

# **Guidelines for Organising a Utrecht Network International Summer School**

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## **Introduction**

These guidelines for organizing a Utrecht Network International Summer School should serve as a means to encourage and convince UN institutions that it is a rewarding and doable task to accommodate and organize a summer school.

It was decided to structure the guidelines along the phases necessary when organizing a summer school. Special attention should be paid to the time line, indicating how many months prior to the launch of the summer school it is recommended to have accomplished certain tasks.

Redundancy in the text is necessary as various tasks have to be dealt with and checked several times.

Recommendations are always more than welcome!

## **Criteria**

A summer school is considered a Utrecht Network International Summer School if both teachers and students have the following profile:

maximum 40% locals

minimum 40% UN (both member institutions and AEN and MAUI) and

maximum 20% outsiders.

The local organizer decides under what conditions these students can be included. However, UN students always have priority – if possible even after the deadlines.

At the Academic Committee also UN partners other than locals have to be involved.

The Coordinator/Applicant has to be a member of the UN.

The amount of funding is closely related to the duration of the school.

Financial aspect: to encourage organizers the task Force suggests to apply on the basis of a 2-weeks course for € 50.000 for a minimum of 3 years, ceiling the first two years with € 20.000.

Applications to the TF must include a preliminary budget plus the information of the composition of the Academic Committee.

Label: all schools that fulfil the criteria can be eligible for the UN label, which means:

Promotion and recruitment of teachers and students within the network, involvement of the international offices, information on the UN homepage, under certain conditions they may even receive Hospitality Funds.

For reporting the completed excel-matrix together with a summary on content and – if HP – names and sending institution have to be handed in to the TF.

## The Different Steps when planning your first summer school

Step 1 The Initiative	Step 2 The Internal Preparation	Step 3 The External Preparation	Step 4 Practical Preparation	Step 5 The Implementat ion	Step 6 Evaluation and reporting
Thinking about the  - study level - date - duration - size - location - target audience - market	Working on the  -Institutional commitment  -academic support  -local logistics - international commitment  Budgetary matters (in general)	Planning the  - core group  - academic committee  - recruitment of teaching staff  - recognition of students' Performance  - budgetary Matters (in details)	Finalizing the  - advertisement and communication  - logistical organization  - recruitment of students	<b>The Event</b>	Rounding up
Conceptual phase					
	-15 month	-12 months Send draft to Task Force	-10 →-3 months	0	+3 months

Although a Utrecht Network Summer School is an international project, led by a team with international and intercultural expertise, the role of the local organiser is crucial. Support at all levels (academic, logistic, administrative, and even financial) is thus important. Therefore, the conceptual phase is split into three sections.

Steps 1-3 are not necessarily separate steps: bright ideas often arise through international discussions and the development of such a project is then a joint decision. However, throughout the conceptual phase it is essential not to forget The Internal Preparation.

## **Step 1: The Initiative**

A proposal for a UN summer school could come up from an existing study or research programme, a well-established co-operation, or when a new curriculum is to be designed. One or more institutions could take the initiative as there are plenty of opportunities.

The planning of the summer school has to bear in mind from scratch that the summer school has to be open for teaching staff and students from other UN institutions to fulfill the criteria for a Utrecht Network summer school. The approach could either be multidisciplinary or in-depth. A contemporary theme which requires expertise from various institutions would be the most probable way to fulfill these criteria successfully and to integrate an international teaching staff.

There is no exclusion on study level as undergraduate, graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral level can be considered. The decision has to be taken by the academic committee.

The date can be fixed according to the local context and to the academic calendar of the UN partners and the partner networks. It is up to the school to decide about the duration according to the level, capacity, content with a minimum of 5 and preferably 10 working days. Bear in mind that some co-financing programs such as Erasmus Intensive Programs require at least 10 days. The coordinator defines the size of the school (number of students, teachers, experts) according to the programme, teaching methodology, capacity and budget.

## **Step 2: The Internal Preparation** **15 more months to go..**

The aim in this phase is to check the commitment, capacity, availability at the host institution necessary for a successful implementation of the summer school. Before advertising the idea at other institutions the tasks listed below have to be answered satisfactorily.

