



Leading for impact

The Erasmian Way

EUR Leadership Policy

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1. Leadership Movement at Erasmus University Rotterdam

Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) is dedicated to making a positive impact on society. Everyone at EUR, including staff, students, and community members, plays a role in contributing to this purpose. Being an Erasmian means embodying values such as global citizenship, social engagement, open-mindedness, entrepreneurship, and building connections with others. Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the culture of EUR and impacting the way in which the university achieves its purpose.

Academic culture at EUR is undergoing a significant change in relation to *Recognition & Rewards*, with the aim of promoting inclusivity and recognizing everyone's talents. The concept of *Recognition & Rewards*¹ is closely integrated into EUR's leadership policy. We further acknowledge that leadership plays a large role in bringing teams to fruition, including the people in those teams. The movement towards more collaboration in teams (team science), is an important backdrop for the leadership development. The leadership development components align with and foster working more in teams.

The *Erasmian Leadership Profile* (see section 3) has been developed as a first step towards a common, EUR-wide understanding of leadership. The fundament of the profile has been co-created at the executive management community, and further refined in a participatory way through follow-up collaboration with multiple stakeholder groups at various levels of the university. This participatory and inclusive process involved all faculties and services.

This policy outlines the guiding principles for leadership development at EUR. It is a starting point, and the intention is to continuously iterate, reflect and improve the policy and leadership profile based on learnings and experiences with the implementation (see section 6 for more details on this iterative process). We do this through forming communities of practice throughout the university.

In this way, we also see the further development of EUR leadership as a process of cultural change and transformation into a university that is fully engaged with society at large. The adapted EUR strategy (2023) reflects this in prioritizing leadership and culture as a central theme.



2. Erasmian Leadership Development Policy

2.1 Defining leadership

This policy addresses both leadership and management within the context of EUR. In order to avoid the potential drawbacks of artificially distinguishing between the two roles¹, the leadership policy at EUR makes use of the inclusive term “leadership”, which refers to both leadership and managerial aspects. The policy acknowledges the importance of nurturing both leadership and management skillsets among university leaders. Thus, the policy also applies to leaders and managers at EUR.

- A **leader** is anyone who directs their energy and the energy of their followers to the achievement of a common goal^[i].
- **Leadership** is not only about having and embodying a vision, it also requires encouraging people’s commitment to achieve shared objectives^[ii]. Leadership emerges when a leader interacts with others to help achieve a vision.
- An **Erasmian leader** strives to lead for impact the Erasmian way, meaning they are engaged with the Erasmian Values, they inspire and facilitate people to create positive societal impact across all areas of work, including education, research, operations, and engagement. They are positive role models, enable and engage others in their development and performance, and drive achievement effectively.
- A **manager** at EUR is a formal role which contains many aspects of leadership. Management is about organizing and facilitating resources, especially people, to effectively deliver results. Providing clarity on roles and responsibility, delegating, and effective feedback are also part of management. Management shares many commonalities with leadership^[iii].

2.2 What is included in the policy?

Leadership at EUR comes in diverse forms and roles. Formal leaders, such as line managers, bear the responsibility for the performance and development of their employees. Additionally, there are leaders who supervise or co-supervise PhD students, even without a formal team structure. Others hold positions of informal leadership, exerting significant influence over processes and decisions within the organization. Personal leadership is a fundamental aspect expected from all employees at EUR, irrespective of their specific role. This policy is specifically designed to cater to the various forms of leadership within the university. It applies to both academic and professional services staff, ensuring that all individuals within the organization benefit from its guidelines and provisions.

2.3 What is not included in the policy?

The policy framework does not yet encompass leadership within Erasmus MC or subsidiaries under the Erasmus Holding. Similarly, the policy does not yet extend to the BVs affiliated with Erasmus University Rotterdam, including RSM BV. After experience with implementation of the policy, consideration of inclusion to these stakeholder groups will take place.

It is important to note that the policy is primarily designed for university staff and does not directly apply to students at EUR. However, if students are employed by EUR and their responsibilities entail taking on leadership roles, they are included within the scope of the policy.

