



## Erasmus Policy Statement

### Our strategy

Politecnico di Torino acknowledges the fundamental values inherited from the generations who have written the history of this University over the past 160 years. They are all worth mentioning as they shape our present and are perfectly reflected in the Erasmus policy:

- role of public University which serves our country with an open, inclusive, democratic and liberal approach;
- constant commitment to working with rigour and integrity
- open to cooperate with other universities, society, the world of business and institutions at regional, national and international level, always with a strong motivation towards integration and inclusion.

The internationalization strategy of Politecnico di Torino is longstanding, strong and based on various complementary aspects, which can be summarized by these keywords: projects in education and research, mobility, recruitment, cultural diversity, inclusiveness equal opportunities and digitalization. All of them are explicitly mentioned in the documents that delineate the university tradition, vision and implementation policy for the upcoming years.

The strong belief that mobility of students, professors, researchers and administrative staff is an essential driver for societal innovation and quality enhancement of higher education can be found in the Politecnico di Torino Statute, Art. 2 - Institutional aims, which reads: "Politecnico di Torino places great importance on its international dimension and supports this with joint actions with other foreign universities, research institutions and enterprises; it promotes and supports the international mobility of students, professors and researchers; it promotes alliances with other actors aimed at participation in international projects in education and research, by activating, when necessary, specific structures and joint degree programmes."

Another founding principle of the university, stated in the Statute (Art. 3 - Guiding principles, clause 5), is that "Politecnico assures equal opportunities, including gender equal opportunity, in every aspects of the academic life and it operates to sensitize the academic community to a common awareness of the issue".

In 2018, Politecnico di Torino aware of the needs to play an active role to conceive and develop its future issued its Strategic Plan "PoliTO 4 Impact" (<http://www.pianostrategico.polito.it/en/>) to guide the actions of the whole Politecnico community until 2024. The Strategic Plan affirms the nature of the University as an academic community and opens up to interaction and cross-fertilization with the various actors in society, both at a local and at an international level. In fact, since the very beginning, POLITO has played a central role in the social and economic progress of the local community, while at the same time promoting an open international approach. In its Strategic Plan, therefore, Politecnico recognizes as relevant opportunity the further development of its activities at international level, by strengthening existing networks in the fields of education, research and technology transfer, and by identifying privileged partners from countries of growing strategic importance. In fact, improving the "impact" requires the ability to reflect and act more and more with a farsighted and international perspective. Through this Strategic Plan, Politecnico di Torino aims at reaffirming the central role of its mission in the field of education and much emphasis is placed on internationalization. The goals are that "Politecnico di Torino intends to pursue a strong international recruitment strategy and to further increase the population of international students not only to better balance the mobility of young Italians who decide to study abroad but also to provide significant benefits for national students as well as for local businesses. In fact, Italian students will have the opportunity of studying in a multicultural context. Local businesses will be given the opportunity to interact with international students and even hire them, thus enabling possible interactions with their home countries."

Furthermore, the Strategic Plan envisions "the promotion of equal opportunities and inclusiveness as inspired by the University's commitment to ensuring fair treatment and opportunities to all its members. This stems from the belief that diversity and inclusion are core values for any university that aims at being a school of life, as well as a place for study and work. In this context, by sharing and implementing the principles of the European Charter for Researchers ([http://www.researchers.polito.it/en/hr\\_excellence\\_in\\_research](http://www.researchers.polito.it/en/hr_excellence_in_research)), the University is committed to launching new initiatives



to monitor and govern equal opportunities with respect to the various aspects of diversity, starting from gender diversity. This will ensure that all actors are offered full and equal opportunities to carry out their activities and pursue paths of cultural, professional and career growth in a merit-based perspective.”

Politecnico di Torino is convinced that “a growing opening to international students and researchers and that a common international strategy for both targets are the more adequate means to create a better training and work experience for students and staff.” To this end it is envisioned that “with the support of the whole academic community, the process that ensures the continuous advancement of knowledge will be enhanced, which is the Institution most valuable asset and it is crucial to make a difference in a rapidly changing society.” Moreover, “Politecnico di Torino understands the importance of international student mobility and promotes it for as many students as possible, through the Erasmus programmes, thesis projects abroad and double degree programmes in cooperation with European and non-European universities. We achieved important results so far; therefore, we will continue to pursue these objectives by providing appropriate incentives to involve the various degree programmes in this internationalization effort.”

