

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

UNIR was established in 2008 as an on-line university and since then it is dedicated to building quality educational, cultural and social experiences for staff and students, with the aim to become a university of choice for international students and research bodies. Partners for international cooperation in terms of mobility and research are chosen with focus on European countries (including EU and non-EU member states). At international level, focus is on Latin America and Caribe for cultural, historical and linguistic reasons. Strategic partnerships are signed with universities sharing common research interests and priorities and providing educational paths compatible (in terms of discipline) with the ones offered by UNIR. Bilateral agreements are already in place with 32 universities outside the EU (including 22 in Latin America) with the aim to foster cooperation in research, students and staff mobility (see <http://research.unir.net/research-agreements/>). Being an on-line university, UNIR international strategy is to partner both with other on-line universities and with traditional ones to stimulate exchange of know-how and to provide both physical and virtual mobility opportunities to students. In terms of research, UNIR collaborates with many national and international institutions related to e-learning.

The University counts on a strong international research network, whereas student and staff mobility is a quiet recent approach, and we are designing our mobility strategy to guarantee compliance with the Erasmus Charter's requirements so that mobility and work placements happen under the Erasmus programme. We are currently in process of implementing a structure suitable for students and staff mobility addressing the following target groups: Staff (administrative; teachers/professor; researchers); students (1st and 2nd cycle). In this perspective, we are introducing blended models mixing physical presence with virtual attendance to our courses.

The objectives of the mobility activities UNIR is setting up are:

- To introduce and promote participation into Erasmus mobility programmes for students: this will increase the diversity of UNIR's student population with incoming students and allow outgoing students to have an enriched educational experience (language and culture) and to get records of their experience as mobile student.
- To introduce and promote participation into Erasmus mobility programmes for staff: this will reinforce the international dimension of the university, stimulate exchange of know-how, empower staff members with working experiences abroad and favor good practice exchange with partner universities in terms of teaching, university management and governance.
- To introduce and promote participation into Erasmus mobility programmes for students' traineeship in enterprises (work placements)
- To develop further UNIR's existing international partners network, for student/staff exchange and research, so to reinforce our research international capacity and to establish strategic partnerships with EU and third countries. This is expected to bring knowledge alliances that will benefit our student, universities and all relevant stakeholders and it functional to the analysis of the feasibility of joint degree programmes in a later stage.
- To exploit the on-line nature of the university by supporting blended mobility models coupling physical and virtual mobility of students, thereby facilitating access to currently under-represented groups (such as

disabled students or students whose social and financial conditions do not allow long stays abroad, students with part-time jobs).

- To ensure promotion and support of student and staff mobility in a non-discriminatory way in line with Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental rights of the European Union thereby fighting discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, religion, beliefs, belonging to minority groups.

Mobility activities will be managed by the International Relations Office (IRO) that will support outgoing students and staff. Orientation weeks will be organized for incoming students. Academic staff will support outgoing students and trainees and mentors will be assigned to incoming students and trainees for day to day support. The Erasmus Policy Statement will be published on our website.

UNIR adheres to the principles of the ECHE and subscribes to the ECTS system, allocating ECTS credits to all of its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

At the moment, UNIR does not participate in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees as this is considered a second step in our internationalization strategy that firstly addresses the implementation of Erasmus students and staff mobility and the reinforcement of our international dimension of research as explored above.

The Department of International Relations and the Vice-Chancellorship for Research and Technology at UNIR signs research and development agreements with national and international institutions, in line with its internationalization strategy UNIR aims at accomplish the modernization and internationalization agenda of the EU for Higher Education. International cooperation projects with EU and non EU universities and stakeholders are already in place. Over 50 R&D agreements were signed up between 2012 and 2013 (see <http://research.unir.net/introduccion-a-los-proyectos/?lang=es>). They focus on research and capacity building, bilateral relationships and knowledge transfer. The final objective concentrates in establishing a framework of collaboration with the counterparts, by developing a detailed programme of joint activities such as the exchange of teachers, researchers and students between peers. Other foreseen activities by these agreements are: design and participation in post-graduate courses and programs with the partners, tutoring and combined guidance for research works, Bachelor, Master and doctoral dissertations, contribution to research teams leading to publication of scientific papers as well as the design, implementation, follow-up and assessment of experiments, prototypes and pilots. In addition, UNIR is partner of a number of R&D projects co-funded by the EU in the frame of FP7 and Lifelong Learning programmes, in the fields of eLearning, Communication, Education and Social Science. These knowledge alliances are aimed to support innovation in European educational and learning systems, so that their results will feed future strategic orientation of UNIR learning provision. Within the frame of the Programmes, UNIR aims at further developing of its international dimension through research and mobility activities, while participation in key actions 1, 2 and 3 of the Programme, all of them very much in line with the UNIR modernization priorities explored in the following section.

UNIR plans to participate in Key Actions 1, 2 and 3 of the Programme to enhance mobility of student and staff, establish strategic partnerships and knowledge alliances with HEIs and relevant stakeholders in order to reinforce the European Higher Education Area, strengthen European research capacity and improve the learning offer to students preparing them to be ready for a constantly changing and increasingly global and

multicultural working environment. The expected impact through the participation in the programme is the following:

- Increased attainment levels for our students and improved process of recognition of informal and non-formal learning experiences in education and working environments (Priority 1). Our policy objective is to implement student mobility and work placements and support staff mobility to enrich and recognize their learning and working experiences in the frame of the programme Key Action 1 and 2.
- Improved quality, relevance and variety of our offer by exploiting ICT opportunities and by strengthening relationships with business (Priority 2). Our policy objective is to strengthen and develop a blended offer coupling virtual and face to face attendances so to give the opportunity also to students unable to move abroad for a long time to enjoy mobility experiences under the Programme Key Action 1 and 2.
- Improved quality, relevance and variety of our offer by implementing mobility and cross-border collaboration (Priority 3). Our policy objective is to ensure a smooth integration of European and international mobility experiences carried out under the Programme (Key Action 1 and 2) in students' curricula and in staff records (ECTS and EQF compliant) to make mobility a requirement for our degrees and to ensure smooth VISA processing for students and staff needing VISA.
- Productive partnership with research institutions and business actors making the knowledge triangle work (Priority 4). Our policy objective is to reinforce the strategic partnerships and knowledge alliances already in place and to sign new ones through the programme Key Action 2 and 3; to enhance knowledge and know-how transfer and exchange in the field of learning innovation and to enhance the contribution of HEIs to social cohesion at local and international level.
- Improved governance and funding (Priority 5). Our policy objective is to improve governance with the exchange of good practices enhanced by staff mobility (Key Action 1) and by strategic partnership and networks (Key Action 2 and 3). Also, we aim to implement the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and to get the Commission HR Excellence in Research badge. Our further objective is to increase the participation of women in research and innovation activities in a gender equality perspective.
- Contribution to the EU HE modernization agenda by addressing transversal themes to policy reforms through Programme Key Action 3.