



Azienda Regionale
per il Diritto agli Studi Superiori

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*Internationalisation Service
Quality Charter*



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INTRODUCTION

Dear students,

with this Service Charter, ER.Go – the Regional Authority for the Right to Higher Education in Emilia Romagna – aims to give a clear and transparent tool about the services that offers, the way to get access to them and the guaranteed quality standards.

The Service Charter is also a statement of commitment to the respect of students' rights, as services users, keeping as guidelines the fundamental principles of equality and impartiality, effectiveness and efficiency, transparency and access, participation, involvement, service continuity.

The Service Charter defines the available services, the access criteria, the modes of operation, the response times. It guarantees and tries to improve the quality of the services supplied.

WHY AN INTERNATIONALISATION SERVICE QUALITY CHARTER?

The support to the internationalisation of the regional University system is explicitly stated by the regional programme among the goals that ER.Go is required to pursue. A particular interest towards international students is not only coherent with the need to organize the services and actions system not in a generalized and indistinct way (and in this sense, the thematic desks have been a first response), but it becomes by now essential, taken into consideration the increasing presence of international students in our region, many of whom are ER.Go services users'.

We think that internationalisation services are essentially strategic, with the awareness that the internationalisation of education is at the same time condition for and aim of "quality", both individual for the personal development and to facilitate the access to the world of work, and social as it promotes and strengthens the cultural integration.

About the contents of this Quality Charter will be given information to the students users of ER.Go services and to the main international students unions in the Universities, in order to get any advices and suggestions.

**THE INTERNATIONALISATION SERVICES PROVIDED
FOR BY THE REGIONAL LAW 15/2007**

According to the wide meaning of the right to Higher/University Education and in line with the purposes of the Regional Law no. 15/2007, the international dimension of higher education has a twofold value: on one hand it is an attraction for talented young people and on the other hand it is already a constituent part of higher education, so that young people stand out knowledgeable in the global competitiveness of the job market.

The Region firmly believes in the concept and value of hospitality which becomes attraction: this is much more true for those, coming from other countries, who find in our land a system of services for the right to higher education, which supports them in facing and overcoming the difficulties met while studying far from home.

Over 3 thousand and 7 hundred students, as to say one fifth of the right to higher education beneficiaries in Emilia Romagna, have a foreign nationality and this is a constant for all the Universities in our region.

In the last few years ER.Go implemented in its offices a welcome desk specifically dedicated to international students, supported by a counseling and guidance service active before their arrival in Emilia Romagna and during their first setting-in period at University. The ERGO/ID Service (ER.Go International Desk) uses a wide range of information and communication channels. Among the different measures supporting the internationalisation, the hospitality services have a pivotal role not only for the international students applying to ER.Go benefits, but also for those who need only an accommodation service.

THE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES ALREADY SET UP

The internationalisation services, taking into account their relevance into the regional programme, are by their nature transversal to the different sectors supporting students (Financial aids, Communication, Accommodation Service, Careers Service, Refugee students support).

- Financial support and Services for hospitality

About the measures supporting financially the educational experiences at international level of all students assignee with a scholarship, such as: international mobility grants, vouchers and the international scholarship for students enrolled at University course issuing double or multi-degrees, we have already dealt in the Economic Service Quality Charter, so as in the same way, we have already dealt with the hospitality services in the Hospitality Service Quality Charter.

Let's focus on the international scholarship:

The double or multiple - degree is the result of a combined university degree course, promoted under a system of international university cooperation both bilateral and multilateral. In general terms, the combined programme of study provides a curriculum, created jointly by two or more Universities and regulated in a specific negotiation agreement. Students, who take part in it, usually spend periods of study with well-defined duration and contents, alternatively in the two or more academic institutions involved. At the end of the degree course, the participating institutions issue the two or more national degrees to the students involved in the programme.

Some different actions in support of the internationalisation have been identified, respectively towards:

- students enrolled in one of the Emilia Romagna Universities and who must attend one or more international Universities, in order to get the degree;
- students enrolled in an international University and who must attend for a specific period of time a University in Emilia Romagna, in order to get the degree.

