

Erasmus Policy Statement

University of Novi Sad's international (EU and non-EU) strategy

The Senate of the University of Novi Sad officially adopted the institutional Strategy of Internationalisation on 12 July, 2016 (<http://www.uns.ac.rs/index.php/en/international-cooperation/internationalization-of-uns/strategy-of-internationalization>)

The University of Novi Sad shapes its future alongside other educational and scientific institutions belonging to the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area, but is equally open towards collaboration with institutions situated in other parts of the world. In line with its Strategy of Internationalisation, the University of Novi Sad chooses its partners with regards to the following priorities:

- Cooperation with leading universities in the world;
- Cooperation and networking with leading universities in the region;
- Cooperation with foreign universities able to contribute to the fulfillment of strategic objectives of the Republic of Serbia, Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, four university cities, other local communities, as well as companies situated on the territory of the Republic of Serbia;
- Cooperation with foreign universities located in the geographical areas inhabited by a larger population of Serbian nationality;
- Cooperation with foreign universities which are of significance to the national minorities in the Republic of Serbia;
- Cooperation with the universities in the region which need support from the University of Novi Sad;
- Cooperation with universities in underdeveloped countries which need support of the University of Novi Sad in the domains of science, education and overall capacity building.

The geographical areas, both within and beyond the EU, where the partner institutions are situated, are therefore closely linked with, and guided by, the above-mentioned priorities. The University of Novi Sad has a strategic interest to cooperate with individual scientific and educational institutions, as well as international organisations and associations, in Europe, but also with those whose seat is outside Europe. This predominantly refers to the higher education institutions in the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, etc.

One of the key aspects of international cooperation supported by the University of Novi Sad is the extensive exchange of students, professors, assistants, researchers and administrative staff within the Erasmus+ Programme, as well as all other mobility schemes funded by the European Union. Academic mobility is, and has been, one of the strategic priorities of the University of Novi Sad.

An important objective of the University of Novi Sad is to achieve the appropriate balance between incoming and outgoing mobility, to encourage student mobility at all three cycles of study, and to make sure that extensive mobility of academic and administrative staff has a sustainable impact on the process of internationalisation at the institution as a whole. International credit mobility, apart from bringing great benefit to individual students and staff is seen by the University of Novi Sad as an exceptional capacity building and quality raising mechanism for university and faculty services in implementing the priorities set out the institutional Strategy of Internationalisation.

When there are advanced mutual interests of the University of Novi Sad and other foreign institutions, bilateral and multilateral cooperation is raised to the level of a strategic partnership, which includes coordinated activities in a number of different areas, joint coordination of large research and development projects, functional joining of resources which are at the disposal of partner institutions, mutual capacity building activities, a common approach towards third parties, extensive exchange of staff and students, and the development of double and joint degrees. Strategic partnerships are developed selectively and with institutions in the region and beyond, which are known for their remarkable results in the fields of science, education, innovation and knowledge transfer.

By implementing unique European standards and acting in accordance with good and commonly adopted practices of the European countries, the University of Novi Sad removes obstacles that prevent or hinder the exchange of information, ideas, knowledge, people and resources in the European Higher Education and Research Area and thus confirms its inclination towards being an open European university.

University of Novi Sad's international strategy for the organisation and implementation of international (EU and non-EU) cooperation projects within the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme

University of Novi Sad (UNS) has been participated actively in international cooperation projects since 1996 within different European and non-European programmes, becoming recognized as a renowned institution and reliable partner providing valuable expertise and contribution to successful implementation of projects. International projects at UNS have been implemented in compliance with institutional strategies, regulations and internal development plans set for this purpose, creating the optimal

environment for its staff and students, so as to increase their project-oriented motivation, full engagement and participation in highly competitive international funding schemes.

The University's strategic orientation towards larger project participation is reflected in the UNS Internationalisation Strategy, defining priorities in the domain of science, such as cooperation with leading universities in the world and creating conditions to involve a growing number of researchers from UNS in international scientific and development projects, that would increase the visibility and reputation of the University and its members in the European Higher Education and Research Area. Along with this document, the implementation of international projects has been also underpinned by the Programme for Scientific Research Work at UNS for the period 2016 - 2020, targeting the programmes and measures to be applied in constant development of scientific work at UNS.

The institutional legal framework supporting successful implementation of projects and their management also include: the University Regulation on Procedures of International Projects' Implementation at UNS providing basic rules for projects' implementation. This version was later amended several times due to the novelties introduced both in international cooperation programmes and national rules. Apart from this document, another one was adopted, too, Rules and Procedures for Project Management at UNS, within which detailed internal procedures for project management and accompanying internal forms were prescribed as a guide for project coordinators and their associates. Certain aspects of project implementation were tackled in Human Resources Development Strategy, Code of Academic Integrity and Regulation on Procedures for Academic Integrity Code Violations, such as ethical aspects, intellectual property rights etc.

Along with establishing the legal framework for UNS's participation in international projects, technical setting has also been provided in the form of a separate web page created within the UNS website, intended for providing relevant information on all projects implemented at UNS, funding opportunities, implementation rules and procedures, etc.

