

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

Universidad Isabel I international strategy coordination and implementation is based on the following four pillars:

- 1- The IRO (International Relations Office) is responsible for planning, directing and coordinating all international actions, including the development and implementation of the internationalization plan and international mobility of staff and students.
- 2- As part of our 4-year internationalisation plan we have set the target of signing 20 international cooperation agreements with institutions from 10 countries. In the first year we plan to sign an Erasmus Bilateral Agreement with at least 4 universities within the European Higher Education Area. In addition, we plan to sign at least two Erasmus Bilateral Agreements for each undergraduate and master's programme: that means 26 agreements in total.
- 3- Our Internationalization Plan includes the following lines:
 - Erasmus + Key Action 1 (KA1): Joint study programmes and traineeships between countries.
 - Erasmus + Key Action 2 (KA2): Strategic Partnerships - Knowledge Alliances - Capacity Building Projects.
 - Erasmus + Key Action 3 (KA3): KA3 Projects
 - Jean Monnet Activities
- 4- In light of provisions within the Erasmus + Program, Universidad Isabel I will contribute to the development of higher education in Europe and worldwide. Universidad Isabel I will take part in K1 actions; it also intends to do so under the Erasmus Mundus Programme (joint master's and joint PhD programmes).

Universidad Isabel I international strategy revolves around four core areas which guide our choice of targets and geographical areas:

- Our status as an expanding university within the EHEA.
- Our links with the Portuguese-speaking world, right from the start, more specifically with Instituto Piaget universities in Portugal, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde and Brazil.
- Our potential as a Spanish university to foster international partnerships in Latin America.
- Our online-based education offer enabling us to reach institutions worldwide.

Our internationalisation strategy is backed by measures promoting foreign language skills among staff and students. That is why we have a School of Languages offering courses in Spanish, English, German and Portuguese, from A1 to B2 levels. CEFR B1 level will be an entry requirement to take part in a mobility programme. It can be achieved through our own courses (a final test must be passed to validate language competence) or certified by a renowned qualification (FCE, DELF, etc.).

Our strategy major objectives are as follows:

- To foster and increase quality in higher education within the EHEA.
- To engage all the university community in our international strategy.
- To forge partnerships with other institutions, enabling cultural, academic and scientific exchanges.
- To work towards agreements with partners sharing our same enthusiasm to promote international cooperation and mobility of students and staff.
- To reach agreements with universities abroad to develop international research programmes.

Through the Erasmus+ Programme, Universidad Isabel I aims to advance students and staff internationalisation, as well as cooperation and mobility within the EU and EEA countries.

For the design and implementation of its internationalisation strategy over the coming years, Universidad Isabel I borrows from *Estrategia Universidad 2015 (EU2015)* (strategy for universities), a Spanish government initiative to upgrade Spanish universities developing an updated Spanish university system.

Therefore, Universidad Isabel I believes it will benefit from taking part in the Erasmus + Programme becoming a more efficient institution, more open to international opportunities, and better equipped to face the future. The following strategic axes will contribute to that endeavour:

The first strategic axis focuses on engaging the university community to think in terms of collaboration with other universities and to enter into agreements with other universities and actors. More involvement in the international field will thus be achieved and our institution will therefore be even better valued and more respected by the community and other national and international institutions.

The second strategic axis is grounded in our commitment to academic excellence in teaching, research and knowledge transfer. To that end, several lines of action are currently being implemented:

- To further advance competence-based, student-centred learning, already implemented across the university.
- To expand continuing training among teachers (minimum of 200 hours per academic year) regarding online teaching and languages.
- To further international cooperation among universities, strengthening existing links to Latin America and Portuguese speaking countries (in Europe, Africa and Latin America).
- To pursue the development of joint degrees with universities abroad.
- To foster research and development, and knowledge transfer in our two major areas of expertise:
 - Innovation in online education
 - The development of IT applications for online teaching and learning

Furthermore, Universidad Isabel I strategy includes the following objective, pursued by the Erasmus + Programme for 2014-2020: to focus on formal and informal learning beyond EU borders, opening up to internationalisation and to third countries in order to improve training and educational skills, and employability of students, teachers and staff.

Universidad Isabel I staff is very young, the average age being under 37. Many staff members have at some time participated in European mobility programmes (under Erasmus-Socrates as students or teachers; under Leonardo as tutors or students, etc.).

We are the Erasmus generation, having tapped opportunities offered by the European mobility programmes over the last 20 years. So our engagement and enthusiasm towards being part of the Erasmus + programme comes naturally for the institution. We are aware of the socio-cultural, academic and language effects this participation will bring about for the university and participants alike.

To take part in Erasmus+ will open up huge opportunities for international networking and partnerships, in order to undertake joint mobility and cooperation programmes. It will also lead to professional, personal and academic development of participants.

Our city and our region will also feel the benefits. Castilla y León is a region full of history, a traditional cultural destination, ready to warmly welcome incoming students and staff.

But the Erasmus+ Programme professional and personal benefits go beyond having the opportunity to study abroad. It means having a life experience which will open participants' minds and lead them to higher maturity, thus indirectly upgrading our institution. Why? Because our university will be better thanks to the development of its community members. The university will enthusiastically engage in European mobility programmes and will strive to be always better. In addition, the whole university community will modernise due to language requirements to take part in these programmes.

To sum up, Universidad Isabel I is fully committed to the modernisation agenda regarding the various European programmes and projects included in this application, as well as to the 5 priorities of the internationalisation and modernisation agenda.

Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs

We offer undergraduate and master's degrees. We foster innovative education for our students and teachers. We work with other universities in and outside Spain on various projects and research regarding both undergraduate and postgraduate studies

Improving the quality and relevance of higher education

Quality is a cornerstone of Universidad Isabel I policy and strategy. We have mainstreamed quality-based management systems as benchmarks for the institution management. Our model is ISO 9001:2015 and UNE 66181:2012 quality assurance systems, achieving 4 stars out of 5 on accessibility, which means that we meet compliance level A of WCAG 2.0.

To ensure the system quality, teachers must be involved in continuing training. That is why all our teachers must do at least 200 hours of training per academic year following update and continuing training targets for teachers. This training enables them to develop better and adapted skills to pursue excellence as an online teacher, as required by our methodology.

Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border co-operation

Universidad Isabel I has already welcomed almost 500 foreign students over the last three years. Although we are an online university, we have managed students' face-to-face internships for periods from 3 weeks to 3 months. We believe teacher mobility is a must to improve the quality of higher education given the benefits derived from it both for the home and host institutions.

Making the knowledge triangle work

Universidad Isabel I has signed cooperation agreements with over 800 companies and institutions in different areas for our students' internships. Collaborative institutions are located in Spain; MNEs have already made available to us their premises in other countries.

Improving governance and funding

Exceptional benefits derive from participating and investing in these mobility programmes and actions. The outcomes have a positive impact on all stakeholders, and they lead to better searching, management and financing of actions.