



UNICAC

WP2_HUMAN CAPACITY BUILDING

(Wp2.7) PRACTICAL TOOLKIT ON ORGANIZATION
AND MANAGEMENT OF IROS

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Introduction

In the current globalization process, the competence of institutional strategies is fundamental to achieving an efficient internationalization process. In this regard, the International Relations Offices (IROs) of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) may play a significant role in their own institutions' development.

“Internationalization is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education. This definition defines internationalization as an ongoing process of making something international, not just a set of activities” (Knight 2005).

This manual (practical toolkit) has been drafted in the framework of the UNICAC project “University Cooperation Framework of Knowledge Transfer in Central Asia and China” implemented between January 2018 and October 2022. Funded by the European Commission through the KA2 – Capacity Building for Higher Education action of the Erasmus+ programme, the UNICAC project aims to increase the potentials for international and cross- regional cooperation of HEIs in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China through a set of capacity building activities for International Relations Offices (IROs), thus contributing to better international networking, enhancement and better exploitation of their potentials for cooperation in Teaching, Learning and Research (T/L/R).

Why a toolkit? The objective of WP2 is to provide the staff of Partner Countries –PC- International Relations Offices (technical coordinators and technicians) with managerial expertise and specific skills and tools in several thematic areas related to the efficient administration of IROs and development of International Relations and Intellectual capital -IC- policies, and services. This has been achieved through specific training prepared and delivered by the EU Higher Education Institutions – HEIs - staff members participating in the project. Each of the four Training Modules has been carefully prepared to take into account the PC HEIs needs and EU partners’ expertise, as well as the intercultural dimension and according to a Train the Trainer Approach.

The training period has been carefully phased along the first year of the project and it was supposed to finish with a practical training in May 2020 (currently postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic), which also included an online workshop about the management of International Mobility for training and research purposes (delivered by INCOMA on June, 3rd 2020). After theoretical training, participants were supposed to accomplish short learning mobilities to EU HEIs to test the knowledge learned in a Job Shadowing Program. Such mobilities have been currently postponed until 2022 due to the Covid-19 emergency.

The WP2 foresees also the development of a Manual on the Organization and Management of IROs, a practical working toolkit to be continuously updated and improved, and disseminated in the different workshops and conferences scheduled at the national level in each PC to spread and maximize the impact of the UNICAC Project.

1. Criteria and methodological Approach

Internationalization applied to higher education institutions (HEIs) can be described as “the process of integrating an international,

intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight 2003: 2). According to Knight (1997), Internationalization requires two complementary strategies to enhance the international dimensions of the HEIs: program strategies and organizational strategies. The former includes the more “conventional” education, research, and university services, and the latter involves organizational initiatives to facilitate the international dimension through management issues (Delgado-Márquez et al., 2011).

In the framework of the UNICAC Project, to collect feedback, expectations, and contributions from all partners we first used the UNICAC platform, then we drafted and shared a specific questionnaire, and finally, we dedicated also a section of the platform PADLET (which was apparently easily accessible by all countries and HEIs) to collect useful inputs.

The main desired and expected goals and outcomes firstly related to WP2 of the UNICAC project can be synthesized as follows:

- ◆ to define criteria and methodological approach for improvement functions of IROs;
- ◆ to improve the capacity building of universities in Internationalization of Education;
- ◆ to provide quality education and prepare for International Accreditation;
- ◆ to increase the number and the quality of the international mobility of students and staff;
- ◆ to improve and provide recommendations on staff selection for IROs with abilities to work with foreigners and projects;
- ◆ quality control and feedback mechanisms;
- ◆ knowledge transfer among partner Universities in Internationalization of Universities;

- ◆ to improve the Internationalization of research activities, participation in International Programs/Projects;
- ◆ to develop a Joint Ph.D. Programs;
- ◆ to increase international student recruitment – Dissemination of Pamphlet;
- ◆ to improve the development of research and educational activities;
- ◆ to enhance the capacity building of HR at International Relations and improve office work.

2. Human Capacity Building in HEIs: challenges and implications between Human Capital (HC) and Intellectual Capital (IC)

Worldwide, most nations and institutions increasingly view Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as crucial to providing the Human Capital to allow countries to be (or become) more competitive in the global economy (Fairweather & Blalock 2015; Jongbloed 2010). Quality and Access are two important keywords for Human and Intellectual Capital and HEIs, and they are strictly connected to the growth of quality assurance, accreditation, and other mechanisms of quality in mass higher education systems (Huisman & Westerheijden, 2010). The Bologna Process and Lisbon Strategy in Europe can be considered an interesting case study for their intention to create greater access to and mobility within HEIs through international cooperation and academic exchanges. The Lisbon Strategy of 2000 officially declared the crucial role of HEIs in the economic future of Europe. To promote student mobility, key components of the Bologna Process were a common credit system for student work and a common structure for Bachelor's and Master's Degrees. Many EU HEIs increased their offer of courses in English to encourage greater student mobility (Huisman et al. 2015).

Partners' Needs and Expectations

This section of the toolkit is aimed to highlight expectations and orientations made by the UNICAC Partners about the better and suitable product and format to be followed for the elaboration of the toolkit, collecting also the main practical suggestions coming from the consortium.

Here we can find a selection of the first inputs collected by the partners:

- ◆ exchange student Platform (software), instruction on how to implement international mobility;
- ◆ for students and teachers;
- ◆ knowledge Transfer in joint/dual/double Degree Programs' development with partner Universities (Case Studies);
- ◆ international Ranking Systems QS, THE. How to implement Academic/Employment reputation (case studies);
- ◆ research/education funding opportunities in the EU for developing countries. What are the requirements and how do apply for grants, and do to write applications and project proposals;
- ◆ organization of international events: conference, seminar, symposium (case studies);

- ◆ access to Information Resources in EU partner universities (Library resources, ex. CAREN);
- ◆ organization of training courses on international Accreditation of universities based on EU experience;
- ◆ organization of training courses on Quality Assurance in university education based on EU experience.

An important issue to be considered for further developments of this toolkit but also to improve the future communication channels used by UNICAC is that many Partners asked for a more digital way to implement the toolkit, such as a website, APP, or e-platform: a simpler and more efficient system where members can see the needed information, without being confused by a variety of messages. Such Partners' needs and requests have been afterward accomplished through extensive use of the Canvas platform promoted especially by Laurea University in the organization and development of the WP3 activities (firstly mobilities).

The UNICAC Project: main outcomes from the implemented training

1. The 1st Training: Organization and Management of IROs, Tashkent (Uzbekistan)

Delivered by the University of Turin (UniTO) and focused on objectives of Internationalization in Higher Education, building partnerships and networks, and sharing of knowledge amongst the participants, the main benefit of the 1st Training Module was the direct communication with foreign university staff for the development of International Relations. The experience of other Universities was studied.

Participants were accompanied in how to create a strategy and goals for Internationalization in their own universities. A specific part of the training has been dedicated to share the practical experience of the University of Turin, reviewing the structure and organization of its School of Management and Economics' International Office, its history and recent developments, and implementing a critical analysis. The participants also appreciated the practical advice received during the training sessions.

The Training Topics included: methods of setting goals and determining the status of the Internationalization of own university, kind of partnerships, and aims of partnerships. This training helped the involved IROs to enhance their knowledge on the following topics:

- ◆ how partnerships are developed at your university and by whom;
- ◆ what kind of obstacles exist in making partnerships;
- ◆ action Plan of Internationalization;
- ◆ analysis of the current status of the Internationalization of own higher education institutions;
- ◆ development of Partnerships, Networks, and International Co-operation Agreements;
- ◆ domestic and international funds: how to develop a successful proposal?

2. The 2nd Training: International Cooperation Agreements and Networks, Khujand (Tajikistan)

This Training was led by Laurea University and provided by its staff of the International

Relations Offices with managerial expertise and specific skills in thematic areas related to the efficient administration of IROs and development of Internationalization. Throughout this learning module, the participants discussed topics such as international Networks and Cooperation Agreements, as well as financing opportunities for Cooperation Programs.

The theoretical part was about Internationalization Objectives and international Cooperation – different forms of cooperation at the HEI level - and the practical one was on building networks between HEIs using different tools. The case and experience of Laurea University have been considered particularly interesting as well as the experience of the PC HEIs from Tajikistan, China, and Uzbekistan regarding funding opportunities. In the framework of this meeting the other opportunities for cooperation between partners were discussed and agreed

upon in a Memorandum of Understanding – MoU- between all consortia members.

During the training were considered issues such as the identification of potentials and development of national recommendations for international cooperation; the development of a cross-regional network for structured dialogue on Internationalization, safety, and promotion of HEIs in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and China.

3. The 3rd training: academic teaching and research cooperation related tools, methodologies, and best practices, Northwestern Polytechnical University (China)

This training has been provided by the University of Sevilla – the US. Fostering Quality Teaching in Higher Education: Methodologies and Good Practices. Quality Research of Higher Education Institutions: Goals, Strategies, and Achievements. Conclusions and Recommendations.

All the members introduced their universities first. Then, each university shared its approaches to quality teaching. They presented good practices and policies like joint international Degrees and Exchange Students. As the leader of the training, US introduced the good strategies and practical cases in the US such as flexible length of schooling, online classes, and a full credit system. After that, all the members discussed the question about how to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They also discussed the academic university rankings.

Thanks to this Training the partners' HEIs have identified some main important topics for the development of HEIs:

- ◆ Implementing the Bologna Process in the European Higher Education (US).

- ◆ Teaching & Learning: Best Practices in European Higher Education Institutions (US).
- ◆ Approaches to Teaching, Learning, and Assessment skills-based Degree Programs in China Universities:
 - > Opportunities to cooperate with Chinese HEIs.
 - > Comparison between national research priorities.

4. The 4th training: EU - Central Asia - China cooperation with special focus on HEIs

This training delivered by UniTO, was expected to be held in Turin (Italy); simultaneously, the practical missions of some IROs representatives from the partner countries would have been arranged in the central and department IROs offices (including strategic visits and the concrete involvement of the participants in the daily activities) of the EU HEIs. However, due to the Covid-19 emergency, the practical missions have been postponed and realized where possible in spring/summer 2022, while the 4th training has been carried out online at the end of February 2021, provided by the experts of the University of Turin and by INCOMA as well (with practical training in Academic Cooperation and Research & Innovation Opportunities).

Previously, to better plan and adapt the contents of this training, many partners' feedback and expectations have been collected in a preliminary online survey aimed at identifying some main key points to be stressed during the fourth training. Such key points were as follows:

- ◆ the development of a cooperation strategy between Uzbek-Tajik-Chinese universities using the experience of EU Universities;

- ◆ the analysis of the possibilities of future exchange programs and double degree programs among the participating Universities;
- ◆ trends in Internationalization in HE in EU;
- ◆ HEIs cooperation in EU: best practices;
- ◆ the theory and objectives of Strategic Partnership, Knowledge Alliances in EU HEIs, and the potential of third countries (including Central Asia) to be involved in these opportunities;
- ◆ the different types of mobilities VET learners and adult education for HE and the potential of third countries (including Central Asia) to be involved in these opportunities;
- ◆ EU-Central Asia-China platform for maintaining and expanding cooperation in HE.

The implementation of the fourth training on EU - Central Asia - China cooperation with a special focus on HEIs has been divided into the following sessions:

1. Cross-regional cooperation (framework, programs, priorities, initiatives, future perspectives). Focus on the partner countries.
2. Role of HEIs in cross-regional cooperation.
3. Links with the New Silk Road, potential and opportunities, research and innovation.
4. Links with the socio-economic challenges in the regions involved.
5. Academic Cooperation and Research & Innovation Opportunities.

Each session, after the different individual presentations, has been followed by a panel discussion and joint debate with partners and institutions.

The main outcomes of the training regarded the challenges and future of internationalization, evolving due to the ongoing global pandemic, the key points of the Erasmus Charter (ECHE Principles) as well as the structure of mobility activities in light of the pandemic (blended mobility in the presence and virtual). Then the training described an example of “International Relations between mobility Programme; China and Mediterranean countries (ChinaMed); Student and teacher mobility programs; Orizzonte China review, stressing the main Socio-Economic Challenges in Internationalization of Tajikistan Higher Education” as youth migration, job opportunities, young HE institutions, budget and external grants constraints, lack of research project, no external career for Ph.D., Finally, an important outcome of the training has been the stress on the huge role and potential of IROs as cross border entities across different disciplines, focus on a greater interdisciplinary approach.

At the end of the training, INCOMA made a workshop on Academic Cooperation and Research & Innovation Opportunities, covering the following topics:

- ◆ preparation of participants, design of exchange frameworks, and competence recognition;
- ◆ general overviews of the main EU grants opportunities;
- ◆ critical and in-depth analysis of the UNICAC application;
- ◆ guided overview of the last Erasmus + KA2 application form;
- ◆ practical suggestions and guidelines.

Best Practices and Case Studies from EU and extra EU Partners

WP2 on capacity building of the UNICAC Project allows us to identify some Best Practices developed by the Projects Partners as well as Case Studies.

Best Practices can be gathered in specific subcategories of topics:

- ◆ *Staff Mobility (incoming and outgoing).*
- ◆ *Principles of International Mobility.*
- ◆ *Practical Information for Students' Mobility (before, during, and after exchange).*
- ◆ *Study Units related to Internationalization.*

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1. The Laurea University of Applied Sciences

As far as *Staff Mobility* is concerned, Laurea's staff has a key role in the Internationalization of the Institution. The development of international competence of Laurea staff is supported by mobility Programs; the objectives of *Staff Mobility* initiatives are:

- ◆ competence development: to provide staff arriving or going on international mobility initiatives (exchanges, projects, events)

and, through them, other staff and students at Laurea and Laurea's operating region with opportunities for internationalization and sharing of expertise between partners;

- ◆ to market Laurea and export Laurea's competence;
- ◆ to promote Laurea's international networking;
- ◆ to offer staff opportunities for professional and personal development;
- ◆ to improve the multiculturalism and language skills of staff.

International *Staff Mobility* includes both teacher and staff exchange to and from Laurea's partner institutions as well as enterprises, conferences, etc. Laurea's extensive partner network supports internationalization. Internationality and internationalization are also supported by offering training in the English language and cultural competence through different networks.

Moreover, it is the responsibility of all Laurea staff members to make sure that Laurea is and stays functionally a bilingual university of applied sciences, which aims to generate all relevant information in both Finnish and English. Producing the text in both languages is the responsibility of the original producer of the information. *Staff mobility* from Laurea means that participation in international exchanges and projects forms part of Laurea's pedagogical, regional development, R&D and service.

International activities should be included in everyone's development plans. International staff mobility and project participation should generally be known at the time of making work plans and approved and included in these plans.

Some interesting Case Studies on outgoing Staff Mobility are:

- ◆ an International Calendar, where information on international weeks and conferences from partner Institutions are collected;

- ◆ encouragement Video Interviews and Blog Writings from mobile Staff¹.

Staff mobility to Laurea means the participation in the planning and implementation of mobility to Finland will also be an opportunity to develop one's international competence and that of students and Laurea as a whole. The process for international staff mobility to Finland is described on the staff's intranet. An interesting Case Study is the International Week(s) organized for partner institutions annually.

As far as the main *Principles of International Mobility* in Laurea are concerned, one of the objectives of the Finnish Ministry of Culture and Education policies on promoting internationality in higher education and research 2017–2025 “is Working together for the world's best education”² is: A genuinely international higher education community coaches students for the mobility period and to operate and work in culturally diverse, global environments. The international competence and connections of staff in higher education institutions enhance the quality of research and teaching. One of the tasks of a higher education institution is to ensure that teaching staff has opportunities for incorporating international mobility periods in their work.

One of the objectives of Laurea's strategy, the vocational competence generated at Laurea is unique and meets the needs of the international working life. As our students graduate, they will enter an international world – internationality is a natural part of work and studies for everyone. Laurea's staff has a key role in the internationalization of our UAS.

1. <http://showcase.laurea.fi/blogi/henkilokunnan-blogit/international-laurea/>

2. <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/79438/okm11.pdf?sequence=3>

The development of staff's international competence is supported using international mobility programs, among other things. The objective of international staff mobility is to:

- ◆ to develop competence: provide staff participating in international mobility to and from Finland (staff mobility, projects, international events) and, subsequently, Laurea's other staff and students as well as the Laurea region with an opportunity to increase internationalization and competence-sharing among Partners;
- ◆ to market Laurea and export Laurea's competence;
- ◆ to promote international networking for Laurea;
- ◆ to provide Staff with opportunities to develop their vocational expertise and personal competence;
- ◆ to improve Staff's multicultural and language skills.

International Mobility is part of Laurea's pedagogical, regional development and research development, and service operations. The international operations should also be part of the personal development plan, which is drawn up in the development discussion. When drawing up working time plans, international trips and participation in projects, exchanges, etc. by staff are, as a rule, known and approved, and included in the plan. The person traveling is obligated to keep their supervisor up to date throughout the process, from planning to implementation.

Drawing up shared principles of international mobility has been deemed necessary for several reasons. Staff should have equal opportunities to develop their competence in international settings as well.

From the perspective of Laurea's operations, resources must be allocated to operations that are in line with Laurea's internationalization objectives. The strategic development project "Laurea International

Partners 2020”, which identifies the key international partner institutions, was carried out in 2017. The goal is to deepen the partnership with these higher education institutions.

With the Erasmus+, Staff of higher education institutions can teach or obtain training during an international mobility period. Correspondingly, staff from foreign higher education institutions can come to teach at higher education institutions in Finland. Funding for the mobility period is granted by one’s own higher education institution.

The teacher and staff exchange should be goal-oriented and linked with the strategies of higher education institutions.

Teacher exchange targets foreign higher education institutions and is based on bilateral partnership agreements signed by the institutions. In addition, a representative of a foreign company may be invited to teach in a Finnish higher education institution. The main aspects of mobility are:

- ◆ The minimum duration of teacher exchange is 2 working days and the maximum is 2 months.
- ◆ The minimum weekly teaching obligation is 8 hours during teacher exchange.
- ◆ The 8-hour requirement also applies to exchanges that last less than one week.
- ◆ The teaching to be provided is included in the regular curriculum of the target institution.
- ◆ A work plan including the content and objectives of the visit will be prepared in advance.

As far as the mobility for training is concerned, the Erasmus+ Program provides the staff of a higher education institution with an opportunity to develop their vocational competence. An on-the-job learning period or a visit to a higher education institution or other private or

public organization in another country to obtain training as possible for any staff members of the higher education institution. The nature of the exchange can, for example, be a study visit, a workshop or an on-the-job learning period. Attending conferences is not supported through the Erasmus+ program.

The main aspects of mobility are:

- ◆ the minimum duration of staff exchange is 2 working days and the maximum is 2 months;
- ◆ the nature of the exchange is training, development of one's organization, and sharing experiences;
- ◆ a work plan including the content and objectives of the visit will be prepared in advance.

