



## Erasmus Policy Statement 2014 - 2020

1<sup>st</sup>

The UvA has chosen to formulate a broad institutional strategy for internationalisation that befits its character as a broad research- intensive university in a major urban centre. The strategy focuses first and foremost on enhancing the quality of teaching and research and is intended to contribute to the further advancement of an ambitious academic culture and research environment.

The main objectives of the internationalisation strategy are:

1. to prepare each student in the best possible way for a career in the global job market;
2. to attract the most talented individuals from around the world to the UvA's degree programmes, in particular to its Master's and Doctoral programmes;
3. to strengthen the UvA's profile in the international research domain
4. to strengthen the UvA's international identity

As the worldwide job market becomes increasingly international in scope, demand for university-educated employees is also rising. Universities need to design effective strategies for responding to the progressive globalisation of labour. Studying in a foreign country represents a major added value for students. A fundamental prerequisite for strengthening inbound and outbound student mobility is a broad spectrum of solid, long-term collaborations between the UvA and international partners. Already, the UvA offers a diverse range of options for studying, working or attending a summer school abroad, both at the Bachelor's and the Master's level. The University has agreements with more than 50 partner institutions outside Europe, including top universities in the United States, Canada, Australia, China, India, Japan and South Africa. European exchanges, including exchanges via the Erasmus programme, are arranged at the faculty level. Each faculty maintains independent ties with dozens of partner institutions.

The main difference between agreements concluded at the University and faculty level is that everyone at the UvA can take part in the former while only students and staff affiliated with a particular faculty can participate in the latter. The UvA has opted for University-wide agreements if the partner institution is of a comparable or higher quality and if multiple faculties have expressed an interest in collaboration. Agreements with partners that are members of the League of European Research Universities (LERU) and Universitas21 (U21) networks are automatically concluded at the University level. In the short-term, the UvA plans to focus on making more effective use of existing agreements with excellent partners, including by enlarging the annual student exchange cohort numbers fixed under these agreements. The UvA will also work more closely with these priority partners to identify ways of enhancing intercurricular compatibility with a view to further improving qualitative outcomes per exchange agreement. To begin with, the UvA will examine together with its preferred partners from the LERU and U21 networks whether arrangements can be made that will promote compatibility and facilities, whereby exchange students will be assured of a 'soft landing' at the partner institution. LERU members are currently preparing a position paper focusing on international curricula and student mobility, and are providing recommendations for increasing the quality, compatibility and impact of student mobility through exchange programmes and the creation of joint programmes.

Young researchers can benefit greatly from exposure to an international research environment early on in their research careers. It is precisely this new generation of researchers that will later find itself operating in a domain where the relevance of national boundaries is diminishing and research projects take place in international collaborations as a matter of course. The UvA has therefore decided to take part in the joint doctoral programmes organised within the U21 and LERU networks. Doctoral candidates enrolled in such programmes can earn a joint doctorate by conducting their research at two of the participating partner institutions. Participation in these programmes offers an added attraction to young researchers interested in doing their doctoral work at two universities



within the U21 or LERU partner networks. A further bonus of joint doctorate degree programmes is that they foster closer ties and collaboration between research groups at the partner institutions.

## **2<sup>nd</sup>**

At the undergraduate level, the UvA will strive to boost outbound student mobility, with the aim of achieving a substantial rise, up to 10% in 2014 and 20% in 2020. The UvA will stimulate outbound mobility in a number of different ways:

- Bachelor's students will be directly encouraged to use (part of) their minor requirement to study abroad, for example by encouraging students to make more and better use of the opportunities in the Erasmus programme;
- the UvA will examine the possibility of targeted study abroad incentive measures for other specific student groups, such as Honours students;
- in future, international experience will always be included on the Diploma Supplement;
- and students at the UvA will be given the opportunity to take an IELTS test.

Currently, the UvA is taking stock of and improving the options for student exchanges in the broadest sense, including long-term and short-term mobility. By 2014, the UvA intends to have assembled a coherent portfolio of instruments aimed at stimulating inbound and outbound mobility among students. The UvA's main aims in developing these instruments are : 1) to strengthen collaborations with excellent partner institutions and dismantle relationships with lesser partners, particularly 'dormant partnerships', 2) to create compatibility between study programmes and modules offered at the UvA and partner institutions in order to ensure that the courses taken by students fit their curriculum and delays are avoided, 3) to make better use of the opportunities for student mobility provided by membership in the global Universitas21 network, and 4) to create a good balance between institutional and faculty partners, in particular in the context of the Erasmus Programme.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> box**

1. The UvA aims to substantially increase its international Master's student intake, to an average of 25% in 2014, representing a sizeable increase relative to 2011 (19.2%).
2. When it comes to actually giving shape to the international learning environment, lecturers have a key role to play. The UvA applauds the steps that some faculties have taken to enhance their lecturer profiles with additional competences beyond the mandatory Basic Teaching Qualification, such as an international orientation.

In 2011, the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) developed a so-called 'Distinctive Quality Feature Internationalisation' and an internationalisation certificate. At the UvA, the LLM programmes in European Private Law, International & European Law and International Criminal Law have already received the Distinctive Quality Feature Internationalisation, and the last of these has also received the Internationalisation Certificate. A targeted, systematic application of these instruments can result in a genuine quality boost in the classroom and help generate awareness about learning outcomes indicating the acquisition of intercultural competences. Targeted investments in the internationalisation of the curriculum and learning environment, particularly at the graduate level, are essential to providing students with the best possible training and international competences.

3. In- and outbound student mobility serves to strengthen the international orientation of the study programmes. Inbound mobility of talented international students can serve as a stimulus for the quality of the study programmes at the UvA. Both the presence of international students in the UvA's study programmes and the completion of all or a portion of a programme abroad helps to better prepare students for careers in the global job market. An international mix in a university's



student population leads to more highly developed intercultural skills across the entire student body. Moreover, study programmes including international students are documented as having higher study success rates and internationalisation is a valuable force in developing an ambitious academic culture, which is a key pillar of the UvA's Vision on Teaching and Learning. Outbound mobility offers Dutch students an opportunity to acquire international academic experience, which can later boost their career prospects on the international job market.

In 2011 a pilot project in the Law School was launched, aimed at training Master's students in intercultural competences.

4. Since the establishment of the Amsterdam Economic Board (AEB) at the end of 2010, the UvA's cooperation with the City of Amsterdam and other AEB partners, such as a number of Amsterdam-based (multinational) companies has steadily increased.

5. By clustering its research into priority areas and themes, the UvA has staked out a strong starting position from which to apply for funding for large projects, under the last of the FP7 calls and, starting in 2014, under the new calls to be tendered within the Horizon 2020 programme. In this context, the UvA will actively take part in lobbying the European Commission as it finalises its plans for Horizon 2020. In addition, the UvA offers outstanding advisory and support facilities for researchers who are preparing and writing applications for European grants at its' Technology Transfer Office (TTO).