



SYSTEMIC UNIVERSITY  
CHANGE TOWARDS  
INTERNATIONALISATION

SUCTI REPORT ON TRAINING PROVISION  
ON INTERNATIONALISATION FOR  
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF IN EUROPEAN  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
**2017**



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This report corresponds to  
an intellectual output of a  
Strategic Partnership project  
(Erasmus+)

**SUCTI Project**

2016-1-ES01-KA203-025646



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SUCTI Project (Strategic Partnership - 2016-1-ES01-KA203-025646)

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SUCTI Project (Strategic Partnership - 2016-1-ES01-KA203-025646)



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## Index

Preface .....	3
Introduction to the SUCTI Project .....	3
Purpose .....	5
Approach .....	5
Presentation .....	5
SECTION 1: EVOLVING DEFINITIONS OF INTERNATIONALISATION AND REFERENCES TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE .....	6
SECTION 2: FINDINGS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES .....	10
Background information .....	10
A Strategy for internationalisation.....	11
<i>General in-house training for administrative staff</i> .....	12
Conclusions .....	23
SECTION 3: LEARNINGS FROM THE CASE STUDIES .....	24
1. Importance of internationalisation to the university and its likely future development ...	24
2. Role of administrative staff in the development of internationalisation .....	25
3. Current capacity of administrative staff to deliver high quality international services.....	27
4. Skills and competences required for internationalisation .....	28
5. Current training provision for administrative staff in all areas including internationalisation.....	28
6. Recommendations for training programmes for administrative staff in internationalisation.....	29
Concluding remarks.....	30
REFERENCES .....	32
ANNEXE 1: QUESTIONNAIRE .....	36
ANNEXE 2: CASE STUDY TEMPLATE .....	42
ANNEXE 3: CASE STUDIES.....	44
Case Study 1 .....	44
Case Study 2 .....	47
Case Study 3 .....	50
Case Study 4 .....	55
Case Study 5 .....	58
Case Study 6 .....	64

## Preface

### Introduction to the SUCTI Project

The seed for the SUCTI project was first planted in 2011 when the idea of creating an internationalisation course targeting administrative staff was proposed during the International Week at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Tarragona, Spain). The idea, which was well received by staff, was to offer a specially designed course for administrative staff that would allow the University and its international office to convey the importance of internationalisation, to explain international developments from around the world (rankings, global trends) and from within the institution (international office, research unit, doctoral school, etc.) and to communicate the message that everyone has a key role to play in the internationalisation process.

As a result of the first course in 2011, it became apparent that many stereotypes about internationalisation were still alive among our administrative staff and that no one had taken the time to talk to them about the importance of internationalisation and the role that they could play in the URV's international strategy. Staff felt that they lacked both knowledge and tools and found that the internationalisation course empowered them to play a key role in the internationalisation process and equipped them with intercultural communication tools.

The success of the course led to it being repeated and improved and then shared with other partner institutions. Interest in it grew and in 2015 the URV submitted a proposal for a Strategic Partnership project under the Erasmus+ programme. The SUCTI Project was thus born and in 2016 was awarded funding by the European Commission to officially start its activities in September of the same year. The project will run for three years (2016-2019) and will develop internationalisation materials specifically aimed at administrative staff, train SUCTI trainers, create a network of experts, discuss the latest developments in internationalisation training for administrative staff and measure the results obtained from training. It will also raise awareness of the fact that administrative staff are crucial to the success of any strategic university process and in particular to internationalisation if our institutions are to become truly international.

The SUCTI consortium is coordinated by the Universitat Rovira i Virgili and has a further 7 members, these being 3 individual universities (University of Porto, Justus Liebig Universität Giessen, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan), the European Association for International Education (EAIE), the Center for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI) at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC), the UNESCO Chair for Higher Education Management of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC), and the Global Impact Institute (GII).

This report describes the provision of internationalisation training at European institutions and offers several case studies that will help readers to learn and apply what they consider useful to their own institutions.

Have a good read!

Marina Casals

Director of International Relations and SUCTI Coordinator at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili





## Purpose

One of the key outputs of the SUCTI project is the development of a *Train the Trainers* programme which will prepare three members of staff Offices in each of the six participating institutions to deliver training courses on internationalisation to their administrative colleagues. The overarching aims of these courses are to provide administrative staff in general with a greater understanding of internationalisation and how it relates to their own work as well as to motivate them to identify how they might play a more active role in the internationalisation processes at their respective universities.

In order to build a stronger basis for the development and delivery of this *Train the Trainers* programme, the design of the SUCTI project foresaw a research project to provide deeper insight into how administrative staff are being trained to deal with the new tasks and functions they face as their universities engage more significantly in internationalisation. The Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI) at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC) in Milan Italy was the leader of this intellectual output.

## Approach

The partners decided to carry out the study in two parts:

- 1) an online questionnaire that would map out the current in-house training provisions for the internationalisation of administrative staff at European Higher Education Institutions (HEIs);
- 2) case studies in the six participating institutions built around the experiences and perceptions from a range of administrative staff about current training provision for internationalisation and how it might be improved.

This combined approach provided an opportunity to situate the six SUCTI members in the broader European context, identify commonalities and differences, and also shed some light on the reasons for the various trends emerging in the questionnaire.

## Presentation

The report is structured in the following way. The first part analyses the evolving definitions for internationalisation and explores how references to administrative staff have become more evident, although typically still more implicit than explicit over the years. The second part highlights key findings from the questionnaires and the third part presents an overview of the case studies in the six institutions. The concluding section draws key learnings for the SUCTI project and its *Train the Trainers* programme planned for early 2018. The annexes include the questionnaire, the case study outline, and the individual case studies.

SUCTI members from all six universities participated, together with the EAIE, in the preparation of the questionnaire and the EAIE was responsible for the development and delivery of the on-line version. SUCTI members from all six universities also undertook the interviews in their own institutions and wrote up case studies according to the template provided. The SUCTI partner Global Impact Institute was responsible for assuring the quality of the report.

## SECTION 1: EVOLVING DEFINITIONS OF INTERNATIONALISATION AND REFERENCES TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE

In order to create a common framework of reference for this study, it is a valuable exercise to explore the evolving definitions of internationalisation, which originally did not make any explicit reference to administrative roles. However, in the more recently revised definitions a growing consideration of the involvement of administrative staff is emerging, even though the reference is still more likely to be an implicit one. To a large extent, this trend has been reflected also in the practice of internationalisation where the focus has been principally on the development of academic activities, and hence mainly on the involvement of students and teachers.

Administrative staff have, of course, always been involved in these activities through the support services they deliver, but they have often been left in the background, at times quite invisible. Yet, at the same time, they have been expected to adapt to the changing institutional needs and provide the requisite levels of service, with or without the appropriate training. This project seeks to play a part in addressing this oversight by recognising the fundamental role they play, and by enabling them to become active participants in the internationalisation processes at their institutions.

The concept of internationalisation as we understand it today emerged in the 1980's and has evolved over time. The first trend identified is one that shifts the definition from a focus primarily on activities to the idea of internationalisation as a process. One example of the early definitions is internationalisation as *"the multiple activities, programs and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange and technical cooperation"* (Arum & van der Water, 1992) but as internationalisation gained importance it expanded quickly to the *"process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution"* (Knight, 1994). The reference in this early definition to service functions already suggests that internationalisation reached beyond academic activities, even though, both in literature and practice, attention was paid mainly to the key functions of teaching and research.

While the focus until this point had been mainly at the institutional level, Knight herself reviewed and expanded the definition ten years later to all levels as *"the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education"* (Knight, 2003). This has undoubtedly become the most widely known and commonly used definition, and while it can be applied to national, regional or international levels, the reference to functions and delivery point to an administrative dimension in the process of internationalisation.

The institutional level itself evolved from an idea that was more inward facing to one that saw internationalisation as a conscious response to external pressures in the notion of *"any systematic effort aimed at making higher education responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalization of societies, economy and labour market"* (van der Wende, 1997).

This definition of internationalisation as a response to globalization implies a shift from earlier *ad hoc* and often more individual than institutional approaches to one that is more strategic. This implies an institution that has developed the capacity to scan its external environment,

gather the appropriate intelligence and make decisions to adapt and innovate its programmes, policies and practices in the face of rapid external change. While not clearly stated, it is evident that any such an institutionally driven approach would require the involvement of a highly trained and professionalised administrative community.

Another trend that has become apparent over the last 20 years is the broadening of scope of activities and tasks that fall under internationalisation. The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century saw the emergence of the term “Internationalisation at home” (IaH) as distinct from “internationalisation abroad” and was defined as “*any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound student and staff mobility*” (Crowther, et al., 2001). This definition stated more what IaH was not, rather than what it might actually comprise but it was the beginning of a significant shift in thinking about internationalisation.

The shortcoming in the definition has since been addressed in a recently revised definition as “*the **purposeful** integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and **informal curriculum** for all students in domestic learning environments*” (Beelen & Jones, 2015). This reflects more adequately what internationalisation at home has or could become, focusing specifically on the desirability of providing an international experience for all students in any given institution.

The inclusion of the word “purposeful” indicates that IaH is driven by conscious decisions and appropriate processes and the reference to the informal curriculum points to the involvement of university staff engaged in support services.

Leask’s retooling of her own definition of Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC) makes this evolution explicit and makes explicit reference to an administrative role in the “*incorporation of international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and **support services** of a program of study*” (Leask, 2015).

As Internationalisation at Home, more of a Continental European concept, and Internationalisation of the Curriculum, developed in the UK and Australia, expand as definitions, they increasingly overlap in their purpose and scope. Both focus on reaching 100% of students and embedding internationalisation within the formal and informal curriculum, and both indicate that administrative staff have a role to play in the successful delivery of internationalisation. Both definitions also imply that this involvement is a purposeful and integrated one.

Although there can be no doubt of the increasing importance but also growing diversity in internationalisation as a lived reality in different institutions, the literature has also suggested that the term is often used by institutions to suit their own purposes, often perceived more as a goal in itself rather than a means to an end (de Wit 2011).

Hence, a recent revision of Knight’s intentionally neutral definition has sought to provide an overarching sense of purpose to internationalisation. It seeks to encourage institutions to reflect more on their own rationales for engaging in it, and to develop their strategies from the starting point of a clear understanding of *why* they are internationalising and in what way internationalisation can make a contribution to institutional mission.

The revised definition states that internationalisation is “an **intentional** process to integrate an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education **in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society.**” (de Wit, Hunter, Howard, & Egron Polak, 2015).

It reflects increasing awareness that internationalisation is critically dependent on active engagement by all actors involved. By embracing “all students and staff” it seeks to reflect the growing awareness that internationalisation has to become more inclusive and less elitist if it is to make a real contribution to the quality of education and research.

This implies that internationalisation should be embedded in the teaching and learning process of all programmes and at all levels with internationalized learning outcomes that ensure an international dimension for all students, mobile or not. Mobility, while a valuable and often transformational experience for the individuals concerned, is nevertheless reserved for the few and should be integrated into the curriculum as an optional pathway for the achievement of the programme’s learning outcomes.

This also points to a more active role in internationalisation for staff and while academic engagement is increasingly being addressed in the literature through interest in the curriculum, much less attention has been paid to the administrative function and how it contributes not only to the quality of the student experience but also to institutional improvement and delivery of mission. While a highly specialized international office can make a significant contribution to a successful internationalisation strategy, as internationalisation pervades more and more of the university operations, it can no longer be an exclusive responsibility of one unit, but rather one that should be distributed across all administrative units, to different degrees and in different ways, according to the assigned functions.

There is increasingly “*the shared feeling that international education no longer can be seen as a fragmented list of activities executed by international offices and a small group of motivated internationalists among staff and students. Internationalisation should on the contrary be integrated, broad and core*” (de Wit, 2011).

This approach is further supported by the recent concept of comprehensive internationalisation as “*a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives through the teaching, research and service missions of higher education enterprise, [...] that has to be embraced by **institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students and all academic service and support units***”. Moreover, in the current environment, it is one that is declared to be “*an institutional imperative, not just a desirable possibility*” (Hudzik, 2011).

Internationalisation is thus understood increasingly as an intentional process of change, one that is both planned and purposeful. This requires institutions to reflect on and decide their future direction of the institution, and then, most critically, to translate these decisions into action and institutional change.

Internationalisation, if understood in this manner, has the capacity to enhance quality, promote institutional growth and renewal and give real meaning and purpose to the term itself.

These recent definitions seek to underline that internationalisation is a means to enhance quality and support mission, and is more than just student mobility or an income or prestige generating activity. However, this implies a holistic approach that considers not only the appropriate academic activities but also the support services and resource management, both financial and human that work in synergy with one another towards achieving the institutional goals.

Beyond a strategy that identifies and implements appropriate structures and processes, it will be the people who bring the objectives to life and make internationalisation happen. And increasingly, the people who are actively involved in internationalisation are also in administrative units, providing high quality professional services across a broad range of functions. However, this crucial role is not yet recognised in many institutions today and consequently insufficient attention is paid as to whether administrators have the necessary knowledge and preparation to provide an appropriate level of service in line with the university's aspirations for quality and excellence in internationalisation.

## SECTION 2: FINDINGS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES

### Background information

SUCTI undertook a survey about current training provision on internationalisation for administrative staff in order to better understand target group needs. Originally, the intention had been to send out a questionnaire to universities in the countries represented in the SUCTI project. However, given that one of the partners in the project is the European Association for International Education (EAIE), it was decided to send the survey to all the universities in the EAIE database that were located in the European Higher Education Area. This would give a much broader overview of the trends in potentially 46 as opposed to 6 countries.

It was also decided to direct the questionnaire to International Directors, or equivalent, in the relevant institutions, since it was presumed that they would be more motivated to respond and more likely be in a position to answer the questions around training provision for internationalisation in their institution. It was also important to understand their involvement in training given that the project sought to train staff currently active in internationalisation who would then deliver the training to their administrative colleagues.

The questionnaire was developed in collaboration with all the partners in the consortium. They received each version of the questionnaire as it was being written and given the opportunity to provide suggestions for improvement. They also acted as the test group to pilot the questionnaire checking for clarity of questions, ease of response and timing.

The definitions for administrative staff and in-house training provision were given as:

- *administrative staff* i.e. individuals involved in administrative and/or managerial functions, but whose primary responsibility is **not** internationalisation (*ie not* the International Office staff).
- *in-house training* i.e. seminars, workshops, courses or on-the-job training provided at the institution exclusively to its own staff, by either internal or external trainers, but excluding any form of mobility.

The questionnaire had 5 different sections: Individual information, Institutional Information, Current Training Provision, Impact of Training Provision, Concluding Questions, and had a range of different question types such as dichotomous (yes/no), multiple choice, rank order, rating scales, open for comments. It took around 10 minutes to complete. The full questionnaire is available in Annexe 1.

