

## UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

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# Erasmus Policy Statement

## International Strategy

The University of Belgrade is a comprehensive, research-oriented university dedicated to academic excellence. The University is the leading institution of higher education in the region and strives to meet the challenges of modern times and, at the same time, maintain the values of national tradition and heritage in a multicultural society. Devoted to research, education, progress and prosperity, the University of Belgrade has the following strategic priorities: to set the highest standards in higher education, to value and encourage intellectual and personal growth and to stimulate meaningful engagement, which serves the well-being of the entire society.

The University of Belgrade is engaged in increasing the attractiveness of the University as an international study destination in the region. The UB would like to extend international and regional partnerships and research cooperation to improve the University's visibility and reputation. The University of Belgrade adopted its Strategy for the Internationalization of the University of Belgrade in 2014. By building collaborations with excellent institutions all over the world, the UB will be more competitive, both nationally and internationally.

The University has bilateral agreements of cooperation with universities from almost every continent and is a member of several university networks, such as the EUA, UNICA, the Danube Rectors' Conference, UNIADRION, AUF, the Black Sea Universities Network and, most recently, the CE7 Network, an informal network of central and eastern European universities partnering with LERU.

Academic partners are chosen based on academic quality and mutual strategic goals, at various levels. The UB faculties and institutes choose their own partners, based on the UB Internationalization Strategy. The general principles of selecting partners are the same at all levels. The University seeks complementary partners with common academic interests for mutual benefits. The strategic priority of the University is to establish partnerships with institutions that can partner with several faculties/institutes of the UB. Although globally oriented, the long-term partners of the UB have been universities in Europe and North America. The University pays special attention to maintaining fruitful relations with universities in the region of South-East Europe and the Western Balkans. The UB has recently started focusing on more intensive cooperation with universities in China.

The UB plans to double the number of international students and researchers in the next five-year period. The number of foreign scholars at the UB is a measure of the University's status as an open and internationally recognized institution. The UB has seen an imbalance in incoming and outgoing mobility. European universities receive more students than they send to the UB.



The UB would like to attract excellent students and scholars from abroad. The presence of international students and scholars contributes to a dynamic and open academic environment. The UB has a professional service that fully supports the needs of foreign students and scholars. The University has a very successful partnership with the Belgrade section of the Erasmus Student Network. The University also offers its students and staff an international perspective by increasing the possibilities for study or research periods abroad. The UB provides professional guidance for students and scholars wishing to participate in exchange programs. The UB recognizes and supports the benefits of international mobility among administrative staff. All levels of academic staff at the UB faculties, institutes and central administrative services are encouraged to participate in training opportunities abroad.

The UB offers 70 study programs in English. The University would like to put more efforts into offering study programs in foreign languages other than English. At the moment the University offers one Master program in French. For incoming students, scholars and staff, the University provides courses of Serbian at the Center for Serbian as a Foreign Language at its Faculty of Philology.

One of the strategic priorities of the UB is the establishment and administration of double, multi and joint Master and PhD programs in areas where such cooperation may fortify strategic research collaboration and ensure a better and more internationally oriented education. The UB participates in several Erasmus Mundus joint master programs and has set up 7 dual degree programs. The University has a number of cotutelle agreements for doctoral students.

The Erasmus+ program has prioritized issues such as quality of education, retention of students and employability of students after graduation. Participation in the activities of the Program will improve the quality and relevance of teaching at the UB and will also contribute to the better employability of students after their graduation.

### Strategy for the organisation and implementation of international cooperation projects

In its efforts to set firm framework and clear path and instruments for successful internationalization of the University and its practices, including a possible positive spillover to national and regional H.E. area, the Senate of the University of Belgrade adopted three documents that serve as milestones and help in providing clear guidelines for actions to be taken and objectives to strive towards:

- Strategy for the Internationalization
- Mobility Strategy
- Action Plan for Internationalization

Since the 2014/2015 academic year, the University of Belgrade, (along with other key stakeholders at the national level, such as the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, or Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, etc.), has been actively and continuously taking planned actions towards the objectives set in the stated strategies. Key priorities, actions and related objectives in this regard are:



