

European Space University for Earth and Humanity

UNIVERSEH is an alliance of five European universities established to develop a new way of collaboration in the field of Space, within the “European Universities” initiative.

The alliance aims to create new higher education interactive experiences for the university community, teachers and students, and for the benefit of society as a whole. Such initiatives will enable broadminded, informed and conscientious European citizens to capture and create new knowledge and become smart actors of European innovation, valorisation and societal dissemination within the Space sector, from science, engineering, liberal arts to culture.

Grant agreement number: 101004066

Funding Scheme: Erasmus+ / European Universities

D6.10 Report on support services for migrants and refugees

Due date of deliverable: M12
Actual Submission date: 02/11/2021

Start date of the project: 01/11/2020

Duration: 36 months

Organisation responsible for this deliverable: UDUS (Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf)

Version: final

Dissemination level

PU	Public	X
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium	

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Document History

Version	Date	Author	Partner	Summary of main changes
1	20.08.2021	Britta Moor-mann (UDUS)		Draft of the report including objectives, developments and challenges for each partnering university.
2	27.10.2021	Britta Moor-mann (UDUS)	Vincent Simoulin (UFT), Agneta Larsson (LTU), Joanna Pyrkosz-Pacyna (AGH), Christina Stange Fayos (UFT), Katarzyna Cieslak (AGH), Veerle Waterplas (ULUX), Joanna West (ULUX),	Final version integrating also proposals for the future.

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Report on support services for migrants^[1] and refugees^[2]

Among the many barriers preventing migrants and refugees from integrating into higher education, language skills and the recognition of qualifications, in particular those from outside the EU, are key issues that UNIVERSEH partners aim to help addressing. Capitalising on existing practices in the partnering universities, support activities are provided in order to contribute to „making migrants and refugees study ready“.

The following report provides insights into current best practices now at each partnering university of the alliance, describes developments and challenges. Finally, an outlook in the future is given gathering some ideas that have been discussed in the working group and during first events organised with external stakeholders.

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I. Objectives in 2021

The alliance is committed to support the strengthening of language skills through additional language course offers for UNIVERSEH students (activities supported by the multilingualism group of WP2), including persons with a migrant or refugee background. Additionally, this helps bridging the gap between earlier students and current ones as in some cases there is a large time gap due to students' personal situation, focus on personal development, strengths and key academic skills. The aim is to support individuals in participating in language courses and further activities offered by UNIVERSEH as this helps the targeted group to attain a level of language but also intercultural skills, which allow them not only to enrol in higher education, but also to integrate into local society and benefit from mobility periods in their future academic career.

All partners will promote projects and EU programmes in the field of education for migrants and refugees. For example, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) that provides high-quality training and career development opportunities for displaced researchers, for instance, with refugee status, who have had their studies interrupted.

II. A repository of best practices

Migrants and refugees, even more than other students, face barriers both to mobility and to foreseeing a career in the space sector. Housing is a huge problem in both infrastructural, financial and accessibility terms and, even more, since there is no dedicated housing platform specifically designed for this audience. All partnering universities from the UNIVERSEH alliance are dedicated to help this specific target group and to engage actions and programs in order to make higher education more accessible to disadvantaged groups, which are discriminated in various dimensions. Additionally, tailoring the aforementioned preparatory course offers to the space environment of the alliance improves specific linguistic proficiency needed to participate successfully in the program.

The following chapter divided into university sections gives first an overview of current projects at each university then a short description of current developments introducing also some of the challenges the partners are facing contemporarily.

1. Université Fédérale de Toulouse (UFT)

International services at UFT count between 15 to 30% of foreign students from the overall number of students. All new students register freely for French national social

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security on their arrival. The WELCOME DESK (starting point for all students of the site), offers a permanence of administrative services dedicated to all students including international. (CAF, Prefecture ...).

Support services include French language classes (INP, UT2J...), partnerships with accommodation agencies, platforms and private property owners to facilitate housing. Students associations help with the integration of minorities into the university and especially to train their language skills, like with the RETSER association.

1.1. Short overview of current of the project

The migrant welcome language program „DILAMI“ (Dispositif Langues Accueil Migrants) assists migrants in their social, academic and professional integration projects. This training promotes the development of linguistic and intercultural skills necessary for successful integration into university, socio-cultural and professional life in France. Supported by the UFT, the migrant welcome language program has been in place since summer 2017.

