

2. Final report of Work Package 4

INDEX

I - INTRODUCTION

II - THE REC-MAT PROJECT

**III - COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MANAGEMENT OF ACADEMIC
RECOGNITION OF STUDENT MOBILITY AT UNIVERSITIES IN EUROPE
AND SOUTH AMERICA**

**IV - THE RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS OBTAINED ABRO-
AD IN BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA**

**V - IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF INSTRUMENTS FOR THE RE-
COGNITION OF INTERNATIONALISATION ACTIVITIES OF PROFESSORS /
ACADEMICS**

VI - BIBLIOGRAPHY CONSULTED

VII - ANNEXES: TAILORED MADE PROPOSALS

I - INTRODUCTION

The *academic mobility of students and professors* is recognized as an essential component in the processes of internationalization of Higher Education (HE). Mobility enriches the academic training of the people who participate in this experience, as it allows the incorporation of a global and international vision in university training and contents and shapes graduates predisposed for their insertion and performance in a global labour market, with skills to adapt to different situations and professional challenges.

Academic mobility produces significant benefits for those Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that promote it, both for their students and for their teaching and administrative staff. In fact, it facilitates cooperation between university institutions, mutual recognition of the quality of their educational offerings, the internationalization of their curricula and academic flexibility in their practices.

Student mobility is one of the most notable trends in the process of internationalization of Higher Education. Experience shows, moreover, that it is a basic and principal strategy in actions aimed at facilitating cooperation in Higher Education in those regions that promote it as a tool for fostering regional integration processes.

In general, Student Mobility Programmes encourage students regularly enrolled in degrees at a given university to take part of their studies, for at least one academic period (semester or academic year), at a university in a country other than their country of residence, subject to a guarantee from the home university that full academic recognition will be granted for the studies taken at the host university, as a concrete and equivalent advance in the curriculum of their own degree programme.

Experience has shown that for a student mobility programme to be successful, it must be based on the following premises: trust between the participating universities, transparency of information from the institutions, reciprocity in the exchanges and, finally, *flexibility* in the processes, especially in the academic recognition of the studies carried out by the students¹. Thus, academic recognition is an unavoidable pillar in the international mobility of tertiary students.

The *mobility of professors*, researchers and administrative staff is another important action to promote the internationalization of HEIs. The exchange and

¹ <https://rieoei.org/historico/documentos/rie35a07.htm>

mobility of academics should be aimed at promoting mutual strengthening, synergic work, as well as the joint and homogeneous growth of institutions. But fundamentally it should contribute to the internationalization of the curriculum as a pillar of the integral internationalization of HEIs.

Latin America and the *Caribbean* are at a lower level in terms of the development of international mobility in comparison with other regions of the world², but the efforts made by HEIs to promote mobility are noteworthy and demonstrable, in spite of a generally unfavourable context. The region does not have a supranational organization that includes all countries in common policies, among them those related to Higher Education. Thus, there is no region-wide initiative to promote academic mobility, as there is in the European Union (EU).

In addition, many governments in Latin American countries do not promote mobility as they do not encourage links with other Latin American countries and do not allocate financial resources for HE. There are few examples of joint government programmes and, in all cases, they cover only a few countries and not the whole region.

Nevertheless, it can be affirmed that there are numerous initiatives and platforms for student mobility operating in the region, especially promoted by different networks and councils of HEIs, such as the Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo [Association of Universities of the Montevideo Group] (AUGM), the Unión de Universidades de América Latina y Caribe [Union of Universities of Latin America and the Caribbean] (UDUAL), the Consejo de Rectores para la Integración de la Subregión Centro Oeste de Sudamérica [Council of Rectors for the Integration of the Central-West Subregion of South America] (CRISCOS), the Programa de Intercambio Académico Latinoamericano [Latin American Academic Exchange Programme] (PILA), among others. Finally, it should be recognized that there are countries that are lagging behind in terms of student mobility, mainly due to socio-economic disadvantages and lack of public policies.

It should be noted that practically all of the student mobility programmes in the Latin American region include the recognition of studies as mandatory, with the consequent commitment of the universities.

Although practically all student mobility programmes provide for the recognition of studies, and the universities are committed to carrying out this

² IESALC-UNESCO (2019). Mobility in higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean: challenges and opportunities of a renewed Convention for the recognition of studies, degrees and diplomas.

recognition with adequate speed, experience shows that on many occasions serious specific problems are detected that have to do with “non-compliance” with recognition, with delays in validations and in some cases with unsystematic application of the tools available in the HEIs.

The slowness in sending the documents between the universities involved, the excessive bureaucracy in the administrative actions of recognition, the lack of knowledge of the study programme by the administrative staff, among others, are quite frequent situations in the development of mobilities.

These situations create insecurity for the student, and in some cases “bad press” for the HEIs, which, together with the financial problems mentioned above, are reasons why many students do not decide to move. In summary, it is generally accepted that most Latin American universities have very weak capacities to guarantee good management of international academic mobility, especially in terms of formal recognition of the activities developed in this context.

II - THE REC-MAT PROJECT

The *main objective* of the Rec-Mat (Recognition Matters) project is to contribute, facilitate and promote the exchange of students between Europe and Latin America, reducing barriers in mobility related to academic recognition and enabling HEIs to implement fairer and more equitable processes.

Five European partners (Universidade do Porto, Universidad de Valladolid, Université de Lille, Universiteit Gent and SGroup European Universities Network) and five Latin American institutions (Universidade Estadual Paulista Julio de Mesquita Filho, Universidade Federal de Rio de Janeiro, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Universidad Nacional del Sur and Universidad Nacional del Litoral) develop the project with different roles and responsibilities.

With its development, the aim is to consolidate and give structure to the action of academic recognition in Latin American universities, raising awareness among professors, programme coordinators and directors and the authorities of the institutions so that the academic community as a whole values mobility as a contribution to the quality of higher education. It also aims to spread good practices in recognition, beyond the existing differences in the educational systems of the different countries.

Within this framework, one of the components of the REC-MAT Project is the so-called Working Package (WP4), which activities are led by the Universidad Nacional del Litoral (UNL) and the Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP); and which also counts on the participation of the Universidade do Porto, the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and the Universidade Nacional do Sul (UNS) in its development.

WP 4 analyses and maps the situation of the recognition of academic activities taking as a sample, from the universe of European and Latin American universities, the HEIs of both regions that participate in this project. In order to enlarge the sample of Latin American universities to a more representative number, the National Universities of Quilmes (UNQ), Cuyo (UNCu) and North-western Buenos Aires (UNNOBA) are also included.

Although it is not an objective of the Rec-Mat project, but understanding that this is an aspect that also requires attention and improvement, the current

regulatory frameworks that regulate the recognition of activities carried out by students in the framework of international academic mobility and also by professors were investigated.

The view thus expanded intends to make evident that the advances and profound transformations in the Academy - such as those required by the formal recognition of international experiences - demand not only time and political decision, but also need consensus on their benefits on the part of the academic community, that is: of professors, students, and fundamentally of their leaders.

In this sense, WP4 organized open activities that allowed the dissemination of results and facilitated awareness of the relevance of recognition as a key element for the advancement and consolidation of the processes of internationalization of Higher Education, seeking to influence the entire academic community but especially its leaders and management dedicated to this task.

This preliminary report presents, on the one hand, the identification and analysis of the processes of academic recognition of the activities carried out by the students who do mobility; and on the other hand, the instruments that the Universities use for the recognition of the internationalization activities of the professors and academics are presented. Finally, and for both cases, general suggestions are made.

III - COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MANAGEMENT OF ACADEMIC RECOGNITION OF STUDENT MOBILITY AT UNIVERSITIES IN EUROPE AND SOUTH AMERICA

III - 1. Methodology used and results obtained

For the development of this analysis, a survey was elaborated and applied to the Argentinean and Brazilian Universities mentioned above (UNL, UNQ, UNNOBA, UNS, UNCu, UFRGS, UNESP and UFRJ).

It should be taken into account that the mobility of students can be classified according to their purposes: a) for the recognition of partial studies and b) to obtain diplomas for complete studies. In both cases, the procedures for registration and academic recognition differ substantially, and in this case we only worked with information referring to point a).

The consultations and a summary of the main responses are presented below:

- Regarding the existence of rules for the organization and regulation of student mobility

Practically all the universities have regulations in this regard, in the form of Mobility Regulations, approved institutionally by Boards of Directors or similar, which are applicable to all the faculties of the institutions. In particular, UNCu has a regulation for each faculty.

- Regarding the administrative procedure for the recognition of studies

The administrative procedures for the recognition of studies for students who do mobility vary according to each University and, in turn, with each faculty. In most universities the procedure is initiated at the International Relations Office (IRO).