2.4 Preconditions for Erasmian Leadership

Effective leadership and its interconnected tasks, skills, and behaviors require considerable attention and energy. It is essential to invest time in building connections, nurturing team members’ personal growth, fostering psychological safety within the team, and engaging in meaningful discussions about goals, concerns, and developmental needs. These responsibilities should not be downgraded to mere afterthoughts or neglected altogether by leaders. Achieving excellence in leadership requires dedicating sufficient time, energy, focus, and attention to these critical aspects.

The amount of time and effort required may vary depending on individual and job (focus) profiles, roles, team sizes, team maturity, developmental stages of leaders and team members, and the specific events during a given period. While there are no rigid guidelines in the policy regarding time allocation and span of control for leaders at EUR, it is **strongly recommended** that faculties and service departments proactively engage in dialogues with leaders to understand their needs for delivering high-quality leadership. For example, the creation of focus profiles for leadership and management for academic staff (in line with the recognition and rewards programme) is an important step for facilitating sufficient time and focus for effective leadership.

By fostering open and constructive conversations, faculties and service departments can collaboratively establish the necessary conditions for leaders to excel in their roles. This proactive approach ensures that leadership is effectively supported and enables the cultivation of a culture wherein quality leadership thrives.

1 leadership encompasses organisational management skills and vice versa (see: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/saving-management-from-our-obsession-with-leadership/>)



2.5 Goal of the Erasmian Leadership Policy

The primary aim of developing leadership at EUR, as outlined in this policy, is to cultivate a workplace environment that promotes the well-being of employees, as well as to inspire individuals to work effectively towards the shared goal of generating positive societal impact across all areas of work, including education, research, operations, and engagement.

To achieve optimal development of leaders at EUR, three interrelated domains are elaborated on in this policy:

1. The Erasmian Leadership Profile and framework
2. Communities of Practice
3. Trainings & Toolboxes

These three domains complement and reinforce each other and operate in synergy, promoting a common language for dialogue and the development of leaders. They also establish clear standards for embodying the qualities of an Erasmian Leader. Together, these domains are the pillars that facilitate the growth of an impactful leadership ecosystem within EUR.

3. Erasmian Leadership Profile

3.1 Introduction & Definitions

The Erasmian Leadership Profile reflects the essence of being an Erasmian Leader and serves as the cornerstone of leadership at EUR. It forms the basis for trainings & toolboxes, and communities of practice.

The Erasmian Leadership Profile consists of the following three levels:

Personal leadership: *Know and show your authentic self.*

It is widely recognized that good leadership begins with self-awareness^[1]. Thus, the Erasmian Leadership Profile starts with personal leadership. Leaders must first put work into reflecting on and understanding their own feelings, biases, behaviours, and ambitions, as well as on their outcomes, which provides a more solid basis for productive interactions with others and the environment.

Leading others (e.g., a team, or supervising a PhD student):
Focus on having a positive impact on others.

A person takes on leadership when they influence and motivate others towards a common goal. Having mastered self-awareness is a prerequisite for leading others successfully, namely another person, a team, or a department. Leadership within a team is about mobilising ownership and commitment with others to jointly deliver a shared thought, inspiration, vision, and results. Ensuring that one has a positive impact on others in any interaction and decision, is, in essence, successful team leadership.

Leading an organisation (e.g., a faculty or service): *Focus on having a positive impact on the organisation (and beyond).*

Leaders at the top of organisational units (e.g., a faculty or service department) have an even greater responsibility, as their task is to balance their personal leadership, leadership of teams or groups of people as well as an added layer of responsibility for a broader group of stakeholders, and the ability to manage complex systems. Leadership at this level is about providing a framework of roles, processes, procedures, etc., to stimulate and guide the contributions of those people. These leaders carry the additional duty of enacting and radiating the universities mission “to create positive societal impact”.

The leadership principles map onto four components supported by research² and translate into competencies:

Role model: a leader’s ability to be aware of their own values, to reflect on themselves and their actions, to lead with integrity, and to inspire with vulnerability and responsibility.

- **Self-awareness:** I know why I do what I do.
- **Reflection:** I am able to understand the difference between my intentions and my impact (on others).
- **Vulnerability:** I dare to share when I am uncertain or make mistakes, and I dare to act even when feeling (emotionally) exposed.
- **Responsibility:** I say as I do and do as I say.

