universidade de aveiro
theoria poiesis praxis

About this document

In compliance with the terms of awarding the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) under the Erasmus+ Programme, call for proposals 2013 - DG EAC/S06/13 (2013/C 85/07), selection year 2014, the following text, published on the University of Aveiro website at www.ua.pt, is a reproduction of the Erasmus Policy Statement submitted to the European Commission in **May 2013**.

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

The University of Aveiro is a young university (40 years in 2013) with prominence in the Portuguese higher education panorama by virtue of its advances in teaching, research, cooperation and university governance. To reach and maintain a leading position and role, UA establishes alliances with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Europe and beyond both on a bilateral basis and participates in recognized HEI networks. Central to the international strategy of the University is the idea that internationalization traverses all areas of university life.

In teaching, this implies the consolidation and rationalization of the institution's educational offer by embracing national and international accreditation and QA processes, fostering the quality of the learning experience for all students (incl. international students, non-traditional learners, and students with special needs), promoting academic success and student retention levels, monitoring employability and professional needs in the globalized job market. UA seeks to further its international visibility by renewing the ECTS and DS labels (application in progress) and securing the international accreditation of its study programmes where possible (e.g. Engineering). Student and staff mobility are also a vital component of the University's international strategy. EU mobility remains of central importance with the presence of European students at UA pushing forward inclusion initiatives for international students and the creation of educational pathways in English, processes to be developed into bilingual programmes, English language degree programmes and mobility windows. Study periods and internships abroad for UA students are strongly recommended, and attention paid to intercultural and foreign language competences of UA graduates.

In research and cooperation, internationalization implies developing UA's research and outreach programmes to contribute to the future of the region and the country, and especially to the internationalization of business and industry in the context of the global economy. UA has a proven track record in attracting talented students and researchers of international repute and this is the key to facing the challenges of ever more competitive markets, particularly in the areas of biomaterials, education science and technology, energy, neurosciences, marine studies and information, communications and electronics technologies, areas of excellence at UA.

The internationalization and strengthening of research are central to the international dimension of the University, providing it with opportunities for the diversification of its funding sources, for strategic investments (e.g. the Creative Science Park), the transfer and economic valorization of knowledge, participation in national and international knowledge transfer networks and the internationalization of the alumni network in Europe and the Portuguese language community (CPLP).

The European status of the UA is central to its ability to project itself beyond Europe. Thus the European component of its strategy remains essential and it pursues a policy of alliances in Europe, such as in the ECIU (European Consortium of Innovative Universities) and in the European University Foundation – Campus Europae, where it has taken a leading role.

This policy enhances the institution's capacity to reinforce student and staff mobility, develop research projects, international study programmes, and other best practices, both in the European sphere and with countries where Portugal has historic ties. Such countries include not only countries of the CPLP but also Latin America, China and India.

Finally, the internationalization process has implications for University governance. In times of strict budgetary control, changing demographics, and the globalized economy, the University seeks to develop a new institutional framework, which includes new rules for staff careers and staff services and the maturing of a new system for accreditation and quality assurance. The University has reflected deeply on a EUA institutional evaluation exercise (2007) that recommended steps to maximize university autonomy and in particular to diversify funding sources. One outcome of this process has been the creation of a European project office with the specific role of harnessing and enhancing the expertise available in the University for bids to European projects in research, education and cooperation. Another outcome has been the development of business relations towards improving the effectiveness of technology transfer actions, deepening relations with industry and providing services to businesses in Portugal and other European states. The change in the University model also has implications and consequences for the decision-making processes and information flows within the University, investing more autonomy, and hence accountability, in the departments of the institution.

Strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects in teaching and training in relation to projects implemented under the Programme.

The broad strategy for the organization and implementation of EU projects is to enhance the attractiveness of UA as a partner in networks of excellence in areas of the European Lifelong Learning agenda, particularly: university governance, enhancement of ECTS for University Lifelong Learning (ULL), implementation of the EQF, accessibility to HE of nontraditional publics, mobility of individuals and curriculum development.

Because of the UA's frequent participation in bids for funding to develop LLP projects in general, and ERASMUS/ERASMUS MUNDUS consortia in particular, and its model of governance (a Campus University with no faculties, where academic departments, research units and polytechnic schools are managed centrally within a framework of interdepartmental and interdisciplinary cooperation), it is possible to ensure strong institutional support for projects. This enables project leaders and teams to benefit directly from the expertise and experience that has been built up over 20 years of involvement in EU cooperation projects. The expertise available includes native speakers of English and French at the European Project Support Office, experience and proven success rates in drafting project applications, access to various networks active in specialized fields related to the EHEA and legal, financial and logistical support for project implementation.

Before committing to project partnerships, project teams have the opportunity to analyze proposed topics and partnerships with top-level University management bodies, ensuring coherence between the University ERASMUS policy and the specific project objectives. Preference is given to projects that are transversal to different academic fields and research interests and which promote institutional learning and acculturation throughout the

organization. This strategy is clearly reflected in the project topics in which UA has been active in ECTS, curriculum development and recognition of non-formal learning.

Expected impact of [the University's] participation in the Programme on the modernisation of [the University], for each of the 5 priorities of the [EU] Modernisation Agenda, in terms of the policy objectives [the University] intends to achieve.

The five key priorities of the modernization agenda for higher education are present in the policy objectives of UA for the 2014-2020 Programme. Evidence for this can be found in the initiatives already in place that result from the European Policy objectives pursued by UA in the context of the University Lifelong Learning (ULL) and which will be enhanced and developed.
To widen access to higher education, UA has developed a platform for the accreditation of previous learning and non-formal experiences and has legislated on this internally. Social inclusion is high on the UA agenda, with specific educational programmes and support structures in place to ease access to higher education for mature students and for students from abroad like East Timor and Cape Verde.

The quality and relevance of teaching programmes will be enhanced through the 2014-2020 Programme by cooperating with partners abroad to expand the Quality Assurance System (SGQ) put in place recently. Teaching formats and methods will be improved as UA continues to implement the PBL method through its polytechnic schools and as distance learning methods gain importance. The University will look for opportunities to cooperate with its partners abroad to adopt the best models of tutoring systems, among other good practices such as the institution of a best teacher award.

International cooperation and mobility are high up on the UA agenda for the 2014-2020 Programme, in particular cooperation towards the development of joint and double degrees. In this, UA clearly sees opportunities to develop joint programmes in new subject areas, thus providing highly attractive programmes for wider publics while contributing to the consolidation of European culture, multilingualism and the European knowledge-based economy at large.

In order to link education, research and innovation, UA will use the 2014-2020 Programme to provide students with opportunities for complementary study and research abroad and placements in business and industry. UA also has an important role and an obligation to use its partnerships in Europe and worldwide to boost regional enterprise and social innovation. The development of regional platforms such as the Aveiro Region Creative Science Park, which represents an investment of 35 million euros largely from EU structural funds bringing together business associations, an inter-municipal association, banks and the University, will require the technical and scientific resources and competences of the University.

To provide the knowledge, the science and the technology to such a venture, UA requires input from its partners in Europe that will make it possible to recruit the talent and expertise (students, researchers, staff) from other EU countries and to target specific funding sources. The 2014-2020 Programme will provide the dynamics required for this and other ventures.