Each year, the course welcomes 60 learners – asylum seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection – who study French as a foreign language at three of Toulouse’s university sites, and notably at the Toulouse University Jean Jaurès and Paul Sabatier. Learners are divided into 3 level groups: beginner level (A0-A1), intermediate level (A2-B1) and advanced level (B2). The idea of the program is to bring the learners to acquire the B2 level in French required for university studies. Until now, the 3 courses offered level certifications and students had the status of „free auditors“. Since the beginning of the academic year 2020-2021, the course has been transformed into two university degrees at Toulouse University Paul Sabatier for the intermediate level (B1) and at Toulouse University Jean Jaurès for advanced level (B2). This training is divided into 2 main areas consisting of 384 hours of French language teaching as foreign language per year to accompany students towards the acquisition of the B2 level in French essential for enrolling in higher education training diplomas. Secondly, the training consists of 80 hours of support for workshops on university and professional orientation in collaboration with the common educational guidance service of the universities involved, conferences with training managers and ongoing exchanges with social referents and those of the employment agency. Additionally, an education in French citizenship (rights and duties, opening up to community life) are included as well as an opening to the heritage and cultural life of Toulouse (visits to sites, realisation of projects (exhibitions, theater, songs, circus) in collaboration with cultural actors of Toulouse city.

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1.2. Developments and challenges

In addition to these two university diplomas, which have been set up for intermediate and advanced levels, the aim of the scheme was also to transform the beginner level group into a university diploma for the 2021-2021 academic year. The establishment of these university diplomas gives learners the status of students, giving them access to study grants and the right to benefit from student accommodation, thus facilitating the pursuit of their studies in a serene environment.

The main difficulty encountered with this group is attendance; unfortunately, they are often confronted with financial difficulties, housing difficulties and a legal situation linked to their fragile status, which does not favour attendance at language classes and further studies.

The UT receives annual funding from the Occitanie Region for 60% of this scheme; the remainder is covered by the UT, the host institutions and the search for other funding (sponsorship, private funding etc.). For these reasons, the system is weakened and its sustainability may be questioned.

At the Universeh level, only 2 institutions are involved in the scheme, namely UT2 and UT3.

2. Université du Luxembourg (uni.lu)

At the uni.lu, the student services help fostering an inclusive environment to students with a migrant or refugee background as students with an immigrant background are at an increased risk of academic underperformance, reporting feelings of alienation, high anxiety related to schoolwork and low satisfaction with life. Yet, many express high levels of motivation to continue and achieve a high level of education.

2.1. Short overview of current projects

The university can support migrant and refugee students since enrolment. Migrants at uni.lu cannot enrol as a regular student, refugees enrol as a regular student, nonetheless they experience academic and social difficulties, especially reluctant to mobility option(s). The way forward for both target groups thus differs. Migrants received pre- and post-guidance and orientation on study programs, however the project had to be put on hold due to the covid pandemic and will restart once in person classes restart fully. A guest student offer will be available within the university. Ultimately, social

elements of university life (such as sports, arts etc.) will become available to migrants. Refugee students will receive comparable support with regards to their application, but also regarding academic and financial issues. Projects with stakeholders from the private sector and public authorities can additionally enhance integration. Lastly,

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



individual support will be made available on the intercultural, social, employment and professional level.

Research within the uni.lu in the newly formed key research are „Migration and Inclusive Societies“ promotes innovative research, teaching and outreach in migration studies with the aim of promoting inclusive societies (2020). The aim is to create a global approach of inclusions. Programme directors support academic guidance in this aspect. Uni.lu hereby implements a „test and learn approach“ with the objective of creating a „best student journey“ for migrants and refugees. This is a broad and co-ordinated effort building on policies and practices to promote continuing education. The idea is to develop a holistic „Access to Higher Education“ programme in the future, provide personal and professional coaching as well as mentoring. This could also serve to set short-term, measurable goals and outcomes.

Student success programme for students with a refugee background starting in October. Main elements: merit award for exam success during previous semester, student job for 1 student with a refugee background for the project, 4 laptops allocated for students on programme, language learning support, study skills training, coaching support, academic support for students encountering difficulties, professional mentoring, housing/rent support for 6 months for 6 students.

2.2. Developments and challenges

Risk factors identified as obstacles of a successful individual student journey include language barriers, disadvantaged socio-economic status, a lack of training for teaching in multi-cultural environments. Social and integration barriers additionally risk academic performance as well as adjustment factors and wellbeing elements.

3. Heinrich Heine University (HHU)

Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf offers higher education programs to people from different backgrounds. With regards to international and –cultural diversity, quite many people with foreign background choose to study at HHU. During the winter term 2019/2020, HHU counted over 37,000 students overall of which more than 2,500 were foreign students (non-nationals who acquired their higher education entrance qualification outside Germany) and over 4,100 international students.

