



Action Plan for Internationalisation 2021-2024

Background

The *Development Plan for Södertörn University 2020–2024* includes internationalisation as one of six prioritised areas for development that will realise the overarching vision of being "a university that contributes to sustainable societal development through research, education and critical reflection on contemporary challenges".

Additionally, the university's *Internationalisation Policy* (reg. no. 1910/40/2012) states that internationalisation must define the entire university's activities and that internationalisation work must be documented in action plans, both centrally and at the academic schools. To conduct work on internationalisation in accordance with the university's vision and objectives, an overall action plan is required. This action plan covers the four-year period of 2021–2024 and is thus linked to the *Development Plan for Södertörn University*.

Why is a plan for internationalisation necessary?

The purpose of a coherent action plan for internationalisation is to gather and concretise the university's overarching internationalisation objectives as planned activities. This means that the plan will not reflect the entirety of international activities at the university. Instead, it contains a selection of activities that are regarded as important for the continuing focus of work on internationalisation. These include activities that aim to remove specific barriers to increased internationalisation.

The advantage of a four-year plan for internationalisation is that it also provides opportunities for longer term, clearly focused work. The hope is also that the plan can contribute to bringing together the annual planning work conducted in activity plans and descriptions at academic schools and administrative units.

How was this plan developed?

The production of a renewed action plan at a university-wide level was initiated at the end of the previous three-year action plan for 2017–2019 (reg. no. 1242-1.1.1-2017).

The main party in the work on proposing objectives has been the university's Advisory Board for Internationalisation, a collegial body that is tasked with acting as a steering committee for international issues and providing advice to management.

In the spring of 2019, members of the Advisory Board and experts in the university administration organised two themed seminars as part of the university's work on a new development plan for 2020–2024. The seminars were documented and open to staff at the university. The Advisory Board then intensified its work on identifying operational needs in the spring of 2020, as part of which the International Office at Student Support Services was tasked with mapping current internationalisation activities and future requests from subjects, programmes, steering committees and research centres. The survey, which was sent to 96 people, had a response frequency of 33% (32 individual responses), and included questions on education, research and third-stream activities.

In September 2020, the Advisory Board organised a workshop for invited participants from university management, at which the purpose of internationalisation in high education and the university's ambitions in this area were discussed. Subsequently, the Advisory Board, in consultation with the closest affected functions, produced proposals for priorities based on the university's Development Plan for 2020–24.

