

Utrecht Network

Internal Regulations

(adopted by the General Meeting, May 5, 2011, amended at the General Meeting 8/9 May 2014, General Meeting 7/8 May 2015 & General Meeting 28/29 April 2016)

PART 1 INTRODUCTION

Section 1

(1) Internal Regulations are adopted by the Utrecht Network:

- a) to amplify the Utrecht Network Statutes by providing more detailed guidelines for specified situations;
- b) to clarify obligations and privileges of members;
- c) to provide guidance to the Steering Committee in their activities.

(2) These Internal Regulations must not conflict with the Utrecht Network Statutes and where any ambiguity arises in interpretation of Internal Regulations, the Statutes will prevail.

(3) Internal regulations are proposed to the General Meeting by the Steering Committee. Resolutions will be passed when the number of votes of members in attendance or represented (see subsection 8

(4)) in favour of the resolution exceeds the number of votes against the resolution.

(4) Amendments or additions to Internal Regulations are proposed to the General Meeting by the Steering Committee. Resolutions will be passed when the number of votes of members in attendance or represented (see subsection 9(4)) in favour of the resolution exceeds the number of votes against the resolution.

(5) Any member is entitled to request the Steering Committee to consider changes to the Internal Regulations; the Steering Committee will report any such proposals to the General Meeting. Resolutions will be passed when the number of votes of members in attendance or represented (see subsection 9(4)) in favour of the resolution exceeds the number of votes against the resolution.

PART II ORGANIZATION

Section 2 Membership

(1) The number of members will be limited. Membership is only open to universities in European countries, in principle one university per country, though exceptions to this rule can be made at

the discretion of the General Meeting. The aim of achieving a balanced representation from across Europe should be kept in mind when considering new members.

(2) The Association, in considering the eligibility of a university for membership, may take into account the following criteria: a comprehensive range of disciplines; state recognition for delivery of degrees; an emphasis on internationalization and a strong central unit dealing with international affairs; broad mobility; waiver of tuition of fees on exchanges with Utrecht Network partners; an effective student support service.

(3) Part of the admission process for a new member will be a site visit, to be carried out by two persons from member universities of the Association, at least one of whom must be a member of the Steering Committee. Such a site visit may include more than one potential member university in the particular country. After their return from the site visit they will prepare and submit to the Steering Committee a report with recommendations. The Steering Committee will discuss this report, and on the basis of this discussion, decide whether to make a formal proposal of membership to the General Meeting

(4) Where re-organization causes a member university to become more than one independent institution, membership will reside with that part which retains the title under which membership was granted unless by mutual agreement the institutions so formed resolve otherwise.

(5) Pools of universities will nominate one of their number to act as the representative of that group of universities (see Article 6(2) of the Utrecht Network Statutes).

(6) Continued membership in the Utrecht Network is contingent upon active participation in the activities of the Association, which implies such factors as regular attendance at the annual meeting; continuity of representation; effective communication; sufficient funding for auxiliary activities, projects and initiatives and regular participation in these areas.

Section 3 Steering Committee

(1) Members of the Steering Committee will distribute tasks amongst each other. The division of tasks will be announced at the General Meeting, where reports will also be made by the Steering Committee members for their respective areas of competency.

(2) As a rule the Steering Committee will meet three times a year: once in February/March, a second time prior to the General Meeting and a third time in November/December. Any additional meetings are at the discretion of the President.

Section 4 Executive Secretariat

(1) The Executive Secretariat supports the activities of the Association.

- (2) The activities of the Executive Secretariat will be financed by the Association, based on an agreement negotiated between the Association and the university which holds the secretariat..
- (3) The main activities of the Executive Secretariat, working under the direction of its head, are as follows:
 - preparing the General Meeting and producing the minutes of the meeting
 - preparing Steering Committee meetings and producing their minutes
 - announcing decisions made by the Steering Committee to the members of the Association
 - keeping members informed of ongoing activities
 - administering and updating the Association's website, listserve, mailing lists, contact information, etc.
- (4) The tasks of the Association's Secretary and Treasurer will be delegated to the head of the Executive Secretariat. S/he will have such obligations as arise from the registration of the Utrecht Network in the Netherlands as an international non-profit association.
- (5) The head of the Executive Secretariat, acting as Treasurer, will keep the accounts of the Utrecht Network. S/he will be responsible in particular for providing the Steering Committee, at its first meeting each calendar year, with a draft version of the balance sheet from the current financial year and a draft budget for the new financial year, and for preparing the annual statement of accounts. S/he will be responsible to the Steering Committee for ensuring that financial transactions are in accordance with the Internal Regulations and are solely for the business of the Association.
- (6) The head of the Executive Secretariat, acting as Secretary, will be responsible in particular for keeping a record of decisions taken at the General Meeting and meetings of the Steering Committee.

