

1. ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)

1.1 Erasmus activities included in your EPS

In this section, you need to tick the Erasmus activities covered by your Erasmus Policy Statement. Please select those activities that your HEI intends to implement during the entire duration of the Programme.

Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility:

The mobility of higher education students and staff

Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation among organisations and institutions:

Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices

Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities

Partnerships for Excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

Partnerships for Innovation

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3):

Erasmus Key Action 3 (KA3) - Support to policy development and cooperation:

1.2 Erasmus Policy statement (EPS): your strategy

Your Erasmus Policy Statement should reflect how you intended to implement Erasmus after the award of the ECHE. Should you wish to add additional activities in the future, you will need to amend your Erasmus Policy Statement and inform your Erasmus National Agency.

What would you like to achieve by participating in the Erasmus Programme? How does your participation in the Erasmus Programme fit into your institutional internationalisation and modernisation strategy?

(Please reflect on the objectives of your participation. Please explain how you expect the participation in Erasmus to contribute towards modernising your institution, as well as on

the goal of building a European Education Area¹ and explain the policy objectives you intend to pursue).

Original language (and translation into EN, FR or DE if the EPS is not in one of these languages)

The University of Ferrara (Unife) has been participating in the Erasmus+ programme since 1990: it is recognised as a catalyst for progressive and constant impulse to students' teaching and technical-administrative staff's mobility. The exchange and comparison with other universities of European and non-European countries allows to build a training context whose effects on employment and cultural enrichment are evident in the improvement of teaching research and learning quality. In particular, the main objective of this mobility project is precisely to foster meeting and exchanging different methods and knowledge with reference to a shared field of study.

Like all Italian universities, the University Quality Presidium set up an accurate monitoring system in order to meet the quality requirements of the accreditation process imposed by the Ministry of University: in-progress checks and a periodic review of the degree programmes are carried out for this purpose. In addition, every three years a Strategic Plan is defined and updated annually.

In the Three-Year Strategic Plan 2020/2022, one of the priority objectives is the internationalization of teaching through the strengthening of English language courses, the activation of double and joint degrees, the increase of students with foreign degrees, the improvement of international communication and reception services (in this regard it should be noted that the new University website went online at the end of 2019 and includes special sections dedicated to internationalization). The objective of developing a dual internationalization (at home and in mobility) is aimed at spreading a more inclusive and multicultural environment/context.

With a view to building an European Education Area, Unife will offer simple and safe online administrative procedures to all students, these are also useful for increasing their international mobility. Indeed, most of the student bureaucratic processes have been digitized. In addition, 2020 has seen the implementation of a software for managing the outgoing student mobility with an interface that includes both students participating in mobility programmes and Erasmus Academic Coordinators. This program will allow for elimination of all hard-copy documents and for a precise monitoring of student mobility from the outset of the bilateral agreement between the universities to the conclusion of the mobility with exam recognition, passing through the phases of the call for application, the assignment of the goal and the grant, the preparation of mobility contracts and the management of learning agreements.

¹ For more information on the priorities of the European Education Area, such as recognition, digital skills, common values and inclusive education, please consult the following website: https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area_en

It is a priority of our University to put the student at the center, encouraging a strong personalization of his academic path.

From its foundation, the university pursues forms of cooperation to promote knowledge and mutual enrichment between cultures, exchange of students and staff, to develop international networks of teaching and research. The exchange and comparison with other universities cause, among its long-term effects better employment and employability outcomes in different fields.

The University of Ferrara aims to increase and improve the quality of training, by providing a larger offer and more training opportunities within the first, second and third cycles, all this through international collaboration. This will increase not only the number of graduates but also the number of research staff members (in particular in PhD and post-doc research). It should be noted that the University of Ferrara, with its policies, has actively fostered the internationalization of its doctoral programmes in recent years. For this reason, we intend to diversify the opportunities for international cooperation through a correct management and agreement mapping of. We set out to do so with the help of the abovementioned management system that is currently being implemented and includes an agreement management module.

In addition, every year Unife issues several European mobility calls for application within the Erasmus Programme and non-European ones within "Atlante", the University mobility programme to non-EU countries.

Participating in the extra-European training system represents an important thrust for updating and innovation; it allows to compare different educational and training projects and to verify the impact of these projects in the work field. In particular, within trainership experiences, these actions make it possible to refine and improve the quality and relevance of the training courses offered. We plan to extend future funding requests to non-European target countries too.