- Regarding the actors involved in the recognition of studies

Most universities have a figure who acts as a link between the student and the host university, in roles such as Academic Coordinator, Career Direc-

tor (Degree), Academic Chair/Commission for the Career, Academic Secretary, or Departmental Board. All universities have an International Relations Office (IRO or similar).

- Regarding the documents required to apply for recognition of studies

All the universities surveyed officially use the Study Contract, also called Academic Recognition Commitment. This document is prepared in agreement between the student and the academic point of reference of the faculty/institute, to be subsequently endorsed by the dean or main authority of the faculty/institute and by the authority of the IRO of the University.

The Study Contract or Academic Recognition Commitment is complemented by a form generally called Amendment to the Study Contract, which allows changes to be made once the student joins the Host University.

- Regarding the criteria that are considered for the recognition of studies

Academic recognition in student mobility, according to experience and normal practice in different regions and universities, can be carried out in different ways (e.g. by subject-by-subject recognition; by recognition by credits or teaching hours; by recognition by equivalence tables drawn up between the universities carrying out the exchange; or by complete semester block).

In the case of the Universities surveyed, the normal criterion for recognition is to consider and compare the minimum content and the workload of the subjects to be taken at the Host University with those to be taken at the Home University.

- Regarding the percentage of students who make an amendment to their Study Contract upon arrival at the Host University

UNCu, UNL and UNNOBA consider that a percentage between 30 and 70% of their students make an amendment to the Study Contract upon arrival at the host university, UNQ indicates that less than 30% and UNS 50%. There is no information available for Brazilian Universities.

- Regarding the compulsory nature of the recognition of studies

In most of the Universities, the credits of the subjects taken abroad must be recognized. Only in one University, the Study Contract allows the student to indicate that he/she does not intend to obtain recognition for the academic activities taken at the Host University.

- Regarding the success rate of the recognition of studies

Significantly diverse responses were obtained. While UNCu does not indicate a value, UNQ indicates that more than 91% of the recognition is done successfully. The UNL indicates that 60% of the subjects are recognized, UNNOBA does not indicate a percentage, but considers that it is an acceptable percentage. For its part, the UNS indicates that 70% of the subjects achieve recognition.³

In the case of UFRGS, the success rate of recognition depends on the academic area in question. It is higher in the area of Humanities and lower in the areas of Law and Health. In the case of UFRJ, the success rate of recognition does not depend on the academic area, but on the institute where the student is located. There are academic units in which the academic coordinators are more skilled in bureaucratic procedures and this is reflected in the success of recognition.

- Regarding the percentage of recognized compulsory subjects

Except for UNL, which indicates that 50% of the recognized subjects belong to the core group (compulsory) of the degree courses, the rest of the universities do not have data to answer this question.

- Regarding whether recognized courses are added to the student's academic record

All universities include the courses (compulsory, elective, optional) taken during the exchange in the student's academic history. In the cases of UFRGS and UFRJ the recognition is not compulsory.

³ The subjects can be from the compulsory group or from the optional or elective group. The classification depends on the system that each university has.

- Regarding whether credits count toward a student's grade average

The situation is different among the universities surveyed. At UNCu, UNNOBA and UNQ the grades obtained by the student are not included in the academic record (the subjects are recognized under the “equivalence” modality). Consequently, they do not count towards the student's overall grade average. At UNL it depends on each faculty/institute, and at UNS they do count towards the student's average.

In the cases of UNESP and UFRJ they are not counted and in the case of UFRGS there is no information in this regard.

- Regarding the time it takes to process the recognition of subjects at the Home University

An important factor in the efficiency of the credit recognition process is the length of the period of time that elapses between the student's return from mobility and the moment when the recognition actually materialises on their academic transcript. This time is often a major obstacle in the way in which the student reintegrates into his/her career or degree. The result among the Universities surveyed varies, ranging from 45 days to more than 6 months.

III - 2. Comparison with results from Europe

There is an important precedent carried out in the framework of the ERASMUS programme of the European Union. This is the **PRIME Project (Problems of Recognition in Making Erasmus)**, a research project that addressed the challenges related to credit recognition procedures for exchange students.

PRIME was conducted in 2009 and 2010 based on surveys that showed that full recognition was not yet a reality <https://www.esn.org/prime>.

The results of the Project can be summarized as follows:

Provision of information: 41% of students receive information about mobility before the exchange.

Study Contract: 73% of Erasmus students manage to complete the Study Contract (or Learning Agreement) before departure. 73% of the students

claim to modify the Study Contract (or Learning Agreement) once they arrive at the Host University.

ECTS: 43% of HEIs consider ECTS credits in accordance with the student workload.

Recognition of studies: 73% of students receive full recognition of the credits successfully obtained abroad and previously included in the Learning Agreement;

24% of the students receive only partial recognition for certain subjects and 3% do not get any of their credits recognised at all. Finally, 22% of students had to repeat at least some of their courses and/or exams upon return.

It is necessary to note the clear difference between the context of higher education in Europe and in South America based on their respective histories and levels of development. Although it cannot be affirmed that in Europe there is a common system of Higher Education, in fact there are common mechanisms and the ECTS system was designed to facilitate the recognition of degrees and academic studies. In South America, on the other hand, national education systems coexist with significant differences, and without any tools for articulation and comparability between them.

From the comparison between the results of the European Universities and those of WP4 of the REC-MAT Project, it can be preliminarily concluded that, although the recognition of studies is considered compulsory, this is not always done in a satisfactory way for the interests of the students and clearly reflecting the contribution of international experience in their training.

III - 3. Conclusions

Although most of the universities have rules for the treatment and regulation of student mobility and a figure that acts as a link between the student and the host university, the universities surveyed show: a) diversity of procedures and forms of recognition of studies, b) very slow recognition processes in several of them, and even c) non-compliance in the commitment to recognition.

Some of the main aspects that hinder academic recognition in the mobility process are listed below:

Curriculum obsolescence

In general, most curricular designs are updates of projects which origins can be traced, in some cases, to the 19th century and, therefore, in correspondence with the paradigms of education of that time. They were conceived and organized on the basis of the knowledge that a graduate should acquire rather than the competencies that he/she should attain.

This criterion leads directly to the belief that the recognition of academic activities carried out by a student in another higher education institution should be based on the direct correspondence of content between the subjects of different curricula. As the intended symmetry between contents of subjects of different curricula is quite difficult to attain and to quantify, the recognition processes become very arduous, if not unattainable. Thus arises the need for **flexibility** in the comparison of curricula and in the recognition of studies, with the premise of privileging competencies and skills over rigid and structured training.

Difficulties in defining common measurement and comparison criteria for the recognition of studies

The different ways of establishing the workload or academic credits in the curricular designs in Latin American universities is one of the main problems when it comes to the recognition of international activities, generating a slow and sometimes incomplete process. In Europe, there is a unique credit system recognized by all countries, called ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System), which allows for the comparison of studies in the Higher Education systems of the countries, which have important differences in terms of curricular design, course workloads, etc. The ECTS system promotes that learning outcomes are the basis for recognition, not the number of credits for a given course.

In the case of Latin America, there is no formally accepted common system for weighting the academic activities carried out by students (except for hours in the classroom). Nor is there a criterion for recognizing those activities that are carried out within the framework of international student mobility. It is worth highlighting two valuable precedents that, if applied and/or extended to the entire region, could allow the comparison of studies in a comprehensive manner and with full regional scope:

- **CLAR (Latin American Reference Credit)**, elaborated in the framework of the Tuning Latin America project (project financed by the European Commission), which promotes the implementation of a Latin American system of academic credit, similar in its essence to the ECTS.

- **The National System of Academic Recognition of Higher Education of the Argentine Republic (SNRA)**, which defines a unit of measurement called RTF (Recognition of Training Path), also compatible with the ECTS system of Europe. This proposal could be extended to other Latin American countries in order to achieve an integrated system.

Diversity in grading systems among universities and university systems in different countries

Although all grading systems serve the same purpose, there are important differences in the design and implementation used by higher education systems in different countries. This causes practices and cultures in the application of grading systems to be misunderstood between countries, and then the respective scales to be misinterpreted. This situation causes disadvantages for students in the accreditation of the courses they complete in the framework of international mobility. However, it should be noted that in Latin America there is an interesting number of mobility programmes organized by university networks that have drawn up tables of equivalence of qualifications (e.g. http://grupomontevideo.org/escala/images/Anexo_3-_Tabla_de_equivalencias.pdf), which greatly simplifies the way of calculating the qualification to be transferred at the time of recognition.

Another aspect to take into account is that, as there are different grading systems, the universities should clarify in the certificates of subjects completed by the student the grading system of their own, in order to collaborate with the host university in the calculation of the corresponding conversion. This situation is solved, in the case of the European universities, with the accompanying “diploma supplement” that explains the grading system used with its equivalents in other systems around the world.