Enable and engage: a leader’s ability to care for and empower others, which they demonstrate by being trustworthy, open-minded, and compassionate towards others and their views. They engage in constructive dialogue, foster a psychologically safe environment, and empower others.

- **Open-mindedness:** I demonstrate curiosity and willingness to explore the perspective of the other without judgment.
- **Compassion:** I am receptive to the needs and circumstances of others.
- **Trustworthiness:** I am able to create a climate of trust, integrity, and social and psychological safety.
- **Dialogue:** I facilitate a climate of active listening, exploring, and thinking together openly.
- **Inclusivity:** I build bridges between people, whilst valuing the diversity of each individual.
- **Empowerment:** I hand over relevant tasks/responsibilities to others and work with their output.

Inspire vision: a leader’s ability to challenge the status quo and responsibly move the organisation, society and science forward by generating an inspiring vision, based on informed and courageous ideas.

- **Informed:** I know what I am talking and acting about, and I am aware of my limits.
- **Courage:** I have the guts to act outside of my comfort zone.
- **Vision:** I can clearly articulate the ‘dot on the horizon’ for the team/unit.
- **Inspiration:** I am able to motivate, energize and mobilize ownership towards a vision.

² on ‘the Big X of Leadership’ by the Erasmus Centre for Leadership (performance [task]- people [relation]-, progress [change]-, and principle [ethics]-oriented leadership).

Drive achievement: a leader's ability to have a plan and guide others to make it happen by being decisive, setting boundaries, stepping up when necessary and by balancing the tensions of different contextual demands.

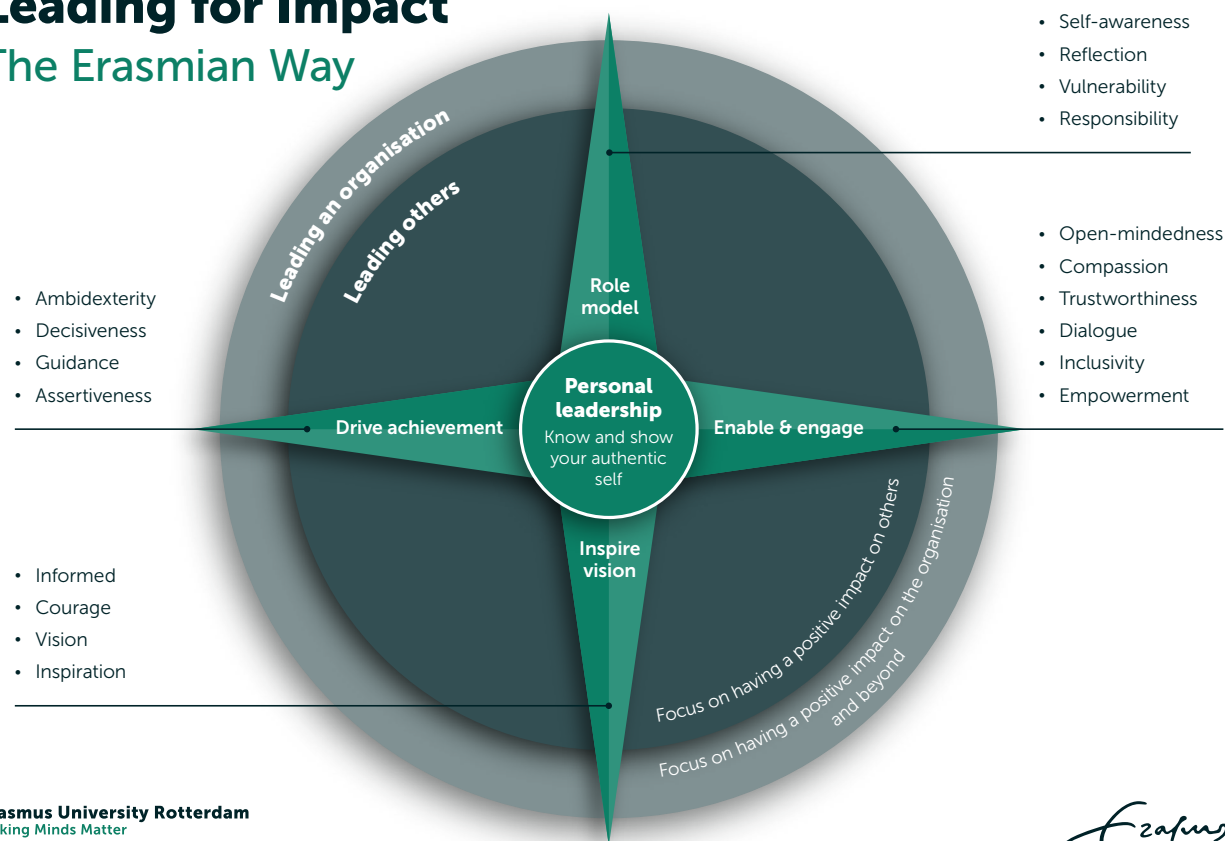
- **Ambidexterity:** I can balance adaptability with perseverance.
- **Decisiveness:** I can gather relevant input from my team, persevere through tough issues and make (difficult) decisions.
- **Guidance:** I can guide people to deliver results according to purpose and strategy.
- **Assertiveness:** I can discuss and evaluate demonstrated behaviour – both supportive and dysfunctional

