

1ST INTERNATIONALISATION PLAN

Universidade de Vigo

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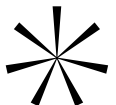
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ATHENA
EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY



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This Plan establishes a clear, detailed strategy to promote and accomplish a process of comprehensive internationalisation at the Universidade de Vigo, to boost mobility and quality training of our students, strengthen professional development of our teaching & research staff, as well as, the technical, management, administration & services staff, whilst enhancing our presence and competitiveness in the global arena.

Maribel del Pozo



Index

Introduction	5
Internationalisation of Higher Education	6
Internationalisation in the Universidade de Vigo 2021-2026 Strategic Plan	7
1st Universidade de Vigo Internationalisation Plan	8
1. International cooperation	10
1.1. Bilateral conventions and agreements	10
1.2. Networks and associations	11
1.3. ATHENA European University	12
1.4. International degrees	13
2. Mobility of students, teaching and research staff, and of technical, management, and administration & services staff	16
2.1. International mobility programmes for students, teaching & research staff, and technical, management, and administration & services staff	16
2.2. Dissemination, funding, and recognition of international mobility activities	17
3. Multilingualism and multiculturalism	21
3.1. Teaching in foreign languages	21
3.2. English Friendly/Français amical/Português amigável/Italiano amichevole subjects	22
3.3. Language level learning and certification plan	23
3.4. Internationalisation at home	25
4. Attraction and retention of international talent	28
4.1. International recruitment initiatives	28
4.2. Spanish and Galician as tools for attracting international students	29
4.3. Creation of a Welcome Centre	30

Introduction

Internationalisation is an essential process for universities to consolidate prestige and competitiveness in the global arena. In an increasingly interconnected and diverse academic context, this 1st Universidade de Vigo Internationalisation Plan aims not only to position our institution as a benchmark in higher education, but also to promote academic mobility, collaboration with international institutions, and attract worldwide talent. It is designed to strengthen the university's international projection, improve educational quality, and promote research & knowledge transfer through global networks, in order to train professionals to face the challenges of a cosmopolitan world.

The Plan summarises the main internationalisation proposals of the Universidade de Vigo's governing team, enriched by comments and suggestions from the university community. A multi-year programme of actions with their corresponding indicators will be used to assess success of implementation. Monitoring reports for each indicator will be published annually.

The 1st Internationalisation Plan is in line with the Universidade de Vigo's international strategy and is financed with own resources sourced from various services whose activities influence the university's international strategy. These funds will complement internationalisation activities covered by regional, national, and international programmes, thus supplementing external resources.





Internationalisation of Higher Education

Universities are key institutions for the knowledge society and hence must generate universal, egalitarian, and diverse knowledge that contributes to the real advancement of humanity. In this sense, and given the global nature of today's society, internationalisation has become one of the fundamental tools for guaranteeing progress that leaves no one behind.

Internationalisation is one of the main challenges in the field of higher education, and its importance has grown in recent years, especially in an increasingly globalised and digitalised context. A key element in ensuring quality training today is the internationalisation of higher education institutions, which confers an essential added value by creating world citizens with a global perspective, multicultural skills, and international competences. These citizens are a valuable asset not only individually, but also collectively for their communities, as they will be able to contribute to the economic and social development of their environment.

This dynamic process involves the local community, the university, its processes, and the relationships and alliances it establishes. Spanish universities increasingly operate in a political, economic, social, and cultural context that affects and conditions them, and over which they also exert influence, thus requiring the urgent formulation and development of internationalisation strategies.

A recent giant step forward in the internationalisation process of European and Spanish universities has been the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which has provided greater flexibility and competitiveness in an increasingly globalised world. Since its inception, Spain has been immersed in this transformation and, as the law governing the university system (LOSU) points out, 'it is no longer possible to imagine that we can articulate and guide the future of universities in Spain without incorporating the perspective, initiatives, and regulations that come from the European Union'. The LOSU further states that 'The Europeanisation of the Spanish university system should not prevent us from extending internationalisation to other cooperation areas such as the Ibero-American Higher Education and Knowledge Area, which has a common language base of some 600 million users'.

In short, internationalisation of the university not only improves educational quality and research, visibility, and reputation, but also contributes to social and economic development, locally, nationally and globally.



*Internationalisation in
the Universidade de
Vigo 2021-2026
Strategic Plan*

The Universidade de Vigo's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan outlines the profile of a Galician university with a worldwide projection that will strive to expand its international dimension, not just to increase mobility actions of the entire university community, but also to strengthen its national and international image.

The Universidade de Vigo is committed to internationalisation and attracting foreign talent, with special emphasis not only on Portuguese-speaking and

Spanish-speaking countries, but also others from Europe and beyond, in this case through initiatives related to foreign languages. Cooperation with Ibero-American higher education institutions and Portuguese-speaking ones is central to the plan and therefore, the elimination of cultural and linguistic barriers would greatly boost internationalisation with partner institutions. The Universidade de Vigo intends to get profoundly involved in internationalisation and spread the benefits to the entire university community.

1st Universidade de Vigo Internationalisation Plan

The main objective of this Plan is to promote and sustainably develop the international dimension in study, teaching, research, and institutional management, as well as the participation of our university in initiatives that promote internationalisation, both through mobility actions and internationalisation at home. This objective involves the following challenges:

- **Improving education quality:** information exchange between people from different backgrounds enriches the diversity and quality of education by encouraging discussion of ideas, joint project collaboration, and the adoption of good practices.
- **Better understanding of cultural diversity and a global approach:** the presence of diverse cultures and backgrounds in the classroom enriches the learning experience and promotes a receptive and global mindset among the university community.
- **Enhancing social impact and sustainable development:** internationalisation facilitates addressal of global issues and contributes to sustainable development through collaboration in areas such as health, environmental sustainability, social welfare, inclusion, etc.
- **Attracting talent:** an international university draws the best talent from all over the world.
- **Fostering research and innovation:** international collaboration fosters research and development of new ideas through access to multiple approaches and resources, as well as participation in international research networks.
- **Higher employability:** students at an international university develop intercultural competences that increase their appeal to large companies and international organisations.

