Three replicable models of internationalized curricula

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Abstract

This document outlines the operational strategy of internationalization within UNITA. On one hand, a set of international learning activities is proposed to the students of the alliance, supporting the personalization of their study paths. This is promoted thanks to the use of the UNITA Diploma Supplement. On the other hand, a strategy to massively increase the institutional internationalization of curricula is initiated: matching events are organized, bringing together directors of department or faculties, and vice-rectors in Education. In parallel to the workshop sessions, models of internationalized curricula are presented. The description of the actions in the continuity of the current efforts conclude the report with some perspectives.

PT: *Este documento descreve a estratégia operacional de internacionalização da UNITA. Por um lado, um conjunto de actividades de aprendizagem internacional é proposto aos estudantes da aliança, apoiando a personalização dos seus percursos de estudo. Isto é promovido graças à utilização do Suplemento ao Diploma da UNITA. Por outro lado, é iniciada uma estratégia para aumentar maciçamente a internacionalização institucional dos currículos: são organizados eventos de correspondência, reunindo directores de departamento ou de faculdades e vice-reitores de Educação. Paralelamente às sessões de trabalho, são apresentados modelos de currículos internacionalizados. A descrição das acções na continuidade dos esforços actuais conclui o relatório com algumas perspectivas.*

ES: *Este documento esboza la estrategia operativa de internacionalización dentro de UNITA. Por un lado, se propone a los estudiantes de la alianza un conjunto de actividades de aprendizaje internacional, apoyando la personalización de sus itinerarios de estudio. Esto se promueve gracias a la utilización del Suplemento al Diploma UNITA. Por otro lado, se inicia una estrategia para aumentar masivamente la internacionalización institucional de los planes de estudio: se organizan eventos de emparejamiento que reúnen a directores de departamento o de facultad y a vicerrectores de Educación. Paralelamente a las sesiones del taller, se presentan modelos de currículos internacionalizados. La descripción de las acciones en la continuidad de los esfuerzos actuales concluye el informe con algunas perspectivas.*

FR: *Ce document décrit la stratégie opérationnelle d'internationalisation au sein d'UNITA. D'une part, un ensemble d'activités d'apprentissage internationales est proposé aux étudiants de l'alliance, favorisant la personnalisation de leurs parcours d'études. Ceci est favorisé par l'utilisation du Supplément au Diplôme d'UNITA. D'autre part, une stratégie visant à accroître massivement l'internationalisation institutionnelle des programmes d'études est mise en place: des événements correspondants sont organisés, réunissant les directeurs de départements ou de facultés et les vice-recteurs à l'éducation. Parallèlement aux sessions de l'atelier, des modèles de programmes d'études internationalisés sont présentés. La description des actions dans la continuité des efforts actuels conclut le rapport avec quelques perspectives.*

IT: *Questo documento delinea la strategia operativa di internazionalizzazione all'interno di UNITA. Da un lato, viene proposto agli studenti dell'alleanza un insieme di attività di apprendimento internazionali, a sostegno della personalizzazione dei loro percorsi di studio. Ciò viene promosso grazie all'utilizzo del Supplemento al Diploma UNITA. Dall'altro lato, viene avviata una strategia per aumentare in modo massiccio l'internazionalizzazione istituzionale dei curricula: vengono organizzati eventi di matching, che riuniscono direttori di dipartimento o di facoltà e vicerettori all'Istruzione. Parallelamente alle sessioni di workshop, vengono presentati modelli di curricula internazionalizzati. La descrizione delle azioni in continuità con gli sforzi attuali conclude la relazione con alcune prospettive.*

RO: *Acest document prezintă strategia operațională de internaționalizare în cadrul UNITA. Pe de o parte, se propune studenților alianței un set de activități de învățare internațională, care sprijină personalizarea traseelor de studiu ale acestora. Acest lucru este promovat datorită utilizării Suplimentului la Diplomă UNITA. Pe de altă parte, este inițiată o strategie de creștere masivă a internaționalizării instituționale a programelor de studii: sunt organizate evenimente de potrivire, care reunesc directori de departament sau facultăți și prorectori în domeniul educației. În paralel cu sesiunile de lucru, sunt prezentate modele de programe de studii internaționalizate. Descrierea acțiunilor în continuarea eforturilor actuale încheie raportul cu câteva perspective.*

