



ERASMUS+

Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS)

Erasmus Charter for Higher Education

UNIVERSITA' CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)

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:

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)

Università Cattolica's internationalisation strategy during the 2014–2020 period was focused on diversifying the countries, within and outside Europe, with which to develop activities by defining agreements and mobility schemes for inbound and outbound students/staff. The University focused on relationships with institutions that held a key position or opportunities in specific strategic areas. The aim was predominantly to increase mobility opportunities by widening the partnership agreements to include various types of mobility programmes, such as traineeships, service learning and volunteering activities, in-class teacher assistantships, etc., thus attracting and involving a larger number of students to study or undertake internships abroad. Moreover, these actions have required the design and actuation of new services dedicated to domestic and international students and staff promote and engage them.

While the previous strategic focus of the University was on quantity and diversification, the 2021–2027 period will be dedicated to securing and advancing the quality of Cattolica's mobility and cooperation projects.

With respect to the mobility of students, the university is embracing a digital transformation which will impact and involve the faculties, the students and the administrative staff. Many procedures for managing outbound and inbound mobility were already online, such as the nomination, application process and, course catalogue. A recent effort has been placed on the following developments for: pre-mobility course approval, post-mobility automatic credit recognition (outbound students), issuance of self-certification and transcript of records (inbound students). In order to promote a more integrated EHEA, the University will fully support the adoption of the online learning agreement (already in place with some partner institutions), the Erasmus Student Card initiative (already tested for Cattolica students) and the Erasmus+ mobile App with the engagement of the Erasmus Student Network-ESN Unicatt support.) These tools will further contribute to the dematerialisation process allowing the transition to a more sustainable university, which has already made significant progress with campus facilities, infrastructures and equipment (e.g.: water suppliers, low energy light bulbs and promoting bike and car sharing systems), but also in administrative processes and procedures.

Physical mobility will remain one of Cattolica's core actions over the next 7 years, specifically with a focus on the design and development of more integrated programmes, such as double and joint degrees (first and second cycle), as well as more internships and service learning opportunities to support the development of students' competences, intercultural and entrepreneurial, to enter the European job market.

Particular efforts will be put into the maintenance of existing, and the establishment of, new strategic networks of partnerships with an aim to facilitate the management and issuance of Joint/ Double Degrees, to share in student recruitment efforts, and to foster student mobility and, last but not least, promote European HE through Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree projects, such as the Agricultural, Food and Environmental Policy Analysis (AFEPA) Network.

In order to pursue similar objectives, Cattolica will continue to participate in projects like International Credit Mobility (ICM) thus facilitating the connections with neighbouring countries. As an example, the ICM project that involves Cattolica and 2 Russian universities provides a conducive platform towards the establishment or the reinforcement of research collaborations, joint publications, student mobility and a Double Degree.

In addition to this, the University is already supporting the design, implementation and recognition of blended virtual mobility programmes outside of the EU, composed of short-term mobility experiences and virtual mobility at home. The partnership undertaken with Boston University, which consists of a Double Degree that includes all these elements, can function as a blueprint for future developments within the Erasmus network. These programmes are also fulfilling the needs of lower-income students, part-time working students who may have the need to limit their time abroad, and of students within certain disciplines with low rates of mobility.

Full recognition of all international experiences in the student's academic career has been and will continue to be one of Cattolica's strategic objectives. This element, which is of primary importance within Erasmus, is also crucial under the quality evaluation and assurance program launched in 2012 by the Italian Ministry of Education. The

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

Autovalutazione degli Atenei (AVA) programme, regulated by Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del Sistema Universitario e della Ricerca (ANVUR) prescribes that Italian universities adopt common mechanisms to transfer information regarding the number of credits accumulated by students during an international experience to a dataset managed by the Italian Ministry of Education (Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca - MIUR) that generates statistics and calculates funding scheme policies accordingly.

The accreditation process managed by ANVUR is Faculty/ programme specific, hence internationalisation strategies 2021–2027, which used to be more focused at the institutional level, are now often being defined together with Faculty deans and programmes directors. As a consequence, 2021–2027 mobility goals will be identified in order to prioritise the participation of Faculties/ Programmes that have not been particularly active in sending students or faculty abroad. Other Faculties/ programmes still plan to increase mobility or consolidate the results already obtained. Within this framework, Erasmus is to play a significant role in terms of number of mobility students as well as in providing a pattern for setting up content specific programmes with strategic partners. Similarly, Faculties which are launching new international programs, will count on Erasmus in their efforts to attract international students in their classroom.

