University of Antwerp is an international research university which features in the top 200 of major world university rankings and in the top 20 of new universities. International cooperation is embedded in UA’s overall policy, it is seen as a condition to reach high-quality goals in education and research. In today’s context of globalisation, UA wants to play an active role in realising global understanding among peoples for the benefit and inclusion of all.

The international strategy focuses on international mobility, cooperation and societal engagement on a global scale, stimulating interconnection between the different actions and between education and research activities, while involving relevant stakeholders.

In order to build sustainable bonds globally and to ensure its long-term international position UA engages in high-quality networks and partnerships based on complementarities and reinforcing potential.

Various strategies lead to a specific choice of partnerships targeted to:
* region specific research (e.g. African Great Lakes, Mexico)
* common educational and research expertise
* capacity building (e.g. worldwide activities in development projects)
* service to society (e.g. collaboration with city/province on migrant communities)
* mobility schemes (e.g. in Europe and with partners in North America, Oceania, Asia, Africa, Latin America, Erasmus Mundus partnerships)
* institutional and thematic cooperation with academic & non-academic partners

UA’s international policy on the one hand stimulates and facilitates initiatives undertaken by individual faculties/institutes and staff and, on the other hand, makes strategic choices at institutional level for university-wide cooperation (with universities in China, India, Latin America, South Africa).

UA’s educational policy states that all students should acquire global and intercultural competences through their learning experience to become responsible citizens in a globalised society and competitive in the international labour market. An ever increasing number of Bachelor and Master students gain such knowledge and skills through international mobility: UA fully subscribes to European and national targets by taking measures to detect and overcome possible obstacles and encourage more participation in various types of mobility. In 2010-2011 22% of the graduates (master level) enjoyed an accredited international experience of at least 15 credits.

In the coming years the focus will be on:
- World-wide mobility, with increased financial support from the university and the Flemish government to targeted countries;
- number of partners, in particular in underrepresented areas;
- Targeting underrepresented student populations, based on surveys and potential for growth;
• Development of alternative and short term mobility opportunities (summer schools, international simulations, moot courts, visits, blended learning, shuttle mobility)

**Traineeships** as part of the diploma requirements and for alumni are highly valued by UA in order to facilitate orientation on the labour market and to gain skills and competences for future (international) careers. To increase numbers, traineeship mobility (e.g. mobility windows, recognition of gained skills, development of an enterprises network) will be actively encouraged.

Mobility of **doctoral students** is crucial in order to maximise international research potential. Research at UA is already very international, with 30% international researchers. Targets are set to attract more (international) PhD students and to substantially increase engagement in international doctoral programmes leading to double/joint doctorates.

UA has set clear goals for the **internationalisation of the campus** by attracting more international degree students and incoming staff. An increasing number of English-taught master programmes are envisaged, including compulsory language testing of teaching staff. The establishment of international study programmes leading to a joint degree with European and universities world-wide is encouraged and supported. Erasmus Mundus Master courses are in place. UA was awarded the HR Excellence in Research logo for having made significant progress in implementing the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Special attention is given to development of high-quality services for a smooth integration of international guests and staff.

With regard to **staff mobility**, the university aims for growth as it underpins the importance of teaching assignments and training opportunities abroad, in order to continuously internationalise and innovate the educational offer. Administrative staff training in international context is successful. It fosters personal development, professional networks and global vision. The university-wide and thematic networks in which UA participates are efficient platforms for sharing expertise and upgrading professional standards.

UA aims to further expand its international activities based on long-standing experience in **international teaching and training projects** with partners in Europe and the industrialised world, in emerging countries and in developing regions.

UA encourages faculties and individual staff members to engage in international cooperation and to take up responsibility towards society locally and on global scale. Each faculty must engage in at least one North-South partnership. Academic staff is involved in international educational modernisation and capacity building projects. UA staff is active in more than 20 developing countries in short and long-term projects. Collaborative online international learning and other types of internationalisation at home are promoted to develop international and intercultural competences for non-mobile students. In-depth cooperation with industry, business and regional authorities is increasingly introduced in the design of master and postgraduate programmes. Staff is supported during application procedures and in project management. Dissemination of good practices, optimal support of all stakeholders are envisaged for increased share.

Strategic networks have been developed successfully ensuring UA’s international exposure. UA plans to continue this investment and to seek new opportunities as they are efficient platforms for a wide range of activities, e.g. joint study programmes, intensive programmes, mobility, teaching assignments, staff and research training, cooperation with 3rd countries, good practices. Notable international networks include the Utrecht Network with associated partners in USA and Australia, Leonet for traineeships and
cooperation with the labour market, the India platform and Erasmus Mundus partnerships with e.g South Africa and China coordinated by UA.

The integration of new academic programmes - as result of the Flemish Higher Education reform - will reposition UA in local and international settings.

**Increasing attainment levels to provide the graduates and researchers Europe needs**
- Through an equal opportunity and diversity policy UA deploys continuous actions targeted to disadvantaged/vulnerable groups in order to facilitate their entrance into the university and to support them during their studies. The Flemish government and UA will allocate extra grants to encourage stays/traineeships abroad;
- Centre for Work & Study offers permanent and individual support for flexible study paths combining employment and study. An alternative offer will be envisaged to facilitate mobility for this group;
- UA’s communication strategy is directed towards higher student recruitment in sciences and technology according to Flemish government policy;
- The action plan for increasing PhD candidates is monitored regularly. The doctoral school has been restructured with course offerings on generic competencies.
- A gender balanced staff policy will lead to at least 30% women represented in all boards and advisory councils.

**Improving quality and relevance of HE**
UA offers competence-based education. Each faculty maintains a discussion platform with professional stakeholders (including alumni) for input on curriculum, learning outcomes, international participation, internships, lecturing. Researchers training is done by the doctoral school. Apart from study field related training, courses in communicative and leadership skills are also offered.

**Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation**
International mobility is an excellent way for acquiring global and intercultural competences. Already 22% of the graduates has an accredited international experience of at least 15 credits. Increasing mobility remains the focus of the next years. UA is committed to attracting more international students, researchers & staff. The participation in 9 different Erasmus Mundus partnerships has led to recruitment of excellent master and PhD students from outside the EU.

**Making the knowledge triangle work nexus education, research, business**
The nexus education/research is one of the strategic objectives of UA educational policy and will be made more explicit in all study programme during future curriculum reviews. In-depth cooperation with industry, business and regional authorities is increasingly introduced in the design of master and postgraduate programmes. Visiting teachers from the business world are invited.

**Improving governance and funding**
UA internationalises the campus by increasing numbers of international students and staff and therefore focuses on qualitative services for smooth integration; UA engages in strategic partnerships embedded in the economically/culturally dynamic Antwerp region; A university foundation has been created to attract alternative funding; HRM focuses on equal opportunities and diversity policy for all staff levels. The HR Excellence in Research label makes UA a provider of a stimulating working environment.