

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)

The University of Molise (UNIMOL from now on) considers the new Erasmus+ Programme a valuable opportunity to make a significant progress in its internationalization process. Since the application for the previous Erasmus Charter, the UNIMOL has worked to optimize its synergies and design an international strategy encompassing the whole university.

This strategy established several priority action-lines to foster mobility, such as the modernizations of the higher educational courses (Ms and bachelor degree), enlarging of the academic offer delivered in English and the improvement of the English proficiency of local students and staff, and the establishment of strategic mobility partnerships with prestigious USA, Canadian and Australian universities.

The Programme allows the UNIMOL to complete these actions and re-define this policy, taking into account the assets accumulated since the beginning of the Erasmus Programme. From this starting point, and from a realistic approach within an adverse economic context, the UNIMOL establishes the following objectives for the next years, concerning initiatives related to increasing the quality of mobility as well as internal actions, oriented to deepen the internationalization of the campus:

1. Consolidation of an array of close partners in Europe and outside within two main geographical areas while establishing a number of key partners in three others. UNIMOL is actually partner of 223 Institutions for Erasmus activities. The recent 131 inter-institutional agreements signed with European and extra European institutions have given further opportunities to start new educational projects. Since 2012, UNIMOL has been involved in several mobility exchange initiatives funded by the Erasmus+ Programme under the KA107 with: Albania, Russian Federation, Algeria, Senegal,) in other funding schemes of Erasmus + KA2 project, implementing 4 CBHE projects, 3 of them as a coordinator with South-Mediterranean (Tunisia), Asia (Central Asia and China), Latin American (Bolivia, Argentina and Paraguay) and African (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) partner countries, with the aim to substantially increase the quantity and quality of the education and international cooperation among HEIs.
2. Identification of a reasonable number of most academically compatible partners with the UNIMOL to attain high quality mobility for inbound and outbound students and staff and also, to establish a significant number of double/joint degree programmes. So far, the UNIMOL participates in an Erasmus Capacity Bulging a double degree Master in the field of Tourism with Tunisia but one of its objectives is to participate and/or coordinate a larger number of joint Mastersdegree. As for the double degrees, advanced dialogues have been settled with the Universidad de Cordoba (Argentina) and Universidad Abierta Interamericana (Buenos Aires) after the annual conference of the consortium CUIA, for the relationship between Argentina and Italian Universities.
3. Reinforcement of the existing academic offer delivered in English at a graduate level, in Biology Science, Agriculture, Engineering, Business and Economics, Political Science, Culture and Heritage Science and Health Sciences, by providing core contents in English so that a short term or summer programme could be designed in collaboration with CLA, the University Language Centre (CLA) at Department level. The purpose of these actions is twofold: to be able to attract more international students and to improve English language proficiency of local students and staff.
4. Increase the number of students and staff with a mobile experience, specially fostering exchanges at second and third cycles in line with objective 3, which are at an improve stage, eliminate barriers for long term stays and encourage short exchange periods and organized traineeships, so as to complete the integration of a culture of mobility in the university core activities .In order to complete the process of partner selection and establishment of mobility targets and indicators. The methodology to be implemented will start from a thorough analysis of the current exchange situation at each faculty, in terms of exchange students' numbers and levels, geographical balance and academic compatibility of study programmes carried out by the International Office for Exchange Programmes and the Erasmus Department academic coordinators. The results will complement and enrich the institutional strategic decisions to be made throughout the life of the Programme.
5. Improve the quality of the centralized support services provided to inbound students from EU or extra EU and staff and facilitate procedures and communication with host universities by: a) organizing Italian language course for incoming students; b) the assistance related to obtaining visas, insurance and accommodation for incoming and outbound mobile participants, b) the appropriate mentoring and support arrangements for participants as well as appropriate meetings to support to incoming participants, c) the organization of real inclusive workshop or/and social activities to unite and integrate work, history, traditions and culture of incoming students/staff and members of receiving Institution (students, teachers, researchers, administrative).
6. Information and dissemination of mobility opportunities will be widely published using traditional media and social networks and a communication policy to inform secondary education students with the collaboration of the regional government that will be implemented. Mobility will be assessed with specific indicators; the number of students outgoing is currently increasing, the number of ECTS acquired during the accreditation process is growing, and is monitored annually within the context of the university quality guarantee system.