Principles of international Mobility at Laurea University to be mentioned are:

- ◆ exchange activities primarily target higher education institutions that are identified as key partners and are either a scheduled international week or a separate teaching or training program designed jointly;
- ◆ an application process is used in Erasmus+ Global Mobility;
- ◆ the contents of the exchange should be closely connected with the person's work;
- ◆ the goals and content will also be agreed upon with the destination institution and they will be included in the mobility agreement. A brief description of the goals of the exchange will also be included in the travel plan;
- ◆ the experiences gained during the exchange will be shared in events organized by the campuses, unit, or Laurea or in a blog, for example.

The aforementioned principles also apply to the externally funded exchange activities organized under other mobility programs, such as Nordplus or FIRST, taking into consideration any special requirements of the programs.

Depending on the academic year and the destination, Erasmus+ Global Mobility funding may also be available for mobility to partner institutions outside Europe. The application periods are announced separately, and the participants will be selected jointly with the destination higher education institutions.

The aforementioned principles apply to these exchange programs as well:

1. Conference attendance

- > As a rule, external funding from a project, for example, should be secured for conference attendance.
- > A conference trip can also be combined with Erasmus+ mobility by visiting a partner institution for a minimum of two days during the trip, observing the principles of the Erasmus+ Program during the visit.
- > Conference attendance without external funding requires a presentation (an introduction, a poster, etc.) and the publication of an associated article. The supervisor will make the final decision once the poster has been approved.
- > The experiences gained during the conference trip will be shared in events organized by the campuses, unit, or Laurea or in a blog, for example.

2. Trips with a student group

- > A trip that is part of a course and taken with a group of students, who will earn credits from it, will be agreed upon with the supervisor.

- > Erasmus+ funding or funding from other mobility programs can be used if the trip meets the funding criteria.
 - > Project funding may also be used.
3. Trips associated with projects
- > The project manager and supervisor will decide within the scope of the project funding and resources.
- 3.1. *Trips associated with international business operations/education export*
- > The trips may concern marketing, planning, or implementation of business operations.
 - > The supervisor's decision is within the scope of the business operations and the unit's funding.
4. Teaching, lectureships, or other work abroad by invitation
- > To be agreed on a case-by-case basis; the supervisor will decide after consulting the HR services.
 - > This type of mobility can be carried out so that the person participating receives compensation from the partner institution and takes time off (leave, holiday, unpaid leave) from Laurea for the duration of the trip.
 - > This may also be included in Laurea's working time plan so that the work compensation paid by the destination institution is submitted to Laurea. If the destination institution only compensates for a portion of the working time, the share of the total working time will be determined and the remaining working time will be planned accordingly.
 - > An employee taking time off from Laurea to work abroad will pay for all expenses associated with the trip (including travel insurance).

- > If a portion of work is carried out abroad, the supervisor, employee, and HR will jointly agree on the process for handling travel expenses and per diem allowances.

About the main *Practical Information for Students' Mobility* Laurea University has gathered guidelines and instructions through the whole mobility process, which can be divided into three sections: *Before, During, and After Study Exchange*.

1.1. Before Study Exchange

1.1.1. Discussion

- ◆ When you want to start planning your study exchange, make an appointment with your head of student affairs/tutor teacher and discuss with him/her the suitable contents and timing of your exchange/traineeship.
- ◆ The study exchange can take place during the second or third year of study.
- ◆ There is no set time for going on international traineeships; you can apply according to the schedule of your study plan.
- ◆ When the contents and timing of your exchange have been agreed upon with the head of student affairs/tutor teacher contact the intl. planning officer to find a suitable exchange destination for you.

1.1.2. Information sources

- ◆ Information about Laurea's international cooperation partner institutions as well as former exchange students' experiences are in the mobility platform.

- ◆ The International Student Mobility map gives an overview of Laurea's partner network around the world.
- ◆ Brochures and other printed material are available from the offices and/or International bulletin boards, libraries, the international services.
- ◆ You can also visit international events organized on Laurea's campuses for further details.
- ◆ Laurea does not send students to high-risk areas so please check the Foreign Ministry's news regarding the country. If you are uncertain about a specific area/country, please contact your international planning officer before deciding on the destination.
- ◆ Criteria for study exchange.
- ◆ Good language skills, which imply that the student can manage the academic language and various professional situations. Erasmus+ destinations have their own requirements for language skills.
- ◆ Flexibility, initiative, ability to accept diversity, and good interaction skills.
- ◆ Awareness and knowledge of Finland, potential to be an ambassador for Finland and Laurea.
- ◆ The credits completed during the exchange abroad have to be included in the Personal curriculum, extra credits cannot be completed during the exchange.
- ◆ Progress and completion (as required) of previous studies in Finland.
- ◆ Priority is given to students who have not been on exchange before.

1.1.3. *Laurea's internal application*

1. Application period:
 - > The internal application period will open at the beginning of January.
 - > The deadline for study exchange applications for the following academic year is February, 18th of each year; an additional application deadline for remaining exchanges is in September. 15th.
 - > There are several info sessions, exchange fairs, etc. organized before and during the application period. Information about these will be provided in student announcements.

2. Application instructions:
 - > Check your exchange destinations as described above.
 - > Applications to international study exchange should be sent through the electronic mobility platform system.
 - > On the application you will also be asked to attach a Motivation letter to the form so make sure you have the text ready in a file on your computer before filling in the application. The motivation letter is meant for Laurea's coordinators to help them in making the student selections to the exchange destinations. The recommended length for a motivation letter is about one page and you can write e.g. about the following matters in it:
 - > What kind of studies or working tasks have you planned to complete during your exchange?
 - > Are you applying mainly for studies in your field or s than another field.
 - > What kind of competencies will you develop during your traineeship?

- > What are your expectations regarding the exchange?
- > Why are you applying for an exchange?
- > How will the exchange support your learning and career prospects?

If you apply to several destinations (you can put together 3 choices on the application form) you can write about all of them in the same letter. Remember to also write your name on the motivation letter.

If you are applying for exchange studies you will also be asked to attach a preliminary Plan of what you want to study at the host institution. You can emphasize your first choice of destination in the plan. The idea of the plan is to show that you have researched the study offer of your destination and thought about what courses you could take there.

3. Interviews and decisions:

- > All applicants are interviewed and the interviews are organized during March.
- > The decisions are made at the end of March/beginning of April.
- > The decisions are made based on your application and motivation letter, the interview, and your degree program's recommendation.

1.1.4. *Planning the study exchange and application to the host university*

Once your internal application for exchange has been approved at Laurea, the next step is to apply to the host university according to their

instructions. International Planning Officers will guide you through this process, and they will inform you on how to proceed.

- ◆ Prerequisite for a successful study exchange is that the credits completed abroad can be transferred fully to your degree at Laurea. Studies completed abroad can be transferred either to your complementary studies or your compulsory studies, so be sure to study the course offerings of the host university well!
- ◆ You will need to fill out a Learning Agreement (a requirement in Erasmus+ exchanges), in some cases already when applying to the host university, but mostly after you have been accepted to the host.
- ◆ The Learning Agreement is approved by the tutor teacher/degree programme coordinator as well as the equivalent people at your host institution.
- ◆ Forms need to be filled in and approved before departure.

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1.1.5. *Orientation studies for exchange*

- ◆ Those chosen to go on study exchange should complete the compulsory orientation studies as project studies in Optima 'Go abroad' (3cr) before exchange.
- ◆ Also, students going on traineeships are recommended to complete the orientation studies.
- ◆ All students elected to go abroad on exchange/traineeship will be invited to the orientation studies.

1.1.6. *Executing the studies abroad*

- ◆ Carry out your studies according to your study plan. You may change the plan during the exchange, but all changes must be

approved by your tutor teacher and the coordinator at the receiving institution.

- ◆ If your study plan changes at the host institution fill in the Changes to the original Learning Agreement section. The changes have to be accepted by the home institution and the host institution (e.g. by email).
- ◆ Complete assignments for the Go Abroad study unit.
- ◆ Participate in the discussion in the Go Abroad workspace.

At the end ask for a certificate of studies completed (e.g. Transcript of Records, which shows the list of courses taken, the credits gained as well as the local grades and possibly ECTS points) You'll need the certificate for recognition of studies after your exchange.

1.1.7. *Remember the contact to Laurea*

- ◆ Maintain contact with Laurea and the host institution's international coordinators. Following the activities of Laurea and your field of study makes it easier to come back.
- ◆ Market Laurea as an opportunity for student exchange to students at the host institution. You can use the communications material about Laurea in English.

1.1.8. *Other important matters*

- ◆ Remember that you are responsible for your health and well-being while being abroad, and consider the health and safety issues, e.g. cautions regarding automobile traveling, accident prevention, nutrition, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, contraceptives, and paid protection from HIV/AIDS/sexually transmitted infections.

- ◆ All people undergo psychological as well as physical and social adjustments to new cultures. So-called “culture shock” is a positive indicator that the person is involved with the host culture. It is helpful to interact with representatives of home and host cultures, e.g. international students, and tutor students from the host country. Working on managing the stress that is caused by cultural adjustment is better than trying to eliminate it. (You can get peer support from other students on exchange in the Going Abroad workspace).

1.2. After Study Exchange

To receive the 2nd payment of your grant and finalize your study exchange reporting, you should follow the following steps:

1.2.1. *Attach the following documents*

- ◆ Letter of Confirmation (proves the actual dates of your studies abroad, should be signed at the end of your exchange at the host university).
- ◆ Learning Agreement fully signed by all three parties (student, tutor teacher, host University).
- ◆ If you had changes to your learning agreement, please make sure you have reported those changes in the learning agreement during the mobility part. You need to attach both the original learning agreement and possible changes to it.
- ◆ Transcript of Records.

1.2.2. *Recognition of the studies*

- ◆ Make an appointment for an evaluation discussion with your tutor teacher and/or international planning officer.
- ◆ The recognition of studies/traineeship should be done within one month after you have received your transcript of records from the host institution.
- ◆ Laurea uses the ECTS system (where 1 credit is equivalent to 27 hours of work) as the normal credit accumulation system.

1.2.3. *Sharing the experience*

- ◆ Participate in the return orientation (you will receive an invitation in your email).
- ◆ Assist other students interested in foreign exchanges and market student exchanges at Laurea for instance in international events or orientations.
- ◆ You can continue with internationalization by acting e.g. as an international tutor student.

1.3. Study Units related to Internationalization

All degree Programs include study units related to Internationalization and you can also choose studies from another degree program's study offer.

- ◆ **Studying in a foreign language:** it allows students to internationalize not only through language studies but also with the help of an internationally emphasized Curriculum and multicultural peer groups. Especially for foreign degree students and those on exchanges, Laurea's foreign-language teaching

opens doors to professionalism based on both Finnish and multicultural roots. Laurea's wide-ranging language program offers opportunities for studying both well-known and unusual languages and cultures.

- ◆ **Student tutoring:** an effective way to acquire international skills is to become a student tutor for international students and obtain practical experience in international work during your studies. A tutor will welcome and guide new foreign students arriving at Laurea in practical issues and leisure activities. In addition, especially the exchange tutors perform various kinds of tasks related to internationalization together with Laurea's international planning officers, thus acquiring skills related to internationalization that will be useful in working life. Students' language and culture skills and skills in guidance and networking develop. Laurea's student tutoring system is active, supporting not only the tutors' internationalization but naturally also Laurea's foreign students. The student tutors provide very important support for incoming foreign students. Training is organized twice a year and exchange tutors also have their additional meetings.

2. The University of Turin

The University of Turin's (UniTO) international mission aims at strengthening the international dimension starting from a variety of actions, of which one of the most notable is the project UNITA - Universitas Montium, a means to raise the quality of teaching and research activities to enhance the impact on our territorial ecosystem and increase the global heritage of our university.

In this context, the staff has a key role in the internationalization of the University.

The development of international competencies of UniTO staff is supported by mobility programs, professional development courses, as well as attendance at international conferences on European Universities. The objectives of such initiatives addressed to the staff operating in internationalization are:

- ◆ development of competencies: to provide staff with international mobility opportunities (exchanges, projects, events) to share experiences and acquire good practices for the management of internationalization among partners;
- ◆ to export UniTO's teaching and research offer;
- ◆ to promote UniTO's international networking;
- ◆ to offer staff opportunities for professional and personal development;
- ◆ to improve the multiculturalism and language skills of staff.

International *Staff Mobility* includes both teacher and staff exchange to and from UniTO's partner institutions as well as enterprises, host of conferences, etc. Internationality is also supported by offering English language courses, such as the *English for administrative purposes of technical-administrative staff* provided by CLA - University Language Center, or the *Skills Lab* from our Departments of Excellence, offering training in the English language for academics, PhDs, post-docs, and staff.

These actions are designed to promote bilingualism in our university, ensuring the flow of information both in Italian and English.

As far as *Staff Mobility* from UniTO is concerned, participation in international exchanges and projects is a core to UniTO development. The new strategic plan aims at enhancing the participation of

staff in such mobility initiatives, in the vision of staff training and staff upskilling. International Staff Mobility and project participation are managed by the Mobility and International Didactics, upon approval of the Area Head.

Participation in projects and mobilities is disseminated in our academic environment by the International Newsletter *International@UniTO* every 3 months, from the International Affairs Office.

Staff mobility to UniTO: the process for international staff mobility to UniTO is described in the intranet.

Participation in the planning and implementation of mobility to Turin is also an opportunity for partners willing to engage in job-shadowing, fostering the development of international skills and competences.

About the main *Principles of International Mobility*, we have to remember that the Italian Ministry of Higher Education promotes internationality in higher education institutions since the inauguration of the Bologna process in 1999. The Italian Our Ministry, since then, continues to work strenuously to consolidate the European Higher Education Area. Some of the tools used to carry out this objective are “Trust for the support of Youth and guidelines for orientation” (in force since December the 29th 2017 and periodically updated), and the last Ministerial Decree (D.M. 289 March 25th, 2021) drafted in light of the Covid-19 pandemics affecting the mobilities throughout the academic world, to fully recognize credits acquired under virtual mobility, thus regardless of the type of mobility (physical, blended, virtual).

A genuinely international higher education community trains students for the mobility period, enabling them to develop the tools required to get to know a culturally diverse yet global environment. The international competencies and connections of staff in higher education institutions enhance the quality of the University’s output. One of the objectives of UniTO’s strategy, the vocational competence

generated at UniTO is unique and meets the needs of international working life. As our students graduate, they will enter an international world – internationality is a natural part of work and studies for everyone. The development of staff’s international competence is supported by mobility programs, among other things. The objective of international staff mobility is to:

- ◆ develop competence: provide staff participating in international mobility to and from Italy (staff mobility, projects, international events) to increase internationalization competence-sharing among partners;
- ◆ market UniTO teaching/research offer and export its competence;
- ◆ promote international networking for UniTO;
- ◆ provide staff with opportunities to develop their vocational expertise and personal competence;
- ◆ improve staff’s multicultural and language skills.

International Mobility is part of UniTO’s development and research. The international operations should also be part of the personal development plan, which is drawn up in the development discussion. When drawing up working-time plans, international trips, and participation in projects, exchanges, etc., staff involved are supervised by the Internationalization Area Head, and participation is agreed upon approval. The personnel traveling is obligated to keep their supervisor up to date throughout the process, from planning to implementation.

Drawing up shared principles of international mobility has been deemed necessary for several reasons. Staff should have equal opportunities to develop their competence in international settings as well.

From the perspective of UniTO, resources must be allocated to operations that are in line with the University's internationalization objectives.

The staff of higher education institutions can teach or obtain training during an international mobility period. Correspondingly, staff from foreign higher education institutions can come to teach at higher education institutions in Italy. Funding for the mobility period is granted by one's own higher education institution. The teacher and staff exchange should be goal-oriented and linked with the strategies of higher education institutions.

Teacher exchange targets foreign higher education institutions and is based on bilateral partnership agreements signed by the institutions.

- ◆ The minimum duration of teacher exchange is 1 week and the maximum is 2 weeks (for such duration, the request is upon the approval of the International Mobility Committee of the University of Turin).
- ◆ The minimum weekly teaching obligation is 8 hours during teacher exchange.
- ◆ The teaching to be provided is included in the regular curriculum of the target institution.
- ◆ A work plan including the content and objectives of the visit will be prepared in advance.
- ◆ The Erasmus+ Program provides the staff of an HEI with an opportunity to develop their vocational competence. An on-the-job learning period or a visit to an HEI or other private or public organization in another country to obtain training possible for any staff members of the higher education institution.
- ◆ The nature of the exchange can, for example, be a training visit, a workshop, or a job-shadowing activity.
- ◆ The general duration of staff exchange is 1 week.

- ◆ A work plan including the content and objectives of the visit will be prepared in advance.

The Main *Principles of International Mobility* at UniTO are:

- ◆ Exchange activities primarily target HEIs that are identified as key partners and are either a scheduled international week or a separate teaching/training program.
- ◆ The contents of the exchange should be closely connected with the person's work.
- ◆ The goals and content have to be agreed upon with the destination institution and they will be included in the mobility agreement. A brief description of the goals of the exchange will also be included in the travel plan, as of the procedure required to manage UniTO missions "ESCO", in the intranet.
- ◆ The experiences gained during the exchange will be shared during meetings held by offices and in the Newsletter "International Affairs @ UniTO".

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The above-mentioned principles apply to other types of mobilities as well:

1. Conference attendance
 - > As a rule, external funding from a project, for example, should be secured for conference attendance.
 - > A conference trip can also be combined with Erasmus+ mobility by visiting a partner institution for a minimum of two days during the trip and observing the principles of the Erasmus+ program during the visit.

- > Attendance at a conference without external funding is subject to approval from a Head. Such missions can be reimbursed according to [UniTO's Regulation](#) on missions.
 - > The experiences gained during the conference trip will be shared during meetings held by offices and in the Newsletter “International Affairs @ UniTO”.
2. Trips associated with projects
 - > The project manager and Scientific coordinator at UniTO will decide within the scope of the project funding and resources.
 3. Trips associated with international education export
 - > The trips may concern marketing, and planning in the international education fairs to draft agreements as well as enhance the international presence of our university abroad, as of our new [Strategic Plan 2021-2026](#). The Internationalization Area Head will decide within the scope of the business operations. The business operation may include participation in an educational fair and drafting a new agreement with a new HEI on the field.
 4. Teaching, lectureships or other work abroad by invitation
 - > To be agreed on a case-by-case basis. This type of mission must be approved by the Department Council, should financial compensation be provided.
 - > Financial compensation for working activity paid by the Host Institution is also subject to approval from UniTO.

