

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall strategy)

International Strategy of Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa

To promote internationalization at home by attracting students and staff from partner institutions in Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia through the organization of conferences, summer schools and similar events and thus attract quality speakers, partners and students. We see it as a very good and cost-effective way to expose the university to international and multicultural atmosphere and to encourage foreign language speaking at home. We believe that it helps to develop the international dimension of the university. The growing number of international students who choose to have an international experience with us has contributed enormously to this goal. This also means that many of our students who are unable to spend time away from Portugal because they work during the day and study in the evening can be exposed to some level of internationalization by studying and socializing with foreign peers. In line with our mission to support life-long learning, we also invest in staff training (i.e. English language skills in-house and participation in Erasmus visits).

We encourage the internationalization of our students (i.e. offering them reduced fees when away) and staff through the provision of mobility opportunities and their participation in international exchanges (Erasmus+ and other projects).

We invest in strategic areas or courses for collaboration on international projects, courses and degrees, where the university is an active partner.

We choose partners and projects based on quality and affinity of interests. We have long maintained strong links with Portuguese-speaking African countries (many of our international students come from Africa) and Brazil. Promoting a broader knowledge of Europe is also a priority because we believe that our continent is an excellent example of multiculturalism, and understanding the affinities and differences between countries must be at the reach of our students and staff. We strongly believe that awareness of other cultures, procedures, habits and educational approaches is vital for their personal and professional lives, and that it helps promote tolerance and mutual understanding. For this reason, we have Erasmus+ agreements with countries representing the various areas of Europe (North, South, West and East). Many partnerships stem out of successful bilateral projects that our staff have initiated with peers in other universities, which have led to increased institutional collaboration in the form of Erasmus+ partnerships and research. We prioritize well-founded projects conducted or proposed by our most dynamic departments and that have strong chance of success and best showcase our institution.

The most important objectives of our mobility activities include:

- To contribute to the training and individual development of our students
- To contribute to the training and individual development of our staff
- To promote academic excellence through academic and research collaboration

- To encourage our staff's learning and exchanging of best practices through a mobility experience so that they can cascade their new learning to peers, and contribute to the improvement of practices at home
- To raise the profile of our university internationally and as a means to learn new ways to improve. We are members of major international organizations such as EUA, EUCDE, ALUP and EUCEN.

We will expand on this strategy by investing in the organization of international traineeships for students and graduates. We will invite our former Erasmus students to be involved in the activity of the international office to benefit from their experience and promote best practices to support our international students.

Strategy for the organization and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Erasmus+ Programme

Given constraints, our strategy is to focus on project quality rather than on quantity, preferably (although not exclusively) involving both our teachers and students on projects that are expected to have strong visibility. Our last project was the international master degree in Architecture in collaboration with six universities in Europe. It involved two lecturers and eight of our students over three years. It was not implemented under the Erasmus programme but it had a strong European cultural dimension. Our EU projects are academic in nature and are normally initiated by teachers and departments in accordance with their strategic research interests, or result from invitations from other institutions. In the case of the latter, the usefulness, requirements, cost and impact of such projects are assessed by the department in question together with the board and supported if deemed feasible and of interest to the institution.

Expected impact of UAL's participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on the modernization of the institution in terms of the policy objectives we intend to achieve

We believe that our participating in the Erasmus+ Programme can contribute to the agenda for the modernization of Higher Education in Europe by continuing to attract non-traditional learners (adult learners, working students, students with family responsibilities, and students with non-formal qualifications), giving them opportunities to study and helping them to have an international experience whether at home (UAL) or abroad. This is in line with priority 1 of the Modernization Agenda for Europe. We will attempt new ways to enable students traditionally prevented from having a mobility experience to have an international experience by creating virtual mobility possibilities with partners and using ICT and distance learning tools (priorities 1 and 3 of the Modernization Agenda for Europe). We will continue to fund their mobility by waiving part of their fees while abroad. We will continue to encourage students who do not have standard qualifications to study with us and offer them additional support during their first year of studies, in line with the plus 23 years of age policy (priority 1 of the Modernization Agenda for Europe). We will continue to make full use of existing recognition tools (ECTS, Diploma Supplement) so that our students do not feel that a mobility will be an obstacle, rather a valuable and enriching experience (priority 3 of the Modernisation Agenda for Europe).

We will continue to improve the quality and relevance of higher education through cooperation with enterprises by continuing to invite representatives from the labour market to teach, participate in seminars and workshops and by promoting traineeships for our students in professional organizations (priorities 2 and 4 of the Modernization Agenda for Europe). Just like we do internally, we plan to organize international traineeships to encourage closer international cooperation between our students and companies and help match companies' needs and students' projects (priority 4 of the Modernization Agenda for Europe). We intend to build on our prior successful experience to develop/participate in international degrees that will help boost mobility and advance Europe (priority 3 of the Modernization Agenda for Europe).

Our institution has been participating in the programme since 2000. The numbers of outgoing and incoming students have grown steadily since then, despite the constraints our students face due to their profile. Our participation has brought profound changes to UAL, contributed to our international strategy and made us think more in the medium and long terms. We believe that modernization requires not just funding, but also understanding the need for change and the clear setting of goals. The current financial situation requires us to help our students more and to be more creative, selective and accountable in what we do. Participating in the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme will help our modernization process, improve as an institution and offer a better education to our students, assist our staff to develop personally and professionally, and help Portugal and Europe attain the goals set in the Agenda for the Modernization of Europe.