



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

INTERNATIONALISATION POLICY

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¹ This document has been translated from Swedish into English. If the English version differs from the original, the Swedish version takes precedence.



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1. Description

This policy specifies Umeå University's ambitions for internationalisation at the University.

2. Background

Research and education at Umeå University have always been characterised by international cooperation. Internationalisation creates perspective and provides knowledge about solutions to societal problems. It also creates an understanding of the world we live in. Umeå University believes it is vital that internationalisation permeates the entire organisation. Integrated internationalisation shapes the core views and values of the University, and is a prerequisite for being active in a globalised world.

Chapter 1, Section 5, of the Higher Education Act (1992:1434) stipulates that the international operations and activities at all higher education institutions must enhance the quality of research and education. International operations and activities at higher education institutions must contribute to promoting both national and global sustainable development, which, according to the Higher Education Act, involves guaranteeing present and future generations a sound and healthy environment, economic and social welfare, and justice. International operations and activities at Umeå University must be carried out responsibly and be based on the University's core values. Responsible internationalisation for global cooperation involves mutual creation of values, academic freedom and integrity with room for reflection on ethics, as well as cultural, political and legal contexts. Internationalisation at Umeå University is important for increasing and strengthening the quality of education, research, and administration.

The Internationalisation policy for Umeå University is intended to be a source of inspiration and support the work with creating action plans and tangible objectives related to internationalisation that are tailored to each organisation. This policy is accompanied by a digital appendix containing references, literature and good examples. In this policy, *student* refers to all education cycles.

The international, collaboration, sustainability and student perspectives have been integrated into this policy. Due to the content and nature of this document, the accessibility perspective has not been integrated. This policy document is not expected to have any consequences for gender equality at Umeå University.



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3. The policy's link to the Vision for Umeå University

The *Vision for Umeå University* identifies three comprehensive areas of development, each with bearing on internationalisation – Responsibility for the future, Collaborative development of knowledge, and Competitive edge and pride.

3.1 Responsibility for the future

Internationalisation has a considerable impact on all of society. Furthermore, it is a decisive factor for providing Swedish universities with access to high-quality research, education, and innovation environments. These environments are essential if Umeå University is to face both national and global societal challenges, increase its competitive edge, and secure its place as a cutting-edge university. Internationalisation is also necessary for meeting the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and Umeå University's contributions to this work.

Umeå University believes taking responsibility for the future is key. The University's *Quality system for education* presents internationalisation as one of six perspectives that characterise high-quality education and its related conditions. Participating in international collaborations is a way for research groups to bring various cultural perspectives and methodological approaches together – which is vital for successful research.

For Umeå University, responsibility for the future means that the University's courses and programmes are underpinned by the latest research, and that national and international researchers are involved in teaching. The international research environment at Umeå University must facilitate ground-breaking global research.

3.2 Collaborative development of knowledge

International contacts enhance research, education and administration which in turn creates an understanding of other countries and relations – an important basis for democracy and tolerance. Staff and students at Umeå University are active in diverse types of international environments, and many of our researchers come from international educational backgrounds. The University's researchers collaborate with colleagues around the world, and visiting research fellows contribute to the University's research. Umeå University has students from many countries and cultures, which enriches the study environment.

Umeå University views collaborative development of knowledge as striving to push the boundaries of knowledge to contribute to a sustainable society and social welfare. We want to offer education that is high-quality and internationally competitive, and where intercultural skills are an integrated aspect. Umeå University wants to collaborate with other international higher education institutions, and pursue international policy work. Umeå University's students and



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staff must feel that they are part of a global community that is working towards common goals.

3.3 Competitive edge and pride

Umeå University's competitive edge and pride are created by working together towards continual development. We are all ambassadors for our University and are part of the creation of a positive and open international work environment. The Umeå University spirit defined in the University's vision addresses this very openness and dynamic approach that makes us generous, sharing, and keen to solve problems together with others.

