European Policy Statement

What is the current situation of your university's international co-operation in the context of current national, international and European development?

The University has long developed a strategic approach to providing an extensive European portfolio dating back to its first comprehensive European strategy document of 1996 that identified teaching, exchange activity, research on European integration and building regional and city links as being integral and valued elements of the University's activities. The University is well placed to monitor and react to current changes at the national, international and European level. It maintains two of the UKs most well-known research centres dedicated to the study of the European Union (the Centre for European Union Studies (CEUS) based in the Department of Politics and International Studies and the Institute for European Public Law housed in the Law School). The University is also the base for external bodies such as the European Information Centre (EIC) and the European Resource Centre (ERC) that have strong links with the regional business and educational communities. The services provided by the ERC have evolved since the establishment of the centre. One new development is to provide specialist advice on the international dimension of citizenship. The introduction of the new citizenship curriculum in England in 2002 has already stimulated new enquiries for the ERCs. These have come from both secondary schools where the curriculum will be statutory and from primary schools where it will be non-statutory. Mostly these have been requests for materials but some schools are also interested in support for curriculum planning and for examples of good practice in global citizenship. ERCs have also been involved with in-service training sessions where citizenship played a key part and in running activity days for pupils where citizenship is the theme. The ERC would ideally build the potential to extend this provision. This would enable the ERC to assist a school in any of the strands of citizenship education, give ideas for teaching and learning activities in citizenship and recommend publications or contacts with other organisations. This work should also have a real community involvement and the idea of a Regional Forum is a means by which idea may be developed. The comprehensive and strong profile of the University in EU-related activities was specifically recognised by the Commission through the awarding of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence designation in 1999. The University continues to implement Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence Action Plan that includes a wide array of activities from European Awareness events for the local community to specialised academic research conferences, workshops and lectures on contemporary European events. Nevertheless, these are challenging times for the University. At the national level, reforms of the pre-University education of England and Wales have provoked a discernible change in the preferences of new students that has implications for the European provision offered by the University. Not least, there has been a reduction in students studying single
honours traditional language degree courses, an increase in those that wish to study languages as part of multidisciplinary degrees (with or without a year abroad) and a general decline in the numbers of British students with competence in foreign languages to A-level standard. The University has responded by recognising that the teaching of foreign languages should not be restricted to traditional arts students undertaking dedicated language degrees, and has invested in a state-of-the-art Language Institute that offers language teaching at all levels and using IT and media technologies where appropriate. Nonetheless, interest in analysing the subject of European integration remains strong with a steady and sizeable number of students taking modules on European integration at undergraduate and postgraduate levels at the University. Indeed, the University continues to offer the popular MA in European Integration and Co-operation (based in the Department of Politics and International Studies as well as the MA in European Public Law offered by the Law School). The University has been a member of the well established UTRECHT network and will continue to work with and support them. The University has also expanded its teaching provision. In August 2000, the University merged with the University College, Scarborough leading to an expansion in its teaching portfolio. The University has subsequently invested in new strategic areas on its Scarborough campus, such as the Centre for Internet Computing. In addition, the Universities of Hull and York were successful in bidding for government funding to open a new medical school. The Hull–York Medical School (HYMS) will admit its first students in 2003. The University is also actively involved in student and staff exchanges with European Partners; many academic areas, for example, receive visiting scholars every year. In response to international developments, such as the rising number of international students wishing to take business modules in the UK, the University's Business School has sought new European links and there has recently been a sizeable cohort of European students admitted to Hull’s undergraduate business programmes through direct entry. The University of Hull would wish, over the next 4 years, to extend activities in all academic areas, not only with Socrates Erasmus, but also in relation to Intensive Programmes (IP), Curriculum Development (CD) and Thematic Networks (TN).

Given the strengths and weaknesses of your university's present situation, define your university's aims and priorities for 2005/2006 - 2006/2007 with a special focus on promoting activities in the SOCRATES programme. Describe briefly how the the EPS has been developed and how it will be implemented at your institution.

It is the mission of the University of Hull to be a research and learning community of international repute, welcoming staff and students from diverse backgrounds and nationalities. The University’s primary emphasis over this planning period is on 'strategic change' as the
institution adapts to the new challenges in the educational environment over the next decade. The University remains firmly committed to enhancing the quality and volume of research by:–

1. Improving the focus of the University's research activities.

2. Increasing the awareness of European research opportunities and the ability to respond to them quickly and effectively.

