

HUMANE

Heads of University Management & Administration Network in Europe

SEMINAR

Friday 3 to Saturday 4 October 2003

Lund University

“International Students: Exchange or Trade?”

Abstracts

Session 1

Marketing strategies for student exchanges at Lund University

Peter Honeth, Lund University (SE)

The benefits for universities investing in student exchanges are considerable: Improvement in the quality of teaching and research, cultural and professional enrichment, diversity, recognition and benchmarking of standards for quality control purposes, enhancement of the institutional image, outreach opportunities, the fostering of cooperation and an additional source of income.

Exchange student balance

The number of outgoing students at Lund University has decreased over the last three years whilst there has been an increase in the number of incoming students. In 2002 Lund University received 1432 exchange students from 38 countries, whilst 746 Swedish students left for exchange studies abroad. A difference of 686 students. That difference was 224 in the year 2000. The trend for 2002/2003 indicates that the decrease in number of outgoing students has been checked and a slight increase has taken its place. The number of incoming students continues to rise.

Marketing strategies include teaching in English and quality services

Lund University has put several policies in place to market the university in EU and in non-EU countries. A European Policy Statement has been developed to coincide with the aims of the university's evolving international strategy. As part of this strategy there is a two-week Swedish language and orientation programme, prior to the start of each semester, designed to give students a smooth integration into the Swedish society. This programme is free for all exchange students.

Other marketing tools, i.e. services, are:

- Nearly 300 courses annually in English. The majority of these courses are part of the university's regular undergraduate curriculum, a few, focusing on various aspects of Scandinavia, are specially designed for international students. Exchange students studying other courses than those in English are an extremely small minority; the courses in English are therefore most definitely crucial in attracting our exchange students.
- Application of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).
- A buddy program where students can network and learn from each other.
- Lund's geographical situation and high-quality housing. Lund is very close to the centre of Europe and to Copenhagen. Housing demand exceeds supply in Lund - an increasing problem. Lund University employs the external International Housing Office that

administrate housing for international students. Efforts to arrange housing in advance for all of the increasing numbers of exchange students, as we would wish to do, have failed in the last two years, though students without housing get help upon arrival in searching for private accommodation.

- The International Desk of the International Office serves as a central resource, referral and visitor centre for anyone interested in exchange studies at Lund University and has proved its potential to enhance student mobility through various activities. The international desk is responsible for welcoming and looking after our international students before, and on, Arrival Day each semester. Students are always welcome to the International Desk with any problems that may arise.
- Lund University has executed a group insurance for all its foreign students free of charge covering medical expenses, certain accident cover as well as liability and legal expenses cover.

Discussion after session 1:

The funding by the State of exchange students is the same as it is for Swedish students and there is no tuition fee. The universities themselves decide how many exchange students they accept, and they are looking for the best. The Swedish Government accepts paying the cost of education for foreign students with the risk they leave, but also the chance they stay a while in Sweden and contribute to Swedish welfare. Universities elsewhere in Europe risk that their best students will go to Sweden for their masters. Obtaining a residence- permit is no problem in Sweden.

Courses for exchange students are in English, mostly as part of the regular undergraduate curriculum, so in English for Swedish students too. The university provides crash-courses in Swedish so that students can cope with everyday life.

Beside the exchange student the Swedish system attracts the so called 'free movers': foreign students taking courses without registering as exchange students.

This may explain the very low attendance from Denmark in the exchange figures.

Session 2

Is there a French identity in international student exchange?

Yves Chaimbault, Université des Sciences et Technologies de Lille 1 (FR)

Following the report made by the national observatory for student life, in March 2003, the French situation will be presented in three parts:

1° The French attitude towards student exchange

Outgoing: no particular remarks, but a low number of students going away

Incoming: mistrust and distance between 1974 and 1995

Remedial strategy since 1995: Claude Allegre's policy; creation of Edufrance agency

2° French identity

Arrivals based on French-speaking countries

Based on cultural specificities

Ambiguity surrounding social and economic immigration

Issues in learning processes

3° New will and new policies

The creation of more open international policies

A new place for other languages (and English)

Emphasis placed on research

The example of the Université des Sciences en Technologies de Lille 1: an international outlook

Session 3

The policy in Germany: International students - not less exchange but more trade?

Johann-Peter Schäfer, Universität Siegen (DE)

Just a few years ago and after some decades of a "laissez-faire" policy towards international students (more exchange than trade), German Universities started a wide-spread initiative to attract more international students and compete with other countries for "high potentials".

Now, after a long-time average of 6 to 8 %, more than 10 % of the students come from abroad. The number of students coming from countries outside the EU is remarkably increasing.

German Universities organize German language courses - the language being one disadvantage against the Anglo-American competitors - and offer more and more degree courses taught in English.

In addition to these activities we have started to offer service packages (food and lodging etc.) for international students - together with the German "Studentenwerk" (Social Services Organization for students) which is responsible for housing and the "Mensa" (cafeteria).

But now, we are facing more and more problems. Especially the number of applicants from Asian countries is increasing. The large universities such as Darmstadt, Stuttgart, München, Aachen receive more than 6,000 applications from third-world countries, especially China. This flood of applications is becoming very difficult to manage, and the selection procedure is also quite difficult.

In order to build up the influence in the world-wide education market, therefore, DAAD and other agencies have started an export of German degree programs. The TU München, for example, offers courses in Singapur, the TU Aachen has created a joint venture degree program in Thailand, a German university has been opened in Egypt.

