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## **Action Plan Internationalisation 2017–2018**

**Fastställd av rektor**

**Datum: 2016-11-15**

## **ACTION PLAN INTERNATIONALISATION**

### **Background**

This document describes the proposed actions towards further development of internationalisation at Örebro University with a horizon of 12-18 months.

This action plan is based on The International Strategy Document 2015–2020 of Örebro University, which clearly outlines the main principles and goals for internationalisation on page 2 of that document, and priority actions in each of the four described internationalisation domains.

More specifically, the proposed actions are based on the following presumptions/ conditions/ terms, which could act as benchmark/ control question/ evaluation marker for each –proposed or performed- action:

- Internationalisation is entirely quality-driven in relation to the three main tasks of the University, alongside other basic values of diversity, equality and global sustainable development.
- The internationalisation actions should maintain and support the integration between research and teaching, as well as implementation of multi-/inter-disciplinarity in teaching and research.
- Teaching programmes at Örebro University have a predominant focus on “professional education”, which should be taken into account in proposed internationalisation actions and its preferences.
- Internationalisation activities at master (second cycle) and doctoral (PhD) level should be concentrated around areas where the University is strong in research (strong research environments, ORU2015).
- Internationalisation strategy and activities concern and affect the entire university and should preferably apply/ make use of existing strategic and operative infrastructure and decision lines, such as deans, faculty boards, head of institutions, programme directors, research area and environment leaders, and support offices in order to facilitate the integration and implementation of the internationalisation policy. Activity plans of the schools and other units should contain an internationalisation paragraph. Rather than creating new structures, existing structures should be adapted and integrated to the internationalisation policy and should stimulate and support the creative and proactive power of Örebro University. The University sees well-functioning international partnerships for education and research with eminent foreign universities as being quite critical to the growth and quality of Örebro, and it is our hope that Örebro will be viewed as a city with a great deal to offer to such partners.

### **Prioritised actions and activities**

Most of the activities overarch more than one goal described on page 2 of the Internationalisation Strategy Document. Hence, the proposed actions and activities are not categorised according to these goals. These are not ordered in accordance to preference or urgency either.

#### *Strategic partnerships*

The number of European universities, which we sign an overarching collaboration agreement with, should grow organically and be limited. Criteria for such collaborations are already identified, and collaboration should preferably be complementary, with respect to e.g. general focus and strengths in research/teaching/societal impact, university culture, geographic location, and share basic values as described before. The basic pedagogic models in teaching should fit with those of our University. As we have established such a collaboration with Aston University now, the next step will be evaluating the possibilities of such collaboration with Glasgow University, as we already have initiated this process. We probably should identify one to three possible Universities on the European continent to explore the same kind of collaboration as we have with Aston University, but so called “niche” universities, should not be excluded if complementarity can be achieved. Dependent on this complementarity, in total three to four international strategic partners –for comprehensive collaboration- would probably be optimal.

This activity will be led by VC, DVC, PVC, and deans. VC is responsible.  
Timeframe: 2016-2017.

#### *Student international mobility*

The goal is to substantially increase the number/proportion of international exchange at undergraduate (first cycle), master (second cycle) and doctoral (PhD) level, with an overall balance in incoming and outgoing students. This is especially a challenge for the professional teaching programs (programs which qualify for a “professional registration”, such as teacher, nurse, psychologist, doctor, etc) and exchange should be focussed on Bologna compatible universities and allied organisations. Quality prevails over quantity. Student international mobility should cover all students, including “free movers”.

The following actions/ activities are proposed:

- The deputy heads international (or those responsible for internationalisation at the School) report how international student exchange can be achieved with the ultimate goal of more than 20% of students participating in this exchange for at least 3 month (at least 3 month in one period) at undergraduate (first cycle) level, as well as on the main (bureaucratic) hinders. This implicates also to host as

many international students. Report to PVC international and International Board (IB) Q4 2016- Q1 2017.

