

## Institut d'Optique's Erasmus Policy Statement

Founded in 1917 with a triple mission to educate optical engineers and scientist, to carry out intensive research in optical science and to transfer knowledge and technology to the optical industry, **Institut d'Optique** Théorique et Appliquée is now known internationally under its brand name, Institut d'Optique Graduate School, and locally under its nickname, SupOptique. Nowadays, it delivers degrees and operates educational programmes at Master and Doctoral levels, along with supervising 3 research centres, and working with the corporate world in numerous industries (from aerospace to cosmetics), including lifelong learning. This is the reason why the brand name was defined as Institut d'Optique Graduate School in the mid-2000s.

Among our degree programmes, the **Diplôme d'ingénieur (Master of Science in Engineering)** is our flagship degree, and probably one of the most valuable ones in our field: optics and photonics. Among our 700 students, 500 are students from this programme. Two important aspects of Institut d'Optique's Diplôme d'ingénieur programme must be considered while exposing our Erasmus Policy:

- this programme, although opened in 1919 with an initial cohort of 16 students, already had in its first intake 3 international students from Poland, Japan and USA. The size of the cohorts was kept low for decades, with only less than 30 students per year in the 1970s. The capacity was then expanded drastically, with cohorts of 80 students in the 1990s, up to its final 'optimal regime' of 150 students per cohort achieved in 2017.
- the Diplôme d'ingénieur is a French master level degree accredited by the French Board for Engineering Titles (Commission des Titres d'Ingénieurs – CTI). Among the guidelines and rules for accreditation of the programme, one of them is the compulsory exposure of the students to international experience during their curriculum. This should be one semester long (equivalent to 16 weeks). This international experience criterion was introduced only recently, starting with a minimum of 4 weeks for the 2015 intake, and increasing gradually to 7 weeks, then 11 weeks, 14 weeks, and now 16 weeks for the 2020 intake.

With a **student population** growing rapidly (**doubled in 20 years**) and an **obligation for all of them to have international experience** during their curriculum, Institut d'Optique has now to face a **high demand for new mobilities** for its students. International experience can be gained by **studying abroad**, for an exchange semester or a double-degree/MSc programme in a foreign university, or by carrying out an **internship** in a company or a university laboratory abroad. In this view, **Erasmus** has been an **extremely valuable framework** to operate to help Institut d'Optique's growth in international mobilities during the past years, and will be more than ever in the near future.

For the purpose of developing and supporting these mobilities, an **International Office** was set up in the early 2000s. The International Office develops and manages academic agreements (exchanges, double-degrees...), support the outgoing mobilities of Institut d'Optique's students, and recruits international student in our curriculum. It also manages the mobility scholarships such as Erasmus+ funding, CROUS International scholarship, and Institut d'Optique's own funding. It is also a support to international students for their administrative processes (student visa and long term stay permit, health insurance...).

Generally, regarding our **international mobilities**, we have seen a growth in the number of exchange semesters abroad. This possibility has been introduced recently in our curriculum, in 2015. We have now 4 students going for such exchange semesters every year, and the demand for 2020 is over 20 applicants. So far, all these exchange semesters are carried out in the Erasmus area. We also operate a double-degree programme with KTH in Sweden with its target of 4 students fulfilled frequently. And our students can carry out internships, in France or abroad, during the summer of each year, from 3 months up to 6 months (final internship, with MScEng thesis).

More specifically on the European Education Area, we want to develop **teaching and staff mobility** with our European partners. This is part of our objective to firmly establish Institut d'Optique as the leader in graduate education in the field of optics and photonics in Europe. We are approaching several of our European partners active in optical science to invite their faculty staff to teach in our curriculum. So far, we have one German professor who is teaching every year in a Master 2<sup>nd</sup> year course, and we expect two faculty staff from Sweden to join us for short stays in 2020-2021. For the other way, we have one Professor from our Saint Etienne campus who is teaching as an invited professor at the University of Modena in Italy: we want to build up on this experience to increase our outgoing faculty staff mobilities. We also wish to foster non-faculty staff mobility for European learning in partner universities. For the other way, we already welcomed colleagues from the Language center of KTH (postponed due to Covid19 outbreak). Being now part of Université Paris-Saclay, we also participate in the **European University** EUGLOH of which Université Paris-Saclay is a founding member, and we expect to be active in this framework of cooperation too. We are in the process of signing Erasmus agreements with the EUGLOH partners, and we already have students applying for exchange semesters at LMU in Munchen, for instance. We wish to develop the sense of 'European citizenship' among our students, and participating in the **ATHENS programme** (one week exchange for short courses in Europe) or implementing the **European Student identity card** are among the tools we want to use.

One of the aims of this European increased exposure of Institut d'Optique is to **welcome more exchange students**. As mentioned earlier, Institut d'Optique has a tradition of welcoming international students since its creation. Although we are still enrolling many international students, mainly from Northern Africa, China, Brazil, Russia, Lebanon..., these are mostly degree-seeking students, and we want to increase the number of students coming for shorter credit-only mobilities (one semester or one year). We have shifted several courses to English, and have now an offer of up to 80% of courses in English in our Master 1<sup>st</sup> year, to help accommodate students whose command of French is too weak to follow full courses in French. We also have an offer of French for foreign students, with two courses available (beginner, and intermediate/advanced), to cater for the needs of all our international students population.

We hope our continuing participation in the Erasmus programme will help us strengthening our international development, which has soared in the recent years, with a special focus on the **European Education Area** and achieve our goals of being identified as **the place to learn optical science and photonics in Europe** in the near future.