



Erasmus Policy Statement

UoC participated in the first Erasmus Inter-University Cooperation Programme in 1989 and has since participated in all subsequent Erasmus programmes for student and staff mobility. This participation plays a valued role in enriching the teaching/learning and research training experiences of students and staff as well as the educational programmes offered by the University (e.g. through partnerships for curriculum development, for short courses, and for Mundus Joint Master programmes).

The broadening scope of Erasmus+ following the Gothenburg summit (2017) has enabled the UoC to take the development of transnational educational partnerships to a new level, through participation in the NEOLAiA European University Alliance [Action: EPLUS2020-AG, Proposal ID 101004059, Title NEOLAiA: Young universities empowering regionally rooted European talents. Website <https://neolaiacampus.eu/>]

Participation in the new Erasmus+ programme is thus integral to realizing and furthering UoC strategy for internationalisation and modernisation.

Strategic Plan (2018-2025)

The University of Crete at the beginning of the 21st century: an international centre of excellence in research and education

The University of Crete (UoC) **Strategic Plan** (391/19-07-2018 Senate decision) sets out the vision and goals for the UoC as an international centre of excellence in research and education.

We recognize that global trends in wealth and power, labour market diversification, and rapid changes in the world of research and technology intensify international competition among universities to attract high-quality staff and students as well as public and private resources. These trends also raise questions about the social mission of the university at local, national, and international levels.

In this context, the UoC will build on the tradition created by the quality of its academic activity and its close relationships with the research and innovation ecosystem of Crete, as well as adhere to the principles governing its functioning: democratic governance, excellence in cutting-edge research, linking research and education, international orientation, developing partnerships with leading institutions in the world, as well as, attracting high calibre staff and students with open procedures. At the same time, measures will be taken to increase productivity and better organize UoC operations, while also seeking to resolve institutional issues that make it difficult to achieve its strategic goals.



The full document and associated quality assurance goals are available on the UoC website (<https://www.uoc.gr/university/vision> & [https://www.modip.uoc.gr/el/content/adip/strategic planning](https://www.modip.uoc.gr/el/content/adip/strategic_planning)).

The following extracts from the Strategic Plan indicate how **participation in the Erasmus KA1 & KA2 programmes** are directly related to the internationalisation and modernisation policy objectives of the UoC strategy.

Axis 1: An international, forward-looking, and creative academic environment

The aims under this pillar of the Strategic Plan are:

to attract talented staff and students from around the world for internationalisation on campus;

to promote high quality research and research training by fostering greater AHSS-STEM interdisciplinarity in research programmes;

to strengthen contacts with the international academic community and active participation in research and educational networks of strategic alliances with universities around the world with similar and / or complementary characteristics.

Axis 2: An attractive educational centre for young scientists and responsible citizens

The aims under this pillar of the Strategic Plan are to equip students with the necessary skills and competences to cope with the challenges posed by the rapid pace of technological and socio-economic change. By 2025 the UoC is committed to the following actions:

2.1. Education

- Regular updating and accreditation of all degree programmes
- Significantly increase the range of internship options and harmonize access procedures across the UoC to enable all students wishing to undertake an internship to do so;
- Significantly increase the mobility of UoC students through ERASMUS+ and other relevant exchange programmes in order to enrich their experience in other academic and educational systems and environments;
- Integrate new technologies in teaching and research
- Training academic staff in new teaching methods and generalizing good practices [‘Train the Trainers’]
- Introduce academic foundation courses for all disciplines on
 - history-methodology of science, philosophy, epistemology, ethics, dissemination of research results, research policy, soft skills
 - social responsibility, economy, sustainability
 - introducing and strengthening extracurricular dialogue in wider areas of science, technology, and social development



2.2. Interdisciplinary and novel study programmes

- Strengthen cooperation among UoC Departments in the organization and implementation of existing undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes and in the development of new inter-disciplinary study programmes, thereby furthering interdisciplinarity in all curricula,
- To develop study programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate) in subjects in high demand from society and the economy
- Explore the possibility of elective courses that will lead to certified interdisciplinary study programs (flexible, student-centred, cross-disciplinary combinations of electives)
- Develop course modules on research methodology, competence training in the evaluation of scientific information, and soft skills training in writing and presentation techniques

2.3. Nurturing the professional development of our graduates

- The numerical and thematic expansion of the network of internship opportunities
- Systematically develop communication forums with alumni willing to act as student mentors, internship hosts, or as a source of information for improving study programmes
- Through the UoC Centre of Continuing Education & Lifelong Learning, organize complementary training programmes and knowledge updates in areas that increase the competitiveness of our graduates
- Mentoring, networking, and recruiting events and workshops with industrial contacts, alumni, and mentors world-wide.
- Encourage the participation of students in national, EU, or industrial funded projects to obtain research experience, develop professionally, and network.

Axis 3: Resources for Development and Modernisation

The aims under this pillar of the Strategic Plan include:

ensuring and maintaining the necessary infrastructure for all academic activities and student welfare;

ensuring adequate funding and improving financial management, including reductions in energy use in line with 'green' environmental policy;

ensuring that UoC human resources can meet the challenges and newly emerging areas of activity attendant on the evolving academic landscape;

In terms of human resources, by 2025 the UoC is committed to:

- Increasing mobility, communication and cooperation with staff with similar duties in other universities in Greece and abroad
- Training in new digital technologies aimed at increasing productivity, reliability and documentation of activities



- Re-organization of the University services in the interests of greater economy, efficiency, and to increase the range and quality of the services offered

Participation in Erasmus+ thus dovetails with meeting these UoC policy objectives by 2025

For internationalisation:

In hosting international academic staff and students and developing associated educational and research training networks

In facilitating the exchange of ideas and good practice through support staff mobility

In enabling UoC students to benefit from intercultural mobility experiences – with new openings through Erasmus broadening horizons outside Europe, and with the Erasmus virtual exchange platform and blended learning options opening up participation in intercultural experiences to more students

In facilitating multicultural/multilingual competences [Online Linguistic Support (OLS) tutoring sessions and interactive MOOCs to improve language proficiency]

In developing and strengthening strategic alliances with HEIs and joint interdisciplinary and novel study programmes through partnerships for excellence, notably the NEOLAiA European University Alliance and also Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

For modernisation

- By facilitating the development of innovative teaching/learning and research training methods that utilize the advances in digital technologies [Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange]
- By widening student training opportunities for developing competences and innovative skills through new types of internship offers (Digital Training Opportunities; Entrepreneurial Internships)
- By stimulating developments in organizational efficiency through Erasmus+ digital platforms and tools that promote and support student and staff mobility [Erasmus Without Paper and the European Student Card Initiative], as well as facilitating inter-university cooperation for innovative, joint educational initiatives

Reflecting on the UoC strategic goals in relation to Erasmus and the EC Digital Agenda Experience with virtual education tools during the period forced on all HEIs with the COVID-19 lockdown in the spring semester 2020 has, in the case of UoC, provided a steep learning curve and major boost to virtual/distance education. The University intends to build on this experience following the resumption of face-to-face classes: first with a review of gaps revealed in digital delivery capacities and students active participation, together with an evaluation of the impact on quality and learning outcomes, followed by the development of (more) blended learning modules and expansion of existing digital competence modules, to be



made available to staff and students of all disciplines, with particular reference to the challenges of technophobia encountered in some AHSS disciplines.