Valuable support to staff and students when participation in international project is concerned, is provided by the University's Research and Project Management Office (RPMO) established in 2011 with the aim to equip the academy with full information concerning available funding schemes within different programmes, monitor project' implementation (content and finances), provide consultancy in legal/financial issues, etc. When deciding on initiating a project or accepting an invitation for participation, UNS applies several criteria in compliance with its Internationalisation Strategy: project objectives and sustainability, quality of partnerships, appointed team members and their expertise. Once the applications have been submitted to UNS fulfilling all the

requirements in terms of internal procedures, the levels of decision-making are the following:

- Vice-rector for Science together with RPMO (first level of approving)
- Rector's team (second level of approving)
- University Senate (final level of approving)

Since UNS is a non-integrated university with its faculties as separate legal entities, certain international projects may be managed and implemented both at central and faculty level. In case the project topics are related to specific scientific fields, they have been implemented at corresponding faculties. However, when there are mutual interests of UNS and other foreign institutions, cooperation needs to be raised to the level of strategic partnership, which includes joint coordination of large research and development projects, functional joining of resources, mutual capacity building activities, and the like (e.g. CBHE Project BE-OPEN resulting in scientific papers' repository significant for all teaching staff, researchers, PhD students). In conclusion, UNS has all the necessary structures and the operational capacity to submit and implement international such as Capacity Building, Strategic partnerships, Knowledge alliances and Jean Monnet.

The expected impact of University of Novi Sad's participation in the Erasmus+ Programme on the modernisation of the institution, with reference to each of the priorities of the renewed EU Agenda for higher education as well as the goals towards a European Education Area, including the policy objectives UNS intends to pursue

Participation of UNS in the programmes funded by the EU in the field of education, research, innovation, mobility, services, governance, etc. is one of the main driving forces behind its process of modernisation. UNS firmly supports and endorses the (renewed) modernisation agenda of the EU in the field of HE and is determined to keep implementing its strategic goals and priorities.

- Tackling future skills mismatches and promoting excellence in skills development

UNS will keep fostering diverse forms of cooperation with the employers in order to increase the relevance, delivery and quality of its study programmes. UNS collects the data on its graduates in the labour market so as to determine both the advantages and shortcomings of its educational offer, and make informed decisions on its continual improvement. This data is part of the institutional self-evaluation reports and quality assurance.

UNS will keep encouraging students' access to work-based learning. There is already a growing trend of work placements as part of UNS's study programmes, particularly in the IT sector. The enrolment policy is responding to the needs and demands of the labour market from the institutional perspective, but is also guided by the national decision-making in higher education.

UNS recognizes the need to modernise its STE(A)M curricula. It will keep preparing applications in the context of the Erasmus+ Programme for the coordination of projects in innovative teaching methods in STE(A)M. Also, the future Science and Technology park will enhance the opportunities for students and staff to gain high-level STE(A)M skills and develop the transversal skills and competences important for excellence in innovation and entrepreneurship.

UNS offers career guidance through the services of its Center for Career Development and Student Counselling.

Staff mobility through the Erasmus+ Programme has a strong impact on professional development of teachers across the Faculties of UNS and is recognized as an investment in the quality of the educational process at home. In terms of pedagogical and transversal skills, UNS offers training modules to university junior staff and PhDs (e.g. TRAIN programme).

- Building inclusive and connected higher education systems

UNS offers an inclusive learning environment for students of different backgrounds and is engaged with the local, national, regional and international communities. Agreements on cooperation are concluded and implemented not only with educational counterparts in the country and abroad, but also with local companies, cultural institutions (e.g. Matica Srpska), art institutions, city fair, local and regional authorities, as well as other stakeholders that contribute to the processes of learning and teaching at UNS, and where UNS can provide relevant expertise and support.

In line with the program of affirmative measures, UNS implements the special enrolment quota for students with disabilities and students of Roma national minority. Students from vulnerable groups have at their disposal different support services, assistive technology and a customized working environment at UNS.

- Ensuring higher education institutions contribute to innovation

UNS is highly dedicated to innovation in education, research and engagement with the wider community. Throughout its units, UNS strives to achieve research excellence and provide high quality doctoral training. It also strives to contribute to the solving of local, regional and global challenges. One of the examples is UNS's BioSense institute.

Recognizing that ICT today plays a pivotal role in ensuring sustainable, smart and inclusive growth of agriculture, BioSense focuses on multidisciplinary, game-changing and needs-driven research and disseminate it to a global ecosystem of forward-looking stakeholders.

The UNESCO Chair for Entrepreneurial Studies fosters, through its programs, activities and projects, entrepreneurial and innovation skills across UNS.

UNS Center for Strategic and Advanced Studies defined priority areas, according to the principles of smart specialization: new materials and nanotechnologies; information and communication technologies; biotechnologies; agriculture; food technologies; energy efficiency and renewable energy sources; environment and sustainable development; community stability and geopolitics.

- Supporting effective and efficient higher education systems

Science, higher education and cooperation with the business sector are balanced and interconnected at UNS. More than 140 start-up companies in the IT sector were founded with the support from the University and its members, employing several thousand young engineers from the region who graduated from UNS. Faculties of UNS cooperate with the business sector in providing relevant services.

UNS will keep encouraging extensive participation of its staff in international projects as well as staff mobility, offering effective internal cooperation and support.