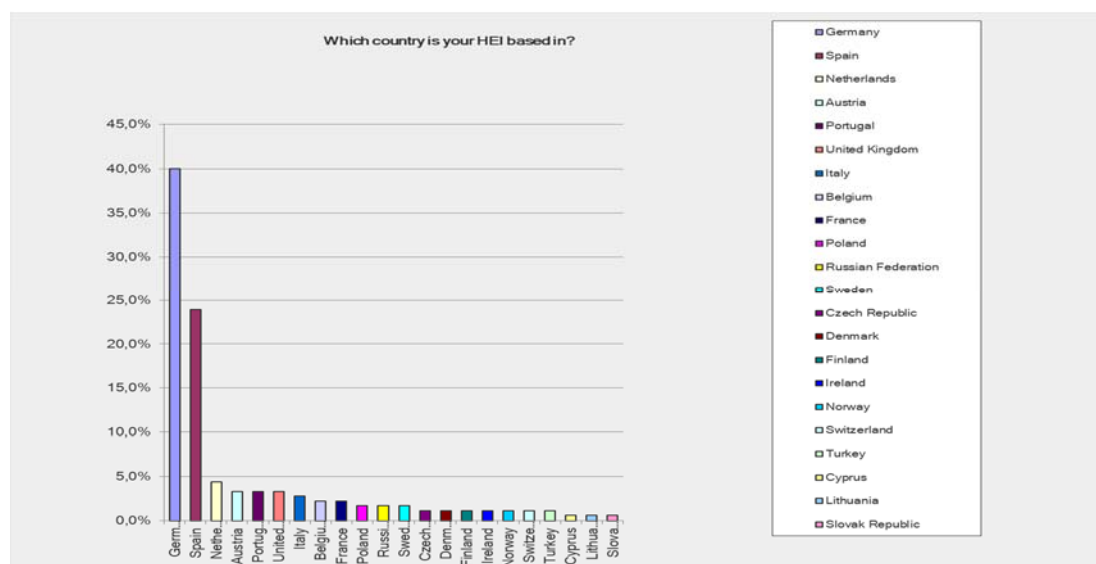
It was distributed to 842 International Directors (or equivalent title) at institutions in the European Higher Education Area registered in the EAIE database in March 2017. Project partners in three of the five countries (Spain, Germany and Portugal) forwarded the link to their own national networks. Overall, 235 responses (27.9%) were received, of which 180 (21.4%) were complete, which are rather usual response rates in such large-scale surveys. For this report, only the 180 complete surveys were used.

There was a broad range of responses from the different countries although two countries clearly dominated. Germany provided 72 responses (40%) and Spain 43 responses (23.9%) so these two countries alone accounted for 63.9% of the sample. Therefore, the results cannot be considered representative for the population of the database available at EAIE (of which 6.9%

are in Germany and 4.9% in Spain). Apart from the fact that these are two large European countries, the SUCTI partners in Germany and Spain contacted their national networks and this no doubt increased the response rate. The other SUCTI partner countries were all represented but to a significantly lesser degree: Portugal had 6 responses (3.3%), Italy 5 (2.8%) and Poland 3 (1.7%).

The results are therefore not statistically representative of Europe but for SUCTI the main purpose of the survey was to gather ideas outside the consortium and obtain a sense of what was happening in a broader range of institutions. It should also be noted that the responses are perceptions from one person in one office who may not have access to all information required to answer the questions, and that the responses do not reflect any official institutional position. There may also be an element of social desirability and self-selection with a number of respondents choosing to undertake the survey because they were able to provide a positive institutional image or because they felt motivated by the topic itself. These limitations are recognised.

### Country representation



### A Strategy for internationalisation

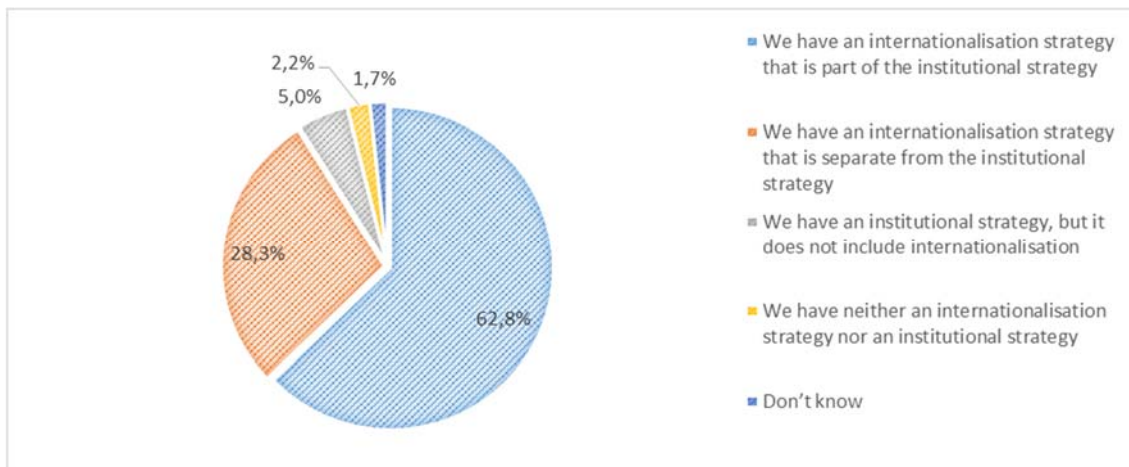
Given the importance of an intentional approach to internationalisation as highlighted in the literature, the first question asked was whether or not the HEI had an internationalisation strategy. However the institutions understand the term (strategies can come in many forms and degrees of effectiveness), 62.8%, practically two thirds, of the respondents indicated that a strategy was in place and that it was a part of the institutional strategy. This highlighted the importance the institutions, rather than just the International Office, attached to internationalisation.

A further 28.3% indicated that the internationalisation strategy is separate from the institutional strategy, and there can be many reasons why an institution might decide to do so, depending on its stage of maturity in internalisation or its traditions with strategic planning. There is also the possibility that in this case the International Strategy sits at the level of the

International Office rather than at senior management level, which is likely to diminish its authority and range of influence. In any case, an overwhelming 91.1% have an internationalisation strategy in one form or another.

Only 5 % have an institutional strategy that does not contemplate internationalisation, and 2.2% have neither an institutional nor international strategy. It is interesting to note that 1.7% of International Directors do not know if there is a strategy in place or not. Whatever the reason, it probably indicates that, even if there is an institutional strategy, it does not include internationalisation and/or does not assign any role or responsibility to the International Office.

*Does your institution have an internationalisation strategy?*



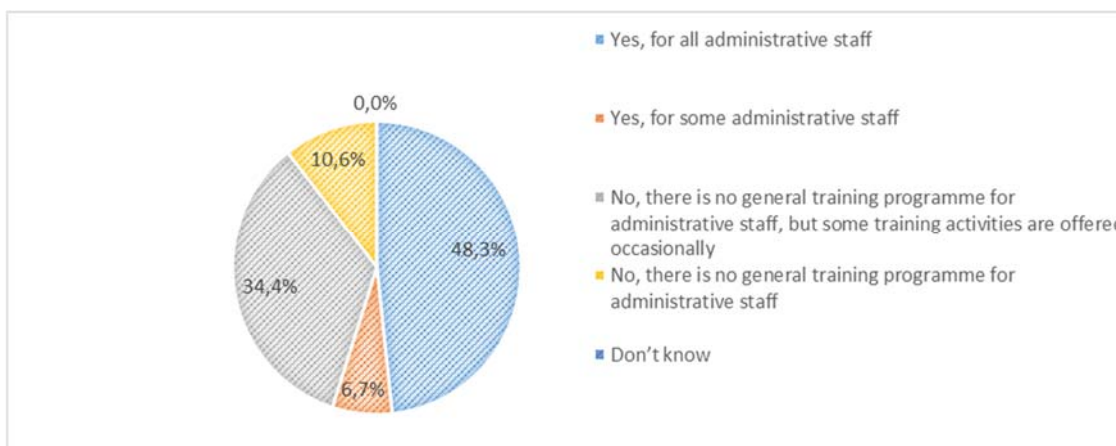
#### *General in-house training for administrative staff*

It was also important to ascertain whether the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) provided in-house training for administrative staff generally. Almost one half of the respondents (48.3%) said that their institution had a general programme for all staff and a further 6.7% said that it was available for some staff. So while it is good to learn that around 50% receive training, it is equally true that the other 50% do not. Around a third (34.4%) stated that there was no general training programme as such but training activities were offered occasionally and 10.6% said there was no training provided at all.

This does raise the general question around the concept of universities as “places of learning” and it is rather disappointing, although not surprising, that universities, given their mission, are not leaders in the provision of professional development for their own staff, especially considering that many universities engage in staff trainings for the business world and might be expected to be role-models. It is well accepted that the degree to which staff in any organisation are informed, prepared and trained for a change initiative, has a huge impact on the outcome and the ability of that organisation to develop agile and rapid responses in a turbulent environment.



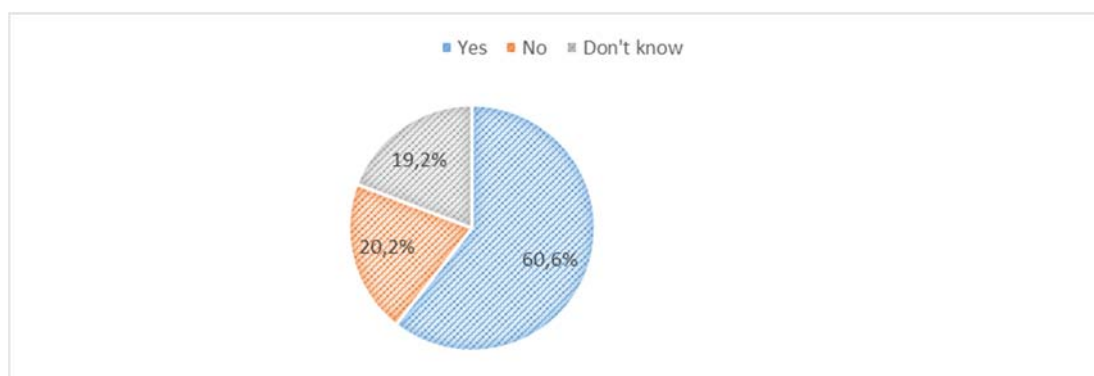
Does your institution have a general in-house training programme for administrative staff?



### Link between institutional strategy and general in-house training provision

While it is good to know that around half of the institutions provide training for their administrative staff, it was also important to understand if they had a strategic approach to training and linked the activities to the priorities in the institutional plan for development. The results are both positive and negative. It is again positive that almost two thirds (60.6%) provide training according to the institutional strategy. However, the remaining group indicate that in 20.2% of the institutions training provision is not linked to strategy and 19.2% do not know. This may be because they have not paid particular attention to the strategy and/or the training but it might also suggest an issue around internal communication of strategic goals and means of realisation.

Is your institution's general in-house training programme linked to the institutional strategy?

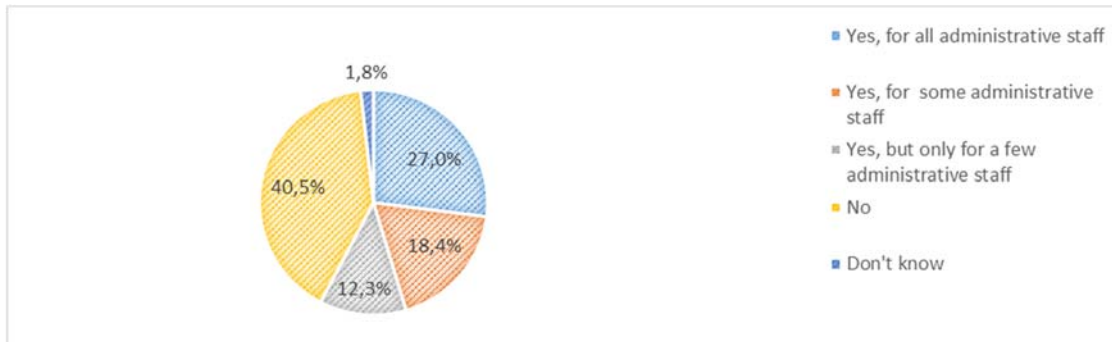


### Training for Internationalisation

While the vast majority of HEIs in the survey have a strategy for internationalisation and almost two thirds of them provide training for all administrative staff, only 27% provide training in internationalisation for all staff, 18.4% for some staff and 12.3% for a few staff. A resounding 40.5% say there is no training for administrative staff in internationalisation. It is not possible

to determine the reasons for this. In some cases, there may be little or no provision of training in any case, a lack of internationalisation strategy, or link between strategy and training. It emerges clearly that the role and importance of administrative staff in internationalisation, and their need for adequate training, are not recognised in many of these institutions.

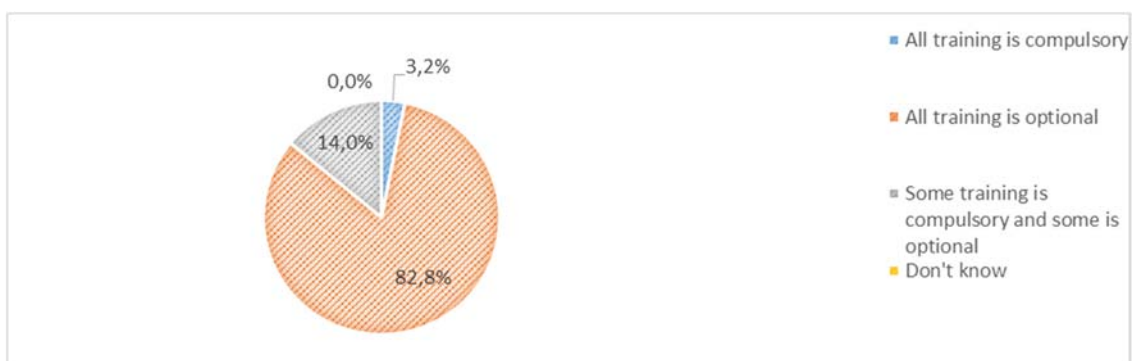
*Is in-house training on internationalisation for administrative staff included in the training programme offered by your institution?*



### Compulsory or optional training provision

Interestingly, it would appear that in the vast majority (82.8%) of HEIs, there is no requirement for staff to undertake training but that these are open programmes where individuals (or in some cases, it may be their department heads) decide whether to participate or not. Only in a very small percentage of 3.2% are staff required to undertake the training. If training is predominantly optional, it cannot provide systematic impact, even if it is linked to the strategy.

*Is in-house training on internationalisation for administrative staff at your institution compulsory or optional?*



### Training provision in the last three years

It was important to discover what type of training was provided specifically for internationalisation purposes. Not unsurprisingly, the most frequently offered training is English language programmes offered in a massive 81.7% of institutions. In the EHEA, only two countries have English as a native language, and recently there has been a massive increase in English-

language taught programmes. Therefore, this level of provision indicates not only a response to a need, but also the current unsatisfactory level of English language knowledge amongst administrative staff in HEIs in the EHEA, many of whom may well have been recruited to their jobs on a very different set of criteria from the skills required for internationalisation. Given also the amount of time required to learn or improve a foreign language, these programmes require long-term investment in time, effort and funding if they are to be effective. According to Cambridge Assessment English<sup>1</sup>, the different steps within the Common European Framework (CEFR) need the following hours of guided learning hours:

CEFR level	Guides Learning hours
A2	180-200
B1	350-400
B2	500-600
C1	700-800
C2	1,000-1,200

This means that considering the usual provision of 2 hours of language training per week, it would take at least one year to achieve only the level of A2.

Two thirds (66.7%) of the institutions provide training in intercultural communication. This is again understandable given the increased number of international students and academic staff entering the institutions.