Period of validity and following up the plan

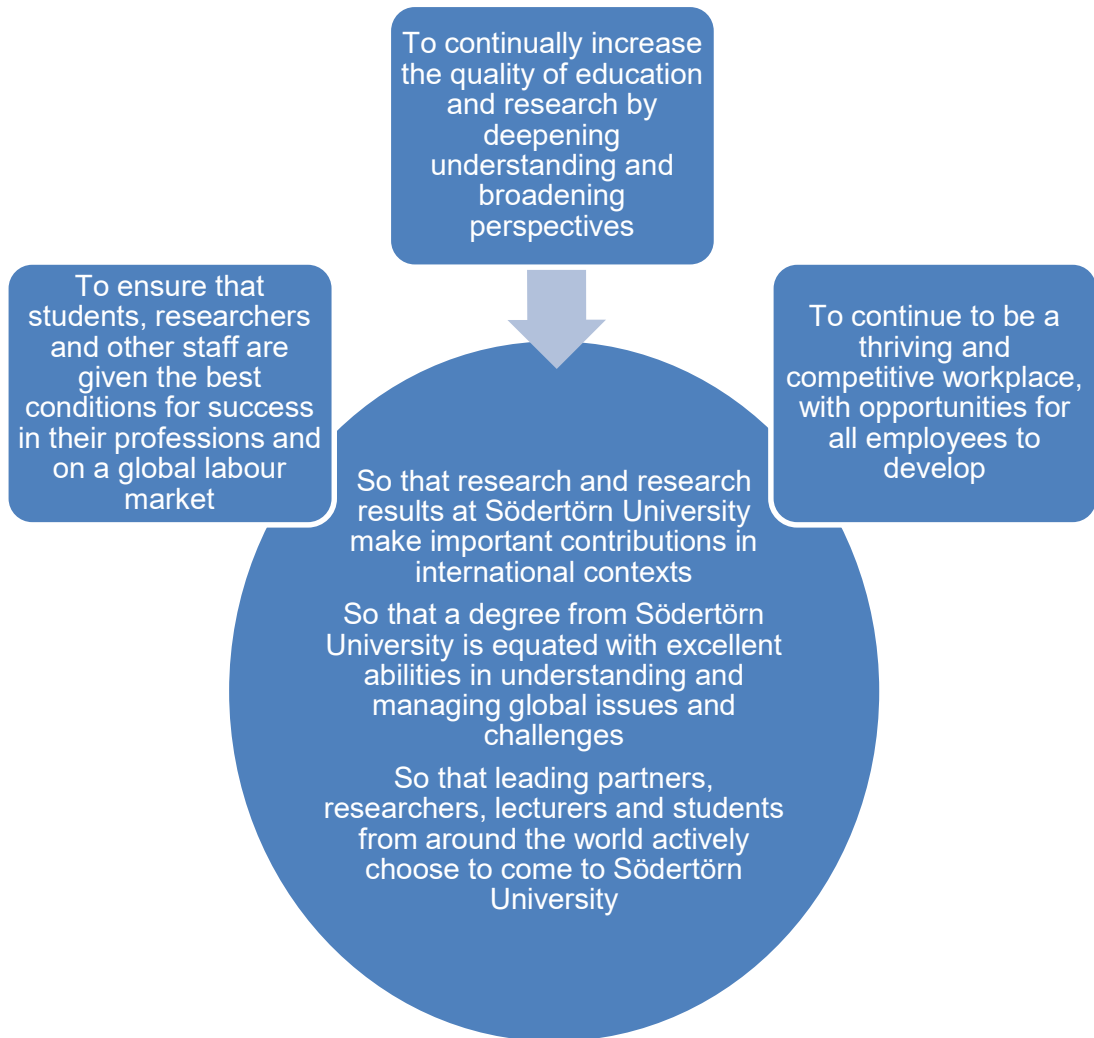
In its entirety, the Action Plan is effective from 1 January 2021 until 31 December 2024. Annual follow ups are conducted through the academic schools' annual reports and at the relevant units in university administration. The Advisory Board for Internationalisation has also been given the task of following up targeted activities through dialogue with the relevant units and, as a steering committee, applying for and allocating funding where necessary.

Appendix

Parallel to the production of a new action plan, a working group was tasked by the vice-chancellor (reg. no. 1039–1.1.2-2020) with analysing the university's potential participation in an alliance as part of the EU's European Universities Initiative. The working group's conclusions and proposals are appended to this Action Plan.

Why internationalisation?

The illustration below shows how internationalisation work at Södertörn University includes students, teaching staff, researchers and other staff, and aims to **raise the quality of education and research**.



Objectives and prioritised activities 2021-2024

1) Broadened and better structured long-term mobility

This purpose of this goal is to improve opportunities for participation in exchanges with a particular focus on the groups that are currently underrepresented in mobility. One way of achieving this is by better integrating opportunities for long-term mobility in all types of education and employment for teaching staff, researchers and doctoral students.

Opportunities for exchanges should also benefit managers and administrative staff, as they contribute to skills development and allows more people to actively contribute intercultural competence and internationalisation at the university.

Goals	Activities	Action taken by	Time plan
In-depth cooperation with foreign higher education institutions around the world, through joint courses, programmes and possibly also joint degrees.	Establish deeper cooperation with strategically important partner universities. Support subjects/programmes that want to develop joint courses/programmes/degrees. Actively providing information, external monitoring and being inspired by model partnerships at other higher education institutions. Encouraging long-term partnerships.	Academic schools IO ¹ and other administrative units contribute knowledge.	2021–2024
Deepen cooperation with European higher education institutions by participating in an alliance in the European universities Initiative (EUI).	a) Supporting subjects/programmes and research environments that want to produce an application for participation in the EUI ² . (See appendix). b) Internal prioritisation of areas or issues suitable for an EUI application.	Management, Advisory Board for Internationalisation and specifically appointed working group. (An operative coordination group must be appointed for a granted EUI.)	2021–2022: Internal discussions at the university and establishment of consortia and applications.
Make exchanges and foreign placements accessible for more student groups at Södertörn University by more	a) Inventory the opportunities for students to study and go on placements abroad, with	Subject and programme councils, supported by IO and	2021 Follow up of existing mobility windows and of information to the

¹ IO = International Office, or the international unit in Student Support Services.