3.2 The Erasmian Leadership Compass

For each level and principle, exemplary attitudes and behaviours have been developed. These are highlighted in the full profile on page 8. An Erasmian Leader is expected to develop themselves cumulatively such that those in a position of leading others,

also work on the elements of personal leadership, and those in a position of leading an organization, also work on elements of leading others and personal leadership. As such, the larger the leadership responsibility, the more is required from the leader.

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3.3 The Erasmian Leadership Profile

Personal leadership <i>Know and show your authentic self</i>			Leading others <i>Focus on having a positive impact on others</i>	Leading an organisation <i>Focus on having a positive impact on the organisation (and beyond)</i>
Leadership Principle	Leadership Competencies	Leadership Attitudes and Behaviours		
Role model	Self-awareness Reflection Vulnerability Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify your core values and purpose^{II} Know your strengths and weaknesses^{III} Understand your ego, biases and other thought patterns/feelings that govern your interactions with others^{IV} Reflect regularly on what (de)energises and touches you (positively & negatively)^V Reflect on your mistakes and learn from them^{VI} Proactively seek feedback from others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dare to be vulnerable (e.g., share uncertainty, when you don't have the answers, or when you make a mistake)^{VII} Seek feedback and work with it^{VIII} Keep your promises (walk your talk)^{IX} Role model expected behaviours^X 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operate from your personal and organisation's values Bring your whole self to work^{XI} Consider the unintended negative consequences of your decisions^{XII}
Enable & engage	Open-mindedness Compassion Trustworthiness Dialogue Inclusivity Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust towards others as a default attitude^{XIII} Listen actively and be open and curious to different (generational/ cultural) perspectives^{XIV} Build empathy to understand when and where others need help and act upon it^{XV, XVI} Regularly explore the perspective of the other^{XVII} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a psychologically and socially safe environment in the team^{XVIII} Create space for others to contribute^{XIX} Foster diversity and inclusion and cultural sensitivity^{XX} Develop team members to grow to their full potential^{XXI, XXII} Delegate effectively and show faith in the capabilities of others^{XXIII, XXIV} Facilitate that team members work in positions of strength as much as possible^{XXV, XXVI} Discuss failures respectfully and stimulate a collective learning culture^{XXVII} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stimulate trust building throughout the organisation Safeguard and promote psychological and social safety throughout the organisation^{XXVIII} Pay attention to and invest in growing people in the organisation^{XXIX} Create synergies by stimulating and enabling collaboration across team and organisational boundaries
Inspire vision	Informed Courage Vision Inspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dare to think outside of the box^{XXX} Identify the area where you can make the biggest impact in the organisation and take action^{XXXI} Experiment, learn and iterate^{XXXII} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve the team in creating the vision, and ensure everyone understands it and can contribute to it^{XXXIII} Ensure structures and a culture wherein the vision is continuously reflected upon^{XXXIV} Encourage entrepreneurial ideas from team members Encourage team members to explore roles where they can make the biggest impact^{XXXV} Stimulate reflection on the progress within the team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model and radiate the organisational vision^{XXXVI} Anticipate and scan the future demands on the organisation and adapt to changing contexts and demands^{XXXVII} Identify opportunities for generating positive societal impact Stimulate experimentation and innovation throughout the organisation^{XXXVIII}
Drive achievement	Ambidexterity Decisiveness Guidance Assertiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and clearly communicate positions of own responsibility Set personal goals and take timely action towards them Anticipate needs of others and tasks to come and adapt where necessary^{XXXIX} Escalate issues in a timely fashion, if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set boundaries for the team/department regarding what is priority and what not^{XL} Ensure the vision is broken down into achievable strategic objectives Recognize and reward people appropriately for achievement^{XLI} Provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities within the team^{XLII} Provide timely feedback and coaching to team members^{XLIII} Communicate relevant information up and down the organisation in a timely manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work towards defining quality standards and communicate them clearly Clarify expectations and assumptions with stakeholders Benchmark with the external environment and scan for opportunities^{XLIV} Ensure adequate resources are available for reaching objectives within the organisation Balance resources for innovation (change) with running the organisation (run)^{XLV} Dare to make tough decisions (even when unpopular)^{XLVI} Create win-win situations