About *Practical Information for Students' Mobility* and concerning incoming students, the University of Turin has gathered [guidelines](#) and

instructions through the whole mobility process, and they are listed in the “Income” addressed to incoming students at UniTO, published on 21st September 2020. The following topics:

1. Buddy Project.
2. Exchange Administrative Procedures.
3. Academic matters.
4. Student Services.
5. Useful information.
6. Contacts

More in detail:

2.1. Buddy Project

The Buddy Project “Do you need support- TO?” is a welcome- and support service for international students enrolled in a degree program at UniTO and for international exchange students in mobility through the Erasmus+ program or a study abroad scheme. A “Buddy” (a current student at UniTO) will assist international students adapting to in their new academic, cultural and linguistic environment before and on arrival in Turin. In consideration of the current restrictions due to Covid-19, some activities may be moved into a digital format. However, each student can refer to a Buddy for help. What a Buddy does:

- ◆ contacts the international student first by email;
- ◆ answers to students’ most urgent questions (accommodation, academic organization, website of the University, administrative procedures on arrival, etc.);

- ◆ assists international students in finding the relevant administrative offices for their own needs or help them find locations in the main university buildings (professors' offices, classrooms, canteens, libraries, etc...);
- ◆ assists international students with online procedures can give tips on life in Turin.

2.2. Exchange administrative procedures

They can be divided into three sections: *Before Arrival*, *When in Turin*, and *Before leaving Turin*.

2.2.1. *Before Arrival*

Exchange incoming students are required to fill in an application form online. The online application form for incoming students is a mandatory step regardless of mobility type (meaning in-person and/or virtual mobility). Instructions on how to fill in the application form are detailed on our university's portal and downloadable in a PDF format. The application form shall be filled in before the student arrives in Turin and is required to have the student provided with an active account at UniTO.

2.2.2. *When in Turin*

a) *In-person mobility*

Once arrived in Turin, incoming exchange students need to register at the "Infopoint Office" to receive a certificate of arrival: this document confirms the date of arrival and the student's status as Erasmus/international exchange students at our university. Moreover, if the sending

institution requests to students some documents signed (such as the “Certificate of arrival”), it is possible to have them signed in this office.

b) Virtual mobility

To communicate the start of a student’s virtual mobility, incoming exchange students need to send confirmation via email or a compilation on of the online form provided by the “Exchange Office”. Such students are provided with further details via email.

c) UniTO.it and email account

Incoming exchange students, after registering on the UniTO website, get their email account. These are made up of their name (name.surname) and password.

After their arrival, students are officially enrolled at the University and can access all the online services available on the website such as:

- ◆ MyUniTO (UniTO.it reserved area).
- ◆ Matricola number (UniTO ID number).
- ◆ UniTO Email account (user@edu.UniTO.it).
- ◆ Online career plan.
- ◆ Online registration for exams.
- ◆ CampusNet/Moodle/Webex of the host Department (e-learning platforms).
- ◆ Free Wi-Fi in University buildings.

d) An extension of the exchange period

Students who want to extend their mobility period at the University of Turin must be authorized by both the UniTO exchange coordinator and by their home University to ask for an extension, students need to:

- ◆ Provide via email to UniTO International Mobility Office internationalexchange@UniTO.it the authorization of the UniTO exchange coordinator and the authorization of their home University.
- ◆ Send an email specifying the number of additional months and the new end date of mobility.
- ◆ Extension requests are mandatory to be able to take exams after the official ending of the exchange period, i.e.: beyond the number of months confirmed at the time of application.
For example, if a student's exchange lasts 6 months, such student can take exams only within 6 months of his/her arrival. If the student wants to take exams beyond the agreed period, it is mandatory to ask for an extension. The exchange period can last a maximum of 12 months.

2.2.3. *Before leaving Turin*

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Registering at the end of the exchange period. All incoming exchange students are mandatorily required to register at the end of their exchange, regardless of the type of mobility (may it be in-person and/or a virtual one). This step is required to provide students with their Transcript of Records.

a) *In-person mobility*

Exchange students involved in a physical mobility can register at the end of the mobility period by

- ◆ Filling in the “End of Mobility form” (providing information in case of pending exams).

- ◆ Make an appointment with InfoPoint to sign the home University documents (End of Mobility Certificate/Departure Certificate/Certificate of Stay).

b) Virtual mobility

To register at the end of virtual exchange, students need to:

- ◆ Fill in the “End of Mobility form” (providing information in case of pending exams).
- ◆ Send an email to the “International Exchange Officer to have the home University documents signed (End of Mobility certificate/departure certificate/certificate of Stay). Students can register for the end of mobility even if their exams are not yet registered on their MyUniTO Profile. The ending date of the exchange period will be the date specified on the End of Mobility Form. If students on virtual mobility do not complete the form, the official ending date of the exchange period will be the date of their last exam at UniTO.

2.3. Academic matters, University organization

The University of Turin is organized into 27 Departments, schools, s, and 7 Hub areas (“Polo”). Exchange students are assigned to a host Department which is part of a larger Hub. It is important to keep this information clear so it will be easier for students to choose courses and get information from the relevant office.

2.3.1. *Learning Agreement*

The Learning Agreement is the document listing all the courses incoming students wish to attend and sit exams for during their exchange. This document has to be approved and signed by the students' university and their relevant coordinator at UniTO. The deadline to have a student's Learning Agreement signed depends on one's home university schedule. In a, NY case both institutions must approve any changes well before the start of the exam sessions at UniTO. Exchange students can choose courses from the UniTO Department/Hub to which they are assigned, however, they can also choose courses provided by other Departments/Hub if there are not enough options suitable for them in their current Department, with the approval of both their host Departmental Coordinator and the Exchange Co-ordinator of the Department in which the course is taught.

2.3.2. *ECTS credits*

ECTS credits (= "CFU", Credito Formativo Universitario) consist of a value allocated to courses to describe the student workload required to complete them (lectures, individual study, exams, etc...). The students participating in an exchange program will be able to transfer these credits from UniTO to their home University based on prior agreement between the institutions. Credits are awarded only when the course has been completed and the related exams have been passed. Therefore, credits are not awarded for attendance-only courses. 1 local Italian credit (CFU) corresponds to 1 ECTS credit. 1 CFU corresponds to 25 hours of workload including lectures, laboratories, seminars, individual studies e, etc. As general guidance, the average workload for 1-year full-time in Italy is 60 ECTS. The Italian grading scale runs from 0 to 30. The minimum score to pass the exam is 18 and the maximum is

“30 e lode” (meaning “with distinction”). Every student finds the ECTS translation table for each exam taken in his/her Transcript of Records.

2.3.3. *Academic matters, courses, and exams*

a) Courses: finding courses

The list of courses available for every academic year and semester is generally updated from late July each year. Changes are possible but generally limited. Each course webpage is provided with a course description and includes all course information (e.g.: lesson materials, content, credits, mode of delivery, method of assessments, bibliography, etc.)

b) Courses: finding class timetables

Each Department/Degree program may display its lesson plans differently: such information is listed according to a year, course, degree program, and alphabetical order. Exchange students have access to all courses across all years and degree programs. They may choose courses across different departments and programs.

c) Courses: registration to courses

Registration to courses allows incoming students to take part in lectures (either in-person or online) and get course material. The UniTO uses three e-learning services: Moodle, Campusnet, and Webex. The choice of platform depends on the requirement of the course as set out by each Professor.

d) Courses: career plan at UniTO

The online career plan is an online procedure (through MyUniTO services) that students must complete to take exams at UniTO and register their grades. Before the start of the exam session, students fill in the online career plan inserting all the courses listed in their Learning Agreement, except for the Italian language course, which is automatically included by the International Mobility Office inside every exchange student's career plan. The Career Plan is generally open for submission and changes from October to June each year.

e) Exams

Students can schedule their exam timetable within the timeframe provided by each department. As a general rule, for each course, students can choose from two or three exam dates included within the set timeframe for both the first and second semesters. This means that if a student fails an exam, or is not satisfied with the result, it is usually possible to retake it. However, only the last grade obtained will be registered in the student's Transcript of Records.

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f) Getting grades

When a grade is uploaded online, students will receive an email on their MyUniTO email account. It is possible to keep track of one's grades both on the MyUniTO desktop profile and mobile app.

g) Getting grades: accepting/refusing a grade

In UniTO exams grades can be either accepted or rejected.

- ◆ Oral exams: students decide on the spot whether to accept or refuse.

- ◆ Written exams: students have to confirm their decision online in a 5-days time frame whether to accept or reject the result. If students do not act within this timeframe, the grade will be registered by default, according to the “silent consent” rule.

h) Getting grades: failed exams

If students fail an exam (scoring a grade below 18) this will be registered as “unsatisfactory”. If the University asks to see this grade as a real number, incoming students are advised to ask the professor in charge of the examination before registering for it.

i) Getting grades: internships and other activities

Such as workshops, seminars, etc. are registered as “passed”. If the University asks to see this grade as a real number, incoming students are advised to ask the professor in charge of the examination before registering for it.

j) Getting grades: when do results arrive

The date of publication of results depends on many factors such as the type of exam (oral or written), how many students were assessed on that date, and the complexity of the assessment. In the case of an oral exam, students will know their evaluation immediately. The evaluation of written exams may require 3 to 4 weeks. Students can ask the Professor managing the course for an approximate date.

2.4. Student services: Information on accommodation, libraries, canteens

2.4.1. *EDISU-run services*

EDISU Piemonte is an Italian Regional Body in charge of managing and running most of the services that guarantee the Right to Education, which are aimed to give the necessary support to those students who are “capable and deserving, although under-resourced”. Such services include housing, study spaces, canteens services, etc.

2.4.2. *Accommodation*

Some students’ residence halls are available in our local territory and are run by EDISU (the Regional Agency of Piedmont for the Right to Education, see page 22). Each year the UniTO reserves a limited number of rooms for international exchange students in EDISU residence halls. To check conditions of allocation, availability, and fees, please visit the [website](#). A further private university residence is also available in town: [Collegio Universitario Einaudi](#).

The private housing market is also an alternative for incoming exchange students. Accommodation ads are posted on housing platforms by current tenants, landlords, and agencies. Note that most agencies or platforms may ask to pay a fee when people are searching for housing. Temporary housing solution: sometimes it may not be possible to find housing by the arrival. In that case, students may consider starting the semester in temporary accommodation from where they can search for a more permanent place to stay. For short-term stays (hostels, halls of residence, bed & breakfasts), students can check the City of Turin tourism website.

2.4.3. *Libraries*

The University of Turin has a large network of libraries providing support for studying. Borrowing entitlements and loan periods are listed on each library website.

Students can access their loan status via your MyUniTO profile. All library services are free of charge. To access library services, it is necessary to use: the EDISU student card, student (matricola) number, UniTO email account, UniTO user, name, e, and password.

2.4.4. *Counseling*

Passi@UniTO is a counseling service for international students. This free counseling service is specifically addressed to all international students at the UniTO. Students can make an appointment by emailing the counseling at passi@UniTO.it and specifying their name and surname, nationality, and phone number. Students will be contacted by the counseling team for further information on the service and to schedule a first online (or face-to-face) session. The service is free of charge and available in Italian, as well as in the following languages: English, French, Chinese, and Urdu, Hindi. The service provided is strictly confidential. The general counseling service provides free professional support to students experiencing: personal or social difficulties that interfere with their academic goals, adaptation problems to Torino, stress, and anxiety conditions. To register with the service, students need to fill in the registration form linked on the University website.

2.5. Useful information: Healthcare and tax code

Before traveling to Italy, students may be sure to check with their home country's healthcare provider (either public or private) if any of their

medical policies can be extended to cover their exchange period in Turin or what other conditions may apply. If a student has any pre-existing medical conditions, we strongly recommend such a student bring a certificate in English explaining personal health conditions and any medication prescribed.

2.5.1. *Healthcare*

The healthcare system in Italy is a regionally based national health service known as “Servizio Sanitario Nazionale” (SSN – National Healthcare Service). It provides universal coverage to citizens and residents, with public healthcare largely free of charge or covered by a small co-payment for services such as tests, medications, and medical assistance provided by specialists. Registering with a doctor Regardless of one’s type of health insurance, we recommend students register with a doctor once in Turin. This will enable them to undergo free outpatient and in-home medical examinations and to obtain prescriptions for medications and specialist services. Students can decide to replace their doctor whenever they want. It is possible to choose one doctor from a list of names and addresses (Italian only) at the closest ASL (Local Health Authority). We suggest students contact the EDiSU service or their Buddy for help. For incoming exchange students coming from Europe, SEE States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) and students from Switzerland, all necessary healthcare is covered by the Italian National Healthcare System. It is required by the way to have the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Students may contact the health authorities in their home country for information and/or get one before leaving for Italy. This card ensures that students will have the same access to the public healthcare system (e.g. access to a doctor, hospital admission) as an Italian citizens. In the case of non-European students, it is necessary to provide UniTO with evidence of health

insurance coverage, when applying for a residence permit. The health insurance coverage can be:

- ◆ With a private insurance company. It must be valid in Italy and it must have coverage for the entire period of the student's stay in Italy.
- ◆ With voluntary registration on the National Healthcare System. Voluntary registration gives all students the right to obtain the same health care as an Italian citizen, it has a validity of a calendar year (1st January – 31st December), it is not apportionable, and cannot be backdated (e.g., if a student applies for it in July, he/she will need to pay for the whole year regardless). Registration for students costs 149.77 €.

2.5.2. *Tax code*

The tax identification code (Codice Fiscale, in Italian) is a mandatory document to identify citizens living in Italy. Students will need it - for example - to apply for a residence permit, open a bank account, enter into a tenancy agreement not and receive the payment of a scholarship. In case help is needed, it is possible to contact the “Residence Permit Office”, or a Buddy.

2.6. Contacts

The main references for international students spending a mobility period in Turin are the following:

- ◆ International Mobility Office: reference office for all the administrative procedures and paperwork related to students'

- exchange period (ex. registration, an extension of mobility, Transcript of Records, etc...).
- ◆ Infopoint Office: this is the University's main information point. It provides information about the services and the organization of our university. Students can refer to Infopoint.
 - ◆ To find information about the academic offer, Italian language courses, and University services, as well as practical tips about the city, and sign paperwork relating to their exchange (e.g. Certificate of Attendance, etc...).
 - ◆ Direct line to UniTO professors: professors' contacts are available in the University people directory. Office hours are shown in the contact details or directly on the Department websites. We encourage students to contact the professors managing the courses they are interested in, to introduce themselves, and ask whether there is any specific information or instructions for Erasmus and/or international exchange students.
 - ◆ International Office of the Hub: this is a support service dealing with administrative issues (such as Learning Agreement), for students enrolled at UniTO or involved in international mobility Programs of the Hub Degree Programs.

About *Practical Information for Students' Mobility* concerning outgoing students:

1. Purpose: Erasmus mobility (for studies or traineeship) allows our students to spend a period abroad, hosted by a Partner UniTO has an agreement with, in the frame of the Erasmus+ Program. Our students receive financial support from the National Agency for courses at the Partner Institution, and have an experience with no additional costs, having UniTO grant the recognition of the activities in their university curricula.

Additional specific contribution is foreseen for students with special needs. The period spent abroad is recognized also based on the Bilateral agreement between our University and the Partner Institution through the Learning Agreement signed by sending Institution, receiving Institution, and the student. The recognition process is carried out on the basis of the ECTS system (European Credit Transfer System).

2. Choosing the destination for Erasmus: students can choose the destination for their Erasmus mobility by browsing the list of Agreements signed by the School or Department (heading the degree program they're enrolled in). Before applying, students shall verify for each destination the following information:
 - > ISCED code of the Agreement: This code identifies the area of the subject.
 - > Level of Studies: students have to check whether the destination they want to select is addressed to undergraduate, postgraduate, or Ph.D. students.
 - > Number of places available and several months for staying: students shall verify this information before applying.
 - > Receiving institution's courses catalog: students shall check whether the courses offered by the receiving institution are compatible with the courses of the degree program at UniTO. In case a student is willing to carry out research activity for final dissertation and/or traineeship, such student shall contact the receiving Institution to ask if such activities can be acceptable. When considering the destination to apply for Erasmus+ mobility, students shall also consider any additional requirement foreseen by Partner Institutions they're willing to choose. Some destinations may be reserved for specific requirements such as "mobility to draft thesis only", or "doubletree programs only" etc. It is

also possible for a Partner Institution to require a specific level of linguistic competence. All the above-mentioned aspects shall be considered by students when applying to another one's profile that matches the requirements of the Partner.

3. How to apply for Erasmus+: the University of Turin manages the application process entirely online.
4. Orientation meetings: following the spreading of the pandemic, orientation meetings for outgoing students have been held online. The purpose of our orientation meetings is to deepen and display accurately the content of the Erasmus+ call for applications (destinations, courses, exams, administrative procedures). Each School/Department of our University hosts an orientation meeting, using the same structure:
 - > general overview of administrative procedures, particularly in consideration of the transition towards the new Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027, held by the Erasmus central office;
 - > overview of the specific application requirements foreseen by each School/Department, held by the International Office of the School;
 - > if possible, the introduction of the Professors coordinating the exchange, and eventually;
 - > participation of students who have participated in the Erasmus mobility exchange, to share one's personal experience with prospective participants;
 - > participation in orientation meetings is strongly suggested to our students to correctly apply.

5. Linguistic statement: “Passport for Europe”: our University Language Center (CLA-Centro Linguistico di Ateneo), aims at supporting students needing to pursue a language certificate. The center provides a testing service to release statements for the following languages: French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German, and dates the level of knowledge of the student according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. This service is free of charge for the students who won the application to the Erasmus+. Therefore, the “Passport for Europe” offers students about to leave for mobility, the chance to pursue a language statement for free (the language used as a medium of instruction in the receiving institution).

6. Instructions for outgoing students: to ease the comprehension of all the steps, our University as the draft has the instruction in 3 different sections, each one dedicated to a phase the international mobility, from the start, until the end of mobility:
 - > Before mobility.
 - > During mobility.
 - > After the mobility.

2.7. Online Learning Agreement - OLA

Starting from the academic year 2021/22 UniTO has adopted the Online procedure for the Learning Agreement. To help students fill in the OLA, UniTO has prepared a *Vademecum* and made available the [recording](#) of the information meeting.

2.8. Recognition of the studies

At the end of the mobility period, students have the ECTS credits recognized in their academic career, according to the principles of the Erasmus Charter. To register the credits achieved abroad, the International Office of the Hub interacts directly with the International Mobility Office and the Registry Office, to make recognition as automatic as possible, according to the principles of the Erasmus Charter. Starting from the academic year 2021/2022, UniTO has adopted an Online Procedure for the compilation and management of Learning Agreements. Such an online procedure is now mandatory and addressed to our outgoing students participating in Erasmus+ mobility for studies. Students involved in other types of mobility are required to use, as of now, a paper version of the Learning Agreement.

