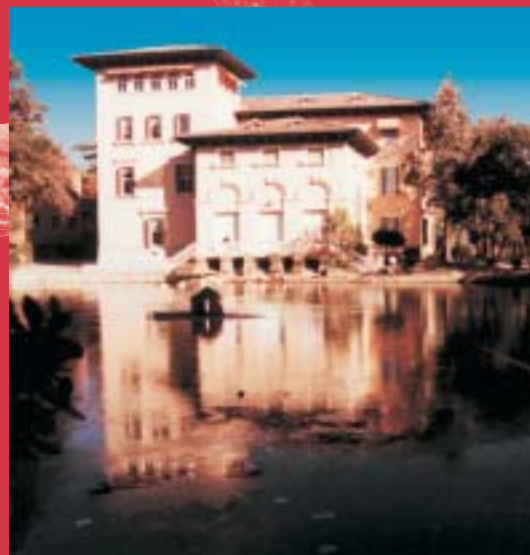


UPC International Relations Plan 2003-2006



UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA
DE CATALUNYA

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Introduction

In recent years, international relations have become an important strategic axis at universities. These relationships allow universities to work out agreements with other centres of reference so as to strengthen their international presence, develop their strategic lines through the exchange of experiences and participation in joint projects, and contribute actively to the sustainable development of the institutions around them. Additionally, they create a reference framework for student, teaching and research staff and support staff mobility in addition to providing these staff members with personal and work-related experiences that remain with them throughout their professional lives.

Following on the experience of UPC's 1996-2002 International Relations Strategic Plan, this document is a presentation of the initiatives foreseen in the International Relations Strategic Plan for 2003-2006. This second plan provides guidelines for developing strategic goals for the next four years, so that they overlap with our institution's strategic lines for governance in order to strengthen them as well as to give an external dimension and an international projection to the initiatives that will be carried out over the course of the next several years.


It is for this reason that this plan has been designed along the lines of the structure of the document "Strategic Lines for Governance and Plan of Action 2003-2006", approved by the Board of Governors on 30 January 2003, which defines the main strategic objectives that we have set for ourselves as an institution for the next several years. These

comprise four main axes: teaching; doctorate, research and transfer of results; society and region, and people, structure and organisation.

It was drawn up as a reflection of the current situation at UPC –the institution has a strong international presence yet must strengthen strategic aspects, related to itself and its component members, that are fundamental to its continued relevance in the knowledge society. Furthermore, the results of the earlier International Relations Plan (1996-2002) have served as a point of reference to aid in diagnosing the current situation as well as providing objective data and relevant experiences.

The overall aim of this plan is to consolidate the initiatives that have been carried out, in a manner that is coherent with these lines of policy, and to face new challenges by giving a definitive push forward to the internationalisation of our university's academic activity. Its aspires to be a comprehensive plan that impregnates all of the University's fundamental activities and eventually forms an essential part of the University's structure.

The climate of change that currently surrounds institutions of higher education –due to the founding of the European Higher Education Area and the creation of the European Research Area– should not deter them from the challenge of designing plans amidst dynamic and uncertain situations, such as what is being seen now. To the contrary, we at UPC must be able to turn this reality into an asset so as to position ourselves at the forefront



of a context in which the most innovative, flexible and solid universities set the pace for the rest. Our institution deserves to be in the vanguard, among other universities of reference, but must also be aware that the next several years will be a transitional period in which the management of the current structure and system must be synchronised with the those of the new European stage.

The protagonists of the plan are the UPC units, which are the driving force behind its activity. Such a plan, therefore, must create a reference framework and provide tools, instruments and structure to the projects that will be proposed, and follow in the international tradition that UPC has acquired over time through both individual and collective initiatives. These initiatives have opened up possibilities for our graduates to study abroad, as well as for UPC to establish agreements with institutions of renowned prestige, form part of strategic international networks and grant recognition its units' research work.

Despite this level of activity, one cannot forget that there is still a long way to go and that the plan must not focus exclusively on quantitative terms, but must rather aim to answer and emphasise the qualitative issues and details that enhance the value of the initiatives that are carried out. Aspects such as mobility and international diversity, the possibilities for our students to acquire professional experience in foreign countries, the design of courses that are compatible and attractive to students from all over Europe, the internationalisation of our postgraduate courses, the competitiveness and the promotion

of our research activities and the transfer of the results on an international scale, continue to be challenges, now more than ever, yet at the same time represent opportunities of vital importance to our university. Additionally, one must not forget that at a progressive university that is committed to the ethical and social values of sustainable growth and cooperation for development, that we must increase efforts to continue to manifest these through the sorts of projects and initiatives that make these possible. We, after all, as an institution of higher education, must set the pace.

