

Erasmus Policy Statement

The University of Milano-Bicocca (UNIMIB) is a multidisciplinary university, born in 1998, with 5 Schools and 16 Research Departments. The campus has modern laboratories and facilities and stands in an easily accessible area on the northern outskirts of Milan. In the space of fifteen years UNIMIB has created an extensive international network and has participated in an increasing number of programs with great benefits for its students and staff. UNIMIB adopts a triennial strategic plan for internationalisation that is yearly monitored and adjusted to our development strategy centred on research, innovation and technological development in an international context. Decisions are made by the Senate and the Rector who is supported by a Pro-Rector for each strategic area. An internal commission at the Department level nominates a member of the academic staff to represent the Department in the university commission devoted to internationalisation strategies.

Partners are selected on the basis of common research and cooperation-specific interests dictated by departmental strategic research areas. UNIMIB supports and enhances international cooperation through exchange programmes with over 200 partner universities in Europe and around 200 partners worldwide. The mobility of students and staff is a method to increase knowledge about educational projects and to foster profitable scientific debate.

For UNIMIB Europe represents the first step in building closer relations with other universities in order to consolidate the Bologna Process and its principles. The Erasmus Programme is the main instrument for student and staff mobility in Europe. UNIMIB applies and enhances this approach in its relationships with academia world-wide and has identified a coordinator for each main geographical area: Asia and the Middle East, Latin America, the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China), Africa and Francophone countries, United States and Anglophone countries).

The most important objective for UNIMIB is to give as many students as possible the opportunity to benefit from at least one period abroad during their academic career. The Erasmus Program is the fundamental tool for applying the above goal and is strongly promoted among students in their first cycle. In order to support the students' personal and professional development for a successful entry into the labour market, UNIMIB grants also training and work placements, both for undergraduate and graduate students. Study and training must demonstrate an ability to meet the required learning outcomes, enabling the successful completion of the degree programme and provide a given number of ECTS. Strict procedures are in place to ensure the quality, approval and allocation of study and training opportunities.

In addition to the Erasmus Program, specific actions have been started to promote participation in mobility programs for students in their second and third cycles: the Exchange Program for placements outside Europe; the “Extra” (External Training) Program for students preparing their master’s theses abroad; the “Bis” Program for double degree students and PhD co-tutorship; the “BI_CI” (Bicocca and China) Program for students interested in Chinese exchanges. The “Marco Polo” project is reserved for incoming Chinese students. Brief Summer Schools are promoted as a first exchange experience with a new partner university.

UNIMIB actively promotes staff exchanges within the Erasmus Program which is considered as a worthy and institutionally enriching professional experience.

UNIMIB has signed several agreements for joint learning programs for double degrees (amongst others, the University of Belgrano in Argentina and the Russian Academy for International Tourism for Economics, the University of Sancti Spiritus in Cuba for Sociology, the University of Buffalo and the University of Michigan for Volcanology and the University of Paris for Biotechnology) and doctoral co-tutorship networks (amongst others, Physics and Chemistry Advanced Materials PCAM network, Urban and Local European Studies URBEUR network). These joint programs represent top quality standard assessments for student and staff mobility because they integrate interactive educational goals, joint course programs, mobility as an integral part of study and training, linguistic and intercultural enrichment, legally recognised degrees, double opportunities for the international labour market. Double degrees and co-tutorship foster the creation of an international citizenship in the European Higher Education and Research Area.

The University of Milano-Bicocca is an active participant in international education and research projects: we strive to offer opportunities that meet the needs and requirements of faculty and students in the challenging international setting. Through strategic alliances and 396 cooperative agreements, Departments attract foreign staff and researchers, whose contribution is fundamental for scientific advancement and multicultural enrichment. Strong academic relations have proved instrumental for further agreements (double degrees, doctoral co-tutorship) which are part of UNIMIB’s international strategy. Research represents not only the widening of knowledge borders, but also the enrichment of educational skills.

Networks are created on specific research topics and international calls are diffused to implement international projects.

UNIMIB’s International Office assists faculty and researchers to draft and submit international projects, to finalize consortium agreements, to verify financial accounting. UNIMIB has established and

developed strong links with the entrepreneurial world with a special focus on the international dimension. Enterprises are invited to offer internship/stage experiences to both Italian and international students. Technology Transfer points have been created in UNIMIB's departments in order to liaise with the international industrial panorama. UNIMIB assigns scholarships to support PhD students in order to contribute to research. UNIMIB's staff mobility is supported and encouraged at all levels, as international collaborations are included in the staff personal development programs: applications for Erasmus grants to cover mobility expenses and move to a partner university are increasing every year. Faculty, students, and staff still consider the Erasmus program as an irreplaceable opportunity, which after 25 years remains one of the most effective tools for cultural understanding, self-development, sharing of knowledge and expertise.

Italy needs to increase its overall number of graduates, in line with the Europe 2020 requirements (up to 40%). This is a great challenge that UNIMIB is already facing by the implementation of a wide range of information, training and support activities addressed to students in their final year of high school, with the primary purpose of increasing the student intake, assisting and steering students in their educational choice, and reducing, at the same time, the "dropping-out" phenomenon and early withdrawal from university.

The recent reform of Italian Universities has given us the opportunity to revise and re-qualify teaching and research activities. In addition to the ISO 9001:2008 certification, a variety of activities, investigations and questionnaires have been carried out for a close monitoring of the results, subject to annual evaluation of specific Commissions and the University Quality Project.

UNIMIB participates in international research and educational programs and networks: cooperation with international research centres and strong synergies with partner universities are instrumental for long lasting relations between our academic staff and their colleagues worldwide. UNIMIB is systematically promoting international cooperation and includes mobility into its curricula, thereby increasing the opportunities of double degrees and PhD co-tutorships. A specific office has been created to help solve all problems related to visa issues for students and researchers.

Our mission has always been to establish a strong relationship between higher education, research and business, in line with the transformation of the old industrial Pirelli site into a lively and dynamic modern university campus, embedded into the regional and national panorama. UNIMIB actively cooperates with the Lombardy Region in order to improve the quality of mobility and training and is partner in the "Milano EXPO 2015" project, that is offering interesting opportunities to attract and recruit the best students and researchers from abroad. The effective collaboration with Confindustria (Italian Entrepreneurial Association) and Assolombarda (the largest regional Entrepreneurial Association)

allows UNIMIB to maintain and stimulate close connections with the labour market and provide its graduates with the skills and knowledge required by the business world. UNIMIB has a technological transfer office which supports and encourages spin-offs and start-ups.

Internationalization is a priority strategic objective for UNIMIB, therefore specific internal funds are always allocated for international programs and activities. Aside from promoting education and research with its own funds, UNIMIB coordinates and participates in publicly and privately funded research projects at the regional, national and international levels aiming at promoting mobility and the development of the human capital of excellence.