



## **ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT**

Fostering and developing international programmes plays key role in the University of Split (UNIST) institutional strategy.

Europe 2020 strategy, its flagship initiatives and new integrated guidelines put knowledge at heart of the Union's efforts for achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Despite a challenging employment climate in the wake of the economic crisis, higher education represents an important priority for Croatia and UNIST.

Consolidating existing international relations and creating new ones is rooted in the principle that UNIST sees internationalization as an investment in and asset for the future. Due to global change, we define internationalization as a joint challenge to be met on equal terms with our partners.

According to scientific research, key areas are studying abroad, international students studying here, exchange programmes and service. Along with our traditional partners in EU and around the world, our partners in emerging nations and WB countries have given us the opportunity to assume a forwardlooking and constructive position in the future internationalization programme. In accordance with newly developed Strategy for education, research and innovation of the Republic of Croatia, UNIST promoted the following targets and measures for internationalization:

1. Raising our profile by establishing internationally competitive university creating learning, scientific, cultural and economic value for society

- Continue with good practices in implementation of individual learning mobility of students and staff, approaching more actively cooperation with enterprises. Our objective is to achieve vivid and successful exchange on all levels, respecting non-discrimination policies. Our target groups include students in 2nd and 3rd cycles (best quality candidates from 1st cycle not excluded) and teaching and administrative staff. Both study and training activities are believed to contribute to modernisation and internationalisation of UNIST, hence equally treated. Results of mobility and cooperation are regularly disseminated and awarded through internal mechanisms.
- Harmonise University research and innovation mission with the national research strategy and our university's potential and expertise.
- Promote UNIST through several international networks (e.g. UNIMED, Danube region, EUA, IUA and Adriatic-Ionian region).
- By concentrating on and raising the profile of traditional international relations we aim to broaden the base of existing bilateral contracts. Furthermore, we will concentrate on specific regions which either already maintain close ties with us (South East Europe), or can be seen as future markets (S.E. Asia, Latin America). Regional priorities are EU, Western Balkan countries, South East Asia, US, Latin America and Australia.
- Our international department motivates and attracts qualified and well prepared international students to study at UNIST (through coordinators at each of our 16 faculties).

2. Teaching and Research Strategy

Our faculties are intensifying their efforts to acquire third-party funding for international cooperation and two-way student exchanges. Apart from forging new contacts in the above-mentioned priority countries, participating in networks, developing dual degrees, dual doctorates, joint degrees and exchanges for doctoral students, postdocs and academics are seen as priority areas.

- Promoting research lies in hands of faculties and currently UNIST Office for science and international relations strongly promotes internalization of research in all faculties, especially by recruiting international academics and postdocs through Marie Curie FP7 programme.
- International Office assists faculties by providing support and advice for international visiting scholars and promoting academic exchanges.
- There are currently several degree programmes offered in English:
  - Medicine (integrated six years)
  - High-end computing in first and second cycle
  - Water resources and environmental engineering as second cycle
  - Architecture as second cycle
- We are in process of establishing integrated and joint degree programmes seen as excellent chance to open more foreign study opportunities within the framework of bachelor and master programmes.
- Our emphasis is on joint programmes on doctorate level which was initiated with "cotutelle" joint PhD programme in 2010. Several faculties are currently implementing it with France, Germany and Sweden.
- We are working towards further expansion of ECTS, diploma supplement, joint degrees, dual degrees and joint doctorates.

### 3. Quality Assurance

Centre for Quality Assurance is active since 2008 and provides a continuing effort in quality check for all study programmes and transparent evaluation of existing teaching activity at UNIST. The Centre annually monitors success of implemented strategies in coordination with the Croatian Agency for Higher Education and Science(AZVO).

UNIST actively promotes international cooperation with EU and non-EU partners and intends to further develop activities through strategic partnerships and knowledge alliances with other HEIs and key stakeholders.

Our research faculties together with scientists from Rudjer Boskovic Institute in the field of physics actively participate in CERN research resulting in training programme for young scientists. Further extension of these training opportunities is planned by organizing new programmes for talented students and their mentors. There is strong link between UNIST and regional youth organisations for the benefit of entire community. Being an active player in the region, University's cooperation with local and regional authorities is a matter of sustainability taken very seriously.

UNIST obtained EUC in 2009 and since then shows successful growth of ERASMUS activities with respect to our size and foster strong increase in signing LLP agreements. Currently there are 163 active agreements. Student mobility has grown from 33 in 2009/10 to over 200 in 2012/13 (including traineeships), teaching/staff mobility from 7 in 2009/10 to 42 in 2012/13. Mobility was represented also through EM projects. We plan to use experience acquired and further develop our activities by several new partnerships and similar actions under the Programme. Besides EU international cooperation, UNIST is active in signing bilateral cooperation agreements with non-EU universities and research institutions. Through Croatia-Japan research projects in last 5 years we have signed contracts with Nigata and Osaka University resulting in several doctorate candidates participating at international research programmes. There is a strong programme with Australia and US in the fields of humanities and forensic science. EU membership will provide us with opportunity to enter new cooperation and capacity building projects with HEIs in Partner countries and support modernisation and internationalisation of higher education.

Participation of UNIST in LLP was instrument in our transformation and modernization process. Even though this process is difficult and faced with many obstacles within national legislation and policies, it has been crucial in clearly changing face of our University. Most of our national strategies are in line with Europe 2020 strategy and our University is determined to implement strategic goals set in Modernization Agenda:

- Increase attainment levels to provide graduates and researchers Europe needs

Since 2003 UNIST dramatically increased number of study programmes and went from 8000 to approx. 20000 students.

- Improving the quality and relevance of higher education

UNIST Centre for Quality Assurance conducts evaluation and monitoring of all study programmes with provision to maintain the high quality and relevance of teaching in accordance with criteria established by AZVO. The newly passed law on Croatian Qualification Framework, fully in line with EQF, provides strategy how to assure the core transferable competences among newly graduates. Our strategy incorporating European Charter for Researchers: <http://www.unist.hr/strategy.pdf>

- Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation

Through ERASMUS programme we have demonstrated strong increase in number of mobile participants. We will

concentrate on incorporating learning mobility principles into curricula. After formal EU membership, our university intends to expand collaboration particularly within WB countries through the Programme. We see this as a great opportunity to enhance cross-border cooperation not only in the area of higher education but also in the joint research programmes.

- Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development

In recent years we have initiated several programmes fostering this priority. UNIST Technology Transfer Office is currently leading coordinator of IPA IIIc project for linking education, research and business. We have just applied for the ERDF source of funding to establish and develop the Scientific Innovation Centre at UNIST with clear goal to promote the knowledge triangle. Several start-up and spin-off companies have been created and are very active not only in the business sector but also in acquiring research funding through national and EU funding mechanisms.

- Improving governance and funding

Recent National Strategy for higher education, research and innovation sets national funding for education and research to increase in next 5 years. UNIST promotes moving towards applying for additional funding sources rather than expecting national budget to cover their needs. In the near future UNIST will participate in setting up new scientific centres of excellence through competitive bidding process organised by AZVO. As a first step towards its absolute implementation in HE sector, in December 2012 performance agreement was signed for upcoming 3 years period for study programmes area.