In order to meet these challenges, the plan must be sufficiently flexible. Far from defining a great number of objectives and intentions for the future, its overall aim is to assist the units in carrying out initiatives in their own fields while reinforcing these through institutional action and the creation of mechanisms for support, stimulus and recognition.

Finally, the document emphasises the necessity of an adequate academic and support structure for the University to confront the challenge of internationalisation, so as to reinforce its ability to carry out projects, educate students and train faculty. Furthermore, it must develop the tools that are needed to automate, systematise and support international activities.

Teaching

The directives of the new European Higher Education Area will outline the efforts that UPC must make –in the short and long term as well as internationally, locally and internally– if we are to provide a quality education that is both compatible and competitive with the most prestigious institutions of higher education. Many initiatives have already been set into motion at the international level, though efforts at the national level have still not been defined. Nevertheless, the university must continue to work, together with the responsible institutions, to create a suitable framework for carrying out the necessary structural reform and devising a way to guarantee the transparency of how it recognises credits and qualifications.

There has also been a substantial collective effort for the University to be an active participant in a great number of networks and associations in which it shares its experiences in the field. To be able to translate these experiences into meaningful results in UPC's qualifications, one of our short-term objectives must be to ensure that this effort is as efficient as possible, so as to continue to strengthen contacts and thus increase the internationalisation and diversification of our student body.

We must also be able to take advantage of the ever-increasing interest of foreign students in studying or participating in continuing education programmes at our institution, so as to be able to undertake the sort of academic reform that will give shape to a new educational model. Our graduate programmes


must be clearly directed at European and international students, by means of collaboration agreements with other institutions or by offering a solid range of courses, and furthermore ensuring the maximum in academic excellence.

The programmes that the European Union has developed to encourage mobility will continue to be a source of opportunities for our students, if we make them known and take full advantage of them. The resources and time dedicated –by individuals and UPC as a whole– to attract greater and greater numbers of foreign students must also be mirrored by efforts to meet these students' needs, both in welcoming them to the University and later on in terms of academic and vocational training.



Subsection 1: The European Higher Education Area

Objectives

 Carry out initiatives that encourage and facilitate the introduction of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) structure to UPC's courses.

Initiatives

Establish a centre, at the service of the units, to study academic reform in Europe and the initiatives that are promoted by excellence networks.

Date

2003

Strengthen permanent collaboration in the European arena as well as through areas, as well as taking advantage of those agreements that currently exist. This will facilitate the exchange of information and the subsequent enrichment of the units, and in doing so will promote the international Master's programmes offered in conjunction with other universities.

2004

Continue to offer support to the schools for them to introduce the ECTS credit structure in their syllabuses.

2003

Subsection 2: The internationalisation of UPC's courses

Objectives	Initiatives	Date
Increase the number of foreign students and enhance the quality of the education they receive, so as to guarantee that they receive adequate information, orientation and integration at UPC.	Ensure that students receive appropriate linguistic information and orientation while acknowledging the reality of what resources and class schedules are available.	2004
	Expand UPC's role to encompass those teaching and research staff involved in international mobility programmes through financial aid offered by the institution through the Mobility Plan.	2004
	Increase Catalan and Spanish language classes and expand the offer to reach all of UPC's campuses to ensure that all foreign students can integrate successfully.	2004
	Bolster welcoming and tutoring initiatives for students coming from foreign universities, especially during their first semester, as well as introducing student tutors.	2004



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Objectives

Continue to strengthen foreign student recruitment through exchange programmes that guarantee quality to students.

Initiatives

Consolidate, and in some cases increase the number of exchange agreements for qualifications through existing programmes, especially those promoted by the EU.

Date

2003

Promote the teaching of classes in English in official syllabuses.

2004

Increase the internationalisation of lifelong education.

Strengthen strategic agreements with universities from around the world to create lifelong education programmes in areas in which UPC is a reference institution.