Bureaucracy in the administration of academic recognition in institutions.

The recognition of courses completed abroad involves a complex process which requires the cooperation of the students and the institutions involved

(home and host universities) before, during and after the mobility. However, bureaucratic procedures are still a problem in almost all HEIs. The procedure for the recognition of learning paths is often complex and students are often not adequately informed about it prior to their mobility. The procedure, in general, requires a lot of documentation and administrative steps, which makes it take a long time. Sometimes the recognition analysis process is carried out upon the student's return, a situation that openly clashes with the regulations of the mobility programmes. Delays occur at both the home and host universities, which are generally attributable to poor communication. In many cases, the documents arrive at the home university several months after the end of the semester.

Finally, although the recognition of studies is generally considered compulsory in student mobility, this is not always done in a way that is satisfactory for the interests of the students and clearly reflects the contribution of the international experience in their training.

Lack of transparency of information needed for student mobility

In general, the provision of timely and complete information to students about the subjects they will be able to take at the host university translates into a better recognition of their studies upon returning from the mobility period. The lack of clear information offered by the host university about the study plans, content of the subjects, number of credits or weekly workload, pedagogical modality and timetable, becomes an obstacle - often insurmountable - to be able to draw up a study contract that is really feasible for the student. Currently, the Universities publish this information on their webpages, although it is not always complete and clearly ordered. In addition, the Academic Coordinators of both the home and host universities have little dialogue among themselves and with the student to remedy this deficiency.

In conclusion, for many students, information about the courses or subjects to be taken at the host university is difficult to obtain and the responsible staff cannot provide accurate information. Students have to find the information on their own, without help from the institutions involved. The lack of transparency of information then becomes a major stumbling block to achieving full recognition of studies.

III- 4. Recommendations

Although it is globally defined and accepted that the international academic mobility of students is the action by which a university student achieves a significant progress in his/her career or study programme in a foreign university and is then recognized by his/her home university, there is no universally accepted way of accreditation and/or recognition of the academic activities developed abroad.

In Europe, the majority of international student mobilities take place within the framework of the Erasmus programme, which is part of the European Union's strategies to achieve a European higher education system with a common regulatory framework that regulates and defines the procedures for the recognition of academic activities (including an official academic credit transfer system, ECTS). In addition, for the rest of the mobilities outside Erasmus, European universities also apply the ECTS User Guide (e.g. in the use of the learning agreement, in the mention of the mobility in the diploma supplement, etc.). With regard to Latin America, as explained above, there is no political will strongly oriented towards the creation of Latin American system for

Higher Education and for the time being presents itself as a universe of very diverse national and/or regional systems that, for some time now, have been attempting to coordinate in order to foster internationalization and cooperation in Higher Education, and, within this framework, to facilitate international academic mobility. This action has not made significant progress so far, so the promotion and implementation of academic mobility remains in an environment of great diversity as far as academic recognition is concerned.

Each university, country or region establishes its own internationalisation policies, including student mobility, and organises itself according to its traditions, visions and capabilities. The development of student mobility takes place through participation in networks, programmes or simply through the signing of specific bilateral agreements. This generates an enormous multiplicity of criteria and procedures depending on the mobilities that take place in one or another framework.

Thus, taking into account the diversity of higher education institutions existing in Latin America and the Caribbean, each one with its institutional objectives, organizational schemes, operating logics and internal procedures, it is not possible, within the framework of the REC-MAT Project, to establish recom-

mendations and/or suggestions for each particular case.

It has therefore been decided to propose a series of general recommendations for a better administration of student mobility and the associated academic recognition. These recommendations are intended to serve as a basis for the analyses that may be carried out in each University in order to improve and/or update the rules and procedures that regulate the aforementioned activity. The recommendations are as follows:

Each University must define official rules governing mobility and academic recognition.

HEIs must define clear norms and procedures that promote, regulate and facilitate student mobility in order to safeguard the efforts made by students and ensure rapid and effective academic recognition. Ultimately, it should be understood that recognition is not only a benefit and a result of the work done by the student but also by the institutions involved. Such regulations or regulatory frameworks should include the systems for the selection of candidates, the pre- and post-mobility management schemes and procedures, and finally the procedures for making the academic recognition effective. On the other hand, these regulations should also enshrine and define rights and responsibilities of students in mobility.

In order to update the regulations and permanently improve the quality of the recognition, it is suggested the establishment of a follow-up and monitoring strategy where the feedback of the system is promoted taking into account the voice of the students after their mobility and the opinion of the professors.

Each University must designate institutional and academic managers specifically in charge of managing student mobility and the corresponding recognition.

In order to achieve efficient management of student mobility, two different roles or functions should be defined within its management scheme: the one responsible for administrative management and the one responsible for academic management. It is advisable that this last role be assumed by a professor of the degree programme, if possible with administrative responsibilities, for example: being the director of the degree programme, which would allow him/her to have a clear and comprehensive vision of the curriculum of the programme or degree in question.

Those responsible for the mobility management process must have sufficient functions and authority – suitably institutionalised – to enable them to resolve recognition procedures and, at the same time, to be valid interlocutors for the partner institutions in the international academic mobility programmes and agreements.

Those institutionally responsible should ensure compliance with those commitments that guarantee the logistical and institutional conditions for mobility to take place, for example: support for immigration procedures, accommodation and maintenance if agreed upon, granting of scholarships in due time and form, providing clear and timely information, among others.

On the other hand, the academic coordinators must guarantee that the development of the activities carried out during the mobility reaches the expected quality levels and that they are recognized according to the Study Contracts signed in due time.

Both areas of responsibility must ensure that the agreed academic recognition is given promptly and in full.

It is suggested that, if they consider it unsatisfactory, students should be able to appeal the recognition granted by their university to the activities carried out in the framework of international mobility, to a figure specifically designated for this purpose and through a simple and accessible procedure (a sort of university ombudsman).

Each University should promote information transparency through clear and complete academic information.

It is recommended that universities generate and provide clear information on the curricula and teaching and course syllabi, explaining the workloads of the different subjects and the institution's own criteria for measuring these loads, whether clock hours, class hours, academic credits, etc. It is also useful to provide information on the correlativity systems or modes of advancement in the different careers to prevent international students from proposing study contracts that are difficult or impossible to develop.

It is also suggested that keeping the information updated on the University's website is one of the easiest ways to present complete and timely information.

Each University must promote and facilitate prior dialogue between the administrative and academic coordinators of the home and host universities and the student.

This communication, together with clear and precise information, significantly facilitates the elaboration of the Study Contract, and subsequently the compliance with the same. This issue is key in the Latin American case where teaching is based on the learning of contents (and on this depends the progress in the careers) and not the acquisition of competences as in the European case.

Both in the case of bilateral student mobility agreements between universities and for mobilities carried out in the framework of multilateral programmes, it is suggested that before signing the agreements, both parties interact in order to know the course offer of each one, and thus be able to evaluate whether or not it will be possible to ensure recognition. Mutual understanding and collaboration between the heads of the institutions involved in a process of international student mobility should be aimed at guaranteeing the quality of the experience and the recognition of the activities carried out.

Each University must streamline the processes for the registration and validation of the recognition of studies.

It is recommended that the administrative procedures related to the recognition of studies be simplified in order to reduce the time between the end of the student's mobility, the recognition of the academic activities carried out and the definitive accreditation in his/her personal file. The computerization of procedures with electronic signatures and validation of procedures is often a great help in streamlining academic bureaucracies.

This recommendation applies both to "outgoing" students (on their return, the recognition should be a quick administrative process so that their reintegration into their studies at their home university is carried out without delays or obstacles) and to "incoming" students (the certification of studies that the university should send to the home university should be done in a short period of time, so that the student is reintegrated into their institution without delays).

The use of applications and the digitalization of procedures is useful not only for students but also for universities to generate valuable information for decision-making regarding their internationalization policies, especially in terms of academic mobility.

Each University must define a scheme that allows the comparison of its grading system with those of its partner Universities.

The recognition must include the transfer of the qualification that the student obtained when passing the courses or activities carried out in the framework of their mobility, for which the institutions must generate a specific regulation and guarantee the publicity of this information.

Including grades in the recognition is of great relevance to most students, but especially to those whose grades or grade average would allow them to access benefits such as scholarships or financial aid to further their studies or even future employment.

Academic recognition procedures must necessarily be based on three concepts that in some way represent the basic postulates or foundations of student mobility with recognition of studies, namely: trust between institutions, transparency of information and the necessary flexibility in the comparison of studies.