In the first case, a specific financial aid, called "international scholarship", has been implemented.

In the second case, as it concerns students not subject to the payment of the regional fee for the right to higher education, ER.GO provides support in getting easier access to the hospitality and catering services.

- Advice and Guidance

Advice and Guidance Service, mainly meant in ER.Go as information and communication provided about the opportunities and services offered to whom enrolls at University and about the access procedure, becomes year after year constantly more important, as it significantly contributes to define the access to the regional University system according to the principle of the widest inclusion, paying specific attention to the weakest from a social-economical point of view. Even the recent regulatory innovations regarding the no tax area applications and their extensive interpretation by the regional Universities go this way. It is a wide system of opportunities, that must let be known.

The Project "School", carried on in the last few years by ER.Go, in some cases with the partnership of the Universities, has among its aims that one of disclosing all around the region which are the services for the right to higher education and how to get access to them. When the project is carried out together with the University, and this is the case of the University Campus in Romagna, it represents a completion of the presentation of education provided by the Universities. There are a lot of web portals which give information of this kind, but meeting with students can be much more helpful and it is useful to establish a good relationship which can go on even in the future.

Between end 2016 and spring 2017, ER.GO has organized meetings in 32 schools of the Region and has taken part to several academic initiatives of meeting with aspirant freshmen (open days, careers service fairs, etc.).

Also the taking part in the Region Emilia Romagna School/Work alternation programme can be a chance to carry out detailed studies in this regard. The world of Education is going to develop and ER.Go must be ready to perform a more complex task for Advice and Guidance Service.

It is also important to give to students, already from the benefits system (either because they are lodging assignee, or because they are only scholarship assignee), a suitable information about the opportunities offered by other institutional, and not only, subjects locally present.

There is in addition the field-test of careers services activities dedicated to international students:

in this case the actions can be focused both on the permanency in Emilia-Romagna, trying to create chances of knowledge about the local economic-productive context, and on any possible return to the native land with the awareness of potential careers opportunities. Even in this case, the international students unions can be a useful

speaker for the building of a net. In any way, return/permanency are not absolutely incompatible experiences, as can occur in different periods of the students' life.

In this context and to these purposes the regional projects **COOPERA 1 and 2** have taken place.

The Region Emilia-Romagna task in this global challenge is not only limited to education and to joint agreements and projects with countries and institutions in Africa, but it's also aimed to let the students, who took part in regional education programmes, enriching the Region itself with their attendance, go back to their homeland, carrying along with themselves the acquired knowledge and experience. These people embody in this way the Ambassadors of the Emilia-Romagna Culture abroad. The projects are not only a way for keeping in direct contact with institutions and people with whom students have shared their own experience during their educational path, but they are also an instrument of support for students in their job placement in companies abroad and in their homeland: this becomes so a strategic keystone to support a solid network of international relations, which can encourage Emilia-Romagna companies to widen their catchment area of potential customers and co-workers. The ER.Go Careers Service Desk can be a suitable container for the initiatives about the internationalisation of education, also professional, promoted by the Region Emilia-Romagna.

Also the initiative **AfricaMORE** organized in Cameroon by ASSUNIMORE in cooperation with the Management Offices of Services to Students of UNIMORE (Modena and Reggio Emilia University) had as a goal the fulfilment of a network for collaborations and partnership agreements, both academic (Universities, Research Centres, Higher education Institutes, Centres for the Italian language learning) and "business", above all concerning companies and industrial groups located in Cameroon, that could be interested in taking advantage of newly graduates and graduates, who studied at UNIMORE and in the Region Emilia-Romagna and who are longing to return to Africa, as soon as they have got their degree.

- Communication and dedicated information services

The information services have been organized for users, who have a little or even no knowledge of Italian language. To date, there are some website sections already translated into English, French and German, just as there are also tutorial videos, which lead to the filling in of the online application form in English and French. This is the right planning and we are further developing it, not only using other foreign lan-

guages (e.g. Spanish), but also developing simplified web pages, which will give minimal information about the main services, referring then to follow-up-materials.