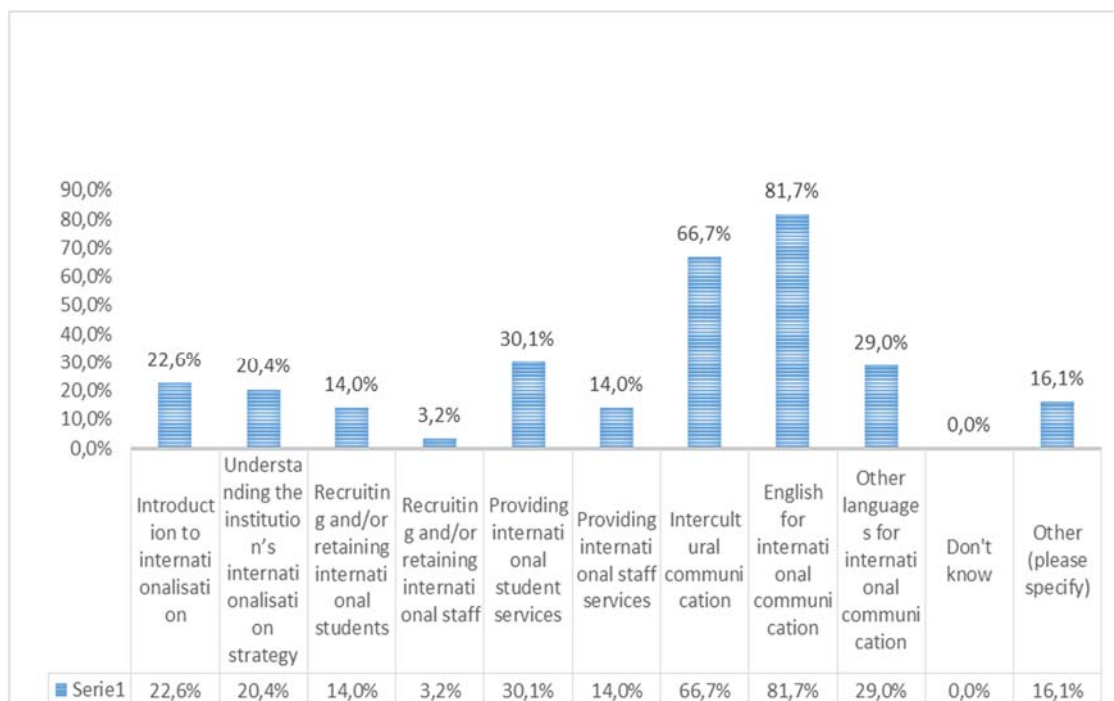
A number of other courses are also offered but they are much less frequent than the first two previously mentioned. Courses on provision of international student services are also mentioned and are more frequent than courses on services for international staff. This is understandable since many institutions will focus on increasing their international student numbers before embarking on a international staff recruitment policy.

It is interesting to note that some institutions invest resources in helping their administrative staff understand the concept of internationalisation itself, and also in ensuring that they are familiar with the institutional strategy and, presumably, the impact it will have on their work, but this is not common practice yet. Understanding internationalisation and the institution's own strategy is surely a strong motivator for staff – it is always easier to accept and implement change when people understand why it is happening and what it actually implies.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://support.cambridgeenglish.org/hc/en-gb/articles/202838506-Guided-learning-hours>

What kinds of in-house training programmes on internationalisation has your institution offered over the last 3 years? (Tick as many as relevant)

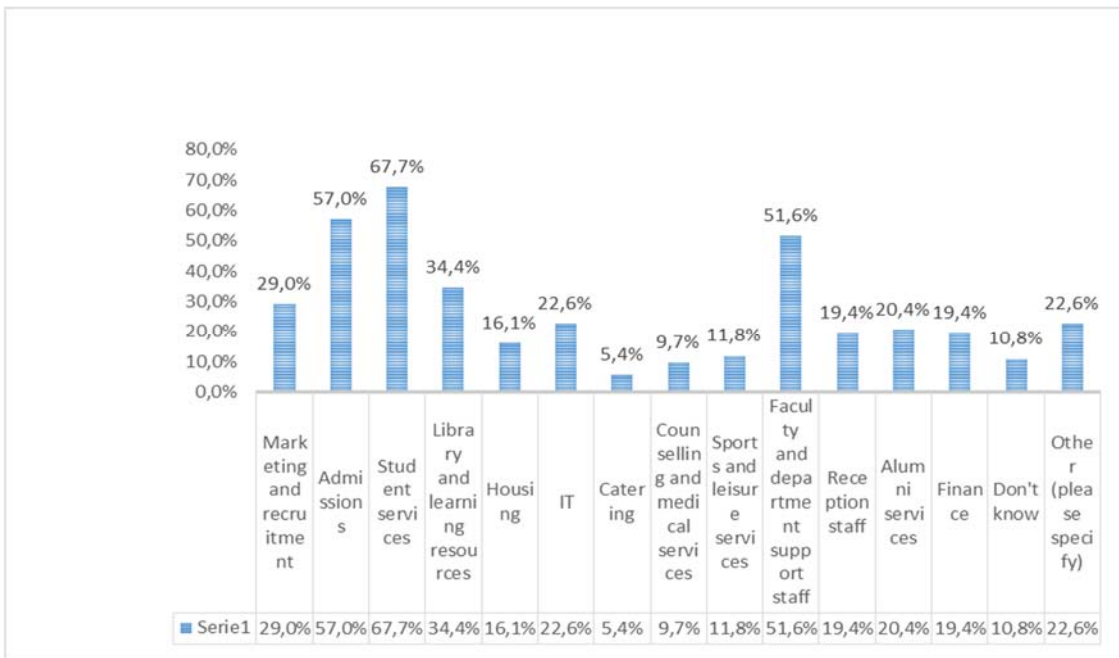


16% of respondents indicated that other training was provided than the options provided by the questionnaire and gave examples such as: international partnerships and projects, internationalising learning outcomes, online learning, recognition of diplomas and admissions processes and country specific sessions. Not unsurprisingly, due diligence, travel security and crisis management were also mentioned which are clear signs of changing times in internationalisation.

### Participants in training programmes

Given the high importance attached to international student recruitment in the EHEA, it is not surprising that the staff most likely to receive training are those involved in student services (67.7%), and this is closely followed by staff involved in admissions (57%) and support staff in the faculties and departments (51.6%). There is then a broad range of involvement of staff involved in different stages of the student lifecycle from before arrival (marketing and recruitment) to during studies (library and learning resources, housing etc.) to after departure (e.g. alumni services). Other staff categories not in the list that were cited by respondents were education advisors and human resources.

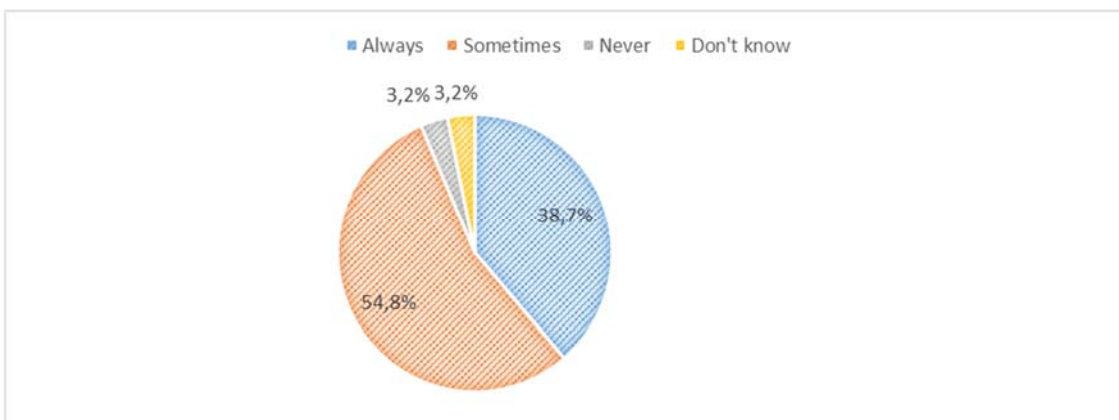
Which administrative staff receive in-house training on internationalisation? (Tick as many as relevant)



### Consultation of International Office

Given that responsibility for the administration of internationalisation lies typically in the International Office, and that high levels of professional expertise have often been developed, it was interesting to know to what extent International Offices are consulted on training for administrative staff. The chart below confirms that there is strong recognition of this expertise since an overwhelming majority are consulted either always (38,7%) or sometimes (54,8%).

Is any International Office staff consulted on the in-house training on internationalisation for administrative staff?

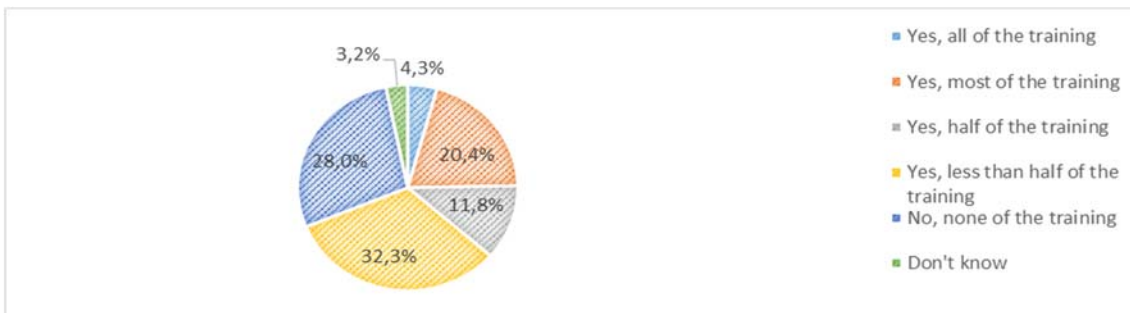


## Amount of training provided by the International Office

Given the focus of the SUCTI project to provide training on internationalisation to administrative staff delivered by other staff members with expertise in internationalisation, it was important to get a sense of whether or not European HEIs also worked with these staff not only on consultation of training needs but also in the provision of the training itself.

The study revealed that the International Office is a significant provider of training on internationalisation within the institutions, confirming again that its expertise and knowledge is recognised. While only a tiny percentage (4.3%), and perhaps rightly so, provides all of the training, 28.4% provides most of the training 10.8% provides half of the training and 32.3% provides less than half. The vast majority of the respondents are thus involved in the delivery of the training with only 20.4% having no involvement at all. A rather surprising 3.2% say they do not know, but this might be explained by respondents being relatively new to their positions or being responsible for specialised functions in internationalisation.

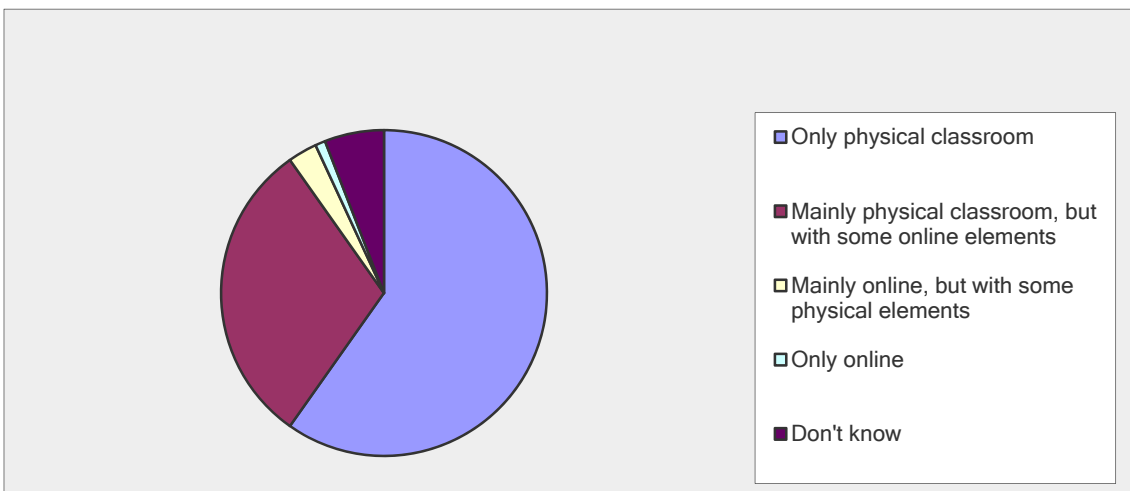
*Does the International Office provide any in-house training on internationalisation for administrative staff?*



## Delivery mode

The results here were to a large extent in line with expectations. Almost two thirds (61.3%) of the courses are delivered exclusively in the physical classroom. However, at the same time it is revealing to see how modes of delivery are shifting with almost another third (30.1%) stating that there are some on-line elements. There is a clear trend towards blended learning approaches although the physical classroom still clearly dominates.

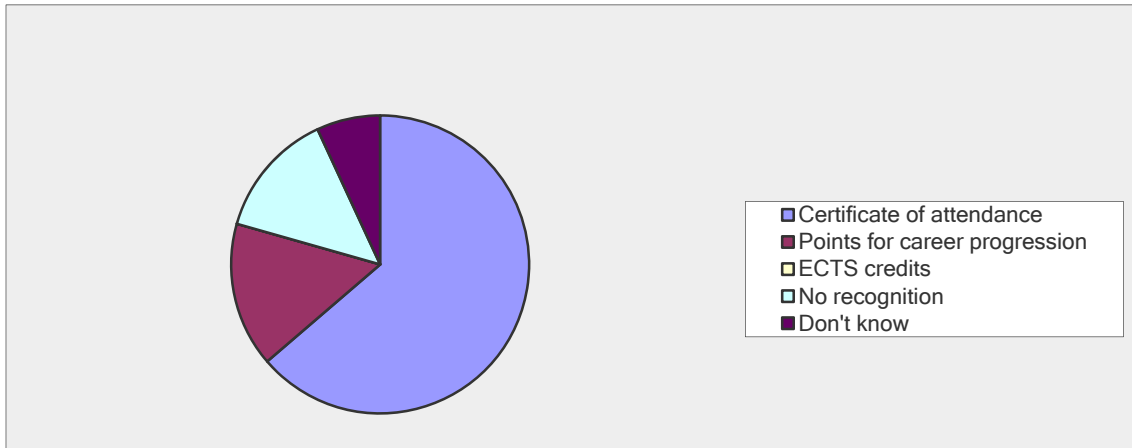
*What is the delivery mode of the in-house training on internationalisation for administrative staff?*



## Recognition

Issues around recognition are apparent. In just under two thirds (64,5%) of the HEIs, the only form of recognition is a certificate of attendance but it is not linked to career progression in any way, which is the case in only 16.1% of the HEIs. None of the institutions structure the training in any way that allows for the award of ECTS credits that could be accumulated towards any formal qualification.

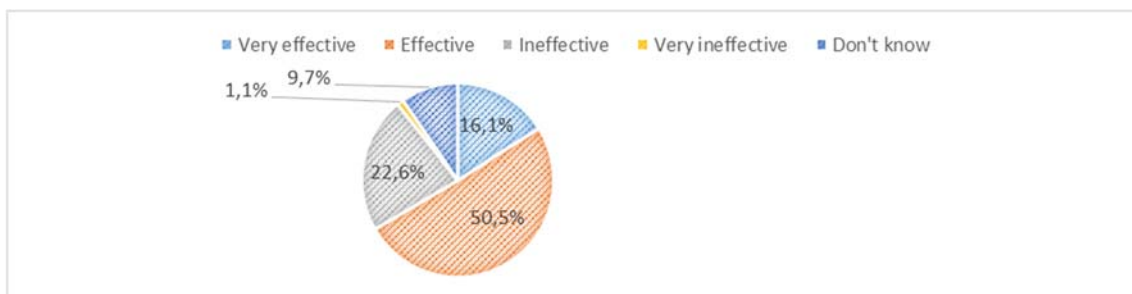
*What form of recognition does your institution offer for in-house training on internationalisation?*



## Effectiveness

Overall, there appears to be a high level of effectiveness in the training offered with two thirds of the institutions stating the training was either effective (50.5%) or very effective (16.1%). There is however room for improvement with almost 1 in 4 institutions declaring the training to be ineffective (22.6%) or very ineffective (1.1%). The fact that almost 1 in 10 (9.7%) are not able to provide an opinion indicates that there may not be effective follow-up procedures in place to monitor satisfaction or to communicate outcomes to the International Office.