3.4 Implementation

The Erasmian leadership profile, with its four principles, three levels, competencies, attitudes, and behaviors, creates a common language for leadership at EUR and fosters cohesion and alignment across faculties and services. While the levels, principles, and competencies are consistent throughout the university, the emphasis on attitudes and behaviours may vary based on individual and contextual requirements of each faculty or service department. The leadership profile serves as a tool, offering guidance and inspiration for personal and professional development. It is an aspirational standard that encourages continuous growth and improvement.

3.4.1 Recruitment & Selection

The Erasmian leadership profile will be used as an input for designing vacancies at EUR which contain positions of leadership. In addition, the profile will serve as a frame of reference for developing interview questions or assessment items for positions of leadership at EUR. The profile will also be used for the employer branding purposes.

3.4.2 Reflection & Promotion

The Erasmian leadership profile will be used as a frame of reference for discussions in the development cycle for leaders. Erasmian leaders will be required to reflect upon how they are doing along the four main leadership principles: role model, enable and engage, inspire vision and drive achievement. Depending on the position in the organization, the appropriate level of leadership will be reflected upon using the framework as a point of reference.

The attitudes, behaviours, and competencies for each of the leadership principles will provide input for a dialogue on how the leader is performing.

A 360-degree feedback tool is a part of the development cycle and leaders are required to gather feedback from employees, peers and their own supervisor using this tool based on the four leadership principles.

Where possible, formal leaders will discuss the results of the employee survey (Engagement & Enablement scan) with their team, to ensure an opportunity for reflection and learning. When considering promotions and appointments to leadership positions, the Erasmian Leadership Profile serves as a guiding framework. People who are promoted to leadership roles are expected to have intrinsic motivation to allocate time for the enhancement of their leadership skills.

3.4.3 Development

The Erasmian Leadership Profile will be used as input for development of leaders. Through reflecting based on the profile, leaders will gain insights into areas where they can benefit from further development, such as training, coaching, or other relevant activities.



4. Trainings & Toolboxes

The Erasmian Leadership Profile forms the basis for the development of all leadership related trainings and tools. To support the development of leaders at EUR, trainings and toolboxes are continuously being developed, assessed, and refined. The *Learning & Career Centre* provides a portfolio of trainings for various levels and topics in leadership. The training portfolio will be adjusted based on the new Erasmian Leadership Profile.

A gap analysis is being conducted to assess the needs for additional trainings based on target group and curriculum. In 2024 and 2025 development and expansion of the training portfolio will take place. In addition, the need for leadership coaching will be assessed, and if needed, a coach pool of leadership and executive coaches will be established. Presently an onboarding module for new leaders is being developed.

