



REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRISË

UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE, TIRANA  
**INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY**  
**2025 - 2028**



UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE, TIRANA

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## The University of Medicine, Tirana: A profile

Founded in 1952 as the Higher Medical Institute, the University of Medicine, Tirana (UMT) stands today as Albania's premier institution for medical education and research. Initially part of the University of Tirana as its Faculty of Medicine from 1957, UMT became an independent university in 2013, marking a new chapter in its development with increased autonomy and expanded academic offerings.

Located in the capital city of Tirana, UMT is deeply committed to aligning with European higher education standards and operates fully in compliance with the Bologna Process standards.

UMT offers a broad range of academic programs across three levels:

- Bachelor's degrees that provide foundational medical education;
- Master of Science, Professional Master, and Integrated Master programs that deepen clinical and research expertise;
- Doctoral studies designed to develop innovative researchers and medical leaders.

The university comprises three faculties:

- Faculty of Medicine;
- Faculty of Dental Medicine;
- Faculty of Technical Medical Sciences, each contributing to comprehensive training across health professions.

UMT attracts talented students, doctoral candidates, etc., who thrive in an environment that encourages critical thinking, innovation, and high ethical standards. The university fosters an atmosphere of open academic dialogue, supporting independent research driven by their own professional interests.

The mission of UMT is to educate and empower health professionals who will advance healthcare standards regionally and globally. It promotes cutting-edge scientific research, fosters international collaborations, and actively engages with healthcare systems and communities to improve public health outcomes.

The vision of the University of Medicine, Tirana (UMT) aspires to be the foremost academic and research center for medical sciences in Albania, committed to maintaining and strengthening this leading position. This pivotal role in education, scientific research, and healthcare will be achieved through continuous reform and modernization, transforming UMT into a dynamic institution that:

- Inspires and fosters university-wide and interdisciplinary cooperation;
- Actively supports and develops the academic staff and student body;
- Recognizes, encourages, and promotes excellence in all fields;
- Understands, responds to, and supports the evolving needs of society;
- Provides clear guidance and exemplary models for academic and professional conduct;

- Cultivates leadership by valuing both enduring traditions and innovative future-oriented principles;
- Promotes a culture of excellence and collegiality within a diverse and inclusive academic community.

## Legal Framework

The Internationalization Strategy of the University of Medicine, Tirana is grounded in the primary legislation and strategic documents regulating higher education and scientific research in Albania, as well as the university's internal regulations. These include:

- Law No. 80/2015 on Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania;
- National Education Strategy 2021-2026;
- Statute of the University of Medicine, Tirana;
- Regulations of the University of Medicine, Tirana;
- Strategic Plan of the University of Medicine, Tirana.

This legal framework provides the foundation for the lawful and institutional operation of UMT, supporting the processes of internationalization and ensuring compliance with national and international standards.

## UMT's Commitment to Global Engagement and Collaboration

The University of Medicine, Tirana (UMT) aims to become one of Albania's most internationally recognized universities by enhancing its global orientation and cooperation. Its primary objective is to build a strong and reputable profile in teaching, scientific research, and international collaboration, with a special focus on research and development projects and mutual capacity-building initiatives.

UMT intentions to serve as a hub for cultural values and exchange, not only by expanding international partnerships but also by fostering tolerance, respect, and appreciation for diverse cultures.

To support these objectives, several long-term goals have been established, focused on the following strategic priorities:

- Expanding the number of effective agreements and partnerships with foreign institutions;
- Developing and offering joint academic programs;
- Advancing scientific research through collaborative projects;
- Promoting the adoption of open science policies by encouraging faculty and researchers to openly share findings, data, and methodologies, thereby enhancing collaboration and transparency within the global research community.

The strategic objectives focus on expanding the university's engagement in internationalization activities, including:

- Promoting mobility opportunities for students and staff, both academic and administrative;
- Supporting and encouraging international cooperation in research, development, and knowledge and technology transfer;
- Strengthening connections with the Albanian scientific diaspora;
- Increasing the university's international visibility regionally and globally;
- Enhancing administrative support services for effective project implementation and external relations;
- Internationalizing academic programs and curricula;
- Fostering awareness and appreciation of the cross-cultural dimension in collaborations with international partners.