Erasmus actions

One of the main objectives of the UNIMOL in 2013 was to be more pro-active and increase its participation in cooperation projects. Starting from the Erasmus Call 2016, it has applied for the Key Action 1 with partner countries and the following projects were financed: 2016-1-IT02-KA107-023341 with Albania, partner Universiteti Metropolitan and Universiteti Polis of Tirana; 2017-1-IT02-KA107-035766 with Agricultural University of Tirana (Albania); 2018-1-IT02-KA107-047580 with University of Biskra (Algeria) and the University of Astrakhan (Russia Federation); 2019-1-IT02-KA107-061718 with Agricultural University of Tirana (Albania), Ecole Nationale de Formation Hoteliere et Touristique ENFHT e UniversitéCheick Anta Diop in Dakar (Senegal). The UNIMOL has developed adequate technical capacity and skills and is endowed with a strong institutional support to coordinate and participate in projects with existing strategic partners and networks and establish new alliances with business and institutions and also, in capacity building projects with third and neighbouring countries. In the Erasmus + Key Action 2 has participated in Strategic Partnership both as partner and coordinator. One of the projects coordinated by Unimol was HEI-PLADI - Higher Education Innovation in Plant Diversity: Flexible learning paths for emerging labour market

programs, a pilot project which relays on a constructive cooperation and integration between five Universities, research institute and organization all providing strong expertise in the field of plant biodiversity characterization, management and conservation and in lifelong learning. From 2015 to 2018, was approved the Erasmus + Key Action 2 project Capacity Building namely IUCLAND "International University Cooperation of Asian-European Countries on Land Degradation" starting a cooperation between Higher Education Institutions in Kyrgyzstan, Italy, Slovakia, Croatia, China, Kazakhstan, creating a close cooperation of Education area. The subject of cooperation were issues in the field of Land Degradation and Forest resources, to improve the quality of soil and ecology condition.

The University of Molise is part of the consortium named Honors Center of Italian Universities (H2CU) composed of 21 Italian Universities with the aim to create an Italian network of universities that promotes internationalization of higher education in New York City. UNIMOL has developed an initial network with Fordham University, Brooklyn College, and CUNY in the New York City area.

The acquired so far experience and skills by the International relations office and International research office, the networks created, will be essential to participate in future Erasmus actions and to be able to achieve the strategic goals that the UNIMOL set for the next years, as already explained in the first section of the EPS.

Impact

The UNIMOL expects that the Erasmus Programme will be fundamental in the upgrading of curricula and internationalization process. Key actions 1 and 2 will contribute to foster mobility and cooperation actions not only in Europe but in other geographical areas, and to expose a much broader sector of the university community to an international experience. The UNIMOL is determined to make use of the Erasmus+ mobility and Cooperation Programmes to develop the initiatives launched through its International and International Research Offices and will establish the following objectives within its framework and in order to comply with the priorities of the Modernization Agenda:

1. To provide for a more well-rounded education to a higher percentage of its graduates with the help of a broad offer of mobility and traineeships so that the students acquire complementary skills, both personal and professional, to enter the job-market anywhere in Europe. Indicator: number of student outgoing up to 100 per academic year in the 2022.
2. To increase the English language proficiency of all students up to at least B2 level, by means of widening the courses delivered in English and attracting foreign academic staff (staff mobility: Key action 1) and by using IT and fostering virtual mobility (Key action 2): number of student with B2 degree up to 200 in the 2022.
3. To increase transparency in the academic offering and working on the university grading culture so that the quality of mobility improves, facilitates academic recognition and provides the student with easily read credentials of their international activities. To obtain a quality assessment for its practices, the UNIMOL intends to update the ECTS tables which contain the statistical distribution of grades achieved by homogeneous groups of students in a given period and apply for the ECTS label.
4. To facilitate the participation of most vulnerable students and staff in all actions and, when and if available, external funds will be primarily given using criteria based on financial need and academic excellence. The participation in the Erasmus programs will also take into account difficult economic, geographic conditions and the promotion of equal opportunities, gender balance, and social equity. All this social conditions will be taken into consideration to ensure a minimum percentage of candidates from different target Groups: most vulnerable students involved in Erasmus+ learning mobility.
5. To create an alumni exchange student database so as to monitor and analyze with objective data and information the actual impact of the student nobility and the international education experiences in the professional careers. The ESN (Erasmus Student Network) will help the incoming students and plan guided visits to places of historical and artistic interest to know the region, ESN is also in charge for organization of support services to students with disabilities, if any, through the University Service Centre for disabled students: number of incoming students up to 80 in 2022.
6. To participate at the call Erasmus + in the 2020-2026 of the three key actions: KA1: LEARNING MOBILITY OF INDIVIDUALS, KA2: CAPACITY BUILDING and COOPERATION FOR INNOVATION AND THE EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTISES, KA3: Support for policy reform and JEAN MONNET Projects.