

Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

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The Institution agrees to publish this overall strategy (all three parts) on its website within one month after the signature of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education by the European Commission.

Please describe your institution's international (EU and non-EU) strategy. In your description please explain a) how you choose your partners, b) in which geographical area(s) and c) the most important objectives and target groups of your mobility activities (with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, including study and training, and short cycles). If applicable, also explain how your institution participates in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees. (max. 5000 characters)

Original language [EN]

a) Partners

Our college Institute Carles Vallbona is serious about getting involved in international projects, taking part in most European mobility programmes and Lifelong Learning Programme such as Erasmus, Leonardo and Comenius. We also have agreements of collaboration with Germany, France and Italy, which have been provided by the Catalan Ministry of Education. In the last seven years around 60 of our students have benefited from international exchanges. We have welcomed around 50 foreign students as well.

Future partnerships are also engaged, thanks to visits of foreign staff and students. A good example are the visits of the group of French Head Teachers from the National Syndicate of Head Teachers (<http://www.snpt.org/>) in 2010 and 2013 (<http://www.iescarlesvallbona.cat/activitats-projectes/programes-internacionals/intercanvis/414-visita-leonardo-de-caps-destudi-francesos>)

E-twinning projects make more partnerships possible. An example being the project with the French Lycée Jouvot of Taverny-Paris in 2011 in which students of both countries presented their works through Skype (<http://www.iescarlesvallbona.cat/oferta-educativa/cicles-formatius/informatica/171-videoconference-history-of-the-computers-and-programming-languages>). Thanks to this first contact, a French teacher of this very Lycée was invited to organize a workshop in which teamwork, problem solving and Project Based Learning was its aim (<http://www.iescarlesvallbona.cat/oferta-educativa/cicles-formatius/informatica/176-erasmus-workshop-in-c>)

Likewise, international companies which operate in our region, and also have subsidiary installations in other countries, are an open door to start placements in internships both local and abroad. In this way, students can practice in the same company but in two different countries.

Our collaboration in a local Trade Fair for more than 4 years makes it possible to collaborate with the Employment Service of Catalonia. Therefore, our students have access to projects of the European Job Mobility Portal (EURES: <http://ec.europa.eu/eures/home.jsp?lang=en>)

Last, but not least, seminars organized by the Catalan Ministry of Education are a good platform to meet new possible partners, either foreign ones who participate in the seminar or via other Catalan colleges which introduce them.

b) Geographical areas

As commented previously, Germany, France and Italy are the main areas in which we work. Baden Württemberg, Rhone Alps and Toscana are the more active regions. As the geographical areas of our partners do not include English speaking countries, one of our intentions is to look for new partnerships in Eastern Europe. In this way, we attempt to improve the level of English language of our students.

c) Objectives and target groups

Our school is aware of the importance of mobility programmes. The main aim is to offer both professional and personal experience to the students, as placement in foreign countries helps them to adapt to the requirements of the labour market in the framework of the European Union. Specific skills, attitudes and competences are acquired along with an understanding of the economic and social environment of the host countries. Thus their professional mobility is widened, not to mention their personal curriculum and capacity for adjustment to changes, the key to future learning.

Our target group is mainly the students. Therefore, in the following years our priority is to consolidate and increase the number of students who have the possibility to go abroad through placements and academic activities.

Furthermore, thanks to the mobility of teachers, it will be possible for our staff to teach abroad and also attend specific training. The exchange of teachers will also allow contact with foreign experts with whom activities such as short seminars and conferences can be organized.

d) Joint degrees

Regarding joint degrees, having a course of International Trade in our school will make the exchange of students and staff easier. The college has been asked to take part in the NETINVET programme granted by the EU, under the coordination of the Catalan Ministry of Education, which involves a common profile for the occupation of import-export assistance and a unit-based certification. Its website is: <http://www.netinvet.eu/>. Preparatory visits will be organized to guarantee contact between partners.

