

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

The UPV/EHU's international (EU and non-EU) strategy.

The University of the Basque Country counts on a wide world strategy for mobility. Lying on the EU Erasmus Programme and its own 'Latin America' and 'Others Destinations' programmes it tries to strengthen its ties, first, with European and Latin American HEIs and, second, with institutions from all around the world. Cultural kinship with Spanish speaking countries and Brazil is a treasure to be guarded and it has been the main effort during the past decade. Now the University of the Basque Country is focusing on widening its agreements with other regions from all around the world.

- a) The University of the Basque Country chooses its partners according to three bedrocks: common interests (to widen HE and research); quality and the approach to other cultures. The University of the Basque Country leads research in the Basque Country. It produces more than 90% of research and almost 100% of it in Sciences and Health fields. In this context the main interests of the University of the Basque Country are concentrated in Science and Health Research. Researchers, research groups and institutes participate under EU, European and Third Country foreign governments funding mechanisms in many research projects. Competitive calls guarantee the quality of projects and the research groups involved. Multicultural and multilingual realities are also a main subject to be dealt with in our institution since there are two official languages in our territory (Basque and Spanish).
- b) The University of the Basque Country focuses mainly on Europe, Latin and North America and Asian consolidated and emergent economies (Australia, New Zealand, Korea, Malaysia, China and India). Although it is quite difficult to find standardized partners we do not ignore African HEIs.
- c) Our most important objectives and target groups are:
 - 1) Staff. By funding the mobility of staff by means of a yearly program, the University of the Basque Country tries to create knowledge networks all around the world. Several cooperation agreements are subscribed under the yearly action of the II.RR. Vice Rectorate call of grants for staff. Erasmus provides too a permanent resource that allows meeting up to 100 members with other European Staff. In this sense the II.RR. Vice Rectorate helps with its own funds the Erasmus mobility action for Staff. Networks development constitutes a main instrument in spreading knowledge and the University of the Basque Country IRO supports the signing of agreements to create them.
 - 2) Students. Through the Erasmus program for degree students the University of the Basque Country aims to give them a better knowledge of a different culture and to make acquisition of language skills easier, which matches the EU policies. Training in different disciplines being more and more important we actually work on strengthening our exchange ties. Our main goal for postgraduate students is to allow them to learn complementary subjects and techniques, improving by this way

their competitiveness and employability –new actions try to ease this goal; i.e. templates for bilateral agreements between master programs-. is to collaborate between master degrees with common interests. For doctoral students the University of the Basque Country makes special efforts in helping them on mobility under European programs –i.e. Marie Skłodowska Curie- A growing effort is being made to increase formal cooperation in PhD Thesis direction –codirections- and third cycle researchers hosted through *ad hoc* agreements.

- 3) Besides Erasmus Intensive Programs Short cycles are also supported under the AEN –Aquitaine, Euskadi and Navarra- group and Euro region funding calls.
- d) One strategic goal for the University of the Basque Country at this moment is the creation of double degrees basically, but not only, within the AEN group. While joint degrees are difficult to achieve taking into account the differences between HE systems in Europe double degrees allow to get, not only two grades, but they also increase the employability of students on both sides of the frontier between Spain and France. In order to ease the agreements describing the conditions of double degrees the IRO legal staff supports and proceeds with them. We are committed to increase this kind of cooperation between universities located in different countries.

The UPV/EHU'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 University of the Basque Country has a record of participating in the Alfa, Tempus, UE/Canada, Leonardo and other European projects, as well as projects from the sixth and seventh Framework Programme. It has coordinated an Erasmus Mundus action 2 (LOT20B) from 2010 to 2012. At present it is coordinating 2 Marie Curie actions and an Alfa project dealing with the relationship between University and Society. We are also partners in 3 Erasmus Mundus action 2 projects with Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Furthermore, 2 of our masters have obtained the prestigious Erasmus Mundus recognition.

The university at present is managing around 7,254,442€ in European research projects, more than 1,000,000€ in mobility grants for different mobility programs including undergraduate exchanges both with European and third countries, graduate and staff exchanges. The University coordinates a Doctoral Network with Latin American partners offering master and doctoral programs in LA universities.

Expected impact of our participation in the Programme on the modernization of the UPV/EHU

The University of the Basque Country is a public all inclusive institution with an effective system of funding aiming to give all citizens equal opportunities to access higher education.

Our Student Guidance Department works closely with local secondary school counsellors and organizes periodical events to provide information for students and guarantee a smooth adjustment to HE. The reinforcement of these activities will enable us to attract more students to HE and reduce the number of drop-outs.

Aiming to boost cooperative and dynamic activities and attitudes in class, our university has established the IKD programme to train and mentor our faculties in the implementation of active teaching-learning methodologies (PBL and case studies).

Dozentiaz is our assessment tool to monitor lecturers' activity and provide advice for improvement. Excellence in teaching is highly valued and rewarded among our faculty members.

Both teaching staff and undergraduate students very commonly use distance and online learning tools at different stages of the degree and/or master studies.

Employers and labour market institutions are also involved in the acquisition of academic and professional competences: most degrees offer compulsory practicum to introduce students to labour market. To facilitate contact between them the University has created a database (PRAKTIGES) which gathers training vacancies.

To increase the number of European researchers, our University offers an attractive postgraduate catalogue with 100 multilingual, 16 in English, 14 inter-university, 8 international masters and 2 Erasmus Mundus. We offer 71 Doctoral Programmes, 32 awarded with the Distinction of Excellence from the Spanish Ministry of Education. More than 300 agreements have been signed with R+D+i centres, institutions and companies and we belong to the LA Network for Master's and PhD programmes where we work with 13 Universities. At the moment we have over 2500 master's students and nearly 2300 PhD candidates. During the year 2011/2012, 326 doctoral theses were read, 75 with a European mention. Every year local institutions provide funding for doctoral and postdoctoral research positions. Our goals include:

- To enlarge the Master and PhD studies catalogue
- To strengthen our bonds with international partners to create joint postgraduate programmes
- To increase the number of Distinctions of Excellence
- To sign more agreements with R+D+i centres, institutions and companies
- To raise the percentage of doctoral thesis with a European mention

Once our students have completed their academic training they are actively supported to create spin-off companies, receiving guidance throughout the launching process.

As a Campus of International Excellence we aim to link HE, research and regional growth, developing knowledge hubs through the Euskampus Project. Finally, our strategic ally in Euskampus, the Université de Bordeaux, is our privileged partner in the development of a cross-border campus.