In particular, the web section "International Desk" offers a first level knowledge, useful to take the first steps in Italy, but also to have an idea of the fulfilments required before leaving from the own country.

- Service strategies for students holder of international protection by humanitarian reasons and for stateless students

A particular intervention strategy consists in supports to refugees and students with an international protection status. All the Universities of the region provide specific support for this type of students, just as the Home Office, in cooperation with CRUI, has provided for an announcement to finance scholarships through services.

It is necessary to avoid overlaps among these financial aids, which in any case do not entirely cover the needs. At the same time, it is necessary to sustain the mainly welfare measure with services aimed above all to the favourable integration into the social context, breaking through the language barriers, and into the academic context with services of support in the choice of the degree course and with tutoring.

ER.Go tried to create, through the Competition Announcement of the A.Y. 2017/2018, the conditions for joint actions with the Universities, and not only. It is important, in fact, to let these students overcome the sense of confusion and disorientation, which definitely does not encourage the integration and, much less, good academic achievements.

It has been reported a substantial increase of the refugee students eligible to the A.Y. 2017/2018 benefits, in comparison with the A.Y 2016/2017. Eligible students pass from 28 to 43 (20 in Bologna University, 6 in Art School "Accademia delle Belle Arti", 5 in Ferrara University, 5 in Modena and Reggio Emilia University and 7 in Parma University). Among the 28 students eligible in the previous A.Y. an amount of 9 students did not reach the academic achievement useful to confirm the scholarship assignment. 7 of them were enrolled at the Bologna University and 2 at the Ferrara University. With the students eligible in the A.Y. 2017/2018 ranking lists it has been attempting an approach of greater involvement, trying any way to maintain a delicate balance, in order to protect the students' proper spirit of independence: their academic careers are under monitoring, they are sent to language courses, present locally even free of charge (in Ferrara this initiative has involved a great deal of foreign students assignee of accommodation), they have to be encouraged when they openly show uncertainty, mistrust or difficulty.

It is required to preliminarily build a good relationship of trust, which is going to be successful, even thanks to the extraordinary skills implemented by ER.GO employees, who work for this service, and thanks to the more than positive relationship established with the qualified offices of the Universities. However, it is equally important the network with other subjects such as Caritas or other dedicated associations.

ER.Go in the last years has counted among its beneficiaries students of this particular target, but from the A.Y. 2017/2018 decided to improve the quality of its services.

In fact, the number of benefits applicants has reported a gradual increase, that on the one hand has increased the complexity in the management of the various records, and on the other hand has required a greater attention to the tools, which will guarantee a better academic performance.

At this purpose, before the issue of the A.Y. 2017/2018 Announcement, refugee, who were already ERGO beneficiaries, have been interviewed in order to focus on the positive and negative factors of their experience with ER.Go. At the same time, it has been made a mapping of the benefits as financial aids and services provided by the universities of the Region Emilia Romagna, with particular reference to scholarships for refugees offered by Unibo, Unife and CRUI.

At the end of this stage, the following goals have been achieved:

- the update of the ER.Go Benefits Announcement A.Y. 2017/2018, according to some of the needs noticed during the interviews. In particular, the changes have been aimed to the systematisation of the procedures of access to the benefits applications and at a better definition of the supporting measures;
- strengthening of the network of institutional stakeholders involved in the management of this particular category of students;
- a wider sharing of all the procedures internal to the single Universities and academies for the access to the education;
- application of the principle of subsidiarity in the offer of benefits and services by Er.Go and by the Universities.

- The relationships with the International Students Unions

Simultaneously, networks have been established with local representatives of organisations and associations, socially dedicated or specifically for refugees.

This has made possible a change of method by ER.Go, because it broadens its own field of action from the education sector to the students' personal sphere. With this attempt it has been taken into consideration the value, the dignity and complexity of

their previous experience and the possible negative but also positive impact on the course of their studies and on their life path.

Specific attention is paid to the analysis of their needs at their arrival through personal interviews to all benefits new applicants. This has made possible the beginning of the **personalisation of the support services**, different for each student. According to the noticed needs, actions are provided to support the orientation to the territory, the education and social integration, even in cooperation with the Universities in the region and with the School of Art (Accademia) in Bologna, above all concerning the recognition of titles and credits useful for the enrolment.

