

Pursuant to Article 54, paragraph 1, point 17 of the Statute of Union University Belgrade and the recommendation of the University Senate approved on 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2020, the University Council session held on 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2020, has adopted the following

## **THE POLICY CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME**

### **Overall goals of Union University Belgrade**

Union University Belgrade (hereinafter referred to as “the University”) is an independent higher education institution which was founded upon the following goals:

- to be a leading institution for the transfer of scientific, professional and artistic knowledge and skills,
- to contribute to the development of science, higher education processes and research,
- to provide an opportunity for everyone to acquire higher education under equal conditions and acquire education throughout their lives,
- to ensure the coordinated activity of its units and implement a unique policy of continuous improvement of the quality of its activity with the rational use of available personnel and material resources,
- to aspire to create and preserve the highest standards in teaching, learning and applying knowledge.

### **The Work of the University**

The University embodies educational, scientific and research work. It provides higher education in the fields of formal sciences, social sciences, applied sciences and art. All study programmes within the mentioned fields are realized at the faculties which are members of the University. The University consists of the Faculty of Computer Science, the Belgrade Banking Academy - Faculty of Banking, Insurance and Finance, the Union University Faculty of Law and the Faculty

of Law and Business Studies Dr Lazar Vrkić. The study programmes are realized at all three levels of academic studies according to the Bologna declaration. Scientific research at the University is conducted through basic and developmental research, and, if appropriate, applied research in certain fields.

As a community of higher education institutions, the University enables the exchange of knowledge and experience in various educational and scientific fields. The goal of the University is to function according to the law, traditions and values of the Republic of Serbia and Europe, especially in regard to directives in youth education in alignment with the intention of Serbia to join The European Union and embrace EU values - *the acquis communautaire*, the rule of law and the application of contemporary scientific achievements. The University also cooperates with universities beyond Europe and is open to cooperation in the fields of education and science based on the principles of equality, mutual respect and objectivity.

The University seeks to achieve the highest quality of education within the process of education reform and the process of stabilization and association with the European Union. Thus, the goals of the University are to establish modern study programmes, to attract expert teaching staff and set rigorous standards for high-quality education while treating students as equal partners in this endeavour. University students who demonstrate expertise in their respective fields while at the same time acting as honest citizens best reflect its quality.

### **The University's Vision**

Union University strives to be recognized regionally and internationally for its education, research and art activities, and for its programmes and principles as an exceptional scientific research, professional and higher education institution. In order to achieve this vision, the University commits to:

- emphasise the value of knowledge and academic honesty,
- emphasise the value of lifelong learning and professional development,
- encourage the scientific research of students and teaching staff,

- promote openness and diversity,
- develop centres of excellence at the member faculties.

The University is also committed to providing:

- high standards of instruction,
- high-quality instructional and supplementary staff,
- high standards of quality in scientific research and artistic work,
- high-quality equipment.

The University is as well committed to:

- fulfilling students' needs
- meeting the needs of society for proven experts in different fields.

### **The Internalization of Cooperation and Activities**

Since innovation and diversification in the area of higher education crucially contributes to the intellectual, economic and cultural development of society, the internationalization of the University creates a dynamic and inclusive academic community capable of responding to numerous challenges presented by the contemporary regional and global socio-economic environment. The internationalization and mobility of students, teaching and non-teaching staff creates opportunities for increasing the level of achievement of the academic community members, enabling them to adapt to the scientific and market needs of the country, the region, and the wider international community. The University has been working on the development of partner networks with higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area, with higher education institutions in the region and beyond. Cross-border cooperation and regional integration are considered to be one of the most important priorities, as intercultural exchange helps to promote the common European heritage of civic values and a good society.

Union University Belgrade chooses strategic partners based on the following principles:

- Cooperation and the building of networks with prominent higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area,
- Cooperation and the building of networks with prominent higher education institutions in the region of the Western Balkans and Southeast Europe,
- Cooperation with higher education institutions that can contribute to achieving the strategic goals of the University,
- Cooperation with higher education institutions that need the support of the University to achieve progress in the fields of science, education and overall capacity building,
- Cooperation with higher education institutions which can contribute to the achievement of the strategic goals of the Republic of Serbia in the scientific, economic and cultural arenas, as well as in other fields,
- Cooperation with higher education institutions in the region that are important for members of national minorities in the Republic of Serbia,
- Having common strategic goals at all educational and organizational levels.

The key aspect and strategic priority of the international cooperation of the University is academic mobility. The University aims to achieve the mobility of students, professors, teaching assistants, administrative and other non-teaching staff within the Erasmus + programme and other exchange programmes of the European Union. The University aims to achieve this academic mobility through:

- Encouraging student mobility at all three levels of academic studies,
- Encouraging student mobility through professional practice,
- Encouraging teaching staff mobility, especially in cooperation with higher education institutions which have accomplished significant results in higher education, innovation and knowledge transfer,

- Encouraging administrative and non-teaching staff mobility with the aim of positively impacting the processes of building internal capacity and internationalization,
- Achieving a balance between incoming and outgoing mobility,
- Ensuring benefits to students, teaching and non-teaching staff of the University, as well as members of the academic community from other institutions of higher education,
- Establishing strategic partnerships with higher education institutions in the region which have achieved significant results in the field of cultural exchange and the exchange of academic staff members and other members of society,
- Improving the quality of service while implementing the internationalization strategy,
- Organizing and implementing, i.e., ensuring, continuous academic mobility.

The normative framework that regulates and supports successful academic mobility includes the following legal acts and documents:

- The Strategy for the Internalization of Union University (2019-2023),
- The Action plan for Implementing the Strategy for the Internalization of Union University (2019-2023),
- Rulebook for International Mobility, and
- Language Policy.