2004



Subsection 3: The promotion of student mobility

Objectives	Initiatives	Date
Increase and diversify the international mobility of our students.	Promote initiatives between the heads of Research and Innovation at General Services and those of the schools to publicise and facilitate participation in existing mobility programmes as well as different sources of funding.	2004
Enhance students' relationship with the professional world.	Study the creation of an institutional framework for establishing agreements with companies or organisations with headquarters in foreign countries so that students can then participate in work placements.	2003 Recognition of academic credits 2004 Study 2005 Framework



Doctorate, research and transfer of results

Evidently, UPC's doctorate programmes must be reformed and adapted so as to ensure and improve the degree of academic and scientific quality and simultaneously enhance the research being undertaken in related areas. The accreditation of programmes, the increase in the number of courses offered in English, the introduction of tools and resources to facilitate student mobility and the introduction, where possible, of double degrees must all contribute towards bringing about the social recognition that such studies deserve, in addition to enhancing the international prestige of UPC's programmes.

The possibilities for cooperation offered by European Union programmes are not limited to countries in our immediate vicinity, but rather extend to programmes in many countries around the world. Different EU programmes facilitate cooperation with countries in the Mediterranean basin, Russia and the Newly Independent States and other emerging countries. Furthermore, initiatives promoted by regional governments to bolster the training and mobility of the teaching and research staff must be fully taken advantage of, as the opportunities and benefits that they represent are not limited to the material resources they entail.

In the area of research, a greater compromise must be made to internationalise and publicise what results are being produced. Along these lines, the sixth Framework programme should concentrate our focus on projecting UPC's image abroad, as this accomplishes three goals: it

reinforces initiatives aimed to boost training and mobility, it establishes a plan to support the creation of young groups with a potential for excellence, and it focuses more attention on basic research. At the same time, however, we must dedicate further efforts to cooperation between the University and the world of industry, not only at on the local level, but also internationally. This allows us to focus more efficiently on innovation and the transfer of results, which in turn promotes social and economic development.


To ensure that this is followed through and to facilitate the task for the teaching and research staff –who would be the most affected– the plan foresees a number of additional measures that it proposes to implement at the institutional level. Amongst these measures are the creation of a unit to assist in the organisation of conferences and congresses, and the creation of a plan to promote and publicise UPC's scientific and technological research.

Subsection 4: The offer of doctorate studies as a international reference

Objectives	Initiatives	Date
Design a program to project the image of UPC's doctorate programmes internationally, so as to attract a diverse student body and promote relevant lines of research.	Taking advantage of the expertise of the teaching and research staff, promote UPC's doctorate programmes in South East Asia, the southern Mediterranean and new member countries of the European Union.	2003
	Promote joint doctorate programmes with prestigious organisations.	2005
	Encourage doctorate courses to be taught in English, either by UPC or visiting lecturers.	2003
Actively encourage doctorate student mobility.	Encourage doctorate student international mobility.	2004
	Promote informational campaigns to encourage participation in international programmes that bolster post-doctorate mobility.	2004

Subsection 5: Scientific policy

Objectives

 Facilitate exchange and collaboration with other international centres and organisations, so as to enhance the quality and quantity of research and its impact.

Initiatives

Promote the organisation of international meetings and scientific debates at UPC.

Date

2004

Create a unit to assist lecturers in organising and designing international conferences and congresses.

2004

Promote the international reputation of UPC's research centres.

2004

Promote the mobility of the Academic Staff.

Carry out initiatives to promote economic and technical assistance to teaching and research staff to increase their international mobility.

2003

Subsection 6: Research support and transfer of the results of teaching and research

Objectives	Initiatives	Date
Ensure adequate administrative support for the internationalisation of research and the transfer of results.	Design a service charter to publicise the services that the different units in charge of managing international projects have to offer and to clarify the processes they undertake.	2004
	Undertake an analysis of future possibilities and procedures to secure European patents for the results of UPC research, so as to increase the number of international patents.	2004
Promote the presence of UPC's research and transfer programmes in the international media.	Design a plan to promote and publicise UPC's scientific and technological activity at the international level, in addition to the activities promoted as part of the Innova Programme.	2005

Society and region

The different aspects and implications of social development in a globalised context require the university to play a more active role in the life of everyday citizens. At the same time it fulfils its basic mission of producing and transmitting knowledge, the university more and more must also become a centre of reflection and debate and of dialogue between the scientific community and citizens. In a modern-day context, this dialogue must extend beyond local boundaries. UPC's wide range of experiences with and personal efforts dedicated to these issues could clearly be extrapolated to the international area, keeping to criteria of cooperation and solidarity, so as to contribute to sustainable socio-economic development and to a better understanding of inequality.

