

Palacký University Olomouc Erasmus Policy statement

Current trends in higher education focus on the internationalisation of curricula with the aim to raise the quality of study programmes and equip graduates with global/international and intercultural competences. Palacký University Olomouc (UP) has articulated its internationalisation strategy to reflect these trends.

Physical and virtual mobility is not a goal of internationalisation, but - when fully integrated into study programmes - a strategy, facilitating international cooperation. Internationalisation should be shifted from international offices into mainstream processes that influence all the students and staff at the institution. The role of academic staff should be emphasized as well as their skills in the internationalisation of curricula such as developing joint study programmes with international partners, study programmes in foreign languages, or in the Czech language with international outreach, and cultivating international study environment and diverse student population should be expanded, too.

The UP internationalisation strategy is structured around its strategic priorities and based on the national strategy of higher education internationalisation. In 2019, Palacký University Olomouc was awarded the prestigious *2019 EAIE Award for Excellence in Internationalisation*, *National Quality Prize for Social Responsibility* in the category of large and medium-sized public sector organisations, and the internationally recognised *Committed to Sustainability Award* while being included in the database of the *European Foundation for Quality Management*. The university is truly committed to the idea of internationalization of academic training in its broadest possible sense. We believe that plurality of cultures helps create the intellectually stimulating academic environment while contributing to the higher quality of science, research, teaching and living in society as such.

UP's participation in the Erasmus programme activities will contribute to reaching the objectives of the aforementioned priorities. It will build upon more than twenty years of its active participation in all programme activities, both mobility and cooperation projects.

The university will optimize and coordinate foreign language teaching at its faculties so that all students are well equipped for international mobility. It will strive to encourage implementing the international dimension into programmes in the Czech language while creating mobility windows where possible and implementing full automatic recognition of study abroad. Courses offered in Czech and foreign language study programmes should be interlinked and make participation of international students easy, this including elements of virtual mobility. Intercultural, language and professional competences of academic staff should lead to joint teaching/learning environment for Czech and international students (face-to-face and virtual). Study environment should help develop intercultural skills among Czech students and integrating international students into the university academic community as well.

Palacký University Olomouc will continue focusing on increasing the number and quality of programmes in foreign languages. This includes new degree programmes, short programmes, and new joint study programmes with international partners. In order to achieve this, the university will support not only its own students and staff, but also prospective students by the means of preparatory courses, aimed at developing academic and language skills. It will

continuously monitor and evaluate the quality of existing programmes and create a consistent marketing and recruitment strategy to promote study programmes, student life, university environment and the City of Olomouc as a student/university city.

The university will support the innovation of doctoral study programmes by strengthening language and intercultural skills of students, creating funding opportunities for international doctoral students and for international mobility of its own doctoral students at universities and research institutions.

UP has joined the AURORA University Network and it is ready to play an active role in this European consortium. This should bring more opportunities for international mobility, maximising societal impact of research, strengthening diversity and inclusion, and using student engagement to drive innovation in teaching and learning.

The university has been developing strategic partnerships in other regions as well, with special focus on Asia, Middle East, Canada, and Latin America. The participation in Erasmus (international credit mobility, capacity building projects, EM joint study programmes) will support these efforts and enable to identify and initiate activities that will develop new skills and mind-sets across universities and regions.

As mentioned before, the university plays an important role in implementing SDG principles within its own academic community and within the city and region. International students and staff should be actively involved in these activities. Student and staff mobility will help promote European values and raise European and international awareness among general public. Through the involvement in international study programmes and cooperation projects, the university will support the development of educational, research and humanitarian activities in selected regions of the world.

Following the existing trends and international strategy priorities, the university will aim to integrate international learning and training mobility into all study programmes. The university will ensure that its international activities are open to students of all programmes including part-time and distance learners, students from underrepresented groups and learners with fewer opportunities for mobility.

It will strive to provide transparent information on international educational opportunities, as well as tailored guidance to ensure informed study choices.