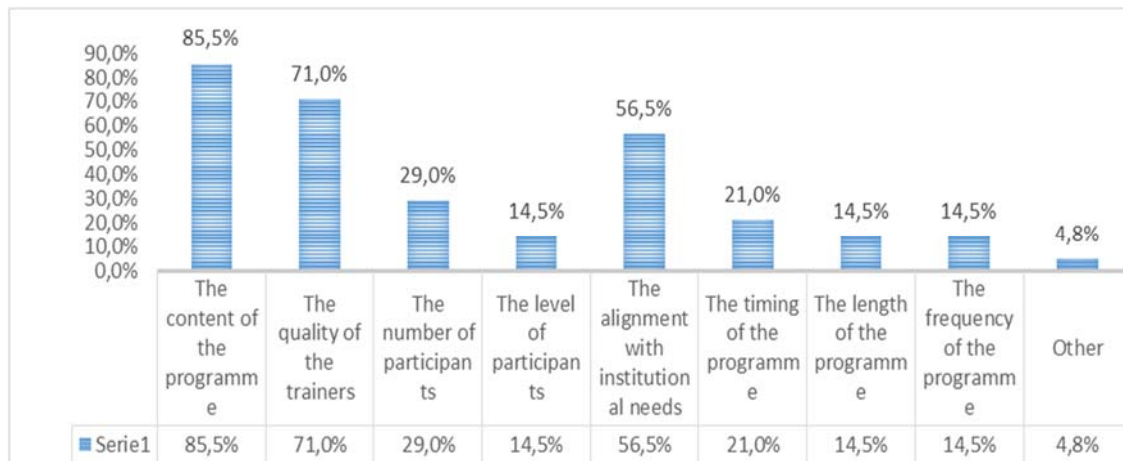
*In your opinion, how effective is the overall in-house training provision on internationalisation for administrative staff?*



## Reasons for effectiveness

The reasons for the effectiveness of training are very clear: the content of the programme (85.5%) and the quality of the trainers (71%) stand out above all other reasons, indicating the importance of the relevance of content to participants' needs as well as the ability of the trainers to transmit the knowledge in a meaningful and engaging manner. The third reason is the alignment with institutional needs (56.5%) which shows that it is not just about developing the knowledge of individuals, but ensuring that they can identify the purpose of the training, how it links to institutional needs, and presumably how they might put it to effective use after the training is over. In other words, they understand their contribution to institutional development. All other issues such as number of participants (29%), timing (21%), length (14.5%) and frequency (14.5%) of the training were still seen as important but did not stand out as strongly as the first three.

*The in-house training provision was very effective or effective because of: (Please tick all relevant boxes)*



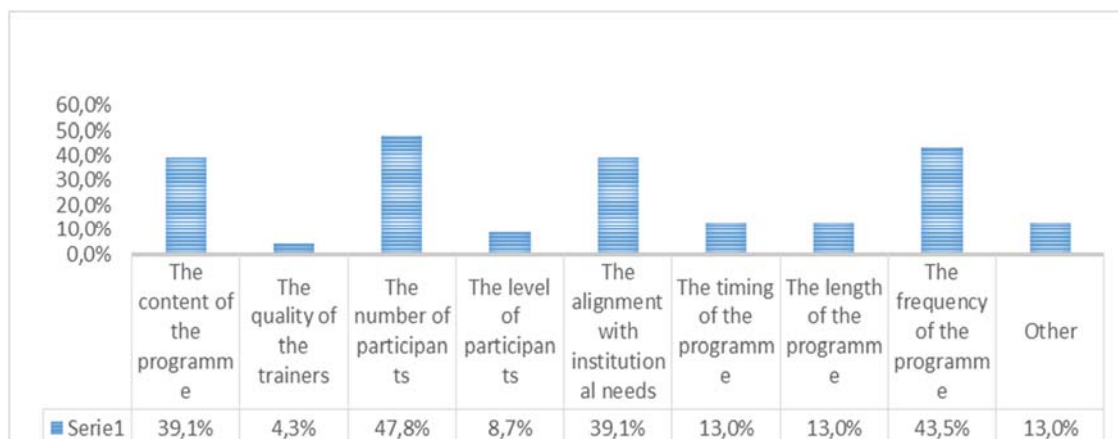
## Reasons for ineffectiveness

No reason for ineffectiveness stood out to the same degree although the most frequently cited reason was the number of participants (47.8%). This probably indicates that the training was delivered to large numbers of people at a time and did not allow for enough active participation and interaction, or for enough personalisation of the programme to specific training needs. The second reason was the frequency of the programme (43.5%) which probably indicates that the programme was not offered for a sufficient length of time or frequency to produce significant learning outcomes. The next two reasons for ineffectiveness are the same as the two of the three principal reasons for effectiveness – the content of the programme (39.1%) and alignment with institutional needs (39.1%).

These highlight the consequences of previous results showing that a significant percentage of training offered was not aligned with the institutional strategy. Interestingly, it would appear that whatever the institution gets wrong, it is almost always right in choosing the trainers themselves. They were indicated as a key reason for effectiveness and only 4.3% indicate the trainers as a reason for ineffectiveness.



The in-house training provision was ineffective or very ineffective because of: (Please tick all relevant boxes)



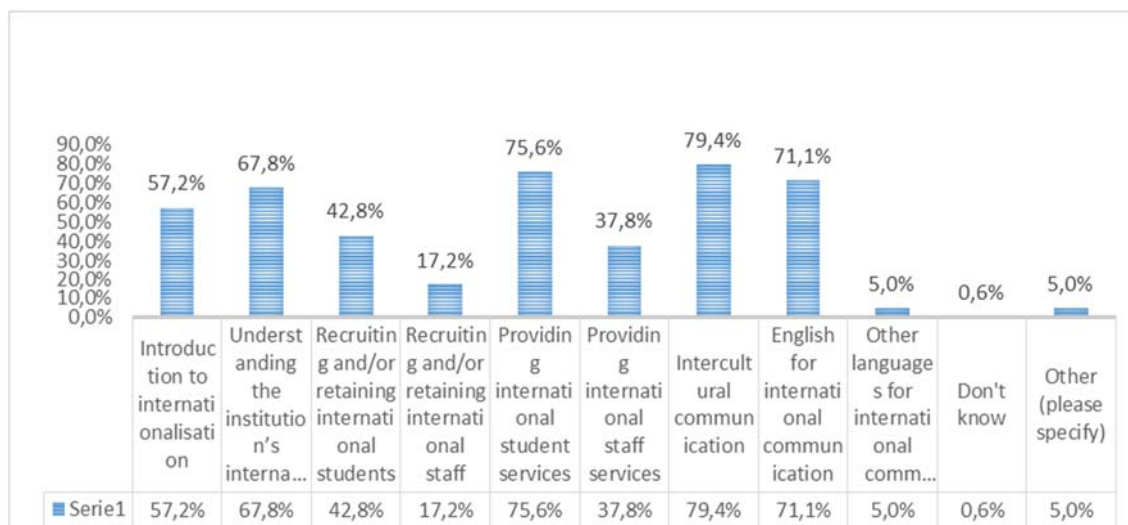
## Priorities

The respondents were asked to indicate in their opinion what the top five priorities for training for administrative staff for internationalisation should be in their opinion. Three stand out above all others: intercultural competence (79.4%), delivery of international student services (75.6%) and English for international communication (71.1%), all of which are closely interconnected, fundamental for high quality services and to be expected.

However, following very closely behind are two other fundamental priorities that appear to be underestimated in many institutions: understanding the institutional strategy (67.8%) and internationalisation itself (57.2%). This highlights issues around internal communication but most likely also points to institutional culture, perceptions of the role and importance of administrative staff and the extent to which they are considered to be active players in institutional life.

The third group of priorities focuses on other specialised aspects of internationalisation such as recruiting and retaining international students (42.8%), providing international staff services (37.8%) or recruiting and retaining international staff. As has been previously mentioned, many institutions are likely to be focusing first on international student recruitment before developing strategies for international staff recruitment. Other priorities that were highlighted were around linking institutional strategy to national strategy, mobility exchange and partnerships, and security.

What, in your opinion, should be the priorities for in-house training on internationalisation for administrative staff at your institution? Please select the top five priorities:

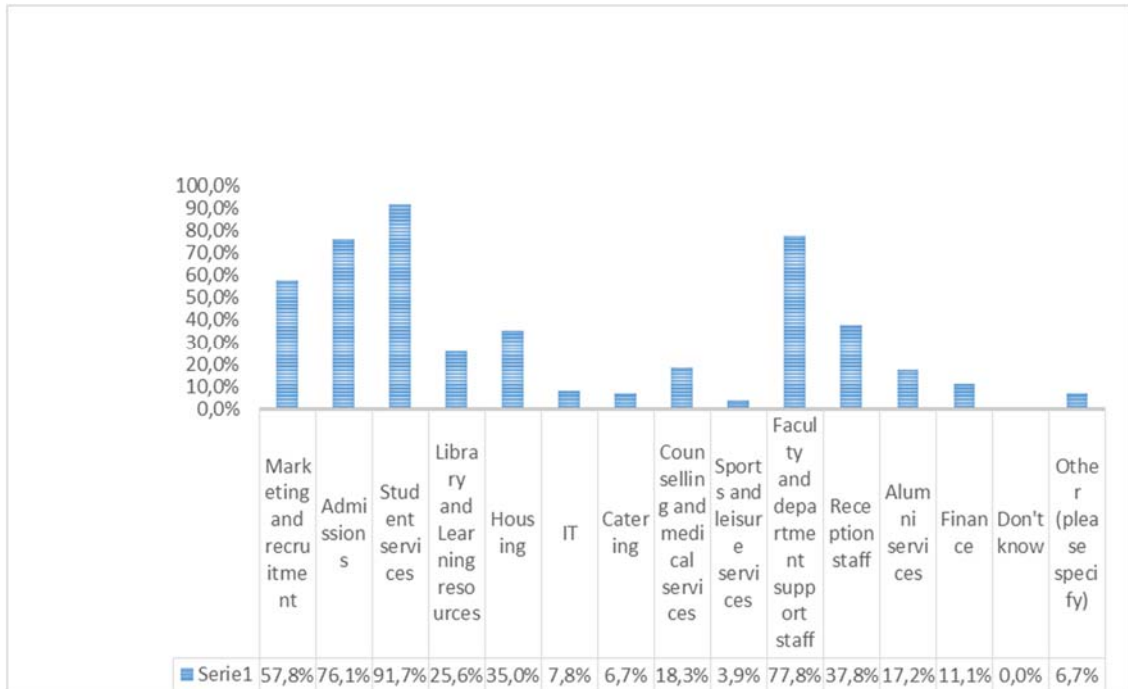


## Categories

Respondents were also asked to identify the five administrative categories that they considered should receive training in internationalisation and overall four categories emerged strongly: student services took the lead with an overwhelming 91.7%, followed by faculty and department support staff (77.8%), admissions (76.8%) and marketing and recruitment (57.1%). These reflect strongly the needs to provide high quality services to students during their time at the university, and particularly in the case of the student administration units, but are also closely linked to the ability to attract students to the institution. This result probably highlights not only the need for training but also a need for a shift in human resources policies and the criteria used to recruit staff to administrative positions that are increasingly linked to internationalisation.

Indeed, a number of comments were made indicating that the institutions were in the early stages of becoming more aware of the training needs of administrative staff and that training, if well done, had the potential to bring about change and enhance quality. Emphasis was placed on the importance of a comprehensive approach and the need to link training to job evaluation and career progression.

*In your opinion, which are the five main administrative categories that would most benefit from in-house training on internationalisation?*



## Conclusions

This study argues that the current understanding of internationalisation and the movement towards a more comprehensive approach makes the involvement of administrative not only a desirable, but also an essential and unavoidable requirement for any successful strategy of internationalisation.

Many institutional strategies place their focus on an expansion of academic activities and may overlook the importance of considering the impact of this inevitable increase in volume and/or scope of activities on support services. Overlooking this part implies that also the key aspects of resource management may also have been underestimated, in terms of both adequate professional development, but also policies for recruitment and career progression, which are closely linked to financial resources and the funding of the internationalisation strategy.

The findings from the questionnaire indicate that an increasing number of institutions are developing a more strategic and more comprehensive approach to internationalisation and in doing so are becoming more aware of the need of ensuring that adequately trained support services are in place. However, in the majority of the respondent institutions training of administrative staff for internationalisation is still in the early stages and there is still much to be done to develop a more comprehensive approach and link training provision for administrative staff to the chosen strategic direction for internationalisation.

## SECTION 3: LEARNINGS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

### *Background information*

The case studies in the universities in the SUCTI consortium were carried out in order to gain deeper insight into the perceptions around the importance of internationalisation and related training needs in the institutions where the training activities would be carried out.

A template was developed that identified the administrative staff categories to be interviewed and the set of questions to be asked. Each institutional representative in the consortium identified the most appropriate staff member(s) according to their own judgement who best fitted the different categories. The interviews were conducted and then subsequently developed as a case study in each institution between May and June 2017. The template is available in Annexe 2 and the individual case studies are in Annexe 3.

The case studies confirm substantially the findings from the questionnaire. However, while the questionnaire captured the views of the International Directors, the case studies provide insights into the views of a broader range of administrative staff at different levels and with different functions in the institutions around how internationalisation, administrative capacity and training provision are perceived.

While the six institutions are all at different stages of development of a more strategic approach to internationalisation, in all cases administrative staff are typically latecomers to internationalisation and the least likely to receive specific training.

#### 1. Importance of internationalisation to the university and its likely future development

##### *Strategic importance*

All six institutions declare internationalisation to be of strategic importance. They all declare it to be an inevitable trend and vital to future institutional development. Internationalisation is increasingly linked directly to institutional mission and its contribution to society. It plays a key role in academic quality and the search for excellence as well as in enhancing institutional prestige and visibility. However, it is also increasingly linked to financial survival in the face of demographic decline in the domestic market. There is an evident mix of academic, socio-political and economic rationales driving internationalisation in all the cases.

##### *Strategic approach*

Although all six declare internationalisation to be of strategic importance, they differ in their experience with strategic planning. The group ranges from institutions with a strong tradition of strategic planning to those who are still in the process of developing a more strategic approach, or have not yet launched an institutional plan. Some have a plan in place but this does not always mean that the plan's objectives are reflected in the institutional policies and everyday practices.

### *Internal Challenges*

There are issues around alignment of goals between central management and the faculties that have not always been properly addressed in the strategic planning process, as well as tensions between the different administrative units and their varying degrees of involvement in internationalisation. As the volume of international activity grows, these tensions become more evident and are often exacerbated by other internal challenges such as the lack of English language knowledge, a bureaucratic culture and an absence of a supporting administrative framework, including a Human Resources (HR) policy that encourages staff involvement in - and commitment to – internationalisation.

### *Shared understanding*

The stronger the strategic process, the more likely it is that staff, whether academic or administrative, and at the different hierarchical levels, have a shared understanding of internationalisation and consequently a greater willingness to make an active contribution to the institutional objectives. Where the strategic process is weaker, there tends to be a separation into two groups. Those who are involved understand and are committed, and those who are not involved may have a restricted view of what internationalisation is (associating it with programmes in English or mobility only), resist involvement or be afraid of not being able to deliver the appropriate level of services.

### *Long-term change process*

It becomes evident that simply stating a commitment to internationalisation is not enough, but that it requires a carefully thought out strategic process taking into consideration the development of the whole institution rather than simply promoting the internationalisation of education and research. This implies that it is a long-term process that can potentially raise many challenges and lead to significant institutional change.

## 2. Role of administrative staff in the development of internationalisation

### *Comprehensive approach*

Naturally, the more comprehensive the approach to internationalisation, the more common it is to see administrative staff playing a decisive role in the development of internationalisation. They are recognised as equal partners in the provision of high quality services, rather than just performing an administrative task, possibly in another language. This does not mean that this standard of achievement has necessarily been met in the institutions, but rather it is a goal they are actively working towards, with a set of policies in place to bring it about.

In institutions that have not adopted a comprehensive approach, or do not have a strong strategic planning process in place for internationalisation, there is a tendency to see it as specialist activity that does not concern certain units, thus creating a divide within the institution. However, as the volume of activity increases, especially in the recruitment of degree-seeking international students, there is a need to outsource services managed within the International Office to the respective administrative units such as Student Services. When

this is done in response to pressure rather than as a result of planning, the approach is *ad hoc*, leading to an unsatisfactory level of service for the users and a sense of frustration and inadequacy amongst the administrative staff forced to find emergency or temporary solutions on a daily basis.