2.9. Student tutoring

An effective way to acquire international skills is to become a student tutor for international students and obtain practical experience in international work during your studies. A tutor will welcome and guide new foreign students arriving at Laurea in practical issues and leisure activities. In addition, the exchange tutors perform various kinds of tasks related to internationalization together with UniTO's international planning officers, thus acquiring skills related to internationalization that will be useful in working life. Students' language and culture skills and skills in guidance and networking develop. UniTO's student tutoring system is active, supporting not only the tutors' internationalization but naturally also UniTO's foreign students. The student tutors provide very important support for incoming foreign students. Training is organized twice a year and exchange tutors also have their own additional meeting:

- ◆ about 4,600 students with foreign nationality (a.y. 2019-20);
- ◆ over 25 international double-degree programs/joint degree programs;
- ◆ Marco Polo and Turandot projects for Chinese students;
- ◆ 17 courses taught in the English language (a.y. 2019-20);
- ◆ over 100 doctorates in joint-supervision and 2 international Ph.D. courses;
- ◆ 1,300 agreements for Erasmus+ mobility for students, trainees, researchers, and teachers;
- ◆ programs for Visiting Professors;
- ◆ over 500 academic cooperation agreements with universities and research institutions from 80 countries;
- ◆ the Italo-French University for the cooperation between French and Italian research institutions and universities;
- ◆ development cooperation with non-EU countries.

More specific Programs and initiatives will be more in-depth described.

2.10. Marco Polo and Turandot Projects

Marco Polo Project is a Program aimed at providing Chinese students who wish to study at an Italian University but have no Italian competency the opportunity to obtain a University Enrolment Visa for those undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs which reserved places for Marco Polo students, on the condition that students take a 10- or 11-month Italian language course before the university enrolment. Students may choose the language course they wish to attend among the courses offered by the universities or language schools participating in the Marco Polo project. Students who at the end of the language

course obtain the B1 or higher-level certificate of the Italian Language Proficiency Test will meet the language proficiency entry requirement.

2.11. Italo-French University

The Italo-French University/French-Italian University (UIF/UFI) was established on October 6th, 1998 as a result of an intergovernmental agreement signed in Florence. The UIF/UFI promotes and actively supports the cooperation between French and Italian research institutions and universities. It acts as a funding agency to:

- ◆ foster academic cooperation between Italy and France, concerning both teaching and research;
- ◆ contribute to the implementation of joint programs and initiatives;
- ◆ promote and support scientific and/or technological joint research activities;
- ◆ support the development of HEI consortia including other EU countries.

The main activities and Programs promoted by the UIF/UFI are as follows:

- ◆ *Vinci Program*. The goal of this Program is to promote students, researchers, and professors' mobility within a French-Italian academic space, while boosting the exchange of methodologies, teaching experiences, refinement of language skills, and the establishment of a scientific network of excellence.
- ◆ *Galileo Program*. This program is managed by the Italian-French University for the Italian part, and by the MEIRIES

and Campus France for the French side. The goal of the Galileo Program is to develop scientific collaborations between Italian and French institutions and research laboratories on joint projects and to promote the mobility of groups of young scientists coming from Italian or French institutions/research centers.

- ◆ *Visiting Professor Program.* The Italo-French University supports Italian universities interested in hosting Visiting Professors (teachers, researchers, or professionals) coming from French universities, research centers or private companies.
- ◆ *Scientific Label Program UIF/UFI.* Since 2007, Italo-French University awards its label to Italo-French initiatives with high cultural and scientific value. In the period between 2007 and 2018 the, UIF has awarded the Label, sometimes accompanied by fencing, to 257 projects frequently proposed by prestigious institutions.
- ◆ *Jointly-supervised doctoral theses award 2020.* The Italo-French University grants two awards of € 1.500 each as recognition for jointly-supervised PhD completed within the last two years in the context of the Vinci program (cap. II and III). The awards are intended for humanistic-social works as well as for scientific ones.

2.12. TOChina Center

TOChina Center is a departmental Center for political and area studies focused on contemporary China. The TOChina Center coordinates the TOChina Hub activities. The TOChina Hub is an integrated knowledge hub developed by the University of Torino in cooperation with ESCP Business School (Turin Campus) and the Torino World Affairs Institute (T.wai) to promote an innovative model of academic cooperation with selected Chinese partners. The TOChina Hub works to provide

theory-informed knowledge, policy-relevant insights, and practical know-how on China's morphing identities, socio-economic structures, institutions, and policies.

The main activities of the Center are:

- ◆ Students exchange programs, double degrees, and a one-semester exchange program.
- ◆ Research: ChinaMed: China's evolving role across Italy's Euro-Mediterranean neighborhood, ICCSO: Italy-China Competence and Sentiment Observatory.
- ◆ Scientific journal: OrizzonteCina.
- ◆ Intensive training programs: TOChina Summer School, ChinaMed Business Program, TOChina Seminars.

2.13. The Unesco Chair in Sustainable Development and Territory Management

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It was established in 2010 at the University of Turin to promote an integrated system of research, training, information, and documentation in the field of sustainable development and management of the territory and to facilitate international cooperation and dissemination of research results between research institutions and universities in Italy in the world, with particular interest to Latin America and the Euro-Mediterranean region.

2.14. Scholars at Risk

It is an international network of institutions and individuals, begun at the University of Chicago in 1999, whose mission is to protect scholars

and promote academic freedom. By arranging temporary academic positions at member universities and colleges, Scholars at Risk offers safety to scholars facing grave threats, so scholars' ideas are not lost and they can keep working until conditions improve and they can return to their home countries. Scholars at Risk also provides advisory services for scholars and hosts, campaigns and s for scholars who are imprisoned or silenced in their home countries, monitoring attacks on higher education communities worldwide, and leadership in deploying new tools and strategies for promoting academic freedom and improving respect for university values everywhere.

3. The University of Sevilla

Managing the different actions that the university undertakes in the framework of internationalization is a highly complex process. In general terms, our International Relations Offices (IROs) whose task is to undertake such tasks are divided into sections whose work is to ensure the smooth running of those activities, programs, projects considered as important to the Institution as a whole in its aim to improve its internationalization. The structure and number of people assigned to each section depend, among other factors, upon the volume of activity, the strategic importance of internationalization, and the staff budget available.

The International Relations Office is divided into five sections, some of which are closely linked:

1. Fundraising.
2. International Projects.
3. International Agreements and Networks.
4. International Mobility Programs.
5. Exterior Promotion.

3.1. Fundraising

To improve the university's internationalization, it is essential to have a specific department or unit to inform or advise the interested parties within the university community on the existing sources of finance, both internal and external. If the university is to undertake activities and projects with other institutions on the international stage, such a department is fundamental. Greater the number of actions that an institution performs, greater will be its exterior projection and better position in international rankings. In university-managed international projects, first, a distinction must be made between cooperation projects and research projects. In the former, collaboration is aimed principally at improving the partner Institutions' educational systems through institutional strengthening and/or syllabus development. In the latter, the collaboration seeks to undertake research in a specific field that will be of benefit to the consortium as a whole. Financing can help us to develop projects – international mobility programs, among others, for example. Below are some recommendations:

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3.1.1. *Continuous consultation of the principal sources of information*

To obtain information concerning the main calls and opportunities of financing, the task of performing planned searches in the main sources, such as official gazettes (local, regional, national, and European), web-pages, and specialized publications are essential. Furthermore, most up-to-date information, it is an absolute necessity to attend the one-day info, the info days that European Union and Technical Offices usually organize where they can explain in detail the main European Programs.

3.1.2. *Chronogram with calls calendar*

Before planning any activity or project, the interested parties need to know all of the calls they have recourse to finance it, as well as their approximate publication date. Creating a section on the IRO website dealing with *grants and aid*, or *means of financing* is, therefore, recommended. This section should provide basic information on the most important calls, and should include the following:

- ◆ the name of the call;
- ◆ the body publishing the call;
- ◆ the object of the call;
- ◆ the approximate date of publication;
- ◆ the previous call (a text file or a link).

3.1.3. *Call Summary*

Creating a call summary is highly recommended. Summaries should include basic data such as:

- ◆ the name of the call;
- ◆ the body publishing the call;
- ◆ the object of the call;
- ◆ the principal differences concerning the previous call (unless dealing with a completely new call);
- ◆ the link or URL where one can find further information.

It is necessary to update any fundamental changes that have been made.

3.1.4. *Rapid and specific distribution*

Information concerning calls should be short and effective in order to allow the interested parties to prepare their proposals on time, especially since some calls have remarkably short application periods. As well as an organized distribution channel via the webpage, distribution lists of potentially interested people is also essential. If possible, these lists should be classified by areas of knowledge, since the volume of information sent out to teaching staff is sometimes so great that they are unable clearly to identify which call might be of interest to them.

3.1.5. *Periodic informative meetings*

As well as the need to distribute information on calls, an annual meeting with students and teachers is also recommended. In such meetings, the different options available to each collective for training visits and project and activity financing can be presented. In Toke advantage of the presence of a large public, meetings of this type usually coincide with other events, such as the inaugural meeting to open the academic year which many centers organizers their students; or it could be a meeting of a Center's Deans and Vice-Deans so that they can pass the information on to their teaching staff.

3.2. International projects

Competition is increasingly fierce in calls for grants to finance projects. This obliges universities to employ qualified staff in their IROs, ensuring that the greatest number possible of their projects are approved, thus improving the Institution's internationalization.

Furthermore, the well-qualified staff is also required to manage the approved projects' administration and finance to avoid refunding

sums or losing the financing of expenses already disbursed by the Institution due to an incorrect justification of the budget.

As indicated earlier concerning the search for financing, having a specific department or unit tasked with project management is recommended. This might be the same department that deals with the search for finance or, indeed, a different one. This will depend on the resources available in each Institution and the existing demand for support – the greater the number of approved projects, the greater the number of staff needed to manage adequately the said projects.

At the University of Sevilla, both these functions are carried out by the General Office of International Projects, or OGPI (Spanish initials)

Within the development cooperation projects managed by universities, a distinction must be made between academic or cooperation projects and research projects. In the former, cooperation between the partners mainly aims to improve partner institutions' educational systems by institutional reinforcement and by reinforcing syllabus development. In the latter cases, the collaboration seeks to develop research in a specific area that will be of benefit to the whole consortium. The former includes development cooperation projects where collaboration is aimed at the “beneficiary countries” – usually those with the lowest income. Below are some recommendations:

3.2.1. *Lifelong Staff Training*

Most European programs have a lifetime of several years. During this time calls are published that usually introduce changes concerning the previous ones. It is, therefore, recommended that the people in charge of project management are continuously kept up-to-date with respect to these new aspects and that they receive specialist training on the different international project calls. This will ensure the calls' correct administration. Such training is usually organized by the bodies that

manage the calls via seminars or info days. There are, however, numerous agencies and consultancies that also supply this type of training. When choosing a course, the organizers' experience in project management is a factor to be considered, as are the training event's duration and its price – the latter being conditioned by the location of the course. Moreover, since most international programs are published in English, part of the personnel managing projects at least must have a high level of English, this being the most widely-used working language in this particular ambit. Furthermore, the training ought also to involve teachers and researchers. Should the project that they present be approved, it will be they who are responsible for coordinating and monitoring all of the activities to be undertaken in terms of the technical and academic aspects, while the IRO personnel manage the administrative and financial side.

3.2.2. *Integrated Project Management*

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Project management can be broken down into several stages:

- ◆ capturing sources of finance;
- ◆ advice on financing projects;
- ◆ technical advice when drawing up projects;
- ◆ technical and financial management of approved projects.

All of the stages are interrelated to a greater or lesser degree and therefore the same department that is in charge of the approved projects' technical and financial management should also be the one to undertake the management of the following stages. By doing this the Institution will be making the best use of the project management staff's training and experience. It will, moreover, enable the teaching staff to contribute fully from the moment that a project is proposed up

to when presenting the accounts for the funds obtained to finance it. As mentioned earlier the specific structure of each IRO will, however, be configured according to each Institution's needs and resources.

Advisory activity will be aimed at informing interested parties about the most suitable options for financing their proposals as a function of their geographical location and the field in which they work while taking into account the different calls' priorities. Technical support should include the possibility of providing quality partners as a result of participating in other international projects or agreements.

3.2.3. *Internal regulations for project leaders*

It is the Institution that receives the funds. Therefore, if a program is incorrectly managed and accounted for, it is the Institution that is ultimately responsible for said funds and it is the Institution that will be affected on several levels. This will not only result in an economic loss, but its reputation will also suffer in future calls. It is recommended, therefore, that it has its own set of rules and regulations concerning project management adapted to its economic and HR regulations. In this sense, it must be borne in mind that administering the various expenses incurred throughout a project's life is doubly monitored by both the financing body and by the Institution. In order to manage a project, this requires us to the rules and regulations of both. In order to raise awareness of these rules and regulations and to ensure that they are respected, it is highly recommended that the teachers with responsibility for the approved projects sign an undertaking in which they promise to fulfill the rules and regulations. In case the rules and regulations be broken, the document might even include a penalty clause, – such as withdrawing support for other projects during a stipulated period of time or recovering the ill-justified amount of money from other projects in which s/he participates. If a teacher stands down from his/her management role in

a project, or if s/he leaves the Institution, the new teacher who assumes responsibility should also sign the abovementioned undertaking.

3.2.4. *Permanent project monitoring and control*

The International Relations Office or the department that is in charge of administering projects ensures that the teachers responsible for the different projects carry out the activities according to the rules and regulations and according to the provisions in the proposal. To do this, one must first have the complete project. In the case of projects that are being coordinated by another Institution, one must also have a copy of the instructions provided to management for this purpose. To explain the project's management system and to clarify any doubts that s/he might have concerning the use of the budget assigned for the different planned activities, of a project it is essential to hold a meeting with the person in charge at the outset. In those projects that we coordinate, periodic meetings with the person in charge and the project's managers are also recommended in case any correction needs to be made before allocating any further costs. Sending project leaders reminders of the dates by which reports need to be presented to occur penalties are also recommended

3.2.5. *Do not pay expenses that require no proof of payment until they have approved*

The total funds granted are not received until after the final obligatory report has been submitted once the project has finished and the granting body has checked that the expenses incurred are admissible. It is recommended, therefore, that those budget items that can be accounted for via declarations and documents and those that require no further proof that a real payment has been made, such as staff costs, indirect, such as staff costs, indirect costs and similar, should not be paid

for until the complete grant has been received. This lessens the risk of economic loss on the part of the Institution if certain expenses incurred are not made good by the granting body. This system is advisable both for projects that we coordinate and those in which we participate as partners. When coordinating a project concerning to transfer of funds to partners, no further payments must be made after the first payment – a necessary one – so that our partners can implement the activities, until the previous payment has been accounted for. This must be reflected in the agreement signed with each partner. Even though the call does not require that such a document be signed, it must be.

International Agreements and Networks Any university needs to expand and strengthen relationships with higher education institutions in other countries by signing agreements. These agreements allow students, faculty, and administrators actively personnel to participate in academic exchanges, research projects, courses, and other mutually organized activities. The creation of an agreement usually requires or advises the organizations participating to get funding, which is a great advantage.

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3.3. International Agreements and Networks

Similar to the agreements, networks can facilitate the internationalization of universities. On the one hand, the participating universities are allowed to partake in regularly occurring activities, such as scholarships, conferences, seminars, publications... On the other hand, the networks are an essential tool for establishing new contacts with universities that could become potential partners for future projects.

Firstly, below are some recommendations for agreements:

3.3.1. *Adopt a standard model framework agreement*

The approval of an agreement usually requires a long process that includes translating, editing, legal report, approval by the governing body, and signature by the legal representative. This process can take months, which is why it is considered desirable to have a framework agreement model, that reflects the mission statement of the signatories, not including financial commitments. It is only after such an agreement is established, that the parties subsequently sign particular agreements specifying the joint actions to be undertaken and the commitments and obligations of each party. Among these actions can include: double degrees, academic exchanges, courses...

3.3.2. *Determining priority geographical areas*

Generally, each institution works according to political guidelines which are approved by a government board, even though these might not always be given in writing by the Strategic Plan of the University. These guidelines set out the actions to be undertaken and the most appropriate countries for our interests. Thus, it must be clear at every moment which are the geographical areas of priority on which our efforts must be centered, taking into account that these priorities may change when the government board changes.

3.3.3. *Establishing a protocol for the signing of agreements*

When a standard procedure for the processing of agreements does not exist, certain problems of an organizational nature usually arise, of which it is important to highlight:

A possible conflict of interest in the processing of the agreement, because it might be processed by various administrative units at the same time.

Lack of awareness of the existence of the agreement on the part of the university community, as a result of which the benefits on offer are not made clear

Dispersion of agreements that are archived in various places, which prevents them from being adequately registered and controlled.

Thus, it is appropriate to agree upon a procedure for the formulation of agreements that agrees at least upon the following aspects: who may propose or initiate agreements, who or which organization can approve them, who signs them, and which administrative unit is responsible for filing and maintaining them.

3.3.4. *Creating a database for the overseeing of agreements*

It is vital to keep a detailed register of all agreements in one database to keep them under proper supervision. This will allow us to consult them quickly without having to resort to the paper archives, and to get in touch with the partner institution should we be inclined. Furthermore, it will help us to provide information on agreements that are often requested by another administrative unit for statistical purposes.

3.3.5. *Raising awareness of the existence of agreements amongst the university community*

The University community must be aware of the agreements that the university has established with other institutions to be able to make use of them. It would be sufficient, as a general rule, to include this procedure on the website. Furthermore, depending on the volume of agreements and the number of existing administrative units and faculties, other methods can be put into practice, practice posting on notice boards, issuing copies of the agreements to university heads of department, information bulletins...If there is enough time to do so, it is possible to scan the pre-signed agreements, which would allow copies to

be sent to interested parties without needing to search for them in the archives.

3.3.6. *Monitoring the agreements*

It is useless to devote efforts to establishing and maintaining a large network of agreements if they are not checked and monitored frequently. When the number of signed agreements is not very high, it is advised at the beginning of each course to email every international relation office to confirm that the information we have for their university is incorrect to make our partner institution more comfortable, they can send a brief file containing the data to get a timely reply. The emails can also be used to include information about upcoming events to take place at the university. Secondly, below are some recommendations for networks:

3.3.7. *Studying members' commitments in detail*

A large portion of the networks are financed by members' contributions, generally paid by their annual fees. Apart from the annual fee, other obligations are rarely required. However, it is advisable to check whether attending a meeting or other organized activities is mandatory. Forfeiting the work it is important to verify the real costs of potential membership. In addition, it is advisable to be aware that although in most programs it is possible to unsubscribe at any time, you have to give advanced notice of it.

3.3.8. *Verifying that the network members fit our interests*

One of the key advantages of networks is that they foster new contacts. Check that there are enough participating universities with which you would be interested in working on future projects or activities. If among

the members there are prestigious universities listed, you can assume that the network is internationally acknowledged.

3.3.9. *Active participation*

Our decision to adhere to an international network also makes our attendance at the annual meetings advisable, since it is the ideal place to network with other member institutions. Our assistance also allows us to know the progress of current projects, the challenges that lie ahead, and d plans.

