



ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

Participation in Erasmus+

The American University of Beirut – Mediterraneo (AUB Mediterraneo) was launched in Pafos, Cyprus in 2023 within the framework of the American University of Beirut's (AUB) commitment to be a global academic institution. AUB Mediterraneo encourages freedom of thought and expression and seeks to graduate active citizens committed to creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, personal integrity, civic responsibility, and leadership.

It is expected that the number of students enrolled at AUB Mediterraneo in Pafos, Cyprus, will exceed 2,000 within 10 years. The university's expansion plan includes attracting students, faculty, and staff from beyond Europe and the Middle East. Its inaugural cohort includes students from 12 countries.

AUB's "VITAL 2030" strategic plan, which was adopted by AUB's Board of Trustees in June 2020, includes the establishment of twin campuses outside Lebanon to achieve the university's aim for internationalization and geographic expansion. Establishing AUB Mediterraneo leverages AUB's strengths including high-quality academic programs, research excellence, generous financial assistance, and regional and international partnerships and collaborations. AUB Mediterraneo's VITA 2032 strategic plan identifies four strategic themes and includes goals to be achieved within each theme. AUB Mediterraneo considers internationalization to be among its core values. The university ensures that all faculty and staff, academic and non-academic, are involved in its internationalization and modernization objectives, each with its own capacity and responsibilities. At the core of AUB's strategic plan is a commitment to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as defined by the United Nations. To encourage digitalization, AUB Mediterraneo has adopted "Integrating Humanities, Technology, and Purpose-Based Education across All Disciplines" as one of its strategic themes. The goal is for students to be capable of solving real-world problems using technology, data, and computing tools, as well as to prepare them to utilize technology in their communications and to access and integrate information.

Because AUB is already part of the Erasmus+ Programme, AUB Mediterraneo is familiar with the significance of this program and its importance as part of its aim to expand and become a hub for knowledge exchange and creation in the region. AUB's experience with the Erasmus+ Programme has been invaluable. AUB has contributed to the program through student, faculty and staff mobility: 1,297 AUB students have studied at 121 universities in 28 countries. AUB Mediterraneo seeks to launch its initiatives and develop its network while recognizing and acknowledging the significance of becoming part of this prestigious program contributing to its internationalization objectives.

Joining the Erasmus+ Programme will enable AUB Mediterraneo to take part in all the actions of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 Programme, specifically Key Action 1, as well as the opportunities offered by Key Action 2 and Key Action 3. Our participation in the Erasmus+ Programme will contribute to developing our teaching staff's skills and qualifications by exposing them to different teaching methods, giving them the opportunity to learn best practices in their fields of expertise, and expanding their professional networks. Incoming teaching staff will have the opportunity to learn about AUB Mediterraneo's system and teaching methods, which follow the American liberal arts model of higher education, and engage in its culture. Incoming students will also benefit from learning from our esteemed faculty and expanding their personal and professional networks while also becoming exposed to a new culture. Our students will also expand their professional and personal networks and become exposed to diverse cultures while also learning from distinguished faculty abroad. The Office of International Programs (OIP) at AUB Mediterraneo will implement the Erasmus+ Programme. The OIP will coordinate with other offices, including the Office of Registrar, Office of Communications, Office of Research, and Office of Student Affairs as well as with deans and faculty, to ensure proper and comprehensive program implementation.

Key Action 1 – Learning mobility of individuals

To achieve student and staff mobility, AUB Mediterraneo aims to sign various agreements with higher education institutions that are part of the program and partner countries, building and expanding on the already signed agreements between AUB and universities in the European Union. The Office of International Programs will secure such agreements, including Affiliation or Direct-Enrollment Agreements, Consortium Agreements, Memorandums



of Understanding, and Student Exchange Agreements. By adopting these agreements, AUB Mediterraneo students will be able to participate in mobility experiences; the university will also benefit by being able to host students. As part of staff mobility, academic staff will benefit from an exchange opportunity for teaching. Students and staff will be selected transparently and fairly. AUB Mediterraneo will ensure the inclusion of a diversity of individuals in its mobility initiatives, including individuals of disadvantaged backgrounds, individuals with special needs or with disability, as well as refugees and individuals seeking political asylum. AUB Mediterraneo adheres to its Non-Discrimination and Anti-Discriminatory Harassment Policy and Title IX, which prohibits discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment. As part of its inclusion efforts, AUB Mediterraneo's Campus Master Plan (CMP) requires all university buildings to be compliant with international codes for accessibility for people with disabilities. AUB Mediterraneo is deeply committed to providing all individuals with an enriching international experience. Among the university's goals is to be a hub for research innovation and excellence, as highlighted in one of its strategic themes, "Advancing a World-Class Research Agenda." Through this goal, AUB Mediterraneo seeks to attract top-tier students and faculty who will contribute to its achievement in innovation and research.

