

**MANUAL FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE
OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

CHAPTER ON INTERNATIONALIZATION

Version 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction	5
1.1	Strategic Plan, Agenda for Internationalization, Policy Framework for Internationalization	6
2	Internationalization in the organization	7
2.1	The Executive Board and employee participation	7
2.2	VU International Office	7
2.2.1	Mobility Unit	8
2.2.2	Centre for International Cooperation	8
2.2.3	Policy and Business Development Unit	8
2.3	Faculties	8
2.4	Service departments.....	9
2.5	Aurora	9
2.6	Ombudsman	9
3	Quality assurance for internationalization of education and programmes	10
3.1	The quality assurance cycle	10
3.2	NVAO's Special Quality Assurance System for Internationalization	11
3.3	Exploring or assessing the international and intercultural dimension of education	11
3.3.1	The VU International Checklist	13
4	Internationalization in teaching: three main themes.....	22
4.1	Mixed classroom.....	22
4.2	The international intake of degree students.....	23
4.3	International exchange and other mobility programmes	24
4.3.1	Exchange programme	24
4.3.2	Summer Schools.....	25
4.3.3	Short-term programmes	25
4.3.4	VU Amsterdam Summer School, VU Graduate Winter School and VU Semester in Amsterdam	26
4.3.5	Joint programmes	27
5	Internationalization of education: guidelines, rules, recommendations	29
5.1	Code of Conduct on International Students in Dutch Higher Education	29
5.2	Starting and providing English-taught courses.....	29

5.2.1	Some basic principles of English-taught education	29
5.2.2	Determining the language of instruction.....	30
5.2.3	Starting up an English-taught degree programme or specialization	30
5.3	The English language at VU Amsterdam	31
5.3.1	Use of English in the organization	31
5.3.2	The language skills of teachers and support staff	31
5.3.3	English as an admission requirement for students	32
5.4	Recruiting international students.....	33
5.4.1	Recruiting international students	34
5.5	Selection and admission of international students.....	36
5.5.1	Credential evaluation and admission	36
5.5.2	Selectiveness.....	38
5.5.3	Conditional admission, exceptions, preparatory year, matching, deficiencies.....	38
5.5.4	Application fee	38
5.6	Study guidance and services to international students	39
5.6.1	Programmes and courses for international students	39
5.6.2	Services for international students.....	39
5.6.3	Study progress	40
5.7	Gaining international experience as a student	40
5.7.1	Principles of outbound mobility (exchange programme).....	40
5.7.2	Principles of inbound mobility (exchange programme)	41
5.7.3	Courses taken abroad	41
5.8	Student scholarship programmes.....	42
5.9	International staff	45
5.10	Collaborating with international partners	45
5.10.1	Aurora strategic network	46
5.10.2	Institutional partners.....	46
5.10.3	Focus countries and strategic alliances	47
5.10.4	Exchange partners	47
5.11	Receiving foreign delegations	48
5.12	What to do in the event of an emergency abroad.....	48
6	Appendix 1: VU International Office.....	49

THE AIM OF THE CHAPTER ON INTERNATIONALIZATION

The Manual for Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning contains the policy established by VU Amsterdam in the field of teaching and quality control in an educational context. This chapter on Internationalization contains useful information for directors of studies, programme coordinators, lecturers and other members of staff, regarding VU Amsterdam's policy on the internationalization of education, complete with an array of practical examples. After reading this chapter, colleagues from faculties and service departments will have a better idea of how to incorporate VU Amsterdam's objectives for the university as a whole into their own ambitions, policies and activities, and of how the VU International Office can help them achieve this. Matters relating to international internships are not covered in this chapter; these can be found in the chapter 'Internships and Theses'.

VU INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

The VU International Office is responsible for this chapter of the Manual. If you have any queries or comments, please call the Policy and Business Development Unit of the VU International Office on +31 (0)20-5989097.

DEFINING INTERNATIONALIZATION

While acknowledging that multiple definitions and interpretations of the concept 'internationalization' exist, VU Amsterdam has consciously chosen to adopt the following broad definition¹:

“Comprehensive internationalization is a commitment, confirmed through action to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education.

It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise. It is essential that it be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units. It is an institutional imperative, not just a desirable possibility.

Comprehensive internationalization not only impacts all of campus life but the institution's external frames of reference, partnerships, and relations. The global reconfiguration of economies, systems of trade, research, and communication, and the impact of global forces on local life, dramatically expand the need for comprehensive internationalization and the motivations and purposes driving it.”

1 INTRODUCTION

There is an increasing demand from the job market for higher education graduates who possess international and intercultural competencies, and who have acquired international experience through work or study. To help our students prepare for their future careers – both in the Netherlands and abroad – VU Amsterdam devotes a great deal of time and effort to the internationalization of its educational programmes.

Internationalization is an objective which VU Amsterdam approaches in different ways. For example, at both Bachelor's and Master's level, education takes place in a mixed classroom setting and talented students are recruited abroad to study in the University's international, English-taught programmes. Ideally, the curriculum offers an international and intercultural perspective, while the participation of both Dutch and international students ensures that all students learn to interact and cooperate with students from other countries and cultures. VU Amsterdam encourages Bachelor's students to go abroad for a semester as part of their studies. To this end, the University selects partner institutions whose curricula and facilities correspond to the wishes and needs of our students and our faculties. Meanwhile, other types of international programmes, such as summer schools and short-term programmes, broaden the range of international opportunities for both Bachelor's and Master's students.

At VU Amsterdam, everyone is involved in one or more aspects of internationalization: the boards and employee participation bodies, staff within faculties and service departments, partners in research and education at home and abroad, and, of course, the students themselves. This part of the Manual for Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning is about how VU Amsterdam is shaping the internationalization of education.

[Section 1 Introduction](#) (more specifically subsection 1.1) sets out the strategy and policy documents that provide the framework for internationalization at VU Amsterdam. [Chapter 2 Internationalization in the organization](#) goes on to describe how the process of internationalization is embedded within VU Amsterdam as an organization. [Chapter 3 Quality assurance on the internationalization of teaching and degree programmes](#) details the aspects of internationalization which are being monitored and evaluated. It also explains how programmes can investigate and assess their internationalization efforts using a checklist drawn up by the University: the VU International Checklist. If desired, programmes can use this checklist as a basis for continuing with an application for the NVAO's Special Quality Assurance System for Internationalization, so that the quality of internationalization on their study programme can be recognized by an accreditation organization. [Section 4 Internationalization of education: three main themes](#) zooms in on three main activities of internationalization in education: the mixed classroom, the new registration of international diploma students, and international exchange and other mobility programmes. [Chapter 5 Internationalization of education: guidelines, rules and recommendations](#) goes on to explain existing policy on a number of relevant topics, providing insight into how internationalization is being shaped at VU Amsterdam.

1.1 STRATEGIC PLAN, AGENDA FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION, POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION

Internationalization features in a range of strategy and policy documents at VU Amsterdam. First and foremost, the University's ambitions in a whole range of areas – including internationalization – have been laid down in the [VU Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#). The three priority areas of the Strategic Plan – Internationalization, Talent and Diversity – are discussed and elaborated on in [the Educational Vision](#) and the [Educational Vision Practical Application Document](#). The [Agenda for Internationalization](#) details the goals of the Strategic Plan, both general and specific, along with the intended results, the points for action, the responsible stakeholders and the timeline for realizing the stated ambitions in the field of internationalization. As you would expect, this agenda also links to the [Education Agenda](#).

Objectives from the Strategic Plan

1. We create an international environment.
2. We increase the international mobility of students and staff.
3. We raise the international profile of VU Amsterdam.
4. We focus on cooperation within the Aurora network.

The existing internationalization policy is described in the Policy Framework for Internationalization. This framework covers our core activities of Education, Research and Services, and International Cooperation. In this context, the following policy principles have been identified:

- The three core values of VU Amsterdam – responsibility, openness and personal commitment – define how the University approaches internationalization.
- VU Amsterdam sees internationalization as a dynamic process geared towards heightening the quality of its core activities.
- At VU Amsterdam, internationalization is never seen in isolation: Talent, Diversity and Internationalization, the three priorities of the current Strategic Plan, are inextricably linked and come to fruition in the mixed classroom.
- Internationalization means dedicating our efforts towards creating an inclusive working and learning environment at VU Amsterdam.
- The implementation of internationalization policy involves students, academic staff and employees throughout the university.

2 INTERNATIONALIZATION IN THE ORGANIZATION

Internationalization has a clear and self-evident impact on our organization. The rise in the number of international students and employees, for example, means that services on campus are increasingly being designed with this international population in mind. For instance, communicating in English has become more widespread on campus, library opening hours have been extended, the range of catering has been expanded and extensive time and effort has been invested in achieving suitable accommodation for these target groups. Lecturers and other staff are also receiving more effective support in their dealings with international students and colleagues from abroad, through targeted training and collective activities. In 2013, the organization was set up in such a way that, by pooling expertise and knowledge in the [VU International Office](#), these developments could receive effective support from within the faculties and service departments.

At VU Amsterdam, everyone is involved in internationalization or the consequences thereof: the boards and employee participation bodies, colleagues in faculties and service departments, the independent ombudsman, partners in research and education, and, of course, the students themselves. A number of bodies and individuals with special responsibilities in this area are described below.

2.1 THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

The final responsibility for the Internationalization portfolio is vested in one or more members of the [Executive Board](#) and in the Dean of Internationalization. In a monthly strategic consultation, the portfolio holders discuss relevant issues with the Director of the VU International Office and the Director of the Student and Educational Affairs Department. Within the [Joint Assembly](#) (the Staff Council and the Student Council), the Internationalization Committee deals with the Internationalization dossier; the Joint Assembly discusses relevant issues with the Executive Board.

2.2 VU INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

All support activities in the field of internationalization are brought together in the [VU International Office](#) (see Appendix 1 for more information). The VU International Office is part of the Student and Educational Affairs Department and is managed by a director. As well as reporting to the Director of Student and Educational Affairs, the VU International Office reports directly to the Executive Board. The activities of the VU International Office are primarily governed by the Policy Framework for Internationalization, the Strategic Plan and the Educational Vision, as well as being shaped by external developments.

The VU International Office consists of three units (the Mobility Unit, the Centre for International Cooperation, and the Policy and Business Development Unit) and is supported by secretarial, administrative and finance staff. In addition to providing input for the annual plan of the Student and Educational Affairs Department, the various units within the VU International Office draw up their own annual plans and reports, which are of course coordinated with the relevant faculties and departments where necessary.

2.2.1 MOBILITY UNIT

The Mobility Unit consists of four teams: 1) Degree Mobility, 2) Student Exchange, 3) Studying Abroad in Amsterdam, and 4) International Services. This unit organizes and supports all forms of international mobility, including the inbound mobility of international students taking a full Bachelor's, Master's or PhD programme (the Degree Mobility team); the inbound and outbound mobility of students and staff participating in an exchange or short-term programme (the Student Exchange team); and the inbound mobility of students participating in the VU Amsterdam Summer School or the VU Semester in Amsterdam programme (the Studying Abroad in Amsterdam team). For all these target groups, the International Services team is responsible for providing services in areas such as housing, scholarships and immigration (incoming students and guests only). A number of services are also provided for the benefit of international employees.

2.2.2 CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Centre for International Cooperation attracts, coordinates and carries out externally funded cooperation projects with faculty research groups. These projects contribute to capacity building in developing countries and emerging economies, and are in line with the profiling themes outlined in the Strategic Plan. The Centre has its own unique project management expertise in place to oversee international cooperation projects of this kind, most of which are complex in nature.

2.2.3 POLICY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT UNIT

The Policy and Business Development Unit supports the implementation of VU Amsterdam's internationalization ambitions and focuses on improving and renewing processes. This is done through projects in which international trends and opportunities are also translated into strategic policy in the field of internationalization. This unit's responsibilities also cover international marketing, communication with students and student recruitment.

2.3 FACULTIES

The faculties are actively involved in the achievement of VU Amsterdam's internationalization objectives. The board is responsible for the faculty's internationalization policy, specifically with regard to internationalization of the curriculum, and recruitment and new registration of international students. The board sets out its ambitions in faculty-level annual plans, and enters into agreements with the Executive Board on the basis of administrative consultations. The VU International Office supports faculties, degree programmes and lecturers in achieving these strategic and faculty objectives. There is also annual consultation between the VU International Office and the Faculty Board to coordinate the plans for the year. The Faculty Board assesses whether the measurable aspects of internationalization fulfil the policy aims and meet the set targets. Annual teaching reports provide feedback on the extent to which the objectives have been achieved.

2.4 SERVICE DEPARTMENTS

The service departments also play a part in achieving internationalization objectives, and have annual plans in which internationalization may feature. In addition to the Student and Educational Affairs Department (including the VU International Office), these include Administration, Marketing and Communications (including Alumni Relations), HRM, Occupational Health, Safety and the Environment, Information Technology, Corporate Real Estate and Facilities, and the University Library. The VU International Office cooperates with these service departments and supports them where possible in achieving their ambitions. For the purpose of quality assurance, data are also systematically recorded by various service departments. For example, the Student and Educational Affairs Department manages information on international students in the student information system (SAP/SLM), while data on prospective international students is stored in Selligent, the CRM system used by Marketing and Communications.