It is also worth noting that Cattolica, in its continuous effort to have complete records of all students' experiences abroad, has launched a new procedure to also track and recognise extra-curricular international activities, as long as such mobility is approved by the Institution. In fact, these activities often provide students with soft and professional skills that are positively assessed by employers after graduation.

Inclusiveness is a core value of Cattolica's mission, the university enjoys one of the best support systems for the integration of students with disabilities or special needs, and the University is studying possible formulas to further encourage their participation in mobility programmes abroad. Same proactivity is made towards incoming students, who can not only enjoy the support of International Advisors, but also counselling services in English and a professional tutor support. The University accommodates most special needs and learning difficulties including those presented by inbound mobile students.

Integration in the EHEA will be facilitated through the University's participation in the European University Alliances network (Cattolica has submitted a project in its 2020 call for proposal). It will not only allow student and staff exchanges, but also a full integration of the academic and administrative systems with the aim of awarding European Diplomas. Moreover, Cattolica is committed to continue the promotion of international credit mobility with partner institutions building on the current experience with HEIs from the Russian Federation. This will allow promotion of the ECTS system abroad and support the full credits recognition principle as well as the opportunity for low-income students from abroad to experience an immersive experience of study at Cattolica campuses.

And finally, the university has participated in the European project, Systemic University Change Towards Internationalisation (SUCTI), which supports the internationalisation at home of administrative staff in order to engage them in the internationalisation process of the University. Cattolica will continue its involvement and organise two workshops per year for its administrative staff. The next phase of our commitment to the SUCTI project will be to engage the academic staff. The University's Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI) is leading the institutional involvement in the SUCTI academic project. The CHEI also offers and organises English as medium of instruction (EMI) courses for faculty teaching in English in order to support the development of teaching and learning skills and strategies for faculty teaching in English as their second language.

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.

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

Cattolica will continue to rely on and run physical mobility programmes for incoming and outgoing students and staff, whether administrative or academic, as the core action of the Erasmus Programme, while strengthening the quality of its existing partnerships and establishing new ones with the focus on 1) student employability opportunities and 2) student development of intercultural competences. The double and joint degree projects as well as the internship/placement opportunities will be key activities the university will support and strengthen through the Erasmus mobility programme and the International Credit Mobility (KA107). The university will also explore and endorse the feasibility of further developing virtual and blended programmes, especially with long lasting HEI partners.

Cattolica will also continue to strengthen some key values of its mission by participating in EU projects. Historically, Cattolica has a long tradition of cooperation in the framework of EU projects focused on social and educational issues. Some of the projects' subjects are for example the use of phototherapy in prisons (Faculty of

Psychology), autism in early childhood (Faculty of Education), social responsibility in business (Faculty of Economics), the food supply chain (Faculty of Agriculture). During the 2021–2027 period, Cattolica intends to increase its participation in EU projects promoting the themes of inclusiveness and the civic and community engagement, especially through the Jean Monnet and the Strategic Partnership for higher education (KA203) and capacity building actions.

Furthermore, Cattolica is keen to enter and promote the European University Alliance opportunity. In order to be well prepared to exploit such a big opportunity, that is the creation of a European University, Cattolica has started and supported the internationalisation of the university staff by participating in two EU projects devoted to internationalisation: SUCTI (on the internationalisation of administrative staff) and SUCTI Academia (which is instead focused on the academic staff). Moreover, Cattolica will continue to join capacity building projects, thanks to the participation of its Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI), in support of and to strengthen the internationalisation processes of HEIs in Partner countries, such as done with projects: Red para el fomento de la Internacionalización de la Educación Superior en América Latina (RIESAL) and Fortalecimiento de la Internacionalización entre las Universidades Europeas y Latinoamericanas (FORINT), this second with a focus in Cuba and Panama.

With regards to the Erasmus actions implementation, the Global Engagement and International Education Office (International Office for short), is the University function dedicated to the development and management of student and faculty mobility programmes and services, international student recruitment and admissions, international communications, international cooperation, and any other international initiative as guided by the Rector, the Rector's Delegate for internationalisation, and Faculties by way of their Committee dedicated to internationalisation. The latter, together with the Faculty Council approves the new partnership agreements proposed from the different Faculties regarding its participation in EU projects. The International Offices' specific unit dedicated to International Cooperation will coordinate with the faculty members assigned to or who have put forward their participation in EU cooperation projects. This unit supports faculty members in the selection of the adequate call for applications, assists in the definition of the project features, and provides administrative support with managing the project cycle for the selected and funded project proposals. Support is also granted in the interim and final reports' preparation and submission.