4.1 Onboarding of new Leaders

To establish a shared understanding and consistent foundation for leaders at EUR, an onboarding programme is being developed specifically for new leaders. This training will be compulsory to ensure that leaders become acquainted with the principles and concepts of Erasmian Leadership, as outlined in the leadership profile.

New, formal leaders – those with responsibility for performance and development of employees – will be invited to join this training within the first year that they have been given a formal leadership role or when starting at the EUR in a leadership position. The onboarding training serves as an entry point to the communities of practice and connects leaders at different levels and departments within the university.

4.2 Toolboxes

Various tools will be developed related to the various elements of the Erasmian Leadership Profile, which will be made available in a resource hub on the MyEUR webpages for leadership development. Tools will include best practices, practical information, handouts, and links to relevant literature and audio/video content. In addition, a 360-degree feedback tool will be procured to help leaders and managers gain valuable insights into their performance.



5. Communities of Practice

To ensure comprehensive and ongoing development of leaders at EUR, it is recognized that a leadership framework and training programs alone are insufficient. In addition to these initiatives, leaders are encouraged to engage in communities of practice as a means of complementing their learning and sustaining knowledge, making the profile come to life.

These communities of practice are designed to bring together leaders from various levels and departments within EUR.

They offer activities and sessions where leaders can learn alongside their peers, fostering collective learning and fostering continuous growth and development on the topic of leadership.

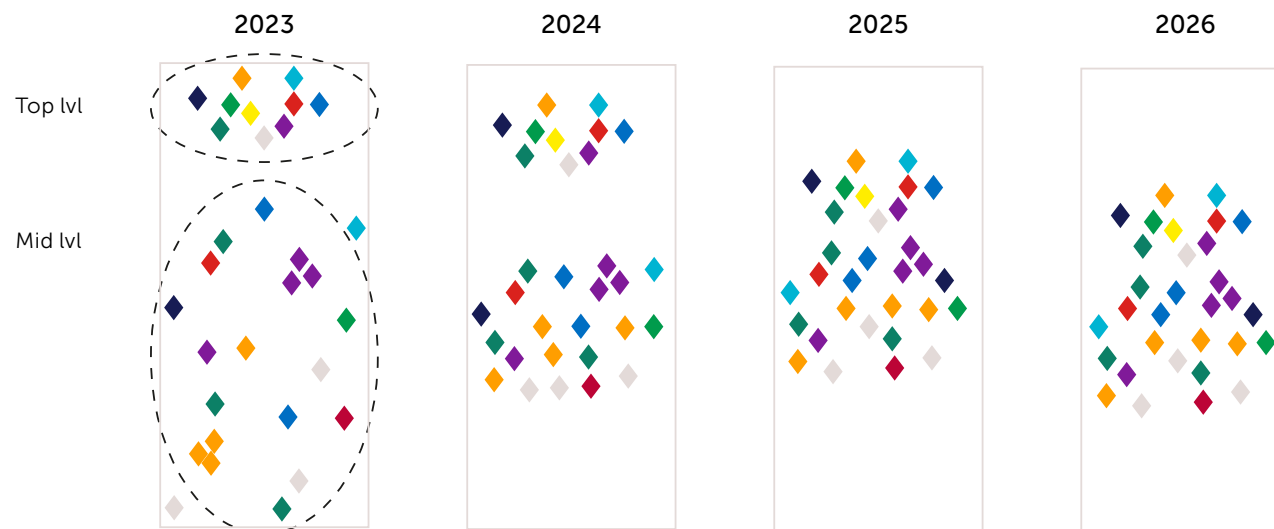
Multiple communities will be established to cater to different sub-groups within the university, including both top-level and mid-level leadership. Over time, the goal is to integrate community activities between top-level and mid-level leaders, facilitating collaboration and knowledge exchange (see illustration below).

5.1 Implementation

Participating in community activities is strongly encouraged, and efforts will be made to involve participants in co-creating these activities to ensure their relevance. The attendance data for community activities will be monitored and used as feedback for the continuous improvement and development of the community offerings.

To ensure the success of these communities, it is crucial to have sponsorship and support from top-level leadership. Their endorsement and encouragement for leaders to attend community activities play a fundamental role in fostering the engagement and effectiveness of these communities.