2.5 AURORA

VU Amsterdam founded the [Aurora strategic network](#) in 2016 together with eight other renowned European research universities. The Université Grenoble Alpes (France), the University of Aberdeen (Scotland), the University of Antwerp (Belgium), the University of Bergen (Norway), the University of Duisburg-Essen (Germany), the University of East Anglia (England), the University of Gothenburg (Sweden) and the University of Iceland (Iceland) joined VU Amsterdam in striving for a university community in which diversity and inclusiveness play an important role. They all have an excellent position in the field of research (in the global top 250) and place great emphasis on high-quality education. This network offers the VU community the opportunity to engage in joint educational programmes, research collaboration and consortium formation, joint grant applications, and sharing good practices. Various thematic working groups are active within the network, including Diversity and Involvement, Social Relevance and Research Impact, Student Initiatives; Innovation in Education; Human Life and Health; the Digital World; Internationalization; and Sustainability, Energy and Climate.

Colleagues with a general interest in Aurora, or in cooperating with one or more Aurora members in a particular area, may [contact](#) the VU International Office (Policy and Business Development Unit), where Aurora's local office is based. The network's VU email address is aurora@vu.nl.

2.6 OMBUDSMAN

VU Amsterdam has a single address where all of the University's students and staff, including international students and employees, can file complaints, objections and appeals: the Disputes Desk. This is where the [VU Ombudsman](#) provides a safe and accessible setting for discussing a complaint, for examining the situation together with the complainant and for deciding whether steps should be taken and what form they should take.

3 QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION AND PROGRAMMES

In this section, we begin by identifying the components that are monitored and evaluated within the quality assurance cycle for internationalization. We then introduce the NVAO's Special Quality Assurance System for Internationalization. Based on this assessment framework, a VU International Checklist has been developed so that programmes can examine their own international initiatives in order to assess for themselves the quality and strength of the international and intercultural dimension of their programme, and take action to improve it where appropriate.

3.1 THE QUALITY ASSURANCE CYCLE

Monitoring the components of the Agenda for Internationalization and evaluating them every six months enables VU Amsterdam to keep a watchful eye on the extent to which established internationalization policy is effectively implemented. The following aspects are also among those measured as part of the quality assurance cycle:

- meeting the standard of English expected from teaching and support staff;
- student satisfaction with the standard of English among teaching staff, based on student evaluations administered by the Education and Quality Assurance section of the Student and Educational Affairs Department;
- student satisfaction with opportunities for gaining international experience, based on the results of the Bachelor's questionnaire and the National Student Survey;
- satisfaction among international exchange students with their time studying at VU Amsterdam;
- satisfaction among international students at VU Amsterdam, assessed through the International Student Barometer survey published by the VU International Office every two years;
- reasons for dropping out and no-shows among students (obtained by asking drop-outs and no-show students to rate the intake process etc. in a decliners' survey);
- self-analysis on the basis of the NVAO's Special Quality Assurance System for Internationalization (which can lead to accreditation).

The following new measurements are planned for the years to come:

- new registrations, progress and completion rates among a programme's international students;
- comparing the performance of international students on a programme with that of students with a Dutch educational background;
- maintaining systematic profile sketches of foreign partner universities, institutes and research organizations, based on student experiences, research rankings and education rankings.

3.2 NVAO'S SPECIAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION

NVAO is the Dutch-Flemish accreditation association. The NVAO assesses the quality and internal quality assurance of degree programmes at universities and universities of applied sciences. Institutes of higher education in the Netherlands can apply to NVAO for a special quality certificate in a number of areas, including internationalization. This type of certification is available at institutional and programme level. The certificate can be applied for as part of the [institutional quality assurance audit](#), the [programme audit](#) or separately (in which case the special certificate remains valid until the end of the accreditation period of the programme or institution in question).

This [Special Quality Assurance System for Internationalization](#) therefore enables programmes to obtain recognition for their commitment to internationalization. Since 2016, NVAO has implemented the assessment framework of the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA). This framework is described in the [ECA Frameworks for the Assessment of Quality in Internationalization](#). Once the NVAO has granted certification under the Special Quality Assurance System for Internationalization, an institute can also apply to the ECA for the European Certificate for Quality in Internationalization.

For more information on the application process for this accreditation, please contact the Educational Policy, Quality Assurance and Process Management section of the Student and Educational Affairs Department. The VU International Office (Policy and Business Development Unit) will be more than happy to offer assistance and advice in this regard.

The following section introduces and describes the VU International Checklist. This checklist is based on the standards and criteria from the ECA's assessment framework.

3.3 EXPLORING OR ASSESSING THE INTERNATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL DIMENSION OF EDUCATION

VU Amsterdam currently has around 66 English-taught Master's and 17 English-taught Bachelor's programmes or specializations, and these numbers are due to rise. In order to help a programme discover how international it really is, or to facilitate its application to the NVAO Quality Assurance System for Internationalization (or for the ECA Certificate for Quality in Internationalization), a team from VU Amsterdam has developed a comprehensive VU International Checklist based on the standards and criteria of the ECA framework. This checklist is also very useful when setting up a new international programme, as it covers all of the points worth considering when giving an international and intercultural dimension to a curriculum.

The MSc in Marketing run by the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration took part in a pilot scheme in 2017. The checklist helped the director of studies to see what had already been achieved and to express this more clearly. It also provided a good mirror for looking critically at remaining points for improvement. Our colleagues at the MSc in Marketing are of course more than willing to share their experiences and their completed checklist. To find out more, please contact the programme's director of studies.

The following 5 standards and 15 criteria¹ are examined as part of this process:



The VU International Checklist provides concrete examples of how the international dimension of a programme can be demonstrated within the context of VU Amsterdam. For instance, it examines how internationalization is reflected in the final attainment levels, the nature of the focus on international and intercultural differences, the international career paths followed by the students, or how easy it is to go on an international internship. Practical matters are also discussed, such as how readily international students can participate in a programme committee or the activities organized by study associations or how easy it is for them to obtain study advice.

Programmes that want to start using this checklist, either for the purposes of initial orientation or as a step towards changing the character of the programme, will find it in Section 3.3.1. (the checklist has been drawn up in English). You can also [contact](#) the VU International Office (Policy and Business Development Unit) if you have any questions about the checklist or applying for the Special Quality Assurance System for Internationalization.

¹ Aerden, A. (2015). [Frameworks for the assessment of quality in internationalization](#) (ECA Occasional Paper).

3.3.1 THE VU INTERNATIONAL CHECKLIST

This checklist follows the [template](#) of the self-evaluation report to assess the current level of internationalization in a degree programme. In the column headed 'current situation', please fill in the programme's status at this time in relation to standard criteria 1 to 5. The last column lists possible examples/questions to be addressed.

STANDARD 1 INTENDED INTERNATIONALIZATION			
1	SUPPORTED GOALS	CURRENT SITUATION (<i>PLEASE DESCRIBE</i>)	FOR EXAMPLE
A	Shared vision. The internationalization goals for the programme are documented and these are shared and supported by stakeholders within and outside the programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme's mission statement: [XXX] • Programme's vision on internationalization: [XXX] • Stakeholders and their engagement with the programme and its internationalization goals: [XXX] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the mission statement of the programme? • Is the programme management's internationalization in line with its mission statement? • With which stakeholder groups does the programme management maintain relations and discuss its vision of internationalization (e.g. staff and students in Programme Committee, Student Representation, alumni, advisory board)? • Are graduates of the programme prepared for working internationally, as global citizens? • Does the programme integrate an international, intercultural and global dimension into its purpose, function and delivery? • Does the programme give students a sufficient international dimension to enable them to evaluate the impact of culture in communication and teamwork? • Are students able to evaluate the impact of differences in culture, governance, economics and gender?
1	VERIFIABLE OBJECTIVES	CURRENT SITUATION (<i>PLEASE DESCRIBE</i>)	FOR EXAMPLE
B	Verifiable objectives have been formulated that enable the programme's internationalization goals to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifiable objectives in internationalization: [XXX] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the programme management listed the programme's objectives on internationalization? • Are the objectives an explicit and measurable operationalization of the internationalization vision?

	be achieved.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the programme management carried out a benchmark comparison with other programmes in NL and abroad? <p><i>Consider for example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All registered students have equal rights and access to the educational resources of the programme. • All core staff members have extensive experience of international projects. Within these projects they fulfil roles varying from scientific researcher to taking on advisory roles in policy and governance. They are a role model for international and intercultural teamwork. • Mixed classroom: students have different backgrounds and project groups are composed to encourage the exchange of different culture aspects. The programme is focused on international content and research projects. • Students are asked to compare best practices from a variety of international situations, to reflect on differences and similarities of a physical, ethical and societal nature. • Every student is given an opportunity for relevant international work-based learning experience. • Students will graduate with relevant international experience.
1	IMPACT ON EDUCATION	CURRENT SITUATION (<i>PLEASE DESCRIBE</i>)	FOR EXAMPLE
C	The internationalization goals explicitly include measures that contribute to the overall quality of teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course evaluations: [XXX] • Curriculum evaluations: [XXX] • Thesis evaluations: [XXX] • Advisory Board: [XXX] • Alumni Committee: [XXX] • National Student Survey: [XXX] • NVAO accreditation/peer review: [XXX] • AACSB accreditation progress: [XXX] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which periodical evaluations are in place and form the basis for improvement measures (i.e. internal and external quality assurance system)? • Are the international and intercultural features of the programme part of the quality assurance cycle? • Diversity of backgrounds among incoming students requires a didactical concept that not only accommodates different backgrounds, but also peer support so that students can learn from each other. • The didactical concept is part of the programme’s vision of the teaching and learning environment and includes an integrated, student-centred approach aimed at lifelong learning in an international context. • The programme’s internationalization will be a part of the annual

			evaluation and improvement plan; the learning outcomes for internationalization will be included in the standard evaluations and the verifiable objectives will be monitored.
SUMMARY OF STANDARD 1:			
STANDARD 2: INTERNATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL LEARNING			
2	INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES	CURRENT SITUATION (<i>PLEASE DESCRIBE</i>)	FOR EXAMPLE
A	The intended international and intercultural learning outcomes defined by the programme are a clear reflection of its internationalization goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International learning outcomes: [XXX] • Intercultural learning outcomes: [XXX] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which international learning outcomes has the programme specified? • Which intercultural learning outcomes has the programme specified? • How many learning outcomes address the international or intercultural knowledge and skills that the students have to master? • Do the intended learning outcomes accurately reflect the vision of internationalization? • The intended learning outcomes include the following examples; the student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can evaluate the impact of differences in culture, governance, economics and gender; - can reflect on differences and similarities of a physical, ethical, economic and societal nature; - can work in an international setting and demonstrate intercultural communicative competence in diverse situations; - possesses the professional skills and knowledge of ethical values needed for working in international and multicultural teams and environments; - has critical knowledge and disciplinary competence relevant to local and global contexts, and to issues of professional, political, environmental and social significance. <p><i>International examples of learning outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - knowledge of international marketing; - knowledge of relations between companies (in various countries); - ability to work in an international business setting;

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ability to communicate in English. <p><i>Intercultural examples of learning outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - familiarity with cross-cultural consumer research; - ability to work in teams with people of different cultural backgrounds; - ability to understand and interpret cultural limitations and restrictions.
2	STUDENT ASSESSMENT	CURRENT SITUATION (<i>PLEASE DESCRIBE</i>)	FOR EXAMPLE
B	The methods used for student assessment are suitable for measuring achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods of assessment used for (mostly knowledge-oriented?) international learning outcomes): [XXX] • Methods of assessment used for (mostly skills/attitude-related?) intercultural learning goals: [XXX] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What methods for assessing the international and intercultural course learning objectives has the programme management selected? • The programme's assessment instruments are in line with the learning objectives of the programme and the individual course units. • The programme should offer a range of different instruments to test both knowledge and skills. • The programme has adopted international teaching standards in grading and examination. • Peer reflection can be used to gain intercultural knowledge.
2	GRADUATE ACHIEVEMENT	CURRENT SITUATION (<i>PLEASE DESCRIBE</i>)	FOR EXAMPLE
C	The graduates of the programme have demonstrably achieved the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurable achievements: [XXX] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The international and intercultural learning outcomes are achieved when... (e.g. xx% of graduates are accepted onto Research Master's/PhD programmes, if majority of the graduates entering the labour market secure an international job) • The sources from which data are gathered (e.g. Alumni LinkedIn group, comprehensive survey among alumni, recording alumni's careers and the extent to which they have attained international and intercultural learning objectives) • A matrix/table showing Intended Learning Outcomes for each programme module. • A comprehensive and coherent overview of how students can attain the final qualification during their studies. • A student who successfully completes the programme meets all the

			intended learning outcomes, including the international and intercultural learning outcomes.
SUMMARY OF STANDARD 2:			
STANDARD 3 TEACHING AND LEARNING			
3	CURRICULUM	CURRENT SITUATION (<i>PLEASE DESCRIBE</i>)	FOR EXAMPLE
A	The content and structure of the curriculum provide the necessary means for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended (international and intercultural) learning outcomes matrix of programme components: [XXX] • International student mobility: [XXX] • International/intercultural components in research work: [XXX] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the programme management made a distinction between courses with international learning goals, courses with intercultural learning goals and courses which address both? • Is there an opportunity for students to spend a substantial part of the programme abroad, either on an international internship or as part of an international exchange programme (and how are academic/personal benefits reported/assessed by the student and/or host company/institution?) • Is an international or intercultural component a requirement of the thesis that each student has to write? • Is the didactical concept part of the vision of the teaching and learning environment and does it include an integrated, student-centred approach in an international context? • Do students who successfully complete the programme meet all the intended learning outcomes, including the international and intercultural learning outcomes?
3	TEACHING METHODS	CURRENT SITUATION (<i>PLEASE DESCRIBE</i>)	FOR EXAMPLE
B	The teaching methods are suitable for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching methods for each course with an international or intercultural focus: [XXX] • Student interaction (international or intercultural exchanges): [XXX] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the programme management listed the teaching methods to be applied for each course with an international or intercultural focus? • Do the methods lend themselves easily to intensive international or intercultural exchanges among the students? • Do students have opportunity to meet and discuss international subjects and to learn how to handle intercultural situations? • What approach is taken to forming groups for assignments?