In order to further develop the quality and relevance of its study programmes, the university will support international staff exchanges as means for academic and other staff continuous professional development and exchange of knowledge that will influence learning environment, bring new teaching and research methods into curricula, and foster employability and entrepreneurship among students.

The university will develop high quality and relevant doctoral training programmes that will increase global employability of its graduates and at the same time attract international candidates. It will further develop existing research centres with focus on international research teams and exchange of researchers, especially in the early stages of their career paths.

The university will consistently use ECTS and the Diploma Supplement as effective tools for efficient recognition of credits gained abroad.

To achieve the goals of its general and international strategy, the university wishes to increase its participation in international cooperation programmes of education and training. These programmes should include the development of strategic partnerships with educational institutions of high profile, development of joint study and training programmes with European and international partners, establishing knowledge alliances with research institutions and enterprises in research priority areas, and capacity building projects with neighbouring and third countries.

The university will search and develop partnerships that will add to the educational and knowledge profile of the university in the international context. UP already has a number of long-standing partners, including outside of Europe, with which it should explore broadening and deepening its partnerships, thus creating strategic partnerships for mutual benefit. Based on already existing links with European and international institutions, the university will focus on identifying suitable cooperation programmes in its priority areas, as mentioned earlier. Participation in any of the cooperation projects will be carefully prepared with respect to its impact on Palacký University Olomouc and partner institutions future development and modernisation. As part of this preparation, project specific support measures will be identified at institutional and departmental level.

The university will ensure that projects are sustainable, balanced and relevant to the institutional capacity. It will ensure the visibility of project activities and results through all available means with special attention to possible spin-offs and future exploitation of results.

In order to support its international activities, the university will seek to develop more effective and flexible ways of identifying and using alternative sources of funding and co-funding of projects. It will focus its international efforts on faculties and departments individual strengths, support the diversity of strategic choices in international activities and develop internationally recognised centres of excellence.

It will further modernise its human resource management to ensure continuing professional development of international and cross-cultural skills and capacities of the academic and administrative staff.

Palacký University Olomouc plans to maintain and further expand its network of partnerships for student and staff mobility, within and outside Europe, with the aim to provide students and staff with diverse opportunities in relation to study and geographic areas and language preferences.

The university wishes to provide all its students with the opportunity to include a period of study abroad in their study programme. Such a period has become the integral part of all Ph.D. study programmes. Study programmes in the first and second cycle should include a mobility window, where possible. Alternatively, students should be offered such arrangements during their study that will allow them to spend at least one semester abroad. This should include blended mobility opportunities and virtual mobility elements. In order to facilitate student

mobility, the university has established and will further develop procedures for credit transfer and full recognition of study abroad, as well as academic and practical guidance at all levels (department/faculty/IRO).

The university has developed strong support measures for incoming international students that include high quality dormitory accommodation, visa application assistance, orientation programmes, language courses, the buddy system, and others.

By 2025, the university plans to balance the numbers of incoming and outgoing students and to ensure that around 10% of the total student population gain an international experience during their studies.

Teaching and training international mobility of academic and other staff is very important for creating an international environment for all mobile and non-mobile UP students. The university will create conditions for all staff members to participate in short academic or training periods abroad, especially in the early stages of their careers.

Palacký University Olomouc will increase its participation in European and international cooperation projects in a pro-active way. It will support its departments to enter relevant projects as partners and to initiate projects as coordinators. Participation in such projects should be undertaken with a view not only to benefit Palacký University Olomouc, but also other participating institutions and wider academia.

The foreseen results of any participation in cooperation projects should be sustainable (i.e. used by the partnership after the project ends, reusable and/or usable in future activities) and balanced (benefit all partners), and should lead to the further development of the European Higher Education Area in general, and UP international involvement in particular.

Palacký University Olomouc will further develop its portfolio of joint degree programmes in cooperation with universities in other European countries and international partners. These programmes at Master and Doctoral level should combine strengths of all participating institutions and bring the added value of international environment while maintaining high quality standards.