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## ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT OF THE UNIVERSIDAD DE LEÓN - E LEON01

The University of León (ULE) is a comprehensive institution with a strong commitment towards internationalisation and since its creation we aspire to become internationally significant, contributing to global education and improving the competitiveness of our country in a global context. Our institution recruits international and EU students and staff and engages in transnational education through academic collaboration with selected overseas institutions from all around the world. ULE is constantly developing its support systems, resources, processes and regulatory frameworks to support a significantly enhanced level of international activity. We consider ourselves an active partner at the following international networks and associations: Santander Group, Compostela Group, Tordesillas Group, Nice Network, European University Association, European Association for international Education, the Forum on Education Exchange, NAFSA, EAIE, AUIP, HACU and APUNE. These organizations gather partners from all parts of the world and they are the main source for partners when envisaging international projects or transnational schemes. A secondary source are the partners themselves, having shown reliability through the collaboration in prior international projects and whose representatives and managers have honored their duties in the past. ULe has a great interest in cooperation with UE neighbouring countries, Latin-America for cultural and linguistic resemblances and the Anglo-Saxon academic world due to their preeminence in the higher quality rankings. Our ongoing collaboration scheme with China has led to the establishment

of a Confucius institute in the city with academic guidance from ULE staff and which has been recognised as the best in the World in 2019.

The ULe has been promoting the internationalization by developing a Co-Teaching Programme which allows faculty to meet international pairs facilitating the promotion of both institutions, the exchanging of scholars, academic information and materials in the belief that the research and educational process at both institutions will be enhanced and that mutual understanding between their respective scholars and students will be increased by the establishment of such exchange programs.

The co-teaching can be enhanced by means of virtual exchanges, where the faculty involved in the co-teaching initiative cooperate and create activities where the students from both institutions collaborate, fostering their linguistic and multicultural competencies.

These virtual exchanges can be preparatory to a subsequent physical mobility, or be part of a blended mobility, combining both, or can be implemented by themselves. ULe has led and participated in several Erasmus+ projects regarding virtual exchanges and we will plan to continue performing them as a tool of internationalization at home and combined with physical mobilities. Short-term mobilities are also valuable, and we organize faculty-led courses, where a group of students led by one or more faculty members of their institution visit a different university to do a



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course with their faculty and students, and participate also in other cultural activities.

ULE is committed towards the complete implementation of the priorities of the Erasmus + Programme. In this sense, the institution is prepared and is at present undertaking the necessary steps to implement digital mobility management fully in line with the technical standards of the European Student Card Initiative. In another vein, ULE devotes many resources in the promotion of environmentally friendly practices in all activities related to the Programme. Moreover, there is a general concern in the need of encouraging the participation of individuals with fewer opportunities in all activities of the Programme, detecting and setting remedial actions against bottlenecks and barriers. Finally, and embedded in an institutional understanding of social service, we commit to promoting civic engagement and encouraging students and staff to get involved as active citizens before, during and after their participation in a mobility or any type of project activity.

Regarding mobility activities, ULE has assumed among its target objectives the accomplishment of the Leuven Communiqué of the 46 countries of the Bologna Process regarding the mobility strategy, that by 2020 at least 20% of the European graduates should have a period of study or training abroad. We are aware that this figure has not been achieved and that one of our main challenges for the next Erasmus Programme 2021-2027 has to be the increase of the mobility figures. We therefore envisage an increase in outgoing student mobility at all levels of education, including the fostering of the European Doctorate. ULE is at present engaging an average

of (12) % of its students and staff in outgoing mobility actions. This figure is unfortunately not equally distributed among the different types and levels of studies, so we target studies of Nursing, Engineering or Education to increase their participation. Mobility at Master level has been extremely difficult since the Bologna process due to the short duration of these degrees in Spain (60 ECTS in one academic year). However some programs are changing to 90 credits and therefore extending their duration one full semester. This change will enable new mobility agreements at this level. We will work actively to promote mobility of all sectors of the university, with varying aims and objectives.

The ULE counts with a Vice-Rectorate for International Relations, which will be renamed to Vice-rectorate for Internationalization according to our International Strategy <https://www.unileon.es/internacional/vicerrectorado/estrategiainternacional>, and which includes two main offices, one is the International Relations Office (IRO) and the other one is the Office for International Projects (OPI). The IRO is in charge of implementing the projects related to the KA1 and the OPI of the KA2 and KA3 actions. These structures use the most modern communication means among its members, reducing at the maximum level the use of physical supports (paper) and adapting to the communication platforms that our younger community is more comfortable with. The institutional Moodle platform hosts all mobility documents, which are available to all parties at any time. Clearly defined activities before, during and after mobility are in place and involve all regular university instances and staff. Internationalization at home (IaH) is



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a very important issue at the ULe, as we consider that the outgoing mobility is a very positive individual learning experience for all participants in all professional and personal competences. These outcomes are returning to the students and staff which did not have the possibility to fulfill a mobility. In this way we are internationalizing our two campuses thanks to the incoming and the outgoing participants. We organise at the ULe each year an International Week with the participation of KA103 and KA107 programmes participants, as well as a Congress for International Cooperation, which have been highly recognized in our final reports evaluated by our National Agency.

Another emphasis will be on the international training of recently incorporated staff. Administrative staff will be offered to visit centers of excellence, good practices or specific international weeks. ULE promotes the implementation of joint diplomas through a specific unit at Vice-Presidency level. At present we offer a joint European Master of Business Studies involving four countries and two double diplomas with University of Xiangtan, China in Business and in Mechanical Engineering and with Universidad de Tlaxcala in México in the study area of Tourism. This list is expected to enlarge as a consequence of the promotion of courses taught through English which will facilitate this signature of such joint ventures with new partners. We also seek to set up this type of actions with countries using languages of Latin origin. An aspect that will enlarge the scope of possible nationalities for recruitment. Despite being

a small university, the ULe has been very active in international research and innovation projects.

The University of León is working on the continuous modernisation of its institution and to contribute to the goals of a European Education Area in line with the communication on “Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture” in the meeting of EU Leaders in Goteborg on 17 November 2017. Our goal is to develop a strong sense of European Identity among our university community members, as well as in our local society. ULe organises each year an International Week, an International Cooperation Congress, we have activities during the Day of Europe, international coffees, Buddy Systems... These events are being evaluated very positively by our incoming and outgoing students/staff, according to their reports after the mobilities. Participating in the Erasmus + Programme and its continued operation in the forthcoming period is essential for ULE to fully contribute towards the actual implementation of the institutional published modernisation strategy through internationalisation (<https://www.unileon.es/internacional/vicerrectorado/estrategia-internacional>) which makes an emphasis on each of the programmes' objectives and activities under four operational lines:

- 1.- promoting the institutional internationalisation process;
- 2.- increasing the international attractiveness of the institution among students and staff abroad;
- 3.-increase international mobility and internationalisation at home; 4.-ameliorate the international cooperation for development. These four lines include a series of numbered aspects for development that are in need of the E+ key actions support.