

Erasmus Policy Statement

The Open University "Universitas Mercatorum" was officially founded in May 2006 (D.M. 10 05 06 G.U. N°134 DEL 12 06 06, SUPP. OR. N°142) and has just started its eighth year of academic work.

Over the years, Universitas Mercatorum increased its offer, proposing new courses at the first and the second level, all within the Economics and management area. This growth allowed to consolidate and increase, in a more complete way, the different projects carried out so far in the international context and to promote new actions of internationalization.

The University is aware that the mobility of students, academic and administrative staff represents an intellectual and cultural growth, essential to improve the research and teaching quality.

The challenges offered by the use of new teaching methods and future technologies require a new and dynamic approach in the higher education context, to fully exploit the knowledge opportunity available internationally.

Distance education is also a useful tool to deal with problems of drop-outs in higher education and to promote the principles of inclusion and social justice.

The current international programmes of University Mercatorum are focussed on the Mediterranean area, as University Mercatorum is one of the associated members of UNIMED, the Union of the Universities of the Mediterranean Area. This association aims at promoting academic research and training in order to contribute to integration between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding with Eurochambers - the representative body of European Chambers of Commerce - is already in place, according to which specific activities are defined to facilitate the international mobility of students within the TA.

Universitas Mercatorum is also activating contacts with some universities in Eastern Europe and countries of the former Soviet Union, supported and sponsored by the respective Chambers of Commerce. Contacts have also been undertaken with universities in countries in Latin America (Argentina and Chile).

The initial proposal of new partners is often made on personal initiatives of academic staff of Universitas Mercatorum, preceded by contacts at international meetings, workshops and seminars. At a second stage, the training and educational activities and the university research program of the proposed partner are verified, in order to identify, on the one hand, common interests and educational issues and, on the other hand, innovative diversified study fields with respect to those of Universitas Mercatorum.

The international mobility of students, especially at the second level, concerns both teaching and training. As far as this latter aspect is concerned, the network of the Chambers of Commerce provides a great support for the involvement and identification of companies. The mobility of academic and administrative staff aims at creating updated skills and ability to relate at an international level.

At the moment Universitas Mercatorum has no agreements for multiple or joint degrees, although this is a goal strongly sponsored by the internationalization strategies.

The administrative Office for International calls provides support to academic staff that is interested in a call within the LLP or other national and international programs, aimed at providing funds for the implementation of cooperation projects. Goal of Universitas Mercatorum is to participate in all four types of projects present in the LLP (Education, Training, Youth and Sport). The academic staff is assisted in the compilation of the application and in the identification of the partners, in order to finalize cooperation agreements, build consortia and complete the necessary documentation. If the application is accepted, the assistance of the office continues even in further stages: administrative and academic staff constantly collaborates in the development of projects.

Students who participate in mobility programs (ingoing and outgoing) are assisted by the Admission Office and the CRI to solve bureaucratic tasks, in the period before, during and after the stay abroad.

The support by LLP of strategic partnerships with local, regional, institutional and voluntary entities is completely in line with the approach taken by Universitas Mercatorum to promote, produce and share knowledge for sustainable development through cooperation projects.

UM is working to increase the participation in Erasmus call for strengthening international alliances in this field.

Universitas Mercatorum intends to increase the participation of students to mobility programs both within the EU and in the framework of bilateral agreements concluded with foreign institutions. It strongly supports the involvement of foreign professors and researchers in carrying out courses and encourages the use of English in the lessons held at the university.

The "distance learning" method allows a wider dissemination and access to higher education segments of the population often otherwise excluded and marginalized, such as disabled people, workers and people who are economically disadvantaged. Through cooperation and mobility projects, Universitas Mercatorum offers to its graduate students multicultural skills, that will improve employability and reduce the drop-out.

The participation in international cooperation programs will increase the quality of education and research at Universitas Mercatorum. Participants to mobility projects will be selected on the basis of merit, competence and motivation. The involvement of high-profile institutions and companies, both local and international, allows updating the training programs offered by the University, with contents taking into account the needs of the labor market.

International mobility is essential to improve the quality and skills of Universitas Mercatorum. The implementation of the Learning Agreement, the ECTS and the DS, as common tools of the mobility procedures, will ensure the quality and transparency of the recognition and transcription of experience achieved abroad. Work placements and staff mobility will, instead, strengthen the link between the world of work, partner institutions and Universitas Mercatorum, improving the transfer of learning experiences.

This objective is particularly supported by Universitas Mercatorum, which has activated numerous fruitful collaborations with the business world, thanks to the support of the Chambers of Commerce. Cooperation with SMEs will be further promoted in order to bridge the gap between research and business reality and support innovation in SMEs.

For the future, the research strategy of Universitas Mercatorum will be in line with the objectives of Horizon 2020 and Europe 2020, for a smart, sustainable and participatory growth. The University is committed to comply quality standards and to support the different administrative controls required by the program, in order to ensure an efficient system of governance and funding mechanism, able to support excellence.