One should always have in mind that the host institution itself should gain from the venture since the awareness of the institution and its academic quality will also increase. A pilot project like a summer school has always created some kind of laboratory situation for other academic and commercial initiatives.

a) Institutional commitment

The host institution has to commit itself through the Rectorate, Head of Institution or unit. The more definite the principal commitment in terms of infrastructure, personnel and money is, the easier it will be for the organiser to go ahead.

b) Academic support

Apart from teachers belonging to UN partner institutions the academic staff of the host institution plays an important role in the teaching part of the summer school. Therefore, a core of an academic committee should be established including the host institution in order to ensure sufficient academic and teaching support. At least some department members have to be committed to the idea of establishing an UN summer school.

Teaching staff who seem to be suited best:

- competent in the subject,
- fluent in the language of instruction (f.e. English) for teaching and discussion,
- ready and capable in terms of teaching methodology and social openness to get integrated actively into an international and intercultural teaching and learning community,
- ready to work in summer without an extra salary/honorarium.

c) Local logistics

personnel:

It is advisable to rely on staff of an international office dedicated to this task or have at least other assistant/s ready to step in. The work concerns administrative and organizational follow-up before and during the actual period of the school. In case of need student assistants can be hired before and in particular during the summer school. Scenarios for emergency cases have to be developed as well.

course rooms and equipment:

For the time of the summer school (1 day prior/1 day after) at no cost or a reasonable price the following has to be available:

- lecture rooms : the maximum number of students defined by the school added with the number of teachers should define the size of the biggest room necessary
- rooms for group activities
- a computer pool (e.g. in a computer centre or library) and preferably

wireless connection

- a small office room
- presentation equipment as well as traditional blackboard/flipchart
- cafeteria and drinking water supply in easy reach

#### housing:

- a students' house or comparably affordable accommodation for the student participant
- lodging for the teaching staff (in some cases arriving with partners/spouses/children) should be available at a reasonable price preferably close to the students' housing
- catering, at least breakfast and possibly dinner, should be part of the contract with the accommodation provider if there are no cheaper ways to provide meals
- block booking, even in summer, should be possible
- when negotiating with the accommodation provider it could be advisable to have "moving targets", i.e. one should be prepared for various recruitment situations and have the deadlines set as close as possible to the beginning of the school. The argument that it is designed as a long-term project and helps to advertise the house should help.

#### catering:

- cafeteria and drinking water supply during the day
- breakfast and lunches, possibly dinners at reasonable prices

#### location & travel:

Even paradise has to be accessible. It is advisable to choose a site which is easy to reach from airports/stations by public transport which commutes frequently (even on Sundays which is often arrival day) or have precautions for a shuttle service from the nearest station.

Students also need public transportation to entertainment places (at night) if the location of their housing is remote and no bars and discotheques are in the vicinity.

#### sponsors:

In the end money will be needed that is why one has to think of it at the right beginning: that is why the support by local or regional governments

and companies is one of the issues one has to bear in mind: the support can also be given non-pecuniary as well. European or national programs like Intensive Programs (IP) offer funding under certain conditions.

### **Step 3: The External Preparation** **12 more months to go**

Backed with the internal commitment of the host institution the proper development of the school can start now.

#### a) Core group of UN partners

At this stage academic input in the design of the summer school is necessary. If the co-operation within the Utrecht Network is not (yet) settled the international officers of the partner institutions have to be approached now. They will distribute the description of the summer school project and help in contacting the most appropriate academics in their university in order to raise interest for joining this group. All these initiatives guarantee to reach an international team where each member supports and complements each other. It goes without saying that direct contacts between academic colleagues at the partner institutions is the most efficient option.

#### b) Set up of an academic committee

Discussions can start through email and video conferences and end by a formal meeting among those willing to contribute to the development of the project. This academic committee should be the 'guardians' of the academic side of the summer school. It takes decisions on the specific theme, yearly focus, study level, methodology, student audience, selection of teaching staff, calculation of workload, number of ECTS credits, methods of assessment.