### *Issues around the internationalisation of administrative staff*

In all institutions, the less involved in internationalisation the administrative staff currently are, the higher their sense of incapacity, whether perceived or real, to deliver the expected level of service. Some feel challenged by working in English, others by the lack of specialist knowledge. In countries where the legislative framework is particularly restrictive, administrative staff feel challenged by the many legal procedures they are required to comply with and struggle to see how they can be - or why they should be –adapted to international expectations.

As international activities increase, there is an evident requirement that the different administrative units become able to deal directly with the different procedures or user requests, rather than these being filtered via the International Office. This is not just about working in a different language or dealing with different cultures but about rethinking work processes that can accommodate the needs of a diverse academic community of students and staff. It requires a revised set of skills and competences and implies long-term planning and attention to the specific needs of different units.

### *Purposeful policy development*

One university has declared a duty to provide high quality services to all students and scholars and has integrated this into the Human Resources (HR) policy in which administrative staff have been given a clearly defined role as communicators and facilitators of internationalisation. It has elaborated this concept in the awareness that diversity brings with it both benefits and challenges, hence the development of an appropriate policy. In so doing, it goes beyond the rhetoric of internationalisation and engages with the specific needs of its own administrative staff.

This implies a shift in thinking from a reactive to proactive role, from a secondary to primary function for support services, conceiving of the institution as composed of two different but equally important communities, and shifting away from the more traditional perception of administrators as “servants of the academic community”.

### *Shifting roles*

It is evident in all institutions that the role of administrative staff is shifting, albeit at different paces, and with different degrees of awareness and intervention. If this change of role is to be effective, it requires appropriate HR policies to prepare the staff, to motivate them and to break down any resistance or fear. While these policies are decided by Senior Management, and implemented by the HR department, it is clear that the International Office can also play a useful role in this process, and a number of them have been involved in the development or delivery of such policies.

Finally, as internationalisation becomes more important to the institutions, it is also interesting to note how the role of the International Office shifts as well, often moving into a more central position with higher levels of responsibility, and that this new identity is often reflected (or not) in a change of name away from the traditional “International Relations Office” to a title that more accurately reflects its revised and more strategic functions.

### 3. Current capacity of administrative staff to deliver high quality international services

#### *Insufficient capacity*

There is a broad range of opinions on the current capacity of administrative staff to deliver international services of high quality, although the majority feel that whatever the level, it can be improved. There may be small numbers within the university who are able to provide a high level quality, but this is not generally the case in most other units. In other institutions, there is the perception that services are generally good but not excellent. Certainly, staff who are currently not involved in internationalisation do not feel they are able to deliver.

Staff working directly in internationalisation tend to feel more comfortable with their current capacity although they express a wish for more systematic opportunities for further improvement. They recognise that most of their capacity comes from experience they brought to the job, to learning on the job and access to international mobility. They also drew attention to the fact that beyond training provision, developing capacity is also a matter of personal attitude and willingness to self-teach.

In some institutions, the HR department has carried out, or is currently carrying out, a mapping exercise to understand current levels of capacity, particularly in languages, in order to identify what type of intervention would be required, or how current human resources might be better deployed. Another purpose of the exercise is to identify what type of capacity is required, and many reiterated the need to take into consideration the specificity of the different units and the nature of the different tasks that are performed.

#### *Challenges and expectations*

A number of institutional challenges emerged to the improvement of capacity to deliver high quality international services such as current levels of workload and understaffing, poor communication and/or coordination between the different administrative units, separation of academic and administrative communities, excessive bureaucracy and limited financial resources. Some highlighted again the lack of a common policy for internationalisation across the different administrative units and the low level of knowledge of internationalisation outside a small number of specialised units. Interestingly, the staff in one institution raised the issue of managing internal expectations around a national versus international identity. These staff saw the university’s identity to be first and foremost a national one.

It emerges clearly that there is much to be done to improve the capacity of administrative staff in internationalisation in all of the institutions, and while all have an awareness of the need, some have already begun to put policies in place, with others lagging further behind.

#### 4. Skills and competences required for internationalisation

##### *Communication skills: languages and intercultural competence*

There was a high level of consensus around the set of skills and competences required for internationalisation. Language training is seen as a necessary pre-requisite. English is of course fundamental but a number of institutions have an enormous challenge with widespread low levels of English language knowledge, not only amongst administrative staff but also academic staff and leadership. Learning a language requires significant investment in both time and financial resources and requires long-term systematic investment. For others, it is more about acquiring more specialised knowledge of English, or of raising levels in other languages. Linked to languages, is the need for intercultural awareness and the ability to communicate across cultures, which was mentioned by all institutions.

##### *Understanding internationalisation and internationalisation strategy*

A further requirement was training in internationalisation, and this should be organised at different levels since even staff in the International Units felt they could benefit from formal training. Interestingly, many staff also raised the importance of learning about their own institutional strategy, which suggests a fundamental, although not uncommon, communication problem within the institution itself.

##### *Targeted and tailored learning*

A number of other needs such as training linked to technical, organisational and interpersonal skills were also identified but languages, intercultural skills and knowledge about internationalisation were the three most commonly identified needs and seen as the foundation for any further training. It was also stated that such training programmes should be carefully targeted at different levels and with different learning outcomes according to the different target groups.

##### *Willingness to learn: individual and institutional*

A number of staff also highlighted two key points if training is to be successful. Firstly, people who receive training must be willing to learn and must be open to the idea of change in their professional lives. Secondly, the institution itself must be willing to change, to address the need for organisational improvement if the training is to have any impact on internationalisation.

#### 5. Current training provision for administrative staff in all areas including internationalisation

##### *Broad range of provision*

All of the institutions have some kind of training provision for staff, which ranges very broadly from an extensive and systematic approach to limited and ad hoc interventions. It rarely includes training on internationalisation, and is more likely to be language courses. Some institutions have access to other training agencies at local or national level, and the Erasmus+



programme was also mentioned as an excellent training opportunity, although often limited to those directly involved in internationalisation. These staff mentioned at times that the learning from these international experiences could not always be applied in their own institution and this led to a sense of frustration.

#### *Insufficient and unsystematic*

In only very limited cases, is provision linked to the institutional strategy, or to an institutional needs analysis.— In all cases, however, it was felt that more training should be provided for administrative staff in internationalisation. A number of shortcomings in the current training provision were mentioned and the most frequently raised were that training is often insufficient and unsystematic, that it is not always easy to access information about training, and that programmes are not always tailored to specific needs, linked to careers or provide any formal recognition.

### 6. Recommendations for training programmes for administrative staff in internationalisation

#### *Three key skills*

The recommendations re-emphasised the need for programmes that improve language abilities, intercultural competences and knowledge about internationalisation, including the institution's own international strategy and how different staff would become involved. Other skills such as teamwork, communication, preparing funding proposals, technical and organisational skills were also mentioned.

#### *General and specific*

In some cases, there could be general courses open to all but there was also a need for programmes tailored to specific needs. The training should have a comprehensive approach that sought not only to provide the appropriate knowledge and skills but also to build a team spirit and collective commitment for internationalisation. Some mentioned the desirability of including administrative leaders in the training programme not only to raise awareness of internationalisation but also to equip them with the necessary basic skills (languages and intercultural understanding).

#### *Internal expertise*

Others highlighted the importance of making use of internal expertise, not only from the International Office but also from other academic and administrative staff with specific international or intercultural experience and knowledge. Internal mobility or job rotation could also offer ways to learn about how other units work. An online platform could make learning available to all and include examples of good practice within the institution. This exchange of knowledge could be expanded into a network of universities for best practice in internationalisation of administrative staff, possibly linked to the SUCTI website.

### *Mode of delivery*

Importance was given to an interactive participative style of training in small groups rather than a series of lectures for larger audiences. There was a clear preference, when expressed, for the training to be delivered in the physical classroom but on-line elements could be included. Staff also highlighted the importance of the training being offered within working hours and that it be formally recognised and linked to career progression.

While not the focus of this particular study, there was general recognition that mobility offered an excellent opportunity for learning but could not be offered to all. Furthermore, any mobility opportunities should be strategically linked to institutional objectives and integrated into the overall training programme.

### *Need for organisational improvement*

It was also re-emphasized that training would only become effective if there was organisational improvement and if other barriers were overcome that prevent application of knowledge and good teamwork across the different units and levels. Some staff saw it as key to have a clearer picture within the institution of the various functions and responsibilities in order to make work processes clearer and more efficient.

Others emphasised the need for stronger connections between the International Office and other administrative units, or between the International Office and the academic leaders with portfolios for internationalisation.

Whatever training model is adopted in the different institutions, all agreed that it would need to be more effectively linked to the institutional strategy and be carried out in a systematic manner over a longer timeframe if it were to raise the level of capacity of administrative staff and enable them to make an effective contribution to international endeavours at their respective institutions.

### *Concluding remarks*

There can be no doubt that where the institutions have adopted a strategic approach to internationalisation and recognised the value of administrative staff there is already a greater sense of involvement or willingness to become involved. Where the approach is less strategic and has not considered administrative staff, the sense of involvement is weaker and frustration is stronger.

There also emerges a greater sense of institutional happiness where the plan for internationalisation has been put in place and is working effectively. This implies not only appropriate structures and processes for implementation but also a carefully thought out communication policy that has explained the internationalisation strategy to all involved. When administrative staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the new strategic direction, have received training aligned with the strategy itself, providing them with the appropriate skills and competences, they are much more likely to develop a sense of confidence and self-belief to deliver the high quality services expected of them and feel they are

making an active contribution to the institutional mission. Where these conditions are not in place, staff feel misunderstood and undervalued, under pressure and unable to cope.

However, what became very apparent in the case studies was that this is not just about internationalisation, but about the need for institutional change. Internationalisation exposes and magnifies institutional weaknesses, and any university that is serious about internationalisation must also be willing to take an honest and critical look at itself in order to make the necessary organisational changes, however challenging these might be to its traditional mode of operation. It is time to give new meaning to universities as places of learning, and SUCTI will seek to make a small but hopefully impactful contribution to this new direction.

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## ANNEXES



## ANNEXE 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

### Introduction

The EAIE is a member of an Erasmus+ project known as SUCTI, Systemic University Change towards Internationalisation ([www.sucti.com](http://www.sucti.com)) and one of the outputs of this project is a survey of the current training provision in European universities for the internationalisation of administrative staff.

For the purposes of this project we use the term “administrative staff” to define all people in the university involved in administrative/management functions, **excluding** those working exclusively for internationalisation (i.e the International Office staff).

However, we are also working on the assumption that the International Director will be aware of, if not involved in, any training provided to administrative staff for internationalisation purposes.

It is for that reason that we have decided to contact International Directors in European universities to ask them to provide us with information on what the current training provision in their institutions is and to share their opinions with us about its degree of effectiveness.

Training can be any form of seminar, workshop, course or on-the-job training provided to the staff in their institutions. Therefore, in the case of this questionnaire, it excludes any training that is undertaken outside the institution, implying some form of national or international mobility. In-house training can be provided by internal or external trainers.

The questionnaire takes around 10 minutes to complete and we thank you in advance for your collaboration. We will make the outcomes of this survey available on our website and will inform all those who complete the survey when these are published.

### Section 1: Institutional Information

1. Your job title:

2. Name of unit:

3. How long have you been in this role?

- less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- more than 10 years

4. University Status:

- Public
- private

5. Size of institution:

- Very small - under 5,000 students
- small - 5,000-10,000 students
- medium - 10,000-25,000 students
- large - 25,000+ students



6. Country: drop down list (Europe)

7a. Does your university have an institutional strategy?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

7b. If yes, is internationalisation one of the key priorities of your strategy?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

7c. If no, is internationalisation one of the declared key priorities in your institution?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

8.a. Does your institution offer professional development to its administrative staff?

- Yes, to all administrative staff
- Yes, to some staff
- Yes, but only to very few administrative staff
- No
- Don't know

8b. If yes, is this professional development linked to the institutional strategy?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

9. Is professional development at your institution compulsory or optional?

- All professional development is compulsory
- All professional development is optional
- Some professional development is compulsory and some is optional
- Don't know

10. Is any form of training for internationalisation included in the professional development programme offered by your institution?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

COMMENTS:

## Section 2: Training Provision

In answering this section please consider the training provision on internationalisation for administrative over the last 3 years (2014-2017).

11. What kind of training programmes has your institution offered AND to which administrative staff category over the last 3 years?

- Understanding internationalisation in general
- Understanding the university's internationalisation strategy
- Working internationally
- Providing international student services
- Welcoming international staff
- Recruiting international students
- Recruiting international staff
- Developing intercultural awareness
- English for international communication
- Other languages for international communication - specify
- Other – specify
- No professional development was provided
- Don't know

Administrative staff categories:

- Compulsory for all administrative staff
- Optional for all administrative staff
- Compulsory for some categories – use list in Q19
- Optional for some categories – use in list in Q19

12. Has training on internationalisation for administrative staff been available every year over the last 3 years?

- Yes, every year for the last three years
- No, only 2 of the last three years
- No, only 1 of the last 3 years
- Don't know

13a. Is training offered by internal or external trainers?

- only internal
- only external
- mostly internal
- mostly external
- both internal and external
- Don't know

13 b. If the any of the training is internal, how much of it is provided by the International Office?

- All of the training
- Most of the training

- About half of the training
- Less than half of the training
- None of the training

13 c. Is the International Office consulted on the training provision on internationalisation for administrative staff?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

14. Does the training take place in the physical or virtual classroom (on line)?

- Only physical classroom,
- Only virtual classroom (entirely on-line),
- Mainly physical classroom but with some on-line elements,
- Mainly on-line but with some physical elements
- Don't know

15. What form of recognition does your university offer?

- It provides a certificate of attendance,
- it provides points for career progression,
- there is no recognition,
- Don't know

COMMENTS:

### **Section 3: Effectiveness and Possible Improvements**

15. In your opinion, how effective is the overall training provision for internationalisation of administrative staff?

- Extremely effective
- Very effective
- Not very effective
- Very ineffective
- Extremely ineffective

Please explain why:

16. Why was the training provision was extremely or very effective? Please explain why.

- The content of the programme
- The quality of the trainers
- The number of participants
- The level of participants
- The alignment with institutional needs
- The timing of the programme with institutional needs

- The length of the programme
- The frequency of the programme
- The adequacy of the budget

COMMENTS:

17. Why was the training provision was extremely or very ineffective? Please tick all relevant boxes and provide any additional comments:

- The content of the programme
- The quality of the trainers
- The number of participants
- The level of participants
- The alignment with institutional needs
- The timing of the programme with institutional needs
- The length of the programme
- The frequency of the programme
- The adequacy of the budget

COMMENTS:

18. What in your opinion should be the priorities for training provision in internationalisation of administrative staff at your institution? Please select the top 5 priorities:

- Understanding internationalisation in general
- Understanding the university's internationalisation strategy
- Working internationally
- Providing international student services
- Welcoming international staff
- Recruiting international students
- Recruiting international staff
- Developing intercultural awareness
- English for international communication
- Other languages for international communication - specify
- Other – specify

19. Which are the 5 main administrative categories in your opinion that would benefit most from training in internationalisation?

- Student services
- Marketing and Recruitment
- Housing
- Catering

- IT
- Library
- Finance
- Counselling and medical services
- Faculty and department support staff
- Reception staff
- Alumni office
- Other

COMMENTS:

20. What else could be done in your opinion to provide in-house training for internationalisation to administrative staff?