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are innovative teaching methods incorporated? • Student-centred teaching • Students in a mixed classroom need sufficient feedback and time for adjusting assignment work • Teaching in a mixed classroom
3	LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	CURRENT SITUATION (PLEASE DESCRIBE)	FOR EXAMPLE
C	The learning environment is suitable for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International/diverse student team work: [XXX] • Composition of teaching staff: [XXX] • Mentor scheme (at programme level): [XXX] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are students confronted with the intercultural dimensions of working together with students from a different background, and if so, how? • Is the composition of the teaching staff international? • Is there a mentor programme, with mentor groups composed of international students, contributing to the international and intercultural character of the programme? • The learning environment refers to the entire range of conditions and activities which determine the learning process. • It consists of an enabling context, adequate resources, and a set of tools. • It is the sum of the internal and external circumstances and influences affecting the learning process.
SUMMARY OF STANDARD 3:			
STANDARD 4: STAFF			
4	COMPOSITION	CURRENT SITUATION (PLEASE DESCRIBE)	FOR EXAMPLE
A	The composition of the staff (in quality and quantity) facilitates the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment policy for teaching staff: [XXX] • Relevant characteristics of staff: [XXX] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the programme management aim to have a teaching staff composed of different nationalities (if so, how many different nationalities and what percentage compared to Dutch teaching staff)? • Do the staff have relevant academic and/or professional knowledge and skills? For example, do/are staff members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - like to teach on an international programme? - have an affinity with teaching internationally diverse student groups? - open to teaching groups of students with different cultural backgrounds? - have a good command of the English language? • The quality of the staff can be described using:

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the highest level of education of the teaching staff, the teacher qualification (UTQ) - international experience in research and diversity in background (reflected in number of non-Dutch nationals) - gender diversity (reflected as number of female staff) - experience of student-centred teaching • The quantity of the staff can be described using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the staff-to-student ratio • The programme facilitates community building among students and between staff and students.
4	EXPERIENCE	CURRENT SITUATION (<i>PLEASE DESCRIBE</i>)	FOR EXAMPLE
B	Staff members have sufficient international experience, intercultural competences and language skills to further develop the programmes' internationalization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVs of core teaching team: [XXX] • Relevant characteristics of UTQ/STQ: [XXX] • English proficiency requirements / evaluation: [XXX] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core teachers and subject-specific contributors are listed with their most recent international experiences; (short) curricula vitae of the intended core teachers and expert team members. • These experiences include intercultural competences and language skills. • The staff on the curriculum development team is experienced in student-centred teaching (in a mixed classroom). • The staff have didactic and/or research competencies in an international context. • The staff have competencies connected with the international job market and the working environment in the professional field. • The staff have competencies connected with their personal academic disciplines in an international context. • Does the Dutch University Teaching Qualification include e.g. intercultural communication? • Do lecturers have a good command of the English language (according to e.g. student evaluations)?
4	SERVICES	CURRENT SITUATION (<i>PLEASE DESCRIBE</i>)	FOR EXAMPLE
C	The services provided by staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services by programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the programme management provide services to the staff?

	<p>are consistent with the staff composition and facilitate international experiences, intercultural competences and language skills.</p>	<p>management: [XXX]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services by VU International Office: [XXX] • Services by HRM: [XXX] • Services by VU Learning Academy: [XXX] • Services by Taalcentrum-VU: [XXX] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do lecturers and programme management regularly discuss teaching in the intercultural classroom? • Career development (HRM) • Training programmes (Learning Academy) • Professional language support (Taalcentrum-VU) • Teaching qualification • Facilities • Staff exchange • VU international staff network • International Classroom Knowledge Series
--	---	--	--

SUMMARY OF STANDARD 4:

STANDARD 5: STUDENTS

5	STUDENT GROUP COMPOSITION	CURRENT SITUATION (PLEASE DESCRIBE)	FOR EXAMPLE
A	<p>The composition of the student group (national and cultural backgrounds) is in line with the programme’s internationalization goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment, selection, admission procedures: [XXX] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the programme have the right to select the students on admission (and based on which criteria)? • Does the programme management maintain a balance in the composition of the student group entering the programme (e.g. are there any underrepresented nationalities/countries)? • The programme aims for diversity in the scientific and cultural backgrounds of the incoming student cohort. • Diversity of background will provide a stimulating multicultural and international learning environment. • The programme facilitates community building among students and between staff and students. • Facilitating interaction and community building through formal and informal/voluntary activities (e.g. ‘out of class activities’ like trips and excursions can increase group identification). • Tools for achieving a diverse composition include communication geared towards enrolment and the availability of scholarships.
5	INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE	CURRENT SITUATION (PLEASE DESCRIBE)	FOR EXAMPLE

B	The internationalization experience gained by students is adequate and corresponds to the programme's internationalization goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses with international focus: [XXX] • International internships: [XXX] • International exchange programme: [XXX] • Student involvement in programme management/organization: [XXX] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International subjects taught in class? • International internships? • International exchange programme? • Student membership of programme committees/student representative bodies? (Does the programme committee have student members?)
5	SERVICES PROVIDED TO STUDENTS	CURRENT SITUATION (<i>PLEASE DESCRIBE</i>)	FOR EXAMPLE
C	The services provided to the students effectively support the programme's internationalization goals and correspond to the composition of the student group.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information provision • digital learning environment • computer and study facilities • library • counselling • study guidance • assistance with accommodation / visa application • career support • language training • extra-curricular activities of an international or intercultural nature (e.g. excursions, summer schools, case competitions abroad) • diploma supplement listing the international and intercultural features of the programme
SUMMARY OF STANDARD 5:			

4 INTERNATIONALIZATION IN TEACHING: THREE MAIN THEMES

Internationalization of teaching can be seen in the lecture hall where Dutch and international students and teaching staff meet, mostly within the context of international (English-taught) programmes but also in English-taught courses or minors within programmes which are otherwise taught in Dutch. This is a result of the arrival of international students who want to obtain a Bachelor's or Master's degree at VU Amsterdam, the exchange of VU students and students from international partner universities within the exchange programmes, and also the hundreds of students each year who come to our VU Amsterdam Summer School and VU Semester in Amsterdam.

This section introduces the following important themes for education at VU Amsterdam:

- Mixed classroom ([Subsection 4.1](#))
- The international intake of degree students ([Subsection 4.2](#))
- International exchange and other mobility programmes ([Subsection 4.3](#))

4.1 MIXED CLASSROOM

Many programmes, tracks, minors or individual courses at VU Amsterdam are taught in English and therefore attract international students and teaching staff who bring a range of linguistic, cultural and academic backgrounds to the University. This creates a diverse teaching and learning environment in which students can acquire international and intercultural skills, and prepare themselves for working in an internationally oriented society and a multicultural context. VU Amsterdam's Mixed Classroom Model aims to provide inclusive education and combines the priorities of Internationalization, Diversity and Talent to create a learning environment that encourages the sharing of a variety of perspectives in a safe environment where people feel at home.

In order to achieve this educational added value, there is a special focus on supervising instructors who teach in one of these Mixed Classrooms. The International Office has joined forces with LEARN! Academy to develop a training programme created by and for instructors. This programme is actively promoted at the start of new English-taught programmes or specializations. The specific objective of the programme is to use pedagogical interventions to take full advantage of the following aspects throughout the curriculum: a) providing all the benefits of the mixed classroom and b) ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, feel comfortable in the classroom. This creates a safe, productive and (inter)active learning environment for everyone involved. The basic principles in this effort are inclusion and equity: creating equal opportunities for everyone on the programme.

For more information, please go to the [KnowVU](#) website or contact Siema Ramdas from Learn! Academy or Wendy Maat in the International Office (Mobility Unit).

Literature:

Shore, L. M., Randel, A. E., Chung, B. G., Dean, M. A., Holcombe Ehrhart, K., & Singh, G. (2011). Inclusion and diversity in work groups: A review and model for future research. *Journal of Management*, 37(4), 1262-1289

Integration at a programme level – One Community

Experiences gained from the programmes, the International Office and the International Student Barometer show that close attention must be paid to the mixed classroom from the very first day, as certain groups of students do not naturally come into contact with each other. For example, students who share a nationality and language are likely to form a group, as are students from the same Bachelor's background. This leads to a lack of *community feeling on the programme they have just begun*. Failing to promote integration at the start of the programme unnecessarily hinders the creation of a community within the programme, which means it is important to address the concept of the mixed classroom at as early a stage as possible.

All students should feel part of the community (a sense of belonging) as soon as possible after a programme begins. This increases the academic success and the quality of the mixed classroom. Becoming one community based on shared academic interests is a secure foundation for the exchange of diverse ideas and perspectives. This exchange reinforces the quality of the education, taking advantage of the benefits of the mixed classroom.

The International Office offers advice and guidance for English-taught Master's programmes regarding starting campaigns or activities, either before or at the beginning of the programme, which promote integration and thereby also strengthen an international learning environment. This often involves a collaboration with the student association. We follow the best practices developed by both programmes at VU Amsterdam and experts in the field. The aims of the activities are:

- To create equal opportunities in future academic success;
- To promote academic self-confidence;
- Community building: to form connections between students based on academic interest;
- To raise awareness of and increase respect for people with different views and the positive effects of such an exchange.

For further details, please contact Wendy Maat in the International Office (Mobility Unit)

Literature:

- Fink, L. Dee. (2003), *Designing Significant Learning Experiences II: Shaping the Learning Experience*. In *Creating Significant Learning Experiences* (pp124–177), *Jossey-Bass*
- Ambrose, S. A., Lovett, M., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., & Norman, M. K. (2010). *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*, Ch 6, *Jossey-Bass*

4.2 THE INTERNATIONAL INTAKE OF DEGREE STUDENTS

With a view to meeting one of the requirements of an international classroom – an international and culturally diverse student body (and teaching staff) – VU Amsterdam makes a concerted effort to recruit international students for its Bachelor's and Master's programmes. By attracting talented students from abroad, the University aims to improve the quality of its teaching and increase diversity in education. To support the recruitment of these capable students, VU Amsterdam has various scholarship programmes at its disposal, including the VU Fellowship Programme (VUFP) at Master's level. The University also makes use of international agents and representatives who are very well

acquainted with both VU Amsterdam and the international market. To qualify for a scholarship, a student has to exceed the standard admission requirements. VU Amsterdam's programmes do, of course, meet the demands of the national and international job market, and their final attainment levels reflect the needs of potential employers as closely as possible. In [Chapter 5](#) these and related topics are discussed in greater detail.

4.3 INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE AND OTHER MOBILITY PROGRAMMES

International exchange programmes are a core aspect of internationalization. By encouraging students to study abroad for a semester or to participate in another programme (e.g. short term) abroad, the University gives its students the opportunity to develop and grow outside the familiar walls of VU Amsterdam and to gain 21st-century skills in a global context. Meanwhile inbound exchange students ensure greater diversity on campus.

The VU International Office is responsible for organizing these programmes and is the first point of contact for students, staff at partner universities and staff within VU Amsterdam. The VU International Office collaborates with directors of studies, lecturers, faculty examination boards and academic advisors.