The academic committee is independent in its decisions but should include the local organiser(s) in order to keep informed about the practical arrangements, funding and the link with the Utrecht Network via its task force.

The academic committee could have 3 to 5 members at the beginning, but it can be enlarged throughout its existence. It optimally meets once or twice a year in autumn and in spring in order to plan and evaluate the school as well as during the ongoing summer school. This is not an absolute obligation. It depends on available time and sufficient financial means to cover travel and living expenses of the meeting by the summer school or individual budget.

Experience has shown that often younger academics accept enthusiastically the offer to work in such an international environment giving them the opportunity to broaden their

international network, to work in a new team and to gain new and/or multidisciplinary insights in their study field.

#### c) Recruitment of teaching staff

After the academic committee has developed a more structured scope of what the summer school should be, a call for teachers can be launched to the UN partners. Their role must not be neglected in the set up of the summer school. The status of an UN Summer School (and the funding) very much depends on sufficient participation of UN teaching staff.

The aim is to have a majority of international teachers belonging to UN member institutions. Also academics from partner networks such as AEN and MAUI may be included if the summer school budget allows. Definitely a certain number of academics from the organizing institution should participate as well.

Teaching staff can include all career levels, from junior to senior provided that sufficient academic level can be guaranteed. Academics with not yet firmly settled positions are often attracted by these initiatives enabling them to develop their international contacts and to boost their careers.

Teachers should submit a proposal for one or more lectures together with an abstract and a short c.v. The academic committee selects the applications and includes them in the final programme. After selection teaching staff has to be confirmed. A first publication of the summer school with a day-to-day programme should be published as soon as possible.

The duration of stay of the teaching staff should cover the days of their obligation towards the summer school plus the departure and arrival day. In order to receive Erasmus funding for the teaching period, the IROs of the sending institutions have to be contacted as early as possible. Deadlines differ from country to country and also each institution handles these agreement differently.

#### d) Recognition of students' performance (ECTS)

This is one of the key factors to recruit students successfully and to assure the quality of the schools over the years. It is obvious that many departments of the students' home universities might have problems when it comes to recognise the credit points of a summer school towards their degree.

Coherence among the systems (different credit systems at MAUI/AEN, various systems of modular structure at the member institutions etc.) is hard to reach. At least, the "actors" of the summer school should do their best to bridge the information gap on the side of the accrediting body at home. Academic committee, local organisers and students have to contribute towards this goal actively.



#### academic committee:

When designing the curriculum of the school the recognition issues should always be in the minds of the members. Members of the academic committee should put themselves into the shoes of the colleagues who then have to recognise the students' performance. Based on the workload the correct amount of ECTS has to be calculated. It would be desirable to identify one member of the academic committee as a contact person for inquiries on recognition questions (at the transcript, in the brochure and at the web). Precautions for a consistent participation of students should be taken (attractive and inclusive forms of teaching as well as a participation record). A comprehensive description of the student's course work with theme, duration, outcome, assessment should be given to the students at the end of the school together with the certificate.

#### students:

To allocate ECTS credits for the workload during the school requires intensive work of all participants. Active participation of the students should be encouraged and assured. Lists of participation must be available and watched. In the end only those who participated to a very high rate can be given the transcript and the course description.

#### **e) Budgetary matters**

Crucial is also the drawing up of a financial plan. An UN summer school is not a commercial initiative and therefore non-profit making by definition.

#### **Income**

The income of a summer school is derived from different sources.

The Utrecht Network supports a number of selected 'Utrecht Network International Summer school' with a grant, which has to be applied for by submitting a descriptive proposal and a tentative budget to the Task Force by July 1 one year prior to the actual event.

Students contribute to the organisation of the school with the payment of a participation cost which should be as low as possible and should at least cover accommodation, meals and other costs. This student contribution is necessary in order to ensure dedication and active participation, appreciation of the infrastructure and supplies and to decrease no-show rate.