## ANNEXE 2: CASE STUDY TEMPLATE

### *Interviewees:*

1 representative from Senior Management: either academic or administrative (the person most interested/involved in internationalisation and/or professional development)

1 representative from Middle Management: most likely HR manager but again the person most interested/involved in internationalisation and/or professional development

A selection of 4-6 staff members directly involved in some aspects of internationalisation

A selection of 4-6 staff members not/not much involved in internationalisation

### *Process:*

The Senior and Middle Management representatives should be interviewed separately.

The staff members can be interviewed as a group or separately.

Arrange a time to meet them and ask them to set aside 30-45 minutes for the interview. Plan an hour for group interviews.

You should explain to them that this is part of the process in preparing for the training to administrative staff within the SUCTI project. Explain the questionnaire to them and that this is a follow up to gain greater insights into the perspectives of training for administrative staff within the universities where the training will be delivered.

### *Questions for Senior and Middle Management:*

1. How important is internationalisation for this university and how do you see it developing in the future?
2. What specific role do you see for administrative staff in the development of internationalisation?
3. Do you think they are currently trained to deliver high quality international services?
4. What skills and competences do you think they need?
5. Do you think they receive adequate training under the current provision (internationalisation and other areas of responsibility)?
6. How do you think the different administrative staff could be trained to develop the required skills and competences for internationalisation, what specific training do you think they would need?

### *Questions for Staff involved in internationalisation:*

1. How important is internationalisation for this university and how do you see it developing in the future?
2. What specific role do you see for administrative staff in the development of internationalisation?

3. Do you think you are currently trained to deliver high quality international services?
4. What skills and competences do you think you need?
5. Do you think you receive adequate training under the current provision for the tasks you perform (internationalisation and other areas of responsibility)?
6. How do you think you could be trained to develop the required skills and competences, what specific training do you think you would need?

*Questions for Staff not involved in internationalisation:*

1. How important is internationalisation for this university and how do you see it developing in the future?
2. What specific role do you see for administrative staff in the development of internationalisation?
3. You are not currently involved in internationalisation but do you think you are currently in a position to deliver high quality international services?
4. If you were to become involved, what additional skills and competences do you think you would need?
5. Do you think you receive adequate training under the current provision for the job you perform at the moment?
6. How do you think you could be trained to develop the required skills and competences for internationalisation, what specific training do you think you would need?

## OUTLINE FOR CASE STUDY

*The headings reflect the questions. In each section identify the commonalities and differences amongst the different people you interviewed, where do they agree and disagree. You can bring your own voice to each of these sections since the purpose of the case study is to provide input to our own training programme. Particularly in the final section you can make recommendations of your own, beyond those suggested by your colleagues.*

1. Importance of internationalisation to the university and its likely future development
2. Role of administrative staff in the development of internationalisation
3. Current capacity of administrative staff to deliver high quality international services
4. Skills and competences required for internationalisation
5. Current training provision for administrative staff in all areas including internationalisation
6. Recommendations for training programmes for administrative staff in internationalisation

*Length:*

Around half a page for each section so around three pages in all

*Submission date:*

31<sup>st</sup> May 2017

## ANNEXE 3: CASE STUDIES

### Case Study 1

#### 1. Importance of internationalisation to the university and its likely future development

All the people who answered these questions agree that internationalisation is key, and that it is the most crucial element in the development of the University. The management and administrative staff members who are actively involved in the whole process focused on enumerating spheres of academic life in which internationalisation is particularly fundamental. Among the most common were international partnerships; networks and consortia; tangible follow-ups to international activities; international and transnational projects; and increasing the number of mobility schemes and improving the courses provided in English and other foreign languages. Staff members who are not involved in internationalisation (mainly those working at the faculties), on the other hand, expressed a more global view. Internationalisation is also important to them, yet their arguments were focused on global demographics and the need to attract more (international) students as well as the general need to internationalise. Otherwise, some thought, the University may be in danger of declining, with internationalisation being something of a “to be or not to be” issue in the market. All things considered, the respondents hope that it (internationalisation) will develop, as there is no turning back and no other way for the University to move forward.

#### 2. Role of administrative staff in the development of internationalisation

Again, both teams, those involved and those not involved directly in internationalisation, expressed the view that the role of the university’s administration is vital to the whole process. On the one hand, the managerial representatives concentrated on specifying the roles and responsibilities that the administrative staff should take on in order to enhance internationalisation. These include supporting incoming and outgoing students and staff; cooperating with international enterprises; marketing, promotion and recruitment activities; boosting scholarship funds for students; and improving the success rate of project applications. In contrast, the staff directly involved in internationalisation also insisted on the importance of administration in the process, but were more aware of the challenges involved. In their daily work they need to tackle language barriers, cultural differences and, most importantly, different types of work and systems. They all, however, also agree that the role of staff involved in internationalisation is crucial in the process and that it is important to focus on the individual when talking about internationalisation since it is the individual who carries this vision. Lastly, the employees not involved in internationalisation see their role not as decision makers or policy creators, but as the first point of contact with international students and staff. They are aware that their role in the process is vital, too, and that is why they want to provide support but at the same time they would like to be trained so that they can perform their role to the best of their ability.



### 3. Current capacity of administrative staff to deliver high quality international services

This issue raised the biggest discrepancies. In all the groups of respondents there were both opponents and supporters of the view that high quality international services can be delivered. Supporters claimed that a lot has been done in the past couple of years to enhance internationalisation so we are gradually becoming more and more efficient at delivering those services. However, a majority asserted that the current capacity to provide high quality assistance still needs to be improved. According to the responses I received, some people at the University are ready to deliver, but others are not. There are strong grounds for believing that we might be ready, but only after appropriate and extensive training. While internationalisation itself is regarded as a crucial element in the overall strategy of the University, there are no tailor-made solutions, training or activities, which would serve to enhance and improve the skills and competences needed for the development of internationalisation among staff.

### 4. Skills and competences required for internationalisation

Again both teams took slightly different approaches to this matter. Staff not involved in internationalisation explicitly stressed intercultural competence (all the people interviewed put this skill/competence in first place). Intercultural communication training, or something of that nature, is key to involvement in internationalisation since without the ability to understand and communicate with international students and staff it is hard to perform internationalisation well, or even at all. Knowledge of cultural differences and how to cope with them in everyday working life would be greatly appreciated. In second place, the staff not involved in internationalisation mentioned English language skills, particularly those areas of English that would be useful for their work, like discussing projects or a consortia with international partners. A third point that was raised was basic training in internationalisation itself: how it works, what its assumptions are, trends and possible future developments. In contrast, the staff involved in internationalisation pointed to more advanced concepts that need to accompany the process. They considered language training, but not English as such (this is a group that is already fluent), but other languages (including intensive courses) or English courses with a particular focus on specialized language. They also brought up the issue of training in internationalisation, but also with a more specialized focus, like global trends, international marketing, working with agents, success stories from other countries as well as good practices in terms of internationalisation. To a lesser extent, staff involved with internationalisation also mentioned intercultural competences and diplomatic protocol skills.

### 5. Current training provision for administrative staff in all areas, including internationalisation

The answers to this question were surprisingly similar. Since I asked different people from various units, there was no way they could have talked to each other about the answers. They

also answered very concisely: there is never enough training. They receive some opportunities for training, like foreign language courses, but this is not enough and it is not organized systematically. Some people mentioned that the biggest professional development opportunities come from the Erasmus + programme. Even so, they would all like more training, and despite the workload they have every day, they still think there is not enough.

## 6. Recommendations for training programmes for administrative staff involved in internationalisation

All the groups had numerous ideas, which did not depend on whether they were dealing with internationalisation directly or not, so I will just list those that were mentioned:

- Intercultural training
- The internationalisation process – what is it; up to date knowledge; how to implement it at different levels in the University
- Meetings and training with people who are the decision and policy makers on a European and global level
- Case studies, success stories and good practice meetings/training
- Team work training
- Language courses (intensive)
- How to recruit international students
- Working with international agents
- International quality of education – how to get certifications
- How to implement and carry out international projects – the procedures
- Meetings with people from universities with a high percentage of internationalisation
- Stereotypes and prejudice
- International networks
- MOOC training
- International marketing and promotion: basics for people from the faculties
- International summer schools
- Social media in international recruitment
- Internationalisation of research: basic assumptions

## Case Study 2

### 1. Importance of internationalisation to the university and its likely future development

The institution involved in case study 2 was the first university to develop a Strategic Plan for Internationalisation in its country in 1996. After 20 years, the goals of the Strategic Plan for Internationalisation have changed from *Promoting mobility of students and teaching and research staff*, to *Offering comprehensive internationalisation to everyone*. Now, there is a vice-rector for International Relations and an Internationals Relations Bureau. So, when you ask how important internationalisation for this university is, the answer is always the same: very important. Especially in a university where 50% of doctoral students are from other countries.

However, when you go further into internationalisation at this university, you can see different worlds and points of view. Senior staff and staff members directly involved in some aspects of internationalisation believe that everyone understands that internationalisation is a key element for the future, but these views are not reflected in current university policies. Few resources are made available to implement internationalisation policies, there is little (or no) training on internationalisation, and some units of the university are not involved in projects promoted by the Internationals Relations Bureau.

For the International Relations Bureau and for this institution's internationalisation policies, another big difficulty is that a large part of the university does not know what internationalisation means (especially the staff not involved in internationalisation issues). All the staff not involved in internationalisation started the interviews by saying that they have little (or no) idea about mobility. According to them, internationalisation and student/professor/researcher mobility is, more or less, the same.

The names of the vice-rector for International Relations and the International Relations Bureau also show that they only partially understand internationalisation. Internationalisation involves more than simple international relations.

### 2. Role of administrative staff in the development of internationalisation

During the interviews, we detected that administrative staff members have three roles (although not all staff necessarily have all three).

Administrative staff members in units not dedicated to teaching and research (such as Departments of Human Resources and Accounting) believe that international affairs affects just professors, lecturers and such specific units as the internationals relations bureau.

Administrative staff members who work closely with students, faculty or researchers believe that their role is to support and assist the initiatives of the teaching staff. In other words, they react to the new situations that appear within the university.

Finally, few administrative staff members who are very directly involved in some aspects of internationalisation and/or in research take a proactive view of the role of the administrative staff. According to them, the main role of administrative staff members is not only to support and assist the teaching staff, but also to generate new opportunities for all members of the university (e.g. with alliances and new networks).

### 3. Current capacity of administrative staff to deliver high quality international services

The answers to this question are similar to the answers to the previous question (the role of administrative staff in the development of internationalisation). Administrative staff working in units not dedicated to teaching and research do not feel prepared to provide international services. According to them, their jobs have nothing to do with international affairs so, they do not need to spend time on these matters or to be prepared for them. From their perspective, they have another kind of responsibility, and are very important to the running of the university.

In the group of administrative staff who work closely with students, faculty, or researchers, we detected many differences. Some of them have the ability to deliver high quality international services, whereas others (in the same unit) do not. Some of the interviewees said that in all units there is usually a small group of administrative staff with the ability to deliver high-medium quality international services; and these are the staff in charge of issues related to international affairs. So, some people said that it is not necessary that all administrative staff develop their skills to deliver high quality international services.

Finally, the administrative staff involved in some aspects of internationalisation feel that they can deliver good quality international services, but that there are many issues that they could improve with additional training and time. Unfortunately, their daily work does not allow them to be sufficiently well trained and does not leave them enough time to improve the service.

### 4. Skills and competences required for internationalisation

Everyone highlighted language proficiency. While the administrative staff not involved in international issues emphasized only English, the others stressed the need to learn and speak other languages (not just English) as a positive aspect for university internationalisation.

The administrative staff not involved in international issues also listed specific knowledge (e.g. behavioural protocols and culture of countries) more than skills. On the other hand, the administrative staff involved in some international matters had a more elaborate speech and highlighted skills such as flexibility, empathy, and communication to finally condense them in a single idea/concept: the management of multiculturalism.

### 5. Current training provision for administrative staff in all areas including internationalisation

The university offers 70 different courses in 9 different categories:

- Category 0 - Social responsibility of the University
- Category 1 - Teaching
- Category 2 - Research
- Category 3 - Development of personal competencies
- Category 4 - Management and quality
- Category 5 - Information and communication technologies

- Category 6 - Languages
- Category 7 - Occupational health and safety
- Category 8 - Legislative and regulatory framework

However, according to the interviewees, except for the language courses, there are no *specific* courses or seminars for improving the internationalisation role of administrative staff members.

## 6. Recommendations for training programmes for administrative staff in internationalisation

Everyone gave similar proposals:

- Language courses, but not just English.
- Management of multiculturalism, taking into account three factors: flexibility, empathy and communication.
- Customer customization, taking into account two factors: cultural protocols (e.g. greetings) and technical knowledge (e.g. working platforms).

## Case Study 3

### 1. Importance of internationalisation to the university and its likely future development

This institution, as a young university, shows a deep awareness of internationalisation processes. This university attracts many international students and PhD candidates from all over the world. There is a vice-rector for internationalisation and an international office that deals with foreign students and takes part in international projects. Internationalisation has increased a lot in recent years especially in terms of inbound and outbound mobility students, researchers and professors. From the point of view of both the management representatives and the non-academic staff, internationalisation is seen as an inevitable process which is going to grow further in the coming years. It is also a useful way to foster collaboration among universities from different countries.

These processes were considered to be crucial from a strategic point of view by all the groups interviewed, given that a high level of internationalisation means greater visibility of academic collaboration and research and increased global competitiveness. The University has also developed and is implementing its second Strategic Internationalisation Plan.

The administrative staff is currently being internationalised: the institution is tackling the staff's need to improve their level of English and raise awareness of international issues. The university has provided a considerable number of English courses and conversation groups for staff members. The goal is twofold: to increase staff members' command of languages and their sensitivity to different cultures.

The challenge pointed out by many of the interviewees is to "normalise" the processes for international students so that every staff member knows how to deal with them and their needs. In particular, the future is focused on making staff more aware of other cultures in order to deal with foreign students more effectively. In this regard, the Human Resources department is making a survey of different services' needs in order to organize a comprehensive training programme to complement the English courses that are already being taught in an effort to get the non-academic staff to an intermediate level.

### 2. Role of administrative staff in the development of internationalisation

The role of administrative staff is crucial in the normalisation of all international processes at this institution. All the people interviewed agree that members of the administrative staff are the main reference for mobility students. In fact, administrative staff are the first to welcome students and continue to be their main point of reference during their experience abroad. Everybody agrees on the guiding role that staff members have for international students: they are like tutors who give them information about the documents they need, accommodation and general information not only about the university, but also about the place where they live.

For top and middle management as well as for the two staff groups interviewed (those who are directly involved in internationalisation and those who are not), the role of administrative staff is to receive international students and to give them all the information they may need. In this regard, staff need to be prepared and trained in order to give the students this type of

information or to direct them to whoever can provide it. But this is not enough: in general, staff also need to be motivated and aware of the importance of their role, which is to welcome and guide foreign students throughout their experience at the university. The members of top and middle management interviewed agree on the importance of planning: internationalising the non-academic staff involves time and an accurate detection of their needs (motivation and skills).

All the staff, whether they are involved in internationalisation or not, agree on the importance of normalising the processes for all the students- That is to say, the practices and procedures for foreign students should be the same as those for national students (an example often provided by the interviewees is student enrolment). Staff involved in international duties are more focused on the importance of providing efficient services during their everyday tasks; in particular, processes and guidelines need to be thought out from an international perspective and, in this regard, the role of management is considered crucial. Another important task for staff involved in internationalisation is, for example, liaising with international partners and managing relations within international projects and collaborations between this institution and partner universities. On the other hand, it seems that staff not directly involved in international activities give more importance to general issues related to basic or general competences, such as language and intercultural skills.