In order to achieve these objectives, this 1st Internationalisation Plan is structured around four fundamental interconnected axes:

- International cooperation
- Mobility of students, teaching & research staff, and technical, management, administration & services staff
- Multilingualism and multiculturalism
- Attracting international talent

The implementation of this Plan involves an assessment of the activities carried out so far in each of the axes, followed by the establishment of a set of objectives, actions, and indicators, which will be reviewed annually to improve the internationalisation process.



1. *International cooperation*

Expanding collaboration with international entities to develop a strategy of solid alliances is essential for the Universidade de Vigo to become international, which in turn will consolidate and increase the (physical and virtual) mobility of students, teaching & research staff, and technical, management, administration & services staff. International double degrees and joint degrees will be established, and collaborative projects contemplated. To date, the University has not only spent years building a solid network of institutional relations with other universities and organisations from all over the world, but also strengthened its presence in national and international associations and networks. These relationships, on the one hand, will provide mobility destinations for our students, teaching & research staff, and technical, management, administration & services staff, while on the other, will attract exceptional students and staff to the different offers at our university.

1.1. **Bilateral conventions and agreements**

The Universidade de Vigo belongs to the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area, which facilitates the establishment of bilateral relations with neighbouring countries. There are currently around 2,300 agreements with universities in European countries and more than 350 bilateral agreements with universities outside the countries associated with the Erasmus+ programme. Both Spanish and Galician facilitate the establishment of collaborations with Latin American and Portuguese-speaking countries due to their linguistic and cultural proximity, as reflected in the Universidade de Vigo 2021-2026 Strategic Plan. For this reason, we should not shy away from establishing collaboration with networks and associations involving Portuguese-speaking and Latin American institutions, which are often forgotten in the internationalisation plans of European universities. These will undoubtedly contribute to the exchange of students and staff, as well as the development of educational and research projects. Internal dissemination of the activities of these networks should be prioritised to inform the university community of the related benefits.

1.2. Networks and associations

Participation in national and international associations and networks provides high institutional visibility at a global level and awareness about the latest developments in the field of higher education. To that end, the Universidade de Vigo has become a member of the [European University Association](#) (EUA), the [European University Foundation](#) (EUF), the [Compostela Group of Universities](#), the Erasmus+ [LEO-NET](#) traineeship network, the [Global Education: Exchanges for Engineers and Entrepreneurs](#) (GE4) and the [International Student Exchange Program](#) (ISEP).

The EUA represents more than 850 universities and national rectors' conferences from 49 European countries and plays a leading role in the Bologna Process and in influencing EU policies on higher education, research, and innovation. Through continuous interaction with other European and international organisations, the EUA ensures that the independent voice of European universities is heard.

For its part, the EUF is a network of universities committed to the creation of a modern, strong, and

competitive European higher education area. The EUF is also an influential advocate for a substantial increase in the quantity and quality of student mobility, regularly putting forward new ideas, policies, and recommendations. The network has a long history of advocacy for policy reforms and contributions to the development of the Erasmus+ programme.

The Compostela Group of Universities is a network of universities that was born around the values of the Way of St. James. Its aim is to facilitate and promote cooperation between universities and agents involved in higher education.

LEO-NET is a European association of expert institutions or parties involved in international mobility for traineeships and is active in the field of competence development and youth employment. It forms an international network of affiliated higher education institutions, mobility consortia, and related organisations. LEO-NET is a neutral, non-profit organisation with a democratic and transparent structure.

GE4 is an international network of non-profit universities created in 1996. It works independently with

the primary objective of connecting academic institutions in engineering and management around the world.

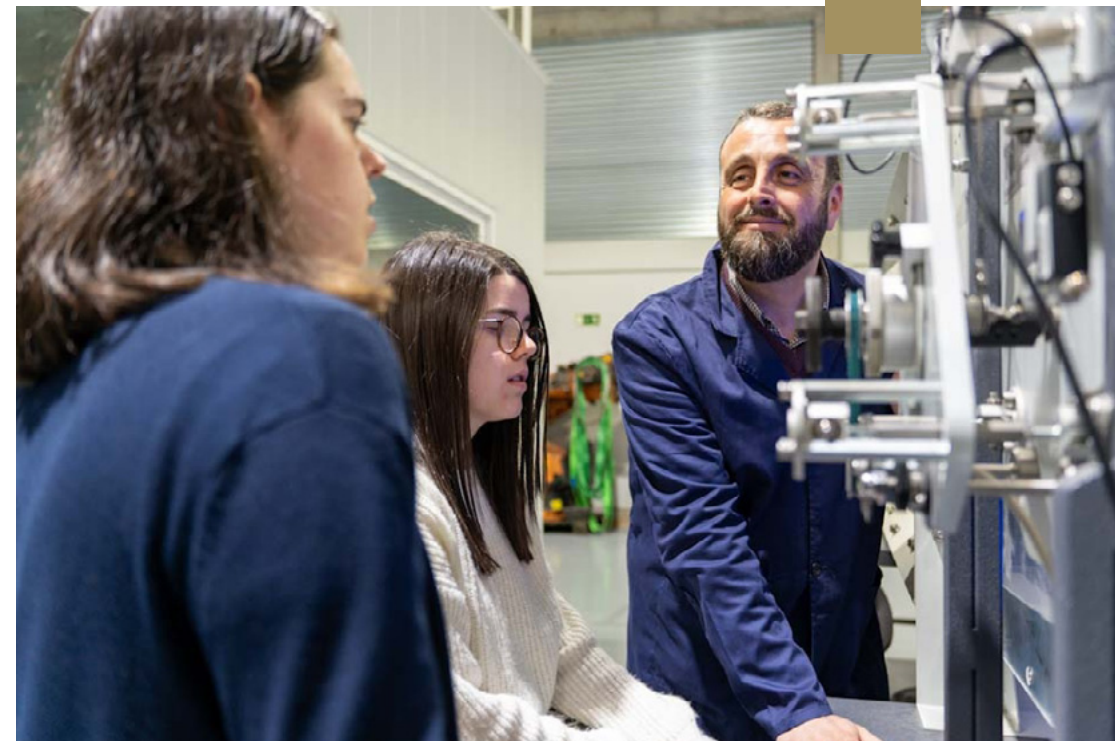
ISEP is a network of more than 200 universities around the world that aims to facilitate the physical mobility of final year undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The Universidade de Vigo has also signed an agreement with the Amity Institute, through which students can carry out placements in schools in the United States.

