What are the key figures and areas of research excellence at Aix-Marseille University (AMU)?

AMU has a total of 80,000 students, including 10,000 foreign students, 8,000 staff members, a budget of €800 million and 800,000 m² of building space. It is present in 4 departments (Alpes de Haute-Provence, Hautes-Alpes, Bouches-du-Rhône, Vaucluse) and many more towns: Aix-en-Provence and Marseille of course, but also Digne-les-Bains, Gap, Aubagne, La Ciotat, Salon de Provence, etc. Research activities are carried out by 4,500 teacher-researchers and 3,500 support staff spread out over 122 research structures and 18 institutes of establishments that are very much geared to interdisciplinarity. Among the most dynamic disciplinary fields, I would like to mention human and social sciences, environmental sciences, law and economics, health (emerging diseases, neurosciences, immunology, oncology), chemistry, mechanics, digital sciences and mathematics... AMU is a research-intensive university that has been awarded the label of the Initiative of Excellence (IdEx) by an international jury. This recognition gave us the idea of launching a white call for projects with a budget of €10 million to gather proposals for research, training and animation projects. This call has exceeded our expectations since we have already received 350 letters of intent. The projects should be selected next December. And we have not forgotten the importance of quality of life for students and staff: our ‘socially committed’ logo is reflected in multilingual courses (English, Arabic, etc.) and an innovative approach to the fight against harassment in all its forms.



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Could you give us some examples of current research projects?

AMU recently proposed two responses to the national call for projects “Biocluster”: one with Gustave Roussy (it brings its expertise in immuno-oncology), the other focused on immunology in the broadest sense with regional industrialists and start-ups with high innovation potential. In addition, our researchers are very involved in projects related to chemistry and virology, as shown by the work of Xavier de Lamballerie, Director of the Emerging Viruses Unit. AMU is also very active in Europe: it is the second French university to have received the most funding (€40M) under the H2020 programme and the only one to have a permanent representative in Brussels. It is also very involved in CIVIS – the European Civic University, an alliance of 10 European universities for which AMU is the lead university. Beyond the European Union, Aix-Marseille University has developed relations with the United States, the countries of the Mediterranean area, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and also China with a Franco-Chinese institute in Wuhan: specialised in biology training, this establishment very recently celebrated its first class of AMU co-graduates at Bachelor’s level on 22 June 2022.

How do you promote the development of research and technology transfer?

Four structures are dedicated to this: the Research and Technology Transfer

Department (management of contracts with the ANR), the subsidiary Protisvalor (management of contracts with industrialists and European contracts), the shareholding in the SATT Sud-Est (maturation of inventions to transform them into innovations) and two start-up incubators: Impulse (generalist and local) and Belle de Mai (focused on multimedia with a national influence). There is also the PEPITE programme for promoting student entrepreneurship. AMU also has a foundation that allows it to receive donations from industrialists and to set up industrial chairs. Recently, a partnership with CMA-CGM has enabled the creation of the first university chair in the region dedicated to health. AMU is always in dialogue with regional socio-economic players and works with them to develop the vision of Marseille 2030 within the framework of a strategic foresight committee.



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Could you present the activities of the Cité de l'Innovation et des Savoirs d'Aix-Marseille (CISAM)?

CISAM was created in 2016 to train students on a massive scale in the culture of entrepreneurship and innovation with the help of industrialists (CMA-CGM and l'Occitane), the Aix-Marseille-Provence Metropolis, the Regional Council and the City of Marseille. Winner of the "Excellence" call for projects launched within the framework of the PIA (Programme d'Investissement d'Avenir, now called "France 2030"), the "CISAM+" project led by AMU has received €40 million in funding. This

will enable CISAM to expand considerably and thus promote the fields of artistic, cultural and technological creation. It is also the winner of a European contract on cultural and creative industries. Its ambition is to develop innovations on preferential themes according to the cities in partnership with the CNRS, Inserm and IRD. Ultimately, we promote innovation in all its forms: technological, educational and managerial. Innovation for the benefit of students.