

Introduction

The University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy (UCTM) offers undergraduate and graduate courses in the field of Organic and Inorganic Chemical Technologies, Chemical Engineering, Metallurgy, Material Science, Biotechnology, Automation, Ecology and Management. Curricula applied at UCTM have been developed in a close cooperation with the industry and include a period of placement that is considered quite important for a quick adaptation of graduates to the real practice. International co-operation of UCTM has been developing in order to support the University educational process and research mainly by enhancing their quality and creating necessary conditions for future developments in the context of promoting the idea of a common European Educational and Research Area and actively applying the principles of Lifelong Learning. University priorities for future ERASMUS (LLP) activities of UCTM are based on the outcomes that have been obtained for 8 years active participation in ERASMUS/SOCRATES Programme. These outcomes are: active bilateral collaboration with more than 50 Universities from 11 EU countries, high number of academic mobility and 98% use of ERASMUS annual budget for decentralized activities, coordination of 1 PROG Project, agreements for issuing of joint diplomas with German Universities, active participation in 6 ERASMUS TN (THENUCE, BIOTECHNET, EULLEARN, ECTN, ESTIA-Net, BIOTECHUNTE). For the period 2007 – 2013 UCTM will work towards enhancement of the academic mobility by: extending the ERASMUS partnership with Universities and industry, establishing connections with eligible third countries, looking for and providing opportunities for student practical placements, active support for teaching mobility abroad of UCTM teaching staff members and attracting more EU lecturers, development and implementation of under and postgraduate curricula taught in global languages allowing the increase of the number of incoming students, stimulation of the part-time students to undertake a period of study abroad. The experience of UCTM in centralized ERASMUS activities will be applied for: initiatives in joint development of MSc curricula for upgrading the qualification and expertise in different industrial and business areas and active involvement in ERASMUS Thematic Networks. For all ERASMUS activities, achievements and outcomes UCTM will inform the society through Internet and appropriate periodicals. UCTM will follow every rule for the financial and administrative management in order to prove the necessity and eligibility of the corresponding expenses. For this purpose the University will keep special files containing originals of the issued documents. For all kind of ERASMUS activities UCTM will ensure equal rights of participants regardless their gender and race. Considering the specificity of its education UCTM will encourage the participation of students and teachers with minor disabilities as well.

Quality of academic mobility activities:

UCTM is a public Bulgarian University accredited by the National Accreditation Agency with a very high final score. The overall assessment of the research and education provided by UCTM ranked it among the first five universities in Bulgaria.

UCTM applies a policy for a full recognition of ERASMUS study periods abroad. The success of this policy is based on:

- flexibility of existing curricula that have a number of elective subjects allowing quick adaptation of courses taken abroad,
- practical application of ECTS for all Bachelor and Master degree studies,
- well developed Internet and Intranet communications supplying the students with an up to date information about all educational issues.

Additionally the quality of ERASMUS mobility is ensured by the well established system for processing of documentation necessary for administrating the incoming and outgoing students and teachers. Outgoing students are carefully and objectively selected according to their study results and language knowledge. UCTM regularly organizes courses for additional language preparation of these students. The service for incoming students includes: accommodation in the student dormitory, orientation advises, personal supervision for quick adaptation to the specific learning environment and financial support for BG language courses. ERASMUS teaching staff mobility plays an important role for the quality of education at UCTM. UCTM teachers and especially those preparing new courses are encourage to undertake mobility abroad in order to have part of these courses prepared or tested. UCTM stimulates the teaching assignments of incoming professors which is additionally a very important contribution to the quality of study courses delivered in foreign languages. Incoming TS mobility is fully supported by providing an accommodation in university appartments.

Quality of student placement activities:

UCTM applies the student placement in industry as a part of the study programmes. This placement is included in every Bachelor or Master degree curriculum. The quality of student placements is ensured as follows:

- by signing agreements with potential placement providers (companies, organizations, research institutes) covering conditions for placement and the time duration,
- appointment of university supervisors and advisors at the place for performing a day-to-day practical instructions and monitoring,
- final assessment of the knowledge acquired during the placement by written report or exam of students.
- evaluation mark for the placement included in the overall evaluation,
- work load in academic hours for teaching staff members supervising the placement.

The agreement for a placement should contain details about the possible payment, arrangements for the accommodation (if it is offered by the placement provider) as well as necessary instructions and documentations about safety conditions. Every agreement has attached working programmes that are connected with the specific working places and functions. A typical working plan should have specified objects to be observed and studied.

More often they are :

- specific processes,
- specific analyses,
- the management (administration) documents flow ,

Every work programme has a description of the final assessment (a written report or an exam).

Monitoring and evaluation of student placements are performed by the University supervisors and the advisors from placement providers. Final evaluation is a mark between 3 (average) and 6 (excellent) and reflects the assessment of the practical skills and the theoretical knowledge acquired. As far as the placement is a part of Bachelor and Master Curricula the corresponding mark is included in the average mark obtained for all subject studied.