The Ministries of Education and the Boards of the Universities of the countries should promote schemes and mechanisms that facilitate the comparability of the curricula of the university careers of the different universities with peers in other countries.

Unlike in the European Union, in Latin America there is no credit system such as ECTS, and there are a large number of curricular systems that do not allow an easy comparison of courses/subjects between Universities that carry out student exchanges.

The absence of comparability schemes between the systems of different countries is undoubtedly a major problem for recognition, which is exacerbated by the lack of dialogue between national systems of Higher Education. Promoting common guidelines, such as a common regional system of academic credits, would greatly facilitate academic recognition.

In the case of Argentina, there is the possibility that the National System of Academic Recognition (SNRA) will become the national scheme for a better international comparison of studies.

In Brazil, on the other hand, there are no government initiatives that regulate or govern the recognition of studies in student mobility.

IV - THE RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS OBTAINED ABROAD IN BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA

Brazil

In 2016, the Brazilian Ministry of Education established and made available the procedures related to the general guidelines for the processing of applications related to the two processes of Revalidation and Recognition. The **Carolina Bori platform** was created, a computerized system for the management and control of the processes of Revalidation and Recognition of foreign diplomas in Brazil. This platform brings together public and private HEIs that, by adhesion, provide the necessary information for applicants (graduates) to request the revalidation or recognition of their foreign diplomas. The platform facilitates the management and control of the flow of the revalidation and/or recognition processes, in addition to offering greater interactivity between the interested parties.

Through the platform, the universities provide the applicant with information on the required documentation, the courses and programmes offered, the capacity for simultaneous attendance and the fees for the provision of services. In this way, the applicant can choose the institution where he/she will apply for the revalidation of a diploma for undergraduate degrees and/or the recognition of a master's or doctoral degree *stricto sensu*. The process of revalidation/recognition of higher education diplomas obtained abroad must be admitted at any time by the institution of revalidation/recognition and concluded within a maximum period of up to 180 (one hundred and eighty) days.

The change will result in benefits for applicants, such as easier monitoring and a faster process, as all documentation is processed digitally. Both the applicant and the members of the evaluation committee will receive the entire process digitally.

Argentina

The procedure for the recognition of a university degree in Argentina obtained by a person abroad is carried out through two different instances: through the Validation procedure or through the Revalidation procedure.

The **validation of university degrees** of foreign citizens belonging to countries with which Argentina has an agreement of recognition of studies is done with a simple procedure, as the procedure has been digitized. Professionals from Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Spain, Mexico, Peru, Ukraine, Venezuela and Syria who wish to validate their foreign university degrees must start the process through the platform tramitesadistancia.gob.ar. There are two types of validations: the one needed to continue postgraduate studies in health specialties and the one for professional practice. The validations requested for the continuation of graduate studies in health are provisional and are granted only for the purpose of hospital medical practices. On the other hand, validations for professional practice are definitive and, depending on the bilateral agreement with each country, their processing may be direct or indirect. In the latter case, a committee of experts evaluates the curriculum, similar to the academic obligations of an Argentinean public university.

In the case of those countries with which Argentina does not have an agreement for the recognition of studies, the procedure of **revalidation of the degree** is applied, which is understood as the certification of equivalence between a professional degree or an academic degree, obtained in foreign universities. This equivalence is made with the respective professional degree granted by an Argentine University. The procedure is carried out by the person before a national university in Argentina. Therefore, you must initially identify which Argentine university offers the curriculum and obtain a degree similar to the one you wish to revalidate. As a general requirement, you must be legally domiciled in the country and sometimes, it is required to be in the same province where the university is located, which has the option to perform the revalidation. The universities, in general, request the same documentation, which must be in Spanish, and if it is a translation, it must have the endorsement of an authorized public translator. Some universities require that the applicant who is not Spanish-speaking must take and pass a Spanish language course.

V - IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF INSTRUMENTS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF INTERNATIONALISATION ACTIVITIES OF PROFESSORS / ACADEMICS

V - 1. Methodology and Results

In order to carry out this analysis, the universities participating in the Rec-Mat project and four other national universities in Argentina were consulted. The consultation was aimed at finding out how and where international academic activities are recorded and accredited, and then, how they are weighted and how they influence the advancement or promotion of the teaching career. Although the level of precision of the responses received was not as expected, and the information collected from European and Brazilian universities was insufficient, a synthesis of the results obtained for Argentina is presented below. Then, and for the same reason, we present a series of recommendations limited to this country:

- Regarding whether the University has a regulation for the recognition of internationalization activities of professors/academics

In general, universities do not have their own regulations for the recognition of the internationalization activities of professors.

- Regarding the administrative procedure followed by the University for the recognition of internationalization activities of professors/academics

In Argentina there is, since 2005, the Integrated Management and Evaluation System (SIGEVA)⁴ used by all university professors/researchers to accredit their academic activities.

Subsequently, in 2011, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation of the Nation launched the CVar, as a national unified and standardized registry of the curricular data of the scientific and technological personnel of Argentina⁵.

In 2012, the “Incentive Projects Report” module was tested, which allows integrating the information that researchers and professors have already up-

⁴ SIGEVA is a system developed in 2005 by the Informatics Department of the Management of Organization and Systems of CONICET.

⁵ CVar is compatible with SIGEVA data.

loaded in the different SIGEVA and CVar systems used for submission to the Incentive Programme.

The CVar is an adaptation of the SIGEVA, with the difference that the SIGEVA, in addition to storing information like the CVar, allows functions of evaluation of scientific activity.

- Regarding which professors' internationalization activities are recognized

The information requested in the SIGEVA and CVar systems is as follows:

Personal data: identification, residential address, work address

Education: Academic training, further education

Positions: Teaching, R&D positions, institutional management positions, other positions

Background: S-T funding, HR training, extension, evaluation, fellowships, other S&T activities.

Scientific production: Articles published in journals, books, parts of books, papers in published and unpublished C-T events; theses, other C-T productions

Technological production: with intellectual property title, C-T services, technical reports.

Artistic Production: Musical-sound; visual, audiovisual, theatrical, dramatic, poetic or essay literary genre, script, others.

Other background: participation in C-T events, awards, memberships, etc.

In the previous items, international activities are implicitly considered, for example, in publications in foreign journals, participation in international events, as well as in the direction and/or evaluation of graduate theses in foreign universities, etc.

- Regarding the benefits of being in the SIGEVA or CVar System

For professors of the Argentine Universities that are registered in SIGEVA, the system allows professors/researchers to participate in the Incentive Programme, which means an additional economic remuneration to their salary. Although not all professors are registered in SIGEVA, since the collection of the incentive requires certain requirements that not all professors meet.

In general, professors who participate in the Teaching Incentive Programme for Research apply. To belong to this system, the professor must give classes (in one annual or two four-monthly subjects) on a semi-exclusive basis with 20 hours per week in front of students and must be involved in a research project accredited by the system.

The system categorizes professors in levels, according to their CV, from category 1 to category 5, where 1 is the highest category in research.

Taking a university as an example, the UNL currently has 1733 categorized professors, belonging to the Incentive Programme, of which 175 are Category 1; 166 are in Category 2; 463 are in Category 3; 381 are in Category 4; and 548 are in Category 5.

In the case of Brazil, the Lattes platform can be considered in some ways the equivalent of SIGEVA. The platform allows the integration of databases of curricula, research groups and institutions in a single information system. The Directory of Research Groups in Brazil is an inventory of active groups in the country. The human resources that constitute the groups, the lines of research and the sectors of activity involved, the specialties of knowledge, the scientific, technological and artistic production and the patterns of interaction with the productive sector are part of the information contained in the Directory. The groups are located in higher education institutions, research institutes, etc. The individual information of the group participants is extracted from their Lattes curriculum.

The platform has become an instrument for measuring and evaluating academic and research performance. It is an open and consistent system that measures the activities that make up academic life.

Currently in Brazil, the Lattes platform is the only public tool to include international activities of professors and researchers. In the context of Brazilian universities, teaching evaluations take into account international activ-

ities related to research and not to teaching. The international mobility of professors is not yet institutionally recognized.

V - 2. Conclusions

Although in Argentina there is the Integrated Management and Evaluation System (SIGEVA), which is used by all university professors/researchers to accredit their academic activities, it can be said that there is no regulation or at least a common criterion to carry out in a unified way the recognition of the activities of professors abroad.

In other words, the tool that is available does not cover all the internationalisation activities that professors can carry out.

In this way, international activities are implicit or subsumed in the teaching, research and extension or transfer activities carried out by the professor.

Among these activities, publications in high-impact scientific journals is the most recognized as an international activity. However, in many cases, the lack of training in foreign languages, particularly English, restricts some professors from publishing in these journals.