- The deputy heads international (or those responsible for internationalisation at the School) report how the majority of programmes (excluding those qualifying for a “professional registration) at master (second cycle) can be given in English and how these are linked to strong research areas/ environments. Report to PVC and IB Q2 2017.
- A special activity is needed regarding international student exchange in first-second cycle programmes leading to “professional registration”. The deputy heads international of JPS, NT and MV or HV, HH, explore the possibilities and hinders with support of e.g. the university legal office, international office (IO) and student office. The option of including research, professions practice placements and internship at non-university organisations (such as health providers, law courts) should be evaluated. Report to PVC and IB Q2 2017.
- In conjunction with the former actions, the legal office in cooperation with the current IO identifies which actions should be commenced regarding rights, duties, insurance of outgoing and incoming students, and whether new or other exchange commitments should be arranged. Report to PVC and IB Q4 2016-Q1 2017.
- An analysis of actions/regulations regarding double (and joint) degree with programmes at universities in various European countries should be made. This could be initiated by either the legal office or the faculty office in collaboration with student office. Deans and Heads of departments should be consulted. Report should initially be directed to the Deans Q1 2017.
- A persistent activity towards assurance of full covering of student/staff information and website in English will be commenced by the Communication Office and reported to PVC and IB Q4 2016-Q1 2017. (this action is also related to other strategic goals)
- As the number of incoming (and outgoing) international students will increase substantially, the university should prepare a plan for housing of these students and how to organise this in an effective way. Housing office reports to UD and PVC Q4 2016- Q1 2017.
- Incoming students will be offered high-quality international courses. Report to PVC and IB, Q2 2017.

#### *Internationalisation of staff*

Activities within this goal aim to achieve a real international signature of competence, culture and atmosphere also at staff level.

The following actions/ activities are prioritised.

- International staff recruitment. This is a pivotal factor for being successful in the future. Today, recruitment of international staff is not a fluent and effective process. First of all we should perform a “lessons learned” procedure regarding the recruitment of the 15 postdoc’s (future research leaders) and the 32 PhD’s, as well as the COFUND “Newbreed” application. HR department takes the lead and reports to PVC, Deans and UD Q1 2017. This will support writing an international recruitment strategy plan by HR department (consulting e.g. deans and head of institutions) to be reported Q2 2017 to UD and PVC. We should have the ambition to have at least one staff member at HR department with a PhD degree and one with international experience (could be the same person).
- The already initiated actions to become an “active” member of Euraxess and later on to achieve “accreditation” by HSR4R deserve full support of the University. HR will present a short action plan how to achieve this to the International Board Q4 2016
- International career development. In contrast to the large traditional (older) universities in Sweden and many well-established and high-ranked universities abroad, the fact to have been employed by or worked at Universities abroad is not taken as an important part of individual career development. This hampers our development and promotion towards the next university league. Staff (teaching, research as well as administrative) with an international background should be encouraged and supported to be engaged in strategic and management positions. There should be a clear incentive to act in an international framework. The deans (and Faculty Boards) (consulting the Heads of School) provide the PVC with input during Q4 2016 -Q1 2017. The PVC will write a short International Career Development Strategy document Q2 2017, which will be discussed in the University Management Team.
- International exchange of teaching, research and supporting/administrative staff. Today, the possibilities of supporting grants (e.g. Erasmus, STINT) are not sufficiently used, although information and support are provided by Grants Office. GO will discuss with the Deans (in the regular so called 3F meetings) how a better use of these grants can be achieved. Heads of Schools might be consulted.

#### *International visibility of Örebro University*

International visibility of the University is an important lead in creating and maintaining international networking as well as recruiting international students and staff and facilitates student and staff exchange. This will, if done adequate and correct, improve the quality of our organisation. The recent ranking scores of Örebro University in THE (Times Higher Education) rankings illustrate the possibilities and also our weakness. An indepth analysis of our THE ranking in comparison to relevant other universities should be made and can be initiated by Chief Planning Officer (“Planeringschef”). The Communication Office will take the

lead in an action plan to improve our visibility and report an initial strategy to the University Management Team Q1 2017. This includes also a website with all relevant information in the English language.

*Involvement in Horizon 2020 (including ERC), STINT and other international grants*

The improvement of Örebro University researchers' engagement and involvement to achieve international highly-acknowledged funding is a persistent interest of Grants office and the Deans. However, the University as a whole still underperforms, mainly due to the limited number of engaged researchers. This issue will be presented and discussed in the University Management Team Q4 2016 in order to identify new or improved actions. Reporting of EU and other international projects is scattered over various persons, as well as ineffective and subject to various errors. The establishment of a "Post-Contract Office" integrated with the activities of GO should be considered and a first framework will be presented by GO Q4 2016.