Key Action 2 – Cooperation among organizations and institutions

AUB, our main campus, is well known as a pioneer in research in the Middle East region. The Office of Research at AUB Mediterraneo plans to build and expand on this reputation and diversify its research initiatives. This includes adopting the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree programs. To maintain the research impact and achieve sustainability, the Office of Research at AUB Mediterraneo will be promoting the "European Charter for the Researcher and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers," adopting best practices and creating an integrated framework while implementing gender equality principles in research and innovation, providing equal opportunities in terms of training and development. This approach aims to enhance research and innovation in the national ecosystem, making it more appealing for both local and international talent, thereby enriching and participating in enhancing the country's capacity for innovation and its position in the global research community. Importance is given to fostering international research networks and collaborations and to tapping into global knowledge and expertise and establishing strong ties with global institutions, facilitating knowledge transfer, strengthening research capacities, and enhancing international partnerships. As part of the VITA 2032 strategic plan, AUB Mediterraneo seeks to continuously expand and improve its research mission; hence, having AUB Mediterraneo join the Erasmus+ Programme would contribute to supporting this mission through establishing international cooperation partnerships with national, regional, and international institutions and organizations to secure research projects. Aiming to identify and secure grant funding, including and especially in the EU, to advance institutional success and knowledge creation, optimizing grant application processes, and fostering inter-institutional collaborations will create new opportunities and partnerships. The Office of Research assists the AUB Mediterraneo community in administering research and institutional development grants and soliciting potential sponsored research from foundations, corporations, and governmental and non-governmental organizations at the local, regional, and international levels.

Key Action 3 – Support to policy development and cooperation

AUB Mediterraneo recognizes the importance of policy development and cooperation and will seek to explore opportunities related to its implementation. Additionally, the university acknowledges Jean Monnet's Actions in higher education and the significance of encouraging education and research related to the history, policies, objectives, and other components of the European Union.



Strategy, Objectives, and Impact

AUB Mediterraneo's mission and vision clearly state its aim to be a knowledge hub that ensures knowledge creation and exchange while producing impactful research and knowledge serving the local and global society. The university offers an inclusive and supportive learning environment fostering freedom of thought and tolerance and encouraging democratic practices.

Objective 1: Launch Student and Staff Mobility

Within the next three years, AUB Mediterraneo seeks to launch its mobility initiatives. Becoming part of the Erasmus+ Programme will contribute to achieving this objective. In particular, we will sign strategic partnership agreements with higher education institutions in Europe and beyond. We will sign inter-institutional agreements with other higher education institutions and a student can request mobility in and out of the institution. Learning agreements will be signed by three parties (the student and the home and host institutions) before the actual mobility time and will be fully honored on the student's return. These actions will build on AUB's long history in promoting internationalization and diversity, as reflected in institutional partnerships with universities worldwide. AUB has over 100 institutional partnership agreements with institutions worldwide including Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America. As AUB Mediterraneo, we will build on this achievement to expedite the integration process of mobility programs.

AUB Mediterraneo considers student and staff mobility a fundamental part of all community members' academic, professional, and personal growth, leading to a rich exchange and inter-institutional collaborations to modernize and improve practices in a coordinated manner in Europe and across the region. The objective is to expose students to different views, knowledge, teaching and research methods as well as work practices in their study field in the European and international context.

Objective 2: Promote and Support Inclusion Efforts

AUB Mediterraneo promotes equal opportunity among students by offering generous scholarships and financial assistance, up to 100%. Through these scholarships and financial assistance, the university aims to support individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds to acquire an AUB Mediterraneo education. This is part of AUB Mediterraneo's priority to make it possible for academically eligible students to join its community without regard for their financial resources. AUB Mediterraneo's strategic plan also includes ensuring diversity and inclusion and addressing the requirements of students with special needs by offering an engaged and collaborative learning environment that makes distance learning available. This is in line with the National Inclusion Strategy in Cyprus.

Objective 3: Continuous Promotion for Multiculturalism

AUB Mediterraneo already houses diverse students and staff from more than 15 nationalities who represent various cultures (Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Canada, Brazil, Lithuania, and more). We aim to continue promoting multiculturalism within our community moving forward and foster forward looking skills, such as digital and green skills, that will enable students to tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow. Our effort for promoting internationalization encompasses supporting students in mobility by making spending time abroad the norm for all students, thus enhancing inclusive mobility and enabling students to access high-quality education irrespective of their socio-economic background, and facilitate personal development such as the ability to adapt to new situations and self-confidence. AUB Mediterraneo aims to ensure multilingualism and promotion of European cultural heritage and diversity. Students will be exposed to the Greek and Arabic languages.

We aim to engage with other institutions to promote sustainability, European identity and studies, diversity, and education, contributing to democratic practices and civic engagement. Students are encouraged to participate in civic engagement activities that provide them with the opportunity to engage in society and actively lead valuable initiatives. In addition, we aim to develop their transversal skills such as communication skills, language skills, critical thinking, problem solving, inter-cultural skills, and research skills.



Indicators

Key Action 1 - Learning mobility of individuals

Objective 1 – Launch Student and Staff Mobility

AUB Mediterraneo aims to achieve the target of having 20% of students and 20% of staff, including incoming and outgoing mobility, in the Erasmus+ Programme within the next three years. The university seeks to augment this percentage to around 40% by 2030. As part of its student orientation, AUB Mediterraneo will ensure that students and staff are aware of the Erasmus+ Programme. They will be guided to the Erasmus website and App to learn more about the process and steps to be followed.

