



**General information for cooperation within Erasmus + International
Credit Mobility
KA1 - Learning mobility of
individuals
Higher Education student and staff mobility between the Royal Thimphu College, Bhutan
and Partner**

General Information		
Name of the College: Royal Thimphu College	PIC: 923324474	OID: E10013505
Country: Bhutan		
Website: www.rtc.bt		
Contact Persons for Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility		
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Introduction to Royal Thimphu College

Royal Thimphu College in Bhutan (www.rtc.bt) is a private undergraduate college with Bachelor's degree programmes affiliated to the national public universities, the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) and the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan (KGUMSB). RTC is the first private College in Bhutan, open since 2009. In 2016, it became the first independently accredited tertiary educational institute in the country achieving the Bhutan Accreditation Council's highest, A+ rating. Study areas include: Bachelor of Arts programmes in Sociology & Political Science, Economics, English, Anthropology, and Mass Communication; Bachelor of Science programme in Environmental Management; Bachelor of Sports and Health Sciences and a BSc in Nursing and Midwifery. Also, about 40% of the College's 1350 students are in business programmes (Bachelor of Business Administration and Bachelor of Commerce). Our primary mission is to provide a College education that can slowly push the standard traditional model of education towards more modern/innovative approaches focusing on our students' holistic/skills-based development.

Internationalisation Strategy and Experiences Over the Years

Royal Thimphu College's first mission states, "To contribute to educational excellence through an Internationalised learning environment". Having a range of international faculty members is part of the College's internationalisation strategy, and there are currently 113 faculty members including 38 International faculty members from 4 different countries. International students on campus are another important aspect of our strategy. Therefore, we became the first full-scale study-abroad option in Bhutan for students from other countries in 2010. Since then we have had over 500 students from the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, India, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Thailand and several European countries, among others, in both semester-study abroad and short-term programmes. The College has since initiated bidirectional exchanges with several partners, gaining considerable experience with such bidirectional mobilities for students and faculty/staff.

The College has been involved in Erasmus+ since 2018 and continues to strengthen its capacity to engage with European partners.. All academic departments in RTC are involved in Erasmus+. RTC welcomes Key Action 1 mobility proposals on a bidirectional basis involving both faculty/staff and students. In the initial stage, it is anticipated that teaching staff, training exchanges and non-teaching staff training exchanges would occur (durations of 1-2 weeks), to strengthen the partnership. In parallel or in the subsequent years, student exchanges would also be possible in both directions (durations between 5-10 months), for international credit mobility. In the future, the credit mobility exchanges could increase in number, and the partners could have sufficient confidence to work together for larger capacity-building projects. RTC is an agile institution, able to quickly provide due attention in exploring new directions. Since 2019, four such Key Action 2 capacity-building consortium projects have been implemented (HAPPY, ENCORE, FRIENDS and RECALL).

There have traditionally been limited mobilities for Bhutanese students and staff to engage in their academic subjects outside of Bhutan. The ICM programme opens the possibility for these individuals to learn from a broader range of perspectives and in vastly different academic and cultural environments. The participants will therefore learn from a much more diverse perspective than they could here in Bhutan. RTC benefits greatly from both the partner country's students and staff's

presence on the campus interacting with our faculty members and students, and also from our own returning staff and students that bring rich intercultural academic perspectives back with them.

This general international strategy is reflected here: [International Strategy](#)

Arrangements and measures for the different phases of the mobility project

1. Selection of Mobility Participants

- Support units responsible for the selection of candidates (students and staff):
 - College Management Committee (President, Registrar, Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Development and External Relations, Head of Administration & Finance)
- Selection Process (staff and students):
 - Students are selected through an open application process after the RTC selection committee has set minimum criteria (based on academics, leadership, extracurricular activities, and social service) in line with the standards and suitability/match for subject areas set by the partner universities accordingly. Written applications are scored and short-listed candidates are further interviewed to gauge criteria such as comfort with new situations, flexibility, and resilience.
 - Staff are selected by the College Management Committee through direct nomination and selection based on experience, suitability/match for subject areas (if academic exchange), and potential for significant follow-up activities.

2. Recognition of Mobility Period

- Recognition of completed activities during mobility for:
 - Students (eg. recognition of course work and placement abroad): Student credit will be recognized as certified learning toward course waivers from the students' local curricula.
 - Teaching staff (eg. related to career advancement): Teaching staff are recognized on their service record as having engaged in relevant professional development activities for future promotion consideration. Teaching staff may also be asked to support further initiatives related to the exchange activities carried out.
 - Non-academic staff (if any): Non-academic staff are recognized on their service record as having engaged in relevant professional development activities for future promotion consideration. The staff may also be asked to support further initiatives related to the exchange activities carried out.

3. Support for Mobile Participants

- Support units provide the following assistance related to obtaining visas, health insurance, and housing:
 - The RTC International Relations Office and the Administration Office are the main offices which provide support for the Erasmus+ mobilities in general.
 - Royal Thimphu College has previously engaged in bidirectional ICM student and staff mobility with several Erasmus+ partners. Beyond Erasmus+ projects, RTC has partnerships with over 70 institutes in over 10 countries around the world and has regularly hosted international faculty members, staff, and students since it opened in 2009. In 2024, RTC managed approximately 18 inbound and 24 outbound mobilities of students and staff with Erasmus+ partners. The RTC International Relations Office has 6 full-time staff dedicated to supporting international mobilities.