The concept of internationalization is supported through two fundamental pillars: incoming students and outgoing professors. This provides a solid starting point for the dissemination of the Italian education system at university level.

Please reflect on the Erasmus actions you would like to take part in and explain how they will be implemented in practice at your institution. Please explain how your institution's participation in these actions will contribute to achieving the objectives of your institutional strategy.

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In the seven-year period 2021-2027, the University of Ferrara intends to focus mainly on Erasmus Key Action 1 (KA1) - Learning mobility - mobility of students and higher education staff. Moreover, the University sets out to participate also in Erasmus Key Action 2 - KA2

Cooperation between organisations and institutions (Partnerships for cooperation and exchange of practices, Partnerships for excellence - European Universities, Partnerships for excellence - Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters, Innovation Partnerships) and Erasmus Key Action 3 - KA3 (Support for policy development and cooperation. This will allow the University to support and complement internationalisation activities consistent with its strategy. The activities that are being undertaken or will be launched shortly to implement these actions in line with the University's internationalization strategy and its achievement are explained below.

In order to develop and achieve the objectives of its policy for updating internationalisation, Unife intends to implement learning mobility projects: mobility of students as well as of teaching and administrative staff, both to European and non-European countries, in an incremental way both quantitatively and, above all, qualitatively. The aim is to seek and provide organisational and economic support to students and staff through the use of increasingly streamlined and functional procedures and by identifying all the possible sources to fund mobility. The University plans to choose and take care of cooperation projects through bilateral agreements, favouring Institutions with adequate descriptions of their degree programmes, credits, expected learning outcomes, approaches to teaching/learning and methods of profit assessment. Emphasis will be given to those Institutions whose standards are considered adequate, so that students do not have to request any additional activities or further assessment forms.

As far as cooperation between organisations and institutions is concerned, the aim is to set up partnerships for cooperation and exchange of good practices; partnerships for excellence: both through European Universities and Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters; finally, partnerships for innovation. The University also wants to test the possibility for action in the context of activities supporting policy development and cooperation. The aim here is to open up to new possibilities of collaboration with countries with which established contacts are not yet in place and to consider the areas of competence where the University of Ferrara has the greatest interest in strengthening the training and research offer.

In order to attract students from abroad, a wider catalogue of courses in English is on the way, thanks to the collaboration of foreign professors and tutors. In this way, by carrying out their teaching modules in English, incoming professors will contribute to increasing the University's international training offer.

At Unife, Incoming students are guaranteed digital administrative processes for enrolment and reception. As mentioned above, the complete mobility process is being digitized through the use of a management software, able to interface with all the Erasmus applications to provide data (Mobile Erasmus+, OLA, Dashboard IIS agreements, Mobility Tool+, etc.), so that students can easily find all the information they need to live a high quality mobility experience abroad.

Unife is working to make its Course Catalogue, the official guide for all Unife students, increasingly user-friendly and constantly updated for incoming students. A section of the institutional portal is dedicated to the list of all the Unife Degree programmes: <http://www.unife.it/it/corsi/lauree-e-lauree-magistrali>. Here, students can gather useful information for choosing the degree programme that is best for them: qualifications offered,

the course descriptions, credit load, teaching and learning methods, assessment methods, course level, individual training units and resources available for learning. In addition, the following link includes a constantly updated presentation providing guidance in the choice of each Unife degree programme: <http://www.unife.it/it/iscriviti/scegliere/corso/catalogo-orientamento-2019-20.pdf>. In addition, a detailed course catalogue is also available in English at the following link: www.unife.it/it/internazionale/venire/cosa-studiare.

Also the ECTS system is maintained and updated every year in order to guarantee an automatic and uniform recognition of the mobility criteria and periods abroad and compare them to other countries. In this sense, rationalising and streamlining abroad-acquired CFU recognition procedures represents an objective. This is achieved by providing suitable advice and support to teachers and students (e.g. control of the outgoing study plan) and by implementing support actions aimed at students who have acquired CFU abroad in order to ensure the completion of regular time frames for their training.

