

UNIVERSITY OF GIBRALTAR

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

In compliance with the Purposes of Visibility of the Erasmus+ programme, the University of Gibraltar agreed to publish this overall strategy after the signature of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.

The University of Gibraltar Erasmus Code is
UK GIBRALT01

The University of Gibraltar's unique number is
271397-EPP-1-2017-1-GI-EPPKA3-ECHE

The Participant Identification Code (PIC) is
926738874

Part one:

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

The University of Gibraltar opened its doors in September 2015 with the principal mission of responding to societal needs as well as shape personal and professional futures through the pursuit of education, training, and research. Partnerships with business, government, charitable foundations, healthcare and educational institutions lie at the heart of the University's mission. The University is committed to quality teaching and learning, world-leading research and academic freedom as well as to the sustainable development of Gibraltar, and the region.

The University aspires to be an internationally recognised yet locally engaged institution of higher education by 2020. Creating international diversity is therefore one main pillar of our university. We aspire to:

- develop a culturally diverse community of students and staff
- prepare students for rapidly evolving global interests
- build education, research and innovation competences through international partnerships and
- develop programmes that meet the demand of local and international markets

Within this context, European and International cooperation alongside staff and student mobility are major themes of the University's strategy.

Partners

Strategic partners are those who share the University of Gibraltar's values. In developing strategic partnerships, we will search for institutions that either have a similar approach to teaching and learning, similar disciplinary strengths, or who offer comparable subject coverage, such as: Health Studies and Sport Science, Business, Tourism and Hospitality, Life and Earth Sciences, Gibraltar and Mediterranean Studies, Professional Development and Continuing Education. Strategic partnerships will play an important role in helping the University to achieve targets for increased participation in international programmes. In these early stages, we seek for partners that will support the University in:

- our strategic approach to European and International funding
- providing opportunities for regional cooperation
- ensuring the University's engagement and alignment with Gibraltar's society and economy

Our initial partnerships have developed from networks and relationships already established by our academic staff. For example, the participation of the University of Gibraltar in the UE4SD project

(University Educators for Sustainable Development) funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme, has enabled the University to partner with a network of 55 European higher education institutions since its inception. Additionally, participating in thematic networking actions (such as COST activities) will also help in building strategic alliances to advance our ambitions of establishing high-profile, long-term contacts and partnerships as well as sustainable and mutual-benefit networks for the benefit of the whole community.

Geographical areas

The University is currently focusing in the Strait of Gibraltar region as a major nexus of the wider Mediterranean area and the east Atlantic seaboard. We seek for strategic partnerships in the UK, Portugal, Spain, Morocco and other countries in the Mediterranean such as Malta, Italy and southern France. Upon commencement, actions with these partners will include diverse staff mobility and visiting faculty activities in order to settle alliances and cooperate in exchanging good practice.

Coordinated student visits and research collaboration is evolving. While maintaining our geographical priorities, we remain open to new opportunities and promoting good practice in our international operations. By way of example, the University is in the process of developing an MSc in Marine Science in collaboration with the University of Seychelles, scheduled for launch in 2017.

Objectives and target groups

In these initial years, the University of Gibraltar will focus on promoting staff mobility as a strategic growth priority of promoting and raising the University's profile internationally (this will be the basis for future student mobility). Key target groups are therefore staff in academic, research, administrative and managerial posts. These groups will initiate both outbound and incoming staff mobility, in view of strategic partnership establishment, relationship management, setting up knowledge alliances, establishing capacity building projects, support of co-operative projects, professional training, teaching delivery and programme development (including collaborative development of degree programmes and Jean Monnet projects). Short professional development courses and summer schools are also an important mobility opportunity that the University of Gibraltar will exploit. In line with this, current objectives aim at KA1 - Learning mobility of individuals, focused on staff; KA2 - Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices; KA3 – Support to policy reform and Jean Monnet Actions.

In the medium-term (2018 onwards), it is expected to increasingly promote student mobility within KA1.

Part two

Describe your institution's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects within the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme.

The University of Gibraltar will make a strong strategic commitment to enhancing opportunities for the mobility of our staff and students by encouraging members of our community to gain international experience as part of their study programme or professional development. We will encourage our community members to study, work or research abroad, ensuring that they develop employability, cross-cultural understanding and citizenship skills, which will provide added value and enrich our society. In order to channel these initiatives, the Erasmus+ Programme will be a major framework pillar since it is the largest structured mobility programme that will support and provide new opportunities for European students and staff to experience Gibraltar, and similarly for our staff and students to work and study across Europe.

Hence, our strategy for the promotion and implementation of cooperation projects focuses on:

- Staff mobility, to benefit from mutual learning, capacity building, developing collaborative degree programmes, and sharing of best practice with other higher education institutions
- The development of sustainable partnerships with European and non-European universities
- Student mobility at all levels, promoting active exchanges within Europe and outside Europe.
- Offering opportunities for students to engage in a professional training with European and international employers within relevant economic sectors for Gibraltar

Our project partnership strategy will pursue an international dimension through engaging with institutions and students internationally; advancing student and staff mobility; developing high-quality research and teaching partnerships and promoting international student recruitment. Staff and student mobility prospects are core aspects of choosing which cooperation initiatives to liaise with and a suitable assessment must be made for each proposal to ensure that the objectives stated in the programme can be met.

