

**D**

## **Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)**

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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]

The international strategy of the Universitat de Girona can be described in three main lines of action: international visibility and prestige of our institution, strengthening the competences of the university community into an international environment and thirdly, organizing and visualizing internally and sending a clear message to our closer environment of the importance of the internationalization of the UdG.

These three points of our strategy have two ways of being developed, bottom-up and top-down.

As explained in C3, exchange and mobility proposals can be organized by our different faculties which allow them to establish their own policy and balance of geographical areas and academic contents. From a university point of view, faculties' structure is sometimes, much more powerful than the central government. This way of working ensures the bottom-up contribution to the strategy development. However, we aim to improve the alignment of these policies versus the "central hub".

As a sample of the top-down strategy, we can mention the commissioned report to an external assessor in 2010 to facilitate the establishment and strengthening of academic relations with those geographic areas which were classified as priorities as per the strategic development of the UdG: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, India, Mexico, Morocco, Russia and Chile were chosen as our target countries and the objective was to establish collaboration policies.

Another sample of geographical target area is the fact the UdG is known for its activity in the cross-border area. In recent years we have intensified the efforts for the creation of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), called European Association of University Cooperation -Mediterranean Pyrenees (AECU-PM).

The two approaches are being linked by the International Policy Commission, chaired by the Vice-Rector for International Policy, with the participation of the people responsible of those areas which are our internationalization motors. These are, among others, researchers, the responsible for the research office, the responsible for the academic service, the responsible for the language service and the responsible for the International affairs office.

It is clear that student mobility in every study cycle is one of the keystones of the internationalization of universities and we can confirm that the Erasmus program has been the key to succeed in this business. The UdG commitment is to carry on with the new program, even deeper now, taking into consideration that, due to the broader geographical area covered by the program, it will help us to complement our already existing exchange projects within the European institutions.

We are certain that we must continue enhancing mobility for practices since we understand that this is strategic in order to help our graduates to successfully complete the training as the professionals that Europe needs. Our institution has driven the project Eurotowns Practices, within the framework of University Network Eurotowns project, led by the UdG. This initiative intends to organize placements within the network cities members' services and the students of the HEIs placed there. Erasmus mobility plays an important role in this project, but not so much in other initiatives, as the recently signed agreement to facilitate the practices in China which we will try to extend to other relevant countries as Brazil. We plan as well, to extend this training mobility to our Master students, by placing it in their Final Project and to be carried out during the summer period.

Staff mobility has to be increased as well. The academic mobility will be promoted by the Academic Recognition Plan for academic dedication. In this line, we ought to improve the tools by increasing administrative staff. On the other hand, organizing an International week seems to be the better way to achieve this goal, both for incomings and outgoings. In any case, we cannot forget the fact that our country is undergoing an economic crisis that has a significant impact on all aspects of mobility.

The UdG is decidedly in favour of establishing a joint and double international degree. This is a newly started path. However, we already have a solid base: the two approved Erasmus Mundus joint masters: the European Master in Tourism Management, led by the UdG, and the European Master in Vision and Robotics, both corresponding to two research priorities of the Euro-Mediterranean Tourism and Water Campus. The UdG aim for the forthcoming years is to have, at least, one international joint or double MA degree for each one of the five study areas defined by the Spanish Ministry and used by the Catalan Universities System, and for the BA degrees as well. At this stage it is important to point out the fact that it is a long and time-consuming process, not only because of the intend to define them as international but also due to all the Spanish/Catalan national quality proceedings

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 UdG has always been very active and successful in participating in International cooperation projects, not only to those related to teaching but also to those related to capacity building. High participation in Intensive Programmes, Alfa and Tempus are a good example that we face action key 1 and 2 within the new Erasmus program as a very good opportunity to continue with this policy. While students and staff mobility is an activity which has an overall impact to the whole institution, cooperation projects may serve to the interest of smaller and more specific groups.

Since the results are quite satisfactory, bearing in mind our university size, the university government plans to achieve this target by keeping the same strategy, i.e.: using the office for International relations as a collector of proposals coming from outside and as a speaker of our own faculties proposals, taking the archived projects as samplers of good practice and promoting them via the University website and fostering the faculties to participate in HEIS networks.

In addition, we plan to increase our external recognition by specifying deeper the allocation of the additional ECTS mentioned in C6, not only in terms of the internal rule by matching it with the design of the new EU program but also by facilitating the decrease of the teaching hours and work load for academic credits to those who participate in this kind of projects by implementing and better profiling the approved Academic Recognition Plan for academic dedication.

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]

Increasing performance levels to provide the graduates and researchers that Europe needs.

In 2007, the UdG commissioned an external organization to study the university education needs in Girona with the aim of collecting social demands on students training. From this study, the UdG defined the skills that our students should achieve when finishing their studies, including, among others: the ability to use English, to effectively collect and select information, to use ICT and to achieve teamwork abilities.

Improving the quality and relevance of higher education.

If internationalization is an undeniable element to improve the quality of education, and mobility is (and will be in the new Program, as inferred from the key actions 1 and 2) the key factor for the internationalization, the UdG understands that the tools to guide it are of vital importance. The UdG is convinced that the Welcome Plan, in a very advanced stage, and "Metroline" (both for incoming and outgoing) will definitely help us to achieve it.

Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation.

The UdG is a HEI rooted in the territory and committed to it. Therefore, when speaking about cross-border education we not only speak of cross-border education but also genuinely about cross-border projects (already mentioned in point 1). As for decreasing mobility obstacles, we are firmly committed, not only to facilitate the incoming and outgoing flows but also to promote blended learning courses, following the path taken in the already existing master MIRO.

Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development.

The UdG understands that relationship with business companies are fundamental in achieving the objectives explained in the previous section. This is why we are actively involved in this sort of initiatives. As an example, we can mention that UdG is one of the four Spanish universities engaged in the project "Sponsor the talent" which aims to improve the employability of young people with higher qualifications, expanding their skills and encouraging entrepreneurship. The UdG also participates in a program jointly set up by two Spanish Ministries aimed to promote entrepreneurship within the university. This participation is in the form of a course aimed at master students and it will be open to incoming students, either if they are exchange or degree seeking.

Improving governance and funding.

The UdG has been actively involved in the definition of internationalization indicators for the Catalan University System. Implementing these indicators implies setting an appropriate framework for the University, to select what should be it is more feasible and with better return objectives. Undoubtedly, the economic contribution resulting from the participation in the new program will be an invaluable help when making decisions, because today we cannot forget, that Spain is undergoing an economic crisis with a high impact in the universities funding.

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

**E**

## Endorsement of the application

*I, the undersigned, legal representative of the applicant institution,*

*certify that the information contained in this application is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. All Programme activities will be implemented on the basis of written agreements with the relevant authorities of the partner institutions;*

*agree to the content of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) application outlined above and commit my institution to respect and observe these obligations;*

*agree to the publication of the Erasmus Policy Statement by the European Commission*

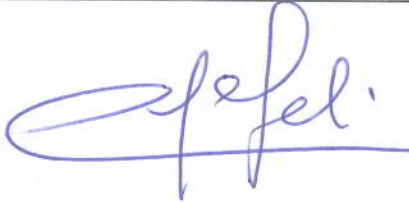
Place: Girona

Name: Anna M. Geli de Ciurana

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): 14/05/2013

*I have read and accept the Privacy statement*

Original signature of the legal representative of the Institution (as identified in section A.2 above)



Original stamp or seal of the Institution

