

## ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

The **University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia (UVic-UCC)** comprises two main campuses (Vic and Manresa) and two sites (Barcelona and Granollers). Its seven faculties provide 36 undergraduate degrees, 15 masters and 8 PhD programs across a wide range of areas of knowledge, including Biosciences, Communication, Design, Education, Business Studies, Engineering, Sports, Languages and Translation, Psychology and Health. With more than 8300 students on campus, taking blended and online courses in official studies, get to a dynamic and committed community which comes from across Europe and from beyond.

The UVic-UCC currently has 31 research groups and 13 Chairs and has international agreements with 277 institutions in 43 countries and it is rapidly expanding its international activity at all levels. Our university has been recognized by the CYD Foundation as the fastest growing Spanish university in terms of international research in the last 5 years. It also holds the 13th position from the 73 Spanish universities in terms of international orientation.

The UVic-UCC is governed by the Balmes University Foundation, whose Board of Trustees is comprised of representatives of government bodies, companies and social agents. After 30 January 2014 the structure was enriched with a federation agreement with the Bages University Foundation in Manresa and later on, in December 2016 a new federation agreement with the Foundation of Health Higher Education, managing our new Medicine Faculty. The UVic-UCC structure is finally completed with three ascribed centres, BAU Higher Education design center, EADA School for Administration and High Management and ESERP Barcelona School of Business and Social Science, complete the university structure.

This university model is dynamic and permeable, with flexible management bodies and a high decision-making capacity. This structure creates synergies in the organisation of course offerings, in the promotion of research and knowledge transfer, and in relationships with the economic and social fabric.

Our university sets the student at the centre of the learning process, considering that personal growth in the context of the common European values is the basis for comprehensive and lifewide education.

### UVic-UCC internationalization strategy

A Strategic Comprehensive Internationalization Plan is now being redesigned to be implemented during the following four-year period. This plan is founded the concept of comprehensive internationalization (Hudzik, 2011) defined as the commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the education, research, and service missions of higher education. This idea is grounded on six interconnected pillars that must necessarily participate in the process at different levels:



- 1) Articulated Institutional Commitment towards the achievement of a Comprehensive Internationalisation in benefit of to the quality of its higher education programmes and student experience, respecting in full the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion and encouraging the observation of sustainable and environmentally friendly practices.
- 2) Administrative leadership, structure and staffing to ensure an efficient and progressively digitalised mobility management, promoting friendly practices, encouraging civic engagement of students and staff and the participation of all individuals, especially those with fewer opportunities. The virtual component of blended mobility will be guaranteed through adequate infrastructures and staff formation. Structural and quality processes will be revised to consider the results of internal monitoring mobility and cooperation activities, thus further improving its international performance.
- 3) Curriculum, co-curriculum and learning outcomes, especially promoting the development of integrated, transnational teaching activities (joint courses / modules / curricula, double / multiple / joint degrees). Automatic recognition of all ECTS-based credits will be ensured for successful periods of study/training abroad, including blended mobility.
- 4) Faculty policies and practices to stimulate and recognise the importance of, and provide visibility to, the results achieved by their staff members engaged in individual mobility or in cooperation projects with strategic partners.
- 5) Student and staff mobility, aiming at benefiting most of the UVic-UCC community in any format (online, blended, physical), especially promoting inclusive actions for individuals

with fewer opportunities, with efficient and transparent procedures and full automatic recognition of credits.

6) Collaboration and Partnership with different kinds of stakeholders to foster every type of synergy (research and technology transfer, student mobility, teaching innovation, cooperation for development...), participating in coordinated actions, consortiums and projects.

The strength of this view, is its connectedness, so that progress (or lack of progress) in any of its six dimensions greatly impacts on what can be achieved in another one or in global, not merely in an additive way. Therefore, for a successful comprehensive internationalization, every member of the community, at any level, needs to feel identified with this shared international perspective and, specially, struggle to permeate all academic activity with the European values and transnational educational scope.

In this context of strategic institutional commitment to pursue academic excellence through internationalization, the Erasmus+ Program is an essential tool not only to foster student and staff mobility, increase research competitiveness and promote initiatives of International Cooperation but specially to induce profound and systemic changes in our institution.

A new training program of European Competences is being designed and will be progressively introduced at different levels in current and future study plans to reinforce European Values, promote mobility and acquire humanistic values and Key Skills. This program should also become a common ground for embedded mobility actions and joint discussion activities with international partner institutions. The main competence areas will comprise: 1) Sustainable development goals (sustainability, health promotion, gender policies, and social responsibility), 2) Entrepreneurship, leadership and creativity; 3) Humanities, culture and multiculturalism; 4) digital and communication skills.

Different strategies will be used to increase all kinds of mobility among students and staff, including physical, online and blended mobility, combined in planned succession wherever possible. Embedded mobility within courses and networked programs will be introduced in existing and new curricula at different stages to ensure opportunities of participation in international experiences to all members of the community, in an equalitarian and inclusive but personalized context. Intercultural and multilingual diversity will meet in these mobility opportunities to take the chance to specially promote and teach the European values in a trans-national environment.

The UVic-UCC will continue to implement a competence-based, student-centered learning system while encouraging staff training to enable them to efficiently perform their tasks in a multilingual, international and technologically advanced context.

Because internationalization means diversity, equity, inclusion and of course digitalization, which are strategic issues for our University, we contemplate the Erasmus programme as a crucial tool to foster societal engagement of higher education and empower people by increasing their educational opportunities. Furthermore, international experiences enrich both people and cultures through diversity and promote critical thinking, open-mindedness and creativity, thus driving forward competitiveness and economic growth.

### **Erasmus key role in UVic-UCC Internationalization and Modernization Process**

From its foundation as University, the UVic-UCC has focused on achieving excellence in Education and Research. In keeping with its institutional policy, the UVic-UCC has centred on creating international networks and projects, which have become increasingly important and enhanced the university's prestige. In this context, Erasmus has offered a wide range of advantages, creating opportunities to share experiences and explore research, teaching and management synergies. These initiatives boost students, faculty and administration and services staff exchange, creating an ideal environment to start up and implement international projects.

One of the key issues of the UVic-UCC strategic vision is the commitment to academic excellence in research, teaching and knowledge transfer. In order to meet with this objective, we know Erasmus will remain more than relevant for our institution amid the changing higher education landscape and no matter what developments could be on the horizon.

### **Expected outcomes**

The participation of our University in the Erasmus+ program does not only fit in our strategic vision but it is key part of its outreach and progression pathway. The renewal of our commitment with the Erasmus+ program will permit our institution to take a large leap forward towards this comprehensive internationalization scenario that will allow the successful participation in a European University consortium in a context of inclusive European Education Area.

We expect to continue increasing our mobility indicators (incoming and outgoing students and staff), but also our participation and coordination of research, technology transfer and cooperation and innovation projects.