

## UNIVERSITY “ST KLIMENT OHRIDSKI” – BITOLA

### ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

2021 – 2027

University “St Kliment Ohridski” – Bitola (UKLO), as a higher education institution from a programme country is strongly committed to supporting the EU modernization and internationalization agenda for higher education and following the principles outlined in the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education. Such principles, in line with the University mission statement, are essential to the realization of the institutional plans, strategies and aspirations. We believe that higher education is the driving power for creation of knowledge and science that makes significant economic, intellectual and cultural contribution to the most immediate community, but also wider, globally. We are committed to provision of quality education for young professionals, well qualified and skilled for competitive entering the labor market, national and international as well as for young researchers to whom the internationalization process opens up additional grounds for collaborative research through institutional participation in European and international projects and programmes, networks and consortia.

Such core values pervade the institutional strategies for quite a long period and lately, they have become also a part of the international engagement of our University. Namely, in our vision for an internationally open university, we consider all the benefits derived from international cooperation. In close cooperation with our international partners, we try our best to facilitate and support staff and student mobility, either in the scope of various joint projects or as participating in mobility programmes, to enable student recruitment from abroad for full degrees, participation in collaborative research and capacity-building activities, in parallel with further improvement of teaching and learning processes. We consider international partnership essential to our broader objectives in regard to teaching, learning and research, quality assurance, development, monitoring and evaluation of further forms of joint activities, since, all successful partnerships have resulted from the shared commitment to, and mutual benefit from such relations. A large portion of them derive exclusively from individual links between academic staff. Others have been introduced through existing partners or other networks. Thus we have accumulated relations with diverse institutions that meet the different needs and priorities of our students and staff. Nevertheless, our University remains open to new, unexpected and unforeseen opportunities for communication and cooperation. Through its International Relations Office, UKLO permanently encourages the development of initiatives and projects led by academic staff, then, regularly disseminates information about new opportunities in this regard and takes every opportunity to promote good practices and outcomes in all aspects of international cooperation, even spreading the word among the local community, familiarizing the business sector and beyond, as appropriate.

With regards to mobility, we are principally committed to extending the range and nature of the opportunities we can offer to our students, by permanent increase in number of signed inter-institutional agreements encompassing the academic offer of interest for our students. Agreements, generally include both study and traineeship opportunities for students and very often refer to all three cycles of study. Of course, we will not cease to enter into relations of cooperation with new, usually unexplored or just less familiar destinations for our students, partner country higher institutions inclusive. Understandably, the principle of quality and content of such agreements is prioritized over the number of signed agreements. Mobility opportunities are widely promoted on the University web, through our network of departmental coordinators and organized departmental presentations, as well as via regular basis information provided by the UKLO IRO staff. Besides, in the future UKLO will

continue working on further active promotion of international mobility in its new student recruitment policy (through University open days, for instance and probably increased participation in education fairs), as well as its institutional commitment with regards to equality of opportunities and enhancing the acceptance of students with disabilities and developing inclusive policies and practice.

On the other hand, mobility of academic and administrative staff, seen as contributing to the enhancement of quality of work, is considered a priority for effective partnership relationship establishment and management, support of cooperation projects, professional training, teaching delivery and programme development. In this context UKLO will explore opportunities for joint delivery of study programmes with partners from both programme and partner countries.

In all our international activities we recognize the importance of regular monitoring and evaluation in order to inform and influence our future practice, policy and strategy.

Further on, we expect to focus increasingly on the development of selected existing partnerships and to extend their scope so that they contribute to more successful achieving the objectives of the EU Modernization Agenda for Higher Education, for example, by developing relationships with other key stakeholders and/or cross-sector cooperation. In order to realize these objectives we will engage in more strategic and sustainable relationships based on deeper understanding of our capabilities, capacity and priorities.

We believe that we improve and grow stronger by learning from others. Working with our partners in programme and partner countries, we will expand our knowledge and experience of other education systems and qualifications to facilitate admission, progression, recognition, exchange and cooperation in programme development. In combination with this, we consider working with industry as a means to translate research into innovations that shape our world, tackling global challenges and transforming lives. We will develop our research collaboration with industry and the public sector, and will seek to increase opportunities for integration of industrial experience into degree programmes.