An agreement has also been signed with the [Association of American Study Abroad Programs in Spain](#) (APUNE), the oldest association

in Europe dedicated to promoting international exchange between Spain and the United States.

The Universidade de Vigo, together with the other universities of the Galician University System and those of northern Portugal, is part of the Universidade Sem Fronteiras ([UNIFS](#)) project, with the aim of promoting more innovative and creative programmes through educational cooperation, by means of a pilot project consisting of the implementation of four joint master's and PhD degrees.



Another member network is the Inter-University Cooperation Network for Regional Development and Integration (**Red de Cooperación Interuniversitaria para el Desarrollo y la Integración Regional**, CIDIR), made up mainly of Latin American universities, which aims to exchange knowledge, promote education, and develop coordination activities with regional organisations, in order to generate instruments and develop actions that contribute to increasing the impact that university activities have on the development of their regions.

The Universidade de Vigo actively participates in the **Spanish Universities Rectors' Conference** (CRUE) sectoral commission on internationalisation and cooperation, more specifically in the cooperation, internationalisation,

and mobility working groups and their respective subgroups and working committees. It also collaborates directly with the Spanish Service for the Internationalisation of Education (**SEPIE**), whose mission is to support internationalisation of the Spanish education system. Its collaboration with SEPIE facilitates participation in different events, such as the Study in Spain fairs, through which it can establish contact with potential students from all over the world.

At the national level, the Universidade de Vigo plans to continue consolidating its relationship with the ministries responsible for education, universities, science, and innovation, as well as, those of home and foreign affairs, in order to maintain a direct dialogue with the different stake holders involved in international collaboration.

1.3. ATHENA European University

Essential, within the chapter on international cooperation, is the European Universities Initiative, a part of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme, created with the aim of supporting 60 European universities encompassing more than 500 higher education institutions. These are transnational partnerships that promote European values and identity, offering curricula focused on each student and taught jointly on inter-university campuses, where different mobility options are available. All this is done with an interdisciplinary cooperative approach to address the challenges currently facing Europe. European universities can substantially increase the quality and scope of higher education in Europe by collaborating with some 1300 partners that include non-governmental organisations (NGOs), businesses, cities, or local and regional authorities.

The Universidade de Vigo is part of the **ATHENA** partnership (Advancing Technology through Higher Education and Novel Approaches), to which ten other partner institutions currently belong. Other prominent associate partners are the Conselho Nacional das Instituições da Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica (**CONIF**) in Brazil and the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (**RUFORUM**) in Africa.

CONIF is a forum for debate, proposal, and promotion of policies for the development of vocational and technological training, research, and innovation. It works in defence of free and excellent public education, where the objectives are to value, strengthen, and consolidate its 41 member institutions—38 federal institutes of education, science, and technology, two federal centres of technological education (Cefets), and the Colegio Pedro II—which





together total more than 600 units throughout Brazil. CONIF fosters studies and projects through events such as congresses, conferences, seminars, and meetings; it promotes the exchange of information and experiences within the network and also with educational, research and extension institutions, cultural, scientific, and technological entities, both national and foreign.

RUFORUM was created in 2004 and currently includes more than 180 universities in 40 countries. It is registered as an international NGO (FORR78950) in Uganda and coordinated by Makerere University in Kampala. In 2014, RUFORUM signed a cooperation agreement with the African Union to support implementation of the Union's Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy.

1.4. International degrees

The Universidade de Vigo plans to advance in the design and implementation of international double and joint degrees with universities that share a close relationship and where degrees can be complementary.

The Universidade de Vigo's regulations for the mutual recognition of credits within the framework of exchange programmes regulations for the mutual recognition of credits within the framework of exchange programmes allow students to not only obtain the degree from our university, but also that from another partner university, after studying at least 60 ECTS for a bachelor's degree and 30 ECTS for a master's

degree, in either face-to-face or virtual modes. This programme does not require the creation of new degrees or verification processes, but just acceptance of the detailed study plans by the pertinent centres at the Universidade de Vigo and the partner university.

The creation of joint degrees is a more complex process as compared to international double degrees, since these new degrees must go through verification processes, as is the case with the UNISF degrees and the Doctoral programme in Marine Sciences, Technology, and Management (DOMAR).

The Erasmus Mundus action of the Erasmus+ programme offers the option of designing joint master's degrees and providing funding for their implementation. These master's degrees typically include periods of study, research, and internships, as well as dissertation preparation and defence. The

'Erasmus Mundus Design Measures' action represents an opportunity prior to the master's degree implementation stage, as it is a call whose main objective is to promote the development of new and innovative transnational master study programmes with a high degree of integration. Participation in the calls for design measures and in the Erasmus Mundus joint master's courses themselves reinforces the capacity of universities to modernise and internationalise their curricula and contributes to the development of common mechanisms for quality assurance, accreditation, and recognition of degrees and credits.

In order to ensure continuity, promote international cooperation actions and position the Universidade de Vigo's academic, research, and transfer offer in the international arena, the following objectives should be prioritised:






-  **Objective 1.1.**
Promote and strengthen inter-institutional collaboration.
-  **Objective 1.2.**
Increase the number and quality of international mobility agreements.
-  **Objective 1.3.**
Advance in the promotion of internationalisation.
-  **Objective 1.4.**
Boost international teaching.
-  **Objective 1.5.**
Increase internationalisation and educational cooperation activities within the framework of the ATHENA partnership.