UPC has traditionally been rooted in the region around it and focused on this area's economic development. We must know how to make the most of this synergy between university, city and region so as to promote an international projection of UPC's campuses.

The plan also proposes bolstering UPC's cooperation in developing countries, as well as ways to ensure its continued financing. Additionally, it aims to promote the active participation of the university community and to increase the awareness that they have of these activities, while instilling in our students a sense of ethics and granting them the possibility of applying themselves in concrete ways to aid developing countries.

Subsection 7: Contributions to development and to socio-economic balance

Objectives	Initiatives	Date
Hold debates, forums and cultural and scientific events to publicise UPC's scientific expertise internationally.	Undertake a census of institutional activities that are carried out in this field and facilitate the organisation of meeting at UPC.	2005
	Continue to promote UPC's participation in the networks to which it belongs and in the activities organised by the Unesco Chair coordinator (GUNI), in addition to bolstering its presence on the web.	2005
Enhance the international visibility of UPC's campuses.	Launch a programme to highlight the unique features of each campus.	2004

Subsection 8: Sustainable development, cooperation and solidarity in UPC's areas of activity

Objectives	Initiatives	Date
Promote active participation in cooperation programmes for development	Monitor to what extent the activities of these programmes are recognised by the different groups that make up the university community.	2003
	Increase and diversify the possibilities for members of the university community to participate in projects and initiatives of solidarity and cooperation.	2004
	Bolster collaboration with other organisations, such as NGOs, to promote synergy as well as reinforcing the University's external presence in networks, associations, councils and platforms.	2004
Promote the acquisition of resources for financing the activities of the Centre for Development Cooperation (CCD).	Carry out specific campaigns and initiatives to acquire resources and to publicise the results of the 0.7% campaign.	2005
Enhance UPC members' interest in and knowledge of topics related to sustainable development, cooperation and solidarity.	Reinforce follow-up, evaluation and publication of the activities of the CCD, the Unesco Chair and other units working in this area.	2004
	Strengthen the teaching of ethics and solidarity.	2004

People, structure and organisation

In order to carry out the objectives defined in these fields, we will also have to undertake various internal changes to improve the quality and efficiency of the initiatives we want to carry out.

Firstly, taking advantage of the experience gained through the implementation and follow-up of the earlier plan, we must be able to improve the quality and the manner in which we follow up the initiatives we undertake, while simultaneously using the process to establish more direct lines of contact and information with the structural units that play important roles in it.

Secondly, we must give special emphasis to those activities which have a more direct and immediate impact on achieving a greater international recognition of our University. Along these lines, monitoring the technical qualification and the preparation of all the staff for these sorts of activities will continue to be a priority, especially in terms of language training and to ensure their ability to create information and support services directed at both teaching and research staff from UPC as well as other universities.

Subsection 9: The model of governance

Objectives

Monitor the efficiency in terms of follow-up, attainment and transfer of the results of the objectives defined in the Research and Innovation Plan.

Initiatives

Design tools and international data gathering systems to grant an easy and trustworthy source of data to the units to facilitate their decision-making processes.

Date

2004
Design
2005
Implementation

Create a committee, in which the structural units are represented, to follow up the plan and to schedule, follow up and improve its activities.

2003

Facilitate the exchange between schools of reference of innovative experiences (good practices) in higher education.

2003

Subsection 10: An organisational structure and a staff tailored in quantity and qualification to institutional objectives

Objectives	Initiatives	Date
Improve the welcoming process for newly-enrolled foreign students.	Formalise a welcoming protocol with the units so that visiting professors have relevant information on the University and on the basic external services it offers.	2004
Work towards more specialised and appropriate assistance to academic activity in the international arena.	Improve staff's proficiency of foreign languages, especially of English, by promoting learning programmes based on the needs of each group.	2004
	Incorporate experts in international relations in the units or on campuses that have a sufficient or growing demand for such a person, or promote the adaptation of other positions to suit such a need.	2004
Push for the international mobility of the academic and service staff as a key element to improving their learning processes.	Promote the recognition, by individuals and the curriculum, of international mobility programmes.	2004