This is more accentuated in certain subjects, since there is a disparity in the possibility of publishing depending on the different subjects (medical sciences have more opportunities to publish, while engineering, especially the more specific ones, have fewer possibilities).

Among the options provided by the systems to declare teaching and/or extension activities, they do not open the possibility of stating which are international and which are not.

In Argentina, in addition to the categorization as a professor/researcher in order to receive an incentive for research work, there is another evaluation of the academic activities of professors known as the “teaching career”, which is accessed through a public tender and can then be revalidated through a closed evaluation. In no case do activities of an international nature that can be accredited have any specific weighting.

The minimum score for a researcher to be considered category 1 is 1200 points.

That score is composed as follows:

Academic training (maximum 200 points)

Teaching (maximum 200 points)

Teaching activity and production (maximum 250 points)

Accredited scientific or artistic research or technological development (maximum 200 points)

Activity and production in scientific research or technological development (maximum 300 points)

Artistic production (maximum 300 points)

Transfer (maximum 300 points)

Training and management of human resources for research, technological development and artistic creation (maximum 360 points)

Management (maximum 150 points)

As can be seen, the main activities considered are those related to teaching and research.

V - 3. Recommendations

In this document, a diagnosis is made in order to know the degree of measurement of internationalization activities in the evaluation processes of teaching activity and the consequent recognition, to then make a series of recommendations on the subject aimed at universities and evaluation and control agencies, in order to contribute to the recognition of international academic activities of professors and thus stimulate the interest of professors and institutional valuation of efforts aimed at the internationalization of Higher Education.

Although it is understood that internationalization is transversal to the substantive dimensions of the University (teaching, research, extension), it is considered necessary to improve the degree of recognition of the international activities carried out by professors.

These recommendations are intended to serve as a basis for the analyses that can be developed in each university, in order to improve and/or update their policies and strategies, as well as the norms and procedures for the consideration and evaluation of the internationalization of university teaching activities. The recommendations are oriented in two convergent directions: first, they propose that the procedures and mechanisms that allow the accreditation of the academic activities of professors and researchers incorporate the necessary spaces where to declare, denounce or register those academic activities of international nature and second, that the forms and procedures that weigh and give merit for the development and promotion in the teaching career include and value international activities.

Recommendations for each University

Each University should take into account the international activities of its teaching staff, some of which are listed below, for the ranking and hierarchy of its teaching staff:

- Consider postgraduate degrees (Master's or Doctorate) obtained by professors in foreign universities.
- Consider the professor's participation in joint projects with foreign institutions (ERASMUS projects, for example).
- Consider work missions (internships, services to third parties, etc.) carried out by professors in foreign universities.
- Consider the reception and accompaniment of foreign professors during their stay at the University (as part of teaching mobility programmes, such as AUGM Scale, PILA, ERASMUS, etc.).
- Consider the representation of the University in activities related to internationalization.
- Consider the professor's participation in the organization of international events.
- Consider welcoming students into their classes (adapting study material, presenting case studies, etc.).

- Consider the tutoring of foreign students
- Consider, in the case of ordinary Competitions, the Internationalization activities that the professor carries out and that, in the case of Latin American Universities, are not taken into account.
- Consider the activities of internationalization of the curriculum that the professor carries out in his/her teaching practice.

Recommendations for National Accreditation Institutions

Higher Education plays a fundamental role in the development of the societies of the countries, and in this framework, the responsibility and the task carried out by university professors is key to its development. This implies the commitment to be updated with their knowledge and skills, to adapt to meet the challenges presented by an increasingly globalized world. In this context, it is important that the institutions that make up Higher Education systems support the internationalization of their teaching staff.

Therefore, the institutions in charge of the accreditation of academic activities, which manage the SIGEVA and CVar systems, must consider and value the internationalization activities that professors develop.

It is recommended that in the design of SIGEVA and CVar, and/or the different evaluation systems, spaces be defined in which professors can complete information on their international activities, some of which are mentioned in this report.

VI - BIBLIOGRAPHY CONSULTED

BUTTI, A. (2008), “Movilidad de los investigadores uruguayos”. Revista CTS, 10, (4), 2008, 33-60.

DE WIT, H.; JARAMILLO, I.C.; GACEL-ÁVILA, J.; KNIGHT, J. (2005). “*Educación Superior en América Latina. La dimensión internacional*”. Banco Mundial, Washington.

IESALC-UNESCO (2019). La movilidad en la educación superior en América Latina y el Caribe: retos y oportunidades de un Convenio renovado para el reconocimiento de estudios, títulos y diplomas.

KNIGHT, J. (2003). “Updated internationalization definition. International Higher Education”, 33, 2-3.

KOWALSKI, VÍCTOR ANDRÉS (2018) “Buscando el Profesor 4.0.” Programa de Formación Docente para orientar su práctica hacia la Formación por Competencias

LOPEZ MONTERO, ROSBERLY, (2018). “Propuesta de internacionalización desde las estrategias didácticas universitarias”.

MOTTAREALE CALVANESSE, DARIA (2017) “La internacionalización de la docencia en educación superior: el caso de la Universidad Complutense”

OJEDA, N.; FAISAL, M. L.; HUBELI, M. P.; ZUCARELLI, V. (2017) “La internacionalización de la Educación Superior en la UNL: movilidad e interculturalidad”, en el Congreso La Universidad como Objeto de Investigación. Santa Fe, Argentina.

PASSARINI, J.; ZUCARELLI, V.; OLIVA, M. S.; SANCHEZ, E. (2017) “Impacto de la internacionalización en la Educación Superior: la opinión de egresados que participaron en movilizaciones académicas”, en el Congreso La Universidad como Objeto de Investigación. Santa Fe, Argentina.

PASSARINI, J.; ZUCARELLI, V.; THEILER, J. “Evaluación de la movilidad académica: opinión de los participantes de los Programas Escala y Marca”. Volumen 2. Año 2019. Revista del Núcleo de Estudios e Investigaciones en Educación Superior del Mercosur - ISSN: 2347 - 0658

PDI (UNL) (2017). “Plan de Desarrollo Institucional de la Universidad Nacional del Litoral” <http://www.unl.edu.ar/> (Febrero de 2017).

SEBASTIÁN, J. (2004). Cooperación e Internacionalización de las Universidades. Buenos Aires Biblos.

SECRETARÍA DE POLÍTICAS UNIVERSITARIAS SPU (2012) “Plan estratégico de Formación de Ingenieros 2012-20162”.

THEILER, J. (2009). “Programas de Movilidad Internacional, su organización y las buenas prácticas para su gestión y administración. Universidad Nacional del Litoral”. Santa Fe. Argentina.

ZUCARELLI, V.; THEILER, J.; RODRIGUEZ, M. (2018). “El impacto de la movilidad académica en la opinión de docentes que reciben alumnos extranjeros en sus aulas”. Revista Politikon, Nro. 2, Volumen 1. Año 2019. ISSN: 2591-6394

PRIME 2010 - <file:///E:/SDIeI/PRIME%20Report%202010.pdf> <https://www.esn.org/prime> <http://semmelweis.hu/erasmus/files/2012/01/ERASMUS-do-not-forget-to-read.pdf> http://www.unica-network.eu/sites/default/files/PRIME_Berlin.pdf

General criteria for academic recognition in ECTS credits for student participation in university cultural, sporting, student representation, solidarity and cooperation activities.

https://www.esic.edu/pdf/normativa_neconocimiento_de_creditos.pdf <http://sigeva.unl.edu.ar/>

<http://cvar.sicytar.mincyt.gob.ar/auth/index.jsp>. <https://www.unl.edu.ar/investigacion/programa-de-incentivos-para-docentes-investigadores/>

https://www.unl.edu.ar/investigacion/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2019/02/427_nuevo-manual-de-procedimientos-reso-1.pdf

VII - ANNEXES: TAILORED MADE PROPOSALS

UFRGS

Each University should define official rules that regulate academic mobility and recognition

In the case of the UFRGS, since the end of the 1990s, there have been norms and regulations that regulate mobility and recognition (“Leave” and “Work Plan”), in UFRGS terminology). However, it has been a few years since the need to clarify the duration of the “Leave” was identified. The current regulations (resolution 11/2013) provide for two possible types of leave, each lasting one semester, extendable for a further semester: leave to complement studies (without a study plan), and leave to pursue studies (with a formalised teaching plan). One of the proposals for improvement would be to provide for a single type of leave of absence, with a study plan, which duration could be flexible from the initial request to last from 1 to 3 semesters.

Each University should streamline the processes for the registration and co-validation of the recognition of studies

The delay in the process of academic recognition, at UFRGS, is mainly due to the absence of a computerised mechanism to manage mobility. In the current way, the request process for leave and revalidation of activities is electronic, but it has not been integrated into the student’s academic life management system (SISGRAD), which slows it down. The recommendation, already made since 2011, is to integrate the systems to streamline the procedure.