List of acronyms

- UNITA technical words:

    - WP: Work Package

    - ICTU: Internationalization of Curricula Through UNITA

    - UCIL: UNITA collaborative international learning

    - VM: Virtual Mobility

    - URM: UNITA Rural Mobility

    - IC: inter-comprehension

    - UDS: UNITA Diploma Supplement

    - UAP: University Associated Partners, composed of

        - IPG: Instituto Politécnico da **Guarda**,

        - UPNA: Universidad Pública de **Navarra**,

        - UniBs: Università degli Studi di **Brescia**

        - UniTBv: Universitatea **Transilvania Brasov**,

        - HES-SO: Haute Ecole Spécialisée de Suisse Occidentale

        - ChNU: Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University in Ukraine

- European institutional technical words:

    - ECTS: European Credit Transfer System

    - E+BIP: Erasmus + Blended Intensive Programs

    - EIT: European Innovation & Technology

    - EFMD: European Foundation for Management Development

    - DS: Diploma Supplement

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1. Introduction

The UNITA work package related to the innovation of Education, aims, among its three main tasks, to support the personalization and the recognition of study paths within the European context. Alliances are expected to build a European inter-university "campus", in which, among some other key cooperation principles, "*students can design their own flexible curricula, leading to a European Degree*", following the European Commission (EC).

In practice within UNITA, the sub-task entitled "Promoting UNITA diploma supplements, towards new joint and flexible UNITA curricula" consists in:

"A further step towards the integration of UNITA universities is to create UNITA diploma supplements for curricula with UNITA components in pre-existing BA and MA degrees in the areas of Cultural heritage, Renewable energies and the Circular economy, also taking into account the degree structure in Spain (240 ECTS for BA and 60 ECTS for MA). At the end of the three years UNITA will present three replicable models of internationalized BA and MA curricula with the aim of expanding the integrated model to other thematic areas beyond the duration of the project."

Thus, in order to present the related implemented activities, the report is structured as follows:

1. After having recalled the main features related to the UNITA Diploma Supplement (UDS), the situation of each institution with respect to the issuing of UDS is summarized (Sec. 2.1). Then the operational strategy to develop the institutional internationalization within UNITA is presented (Sec. 2.2).

2. As one of main strength of European Universities is constituted by the level of a long-term and structural cooperation, a strategy to internationalize the curricula has been designed (Sec. 3.1). A matching event held in March 2023, Turin, has gathered Vice-rectors of Education, Vice-rectors of Internationalization and more than a hundred of head of curriculum, all from the 6 UNITA universities and their 6 Universities Associated Partners (UAP). During this event, replicable models of internationalized curricula have been presented (Sec. 3.2).

3. The present report ends with some perspectives, expectation and challenges related to the internationalization of curricula in the current situation of UNITA.

2. Internationalization of study paths

2.1. UNITA Diploma supplement

In order to promote the internationalized study paths among the UNITA universities, a specific UNITA diploma supplement is created, adapted from the existing diploma supplement of the European Commission, in the framework of the Erasmus + program: a platform of services, aims, among other objectives, to support the academic institutions, by facilitating the readability of training courses through the issuing of a Certificate or a Diploma Supplement (DS). This platform of services, named Europass, is described in the deliverable D6.9 "Framework of skills developed during the UNITA mobilities", produced by the UNITA WP6 Task Force. In Table 1, the current situation for each institution regarding the use of Europass tools.

	Europass Diploma Supplement issuing	Responsible office
UBI	Automatic delivery	Quality office
UNIZAR	Automatic delivery	
UPPA	Automatic delivery	Education office
USMB	Sent on demand	Education office
UNITO	Sent on demand	
UVT	Automatic delivery	

Table 1 - Current status of the use of Europass tools. Adapted from D6.9 "Framework of skills developped during the UNITA mobilities"

The adaptation of the regular DS, to the UNITA activities is fully described in the deliverable D6.3 "Models for UNITA diploma supplement", also produced by the WP6 Task Force. In this report, the UNITA DS is stated as being a regular DS including at least one UNITA activity. The list of UNITA learning activities that can be included into the UNITA DS is also provided, see Table 2. These activities are proposed to all students of the UNITA alliance, no matter they are registered in a study program related to one of the three strategic thematic of UNITA.