Through these targeted actions, the University of Medicine, Tirana seeks to elevate its role not only as a national leader in medical education and research but also as a proactive contributor to the global academic and scientific community.

### Our aspiration

To enhance our international reputation by delivering high-quality teaching and scientific research that addresses the demands of a globalized world, while fostering partnerships with external entities to facilitate knowledge transfer and provide valuable services.

## Internationalization objectives

Internationalization is a fundamental component of the institution's development strategy, encompassing education, innovation, research, and collaboration with global academic and scientific communities. A key focus is on promoting open science practices to enhance transparency, accessibility, and collaborative research efforts.

Active participation in international partnerships is demonstrated through involvement in European Union programs such as Erasmus+, with numerous Credit Mobility Projects implemented alongside universities in Italy, Turkey, Romania, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Spain, Greece, Poland, Estonia, Slovenia etc.

Membership in various international networks, including UNIADRION, BUA, and AUF, facilitates academic and scientific cooperation. Over 100 Memorandums of Understanding have been signed with Higher Education Institutions worldwide, fostering collaboration in academic programs, scientific research, and medical fields, alongside initiatives supporting open science and broader dissemination of research outputs.

Plans for expansion include strengthening relationships with European countries to provide students and staff with increased opportunities for teaching, training, and gaining valuable experience. Participation in international projects has expanded the institution's international footprint and enhanced exposure to European education systems.

Efforts to deepen collaboration with EU countries focus on:

- Improving the quality of higher education;
- Developing new and innovative educational programs;
- Modernizing higher education systems through systematic cooperation with global regions via joint initiatives;
- Sharing best practices and enhancing teaching methods by integrating the latest technologies;
- Conducting joint analysis and development of scientific, methodological, and educational materials in both written and electronic formats;
- Facilitating the exchange of publications and scientific literature between libraries;
- Inviting qualified lecturers for specialized courses and organizing joint seminars to enhance staff qualifications;
- Organizing student exchanges to foster academic and cultural exchange between institutions.

To effectively implement the internationalization strategy 2025-2028, the University of Medicine, Tirana has identified key action areas that reflects its strategic priorities.

These areas guide the institutions efforts to strengthen its global engagement in education, research and academic collaboration, insuring lasting impact and alignment with international standards.

### **Relevance of the Strategy**

- Expanding mobility opportunities for students and staff;
- Enhancing international visibility and recognition of research conducted by the academic staff;
- Highlighting the international scope of research, development, and knowledge and technology transfer activities;
- Strengthening international cooperation, including partnerships with the Albanian Diaspora;
- Increasing participation in scientific activities and research and development projects;
- Building institutional capacity to manage and implement international projects;
- Recently, Memorandums of Understanding have been signed with the University Vita Salute, San Raffaele, Italy, Asomi College of Sciences, Malta, Acibadem University, Istanbul, Turkey, Afyonkarahisar University of Health Sciences, Turkey, University of West Attica, Greece etc., to collaborate on Erasmus+ mobilities, capacity-building projects, joint programs, and doctoral studies.

## International Projects: European Funding Programs (Horizon and CBHE)

As part of the University of Medicine, Tirana’s international strategy, participation in European-funded projects under programs such as Horizon and Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) has been instrumental in advancing research, innovation, and institutional cooperation. These projects have enabled UMT to collaborate with international partners, address critical health challenges, and contribute to capacity building in higher education.

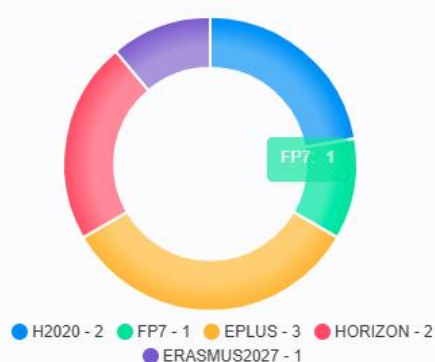
Below is an overview of selected European projects involving UMT, highlighting our roles and contributions within these initiatives.

