

## **ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT**

The University of Creative Communication is a recently established higher education institution and as such is engaged in a period of dynamic development that involves rapid growth in terms of the institution's size, as well as transformation of its strategies and aspirations. The University of Creative Communication (UCC) is prioritising internalisation as one of its key strategic objectives as it regards both its current degree programmes, Creative Writing and Visual Communication, as fields that are inherently transnational and cooperative. The graduates are therefore expected to benefit from the international cooperation implemented by the UCC in order to succeed in the increasingly globalised job market. By producing highly employable, responsible, interculturally aware and creative graduates, the UCC aspires to contribute to cultivation of the society and to assume an active role in shaping its future.

Selection of partners in general depends on mutual interests and quality of cooperation. Since the UCC defines itself as an arts curriculum institution, the prospective partner universities are selected according to the artistic quality of their degree programmes and courses. We welcome cooperation and establishment of various types of partnerships; the criteria may therefore vary according to the purpose and desired outcome of the partnership. For exchange mobilities of student and staff, particular attention is paid to the academic curriculum, which has to meet the UCC's academic standards and / or complement the UCC's academic curriculum by offering courses unavailable at the UCC. Another important aspect is the overall mutual attractiveness of the partners to ensure sustainability of the cooperation and its further development, as well as the services provided by the partner institution in terms of facilities and support.

As a rule, the UCC does not wish to limit its departments and other organisational units in their international activities, and welcomes cooperation with partners from all over the world. However, several geographical areas have been prioritized as indicated in the UCC's strategic plan for internalisation. These include partners based in neighbourhood countries, such as Austria, Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. The other priority geographical area are Scandinavian countries as the UCC's concept is inspired by the well-established model of higher education institutions in Norway, Finland etc. specializing in creative industry-based curricula. In the next step of the internalisation process, the UCC intends to expand its international cooperation beyond the EU partner countries into the South-Eastern Asia and the USA in order to further development in the visual- and graphic-based study programme of Visual Communication.

The core of the UCC's curriculum is based in creative communications and industries, which determines the objectives and target groups of its international exchange activities. It promotes the internationalisation opportunities systematically among the first-year students, with a specific target group for training abroad being the newly launched specialisations under the Visual Communication Programme, the Creative Marketing and Management in the Creative Industries. In general, however, the UCC strives to achieve balanced development of international cooperation in both its programmes by collaborating with transnational umbrella associations that include educational institutions and enterprises.

Therefore, the UCC is pursuing the establishment and development of cooperation with the European Association of Creative Writing Programmes, the largest European association in this field. Being the only accredited degree programme in creative writing in the Czech Republic and having strong personal ties to the Association, the UCC intends to assume a pivotal role in shaping the field of teaching of creative writing and cultivating the European cultural space.

Establishing and developing mutually beneficial cooperation with European-level, multi-disciplinary institutions, e.g. European Association of Communications Agencies and European Institute for Commercial Communications Education, allows the UCC to intensely pursue internalisation for students of Visual Communication and Creative Writing through academic exchange mobilities and a wide range of internships or traineeships, particularly at the more practice-based BA level of the UCC's programmes.

At the moment, the UCC is strongly committed to establishing and successfully fostering the international activities defined by the scope of exchange mobilities. It plans to pursue the possibility of joint degrees as part of its strategic plan for internalisation in the later phase of its development. Currently, a survey of possible future contacts is being carried out with focus on neighbourhood countries and potential partner institutions in the other priority geographical areas.

The UCC recognizes the uniqueness of the Erasmus+ Programme's support and welcomes its new initiatives as they provide external motivation, support, and recognition of the objectives of the UCC internalization strategy. At the same time, the UCC appreciates its own pro-active role in involvement in the cooperation projects. It understands this involvement as an investment into its future and has therefore been engaged in international cooperation since the beginning of its existence. This understanding has been articulated as part of the UCC's internalisation strategy as the following four objectives:

1. To increase the number of international students and teaching staff in order to create a stimulating and sustainable academic environment.
2. To increase the outward student and staff mobility in order to disseminate awareness of the UCC's academic quality and promote collaboration and innovation.
3. To continuously improve and expand the offer of courses taught in English.
4. To improve the teaching conditions and quality of services to enhance the study environment for all students.

To help achieve these objectives, the UCC shall allocate a portion of its institutional resources to provide administrative support by disseminating information and assisting with the organisation and processing of the project proposals. The International Office is also actively seeking and distributing information on project opportunities.

Pursuing the above-mentioned objectives will provide the UCC with tools to monitor and evaluate its own performance. By achieving these objectives the UCC also aims to play its part in modernisation and innovation of European higher education. In particular, these objectives correspond to the following key priorities of the Modernisation Agenda of Europe's Higher Education System:

### **1. Increasing the number of higher education graduates**

By offering unique programmes the UCC intends to supply the national and European job market with highly sought-after graduates in various progressive, inter-disciplinary fields of creative industries. Thanks to the school's relative small size, it is possible to offer individual assistance to all of the students and thus keep the drop-out rate at minimum level.

Furthermore, the UCC welcomes students with immigrant backgrounds and in effort to find effective ways to combine studies and work it has prepared a specific study format for mature and employed students. Through the process of Prior Learning Recognition and Credit Transfer all relevant prior learning is valued and recognized as part of the study requirements.

## **2. Improving the quality and relevance of higher education**

Equipping future graduates with the knowledge, soft skills, and core transferable competences they will need in high-skill occupations is one of the key goals of the UCC's strategy for curriculum improvement. Most of the study programmes are based on working with modern technologies and reflect the need of the job market for new types of positions and skill sets.

Therefore, the VSKK puts a great emphasis on combining teaching and research, and practical training is compulsory part of the programmes' curricula. In order to make the educational processes more flexible and effective for the planned distance mode of studies, the UCC is also implementing the use of the e-learning environments, e.g. Moodle.

## **3. Providing more opportunities for students through exchange programmes and mobilities**

The Programme provides excellent platform for achieving some of the UCC's strategic objectives, both in areas of curriculum improvement and internalization, especially "supporting the international student mobility as a means of enhancing the overall quality of the studies" and "ensuring the efficient recognition of credits gained abroad". In addition, the UCC strongly believes that by participating in the Programme it will be able to enlarge the number of long-term, sustainable international partnerships, enhance cooperation on both national and regional levels and encourage crossborder projects. In an effort to diversify its portfolio of educational formats, the UCC is currently involved in creating a range of international summer-school type accredited courses, which will offer the incoming students a unique experience by involving them in intensive workshops and tutorials lead by international tutors and focused on selected themes from the field of creative industries.

## **4. Strengthening the “knowledge triangle”**

High employability of the UCC's graduates is one the school's main strategic goals. The UCC is working very closely with the employers on the national level in order to develop and evaluate the degree programmes' job market relevance and participating in the Programme will allow the UCC to expand this strategy on the international level. By maximising the graduates' potential, the UCC hopes to educate a new generation of high-knowledge professionals and researches.

## **5. Improving governance and funding**

The UCC is actively exploring additional sources of funding available to HEIs on both national and transnational level. In addition, the UCC is looking into methods of diversification of funding sources, of which the participation in the Programme is one example. The participation in the Programme may also serve as an incentive for strengthening and restructuring efforts in the school's human resource management. All these impulses will present a new set of challenges for the UCC but will also serve as a welcome opportunity for self-reflection and innovation of existing processes.