- Adoption of laws and regulations that strengthen support and facilitate implementation of international cooperation, internationalization and mobility;
- An increase of funds for the development of mobility;
- Further increase and development of home curriculum;
- Building and facilitating mobility infrastructure by designing and developing online mobility platform, putting up and promoting clear information guides and support for both incoming and outgoing students and staff, supporting buddy system for incoming candidates, translations to additional world languages planned for the future period, etc.;
- Harmonizing international and home students' rights and obligations in terms of subsidized accommodation, food, health insurance and right to work through students and youth agencies;
- Education and informative sessions on regular basis for home staff and students;
- Support and incentive to home administrative staff, to increase outgoing mobility and related learning processes, and to create new contacts and opportunities;
- Providing a consolidated, complete and annually updated ECTS Course Catalogue in Serbian and English language, from all 31 faculties, with all 408 degree courses;
- Supporting outgoing teaching mobility and strengthening home capacity to teach in English and other foreign languages, as well as to further develop home study programs in English language (as a result, from 2016 to 2018 the University of Belgrade increased the number of its study programs in English language by 45%).
- In support to teaching and learning in English, and in support to facilitating learning in Serbian for incoming students, the University of Belgrade:
  - offers language assessment to all students of the University of Belgrade in 34 foreign languages that are taught at UB - Faculty of Philology;
  - provides all of its academic and administrative staff with free courses of the English language;
  - offers courses of Serbian language, Serbian culture and heritage to its incoming students, at the Center for Serbian as a Foreign Language, within the UB Faculty of Philology;
- Appointing and training an Erasmus/ECTS coordinator at each member institution (31 faculties and 11 research institutes), and further strengthening its central IRO and trained IR coordinators at all member institutions;
- Support to, and an increase of joint study programs at all levels, that has resulted in 8 such programs so far, with one of them being the Astromundus – that was awarded the best Erasmus Mundus project for two consecutive academic years (2013/14 and 2014/15). The further development of joint study programs, and a consequent positive effect to related home policies, regulations and practices is further supported;
- Creating databases as integral part of IT systems, to keep accurate records of all incoming and outgoing students, researchers and staff that participated in mobility

In addition to the above listed, further endeavors of the University of Belgrade, in regard to the objectives and strivings set out in the official documents and strategies, will also include:

- Efforts and contributions to acquisition of student visas
- Increase capacities for accommodation facilities for international students and staff
- Further work on designing innovative study programmes

Furthermore, the University of Belgrade continues building upon all the good practices it has so far received appreciation and positive feedback from the EACEA and other relevant instances, as was the model of project management and project monitoring set during the life span of the Tempus program, which were positively evaluated as a good practice and translated into later projects and programs UB has become a part of.



## Modernization Agenda

As a leading higher education institution in the region, the University of Belgrade needs to invest further efforts into not only maintaining, but improving its position in order to make its presence continuously felt at the national, cross-border and international levels. Further participation of the University of Belgrade in the Erasmus+ Program may play a key role in achieving this goal.

In line with the mission of the University of Belgrade, to provide superior education and exceptional knowledge to its students, the University is also striving to equip its graduates and researchers with the skills they need to apply this knowledge to the further pursuance of their studies or research, both nationally and internationally. In order for them to be more competitive on the common European labor market, the UB strives to increase their employability through training and education offered in a wide array of competitive and modern disciplines.

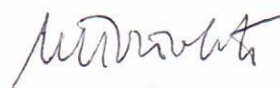
By becoming a part of the European Education Area, the UB open to wider cross-border cooperation with its traditional partners from the region, as well as increased cooperation within the EEA itself. This cooperation is mostly visible within the Erasmus+ Program, through student and staff mobility and capacity building projects, which have all brought about the modernization of curricula offered at the UB. There has been an increase in the number of study programs in foreign languages and an improvement in the quality of education and training offered to UB students and incoming mobility students.

Increased mobility within the European Higher Education Area creates a better international environment for the students and staff taking part in mobility programs, for those going on mobility abroad, but also for those students and staff who are not able to take part in the mobility, as they can also benefit from incoming mobility participants, as well as those returning home from mobility, who all bring an invaluable experience, thus also improving the quality of the education and training offered at home.

One of the key aspects of improvements that have been taking place at the UB, in line with its modernization agenda, is the creation of an efficient knowledge triangle and innovation environment. The UB founded the Centre for Technology Transfer in 2010, with the purpose of identifying, protecting and commercializing the results of scientific, research and expert work and protecting the intellectual property of the University. The Science and Technology Park Belgrade was established by the RS Government, the City of Belgrade and the UB, with the aim to create a favourable environment for knowledge transfer, new technology development, innovation, commercialization, networking and growth in a knowledgebased economy.

As a state-owned University, the UB's main source of finance is the national budget, although the University and its faculties and institutes may also gain additional income by working within their core activities. Furthermore, as a researchintensive university, the University of Belgrade must translate its research results into practice, attracting additional sources of funding.

In conclusion, it is essential to mention that the involvement and support of the top management of the University of Belgrade (Rector and the Rector's Board) was been recognized and highly appreciated by EACEA in its 2014 institutional monitoring visit at the UB. The governing bodies of the UB have introduced a model of good practice in project management and project monitoring during the life span of the TEMPUS program, which were positively evaluated as models of good practice and translated into later projects and programs of the UB. This all goes to show that the University of Belgrade is well-prepared to adapt to current challenges in providing quality education, preparing its students for the demands of the European labor market and offering research opportunities and staff development to its employees. This practice would be impossible to achieve without international cooperation with eminent HE partners from abroad and without adopting examples of good practice and aiming for reciprocity in channels of cooperation.



Prof. Ivanka Popović  
RECTOR