

# After COVID-19 Era - Internationalisation at UCY : Lessons and Prospects

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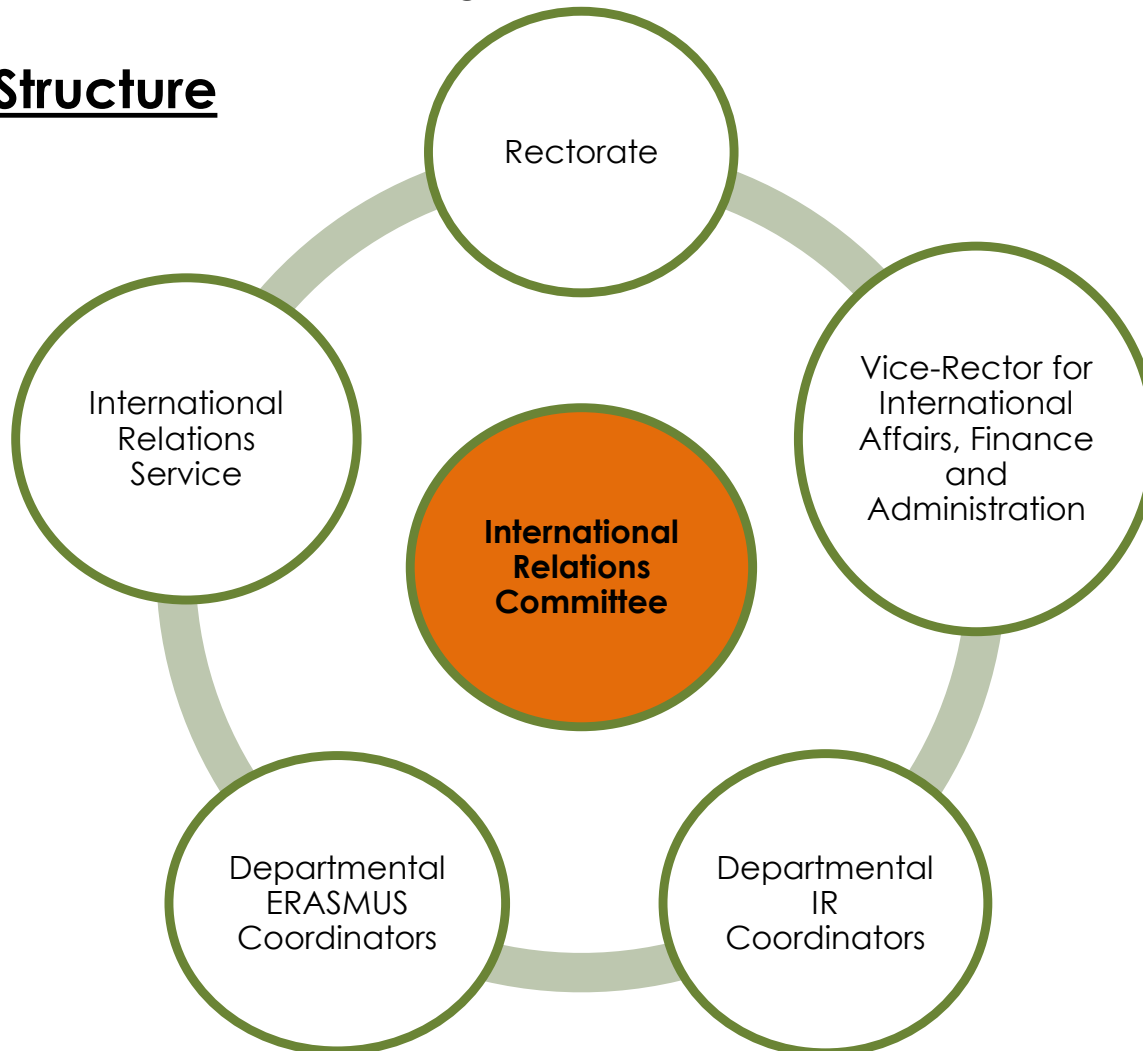


University  
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Internationalisation has been placed at the top of the UCY Strategic Goals →

The UCY Internationalisation Strategy is the means towards achieving this Goal

## Internal Structure



## Actions

Physical Participation in Educational Fairs Abroad

Physical Participation in Conferences/Meetings of Networks/Associations

Organised Group Visits to Partner Institutions Internationally

Visits of Delegations at UCY from other Institutions in the International Area

Hosting of Conferences/Meetings at UCY

Student and Staff Mobility through the ERASMUS+ Programme and other Agreements of Cooperation

Student Internships/Placements

Participation in Projects

Participation in the YUFE Alliance

Mobility of Staff and Students in the context of the Confucius Institute at UCY

# INTERNATIONALISATION AT UCY - DURING THE PANDEMIC

## March 2020: COVID-19 Crisis and International Lockdown

The International Relations Service **had to make important decisions** facing the crisis, so as to keep up with the Strategic Goal of UCY for Internationalisation.