² EUI = European Universities Initiative. A university-wide partnership programme within Erasmus+.

<p>clearly integrating international opportunities in subjects and programmes.</p>	<p>full credit transfers, for all subjects/programmes. b) Improve information about exchange opportunities that is specific to subjects/programmes by clarifying mobility windows, academic guidance for outgoing students and following up their experiences.</p>	<p>other administrative units.</p>	<p>students. Identify good examples, challenges and needs. 2022: Dialogue on measures to broaden mobility opportunities for students.</p>
<p>Making it easier for more international students to find and to enjoy their time on the university's English-language Master's programmes.</p>	<p>a) Evaluation of completed work on student recruitment b) Continued work to support subjects with the marketing of programmes offered in English. There should be particular focus on diversifying countries, names of programmes and on the timing of announcements/calls. c) Improving processes and tools for collecting and processing data on freemover students d) Evaluating and continuing to develop support for freemover students, focusing on better integration of foreign students on campus</p>	<p>IO with programme coordinator and the Advisory Board for Internationalisation.</p>	<p>2021: Evaluation of student support and student recruitment 2021–2024: Actions to broaden the basis for student recruitment abroad. 2022: Improve processes for data collection 2022–24: Develop activities for better integration on campus</p>
<p>Increase the accessibility of exchange studies outside Europe and profile partnerships with Baltic/Eastern European countries by offering more potential grants to students and teachers.</p>	<p>a) Follow-ups to previous programme participation, applications and interest in various regions, etc. b) Participation in programme calls c) Marketing profiled partnerships and regions as part of Södertörn University's exchange opportunities.</p>	<p>IO in dialogue with interested subjects and programmes. Strategic issues taken to Advisory Board for Internationalisation or advisors to the vice-chancellor for evaluation and support.</p>	<p>2021: Follow ups and mapping of areas of interest 2021–23: New applications to relevant programmes. 2024: Follow ups of completed project partnerships.</p>

2) Utilising the international experiences of students and employees in university activities

The *Development Plan for Södertörn University 2020–2024* states that the university must implement measures to highlight the international and intercultural experience and knowledge of staff and students, not least linguistically. The area includes recruitment processes for academic staff and the opportunity to evaluate and utilise international merits in education, research and collaboration/third-stream activities.

Goals	Activities	Action taken by	Time plan
Improved and more systematic utilisation of students' and staff members' international experiences and clearer returns on these experiences in university activities	Initiate university-wide discussions on the international experiences of staff and students	Advisory Board for Internationalisation and advisor to the vice-chancellor; FB ³ , MB ⁴	2022: university-wide discussion 2023: specification of how international experiences can be integrated in university activities
1) Clarify international aspects in the recruitment of teaching staff, researchers and doctoral students under the university's HRS4R strategy ⁵ . 2) Define and place more value on international merits in recruitment processes, in accordance with the university's HRS4R strategy and the European Council's Code of Conduct for Recruitment ⁶ .	a) Initiate a discussion about international recruitments. b) Promote increased international recruitment in accordance with the <i>Development Plan</i> . c) Continued implementation of the HRS4R strategy according to schedule.	RC ⁷ , HR ⁸ , advisor to the vice-chancellor and FB.	2021: discussions and specification of problem areas. 2022–23: produce clearer instructions for the Appointments Procedure (see also schedule for work on HRS4R).
Facilitate and support international publication by the university's researchers through	Simplify and clarify the publication support available for proofreading,	Library	2021: Development of support for international publication

³ FB = Faculty Board.

⁴ MB = Management board of the academic school/equivalent.

⁵ In November 2019, Södertörn University was recognised by the European Commission for its commitment to good working conditions and the development of career support for researchers through compliance with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers ('Charter & Code'). The university strategy is available here: [Vacant positions - Södertörns högskola](#)

⁶ Den europeiska stadgan för forskare och Riktlinjer för rekrytering av forskare ('Charter & Code').

