

## **Università del Salento for European Universities in Brief: Local Roots with a Global Mindset**

Situated in the Southeast of Italy, the Università del Salento is a young, dynamic university, keen to expand and to prove itself at a national and international level, while consolidating and reinforcing its role as the guiding light of the local culture and society. With 95,000 inhabitants and its favourable geographical position, right in the centre of the Mediterranean and between two seas, Lecce has been throughout its long history a cross-road of cultures, contacts and trading between the Middle East, the Balkans and Western Europe, as well as a bridge between North Africa and Southern Europe. Gifted with unique natural sceneries and architectural styles, Lecce and the Salento region offer a vibrant and authentic lifestyle, which allows University students to get qualitative education at affordable costs, with housing, entertainment and shopping opportunities for every budget.

Since 1955, the Università del Salento has aimed to promote knowledge and skills acquisition by offering a large range of educational opportunities. From Law to Science, Economics to Engineering, Humanities to Media Studies, the University provides academic pathways to a range of professions as well as post-graduate and specialist courses tailor-made to meet the needs of the job market.

8 Departments with more than 600 staff and 500 administrative staff, cater for approximately 18,000 students. With more than 60 Degree Programs, 30 Research Centres and 150 international partners, the University del Salento demonstrates its commitment to teaching, research as well as social engagement and impact on the local community (Terza Missione), with a strong interdisciplinary and international stance. The numerous PhD programs, schools for Cultural Heritage and Legal Professions, as well as the prestigious ISUFI School of Advanced Studies, are a clear testimony of the University del Salento's drive for excellence in achieving the highest standards in all three areas.

More than an institute of higher education, the Università del Salento is an inclusive and diverse community of individuals who recognize the free promotion of research and teaching as a means for human development, affirmation of pluralism and pursuit of equality and social dignity. It is a public institution that recognizes and implements the principles, rights and duties foreseen by the Italian Constitution and the Treaties of the European Union. No one can be discriminated against due to ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, or political orientation within the University community, in any way or form. The Università del Salento recognizes and guarantees equal rights, opportunities and dignity to all its students, promoting their free and critical vision while developing their knowledge, skills and abilities.

At the Università del Salento, the internationalisation of research and teaching is regarded as a strategic objective for institutional development, a model for emphasizing its role in cooperation with other countries and a strategy to drive our local strengths within a global context. We are a distinctly Southern Italian university based in a multicultural and multilingual border region, but our aspirations and reach are international and this is the context in which we want to be measured.

With this vision, the University has been engaged in a number of initiatives aimed at:

- Increasing the number of international courses, taught in English, at all levels;
- Increasing incoming/outgoing student mobility exchanges, both within EU and extra-EU countries, as well as promoting teaching and administrative staff mobility;
- Strengthening research collaboration with foreign universities and research organisations.

The process of internationalisation affects the whole University, from teaching and research, to the social engagement and impact on the local community (Terza Missione). We operate on an international scale and we believe that this must be reflected in all areas of the University life. The mobility programmes are carried out in collaboration with a wide range of universities worldwide.

At present, the University offers:

- 7 second level Master Degrees in English, in Communication Engineering and Electronic Technologies, Materials Engineering and Nanotechnology, Management Engineering, Computer Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, Coastal and Marine Biology and Ecology and Sociology;
- 6 double and 1 multiple first and second levels degree Programs in Business Administration, Economics and Finance, Philosophical Sciences, Cultural Heritage, Digital Media and Information Society.
- 11 PhD Programs in Cultural Heritage, Materials and Structures Engineering with Nanotechnology, Complex Systems Engineering, Mathematics and IT, Physics and Nanosciences, Human and Social Sciences, Philosophy (International program with Université Paris-Sorbonne, Universität zu Köln), Languages, Literature and Culture, Biological and Environmental Sciences and Technologies, Law, Economics, Management and Statistics Quantitative Methods.

The University promotes and is actively engaged in mobility projects to foster the mobility of its students (through Erasmus+, Regional and University's dedicated funds) as well as short and long-term mobility and research of its academic and administrative staff (through Erasmus+, Marie Skłodowska-Curie RISE Actions and other funds). The University of Salento is Puglia's first University for outgoing international students (455 in the 2018/19 Academic Year)

In order to support its internationalisation drive and potential, The Università del Salento has a dedicated International Relations Office and several staff units in each Department backing and promoting international mobility and collaborations. The strategies for internationalisation are defined, promoted and coordinated by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Internationalisation and 8 Department's Delegates for Internationalisation chosen among the University's most experienced and internationalised academic staff.

**References:** <http://international.unisalento.it/>

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