discretion where appropriate.

Organisations are encouraged to make the case for participants whom they believe should be entitled to extra financial support even if they may not meet the scheme’s definition of disadvantage.

Organisations are also encouraged to note in their bids if they intend to widen access to groups underrepresented in international placements, such as **minority ethnic, part-time, disabled, and mature students, as well as students who are the first in their family to attend university**.

Further detail will be set out in the programme guidance, but definitions of disadvantage are available on the [widening access page](#).

Box 3: Additional financial support for disadvantaged groups

Participants **in all projects from “defined disadvantaged backgrounds”** will receive **actual costs for additional travel expenses**, including the **costs of visas, passports, and health insurance**.

For those with **special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**, the scheme will also fund **up to 100% of actual costs for support directly related to their additional needs**. This is in line with what was previously provided under Erasmus+ programmes, but funding will now also cover preparatory visits to carry out risk assessments and ensure participants will be able to access and take part in all elements of a placement.

Specific HE support

Participants from disadvantaged backgrounds on a HE placement will receive **a higher cost of living grant**:

- To Group 1 destinations: £490 per month
- To Group 2 and 3 destinations: £445 per month

Funding will also be provided to help cover **costs of travel** for HE participants from a disadvantaged background. The exact amount will depend on the distance between the home and destination organisation, but at least 70% of the actual costs will be covered. Further information is available on the [HE funding page](#).

4. Responses to the new scheme

4.1 The devolved administrations

On 26 January 2021, the Scottish and Welsh governments issued a [joint statement](#) detailing their disappointment that the UK government had chosen not to continue to participate in the Erasmus+ programme:

The Turing Scheme, funded at £105 million for one year, pales in comparison to Erasmus+, which has now had its budget for the next seven years increased to €26.2 billion. Turing will offer no funding to the international partners that are needed to allow mobilities to take place unlike Erasmus+, where both parties are awarded funding to facilitate the exchange of learners from one country to another. Turing will also fail to support any of the strategic partnerships currently supported by Erasmus+, which help to build relationships with partners in Europe. [...]

It is all the more unacceptable then that the UK Government is looking to impose this inadequate scheme upon Scotland and Wales through new legislation that overrides the devolved nature of education. [...] any replacement funding for Erasmus+ should be given in the first instance to the Scottish and Welsh Governments, to allow us to exercise our right to deliver educational services within our respective nations.²⁵

The statement said that **both the Scottish and Welsh governments will explore how they can continue to enjoy what they see as the benefits offered by Erasmus+.**

On 15 February 2021, however, in response to an open letter signed by members of the European Parliament calling for Scotland and Wales to be allowed to re-join the Erasmus+ programme, Ursula von der Leyen, EU Commission president, ruled out such a possibility:

The EU offered the United Kingdom full association to the Erasmus programme in exchange for the standard financial contribution from third countries participating in union programmes.

Following a year of constructive negotiations with the UK government, the decision was made in London not to pursue UK association to Erasmus.

As one constituent nation of the UK, association to Erasmus is not possible. The only possibility for the UK is to associate as a whole, or not at all.²⁶

4.2 Sector responses

Within the HE sector, disappointment has similarly been expressed at the decision to leave the Erasmus+ programme, but the announcement of a replacement scheme has been welcomed.²⁷

²⁵ [Joint statement on Erasmus+ exchange programme](#), 26 January 2021.

²⁶ ["EU rejects calls to readmit Scotland to Erasmus scheme"](#), *Politico*, 16 February 2021 (accessed on 16 February 2021); ["Brexit: Welsh students' return to Erasmus scheme ruled out"](#), *BBC News*, 16 February 2021 (accessed on 16 February 2021).

²⁷ Universities UK, ["UUK response on Turing Scheme for students to work and study abroad"](#), 26 December 2020 (accessed on 12 February 2021).

14 The Turing Scheme

Vivienne Stern, Director of Universities UK International (UUKi), which represents UK universities on the global stage, has noted that the Turing Scheme meets a number of expectations outlined by her organisation for a national scheme, particularly in light of current economic pressures:

Our proposals, developed by a working group chaired by Professor Colin Riordan, Vice-Chancellor of Cardiff University, drawing on the expertise of mobility experts from universities across the UK, centred around the following principles: that a national scheme should provide an equivalent number of opportunities for students to Erasmus; it should be simple in design; it should be UK-wide, global and demand-led; and it should be designed to encourage wider participation in mobility.

What we know so far about the Turing Scheme sounds pretty good measured against these principles.²⁸

The scheme has also been welcomed by David Hughes, Chief Executive of the Association of Colleges (AoC):

The Turing Scheme opens the world's door to work and study placements for college students. This is an important part of 'levelling up' the life chances for all of our young people - whatever their background.

International mobility motivates and inspires young people to understand their place in the world, develop their life skills and build confidence and ambition. I strongly encourage colleges new to international exchanges to consider participating in Turing and hope that those who have been.²⁹

²⁸ Vivienne Stern, "[Reasons to give the Turing Scheme a chance](#)", *Higher Education Policy Institute*, 19 January 2021 (accessed on 15 February 2021).

²⁹ DfE Press Release, "[Measures announced to boost international study and global opportunities](#)", 6 February 2021.