Illustration of leadership communities of practice development



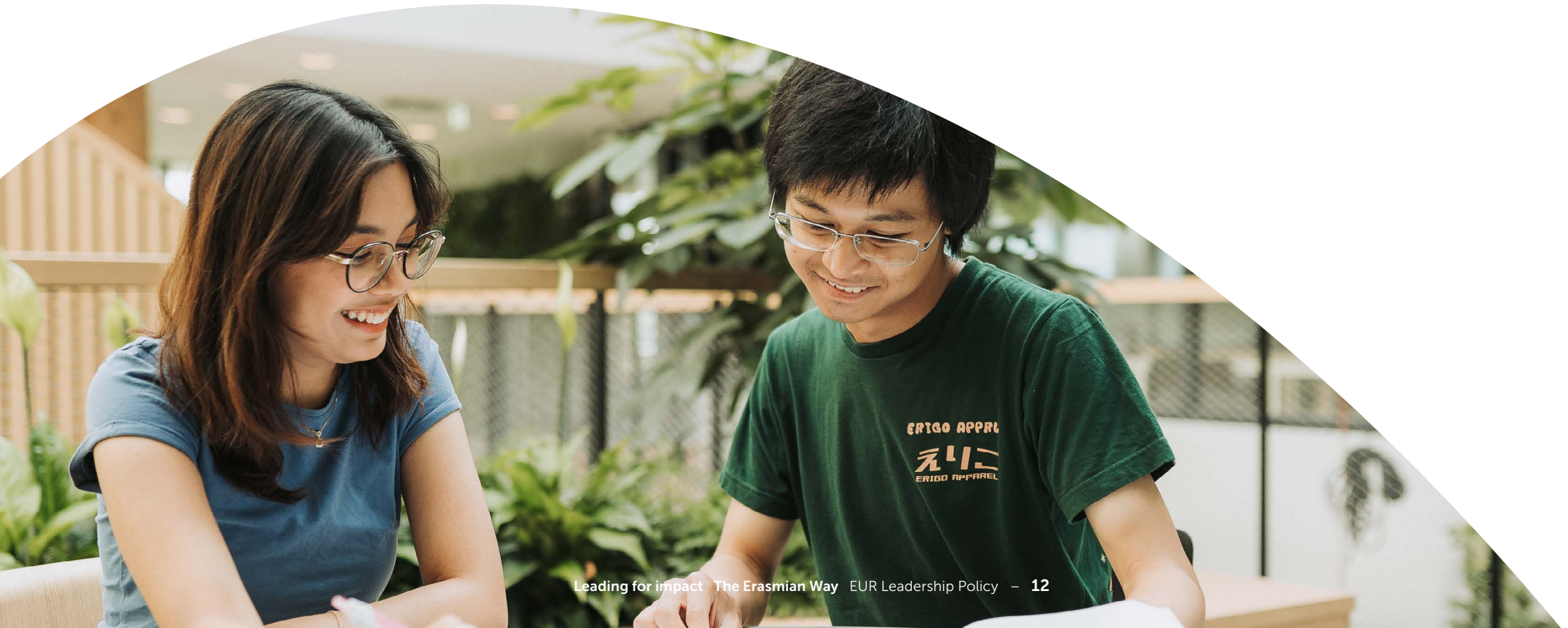
Note: different colours illustrate different faculties and service departments (the colours are not exactly matching, but serve to illustrate the point)

6. Continuous Development

The implementation of the Erasmian leadership profile and policy at EUR is designed to be a dynamic process, continually evaluated, and adjusted based on experiences and learnings. The policy undergoes regular iterations and updates to ensure its effectiveness.

A formal evaluation of the policy will be conducted after two years of implementation. Insights gained from this evaluation will be utilized to further develop and refine the policy, leadership profile, trainings and toolboxes and communities of practice. During the initial two-year period, feedback will be collected from across the organization to inform the formal review process.

EUR emphasizes the importance of creating opportunities for leaders to connect and collaborate, fostering a sense of cohesion and synergy across different organizational units. These opportunities facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences among leaders at various levels and departments within the university.



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