Name	Short description
UNITA Collaborative International Learning (UCIL)	International learning experience involving a whole classroom and its teacher from each international partner.

Name	Short description
Virtual Mobility (VM)	International learning experience based on online mode.
Inter-comprehension course	Learning experience involving a group composed of international students.
UNITA Blended Intensive Programs (BIP)	International learning experience based on both online and face-to-face periods ; the later involves a group of international students.
UNITA Rural mobility (URM)	Immersing experience abroad based on a contribution to the socio-economic development of a rural zone.
Tandem & Language café	Communication activity based on interculturality.
UNITA student assembly	Experience related to the active involvement in the management of the European University.
UNITA microcredentials	Learning experience based on focused topics internationally co-designed, with targeted learning outcomes
European citizenship workshops	Collaborative experience of work involving international groups, aiming to promote European values towards educational and non academic people.
UNITA Ideathon - hackathon	International contests involving multi-cultural groups of students from various academic disciplines and levels.

Table 2 - Table of activities that can be included for a diploma supplement to be a UNITA one. Adapted from D6.3 "Models for UNITA diploma supplement".

The technical issues are also highlighted, preventing the creation of UNITA DS. They are summarized here below:

- Recognition by the vocational world: in some country, the relevancy of DS with respect to employability remains weak.

- From the technical point of view:

  - if elementary digital tools are used, a consequent workload for the administrative staff is needed to produce UNITA DS.

  - If dedicated educational software are used, it may be not possible to mention a « set of activity » as virtual mobility is; in addition, the formatted description of a UNITA learning activity may be tedious to get, as it is provided by an international teacher.

Thus, UNITA DS may constitute a first way to valorize an internationalized study paths. However, a qualitative step forward will be constituted on one hand by the integration of the UNITA teaching activities into the regular study programs, and on the other hand by a European label delivered to international curricula.

2.2. UNITA Internationalization operational strategy

The internationalization study paths within UNITA is initiated thanks to the development of new forms of mobility in the context of the alliance. One of the main advantages of using such initiatives (VM, BIP, URM) lies in the potential of personalization of the student's study path. Indeed, whenever these UNITA learning activities are recognized, each student may integrate an original experience in his regular curricula, while keeping the pedagogical consistency. In a mid-term period, with enough experience, it will be possible to identify the successful personalized study paths with UNITA, using a dedicated digital cartography, as it is described in the related report D2.3 "Database of study paths" produced by the WP2 Task Force.

In parallel, institutional strategies have to be implemented to build UNITA joint internationalized curricula. An option consists in building from scratch new joint programs. This requires a huge amount of investment in time, human resources and financial support; it may faces also some critical obstacles from national regulations. Another option consists in internationalizing existing curricula. In order to proceed through this way, the natural steps are:

1. Get the institutional support at the highest level, corresponding at least to the implication of the Vice-Rectors for internationalization.

2. Identifying the curricula that can match together, and make their related coordinator of department or Faculty meet for discussing about some projects of internationalization.

3. Support the coordinators of department by proposing various models of internationalization, including the building of a joint program. For each of these models, a road map to progress step by step towards the internationalization is drafted.

4. Make the accompaniment of the projects of internationalization, by

    1. assuring a follow up of the progression,

    2. collecting the obstacles and issues with the perspective to overcome them,

    3. facilitating the administrative aspects,

4. awarding some dedicated grants.