#### **UN Hospitality Scheme**

As decided by the AGM in 2012 for the years 2013 and 2014 a new procedure applies. This procedure follows the following steps which are clarified here:

Each school (and there is a maximum of 3 per year) can use up to 30 grants of € 250 each per year (this is based on the number of full UN member institutions).

Each school, preferably its academic committee, decides on the allocation of the grants in a transparent manner:

- One student per institution has priority based on performance (and other reasons applicable for the purpose of the school).

- If no students applied from a specific UN institution, this non-used grant can be used for students from other member universities ranked lower than first. They will then be given to students from other UN member institutions where more than one student applied.

- The body who ranks the students, preferably the academic committee, allocates the grant with the consent of their home institution. Schools therefore first have to communicate with the UN home institution of the student selected before they contact the students. However, in case of disagreement between the school's decision and the recommendation of the student's home institution the final decision lies with the school.

- Once the students started with the school, the school claims the HP funding for participants at the UN secretariat through the Task Force Summer schools.

Some UN universities have set aside funding for summer schools organized by staff members of their university. Check this with the university authorities.

The Erasmus Program subsidizes Intensive Programs (IP) of short duration. Criteria are similar to the format of the UN summer schools and there is one deadline per year (usually 1,5 years in advance). Subsistence and travel costs for teachers and students and organisational costs are partially financed under the IP.

External sponsors such as national and local governments or enterprises can be solicited as well. The support can also be given in kind. A logo of the sponsor can be added.

### **Expenditures**

Costs for accommodation, catering, excursions, lecture rooms, office supplies, shuttle services, stationary and student tutors have to be quantified. This implies a search for the right dormitories or youth hostels, cafeterias and student restaurants.

Students pay for their own travel. Home institutions are encouraged to support their students financially. IROs should include details when distributing the information.

Teachers pay for their travel and living costs as well. These items do not appear in the summer school budget as they are usually covered by the Erasmus Teaching Mobility Scheme. Teachers should apply to their International Office to receive this grant. A bilateral agreement between the host institution and the partner university forms the basis.

In case the summer school is recognised as an Erasmus IP travel and living expenses of students and teachers are part of the funding and do appear in the budget's income.

## **Step 4: The Practical Preparation**

### **10-3 more months to go**

If the host institution has already some experience in organising summer schools it will be relieved of some of the work. The department involved or the communication/PR office should be contacted in order to find out how much investment is required in time and human resources.

#### **a) Advertisement and communication**

The tools to advertise the summer school are a poster, a brochure/e- brochure and a website.

To give a common identity to all UN summer schools the task force has developed a standard format (content, lay-out, logos) for application forms for students and teachers, a brochure, a flyer, a poster and an evaluation form. This material can be used with local adaptations. Most important is, though, to use the UN logo wherever possible!

The website of the Utrecht Network, the host university or a special website developed by the summer school can be used to provide all necessary information to the teachers and students. It is also an excellent tool to advertise the summer school to the outer world.

The brochure/website contains the following information:

- general description of the summer school, rationale of the theme, programme, structure and content
- composition of the academic committee
- names of the teaching staff
- day-to-day programme
- general information on the target audience, language requirements, participation costs, application procedure, deadlines
- location and accommodation
- travel information
- information on the host university
- information on the Utrecht Network, MAUI and AEN

The final printed brochure can then be distributed to the participants at the beginning of the school.

poster:

Some graphic coherence between the poster and the website/ brochure should to be taken into consideration.

**b) Logistical organisation**

It has to be checked carefully what details can be confirmed at which time. False promises to academic staff and students participating that may not materialise when the summer school actually takes place should be avoided. This is the best time to work on some 'worst-case scenarios'. Also anticipation is vital in a short programme. There is no time to change or reorganise, it has to be spot on from the start.

The UN, the task force, the academic committee, the local academic coordinator as well as the local organising team creates a team with multiple partners for assistance ready to share out of the work.

personnel:

Before and in particular during the summer school additional administrative staff is needed. Student assistants can be hired to provide assistance before and in particular during the school.

