

# Development strategy for International relations of University of Food Technologies

## *Objective:*

International cooperation should be used as a main instrument for implementation of reforms in education in line with European requirements and criteria. This approach achieves the key strategic objective which is:

*Development of UFT-Plovdiv as an equal partner in European educational and research institutions through the implementation of an effective learning process ensuring qualified education, competitive professional staff training in a European and global labor market and progress of innovations in priority areas: Food industry, Biotechnologies and Business management.*

## *Strategic partnerships in international relations*

In terms of geographic location of Bulgaria, three groups of strategic partners are outlined:

**1. Western and Central Europe:** Principal objectives in partnership with these countries are: Realization of joint projects in the field of higher education, Knowledge and teaching methodology transfer and management of educational process through intensive student, teacher and non-teaching staff mobility's.

The expected results are: Modernization and adaptation of study plans and programs, Amelioration of organization and governance of teaching process, and Creation and implementation of operating system for quality control. Achievement of these results is a main condition for UFT-Plovdiv to become part of European educational system with common rules, criteria and standards.

**2. Neighboring countries:** Aim of development of international relations with neighboring countries is to increase the visibility of UFT- Plovdiv through realization of joint scientific and educational projects with universities, educational institutions outside of higher education non-governmental organizations and business partners in the region. This strategy will lead to increased number of foreign students from these countries in the UFT.

**3. Russia and former Soviet Union Republics:** International relations with these countries are focused on realization of joint projects in the field of research and higher education reform in which UFT acts as a liaison with the European educational system. Efforts are directed towards the implementation of projects for the issuance of double and / or joint diplomas, which will increase the number of foreign students from these countries conducting part of their training and / or implementation and long-term internships in UFT- Plovdiv.

### *Main activities*

**International projects:** General approach for achieving main targets of international cooperation is the participation of UFT-Plovdiv or collectives from the university as a partner, beneficiary or leading organization in European projects focused on improvement of reforms in higher educational system. Significant efforts will be directed against participation in projects related with development of joint learning plans and programs, governance reforms of universities and projects based on increased practical orientation of education.

**International mobility:** One of the means that could lead to the transfer of educational "know-how" is the international mobility. The main strategic groups on which intensive efforts for international mobility will be targeted are:

- Bachelor and PhD students: Realization of learning mobility. Aim of their relatively longer period of training is the development of new skills and

educational habits focused on autonomy work, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit;

- Master students: Realization of placement mobility. This will allow students to work and study in foreign business conditions acquiring professional skills and habits that will prepare them to be competitive in common European labor market;
- All teachers, regardless of age or degree, which will allow real transfer of knowledge, experience and skills;
- Employees working in the organization and management of the educational process, scientific research, management and cash flow information;

### ***Encouraging of international relations***

The management UFT-Plovdiv will stimulate international mobility of students, teachers and non-teaching staff by:

- Organizing language courses for teaching staff, students and non teaching staff;
- Increasing language skills of students through the introduction of optional subjects in a foreign language;
- Increasing the intake of students who conduct their studies in a foreign language (English or French);
- Create new specialties in which education is carried out in a foreign language;
- Insuring transparent governance and equal access to European and international programs, funding academic mobility and structural and management reforms in higher education;

**Team principle:** The implementation of the development plan of international cooperation requires formation of motivated teams who will prepare project documentation and manage international projects. These teams should include people who are not involved in the educational process and their work is entirely focused on the implementation and management of projects. Formation of such teams will allow better benefit from the opportunities of various European and international funds.

### *Expecting results*

The implementation of priorities in international cooperation will lead to:

- Development of rules for acting credit system that will ensure full academic recognition of stages of education conducted outside UFT-Plovdiv;
- Diversification of higher education offered by the UFT-Plovdiv, that reflects in the development of new education plans and programs in existing disciplines, opening new specialties and new forms of education (distance learning);
- Realization of Joint Masters or PhD study plans with strategic partners of UFT-Plovdiv, which is accompanied by the issue of double or joint diplomas;