3.3.10. *Certifying annually that planned activities have been taken*

Should the network demand a quota for its members, each year the organization sends a renewal letter to its members with information on the amount required to renew the subscription for the following year. Before processing the payment it is necessary to ensure that the network has fulfilled the specified objectives and has taken the planned course of action. Given that almost all networks have at their disposal a web page to which they can upload information of interest to their members, it is sufficient to consult annual activity records to confirm how far the agreement has been maintained. It is also possible to get hold of this information in the annual assemblies.

3.4. International Mobility Programs

International Mobility Programs are those that involve a study, internship, teaching, or training stay in another country. Such Programs exist for all members of the University community. In general terms, they are financed by the university itself, by other bodies and organizations, or by a mixture. Mobility Program participants must take part in a public

call based on criteria of transparency, merit, and capacity, as well as respecting equal opportunities.

To obtain external funding for European mobility programs, such as Erasmus+ in its action 1, a project must be submitted requesting mobility funds from the National Agency within the established time frame. Only when the project has been approved can universities prepare their call to select participants for the mobility places granted. Similarly, a possible means of obtaining financing for other programs would be to submit applications or follow the procedure established by the relevant body. This might take the form of the signing of an agreement – as is the case for the ISEP program. Finally, universities often sign agreements with other institutions in which one or both parties establish a budget for financing specific mobilities, which could include Teaching Assistants of training grants.

In conclusion, each University manages mobility programs that are financed through different bodies or by agreements that they have signed with other institutions; numbers depend greatly upon the ability to capture funds.

Below are some recommendations for managing such programs:

3.4.1. *A complete IT system*

Given the growing number of mobility programs in which Universities can participate, it is increasingly important to have an IT system that can process electronically all of the administrative and academic procedures that managing such projects requires.

The more complete the system, the greater will be the benefits reaped, such as:

- ◆ Flexibility in call processing, especially if applications can be made online.

- ◆ Virtual administration, removing the need to appear in person.
- ◆ Creating lists, data for publication, economic management, and statistic.
- ◆ Keeping all parties up-to-date about the state of their application, if it has been passed, or if they need to submit additional information.
- ◆ Sustainability and environmentally friendly through a huge reduction in paper consumption.

3.4.2. *Centralizing the administrative and financial management of call*

In the case of students, academic matters are dealt with in their Faculties and, in the case of teachers in their Departments. In the case of services staff all, employment matters are dealt with centrally in the IRO. However, the administrative and financial aspects inherent in mobility programs are dealt with centrally in the IRO. Only by doing this can we ensure that the selection and assignation processes for mobility places are performed with equal opportunities for all interested parties, while also offering the required transparency inherent to any administrative process.

However, and bearing in mind that the different administrative processes – be they academic or administrative – are interrelated, there must also be mechanisms that enable the participants' situations to be known to process grant payments and, where necessary, demand re-funds from those who have not correctly justified their stay. In Fundamental terms, there must be fluid channels of communication between the IRO, and the various other offices involved. This can be achieved in the following manner:

- ◆ Everyone involved in the application management, be they academic staff from the different centers of IRO should have access to the app, even though this access should be limited to their functions.
- ◆ An internal group should be created on an intranet, or via WhatsApp, incorporating the Center's academic heads, the heads of mobility programs administration, and the IRO Vice-Rectors and Directors. This would lead to a sharing and solution of doubts and queries, as well as the fact that everyone would have the most up-to-date information at their fingertips.
- ◆ Periodic meetings between the above-mentioned heads and chiefs. These are of special importance before mobility periods commence and at the end of the academic year because they enable incidents to be detected to improve future procedures.

3.4.3. *Informative meetings for incoming and outgoing students*

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If organizing informative meetings for all mobility participants is regarded as a good thing, this is especially so in the case of students. Students are greater in number and their stays are longer. It is therefore essential that they attend a meeting where they can obtain in one place and at one time all of the information that they will need to know concerning their grants and the academic recognitions that they will receive as participants in a mobility program.

It is better to organize two meetings for incoming students: one at the beginning of each academic semester, although this will depend on the number of incoming students foreseen for the second semester. If it is a small number, then the second meeting may not take place.

Outgoing students, however, will only need one meeting before their departure, be their mobility for a whole academic year or merely a semester. This meeting should take place well before their departure

date because the students will have to perform several administrative tasks very early on, tasks such as reserving accommodation in the host country and such as preparing their study contract. This meeting is best held immediately after the mobility students have been selected.

Finally, all of the information and presentations were given during the above meetings should be published on the IRO website. Attendees will then be able to consult them again at a later date and those students who were absent from the meeting will be able to access the information contained therein.

3.4.4. *Permanent monitoring of participants*

During a participant's stay, circumstances might arise that lead to modifications in the conditions of his/her mobility program. These might be due to personal, family, medical or academic reasons, among others. Generally, when something of this nature occurs, the participant will contact the IRO to certain how to justify the stay or modify the conditions for another study, teaching, or training agreement. Occasionally, these incidents are detected at the end of the stay when the participant submits his/her certificate of study or grades and it is discovered that the certificate does not coincide with what was initially foreseen. If the number of participants is not high and there is sufficient staff to do so, it is advisable to contact these participants when they are still at their destination before finishing their stay to ensure that everything is processed according to the documentation included in their file. Individual cases apart, unfortunately natural disasters or armed conflicts occur that make it advisable for participants to return immediately or for them to be contacted to ensure their wellbeing and to ascertain if, with the permission of the local authorities of the country in which they find themselves, they are willing to continue their story. In order to do this, it is of the utmost importance to have the most up-to-date

details of the participants so that the International Relations Office can contact them immediately 24/7. It is, therefore, highly advisable that potential participants attend all of the symposia, meetings, and other events whose sole aim is to give in-depth information on all mobility-program-related aspects, be they to inform of new calls or to clarify any doubts concerning existing ones.

IRO staff training results in the smooth running of mobility programs and contributes towards mobility stays going according to plan, thus correctly justifying the funds received to finance them.

3.5. External Promotion

This section is devoted to the activities enhancing the visibility of the university to enlarge international Programs, increase the number of students, and to rt new relationships or strengthen the existing ones. In short, it seeks to promote the internationalization of the institution and thereby improve its competitiveness

Below are some recommendations:

3.5.1. *Attending great impact international fairs*

These events are very convenient to meet other institutions willing to establish new agreements or participate in international projects. Some of these fairs are specifically designed to attract international students and in consequence, are an essential tool to raise the visibility of the academic portfolio of the university and the number of international students wishing to enroll in it. To take full advantage of the attendance and make profitable the investment costs, our potential contacts should be informed that we intend to attend the event in order to the agendas and organize future appointments. Regarding the dissemination of material required

to attend these meetings depends largely on the event's nature. If it is addressing students, it is essential to develop low-cost brochures containing basic information and websites where students can find further information. At some fairs, it is possible to attend the event and network without having to hire a booth during the whole period of the event. The renting of the stand and the number of staff sent by the university by the university will depend on the funds available and the number of attendees expected according to the data provided by the organization.

3.5.2. *Information in several languages*

The International Relations Office must be provided with at least two types of brochures: a low-cost brochure to be handed out at large-scale international fairs and disseminated by post to other institutions, and high high-qualifying institutional representatives and for formal events. In both cases, the brochures should be practical and not contain too much information, so they are easy to carry and do not end up in the trash. Intending to reach as wide an audience as possible, all information should be available in the university's language of instruction and also in English, which is an exception for those where it is specifically recommended or regulated to use a different second language. Besides, the brochure should be translated into the language of the country we are going to.

3.5.3. *A striking Website*

Most users and potential users of a university's services gain access to the information they need through the university's website. In consequence, this website must be attractive and functional. In addition, all information on this website should be regularly updated, and all out-of-date information, especially regarding public calls for proposals

and regulations should be removed, if possible, through an automatic system, to avoid any distrust among the website's users.

3.5.4. *Organizing international events*

It is very convenient to organize at least once a year an event of international importance such as a conference, a workshop, or a seminar inviting renowned lecturers from other universities. Such attendance obviously implies some financial support, but ensures the attendance of a large number of other universities' staff and consequently increases the visibility of the organizing university. To reduce cost and time, it can coincide with any other event, such as the Staff Week within the framework of the Erasmus Program.

4. Extra-EU countries

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Some Best Practices from the extra-EU UNICAC Partners are as follows:

4.1. Tashkent University of Information Technologies - TUIT (Uzbekistan)

Nowadays, many Universities of Uzbekistan lead double-degree Programs with foreign Universities. For example, joint Faculty in TU-IT-BSUIR students' study for two years in Tashkent and two years in Minsk (Belarus). Such Programs nowadays exist in many Universities in Uzbekistan: NUU(UZ)-HIT (Israel), NUU(UZ)-KSU (Russia).

4.2. Xinjiang University - XJU (China)

In China, there is joint training between universities, such as Xinjiang University and Xi'an Jiaotong University. In four years of undergraduate study, students will spend two years at Xinjiang university and two years at Xi'an Jiaotong University with a joint degree.

4.3. Institute of Economy and Trade of Tajik State University of Commerce in Khujand - IET/TSUC (Tajikistan)

From the perspective of IRO staff most of us say the good suggestion for internationalization is a NIS network. Expanding the network requires appropriate staff and again it brings us capacity building, in particular the place of learning foreign languages for HEI staff. IET TSUC since 200 full-degree programs offered in English. That was a key resource during fostering internationalization in 2017-2020 at IET TSUC. Because just in a very short period IR of IET TSUC had a great work using the potentials, which we were building since 2008. Regarding why Network is prioritized – most of the significant achievements in IR were through personal contacts and networking. Most of the Central Asian HEIs are not paying attention or not investing in big Networking events of different associations like the European Association for International Education (EAIE), because of the high cost and absence of the located budget for this. However, IET TSUC is trying to participate in such events, so in the last 2 years of participation of IRO Staff at the Eastern European Universities Association.

Emerging practices and main challenges. The impact of an emergency (such as Covid-19 pandemic) on the internationalization of HEIs: between constraints and alternative solutions

The UNICAC project has been mostly implemented during these years of Covid-19 Pandemic (2018-2022) which has largely affected many areas of international relations, firstly the limited mobility of people and the necessity to use ICT to allow people to work, study etc. For such reasons, a specific section of this manual is dedicated to describe how the different IROs partners and countries were (and are) dealing to manage the effects of Covid-19 to the internationalization of their HEIs. The different contributions from all the involved HEIs have been collected during the spring 2020 and the fall/winter 2021.

1. Laurea University of Applied Sciences

1.1. Overview

Laurea had been preparing for various scenarios in a systematic and risk-based manner before the closing of the campuses due to the outbreak of Covid-19 in Finland in March 2020. Collaboration on preparations was goal-oriented and successful with all members of the Laurea community and stakeholders. After that, the recommendations and regulations have been decided by a preparation working group set up by Laurea's President. Laurea has followed carefully the recommendations from the leading national institution, the [Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare](#).

With these decisions, our goal is to provide all members of our community with safe working conditions and a continuation of teaching for students. Our focus is on actions ensuring the continuity of our operations.

For its part, Laurea wants to bear its responsibility for not spreading the virus in our community and not making members of our community, or anyone else, ill. At the same time, we wanted to prevent members of our community from being quarantined abroad with these guidelines. The guidelines have been created taking into account every Laurea employee's right to safe and healthy working.

The rapid development of the Corona situation has been carefully monitored by Laurea Management with the support of Safety and Security Dior. The Laurea's intranet has been the platform for continuous information sharing. The intranet has been updated regularly based on the evolution of the coronavirus.

Due to potential coronavirus exposures revealed over the weekend in Mid-March, Laurea's students and staff started to move on to remote work. The decision was based on suspected exposures during

the previous week, the extent of which was unknown at that time. To protect students, staff, and other members of the Laurea community, Laurea decided to close all campuses until the end of May. Since mid-March Laurea has been offering teaching online or through other means.

As Laurea is used to offering full degrees online, the remote working atmosphere and tools were already existing. Remote working has been a normal working habit and an option to do now and then in Laurea. It was basically up to remote work. Though the contact lessons needed to be planned again differently, which caused a huge amount of workload in the first weeks of online teaching.

During these current unusual times, Laurea has supported staff and teachers with continuous online training to use different online tools. Our IT Help Desk is also easy and possible to contact in cases there are network, hardware, or software problems. In Finland, the network is vast and efficient, so basically problems with internet connections occur quite rarely. Every staff member has been provided with a laptop and mobile phone, so the tools were already existing. The online training calendar has been updated regularly.

1.2. Guidelines during the Covid-19 situation

Updated guidelines are published and updated in staff and students' intranets. Guidelines are published also on the Laurea web page. Guidelines include e.g. the following topics:

- ◆ Prevention of the risks of infection.
- ◆ Teaching and training transferred online.
- ◆ Exceptions to campus services.
- ◆ Students returning from abroad to Finland.

- ◆ Entrance exams and selection tests.
- ◆ Common events and other activities on our campuses.
- ◆ Visitors to our premises.
- ◆ Staff meetings.
- ◆ Work-related policies.
- ◆ Internal staff communication in case of disruption.

The basis of our preparation is to ensure student wellbeing and to enable our students to continue their studies as seamlessly as possible. Also, simulation and workshop teaching in health and physiotherapy are temporarily being transferred online. The teachers inform their students about possible changes and how exams and similar events are going to be arranged.

Job placements and internships in Finland will continue until further notice, if not canceled by the placement organization. The announcements of Laurea and the internship organization's guidelines must be followed. If a job placement period is canceled, we try to offer another teaching to replace the internships.

For students, we also opened a separate corona named email if they have questions related to their studies or internships.

1.3. International relations during the pandemic

Laurea has been preparing for the Corona situation to ensure student wellbeing and to enable our students to continue their studies. Our decisions are based on the recommendations of the Government and the [National Institute for Health and Welfare](#). We also updated student and staff intranets by sending several emails to our students abroad, exchange students in Laurea, and partner institutions worldwide. For the exchange students, there is also a mobile phone with WhatsApp

and the possibility to send quick questions or share worries and receive answers from an IRO team member.

Laurea IRO also promoted a possibility for an Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange. It is offered to help teachers and students to continue their studies in these uncertain times. The readymade made courses, which might be possible for Laurea students. A teacher can design a course with an international partner teacher for everybody's use. More information here: https://europa.eu/youth/erasmusvirtual_en.

1.4. Communication and guidelines to our students abroad

Some of Laurea's students had gone on their exchanges earlier this year while some of the students did not start their exchanges before the exceptional current situation. The coronavirus situation developed rapidly in March also in Finland, to which Laurea responded.

Laurea IRO sent an email to our students abroad at the beginning of the eruption of the coronavirus. Based on the Finnish Government's announcement, declaring a state of emergency in Finland, Laurea was in line with this announcement guiding all students to terminate their stay abroad and return to Finland at once. Laurea decided to support students with their additional travel and accommodation costs if they returned by the end of March 2020. Otherwise, we are closely following our student's situation abroad who decided to stay abroad.

1.5. Practicalities to take into consideration when terminating exchange

1.5.1. *Studies*

Contact your tutor teacher as soon as possible to let them know of the termination/cancellation of the exchange and for finding out how to ensure the continuation of your studies in Finland.

1.5.2. *Insurance*

Contact your insurance provider to see what they cover in this situation and whether you can make claims for any costs caused by this situation. It is good to have their decision in writing.

1.5.3. *Flights*

Many countries are now closing their borders and restricting movements, which causes airways to cancel their flights. It is, therefore, important to act immediately.

You should contact your airline to check the possibility of changing your flight or ask for compensation. If you receive no compensation for the flight costs from the airline or your insurance, Laurea will pay for your flight back in case you return early to Finland. Provide receipts of the flight and written documents from an insurance company to national services. It is recommended, however, that you look for the most reasonable price possible.

1.5.4. *Housing*

Remember to terminate your housing contract at your exchange destination and to see whether there is any cancellation policy in place. Organize housing at home.

1.5.5. *Quarantine*

It is important to remember that, after returning to Finland, you will be placed in quarantine-like conditions for 14 days. This must be taken seriously.

1.5.6. *Health concerns*

If you suspect you have symptoms of the coronavirus, call the local health center in your area. Any suspected infections are dealt with locally.

1.5.7. *Grants*

In bilateral exchanges (outside Europe) the students can keep their grants. For Erasmus+ exchanges, students should send the International Services information regarding the costs of the exchange so that a claim to the Finnish National Agency for Education can be made and allow the student to keep the grant as compensation for the costs.

1.5.8. *Information*

Follow student intra, the local authorities, and your local Finnish embassy for further information.

1.6. Communication with exchange students and our partner Universities

Laurea IRO has sent frequent e-mails to all its partner Universities and institutions about our practical actions due to the coronavirus in March-April. We informed our readiness for online teaching and that all students can continue their studies remotely. The exchange students at Laurea received detailed instructions from their Laurea

teachers regarding each of their courses. Teachers also informed the students separately about how exams and similar events would take place online. We also instructed the exchange students at Laurea to be in contact with their home universities if they wish to return to their home countries and finish their studies while at home.

Some of the exchange students returned to their home countries. Less than ten exchange students decided to stay in Laurea. Out of these students, a few want to continue their studies in the fall semester with us. Laurea supports exchange students in their decisions. If there is a need, we will pay the rent for May in case a student returned earlier to the home country. Some student apartments are rented with fixed-term contracts and the landlord wants the rent paid for the whole fixed term.

Laurea will continue accepting nominations from incoming exchange students for the autumn semester normally. However, we would like to remind them that the Covid-19 situation is continuing, and therefore keep in mind that the acceptance is conditional until we can be sure about the autumn situation. If the situation changes, we shall inform our partners accordingly. As for current Laurea students looking to study at our partner universities, we shall nominate them as directed and act according to our partners' instructions.

1.7. Exchange students in the autumn semester of 2020

We will do everything we can to start the semester at the normal time in August, but we must follow the national instructions as well as the international situation all in all. It is possible that large gatherings will not be allowed in August, or it could also be possible that traveling within the EU or to the EU is still banned in the autumn.

We have informed them that if a student is coming from a non-EU country, he needs to also keep in mind that getting a residence permit to Finland might be extremely difficult due to the embassies and consulates being closed, and therefore he might want to even consider postponing the exchange to the spring semester 2021 just to be sure.

If we were not able to start the semester on our campuses in August, the studies will be offered fully online until the return will be possible. It is very good to keep in mind that as we can't be 100% sure how the situation will be, any payments for flights or accommodation shouldn't be made that can't be returned in case of postponement of the exchange. We also advise the students to make sure that their insurance policy covers any costs due to the Covid-19 situation, e.g., postponing or canceling flights, accommodation, etc. If the travel restrictions will be lifted, it is still possible that there is a quarantine for 14 days after the arrival to Finland.

2. Covid-19 impact on the Higher Education sector NWAUFU/China

2.1. How the Office of International Cooperation and Exchange of Northwest A&F University dealt with the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic

Large-scale outbreaks of pandemic disease took place globally, affecting not only human health but also the education sector. The massive disruptions created by the novel coronavirus to the education sector have been so severe that, according to UNESCO, more than forty-six countries in five different continents have announced school closures and banned face-to-face teaching to contain the spread of Covid-19. At the beginning of this semester (end of February 2020), the Chinese Ministry of Education launched an initiative entitled “Disrupted

Classes, Undisrupted Learning” to provide flexible online learning to hundreds of millions of students in China. All levels of institutions of education in China initiated several strategies to cope with educational issues raised in this crisis.