### 3. Current capacity of administrative staff to deliver high quality international services

The top and middle management believes that, in general, the administrative staff are well prepared, but there are a lot differences between the different areas of the university. Some departments are assumed not to be internationalized as they are not in touch with international students or researchers. As a result, some staff members are less capable of dealing with international issues, whereas others are used to them because it is part of their role. During the interviews doubts were expressed about whether every member of the administrative staff needed to deliver high quality international services, if they did not deal with international issues in their everyday tasks. The overall impression was that internationalisation affects everyone and that staff should be ready for anything.

With regard to the quality of international services, top and middle management are aware that services are good but they still fall short of excellence. For this reason, the department of Human Resources is reviewing the training needs of the various areas and departments. The aim is to provide every department with people capable of dealing with international issues, thus offering high quality services. The general goal is to provide all staff members with an intermediate level of English.

Similarly, the staff perceive their own level of preparation as good but not excellent. Both groups (those who are involved in internationalisation and those who are not) agree that current preparation is also a matter of personal attitude and self-training. For example, some people are well trained because of their past studies or their willingness to learn on-the-job day by day. Therefore, staff members highlighted the need to acquire further skills in order to deliver higher quality services.

There is a difference in the kind of training needed: the group involved in international services asks for continuous learning so that they can find out about changes in procedures, law and organizational software. They also request more knowledge about general processes: as they are involved in specific parts of the processes, they would like have a better understanding of the “big picture” of the internationalisation processes.

On the other hand, members of staff not involved in internationalisation services ask for well-thought-out training: they need to be aware of the reasons and the aims of the training. In particular, one of the members interviewed mentions that there is a lack of knowledge and awareness of internationalisation as a cultural issue. On this matter, it has been stressed that management should take into consideration the different needs of the two groups and come up with different training methodologies.

#### 4. Skills and competences required for internationalisation

Some points were common to all the interviews: some skills are general and others specific.

Non-academic staff need general skills such as language (intermediate command of English and other languages), empathy, communication skills and intercultural skills. They are all regarded as necessary if international students’ needs are to be addressed and their questions answered. It is important not only to understand students linguistically, but also to be able to put oneself in their shoes through empathy. For this reason, it is important to improve patience and flexibility. Furthermore, staff members need to be open minded and willing to learn if they are to deal with foreign students.

The jobs and tasks performed in each department require specific skills. These include being regularly updated about software and IT, and understanding the national legislation on international students and the bureaucratic procedures required (documents, enrolment etc.). Staff also need to be aware of changes affecting the university and the implications on their daily tasks. Specific training should focus on transmitting the importance of internationalisation for our universities in order to further motivate and sensitize staff. This would raise awareness of the added value of having international students at our own institution.

Some of the staff not directly involved in internationalisation pointed out that some needs are individual and that institutional training cannot respond to them all. Needs can be quite personal and this personalization is very hard to address only through training. As a result, specific training is very hard to organize.

Moreover, it is essential that the university as a whole be highly organised: internal communication among the different administrative units, and particularly between the units and the International Relations Office, must be good. This organisation is fundamental if international services are to be of high quality. This should lead to the creation of a “knowledge network” among staff members aimed at directing students and researchers to the service they need. This network requires a clear picture of the specific functions of each department (“who does what”) and it could simplify and improve the way of working. In this regard, a database of good practices and an online platform have been mentioned as examples.

The following chart summarizes the different kinds of skills required:



Individual		Organizational
Transversal	<b>Specific</b>	<b>Institutional</b>
<b>Language</b>	Software	Good internal communication among different units
<b>Empathy</b>	Law/legislation (national and international)	
<b>Communication</b>	Bureaucratic procedures	
<b>Intercultural</b>	Internationalisation as a whole	
<b>Flexibility</b>		

## 5. Current training provision for administrative staff in all areas including internationalisation

Members of management think that, on average, staff are well prepared. Even so, it has been pointed out that there is a lack of motivation towards addressing international students' issues, which need more time and patience than national ones.

It is very important to motivate the administrative staff because this year, for the first time, international students can enrol at the administrative office of each campus and not at the International Relations Office. This is part of the "normalisation" of international processes. For this reason, non-academic staff are being trained so that they can perform their new tasks better.

Furthermore, the Human Resources Department regularly analyses the training needs of each employee and produces an annual report. Training, then, is planned by taking into consideration staff needs and expectations.

Training depends on the functions of non-academic staff, because every role has different needs. Thus, there are different kinds of courses and training. Some of them are specific; others are more general.

As for internationalisation, the URV has been organizing English courses of different levels for a long time. Other activities such as conversation groups are organized in order to provide staff with practical language skills.

Staff perceive that the level of institutional training is good, but both staff groups interviewed pointed out that most of the specific training is individual and takes place during daily practical activities. The staff suggest that there should be "non-official training" so that they can learn through tools such as webinars and web-based training. This kind of "informal" training should also be normalized and recognized by the institution.

As for internationalisation, staff need to have a better understanding of the processes involved: being aware of "who does what" is crucial if they are to improve and provide better

and quicker services. Moreover, practical training about internationalisation would be useful to develop the skills required: job rotation is suggested as a good practice if this goal is to be achieved. Management points out that a close connection needs to be established between the administration and those who can answer their questions about internationalisation (such as the international office and the vice-rector for Internationalisation). It is vital that training programmes promote and facilitate the normalisation of internationalisation.

## 6. Recommendations for training programmes for administrative staff in internationalisation

The interviews suggest that the normalisation of internationalisation should be an ongoing process. In particular, there should be two objectives: raise staff awareness and simplify procedures and practices.

With regard to the first, general training in languages, and intercultural and communication skills can improve the attitude of staff members towards foreign students and researchers. This kind of training course would raise administrative staff awareness of internationalisation processes by improving their ability to communicate and deal with other cultures. In general, these courses can motivate them about the importance of international students and, consequently, and the need to provide better services. From a practical point of view, experiences such as staff exchanges among universities from different countries could be added value for staff members.

As for practical procedures, organisation can be simplified: bureaucratic issues can be adapted for international students and internal communication between the various units improved. In this regard, the use of new technologies is recommended, in particular organizational software and an online network platform. The platform could be useful as a reference point where strategic information about tasks and roles of staff involved in internationalisation can be found (“who does what”). Also, it could foster internal communication among different services. Furthermore, interviewees suggest on-the-job solutions such as job rotations or staff shadowing within departments in order to acquire a broader knowledge of processes as a whole as well as more flexibility and openness.

The following chart summarizes the aims and training strategies in internationalisation suggested by interviewees:

<b>Aims</b>	<b>Theoretical Training</b>	<b>Practice</b>
<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Languages; intercultural skills; communication skills and empathy</b>	<b>Conversation groups; staff exchange among universities from different countries</b>
<b>Simplification</b>	<b>Specific task-oriented training (software, legislation, bureaucracy etc.)</b>	<b>Knowledge and network web platform; job rotation</b>

## Case Study 4

### 1. Importance of internationalisation to the university and its likely future development

As the biggest employer in the city and the region, this institution attracts more and more students, staff and research institutes from abroad. This is due to the way in which the university has been developing over the last decade in terms of attractiveness, thus giving the city more importance. The city is located close to one of the main cities in the country but it is not so expensive. The city and the university are appreciated for their openness and their familiar atmosphere. The university has almost 30,000 students, (together with the University of Applied Sciences there are 40,000 students in the city), whereas the population is only 80,000.

Internationalisation plays a key role at this institution. In 2016, it launched its new internationalisation strategy “Progress through Internationalisation 2016-2026”. The university’s basic conviction is the following: internationalisation in a globalised world is of prime significance for all fields of action and members of the university as well as the society in which the university is located. Internationalisation is the prerequisite for excellent research and teaching and is therefore constitutive for this university, whose success and pioneering impetus for research, teaching and knowledge transfer have always stemmed from excellent research achievements. At the same time, internationalisation is of enormous social and cultural value for positive societal development in the generations to come.

This is seen and mentioned by all the target groups interviewed. There is a strong feeling that the university will have to internationalise even more because internationalisation is affecting the whole institution. It is not a “stand alone”. We have, for example, more and more funding programmes with international contractors, and more international students require appropriate counselling and support in English.

### 2. Role of administrative staff in the development of internationalisation

Shortly after the internationalisation strategy was launched, this institution determined that staff would play a transversal role. The **university administration** would have to be internationalised. The central administration in the faculties and schools is an important – and often the first – point of contact that international students, guests and other members of the community have with the university. For this reason, administrative processes should be adapted to the needs of the international members of the university (e.g. by implementing bilingual documents and training non-academic staff in foreign languages and intercultural skills). The administrative staff see themselves in the role of communicators and facilitators of internationalisation.

Senior and middle management also believe that this institution will continue to fulfil its duty to provide **comprehensive advice and support to international undergraduate, post-graduate and doctoral students and scholars**. Central organisational and social advisory services alongside decentralised academic counselling and integration will provide the best possible framework for a successful stay at the university. To this end, this institution will endeavour to optimise advisory services already tailored to the target groups and further internationalise services and administrative procedures at the same time as the intercultural competence of

university staff at all levels and in all areas of university activity. This institution regards the heterogeneity of its members at all levels as a valuable asset to academic, social and cultural life. The university is, however, mindful of the challenge presented by cultural differences and will continue to develop concepts to stimulate and harness the great potential of international members and guests.

### 3. Current capacity of administrative staff to deliver high quality international services

The administrative staff not involved directly in internationalisation do not feel well-prepared to deliver high quality international services whereas those already involved in internationalisation feel better prepared. It also seems that the first group is more hesitant about asking for training of this kind and prefer to be approached directly by their bosses.

Most of the admin staff not involved in internationalisation would like to attend training on internationalisation because at the moment they are a bit “afraid” that they could do something wrong in their dealings with international students or guests. Most are quite prepared to accept a more international environment and to learn more about it and how to deal with the differences. But they often feel left behind and overwhelmed when they are supposed to fulfil tasks that – from their perspective – they cannot fulfil because of their lack of appropriate international competences.

Although some international training courses are already being provided, it has become clear that they do not fully meet the staff’s needs. Staff are often not aware of them because they are not systematically advertised or taught.

Senior and middle management have realized this lack and are now pushing to include more international elements in the new HR strategy. In the new HR strategy internationalisation now plays a key role. As part of a working group, the international office gave input as to where international elements could be used alongside other courses on offer. Furthermore, an “internationalisation” training module will be set up which will include different kinds of training. This will enable the admin staff to deliver even better international services.

### 4. Skills and competences required for internationalisation

Everybody mentioned the following:

- English language skills, intercultural competences, communication skills

The administrative staff already involved in internationalisation expressed a desire to know more about the internationalisation strategy of their own institution and other general issues about internationalisation in Higher Education.

The admin staff in the financial department for example would like to have targeted Financial English or Business English Classes; those in the examination office said they would need basic intercultural training and language training.

## 5. Current training provision for administrative staff in all areas including internationalisation

What we already offer at this institution is the following: Firstly, there is the internal further training programme in which every staff member can participate. Secondly, the state also provides a training programme for all staff members in Higher Education Institutions and other public institutions throughout the federal state. Both these programmes include (small) elements of intercultural or language training. Then, there is the National Agency, which offers a wide range of training opportunities in internationalisation. They even issue certificates for whole internationalisation modules, consisting of different types of courses on internationalisation issues and skills.

Obviously, not so many staff make use of the offer (cf. Q4) because they are not aware of it.

## 6. Recommendations for training programmes for administrative staff in internationalisation

In general, the skills and competences required under Q4 should be the content for the training programmes.

Most of the staff members said that they wanted English language classes, specifically for communication with international students and scholars. Furthermore, intercultural workshops and communication skills in general are the key to understanding the international target groups and community better – so this is also a top priority. In order to put these things into context, one or more units about internationalisation processes in general, and also specifically for Higher Education and our own institution are crucial. Understanding internal processes better and why things are being done makes life much easier for all the people involved.

Finally, contextualisation not only within one's own institution but also towards the environment outside the university is needed. The welcome culture and cultural understanding play a crucial role and should have a spill-over effect on society.

The preferred training method is group training and workshops.

## Case Study 5

### 1. Importance of internationalisation to the University and its likely future development

All staff agree on the importance of internationalisation for this institution, especially in terms of the effect it can have on reputation and recognition of the education and research quality of the university, both nationally and abroad.

The senior and middle management clearly perceived internationalisation as one of the strategic vectors of the institution and recognized it as a top priority of the University's strategic plan – "Strategic Plan of this university 2020".

Senior management acknowledge networking and international collaboration in education and teaching, as in research, as essential in the current global world, because it enables the University to achieve excellence and opens the University itself, the curricula and the teaching and learning processes to the rest of the world. In this context, the present strategy is expected to make further progress and participation in international partnerships, projects/consortia and international networks, especially with prestigious international institutions, will be increased.

Middle management recognise the importance of internationalisation at the University and the need to align individual and departmental goals with the institution's internationalisation strategy. Being an institutional goal, if it is to be effective internationalisation must also be reflected as a formal objective of all departments and staff (teaching and non-teaching). This cannot be done exclusively by the International Office or Human Resources Department; it has to be done by the whole institution. The future development of this process requires awareness of the importance of internationalisation to be raised and joint efforts to be made.

The administrative staff that are most involved in international activities (e.g. communication, employability, academic affairs) regard internationalisation as very important for the University. It is through internationalisation that the university promotes its visibility and reputation, and encourages the exchange of knowledge, best practices, management procedures and work culture, at an international level. This group sees international networking and joint projects as natural and as part of the HEI's mission to foster institutional development and excellence by creating multicultural environments and equipping students with the necessary skills and competences, thus anticipating increasing international professional settings.

Additionally, this group sees that internationalisation is a strategic factor that will make the courses and training programmes on offer more attractive. Interviewees in this group understand internationalisation as a whole. It involves different levels, not just mobility, but also education and training, research, curricula and study opportunities suitable for global markets. From some perspectives, internationalisation might contribute in the near future to the sustainability of HEIs, given that the increasing numbers of international students may offset the decrease in the number of national students.

In this light, the University should continue to invest in internationalisation as a way of ensuring the continuity of study programmes which depend on the number of students enrolled and the diversification of audiences. For this particular group, the prospects are for increased flows of mobility, especially of teachers and researchers, but also of administrative staff, as international mobility becomes easier, less bureaucratic, and more natural.

Administrative staff not involved in international activities think of internationalisation mainly in terms of the mobility of students and staff (academic and administrative), which they agree are very beneficial. However, they show some resistance, and are concerned about the difficulty of the process; the lack of recognition of the international experience in terms of career; the authorization required by senior management; and the outcomes and benefits of the experience, as the recognised benefits are not considered to be sufficient incentive for administrative staff to engage in mobility abroad when the corresponding increased volume of work is taken into account. For those not involved, internationalisation in this institution is evolving at different paces; the progress is made not by the institution as a whole but by the 14 different faculties. In this respect, the interviewees recognise the need to raise awareness of internationalisation within the faculties.

## 2. Role of administrative staff in the development of internationalisation

In short: staff need to be motivated and involved by analysing how they can contribute to internationalisation, thus aligning the mission and activities of individuals and structures with the [internationalisation] strategy of the institution.

Senior and middle management believe that internal services should not operate separately within the University, but follow a network approach, so as to exchange competences and improve results. This network approach is seen as particularly important in the case of International Relations, Human Resources and Academic Affairs, and at this institution efforts are being made to bring these structures closer together.

In this context, administrative staff are expected to play an important role in internationalisation and they should all be motivated to join in. All staff members should be encouraged to engage in mobility activities (both going abroad and receiving international colleagues) that will allow them to exchange good practices and learn with others. They should also be encouraged to receive appropriate training and institutional support so that they can help the University achieve its internationalisation goals.

Staff members involved in internationalisation consider that the administrative staff play a central role, as they represent and incorporate the strategies and values of the University and are responsible for implementing the operational activities and for updating internal processes, at the University. However, they lack preparation and awareness of international activities. This transition requires time, motivation and awareness of the benefits and relevance of internationalisation (for themselves, the institution, the city and the country), and people need to be encouraged to become involved and get out of their comfort zone.

