

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

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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.

The international strategy of UCSC focuses on the sustainable development of institutional relationships and strategic activities that will underpin UCSC's international profile in the future. Cooperation and mobility are central to the international strategy as they guide institutional actions in teaching, research and outreach to the global community. The ERASMUS network is an important part of the internationalisation strategy. In line with Catholic values and UCSC traditions, the University maintains important relationships in developing countries which focus on capacity-building through knowledge transfer and human capital development.

In choosing partners for cooperation, mobility and other strategic activities, UCSC has three main criteria: the partners share a common commitment to quality education, mobility and project development; the partners take a long-term view of the projects to be developed; and the partnership is entered into under the principles of mutual benefit. This does not mean that benefits have to have equal monetary value, but recognizes that all partners can learn from each other, and sustainable partnerships are formed through reciprocity of learning. Partners may be chosen from within or outside of the EU. The focus is based not on geographic location but on the activities planned under the partnership.

During 2014-2020, UCSC will focus on creating deeper and more active partnerships in strategic activity areas with institutions and organizations in EU and non-EU countries. Latin America and Africa are traditional focuses for UCSC. In the coming years, more priority will be placed on the development of activities in Asia as a region with rapidly developing education and research systems. Creating mobility linkages with Asian institutions will be important to future graduates who wish to develop their skills and knowledge for future enterprise development. Our Confucius Institute, in place since 2009, will increase our capacity to engage with institutions and communities in China.

Cooperation partnerships are most often developed in conjunction with existing ERASMUS partners. However the university remains very open to establishing new ERASMUS partnerships for long-term and strategic projects.

UCSC is part of the International Network of Universities (INU), a global network of universities which promotes internationalisation of higher education across the network. INU has both EU and non-EU members and UCSC supports the addition of more members in the future, particularly from the EU region. A major project will be undertaken on approaches to the development of Global Citizenship qualities for students within the member institutions.

For students, mobility activities aim to build international competencies (including language) and employability for UCSC graduates, and for students who will be graduating from partner institutions. UCSC will continue to use ECTS and it has fully implemented the Diploma Supplement across all programmes. UCSC aims to include more students from underrepresented groups such as students from low socioeconomic categories and students with other disadvantages.

This also includes a focus on students from disciplines with low rates of mobility. Extending the availability of double degrees for students in all degree cycles is a priority. For students who cannot participate in mobility programs, the extension of projects under the framework of UCSC Internationalisation at Home is an important strategy.

Staff mobility has two focuses: developing international research and cooperation projects, and supporting student mobility activities with partner institutions. Both of these focuses aim to further develop the capacity of staff to improve the quality and relevance of UCSC's teaching and research. Training projects have a strong focus on capacity development and sustainable outcomes with a balance between EU and non-EU (developing country) participants and partners.

As stated above, double degrees is an area of priority for mobility and cooperation in the future. UCSC already has several double degrees with partners in EU and non-EU countries. The goal for 2020 is to triple the number of double degree offerings overall for inbound and outbound students. The priority is programs in first and second cycles. Double and joint doctoral programs are also considered strategic and important for sustainable international research collaboration, but generally take longer to develop.

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.

Cooperation projects are based within the Internationalisation portfolio of UCSC as a central resource for faculty and students. One of the primary strategies in cooperation is to invest in existing projects and networks to strengthen the sustainability of outcomes for all participants. By adopting new priorities that are consistent with the current direction and activities, projects can achieve a broader impact and stronger capacity development.

UCSC's second strategy is to invest in possibilities created by the restructure of EU international programs under the framework ERASMUS FOR ALL. As Asia will be a focus for the internationalisation strategy, UCSC will be seeking to join existing networks in cooperation projects, and to establish new networks in new areas of activity.

UCSC invests in five special Centres to focus on cooperation projects: The Centre for International Solidarity, The Confucius Institute, UCSC ExpoLAB, The Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation and Spe Salvi Foundation. Through these projects, research expertise is disseminated and applied to social and scientific problems in developing countries. UCSC faculty and students are key resources in this process as they support activities in many communities, particularly in Africa. The focus on Africa is likely to increase in the future as more staff and students become involved in new and existing projects.

Entrepreneurship, as a key strength of UCSC, is an another important focus for cooperation projects. In this area, projects focus on empowering individuals and communities to develop sustainable business enterprises within their local environment. An instrument to reach this sustainable outcome is to invest in research within local communities to connect the academic and business sectors.

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.*

Through mobility and cooperation, internationalisation is contributing to the modernisation of UCSC by forming globally competent graduates, internationally engaged researchers, and by improving the quality and relevance of our programs. Mobility programs aim to complement UCSC curriculum by providing opportunities for students to experience international education and business systems first-hand. International research collaborations are essential to developing world-class research programs and to solving critical global problems. UCSC is strongly committed to developing the capacities of our researchers to participate in important international knowledge communities. In the future, most UCSC research projects will include international partners (both EU and non-EU). By promoting staff mobility, both inbound and outbound, UCSC faculty are able to incorporate new learning into their academic curriculum, thereby continuously improving the quality and relevance of a UCSC education.

UCSC already has strong ties with the business world with thousands of placement and internship opportunities offered to students and graduates, which allow the university to be regarded as one of the top institutions of higher education for employment placement in the country. UCSC is also regarded to be in tune with the ever changing needs of employers in all industries. UCSC also seeks to strengthen its connections with local and international businesses for research partnerships in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility and Entrepreneurship, especially in its relations with emerging market regions, such as the BRIC countries and Africa.

UCSC is a participant in adopting a new quality evaluation and assurance program launched in 2012 by the Italian Ministry of Education. The AVA (Autovalutazione degli Atenei) program, regulated by ANVUR (Agenzia Nazionale per la Valutazione delle Università e della Ricerca) prescribes specific criteria to ensure a more transparent and effective governance structure (already modernised by the Education & Research Reform of 2010) and funding schemes and policy. UCSC has created a dedicated center to support the internationalisation and modernisation of the University. The Center for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI) focuses not only on research and development projects at a European and global level, but it has an important contribution to make to the modernisation of both the University and the Italian higher education system. CHEI undertakes research to support the UCSC internationalisation strategy which will lead to higher quality programs, more relevant graduate outcomes, and a globally-engaged research strategy. Through understanding how universities operate in other countries, UCSC is integrating internationalisation into its governance structures. As an important strategy to the modernization of the university, internationalisation will become a university priority in the coming years.

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