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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Cattolica students' participation in Learning Abroad programmes has increased significantly in recent years, reaching nearly 30% of the graduating cohort (2879 mobility students in A.Y. 2018/19 per 10,000 graduates approx.). Erasmus has been contributing to this tally with more than 20% (674 students involved) of the overall numbers. Overall participation still is not evenly spread across Faculties/disciplinary areas and therefore the main target will be to consolidate existing numbers in student mobility for study and placement and increase the involvement of students attending degrees that are traditionally less mobile.

As for the inbound mobility, Erasmus student representation has been consistent over the past few years with an average of 325 Erasmus students per year. The University's hosting record will vary predominantly based on whether, and in what disciplines, new degree programmes are launched in English. As long as the academic offering in English remains unchanged, so will the number of inbound students. However, generally, our strategic objective is to maintain or slightly increase this number, the ultimate objective is to focus on the simplification of administrative procedures and an improvement of the student experience.

The priorities for the next ECHE project period include:

1. Improve the online course selection process for the definition of the student's learning agreement.
2. Improve course registration process and information regarding course calendar and credits, and academic advising practices.
3. Online academic record verification, self-certification and transcript order system.
4. Integration: develop the buddy-programme further, and provide additional socialising opportunities on campus.
5. Develop, promote, and facilitate access to online or blended content.

There is no imperative to keep a balance between our inbound and outbound numbers. Such discrepancy is due primarily to the fact that over 80% of our academic offerings is in Italian, although, we expect a gradual increase of course options in English over the next seven years. Furthermore, with the intent to facilitate access to our Italian-taught coursework, the University offers Italian Language Course at multiple levels designed for international mobility students.

With regard to partnerships, priority will be given to Faculty specific strategic goals so as to provide support to the University Quality assurance processes, thus providing ground for more sustainable long term impact. As well, the continuous improvement of the services provided to students as mentioned above.

All existing Agreements will be revised in order to update Faculty to Faculty or programme to programme course mapping efforts. Following the experience made with the Double Degrees, it will be suggested to identify a minimum of 20 ECTS pre-approved per semester for every Program involved in Erasmus mobility.

Faculties will be involved in a process of partial revision of study plans in order to introduce optional activities or courses that may be more easily approved for automatic recognition and credit transfer. This analysis will continue to include, and possibly reinforce the inclusion of, Traineeships as well as virtual or blended experiences abroad.

Provided that it is planned that more Faculties will start offering international degrees taught in English in the coming years, we expect to be able to increase the number of inbound mobility, increase the number of strategic partnerships, and envisage a higher and better diversified number of mobility participants across programs.

The target will be to increase by 15% the current number of agreements. This process will involve, as indicated above, a review of all agreements giving focus to course and programme compatibility. In order to facilitate these processes and objectives, Teaching Staff mobility will play an increasingly strategic role. In line with the future/mobility objectives Erasmus will provide an effective platform to facilitate the internationalization of the faculty.

Cattolica's numbers pertaining to the mobility of its faculty has been quite stable over the past four years with an average of 30 incoming and 24 outgoing. The University intends to put efforts towards increasing these results by 20% in 7 years.

The satisfaction of the services provided to Academic staff is currently monitored on a yearly basis by the Nucleo di Valutazione (internal quality assurance body) and will be used as a qualitative indicator.

A particular attention will be given to Double Degree Agreement that we expect to develop at every Faculty. The number of new agreements will function as quantitative as well as qualitative indicators.

In order to guarantee long-term sustainability of mobility programs, student support services play a crucial role. In this regard, we plan to finalize in the coming framework various projects, such as the:

- Digitalisation of the application procedures for all inbound students
- Digitalization of the recognition procedure for all outbound students
- Adoption of the Erasmus Student Card Initiative

Moreover, we will increase the number of pre-departure and post-return "how to maximise your international experience" meetings available to both domestic and international students. The number of events arranged per semester will count as qualitative indicators.

Students satisfaction will be assessed through dedicated surveys that will be administered together with the EU-Erasmus survey (i.e.: student's course evaluations surveys; International Student Barometer - ISB survey).

Provided all the above we also expect to increase the number of mobility flows and our participation to the Erasmus+ mobility scheme will play a crucial role towards such goal.

Outbound – increase of 30% in 7 years: SMS from 556 today to 670, SMP from 118 today to 200.

100% students with Credit recognition, or which 75% have over 20 ECTS recognised toward their degree.

The ultimate University goal is to reach 4000 outgoing students per year, which equals to 10% of the overall student body and 40% of the graduating cohort.

With regards to European cooperation project, Cattolica will continue to foster the participation and support of the Faculties in the following actions: Strategic Partnerships and Capacity Building (KA2). Currently the University is engaged in 11 projects as coordinator and 10 projects as partner; an increase of the 50% in the different actions is foreseen for the next 7 years.