As a result of the growing competition I guess that in the future German Universities will develop more means to become competitive; so the trend goes into the direction of trade:

- International compatibility of degree programs with Bachelor/Master programs (Bologna process);
- Improvement in success rates of study (reduction of length of study; international students must be sure that they can reach their degree in a definite period of time);
- More German language training or courses taught in English.

Session 4

The SCANet project

Juan José Perez y Valverde, Universidad de Cordoba (ES)

The presentation consists of an explanation on a Spanish project called SCANet that aims to become a European Standard for communication on academic administration, as follows:

1. The project SCANet: Aims and reasons

The aim is to provide a tool for systematic comprehension of information contained in university curricula. Since it is regarded to be a necessary element for mobility and European convergence in such items as transfer to another university, standardization of courses, etc.

2. What it is

It's an administrative tool composed of a conjunction of codes and codified information useful for transmission of curricula information among universities, students and other agents related to the university system.

3. Attributes

- Clarity

- Reliability
- Versatile media
- Widely designed: It's modular structure makes it suitable to comply with every requirement on curricula codification and other processes
- Fulfils the requirements to hold the information of the European Degree Supplement
- Provides systematic definition and implementation to the European Transfer Credit System (ETCS)
- It complies with international standards: ISO, EAN, XML

4. How information is kept

Information is kept by a structured codification based on international standards and internal system regulations (for instance: Norma 1.01/02E for a standard unified student-identification code).

5. Who are on it

SCANet was formerly conceived at Lleida University (Spain) in April 2001. Later up to 49 Universities in Spain have joined the project, that was undertaken by the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (CRUE) in 2001 and nowadays is being incorporated by the Spanish Government to the regulations on university administration as a tool for the codification of the European Degree Supplement.

SCANet was already presented to the European Universities Association.

6. About the near future

The aim is to provide European universities a tool to share a standard for curricula managements.

Discussion after Session 3:

Since the Scanet project aims to provide a standardised code-system (and is not an IT-system) the expenditure is very low, and exist mostly in people freeing time to work for the project. At the moment the project is in this way sponsored by the 40 participating universities. It isn't a project for only administrators, and it is governed by a committee of vice-rectors.

The protection of data and privacy is a part of the implementation of university systems. The codes of countries, universities, curricula are open. The exchange of information between universities of ECTS points gathered by students has a privacy-aspect, but that is the same in sending letters in stead of data-files.

The aim of the project is the core-business of administrators: creating order out of chaos, and reducing costs in fulfilling administrative procedures

Since Scanet uses the local code-systems the only things to agree on are:

The length in digits of the codes for courses and students-identification-numbers

The country-codes (most likely to use the phone-codes)

The codes for universities within a country (mostly done by the national offices for statistics)

Scanet only eases exchange of information. It does not solve the existing portfolio-problems, or the certification of courses in another curriculum.

Workshop Session (a)

International student recruitment and the Bachelor/Master structure: development of studyprogrammes and the marketing strategy at the University of Groningen

Bert Verveld, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (NL)

The introduction of the Bachelor/Master structure (BaMa) has greatly influenced the way the University of Groningen (RUG) plans its international student exchange and recruitment programmes. The difference between bachelor and master offers new opportunities to open up new markets and to create new and attractive study programmes for international students.

New marketing concepts are adopted and recruitment strategies are being redefined.

The presentation will show the example of the University of Groningen.

The University of Groningen, being an internationally oriented research university, develops and implements – English taught – research masterprogrammes in most fields of study for international students, as well as home students. The aim is to attract good, ambitious students from other countries, with a prospect on the PhD-phase.

Other examples of international masterprogrammes are for instance specific ‘double degree masterprogrammes’ with specific universities in other countries, as well as economic and bussiness programmes for the international market.

Of course many Dutch taught masterprogrammes will be continued, but there is a very clear shift towards an international perspective in the master phase of the university. The University of Groningen is in this resepect not alone, it can be seen as an example of a trend (at least in the Netherlands).

The main objective of the bachelorphase on the other hand continues to be the home market.

International students can of course enter the bachelorstudies, but command of the Dutch language, apart from specific courses in English, is required also for international students.

The marketing strategy for masterprogrammes is of course also greatly influenced by the differences between the faculties (science, arts, medicine, etc. have different international traditions and cultures), and also by the differences between Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa and Australia.

These differences lead to different opportunities and to different target groups. This has also consequenses for selectionprocedures.

Of course facilities for international students (housing, financial support, counseling, etc.) have to be attractive, otherwise the marketing strategy will fall short of its aim. This puts a great strain upon the support organisation and a good relationship with local government (the city) – especially in relation to housing the international students - is essential.

In the presentation the question will be raised how these developments, that can be seen at many universities, will influence the landscape of higher education in Europe and how individual universities, like Groningen, try to respond to this emerging environment.

Workshop Session (b)

No frontiers - students and internationalization at the University of Bologna

Inez Fabbro, Università degli Studi di Bologna (IT)

The University of Bologna has been expanding its borders all over the world for a long time.

The presentation will be a travel through the international reality of University of Bologna: exchanges between students and university teachers, influence of internationalization on teaching and learning processes, and organization of services for foreign students will be explored.

Moreover, there will be the opportunity to see how communication among young people with different linguistic and cultural extraction is promoted and integrated.