In its overall strategy, the University of Ferrara intends to initiate and strengthen cooperation and internationalization agreements in order to enrich transdisciplinary knowledge between countries with different cultures and educational contexts.,

The University of Ferrara promotes collaboration with international institutes and encourages international exchanges of professors, students, graduates and technical-administrative staff through agreements and conventions, including economic support. To this end, for more than a decade now, the University has been promoting the Atlas programme, which allows for academic exchange with non-EU countries. Within the Atlas Programme students can carry out mobility periods for study, thesis research or internship, with the consequent acquisition of academic credits. The University will choose new Institutions for new agreements based on the criterion of similarity in terms of course catalogue as well as on the criterios of being able to complement our educational offer and providing students with a wider range of opportunities.

For some time now, Unife has been paying particular attention to the support and reception of incoming students, by taking into consideration the difficulties that students, especially non-EU ones, may encounter, and with specific services with the aim of facilitating the integration of the students themselves.

Once the names of incoming students have been received by a partner university, the first step will be to register them in the Unife platform and, in the case of students with non-EU citizenship, to send a communication via PEC to the respective Italian diplomatic representation to start the procedures for issuing the entry visa. At the same time, the student will receive a copy of this communication, as well as other information necessary to organize their study stay. Unife's administrative offices will also provide to each incoming student a support service for online applications, for the tax code activation and, at the same time, for issuing the university badge which includes, among other things, a credit card function (including account number that is necessary for receiving Erasmus mobility contributions, where applicable). In case the collaboration agreement includes it, once the exact mobility period of incoming students has been confirmed, the purchase of round-trip tickets and the

booking of accommodation in Ferrara for each candidate will also be carried out. This of course greatly facilitates the entry visaprocedures.

Thanks to the collaboration with the ESN (Erasmus Student Network), shortly before arriving in Ferrara, a Unife student will be assigned to each incoming student and walk the new student through its first weeks of mobility. Incoming students will also be able to participate in a welcome week during which they will receive information on the services provided by Unife, as well as take advantage of specific Italian language courses according to their language level and the support of a team of tutors for the administrative procedures for admission, for the compilation of the residence permit application and their unife study plan.

What is the envisaged impact of your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on your institution?

Please reflect on targets, as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators in monitoring this impact (such as mobility targets for student/staff mobility, quality of the implementation, support for participants on mobility, increased involvement in cooperation projects (under the KA2 action), sustainability/long-term impact of projects etc.) You are encouraged to offer an indicative timeline for achieving the targets related to the Erasmus+ actions.

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The expected impact deriving from the implementation of the abovementioned programme/objectives can be summarized as follows.

Short-medium term - next seven years

- strengthen and make consistent over time the international mobility of students, lecturers, researchers and administrative technicians towards an increasing number of different universities with quality reports on different fields of study and research;
- increase Unife's relations with other world-class universities which either are at the top of the rankings and/or belong to geographical areas with a high potential for the development of future projects (also in the field of research); this achievement is measurable through the number of newly signed agreements;
- create simplified and automated systems for exam recognition for students during their mobility; this achievement measurable through the number of credits they have acquired abroad;
- strengthen the university's capability for training actions also through experiences abroad, that are highlighted in the Diploma Supplement and will be a testimony to the individual's ability to adapt to different studying systems and methods;

- encourage students near graduation to carry out work experiences abroad, also through incentives such as a number of extra points in their final assessment (Diploma Ferrara School of..) in order to enrich their professional profile;
- open up new job prospects for students abroad;
- increase the enrolment at Unife of students with a foreign qualification using the incoming Erasmus mobility as a driving force for subsequent cycles (Master's degree, Master's degree, Doctorate);
- improve the support service for international students and the reception and guidance desk for foreign guests (professors, researchers, PhD students), offered by the new Welcome, guidance and incoming office;
- strengthening the training and the exchange within Ph.D. programmes and, as a consequence, also the training of the new teaching staff.

Particular attention is paid to PhD students. Ph.D. students in research fields where there is an established track record of International relations maintained by individual professors, receive scholarships and funding to build long-lasting relationship between Unife and specific countries with the ultimate goal of fostering new research projects.

- in the field of international communication, the sections of the new portal will be translated into English, a map of the agreements will be implemented and its update will be linked to the new management system for mobility and international cooperation, that is under completion.

Medium-long term - next seven years

- increase the ability to design and manage university programs networks;
- deepen the knowledge of the world of work and entrepreneurship in the host countries so that mobility participants can make use of them when they return to continue their career;
- make the course catalogue more international by increasing the number of English language courses, by activating new double degree programs and hosting visiting professors;
- improve the quality of outgoing mobility by conducting a survey among students to analyse the weaknesses and strengths of outgoing mobility in order to guide subsequent improvement actions.