Being an important section of our university (NWAUFU), the problems faced by the office of international cooperation and exchange have been particularly complicated and unprecedented when the whole world is virtually under lockdown. It’s been really difficult to carry out the work, and it must be the same for every international office in universities globally. However, our office has tried our best to find solutions to various problems and mitigate the adverse impact created by this pandemic. The following are the thorny problems we are facing and some solutions that we have found to address them.

First, the biggest challenge we need to handle is to remain connected with all foreign teachers and international students, and make sure the information on their health status has been reported and updated to the government as required. It’s been hard due to the time differences and the lack of Internet connection for a few. Apart from that, because the outbreak of the virus was during the winter vacation, many Chinese students and teachers were visiting universities overseas, we also need to make sure the latest information about these Chinese students and teachers has been collected and reported in time for our government to better understand whether they are safe and whether they need help in case they have an emergency.

To deal with this challenge, our office has adopted several solutions

- a. It seems we are understaffed during the situation of emergency, partially because some staff are required to stay where they are and are not allowed to come back to the office, and partially because the workload has increased dramatically. Therefore, we

recruited volunteers who are fluent in English from different schools in our university (teachers or students) to be responsible for reaching foreign teachers or international students every day.

- b. Volunteers not only need to gather the latest information on the health status, and the traces of movement of foreign teachers and international students, but also make sure they are informed about the updated situation of epidemic control in China and regulations concerning traveling borders.
- c. For the Chinese teachers and students who are traveling overseas, our office remains connected with the universities and research institutions that they are visiting to make sure their safety of them should be the priority. Meanwhile, we use the social networking platform to inform them of useful information, such as what kind of help is available from the Chinese embassy in case they have an emergency.
- d. We feed updated e-pamphlets to these teachers and students. Pamphlets detail all the information they need from how to protect themselves scientifically, what regulations they need to adhere to while they are in a particular country, what if their visa is going to expire, to what they should do if they don't feel well and how to see a doctor if it's necessary, and if they are planning to come back to China, what they should prepare.

Another pressing issue that needs to be addressed by our international office is minimizing the adverse influence of Covid-19 on our cooperation and collaboration with overseas universities and research institutions. Meetings have been called by our office with different offices in our university to discuss the significance of continually carrying out research and fostering collaboration, especially during times of crisis. Proper guidance and incentives have been offered

to encourage teachers, researchers, and students to continue to work and cooperate internationally to ensure that the latest research findings will be better shared and used. Some practices we've adopted are as follows:

1. We actively explored the possibility of using virtual platforms to recruit leading foreign experts globally. We also are encouraging teachers and students to hold meetings, and conferences between universities domestically and internationally, maintain academic communication, conduct research, and even promote teaching and learning online by using video conferencing software and apps that enable them to work more collaboratively without the limitation of time and place. For those who are not adept at using the latest online communication software such as Zoom and Tencent Meeting, our office invited experts in using this software to offer several online webinars to our staff and students to improve their technology literacy. And the university has employed several technicians to offer technical support to our staff whenever they encounter problems concerning communication with technology.
2. For those who plan to conduct any online activities internationally, they need to notify the international office, then they need to apply in advance to the offices accordingly in our university to get the support they need.
3. The person who is in charge of a particular international program established and implemented online should make sure that the process of carrying out it is effectively required and properly supervised. The written report of the implementation of the program must be handed to relevant offices and provided to get funds as supporting materials.

4. For the security of conducting research and holding conferences online, the international office offers essential guidance on stressing the significance of network security, information leakage, and how to make sure all research materials are properly recorded and preserved.

More practices have been done to tackle the problems caused by the Covid for our university, especially for our office. We just hope what we have shared here could offer some experiences to other universities to draw on during this hard time.

3. Covid-19 impact on the Higher Education sector of Tajikistan

3.1. Overview

Tajikistan was one of the few unaffected countries in the world, without any positive Covid-19 cases reported. Among all the consortia member countries in Tajikistan quarantine measures have been taken at the end of April. 30th April 2020 the Ministry of Health of Tajikistan has officially reported 15 cases of Covid-19 infected people¹. However, the government didn't announce a total quarantine. Partial quarantine measures were taken a week ago, and only schools and colleges², and industries, including HEIs, were working regularly. After the official report of cases Universities were also quarantined. The quarantine has touched only 1, 2- and 3-year students. All the classes were stopped. The 4th year students, who are in the phase of examinations are coming to the universities to accomplish their last year of study.

1. Khovar

2. Ministry of Education and Science of Tajikistan

In our opinion, the government's weak quarantine measures are directed to minimize the effects of quarantine on the economy in general and in particular minimize the negative impact of the pandemic on key activities and events of different sectors, including higher education. During writing this paper (07.05.2020) the official number of infected has reached 379 with 8 reported death cases³.

3.2. The impact of a pandemic on the HEIs in Tajikistan

Nevertheless, this is unprecedented for the higher education of Tajikistan as well as for most of the countries around the world. Earlier in 2017, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan declared instant transformation from part-time studies to distance learning (due to the specification of this study being more similar to the Blended learning system). The resolution of experts about the ineffective form of part-time study should be converted into an online form of study with contacting classes for examinations. Unfortunately, very few HEIs of Tajikistan could be able to transform all providing courses into Distance learning. The factors of weak technical readiness of universities, low-skilled teaching staff in using technologies, and just the absence of students' capabilities to follow courses online pushed all HEIs in Tajikistan just to stop studies in the middle of the semester, pushing everyone to complete their studies in one-two weeks. Only 4-year undergraduate students were allowed to finish the semester to defend their final diploma works until the 15th of May. Such measures were taken to minimize the number of students and staff who are coming to the university. The current situation showed how universities in Tajikistan and how the students are not ready for online education. Still, a

3. [Khovar - National information agency of Tajikistan](#)

lot of reforms have to be implemented for facilitating the development of online learning. The resolution of the Ministry of Education and Science of Tajikistan on switching to Distance learning released in 2017 is still challenging for many universities.

Another negative impact is the economic situation of the universities. Most of the universities in Tajikistan highly rely on tuition fees, our university is not an exception. The pandemic brought chaos, and reduction in income in families, and negatively impacted tuition fee payments. The Ministry of Education and Science of Tajikistan has declared tuition fees holidays, allowing students not to pay for their studies until the stabilization of the situation. This creates a big burden for the universities to survive and directly hits the staff of the university. Today, voluntary quarantine measures allow HEIs staff to come to work if it is needed, only the key staff are working and the majority are on unpaid leave.

3.3. International relations during a pandemic

International relations are one of the most negatively impacted areas at IET TSUC. The international relations here at IET TSUC started to boost in 2017 and today we were running 7 international projects, where 5 are within Erasmus and 2 World Bank-funded projects.

First of all, international credit mobility, currently, our 9 students are stuck in Spain and Turkey. The IRO tends to contact Tajikistan embassies to provide support and somehow find a way to bring them home, this is one of the most important tasks for the IRO right now to help them come back home. IROs are in constant communication with all of them and their families here in the home country.

The rest of the incoming and outgoing mobilities of the staff were postponed for an uncertain time. Regarding capacity-building projects,

we have even more challenges. Currently, all planned activities are postponed and will negatively affect the implementation of the project timeline and the milestones.

One of the IET TSUC proposals while drafting the UNICAC Project was creating a video conference room. Hopefully, it was done here at IET TSUC within the UNICAC project, and here at the International Relations Office, we have installed video conference equipment allowing us to participate in the virtual meetings for up to 18-20 people. Video conference room (65sq.m) equipped with:

- ◆ Video conference system Logitech Rally Plus (with PTZ camera, soundbars, microphones, and connecting concentrators).
- ◆ Smart TV Screen 65" Samsung.
- ◆ PC – Dell Vostro 3670, Intel Core I5 2.8Ghz, 8Gb RAM, HDD 1Tb.

This video conference system allows staying in contact with our partners, and students who are in mobility and take active participation in UNICAC virtual meetings and partner meetings. One problem remains with this software. Until now we are using ZOOM and SKYPE free versions. When meetings are hosted by some of our partners, we don't have any shortages. Hosting these types of events is problematic because we have some limitations in using the software properly, due to the absence of the professional version. The next step is for us to explain the importance of using professional software for virtual meetings because in such a difficult situation for the universities allocating a budget is very sensitive. Anyway, we found the video conference room more efficient when virtual meetings in one room are presenting all the staff who are involved in project implementation. But today when the situation regarding the pandemic Covid-19 is developing among 5 IRO

staff, only 2 of us are still working, and the staff whose presence is not needed are working from home. Nevertheless, virtual meetings couldn't displace some of the activities. In the framework of the World Bank project, we have planned an external evaluation of the International accreditation agency for the accreditation of 2 undergraduate programs. The process was started, and according to the agreement we are waiting for a site visit activity with external experts from the agency.

Another thing is the process of documentation, signing the papers, and finding the management staff to deal with something. We don't yet have an e-signature system here in our university, and probably HEIs around the country have similar problems. This bureaucratic approach to decision-making creates more barriers in the project implementations and affects the timeline negatively.

Surely, this is a challenging situation for the whole world, never happened in the modern world. This pandemic hit many struggling economies and developing countries. Higher education in Asia, in particular in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, was the phase of developing and providing quality education towards the Bologna process, having tight partnership relations with

EU universities. The number of projects and the number of students and staff who were involved in international projects were growing. Nobody knows now how post-pandemic will affect the future of Erasmus and other international programs.

Unity and sympathy can somehow reduce the negative impacts of that virus. Most theine education providers are opening the courses for free and supporting people around the world to continue educating.

4. The impact of Covid-19 on the internationalization of HEIs at UNITO/Italy

4.1. Overview

Italy, one of the European countries at the center of the world's coronavirus outbreak in March 2020, has gradually returned to “normality” after about two months under lockdown and no reports of new infections. The daily number of people dying of Covid-19 also is declining.

Italy has relaxed some of the coronavirus restrictions and is moving toward the next phase to reopen more businesses. Tourists will be allowed into the country beginning June 3, 2020.

Regarding information on the measures adopted by the Italian Government:

- ◆ FAQs on the #ImStayingHome Decree are available [here](#) and the list of Decrees and Regulations adopted by the Italian Government is available at the following [link](#).

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Regarding the main measures adopted by Italy:

- ◆ On 15th May 2020 the Government decided to ease restrictions on movements. Starting from 18 May 2020, the movement of people within the same Italian region is allowed, and, starting from 3 June 2020, travel between different Italian regions as well as travel to and from abroad is also allowed. Quarantine: some easing from 18 May to 2 June. As of June 3, the quarantine is not required for travel to and from the EU, Schengen, UK, and European microstates. The need for justification and the quarantine at least until June 15 remain valid for movements to and from other states and territories. Persons with confirmed

Covid-19 and persons who have been in close contact with confirmed infected persons must stay in quarantine.

- ◆ On 26th April Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte outlined how the country would begin “Phase Two” of lifting its coronavirus lockdown and announced a gradual easing of the measures starting from May 4th.
- ◆ Previous measures: The Decree issued on 9 March 2020 provides, in particular, urgent measures to combat and contain the Covid-19 virus extending to the whole national territory the restrictive measures envisaged by the previous Decree, issued on 8 March, for Lombardy and surrounding areas. Among the more far-reaching measures, the decree provides that any movement of physical persons (both within the national territory and entering/exiting) must be avoided, except for proven work needs, situations of necessity, or health reasons. Work, need or health reasons can be self-certified, as required by current legislation. Return to one’s own home or residence is allowed. There are also restrictions on the exercise of public activities (sports, restaurants, entertainment, etc.) and any form of gathering of people in public places or places open to the public. In addition to the closure of the schools, already in force since February 5, the opening of the museums and the holding of events and shows are suspended. It is recommended to always keep a distance of at least one meter from other people (“social distance”). In parallel, measures were taken to strengthen the national health system, with particular reference to intensive care. With the Prime Ministerial Decree of March 8, there are no longer any red areas: the limitations that were foreseen in the previous Prime Ministerial Decree of March 1 (with the establishment of specific red areas) have ceased.

4.2. The International Relations at UNiTO/Turin University during the Pandemic

Several measures have been taken by Turin University, as described in the following methods:

- ◆ UniTO's Website:
 - > <https://en.UniTO.it/coronavirus-updates-UniTO-community>
 - > <https://www.UniTO.it/ateneo/gli-speciali/coronavirus-aggiornamenti-la-comunita-universitaria>



- ◆ On the UniTO website a special section dedicated to International Relations during pandemics has been introduced:
 - > <https://www.UniTO.it/ateneo/gli-speciali/coronavirus-aggiornamenti-la-comunita-universitaria/mobilita-internazionale>
 - > <https://en.UniTO.it/coronavirus-updates-UniTO-community/international-mobility>
- ◆ in staff and students *Intranet*, guidelines are published and updated;

- ◆ frequent *emails* sent by UniTO IRO to outgoing and incoming students as well as to Partner Universities.

At the beginning of the pandemic, in line with the announcement of the Italian Government of a state of emergency, Turin University supported outgoing students when deciding to return to Italy and is following closely the situation of those students who decided to stay abroad. The University of Turin has suspended all outgoing mobilities within the Erasmus program or any other international exchange program previously planned for the second semester of A.Y. 2019-2020.

UniTO emailed its incomings a Survey at the very beginning of the pandemic to know if they wanted to return to their home countries or continue their studies at UniTO. Our exchange students received detailed instructions regarding their courses. Teachers also informed the students separately about how exams and similar events would take place online. We also instructed the exchange students at Turin University to be in contact with their home universities, if they wish to return to their home countries and finish their studies while at home.

UniTO IRO sent frequent emails to all its Partner Universities about its practical actions due to the coronavirus and informed them about online teaching and the possibility for students to continue their studies remotely.

Regarding the next a.y. 2020-2021, Turin University will continue accepting nominations for incoming exchange students. our university is monitoring the general situation and should future conditions require it (in particular during the first semester) distance learning will be organized. We expect updating to be provided by the end of June and we will inform our partners/students accordingly. Therefore, as of now, we highly recommend waiting for more king flights or accommodation or considering refundable solutions. We also suggest you visit our Incoming webpage where all the relevant information/

updating about the application process will be published together with information about the University of Turin and our city. Italian version: <https://www.UniTO.it/internazionalita/studenti-e-ospiti-internazionali/studenti-mobilita-ed-erasmus> English Version:<https://en.UniTO.it/international-relations/students-mobility/exchange-students-and-erasmus-mobility>

Considering the totality of its decisions and measures depending on the pandemic, UniTO's main goal is to provide its community with safe working conditions and the continuation teaching students.

UniTO's students and staff started to move on to remote working immediately: to protect students, staff, and other members of our community, Turin University decided to close all Campuses and is offering to teach online.

Consequently, also UniTO International Center and its International Offices in the different Campuses will be closed until further notice and its staff is working from home.



The restrictive measures to limit the spread of Covid-19 disease have been further loosened with the President of the Council of Minister decree of May 17th, 2020. At the present moment, all the ordinary activities are carried out in remote mode, except the services that can't be postponed and fulfilled remotely. The staff and the similar figures

(Ph.D. students, grant holders, research fellows) that will have to work on-site - on the instruction of their director - must previously and carefully follow the Covid-19: Information and Guidance (access reserved only to UniTO staff) and then fill in the Self-certification for the return to work and acknowledgment of having read and understood the “Covid-19 Information and Guidance Form”.

This extraordinary situation requires a strong sense of individual responsibility. Punctual and scrupulous compliance with the hygienic-sanitary measures set by the authorities is recommended.

Best practices at UniTO during pandemics and Initiatives for Staff and/or students, such as:

- ◆ Online Course for Staff on Smart Working.



- ◆ Smart Learning, lockdown made by a group of students in Psychology of Work and Wellbeing in Organizations.
- ◆ UniTO Listening Space: It is a psychological counseling service that aims to improve life quality in UniTO, addressed to UniTO staff (academic and administrative) and students living in situations of hardship or psycho-physical distresses that can have consequences on their work and study quality.

UniTO Listening Space offers support and guidance to the analysis, the management of the critical issues experienced, and the development of useful resources for good-quality work and university life. The service is free and provides an interview cycle, up to five, with psychologists qualified in psychotherapy, specialists, and School of Health Psychology students in specialist training in the Department of Psychology.



More specifically in International Relations, in this uncertain time, UniTO is supporting the development of international projects based on virtual mobility. Turin University is part of an Erasmus+ Project on Virtual Exchange Mobility called “Movidis” and is led by the University of Nice. For a short description of the Project click here:

<http://www.lets-steam.eu/post/participation-to-movidis-kick-off-meeting>

And last but not least, in this period UniTO IRO is very much experiencing the implementation of digitalization and e-signature systems, for example, cooperation agreements and study plans, as well as virtual meetings held on the Webex platform.

5. The Buddy Project of UNiTO during the Covid-19: between necessity and adaptation

With the “Buddy Project - Do you need support-TO?”, the University of Turin provides a welcome and assistance system aimed at international

students enrolled in a degree-seeking course or who carry out a period of mobility at the UNiTO university (exchange incoming). The new arrivals are supported by the University students, regularly enrolled and with adequate language skills, in a logic of peer-to-peer tutor. The aim of the Buddy Project is twofold:

- ◆ allow international students to familiarize themselves with the new academic cultural and linguistic context, both before arrival in Italy and during the first months of their stay at UniTO;
- ◆ offer UniTO students the opportunity to internationalize their educational experience directly at the University.

Due to the Covid-19 emergency, in recent months UNiTO central IRO has conducted some focus groups for evaluation purposes with buddies and IROs local coordinators, to understand how to adapt this service. Two main issues have been noticed: on the one hand, the difficulty of allowing the buddy to finish the hours foreseen in the collaboration despite the contingent situation, and on the other the will to effectively transmit the knowledge acquired during these months to the buddy of next year. In recent months, moreover, the Natural Sciences department of UNiTO has started experimentation with its buddy which has proved to be very interesting: the buddy has prepared a handbook for incoming students who arrive at their center, centered by an IRO officer. Given this experience, we thought it could be useful to build guides similar to the one produced by the Natural Sciences department (partly taking up the contents) by the buddy of each department, to bring together the existing orientation material and be able to offer something unified to students.