### European Projects (Horizon)

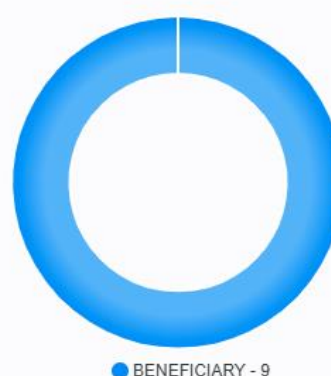
Title	Role of UMT
<b>MEDIGENE - Genetic and environmental factors of insulin resistance syndrome and its long-term complications in immigrant Mediterranean populations (FP7).</b>	Partner
<b>EUSCREEN – Implementation of cost-optimized childhood vision and hearing screening program in middle-income countries in Europe (Horizon 2020)</b>	Partner
<b>DIGICARE4YOU - An intersectoral innovative solution involving DIGital tools, empowering families and integrating community CARE services for the prevention and management of type 2 diabetes and hypertension (Horizon 2020)</b>	Partner
<b>PIECES - Towards large-scale adaption and tailored implementation of evidence-based primary cancer prevention program in Europe and beyond (Horizon-RIA)</b>	Partner
<b>EARLY - Evaluating, Identifying and Reducing determinants MHC in Youth (Horizon HLTH)</b>	Partner



Programmes



Roles



## Projects Capacity Building in Higher Education.

Title	Role of UMT
<b>GRADUA (Capacity Building) – Graduates Advancement and Development of University capacities in Albania.</b>	Partner
<b>QUADIC (Capacity Building) – Quality development of international cooperation and project management.</b>	Partner
<b>IDEA (Capacity Building) – Inclusive tertiary Education in West Balkans.</b>	Partner
<b>BIOSINT (Capacity Building) – Strengthening capacities and digital competences in biomedical education through internalization at home.</b>	Partner



## Priority Areas of Action

In support of its strategic vision and objectives, the University of Medicine, Tirana (UMT) has identified the following Priority Areas of Action to guide the implementation of its internationalization agenda over the period 2025–2028. These areas represent the key pillars for deepening the university’s global engagement, improving quality in teaching and research, and enhancing its regional and international impact.

### 1. Strengthening International Partnerships and Agreements

UMT will expand the number and scope of formal agreements with international universities and research institutions, with a particular focus on institutions within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Emphasis will be placed on partnerships that enable long-term academic cooperation, student and staff exchanges, joint research, and curriculum development.

### 2. Promoting Academic and Administrative Mobility

A major priority is to enhance mobility opportunities for students, academic staff, and administrative personnel. The university aims to increase participation in programs such as Erasmus+ and other bilateral or multilateral mobility frameworks. Institutional mechanisms will be improved to support the logistical, financial, and procedural aspects of international mobility.

### 3. Internationalization of Curricula and Programs

UMT will develop and implement study programs taught in English, including joint and dual degrees. Curricula across all study cycles will be progressively aligned with international standards, integrating global perspectives and competencies. Hybrid and digital learning formats will also be promoted to complement physical mobility and expand accessibility.

### 4. Advancing International Research and Open Science

Increasing participation in international research projects is a strategic focus. UMT will actively pursue EU-funded research opportunities (e.g., Horizon Europe), while fostering interdisciplinary collaboration. The adoption of open science practices will be promoted to encourage transparency, data sharing, and global research visibility. Stronger collaboration with the Albanian scientific diaspora will also be pursued.

### 5. Enhancing Institutional Visibility and Communication

The university will invest in improving its international communication strategies, including the development of a multilingual website and active dissemination of academic and research

achievements through international platforms. Participation in global academic networks, international conferences, and educational fairs will be prioritized to strengthen UMT's global presence.

## **6. Developing Support Services for Internationalization**

Dedicated structures and human resources will be strengthened to support the coordination and implementation of international activities. This includes enhancing the capacities of the International Relations Office, establishing clear procedures for welcoming international students and staff, and providing training for project implementation and international cooperation management

## **7. Promoting Intercultural Competence and Inclusion**

UMT will foster a campus culture that values diversity, inclusion, and intercultural understanding. Awareness activities, training programs, and joint academic or cultural events with international partners will be implemented to promote global citizenship and prepare students and staff for meaningful engagement in multicultural environments.