Key support for students and staff in academic mobility is provided by the International Relations Office, in cooperation with the offices for international cooperation of all respective faculties. These offices were established with the aim of providing timely and complete information concerning various student and staff exchange programmes and other forms of cooperation, monitoring the implementation of individual projects and project activities, and providing consultations in legal, financial, logistical and other related matters. Union University is institutionally capable of launching academic mobility projects in accordance with the adopted Strategy for Internalization.

The University has experience in cooperation with various European universities and other higher education institutions. The University has organized and completed various bilateral and multilateral cooperation projects. The University has been participating in international cooperation projects since 2008 and has completed projects within the Tempus programme and Erasmus + student mobility frameworks. The University and its respective faculties have participated in the following projects: the Tempus Project *Business University of the New Age in Serbia – BUONA* (2008-2010), the Tempus project *Development of Public Administration and Management Studies in Serbia* (2009-2012), the Tempus project *South East European Project for the Advancement of Language Studies – SEEPALS* (2010-2013), a master's double degree programme in cooperation with the university in Nice – *Sophia Antipolis* (during 2018), as well as numerous projects of student and teaching staff exchange.

Through the realization of these prior programmes and of programmes still in progress, the University stands as a reliable partner in the implementation of institutional strategies, regulations and development plans, creating a stimulating environment for students, teachers and other staff. In addition to improving mobility capacities and activities, one of the most important priorities of the University is to promote its strategic partnerships by improving its bilateral and multilateral cooperation with other institutions. Such cooperation includes the following coordinated activities: research and development projects, the pooling of resources in order to improve joint capacities and the development of double degree programmes. The international cooperation of Union University Belgrade focuses on the countries of the Balkans and Southeast Europe and the European Higher Education Area. These enterprises propel the University forward in becoming an exemplary partner in the further transfer of knowledge, skills and experiences, especially concerning issues specifically related to the education area of a country falling within this framework. Thus, one of the priorities of the University in international cooperation is to focus on *Jean Monnet* projects, which support innovation and excellence in teaching, promote active European citizenship, dialogue between people and cultures and strengthen European integrations.

Union University Belgrade gathers information about the labour market outcomes of its graduates and continuously works on improving the quality and relevance of its education

services by analysing their advantages and disadvantages. This feedback helps ensure quality and improvement in education services. By adapting knowledge and skills to the needs of the labour market, the University promotes excellence and development by creating an inclusive and dynamic environment which supports innovations and an efficient educational system capable of responding to the challenges of contemporary society and an ever-changing market. The entrance policy responds to the needs and demands of the labour market, but it is also governed by decisions on a national level concerning higher education. The University and the respective faculties conduct and implement cooperation agreements not only with educational institutions in the country and abroad, but also with various public authorities, public and civil society organizations, various companies and other participants that can provide relevant support in professional practice. This capacity building and development of the University's education services are directed towards the quadrihelical innovation model, an approach that the University is committed to developing to a full extent in the following period.

The University recognises the need to modernise its curricula by preparing applications for the Erasmus + program for project coordination in innovative teaching methods and the use of modern didactic tools. An important measure in these processes is the development of study programmes in English, which will enable full internationalization of the University and facilitate the creation of joint degree programmes. Union University recognizes the need to develop online studies, to digitalize and develop a more efficient administrative system through modern software and logistic support, to increase administrative capacity, to improve the implementation of international projects (Erasmus + K2, cross-border projects, Horizon 2020 and similar initiatives), and to strongly support the development of student organizations' capacities in order to create networks of support for student mobility. Among the specific priorities of the University is development in the field of social responsibility according to the principles of the European Union concerning issues of inclusive education, the empowerment of women in the field of scientific research and socially vulnerable groups. The University is especially interested in cooperation which contributes to the scientific and social affirmation of members of socially vulnerable groups. Such cooperation results in gathering important information about productive measures for future affirmative action.

The University chooses strategic partners located in a Program Countries, third countries associated to the Program (Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, Turkey, North Macedonia) as well as in Partner Countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro) based on the following set of principles and requirements:

- Respect in full the principles of non-discrimination and to promote and ensure equal access and opportunities to mobile participants from all backgrounds, in particular disadvantaged or vulnerable groups.
- Apply a selection process based on a publicly accessible platform that facilitates and digitizes administrative work on projects mobility, through online completion and exchange of project (administrative) documentation. A selection process should be: fair, transparent and documented, ensuring equal opportunities to participants eligible for Incoming or Outbound student mobility, Incoming or Outbound teachers and other staff mobility, Traineeships - Incoming or Outbound student mobility, Incoming or Outbound teachers and other staff mobility and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees.
- Ensure recognition for satisfactorily completed activities of study mobility and, where possible, traineeships of its mobile students.
- Charge no fees, in the case of credit mobility, to incoming students for tuition, registration, examinations or access to laboratory and library facilities. Nevertheless, they may be charged small fees on the same basis as local students for costs such as insurance, student unions and the use of miscellaneous material.

In conclusion, Union University Belgrade committed to being an internationally recognized and highly valued higher education institution which has the capacity and qualified staff to respond to the challenges of the modern local and global market and to develop successful practices of socially responsible work. University Union Belgrade aims to achieve this by creating long-term

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<sup>1</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

and reciprocally useful cooperation with higher education partners at the international level with the desire to exchange, adopt and transfer all available knowledge, experiences and skills through numerous forms of international cooperation.

University Union Council Chair  
Slobodan Vukadinović

