



PROMOTING NORDIC STUDENT EXCHANGE

Study counselling and administration conference – Vägledar- och
administrationskonferens, Åbo 2-4 maj 2018

Today's topics

- Something about me – and the context
- Something about you – and your Nordic exchange reality
- Topics to be discussed:
 - *Why exchange – and why Nordic exchange?*
 - *How to attract Nordic students to our campuses?*
 - *Supporting Student Success in exchange?*
 - *Target groups to change the picture?*
 - *Erasmus+ vs. Nordplus*
- Conclusions

About the context at ÅAU

The task of Åbo Akademi University is to provide an open, Swedish-speaking university environment for quality research and studies with a Nordic and international anchorage.

AAU develops Nordic co-operation, joint education ... as well as international student and personnel exchange.

As the only Swedish language university in Finland, Åbo Akademi University has a unique position, both domestically and in the Nordic context. Our goal is to be foremost among the universities in Finland in terms of international co-operation, especially with our Nordic colleagues.”

Goals and Strategies 2015-2020

https://www.abo.fi/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/eng_strategy_2015-20.pdf

Nordic exchange numbers, ÅAU 2015-2019

Year	Outgoing from ÅAU	Outgoing Work Placements	Incoming to ÅAU
2015-2016	46 (189) 24 %	11 (25) 44 %	4 (214+89) >1 %
2016-2017	60 (191) 31 %	10 (22) 45 %	5 (194+96) <2 %
2017-2018	37 (184) 20 %	9 (19) 47 %	10 (218+86) 3 % *)
2018-2019	38 (154) 25 % **)	TBC	5 (262) <2 % ***)

*) Including incoming student teachers to Vasa Övningsskola/Vasa Teacher Training School

***) Trainees (Outgoing Training) missing

***) Nominated for autumn or full year; spring nomination due 1.10

- Goal at ÅAU: International mobility is increased from 6 % to 12 % by 2020.

Internationalisation Action Plan for Åbo Akademi University 2017–2020)

Participants – the status of Nordic exchange at your University?

- Increasing or decreasing (in relation to exchange in general) – would you like to see a change?
- What status does Nordic exchange have at your University?
- What are you doing today to get people moving in the Nordic countries?

Why exchange – what's in it for the students, and for us?

- Top motivators for students to go abroad: a new experience (living abroad), meet new people, improve language skills, develop transversal skills, enhance employability possibilities, also: study a subject not available at home (Erasmus Impact Study 2014)
- Benefits: personal development, higher employability (lower risk of unemployment), (Erasmus Impact Study 2014)
- Motivators for universities: economic, political, strategic reasons
- Is anything different with regard to Nordic exchange?

What about those not interested in going?

- “I always new I wanted to go abroad...”
 - How to encourage those who have not always had this dream? What strategies to plant the exchange idea in these students’ minds?
 - Mandatory exchange?
- Is anything different with regard to Nordic exchange?
 - Familiar option (“not to far away”, similar culture, etc.)
 - Perhaps familiar language

Topics to be discussed

- Form groups of 4-5 persons in each, come up with 3-5 ideas for the topics you choose
- Why Nordic exchange? Should Nordic exchange be distinguished from exchange in general?
- How could we attract more Nordic students to our campuses? What measures to take to increase mobility in general?
- In relation to this conference's topic *Supporting Student Success*, what should exchange advisors consider when guiding students in the study abroad process?
- Are there specific target groups that are more relevant when we talk about Nordic exchange (students/staff)? How can these be addressed to increase Nordic exchange?
- Challenges and opportunities in the aspiration to use more Erasmus' funds for Nordic exchange?
- The opportunities in short-term mobility

Why Nordic exchange? – findings

- A safe and fairly familiar alternative, especially for students who are unlikely to go abroad
- Easy recognition of studies (“perfect match”)
- Many available exchange spots
- An option for students who are looking for specific subject areas, but not necessarily a “foreign” experience or language
- To promote the Nordic idea, one way of learning about each other and acknowledging similarities and a common history

How to attract Nordic exchange students to our campuses – findings

- Appoint PR ambassadors for Nordic exchange, who can make e.g. funny, easy-going reality shows about exchange in different Nordic countries (YouTube)
- Encourage Staff Exchange, and let the staff visitors speak to local students about his/her home university
- Focus on promoting core areas, like teacher education in Finland

Supporting Student Success – findings

- Deeper integration of study counselling and exchange advising – students benefit from getting all information from one source; find new ways to collaborate
- Create *Mobility windows*
- Easy, systematized credit transfer and recognition

Key persons to strengthen Nordic exchange – findings

- International coordinators or teaching staff on staff mobility can promote their home university to students of the host university
- Use the networks of academics who can promote their research partners
- Current exchange students on campus can promote their home university to students of the host campus (through internationalisation at home, and on specific events)

Erasmus+ vs. Nordplus – findings

- Easier for students if there is only one option (Erasmus+)
- More funds available in Erasmus+

Opportunities (and challenges) in short-term mobility – findings

- Option for students who are not ready to go on long-term mobility
- What's in it for the universities?
- What funding for students on short-term mobility?