# International experience

"Umeå University wants to support the students and staff who aspire to obtain international experiences. Both individuals and the University as a whole can benefit from new cultural and organisational experiences, as well as new knowledge about methods and approaches. Even though a great deal of international cooperation can take place online, physical meetings are essential to their success, and they are particularly valuable for new contacts.

Students and staff at Umeå University are to have the opportunity to create their own international experiences by participating in activities such as studies abroad, internships, work shadowing, conference participation, network meetings and research periods abroad. The quality aspects of international experience are significant, hence it is important they are followed up and evaluated.”

(From [the Internationalisation policy](https://www.umu.se/en/legal-framework/first--and-second-cycle-education/internationalisation-policy/))

## Mobility windows

Study and internships abroad create unique opportunities for students to develop their own international experiences.

Mobility windows included in study programmes make it both easier and possible for Umeå University to provide students with the chance to gain valuable international experience as part of their degree.

Examples of mobility windows include a free semester or shorter period where students are able to participate in exchange studies.

Would you like help to implement mobility windows into a programme? Get in touch with the international contact at your department for tips and advice. Representatives from the International Office are happy to attend planning meetings or programme council meetings.

## Mobility windows

**Flexibility in staffing and incentives for periods abroad**

There needs to be flexibility with employment conditions if teachers and technical and administrative staff are to be able to participate in exchanges.

There needs to be an incentive for teachers to choose to go and teach abroad. International experience can generate indispensable input for personal educational and teaching methods, course development and opportunities for international collaboration in teaching. It can provide insight into how students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds can be integrated into the classroom setting.

International experience can also enable personal development, training in teaching in another language, and the possibility to establish contacts at the partner university – not least in the researcher's own field.

Those who have taught abroad encourage and stimulate students by integrating the knowledge and experiences they gained into teaching. They are good ambassadors and inspire home students to participate in exchanges. There needs to be incentives that emphasise the University's desire to increase interest in teaching abroad.

Such incentives can include making teaching abroad part of the salary criteria and educational merit system, or placing special emphasis or consideration on a teacher's international teaching experience when staffing courses and programmes.

There needs to be an understanding of how time abroad for technical and administrative staff can benefit both the individual and the University. Job shadowing within the EU is a relatively simple way of developing new perspectives and establishing new contacts at other higher education institutions.

By seeing how other people with similar duties address their tasks, technical and administrative staff will receive a new set of tools which they can use at their own higher education institution.

**Flexibility in staffing and incentives for periods abroad**

## Partner university agreements

Exchange agreements with international higher education institutions for student, teacher, and staff mobility must be of high quality, and aim for mutual exchanges with incoming and outgoing staff and students.

There are three levels of university partnership agreements, each complementing the other: departmental level, faculty level, and university-wide level. It is important that when combined, all of these agreements create a varied and expansive portfolio of exchange agreements with international higher education institutions, as regards location and subject areas.

There needs to be thoroughly developed support for all forms of exchange agreement, and clear procedures for initiating, maintaining and terminating them.

[All partnership agreements can be found on Solemove](https://saas.solenovo.fi/move/destinationSearch/10220082).

## Partner university agreements

## Information about international experience opportunities

In order for more people to discover and think about going on an exchange, information about the opportunities and how to apply for international experience is necessary. Students, teachers and technical and administrative staff are all offered the relevant information, guidance and service before, during and after their exchange period, which may involve studies, internships, job shadowing or teaching abroad.

It is also highly important that students and staff are encouraged and inspired to apply for international experience. Guidance and support with international mobility is particularly necessary for students who face certain challenges, as well as under-represented student groups who have no previous international experience, have reflected upon studies and internships abroad during their degree.

[Exchange studies for students](https://www.umu.se/en/student/study-abroad/exchange-studies/exchange-studies-outside-europe/where-can-you-go/)

[International exchanges for staff](https://www.aurora.umu.se/en/my-employment/skills-development/international-exchange/)

## Information about international experience opportunities

## Coordination

All departments at Umeå University have an international contact who is responsible for the department's agreements, information, and support for students, teachers, technical and administrative staff who are interested in spending time abroad.

Together with other people who work with internationalisation, the international contact forms a network of people who support each other with backing from the International Office.

The central functions can supply all University staff with information about the University's trend monitoring.

[International contacts](https://www.umu.se/en/student/study-abroad/exchange-studies/international-contact-persons/)

[International Office](https://www.umu.se/en/international-office/)

## Coordination

## The importance of international experience for a person's career

Once they have completed their studies, Umeå University students will be competing for jobs in an increasingly globalised world, where understanding and awareness as well as intercultural skills form vital components. International experience can make them more attractive to the labour market.

As part of their employment, staff should be able to participate in conferences and networks – and spend time abroad. All research positions should facilitate personal international experiences. Doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows are a priority group, as international collaborations early in their career can have a positive effect on research.

## The importance of international experience for a person's career

## Funds for personal international experience

University staff should be aware of that funding is available for internationalisation. Umeå University has set aside various levels of special funding for doctoral students, as building international relationships and being active in international contexts has been prioritised for young researchers.

[Funding calls and announcements](https://www.aurora.umu.se/en/education-and-research/announcements/travel-grants-from-the-kempe-foundations/)

## Funds for personal international experience