**Internationalisation requires, by nature physical contact, travelling, organising meetings and visits with international partners.**

### **BUT:**

- During the crisis, all UCY activities had to switch to virtual in literally one night
- All courses were taught on-line
- All communication with international (and national) partners quickly switched to virtual
- All recruitment activities that had already been planned, had to stop
- All planned meetings abroad, and all organised visits at UCY had to be cancelled

## INTERNATIONALISATION AT UCY - DURING THE PANDEMIC

- **Had to cancel all outgoing trips** for the UCY academic and administrative staff and also all expenses were reimbursed for unrealized trips.
- **All trips from third countries** through the **Erasmus+ International Programme** were also **cancelled**.
- The **Erasmus Staff Training Week** which was planned to take place in May 2020 was also **cancelled**, it was **postponed** for October 2020, but was **cancelled again**.
- The **mobilities for 2020-21** Fall and Spring Semesters were also **greatly influenced**.
- The **UCY students** were very **reluctant to travel abroad** and also **many universities decided not to accept students**.
- The **UCY Senate decided not to accept incoming Erasmus students for the Fall Semester 2020-21** but accepted them for the Spring Semester 2020-21 online (again during lockdowns).

## Important Decisions During Crisis – International Cooperation and International Promotion

The international academic community quickly managed to find new ways to overcome the obstacles created by the inability to travel and to have physical contact with partners. Technology became the most important ally in this joint effort.

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Participation in/organisation of Virtual Meetings

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Participation in/organisation of Virtual Conferences

UCY continued to work towards internationalisation in the following ways

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Filming of Short Videos to be sent to partners, replacing in a way the physical presence in events, e.g. anniversary celebrations

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Participation in Online Educational Fairs

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Promotion through Virtual Platforms

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Advertising in Online Publications internationally

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Online Tutoring and continuous Support for the incoming and outgoing exchange students during the pandemic

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# INTERNATIONALISATION AT UCY - THE RETURN TO NORMALITY?

## How successful were we in creating new partnerships and new programs? How were your international initiatives affected by the pandemic?

Despite the pandemic, UCY's international engagement has not been greatly affected, as evident also from the KPI's set every year. In fact, UCY has experienced the following:

### More International Engagement

Participation in Events that UCY would not be participating in, if done physically (e.g. seminars organised by partners in Japan!)

Opportunity for more people from UCY to participate in Virtual Meetings with international partners (no cost considerations)

Opportunities to explore new Ways of promoting UCY internationally: online educational fairs, promotion through online platforms, advertising in online editions internationally

### Contribution towards Sustainability

Blended Mobility introduced in Erasmus and as part of the new Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027

## INTERNATIONALISATION AT UCY - THE RETURN TO NORMALITY?

**How successful were we in creating new partnerships and new programs? How were your international initiatives affected by the pandemic?**

However, some activities which could not take place, have had an impact on the progress of the Strategic Projects for internationalisation:

Difficulty in mobility has impacted in the participation of students in summer schools, exchange programmes, conferences and competitions abroad

Difficulty in travelling has had an impact on the organisation of roadshows, visits and activities with international partners, delaying the development of an Italian and an Arabic Centre at UCY

When most activities take place virtually, the cultural and interpersonal benefits of international engagement are lost



## INTERNATIONALISATION AT UCY – THE RETURN TO NORMALITY?

### **Are we ready now to go back to work as in the period before 2019 outbreak?**

UCY is finally ready to start opening up to its partners, encouraging physical meetings and activities. At the moment, it is working more within the Hybrid Model:

Participation in/organisation of physical and virtual Meetings and Conferences

Participation in physical and virtual Educational Fairs

Physical and Online Tutoring and continuous Support for the incoming and outgoing exchange students

# INTERNATIONALISATION AT UCY - THE RETURN TO NORMALITY?

Are we hesitant to physically work together with our IRO colleagues?

## **Colleagues within UCY:**

insecurity to begin physical interaction  
habit of communicating virtually

## **International Colleagues:**

The different approaches countries hold towards dealing with the pandemic make physical interaction more challenging.

There is still some insecurity in resuming activities as before the COVID-19 outbreak

## INTERNATIONALISATION AT UCY - THE RETURN TO NORMALITY?

### How has the pandemic impacted your Working Mindset or Lessons Learnt

- ✓ “No man is an island” – In every crisis, a joint effort is always the way towards success
- ✓ There must always be a Plan B – the show must go on under whatever circumstances
- ✓ Need to adopt quickly to any new situation using at the highest degree the technology already available
- ✓ People working in IR must be flexible and open to change and to welcome new ways of doing things- there are always alternatives → Reschedule, redesign, reroute, restart to face any challenge
- ✓ Having a strong network of partners can help overcome obstacles more effectively, through the exchange of know-how and best practices
- ✓ Be optimistic and work with a smile 😊

## Prospects

- ✓ Technological advancement can provide an alternative to physical presence - it has opened the road towards a more inclusive internationalisation for universities: it has allowed the involvement in international activities to more people, from all corners of the world
- ✓ Has allowed universities to explore new ways of promoting internationalisation → Sustainable Development in IR
- ✓ Has lowered – eliminated even – the cost of participating in international activities, while at the same time contributing to the achievement of many SDG's
- ✓ Internationalisation at Home (I@H) is a MUST



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**Thank You!**

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