The idea would be to create two distinct handbooks:

- a. One (in English) addressed to incoming students, with both general information (those which are usually studied in depth on the Welcome Day) and those specific to each department (a quick overview). An example of a possible index could be as follows:
- i. Brief introduction.
 - ii. Arrival.
 - > From a European Country.
 - > From a non-European Country.
 - iii. Housing.
 - iv. Learning Italian.
 - v. Learning Agreement.
 - vi. My.UniTO.it
 - vii. Career Plan and exams.
 - viii. Departments (for each department you can enter information about: where the department is located, links for consulting the courses and individual degree courses, course times and academic calendar.
 - ix. Map of the places where lessons are held, Help desk, referring professors, library, job placement, etc.).
 - x. Departure.
 - xi. Contacts.
- b. One (in Italian) for the buddy. It would be a handbook in which future buddies can find information that will help them to support incoming students more effectively, starting from those difficulties previously reported in a specific monitoring phase.

Possible points to be included are as follows:

- ◆ How to welcome incoming students and what procedures to indicate upon arrival.
- ◆ Who needs a residence permit? How do you get it?
- ◆ Erasmus: a guide to the procedures to be followed by Erasmus students (e.g. deadlines to be respected, facsimile of the forms to be completed such as the Learning Agreement, professor, r s, and reference offices).
- ◆ Other mobility agreements: a guide to procedures.
- ◆ Career plans, pedometer, and exam registration.
- ◆ References: which office to contact for what.

It is an indicative index, to be declined according to each department/HEI, etc.

6. US/University of Sevilla. Action plan from The Covid-19 Health Crisis

6.1. General information

After publication of Real Decreto 463/2020 of March 14th, declaring a state of Emergency to deal with the Covid-19 crisis, several measures have been taken, described in [this link](#).

Consequently the International Centre will be closed until further notice. All public-facing and on-site services will be suspended. Staff will be working from home and can be contacted via:

- ◆ EMAIL: you can contact us any time if you have doubts and we will reply as soon as possible.

- ◆ INTERNATIONAL CENTRE [WEBSITE](#)
- ◆ UNIVERSIDAD DE SEVILLA [VIRTUAL OFFICE](#) where you can submit applications using the *Modelo Genérico* form via Universidad de Sevilla's telematic register.
- ◆ TELEPHONE INFORMATION: all phone calls to the Centre will be forwarded to the relevant person who will attend your call.
- ◆ RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAFF MEMBERS INVOLVED IN MOBILITY PROGRAMS

Universidad de Sevilla is staying connected with the University community who are currently involved in an international stay in a foreign country, such as students, researchers, and administrative staff members. We have prepared the following recommendations from them:

6.2. General Recommendations for Universidad de Sevilla students

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- ◆ We highly encourage you to follow the indications from health authorities from your destination country and university, which will be taking various steps to stop the pandemic.
- ◆ Due to border closure in a lot of countries, and growing travel difficulties, we recommend you to keep in contact with competent consular authorities in your destination, especially if you wish to travel to Spain and you have trouble preparing for your return trip. Please always follow their indications. Contact information of Spanish Embassies and Consuls abroad can be found here.
- ◆ It is VERY IMPORTANT that, if you have not done so yet, fill in the Registered Traveller System for the competent consul to have records of your stay in the country and contact you if necessary.

- ◆ If needed, you can also contact the Emergency Consul Office from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, through the Spanish phone number 913948900 or Twitter: [@MAECgob](#).
- ◆ During these exceptional circumstances, we want to remind you of the importance of remaining in contact with Universidad de Sevilla, either with your faculty or the International Centre, and also so that we can inform you immediately if you need help with any change in your situation. Please [click here](#) to know all the contact information listed.

6.3. General Recommendations for international students at Universidad de Sevilla

- ◆ Stay at home, except for the most essential tasks.
- ◆ Since March 16th teaching has been suspended and the University's facilities have been closed. Click on the [link](#) to access updated information on all of the steps that our university is taking, including how online teaching is being organized.
- ◆ Keep in touch with your Centre's Head of Mobility and with the Universidad de Sevilla's Head of Incoming Mobility at its International Centre. For more information on online teaching and to inform us of any change in your circumstances, you can access the Contact List.
- ◆ Keep in touch with your own University.
- ◆ If you think that you might have caught Coronavirus, click on the [link](#) to access specific information on how to act.
- ◆ Click on this [link](#) to access public information from the Spanish Ministry of Health.

6.4. General Recommendations for Universidad de Sevilla Teachers, Researchers, and Administrative Staff

- ◆ We highly encourage you to follow the indications from health authorities from your destination country and university, that will be taking different actions to stop the pandemic.
- ◆ Due to border closure in a lot of countries, and growing travel difficulties, we recommend you to stay connected with the competent consulate authorities in your destination., especially if you wish to travel to Spain and you have trouble preparing your return trip. Please always follow their indications. Contact information of Spanish Embassies and Consulates abroad can be found here.
- ◆ It is VERY IMPORTANT that, if you have not done it yet, fill in the Registered Traveller System for the competent consul to have a record of your stay in the country and contact you if necessary.
- ◆ If needed, you can also contact the Emergency Consul Office from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, through the Spanish phone number 913948900 or Twitter: [@MAECgob](https://twitter.com/MAECgob).
- ◆ During these exceptional circumstances, we want to remind you of the importance of remaining in contact with the University of Sevilla through the International Centre and the Vice-Rectorate for Research. and also, to inform them immediately if you need help with any change in your situation.

6.5. General Recommendations for International Teachers, Researchers, and Administrative Staff at Universidad de Sevilla

- ◆ Stay at home, except for the most essential tasks.
- ◆ Since March 16th teaching has been suspended and the University's facilities have been closed. Click on the [link](#) to access updated information on all of the steps that our university is taking, including specific information for Teachers, Researchers, and Administrative Staff.
- ◆ Stay connected with Universidad de Sevilla's Centro Internacional and Vice-Rectorate for Research. Access the Contact List.
- ◆ Keep in touch with your own Home University or Centre.
- ◆ If you think that you might have caught coronavirus, click on the [link](#) to access specific information on how to act.
- ◆ Click on this [link](#) to access public information from the Spanish Ministry of Health.

7. The impact of Covid-19 on the internationalization of HEIs in Uzbekistan

The Covid-19 pandemic period has had a big effect on the internationalization of HEIs in terms of international mobility of staff/students/teachers; International universities cannot accept professors from foreign countries because of closed borders. International activities: conferences, seminars, and symposiums have been postponed or canceled.

However, the situation has affected the distance learning process, and many universities have started providing online education. This will enhance new services at HEIs.

Nevertheless, within the project framework the following activities were accomplished with the use of online conferencing systems:

- April 7, 2020: online meeting with participation of all project partners devoted to the presentation of online courses for teachers, students, and researchers in leading European NEIs.
- April 7, 2020: online meeting with participants of the NUUz project team discussing the ongoing problems and perspectives.
- April 2020: the equipment purchase agreement was concluded and sent to the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
- The organization of the online conference in the summer was discussed with the partners from Tajikistan.
- The updated information about the project was translated into Uzbek and released on the official website.
- The NUUz coordinator published the article devoted to the project.

Conclusions and practical Recommendations

What have we learned from the past that will guide us into the future? Has international higher education lived up to our expectations and its potential? As we look backward and forward, it is thus important to ask, what are the core principles and values underpinning the internationalization of higher education that in 10 or 20 years from now will make us look back and be proud of the track record and contribution that international higher education has made to the more interdependent world we live in, the next generation of citizens, and the bottom billion people living in poverty on our planet?

(Knight & de Wit, 2018)

A quite recent report (EC, 2020) has highlighted that the success of transnational collaborations depends on the following key aspects:

- ◆ Organizational capacities and efforts, including leadership, broad organizational commitment, and digital infrastructures.
- ◆ Proximities between partners in the collaboration, e.g. in language and geography, but also a mission, regional engagement, and academic culture.
- ◆ Previous experiences and existing ties between the institutes and professionals involved in the collaboration.

Some of these points (as the organizational skills and the huge use of digital devices) have been extensively explored and applied by the UNICAC Project. Some of them constitute the real and charming challenge of this project which is deeply based on a continuous exchange between different organizational cultures. While the last point constitutes a pillar of UNICAC, which is a pilot project (with quite no other similar experiences working as possible sources of inspiration) and for such reasons rich constraints and unexpected positive goals along its experimental path.

The collection of direct experiences regarding the management of the involved UNICAC IROs during the first months of the pandemic Covid-19 has allowed a very immediate and overall picture of the main emerging difficulties and adopted solutions to deal with such an unexpected global emergency. Indeed, people who just arrived at our universities have been blocked in a foreign country without any contacts and references, and the students who were unable to accomplish their Erasmus exchange or other EU programs despite maybe their long attendance and expectation about such chance normally considered as a quite standard opportunity offered by the EU. The core of the scope and mission of international relations has been profoundly upset by Covid-19 pandemic. Accordingly, the goals and the activities of a project as the UNICAC have a moral to continue, despite adapting to this new spirit/mood.

Indeed, despite Covid-19 has strongly affected activities worldwide (and the mobility of persons is perhaps one of the more evident), the UNICAC partners are still there, trying to overcome the physical distance with alternative solutions and keeping alive the will and commitment of the involved people and institutions.

The activities of the capacity building carried underhand the umbrella of WP2 of the UNICAC project have allowed to achieve some practical recommendations.

- a. The importance of carrying out “physical” training as much as possible (despite the current limits due to the pandemic). Because only “physical” exchanges (including the cultural and geographical/environmental aspects) and sharing of daily IRO activities represent a complete and enriching experience.
- b. The importance of signing new agreements among the involved partners, allowing new and more in-depth forms of mobilities and exchange.
- c. Co-supervising Ph.D. students with EU universities, which is a valid and recognized value for both parties and candidates and supervisors as well, despite quite often the administrative tasks to accomplish and formally recognizing such double degree deeply affect the involved people and institutions.
- d. The possibility of organizing joint degree programs with EU partner universities. If we can note that for China more occasions exist and are developed by the same member of the project (see for instance the TOChina center within the University of Turin), for the other partner countries (Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) more innovative programs could be promoted. Thus, a more detailed and spread knowledge of the possibilities offered by such countries should be enhanced within the EU-involved HEIs.
- e. The necessity to foster the mobility and exchange of the technical (first IROs, but not only) staff of universities (which often spend their work between the call for proposals and administrative tasks, without living and enjoying directly the positive and useful insight done by a direct “physical” mobility). Normally, this HEIs staff is overcharged with multiple tasks and cannot be absent for a long period of its position. For such reasons, the UNICAC Project should contribute to imagining a

suitable modality to build a “mobility package” suited/tailored to the daily management of IRO officers.

The Case Study which is better described in the annex about the birth and development of the IRO office at the School of Management and Economics of the University of Turin may allow us to highlight both the major difficulties of an emerging IRO but also the innovative solutions that can be adopted.

- f. The potential of the partner countries in terms of knowledge, different organizational cultures, young people, linguistic skills, and literacy represents an enormous exchange base for EU partners.
- g. The already mentioned role and potential of IROs as a cross-border across different disciplines, focused on a greater interdisciplinary approach. A cross-dialogue and openness should concern first the same internal structure of HEIs where often the intra-mobility and exchange between different departments or divisions should be better cultivated. The overall approach could be the generic way: for one time may be the international dimension to influence the internal dynamics.

Case studies and useful material

Annex 1. The ERASMUS model: birth and development of the International Relations Office at SME/UNITO

Interview to Prof. Oreste M. Calliano (former Vice-Rector for European Relations and lecturer at SME, School of Management and Economics, Turin University) and Prof. Cristina Barettoni (former International Relations Officer and lecturer at the School of Management and Economics, Turin University)

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How did the Erasmus Programme start?

The idea of allowing exchanges among European students originated in 1969, thanks to the intuition of the Italian prof. [Sofia Corradi](#) (nicknamed “Mamma Erasmus”, who was awarded the Charles V prize in 2016), educator and scientific consultant of the Permanent [Conference of Italian University Rectors](#): this role allowed her to circulate in the academic and institutional sphere her idea of creating Europeans “from grass-roots”, enabling young students to get to know formative realities directly, and thus create a “network” of future European leadership.

The Project started thanks to an initiative of the student association EGEE (now AEGEE), founded by Franck Biancheri, which in 1986-1987 convinced French President François Mitterrand to support the creation of the *Erasmus program*. The decision was approved by the Turin Summit.

This active collaboration between AEGEE and the European Commission, and especially Domenico Lenarduzzi, Director of Public Education, brought forth the approval of the Erasmus Programme in 1987. It became an integral part of the Socrates I (1994-1999) and Socrates II (2000-2006) programs. In 2007 it became one of the elements of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013), then Erasmus+ since 2014.

Which motivations led to the creation of an Erasmus / International Relations Office at the School of Management and Economics of Turin University?

In 1987 the Rector of the University of Turin, prof. Mario Umberto Dianzani, invited me to cooperate with the University as a Vice-Rector and asked me which sector, I would like to concentrate on. As I had been a convinced and active European federalist since my youth, I suggested I might be involved in international relations; but this sector was already under the care of our colleague prof. Ferraresi. Therefore, Turin University opted for one Vice-Rector for International Relations and one Vice-Rector for European Relations. A few days later the delegate for International Exchanges of Lyon III Jean Moulin University came to Turin, and he was surprised to be able to negotiate exchanges of the prospected Erasmus Programme with an eponymous Vice-Rector. We had a fruitful dialogue and I understood that we had the chance of drawing useful information from the French experience concerning student exchanges, for example:

- a. The creation of a University Erasmus Commission, composed of representatives from the various Schools, regularly meeting (once a month) to coordinate the different and often incoherent practices of the various Schools concerning the selection of outgoing students and acceptance of incoming students. Consequently, we enhanced the creation of a similar Commission in every School, to avoid personal or discriminatory choices. The Erasmus Commission of the School of Management and Economics was the first one created, as early as the 1988 Erasmus selection.
- b. Working out a uniform procedure for selecting students and accompanying them abroad; this procedure was set up during a year of intensive coordination among the representatives of the various Schools, who were bringing up different needs and approaches (scientific Schools, humanistic Schools, professionalizing Schools).
- c. An integration of national scholarships with a further economic incentive to compensate costs before by students and their families. Erasmus scholarships were indeed meant to cover the difference between fees in the home University and foreign University, and they did not foresee travel and living expenses, which resident students did not need to bear in Italy. The Erasmus Commission of the School of Management and Economics suggested to the School Council an integration of 150 euros for train journeys and 300 euro for flights, and the Council approved. This “nudge” reduced any income discrimination and encouraged many students to take part of the project.

How did the Office start, and how did it develop?

The entire procedure needed to be followed by a dedicated office, which we called the Erasmus Office. Both outgoing and incoming students could refer to the office, as well as officers from other European Universities, outgoing lecturers, and later even incoming lecturers. This required organizational, linguistic, and communication skills in foreign languages. Therefore, I initially asked our Rector for one officer and two employees, and they were granted to me; one of them, engineer Kaboré, was French mother tongue and spoke English. The office was initially located in a room under a staircase in the Rectorate, with one only phone and one only personal computer.

The directing officer, Dr. Marengo, was enthusiastic about this initiative, and she succeeded in getting over the initial operational difficulties. However, the entire group was conscious of the fact that we were playing an important role for Turin University since we were among the first to activate an Erasmus Office in Italy, as well as for our outgoing students and the European integration process. In this pioneering phase, of a “state nascent”, information at the national level was little and fragmented. It was considered preferable to dialogue with foreign officer colleagues, exchanging experiences and solutions to questions that came up daily (were to accommodate incoming students, how to communicate with them beforehand, how to stimulate lecturers to hold examinations in foreign languages, how to register examinations of Erasmus students who, bureaucratically, did not appear to be enrolled in our University...). A relevant legal problem was, right from the start, the one of obtaining staying permits for studies for students intending to stay in Italy for six months, while Italian law offered permits for studies for only three months. We had to bring up the issue of EU law prevailing over Italian law, and make pressure, with the support of the EU Commission, for Italy to grant Erasmus study permits for at

least six months. We thus had to face many logistic, organizational, and legal problems, but thanks to our enthusiasm, appreciation for the work we carried out, and the Rector's support, we were able to bridge them soon.

Which geographic areas were by and by taking into consideration, and how did the personnel of the Office consequently undergo adjustments and formation?

The first indication came from our students, who aimed their choices at relevant geo-linguistic areas.

The first was the Anglophone area, but British Universities (or rather the English Government) immediately showed strong resistance to welcoming a significant number of students. Indeed, based on the principle of "mutual recognition", Erasmus students did not pay the high fees of their resident British colleagues, depleting Universities that in that "Thatcher" period were suffering heavy cuts in their budgets. We, therefore, turned to Irish Universities, which were more cooperative and "pro-European", and then to Nordic Universities which taught courses in English: Danish, Finnish, Swedish and Dutch Universities were highly qualified and well organized.

The other area was the Hispanic one, partly because of the untrue belief that Spanish is an easier language for Italians, and partly because of the similarity in juvenile habits and traditions. Spanish and Portuguese managerial Universities turned out to be of excellent level (Barcelona, Oviedo, Porto), well organized, and strong in international relations (it is not by chance that Spain is the first European country to use the Erasmus program, followed by Germany and France, and then Italy in the fourth position).

The Francophone area had always been a cultural exchange area for Italian Universities; with French Universities, we mainly worked out

bi-national Degrees, which were then promoted and encouraged by the Italian-French University, based in Turin. We set up a bi-national Degree Turin - Chambéry in “Langues appliquées” for the formation of technical, legal, and economic translators; a bi-national Degree Turin (Cuneo campus) – Nice in Management; a bi-national Degree Turin - Lyon in Comparative Italian-French Law.

To this scope, our Erasmus Office needed to dialogue in English, French, and Spanish. We hired a trilingual officer and enhanced English language courses for all our officers, and we allowed our directing officer to take part in foreign exchanges for Erasmus officers, which were foreseen by the project.

How were partner Universities selected, and how were connections to them set up?

Early contacts were based on individual lecturers’ scientific and personal connections: by suggesting an exchange, lecturers wished to set up constant communication channels between them, as well as to create possibilities of traineeships for their graduating students.

Another channel was based, on research centers, on the development of Post-Doc and Ph.D. exchanges.

Finally, a structured channel was offered by University networks which were being set up at the European level: the network of historic Universities Coimbra Group had recently been founded, in 1987. In 1988, by an initiative of the City and the Chambre de Commerce of Bordeaux, the -Eurometropoles network was created. It included non-capital European cities, among them Bordeaux, Lyon, Barcelona, Manchester, and others; Turin University was assigned the task of coordinating the Universities of twinned cities. The aim was to share experiences on Erasmus exchanges and facilitate their implementation. For example, Lyon had created, in an old abandoned industrial hall,

the Maison de l'Europe, which offered housing for incoming Erasmus students. This experience was copied by other towns. Turin preferred to create a network of apartments rented at an agreed price and coordinated by the Erasmus Office.

Since our students turned out to be among the best in the management area, relationships with partner Universities became stronger, and were extended also to their twinned Universities by reciprocal contacts and “academic word-of-mouth”.

How are incoming students welcomed? Are there welcome days, is assistance provided for finding accommodation and getting to know the town, and for choosing classes to attend?

