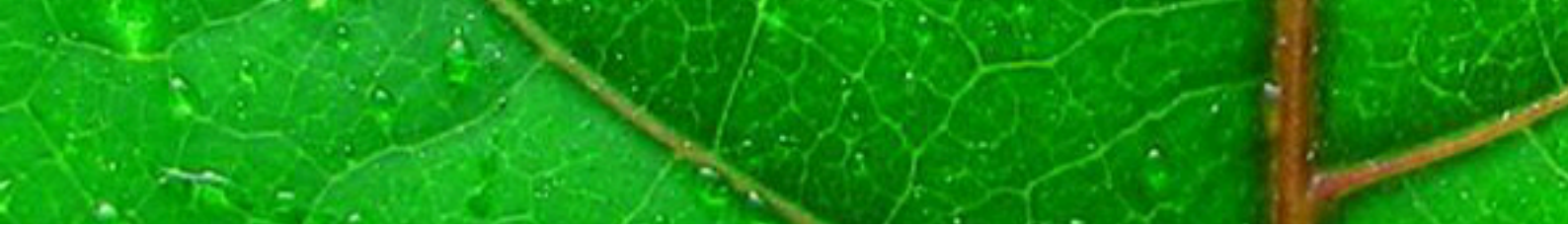

UPPA international strategy

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Target geographical areas, partners and groups privileged by mobility activities

The UPPA boasts a singular environment: a cross-border area that stretches from the Basque Country to Aragon, fostering a thriving collaboration activity with the University of the Basque Country (UPV), the Public University of Navarre (UPNA) and the University of Saragossa (UNIZAR). Built around a number of key actions (a local mobility programme open to all, placements in companies, the implementation of double degree courses and co-supervised theses), this partnership is a core value in UPPA's mission statement and underpins its international policy.

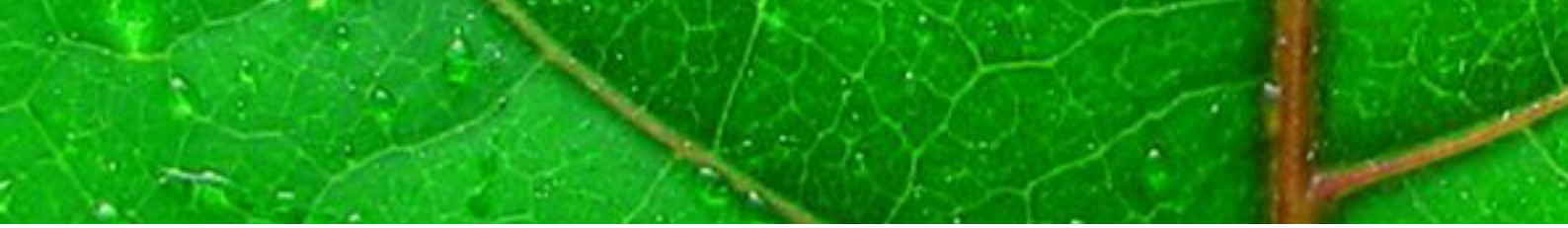
It galvanises the development of collaboration initiatives in Latin America, with countries that have sociocultural and historical links with Spain, the Bearn region and the French Basque country. Bilateral mobility agreements (for students and teachers alike) will be drawn up with this in mind, and complemented by the creation of transnational courses, involving South American partners (Argentina, Chile, Mexico) as well as those just across the border, so that knowledge can be shared with the third-party countries.

On the strength of a thriving cross-border collaboration, UPPA has set itself a new challenge: promoting three languages, French, Spanish and English. It involves encouraging students and staff (with, in particular, the creation of an “International certification” for staff) to learn and practice English and Spanish, and attracting international students who wish to take advantage of courses taught in English and/or Spanish while improving their fluency in French.
Partnerships with Anglophone universities are therefore another priority for UPPA, and it will optimise the quality exchanges with the universities of Aberdeen, Abertay, Swansea (UK), Limerick (IRL), Linköping (S), etc., thanks to the fine-tuning of the ECTS system and of the grading scale. UPPA will also extend its mobility network by signing further agreements, in particular with Keene College in the USA and the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, which are due to join the list of its Anglophone partners outside Europe.

Defining specific targets and rationalising bilateral exchanges by focusing on those agreements which promote reciprocal recognition of a mobility period – in particular when the possibility of a double degree is involved (as is the case with Essen in Germany or Oviedo) – does not however exclude European or non-European universities with which UPPA has created diversified ties, justified by the multi-discipline nature of the institution.

A number of partnerships were effectively born as a result of the strategic teaching of FFL at UPPA (Sweden, Mexico, and China), giving rise to mobility for studies with the third-party countries. UPPA is also present in a number of different networks such as the Vietnam-based South-East Asia consortium of the AUF (Francophone University Association), and on the themes of urbanization, aquatic resources, chemistry and civil engineering, as well as on our university's more specialist subjects such as geosciences or wood.

Such courses, with innovative and/or vocational themes, will combine different types of action at international level, such as staff and student mobility, for study and for placement, from first to third cycle, or transnational integrated teaching activities (as part of a policy to increase the number of double degree courses proposed, and to share modules on electronic platforms).



Another geographical area, the Maghreb, extended to certain African countries, adds a subject-based and sociocultural dimension which opens the way for the development of specifically-targeted partnerships, based mainly on themes such as geosciences, energy, the environment or even history, heritage and anthropology.