Another challenge that Politecnico di Torino has embraced for the near future, again as clearly stated in its Strategic Plan, is that “administrative processes and procedures will be revised, simplified and digitalized so that the academic progress of our students will be managed more effectively and increasing support will be offered to our faculty members.” The perspective is that the revision of the administrative processes will improve efficiency and effectiveness through an appropriate use of technology and digital solutions will enable a better management and control of these processes.

Evidently, there is a strong affinity between the Institution’s commitments and the general principles of the Erasmus Charter and – just as important - how Politecnico di Torino actually relies on the Erasmus programme to fulfil the engagements undertaken by, and to the benefit of, the whole academic community.

In one way, the Erasmus key actions aimed at promoting mobility for students and staff and cooperation among universities offer the opportunities Politecnico di Torino is willing to seize so as to increase its international dimension; this is has always been the case from the start. However, historically Politecnico di Torino has also taken a proactive role by supporting a number of further complementary initiatives with the aim of strengthening its international relations, becoming more attractive for international students (both incoming mobility and enrolment), encouraging outgoing mobility, and promoting international research partnerships.

As Politecnico di Torino ranks well educationally-speaking in specific geographic areas (as China, South America, Europe), our strategy has been and will be focused on maintaining this status as well as trying to develop new relations with academic and non-academic institutions in both developed and emerging markets (e.g. South Korea, Japan, Israel, India, Uzbekistan, South-Asia). Initiatives are set in place with a mix of traditional partnerships schemes – such as students mobility and double/joint degrees mainly on second and third level courses – and more complex actions fostering a wide range of activities such as research, teaching, international mobility and technology transfer, hosting foreign companies at the Politecnico di Torino campus (Cittadella Politecnica) and opening Politecnico di Torino labs abroad.

So far, outcomes of this strategy are the opening of Sino-Italian branches, funding of several PhD scholarships for international applicants, supporting top students to develop their final projects abroad with a significant annual budget, developing policies for supporting the outgoing mobility of researchers, encouraging all students and staff to live an international experience, promoting enrolment of international students through recruitment events abroad and offering online and onsite dedicated services.

As a result, not only mobility has increased significantly but also the percentage of international students has reached 16% of enrolled students: an excellent result if compared with the Italian average (4.5%) and the OECD countries average (8%).

At the same time, the Erasmus policy will prompt the transition to digitalization of the administrative processes, which have not yet fully been implemented. Great efforts have already been made to the establishment of a centralized



administrative Division dedicated to international affairs, a consolidated online procedure “Apply@Polito” ([http://apply.polito.it/index\\_en.html](http://apply.polito.it/index_en.html)) dedicated to international student enrolment, an online procedure for students’ nomination, a database to manage institutional agreements and related incoming-outgoing students. However, further steps need to be taken along this direction, and Politecnico di Torino is committed to doing so.

A specific mention to the European Universities Initiative is at hand. When it first came along, Politecnico identified the immediate affinities and seized the opportunity to contribute to the promotion of European values elicited by the European Commission’s calling. As a result, Politecnico is one of the seven members of UNITE!, a pilot project of the aforementioned initiative that aims at leading the evolution of European higher education into a true multicultural and multilingual area where future generations of European citizens can seamlessly move across universities. At present, Politecnico together with UNITE! partners are working to create the foundations of the network that will hold both a virtual and physical European inter-university campus. Politecnico has found in UNITE! a collaborative space in which to put in practice both its internationalization strategies as well as its philosophy of uniqueness through multicultural diversity awareness. The strategy rationale is a stronger link between internalization in research and education. In fact, in research-intensive universities, high quality teaching is immersed in an environment of internationally collaborative research and education and research and services to society are strongly interrelated and reinforce each other.

### Participation in the Erasmus actions

Politecnico di Torino started the promotion of student mobility in the 1990’s, at the very beginning of the Erasmus programme and over the years, it has consolidated relationships with numerous European and non-European partners, offering high-quality exchange opportunities to both students and staff. Between 2014 and 2020, Politecnico di Torino has been very active and successful in participating in KA1 calls (both KA103 and KA107), further increasing the number of international partners and mobility opportunities. Due to its extensive experience with non-EU mobility, Politecnico di Torino has received substantial Erasmus+ KA107 funding in the previous calls (i.e. 2019: 217 flows, 997.307 euro); at European level over 470 agreements were signed.