TABLE OF INDICATORS FOR AXIS 1

Objective	Actions	Indicators
1.1. Promote and strengthen inter-agency collaboration	International visibility of the Universidade de Vigo	Number of networking fairs, meetings, etc. participated outside Universidade de Vigo
	Participation in networks	Number of national and international networks in which Universidade de Vigo participates
1.2. Increase the number and quality of international mobility agreements	Establishment of framework agreements and specific collaborations	Number of foreign university partners
		Number of collaboration agreements for mobility actions within the Erasmus+ KA131 programme
		Number of educational cooperation agreements for mobility within the Erasmus+ KA171 programme
		Number of collaboration agreements for student mobility within the framework of our own scholarships
1.3. Advance in the promotion of internationalisation at Universidade de Vigo	Raise awareness in the university community about the need for internationalisation	Number of dissemination activities on the importance of internationalisation in the university system
1.4. Impulsar la docencia internacional en la Universidade de Vigo	Establishment of international degrees	Number of international bachelor degrees
		Number of international master degrees
	Establishment of joint degrees	Number of international joint bachelor degrees
		Number of international joint master degrees
		Number of international joint PhD degrees
		Number of PhD theses with cotutelle
Promote international co-tutorship of PhD theses with international mention	Number of PhD theses with international mention	
1.5. Boost internationalisation and educational cooperation activities within the framework of the ATHENA partnership	Promote joint degrees within ATHENA	Number of master's and bachelor's degrees with ATHENA partner institutions
	Promote the development of joint projects within ATHENA	Number of joint projects presented with ATHENA partner institutions

2.

Mobility of students, teaching and research staff, and of technical, management, and administration & services staff

University student and staff mobility is a fundamental pillar for the advancement of internationalisation of the Universidade de Vigo. Therefore, the aim is to raise awareness among students, teaching & research staff, as well as among the technical, management, and administration & services staff, of the benefits of participating in a mobility action that, in addition to completing and enriching their training and professional competence at different levels, gives them the opportunity to access different cultures and personal experiences, while discovering in detail the different approaches to teaching, learning, good practices, and work at the host institutions.

2.1. International mobility programmes for students, teaching & research staff, and technical, management, and administration & services staff

Participation in the different Erasmus+ programme actions enables the Universidade de Vigo to offer a wide range of mobility activities, both for students (studies and internships) and for teaching and training stays targeted at teaching & research staff and technical, management, and administration & services staff.

Numerous agreements have been signed with European higher education institutions within the framework of the Erasmus+ KA131 action, in all knowledge areas and for all Universidade de Vigo schools and faculties. These bilateral agreements facilitate mobility of the university community and position the Universidade de Vigo as an academic destination for many students coming from European institutions.

The Erasmus+ KA131 mobility call caters to students at all levels (bachelor, master, and doctorate) for studies or internships. In the case of teaching & research staff and technical, management, and administration & services staff, it offers teaching or training stays. This action is complementary to our own grants and includes outgoing mobility to institutions outside the European Union and the Erasmus+ programme. The signing of framework and specific mobility agreements with international institutions offers international mobility opportunities for Universidade de Vigo students to destinations such as Latin America, Canada, or the Republic of Korea, among others.

Erasmus+ KA131 and the call for our own grants are not the only mobility options available to Universidade de Vigo students. Thus, the agreement signed with the **Global Education: Exchanges for Engineers and Entrepreneurs (GE4)** network offers the possibility of carrying out engineering study stays at partner institutions. Students can also carry out industrial internships in engineering or science at institutions and universities in Japan thanks to the **Vulcanus** programme.

Moreover, Universidade de Vigo students can carry out academic stays in higher education institutions in the United States, Canada, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and Oceania, thanks to collaboration with the **International Student Exchange Program** (ISEP) network. As this is a reciprocal programme, Universidade de Vigo must put up an attractive offer so that foreign students decide to study at our institution. Thus, the focus should not only be on promoting outgoing mobility, but also on increasing incoming mobility at all educational levels (bachelor, master, and PhD).

The agreement signed with the **Amity Institute** will enable students to do internships in American schools, where they will have the

opportunity to disseminate Spanish language and culture while living with local families.

PhD students can carry out research stays within the framework of the **IACOBUS** programme in higher education institutions in the north of Portugal. This programme is also available for teaching & research staff and for technical, management, and administration & services staff to carry out research stays in these Portuguese institutions.

The **Stella for Staff programme of the Compostela Group of Universities** allows the mobility of technical, management, and administration & services staff among the higher education institutions that make up this network, which includes the Universidade de Vigo and through which staff from other partner institutions are also received. The Compostela Group of Universities Chair is another programme to promote mobility and exchange actions for teaching & research staff.

The KA171 action of the Erasmus+ programme for educational cooperation likewise offers mobility opportunities to staff (teaching & research staff and technical, management, and administration & services staff) and students. This action (International Credit

Mobility) allows the participation of institutions from all regions of the world. Project implementation requires close cooperation with partner institutions from third countries not linked to the Erasmus+ programme, which facilitates continuity of projects beyond student mobility and acts as a mechanism for attracting international students.

Combined (virtual and physical) mobilities, known as Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP), as well as short duration mobilities, have increased significantly in recent years, gaining popularity not only among students, but also among teaching & research, and technical, management, and administration & services staff. Similarly, virtual mobilities offer a great number of opportunities at all levels, many of which are being implemented within the framework of our ATHE-NA partnership.

2.2. Dissemination, funding, and recognition of international mobility activities

The Universidade de Vigo organises information and dissemination events to foster mobility activities among students and staff. In these events, adapted to each target group, detailed information is provided on the different mobility programmes: calls for applications, preparation of documentation, requirements, testimonies of beneficiaries, funding opportunities, etc. Host institutions also attend some of these events.

In terms of funding, besides programmes such as Erasmus+, students at the Universidade de Vigo can also apply for funding from the regional government (Xunta de Galicia), the Pontevedra and Ourense Provincial Authorities, and the Banco Santander, depending on the mobility programme. The university also allocates funds towards scholarships, whose main objective is to cover destinations in non-EU countries.

Signature of a study or placement agreement by the beneficiary and staff responsible for academic coordination at both institutions, ensures recognition of stays within the framework of mobility

programmes. Students undertaking master's or PhD mobility without credit recognition obtain stay recognition at the home university after receipt of an academic tutoring report from the host institution. Placement students who have already graduated receive recognition of their stay through the Europass.