The carried out experience has given to Er.Go a different rule in the territory, because, in many cases, Er.Go activities have been a real turning point for the combined and joined services.

The approach distinguishes itself as **multi-system but never self-referential** and such it must always be, even in the future. The sometimes enormous difficulties, with which refugee students must deal, make all the more necessary actions of constant monitoring and review of its own method and activities.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SERVICES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- TYPES OF COMMUNICATION SERVICES

ER.Go is committed to promote the greatest accessibility to services supplied according to competition procedures and to services for all students, providing both general and customized information, also in English, through a variety of communication channels that will be described in this Charter.

Students can get access to information:

- - consulting the website,
- - using a certified e-mail,
- - through the phone service "Parla con ER.GO",
- - through the service "Scrivici",
- - using the on-line chat service,
- - going to the first assistance points, to the thematic desks for international students run in partnership with the Universities, and to the information desks in the different ER.GO local offices of Romagna area;
- - using the Er-go.ID service and its help desk.

- Fundamental principles

ER.Go promotes and helps students' participation.

Students are asked to give their opinion about the quality of the expected and actually provided services., using both the operating channels and periodic meetings.

Typical and specific characteristics of the services are a welcoming attitude, willingness to listen, personalized information, support to and tutoring of students.

ER.GO follows as its own guidelines the fundamental principles of: equality, impartiality, continuity, participation, efficiency and effectiveness.

- Guarantee of users' rights

Services are organized and managed so as to continuously guarantee to students:

- accurate evaluation of requests and needs;
- exhaustive information about the service and expected results;
- sharing and participation;
- personalization of aids;
- respect for dignity and privacy;
- entrusting to competent staff;

- conditions of safety and respect of laws in force;
- cooperation and synergies with other institutions

- Quality standards, commitment and plans

ER.Go commits to achieving quality standards which are, by definition, the outcome of a dynamic process of continuous and gradual improvement of quality.

ER.Go chose as its priorities the following quality aspects:

- personalization of services;
- efficiency and effectiveness of services;
- right to information and participation;
- accessibility of its website, with information in four languages: English, French, German and Spanish
- updating of information
- promptness

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

- Website

The website www.er-go.it plays a key role for the development of ER.GO overall strategy of promoting and communication, giving students and citizens clear and easily usable information. It is complemented by social networks, in particular YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, both to disseminate information on the activity of the Authority and to promote events, besides creating new possibilities of dialogue with students, getting their opinions and evaluating the degree of satisfaction on services and institutional activities.

In the website you can find all the activities that the Authority organizes and the news coming from other institutions considered as more relevant for students.

Moreover, it is available a "Contacts" page where you can find the details for any kind of interaction.

There are 4 sections in foreign languages, namely English, French, German and Spanish, and a section dedicated to international students called "International Desk".

- SCRIVICI

This Written information service allows to get first of all concise information about benefits/services application and management thanks to the news contained in the page called "**Le domande del mese**" and then gives the possibility to write to ER.Go by logging in with personal data. Students can get answer in foreign languages.

Staff members work from Monday to Friday answering as soon as possible, also depending on the number and complexity of questions they receive.

This service allows to record messages.

- Informative material

Every year a guide to application is published in English for foreign students, with the aim of informing about the necessary fulfillment to get benefits, the requirements and the documents that must be submitted, in a clearer and simplified version with respect to the Competition announcement.

Moreover, there is a short leaflet in English with some fundamental information for freshmen, including those of master degrees. The leaflet pays particular attention to the different fulfillment and is not specific for a single academic year.

- Tutorial videos

On the website there are videos in English and French, supporting international students in filling out the benefits application form. We noticed that these videos are really useful as many students look at them during the application period.

- PARLA CON ER.GO

This is a telephone assistance service that the student can turn to, for questions about the right to education, advice on how to apply and on the procedures to be followed in order to get access to ER.Go benefits and services.