## SWOT Analysis

### ➤ Strong points

- Students engaged in the Network of Excellence
- Highly qualified academic staff
- Extensive cooperation agreements with European institutions
- Numerous inter-institutional agreements with partner institutions in Erasmus+ program countries
- A significant number of lecturers actively involved in international collaborations
- Membership in several prominent international university networks
- Numerous project applications for foreign funding aimed at capacity building

### ➤ Weak points

- Limited number of study programs offered in foreign languages
- Low number of incoming Erasmus+ students
- Insufficient engagement with alumni living abroad
- Challenges in adapting curricula and administrative procedures to meet international standards and expectations

### ➤ Opportunities

- Partnerships supporting university activities
- Growing interest in expanding academic program offerings
- Potential for offering joint or dual degree programs
- Strong potential for international development
- Ministry of Education and Sports' emphasis on the internationalization of universities
- Access to European project funding for launching joint/dual programs

### ➤ The Risks

- Insufficient funding to support internationalization efforts
- Lack of incentives for academic staff participation in international activities
- Limited knowledge and experience regarding the internationalization process

## The internationalization plan for the period 2025-2028

Objective	Activities	Period
<b>Internationalization through Scientific Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Establish collaboration with internationally universities</li> <li>•Publish scientific articles in international magazines</li> <li>•Organize joint activities such as conferences, seminars, and workshops with foreign higher education institutions (HEIs)</li> <li>•Increase participation in international research projects</li> <li>•Recruit researchers and academic staff with international experience</li> <li>•Apply for international scientific research funding opportunities</li> <li>•Encourage adoption of open science practices, including open data sharing, open peer review, and transparent research methodologies, to foster an inclusive and accessible global research community</li> </ul>	2025-2028
<b>Internationalization through teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Offer study programs in foreign languages</li> <li>•Develop and implement dual/joint degree programs</li> <li>•Facilitate admission opportunities for international students</li> <li>•Promote academic staff mobility for teaching at foreign universities</li> <li>•Increase student mobility for study periods abroad</li> <li>•Expand the number of visiting professors</li> <li>•Enhance cooperation with honorary doctorate recipients (Doctor Honoris Causa network)</li> <li>•Increase inter-institutional agreements with European universities</li> </ul>	2025-2028

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Provide incentives for academic staff to participate in international activities</li> <li>•Offer incentives for students to engage in mobility programs</li> <li>•Build a network of UMT student ambassadors who have participated in international mobility programs</li> <li>•Increase the institution’s attractiveness to foreign students</li> <li>•Improve teaching skills of UMT lecturers through targeted training programs</li> </ul>	
<b>Increasing Institutional Visibility at the International Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Provide all information on the UMT website in English</li> <li>•Translate all official UMT documentation related to internationalization into English</li> </ul>	2025-2028
<b>Improving Conditions for Foreign Students at UMT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Develop comprehensive guides tailored for foreign students</li> <li>•Facilitate the application process, residence permits, accommodation, and related administrative procedures</li> <li>•Create a network for foreign students who have studied at UMT</li> <li>•Offer scholarships to outstanding foreign students choosing UMT for their studies</li> <li>•Implement tools to measure and monitor student satisfaction</li> </ul>	2025-2028
<b>Establishing Sustainable Collaborations with Foreign Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Develop specific guidelines for the implementation and management of cooperation agreements</li> <li>•Review and discontinue partnerships with institutions that fail to fulfill agreed commitments</li> </ul>	2025-2028
<b>Curriculum Adaptation with Partner Institutions in the European Union</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Organize meetings focused on aligning and adapting curricula</li> <li>•Adapt curricula in at least two programs per Main Unit to match those of partner HEIs</li> </ul>	2025-2028

<b>Provision of Dedicated Funding for Internationalization</b>	•Establish a specific fund to support internationalization activities such as curriculum adaptation and planning of joint study programs	2025-2028
<b>Integration and Recognition of Mobility Credits</b>	•Ensure recognition of subjects, courses, and modules completed abroad within official academic transcripts and supplements	2025-2028

## Evaluation and Review Mechanism

To ensure the effective implementation of the internationalization strategy, the University of Medicine, Tirana will establish a clear evaluation and review mechanism. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be developed to monitor progress across all strategic objectives, including mobility rates, number of international partnerships, participation in international projects, visibility metrics, and student/staff satisfaction. Annual progress reports will be compiled by the **Office for International Relations in collaboration with relevant university units**. These reports will be reviewed by the university leadership to assess outcomes, identify challenges, and propose necessary adjustments.