

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

The participation in the Erasmus+ Programme is strictly connected to the internationalization and modernization strategy of Marche Polytechnic University (UNIVPM), especially because now more than in the past the Erasmus+ Programme has become widely comprehensive and covers the most relevant actions that a higher education institution can implement to develop its own internationalization.

Individual mobility of students and staff is certainly important and probably the first prerequisite to develop a sound international approach to teaching and research. However, all the other collaboration opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ Programme also contribute to the growth of the university and, consequently, to better international opportunities offered to students, staff and partners on the international level.

UNIVPM has been participating in the Erasmus+ Programme for many years and its capacity to manage Erasmus activities grew and developed together with the growth and development of the Programme itself, both in terms of quantitative and in terms of qualitative results. The student population amounts to about 17.000 units divided into the five faculties the university is composed of (Agriculture, Economics, Engineering, Medicine and Surgery). The Faculty of Engineering hosts the highest percentage of students (about 6.000), followed by the Faculty of Economics. While the latter has historically been the most internationalized Faculty of our university (for several reasons, mainly because economic subjects are probably the most oriented to an international approach) and the highest number of students exchanged (both incoming and outgoing) used to come from that Faculty, in the last seven-year period UNIVPM experienced a rapid growth of the Faculty of Engineering, which is now pairing the Faculty of Economics in terms of numbers of students exchanged. Such development is expected to continue in the next years and will bring positive results to the internationalization and modernization of the university as a whole. Indeed, while the pioneering Erasmus activities of the Faculty of Economics worked as pilot for the other areas, the active and vivid participation of the Faculty of Engineering of the recent years also contributed to the **development of digital tools** for the management of international mobility, to an **increase in the number of the outgoing students**, to the **improvement of the academic offer for incoming students**, to the **establishment of Erasmus international partnerships active in the field of scientific research**. The ongoing growth of the two Faculties within the Erasmus+ Programme will lead the development of the other three areas, which are also very active in terms of participation in the Programme but where numbers are lower because of their dimension (as in the case of Agriculture and Sciences, which together count about 3.000 students) or of other features which sometimes represent obstacles to a qualitative mobility (this is the case of Medicine, where the academic path is characterized by stricter rules and sometimes a less flexible approach).

The participation in the Erasmus+ Programme strongly influenced the development of the internationalization process of UNIVPM in the past and will continue to lead such process in the

future. Many changes operated in the recent years originated from the need of improving the quantitative and qualitative results of the Erasmus+ projects managed by the university. For example, **a lot of services have been developed to welcome Erasmus students** (new dormitories, new agreements with local service providers, improved digitalized management of the incoming mobilities, improvement of the international academic offer with the development of courses taught in English in all the Faculties, involvement of foreign students in local events to bring them close to the local society and the local society close to them, and so on) which led to a growth of the international collaborations, to the opening of our doors to other extra-Erasmus students and even to the beginning of new kinds of collaborations, such as joint programmes or partnerships for the development of innovative, international projects. Past experiences demonstrate that the internationalization process of UNIVPM deeply depends on the participation in the Erasmus+ Programme. Without Erasmus UNIVPM's internationalization strategy would not have achieved its objectives and its further development must go hand in hand with the growth of the Erasmus+ Programme. Among the **objectives** to be achieved through the implementation of the internationalization strategy and, therefore, through the participation in the Erasmus+ Programme the following can be mentioned:

- Increase the number of student mobility
- Improve the quality of student mobility
- Improve welcome services offered to incoming students and staff
- Increase the number of academic and administrative staff mobility
- Further develop already existing joint programmes and establishment of new ones
- Strengthen collaborations with EU and non-EU partners, both with higher education institutions and with enterprises, both in teaching/research projects and in VET initiatives
- Development of partnerships under the innovative action "European Universities"
- Increase the number of degree-seeking international students
- Improve the international visibility and the reputation of the university
- Develop digital technologies as tools for the improvement of processes and procedures
- Develop online teaching resources also in favour of blended mobilities

The participation in the Erasmus+ Programme will support the university in the achievement of the above objectives, both in terms of numbers and in terms of quality.

The respect of the principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education as well as of this Policy Statement will guide the university through the further development of a quality process already started thanks to the participation in previous Erasmus Programmes.