Section 5 Board of Advisors

- (1) The Legal Representative of a member university or his/her nominee automatically holds a position in the Board of Advisors of Utrecht Network
- (2) The Board of Advisors will meet when necessary and can advise the Steering Committee and/or the General Meeting solicited and unsolicited in any area of affairs of the Association..

PART III GENERAL MEETING

Section 6 Documents for discussion at the General Meeting

- (1) All materials to be discussed at the General Meeting must be submitted to the Executive Secretariat not later than four weeks before the meeting.

(2) Two weeks before the General Meeting begins, the Executive Secretariat will send out to all members of the Association the agenda for the meeting as well as all documents for discussion.

Section 7

Attendance at the General Meeting

Members may send one or more persons to the General Meeting, but travel and subsistence costs will be covered by the Association for only one person from each member university as well as for the head of the Executive Secretariat.

Section 8

Chairperson of the General Meeting

The General Meeting will be chaired by the President of the Association, in her/his absence, by the Vice-President.

Section 9

Nominations and elections

(1) *Scrutineers.* The Chairperson will appoint two scrutineers to supervise any elections conducted by ballot. The scrutineers must not be candidates in the elections concerned.

(2) *The Steering Committee.* Candidates can be nominated or nominate themselves for the Steering Committee. Candidates must be the appointed Utrecht Network representative of their institution. Nominations in writing must be sent or given to the President by the closing of the session of the General Meeting on the day before the election at the latest. Nominations may be made by the appointed representative of a member and must state that the assent of the nominee has been obtained. If the number of nominations is less than the number of places to be filled, the Steering Committee will be empowered to make additional nominations at the General Meeting with the assent of each nominee. If the number of nominations exceeds the number required, a secret ballot will be carried out during the General Meeting.

(3) *Financial auditors.* Nominations of persons to act as financial auditors will be called for after the conclusion of other elections at the General Meeting. Candidates can be nominated or nominate themselves. If the number of nominees exceeds two, the election will be by secret ballot.

(4) *Voting by proxy.* If a member university is not able to send a representative to the General Meeting, it may authorize a representative of another university who will be present at the General Meeting to vote for it by proxy on any decisions that will be voted on by ballot at the meeting. Such authorization must be communicated in writing (letter or e-mail) to the President of the Association before the opening of the General Meeting, and include the name of the individual who is authorized to exercise the proxy vote.

PART IV GROUP ACTIVITIES

Section 10 Special Interest Groups

- (1) Members of the Utrecht Network may form Special Interest Groups to explore the possibilities of undertaking cooperation in areas they believe reflect the aims of the Network. It is sufficient to inform the General Meeting, or the President of the Steering Committee between General Meetings, of the creation of such a group.
- (2) Special Interest Groups are not eligible for funding from the Utrecht Network.
- (3) Should the discussions among the members of a Special Interest Group lead to the development of a concrete plan of action, the group may be transformed into a Task Force through submission of a proposal to that effect, which will be discussed and voted on at the General Meeting

Section 11 New initiatives

- (1) If an opportunity should arise between AGMs for an activity that is in line with the network's priorities and that needs to be acted on urgently, a proposal may be made to the Steering Committee for funding as a new initiative. Such funding can only be granted once. A report on the resultant activities will be presented at the General Meeting.
- (2) Should those responsible for the activities wish to continue in their work, they may submit a proposal for approval as a Task Force.

Section 12 Task Forces

- (1) A Utrecht Network Task Force is a group of people working towards a specific goal or goals of benefit to the Utrecht Network as a whole, as expressed in a written document.
- (2) Task Forces are established by a vote of the General Meeting, on the proposal of either the Steering Committee or a Utrecht Network member or members. Such a proposal must contain a list of the Task Force members – normally from three to six persons (all staff of Utrecht Network member institutions), one of whom is designated as the chairperson – and a written statement of the Task Force's aims and plan of action.
- (3) The chairperson is responsible for coordinating the activities of the Task Force. S/he ensures that it meets at regular intervals and determines the responsibilities of its individual members. The chairperson is responsible for the management of the budget and prepares an annual report at the end of the financial year. S/he reports back to the Steering Committee and keeps the members of the Utrecht Network informed at all times of the Task Force's activities.

(4) Those wishing to join a Task Force should contact the chairperson. Membership in a Task Force is dependent on effective continuity of representation as well as active and regular participation in the group's activities. Any new member(s) of a Task Force must be confirmed by the Steering Committee. The next General Meeting will be informed of such a new member.

(5) Task Forces are eligible for financial and other support (for example, technical assistance) from the Network.

