

## Erasmus Strategy Statement 2021-2027

The National School of Agricultural Sciences of Bordeaux Aquitaine (Bordeaux Sciences Agro) is a school for agricultural engineers under the supervision of the French Ministry of Agriculture and Food. As the only agricultural higher education institution in the Nouvelle Aquitaine region, it benefits from the dynamism of the agricultural sector in the area, Europe's largest forest, and the international reputation of the wine industry, with 20% of the French vineyard related to Bordeaux, Cognac, and Armagnac.

The school trains 600 students annually who follow the Agronomy Engineering curriculum, either as regular students or apprentices, or one of the six master's programs co-accredited with Bordeaux universities or other national partners. The school's training offer is complemented by a CGE-labeled specialized master's degree and a professional degree offered to an international audience.

The arrival of Mrs. Sabine BRUN-RAGEUL as the director of Bordeaux Sciences Agro in January 2020 marked the beginning of a new phase for the institution, with the implementation of a comprehensive strategy covering the various activities of the school.

Within this context, Bordeaux Sciences Agro's international activity has entered a new stage of development through the consolidation and enhancement of positive actions and experiences conducted in international partnership. The Erasmus+ program is a cornerstone of this strategy, providing resources for the development of international activities and reflecting key principles such as cooperation, exchange, recognition, transparency, fairness, and the valorization of partnership experiences.

Bordeaux Sciences Agro's overall international strategy aims to promote and support the internationalization of the school's activities and services. The school leverages its key fields' attractiveness and dynamism while ensuring that target countries align with these fields and maintaining the scientific excellence of its partners, fostering synergy between education and research.

Geographically, Europe is a major focus due to its proximity, cultural and scientific richness, and compatibility between member countries' higher education systems, representing a significant portion of Bordeaux Sciences Agro's key partners.

In terms of education, internationalization is essential to equip future professionals in the agricultural sector with the skills needed to address global challenges in agriculture, food, and the environment. Bordeaux Sciences Agro evolves its curriculum by introducing new modules and integrating international dimensions into different specializations, while also increasing instruction in English. For example, the seventh semester of the core Agronomy Engineering curriculum has been modular and multidisciplinary since 2018, featuring a fully English-language track. This modularity serves two purposes: enabling the personalization of each student's curriculum and meeting the needs of incoming international students, whose varied profiles often made a single course offering inadequate. The possibility to pursue a fully English-language education opens new prospects for welcoming students who might be limited by their proficiency in French, while also serving Bordeaux Sciences Agro's students, whose English proficiency is necessary for graduation and future career opportunities. Institutionally, this evolution allows for a better balance of student exchanges, paving the way for new agreements and sustaining existing partnerships with English-language universities.

The Erasmus+ program contributes to the evolution of the school's training offer in several ways: by enabling international professors to teach in the school's programs, thus enriching the curriculum, and by promoting the exchange of best practices among partners. These exchanges are facilitated by the common adoption of European principles, such as the use of ECTS credits and the articulation of learning objectives through competencies.

In terms of research, European and international partnerships are indispensable. Participation in international projects fosters international doctoral student exchanges, researcher and doctoral student mobility among partners, and joint thesis supervision. This not only brings international expertise to Bordeaux Sciences Agro's research themes but also enhances its international visibility and reputation through the demonstrated expertise of its scientists. While research activities mainly rely on the Horizon 2020 program, Erasmus+ serves as a facilitator for meetings among researchers and lays the groundwork for future scientific collaborations while strengthening the links between education and research among partner institutions.

The transfer of competencies carried out by Bordeaux Sciences Agro's teams is undergoing internationalization through projects involving academic partners and European economic actors. Three strategic partnerships have been proposed this year on themes like agroforestry, bioeconomy, and corporate social responsibility in the wine industry, demonstrating the importance these collaborations hold for the teams.

At the individual level, for staff and students, internationalization translates into acquiring new professional and personal skills, offering a significant advantage for direct application in work and promoting individual growth, fostering European citizenship.

Individual internationalization occurs both on-site and abroad. On-site, this internationalization takes place through the participation of foreign experts in training programs and the progressive internationalization of student cohorts. Abroad, it is achieved through international mobility, mandatory for all students and encouraged for all staff (teachers, scientists, and administrators). Whether on-site or abroad, the school relies on Erasmus+ to facilitate mobility with its European partners and strategic partners from other countries.

For the school's services, internationalization is evolving continuously due to the constant increase in the international audience. The evolution of Erasmus+ procedures and guidelines since 2007 has contributed to the adoption of good practices in mobility management within Bordeaux Sciences Agro (from an educational, administrative, and financial perspective), allowing qualitative improvements in internal procedures, especially regarding individual support and mechanisms for recognizing and valorizing mobility. All the school's departments are adapting to a more open global context requiring new linguistic and methodological practices. This change is reflected by the increasing presence of English-speaking staff in services like administration, student accommodation, departments, accounting, and finance, a criterion considered during recruitment prerequisites.

This policy results from collective work at the institutional level in both its definition and implementation. Indeed, the primary lines of Bordeaux Sciences Agro's international activity are defined by its management board, which includes the school's management and the heads of key missions, including the International Relations delegate. The board establishes the direction in full coherence with the institution's overall plan, aiming to meet the quantitative and qualitative objectives set by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

The RIN process group, derived from the Quality Management System (QMS), for which the school is ISO 9001 certified, breaks down strategic lines into action plans, anticipates the conditions for activity execution, and identifies the people responsible for each project.

This working group, meeting quarterly, comprises teachers from each teaching department, representatives from the Studies Department, the International Relations team, and two student representatives, ensuring a comprehensive view of international issues at the institution.

The International Relations department, consisting of three permanent staff members—the delegate, the service head, and the international mobility officer—determines the necessary resources for executing the action plan, identifies appropriate mechanisms to support activities, and ensures the implementation of planned actions in close cooperation with all school services and with local, national, and international partners.

As the only agronomy institution in Nouvelle Aquitaine, Bordeaux Sciences Agro coordinates a consortium initiated by DRAAF with agricultural high schools in the region to support them in developing their international mobility in higher education and assist with implementing the Bologna process, including the experimentation with BTEC Higher National Diploma aiming at implementing ECTS.

The school's internationalization strategy also relies on partnerships established through its integration into the Bordeaux site of higher education and research and IdEx Bordeaux University, or its membership in Agreenium and the network of agronomy institutions under the Ministry of Agriculture. Actions taken within the framework of these site or network partnerships are built in coherence with jointly established thematic and geographical priorities, with Bordeaux Sciences Agro leveraging its strengths and specificities.

In conclusion, Bordeaux Sciences Agro's international strategy aligns with the five priorities of the higher education modernization agenda and finds in the Erasmus program the financial and structural resources to achieve its objectives and pursue its policy.

Indeed, the evolution of the school's curriculum to address global challenges and a more globalized job market contributes to improving the quality of the higher education system, allowing a better match between European expertise demands and the training offered to young graduate engineers. International mobility for all students contributes to continuous improvement of the training provided, through the complementary courses offered by the school's academic partners, and the acquisition of cross-cutting skills related to the mobility experience.

Moreover, Bordeaux Sciences Agro's participation in several projects for transferring competencies in collaboration with academic and economic partners represents an excellent way to showcase the school's expertise and guarantee the development of the regional and European agricultural sector.

Finally, the Erasmus+ program represents an essential financial tool for developing the school's international activity and a platform for exchanging best practices. Its adoption by various school departments represents an undeniable improvement in procedures and working methods.