In upcoming academic years, the University envisages to attain:

- 20% mobility in undergraduate students
- 33% mobility in Master's degree programmes
- 50% PhD students on collaborative programmes with international partners
- 100% mobility in staff

In line with this, the University has the adequate support structure for the organisation and implementation of cooperation projects. The European and International funding office provides advice and guidance in identifying networking opportunities and partnerships for the University of Gibraltar. The office supports all departments and staff in bidding for external funding from the European Commission, in order to proactively support collaborative research and academic development projects across the University.

Proposals are therefore considered by the European and International Funding Officer, the Finance and Enrolment Manager and the Director of Academic Programmes and Research; and then reported to the Vice-Chancellor for final assessment, who recommends the final approval to the Board of Governors. In addition, the funding office provides comprehensive support in the management of

projects pre and post award, both across the University and across the EU partnerships and international networks in which it collaborates.

The most important target group of our mobility activities at the current inception stage is University's staff (at teaching, research, managerial and operational levels) to help us in building and delivering a high-quality service to the community we serve, cultivating the basis to develop programmes with international partners at all levels. Consistent with this, the relevant objectives of our programme activities are the implementation of strategies in collaborative teaching, research and staff exchange that help extending the University's outreach and its international engagement. Curriculum development and student exchanges are also planned; since these enrich the overall student experience and enhance and develop the global employability skills of our graduates at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Apart from establishing European and International partnerships, part of our strategy is to support learning and professional development in the region too. Hence, there will be support for individual learners and employers looking to develop skills and education in the workplace, and founding international sector skills alliances is a key aspect in achieving that objective.

As part of the development of collaborative provision within the area, the University counts on the support of its associate campuses; the Gibraltar Botanic Gardens, the Gibraltar Museum, the Gibraltar Garrison Library, the Department of Environment and Climate change and the Gibraltar Health Authority's School of Health Studies. These campuses act as research hubs, generating knowledge, building local research capacity and helping to make sense of contemporary and historical issues.

The EPS has been approved by our Director of Academic Programmes and Research.

Part three

Explain the expected impact of your participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on the modernisation of your institution.

Our participation in the Programme will assist us in generating and securing links with academic research and businesses which will contribute to the development of Gibraltar's economy and its surrounding areas. By working pro-actively with local, regional, European and international partners we intend to attain a solid background for the implementation of the higher education agenda in Gibraltar. The expected impact is the delivery of a high quality education system by ensuring curricula that allow mobility, sharing of knowledge and creation of alliances that will bring added value to our community. Our participation in the Programme will also seek establishing partnerships to develop and deliver collaborative degree programmes and enhance our presence internationally. With regard to the 5 priorities of the Modernisation Agenda, the University will contribute as follows:

1.- Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs

The designing of degree programmes that are responsive to local environment and business' needs will be key to ensure significant attainment levels of local students. Promoting the University in local comprehensive schools and the College of Further Education will help to raise interest in higher education and increasing engagement of local community. The University will also seek international and work related learning opportunities with a view to enhancing students' future prospects. Participation in the Programme will offer a range of mobility opportunities so that staff, students and researchers can develop the skills required for today's globalised environment. The programme will also offer opportunities for the development of academic consortia and collaborative partnerships that will support professional courses and Masters and PhD degree programmes.

2.- Improving the quality and relevance of higher education

As pioneers of higher education in Gibraltar, we will concentrate on developing a focused education provision at all cycles. We want to ensure high aspirations for our graduates, and proactively deliver employment-related skills that will enable these aspirations to be met. The University requires that staff explore innovative ways to teach and promote learning, and to undertake visits to learn about the design and delivery of courses, and how these are matched to professional and skill requirements from different countries. The Erasmus Programme will offer us opportunities to accomplish these goals in our initial operational stage (2016-2020), especially through staff training and teaching mobility opportunities.

3.- Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border co-operation

The participation in the Erasmus+ Programme will broaden the opportunities for University of Gibraltar staff and students to have an international experience. Similarly, it will facilitate staff and students coming to Gibraltar to experience a unique stay within this small community nurtured by a wide range of cultures (British, Moroccan, Jewish, Indian, Spanish and more). Quality and relevance will be promoted by the development of collaborative courses across borders (Morocco, Spain, Portugal) and internationally (e.g. Malta, Seychelles, UK). Quality will be further increased through incoming and outgoing staff mobility which provides an opportunity to experience a different perspective to their work and fosters exchanges of good practice between academic staff. For those

students who are unable to go abroad, incoming students will provide an international dimension to their home academic experience.

4.- Making the knowledge triangle work: Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development

Working with industry and business translates research into innovation and hence we are working closely with the local business community to ensure that our educational and research offer meets the very demanding business environment of Gibraltar. We work with key stakeholders and local authorities in developing research collaborations in relevant business sectors (ICT-gaming, banking, finance, health, environment, heritage, hospitality, tourism) as well as in the public sector (Gibraltar Health Authority, Dpt. Of Environment and Climate Change) to deliver highly-skilled graduates that respond to local needs and bring added value to the local economy.

5.- Improving governance and funding

It is important to us that students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to access higher education. Our leadership and governance policies promote equity and provide the necessary legal and administrative independence that allow us to define strategies and structures to differentiate ourselves from long-established universities.

Our governance structure favours our autonomy to set strategic plans, manage public and private income streams, partner in research and mobility activities, attract highly-qualified teaching and research personnel, set tuition fees and introduce new study programmes in the future.