Agreements are reviewed annually by staff responsible for international relations at each Universidade de Vigo centre to enhance current levels of outgoing and incoming mobility. The renewal, signing, or termination of an agreement is performed in accordance with the internationalisation strategy of each centre pursuant to its own needs.

The aim is to achieve the following objectives:

-  **Objective 2.1.**
Increase the number of student, teaching & research staff, and technical, management, and administration & services staff mobilities through the different mobility programmes.
-  **Objective 2.2.**
Improve the perception of our institution among incoming students and staff.
-  **Objective 2.3.**
Increase the number of student, teaching and research staff and technical, management, and administration & services staff mobilities within the ATHENA framework.

TABLE OF INDICATORS FOR AXIS 2

Objective	Actions	Indicators
2.1. Increase the number of student, teaching & research staff, and technical, management, and administration & services staff mobilities through the different mobility programmes	Increase the number of outgoing students, teaching & research staff and technical, management, and administration & services staff through the different mobility programmes	Number of outgoing students through Erasmus+ KA131 projects
		Number of outgoing teaching and research staff through Erasmus+ KA131 projects
		Number of outgoing technical, management, and administration & services staff through Erasmus+KA131 projects
		Number of outgoing students through Erasmus+ KA171 projects
		Number of outgoing teaching and research staff through Erasmus+ KA171 projects
		Number of outgoing technical, management, and administration & services staff through Erasmus+ KA171 projects
		Number of outgoing students through own scholarship and free mobility programmes
		Number of outgoing students through the GE4 programme
		Number of outgoing teaching and research staff through the IACOBUS programme
		Number of outgoing technical, management, and administration & services staff through the IACOBUS programme
	Number of outgoing technical, management, and administration & services staff through the Stella for Staff programme	
	Number of outgoing students through the ISEP programme	
	Number of outgoing students through the Vulcanus programme	
	Number of Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) organised	
	Number of BIPs in which Universidade de Vigo has taken part	
	Increasing the number of incoming students, teaching & research staff and technical, management, and administration & services staff through the different mobility programmes	Number of incoming students through Erasmus+ KA131 projects
		Number of incoming teaching and research staff through Erasmus+ KA131 projects
		Number of incoming technical, management, and administration & services staff through Erasmus+ KA131 projects
		Number of incoming students through Erasmus+ KA171 projects
		Number of incoming teaching and research staff through Erasmus+ KA171 projects
Number of incoming technical, management, and administration & services staff through Erasmus+ KA171 projects		
Number of incoming students through own scholarship and free mobility programme		
Number of incoming students through the GE4 programme		

		Number of incoming teaching and research staff through the IACOBUS programme
		Number of incoming technical, management, and administration & services staff through the IACOBUS programme
		Number of incoming technical, management, and administration & services staff through the Stella for Staff programme
		Number of incoming students through the International Student Exchange programme (ISEP)
2.2. Improve the perception of our institution among incoming students and staff	Make Universidade de Vigo known around the world	Number of activities organised for international students
		Number of international weeks organised
2.3. Increase the number of student, teaching and research staff and technical, management, and administration & services staff mobilities within the ATHENA framework	Increase the number of outgoing students, teaching and research staff, and technical, management, and administration & services staff to ATHENA universities through the different mobility programmes	Number of student mobilities from Universidade de Vigo with ATHENA partner institutions
		Number of teaching and research staff mobilities from Universidade de Vigo with ATHENA partner institutions
		Number of technical, management, and administration & services staff mobilities from Universidade de Vigo with ATHENA partner institutions
	Increase the number of students, teaching and research staff, and technical, management, and administration & services staff coming from ATHENA universities through the different mobility programmes	Number of student mobilities from ATHENA partner institutions to Universidade de Vigo
		Number of teaching & research staff mobilities from ATHENA partner institutions to Universidade de Vigo
		Number of technical, management, and administration & services staff mobilities from ATHENA partner institutions to Universidade de Vigo

3. Multilingualism and multiculturalism

One of the main objectives of the European Commission is to improve the quality of university higher education in line with the needs of the labour market. The European university, playing a crucial role as a provider of qualified human capital and generator of new knowledge, becomes a key player in a society where 90 % of job vacancies in the coming years are expected to require qualified or highly qualified staff. Since 2008, the European Commission, in its document [Multilingualism - an asset and a commitment \(COM/2008/566\)](#), has stressed the importance of strengthening foreign language skills to improve mobility, employability, and personal development of European citizens. Furthermore, the [EU cooperation in education and training](#) strategic framework identifies communication in foreign languages as one of the eight key competences needed to enhance the quality and effectiveness of education and training.

Universidade de Vigo acknowledges the relevance of internationalisation in all dimensions of its activity, including teaching, research, management, and training. One of its priority objectives is to promote the internationalisation of academic activity and improve multilingual

and intercultural skills of both its university community and its environment. The objectives set out in this plan will have a positive impact on the professional and personal development of students, teaching & research staff, and technical, management, and administration & services staff.

3.1. Teaching in foreign languages

One of the priorities of Universidade de Vigo's 1st Internationalisation Plan focuses on consolidating academic offer taught in foreign languages, especially through English. An essential tool for international communication that facilitates access to quality employment both in our immediate environment and abroad, is the mastery of foreign languages, particularly English.

Moreover, it should be noted that mobility of both students and workers has also increased in recent years. In 2023, Spain topped the list of European countries that participated in mobility schemes such as Erasmus+. Graduates increasingly wish to complete their studies in foreign universities or plan to look for their first job in other countries. Therefore, rather than have a general knowledge

of the foreign language, one needs to master the linguistic expressions specific to the exercise of a particular profession or field of knowledge.

University teaching in foreign languages and bilingual degrees, especially in English, are a magnificent opportunity for our graduates, as well as an excellent tool for their professional future. To that end, the Universidade de Vigo, in line with social reality, intends to complete its academic offer with a set of subjects and even degrees taught in foreign languages, as stated in the Regulations on teaching in foreign languages [Regulamento para a docencia en lingua estranxeira nos centros da Universidade de Vigo \(ReDLE\)](#).