Each University should take into account for the scheduling and ranking of its teaching staff, the international activities that the teaching staff carry out

The UFRGS already applies most of the suggested recommendations. A specific point where it can improve is:

- in the internal valuation of professors who tutor foreign students in mobility at the University.

- in the internal valuation of the classes taught in a foreign language, particularly at postgraduate level.

UFRJ

Actions resulting from the work done within the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) regarding the Erasmus+ Rec-Mat Project, aiming at an improvement in the standard of recognition of studies in exchange periods.

The Federal University of Rio de Janeiro is part of the consortium of universities participating in the Erasmus+ Rec-Mat Project, which aims to improve the recognition and use of studies undertaken by undergraduate students during exchange periods at European universities. The project is coordinated by the University of Porto and includes a series of Work Packages aimed at generating products and tools to be disseminated among the partner universities, in order to facilitate that the project objectives are achieved more easily. One of these, number 4, is aimed at pointing out proposals that specifically improve the administrative procedures for the utilization to be carried out.

Regarding the important aspects for the WP mentioned we must inform that:

Official rules governing mobility and recognition

UFRJ has more than one official rule that regulates mobility, basically students who have completed at least 30% of the total credits required to complete the course and have not reached a total of more than 80% of credits completed are eligible for international mobility. The rules for the utilization of the contents studied in current exchange periods at UFRJ are quite simple, and apply not only to those studied during international exchange periods, but also to those studied during internal student mobility in Brazil, as well as to the utilization of subjects studied in other universities (national and foreign) in periods prior to the student's admission to the courses at our university. Currently, the utilization depends on the academic coordinators of the courses, who analyse the documentation issued by the partner universities, find similarities in workload and content, and validate the recognition and insertion of the subjects in the students' transcripts. The only restrictions are determined by the regulations of the Ministry of Education, which require a minimum of 75% coincidence of course load and coincidence of content in the description of the syllabus, with no concern for the similarity of pedagogical objectives and skills to be obtained by students.

Responsible for the academic management of mobilities and for the processes of validation and recognition of courses taken in exchange

Most of the Academic Coordinators at our university do not have an exact understanding of the differences and similarities between the credit system used by UFRJ to structure its courses and the ECTS system adopted by its partners in Europe after the Bologna agreement. This misunderstanding is the result of the greatest difficulty in terms of taking advantage of the studies of our exchange students, since the divergence of effective teaching hours in the classroom is understood as an impediment to meeting the rule of 75% equivalence. Since the ECTS system computes a small number of hours of effective teaching in the classroom, adding to the total number of hours computed for each subject all the hours spent by the student to understand the contents and develop skills, and focusing its pedagogical effort so that the student achieves the specified training objectives, the differences between this pedagogic philosophy and the credit system (based on class attendance to obtain the effective workload determined and assessment of understanding of content pre-defined in the syllabus) interferes with understanding of the similarities between the two qualifications offered and the correct pairing of subjects to formulate equivalences and the due use of studies undertaken.

At the moment we are making efforts to disseminate among the academic coordinators at UFRJ the information regarding the problem described, broadening the understanding of the ECTS system, aiming for these professors to have a better understanding of things and making it possible to improve the current use of the subjects studied by the exchange students. The development of subject pairing grids that enable quick recognition is one of the points being worked on, and should evolve greatly after the intended perception change. Once these tools have been developed, the study planning processes of future exchange students will be able to be carried out with an accurate assessment of their performance upon their return from their periods of study.

At present there is an effort of the General Superintendence of International Relations to build in conjunction with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies a draft resolution to be submitted to the Undergraduate Education Council so that such actions are regulated in Council resolutions that will serve as procedural parameters for the use of exchange studies.

When the project began, most of the academic units at UFRJ did not have formalized Internationalization Coordinators among their staff. For two years

now, we have persisted in advising directors to appoint a professor for the position, with the aim of forming a network of Academic Coordinators who guide students and professors in internationalization procedures, including mobility planning and the consequent recognition and use of studies by students.

Improve the mechanisms for transparency of information

The website of the General Superintendence of International Relations is in the process of being redesigned, since the analysis of the current one has made it evident that the low degree of intuitiveness makes it difficult to access information. In the reformulation is planned the creation of an area for foreign students, in which the largest volume of information will be detailed and the connection with the information already existing in our system will be offered in a friendly way and designed with the best parameters of user experience.

Improve data recording and enable the entry of information into student academic records

The current system of enrolment in subjects at UFRJ (SIGA - Integrated System of Academic Management) already allows the entry of all data related to the exchanges in the students' transcripts, since there are spaces for notes that are not usually filled and can be used for this purpose. This possibility was noted by the professor who participated in the training carried out by professionals from Ghent University. For this resource to be exploited and enable the full entry of data on the subjects studied during exchange periods, it is only necessary to establish standardized procedures for course coordinators and academic secretariat staff in order to guide how to perform this type of annotation, which will be encouraged through the production of a document in the format of a primer to guide all staff in administrative functions, and soon standardized through a resolution to be approved by the Teaching and Graduation Council of UFRJ.

Facilitate early dialogue between administrative and academic officers

Prior to the Rec-Mat project there were already well-established exchange relations between some academic units of UFRJ and UPorto, actions that generated some grids for the use of subjects in certain areas of knowledge with good functioning for the full use of studies. It is our intention at the present moment to establish grids in the courses of Journalism, Chemical Engineering, Biopro-

cess Engineering and Pedagogy that allow the fast processing of processes of utilization of studies in interchange in these courses in function of the Rec-Mat project. For such we have already started the establishment of direct relations between the Academic Coordinators of the courses of both universities, so that these grids can be built in a solid and definitive way. The production of such a resource will facilitate the formulation of similar grids with the other European universities involved in the project. Based on the grids established with one of the partners, the intention is to establish standards for the use of studies that can be applied to all the other universities in the countries where these partners are located.

Allow the equivalence of degrees in the recognition of courses taken in exchange between partner universities

Regarding the entry of the degrees obtained and the calculation of their equivalence between the different scoring systems of the partner universities, it is worth informing that at UFRJ, the existing norm determines that any equivalence obtained by the student, in whatever modality, has its inclusion in the student's official transcript made with an entry without a degree. In place of the degree obtained, the letter "T" is inserted (indicating transferred content), the credits obtained by the student in these processes count towards the completion of the course and obtaining the final degree, but do not interfere in the calculation of the student's performance coefficient (general average). It is possible that the grades obtained by the student are informed in his/her final transcript, through the solution presented for the entry of information regarding the subjects taken in exchange periods, but the use of these scores for the calculation of the student's performance coefficient depends on the approval of an alteration in the norms that establish this calculation by the Undergraduate Education Council of UFRJ.

UNESP

The Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (Paulista State University Júlio de Mesquita Filho - Unesp) is a partner of the Erasmus+ Rec Mat Project, coordinated by the University of Porto.

The project includes a work line (WP4) that aims to generate proposals to improve the recognition of internationalisation actions carried out by students and teacher-researchers from the participating universities.

To this end, an assessment of the current state of academic recognition in a group of universities in Brazil and Argentina was carried out, and based on this information, a document was prepared that includes a series of general recommendations on the improvement of regulations and procedures in academic recognition in international student mobility, as well as in the formal recognition of the value of internationalisation for teachers at the institutional level.

After analysis of the recommendations made within the REC-MAT by the External Relations Advisory of Unesp team, we sought ways to facilitate and debureocratize academic recognition in the Institution.

The Assessoria de Relações Externas (External Relations Office), was established in 1993 and since then has been working in the area of international cooperation, promoting cultural and scientific exchange with foreign institutions. Aiming to structure and regulate the exchange of undergraduate students were elaborated in recent years the institutional resolutions of academic mobility. Some considerations about these documents are presented below.

Official rules governing mobility and recognition:

Unesp has six resolutions that ensure the recognition of academic activities developed in Foreign Institutions in the Academic Mobility Programme.

The first resolution was created in 2010 and has already undergone some adjustments and changes in 2011 and 2014. With the development of the Rec Mat project and the analyses developed by WP 4 we verified the need to carry out a new analysis of our Exchange resolution. Thus, the resolution is again under analysis so that new improvements can be introduced.

Among the points on which we are working are the maximum period in which the student can stay an exchange. This period was changed from 3 to 4 semesters, seeking to enable the student to carry out a period of exchange, research, and internship.

The procedure for the Study Contract to be used to assure the complete substitution of the curricular components foreseen at Unesp for the period that the student is in exchange was improved. If the contract is approved and the student passes the components, they will be automatically used (after proof). If the Course Council considers that the Study Contract cannot be used to completely substitute the curricular components of the semester, these can be eval-

uated individually and prior to the exchange, to be used as compulsory or optional subjects.

