

Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS)

Participation of the University of Huelva in the Erasmus Program is a key element in our Internationalization and Modernization strategy. In 2018, the University of Huelva developed a new Strategic Plan, declaring its modernization strategy its commitment to being a university of excellence in its teaching, research and transfer of knowledge, identified by its promotion of culture, its concern for people and for sustainable development, linked to productive sectors in Huelva province, and especially in European, South American, Portuguese and North African spheres. To that end, a seven-axis strategy to trace the future path of the University of Huelva was defined. In line with its strategic plan, the UHU considers internationalisation among its top 7 strategic axis. The strengthening of internationalization highly contributes to the strengthening of the knowledge triangle between education, research and business, as well as the social commitment at local, European and international level. In addition, it will facilitate provision of highly skilled human capital and articulate citizens that Europe and the world needs to create jobs, economic growth and prosperity, and to benefit from globalization. This broad definition of internationalisation encompasses collaborative and partnership activities in research and learning and teaching, foreign language teaching, deeper engagement with international alumni and partnering with non-academic organisations. The strategic plan of the UHU is developed in the annual Internationalization Plan, where more than 30 calls and activities open to the students and staff, are included. This plan strengthens the four pillars for UHU internationalization: internationalization at home, bring the world to the UHU, take the UHU to the world, and commitment to Cooperation for Development.

The new Erasmus Programme allows our institution to continue achieving our strategy goals by focusing on student and staff mobility. Within it, our goal is to promote and support student and staff mobility especially for individuals with fewer opportunities and further develop non-discriminant policies. Furthermore, given that mobility is sound and well developed in the UHU, and not forgetting to keep working and improving it, we will use this programme to explore the new and creative initiatives.

UHU is an attractive university for international students and staff, offering academic quality, a wide range of subjects taught in English, use of Spanish as official language and a welcoming and accessible personality as a medium sized university providing quality of life for our guests (small city, safe, cheap, close to natural areas).

Despite important strategic, pedagogic and practical challenges, joint programmes are one of the main areas of collaboration for the UHU. In order to encourage and promote double/multiple/joint degrees we are following diverse, but complementary approaches. The first one is participation in an Erasmus Mundus Master in Urban Climate and Sustainability as well as promoting other Erasmus Mundus, already underway. The second approach is to sign specific agreements with universities in order to establish double degrees, or to organize double Masters through cooperation projects funded by the Regional Government (Master in Cooperation for Development together with South American Universities). Thirdly, UHU has recently been participating in the Erasmus+ K2 European Universities Call, that includes a European Master degree and an International PhD Programme, along with a number of other teaching and research activities shared by the seven European universities taking part in the Consortium.

The main target groups for mobility activities are students and academic staff, but within these groups the UHU will endeavour to target certain sub groups in order to widen participation. These may include under represented subject areas, second and third cycle students, and academic teaching staff, particularly with regards to the development of key international corporate partnerships.

The selection of partners is especially important for achieving our goals related to modernization and internationalization. The success of partnerships is often based on reciprocity, balance of mobility and mutual interest. Partners are evaluated according to their reputation, quality of teaching and research, as well as academic offer in English and other foreign languages. Ideally, long-term partnerships are implemented in terms of mobility as well as in research and teaching collaboration, covering all three cycles.

We are of course focused on Europe, with traditional and successful partnerships with Italy, France, Germany, Poland or Portugal; but we are also opening to new areas like the Balkans (Albania, Montenegro) as promising partners. Because of our historic and cultural link, we also promote partnerships with South America (where, as well as Erasmus, we take part in other important mobility programmes, for example Santander Bank Scholarships and PIMA Programme consisting of networks in 4 different areas) and North America, because of the quality and reputation of its HEIs, is also an obligatory destination.

Partnerships with African universities, with special interest in North and Western Africa, are being promoted because of the geographical proximity, shared history and social responsibility. Also taken into account is the potential of this continent with its growing population, vitality and increasing demand for quality higher education.

One of the main goals of the UHU's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international cooperation projects within the Programme is for operational planning to contribute as fully as possible to outcomes and impact. We use our Internationalization Plan, with its diverse calls and activities, to encourage our staff and students to internationalise their CVs,

contributing to the internationalization of the university at the same time. The impact of the plan is strongly reinforced due to the actions K1 and K2, included in it. The International Relations Board allows us to work with the faculties, students and staff in a transversal way, and is the venue for discussion, approval, monitoring (considering equity, fair processes or transparent selection) and dissemination of actions and calls. Furthermore, we are accomplishing several actions to motivate local students and staff to go abroad, and to encourage international students and staff to come to Huelva, in order to work towards the goal of 20% mobility by 2025. Every year we organize our International Week where staff from our partner institutions is invited to come to a week full of activities, talks, meetings and visits, and where our Study Abroad Fair, for local students to visit stands from our partners, is highly appreciated. We are developing new ideas like the UHU International Passport for students and staff to reflect individual international actions for assessment or reward. Regarding K2 projects, we are helping UHU staff to obtain external funding for their international cooperation activities implemented under the programme and working towards increasing the number of projects, in addition to monitoring and evaluating the operational plan. Besides the support of our International Cooperation Office, we are also offering the assistance of specialized companies, funded by the university.

Our policy objectives are to participate fully in the Programme's key activities, such as learning mobility (within Europe and / or to / from Third Countries) and especially joint master degrees and cooperation projects. Both with a quality academic offer solidly funded by the regional Government and the consistent international approach supported by the programme, including grants and opportunities for students and staff from different social and economic backgrounds (mobility grants are also supported by our Regional Government), we aim to contribute to the target of 40% young people having completed Higher Education Studies. Special emphasis is placed on regional and international level, the latter mainly focused on African and South American students. Mobilities or international activities within the programme, at our university or abroad, provide the students with the right mix of skills-transversal competences, e-skills for the digital era, creativity and flexibility and a solid understanding of their chosen field- needed for their success in a knowledge economy and in high skill positions.

The quality and relevance of higher education is expected to be impacted by the UHU's participation in activities related to the internationalisation of the curricula. Involving employers and labour market institutions in the design and delivery of our programmes, supporting staff exchanges and including practical experience can help attune curricula to current and emerging labour market needs and foster employability and entrepreneurship, and better monitoring of the career paths of our former students can further inform our programme design and increase relevance. In the framework of the Programme, our institution will strive to improve the curriculum development further, in terms of structures, systems and content, in cooperation with its EU

and non-EU partners. Developing innovative and flexible learning environments is a particular area of interest for project collaboration, with the aim of enabling different groups of learners. Mobility experiences and open opportunities in actions 1 and 2 contribute to motivate and improve competences of teachers and researchers, whom the reform and modernization of Europe's HE depends on.

Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border co-operation is directly achievable through participation in the Programme Key Activities and will be achieved by attracting more talented students and staff to our institution.

The UHU is committed to the regional development and came into being due to popular demand. There is a close relationship with local companies and institution formalised and consolidated in many cases with inter institutional agreements and cooperation activities. The programme provides the funding opportunities and institutional framework to approach our goal of increasing cross organizational cooperation and linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development. The European Universities Call is a new and huge opportunity in this respect.

UHU is committed to creating the right and more flexible governance and funding conditions by playing to our strengths and ensuring that funding is sufficient, efficient and well-targeted. An effective governance system, transparency and analysis of the impact of funding models are pre-requisites for success. The UHU plans to support development and implementation of EU transparency tools and EU wide networks through future participation in Key Activity 3.