*Integrating External Relations Office in the internationalisation activities*

Traditionally, the network of the External Relations Office is dominated by regional and other national members, although its staff is international and the office is engaged in international innovation networks. The competences and skills of the External Relations Office, not the least in relation to societal impact, should be optimally used in the University's internationalisation activities as described above. The head of the Office together with the PVC will guarantee this.

*Creating a truly international culture and atmosphere at Örebro University*

This ambition cannot be achieved by isolated actions and will be the natural consequence of the goals and action described in the International Strategy 2015-2020 and this document. However, other stakeholders like Örebro Municipality, Örebro Region County Council, and regional industry and public sector play an important role as well and should be stimulated to promote an international culture and atmosphere. This also means that our international staff and students should be stimulated to interact with the local and regional community. The support of courses in the Swedish language to international staff is one step, but other steps, including creating novel meeting places should be considered. This action plan does not identify additional detailed actions to achieve this ambition, but more international art/creative activities should be organised and a well-organised air traffic to a main international hub is mandatory.

## **Supporting infrastructure at the University**

### *International Board*

In line with the International Strategy 2015-2020 document, an International Board has been established Q3 2016. The VC decided on the tasks and duties and composition of the IB. The IB reports to the VC. Its mandate period is initially 3 years, the member composition is based more of formal position within the University than on personal merits. The IB has the following members:

- Chair: PVC international
- UD
- One representative of the Deans\*
- One representative of the Heads of School\* (\*preferably not from same Faculty)
- One student member

The IB will be supported by the IB secretary, who preferably has international expertise and experience. The IB can “adjungate” or consult other members during their meeting. The IB will meet initially about 7 times a year (about 2 hrs each) in line with the Faculty Boards.

### *Network of Deputy Head International*

As the IB has primarily a strategic function, the executive phase of actions will be discussed and coordinated by the deputy heads international (or those responsible for internationalisation at the School), who build a network with regular meetings where the PVC can attend. The position of these deputy heads international was already indicated in the International Strategy document. Furthermore, there are regular meetings such as between the University management, Deans and Head of School (ledningsmöte), Dean meetings and Institution Forum meetings, which will enable coordination and anchorage of activities.

### *International Office*

The current International Office (IO) has outstanding competence with regard to student exchange especially related to the various exchange agreements, such as Erasmus. However, Örebro University needs coordinated comprehensive competence regarding student and staff exchange, with also a clear front-office function. This includes student exchange, incoming freemovers as well as international students doing their thesis work at OrU, but also practical placement (in programmes qualifying for a professional registration) within a frame denoted “VFU” in Swedish. These placements often take place outside a University environment, often non-academic teaching organisations, health care organisations, industry, and may have relatively short duration, which has many implications. These issues should not be settled by each School, but be facilitated by IO. Furthermore, IO will deal with staff exchange, especially in the context of teaching. Besides the comprehensive front-office function of IO, the office should also deal with a number of back-office issues in collaboration with e.g. legal office, HR, and communication office. The position

of IO in the organisation should be discussed, but this is also dependent on whether Örebro university will have a general service office, in which the front-office function of IO should be incorporated.

PVC and UD will discuss this new function for IO, consulting the Head of Student Office and Heads of School and present a proposal to the VC Q4 2016- Q1 2017.

#### *Budget*

The existing budget for 2016 covers the expenses of the centrally-initiated internationalisation activities. 2017 will initially have the same budget as 2016, but during Q1 2017 a more detailed budget for the remaining of 2017 will be made, dependent on the activities decided on and scheduled.



**Abbreviations:**

Q1: first three months of the year (cf Q2, Q3, Q4)

VC: Vice-Chancellor (rektor)

DVC: Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (prorektor)

PVC: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (vicerektor)

UD: University Director (Universitetsdirektör)

IB: International Board (Internationaliseringsråd)

GO: Grants Office

HR: Human Resources Department (Personalavdelning)

IO: International Office (Internationella kontoret)