3. Increase the level of research funding awarded to the University through an increase in the quantity and quality of research proposals submitted

4. Promoting the development of interdisciplinary research projects

5. Expanding the volume of learning and teaching, whilst sustaining and promoting quality and innovation

6. The development of credible and profitable reach–out activity.

The University aspires to enhancement of its reputation both nationally and internationally. With regards its European vocation, participation in the SOCRATES programme will be firmly integrated into the University's future plans and on this basis, the aims of the University for the 2003/2004 – 2006/2007 period are:

1. To extend activities in all academic areas, not only with SOCRATES Erasmus, but also in relation to Intensive Programmes (IP), Curriculum Development (CD) and Thematic Networks (TN) (for example our partnership in the ATHENA II Thematic Network).

2. To consolidate and enhance co–operation with the existing international partners in the sphere of teaching co–operation, student mobility, exchanges and research.

3. To develop new links with partner institutions covering subject areas that the University has identified for development as part of its strategic planning processes.

4. To ensure that student and staff exchanges are effectively monitored and evaluated by the University in order to guarantee high quality provision of services and maintain satisfaction amongst participating students and staff. The University also has a number of specific priorities to facilitate the achievement of these aims, namely:

5. To ensure that the University sustains a viable and attractive portfolio of language provision in order to facilitate SOCRATES staff and student exchanges, including the ongoing development of the Language Institute. 6. To maintain and extend opportunities for co–operation with partner institutions through the development of attractive and new undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, such as within the Hull University Business School (HUBS) and the Hull–York Medical School.
7. To consolidate and improve the University's existing profile as a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence in teaching and research on European integration through the activities of dedicated research centres, such as the Centre for European Union Studies (CEUS) and the Institute for European Public Law.

8. To further integrate the activities of the University with those of the local community through, for example, the work of the European Information Centre (EIC) and the European Resource Centre (ERC) based at the University.

The University's International Office has a dedicated International Officer – Europe whose remit includes preparing outgoing students for their study abroad and welcoming incoming exchanges students. The remit of this officer extends to monitoring exchange activity, liaising directly with partners and EU officials and the academic departmental network about European issues and opportunities, therefore the International Office is seen as the operational arm which gives an overview of all European activities and makes policy recommendations on Europe. Decisions on new European initiatives or changes to policy will be passed through the International Committee via the International Officer – Europe, if necessary these will be officially approved by higher committees which govern the University and finally council.

How will your institution ensure high quality in student and staff mobility and in Erasmus co-operation projects?

The University has developed a comprehensive system of quality assurance procedures to ensure high quality in both student and staff mobility and within the ERASMUS co-operation projects. The University's International Committee is responsible for strategic decisions relating to the University's European strategy. There is also a dedicated International Office staffed by professionals that is responsible for running European staff and student exchanges, dealing with any queries from international students before and during their stay at Hull and monitors ERASMUS co-operation projects. The International Office also regularly liaises with the University's academic departments through an established European co-ordinators’ network. The University has also implemented a number of specific policies to facilitate international co-operation with its European partners. As regards outgoing study abroad students, a placement policy has been devised in accordance with the regulations of the UK's Quality Assurance Agency. There are also briefing sessions provide for outgoing exchange students outlining the benefits of participation, application processes and other practical issues. There is also a number of induction programmes designed especially for international students, such as a week-long orientation programme (held in September and February each year) for all international students, including those on an exchange. The University also attempts to be as flexible as possible, whilst continuing to pay attention to the need to offer coherent menus of study for such SOCRATES students in order to cater for individual study preferences. Incoming students are normally permitted to study available, appropriate modules across more than one department. University Departments and International Office have close contact with well
established partners to ensure a high quality experience for outgoing students and staff. All Departments have at least one member of staff appointed as an Exchanges co-ordinator. These officers provide an additional contact point and supervisory advice for international students taking modules in that particular department. The University also offers staff development courses academic departments in order to ensure they are adequately trained to handle student enquiries and also to ensure up-to-date knowledge of policy developments affecting the University's provision as part of the SOCRATES programme. International students coming to Hull are also offered the services of variety of support offices, such as the International Office, Counselling, Accommodation, Disabilities, Student Union Advice Centre, computing and library resources. All resources made available to home students are available to exchange candidates which in turn enhance their study programmes at Hull. The Language Institute of the University also provides a range of services to suit the linguistic requirements of most international students. The Institute provides intensive and/or refresher courses in English as a Foreign Language for those international students wishing to improve their English prior to beginning modules at Hull. Equally, the Institute provides introductory, intermediate and advanced courses in the major foreign languages for those students wishing to take a language as extra-curricular activity. The University is committed to the European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS) and promotes the scheme whenever appropriate. The University is widely regarded as being a reliable and transparent partner in European and international co-operation. Our institution has been visited by ECTS councillors in 2002 that confirmed within a report draft the University meets relevant criteria. Given these firm foundations, the University will apply for the new ECTS label in 2003.