At the same time, our current international partners and potential ones have stressed on academic offer in foreign languages as a fundamental requisite for establishing or extending collaborations. For example, it is now extremely difficult to reach academic agreements with institutions included in the Top 500 of the Shanghai ranking without a teaching offer in English.

Prioritising English as the language of instruction does not prevent the Universidade de Vigo from establishing other priority languages pursuant to its interests at any given time.

Three lines of action are defined below:

- A training and accreditation programme for teaching in English.
- A procedure for the implementation of programmes and subjects in English.
- Recognition and incentives for participation in teaching programmes in English.

To date, a considerable effort has been made to implement a significant number of subjects in English, both in bachelor's and master's degree programmes. This effort must continue if we aspire to stand out among Spanish universities in terms of becoming a preferred destination for international students.

Therefore, specific courses are proposed through the Language Centre (CdL) to boost:

- Conversation and pronunciation for teachers.
- Oral speech and pronunciation for project management in the international arena.
- Oral speech and preparation of presentations.
- Oral speech in scientific forums,

international forums, and in the classroom.

- Coordination of international projects.
- Linguistic support through [EMILAB](#).

3.2. English Friendly/Français amical/Português amigável/Italiano amichevole subjects

Another fundamental objective of the Universidade de Vigo is to increase the offer of subjects under the **Friendly** modality over time. This approach, already successfully applied in English, seeks to incorporate other strategic languages such as Portuguese, French, and Italian. This will foster internationalisation as an attraction for foreign students, while promoting cultural and linguistic diversity in our environment, thus contributing to a more globalised and competitive education.

Our university already has a programme of English Friendly subjects taught in the official bachelor's and master's programs in Spanish and Galician, in which the teaching staff assume commitments such as: indicating the English Friendly nature of the subject in the teaching guide, translating content, providing mate-

rials and bibliographical references, conducting tutorials, designing and carrying out tests and assessments in English, whenever requested by the international student.

The Universidade de Vigo, committed to its international vocation and its role as an academic and cultural benchmark within the Galician University System, considers it essential to expand this model to other strategic languages such as Portuguese, French, and Italian, due to their relevance in the global context. Promotion of the Portuguese amigável modality is in line with one of the university's strategic objectives: to strengthen our presence in the Portuguese-speaking world, especially with Brazil. Galician, as a sister language, acts as a natural bridge with Portuguese, but it is essential to establish a specific modality in Portuguese to attract and retain Portuguese-speaking students, researchers, and collaborators. Brazil, with its growing global influence and development in sectors such as technology, science, and culture, is a key environment for attracting talent. The implementation of teaching guides and programmes in Portuguese allows the Universidade de Vigo to fully integrate into the Portuguese-speaking academic network, thus facilitating exchanges

and collaborations that will enrich both students and teaching & research staff.

Similarly, French is an international language with a wide presence in Europe, the Maghreb and much of sub-Saharan Africa. Incorporating the Français amical modality will allow Universidade de Vigo to attract a diverse French-speaking student body, enriching our university community with new perspectives and global experiences. The integration of French into teaching guides and academic activities facilitates the recruitment of students from French-speaking countries, as well as the establishment of closer links with educational and research institutions in strategic regions. It also allows us to expand opportunities for collaboration with academic partners in the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa, reinforcing our university's international networks.

Italy, as one of the main industrial and cultural engines of Europe, stands out in sectors such as design, fashion, art, architecture, engineering, social sciences, and gastronomy. Implementation of the Italiano amichevole modality allows us to attract students and researchers interested in disciplines in which Italy is a global leader, as well as to

strengthen our connections with Erasmus students, as Italy is one of the main countries of origin for these exchanges. The adoption of programmes and teaching guides in Italian opens up new opportunities in the field of cultural heritage, arts, and humanities, and reinforces the role of the Universidade de Vigo as a preferential option for international students from this country.

This step strengthens the university's internationalisation strategy and consolidates our commitment to linguistic and cultural diversity, making the Universidade de Vigo a more inclusive and attractive environment for students and collaborators from all over the world. The expansion of the Friendly modality also contributes to preparing our students for a globalised world by offering them essential linguistic and cultural competences to face the challenges of a global and competitive labour market.

3.3. Language level learning and certification plan

The Universidade de Vigo has a Faculty of Philology and Translation which offers degrees in Applied Galician and Spanish Philology, Foreign Languages, and Translation and Interpreting. Language level accreditation for these degrees will be carried out by the faculty itself, in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages. The level attained will be reflected in the student's transcript and, whenever possible, in the European Diploma Supplement.

In addition, regarding the student body, the Universidade de Vigo

launched a pilot English learning plan in the 2023/2024 academic year to reach a specific level in this language and be able to certify it. The Comprehensive English Preparation and Accreditation Plan (known as PIPA) aims to promote the English language training and accreditation of students. During the first phase, a 'diagnostic' test, is sent en mass to students to assess their initial English level. The main aim of this test is to identify the language skills of each participant in order to establish a solid basis for preparation and improvement. The results are used to select students for specific training and certification tests. This process ensures that participants have the support needed to develop and certify



their English language skills. In the second phase, a committee selects students from among those assessed to take part in a preparatory course run by the University's Language Centre. This course lasts 10 hours, of which eight are in asynchronous virtual mode through the Moovi platform, and two face-to-face, at sites throughout the three Universidade de Vigo campuses. Students who attend 85% of the course can take the CertAcles B1 or B2 exam free of charge. CertAcles accreditations are recognised throughout the European Higher Education Area, which guarantees their validity in any European university and reinforces the international competences of Universidade de Vigo students. English language accreditation is essential, as it is required for access to jobs, competitive examinations, competitions, among other areas. Within the framework of the PIPA Plan, the Universidade de Vigo facilitates a preparatory course and free access to the CertAcles certification tests to a part of each year's incoming students.

The technical, management, and administration & services staff are provided with training tools by the Universidade de Vigo to reach this level of international demand. The Language Centre (CdL) channels

the language training needs required by the technical, management, and administration & services staff, and will continue to offer the possibility of mobility within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme, among others.

