NTT DATA

Boosting student mobility through the roll-out of the European Student Card

NTT DATA is heading up the global consultancy and technology project to implement the European Student Card

Client profile

The European Student Card Initiative (ESCI) was established by the European Commission (EC) through the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC). It aims to promote student mobility by digitising and simplifying administrative procedures and building a European student identity that students can rely on to access cross-border services when on mobility abroad.

A key pillar of this transformative project is the European Student Card (ESC), which was initiated in 2016 as an EC-funded pilot project encompassing three countries – Spain, France and Italy – and aiming to add a European dimension to existing university student cards. Since becoming an EC-led project in 2021, the ESC has continuously grown to establish a common European identity for higher education students and empower them to easily and securely validate their student status across the European Education Area and third countries associated to the Erasmus + programme.

Why NTT DATA?

NTT DATA, part of the NTT Group, is an innovative global business and IT services company headquartered in Tokyo. With more than 140,000 professionals, the company assists its clients in their transformation process through consulting, industry solutions, business process services, digital and IT modernisation, and managed services.

![European Commission logo]

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The European Student Card facilitates the mobility of students by making their identification across Erasmus + programme Countries easier, more efficient, and greener. Our work in this project has contributed towards the creation of a more connected, efficient, and inclusive European higher education system by providing multi-faceted and 360 consultancy services ranging from the development and maintenance of the IT infrastructure to the engagement and communication with key stakeholders and governance bodies

Carles Pérez García, European Institutions Director at NTT DATA

Business need

- Innovative technologies and foresight to harness the potential of both existing and emerging solutions, such as card validation.
- Technological infrastructure to ensure interoperability, support the development, maintenance and continuous improvement of the ESC-Router, and ensure card interoperability and data protection.

Solution

- Developed a global project to manage the European Student Card.

Outcomes

- 3.2 million students have been issued an active ESC.
- 321 card issuers have issued active cards.
- 965 card issuers have registered in the ESC-Router.
- 18 countries where ESCs are issued.

Thousands of European higher education students embark on a transformative experience each year by participating in the Erasmus+ programme. Since its inception 38 years ago, the Erasmus+ programme has supported over 16 million individuals in higher education, school, training, youth and sports fields. Students participating in this programme do not simply move to another country, they also expand their cultural and academic horizons; develop new skills; and build international networks.

To maximize their experience abroad, students need access to several services tailored specifically for them: from libraries and university canteens to public transport, student dormitories and discounts.

Associated to the Erasmus+ programme is the European Student Card Initiative (ESCI) that aims to promote student mobility by digitizing and simplifying administrative procedures and by building a European student identity. The goal is to make the European Student Card (ESC) available for as many European students as possible by 2025 – in a physical or digital format.

The ESC aims to facilitate students' access to on- and off-campus services (e.g., building access, library services, transport discounts), simplifying the Erasmus+ mobility experience.

The project is being implemented by NTT DATA and encompasses a range of activities: from developing and implementing the technological infrastructure and governance models to communicating and engaging with stakeholders to provide them with support and training, as well as other key activities.

Business need

This transformative project includes the following main elements:

- **Strategic planning and governance** to ensure swift coordination and communication, support decision-making, monitor ESC adoption needs, and involve key stakeholders in the initiative's implementation, usage, needs and future development.

- **Innovative technologies and foresight** to harness the potential of both existing and emerging solutions, such as card validation.

- **Technological infrastructure** to ensure interoperability, support the development, maintenance and continuous improvement of the ESC-Router, and ensure card interoperability and data protection.

- **Engagement and communication with stakeholders** to ensure the correct deployment and uptake of the ESC by card issuers (including higher education institutions), student service providers and students in Erasmus + programme countries and third countries associated to the programme.

- **Support and training**, with synchronous and asynchronous training activities, development of training materials and continuous support from the help desk service for institutions registered (or wishing to register) in the ESC-Router.

Through a public tendering process, DG EAC selected NTT DATA in 2021 as the main partner to develop this pioneering project which is vital to building a more connected, efficient and inclusive higher education system in Europe. This project is set to span four years and is exploring ways to go above and beyond simply providing a means of student status validation by working with service providers and partners in Europe.

Solution

The response to this need has been developing a global project to manage the European Student Card. Some of the activities have included:

- **Conducting a benchmark** study on the current status of ESC adoption in countries participating in the Erasmus+ programme as well as the development and updating of corresponding national profiles.

- **Defining and implementing the ESC governance** involving the different governance bodies and convening them to gather their expertise, input and feedback on the correct deployment and improvements for the ESC.

- **Developing IT infrastructure** by defining and maintaining the ESC-Router infrastructure and migrating it to the European Commission's Directorate-General for Informatics (DIGIT) cloud.

- **Defining and implementing a stakeholder engagement strategy** to promote the ESC and its adoption in all EU Member States and countries associated to the Erasmus+ programme. This includes participating in key education events, organizing specific meetings with Erasmus + National Agencies, higher education institutions or other card issuers, while continuously monitoring the initiative.

- **Designing and implementing communication activities** that promote the benefits of the ESC through various channels (social media presence, newsletters, toolkits) as well as designing and updating the ESCI website.

The card is managed through the ESC-Router, a digital platform that enables card issuers to add the ESC elements to their students' card for cross-border recognition in Europe:

- **European Student Card Number (ESCN):** a unique card identifier used to identify and validate student cards.

- **European Student Identifier:** students from all Erasmus+ institutions and countries are given one of these unique identification numbers for the duration of their studies abroad. The European Student Identifier has been specifically created for study abroad programmes like Erasmus+ to ensure that student information can be shared among participating institutions securely and efficiently.

- **ESC logo:** including a QR code and certifying the card's authenticity on a European level.

- **Supporting users:** through the helpdesk, providing simplified guidelines, and conducting specific training sessions and webinars.

Outcomes

As of today, the following statistics have been collected:

- 3.2 million students have been issued an active ESC.

- 321 card issuers have issued active cards.

- 965 card issuers have registered in the ESC-Router.

- 18 countries where ESCs are issued.

The implementation of the first phase of the ESC is expected to conclude in 2025.

Next steps

The project team is conducting various activities to facilitate the adoption of the ESC in Erasmus+ countries and beyond, exploring ways to make it more flexible and adaptable to specific contexts and new technologies. In line with current digital trends and to ensure the recognition of the cards, a strategy is being developed for the future of the ESC the ultimate aim being to streamline and facilitate the issuance and use of both physical and digital cards.

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