Open every day – from Monday to Friday – from 9.30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

- **Tel. 051.6436900** for freshmen
- **Tel. 051.19907580** for all other students

- ON LINE CHAT

Assistenza live! - on line chat service, accessible from www.er-go.it website for answers to simple and quick questions. It is open from Monday to Friday from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.

SPECIFIC SERVICES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- Thematic desk for international students

There is a thematic desk for foreign students available for information about benefits application and about documents regarding incomes and assets abroad that the student has to submit every year to apply for ER.Go benefits. It offers also listening to personal problems. In order to book an appointment you must use **SCRIVICI** service, accessible from the website contact service.

- ER.GO/ID SERVICE

Started in 2013, this e-mail listening and support service, mainly activated to give support with regards to procedures and foreign documents to be submitted, in 2017 has allowed to help about 800 foreign students. A Facebook page that got 4000 accesses has been created too. The service is aimed at providing international students the basic information about the Italian university system, the university organization and educational offer in the Region, rules and requirements to access to university courses.

As regards NON-EU citizens living abroad, the service gives assistance and support throughout the whole process required for their entry in Italy according to law in force, including the issue of their stay permit and the enrollment to the University.

The International Desk offers information useful for international students that use ER.Go services and helps to solve problems that may rise during the university career. It also guides international students to settle in the town where they study, informs about local services that can deal directly or indirectly with the right to education.

CONTACTS

Devoted ER.GO info point: in order to ask for an appointment, please, use the SCRIVICI service.

Devoted e-mail ergoid@er-go.it

Er.GO Risponde – Scrivici service

INFO POINTS AT THE UNIVERSITIES

- **BOLOGNA**

ER.Go International desk "Sportello internazionale" - Via Filippo Re n. 4

Monday to Friday 9.00 a.m. - 11.15 a.m.;

On Tuesdays and Thursdays 2.30 p.m.-3.30. p.m.

On Thursday afternoons an ER.GO employee will be there in order to give infos about competition announcements (scholarships, accommodation, etc.)

- **MODENA E REGGIO EMILIA**

International Welcome Desk

Modena

Via San Geminiano, 3

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9:30 - 14:30

Reggio Emilia

Via Allegri, 15 - 42121 Reggio Emilia

Every 2 Wednesday (please contact IWD for appointment)

IWD provides assistance concerning immigration and visa procedures; permit of stay; tax identification number; bank account opening; purchase of health insurance, Information on possible discounts for transport, access to accommodation service and monitoring of contracts, accommodation certificates to be submitted to the Italian Embassies/Consulates. **No info to apply for ER.GO benefits – Scholarship and Accommodation."**

- **FERRARA**

UNIFE INTERNATIONAL – Ferrara, via Savonarola 9

e-mail: international@unife.it

tel. +39 0532 292200

fax +39 0532 292 203

- **PARMA**

University Offices – Parma, via Università 12 – phone +39 0521 902111

THE LOCAL OFFICES AND INFO POINTS

- **BOLOGNA AND ROMAGNA**

- Bologna, via Schiavonia, 3/A - 40121 Bologna - Phone 051 6436711 fax 051 235645
- Cesena, via Montalti, 69 - 47521 Cesena - phone 0547 364311 fax 0547 364312
(Thursdays from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.)
- Forlì at the URP Università - Campus di Forlì - Piazzale Solieri (Thursdays from 2.30 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.) - Phone 0543 374810
- Ravenna at the Università di Bologna - Campus di Ravenna - Via Baccharini 27 -
Phone 0544 936256 (Tuesdays from 10.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and from 2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.)
- Rimini at University facilities via Cattaneo 17 - Phone 0541 43.41.96 (Wednesdays from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.)

- **FERRARA**

at Residenza Santa Lucia - Via Ariosto 35 - 44121 Ferrara
Phone 0532.688408 fax 0532.688423

- **MODENA**

strada Vignolese, 671 - 41125 Modena. Phone 059.413711 fax 059.413750

- **REGGIO EMILIA**

via Borsellino, 26 - 42124 Reggio Emilia. Phone 0522.406333

- **PARMA**

Vicolo Grossardi, 4 - 43125 Parma. Phone 0521.2139 fax: 0521.213620

FACTORS, INDICATORS, QUALITY STANDARD AND IMPROVEMENT GOALS

Quality

The quality of a service is the set of characteristics of the service itself that are considered as important by the citizen. In other words, the quality of the service is measured according to the capability to meet the needs and expectations of its own users.