The **Higher Education Lecturing Accreditation (HELA)** is a test aimed at teaching & research staff) at the Universidade de Vigo that assesses whether they have the necessary language skills to teach effectively in English. This assessment covers aspects such as language mastery, fluency, communication skills, oral presentation, and the ability to interact with students. The test has written and oral parts, following a rubric developed by experts from the University and the Language Centre. In addition to accrediting language proficiency, HELA provides the candidate with a detailed report, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement, with the aim of encouraging the continued development of teaching skills in English.

3.4. Internationalisation at home

Internationalisation at home refers to strategies and initiatives developed within the university itself to promote the linguistic and



cultural competence of students without the need for international mobility. This includes activities such as offering foreign language courses, incorporating international perspectives into curricula, using foreign languages as a vehicular language in some subjects, and promoting cultural exchange between students from diverse backgrounds through collaborative projects and intercultural events. As part of our strategy to strengthen internationalisation

and promote active participation of foreign and local teaching staff in the Universidade de Vigo teaching activities, two key initiatives are implemented: the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) methodology and mirror classes. These actions not only enrich the educational experience of our students but also facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices with partner academic institutions around the world.



The COIL methodology is an innovative educational strategy that facilitates international collaboration between students and teaching staff from different universities without the need for physical travel. Through COIL, courses are designed and taught in which groups of students from different universities work together virtually on common projects or learning activities, guided by their respective teachers. This methodology fosters the acquisition of intercultural competences and improves students' ability to work in multicultural teams. It also allows foreign teaching staff to participate directly in the teaching of Universidade de Vigo subjects, thereby contributing their experience and global perspectives to the curriculum. By integrating COIL into our teaching activities, we foster international academic collaboration and prepare our students for an increasingly globalised professional environment.

Mirror classes are another fundamental tool for the internationalisation of teaching at the Universidade de Vigo. They consist of the coordination and synchronisation of classes between our university and a foreign partner institution, in which both groups of students, in their respective locations, attend sessions taught simultaneously by lecturers from both universities. These classes, which take place in a shared virtual environment, allow students from different countries to participate in joint discussions, exchange ideas, and learn from the perspectives and teaching methodologies of other educational contexts. Mirror classes provide Universidade de Vigo students and teaching staff with the opportunity to interact directly with colleagues from other countries, enriching the teaching-learning process with a broader and more diverse vision. This modality not only favours the development of intercultural competences, like COIL,

but also strengthens academic ties and facilitates knowledge exchange between institutions from different countries.

These two initiatives give our community access to a wider range of educational experiences and foster a strong and lasting network of international academic collaboration.

There are also activities involving technical, management, and administration & services staff and the student body, such as the language tandem and One2One in English, French, Portuguese, and German. Tandem is a programme designed to promote cultural exchange and language practice among members of the university community. This programme connects students, teaching & research staff, and technical, management, and administration & services staff with native or proficient speakers in different languages, thus facilitating mutual learning through informal conversations. Participants can practise languages such as English, Portuguese, Arabic, Polish, and Turkish, among others, while sharing their own language and culture in a mutually enriching environment. This programme not only strengthens communication skills in different languages but also enriches cultural understanding and promotes diversity within the university environment. The **One2One** programme is an initiative

that offers individualised language training in various languages such as English, Portuguese, German, and French for the university community. Its aim is to improve communication skills through individual sessions of approximately 50 minutes with teachers from the Language Centre. These online sessions allow students to work on specific aspects such as presentations, defending academic work, preparing projects, and improving fluency in the language.

The objectives to be achieved here are to:






-  **Objective 3.1.**
Improve the linguistic and intercultural competence of the university community through internationalisation methodologies at home.
-  **Objective 3.2.**
Boost the activity of the Language Centre of the Universidade de Vigo.
-  **Objective 3.3.**
Extend agreements with official language institutes.
-  **Objective 3.4.**
Consolidate the catalogue of subjects in English and other languages.
-  **Objective 3.5.**
Encourage participation of foreign teaching staff in Universidade de Vigo's teaching activities.

TABLE OF INDICATORS FOR AXIS 3

Objective	Actions	Indicators
3.1. Improve the linguistic and intercultural competence of the university community through internationalisation at home methodologies	Improve the community's foreign languages level in order to obtain official certifications	Number of language training courses for teaching and research staff
		Number of language training courses for technical, management, and administration & services staff
		Number of language training courses aimed at students
		Number of participants in language training courses for teaching and research staff
		Number of participants in language training courses for technical, management, and administration & services staff
	Improve intercultural competences	Number of participants in the language training courses for students
	Improve intercultural competences	Number of intercultural training activities
3.2. Boost the activity of the Universidade de Vigo Language Centre (CdL)	Improve visibility of the CdL	Number of face-to-face and virtual visibility actions
		Number of visibility actions in social media
3.3. Extend agreements with official language institutes	Extend and strengthen agreements	Number of agreements
3.4. Consolidate the catalogue of subjects in English and other languages	Strengthen and extend the presence of foreign languages in the different stages of training	Number of completed degrees (minimum 80 % of credits) in foreign language
		Number of subjects taught in foreign languages
		Number of English-Friendly subjects
		Number of Português-amigável subjects
		Number of Français-amical subjects
		Number of Italiano-amichevole subjects
		Number of One2One participants
		Number of language tandem participants
	Number of HELA participants	
3.5. Encourage participation of foreign teaching staff in Universidade de Vigo's teaching activities	Establish collaborations between Universidade de Vigo's teaching and research staff and those from abroad	Number of COIL actions
		Number of mirror classes

4. *Attraction and retention of international talent*

Attracting and retaining international talent is of prime importance to the Universidade de Vigo for several reasons that contribute to both academic development and global competitiveness of the institution.

Many European countries, including Spain, and especially Galicia, are undergoing a deep demographic crisis, which is why attracting international students has become one of the Universidade de Vigo's priorities. In line with the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, Spanish-speaking and Portuguese-speaking countries are now the priority for this recruitment. However, it will also be necessary to make an effort to attract students from Africa and Asia.

At present, the regulatory restrictions on access to degrees in the Spanish university system warrants us to focus international students' recruitment efforts on postgraduate (master's and PhD) studies.

