



Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

University strategy

The University of Twente (UT) aims to provide high quality research and education and strives to become an international meeting place for talented people. We distinguish ourselves with innovative knowledge and solutions that benefit society. Combining high tech with a human touch, we strive to introduce scientific innovations and to educate people who can make a difference. The university provides innovative solutions in areas such as energy, sustainability, health, safety and learning. From this the UT is building a special position in the Netherlands and in Europe: a modern university of technology where relevant research disciplines are combined in entrepreneurial ways.

In order to reach this the following strategic points for improvement have been formulated as objectives: (1) improve the quality of UT education, (2) improve the UT profile; (3) realize a substantial growth in the number of students in educational programmes. The UT defines internationalization as integrating the international and intercultural dimension in education, research and the supporting organization. Internationalization is not a goal in itself but is merely a strategy to realize the long term research and education ambitions of our university.

University partners - research and education

Our EU and Non-EU university partners are chosen by means of a combination of factors related to the formerly mentioned three objectives. We focus on the existing contacts of our researchers with their international colleagues and combine them with student interest for exchange destinations and programs. Those contacts form the basis of further cooperation for research as well as for education and help us to improve our profile and the quality of education. To enhance the UT international education profile the university connects its graduate programs with high level partner universities with whom we improve our education, visibility and attractiveness. The Twente Graduate School (TGS) has been established to actively recruit, develop and retain talented (international) students focusing on the fields of study mentioned in the first paragraph. Its graduate programs are strongly connected to the UT research strengths. Joint programs at master and PhD level are therefore a specific challenge.

University partners - joint education

The UT aims to offer challenging network programs leading to internationally recognized joint degrees with an international co-accreditation. The graduate programs concentrate on the (European) strategic research partners of the institutes and the existing European and American education partners. A joint program partner is excellent in education and research, and complementary to the specializations of the UT. The development of these joint programs has started bottom up.

The challenge for faculties and institutes will be to actively initiate cooperation with preferred partners and to expand research, education and exchange collaboration with them. We also gained valuable experience with Erasmus Mundus, Tempus programs and our participation in ICT.Labs, one of the first Knowledge and Innovation Communities (European Institute of Innovation and Technology). The costs of setting up and implementing joint degrees are high. Our ambition is that students choose a study at our institution because

UT programs are based on specific research and educational expertise, combined with the strengths of its (mainly European) partners.

University partners – capacity development

Apart from content driven partners for educational and research collaboration we also have projects with partners where exchange of student, staff and best practices and possibly even influx of students are more important. Those countries include Indonesia, Brazil, India and many others. We strive for a good mixture of partners from all over the world. Furthermore one of our faculties has a special focus and task in capacity development and therefore invests heavily in collaboration with partners in developing countries in for example Africa.

University partners – best practices

The university is a leading member of the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU). This network is one of the global leaders in the higher education through its collective expertise and commitment to innovation in teaching and learning and members shared history of fostering economic and social development in regions in transition. The university uses the network to share good practice in educational collaboration and aims to have a substantial flow of exchange students and staff.

Next to the initiatives in research and education the improvement of the international profile is also achieved by communicating the strengths and good practices of the UT to the international academic world. The central message is our special position in The Netherlands and Europe, being “a modern university of technology where relevant research disciplines are combined in entrepreneurial ways”. Getting the world to know the UT is also accomplished by involving UT departments in international conferences, hosting international seminars, participation in international staff exchange programs and membership of university networks like ECIU. UT is developing a HRM policy to encourage international (support) staff exchange. Our faculties are encouraged to participate in international projects to share their experience on international collaboration and the connected instruments like joint degree master and PhD programmes especially with partners in strategic countries. The university has reserved a specific budget to support or match this kind of activities.

Participation to the Programme has and will have a big impact on the earlier mentioned objectives (see university strategy above) of our institution. The Programme and its actions will firstly enable us to improve our international profile. It enables us to send and receive (international) students and staff and/or become ambassador for our university but also to contribute to the international classroom. Students will learn how to collaborate with students from other cultures and learn that a different cultural background also leads to different perspectives on suitable solutions for future societal challenges.

The UT expects an increasing influx of high tech talent from Europe and beyond. Our university will be visible because of participation in European ranking initiatives, the use of European labels (DS label and HR excellence) but also the availability of a master loan will give underprivileged students the opportunity to study at our university. This envisioned increasing influx is also seen by the companies in our region as an excellent possibility to fill up the many positions which are open and will be created by our future spin off companies in the coming years (over 700 companies created as of 2013).

The UT is looking forward to the opportunities which will be made available to work within the Triple Helix construction. We already have an excellent track record in this area, experiences we share within the ECIU consortium. The new Programme enables us to move further on this path of linking regional and international educational partners, high tech Small and Medium Sized enterprises, our spin offs and multinationals together with local, regional and national government.

Internationalization of the UT also poses a challenge for the public, educational and private actors in region of Twente. It requires a mutual effort to attract and retain international talent. Twente can only achieve this by offering primary and secondary education in English, by opening up public facilities for foreigners like the municipal website and improve public transportation. The UT is aware of its responsibility in this and is proactively contributing to this.

Sharing best practices on the governance of the university but also about the way we support internationalization will be a main focal point of our university in the coming years. The EU Programme enables us to do so within the European Union but especially also in countries with a need for capacity development.

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V. van der Chijs
President Executive Board
University of Twente