If applicable, please describe your institution's 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. (max. 2000 characters)

Original language [EN]

As said, our college is serious about getting involved in international projects. The school has several existing partners and diversified ways to look for more. The number of projects, as well as their quality, will continue to improve.

The quality of each international project is the result of a close collaboration between tutors, teaching staff and the international coordinator. The selection and monitoring of the best students throughout the project is essential. The short-term priority is to consolidate and extend the number of teachers involved in the international programmes in order to improve their quality.

As part of the curricula, more teachers are now able to teach their lessons in the English language. In this way, we attempt to improve the level of our students' English and thus prepare them for any international projects.

As also mentioned previously, one of our intentions for the mid-term future is to look for new partnerships in Eastern Europe. E-twinning as well as preparatory visits are good tools to help find new partners.

As for corrective actions, it is noteworthy to mention that our college has followed an increasing trajectory for international projects. So far around 60 students have been placed in foreign companies. However, almost half of them traveled before 2010, before the minimum period to be abroad changed from one to two months. Since that time numbers have dropped. As placements interrupt their academic activities, not all of the students feel comfortable going away temporarily. The extra effort needed on their return may cause their studies to be lengthened, and it is clear that this is not an easy decision for them to make. Since the students are placed in the enterprises in the second year of their two year course, a good presentation of the international projects is highly recommended at the beginning of their studies. In this way, those students interested in traveling abroad can plan their personal strategies in advance.

Please explain the expected impact of your participation in the Programme on the modernisation of your institution (for each of the 5 priorities of the Modernisation Agenda*) in terms of the policy objectives you intend to achieve. (max. 3000 characters)

Original language [EN]

One of the hallmarks of our school is its International projects. This becomes a positive pull factor. There has been a noticeable increase in the demand of the Short Cycles enrollment as long as the student's profile has also changed in a way that pupils are more aware of labour mobility.

The main aim of our participation in international projects is to increase students' opportunities. This improves their curriculum significantly. It is proven that students who have had a placement in a foreign country adapt themselves better to the requirements of the labour market.

Our school also offers adult training for unemployed people who wish to recycle and enter again in the labour market. The teachers who teach in the Short Cycles are the same and this is an easy way to promote this kind of study. Ours school is also involved in a programme promoted by the Catalan Ministry of Education which validates some subjects and even professional experience (<http://www.pifp.cat/qualificat/>), which increases the number of people who can access higher education.

Our school is aware of the importance of tutoring in all ages of education. This is why tutors in Short Cycles are specially dedicated to monitoring school drop. As a vocational school and as part of the curricula, tutors in second year regularly visit the enterprises where the students are placed. This dual monitoring in school and enterprise helps to enhance social cohesion.

As a way of improving quality and fostering employers in the collaboration of curricula in the school, our college participates in a placement project for teachers in the enterprises. For instance, in this course there have been 3 placements so far and plans can be laid to start doing it abroad. This will also decidedly improve the quality of teaching and strengthen research in both business and school. Of course, the quality of teaching will improve thanks to the mobility of teachers and cross-border co-operation.

Our school is of the opinion that it can help to drive regional economic development through international programmes in cooperation with other higher education institutions and Town Hall. For instance, the college takes part in some projects in which enterprises collaborate to reduce youth unemployment in the automotive sector. With a university center we also offer software engineering for mobile phones, which is another area of economic growth.

We are aware that our three areas of study, IT, Commerce and Marketing, also provide opportunities to develop entrepreneurial, creative and innovative skills. The integration of these three branches can help to boost new business ideas. For instance, the collaboration of students of these three different profiles can start an online shop. Students are encouraged to take part in several regional research contests.

Last, it is worth mentioning that our college is accredited as a standard quality ISO 9000 and the next stage of this process is to become a center of excellence.

* COM (2011) 567 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0567:FIN:EN:PDF>)