In March 2023, the 16th and 17th in Turin, a matching event was held, aiming to fulfill the 3 first steps described above. This event, called "Internationalization of Curricula Through UNITA, ICTU", brought together several Vice-Rectors in Education, Vice-Rectors in International Affairs, Heads of central office of the universities, and around a hundred and fifty of coordinators of study programs. All participants came from 12 institutions, composed of the 6 UNITA universities and the 6 University Associated Partners (UAP): Instituto Politécnico da **Guarda**, Universidad Pública de **Navarra**, Università degli Studi di **Brescia** and Universitatea **Transilvania Brasov**, with the Haute Ecole Spécialisée de Suisse Occidentale in Switzerland and the Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University in Ukraine. People worked together per groups of 2 to 8 persons, divided in 8 coarse academic fields: Social Sciences, Sciences, Medicine & Health, humanities, Education, Economy and Agriculture. After this event, the number of proposals of international collaborations differs following the type of collaboration, see Table 4.

Type of collaboration	Examples of initiatives to be implemented	Number
First contact	Exchange of students, staff, placement	26
Cooperation	Master thesis, co-tutelle, summer school	12
Pedagogical initiatives	BIP, UCIL, microcredentials, joint-modules	24
Diploma	Joint diploma, double/multiple diploma	20

Table 4 - Table of number of proposals of international project, with respect to the type of collaboration.

3. Replicable models of internationalized curricula

During the plenary sessions of the ICTU event, some concepts and models of internationalization have been presented. The objective of these presentations is to enlarge as possible the spectrum of internationalization, as well as to show the challenges but also the replicability in the framework of UNITA. The following sub-section 3.1 and 3.2 are based on the presentation made by the speakers.

3.1. Concepts of internationalization

The internationalization process consists in incorporating international, intercultural and global dimension into the content of a curriculum. The learning outcomes, the assessment tasks, the teaching methods and the support services are also impacted by the international framework.

1. Basic required actions are linked to the internationalization process:

    i. partnerships must be developed with foreign institutions, focusing on the interest of study programs abroad,

ii. students mobility and staff mobility must be facilitated,

iii. agreement on the objectives of the cooperation, the shared resources, the educational rules, the recognition of the degrees and the financial aspect, has to be stated and formalized.

2. The specific benefits of the internationalization from the curricula point of view:

i. increase the international visibility of the degree,

ii. join distinctive and complementary resources and skill of several partners, around a common program,

iii. instill a stronger international culture within the institution.

3. However, there are still some challenges and issues associated to the internationalization:

i. the concept of joint European degree does not yet exist. This is crucial key-concept that constitutes one of the four flagship initiatives of the European Strategy for Universities, by the European Union.

ii. Overcoming the discrepancy between the national regulations on the Educational procedures (degrees format, accreditation process, academic periods, …).

iii. From a practical point of view, the coordination at both the political and the operational levels (teachers and administrative staffs) is crucial.

Based on the common characteristics of the interntionalization of a study program, several paths can be identified as being constitutive to the internationalization, as it corresponds to a continuous process.

3.2. Models of internationalized curricula

In practice, the internationalization takes several key dimensions, Table 5. From these dimensions, several theoretical models can be performed, corresponding to existing models of internationalized curricula.

Dimensions	Low level	High level
Number of partners	two	Large pool of partners with multiple roles
Scope of disciplines	Uni-disciplinary	Multi-disciplinary
Languages	One common language	Multilingual program

Dimensions	Low level	High level
Level of integration	modular/electives	Jointly designed and fully integrated
Degree awarding strategy	Single national recognition(s)	Joint degree

Table 5 – Key dimensions of study programs internationalization

Hereafter three basic models of internationalized curricula are presented:

- The "rake" model, involving at least 3 partners. The principle consists in teaching a common background, and then propose some specializations.

  - The first part of the program is taught at home, within each institution.

  - The 2nd part of the program, corresponding to the specializations, has to be chosen within a pool of possible destinations :

    - not all institution may propose a specialized program

    - students choose according to their language

- The "snake" model, involving as many partners as manageable. The principle is to propose a set of highly flexible study path, based on some selected parts of the study programs of all partners.

  - The program is divided into parts included into each semester. These parts are taught similarly at some different partner institutions, even if all institution may not propose a semester of study.

  - The students choose their destination according to the language and the educational content.

- The "musketeers" model, involving as many partners as the number of semesters composing the degree; for example, there must be 4 partners for a Master degree composed of 4 semesters. The principle consists in providing a part of a semester program at a unique institution for the whole students.

  - The program is fully jointly designed, taught separately at the partner institution.

