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INTERNATIONALISATION



GUIDE FOR ASSOCIATIONS



**The international aspect** is always a part of the associations' operations in some manner. When an association considers internationality an important value and international students as potential and important members, this helps both with the integration of the international students and the internationalisation of Finnish students.

Student exchange or internships abroad are not possible for everyone, but internationalisation can take place close to you. Taking international aspects and international students into consideration in association activities teaches the same skills: interest and contact increase understanding regarding both one's own and the foreign culture and enhance language and communication skills.

Making student association operations more international may seem difficult, but it can also be implemented in small steps. This guide presents concrete measures for taking the international perspective into consideration both in the association events and modes of operation. The guide is divided into three sections, of which **A** includes things that are easy to implement, **B** some things that require more investment and **C** more thorough internationalisation measures that have a wider impact. The aims have been divided into four areas:

**Advocacy:** how does your association function? How do you take the international perspective into consideration?

**New students:** how can you include exchange students and international degree students in the association's operations?

**Events:** what kind of events does your association organise?

**Communication:** who does your communication reach and how? What languages are used in your association?

**We hope that this guide is helpful for you and your association!**

# A

## Advocacy

Select an International Affairs Officer to the board of your association, who is responsible for maintaining an international perspective in the association operations. You can also create an International Committee to assist them. They should not have to do everything themselves, but their task is to make sure that others take international perspectives and international students into consideration in their activities.

## New students

You can take the board of your association to meet the new international students in the beginning of the academic year, for example during the Orientation Week.

If your association receives new students, make sure that there is a person responsible for international students as well as tutors for them. The person responsible may be the International Affairs Officer or a person responsible for other new students.

## Events

Make a review on your events: what kinds of events does your association usually organise, and do they reach international students? How could these activities be developed in a manner that would take all students into consideration?

Make an excursion with your active members to an event organised by the university, the Student Union or another student association, for example language cafes or an exchange fair, with a lot of international students attending.

## Communication

Translate the main points in all communication into English and remember to include “In English below” in the beginning of the text, so that the English information is not lost. If the issue really only concerns Finnish-speakers, it is good to take international students into consideration by saying, for example, that “This only concerns Finnish students”.

Pay attention to explaining the terminology. For example, not many people know what “sitsit” is, but “an academic dinner party with singing” already says a lot about the event.

# B

## Advocacy

Prepare an internationalisation plan for your association where you list the most important goals. It can be a part of the action plan of your association.

## New students

Organise a year opening event, a reception for new students or the whole orientation week as multilingual and open for all new students.

Recruit students returning from exchange as international tutors or for other activities in cooperation with the department or the university.

## Events

Organise international parts during existing events: English-spoken parts at sitit parties, excursions or other events, or programme organised by international students in your existing event

It is easy to get to know different cultures outside the university. Organise an event for refugees, an excursion to the cultural centre or a visit to an embassy of an interesting country.

## Communication

Translate the entire texts for events and their posters, news, newsletters, programme for annual celebrations etc.

Keep regular and active contact with the international students who have joined your association, for example weekly and via decided channels.

If your association has a magazine, take multilingual content into consideration in making it.

Key words in presentation and training material could be in English as well, even if it were only presented to Finnish students.

# C

## Advocacy

Make it possible for international students to participate in running your association's operations, attending meetings and being involved in the board and as an active member.

Do you do advocacy work at the university or elsewhere? Think about how to take international affairs and intercultural communication into consideration in your lobbying, e.g. in terms of developing teaching.

Does your association have international networks or international friend organisations? Take a look at their operations, organise an excursion or invite visitors to your own meetings or events. You can apply for e.g. Erasmus+ funding for this.

## New students

Put new students in the same groups regardless of their background, or make use of buddy groups: one international tutor group and one Finnish tutor group can serve as buddy groups for each other and do things together.

## Events

Invite students who have been in student exchange/ had an internship or course abroad to tell about their experiences at a current event or organise a new event.

Host all events in several languages, if needed.

Consider with your international actives, if content from other cultures could be included in your events.

## Communication

Translate most of the documents into English.

Think about how to bring up international perspectives and phenomena in your communication. For example, you can ask for a contribution for your blog, website or Facebook page from an international student involved in your association's operations, or write about a conference in your field or about exchange studies.





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