Before mobility, AUB Mediterraneo will ensure that the information needed regarding the mobility experience is available for students and staff and will make available its course catalogue on its website at least one semester before the mobility experience begins (posted and regularly updated). The Office of International Programs will have the contact information of the Erasmus+ coordinator available to support students and staff and respond to their inquiries regarding the mobility experience. The office will also refer individuals to valuable resources and contacts in preparation for their mobility experience.

During mobility, the university will ensure that incoming students and staff, as well as outgoing students and staff, have the contact information of the Erasmus+ coordinator, who will support them as needed. Students and staff will take part in pre-organized orientation, engagement activities and cultural activities, etc.

After mobility, AUB Mediterraneo will provide earned transcripts or certificates for individuals who took part in the mobility experience and will provide an anonymous feedback mechanism whereby incoming and outgoing students and staff can voice comments, suggestions, or opinions that they would like to share for the benefit of those who participate in future mobility experiences. The participants will become ambassadors who will promote mobility programs to other students and staff. Staff will benefit from this mobility experience and will be a key aspect in the assessment of their professional development by HR, contributing to their career progression.

Objective 2 – Promote and Support Inclusion Efforts

Before mobility, the university will ensure that incoming students and staff are familiar with AUB Mediterraneo's mission and values which encompasses respecting diversity and providing an inclusive learning environment based on equal opportunity. AUB Mediterraneo's Non-Discrimination and Anti-Discriminatory Harassment Policy and Title IX are available on its website and will be highlighted for incoming students and staff.

During and after mobility, the university will ensure that feedback and complaint mechanisms are available for students and staff to report any breach of policies or experiences of discrimination or harassment.

Objective 3 – Continuous Promotion for Multiculturalism

Before mobility, AUB Mediterraneo will promote essential and beneficial information about the campus in Pafos, Cyprus, as well as information and resources regarding cultural aspects of the host country. This benefits incoming and outgoing students and staff in their preparation for their mobility experiences. Adopting the Erasmus Student Card will be beneficial as it will provide individuals with crucial information for their journey. AUB Mediterraneo promotes civic engagement as per its strategic plan and continuously seeks to support community service projects and research reflecting its core values. Although education at AUB Mediterraneo is in English, students will be exposed to the Arabic and Greek languages. Our course catalogues will be offered in the Greek and English languages. Students will have the opportunity to enroll in Greek and Arabic language courses.

During mobility, students and staff will have the opportunity to be exposed to different cultures and societies, which will enrich their experiences and widen their perspectives regarding education, research, and teaching. These are fundamental criteria for any internationalization and modernization objectives.

After mobility, students and staff will benefit from new learning experiences and from expanding their professional and personal networks. The university encourages staff to voice their feedback and suggestions for improvements,



including its internationalization strategic plan, internal system, and various structures within AUB Mediterraneo, through seminar series. Staff will reflect on new technologies, teaching methods, tools learned within their fields, and the skills and competencies they have developed. Students will reflect on intercultural, professional, and personal skills they have acquired and any civic activities they participated in.

Key Action 2 – Cooperation among Organizations and Institutions

AUB Mediterraneo plans to strategically collaborate with national, regional, and international institutions and organizations to increase its involvement in research projects that reflect its mission and vision.

To this end, the AUB Mediterraneo Office of Research was created to promote, support, and administer sponsored research and development awards. It aims to support AUB Mediterraneo's administration, faculty, and staff in soliciting research funding and administering awards and supports them in pursuing their research and scholarly activities and in protecting and transferring inventions and technologies for the public good. AUB Mediterraneo is expected to receive a large percentage of its research and development funding from international agencies such as the EU (Horizon Europe, ENI, EuropeAid), various US federal agencies (such as NIH, CDC, NEH), UN agencies (such as UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, etc.), foundations, NGOs, and industry. AUB Mediterraneo supports research collaborations among its faculty as well as with external parties and aims to be part of research funding programs. The university intends to partner with national agencies for research. It is already part of the Cyprus Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) and participates in RIF programs at the national level.

AUB Mediterraneo will join a large number of consortia in the region, both EU and US. These consortia will work together to attract international funding for projects agreed upon between consortia members. The university already has a Participant Identification Code (PIC) on the Funding & Tenders Portal of the European Commission. AUB Mediterraneo will be seeking and/or securing external research funding to undertake and expand scholarly contributions.

Key Action 3 – Support to Policy Development and Cooperation

AUB Mediterraneo is keen to be involved in policy development and cooperation opportunities as they arise. AUB Mediterraneo is hosting a conference in February 2024 on 'Influencing and Political Acumen' co-developed by London Schools of Economics and Political Science, the Asfari Foundation, and the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship. Furthermore, we look forward to exploring Jean Monnet's Actions in the field of higher education and making significant contributions to activities promoting democracy, equality, freedom, human rights, and human dignity while also promoting EU values.