



## Erasmus Policy Statement 2021-2027

### International Strategy

Since its foundation in 1993, **Universidad Francisco de Vitoria (UFV)** has actively promoted student mobility as a key factor to improve the employability of its graduates. The international mobility projects are a fundamental part of UFV's international strategy and are always present in its Strategic Plan (2024/2029 current plan). The main objectives are:

- To achieve a university staff with an international teaching and research profile.
- To enable and promote the students international experience to boost their leadership role in the coming world transformation.
- To imbue higher education with an international vision, in dialogue with other nationalities and cultures.
- To develop intercultural competences and skills that facilitate integration into the labour market.

Each year, nearly 1,000 students (both incoming and outgoing) participate in international exchange programs at UFV. Additionally, while there has been an increase in exchanges with non-European institutions, **Erasmus** remains the primary mobility program for students and staff at UFV.

Thus, its internationalisation strategy has been re-defined in a new International Strategic Plan (2024/2029). In the context of the Strategic Planning Process, UFV has adopted a new Integrated Institutional Internationalisation model. Internationalisation affects all university areas (teaching and research) and UFV promotes a comprehensive and transforming internationalisation, inclusive of the entire university community, which contributes to the humanisation of an increasingly global world. This model includes four main areas: (a) Culture; (b) Organizational Structure; (c) Leadership and People; (d) System and Processes. Our goal is to give all interested students from different backgrounds the possibility to gain high-quality international experience through a period of study or work abroad.

The **Erasmus+ Programme** offers many activities for learning mobility, creating opportunities to internationalise students and staff. As part of its International Strategic Plan, UFV will increase the number of international activities as well the list of exchange agreements and partnerships with institutions which have a similar academic profile, common areas of interest and shared institutional values, often built on prior academic co-operation and collaboration. The objective is to continue this path to provide students from all study areas and staff with the added value of an international experience and the main skills to progress and prosper professionally but also enable them to be engaged citizens. Moreover, UFV is currently implementing and developing new digital learning and exchange initiatives in collaboration with partners abroad. There is no doubt that participating in the



Erasmus+ Programme play a crucial role in enabling cooperation within Europe, with the EU neighbourhood and beyond.

The implementation of internationalization activities at home aligns with the new UFV Strategic Plan. We are committed to facilitating that incoming and outgoing faculty and research staff with international profiles, as well as attracting high-profile students from other countries to enhance the international experience of UFV students at home. This environment of diversity, multiculturalism, and innovative learning approaches will inspire both incoming and outgoing students to acquire and develop the knowledge and skills needed for today's job market. Additionally, UFV will continue to make significant efforts to ensure the integration of foreign and domestic students, as well as academic and faculty staff, through the buddy program, Spanish courses, personalized tutoring sessions, volunteer opportunities, and various cultural activities integrated into the curriculum.

Curriculum development in collaboration with UFVs EU and non-EU partners is another key strategic goal at UFV (structure and content). Furthermore, the design of innovative learning environments is a particular area of interest for project collaboration. In line with UFV modernisation strategy, our university offers academic staff opportunities for professional development (pedagogical innovation awards, pursuit of excellence, key alliances with leading institutions) to foster the quality of teaching. Therefore, an important promotion campaign will be carried out by the UFV Vice-Rectorate for Internationalisation to encourage UFV staff to participate in exchanges for teaching and training in the framework of the Erasmus Programme.

### **Erasmus+ Actions**

UFV participates in the **Erasmus Mobility Programs (KA131 and KA171)** as a key component of its internationalization strategy. In addition, it actively engages in **Erasmus KA2 projects**—Cooperation between organizations and institutions—fostering innovation, knowledge exchange, and capacity building in higher education. Currently, UFV is managing six KA2 projects and one Capacity Building project, collaborating with international partners to enhance educational methodologies, digital transformation, and environment. These initiatives reinforce UFV's commitment to academic excellence and global engagement.

In November 2024, UFV has joined the "European Universities" initiative in the 2024 call, becoming part of the **ACE2-EU Alliance**: "Applied, Connected, Entrepreneurial, and Engaged – European University (ACE2-EU)".

The Applied, Connected, Entrepreneurial, and Engaged European University (ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU) is an ambitious alliance uniting nine universities across Europe to address global challenges through collaboration, innovation and inclusion. Founded on shared values such as equality, sustainability, and solidarity, ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU aims to drive societal transformation while promoting the core principles of the European Union.



The ACE2-EU alliance is led by the Santarém Polytechnic University in Portugal and includes the participation of eight other European universities: Constantin Brâncuși University (Târgu-Jiu, Romania); Latvian Academy of Culture (Latvia); Medical University of Gdańsk (Poland); Kaunas University of Applied Engineering Sciences (Lithuania); Goce Delcev University (North Macedonia); Carinthia University of Applied Sciences (Austria); and Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt (Germany).

Participation in the ACE2-EU alliance will allow UFV and its partners to build a true European interuniversity campus. The main objective of ACE2-EU is to equip students, faculty, and administrative staff with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to face future challenges, including digital and green transitions, as well as current socioeconomic challenges. Students will benefit from programs offered by the partner universities of the alliance, enhancing their academic and personal development in a collaborative and multicultural environment.

The ACE2-EU alliance is structured into several units and operational systems:

- (1) "APP Factory", which develops joint student-centered learning initiatives based on challenges (short programs and full academic programs).
- (2) "ARIES Incubator", focused on developing joint research and innovation activities, fostering entrepreneurship, and supporting research projects.
- (3) "SPACE Centre", designed to co-create social service activities with a direct impact on the social fabric of the alliance's universities.
- (4) "e-Campus", a digital platform that supports virtual training initiatives developed among the alliance's universities.

UFV will play a prominent role within the ACE2-EU alliance, leading the APP Factory, which is responsible for designing and developing the alliance's training and pedagogical programs. Additionally, UFV will co-lead the "SPACE Centre", related to the design of social and cultural programs, as well as the "e-Campus" digital platform.

The UFV Vice-Rectorate for Research has boosted research in recent years and numerous UFV academics are working on research projects with research institutes, universities and other organizations around the world. The European Projects Office leads the development of research projects at the international level and drives innovation and excellence in teaching methods and support structures at UFV.



Regarding the impact on the modernisation of our university, the main expected outcomes will cover the following areas:

- ✓ Improve the quality and relevance of higher education. Increase the competences of professors and researchers, with the subsequent impact on graduate employment outcomes.
- ✓ Strengthen quality through mobility and cross-border co-operation. Building mobility more systematically into the different curricula of our university and ensuring the efficient recognition of credits gained abroad.
- ✓ Link higher education, research and business for excellence and regional growth. Development of entrepreneurial, creative and innovation skills as well as encouraging partnership and cooperation with business. Competency-based curricula, work placements, a mentoring programme and career counselling are tools offered by UFV to improve the employability of its graduates.
- ✓ Improve governance and funding. Creation of a new coordinating body for international projects within the University and increase in financial support for selected participant and projects.
- ✓ Improve digitalization of all processes. UFV is constantly implementing new ICT tools across the university to improve services efficiency, data protection, communication and students' engagement. Thanks to the Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) project, the University has implemented a new software for mobility management provided by an external provider and also connected to the academic management system (Universitas XXI), which has enabled greater intercommunication.