Emergency contact:

In case of an emergency the name and phone number of a contact person is vital.

housing:

Students can be accommodated in single, double or triple rooms as available, staff is accommodated individually in single or double rooms according to their needs.

logistics for stay:

Welcoming academic staff is not the same as welcoming students and efforts must be made to ensure that both arrival and departure and accommodation is dealt with adequately.

special requirements:

Both academic staff and students may have special needs which have to be dealt with before arrival as it may be too late to handle on the spot.

catering:

It could be part of the contract with the accommodation provider if there are no cheaper ways to provide meals elsewhere.

information package:

Information on the country, city, university, general information, local transportation, climate, preliminary reading and more have to be included.

insurance:

Participants have to be informed to have their insurance Coverage including medical and personal liability.

organisation of side activities:

Evening programmes, cultural programmes, excursion(s) during the weekend(s), official reception, closing and/or farewell dinner, and the involvement of local & university authorities have to be organized.

student transcripts:

It has to be decided whether students receive their transcript right at the end of the summer school or whether in case additional work has to be completed within a certain time limit it will be sent to them by mail.

**c) recruitment of students**

Devising an excellent summer-school is not enough. Nothing will come out of it if there is not the commitment and intense promotion undertaken by UN partners. The success of any school is dependent on UN colleagues disseminating and promoting the school and recruiting applicants. In order to ensure a good recruitment of students bear in mind that recognition is an important asset for attending a summer school.

selection of home students:

Students can be recruited locally at a reduced rate. Apart from enjoying the academic programme with the internationals these students

are invaluable in facilitating integration. Similarly it might be considered to

employ some students as assistants in the 6-9 months before the school starts and having maybe two student tutors during the actual programme for academic and logistic assistance.

adaptability:

Hence the importance of deadlines to prepare for any changes yet remaining flexible.

Students apply with the home university using the UN summer school application form. The home university selects the candidates and submits the short-list to the co-ordinator of the summer school shortly after the application deadline.

If places are left students from other universities than UN partners can be accepted. The coordinator decides under what conditions they can be included, preferably prior to the case arrives. However, UN students have priority.

## **Step 5: The Implementation**

### **Go!**

- Sufficient administrative and logistical assistance during the school including staff from the international office or student tutors is provided
- Copy machine/s, telephone/s, fax machine/s, laptop/s are available
- Paper, pencils, board markers, message boards and first aid kit are in easy reach
- A 'certificate of attendance' as well as a list of participants, name tags, folders and a notebook have been prepared
- University & local press are invited
- Photos will be made – a camera is always in easy reach
- Emergency scenarios should be anticipated
- An emergency number is installed

## **Step 6: Evaluation & Reporting**

Students' and teachers' evaluations can serve as a basis for the academic committee to evaluate the school and to plan the school for the coming year. A standard evaluation form for students and teachers is available in the annexe. Also an internal evaluation is essential to improve the services delivered.

A financial report has to be drafted and presented to the Utrecht Network in case of subsidizing.

There may be a case for the academic committee to want more closer co-operation in research for example or disseminate more professionally leading for example to development of a joint degree programme on mid-term. This can generate a high-level of motivation to justify the running of the school even if the off-shoots are not actually achieved.

The UN does have its web-site and any academic printing of material, press books or simply photos from the school will help to prove the activity our network develops and to promote the school.

### **Conclusion**

The task force has done its best to use its expertise for advice. For further questions the members of the task force can always be contacted!



List of Task Force Members: to be added

## **Annexe 1:**

### **A chronological overview of the different steps:**

- meeting of academic committee
- recruitment of teachers
- collection of applications
- selection of teachers
- final program
- confirmation or rejection to teachers by individual
- confirmation of teaching staff to UN partners
- posters, brochure for distribution
- recruitment of students
- selection of students by home university
- presentation of applicants to coordinator
- decision of coordinator upon number of places for each UN university and overseas partners (MAUI, AEN)
- confirmation to students by individual email
- confirmation of students to UN partners
- feed-back to teachers
- feed-back to students
- follow-up payments tuition fees
- continuously contact by email with individual students and teachers