Several academic representatives are directly involved in guiding and monitoring student mobility: the Vice Rector for Internationalization and the Vice Rector for Education, the Erasmus+ institutional coordinator and the mobility coordinators appointed for each study programme offered by Politecnico di Torino.

Student and staff mobility is managed by the International Affairs Department, in particular the Incoming Mobility Office and the Outgoing Mobility Office. The Department is in charge of:

- Definition of the Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIA) that contains details of the mobility activities;
- Promotion of the mobility opportunities and selection of candidates:
  - POLITO selects students and awards mobility scholarships through annual calls for applications for all mobility opportunities: Erasmus+ mobility within the Programme and with Partner Countries (BSc, MSc, PhD); Erasmus+ traineeships; mobility with non-EU countries funded by POLITICO; mobility for Master thesis funded by POLITICO; special projects often co-funded by private companies.
  - Academic and administrative staff mobility at POLITICO supported by Erasmus+ funding is also managed through annual calls for Teaching and Training mobility
- Support for participants before, during, after mobility:
  - incoming participants:
    - online information on courses (content, level, scope, language) and related requirements, available well before the mobility periods;
    - guidance on admission procedures and assistance during all the mobility steps;
    - dedicated contact points, detailed in the IIA, providing support for visa, residence permits, fiscal codes, housing;
    - support for individuals with disabilities.
  - outgoing participants:
    - support in the preparation of the mobility period and in finalizing the LA,
    - guidance on language courses opportunities.



- Scholarship payment: scholarships are awarded and paid by POLITICO to both incoming (KA107 only) and outgoing participants
- Monitoring: periodic meetings are held and appointments with the academic referents are organized. The monitoring actions extend from settling in, bureaucratic procedures, and inclusion into the HEI everyday life to guarantee integration and to performance (participation in the activities; outcomes). The Department also monitors that the participants complete the required EU Survey.
- Mobility recognition: recognition of student activities abroad is regulated in the IIA according to the principle of mutual recognition of exam results and is based on the LA and the Transcript of Records (ToR). Exams are graded and credits are awarded according to the Politecnico di Torino regulations, and a ToR in English is issued at the end of the mobility period. The outcomes of the outgoing students are converted and registered into the student's career record.
- Reporting all the activities carried out in the frame of international programmes.

Politecnico di Torino has gained a significant experience in **Erasmus+ KA2 - Cooperation among organisations and institutions**. The experience is widespread within the university since both academic and administrative departments manage KA 2 projects.

The participation in Partnerships for Cooperation and exchanges of practices projects enables Politecnico di Torino to gain experience in international cooperation and to strengthen its capacities as well as to deliver high quality innovative standards. Politecnico di Torino places great importance on its international dimension and supports this with joint actions with other foreign universities, research institutions and enterprises aiming at enhancing interaction and cooperation within partnership with other institutions.

The International Affairs Department disseminates information about participation in Erasmus+ KA2 calls, provides consultancy on management, budgeting and reporting.

Around 40 projects were funded in the framework of the Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020. The projects are coordinated by a scientific referent and developed by the coordinating Department (which can be academic or administrative).

In order to increase the internationalization of the course catalogue, POLITICO actively participates in the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees projects – EMJMD with other universities to offer highly integrated Master programmes delivered by international HEI consortia.

The International Affairs Department disseminates information about the participation to Erasmus+ KA2 calls, provides consultancy on management, budgeting and reporting. Student mobility is managed by the International Affairs Department, in collaboration with the coordinating academic Department.

Two EMJMD were funded in the framework of the Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020.

Projects are coordinated by a scientific referent and developed by the coordinating academic department.

Politecnico di Torino's commitment to international mobility has led to the participation in the new Erasmus+ European Universities Programme. The university is one of the 7 members of the UNITE! alliance funded in 2019. In line with the EU goals, the alliance intends to create a trans-European campus for students, scientists and administrative staff. The alliance includes 167.000 students and it is foreseen that by 2025, 50% of them will benefit from the various mobility opportunities (whether physical or virtual) among the universities.

