



Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS) 2009

The University of Milano-Bicocca (UNIMIB) is a multidisciplinary university, with 8 Faculties and 21 Research Departments, conceived as an open campus in an easily accessible area on the northern outskirts of Milan. Over 30,000 students benefit from its location, its modern laboratories and numerous facilities, which include halls of residence, refectories, sport centres, free eco-bus and bike sharing services. In the space of ten years – although with the rich heritage of the ancient University of Milan it proceeded from in 1998 - UNIMIB has created an extensive international network and has been participating in an increasing number of programmes with great advantages for its students, teachers, and staff. Internationalization is one of the spearheads of UNIMIB's policy, as an essential component of the instruction and research process.

International Dimension - Cooperation with over 200 partner universities in Europe and 100 worldwide testifies UNIMIB's aim to enhance international cooperation through exchange programmes. The current triennial internationalization policy plan - approved and supported by the University Senate and University Executive Committee - focuses on the following issues and priorities in regards to European cooperation and the Erasmus program:

1) Agreements – Stipulation of new agreements for joint learning and teaching programmes (double degrees, co-tutorship for doctoral thesis), joint research projects, bilateral agreements, international summer schools.

2) International students – The number of foreign students has been constantly increasing, with a 3% of regularly enrolled international students and a 1% exchange students. In addition to the existing PhD courses that were already in English, UNIMIB developed a number of courses taught in English in order to meet the increasing demand of Italian and international students.

3) Students Mobility – Outgoing - The International Office adopted a number of strategic actions to promote and increase internal and external awareness on Erasmus programmes: a) The promotion of student mobility includes open days, in-class presentations, faculty and department-specific information meetings with the active cooperation of the Faculty Erasmus coordinators, distribution of booklets and brochures, posters on notice boards. b) The well-established use of ECTS as an internal credit accumulation system makes European partnerships easier, and facilitates the full recognition of credits to (incoming/outgoing) students. c) Outgoing students are fully briefed prior to departure, supported by their tutors in the learning agreement preparation, and provided with placement handbooks. d) All the necessary instructions and forms are posted on UNIMIB's official website. e) UNIMIB provides financial support to outgoing students.

4) Students Mobility – Incoming - Our website provides extensive information in Italian and in English on the various degree programs, and all the courses offered are listed and explained on each Faculty's website. Welcome meetings are organised to inform and steer newly arrived students. The University's orientation programme and welcome activities aim at providing: a) Timely instructions on how to obtain tax codes, stay permits and health

insurance when necessary; b) in-campus accommodation, in cooperation with C.I.Di.S, a consortium which manages University Halls of Residence under special conditions and provides grants and other supporting services for deserving students in need; c) orientation on the main University services, cultural opportunities and student associations activities; d) assignment of a Bicocca's student card and related Access Code to enter Sifa On-line (University of Milano-Bicocca Informatics System) where students can fill in their personal data, details about their stay, find information on procedures, curricula, exams, events, and receive a personal e-mail address; e) Italian language courses, free of charge and available for incoming students; f) The University is nearly ready to release the Diploma Supplement.

5) Teachers Mobility – UNIMIB's financial support allows every Faculty to host international teachers/lecturers during the lessons terms: their contribution is fundamental for cultural enrichment and multicultural awareness. In addition, the consequent strong academic relations often proved to be instrumental for further agreements (double degrees, doctoral co-tutorship), which are part of our institution's international strategy.

6) Staff Mobility - The International Office actively promotes Administrative Staff Exchanges within the LLP Erasmus Programme, spreading the notification internally and inviting foreign colleagues through mailings to a list of partner Universities. The University also made considerable investments to ensure administrative staff mobility, a professional experience which is considered as worthy and institutionally enriching.

7) Official Website - Since January 2009 the official web-portal has been revised to simplify the retrieval of information, to give more visibility to international activities, news and events. In addition, its special features facilitate the information access to disabled users. Large visibility will be given to the EUC and to the EPS, through publication on the official website.

8) Language Centre - The University Language Centre offers free Italian language courses to Erasmus incoming students, divided into different levels after an assessment test. Preparatory and refresher language courses are available for outgoing students.

9) Non-discrimination Policy – In line with Italian and European legal requirements, UNIMIB has developed and promoted policy statements and codes of practice concerned with specific areas, for which the Rector appointed his Delegates: disability, equal opportunities, and promotion of racial equality. **a) Disability** - UNIMIB promotes the integration of disabled students through an internet website for visual impaired people and the Office for Disabled Students Services, which a) offers instruments and services to improve physical access to all campus areas; b) improves the academic environment among students with disabilities and others at the university; c) creates personalized assistance so each student may benefit from designing a specific study plan and making the most of their individualized course of study; d) organizes research projects, meetings and workshops to raise sensitivity on the issue, as well as a tuition waiver for those with at least a 66% handicap; e) promotes their full integration in the university context. **b) Equal opportunities** - UNIMIB enhances social and economic cohesion through our collaborative relationship with C.I.Di.S, a consortium that manages state-sponsored scholarships and grants to needy but deserving students, free refectory vouchers, assignment of university hostel rooms. **c) Racial equality** - Our efforts to combat racism and xenophobia can be seen through university law which establishes equal rights for all ethnicities in all university practices.

10) Quality Project - UNIMIB aims at providing top quality services: for this reason, the ISO 9001:2008 certification has been obtained and a variety of activities are subject to the annual evaluation of a team of inspectors, within the implementation of the University Quality Project.

11) Presentation/Promotion of UNIMIB Abroad - UNIMIB's participation into several international research programs is a prestigious and useful presentation card vis-à-vis foreign institutions. Our cooperation with international research centres is the key for strong and lasting relations between our staff and their foreign colleagues, that implementing further educational agreements. In order to promote UNIMIB abroad, the University participated into international college fairs.

12) Placement Activities - In order to support the students' personal and professional development for a successful entry into the labour market, UNIMIB grants specific activities, such as training placements and work placements either for undergraduate and graduate students as part of our provisions. Students are encouraged to choose placement opportunities abroad. Training placements must demonstrate an ability to meet the required learning outcomes, enabling the successful completion of the degree programme and - if included in the student's study plan - provide a given number of ECTS. After a first placement pilot project, a final official project has been successfully implemented with the activation of Stage Service Offices in every Faculty and Department and a specific website to provide information and guidelines (<http://www.stage.unimib.it/StageWebML33/>).

Applying students submit their applications to the Faculty/Department Stage Service, which provides guidance on opportunities and conditions for mobility, runs language tests, interviews, and final selections on the basis of precise merit criteria for transparent selection of beneficiaries, also in compliance with non-discrimination principles. Strict procedures are in place to ensure the quality, approval and allocation of placements: UNIMIB signed agreements with private companies, institutions, public boards to provide interesting opportunities to the selected candidates either in Italy and abroad, through a network of subsidiaries and foreign offices. Italian and International laws clearly state all the legal and administrative aspects, that must be followed when drawing up the 'Training Placement Agreement' which has to be endorsed by all parties. A tutor is appointed to follow the student during his/her training experience, to keep regular contacts between all parties during the placement, and to intervene should any problem arise.

At the end of the training, a final report will be written by the host institution/placement provider to the student's tutor/teachers, for the twofold purpose of ensuring the mobility period has met all defined objectives, and the evaluation of the placement for the credit recognition. In order to support placement activities abroad, UNIMIB activated 'EXTRA' a special program with the financial contribution of Fondazione Cariplo, which allows a number of students to prepare their final thesis in co-tutorship abroad.