For a long time, French and Nordic Universities had been organizing a welcome day for international students. We decided to delegate this activity to former and present Erasmus students in our School, and we called this day “Erasmus Day”. On Erasmus Day, incoming students were welcomed by our Rector and/or the Deans of the School and our Erasmus Coordinators, there was a visit to the town and youth logistics information was provided. Furthermore, every incoming Erasmus student was entrusted to one of our volunteer students, who served as a tutor for academic information and for organizing the incoming student's stay in our town.

A transnational network of relationships was thus established, and according to prof. Sofia Corradi's dream project created a network of young people who were connected not only to their home country but also to Europe, as a space of culture, relationships, and common exchanges. Many Erasmus students joined as couples, others got married (my son met an Alsatian colleague in Dublin, and now they have two lovely children), and all of them kept up transnational relationships

which are still useful for their work careers as well as for cultural-tourism exchanges.

Are incoming Erasmus students able to find courses taught in English?

The appeal of Italian Universities used to be diminished by the scarce diffusion of the Italian language as a vehicular language, except for children and grandchildren of Italian emigrants. Initially, exchanges were sought for in humanistic sectors (Art History, Literature, Linguistics) or scientifically advanced sectors (Physics, Biology...), as well as in cases when they were with historic Universities, or Universities located in touristic towns. It was, therefore, necessary to develop courses taught in a vehicular language, especially English.

The School of Management and Economics started with an English medium Degree course in Management; gradually, other Degree courses taught in English followed, and nowadays they are offered even online. It was also necessary to train lecturers in didactics in a foreign language, thanks to specific training courses, and to overcome the problems of legal technical language, which in Italy is based on Romantic Codes, and is therefore difficult to adapt to the Common Law language. However, the encouragement from the world of companies, the impulse given by Department Directors, and the commitment of many lecturers, especially the younger ones, overcame any obstacle.

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How are exchange agreements set up, and how are the selection and formation of outgoing Erasmus students organized?

The first step is the negotiation of the framework agreement, which states the yearly number of exchangeable students (tendentially, but not necessarily symmetrical); the duration of the exchange period: initially, since not all Universities had yet adhered to the 3-year

Bachelor + 2 year Masters' model (for example German Universities in the first years after 1997) or the division into semesters (Humanistic and Law Schools), this raised the problem of homologation at the European level; choice of the 1st or 2nd semester depending on the agreed courses students are to attend.

Every year, an Erasmus call is published, listing all partner Universities with which there is an agreement; the call states the number of positions available in each partner University and the deadline for applications (initial students were asked to express a first and a second choice in their application). The Erasmus call is divided into sections according to the instruction language: there is an English, German, French, and Spanish-Portuguese language area section.

Students are selected according to criteria based on the number of examinations already passed, the average grade, and the year of enrolment (students who are about to graduate and Master's students are given precedence). A motivational interview with each suitable applicant is then organized; evaluation looks at the knowledge of the receiving University's language (since the Erasmus Program is not aimed at studying languages, but at enriching the students' experience with foreign Universities and environments), at academic motivation (courses the student intends to attend, maybe final dissertation to be prepared), at personal motivation (whether the student seems prepared to adapt to a different lifestyle, and shows a genuine interest in discovering new cultural patterns) and at career motivation (especially for traineeships in companies).

Finally, the Erasmus Commission puts down a ranking. In early times, a first-choice ranking and a second-choice ranking were prepared, to distribute candidates into all available positions, avoiding excessive affluence to the most attractive Universities and thus maybe leaving some locations uncovered. Subsequently, due to the high number of applications, the second choice was canceled in the whole

of Italy; however, in my view, this leads students to concentrate their applications on the locations which seem most attractive, even just based on mere students' "word-of-mouth", which is often misleading. Therefore, a second chance is nowadays given: students who have not been assigned to the chosen receiving University are later offered the chance of spending their Erasmus exchange semester at one of the Universities of the chosen language area where some positions have remained uncovered; students are given a few days to think about it and maybe collect information about the specific University, before they agree. They often do agree, and in the end, they are very happy of having been assigned to a more "unusual" destination.

As to the formation of outgoing Erasmus students, once they have been selected, they are invited to meetings with the School's Erasmus officers and with the Erasmus coordinator relevant to the destination they have been appointed to – since the coordinator, who is a lecturer, has normally visited the destination University personally, often has scientific connections with colleagues teaching there, and has collected feedback from students who have spent their Erasmus exchange period at that University in previous years, as well as from incoming students from that University. The plan of courses each student should attend is agreed upon with the relevant Erasmus coordinator. Furthermore, meetings are organized with students who have been at the selected location, and with students from that University who are currently in Erasmus exchange at our School.

When outgoing students have reached the hosting University, their activity is carefully monitored, with the exchange of information between coordinators to solve problems that might show up, for example changing agreed classes because a class is not offered anymore or is not coherent, as to its syllabus, with the student's objectives. Similarly, the Erasmus coordinators follow up on the activity of incoming

students, and keep in touch with their home coordinators, if necessary, adjusting their plans of studies and examinations.

When outgoing students return to Turin after their Erasmus experience, their marks need to be validated. It should be remembered that grading systems may vary from one EU Member State to another: in France, the highest score is theoretically 20/20, but in practice, it is 16/18; in the other EU Member States, grades are letters of the alphabet from A to F (failure); in the further EU Member States what counts is not the single examination, but the average score throughout the academic year. The Erasmus Commission then addresses any issue of recognition of supplementary or unforeseen examinations in courses which however are equivalent, as to syllabus and credits, to courses offered at the home University. Finally, the examinations passed abroad are added to the student's curriculum by the Schools' Student Offices.

Bi-national Degree theses are also discussed, sometimes in the presence (even just virtual) of lecturers from both Schools.

Which kind of feedback have you received from students, lecturers, and officers concerning the Erasmus experience?

The Erasmus Program has been, and still is, a source of significant experiences for:

- ◆ Outgoing and incoming students. Sandro Gozi, now a member of the EU Parliament elected in France, in his [book](#): *Generazione Erasmus al potere. Il coraggio della responsabilità* (*Erasmus Generation in power. The courage of responsibility*), Bocconi University Ed., 2016, highlights this generation's potentialities and difficulties in emerging.
- ◆ Lecturers, who have started dialoguing with European colleagues, not only about scientific research but also about

didactic methods and organization. In this regard, two important initiatives started: the Jean Monnet network, which set up chairs by the same name, one of which I held and still hold; and AUSE (University Association of European Studies), of which I have been Vice-President and now a member of the Committee of Guarantors.

- ◆ University administrative offices, which have compared their bureaucratic practices, often making them leaner, improving them, and updating them. Dr. Marengo, now retired, remembers that “glorious period” nostalgically.
- ◆ Central educational administrations, which, by creating Bodies dedicated to managing the various European educational projects, are proposing improvements in the national formation system (among them, courses taught in the English language and online didactics).

I enjoyed the great privilege of being among the first in Italy and Europe to follow the Erasmus Project and to be in touch with the various Italian coordinators, who were mainly language lecturers; since I was among the few non-linguists, being a comparative lawyer, the group entrusted me with analyzing the legal-organizational aspects of the project.

Guided by prof. Corradi, in 1989 we took part in a visit to Salamanca University, to negotiate exchange agreements with the main Spanish Universities, and in 1991 we went to New York to develop exchanges that were then going to enter the Mundus Project.

Unfortunately, this “grass-root” experience was not welcomed by the Rectors’ Conference and by the RUI Foundation, which aimed at centralizing all regulations and decisions in Rome, and thus prof. Corradi was emarginated and the network was dismantled. However,

relationships remained strong and this enabled every single University to keep up some organizational and decisional autonomy.

The structure designed in the first phase (University Erasmus Commission, common procedures, Central Erasmus Office, and Schools' Erasmus Offices) was maintained and strengthened, even after I was not a Vice-Rector anymore and was substituted by an Erasmus Delegate, prof. Morelli, and by the various subsequent Rectors.

The most significant experience for me, however, is the one I live when I meet again with many students, I sent for an Erasmus experience, or their parents, who thank me for the deep formational transformation and for the professional and relational opportunities the Erasmus experience enabled them to pick.

Finally, let me quote two relevant passages:

One is from Jean Monnet, who brought forth the Schumann Declaration, which 70 years ago initiated the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the first nucleus of the European integration process: *“Les institutions peuvent, si elles sont bien construites, accumuler et transmettre la sagesse aux générations successives”* (Institutions can, if they are well constructed, accumulate and transfer wisdom to future generations).

The other one is from Altiero Spinelli, founder of the European Federalist Movement, who in the Ventotene Declaration in 1943 indicated to future Europe an anticipating objective of the Italian Constitution: “young people should be assisted with what is needed to reduce, as far as possible, distances among their starting positions in their struggle for life. In particular, the State education system should offer a real chance of continuing their studies up to the highest level to the most suitable persons, instead of to the richest ones”.

Prof. Barettoni, what was your experience as an International Relations Officer at the School of Management and Economics, Turin University?

When I started my activity at the International Office, in 2005, we already had a very wide network of Erasmus partnerships in Western Europe, therefore my role was mainly to extend our international exchange network to Central and Eastern European Universities as well as Universities from other continents. Since I had been teaching a lot in Central and Eastern European Universities, we intensified our bonds with Universities from those areas (Lithuania, Russia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Poland, and Serbia...); with some of them we were even able to negotiate Erasmus exchange agreements since the relevant Countries were already Ethe U Member States, were preparing to join the EU or were in any case included in the Erasmus Programme.

As to Universities from other continents, of course, many of our students wished to go to the United States, so we negotiated several exchange agreements with prominent U.S. Universities, and also invited U.S. lecturers to Turin as visiting professors. We strengthened our relationships with our partner Universities in Canada, Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, and we opened new exchanges with more South American Universities in the above countries and Chile.

However, we did not want to restrict our exchanges to the usual Europe-America pattern, since we did have many students and lecturers interested in other continents and in emerging/developing countries, so we also negotiated many new agreements with Universities in Australia, Asia (India, China, Taiwan, South Korea...) and Africa (South Africa, Morocco, Tanzania...).

I believe that a very important part of successful international relations is also the personal factor, i.e. to go and visit partner Universities, and invite their lecturers to us: through the years, I was able to travel

to many of our partner Universities on all continents as a visiting professor, and many of their lecturers came to teach in Turin. I believe the personal presence of a lecturer from a partner University is extremely enriching for local students and lecturers, who are unable to go for an exchange to more than one or two countries but are in this way able to experience different approaches and teaching methods. And of course, for a lecturer and exchange coordinator, it is very important to personally get to know the Universities he/she will send students to and receive students from.

How are foreign visiting professors welcomed and accommodated?

Visits from lecturers from our partner Universities are always treasured by us, because they are the best ambassadors for future incoming students, and they will be important reference persons for our future outgoing students. We do our best to make them feel at home in our town, discover its beauties and points of interest, and also meet our officers and lecturers; we believe that personal relationships are fundamental, for approximating our curricula, working out exchange students' careers, solving any problems which might come up, and maybe, when the time comes, even creating double degrees.

Therefore, we put the utmost care into welcoming visiting professors adequately: we pick them up from the airport and accommodate them in one of our partner hotels, according to their preferences: mainly it will be one of our hotels in the historic city center, which is very attractive, and well connected to our School by public transport. During their stay in Turin, we introduce them to colleagues, officers, and students, as well as of course to the classes they teach; we invite them to a formal meal in one of our typical restaurants; but we also put every care into showing them the main points of interest in our city, like castles, parks, museums, the main shopping areas... and if they have sufficient

spare time we like to take them to our mountains, countryside or one of our lakes.

This policy has enabled us to construct solid and long-lasting friendly relationships with many colleagues all over the world: some of them have even returned to Turin regularly, I have visited them at their premises, and together we have been able to solve any problem concerning our exchange agreements and students' careers; also, through them, we have gained access to their partner Universities, and we have been able to enter into agreements with some of these Universities thanks to their kind introduction.

Do your School's lecturers make full use of the opportunity of being visiting professors at partner Universities?

We have always warmly encouraged our lecturers to visit our partner Universities and experience teaching there since we believe this is very enriching for them personally, as well as fruitful for the local students and lecturers and for strengthening our mutual relationships. Several of our lecturers have been very keen on doing this; one of our professors, now retired, has even written a book about her experience at one of our partner Universities in the United States; another one enjoyed his experience at one of our partner Universities in Australia so much that he has moved to that University!

Though we have been actively promoting the possibility of going to partner Universities as visiting professors, however, some of our lecturers still do not see the importance of this chance, or do not find time for an exchange period among their many commitments; we do regret this and we still work intensively on trying to promote this extremely precious opportunity!

Annex 2. Covid-19 Emergency FAQs for exchange students (UNITO)

When will classes resume?

The Italian Government has ordered the closure of all schools and universities nationwide until 3rd May 2020 and introduced strong limitations to personal movements. As of now, with other European countries starting to adopt similar measures, we cannot give a precise date when everything is going to go back to normal. In this regard, we do ask for your patience and understanding.

Is it mandatory to end my exchange now?

No, it isn't. If you wish to wait until the 3rd of May and attend classes online, you can do so.

We acknowledge, however, that some of you may feel unsafe or worried about the whole situation and wish to go home, especially if you just came here for the second/spring semester. We, of course, want to do everything that is in our power to help you do so. Please contact your home university as well and follow their advice.

On the contrary, if you decide to stay, we want you to be aware of the limitations that are occurring at this moment both in terms of teaching (not all courses can be taught online e.g. laboratories) and of personal movement (cinemas, theatres, museums, and other leisure venues are closed and traveling is limited) and this may have an impact on your exchange as you imagined it. In this regard, please contact your home University as well and try to understand with them what is the best course of action for you. For example, if you planned to graduate in May, this may affect your schedule.

I've already left Turin. Can I attend classes and take exams online and/or, if necessary, come back to Turin when classes and exams restart regularly?

Yes, you can. The University is currently working on making most of its teachings available online as well as preparing for online exam sessions. You will receive further information on this from the relevant Professor and/or office as soon as it becomes available. Make sure to contact your home University to understand if they will recognize this kind of activity and credits as part of your exchange.

I am no longer in Turin but I am attending classes online. Do I have to register at the end of my mobility anyway?

It is not necessary unless your University requires you to do so (please check with them what the best course of action may be). We will require you, however, to fill in a questionnaire to keep track of your mobility differently. Check your email for further information.

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I couldn't take some exams in February/March. Can I take them online?

The University is working towards facilitating online exams for those who could not take them in February/March due to the sudden closure of the University. You will receive further information on this from the relevant Professor and/or office as soon as it becomes available. Please bear in mind that the spring exam session usually takes place in May/June/July.

What do I do if I want to go back home?

Please let us know and inform your home university as well. Check your email address where we sent you the self-declaration form for traveling

purposes (“*modulo per l’autodichiarazione Degli spostamenti*”), necessary to travel to the airport or the train station.

Due to the situation, we are facing, you are NOT requested to go to INFO POINT to interrupt your mobility period. You can do so by:

- ◆ Filling in the online form using your @edu.UniTO.it email.
- ◆ Filling at the end of mobility form upload. If you cannot print it, you can send it via email without your signature.
- ◆ The date of the end of your mobility is the last day you are/were in Turin.
- ◆ If you took exams, please upload the most up-to-date list of courses and exams of your Career Plan (“*Autocertificazione esami per student incoming*” available under www.UniTO.it » MyUniTO » Carriera » Certificazioni Carrier). For any incomplete or incorrect information, please specify the relevant option.
- ◆ End of mobility form: <https://forms.gle/P4BumPB2nvweb-pwc7>

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I ended my mobility before the emergency started. When will I get my Transcript of Records and my certificate of attendance?

We are working on this as well, however, it may take longer than planned. Your home universities have been contacted and are aware of this. For any extreme urgency (such as graduation) please contact us accordingly through your home university as well. Due to the current emergency, we ask for your patience and understanding.

How does distance learning work?

To be able to access classes online you first need to:

- ◆ Make sure your MyUniTO account is active (it must show “Current Student”. If you still see “Future Student” and you registered your arrival at the Infopoint, please contact us).
- ◆ Take note of your MyUniTO username and password. You will need them to log in.
- ◆ Check your @edu.UniTO.it email account for messages.

Follow the instruction in the document named “Distance learning”.

I was supposed to start my exchange this semester. When can I come to Turin?

If you haven't left your home country yet, please reschedule your mobility in Turin for the next academic year and inform your home university. For this semester no new incoming mobilities at the University of Turin will be allowed.

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How do I access healthcare in Turin?

For all emergencies (Pronto Soccorso), Covid-19 included, healthcare assistance is guaranteed regardless of any type of medical insurance and with no extra costs.

If you feel like you might have suspicious symptoms related to Covid-19 (most commonly fever, dry cough, shortness of breath), please make sure to:

- ◆ **Call the Regional Emergency toll-free number 800.19.20.20:** be ready to answer some questions related to your whereabouts, latest travels, health condition, etc... Be specific and follow their guidelines and advice. The service is available 24/7.

- ◆ **112 - Common Emergency Telephone Number:** for emergency medical services.
- ◆ **National Information Center on Covid-19: 1500.** For general information valid nationwide.
- ◆ **Guardia Medica: 0115747.** non-urgent medical services at night-time (from 8 pm to 8 am) or on weekends (from 10 am to 8 am on the closest working date). **The service is free of charge.**
- ◆ **Do not enter the Pronto Soccorso (hospital emergency room) without signaling your symptoms first and keep the safe distancing measures!**

In all other *non-emergency* cases:

- ◆ If you applied for health insurance with the **Italian National Health System (Sistema Sanitario Nazionale - SSN)** you can choose a general practitioner (“*medico d base*”) in the area where you live without extra costs. For further information please check the Edisu website: <https://www.edisu.piemonte.it/en/faq/faq-sale-studio-e-altri-servizi/faq-health-care-information>
- ◆ If you have a **European Health Insurance Card** (in Italian called “TEAM”) released from another European country, first contact your doctor or the competent health authorities in your home country to gather information on how to use your card and then take it with you to a general practitioner near you. For further information: <https://www.edisu.piemonte.it/en/faq/faq-sale-studio-e-altri-servizi/faq-health-care-information>
- ◆ If you have private insurance (either European or non-European) please contact your insurance company at first to understand what services are included and so that they can provide you the name of a doctor and or clinic/hospital that

are affiliated with them. Take your insurance documents with you as well.

What is the situation now in Italy and Turin? How can I keep updated?

Please check the following pages for regular updates:

- ◆ **UniTO webpage - Italian version:** <https://www.UniTO.it/avvisi/coronavirus-aggiornamenti-la-comunita-universitaria>
- ◆ **UniTO webpage - English Version:** <https://en.UniTO.it/news/coronavirus-Covid-19-update-UniTO-community>
- ◆ **FAQ:** https://www.esteri.it/mae/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/approfondimenti/farnesina-al-lavoro-per-una-corretta-informazione-all-estero.html
- ◆ **Read the World Health Organization's advice:** <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>



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