In addition to the standard exchange programmes, where for every student it sends abroad VU Amsterdam welcomes an incoming student from a foreign partner university, the University participates in a range of other international mobility programmes: internships abroad, summer schools at universities outside the Netherlands, programmes run by its own teaching staff that allow VU students to take part in a course abroad (short-term mobility), and – for incoming students – the VU Amsterdam Summer School, the VU Graduate Winter School and the VU Semester in Amsterdam programme.

Target for 2020

It is VU Amsterdam's ambition that an increasing number of its students should complete part of their studies abroad, with the specific target of 25% of Bachelor's graduates in 2020.

4.3.1 EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

Student exchange is also known as international credit mobility. This includes all short-term stays abroad as part of a degree programme and for which students receive credits (ECTS) without being entitled to earn a degree at the institution abroad. An exchange programme encompasses outbound and [inbound mobility](#): outbound students are VU students who have been selected by the VU International Office for an exchange with one of our partner universities, while inbound students have been selected by their home university for an exchange at VU Amsterdam. In both cases, the criteria are set jointly by VU Amsterdam and the relevant partner university.

Attending classes at a [partner university](#) abroad counts as part of the programme that the student is taking at VU Amsterdam. The faculty examination boards determine which courses can be approved

as part of the programme, taking into account the level and content of each course. The VU International Office establishes exchange agreements with universities of a sufficient academic level, seeking advice from the relevant faculties where necessary. All this is done to ensure the quality of the exchange.

4.3.2 SUMMER SCHOOLS

The wishes of VU students with regard to studying abroad are changeable. For example, the traditional exchange structure in which students study at a partner university abroad for one semester is not always appropriate. VU Amsterdam therefore seeks to offer its students a wider range of relevant international experiences. For example, participation in a summer school abroad can be an option. By embedding this within existing exchange agreements with partner universities, outbound summer students can be exchanged for inbound exchange students who come to study at VU Amsterdam for a full semester, or for inbound students who attend the VU Amsterdam Summer School. VU Amsterdam pays an allowance to the relevant faculty for each summer school student; this expense means that VU Amsterdam will only enter into such an exchange contract with top-tier universities. Students are free in their choice of summer school; they can also opt for suitable summer school programmes that exist outside current exchange agreements and even at other universities. If students wish to incorporate their summer courses into their degree programme, it is up to the faculty examination board to approve (or reject) this request on the basis of their own criteria.

4.3.3 SHORT-TERM PROGRAMMES

With the support of the VU International Office, faculties at VU Amsterdam also offer a range of short-term programmes (duration: 1-4 weeks) to expand the range of relevant international-exchange options open to students. These are programmes in which a course (or part of a course) is taught abroad, often in collaboration with partners in the country concerned. Compared to standard semester exchanges, short-term mobility covers less time but is more intensive. All faculties can initiate short-term programmes. The VU International Office can provide various types of assistance in this regard.

In 2017, the Faculty of Medicine entered into a collaboration with the Universitas Gadjah Mada to run an International Summer Course in Interprofessional Health Care. Students from VU Amsterdam spend two months in Yogyakarta, joining local students to work together and study in community health centres. The contact is Marianne van Elteren (VU University Medical Center Amsterdam). Another module, named ICT4D, began in 2018 and involves a collaboration with the University of Sarawak in Malaysia. VU students work with Malaysian students in local communities to develop and test apps, such as an educational app for primary school pupils that uses a game to help them learn English. The contact for this initiative is Anna Bon.

Do you have your own ideas about organizing a short-term international programme within your degree programme? If so, please [contact](#) the VU International Office (Centre for International Cooperation; Wendelien Tuyp).

4.3.4 VU AMSTERDAM SUMMER SCHOOL, VU GRADUATE WINTER SCHOOL AND VU SEMESTER IN AMSTERDAM

For several years, VU Amsterdam has been running programmes for international students who want to study at the University for a short time: the [VU Amsterdam Summer School](#), the [VU Semester in Amsterdam](#) programme and, from 2019, the VU Graduate Winter School. Unlike student exchanges, in which no money changes hands, students have to pay a fee to take part in these programmes. These programmes have been initiated, developed and organized by the VU International Office's Study Abroad in Amsterdam team, while the faculties are responsible for course content and the quality and quantity of the tuition on offer.

VU Amsterdam Summer School

The VU Amsterdam Summer School offers a coherent unit of high-quality summer education, developed to provide an accurate reflection of the educational profile of VU Amsterdam. The courses on offer may differ depending on the objective and target group of each faculty. An academic programme committee provides quality assurance. The VU International Office collaborates with faculties about the package to be developed, takes care of marketing, helps faculties recruit students, and acts as a contact for international partners. It also arranges accommodation, registration and a programme of social activities, in addition to the financial administration. Enrolment in the VU Amsterdam Summer School is open to all students with a relevant background and is also promoted through selected partner universities.

VU Graduate Winter School

VU Amsterdam organized the VU Graduate Winter School for the first time in 2019. The focus is primarily on education for Master's and PhD students and professionals. The Winter School courses are offered in the second and third weeks of January. The VU International Office collaborates with the Graduate Schools about the package to be developed, takes care of marketing, helps instructors recruit students and acts as a contact for international partners. It also arranges accommodation, registration and a programme of social activities, in addition to the financial administration. Enrolment in the VU Graduate Winter School is open to all students with a relevant background and is also promoted through selected partner universities.

VU Semester in Amsterdam

This semester programme, which involves a fee, is designed to appeal to students who wish to take part in an existing English-taught Bachelor's or Master's programme for one or two semesters. The programme aims to recruit students through intensive cooperation with American providers and international agents. Over a quarter of the students also register individually. The programme offers its students a high standard of service and has its own programme of social events with optional excursions, where the emphasis is on getting to know aspects of Dutch culture. Faculties that make their educational resources available to Semester students generate additional income, as students pay per credit for the courses they take and the balance is settled directly through the VU International Office.

The main objectives of these programmes are to raise the international profile and enhance the reputation of VU Amsterdam and to diversify the sources of income from internationalization. These programmes also ensure diversity both on campus and in the mixed classroom. For example, they facilitate cross-fertilization of knowledge and skills on specialist subjects which the participating students would not find at their own university. This benefit applies both to inbound international students and to the VU students who take the classes alongside them.

Although this was not a primary aim at their inception, the VU Amsterdam Summer School, the VU Graduate Winter School and the Semester in Amsterdam programme have opened the door to new partnerships with renowned universities that are not directly interested in an exchange agreement. Since the programmes are open to students from non-partner universities, they enable these universities to become acquainted with ongoing research projects and the education on offer at VU Amsterdam's faculties. Moreover, these programmes can further the general recruitment of students from abroad for our international programmes. The summer courses also offer an opportunity to experiment with forms of blended learning such as flipping the classroom and other teaching methods.

Would you like to know more about these programmes or discuss a potential course for a future edition of the VU Amsterdam Summer School? If so, please [contact](#) the Mobility Unit's Study Abroad in Amsterdam Team at the VU International Office.

4.3.5 JOINT PROGRAMMES

An increasing number of programmes are collaborating with programmes abroad to offer students a joint programme format. The [Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree](#) programmes represent a prime example of this approach. Within the context of the European Union's Erasmus+ programme, they focus on cooperation with European higher education institutions inside the European Union and beyond. These programmes consist of a joint curriculum taught by cooperating institutions from at least three European countries. Students from both inside and outside the EU can apply for these programmes.

The European framework [European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes](#) gives the following definition of the term 'joint programme': *"Joint programmes are understood as an integrated curriculum coordinated and offered jointly by different higher education institutions from countries belonging to the EHEA, and leading to double/multiple degrees or a joint degree"*.

Joint programmes can therefore lead to different types of degree: two degree certificates (*double degree*), more than two degree certificates (*multiple degree*), or a single joint degree certificate (*joint degree*).

The NVAO has a separate [protocol for accreditation of joint degree programmes](#). In the case of joint degrees, the NVAO uses a protocol based on Dutch regulations. There are protocols for new and existing programmes. Dutch legislation makes it possible to link a joint degree to both a degree programme and a specialization.

The European framework makes it possible to obtain accreditation based on a single quality assessment, in any country that is part of the European Higher Education Area and where accreditation of degree programmes is mandatory. This prevents a situation in which joint programmes have to undergo an assessment procedure in several countries (involving different panels, site visits, reports, etc.). The condition is that the assessment organization is listed on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education ([EQAR](#)) and carries out its assessments in accordance with the European framework.

Other than the statutory provisions (see the Higher Education and Research Act, Art 7.3c) there are no VU-specific rules governing joint programmes at Bachelor's and Master's level, although of course the standard accreditation procedures as drawn up within VU Amsterdam must be taken into account. The protocol on [Starting, changing or stopping a programme or specialization at VU Amsterdam](#) also has to be followed. The policy on joint research conducted by PhD candidates can be found in the [VU Doctorate Regulations](#) (such as Article 18 of the Joint Dissertation).

5 INTERNATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION: GUIDELINES, RULES, RECOMMENDATIONS

To guarantee the quality of the internationalization of education, guidelines, rules and recommendations are included below, often based on existing policy from the Policy Framework for Internationalization.

5.1 CODE OF CONDUCT ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN DUTCH HIGHER EDUCATION

VU Amsterdam is a signatory to the Code of Conduct on International Students in Dutch Higher Education (hereafter referred to as the Code). This Code is a joint initiative signed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of Justice and Security, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), and the higher education institutions. It contains agreements made by the institutions about their dealings with international students. The Code lays down requirements and the desired course of action for aspects of the University's internationalization activities, including information provision, admission and enrolment, student counselling and services. The Code can be found on www.internationalstudy.nl. In all its activities concerning international students, VU Amsterdam complies with the Code's provisions.

5.2 STARTING AND PROVIDING ENGLISH-TAUGHT COURSES

VU Amsterdam offers a range of international programmes which are taught in English. For example, there are full English-taught programmes at Bachelor's, Master's and PhD level, an increasing number of English-taught specializations within Dutch-taught programmes, an increasing number of English-taught minors (see Minor Policy in the Programme chapter) and individual courses, while the VU Amsterdam Summer School and VU Graduate Winter School are organized every year. This holds great appeal for both Dutch and international students and academics. Among other benefits, it ensures that they are given the opportunity to teach and learn in an international/mixed classroom. Each faculty aims to offer at least one international, English-taught Bachelor's degree programme by 2020.

In Subsection [3.3 Internationalizing a programme: the VU International Checklist](#) features a handy list that can be used as a guideline to incorporate an international and intercultural dimension into a programme. Subsection [4.1 Mixed classroom](#) provides further details on how to design such a learning environment.

5.2.1 SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ENGLISH-TAUGHT EDUCATION

A number of basic principles apply to the various forms of English-taught education at VU Amsterdam:

- A pre-Master's programme for an English-taught Master's programme should preferably be taught in English, although pre-Master's tuition often necessitates a customized approach with regard to international students. From a practical point of view, it is therefore not always feasible to teach a pre-Master's programme entirely in English.
- University and faculty minors are taught in English (unless there are compelling reasons not to do so) with a view to promoting VU Amsterdam's internationalization objectives (e.g. attracting new foreign exchange students and students to the Semester in Amsterdam programme) and to improving students' English language skills.

- The VU Honours Programme is taught entirely in English; both departmental and interdepartmental honours courses are taught in English (unless there are compelling reasons not to do so).
- The courses offered as part of the VU Amsterdam Summer School and the VU Graduate Winter School are all taught in English.
- Faculties ensure that they offer enough appealing English-taught courses (also in the form of minors) in both the first and the second semester, and open them up to inbound exchange students and students on the VU Semester in Amsterdam programme.

5.2.2 DETERMINING THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

In determining the language of instruction for its programmes, VU Amsterdam complies with Article 7.2 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act, which states that academic programmes in the Netherlands should in principle be taught in Dutch. A programme can deviate from this if the specific nature, organization or quality of the programme or the background of the students necessitates this, as is the case for all our English-taught programmes. In accordance with the [VU Code of Conduct on Foreign Languages](#) established by the Executive Board, programmes are required to provide the reasoning behind their decision to opt for an English-taught programme (see also the protocol on [Starting, changing or stopping a programme or specialization at VU Amsterdam](#)). The following factors can play a role here:

- *Content*: the professional field for which the degree programme prepares its students has an international character; the issues that are central to the curriculum are international in nature.
- *Selection*: the programme wants to attract the best students, and to keep the number of new registrations at an acceptable level it is also important to recruit internationally.
- *Strategy*: the programme contributes to the identity of VU Amsterdam in an international context; an English-taught programme contributes to the distinctive character of the programme; distinctiveness can be local in nature.

5.2.3 STARTING UP AN ENGLISH-TAUGHT DEGREE PROGRAMME OR SPECIALIZATION

The procedures to be followed when starting up new English-taught specializations, full English-taught Bachelor's or Master's programmes, and programmes involving cooperation at programme or specialization level with one or more (foreign) institutions (joint programmes) are described in the protocol on [Starting, changing or stopping a programme or specialization at VU Amsterdam](#). Procedural issues are also discussed when an existing programme plans to change its curriculum and language of instruction from Dutch to English, or when a degree programme or specialization is discontinued.