5. Issues

5.1 Inward mobility

The government's decision not to include funding for participants to come to the UK as part of the Turing Scheme – the expectation is that incoming students' costs will be covered by their own governments or institutions – has prompted **concern that it will lead to a decrease in inbound exchange students** and the loss of benefits that they bring to the UK.³⁰

In a report published on 12 February 2019, the House of Lords European Union Committee noted a number of these benefits:

- a “global, outward-looking culture” on campuses
- a higher standard of UK education and training through international collaboration, and the sharing of innovation and best practice
- “tangible economic benefits” through money spent on courses and in local economies.³¹

Data from the Department for Education on the revenue received through UK educational exports reveals that **the living expenses of incoming Erasmus+ students amounted to £440 million in 2018**, which is a **71% increase since 2010**.³²

Another possible consequence of the decision not to fund inward mobilities is that while **the government expects host countries to waive tuition fees for UK students**,³³ it is unclear how this will work in practice, since the Erasmus+ programme relied on the principle of reciprocity for participating countries.

The government's position

The government have said that the decision not to fund inward mobility was made to ensure **value-for-money for the UK taxpayer**, and they are confident that the UK will remain an attractive destination for study. In a written answer on 15 January 2021, Michelle Donelan said:

The design of the Turing Scheme will be driven by our ambition for a truly global UK-wide scheme that promotes social mobility and provides excellent value for money for the taxpayer. These principles underpin the decision-making on the design of the scheme, including the decision not to fund inward mobility.

The Government has carefully considered whether to fund inward mobility as part of the scheme design, including through discussions with the sector, and is confident that students will continue to want to study in the UK. The UK is a world-leading destination for study and research, with four universities in the

³⁰ “[Five questions to ask about the Turing scheme](#)”, *Higher Education Policy Institute*, 11 January 2021 (accessed on 15 February 2021).

³¹ House of Lords European Union Committee, *Brexit: The Erasmus and Horizon programmes*, 12 February 2019, HL 283, para 35-36.

³² DfE, [UK revenue from education related exports and transnational education activity in 2018](#), Table 2, p. 5, 17 December 2020.

³³ “[We created the Turing Scheme because Erasmus wasn't value for money or best fit for UK students](#)”, *iNews*, 8 February 2021 (accessed on 15 February 2021).

world's top 10 and 18 in the top 100. The UK is currently second only to the USA as a destination for international HE students with approximately 486,000 students from abroad and has been one of the most popular destinations within Erasmus+.³⁴

As part of its recently updated [International Student Strategy](#), the Department for Education believes that the Turing Scheme will help it to meet a target to **increase education exports to £35 billion per year, and host 600,000 international HE students in the UK each year by 2030.**

The International Education Champion, Sir Steve Smith, has said:

I warmly welcome this revised International Education Strategy. Not only does it show the progress we have made since the launch of the original strategy in March 2019, but it outlines concrete measures to support the entire education sector across all parts of the UK to achieve the goals of at least 600,000 international students coming to the UK, and educational exports rising to £35bn by 2030.

Changes to the visa arrangements, the new iQTS, a focus on a set of priority markets and the launch of the Turing mobility scheme will all support making the UK an even more successful and attractive educational powerhouse.³⁵

³⁴ [PQ 133977](#) [Turing Scheme] 15 January 2021.

³⁵ DfE Press Release, [Measures announced to boost international study and global opportunities](#), 6 February 2021.

6. Comment

The decision to leave the Erasmus+ programme and the announcement of the Turing Scheme have attracted much comment.

In an [article](#) for the *Higher Education Policy Institute*, Professor David Carter, Head of the International Study and Language Institute at the University of Reading, asks a number of questions about the new scheme, including:

- whether the budget is really large enough to support the stated aim of worldwide mobility
- whether organisations may now have to negotiate exchange agreements individually through bilateral contracts
- what the implications are for modern language learning if a focus on worldwide mobility directs students to English-speaking countries.³⁶

An [article](#) on *WonkHE* **similarly queries the proposed budget and how it will meet the ambitions of the new scheme**, arguing that while just over £100 million may be enough for 2021/22 – when travel will potentially still be hindered by the impact of Covid-19 – “in a post-Covid world, this will be spread thin at best”.

The article also notes that the increased Erasmus+ budget for the 2020-27 cycle (€26 billion, up from €14.7 billion), which the UK government has cited as a factor in its decision to leave the programme, is a result of the EU’s intention to provide greater support for underrepresented groups in international exchanges. It surmises:

It is doubtful that the Turing Scheme could match the success of Erasmus, which is after all, a 33-year-old programme considered by many to be the most positive endeavour to come from the EU.³⁷

In an [article](#) for the *The Times*, Taiwo Owatemi MP, chairwoman of the Erasmus+ All-Party Parliamentary Group, highlights the lack of reciprocity in the new scheme. She argues that **onerous visa processes and the decision not to fund overseas students visiting the UK undercut the ambition for a “truly international scheme”**.³⁸

Further comment can be found in the following articles:

- [“The fatal design flaw in UK’s Erasmus-replacing ‘Turing scheme’”](#), *The National*, 5 January 2021.
- [“Turing Scheme: Erasmus Holds Lessons for Global Britain”](#), *Chatham House*, 13 January 2021.

³⁶ [“Five questions to ask about the Turing scheme”](#), *Higher Education Policy Institute*, 11 January 2021 (accessed on 15 February 2021).

³⁷ [“Will Turing be a good enough exchange?”](#), *WonkHE*, 4 January 2021 (accessed on 16 February 2021).

³⁸ [“Erasmus replacement does not fulfil promise of a truly international scheme”](#), *The Times*, 13 January 2021 (accessed on 16 February 2021).

18 The Turing Scheme

- ["Erasmus and the Turing Scheme: A metaphor for Brexit?"](#), *The Parliament Magazine*, 19 January 2021.
- ["The Turing scheme: a licence to do things better?"](#), *University Business*, 20 January 2021.

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