Umeå University views the competitive edge and pride as being the way for us to become an attractive choice for international students and staff. An international perspective provides students with a competitive edge on the labour market, and promotes career development for young researchers. To strengthen this competitive edge and pride, Umeå University will expand and deepen its contacts with higher education institutions and other partners around the world.

4. Areas of development

Based on the University's vision, Umeå University has identified the following prioritised areas of development for our internationalisation work:

- Internationalisation at home;
- International cooperation within research and education;
- Personal international experience for students and staff;
- Hosting that benefits internationalisation.

4.1 Internationalisation at home.

Umeå University wants to expand the way staff and students understand the world, and provide them with the opportunity to develop their intercultural skills. This will take place through internationalisation at home, which is accessible for those who are unable to gain their own experiences abroad. Internationalisation work must be incorporated into all courses and programmes, even if their starting points and representation in international networks vary, and their opportunities for international cooperation differ. The international research and education environment at the University must draw on the skills and experiences of staff and students and be in keeping with the content and structure of the courses and programmes. Internationalisation at home must include alumni and collaboration partners in addition to the University's staff and students.



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In order to develop internationalisation at home and make it an integrated aspect of Umeå University's internationalisation work, focus must lie on:

- clarifying what an international subject perspective means for subject fields at Umeå University;
- identifying and developing areas that promote the intercultural skills of staff and students;
- international cooperation at course and programme levels;
- a broad spectrum of courses and programmes for international students;
- marketing and promoting the range of courses and programmes for international students at Umeå University;
- supporting the University's staff who work with internationalisation, as well as the opportunity for exchanging experiences.

4.2 International cooperation

Umeå University believes it is important to support and develop international cooperation within research and education. Furthermore, it is important that teachers, researchers and other members of staff are part of national and international networks. Environmental scanning will be an important element of our work at Umeå University, and staff must be encouraged and given the opportunity to participate and influence international forums and contexts.

If Umeå University is to be able to collaborate in international networks for education, research and collaborations, focus needs to lie on:

- long-term relationship building;
- project support;
- supporting established research and education collaborations;
- developing new research and education collaborations;
- awareness of and participation in national and international networks and arenas.

4.3 International experience

Umeå University wants to support the students and staff who aspire to obtain international experiences. Both individuals and the University as a whole can benefit from new cultural and organisational experiences, as well as new knowledge about methods and approaches. Even though a great deal of international



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cooperation can take place online, physical meetings are essential to their success, and they are particularly valuable for new contacts. Students and staff at Umeå University are to have the opportunity to create their own international experiences by participating in activities such as studies abroad, internships, work shadowing, conference participation, network meetings and research periods abroad. The quality aspects of international experience are significant, hence it is important they are followed up and evaluated.

For students and staff at Umeå University to be able to gain their own international experience, focus needs to lie on:

- mobility windows in study programmes (students);
- creating incentives and allow for periods abroad for staff;
- agreements with partner universities for study and teaching exchanges;
- clear information and communication about the various opportunities for studying, researching, taking part in an internship, work shadowing, and teaching abroad;
- coordination at the University to facilitate exchanges for students and staff;
- clear information and awareness about the importance of international experience from a career and skills development point of view;
- funds for personal international experience.

4.4 Hosting that benefits internationalisation

Umeå University wants positive hosting to contribute to cutting-edge education and research environments. By hosting in a way that benefits internationalisation, we can continue to recruit the researchers of the future. Umeå University must provide a tolerant environment where research is allowed to grow and make itself seen and heard. The non-hierarchical structure that permeates Umeå University must be promoted to create great openness between staff and students.

If hosting at Umeå University is to benefit internationalisation, focus needs to lie on:

- high-quality and accessible research infrastructure;
- well-developed reception for international students and staff;
- ensuring international students and staff can access important information in accordance with the Language policy for Umeå University;
- facilitating the recruitment process of international staff.