



## Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2014-2020

### Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

The University of Trento (Unitn) is a medium-sized university set in the alpine Province of Trentino in the north-eastern part of Italy. On the outskirts of Italy and at the heart of Europe, Unitn was founded 50 years ago and since its very beginning it has always made internationalization one of its main priorities. This endeavour has led Unitn to build a network of solid partnership with prestigious universities and research centres around the world. Throughout the years it has increasingly widened its research and training fields, thus including new disciplines and it has continuously pursued high quality research and teaching activities.

The University of Trento is constantly working to develop its international scope, establishing and developing networks and partnerships that guarantee the opportunity of cooperation with regard to education, research and relations with industry. During the last decade this goal has become a strategic priority of the University, which has committed itself to set up what is called internationalization at home, making its campuses international and encouraging the presence in Trento of foreign visiting professors and researchers, as well as students and staff from all over the world. In order to make a significant number of courses truly accessible for international students, an increasing number of Master's courses covering all the areas are taught in English. Numerous seminars and events in English offer further opportunities for local and international students willing to deepen their knowledge and preparation. Unitn aims at enhancing the spread and knowledge of foreign languages among students and staff and to introduce multicultural awareness into its institutional activities, as well as into the everyday lives of its students, employees and guests. The continuous and coherent effort aimed at enriching the educational offer and at giving students, academic and administrative staff good opportunities to study and work abroad, and grow in an international environment has always been a trademark of the Institution. Unitn aims at attracting the most talented and deserving Italian and international students and researchers, who are rewarded with a stimulating and enriching environment, able to combine the local features with the international dimension, based on strong European and international networks of cooperation and relationships.



Unitn is strongly committed to carry out joint learning programmes (double/multiple degrees at all levels), joint research projects (inside and outside EU programmes) and activities to support Universities in developing countries. Unitn offers various double degree programmes which provide students with a unique opportunity to achieve two degrees in two countries, after having spent at least one year abroad, attending courses at a foreign university. One joint degree is offered in conjunction with other three European countries and students achieve in this case only one degree recognized in all the involved countries. Moreover, Unitn participates in several projects of the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Commission covering various field of research and has recently achieved excellent results in the European Research Council competition which aims at supporting investigator-driven frontier research.

As far as the international cooperation actions undertaken by the University is concerned, Unitn is very active in projects aiming at helping universities in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans, and the Mediterranean region to develop a modern university system and to use IT tools for its development and at hosting students and staff of these countries helping them to become acquainted with the European higher education area.

For the signing of bilateral agreements, Unitn considers as qualifying element the teaching and research quality level of the foreign partner university evaluated through the main international rankings, such as QS World University Ranking and Times Higher Education World University Rankings. New international cooperation agreements are therefore established only with foreign universities all over the world which have a good position in these rankings. In the planning of international partnership inside EU and non EU programmes, Unitn carefully chooses its partners according to their international dimension and institutional reliability. The main geographical areas in which Unitn is expanding its cooperation are: Europe, East Europe and Russia, South-East Asia, Oceania, India, North and South America, North Africa.

For the implementation of its international cooperation strategy Unitn can count on a central administrative department and on various decentralized offices which are in charge of organizing the mobility opportunities to students, Ph.D. students, researchers, teaching staff defined in specific agreements. An academic Rector's delegate supervises the administrative implementation of the University's international cooperation strategy.

For outgoing candidates information on mobility opportunities is provided through a dedicated web portal, e-mails, brochures, department guides, information sessions, press and TV broadcast. Face to face information and advice, including teaching methods and assessment at the hosting institution, is offered by academic tutors.



Incoming candidates have access to information on curricula and procedures directly from the web portal dedicated to international activities and at their arrival in Trento are supported by a dedicated service for international guests. The Welcome Office supports international students in all the administrative and informative aspects related to their enrolment at the University, their arrival and stay in Italy (visa, pre-arrival services, health insurance, stay permit, student card, tax code, library card and bus pass). An accommodation for all international students is available at the University's campus. Guided visits in town and excursions in the surroundings for all Unitn international students are organized in order to become familiar with Trentino Alto-Adige and to meet other international students. The University's Language Centre offers courses through classes, supported self-learning and on-line courses.

Since quality is central to its policy, Unitn has a long record of actions aimed at quality enhancement. All activities, including international ones, are subject to annual evaluation also through structured consultation of end users. Recommendations are issued for improvement.

Unitn has had in the last few years a general increase in the number of enrollments and has registered a progressive decrease in the study drop out: it intends to maintain and improve these trends through dedicated measures in the guidance of the university choice and in the tutoring of the enrolled students.

Unitn deserving students in need can count on adequate grants for their studies provided by the Opera Universitaria, a special branch of the local Government, which besides these grants supplies accommodation, canteens, sport facilities and supporting services for all university students. Unitn is moreover the first Italian university which foresees a particular students' fees system based on the economic situation bands awarding money to students who are particularly deserving. Duration of studies, period of study abroad, student's commitment during the first year are taken into consideration to establish the award. In this way the university aims at the same time at encouraging students to obtain quickly the degree, to commit themselves in terms of number of exams and grades and to go abroad for a study period.

Unitn already offers e-learning opportunities and intends to further develop this sector in the next few years in order to give its students the opportunity to attend lessons also in a different moment than that of the traditional frontal lesson and at the same time to reach a larger variety of students, also non-traditional such as workers and adults, and give them the chance to obtain a new qualification. A part-time course in Business Management dedicated to student workers is already present in the official educational syllabus of the University.

As to academic mobility activities, Unitn has developed instruments and procedures to assure full academic recognition of student performance and to prevent loss of progress. Cross-checking of data



and documentation and a functional data management system which speeds registration and transfer of ECTS credits, as well as the release of the Diploma Supplement, are reducing sources of delay.

The University of Trento strongly supports the linking of higher education, research and business for economic growth and regional development. This commitment has been fulfilled in the direct participation to the institution of the Trento RISE – Trento Research, Education & Innovation System, which has become an EIT-ICT Labs' node in Europe, one of the first Knowledge and Innovation Communities set up by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology. Unitn therefore strongly commits itself to the success of the knowledge triangle.

Unitn has recently undergone an important governance reform according to the national legislation but also to a special agreement with the local Government which is now in charge of the university's full funding. This will also allow Unitn to decide on its recruiting with a larger independence and accountability.