With these changes we want to avoid that the student has losses in having to take subjects at Unesp to compensate what was not validated.

We indicate that the Course Councils should consider, in the approval of the Study Contracts, the equivalence of competences and skills to be acquired by the students, when comparing Unesp and exchange subjects, as well as the similarity of the total workload of the period that the student should take at Unesp and the exchange period, regardless of the individual workloads of the subjects. It was explained that there should not be a comparison between subjects and their contents. The analysis should be focused on skills and competences.

An Academic Tutor, who is a teacher on the course, will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the activities foreseen in the Learning Agreement and approving any changes.

Facilitate early dialogue between administrative and academic officers:

In March 2021 we started an initiative to bring the External Relations Office closer to the Local Internationalisation Committees and Undergraduate and Graduate Course Coordinators. With monthly meetings we seek to address issues related and of interest to the academic community. Among the topics addressed so far are:

- Priorities for the internationalisation of the university
- BRaVE programme and Virtual Mobility
- Presentation of the PLIU – Unesp’s English Language Programme: internationalisation, training, and transversality
- Courses offered in other languages at Unesp
- Internationalisation of Graduation: Functionalities and facilities offered by the System of Mobility and Integration into SISGRAD
- Internationalization of Graduate Studies: Features and facilities offered by the Internationalization System of Graduate Studies and Intelligence

System PrInt

- “How to deepen Unesp’s internationalisation actions?”

Improving the mechanisms for transparency of information:

Due to the great interest of our students and former students in doing an exchange or post-graduation course abroad we saw the need to elaborate a document where we explain in detail the grading system used at Unesp, as well as the acronyms and information that appear in our students’ transcripts. We have also included information on the equivalence of Unesp credits to ECTS.

The ‘Unesp Grading System’ was elaborated by the Assessoria de Relações Externas (External Relations Office) in partnership with the Pró-Reitoria de Graduação (Dean of Undergraduate Studies) and is in the final stages of approval to be published on our website in English and Spanish.

UNL

The Universidad Nacional del Litoral (UNL) participates in the Rec-Mat Project (Recognition-Matters), coordinated by the University of Porto. The project includes a line of work (WP4) aimed at generating proposals to improve the recognition of internationalisation actions carried out by students and teachers/researchers in the Argentinean and Brazilian universities participating in the project. To this end, an assessment of the current situation of academic recognition in a group of universities in Brazil and Argentina, among which are the institutions participating in REC-MAT, has been carried out, and on the basis of this information a document was drawn up which includes a series of general recommendations for improving the regulations and procedures for academic recognition in the international mobility of students, as well as the formal recognition of the value of internationalisation for teaching staff at the institutional level.

The recommendations elaborated in the framework of REC-MAT have been analysed and evaluated by UNL’s internationalisation management staff and compared with the official rules and procedures of the Institution. As a result of this analysis, the present report has been prepared with the aim of improving the conditions for academic recognition at the institution.

The UNL has been developing systematic internationalisation activities since the mid-1990s, when it defined a specific policy and created an ad-hoc administrative structure. Thus, for more than 20 years, numerous students, teachers, researchers, and administrative staff have been involved in countless academic programmes and activities of an international nature, as a result of which the UNL has become a national and regional reference in institutional internationalisation policies.

ACADEMIC RECOGNITION IN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY

International student mobility is a priority line of action for the UNL. In fact, since 1999 it has developed a profuse action of exchanges with higher education institutions in the rest of the world. Thus, student mobility has been growing year by year, always bearing in mind the basic concept of recognition of the studies that UNL students carry out abroad.

Early in 1999, the UNL approved the creation of PROINMES (International Student Mobility Programme), through which more than 3000 students of the Institution have spent a period of study abroad, most of them with financial aid provided by the UNL itself. The mobilities are framed in institutional agreements, either by bilateral agreements with HEIs from other countries, or by the participation of the Institution in International Programmes (ERASMUS Programmes of the EU, ARFITEC Programme -Argentina-France Technology-, Iberoamerica Scholarship Programme of Santander Universities, MARCA Mercosur Programme, OEI's Academic Exchange and Mobility Programme -PIMA-, IAESTE Programme), or through university network programmes (AUGM's "Student Scale" Programme, UDUAL's PAME Academic Student Mobility Programme, JIMA Programme -Mexico-Argentina-, MACA Programme -Colombia-Argentina-).

As mentioned above, the UNL carries out this internationalization action in a systematic, institutional, and organized manner. It is regulated by the following regulations of the Institution, approved by its highest governing body:

- Regulations of the International Student Mobility Programme (PROINMES). Approved in 1999, it defines the objective and generates a general regulation to facilitate student mobility, accelerating the recognition of credits, degrees, studies, and diplomas, from the perspective of mutual trust between institutions under the concept of quality equivalences.

- Regulation of academic-administrative procedures linked to the management of PROINMES (SC Res. n° 125/2015). It renews and completes the specific regulations for student mobility. Among other things, it imposes the principle that the academic activities carried out during the mobility period “represent a significant advance in the student’s academic training”, explains the actions to be taken after the exchange period, including the recognition of the subjects or curricular activities approved by the student at the host university, and defines the mandatory recognition of those academic activities included in the Learning Agreement, according to the administrative procedures in force in the respective Academic Unit (a copy of the Resolution is attached).

- Management system for exchange students (GEA). The UNL has developed a student mobility management portal for both “incoming” and “outgoing” students. In the case of the GEA for UNL’s own students, the system includes the global management that a student must carry out, from registration as an applicant for mobility places to the management of recognition in their Academic Unit.

The following is a summary of the general recommendations on good practice in academic recognition in student mobility presented in the WP4 Report of the Rec-mat project, and the level of development and compliance at UNL:

REC-MAT RECOMMENDATIONS	SITUATION IN THE UNS
Each university must define official rules governing mobility and recognition.	UNL has clear and comprehensive regulations on the subject.
Each university should designate institutional and academic authorities specifically in charge of responsible for managing student mobility and for carrying out the corresponding recognition.	UNL has a very comprehensive management structure, with a general responsible for student mobility, a specific office with an adequate number of experienced staff, administrative mobility delegates in each faculty and academic mobility coordinators in each degree programme.

<p>Each university should promote greater information transparency.</p>	<p>The UNL offers clear and complete information on its academic offer, the contents of the courses, the conditions to be fulfilled by foreign and home students in order to access mobility, etc. The information is summarised in the GEA System.</p>
<p>Each university should promote and facilitate prior dialogue between the administrative and academic coordinators of the sending and host universities and the student himself/herself.</p>	<p>This recommendation is not fully implemented. In spite of the training efforts aimed at degree/title coordinators at the university, the prior dialogue is not fully implemented, mainly because there are no reciprocal efforts at the partner university.</p>
<p>Each university should streamline the processes for student registration and monitoring (so that they are less bureaucratic).</p>	<p>The UNL uses the GEA system, operational for several years, which provides adequate IT support in the management of student mobility by facilitating the registration and monitoring of activities.</p>
<p>Each university must define a system that allows comparison of its grading system with those of its partner universities.</p>	<p>Comparative tables of grading systems exist in university network programmes (PILA, AUGM), but not in bilateral agreements. UNL does not have its own criteria for the conversion of qualifications</p>

Based on the recommendations set out in the REC-MAT project, and the comparison with the standards and practices developed by UNL and set out above, the following action plan is proposed to improve academic recognition actions and the quality of student mobility in the institution:

- Consolidate the figure of student tutoring, for pre and during mobility. Although the UNL Mentoring Club exists, its organization is informal, so a specific regulation will be developed to organize the activities and at the same time allow the issuing of a specific certification to the participating students.
- The UNL is currently in the process of updating the curricula of most of its degree courses. Within this framework of reforms, it has been decided to develop actions aimed at incorporating the international dimension in the new curricula, so that exchange experiences are visibly expressed as a “transversal training path” developed outside the institutional environment (national or foreign). In addition, the possibility of registering these experiences in the institution’s IT/administrative systems will be enabled (see UNL report/proposal for WP5).
- There is a project for a common elective course for all foreign exchange students, which has already been approved by the Higher Council of the UNL. Its implementation has been delayed due to the COVID19 pandemic, and it is expected to start in 2022.
- The UNL offers a course in Spanish as a Foreign Language, aimed at exchange students who do not have Spanish as their mother tongue. Since its creation, this course has been taught in classroom mode. Due to the COVID19 pandemic, it has been implemented virtually, with the additional benefit of allowing students to take it before they travel to Santa Fe for their period of study.

