

## **ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS)**

IMT Institute for Advanced Studies Lucca (est. 2005) is a research university within the Italian public higher education system. The pillars of the institute's research model are its thematic research units, highly specialised in a specific field, that often cooperate on interdisciplinary projects. The multidisciplinary PhD program of IMT, organised into thematic curricula, promotes the full integration of research and education.

International strategy is a core dimension of IMT: competitive international procedures in line with international standards such as the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers are used to recruit professors, researchers, and students, and many courses and seminars are held by world-renowned visiting researchers and professors. English is the official language for teaching and working. These key factors strongly contribute to IMT's pursuit of cooperation with universities and institutions in different geographical areas (EU and extra-EU).

In the current academic year (2012/2013) almost 40% of enrolled PhD students and approximately 35% of researchers are non-Italian. In this environment IMT academic and administrative staff engage in international cooperation mainly with Europe, USA and East Asia.

IMT actively seeks international partners both for projects and mobility on the basis of their quality and relevance to IMT areas of interest (Economics, Computer, Decision, and Systems Sciences, Management and Development of Cultural Heritage, Political History). All faculty is involved in international collaborations and IMT's specially designed campus fosters the continual presence of visiting scholars who contribute to creating an intellectually stimulating and lively environment. Regular contact with visiting professors, scholars and students facilitates access to the international scientific community and the broadening of international relationships. Institutional partners are largely found through academic and scientific contacts, though in some cases PhD students themselves, who follow seminars, conferences, workshops, summer schools abroad in addition to "at home" courses, pro-actively seek out interesting contacts. Moreover, the mobility and placement staff act as a hub forwarding communication on mobility and placement activities.

As for the geographical areas concerned, the choice of partners – in line with the general IMT policy of meritocratic selection - is made on the basis of quality and relevance of potential cooperation independently of the host institution's geographical location, though statistically speaking, for student mobility, Europe (including eastern Europe) and Northern America are the preferred destinations.

Outgoing mobility is considered a key point of students' doctoral formation, fully recognised in their transcript, and the vast majority of IMT PhD students spend a period abroad for study, research or placement. To promote student mobility, financial aid is granted whenever possible: as a matter of fact, all IMT student positions are tuition-free and about 36 positions per year are with a 3-year scholarship (assigned on a competitive basis). In the case of mobility abroad such scholarship is increased by 50% and students who are not scholarship recipients have individual funds available and priority in the case of selections for additional mobility funding (e.g. Erasmus funds).

Student incoming mobility is promoted by free access to courses and campus facilities, and by the international environment in the setting of the historical town centre of Lucca. Moreover, IMT is a disability friendly structure; the campus has no architectural barriers and accommodations are available with private bathrooms specifically designed for disabled people.

Academic staff short-term mobility, and to a lesser extent, long-term mobility, is taken for granted, in order to strengthen strategic international collaborations.

Administrative incoming and outgoing mobility is very much envisaged as a privileged medium to exchange good practices, as at IMT the international dimension permeates not only mobility and project collaborations, but all tasks: from faculty, researcher, student, and staff recruitment to course and seminars organisation, to graduation procedures, etc. One objective pursued by administrative staff members is to be compliant with Italian bureaucracy in a transparent way, thus unburdening as much as possible the recipients of administrative services, and to this end international cooperation may be very fruitful.

IMT is open and willing to participate in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees as provided for in the PhD regulations.