The aim is to involve these partners (Algerian, Moroccan, Congolese, etc.), in larger network and cooperation projects, in centralised actions built essentially around e-learning platforms and based on the sharing of best practices (increased course transparency through the creation of documents such as the "Supplément au diplôme" (Diploma Supplement) for which UPPA received certification for the period 2011-2014).

Finally, UPPA's international strategy strives to stay in step with institutional partnerships in the Aquitaine region and with the towns that are home to the UPPA's 5 campuses. Following Göttingen and Swansea, UPPA signed agreements with Örebro, in Sweden, and two universities in Xi'an, China; it will submit a project to open a Confucius Institute with one of the latter.

Quebec (the universities of Laval and Trois-Rivières) is still a leading light as regards partnership with the Aquitaine Region, in particular regarding the agreements for short-term courses (DUT) designed to develop mobility for placements in industry.

Implementation of European and International collaboration projects

UPPA's strategy for organising international cooperation projects will be led on three non-exclusive fronts, which will be grounded in the specificities described in point A.

Strategic partnerships

It will first develop “strategic partnerships” by giving priority to the association of three factors:

* A basic partnership between the universities of Aquitaine and the greater south west France region and the cross-border Spanish universities, a circle extended to include the European partners of each and the local authorities.
* A trilingual dimension
* The electronic dimension of distance learning, a concern shared by the key personnel in
* Aquitaine and the partners in the Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarre network.

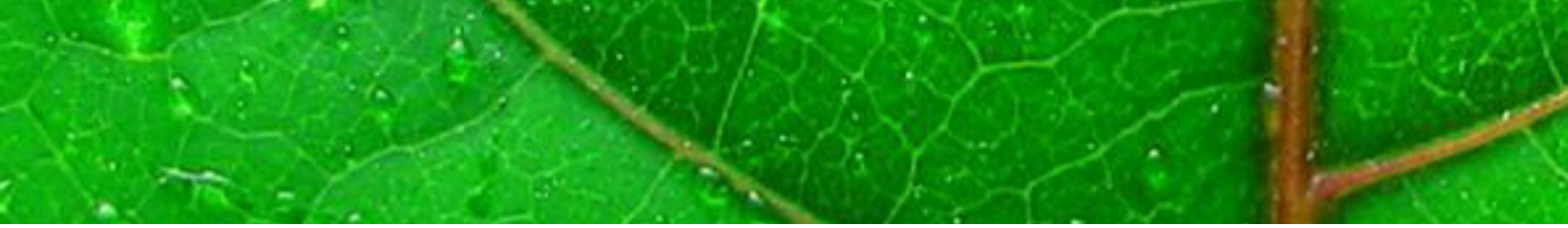
These partnerships will act as a springboard for trilingual distance learning projects, particularly in the subject areas of law, management and European cultural affairs.

“International collaborations” with the Maghreb

These aspects will also be visible in “international collaborations” with the Maghreb, where sharing practices in the reformation of the curricula will be a priority. The modernisation of teaching programmes and the call for new teaching methods (e-learning) will be juxtaposed with theme-based priorities, common to both the UPPA and its regions (such as the energy sector or environmental issues). These course projects, adapted to the socioeconomic reality, will cover aspects relating to employability.

Innovative and vocational courses

On the strength of innovative and vocational courses underpinned by recognised research teams, UPPA will take part in promotion projects that marry industrial partners and networks of international researchers, certified by different competitive clusters in France (Avenia, AESE, Xylofutur,



CREAHd, AGRIMIP, etc.). Sectors with high potential for innovation (analytical and materials science, geo-resources, eco-construction, aeronautics, water resources, etc.) will be the subject of particular focus.

Expected impact on modernisation and the international dimension of the institution

In addition to the linguistic and multicultural added value that future graduates will gain from their time abroad, a mobility period organised as part of the ECTS system will foster the customization of the curriculum. The credit transfer system will guarantee the recognition of a high-level qualification by enabling academic courses to be tailored to the needs of students and to European society.

A similar function will be ensured by staff mobility and by “collaboration projects for innovation": creating networks of researchers around cutting-edge activities will increase these individuals' qualification level and speed up scientific progress.

UPPA will have to discuss its training offer to boost its international appeal. The requirements of the ECTS system will make the training offer clearer (modernization of the course catalogue) or even lead to changes being made to the different courses. Courses will also see the benefit of innovative practices and an added value that comes from integrated transnational training.

The development of classes in English and Spanish will make UPPA more appealing to international students, while encouraging students to travel after completing our courses. UPPA will be able to carve out an international reputation and position itself on the international knowledge market.

The innovative methods developed in European programmes and which can be transferred to UPPA courses will have an indirect impact, in terms of both quality and quantity, on the profile of Pau students. Online courses, a source of flexibility in the learning process, will help diversify the nationality of Pau's graduates by opening the university to sectors that are disadvantaged in socio-cultural terms, or which are far away geographically, and to offer more sandwich courses.

In its strategy to branch out internationally, UPPA is making a bet on the future regarding the mobility of its staff, to make them the springboard for general modernization of the university.
The International Certification, based on the recognition of professional mobility experiences, should unite research lecturers, administrative personnel and technicians around the same project: the label will ensure continued training for staff and add value to professional careers. It will result not only in the internationalization of teaching strategies, but also in modernisation of UPPA's technical and administrative management, enriched by a similar process at international level and by the adoption of the most pertinent organisational techniques.

Regarding the university budget, the financial consequences of knowledge alliances can be only of benefit, as they extend the partnership network to companies and to international socio-economic sectors, and will encourage the diversification of their sources of funding.