⁷ RC = Recruitment committees.

⁸ HR = HR unit.

clear and simple forms of publication support	translation and editorial work. Find inspiring models at other higher education institutions.		2022: Clear information about translation and proofreading services
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3) Internationalisation at home

Internationalisation at home is a strategy that can be used to make internationalisation available to students and staff who do not participate in international mobility. The aim is to provide everyone at the university with a broader and more international perspective. Incoming visiting lecturers, doctoral students, researchers and students, as well as international doctoral students and students who have returned home can be used in teaching, and the mix of national and cultural backgrounds at the university can be utilised in an educationally focused manner. Other tools could be virtual exchanges, integration of international and/or intercultural intended learning outcomes in the syllabuses for courses and programmes, and educationally focused methodology in international classrooms.

Goals	Activities	Action taken by	Time plan
<p>Providing international aspects in the education of students who cannot or do not want to participate in a physical exchange, by:</p> <p>Virtual and blended mobility, common distance courses.</p> <p>Use financing from the Erasmus Programme for this.</p>	<p>a) Courses at Bachelor's and Master's level with elements of virtual and blended mobility.</p> <p>b) Joint distance courses with foreign universities.</p>	The Library and och ICT educators, Development Unit for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, subject and programme councils, MB, IO	<p>2021–22: course development and follow ups of previous development support, focusing on virtual exchanges/courses.</p> <p>2023: start of courses</p>
A balanced and considered course offering in English as part of the regular offering, studied by both Swedish and international students.	Based on follow ups, define targets and continue to develop the integrated English-language course offering at Bachelor's and Master's levels.	FB, MB, Advisory Board for Internationalisation, IO	2021: Follow ups and continuation of previous work for modules in English (IO + Advisory Board for Internationalisation). (Ensure that courses are not withdrawn for the wrong reason).
Allow teaching staff to expand their educational skills linked to internationalisation at home and	Support educational initiatives in internationalisation.	Advisory Board for Internationalisation, Development Unit	2021–2024 Development Unit for Teaching and

teaching in the international classroom.	Facilitate development projects and continue with targeted courses in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.	for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education	Learning in Higher Education offers and develops courses on the theme.
Integrate international and intercultural perspectives in more course and programme syllabuses.	Clearer implementation of Section 5 of the Swedish Higher Education Act ⁹ in the university's course offering	FB, MB, IO, Advisory Board for Internationalisation, subjects and programmes	2021–24: Discussion about generic intended learning outcomes related to internationalisation and intercultural understanding 2021–24: Support for subjects/programmes that want to integrate international and intercultural perspectives in course and programme syllabuses.

⁹ "...in their operations higher education institutions should promote understanding of other countries and of international circumstances"

4. International research partnerships and the internationalisation of research

The university will continue to develop and strengthen international partnerships that are relevant to research into the Baltic Sea region and eastern Europe. BEEGS and other international graduate schools where Södertörn University participates conduct high quality doctoral education with international recruitment of doctoral students in all research areas. Both these profile areas will continue to characterise the university's work on internationalisation. To strengthen structures for international research partnerships, various areas will be prioritised: the reception of incoming doctoral students and researchers, mobility for doctoral students and opportunities for language support.

Goals	Activities	Action taken by	Time plan
<p>a) Improve the university's reception of visiting researchers (in synergy with the action plan for the HRS4R, reg. no. 1762-3.2.2-2018).</p> <p>b) Coordinate and quality assure support for incoming international researchers and doctoral students.</p>	<p>a) Develop and introduce routines for receiving visiting researchers</p> <p>b) Propose quality assurance tools (annual survey or similar)</p>	<p>ER¹⁰ helped by HR, IO and other administrative units</p> <p>Management for academic schools.</p>	<p>2021: Introduce reception routines</p> <p>2022–24: Quality assurance</p>
<p>a) Clarify rules for doctoral students' mobility during their education</p> <p>b) Work to facilitate longer foreign stays for all categories of doctoral students</p>	<p>Investigate and inform about opportunities and rules, and work for a coherent policy for the entire university.</p>	<p>Chair of the steering committee and directors of studies for doctoral education, BEEGS/CBEES, supervisors and HR.</p>	<p>2022: Coherent new guidelines introduced</p> <p>2023: Develop information package about mobility for doctoral students</p>

¹⁰ ER = Unit for External Relations, University Support Services.