Recommendations

Before launching a new international programme or specialization, a faculty can ask the VU International Office to conduct market research into the market potential, competitive position, recruitment opportunities and expected number of students. The VU International Office also advises on naming the programme and provides guidance and supervision during the communication process and on procedural aspects. It also assists in the international marketing and promotion of the new programme or specialization. In addition, a new international programme or specialization can use the

[VU International Checklist](#) to see where an international and intercultural dimension can be incorporated into the programme (or to prepare an application for the NVAO Special Quality Assurance System on Internationalization and the ECA's affiliated Certificate for Quality of Internationalization).

Would you like to find out more about the potential for carrying out market research or about marketing programmes internationally? If so, please get in touch with the VU International Office (Policy and Business Development Unit) to discuss your plans or ideas with the Marketing and Communications consultant.

5.3 THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT VU AMSTERDAM

5.3.1 USE OF ENGLISH IN THE ORGANIZATION

VU Amsterdam's language policy (see also Chapter 11 of the Manual for Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning) aims to create an inclusive environment for all staff and students and is centred around 'bilingualism' (Dutch and English). That is not to say that everything is or should be available in two languages, but that a reasoned choice is made between Dutch and English at a departmental or programme level. In a phased process, the University is developing into a bilingual campus, where both Dutch and English are used as official languages. To make it possible for everyone who is part of the academic community to be involved and to understand what is being said and written, English is often already used (sometimes alongside Dutch) in cases where members of the target group do not speak Dutch. This means, for example, that service announcements and news items on the university and faculty websites are offered in both languages.

5.3.2 THE LANGUAGE SKILLS OF TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF

It goes without saying that lecturers should have a sufficient command of the language in which they teach. English proficiency is therefore a basic precondition for lecturers who teach in English. In the case of English-taught programmes, it follows that the faculty should assess the standard of English among the lecturers scheduled to teach the programme to make sure that they are proficient enough. At a minimum, they are required to have active and passive skills at C1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and are tested accordingly. If a lecturer does not achieve the score required, they will undergo further training.

A lecturer may obtain an exemption from the language test on the following grounds: if English is the lecturer's mother tongue, if the lecturer has completed a degree programme in English language and culture, or if the lecturer can provide proof of an adequate score in a recent language test. The following test scores are comparable to level C1 of the CEFR: 623 for the paper-based TOEFL, 106 for the internet-based TOEFL, or 263 for the computer-based TOEFL, or 7.5 on an IELTS Academic test. For more details and the latest information on this subject, employees or prospective employees should contact the faculty's HRM department or the HRM Service Desk.

In general, no standard language requirements have yet been set for support staff commencing employment at VU Amsterdam. As a guideline, a minimum competence level of B2 according to the

CEFRL can be set as a requirement. For more details and the latest information on this subject, employees or prospective employees should contact the faculty's HRM department or the HRM Service Desk.

5.3.3 ENGLISH AS AN ADMISSION REQUIREMENT FOR STUDENTS

Admission to all programmes at VU Amsterdam is dependent on the level of competency in the language of instruction. This requirement applies to all students and is specified in the Academic and Examination Regulations for each programme. It therefore takes precedence over the requirements set out in the Code of Conduct (although these do apply as minimum requirements). For our international (English-taught) courses and programmes, the following conditions apply:

English as an admission requirement for Bachelor's students

For students with a Dutch pre-university secondary school diploma (VWO), there is no further English-language requirement for admission to an English-taught Bachelor's programme. International students who do not have a VWO diploma must take an English-language test approved by VU Amsterdam and meet a predetermined minimum standard. The statutory minimum language requirements are set out in the Code of Conduct on International Students in Dutch Higher Education. Please note, however, that VU Amsterdam sets its own more stringent requirements regarding the standard of English on admission. These may differ from programme to programme and are laid down in the relevant Academic and Examination Regulations. Notwithstanding the stipulations in Article 4.2 of the Code of Conduct, VU Amsterdam can exempt an international student from the obligation to take a language test, if their prior education was in English. Students who completed their previous education in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia or New Zealand, and students who obtained an International Baccalaureate or a European Baccalaureate diploma (from an English IB / EB programme), are in any case exempt from this admission requirement. The national committee supervising compliance with the Code of Conduct may ask VU Amsterdam to submit a Nuffic statement confirming that the student's prior education was in English.

English as an admission requirement for Master's students

All students, both Dutch-language and international students, must demonstrate that they meet the admission requirements for the Master's programme. They can do this by taking an English-language test approved by VU Amsterdam in order to gain admission to an English-taught Master's programme. The admission requirements and conditions for exemptions may differ from programme to programme and are laid down in the relevant Academic and Examination Regulations. The statutory minimum language requirements for international students are set out in the Code of Conduct on International Students in Dutch Higher Education. Please note, however, that VU Amsterdam sets its own more stringent requirements regarding the standard of English on admission. Notwithstanding the stipulations in Article 4.2 of the Code of Conduct, VU Amsterdam can exempt an international student from the obligation to take a language test, if their prior education was in English. Students who completed their previous education in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia or New Zealand are in any case exempt from this admission requirement. The national committee supervising compliance with the Code of Conduct may ask VU Amsterdam to submit a Nuffic statement confirming that the student's prior education was in English.

English as an admission requirement for inbound exchange and Summer School students

In the case of an exchange programme, an agreement is made between VU Amsterdam and the partner institution regarding the minimum English-language requirement for the students. As a guideline, VU Amsterdam sets a minimum level of C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This is higher than the minimum requirement for international students imposed by the Code of Conduct. At the request of the national committee that supervises compliance with the Code of Conduct, VU Amsterdam grants inspection rights regarding the agreement with its partner institution.

VU Amsterdam does not require inbound exchange students at Bachelor's level to provide proof of English proficiency; it is up to the partner institution to ensure that these students meet the level set by VU Amsterdam. Inbound exchange students at Master's level are obliged to demonstrate their proficiency by providing their results from one of the relevant English-language tests if they are also taking Master's courses at VU Amsterdam. Relevant language tests include the IELTS Academic test (minimum score 6.5), the TOEFL paper-based test (minimum score 580), the TOEFL internet-based test (minimum score 92), the Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (A, B or C), the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (A, B, or C), or VU Amsterdam's own English test (TOEFL ITP with the above-mentioned TOEFL scores). An exemption is granted to students who have completed at least two years of education taught entirely in English no more than two years prior to starting the programme.

In the case of the VU Amsterdam Summer School, the University takes B2 level according to the CEFR as a minimum guideline. This is the minimum level required by the Code of Conduct on International Students. Inbound students are not obliged to provide proof of this.

5.4 RECRUITING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

VU Amsterdam's Strategic Plan is clear about the University's drive towards internationalization: 'Our decisive shift towards developing a more international character has a positive effect on both the quality of our teaching and research, and our contribution to society. There are two aspects of quality as regards new registrations of international students. Firstly, the influx of talented international students helps us improve the quality of our English-taught programmes. Secondly, this international influx helps us create a truly international classroom. On programmes with a high degree of diversity, students are challenged to exchange their views and perspectives on a particular issue and to find a way to integrate them. This ultimately benefits all students.

Alongside quality, there is a financial benefit to the faculties. International students from outside the EEA pay higher tuition fees and this expands the university's financial opportunities. In addition, the influx of international students makes it possible to achieve class sizes that make smaller specializations financially viable. Each of the faculties has expressed its own ambitions for increasing the number of registrations from outside Europe. Taken as a whole, these faculty objectives amount to an increase of 150 registrations by non-EEA students in the academic year 2017-2018 compared to 2016-2017.

Target for 2017-2018

The faculties' ambition is to achieve an increase of 150 registrations by non-EEA students (compared to the year 2016-2017).

5.4.1 RECRUITING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

To achieve the desired increase in the number of international enrolments (by both EEA and non-EEA students), the University draws up international plan of action on an annual basis. This plan spans the entire range of international Bachelor's and Master's programmes at VU Amsterdam and is based on thorough market research, analyses and input from all faculties, the VU International Office and the Marketing & Communications Department. The plan specifies target groups, target countries, and the offline and online resources to be deployed. In addition to this university-wide effort, additional marketing plans are also drawn up and implemented to fulfil the needs and wishes of specific faculties and programmes, especially new programmes. Faculties are expressly involved in these plans, both as client and implementing party. A sophisticated contact strategy ensures the highest possible conversion rate of leads to applications, student admissions and ultimately registrations.

Would you like to find out more about what you can do for VU Amsterdam and the recruitment of students during a trip abroad (for example while visiting a conference or giving a guest lecture)? Perhaps you already have ideas on how to approach this? If so, please get in touch with the VU International Office (Policy and Business Development Unit) to discuss your plans or ideas with the Marketing and Communications consultant.

Below is a description of the policy on target groups and recruitment countries, along with the resources deployed. More detailed information can be found in the International Recruitment Plan for 2018-2019.

Market research

Before launching a new international programme or specialization, a faculty can ask the VU International Office to conduct market research into the market potential, competitive position, recruitment opportunities and expected number of students. In addition to advice on how to make a curriculum more international, the VU International Office can advise on naming the programme and provide guidance and supervision with regard to communication processes and procedural aspects. It also takes care of international marketing and promoting the new programme or specialization.

Target groups

In recruiting talented international students, we focus on the following target groups: pupils at International Schools and international pupils and students in the 15-28 age group (including international students taking a Bachelor's degree programme in the Netherlands); Master's students from the target countries who wish to obtain a second Master's qualification; young professionals in the 24-32 age group; and the partners of expats and internationals in the Netherlands, who plan to live in the Netherlands for an extended period.

Recruitment countries

In addition to generic, worldwide international marketing and communication, additional activities are carried out in a number of specific recruitment countries. These countries are selected on a range of relevant factors, most notably the size of the target group; the mobility figures; market potential, market share and market developments; the financial resources of students; the standard of English and education; our competitive position; the need for geographical diversity; and the results of previous recruitment campaigns. For the 2018-2019 academic year, VU Amsterdam's recruitment countries are: China, Brazil, Colombia, India, the United States, Indonesia, Russia, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Romania, Germany and Greece.

Resources

VU Amsterdam opts for a multi-channel approach, in which online and offline resources reinforce each other. The University's approach always centres on a combination of resources and activities that are most effective in the relevant recruitment country. For example, VU Amsterdam makes active use of search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine advertising (SEA) through Google Adwords in its campaigns for all programmes. Google Analytics is used to optimize the University's online recruitment platform for Master's and Bachelor's programmes. VU Amsterdam employs a targeted social media strategy: the University is active on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, for China specifically on Weibo, WeChat and Youku, and for Russia on VKontakte and Yandex. There is a [Study in Amsterdam blog](#), a [VU website in Chinese](#), and a range of websites for the promotion and recruitment of all programmes (e.g. www.bachelorsportal.eu, www.topuniversities.com, www.eurogates.com, www.studieren-in-holland.de). External websites, (e.g. Studyfinder and other commercial sites) use the Hodex (Higher Education Data Exchange) platform to source their information on VU Amsterdam and our degree programmes. Webinars are also used for recruitment purposes, often in collaboration with [Nuffic Neso](#) offices or commercial organizations.

For student recruitment, VU Amsterdam has drawn up a schools policy, which also includes maintaining contact with international schools and visiting them for presentations, talks and fairs. The University also attends education fairs abroad, to promote all of its international programmes. At the fairs and in the wider vicinity, the University gives presentations, visits international schools, gets alumni involved, provides information, and deploys social media and email marketing.

VU Amsterdam also works with carefully selected recruitment agencies in China, Indonesia, India, Russia and the US, and with VU representatives in Russia and Colombia. They recruit students, help them with the application process and conduct part of the preselection. Current students and alumni also assist in recruitment activities. These ambassadors are prominently featured on the VU website and are available to answer any questions from prospective students, give presentations or guided tours, and post on the university's social media. Of course, in addition to specific campaigns and PR activities, suitable printed matter is developed in support of all these activities.

Contact strategy and funnel monitoring

To ensure that talented international students ultimately opt for VU Amsterdam, it is important that they feel a genuine sense of connection from the moment they come into contact with the University. To achieve this, the VU International Office has developed a contact strategy. Far more than their Dutch counterparts, international students, have to jump through all manner of official hoops before they can begin their studies at VU Amsterdam. By means of mailshots, personal emails, newsletters

and telephone calls, our potential students receive relevant information and support to guide them as efficiently as possible through the entire application process. This helps build a personal relationship and reduces the risk of dropout as the process proceeds. The VU International Office uses funnel monitoring. The funnel, which runs from lead to actual registration and the student starting the programme, describes each phase that students encounter as part of the process. By monitoring these phases, measures can be taken to reduce dropout rates in the course of the process and to increase conversion rates.