As for the staff not involved in internationalisation, some of the interviewees show some resistance to international activities. The expansion of the international dimension to a wider range of activities proved to increase the visibility of the University and its faculties, but there is still a need to enhance the awareness of its importance among the administrative staff. Administrative staff members have little time to engage in mobility programs because of the volume of work. Moreover, some seem to consider that internationalisation does not apply to their activities and that it is restricted to particular areas/lines of work. Therefore, administrative staff should be consulted about the training they would need and the mobility opportunities

they would be interested in. This requires a proactive approach. Staff training and motivation makes a great difference when it comes to internationalisation. The International Office has a central role in this aspect. It needs to coordinate and motivate administrative staff not yet involved in internationalisation and identify mobility opportunities and staff needs.

### 3. Current capacity of administrative staff to deliver high quality international services

Opinions about the capacity of administrative staff to deliver high quality international services vary among the interviewees, though most of them acknowledge that staff lack adequate preparation and training to successfully perform activities related to internationalisation.

In the opinion of the senior management, although International Relations personal is perfectly ready and able to deliver high quality international services, administrative staff from other structures are just beginning to receive proper training. This is the result of greater awareness among staff members of the opportunities of international mobility. However, these changes take time and are not attainable for everybody, since senior staff members are less willing to engage in mobility programmes.

As for the middle management representatives' opinion, administrative staff cannot deliver high quality international services, mostly because of lack of language skills and support from the directors of the university structures.

Some of the administrative staff members involved in internationalisation consider they are capable of delivering high quality international services, because of their experience and the services provided within their department. They believe that there is considerable potential for internationalisation in common subjects concerning general areas, which can be compared or internationalized (e.g.: good practices exported to other realities/countries). Others, however, acknowledge that language is still a barrier, especially for senior staff, and that there is a lack of information and data base/IT tools available in English, to support internationalisation. Most of them do not feel sufficiently prepared to deal with the challenges of international activities, especially those concerning the different academic backgrounds of international students, because internationalisation has only just reached their departments.

As for administrative staff members not directly involved in internationalisation, some consider that they are capable of delivering international services because of the University's international reputation and contacts, and the high quality and satisfaction patterns of the services delivered by the international office.

Others consider that there are still only a few international contacts in their department and that there is considerable segregation between the internal structures of the University, a great deal of bureaucracy and administration and a considerable limitation of (human) resources. There is no common policy directing the internationalisation of the specific departments of the University. Furthermore, there is little understanding of foreign realities. Current teamwork practices and the divide between professors and administrative staff/specialists is still an obstacle to comprehensive internationalisation in the University.

In addition, the financial resources for internationalisation are very limited and legislation and internal procedures differ a lot between countries, making the internationalisation process more difficult and less consensual.



Therefore, in the opinion of the staff members not directly involved in internationalisation, there is clearly a need for services to be integrated, for staff to be more autonomous and for actions to be shared. This integration requires specific training and awareness of internationalisation, including hierarchical superiors.

#### 5. Skills and competences required for internationalisation

For senior management, the main skills and competences required for internationalisation are language skills, an open mind that can perceive differences between HEIs and countries/cultures, and know-how to understand the changes that need to be made.

It is also crucial that department directors are aware of the need for this training and of the importance of establishing networks between departments to achieve common goals. Therefore, the International Office should combine efforts with the other departments of the University/faculties (e.g. Academic Affairs and Marketing/Communication Services) and the administrative staff should be trained accordingly, always with the institutional goals and internationalisation priorities in mind.

Middle management representatives also highlighted the importance of language skills and the need for all departments to seriously acknowledge the importance of internationalisation.

As for the administrative staff members interviewed, whether they were directly involved in internationalisation or not, the opinions expressed about the most relevant skills and competences required for internationalisation were similar, namely:

- Language skills, including technical language;
- Interpersonal and intercultural skills to deal with diversity;
- Team work and multidisciplinary training provided to all who deal with international students and staff;
- Technical skills for the preparation and management of mobility applications;
- Organizational skills for the preparation of events to promote contact with the international community.

Administrative staff not directly involved in internationalisation also highlighted the importance of the following skills:

- Know-how in communication technologies, videoconferencing, e-learning platforms, data bases, and other new ICT tools and networking skills;
- Technical skills and experience in strategic documents, statistical data and context information on the internationalisation process.

#### 4. Current training provision for administrative staff in all areas including internationalisation

Senior management considers that an effort is being made to train administrative staff for internationalisation, even though it is only in its first steps. International Relations and Academic

Affairs must work together to achieve the strategic goals established by the University in terms of internationalisation, taking into account the specificities of each office and its staff.

In the opinion of the middle management representative, administrative staff do not receive adequate training for internationalisation and there should be specific training activities integrated into the HR training plan to fill this gap.

As for the administrative staff members interviewed, whether directly involved in internationalisation or not, they consider that they receive appropriate training in their regular daily functions and responsibilities and their degree of specialization. However, when it comes to internationalisation, they all agree that the training provided by the University is lacking and inadequate. Moreover, most of the training received is the result of proposals made by the employees themselves and carried out by external entities, or by engagement in mobility programs. So there is a common understanding that the University must rethink and update its internal training programs. Furthermore, staff are not provided with training for the development of skills and tools, nor for specific services, which implies that there is an urgent need to update the training provided, so that it can have an impact on personal and professional life and be useful for daily professional duties. There is also the need for the formal recognition of international mobility in terms of career and professional development.

## 6. Recommendations for training programs for administrative staff in internationalisation

Note: administrative staff need not only to be trained but also to have their awareness raised of the benefits and relevance of internationalisation. This must be part of the training itself. Additionally, before the training, a top-down approach must be used to make the heads of department aware of the importance of internationalisation

All groups referred to the importance of language training (particularly English) for the administrative staff and some also mentioned the need for technical language (e.g. financial). In the case of this institution this is indeed a must as particularly the senior officers do not master English, especially spoken.

Senior and middle management highlighted the need to adopt a **department-focused approach**, and identify the most important needs for each department. This is a job that must be done by the head of each department, who understands the strategy and can define internationalisation objectives according to the department's mission and role. From this starting point, each department should work with the International Office to put the training into practice. It is important that this training is **tailor-made for each department** as needs are different. So the training should consist of various modules that can be applied to different departments.

One interesting idea was to **get all the pro-internationalists** at the university to contribute to the awareness raising of other staff members.

Another training topic that was often mentioned was **intercultural education**. Some staff members suggested training using **IT tools** and basically any kind of platform that allows international communication (e.g. social networks, videoconference). Other topics that were

mentioned were **international communication, ethics, provision of services** to international students, **submission of proposals** to international projects, and **database management**.

As for the type of training, most interviewees agreed that **workshops** and **group discussions/debates** would be most effective. **Face-to-face contact** was mentioned by the majority as being the preferred format, even though some also mentioned the possibility of doing some e-learning.

Finally, the interviewees considered that this training should be organised during the working day and not as an extra activity so as to guarantee the involvement and motivation of staff members.

## Case Study 6

### 1. Importance of internationalisation to the university and its likely future development

Internationalisation has been declared of strategic importance at this institution but as of yet no strategic plan has been officially launched. One step that has been taken is to divide the administrative units into three key areas, one of which is international. However, this decision has not yet been operationalised and in the meantime, the volume and scope of international activities continues to grow.

This situation is creating tension within the institution between units with a more international focus and those that operate essentially in a national context. This is the case not only for the International Office, responsible principally for mobility and recruitment but also in other support units such as the Research Office and the Library that provide a high level of services to the interested academic units in the internationalisation of education or research activities.

Many other units however – both academic and administrative – are still operating according to a purely national logic – and this is leading to communication problems, a slow-down in – or duplication of – operations as well as a loss in quality of international services. Internationalisation is not yet perceived as an integrated task but rather as an add-on element managed by specialists.

As ever there are some units that lend themselves more naturally to internationalisation but the gap is exacerbated in Italy where knowledge of foreign languages is poor and many, even in leadership positions, feel professionally challenged by internationalisation. This creates a number of different barriers that go beyond communication alone, and develops a tendency to “compartmentalise” international activities in a select number of units, while the institution continues to operate principally according to national or local traditions.

So internationalised units may be innovative and dynamic, but they are often operating as islands and disconnected from the rest of the university. As their work grows in volume and complexity, they have an expectation of a clear strategic direction from leadership that is currently not forthcoming. They continue to work without a clear strategic framework, stable operating arrangements (including financial) or systematic support policies and work on a daily basis with other support services that are unevenly geared to the current level of international effort.

The university does not have any tradition of strategic planning, and it appears that a strategic approach to internationalisation is more of a future idea than present reality. While there is recognition that it is an inevitable and necessary direction for institutional development (and also survival given the current national demographics), the university struggles to make the transformation.

### 2. Role of administrative staff in the development of internationalisation

There is recognition that administrative staff should play an active role in internationalisation but that there are many challenges to be overcome. There is also recognition that the university has always tended to conceive of its community as one of teachers and students, and yet

administrators make a fundamental contribution and, increasingly, bring a high level of specialised knowledge and professionalisation. Their work is key to the delivery of quality international services.

There is a fundamental difference again between units that already have a strong international dimension and currently deliver a high level of professional support, and those, such as the Student Office, that have found themselves exposed to internationalisation without the necessary preparation.

In the case of the International Office, but also in the case of other units such as the Library and Research Office, staff have been carefully selected according to their international competences, especially their knowledge of English and other languages. Because of the international experience they have brought to the job, they have been able to rise to the challenge of internationalisation through individual efforts or opportunities offered at unit level.

Most international services are still managed centrally by specialised units, but there is an expectation that more administrative staff will become involved as international student numbers grow. However, the majority are not currently able to deliver. One of the most obvious and most frequently cited challenges is the ability to work in English. However, this is also very quickly associated with an ability to work with different cultures, to understand different needs and to be open to change.

There is also an institutional challenge in that the entire administrative service is set up according to this country's regulations, which tend to develop a very bureaucratic culture based on norms and procedures, rather than innovation and change. Internationalisation is seen as having a destabilising effect. It is not just that the staff in the student office cannot speak English, but that the whole system is geared to this country's rules, its language and its local students and staff. Some feel threatened by the change and others feel ill-equipped to deal with it.

### 3. Current capacity of administrative staff to deliver high quality international services

For all the reasons mentioned above, administrative staff are not currently able to deliver high quality international services. They have not been selected on the basis of a set of criteria that would enable them to do so and have not received any targeted professional development. There have been some attempts to provide English language training, but these have been sporadic attempts that have not been linked to specific job requirements or career promotion.

The Human Resources Department now have language training as an action line in their new policy, but have not yet developed a plan for implementation. They recognise that language training takes time and that it needs to be done strategically, identifying needs and preparing tailored programmes for different target groups. They also recognise the importance of inserting linguistic ability in the assessment criteria and creating financial incentives but such mechanisms are not yet in place.

A current initiative is underway to identify staff in Student Services who have sufficient English language skills to interact with international students and to create a system that would automatically guide international students to these counters. Staff say they struggle with their

own limited English ability and often call on the assistance of local students in the queue to translate and/or explain. The staff express their discomfort with this arrangement.

However, there is also the bigger issue of managing expectations at a university that defines itself as international to prospective international students. Interestingly, some administrative staff make the point that it is a university in a non-English speaking country and that is why everything is in its own language (not English)! So clearly there is a strong disconnect in self-identity amongst the different units. However, as this institution is increasing the numbers of fee-paying students, both for study abroad and full degrees, these students are entitled to quality services in a language they can understand.

There is also recognition that English is a basic requirement but that internationalisation is more than language, that it requires creating an international mindset. The internationalised units lament the difficulty of interacting with colleagues in other units. Internationalisation is about doing things differently not just using English. Indeed, the point was made that administrative staff do not even know what internationalisation is – or even why international students are coming - and that they first need to understand the phenomenon and how it will impact their work.

#### 4. Skills and competences required for internationalisation

As has emerged above, the first step is to increase the ability to interact in English, a necessary but insufficient requirement for internationalisation. There may be specific needs for other languages beyond English, and of course, internationalisation can also take place in the local language. However, with increasing numbers of students and scholars from a broad range of countries coming to this institution, a growing number of staff need to be able to operate in English, at varying levels, based on frequency and intensity of contact.

Whatever the language used, contact with people from different backgrounds requires an ability to work with different cultures. The university has a strong focus on humanities and the International Office pointed out that much better use could be made of the knowledge within the university to learn about different cultures.

This is linked to the recognition that internationalisation requires people to change their mindset and to be open to new ways of working. And for people to understand that they also need to understand what is meant by internationalisation in general, and then to understand more specifically what the university's strategic intention is for internationalisation.

#### 5. Current training provision for administrative staff in all areas including internationalisation

The HR department organises courses in a range of topics but these are not offered in a systematic manner, they are not linked to career progression, nor are they part of an institutional strategy. Previous experience of language training has not been very successful and courses were offered more as a benefit to the individual and on a voluntary basis. This suggests an issue of lack of clear mechanisms for career advancement linked to training, and which can lead to a lack of motivation.

In general, administrative staff do not feel they have been trained for their jobs, but rather have learnt on-the-job. They were unaware of any opportunities for mobility that they could take advantage of, and in any case these do not appear to be advertised to administrative staff in a systematic manner.

International Office staff have regular access to travel abroad opportunities that have enriched their knowledge, but they do not feel they have been trained by the university. They also mentioned that much of the training done abroad was often difficult to apply in practice once home, and therefore often remained theoretical knowledge.

There is recognition of the need to introduce training for internationalisation as it becomes more strategic to the university, and the first step will be language training. However, there is probably a need to think about training in general and how it serves the interests both of the institution and the individuals. There does not appear to be any institutional programme offered on an ongoing basis, where staff can apply for training, not even in languages. Nor does there appear to be any mechanism for mapping current knowledge, skills and competences across the different administrative units.

## 6. Recommendations for training programmes for administrative staff in internationalisation

It is evident that there is an urgent need to improve the level of English language ability of administrative staff but that this needs to be done strategically, identifying staff whose work has an international dimension and targeting the training accordingly. There is recognition that learning a language takes time and therefore a mapping exercise of current English ability would be a good first step. This is currently being undertaken in Student Services but it would be important to do this across all units for all languages.

Linked to learning language, is the ability to interact across cultures and to raise intercultural awareness and competence. Many stressed the importance of linking language learning to opening minds and equipping staff with the skills to cope with diversity.

It is also apparent that administrative staff need to understand internationalisation as a global phenomenon and then, more specifically, to understand the university's own strategic direction, what specific actions are planned and how this will affect their work.

All of these programmes need to be delivered in a participative, interactive manner in a way that enables people to do their job more successfully, but also motivates them to engage with the different international activities, to see internationalisation as part of their work and not an activity that sits exclusively in the International Office or other specialised units.

Mobility, while valuable, is not seen as a viable option for many administrative staff both because of personal constraints, but also because of work pressures and understaffing. The point was made that if mobility is used then it must be done so strategically and that the learning is integrated into the workplace as a means to improve practice.

It was suggested that use could be made of the knowledge both of the International Office staff and of the many academics who know different languages and cultures but also those who already have a strong international background and experience. Other units in the university

could also be used for training, such as the Confucius Centre and a Research Center in Internationalisation.

It could also be interesting to learn more about work in other administrative units to understand their needs and create an internal mobility programme. Finally, it could be useful to create a network of universities for an exchange of best practice and know-how in the management of internationalisation.

Whatever training is undertaken, it would be useful to provide certification of the training undertaken and to include it in the criteria for work assessment and career advancement. This should be part of a strategic and systematic approach to training as a means to advance institutional objectives.