<p>Language support in Swedish for foreign doctoral students, visiting researchers, newly employed senior lecturers and project-specific researchers.</p>	<p>a) Inventory needs, resources and experiences. b) task the subject of Swedish or equivalent. c) Develop “packages” adapted to target groups through packages or partnerships with other higher education institutions.</p>	<p>Development Unit for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (primary responsibility) There should be consultation with the director of studies at BEEGS and the Doctoral Students’ Committee.</p>	<p>2021–22: Inventory needs, resources and experiences. 2022–23: Allocate tasks and produce packages.</p>
<p>Promote the use of virtual tools in foreign research partnerships.</p>	<p>Support the use and development of methods and processes for digital research partnerships. Work is conducted through better information about existing systems, and increased coordination and experience exchanges.</p>	<p>CICT¹¹, management for academic schools, research areas and research areas for doctoral studies, CBEEES</p>	<p>2021–2024</p>

¹¹ Campus and ICT Services

Appendix: Södertörn University and the European Universities Initiative

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1. Introduction

Södertörn University has received enquiries from other higher education institutions about participation in an alliance within the EU's European Universities Initiative. Inclusion in such an alliance is in line with the university's strategy for international cooperation. On 18 February 2020, the vice-chancellor decided to appoint a working group (reg. no. 1039–1.1.2-2020) to analyse what participation in such an alliance would entail for the university and to provide suggestions for ongoing management of the opportunities and consequences of such participation.

2. Background

Subsequent to the 2017 Gothenburg Summit, where EU leaders outlined their vision for education and culture, the European Universities Initiative has been developed to strengthen strategic partnerships between higher education institutions in the EU. Two pilot calls for proposals have been conducted, in 2019 och 2020. European Universities will continue to be part of the new Erasmus Programme 2021-2027 and have a leading role in the development of a European Education Area.

European Universities will raise the quality of higher education in Europe and contribute to inclusion and increased competitiveness. The initiative involves universities in European countries cooperating in transdisciplinary alliances to deal with societal challenges. The idea is that students and staff should be able to move freely between the universities that are part of an alliance and that students can personalise their education with courses from these universities.¹²

2.1. Why a European Universities Initiative?

Partnerships within a European University must be systematic, structural and sustainable. The aims of the European Universities Initiative are:

- to promote shared European values and strengthen European identity, and to be a decisive driver in raising the quality of higher education and strengthening its links to research and innovation in Europe. to bring together a new generation of Europeans who can cooperate within different cultures, in different languages, across borders, sectors and academic disciplines to meet the societal challenges Europe is facing, now and in the future.
- to achieve a significant leap in the quality, attraction power and international competitiveness of European higher education institutions and contribute to the European knowledge economy, employment, culture, citizen engagement and welfare. The European Universities Initiative will be the most important driving force in increasing the quality of higher education and, where possible, strengthening links to the research and innovation landscape in Europe and to society and the overall social economy.

The European Universities initiative will increase exchanges for students, doctoral students and staff, and strengthen links between education, research and innovation through shared long-term strategies and close cooperation. These bottom-up networks of universities throughout Europe will make it possible for students to earn degrees by combining studies in several EU states and will also contribute to the international competitiveness of European higher education institutions.

¹² Source: Swedish Council for Higher Education

2.2. What is the European Universities Initiative?

European Universities are transnational alliances with the potential to develop cooperation between higher education institutions. These alliances will:

- include partners from all types of higher education institutions from different geographic regions throughout Europe (most approved European universities comprise 5-9 higher education institutions)
- be based upon a joint long-term strategy with, where possible, links to research and innovation and society in general, focused on sustainability, excellence and European values
- offer shared, flexible curriculums for a student population that reflects the diversity of the population and which can build their own programmes and move, physically or virtually, between higher education institutions at all levels of study
- adopt a challenge-based strategy with students, academics and external partners who work together on transdisciplinary teams, to address and deal with the societal and other challenges facing the EU

3. Terms and conditions

3.1. Calls and applications

The first call (2019) had 54 applications, from which 17 European Universities, which include 114 higher education institutions from 24 countries, were selected. The second call (2020) had 62 applications, from which 24 European Universities, which involve 165 higher education institutions from 26 countries, were selected. The projects run for three years.