  - All students move together from one partner institution to another according to a single predefined path.

Hereafter, three replicable models of internationalized curricula are described. They correspond to existing internationalized degrees, based on the above theoretical models, Table 6.

Name of the Degree	Model type	Number of partners	Involved UNITA institution
European Master in Business Studies	Multiple Master degree, Joint program, type Musketeers	4	USMB
European Computer Science	Multi-institutional double degree, bi-lingual undergraduate program, type Rake.	7	UVT
Msc Food Systems	Integrated graduate degree program, organized by academic institutions and industrial partners, almost type Snake	8	UniTo

Table 6 – Three replicable models of internationalized curricula

1. The European Master in Business Studies (EMBS), is a Master degree program, involving 4 institutions: USMB (France), Università di Trento (Italy), Universität Kassel (Germany) and Universidad de León (Spain). It started in 2007 as a double degree with two mobility partners and the joint degree was established in 2010. The EMBS received the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) accreditation in 2017. It counts around 20 to 25 students per promotion, coming from 8 to 12 countries.

2. The European Computer Science (ECS), is a multi-institutional undergraduate double degree, in which students do the first 2 years at home university and spend the third year at a partner university, among the 7 institutions:

   i. The Universidad de Burgos (Spain) offers the specialization "Artificial intelligence and Knowledge Management",

   ii. The Instituto Politénico de Coimbra (Portugal) offers the specialization "Artificial intelligence and Data base",

   iii. The Hochschule fur Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg (Germany) proposes the specialization "Embedded Systems & Sensor Technologies",

   iv. The Université de Lorraine (France) proposes the specialization on "Human Computer Interaction & Business Intelligence",

   v. The Universitatea de Vest din Timisoara (Romania) offers the specialization on "Artificial Intelligence and Distributed Computing",

   vi. The institution Turun ammatikorkeakoulu (Finland) proposes the specialization "Embedded Systems",

vii. and the Universita Ca'Foscari di Venezia (Italy) offers the specialization "Web interfaces and Web software Technologies".

From a Erasmus Curriculum Development project, the ECS started in 2005. Since 2013, over 20 potential double-degree pairs are possible, mixing both one-direction mobility and bidirectional mobilities.

3. The Master in Food Systems (MFS) is an integrated graduate degree program, that awards a Master Degree and the European Innovation & Technology (EIT) label certificate. It involves 8 institutions: University of Hohenheim (Germany), University of Warsaw (Poland), University of Turin (Italy), Lund University (Sweden), University of Reading (United Kingdom), Aarhus University (Denmark), Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain) and the Queen's University Belfast (Northern Ireland). Each semester of the MFS includes a specific teaching common to all institution:

   i. Semester 1: Introduction to food systems (7.5 ECTS)

   ii. Semester 2: Entrepreneurship & Innovation in the Food System (7.5 ECTS)

   iii. Semester 3: Merging Technologies – Business case study (7.5 ECTS)

   iv. Semester 4: Graduate conference.

Only the 1st and the 4th semesters are at home university, while the semesters 2 and 3 happen in two different host partner universities. More than 10 tracks are possible for around a hundred of students.

4. Perspectives

The next challenge coming soon for the UNITA alliance consists in integrating the 4 new full partners (IPG, UPNA, UniBs and UniTBv) and the associated partners (HES-SO mainly, but also ChNu for the current well-known geopolitical reasons related to Ukraine). The new consortium, starting from next November 2023, will highly increase the potential of internationalization. Hopefully the 12 institutions are already involved in the ICTU event, for which a new event is already planned at the end of November 2023 in Turin. The aim of the next ICTU event is to support the groups of the last ICTU edition that have progressed in their internationalization project. The internationalization of curricula is formally planned in UNITA over the period 2024-2027, through a Task called "UNITA personalized international learning paths".

Beside, an important expectation is related to the Joint European Degree Label, for which the European Commission has initiated 6 pilot projects of exploration. Among the expected results, recommendations related to transnational cooperation instruments will be brought to the European

Commission, towards a future European Degree. The Alliance UNITA is currently associated partner of one of the 6 pilot projects, named SMARTT.