The management and implementation of the project involve numerous actors: the Rector's Delegate for European Relations is the scientific coordinator that works in strong connection with the Project Manager, specifically appointed for the UNITE! Project, of the International Affairs Department. In the frame of Unite!, the Director of the Doctorate School (SCUDO) takes care of the scientific aspects, the Vice Rector for Education and Vice Rector for Internationalization focus on common strategies of academic and internationalization issues, the Erasmus institutional coordinator manages the policies for student mobility. Administrative departments and academic representatives are directly involved in the ten work packages into which the project is divided.

It is envisioned and desired that starting from the UNITE! experience but also due to the contingent situation of the coronavirus outbreak which has called for a limitation of physical mobilities as a prevention measure and a quick transition to online learning and remote work, virtual and blended mobility will become a standard in the next years to



allow more students and staff to benefit from international exchanges. To this end POLITO will jointly address possible actions and solutions with the partner universities.

Based on the current status of internationalization at Politecnico di Torino, the expectations from participating in the Erasmus actions are mainly concerned with the strengthening of POLITO's international dimension. Mainly because mobility of students, professors, researchers and administrative staff, together with cooperation during projects in partnership with international institutions, has been evaluated to be an essential driver for societal innovation and quality enhancement of the higher education. Moreover, boosting the international mobility experience of students and staff will provide new knowledge, develop key competences, boost their CV's and thus increase international career opportunities.

Participation in the Erasmus Actions will stimulate the revision of administrative processes and procedures improving efficiency and effectiveness through an appropriate use of technology and digital solutions that will enable a better management and control of these processes.

Through the creation of solid relationships with international partners, POLITO also aims at exchanging, and learning from, best-practices sharing experiences to improve the quality of the services offered to the different stakeholders (students, academic and administrative staff, business world and national and international institution).

### Envisaged impact of participation in the Erasmus+ Programme

Qualitative and quantitative indicators of the positive impact generated by participation in the Erasmus+ Programme are set out in agreement with the POLITO Strategic Plan, especially where it reads that POLITO intends "to continue attracting a high number of international students (>15%), with greater attention to the quality of their background and potential impact on the Italian economy and the possible interactions with their home countries" (second target of Education, POLITO first mission) and "to become an attractive university for students from different regions, including western countries, in addition to the students from our current international partner countries." (third target of Education, POLITO first mission).

Furthermore, indicators are aligned with the concrete actions already scheduled in the POLITO Action Plan, an operational instrument to pursue the strategic objectives in medium-term through appropriate planning and resources (both human and economic) allocation.

Both quantitative and qualitative indicators will be taken into account:

#### QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS

- increase the number of students and staff benefitting from outgoing mobility programmes with highly qualified partners
- increase the number of submitted KA2 projects (with strict monitoring of the success ratio)
- increase the number of both virtual and in presence events (e.g. webinars) dedicated to the dissemination of staff mobility, KA2 opportunities and student mobility opportunities by 10% per year for the first 3 years of the programme. In the following years the number of events will be maintained
- increase the number of cultural, sports, recreational, social initiatives and activities for the inclusion of international students in the academic and city life by 10% per year for the first 3 years of the programme. In the following years the number of events will be maintained
- increase the number of initiatives and activities to promote mobility in collaboration with partners by 10% per year for the first 3 years of the programme. In the following years the number of events will be maintained

#### QUALITATIVE INDICATORS

- survey results analysis for both improving services and strategies. Students and staff participating mobility experiences are required to fill in a EU survey and POLITO requires students to fill in an additional survey on academic and personal aspects of their mobility.
- completion by 2022 of the UNITE! project within the European Universities Action and timely achievement of the projects objectives



- make the process of the vote conversion fully automatic through the ECTS Grading System or, in case of Transcript of Records not reporting ECTS nor the statistical distribution of grades, new conversion tables based on the CIMEA (the official Italian Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence) database;
- digitalization and sharing through dedicated UE platform for mobility documents (EWP, Student Card)  
Timeline:
  - Digitalization IIA via Dashboard: mobility a.y. 2021/22
  - Digitalization LA (OLA): mobility a.y. 2022/23
  - Digitalization Transcript of Records (Tor): mobility a.y. 2023/24
- Improve communication about Erasmus principles and opportunities.