4.1. International recruitment initiatives

One of the actions promoted to attract international students is participation in recruitment events organised by the SEPIE, the Instituto Cervantes, and other entities, such

as the Study in Spain fairs. Participating in these international events aimed at undergraduate, master's, and PhD students is essential for universities aspiring to increase their global visibility and attract talent. These fairs are an unbeatable opportunity to establish direct contact with potential students, who receive detailed information about academic programmes, facilities, research opportunities, and university life. This direct contact allows the university to highlight its strengths and establish a personalised link with prospective students, which is difficult to achieve through digital media such as social networks, websites, or emails alone.

It is especially important that the Universidade de Vigo participates in fairs in Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries. Galicia, as a bilingual territory, maintains deep cultural and linguistic ties with these countries, which facilitates the adaptation of international students to their new environment. Countries such as Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Portugal represent strategic areas with a high number of students seeking training abroad. Studying in Galicia offers these students the advantage of integrating into a culturally close environment, with the possibility of learning

another language and experiencing a new culture.

Moreover, participation in these fairs plays a key role in the Universidade de Vigo's internationalisation strategy. Internationalisation not only boosts prestige and global visibility of the university but also enriches the academic and cultural environment of its three campuses by shaping a more diverse and dynamic learning community. This process is particularly relevant in the Galician context, where a significant demographic decline is expected in the coming years. In this sense, attracting international students is an essential strategy to compensate for the decrease in the local or nearby student population, thus ensuring sustainability and growth of the university in the medium and long term. Participation in international student recruitment fairs therefore represents a fundamental strategic investment for the Universidade de Vigo.

4.2. Spanish and Galician as tools for attracting international students

The Faculty of Philology and Translation can offer Spanish and Galician language and culture courses to ISEP, Erasmus, and visiting students by offering specific departmental

subjects. These courses and others from the faculty's own degree programs will be promoted along with other complementary training activities. In turn, the Language Centre will be able to promote courses that complement and even collaborate with the faculty's offer.

The Language Centre offers language, culture, and university adaptation courses. Offering Spanish courses for foreigners in the university environment is a strategic initiative that brings multiple benefits to both students and the institution. Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world in terms of number of native speakers, and knowledge of it opens avenues in many Latin American countries, in Spain, and in Spanish-speaking communities in the United States. , Learning Spanish significantly improves international students' academic and professional opportunities. Proficiency in Spanish provides access to a wealth of literature, research, and educational resources only available in that language. Moreover, Spanish is a key language in sectors such as international trade, diplomacy, tourism, technology, and healthcare, and therefore provides a competitive advantage in the global job market.

The Universidade de Vigo, located in a community with a historical nationality and a unique cultural and linguistic identity, is a natural connection channel for Portuguese-speaking students, especially from Brazil, Portugal, and the Portuguese-speaking African Countries (PALOP). Galician, as a sister language of Portuguese, facilitates academic and cultural integration, making it a valuable tool for connection and integration. This linguistic proximity favours adaptation to university life and promotes the creation of academic and professional networks within the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa,

CPLP). The Universidade de Vigo is committed to an open and diverse academic space, in which linguistic and cultural affinity is a driving force to attract and welcome international Portuguese-speaking students, thus promoting knowledge exchange and mutual enrichment.

In addition, Galicia, with a long tradition of migration, is an appealing destination for descendants of the Galician diaspora, especially in Latin America and Europe. The interest in Galician and Spanish, together with the academic and professional opportunities offered by the Universidade de Vigo, reinforces this historical link, facilitating the symbolic and real return of many



people of Galician descent who wish to rediscover their roots. The aid and programmes promoted by the Xunta de Galicia regional government help to facilitate this return, through financial support and academic and social integration in the country.

4.3. Creation of a Welcome Centre

The creation of a Welcome Centre at the Universidade de Vigo is an essential initiative to improve the experience of international students, teaching and research staff, and visiting staff joining the institution. This centre would act as a point of reference and comprehensive support, facilitating the adaptation and integration of the international university community. Its main functions include the following:

- a) Assistance with administrative procedures: support with visas, residence permits, academic enrolment, and other bureaucratic procedures.
- b) Orientation and support: detailed information about the university, the city of Vigo, and the local culture. Organisation of orientation programmes and integration workshops.

c) Accommodation services: support in finding suitable accommodation, either in university halls of residence or in the private sector.

d) Linguistic support: Spanish and Galician language courses, as well as workshops to improve the language skills of newly arrived students.

e) Cultural and social activities: events and activities that favour cultural and social integration, encouraging exchange between local and international students.

f) Academic and career counselling: personalised guidance on academic offerings, research opportunities, scholarships, and internships.

The creation of the Welcome Centre will contribute to improving the international experience of those joining the university, facilitating their adaptation and making their stay more satisfactory and productive. It will also make the university a preferred destination for students, teachers, and researchers from all over the world, increasing its prestige and international visibility. It will enrich the academic and social environment by promoting greater cultural diversity and

fostering the exchange of ideas and perspectives, to the benefit of the entire university community. It will also foster international mobility by increasing opportunities for collaboration and consolidating a wider network of international contacts and alliances. These initiatives will undoubtedly help to reinforce the university's internationalisation strategy and consolidate it as a globally connected institution committed to educational excellence.

The objectives to be achieved here are to:

- **Objective 4.1.**
Advance in the international promotion of the Universidade de Vigo to attract students, teaching & research staff and technical, management, and administration & services staff.

- **Objective 4.2.**
Facilitate the retention of international talent.



TABLE OF INDICATORS FOR AXIS 4

Objective	Actions	Indicators
4.1. Boost international promotion of the Universidade de Vigo to attract students, teaching & research staff and technical, management, and administration & services staff	Participation in international recruitment events organised by different institutions	Number of international recruitment events (face-to-face or virtual) in which the Universidade de Vigo participates
	Use of Spanish as a language for attraction through the Language Centre	Number of outreach activities organised jointly with the CdL Number of students on Spanish courses enrolled in degrees at the Universidade de Vigo
4.2. Facilitate the retention of international talent	Increase international student numbers	Number of international undergraduate students
		Number of international master's students
		Number of international PhD students
	Launch of the Welcome Centre	Number of enquiries at the Welcome Centre