3.1. Short overview of current projects

At HHU, dedicated programmes for refugees funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), and, the Ministry of Culture and Science of North Rhine-Westphalia support the

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integration of refugees in higher education since 2016. The International Office manages the four programs „INTEGRA“, „NRWege“, „NRWege Leuchttürme“ and „WELCOME“ all of which aim to help students with a refugee background to participate in German language courses, intercultural trainings and social activities facilitating integration at local level. Additional services dedicated to the target group are managed by the Student Service Center (e.g. consulting services for refugees interested in studying, chat counselling for prospective students, counselling and support for newly arrived immigrants). Within the aforementioned programs, study consultation and support offers help future students to orient themselves. Additionally, consultation services offered to refugee pupils support those transitioning from school to university. Once enrolled, students with a refugee background have the opportunity to participate in mobility programmes in accordance with their residence permit. Those degree-seeking students with a refugee or migrant background are enrolled as international student. Currently, 375 students are enrolled whose main country of origin is outside of Germany. Whilst studying, specialised language courses, consultation offers, events and workshops for social integration support the target group in their successful student journey. Scholarships are open to students with refugee status in order to provide additional support on the economic level. With regards to career entry, events and workshops for labour market preparation, individual support offers and mentoring programmes facilitate smooth transitioning from higher education to work in the INTEGRA and NRWege Leuchttürme programs.

3.2. Developments and challenges

Over the recent years, program officers responsible for aforementioned programs could observe a changed applicant pool related among others to the declining influx of refugees. With regards to language capacities, the passing of the German language exam at C1 level was identified as obstacle many of the participants had to confront. As an increasing number of refugees enrol at HHU and with enrolment, those students count as international students, the individual student journey is hard to track. This contributed to the positive reinforcement of opening aforementioned programs to international students. Assuring study success, thus the individual student journey to flourish and result in successful completion of an academic career is an obstacle. Considering the work in the European alliance, finding common definitions of the terms „migrant“, „refugees“ and „international students“ presents an obstacle because of different national regulations and legal framework. At HHU, these terms and definitions depend mostly on whether or not the university entrance qualification originates from Germany or abroad. The term „refugee“ refers to people who do not have a valid university entrance qualification.

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4. Lulea University of Technology (LTU)

The student recruitment administration is the central point of contact for the five different departments at LTU. An action plan for diversity and inclusion has been set in place and has a high priority for LTU and is also mandated by the Swedish government. The mission of the aforementioned diversity and inclusion plan is to integrate both these perspectives in all recruitment communication activities so that it becomes an inherent part of all LTU communication.

International students receive support at the beginning of each semester mainly from the international office g., through accommodation services for exchange and fee-paying students, and through informative meetings as well as academic workshops organised by the Lulea University Reception Committee (LURC). Next to the arrival service, their activities further include the buddy programme, social activities, language cafés, trips and a career day for international students once a year.

4.1. Short overview of current projects

Supported by the Swedish government, the LTU has established different recruitment activities to promote diversity & inclusion, one of which is the '5-TEK' programme. The target group consists of those who identify as girls aged between 17-24. The purpose of the program is to encourage girls to choose engineering programs through activities such as testing out equipment and technology in a way they might during a course.

The 'Digital Open House' is another programme offered by LTU targeting people living in remote and rural areas. The purpose is to encourage them to choose higher education through activities such as online presentations about university courses and employment opportunities after graduation.

The 'Tech for Youth' programme targets children aged between 4-18 living in the northern region of Sweden with the purpose of promoting their interest in technology and natural sciences. Activities involve remote experiments, 'the Technology Challenge' and the format 'ask a researcher'.

The 'the Short Cut' program aims to fast-track international professionals into work that is relevant to their academic background. The programme receives funding from the Swedish Public Employment Service and is offered to those who have achieved at least two years of higher education in their home country and have sufficient knowledge of Swedish. Anyone who wishes to take part in the program needs to be registered with the Swedish Public Employment Service. Two routes can be taken: preparing for work or preparing for supplementary studies. The modules include job

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market orientation, career coaching, internships (arranged by LTU Business), academic Swedish courses.

Another example is a complementary programme for nurses with a nursing degree from outside the EU/EES and Switzerland. This programme consists of 60 ECTS and is taught in Swedish.

4.2. Developments and challenges

In the future, more diversity and inclusion activities shall be offered by LTU. The purpose of this endeavour is to increase the number of applicants of under-represented genders (e.g., men in nursing programs). Activities involve using role models and student ambassadors in marketing and social media campaigns.

5. AGH University of Science and Technology

5.1. AGH UST Department for International Students

AGH UST Department for International Students is the central unit, where the candidates and students may contact directly and get full package of the information about recruitment procedures, on how to apply for regular and exchange studies.

Here is provided a formal and legal assistance - before the student arrival and during the stay at AGH UST.