In order to measure the quality of services for disabled students, the Charter identifies a system of quality factors.

The quality factor is a characteristic of the service connected with users' expectations and needs (i.e. the promptness of the service). Thus, the quality factor is one of those features that affects the quality perceived by the users.

Quality standards and indicators

For each of the quality factors there are some indicators chosen to measure the service quality level and quality standards – both general and specific – that determine the quality level guaranteed to users.

The indicator is a tool that is needed to detect the presence of a given quality factor.

The reference standard is the expected value of a given indicator. The generic standard measures the average time value needed to answer/start the service. The specific standard measures the maximum time value within which it is possible to answer/provide the service.

The standards allow then the student to check if the commitments taken in the Charter of services are actually fulfilled.

Quality factors and indicators are identified for each service provided and each activity carried out.

Recognisability of contacts

The staff members guarantee their recognisability during interactions with users, including those at the telephone, by introducing themselves.

Listening and support

The staff is willing to listen to the needs and works to find solutions for problems the students might have. They use a simple, straightforward and easy to understand language, with special attention for international students.

Welcoming attitude

Personnel is kind and willing to listen, because a welcoming attitude is necessary to understand citizens' requests and needs.

The same level of attention is given to every interlocutors' questions, according to the principle of equality of treatment, avoiding any possible discrimination.

Attention to students and improvement of the offered services.

The company pays attention to students and recognizes the Charter of services as the tool to represent the service standards that it is committed to respect. The evaluation of students' satisfaction is carried out by listening to the work groups with students of all the different University sites.

Quality factors	Quality indicators	Standard
Timing	Normal response time	Normally within 3 days from the request (except for holidays and pre-holidays)
	Response time in cases requiring the advise of other offices.	Normally within 10 days from the request (except for holidays and pre-holidays)
	Response time for potential individualized problems/requests	Normally within 20 days from the request
Service functionality	Customer orientation	Present
	Recognisability during interaction	Present
	Listening and support	Present
	Welcoming attitude	Present
	Accessibility of the website and on-line services, also in the different foreign languages	Present
Staff	With adequate professional qualifications	All the operators
	Knowledge of foreign languages	Some front office operators

**DATA ABOUT THE MAIN MEANS OF EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION
FROM 2014 TO 2017**

Over the years, ER.Go has activated different information channels aimed at combining the greatest accessibility and a marked personalization of information, being aware of the strategic importance of the information service as a crossroads leading to other Authority services/interventions and of its key role in orientation. Here you have some data about the use of the service during the years 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 by international students:

<i>Year</i>	<i>N. VISITORS OF THE WEBSITE</i>	<i>PARLA CON ER.GO</i>	<i>CHAT</i>	<i>SCRIVICI</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
2014	108.226	2.903	517	6.781	118.427
2015	112.016	2.802	1.113	7.683	123.614
2016	119.874	1.976	1.352	8.829	132.031
2017	125.370	1.696	1.763	10.289	139.118

(The 15% of the students has visited the webpages in other languages. Monitoring the students that have used the different communication channels, an average 10% resulted to be foreign students).

Beside these channels, there are the chance to have an appointment in our local offices, the help desk expressively meant for foreign students through a specific Facebook page and a dedicated e-mail (the contacts managed through these channels were more than 900).

International students mainly visited website pages in English, in particular, **How to apply** and the page regarding documents about incomes and assets to be submitted in order to apply for benefits.

Pages about students accommodations and canteens reached an interesting ranking with regards to the visited pages.

Also the English version of pages describing towns and Universities of the region Emilia-Romagna "**Studiare a...**" have been visited.

Tutorial videos about how to apply for benefits for AY 2017/18 have been watched by 860 students in English and by 196 students in French.