In these calls, the applications were assessed using the following five criteria:

- Relevance of the proposal (max 25 pts)
- Geographical balance (max 15 pts)
- Quality of the alliance cooperation arrangements (max 20 pts)
- Quality of the proposal and implementation (max 20 pts)
- Sustainability and dissemination (max 20 pts)

The eleven Swedish higher education institutions participating in a European University are¹³:

Selected 2019

- Linköping University: ECIU University
- Stockholm University: CIVIS - A European Civic University
- KTH Royal Institute of Technology: UNITE! - University Network for Innovation, Technology and Engineering
- Stockholm School of Economics: CIVICA - The European University of Social Sciences
- University of Gothenburg - EUTOPIA - European Universities Transforming to an Open Inclusive Academy for 2050
- Lund University: UGLOH - European University Alliance for Global Health

Selected 2020

¹³ Factsheets about these alliances are available here: [European Universities factsheets](#)

- Chalmers University of Technology: ENHANCE - European Universities of Technology Alliance
- Uppsala University: ENLIGHT - European University Network to promote Equitable Quality of Life, Sustainability, and Global Engagement through Higher Education Transformation
- Linnaeus University: EUniWell - European University for WellBeing
- Karolinska Institutet: NeurotechEU - European University of Brain and Technology
- Luleå University of Technology: UNIVERSEH - European Space University of Earth and Humanity

3.2. Financial conditions

The second call in the European Universities Initiative opened in November 2019, with a deadline of 28 February. The budget was EUR 120 million for up to 24 networks.

The budget for a three-year European University is EUR 5,000,000. The budget for the European University alliances will be based the actual costs that arose due to their activities. The EU grant is to co-finance activities to a *maximum* of 80% of the total costs that are eligible for funding. The requested budget must be based upon the planned activities, as described in the application form. The budget for the Erasmus programme 2021-2027 has not yet been decided, so nor has the budget for the European Universities Initiative.

3.2.1. Economic conditions

Co-financing, which the EU always requires of project participants, demands that the university's participation in an alliance in the European Universities Initiative is supported by the organisation and that there is a broad desire to be part of such a cooperation. Co-financing is assessed to be necessary at central level and at that of the academic schools. Different parts of the organisation will need to carry different parts of the costs of participation. Co-financing may consist of, for example, staff resources, in the form of time or travel funding. Digital meetings will not be as much of a challenge in the future, but for new cooperation there may still be a need to have some physical meetings. The physical meetings contribute to creating contacts and build a foundation for developing a good partnership. Costs where central funding may be necessary could be for project management of cooperation within the university. When it comes to co-financing at the level of the academic schools, it is therefore important to have the support of the academic schools and subjects so there is a desire to participate in an alliance. Participating in a consortium within the European Universities Initiative will have a cost in the form of work and resources, but this must be put in relation to the value it brings to the university, which includes contributions to the development of activities and increasing quality.

Exactly how much participation would require in terms of co-financing is difficult to estimate, as it depends on the activities and budget that the alliance agrees on and conducts.

The university has invested in internationalisation and is already doing a great deal in terms of international partnerships and exchanges. We can continue doing some of what we already do, and for which we use existing funding, and this can be part of the co-financing. Erasmus mobility funding can be used for exchanges between the alliance's partner universities and for activities linked to these exchanges. Separate bilateral Erasmus agreements are signed for this.

4. Internal criteria for participation in the European Universities Initiative

4.1. Assessment of the extent to which participation contributes to realising the university's development plan and long-term objectives

Södertörn University's *Development Plan 2020-2024* (reg. no. 1279-1.1.2-2019) includes a vision statement and overarching objectives that show the direction the university will take over the next five years. As regards the EU's purpose and objectives with the European Universities Initiative, it corresponds well with the objectives in the university's Development Plan, primarily with the objective of promoting the internationalisation of research and the mobility of students and staff. There is therefore plenty that indicates that participation in a well-chosen alliance as part of the European Universities Initiative would make a significant contribution to benefitting the university and realising its development plan. The working group is agreed that the European Universities Initiative is something in which the university should invest.

