



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

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

The National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (UoA) has established agreements in all fields of study with more than 400 partner Institutions from all over the world.

Partners are chosen upon the following criteria:

- Equivalence of educational programs, courses and subjects taught.
- Affinity in research interests.
- Existing collaborations between academic staff.

Our 370 European partners cover a wide geographical area, including all parts of Europe. Bilateral collaboration agreements also exist between 40 Universities of North America, South America, Russia, China, Japan, Asia and Australia.

Our aim is to further expand and intensify such collaborations with Institutions of other parts of the world and to include these Institutions in our University's partners under the new programme. This cooperation will promote student and staff mobility for studies, training and teaching and the expansion of Joint Programmes to countries outside Europe. Part of the University's international strategy is to expand existing collaborations mainly with Mediterranean, Middle-Eastern, African and Black Sea countries, in order to cultivate closer bonds with areas in Greece's geographical vicinity. To this purpose, our University the last years participates in international exhibitions on education held in Middle-East, as well as East and South Mediterranean regions, in order to establish new bi-lateral agreements and cultivate an international spirit of goodwill and trust in this area of the world. This

orientation is further supported by our participation in several international Associations and Networks of collaboration among educational institutions that include Mediterranean countries and promote cooperation with countries outside Europe (e.g., UNIMED, EUA, UNICA, ATOMIUM CULTURE).

The strategy of our University that aims at promoting cooperation with Mediterranean countries and countries of the Black Sea is developing the recent years and as a result this year there was an increase of applications of UoA as a coordinator and as partner in the framework of TEMPUS programme and as a coordinator of a large ERASMUS MUNDUS (action 2) programme. Furthermore the School of Philosophy of UoA initiated the foundation of the new ATHENS HUMANITIES NETWORK for the promotion and support of Humanities studies. The network involves cooperation with many Universities from South-eastern Europe and from countries of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea region.

Regarding the objectives and target groups of our student mobility, such mobility of all three cycles is promoted, including study and training. The main aim of student exchange remains to expose students to different cultural and educational environment, to help them acquire various perspectives, ameliorate their language skills and experience different work ethics. We encourage our students to approach different research methodologies and develop their aptitude to adapt to a different educational and working system. Regarding academic staff, we encourage and promote exchanges, in order to allow our professors to benefit from their contact with their respective colleagues abroad and research facilities, laboratories and libraries abroad.

Regarding UoA's participation in consortia for Joint Masters or Doctorates, we encourage study and research of our postgraduate students in foreign institutions under joint supervision or in collaboration with professors from partner, mainly European, Universities, in order to obtain a Master's or PhD degree. Such collaboration is encouraged especially in cases where the research object and study field require a trans-border or multidisciplinary approach.

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.

The UoA's strategy for the organisation and implementation of cooperation projects under the Programme includes:

- Student and Staff Mobility: Each year we expand the existing collaboration agreements and thus offer our students and staff a wider choice of foreign Universities for studying and teaching. We encourage students to take part in placement mobility, in order to acquire working experience in a different country and put to use their academic knowledge in practice.

The period of studies or placement abroad is fully recognised by our University. Our aim is to expand our collaboration with enterprises, and offer the opportunity to our students and staff to become market oriented.

- Joint Masters and PhD degrees with foreign Universities: Our Joint Masters and PhD degrees cover so far a small range of academic fields, however, following the voting of a new Law on Higher Education, such projects are facilitated and highly encouraged. It is thus our aim to exploit these new opportunities and, in the near future, expand the range of joint degrees within European and especially non European universities

- International bilateral agreements with non participating countries: So far, we have established 60 bilateral agreements (not under Erasmus), 40 of which are with institutions of non participating countries and our aim is to further expand such collaborations

- Joint research programs: Each Faculty has developed specific joint research projects in a wide spectrum of scientific areas (within the Faculty), aiming to promote science and train students. These projects so far are financed by our University and private funding, such as Foundations and Enterprises

- Finally, cooperation will be expanded to various Institutions as well as local authorities e.g. Municipalities, Cultural/Beneficial Foundations, Non Governmental Organisations etc. aiming at constructing and implementing educational and research programs that will greatly benefit society as a whole.

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.*

Greek society has traditionally been oriented towards higher education. It is worth noting that a high percentage of high school graduates are admitted, following a strict entering exam, to the country's universities and technological institutions, thus attainment levels in higher education in Greece are high enough (31%) and very close to our national target of 32% towards year 2020. However, the current economic crisis the country suffers intensifies a high unemployment percentage among young educated people, which reaches at present an alarming 50%.

According to the new Law on Higher Education in Greece the collaboration among universities and corporations is encouraged. The new legal framework promotes the reduction of administrative, regulatory and bureaucratic barriers. Our aim is to encourage partnerships with enterprises and business through which our students will have the opportunity to explore the market possibilities and enterprises may contribute their expertise, know-how and equipment to research projects.

Our university has already taken adequate steps and undertaken initiatives in several projects involving the use of ICTs. For example, e-learning, internet portable systems of teaching, already applicable to several courses, have been implemented. Furthermore, several research projects use informatics, GIS, virtual reality and other programs, in order to enrich the teaching and learning experience of the participant students and staff. Additionally, the open digital classes are in preparation, aiming to offer easy access of knowledge to society and will soon be implemented.

Mobility and cross-border cooperation, as already described, forms part of the university strategy and has produced, among others, excellent research results, such as joint international publications.

At present, our University offers the possibility to incoming students to study for their PhD in English, French and German. Our aim is to extend this possibility to Master's degrees as well. During their stay, foreign students are offered free courses in Greek language. This greatly benefits particularly students who are interested in Humanities. Regarding the undergraduate studies, most courses are taught in Greek. Some Faculties however have developed specific programs in English, French and German, in order to assist incoming students and attract more students from abroad.

Although in Greece it is fully recognized that public investment should remain the basis for sustainable higher education, the present fiscal policy has dramatically reduced the state participation in the universities financing. This makes finding alternative financing an urgent priority for our Institution.

Finally, among our strategic choices is the development and full support of Centers of Excellence of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.