

## Erasmus Policy Statement

International engagement is a key educational strategy for improving the quality of teaching and research at European University Cyprus (EUC), in turn enhancing the University's overall reputation.

Following its award of University status in 2007, EUC has advanced to become one of the leading universities in Cyprus and has developed a network of international partnerships/networks with EU and non-EU states. EUC is a comprehensive University, which comprises five Schools (Medicine, Sciences, Law, Business Administration and Humanities, Social and Education Sciences) and a Distance Education Unit. EUC has one of the three Schools of Medicine and the only program in Dentistry on the island. Research activity at the University has increased by a factor of around 10 in the last decade, as measured by publications in peer-reviewed journals and external research funding. The University hosts the only Microsoft Innovation Center in Cyprus, one of 110 in the world. EUC is also one of around 500 organizations in Europe which have been awarded the EU 'HR Excellence in Research' badge.

The Partnerships and Networks of the University have been chosen on the basis of:

- a. Proven innovative capacity,
- b. Confirmed efficacy of knowledge and experience,
- c. Demonstrated commitment to 'quality service' for students and society,
- d. The significant competence and skills they bring to the overall workforce,
- e. Pursuit of excellence, in line with its academic mission and strategic priorities.

The University has developed a Strategic Plan, following consultations with academic staff, students, the senior management team and members of the University Council. Based on the founding principle of being an open university, EUC promotes internationalization in accordance with its distinctive qualities.

Moreover, EUC has entered into international cooperation agreements with the EU, Mediterranean, Pacific Rim and Eurasia regions that are at the forefront of Cyprus' international strategy. Meanwhile, EUC promotes internationalization within local communities by taking advantage of the state's geographical location in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Office of the Vice Rector of Research and External Affairs, in close cooperation with the Committee on International Relations, Programs and Mobility which includes representatives from all Schools of the University and key Administrative Departments, drives EUC's internationalization strategy, fostering network memberships and partnerships and promoting international mobility for students and staff. More specifically, part of the EUC's Internationalization Strategy is to offer its staff and students a strong platform for international recognition, research collaboration and joint transdisciplinary programs, workshops and student opportunities in Europe and the rest of the world. It does this through membership/partnership with principal institutions, which, consequently, have an immense range of target groups.

The EUC internationalization strategy identifies seven key drivers for the institution to continue to be amongst the leading universities of the region:

1. Embed internationalization into EUC core activities,
2. Attract the best students, academics and researchers through sustainable recruitment processes,
3. Develop new forms of cross-border synergy,
4. Increase and sustain high quality strategic academic and professional partnerships/networks,
5. Build learning and teaching mobility more systematically into curricula,
6. Continue to internationalize the curriculum,
7. Cultivate our international alumni to develop a strong network of EUC graduates around the world, contributing to and benefitting from their close connection with our university.

There is currently a remarkable diversity of international partnerships in place across the University. The aim is to develop at least three prominent international partnerships per year. These will be expanded at a number of educational levels and will combine research, learning and teaching.

As the global research and innovation scene is changing rapidly, EUC has adopted a strategy aiming at:

- a. Building and promoting a knowledge triangle (education, research and society/business),
- b. Efficient mechanisms for supporting excellence.

Synergy with EU and non-EU countries is accomplished through a number of major university memoranda. Special weight is given to joint activities, which are important for the development of new programs, particularly at graduate level. Many bilateral and multilateral projects, including EU funded projects, identify EUC as an internationally acclaimed institution both in teaching and research. EUC has participated in more than 250 projects in recent years, funded by a number of national, EU and international programs and organizations. Current sources of funding include Horizon 2020,

Erasmus+, Directorates General of the European Commission, the European Space Agency, the Cyprus Research and Innovation Foundation, and other governmental bodies.

Whilst working to promote teaching and training, the EUC strategy for the organization and implementation of international projects focuses on:

1. A cooperation model for development, which aims to meet regional needs.
2. An educational strategy generated by the academic community to meet the needs of EU and non-EU institutions.
3. Training for lecturers and professionals from EU and non-EU countries.
4. Carrying out cutting-edge joint teaching programs with organizations, research groups and researchers.

The EUC strategy places exceptional emphasis on promoting the development of joint interdisciplinary programs. EUC maintains excellent relations with domestic and international academic institutions and has established regular cooperative mechanisms for personnel exchanges and/or running joint projects that perform innovative education activities. The faculty members have accumulated rich international experience by paying visits to, or teaching in, foreign universities, teaching in joint programs and participating in international conferences. In addition, every year EUC sends an increasing number of undergraduate and graduate students abroad. A vast number of distinguished scholars, domestically and internationally, serve as honorary, visiting or guest professors at EUC.

Under the internationalization strategy and, primarily, within the “EU Modernization Agenda for Higher Education”, EUC energetically pursues major multilateral projects through mobility and cross-border synergies. As synergies bring excellence, they also link research, teaching and learning programs with business. Meanwhile, they provide staff and students with opportunities for a dynamic contribution in multidisciplinary projects both at regional and international level. Consequently EUC, by adopting the priorities of the “Modernization Agenda”, has a strong regional and international impact on the networks/partnership programs offered in all disciplines.

This successful cross-organizational synergy has been realized through, inter alia:

- a. Incentives for multidisciplinary, and
- b. Reduction of regulatory and administrative barriers to affiliations between EUC and public-private stakeholders.

However, more is needed to maximize the contribution of Europe's higher education systems to innovative, sustainable and inclusive growth, and modernization of their policy objectives is therefore needed. Thus, EUC has adopted the five priorities of the “Modernization Agenda” so as to remain an attractive institution and partner of choice.

Additionally, EUC governance fosters efficient and up to date methods of management, based on an accurate appraisal of the educational environment in which universities operate, in Cyprus and abroad. In addition to the expected impact, we intend to continuously accomplish positive transformation as a result of the “Modernization Agenda”:

1. In strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border actions, some matters are prioritized, whilst others occur organically,
2. The systems by which Departments and Schools accomplish specific goals differ noticeably. Some aspects, for instance, of the “Modernization Agenda” seem simpler than others. Frequently, when procedures are examined in isolation, they appear to be the logical way to accomplish the priorities, but complexities emerge from the interactions between the actors. Some of these interactions hide divergences in the priorities of different actors,
3. One essential reason that the knowledge triangle is of pressing concern is the perpetuation of a severe economic crisis. Despite the fact that the triangle promises many benefits for improving quality and efficiency, its strategic execution can be very convoluted, particularly for business actors, due to problems of cost.

EUC will continue to expand and enhance priorities within the “Modernization Agenda” to further:

- a. Advance and improve international exchange and cooperative arrangements,
- b. Promote internationalization in parallel with the ‘knowledge triangle’
- c. Carry out cutting-edge joint research with EU and non-EU organizations, groups and researchers,
- d. Accept first-class students and faculty,
- e. Integrate international perspectives into all study and research programs and administrative support matters.