A partnership that contributes to realising the university's development plan and long-term objectives requires that we select partner universities with profiles, education and research that either contribute to strengthening ours or supplementing them. Södertörn University's profile and direction can briefly be described as:

- ✓ a young university in a metropolitan area
- ✓ located outside the city centre
- ✓ builds upon democratic and academic values, open society, liberal education
- ✓ international environment, characterised by the closeness between teachers and students found at small higher education institutions and the breadth and quality of research found at large higher education institutions.
- ✓ research and education are conducted in a broad spectrum of subjects in the humanities, natural science, social sciences, technology and the educational sciences, in established disciplines and in interdisciplinary groups
- ✓ an intercultural perspective in teaching and research, a multicultural student body and linguistic diversity among students, researchers and teachers
- ✓ research-based education that is societally relevant
- ✓ Baltic profile
- ✓ East European studies

What types of in-depth cooperation and activities, with which higher education institutions, would contribute to strengthening the university's activities and contribute to our development? Which higher education institutions fit or match our profile and direction? Partnerships could be with universities that have similar profiles for education and research, but also partnerships that supplement us, our education and our research. It is important that the partnerships contribute to developing the quality of our education, e.g. through good

opportunities for student mobility, as well as for staff, the development of joint courses and programmes, transdisciplinary cooperation, etc.

4.2. Advantages and disadvantages of participation

The working group has discussed the advantages, disadvantages and risks of participating in an alliance within the European Universities Initiative. Lists of advantages and disadvantages are presented below.

4.2.1. Advantages

- 1) Participation in a European University contributes to realising the university's vision statement and the following long-term objectives:
 - ✓ To develop and participate in a strategic international network. To participate in a strategic alliance through in-depth, structured cooperation, helps to further integrate internationalisation in our courses and programmes and enrich their quality.
 - ✓ To establish and deepen cooperation with international actors in education and research, with the university as an intercultural meeting place.
 - ✓ To facilitate student mobility – so they gain new academic knowledge, other perspectives and new experiences, can experience and hopefully gain understanding of another culture, develop a broader understanding of society, and build important networks – which enrich their education and contribute to better preparing them for their future professions and the labour market.
- 2) More structured opportunities for networking, mobility and knowledge development for staff through deeper cooperation.
- 3) Increased and more structures internationalisation at home, through visiting teachers, incoming students, cooperation with joint courses and programmes, etc. Increased diversity that enriches and inspires our activities in an international and intercultural context.
- 4) Increased knowledge of Södertörn University abroad, which increases the university's attractiveness.
- 5) Depending on the focus of the alliance, it may strengthen the university's profile and direction, e.g. research about the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe, liberal education or the environment and sustainable development.

4.2.2. Disadvantages or risks

- 1) That financing is withdrawn from another activity at the university, which risks being disadvantaged.
To reduce this risk, it is important that it is a strategic decision that considers a range of criteria and has the support of the organisation.
- 2) There is a risk that the university puts resources into an alliance that later turns out not to work well or have a good result for our activities.
To reduce this risk, it is important that the selected alliance's focus and activities correspond to and are very relevant to all or parts of the university, and that wherever possible the university participates in and contributes to the design of the alliance and its partnership activities.
- 3) Being part of an alliance reduces opportunities for inclusion in another alliance within the European Universities Initiative (other international cooperation is, of course, still

good).

To reduce this risk, it is important to choose an alliance with partner universities where in-depth cooperation provides added value for the university and which we believe will work well.

5. Suggestions for strategic and academic considerations

Below, the working group proposes a few requirements and assessment criteria that should provide guidance and a basis for decisions on participation in an alliance within the European Universities Initiative. The fundamental basis for cooperation within an alliance is that it is a strategic partnership that is structured, long term, has local support and is sustainable. Below are some requirements the working group believes should be fulfilled for participation in a European University, and some assessment criteria that the working group believes would strengthen such a partnership.