5.5 SELECTION AND ADMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

After recruitment to VU Amsterdam's international programmes comes the selection and admission process. This is particularly important for the success of the international classroom, which largely depends on the participation of talented international students. Programmes aim for the greatest possible diversity with a view to maximizing their students' international and intercultural learning experience. In addition to geographical distribution, the ability to attract and select talent is also central to the recruitment process: in selecting students for both the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes, the focus is on highly motivated students of outstanding quality. For this reason, faculties can make access to their programmes selective by setting stringent admission requirements. These requirements are stated in the Academic and Examination Regulations of the relevant degree programme. Selection and admission procedures also apply to exchange students. When entering into and maintaining exchange agreements, VU Amsterdam examines the level and profile of the partner university and the student selected for an exchange.

5.5.1 CREDENTIAL EVALUATION AND ADMISSION

The admission of international students to English-taught programmes and English-taught tracks within Dutch-taught programmes is governed by a uniform method and supported by advanced systems. The VU International Office ensures credential evaluation of qualifications obtained abroad. This determines whether a qualification is equivalent to the Dutch VWO diploma (granting entry to a Bachelor's programme) or to a university Bachelor's degree (granting entry to a Master's programme).

For the VU International Office and other stakeholders, support on [credential evaluation](#) is available from Nuffic. Nuffic's International Recognition department has been designated as the [ENIC-NARIC evaluation centre](#) for the Netherlands, working closely with other European ENIC and NARIC centres to develop policy in the field of credential evaluation.

The VU International Office assesses admissibility on the basis of predetermined admission requirements (covering at a minimum the student's prior education, language skills and qualifications relevant to the specific programme for which admission/registration is being requested). Selection criteria may only be formulated on the basis of clearly defined admission requirements. If necessary for successful completion, the Faculty Board may, in the programme-specific section, set a standard for admission to a programme or for participation in a particular educational unit that is higher than the generally applicable standard. The VU International Office then decides on admission (new Bachelor's registration) or advises the faculty admissions board on the admission of the student (new Master's registration). The entire admission process (from application and possible selection up to and including admission) takes a maximum of four weeks.

Would you like to know more about the various education systems abroad? Take a look at the Nuffic website <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/foreign-education-systems/> for extensive descriptions of educational systems around the world.

Towards a diverse and international student population: competency-based admissions

VU Amsterdam takes various measures to increase the diversity within its international programmes. For example, VU Amsterdam has coordinated an Erasmus+ project called Mastermind Europe, which aims to develop skills-based guidelines and tools for Master's admission as an alternative to credential evaluation. In the final year of the project (2017), the Mastermind Europe method was tested in a number of pilot schemes within a single discipline.

The Mastermind Europe project offers relevant information for improving intake procedures with a view to achieving a diverse and international student population in the Master's programmes. In this Erasmus+ project, coordinated by VU Amsterdam, relevant expertise and a toolkit were developed with a view to granting admission based on competency assessment rather than diploma recognition.

In the project, instruments and conceptual frameworks have been developed to formulate the learning outcomes of a Master's programme in a clearly defined and verifiable manner: in terms of required professional knowledge and skills, general academic skills, language skills and (where relevant) personal skills. The instruments help to distinguish between the underlying criteria (*what do students need to be good at?*) and the most frequently used admission requirements (*how can a programme tell that a student is good enough?*).

For the various types of criteria and entry requirements, the Mastermind Europe Consortium (11 organizations, 6 universities, 8 countries) produced Guiding Tools that compiled and structured best practices and relevant insights from the literature. These tools present and analyse the most common assessment approaches.

In addition to information and reference material on the website <http://mastermindeurope.eu>, a Mastermind Europe Manual has been made available at <http://mastermindeurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/MastermindEuropeManual.pdf>, providing a step-by-step guide to the process and the tools. See the [Mastermind Europe website](#) for the presentation of the pilot scheme and workshop held for the Master's in Drug Discovery and Safety at VU Amsterdam.

5.5.2 SELECTIVENESS

On the grounds of Article 7.53 of the Higher Education and Research Act, Dutch institutions may select students for programmes – or programme components – under certain conditions, while charging tuition fees that exceed the statutory amount. This applies to programmes that offer intensive education on a small scale. Our selection procedure and the way in which it is implemented must be fair, transparent and painstaking. Programmes employ at least two qualitative selection criteria, aimed at predicting successful completion of the programme as accurately as possible and at preparing students for the profession(s) relating to the programme. Candidates who wish to take part in a selection procedure must submit an application request via Studielink no later than 15 January prior to the academic year in which they plan to start the programme.

5.5.3 CONDITIONAL ADMISSION, EXCEPTIONS, PREPARATORY YEAR, MATCHING, DEFICIENCIES

Article 7.24 of the Higher Education and Research Act lays down the principle of general admission to higher education. On the grounds of Articles 7.28 and 7.29, the board of an institution can demonstrate a significant difference between the general admission requirements of the country where the qualification was attained and the general requirements under or pursuant to this Act. Programmes may therefore make exceptions and admit candidates in certain circumstances (e.g. candidates with relevant work experience but without the required qualifications, or candidates who have passed a special entrance examination). Candidates granted conditional admission must demonstrate before the start of the academic year that they meet the educational requirements and any additional educational requirements. Candidates who do not fulfil this obligation will not be permitted to register.

For international students, there is also the [International Foundation Year](#), run by the Holland International Study Centre of the Studygroup organization. This preparatory year in the field of Business and Management or Science and Engineering prepares international students for admission to an affiliated English-taught Bachelor's programme at VU Amsterdam. Successful completion of this preparatory year guarantees admission. Bachelor's programmes have a mandatory matching activity (the results of which are not binding) to give international students a clear understanding of what is expected of them and what the programme has to offer. Prospective international Bachelor's students are also given an opportunity to bring their knowledge of mathematics up to the required standard for admission.

5.5.4 APPLICATION FEE

To guarantee the quality of new registrations for English-taught programmes, all international students who apply to an English-taught Bachelor's or Master's programme are asked to pay an application fee. By paying the fee, the students demonstrate a level of commitment that suggests they are making a well-considered choice in seeking to study at VU Amsterdam.

5.6 STUDY GUIDANCE AND SERVICES TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

With regard to programmes and courses for international students, services for international students, and their study progress, VU Amsterdam adheres to the following rules (in line with the Code of Conduct):

5.6.1 PROGRAMMES AND COURSES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

VU Amsterdam complies fully with all statutory requirements. The University offers international students only accredited educational programmes leading to a degree, as defined by the Higher Education and Research Act. VU Amsterdam can also provide education based on the law of other countries, if this educational programme is accredited in the country in question by an authorized body in the higher education sector whose decisions are recognized by the relevant authorities. Short higher education programmes – other than those for a preparatory year – can also be made available to international students, as long as they are clearly derived from accredited programmes taught at VU Amsterdam. A committee set up for both the VU Amsterdam Summer School and the VU Graduate Winter School oversees the quality of the courses offered.

VU Amsterdam has the obligation to deliver the education it offers. If an educational programme is cancelled with good reason, cancellation will take place no later than three months prior to the start of the programme, short courses and customized programmes excepted. If the international student has already travelled to the Netherlands in order to take the programme concerned, VU Amsterdam is obliged to find a suitable alternative in consultation with the international student, and to inform the international student about the procedures to be followed.

5.6.2 SERVICES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

VU Amsterdam clearly states which services it provides to international students as regards obtaining a visa and a residence permit, housing, introduction activities and supervision. In its information material, VU Amsterdam clearly indicates which services it offers in this context and details any associated costs.

For example, the VU International Office actively helps international degree students to find suitable accommodation. Staff at the VU International Office who have dealings with international students are easy to contact, provide direct information when queries and problems arise, and endeavour to solve problems quickly. The VU International Office also establishes agreements with the faculties regarding the responsibilities of various parties in relation to international students and one other.

The first ports of call for international students who experience problems with their studies or in their personal lives are the programme coordinators and academic advisors within the faculty, after which, depending on the nature of the problem, students can be referred to the faculty academic advisors, student counsellors or student psychologists at the Student and Educational Affairs Department, or the relevant member of staff at the VU International Office.

Programme coordinators, academic advisors and lecturers work together to provide the best possible guidance on study-related issues. This is to prevent students falling behind with their studies, especially during the first three months. Measures include academic progress monitoring which may lead to

refresher courses (e.g. IT, Dutch for beginners, introduction to teaching methods at VU Amsterdam). International Bachelor's students are also subject to the binding recommendation on continuation of studies.

5.6.3 STUDY PROGRESS

Since the introduction of the Modern Migration Policy (MoMi), students with a residence permit have been subject to a study progress standard, whereby they have to meet 50% (or more) of the official study requirement for the total academic year or part thereof. Regardless of this requirement, all international students are required to successfully complete the preparatory year.

At the end of each academic year, VU Amsterdam's academic advisors determine the study progress of international students on English-taught or Dutch-taught programmes, with the exception of exchange students. If students fail to achieve sufficient study progress, VU Amsterdam tries to determine the cause of this, for example by arranging an interview between the student and the academic advisor.

The Code of Conduct contains additional rules and guidelines on what to do if it transpires that an international student is not devoting enough time and effort to their studies, and if they are making insufficient progress.

5.7 GAINING INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AS A STUDENT

5.7.1 PRINCIPLES OF OUTBOUND MOBILITY (EXCHANGE PROGRAMME)

- During their studies at VU Amsterdam, Bachelor's students participate in at least one relevant international activity, such as an exchange semester in the third year of their programme. The Academic and Examination Regulations format states that: 'The Bachelor's programme includes a focus on internationalization, which is expressed in one or more educational units.'²
- Bachelor's students do not fall behind with their studies as a result of participating in an international exchange as long as the programme has reserved a place in the curriculum for an exchange semester and provided that students obtain sufficient credits during the exchange.
- Bachelor's students who do not spend time abroad will at least attend one or more English-taught courses at VU Amsterdam alongside international students or exchange students and/or taught by international lecturers.
- In certain cases, Master's students also have the opportunity to go on an exchange.
- The Academic and Examination Regulations establish the framework for Bachelor's or Master's exchanges.
- Students must obtain permission from the Examination Board before taking components of the study programme at an overseas institution.
- The Examination Board shall indicate which components (provided these are completed successfully) can replace compulsory components of the curriculum, including the elective modules, and which components can be recorded as extra-curricular components.

² Academic and Examination Regulations format for Bachelor's programmes 2018-2019, Article 2.2 Programme structure

- This makes it possible for the students themselves to decide during the application process which components they would like to record as curricular or extra-curricular.
- The student receives a grade list from the partner university, sometimes accompanied by a certificate. No separate diploma is issued for an exchange.
- Results are recorded as 'pass' or 'fail'.
- The education that students from VU Amsterdam receive abroad is clearly expected to meet certain standards in terms of quality. In general, quality is guaranteed by ensuring that the exchange takes place with reputable institutions that have and maintain a long-term relationship with VU Amsterdam and that contractual agreements are laid down, for example within the context of the Erasmus+ programme. In addition, an Examination Board (or another authorized body) approves the exchange programme for each individual student prior to the stay abroad. This allows them to determine in advance whether the chosen programme meets the quality requirements.
- VU Amsterdam seeks alternatives to an international semester exchange by offering shorter programmes, including international summer schools or programmes abroad which are supervised by VU teaching staff and which last between one and four weeks.

5.7.2 PRINCIPLES OF INBOUND MOBILITY (EXCHANGE PROGRAMME)

- On a reciprocal basis, VU Amsterdam welcomes international exchange students from its partner universities for a period of up to two semesters.
- These inbound students take an educational package composed of English-taught courses at Bachelor's or Master's level (depending on the level or status of the student). These are courses taken from all regular programmes, including faculty or university minors. The VU International Office coordinates the courses offered every year with the directors of studies or the teaching/programme coordinators.
- On successful completion of the programme, the students are issued with a grade list by the VU International Office. The home university is responsible for incorporating the results achieved into their own grading and credit system.

5.7.3 COURSES TAKEN ABROAD

The programme has a clear approval procedure for units of study abroad to be taken by its students; this is stated in the study guide. The student is required to submit a timely application for units of study to be taken abroad to the Examination Board of the programme, in accordance with the procedure detailed in the study guide. The Examination Board must then provide a timely indication of which units of study count towards the student's curriculum and the number of credits they represent. The grades obtained are compared with the Dutch grading system, and on this basis a 'pass' or a 'fail' is awarded.

5.8 STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMMES

In order to maintain a strong position in the international competition for talent, VU Amsterdam has to appeal to international students in various ways. A balanced [scholarship programme](#) for talented international Bachelor's and Master's students supports this aim.

The availability of scholarships and grants contributes to various VU Amsterdam internationalization objectives. For example, attracting talented international students helps create an international classroom and enriches diversity on campus. An international exchange enables VU students to come into contact with cultural differences and also prepares them for an international future. Using scholarships to promote international mobility to our programme countries and profile partners helps strengthen relations with these partners, and this in turn helps boost VU Amsterdam's profile.