To meet the restrictions related to the epidemiological state, there is a virtual office implemented as online consultation for applicants and students.

In order to improve the service standards Department for International Students cooperates with other AGH UST units - contact with professors, as well as with faculties offices, help to get the information about timetables, instruct how to arrange a Student ID Card, support registration for courses and also dorm application.

Cooperation with external institutions and services

AGH UST cooperates with external institutions and services such as the Department for Foreigners at Małopolska Provincial Office in Krakow, International Organization for Migration (IOM), border control, the Internal Security Agency (ABW), embassies and the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA). All information is accessible through the website (www.international.agh.edu.pl) translated in different international languages (English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian and Vietnamese). Here can be found the information on legal acts, legal service for foreigners, visa and residence legislation, the Polish diplomatic missions abroad, and border crossing formalities.

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5.2. Welcome to AGH UST Application

Responding to the needs of the mobile first generations, the application for AGH UST students – “Welcome to AGH UST” (<https://welcome.agh.edu.pl/en>) offers further information in an easily accessible setting. Its main goal is to help students to move around the AGH UST Campus and provide them with indispensable information including opening hours of Deans’ offices, locations of AGH UST premises (faculties, dormitories, sport facilities, student clubs, copy centres, canteens and many more) with the function of navigation, events and news connected with student life as well as information about Krakow and its top attractions.

5.3. Short overview of current projects

Integration Support:

- ESN "mentor" or AGH students
- Welcome meeting
- „Orientation week” (twice a year)
- International Christmas Eve, Easter
- Polish Language Course
- AGH UST Student Campus (accommodation with students from Poland, Dorm
 - guaranteed for every international student)
 - English speaking people at Dean's offices and Student Campus
 - AGH UST for Breakfast
 - Welcome to AGH UST app
 - Virtual office

5.4. Developments and challenges

The future developments might include investigation of specific needs and barriers that some migrant and refugee students face when entering the education at AGH UST. The other important direction would be training staff (academic and administration) to be better prepared for assisting foreign students. The attempts to encourage openness and tolerance towards foreign students will also be supported.

Insights from Staff Seminar on current challenges of Migrants and Refugees

One representative from the local French NGO Red Cross reported during the Staff Seminar organised by WP6 in May 2021 that the main obstacle they are facing in the

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cooperation with higher education institutions is the **missing communication** on scholarship opportunities and support offers for their respective target groups. The struggles migrants and refugees face concerning the **technical infrastructure** (no accessible hardware, no access granted to educational material, unavailability of open-source material from local university) are high. Additionally, the particularly difficult legal situation, as well as the bureaucratic challenges migrants and refugees, face halt them from attaining consistent (higher) education. Until governmental institutions define the legal status of migrants and refugees, two years can easily pass. During this time, access to higher education institutions is permitted, as it does not correspond to the given legal conditions. There is a fundamental need of connecting and linking local refugee and migrant programs, initiatives, NGOs to the local universities. A crucial factor enabling a steady process of integration into the higher education system open to everyone irrespective of their legal status. Also, the idea was discussed that gender was an issue.

Proposals for the future

1. An additional online seminar for staff will be organised by WP6 to share best practices and to encourage further exchange of ideas. It will focus on a case-to-case discussion on how to solve the manifold barriers hindering integration of migrants and refugees into higher education and research (e.g. recognition of qualification). Similar to the first staff seminar organised in May 2021, external stakeholders as well as student representatives could be invited strengthening also a process of familiarisation with topics relevant to the target group.
2. Collaboration with external stakeholders such as NGO's e.g. with the aim of creating and collaborating on awareness campaigns pointing out contemporary problems and issues of migrants and refugees in the alliance's respective countries.
3. Dedicate a WP6 meeting solely to the question of how to support migrants and refugees more systematically at our universities. Define concrete ways and specific ideas in some form of outlet.
4. Undertaking actions focused on furthering our understanding of specific needs that migrant and refugee students face by conducting interviews, surveys, etc.

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5. Encouraging and supporting students activities aimed at broadening knowledge and understanding of specific situation of migrant and refugee students. Incorporation of the subject to already existing students' programs i.e. peer to peer support, buddy program, etc.
6. Fostering communication with migrant and refugee students and alumni in order to broaden the understanding of their specific situation and needs and in order to provide success stories and inspiration for younger students.

^[1] The International Organization for Migration defines „migrant“ as „(a)n umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally-defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.“, see International Organization for Migration, Glossary on migration, IML Series No. 34, 2019, [iml_34_glossary.pdf \(iom.int\)](#).

^[2] The 1951 Geneva Convention defines „refugee“ as a „any person (...)“ who has a „well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (...)“ see [UNHCR - Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees](#).

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