

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

D. Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

The Institution agrees to publish this overall strategy (all three parts) on its website within one month after the signature of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education by the European Commission.

Please describe your institution's international (EU and non-EU) strategy. In your description please explain a) how you choose your partners, b) in which geographical area(s) and c) the most important objectives and target groups of your mobility activities (with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, including study and training, and short cycles). If applicable, also explain how your institution participates in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees. (max. 5000 characters)

Original language [EN]

In an attempt to give structure to the international activities of the URV and to better systemize the gathering of international data, the URV has developed a Strategic Internationalization Plan (SIP) that finalizes in 2013. We are now updating it in keeping with the new context in order to extend its application to 2018.

Our SIP includes the main areas identified in the new agenda 2020. As a HEI, our main task focuses on increasing the number of HE graduates. Two of the SIP's four objectives aim to internationalize teaching and research activities. In complement to these, in the past we developed a strategic approach to adapt our degrees to the Bologna Process and to identify strategic research priorities to improve the quality and relevance of teacher and researcher training. Our main objective is to equip graduates with the knowledge and the core transferable competences they need to succeed in high-skill occupations.

Our SIP defines how to provide opportunities for students to gain additional skills through study or training abroad, and how to encourage cross-border cooperation to boost higher education performance. Through its 4th objective together with our 3rd Mission Strategic Plan, we strive to strengthen the "knowledge triangle", linking education, research and business, and to create effective governance and funding mechanisms in support of excellence. In this sense, it is worth mentioning that we were recently recognized by the Spanish Ministry as the Campus of International Excellence Southern Catalonia.

Following the directives of the SIP, the URV has over the years created a network of international partners all over the world through its membership in European and non-European university networks, collaboration in joint projects and participation in missions to visit certain regions of the world to better understand their HE systems and institutions. Many of these actions have led to the establishment of MoU with renowned universities as well as with those with a similar profile to the URV.

By attending and taking part as speakers in international conferences and contacting colleagues through researchers at our own institution, the URV has got to know potential partners that throughout the years have become strategic collaborators for the development of joint projects.

We select active universities as our partners, mainly those with common or complementary activities to ours and those that share our international approach, in both EU and non-EU countries.

Because our international teaching activity focuses on postgraduate studies, special emphasis has been given in recent years to creating fruitful partnerships with BRIC and some Asian countries (Japan, Korea, Indonesia, and Hong Kong).

We have significant experience in China, which is the international country from which the URV has received the highest number of students in the last 5 years thanks to an intensive Spanish programme tailor-made for this community. Students attend their 3rd and/or 4th undergraduate year at the URV, for which they get credit at their own institution. Some of them stay an additional year and join the master afterwards making this one of our most valued instruments for student recruitment in China.

The US is also one of our focal points in order to increase mobility within the university community (among academics, students and administrative staff) and to foster joint research.

One of our interests for the future is to expand our Internationalization at Home strategy. A great advance in this respect is the study abroad programme, for which the URV has developed tailor-made programmes for US, southern Mediterranean and South American students who attend a course of a minimum of two weeks. Disciplines vary from group to group and tuition is usually complemented with Spanish courses and extra-curricular activities.

The URV's collaboration with South American universities has been growing steadily, as the common language makes this one of the natural markets for Spain.

Until now, most of our objectives have been mobility exchange programmes for the entire URV community, together with specific research collaborations, mainly based on the researchers' own work. However, the URV is now aware of the importance of providing instruction in English (we have a catalogue of subjects taught in English on our website) and of offering double and joint degrees in conjunction with international HEIs. To this end, our Postgraduate and Doctoral School is orientated towards fostering international collaborations at the postgraduate level. We have offered several collaborative degrees as a result of our active participation in Erasmus Mundus calls for proposals, but we know that this is an area in need of improvement and new approaches. Therefore, a protocol for such collaborations was drawn up and has been put into place in the last 2 years. It is both a legal and financial instrument designed to work towards meeting these goals.

If applicable, please describe your institution's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme. (max. 2000 characters)

Original language [EN]

The URV gives its academics freedom to participate actively in European programmes. Our primary strategy has been to provide technical support based on administrative units to ensure that the various possibilities are publicized and known to the academic community and that projects are properly prepared and registered, monitored and thoroughly described. This is done through a supervisory unit within the framework of the Postgraduate and Doctoral School service for the support of research as well as by means of the Centre for Technology Transfer and Innovation.

This basic network ensures the implementation of more specific actions to assist in the development and implementation of these projects, including increasing the number of courses offered in English and the internationalization of the curriculum, raising awareness of the value of internationalization for the institution and building a framework for the development of joint, double or multiple degrees to encourage short-term mobility. All of these proposals work towards providing a greater degree of academic mobility for members of the university community.

The strategy for cooperation projects related to innovation and good practice lies in the design of the new Postgraduate and Doctoral School, which aims to promote and encourage doctoral programmes of high standing in an international environment. This approach also involves the development of doctoral programmes in collaboration with companies. The strategic partnership association of the CEICS also plays an important role in this approach, as it was specifically designed to create a hub for the simultaneous activities of different stakeholders. The initial scope of the project consisted on the local region, but the network has ambitiously expanded to include international collaborations, we are beginning to form connections between European, Latin American HEIs and different enterprises to jointly design a common-interest international academic programme

Please explain the expected impact of your participation in the Programme on the modernisation of your institution (for each of the 5 priorities of the Modernisation Agenda*) in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve. (max. 3000 characters)

Original language [EN]

The URV is a research-based university. Research allows knowledge to be generated and affords the best teaching possible.

Our participation in the Programme would help to broaden our relations throughout the European Union and beyond to improve these activities. This would increase the amount of funding for master's degree studies, which would in turn lead to more graduate students reaching the research level. Through the actions addressed to develop knowledge alliances, through large scale partnerships between education/training establishments and businesses, we would develop new projects not only directed towards applied research and new innovative ideas, but also towards teaching activity more closely in tune with the needs of society.

The international approach of these cooperation activities would allow intercultural skills to be reinforced, which would help strengthen the professional and social capacities of individuals, thereby resulting in skilled human capital for the globalized world.

All of these are goals for our institution, in which are we working to develop an increased awareness of the added value of mobility schemes in terms of securing optimal future employability. In fact, we are now working to ensure, as much as possible, the recognition of academic qualifications with regard to double and multiple degrees, in which students can optimize learning mobility to the maximum.

The Programme will be helpful in coordinating efforts to switch institutions to a more flexible recognition process.

This approach would be reinforced through tools to promote industry-relevant doctoral training, thereby better meeting the demand for expert human capital. It is an objective that we have just recently set at the URV and that would also contribute to improving the quality and the number of innovative processes in our national industry, which at present lacks sufficient skilled and innovative staff. As mentioned above, our Campus of International Excellence is already a strategy designed to work within the framework of the knowledge triangle. Our Strategic Internationalization Plan (SIP) defines the need to internationalize the local network in that triangle. The actions of the Programme would act as a basic tool to fully implement this approach, together with the H2020.

The expansion of the Programme will allow us to bring in more students from BRIC countries to help increase income, but also to build strong research collaborations that could evolve into new innovative programmes.

* COM (2011) 567 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0567:FIN:EN:PDF>)