The VU International Office manages multiple scholarships and grant programmes for both inbound and outbound students, and deals with over 1,200 scholarship applications a year from international students who want to come to VU Amsterdam and from VU students who want to study abroad for a time. For some programmes, the office only provides administrative support, while for others support also covers promotion and the selection of scholarship candidates.

VU Amsterdam is responsible for the largest part of the financing, but the VU Association, the AUC Scholarship Fund Foundation, the Van Coeverden Adriani Foundation (VCAS), the EU and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science all play a part in recruiting international talent for VU Amsterdam and fund part of the scholarship scheme. There are internal scholarship programmes that are primarily funded by VU Amsterdam and the VU Association, and external scholarship programmes entirely funded by other organizations. The conditions, registration and selection procedures differ for each scholarship programme.

Faculties have set ambitious targets for the intake of talented international students. To support the recruitment of these students, faculty scholarships can be made available. Is your faculty interested in offering faculty scholarships to talented international Bachelor's or Master's students? If so, please [contact](#) the VU International Office (Policy and Business Development Unit) to discuss the options.

Internal scholarship programmes

Students can apply for these scholarships via VUnet. The registration, selection and administration are coordinated by the VU International Office.

VU Fellowship Programme (VUFP)

This is a scholarship programme funded by VU Amsterdam and the VU Association for talented international Master's students (both EEA and non-EEA) at VU Amsterdam. Some of the scholarships are specifically earmarked for students from VU Amsterdam's focus countries (South Africa and Indonesia; see also 5.10.3 Focus countries and strategic alliances) and students from under-represented countries. The Orange Tulip Scholarship programme for students from Brazil, China, Indonesia, South Korea, Russia and India and the Fulbright Scholarship programme for students from the US also form part of the VUFP. Students are initially selected on the basis of excellence and

motivation. Country of origin and the student's financial means are also taken into account. Preselection is carried out by the VU International Office together with the faculty scholarship committees, after which a central scholarship committee makes the final selection. Students receive a scholarship for the applicable tuition fees.

Holland Scholarship Programme (HSP) – inbound

This programme is funded jointly by VU Amsterdam and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to support talented international Master's students (non-EEA) admitted to VU Amsterdam, who enrich the diversity on campus. Some of the scholarships are specifically earmarked for students from VU Amsterdam's focus countries (South Africa and Indonesia) and students from under-represented countries. In addition to excellence and motivation, country of origin and diversity are taken into account as selection criteria. Preselection is carried out by the VU International Office together with the faculty scholarship committees, after which a central scholarship committee makes the final selection. The grant amounts to €5000 per student and can only be applied for in combination with a VUFP scholarship.

South Africa Programme

This programme, financed by the Van Coeverden Adriani Foundation, makes five scholarships available to South African students to study for one semester at VU Amsterdam as part of the exchange programme. Selection takes place on the basis of the student's financial means. The grant amounts to €5000 per student.

Holland Scholarship Programme (HSP) – outbound

This scholarship programme is jointly funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the VU Association to help talented VU students go on an exchange to one of VU Amsterdam's focus countries (South Africa and Indonesia) or to one of VU Amsterdam's partners outside Europe: Renmin University and Beijing University of Technology in China, Amrita University (various campuses in India) and the University of California Los Angeles in the United States. These scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis. The grant amounts to €1250 per student.

GLOBE Programme

This scholarship programme is funded by VU Amsterdam for students at the university who go on an exchange for at least three months to a partner institution in a country other than those participating in the Erasmus+ programme. These scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis. The selection is based on average grades and is carried out by the VU International Office. The grant amounts to €1250 per student.

Subsidies and Grants Information Desk Scholarship

This scholarship programme is funded by the VU Association and is intended for VU students going on an internship to a non-EEA country (and who do not therefore qualify for an Erasmus+ internship grant). The student's financial means are taken into account as part of the selection; to qualify, students must have an additional scholarship from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. The Subsidies and Grants Information Desk scholarship cannot be combined with the GLOBE scholarship; it is an amount to be put towards costs and amounts to €1,250 per student.

External scholarship programmes

In cooperation with Nuffic, the VU International Office manages a number of scholarship programmes. Depending on the nature of the scholarship programme, the VU International Office is involved in the selection of candidates, the administration and the payment of scholarships. The most important scholarship schemes are:

- Erasmus+ for Students or Interns
This European scholarship programme is funded by the European Commission and applies to VU students who are going on an exchange for at least three months to a [VU partner institution](#) in one of the 28 EU member states or Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey or the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Please note: VU Amsterdam does not have exchange agreements with every country) or in internship of at least three months in one of these countries. Students who go on an exchange are selected by the VU International Office on the basis of their average grades. Nuffic is responsible for the annual allocation of total amounts to institutions in the Netherlands. The students are paid by VU Amsterdam, which then reports this expenditure to Nuffic on an annual basis. The amount paid ranges from €5 to €9 per day for Erasmus+ for Students, and from €9 to €13 per day for Erasmus+ for Interns (with a maximum number of days where the budget allocated to VU Amsterdam does not permit a longer subsidy period).

- Netherlands Fellowship Programme (NFP)
This Dutch scholarship programme is aimed at reducing the shortage of skilled labour in 51 countries. With an NFP scholarship, students from these countries can take a programme in the Netherlands. The candidates register with Nuffic, which is responsible for the final selection based on criteria from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the assessment of the embassies from the 51 countries, which are also involved in the selection process. Each year, VU Amsterdam is permitted to nominate a number of students who have been admitted to degree programmes that reflect the four priorities in Dutch development cooperation policy: Security and the Legal Order; Water; Food Security; and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. The VU International Office is responsible for the administration and the payment of scholarships, and reports to Nuffic on these matters.

- STUNED (Studying in the Netherlands)
This scholarship programme is part of the bilateral cooperation between the Dutch and Indonesian governments to strengthen the ties between the two countries. VU Amsterdam welcomes an average of four students per year via this programme. The VU International Office is responsible for the administration and the payment of scholarships, and reports to STUNED on these matters.

The AUC Scholarship Fund Foundation manages the scholarship scheme for Amsterdam University College. The VU International Office is not involved in the selection, allocation and administration of this scheme.

AUC Scholarship Fund (ASF)

Amsterdam University College is a joint initiative founded by VU Amsterdam and the University of Amsterdam. The AUC Scholarship Fund Foundation provides funding for the ASF scholarship scheme. The scheme focuses on talented Dutch and international students, who would otherwise not have had the opportunity to study at AUC due to insufficient financial resources. The Fund's board seeks to provide 10% of AUC students with scholarships averaging €7000. Between 2016 and 2018, the ASF is also awarding a number of excellence-based grants from the Diversity Award Programme (DAP) to Dutch students with a non-Western immigrant background. Both the ASF scholarships and the DAP awards have a duration of three years, with an annual assessment to check whether the student is making sufficient academic progress. The Fund's board has appointed a selection committee that makes proposals to the board for awarding both ASF and DAP grants.

5.9 INTERNATIONAL STAFF

As well as international students, international staff now represent a growing proportion of VU Amsterdam's talent base. Over 20% of all VU Amsterdam scholars come from outside the Netherlands; among PhD candidates, this figure rises to almost 50%. VU Amsterdam's International Office is working with Human Resource Management to optimize the services and information offered to international staff. In 2018, the Relocation Manager initiated a project to explore the customer experience using a 'customer journey'. The results of this project led to the creation of the International Talent Programme. The projects that fall within this programme aim to make a positive contribution to attracting and retaining international talent.

The projects are implemented at both a central and a faculty level. For example, an English-speaking welcome event is now held eight times a year to help international staff members settle in once they arrive in Amsterdam. The International Staff Network has also grown to more than 500 members, and the Global Room is used as a meeting space. Rector Vinod Subramaniam is the patron of the network. The Relocation Manager is the first point of contact for senior international staff. The Relocation Manager helps with finding accommodation, schools and childcare, partner/spouse support and other matters related to living and working in Amsterdam. All these activities make VU Amsterdam more attractive as an international employer.

5.10 COLLABORATING WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

VU Amsterdam cooperates with selected partner institutions from all over the world. This cooperation includes operational and tactical activities (e.g. enabling student and staff mobility through exchange programmes, joint programmes, or short-term programmes) and strategic activities, as in the Aurora network. With a number of institutional partners, and within the Aurora strategic network, VU Amsterdam has entered into more intensive cooperation with the aim of integrating the exchange of expertise, students and staff in the teaching and research programmes of all faculties and where relevant, in the service departments. Strategic partners help VU Amsterdam to achieve its ambitions in the field of education, research, talent, diversity and internationalization.

5.10.1 AURORA STRATEGIC NETWORK

In 2016, VU Amsterdam established the [Aurora strategic network](#) together with eight other renowned European research universities. In addition to VU Amsterdam, the network consists of the following universities: Université Grenoble Alpes (France), the University of Aberdeen (Scotland), the University of Antwerp (Belgium), the University of Bergen (Norway), the University of Duisburg-Essen (Germany), the University of East Anglia (England), the University of Gothenburg (Sweden) and the University of Iceland. You can find more detailed information at www.aurora-network.global and <https://vu.nl/en/about-vu-amsterdam/mission-and-profile/aurora/index.aspx>.

Staff at VU Amsterdam are invited to use this network to bring about cooperation in research and education, which may also cover the forming of consortia and joint grant applications, and the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

- Several thematic working groups are active within the network, including:
- Diversity and Involvement
- Relevance to Society and Research Impact
- Student Initiatives
- Innovation in Education
- Human Life and Health
- The Digital World
- Internationalization
- Sustainability, Energy and Climate

Aurora's local office at VU Amsterdam is coordinated by the VU International Office. Staff with an interest in Aurora in general, or in cooperating with one or more Aurora members in a particular area, should [contact](#) the VU International Office (Policy and Business Development Unit). The network's VU email address is aurora@vu.nl.

5.10.2 INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

VU Amsterdam cooperates with a number of partners at institutional level. This cooperation has a broader effect, for example in the political arena, at policy level and in terms of raising the university's profile. These partners are Renmin University and Beijing University of Technology in China, Amrita University (various campuses in India) and the University of California Los Angeles in the United States, where the primary focus is diversity.

Staff at VU Amsterdam with an interest in cooperating with one or more Aurora members in a particular area, should [contact](#) the VU International Office (Policy and Business Development Unit).

5.10.3 FOCUS COUNTRIES AND STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

For decades VU Amsterdam has contributed to knowledge sharing with developing countries. The University continues to maintain long-standing relationships with South Africa and Indonesia – countries that have been adapting to new circumstances throughout their history. With the passage of time, both have developed into major economic players in their respective regions. VU Amsterdam enters into institutional relationships with organizations in these focus countries, for example through research Master's programmes.

Social commitment, international diversity and new avenues for research collaboration are at the heart of SAVUSA (South Africa VU Strategic Alliance) and RIVUSA (Republic of Indonesia VU Strategic Alliance). The cooperation within these strategic alliances is aligned with the four profile themes from the VU Amsterdam's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan. A Joint Doctorate Agreement has been established with a number of institutions, while in others a Joint Master's Degree Programme is already up and running. Although the ambitions and underlying principles of SAVUSA and RIVUSA differ, both programmes aim to strengthen cooperation between VU Amsterdam and higher education, government and industry in South Africa and Indonesia respectively, in order to enrich teaching and research.

The teams behind SAVUSA and RIVUSA are coordinated by the VU International Office. Staff at VU Amsterdam with an interest in cooperating within the framework of one of these programmes should contact the VU International Office (Centre for International Cooperation).

5.10.4 EXCHANGE PARTNERS

To facilitate the exchange of students and staff, the VU International Office establishes and maintains exchange agreements with renowned institutions abroad. The [VU Study Abroad Worldmap](#) shows all of VU Amsterdam's exchange partners, with information on each university, the number of exchange places available each year, the target group (Bachelor's or Master's, specific programmes), the range of courses available, practical matters (e.g. registration, housing, visa), and reports detailing the experiences of previous exchange students. VU Amsterdam's policy on exchange partners details the appropriate guidelines and procedures.

Exchange partners within Europe and outside Europe

Exchange contracts concluded within Europe form part of the European Erasmus+ programme. For this purpose, VU Amsterdam has been awarded the [Erasmus Charter for Higher Education \(ECHE\) 2014-2020](#). [VU Amsterdam's Erasmus Policy Statement](#) outlines the University's strategy with regard to the ECHE. The central principles of this strategy are that VU Amsterdam is committed to facilitating student mobility and recognizes the credits obtained by its students at the Erasmus partner universities. The Director of the VU International Office is authorized to sign any agreements made in this regard. VU Amsterdam's Erasmus Institutional Coordinator is responsible for the agreements within Europe, carries out the necessary preparations for these agreements and maintains contact with partner institutions through the VU International Office.

