



UNIVERSITE DU LITTORAL COTE D'OPALE ERASMUS+ STRATEGY STATEMENT – 2021-2027

The Université du Littoral Côte d'Opale (ULCO) aims to expand its relations with leading European and world universities in order to improve its international visibility and develop strong and lasting partnerships in education and research. ULCO is a university located in the coastal area of Northern France. Due to its geographical position, it has developed specific themes related to its location in coastal and port areas, including: marine sciences (marine biology, fish processing), port management and logistics, environment. As in the past, cooperation with French-speaking countries (Mediterranean, Africa, Middle East, Vietnam) remains important for ULCO. Its geographical position - ULCO is located less than 20 km from the Belgian border and the Channel Tunnel starts from one of its sites - is an asset for the development of cross-border cooperation.

Within the Hauts-de-France region, ULCO coordinates its training and research activities with the University of Artois and the University of Picardie - Jules Verne, with which it has undertaken an Alliance approach since 2018 (A2U), within the framework of Ordinance n°2018-1131. Joint actions will enable its members to increase their international visibility and attractiveness on a scale that would not be possible for a single institution. For example, the universities of the A2U Alliance are planning to create a co-accredited international training offer. Among the possibilities under consideration are a Graduate School abroad (including a campus in Morocco) and joint double degrees. All three universities have an extensive network of international partners. The mapping of its partners in research as well as in training and their pooling will not only allow a better visibility of existing partnerships, but also the development of new projects and the constitution of a network of collaborations. Within the framework of the A2U Alliance, structures will be created in order to promote a common dynamic on 7 structuring research themes: Artificial intelligence and optimization; Energy; Sea and Coastline; Environment; Health; Societal adaptation to change; Cultures, Territories and Heritage. These themes will also be favoured at the level of the A2U Alliance's international scientific policy, which will be based on the mutualisation of existing international partnerships, giving priority to foreign universities of excellence, particularly in Europe, to facilitate the setting up of European projects. Among the levers used will be "visiting professors" and thesis co-supervision. The pooling of the human and financial resources that the three universities allocate to their IR services will allow a more visible and effective international presence.

ULCO subscribes to the 5 priorities of the Higher Education modernization agenda. Its ambition is to provide its students with a high quality, relevant education so that they can access the levels of qualification that will enable them to become the graduates and researchers that tomorrow's Europe needs. It will rely on mobility and transnational cooperation to raise the quality of its training and to improve its governance. It will promote regional excellence and development by linking higher education, research and business.

In order to achieve these objectives, ULCO will develop actions under the three Erasmus Key Action 1 - *Learning Mobilities*; Erasmus Key Action 2 - *cooperation between organisations and institutions* ; and Erasmus Key Action 3 - *Support to Development and Cooperation Policy Reform*.

The Erasmus+ programme will play a key role in ULCO's modernization and internationalization strategy, participating in all three Erasmus Key Actions. As in the past, a particular effort will be made in the area of student mobility, which will function as a lever for the other two Erasmus Key Actions. During its 2018-2019 evaluation campaign, the HCERES recognised that the international dimension at ULCO is supported by a proactive attitude which has been successful (increase in double degrees and thesis co-supervision), but that in terms of mobility as well as attractiveness, it comes up against the realities of its territory (including the precariousness of students, which prevents them from envisaging a stay abroad with confidence). ULCO will continue its policy of encouraging international mobility for its students and staff, which has proved effective in recent years, and will improve its reception arrangements by continuing the deployment of the "Welcome to France" label.

Particular attention will be paid to the international attractiveness of Masters programmes. In addition to the Masters already offered in English - including MISC (Master in Complex Systems Engineering) in Calais - new Masters in English will be opened, including (i) specific Masters open to engineering students (e.g. Master in Design Engineering) and (ii) Masters in Social and Human Sciences, in particular in tourism and port management. These openings will attract excellent international students, the best of whom will be able to continue on to PhD level. These Masters in English could be a lever to start exchanges with the eventual aim of filing joint Erasmus Mundus Masters.

ULCO will continue to respect the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and inclusion in the way it selects candidates for mobility (students and staff) as well as in the awarding of grants. Special efforts will be made to provide access to mobility for students who are still deprived of it for financial reasons. As an incentive to mobility, it will maintain its Erasmus+ study mobility policy as a matter of right, even if it means transferring funds from the OS or other budget lines, in order to make mobility possible for a maximum number of students. In this context, the new possibility of mixed mobility (short physical mobility + distance mobility) will be suitable for people who are far from mobility for financial reasons. Following the recent approval as an Apprentice Training Centre (CFA) by its FCU centre, ULCO will support a new public in mobility: apprentices, for whom blended mobility may be an appropriate formula. In order to promote inclusion, the International Relations Department will collaborate with the Student Life and Disability Office to set up measures for students with disabilities, whether they are outgoing or incoming mobility students.

ULCO's international policy will also take into account the after-effects of the COVID19 health crisis and its possible effects over time on mobility as long as there is no effective vaccine (difficulties in travelling, problems in obtaining a visa, etc.). ULCO is already well equipped with video conferencing infrastructure, but as part of its modernisation strategy, it aims to equip all its lecture theatres and large rooms with video conferencing. In combination with the development of digital resources, this will make it possible to develop blended mobility, but also to offer distance learning to students whose mobility is (temporarily) prevented or delayed.