On the other hand, the Report of WP4 of the Rec-mat Project makes a recommendation no longer referring to a particular institution, but at the level of the university system of the countries, which is the following:

“The Ministries of Education and the Councils of Universities should promote systems that facilitate the comparison of the curricula of university degrees among the different universities and national systems of Higher Education”. In this regard, it is important to note that the Argentine Republic has implemented the National Academic Recognition System (SNRA), which covers the entire National University System. This regulation is fully applicable to academic recognition in international student mobility, as it defines a system for measuring curricula in credits, called RTF (Recognition of Training Paths), which, for example, are equivalent to the ECTS credits applied in Europe.

RECOGNITION OF THE INTERNATIONALISATION ACTIVITIES OF TEACHERS/ACADEMICS

In principle, it is recognised that a deficient aspect of the international policies developed by the UNL has been the lack of recognition of the efforts made by teachers and researchers to promote them.

This institutional policy deficit, recognised by UNL authorities when developing the Strategic Plan for Institutional Development 2010-2019, was particularly evident when the institution participated in the REC-MAT project.

Thus, with the aim of recognising the internationalisation actions carried out by teachers and researchers, the UNL has issued a specific regulation, by resolution of the Higher Council of the UNL No. 232 of 2020 (copy attached), which defines the figure of INTERNATIONAL TEACHER of the UNL, providing, in addition, its registration in the management systems of human resources of the Institution. In this way, the recognition of the international activities carried out by teachers and researchers is promoted, both in their promotion, their professional development and in the competitions in which they participate.

Resolution n° 232 must be accompanied by a specific regulation, to be issued by the Rector of the UNL. These regulations are currently being drafted, taking as main reference the recommendations of the REC-MAT project, which are summarised below:

- Consider postgraduate degrees (Masters or Doctorates) obtained by teachers in foreign universities.
- Consider the teacher's participation in joint projects with foreign institutions (e.g. ERASMUS projects).
- Consider work missions (internships, services to third parties, etc.) carried out by teachers in foreign universities.
- Consider the reception and accompaniment of foreign lecturers during their stay at the University (as part of teaching mobility programmes, such as AUGM Scale, PILA, ERASMUS, etc.).
- Consider representation of the University in activities related to internationalisation.

- Consider the teacher's participation in the organisation of international events.
- Consider the reception of students in your classes (adaptation of study material, presentation of case studies, etc.).
- Consider Tutoring of foreign students
- Consider the activities of internationalisation of the curriculum that the teacher carries out in his/her teaching practice, especially those carried out within the framework of official actions promoted by the university itself.

Consider the activities of internationalisation of the curriculum that the teacher carries out in his/her teaching practice, especially those carried out within the framework of official actions promoted by the university itself.

- Admission tender and promotion in the teaching career.
- Admission tender and categorisation in the career of teacher-researcher

UNS

The Universidad Nacional del Sur (UNS) participates in the Rec-Mat Project (Recognition-Matters), coordinated by the University of Porto. One of the work packages of the project (WP4) aims to generate proposals to improve the recognition of internationalization actions carried out by students and teachers of Brazilian and Argentinean universities that are members of Rec-Mat. For this purpose, the current situation of academic recognition in a group of universities in Brazil and Argentina, among which are the institutions participating in REC-MAT, has been evaluated. On this basis, a document was drawn up detailing a series of general recommendations to improve the regulations and procedures for the academic recognition of activities carried out by students during their international mobility, as well as the formal recognition by the university of the value of internationalization activities for teachers.

The recommendations elaborated in the framework of REC-MAT have been analysed and evaluated by the internationalization management staff of the UNS and by teachers participating in the REC-MAT project, comparing them with the official rules and procedures of the Institution. As a result of this analysis, this report has been prepared with the aim of improving the conditions of academic recognition at the institution.

The UNS develops systematic internationalisation actions in 2007, the year in which the Undersecretariat for Internationalisation was created. This office has coordinated exchange actions and international academic activities involving students, teachers, researchers, and non-teaching staff.

ACADEMIC RECOGNITION IN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY

Internationalisation is one of the pillars of the UNS Strategic Plan. This internationalisation includes exchange activities for students, teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as internationalisation activities at home. In the specific case of student mobility, since the creation of the Under-Secretariat for Internationalisation, numerous student exchanges have been coordinated with partner universities abroad, activities that have been gradually increasing until 2019. Recognition of the academic work done by students has always been an important point.

Each year two calls for applications are made under the title MUNDO UNS, in which interested students can apply for a period of study abroad in the framework of programmes in which the UNS participates, such as ERASMUS Programmes of the EU, ARFITEC Programme -Argentina-France-Technology-, MARCA Mercosur Programme, IAESTE Programme, I. DEAR -Engineers - Germany-Argentina-, or through university network programmes, such as AUGM's "Escala Estudiantil" programme, the PILA exchange programme with Mexico and Colombia, and numerous bilateral programmes with universities in Europe and America. Students receive financial support for these programmes, some provided by the UNS itself and others by the partner universities.

The UNS carries out these actions in an institutional and organized manner, regulated by regulations issued by its highest governing body. These are the main regulations:

- Selection mechanism for international mobility of undergraduate students. CSU Resolution 555/14. Approved in 2014, it establishes the application mechanism and how to assess the background of undergraduate students interested in participating in an international exchange.
- Recognition of subject equivalences. Resolution CSU 370/13. Establishes the procedures to be followed for the recognition of subjects taken in

foreign institutions as equivalent to UNS subjects. It also establishes the form of the study contract.

- Methodology for the conversion of grades. Resolution CSU 727/15. Establishes an objective way of converting grades obtained in a foreign institution to those corresponding to the UNS.

The following is a summary of the general recommendations on good practice in academic recognition in student mobility presented in the WP4 Report of the REC-MAT project, and the level of development and compliance at UNS:

REC-MAT RECOMMENDATIONS	SITUATION IN THE UNS
Each university must define official rules governing mobility and recognition.	La UNS posee una normativa clara y completa sobre el tema.
Each university should designate specific institutional and academic authorities in charge of managing student mobility and the corresponding recognition.	UNS has an established management structure, with an office responsible for student mobility, and an academic management office in which academic recognition mechanisms have been implemented.
Each university should promote greater transparency of information	The UNS offers complete information on its academic offer, course contents, conditions to be fulfilled by foreign students and by its own students in order to access mobility. The information can be found on the university's website and is also promoted through social networks.
Each university should promote and facilitate prior dialogue between the administrative and academic coordinators of the home and host universities and the student.	This recommendation is met in most exchanges and is the input for the study contracts that students sign prior to their exchanges.

Each university should streamline the processes for student registration and monitoring (so that they are less bureaucratic).	At UNS, these processes are still carried out in an artisanal manner, with little IT support. This needs to be improved.
Each university must define a system that allows comparison of its grading system with those of its partner universities.	UNS has a method of grade conversion established by regulation.

Based on the recommendations set out in the REC-MAT project, and the comparison with the standards and practices developed by the UNS, the following action plan is proposed to improve academic recognition actions and the quality of student mobility in the Institution:

- With the increase in exchanges, it is necessary to obtain IT support for the management and monitoring of exchanges, in the form of a management programme. It is proposed to acquire or generate internally a software for this purpose.
- The UNS offers two subjects of Spanish as a Foreign Language, levels A2 and B1, aimed at exchange students whose mother tongue is not Spanish, and a subject of Argentine Culture. Since its creation, these subjects have been taught in classroom mode. Because of the COVID19 pandemic, they have been implemented in distance mode, with the additional benefit of allowing students to take them before they travel to Bahía Blanca for their period of study. It is proposed to retain at least one of these courses in distance learning format.

On the other hand, the WP4 Report of the Rec-mat Project makes a recommendation referring to the level of the university system of the countries, which is the following:

“The Ministries of Education and the Councils of Universities should promote systems that facilitate the comparison of the curricula of university degrees among the different universities and national systems of Higher Education”. In this regard, it is important to note that the Argentine Republic has

implemented the National Academic Recognition System (SNRA), which covers the entire National University System. This regulation is fully applicable to academic recognition in international student mobility, as it defines a system for measuring curricula in credits, called RTF (Recognition of Training Paths), which, for example, are equivalent to the ECTS credits applied in Europe.

RECOGNITION OF THE INTERNATIONALISATION ACTIVITIES OF TEACHERS/ACADEMICS

In principle, it is recognised that a deficient aspect of the international policies developed by the UNS has been the lack of recognition of the effort that teachers and researchers have made in promoting them. Usually, the activities that teachers themselves have carried out abroad are recognised, such as post-graduate degrees obtained in foreign universities, internships, research projects with international counterparts, but it is less usual to recognise their activities in promoting internationalisation, or internationalisation at home. This deficit needs to be addressed.