Outside Europe, the VU International Office establishes bilateral agreements with universities for student and staff exchange. These agreements are signed by the Executive Board's portfolio holder for Internationalization. The designated person within the Mobility Unit's Student Exchange team at the VU International Office prepares these agreements and maintains contact with the partner.

Staff with questions about existing exchange agreements or who are interested in contacting new or existing partners for student and staff exchange should [contact](#) the Mobility Unit's Student Exchange Team at the VU International Office. The VU International Office has drawn up a procedure for establishing and terminating exchange agreements; this is available on request.

5.11 RECEIVING FOREIGN DELEGATIONS

VU Amsterdam regularly welcomes representatives from various organizational levels of its international partner institutions. These delegations visit VU Amsterdam to discuss future collaborations, to renew existing partnerships, to attend workshops or conferences, or to pursue other ambitions for education, research and management. Occasionally, groups of students from schools, colleges or universities also visit VU Amsterdam. In cases where a relationship between faculties already exists, the visiting delegation often coordinates the programme with the faculty, and this may include a role for the VU International Office (e.g. discussing new educational cooperation, for example for student exchange). However, the VU International Office also receives requests in cases where such a direct relationship does not yet exist or where it can offer support within the programme. This might include a visit from a new interested party, a visit from a delegation that wishes to visit several departments at the University; or a visit where the involvement of the Executive Board is appropriate. The VU International Office has developed a procedure for hosting these visits. This can be found at VUnet > Service centre > Internationalization > International cooperation > Receiving international delegations. Of course, representatives from VU Amsterdam also visit institutions abroad; forays which vary from administrative missions to individual visits.

5.12 WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY ABROAD

In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in the international mobility of students, staff and guests to and from VU Amsterdam, both in terms of scale and the range of opportunities available. This also increases the possibility that an unfortunate incident might befall a student, guest or member of staff. This international mobility exposes VU Amsterdam, its students and staff to a greater risk from an emergency or a natural disaster, both individually and as an organization.

When an emergency or natural disaster occurs abroad, the standard procedures for dealing with a crisis are more difficult to implement. Vital decisions need to be taken, often with a high risk of damage and in the face of intense media scrutiny. Matters may be further complicated by pressure of time, a lack of information, contradictory reports, physical distance and cultural misunderstandings. For circumstances such as these, VU Amsterdam has drawn up a [VU Crisis Protocol](#) (see VUnet > Service Centre > Internationalization > Guidelines > International policy in case of crisis).

6 APPENDIX 1: VU INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Contact details

VU International Office

Main Building, ground floor, Room 0E

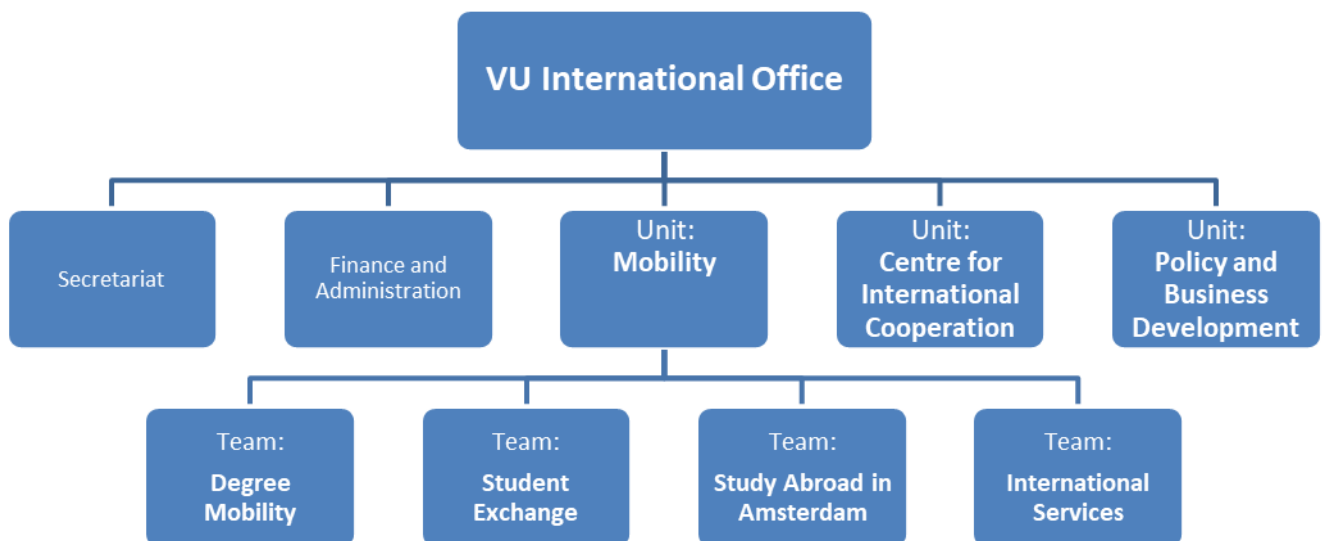
De Boelelaan 1105

1081 HV Amsterdam

Telephone: +31 (0)20 59 89097

www.vu.nl/en/about-vu-amsterdam/contact-info-and-route/departments/international-office

Organization chart



How does the VU International Office do?

A number of the core activities carried out by the units of the VU International Office are listed below.

Mobility Unit

- Initiating and managing partner agreements for student and staff mobility.
- Managing relations with international partner universities and other organizations, such as embassies and the Nuffic Netherlands Education Support Offices (NESO).
- Managing and/or implementing the applicable scholarship programmes for international mobility.
- Providing various services throughout the student's process (orientation, application, registration, arrival, stay and departure): these include help with the orientation and application process, credential evaluation, applying for visa and residence permits, offering accommodation and related information, organizing introduction days and a buddy program, and student career services.

Centre for International Cooperation

- Working with faculty research groups to acquire, coordinate and carry out externally funded international collaborative projects.
- Maintaining an international network, including contacts relevant to the SAVUSA and RIVUSA programmes.

Policy and Business Development Unit

- Preparing the monthly internationalization meeting between the Executive Board's portfolio holder for Internationalization, the Dean of Internationalization, the Director of the Student and Educational Affairs Department and relevant parties within the VU International Office.
- Participating in various consultative bodies, such as the national University Platform on Internationalization (organized by VSNU, the Association of Universities in the Netherlands) and the local Open Kennis Amsterdam consultation.
- Contributing to the development of an inclusive campus for Dutch and international students and staff through coordination and implementation of the International Campus programme.
- Maintaining VU Amsterdam's strategic partner network, including the local office of the Aurora network.
- Supporting the Executive Board on missions abroad and welcoming delegations from abroad.
- Policy implementation with respect to VU Amsterdam's major scholarship schemes, and supporting the committee responsible for scholarship allocations.
- International marketing and recruitment of international students for the international Bachelor's and Master's programmes, in collaboration with the Marketing and Communications Department, and developing recruitment support activities, including those requested by programmes.
- Supporting the setting up and analysis of surveys for optimizing the services of the VU International Office. Implementing policy on action taken in response to the results of the National Student Survey and the International Student Barometer survey.

Services provided by the VU International Office

The VU International Office, together with faculties and other service departments at VU Amsterdam, encourages the internationalization process within the University and supports those involved in many different ways. The process of internationalization has had an effect on the service departments: housing and immigration procedures for international students and guests are just two prime examples. We are also keen to welcome our international students and guests and to make them feel part of the organization (e.g. thanks to bilingualism, introduction days, buddy programme, international staff network, study associations) while preparing our students (both Dutch and international) for a career in the Netherlands or abroad (e.g. through student career support). In addition, the VU International Office supports the academic staff and employees in dealing effectively with our international students and staff (e.g. through language training, diversity-intensive teaching, sharing best practices, organizing the International Classroom Knowledge Series). Below a number of services are listed which relate to internationalization and are provided by the VU International Office.

Immigration

The VU International Office arranges immigration procedures for students with a non-EEA nationality. Depending on the student's nationality, the office requests an entry visa and/or residence permit from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND). A residence permit is valid for the official duration of the student's programme of study and can be extended if necessary.

VU Amsterdam is a sponsor for the IND, a position which entails rights and obligations. The University can apply for visa and residence permits on behalf of students using an abridged procedure at the IND. For this purpose, the student has to submit a number of documents via VUnet. Once all the relevant documents have been checked by the VU International Office, the applications are sent digitally to the IND, which decides within two weeks whether or not to approve the application. Sponsorship also entails obligations: VU Amsterdam has a duty of administration and information and is obliged, among other things, to carry out an annual check of the student's progress. If the student does not meet these requirements, this has to be reported to the IND and this may have consequences for the student's residence permit. In addition to the application for a visa or residence permit, the VU International Office also handles extensions or changes in cases where the student already has a residence permit for another Dutch institution. If the student is no longer registered at VU Amsterdam, deregistration must also take place in relation to the IND.

Accommodation

Affordable housing is in short supply in Amsterdam. The VU International Office is strongly committed to improving the housing situation for international students and staff, working closely together with the City of Amsterdam, housing corporations, alternative providers of accommodation, and other institutions of higher education in Amsterdam.

The VU International Office offers housing-related services to non-Dutch students who participate in one of our English-taught programmes. Students who have been admitted to the University (even conditionally) can apply for housing via VUnet. To this end, VU Amsterdam reserves over 1,000 housing units a year from DUWO housing corporation and other housing companies. These properties differ in terms of rent, floor space and comfort, and are furnished (for a fixed one-year rental period, with shared facilities or as an independent home) or unfurnished (for Bachelor's students and students on a two-year Master's programme based on a campus contract for the duration of the degree programme).

Grants and scholarships

The availability of scholarships and grants is an important part of various VU Amsterdam internationalization objectives. The VU International Office manages multiple scholarships and grant schemes for both inbound and outbound students. For some programmes, the office only provides administrative support, while for others support also covers promotion and the selection of scholarship candidates. There are internal scholarship programmes primarily funded by VU Amsterdam and the VU Association, and external scholarship programmes entirely funded by other organizations, often with the involvement of Nuffic. The conditions, registration and selection procedures differ for each scholarship programme.

Introduction days for international students

To enable international students to arrange a number of practical matters, the VU International Office organizes introduction days. On these days, students are welcomed at Schiphol Airport and are brought to the University by bus. On campus they can then take care of many practical arrangements in a single day: signing a housing contract and receiving the keys, registering with the municipality (Amsterdam and Amstelveen), opening a Dutch bank account, taking out a health insurance policy, registering with the international student organization Erasmus Student Network, and submitting any remaining documents to guarantee full enrolment. As a continuation of this, the students are offered a series of activities a few days after they have settled here. These include the workshops How to make it at VU Amsterdam and Intercultural Competence, and a crash course in Dutch.

Study support and forming communities

The welcome that students receive during the introduction days signals the start of a successful stay at VU Amsterdam, but the support does not stop there. Throughout their time at the University, it is essential that students feel part of the VU community and receive the answers they need in response to questions about their studies and their career. For this reason, the VU International Office organizes a range of events, such as Q&A sessions on student counselling at the University. A series of social networking events are also organized, including Christmas Drinks and a Graduation Party. A Buddy programme has been set up for new exchange students and Semester in Amsterdam students who will only be at VU Amsterdam for a short period. This programme helps these students to settle in as quickly as possible, both at VU Amsterdam and in the city of Amsterdam.

Student associations

Depending on their interests, students at VU Amsterdam can join one or more organizations associated, for example, with a particular faculty or programme. To promote integration among the growing number of international students and to give student life more of an international flavour, the student associations and the VU International Office are cooperating more closely. This not only meets the wishes of the international students, but also those of the associations' Dutch members who are given an opportunity to enjoy a more international experience. International students also represent an additional source of new members for the associations.

Campus facilities

Creating an inclusive working and learning environment for international students and staff is about more than simply providing bilingual campus facilities; these facilities also have to be accessible and suit a wider variety of needs. Our catering, for example, is becoming increasingly international, our cultural venues Rialto and Griffioen are looking at ways to make their programming more international, the VU Sports Centre offers a wide range of English-language activities, and the opening hours of the campus and the library have been extended. With regard to such services, the VU International Office participates more as a sparring partner than as an independent policy maker. The VU International Office hosts the [International Service Desk](#), part of the Student Desk in the Main Building, which is specifically geared towards providing assistance for the University's international students.

Student Career Support

Students are increasingly choosing their university and degree programme on the basis of career prospects, and expect the university to prepare them for the transition to the job market. The VU International Office has developed a career cycle, which helps prepare international students for the

transition to the job market at every stage of their education. A range of activities are organized, including appropriate training courses and workshops, as well as events with potential employers. In order to furnish the Amsterdam metropolitan region and the national and international business community with a better access to talent, VU Amsterdam regularly collaborates with Amsterdam's other institutions of higher education, such as the University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences and Inholland University of Applied Sciences. Each year, VU Amsterdam actively participates in the [International Talent Event Amsterdam](#), which brings together the business community and international Master's and PhD students, and [TECH020](#), the annual meeting event for tech companies and tech students from the Amsterdam region.