- Incoming students are placed in the on-campus hostels and can avail of dining options at the on-campus student dining hall. Incoming faculty members/staff are placed at the on-campus College Guesthouse, and on-campus apartments, or facilitated in booking hotels.
- For more details, visit: [Residence and Housing](#)

4. Mentoring Activities

➤ Students (outgoing/incoming):

- Outgoing students are supported in all logistical aspects as well as oriented in relevant administrative procedures (e.g., visas, travel plans and student application procedures) and on settling into their new environment (including cultural expectations). Students are supported through the pre-departure orientation, ongoing check-ins during mobility, and post-return reintegration.
- Incoming students are provided with an extensive orientation to Bhutan and the College both before departure and through a week-long orientation upon arrival, including being paired with local students for peer activities to welcome the students to their new environment. Regular wellness check-ins are conducted monthly, and international students are facilitated for group outings several times a semester.

➤ Staff (academic and non-academic: outgoing and incoming):

- Similar to outgoing students, outgoing staff are supported in all logistical aspects as well as oriented in relevant administrative procedures (e.g., visas, travel plans and student application procedures) and on settling into their new environment (including cultural expectations). They are further briefed on the partnership requirements of the exchange and key objectives to be fulfilled.
- Incoming staff have an orientation to Bhutan and the College. Their visa and in-country logistics within Bhutan are facilitated by the College.

Outreach and selection strategies, ensuring participation of those with fewer opportunities (in accordance with the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy)

The new E+ KA171 call focuses on inclusivity and aims to encourage the participation of disadvantaged individuals. RTC will promote the participation of those with any special needs including physical, mental, or economic conditions who would otherwise not avail such opportunities. RTC believes in providing equal opportunities to its entire community be it in terms of education, facilities and opportunities both in national and international programmes. However, with the new call, we could also look into applying for possible additional costs to support equipment, facilities and care for our participants in need to make it likely for them to participate equally.

RTC will also ensure that the participants are well-equipped with the necessary competencies to manage and work with diversity, which would encourage positive interactions between people of all backgrounds. Bi-directional exchange opportunities naturally provide a good setting for discussing and learning about inclusion and diversity issues. Programmes such as training and networking could be tailored to allow participants to exchange and gain professional competencies specifically to work on enhancing inclusion and diversity. Basic linguistic support could be provided by applying for

additional funding with the EU receiving partner institutions or having access to online support for linguistic training for mobilities lasting more than 2 months. Support for exceptional costs in addition to the regular organisational support would greatly benefit and assist in covering costs such as coaches and mentors, visa costs, travel insurance, translation/interpretation, etc.

Impact

➤ **On the individual level:**

- Strengthened intercultural awareness through professional experience in another country with substantially different national environments.
- Building of capacity to provide teaching and services to international students.
- Building a portfolio of good practices.
- Better awareness of Europe and European values.
- Broadening of the international network of partnerships at both institutions.
- Increased opportunities for intercultural learning mobility for staff.
- Enhanced engagement of staff with the home institution in terms of getting involved in future international engagements Setting the stage for longer-term cooperation among the partners in areas of academics & curriculum.
- Identification of possible research opportunities for future collaboration.
- Improved management skills for international partnerships.

➤ **On the organisational level:**

- Broadening of the international network of partnerships at both Colleges.
- Increased opportunities for intercultural learning mobility for staff.
- Enhanced engagement of staff with the home institution in terms of getting involved in future international engagements.
- Setting the stage for longer-term cooperation among the partners in areas of academics & curriculum.
- Identification of possible research opportunities for future collaboration.
- Improved management skills for international partnerships.
- Building a portfolio of good practices.
- Greater awareness of the KA171/KA107 Mobility programme within the Tertiary Sector and the other Higher Education Institutes.
- Increased interest from students and staff in the programme.
- Increase of students and staff leaving their homes for an international and intercultural experience abroad.
- Contribution to the professional development of an individual which in return benefits the local stakeholders.
- Increased awareness to deal with other foreign persons such as tourists and expatriates that are in their home country.

➤ **On national & international levels:**

- Dissemination and promotion of good practices in higher education in the two countries.
- Building diplomacy and cooperation between the countries.
- Strengthening personal and institutional relationships through this partnership can also stimulate increased international ties between the countries.

Dissemination of Information

RTC disseminates information about international programmes, including Erasmus+, on our website and social media pages. Opportunities for mobilities are transparently advertised on the RTC website. The International Relations Office maintains an open environment for any drop-in requests for information. The major measurement tools for the mobility project dissemination would be as follows:

- Increased confidence from both the partners to re-collaborate and not limit the cooperation within the Erasmus+ projects.
- Platform to share their individual experiences and reflections after they return.
- Increased number of staff and student inquiries willing to participate in staff and student mobilities.
- Active engagement and participation in international activities on campus.