(6) By the end of February each year, Task Forces must submit a report on their activities in the current financial year *and* a workplan for the upcoming financial year, including an indicative budget plan (see section 17.2). This report must contain a description of activities, details of financial expenditures (excluding expenditures on travel and subsistence costs for members of the Task Force) and information on the membership of the Task Force. If a Task Force does not submit a report by the above deadline, it will not be eligible for funding in that financial year; if this happens two years in a row, the Task Force is automatically dissolved.

PART V FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Section 13 The budget and the annual statement of accounts

(1) The financial year for accounting purposes will be 1 April – 31 March.

(2) It will be the duty of the head of the Executive Secretariat, at the first meeting of the Steering Committee in the calendar year, to make available to the committee a draft version of the balance sheet from the current financial year as well as a draft budget proposal for the new financial year.

(3) Two items in particular must appear in the draft budget proposal, and must remain in the budget as approved by the General Meeting:

- (a) the reserve fund: a minimum of 50,000 euros must remain in the reserve fund;
- (b) the hospitality fund: Each summer school (and there is a maximum of 3 per year) can allocate up to 31 grants of €250 each per year (this is based on the number of full Utrecht Network 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). Participants who are eligible for Erasmus+ ST funding cannot receive Hospitality Funding – even if their home institution will not allocate ST funding for them.
- If no students apply from a specific Utrecht Network institution, this un-used grant can be used for students from other member universities ranked lower than first. They will then be given to students from other Utrecht Network 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 Utrecht Network 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.
- The school distributes the hospitality grants to the students (or reduces their fee accordingly) and then claims the funding from the Utrecht Network Secretariat.
- The schools report on the allocation of Hospitality grants to the Task Force Summer Schools and the Steering Committee.

(4) It will be the duty of the head of the Executive Secretariat to ensure that the annual statement of accounts is available to the auditors two weeks after the end of the Network's financial year.

(5) At the General Meeting of the Association, the Treasurer will present the annual statement of accounts for the previous financial year as well as the budget proposal for the current financial year. The General Meeting may pass a motion concerning the statement of accounts. It must take a formal vote on the proposed budget. If the audited reports are not available in time for the General Meeting, the draft reports will be given to the General Meeting and an oral report given. The audited reports will be circulated by e-mail to all members when they are available.

Section 14 Auditors

(1) The Association will have two financial auditors, to be elected at the General Meeting. Financial auditors must be representatives of members but not members of the Steering Committee.

(2) Auditors serve for a period of two years, and may be re-elected. Ideally their terms of office will be staggered.

(3) Following the preparation of the annual statement of accounts by the head of the Executive Secretariat (see subsection 13 (4)), the auditors will be asked to examine these documents.

(4) The auditors will report on the statement of accounts at the subsequent General Meeting, and may make recommendations for future improvements. The General Meeting may pass a motion concerning the auditors' report. If the audit report is not available in time for the General Meeting an oral report will be given at the General Meeting. The audit report will then be circulated by e-mail to all members when it is available.

Section 15 Persons and bodies eligible for reimbursement and funding

Those eligible for funding from the Association budget are:

- a) Utrecht Network members (as institutions or as represented by individuals);
- b) the head of the Executive Secretariat;
- c) Utrecht Network Task Forces and new initiatives.
- d) the Steering Committee

Section 16 Expenditures eligible for reimbursement and funding

- (1) Travel and subsistence:
 - General Meetings
 - Steering Committee meetings and site visits
 - Staff visits and new initiatives
 - Task Forces
 - Auditing of the annual statement of accounts
- (2) Other budgetary items for Task Forces and new initiatives
 - translation, printing and dissemination of materials
 - equipment
 - administrative costs

Section 17 General guidelines relating to funding

(1) *Basic provisions*

- a) No funding or reimbursement of any kind can be made until the member university concerned has paid its current annual fee.
- b) Maximum subsistence costs (accommodation and meals) will be based on real costs not exceeding official EU guidelines.
- c) It is at the discretion of the Steering Committee to limit the amount refunded for any particular activity.

(2) *Application deadlines.* Applications for funding of Task Force activities must be submitted with a workplan Applications for financial assistance for Task Forces must be submitted electronically by **end February**. In the case of applications for other forms of financial assistance, there are three deadlines, **30 January, 1 April and 1 November**. A response will be given within two weeks after the next meeting of the Steering Committee or AGM (for the April deadline).

(3) *Reimbursement.* All activities will, as a rule, be pre-financed. Only once a written report has been submitted using the appropriate form will expenditures be reimbursed. Reimbursements will be based on real costs, in the case of reimbursements to individuals as attested by original documents furnished to the Executive Secretary. When reimbursing expenditures to a university, the latter will send an official invoice to the Executive Secretariat, with copies of the original documents.