5.1. Requirements for participation in an alliance with the European Universities Initiative

Support from the university's academic units – Interest must be expressed in participation in the alliance and there must be support from the university's subjects, programmes or research centres that are affected. A partnership should rest upon the area of education, with environments where there is potential for high student mobility and other cooperative activities, such as joint courses or programmes, teacher, doctoral student and staff mobility, joint courses with elements of blended mobility with physical and digital exchanges, summer schools, staff weeks, seminars, workshops, etc., and research environments with the potential for high quality and internationally relevant research that can be conducted with the intended partner universities.

Strategic value – Participation in the alliance must be strategically important to the university as a whole or the parts of the university that are primarily affected by the cooperation. Partnerships within a European University must provide added value, such as by strengthening or supplementing the relevant activities.

Structure and long-term thinking – Participation requires long-term thinking in the cooperation and a structure with a functioning organisation, both within the alliance and internally at the university. Depending on the structure of the alliance, representatives from various parts of the university will be necessary, e.g. from university management, a coordinator/project manager and academic contact persons and administrative support.

5.2. Grounds for assessment and evaluation criteria

For decisions on entering an alliance within the European Universities Initiative, the below points should be used as grounds for assessment and evaluation criteria. The partnership is assessed as strengthening if it:

- includes students and Bachelor's and Master's levels
- includes widening participation, widening participation and increased mobility, physically or virtually
- has links to research and leads to new or deepened international research partnerships. Research includes doctoral level education

- Recommended by several subjects or research environments at the university, preferably from more than one academic school
- includes partner universities that:
 - are assessed as being relevant and having good potential for an in-depth, strategic partnership (at least one of them, but preferably more)
 - are from different geographic regions in Europe and preferably one or two higher education institutions in Eastern Europe
 - offer education in subjects that are studied by many students at the university at which students wish to study. Over the past five-year period, most outgoing students have been on exchanges to: Spain (Madrid, Barcelona), France (Paris), Italy (Rome, Florence, Milan, Venice), UK, Republic of Ireland (Limerick), Portugal (Porto), Croatia (Split).
 - has students who want to study at Södertörn University Over the past five-year period, most incoming students have come from: Spain (Madrid, Barcelona), Germany (Oldenburg, Nuremberg, Bremen), Italy (Florence, Venice, Rome, Milan), UK, France (Bordeaux, Rennes, Paris), the Netherlands (Zwolle), Czech Republic (Prague), Republic of Ireland (Limerick)
- is an alliance
 - that has a clear overarching idea or central theme that corresponds to the university's vision statement and development plan
 - with academically strong partners
 - that is assessed as having good chances of being granted funding
- includes and contributes to educational development.
- includes issues regarding academic leadership
- includes cooperation with other actors, outside the higher educational institutions.

5.3. Initiative, preparation and decision

The working group has also discussed where an initiative for participating in an alliance can and should come from. The group feels that an initiative should primarily come from academic units and the foreign contacts of the university's researchers and teaching staff. In cases where the university receives a request centrally, this must have the support of academic units before it is considered. Initiative that is central in origin, i.e. university management actively searches for suitable partners, is not recommended.

For preparing and investigating a decision about whether to enter an alliance within the European Universities Initiative, the working group proposes appointing a preparatory (ad hoc) group when the vice-chancellor receives an enquiry. The proposal is that the preparatory group includes the chair of the Faculty Board, another two representatives from collegially elected bodies (the Faculty Board or Advisory Board for Internationalisation), a head of school, adviser to the vice-chancellor for internationalisation and the head of the International Office, as well as two representatives from the students' union, of which one is a doctoral student. The preparatory group then submits its proposal to the vice-chancellor for a decision.

When an enquiry about participating in an alliance within the European Universities Initiative, the university should be able to make and provide a decision within two or three weeks.

Sources and links

European Commission, Education and Training: European Universities Initiative

Factsheet about the European Universities Initiative:

<https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/european-universities-initiative-factsheet.pdf>

European Universities Initiative, Commission press release (26 June 2019)

2020 Erasmus+ Programme Guide: European Universities

Kick-off event on the European Universities Initiative - Building the universities of the future (7 November 2019)

European Universities - Info session presentation (7 November 2019)
https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/european-universities-info-session-presentation_en

Swedish Council for Higher Education: European Universities

European Universities factsheets (granted networks)