(4) *Staff visits.* Visits aimed at benefiting the Utrecht Network as a whole may be funded, as well as a visit to Utrecht Network universities by new members. Money for such visits should only be allocated if no other funds are available.

Section 18

Funding of the General Meeting

- (1) The host institution will receive funding from the Association based on real costs and a maximum approved by the Steering Committee in advance
- (2) With the funding received from the Association (section 18(1)), the host university is expected to cover the subsistence costs (accommodation and meals) and the costs of the accompanying programme for one representative of each university present as well as for the head of the Executive Secretariat.
- (3) Actual travel costs will be reimbursed directly for one representative from each university attending as well as for the head of the Executive Secretariat. Reimbursement of travel costs will not be guaranteed if the representative has not registered before the registration deadline of the AGM.
- (4) Should a university send more than one persons to the General Meeting, it must bear all costs directly related to travel.
- (5) The host institution is entitled to levy a fee for each additional person from any member university present at the General Meeting.

Section 19

Funding of Steering Committee meetings and site visits

- (1) For their meetings held prior to the General Meeting and if a meeting is held in conjunction with the EAIE, members of the Steering Committee and the head of the Executive Secretariat will be funded for one extra night plus the cost of additional meals. Should a member not be participating in the EAIE, then travel costs may also be refunded. For other meetings of the Steering Committee (including the joint meeting with the Task Force Chairs) travel and subsistence will be funded within the Steering Committee's budget. The number of nights accommodation and subsistence funded will be determined by the length of the meeting and travel schedules, and will be at the discretion of the President.
- (2) Travel and subsistence costs for site visits will be covered.

Section 20

Funding of staff visits and new initiatives

For staff visits and new initiatives, travel and subsistence costs may be funded. *Costs may be refunded based on a financial request (see section 16(2)).*

Section 21

Funding of Task Forces

- (1) Task Forces receive a lump sum funding. The amount of lump sum funding will be decided by the AGM. The lump sum funding includes meetings and all activities directly related to meetings included in the work plan of the Task Force (see section 12(6)). The remaining lump sum budget from one year can be transferred to the next year but needs approval from SC. Requests for the transfer of budget to the next year need to be justified and included in the work plan.

(2) In exceptional circumstances an application may be made for additional funding.

(3) No reimbursement will be made by the Executive Secretariat without written (e.g. electronic) approval of the Task Force chair or another Task Force member if the chair is involved. Requests for reimbursement will be made via the Task Force chairs.

Section 22
Auditing of the annual statement of accounts

Travel and subsistence costs may be covered for one auditor.

Section 23
Travel and subsistence costs

(1) The beneficiary should use the most economical method of travel.

- (2) The following travel conditions are eligible for approved expenses:
- Economy class travel by plane and the university standard by train;
 - Expenditure reimbursement up to the amount of first class rail fare, for travel by car or taxi, independent of the number of people travelling.
 - Partners are required to use the cheapest means of travel and take advantage of reduced fares, where this is not the case then a full explanation should be provided
 - The actual costs in the case of a rented car, this mode of travel to be used only if no other suitable transport is available.

Section 24

Costs related to technology (hardware) and equipment

- The acquisition of such technology and equipment will only be eligible if such acquisition is strictly necessary for the performance of the approved activities.
- If there is the option to choose between leasing, renting or purchasing the equipment, the beneficiary must choose the least expensive method. Where the beneficiary opts for the rental or leasing of technology or equipment, the costs of any buy-out option at the end of the lease or rental period will not be regarded as an eligible cost.
- Where the purchase of technology or equipment is allowed, the equipment must have a life expectancy of at least three years where the purchase price is more than 1,000 euros.

Section 25

Costs regarding production, printing, distribution and translation

- These costs will be eligible provided they are reasonable in amount and in relation to the volume and complexity of documents or materials involved.
- Where the beneficiary uses its own technical departments to perform production, printing or distribution tasks, then the eligible costs will include only material (consumable) costs.
- For translations, the maximum allowable cost will not exceed the standard current EU rate.

Section 26

General administrative costs

These costs involve indirect costs relating to the approved activities, such as:

- communication
- administration and office supplies
- insurance
- photocopies of documents
- rental of premises

These costs will be allowed provided they do not exceed a maximum of 20% of the total value of the requested grant.

Section 27
Other costs and bank charges

Other costs may be allowed provided:

- they are reasonable in amount
- are strictly necessary
- are fully documented and explained in the Declaration of Expenses
- are not covered elsewhere

Bank charges relating to accounts established for UN approved activities are eligible. Charges relating to establishing or maintaining a line of credit, overdraft or guarantee facility shall not be eligible.