

# Student placement among institutions within University of the Arctic.

## Introduction

Since we started our network, we have worked hard to develop common courses for our students. It has been a lot of work, and rather few successes. Differences in requirements, number of credits and other more practical problems have made this a difficult project.

Still the idea of shorter stays at other institutions as part of an education is an important idea from many points of view.

As placement periods are part of most social work educations, and that they mainly use the placement institution as their arena, it may be more fruitful to establish an agreement among us on how such possibilities should be facilitated.

In the following text we suggest some common rules for organizing this – and to make it well known among our students.

## Basic frames

When a student goes abroad for placement, it is the systems and rules for placements at the home institution of the student that regulates the work at the placement. This means the time for the stay at the placements is decided from when the placement period starts and ends at the home institution. Systems of supervision and documentation should work as the home institution requires. And there must be a direct contact between the local supervisor at the placement and the person responsible for placement at the home institution.

In every institution in the network there must be one teacher/ placement responsible in staff that can be contacted and asked for placement. The list of such persons must be available at our website at UA. This person is responsible for looking after the process of finding a placement, and to inform the home institution on this work. The job should also include support to the student in finding a place to live, and – if possible - to establish a contact between the student and a class at the university.

This local contact person is informed about what the home institution need as support through the placement period. This can be measures as visit at the placement and “back up” support for the student at placement, and contact if things go wrong for the student or the placement.

Except from this the placement should be treated the same ways as placements, served by the home institution.

The local contact person is also responsible for informing students at their institution about the possibility to go to other institutions in the network for a placement period. This person should also know about possibilities for economical support for going abroad – like the North2North program.

The home institution is itself responsible for the placement as they are for any other placement. They use the support from the institution that is close to the placement as part of their supporting system.

It is not acceptable for any institution or student to agree on a placement in direct contact with the working place. All placements must be recruited and followed up by the local university or college.

The contribution from the institution where the placement is located, is limited to the services mentioned here. All economical matters are responsibilities of the student or the home institution.

We must decide how we define the workload for the local contact person. The best solution would be If it is possible to say that hours spent on a visiting student, some time will be paid back by the same service from another university.

On the other hand it is of course possible to define some of the twenty hours, set up for the network as work time for the visiting student.

### Placement in the Arctic

This project can be available for students from Jan 2018 if things work out well in establishing a web of contact persons – and find solutions to practical matters.

If we agree on this, we must work hard to inform our students. To succeed here, it is wise to point at examples of placements we think will work well for students that do not always know the different languages in our region.

There are f.ex. rather few Canadians who speak Swedish. But if the Canadian student can work in refugee services or in a social service for foreign students, the language can turn from a disadvantage to an advantage.

This may mean that the contact persons also should look at the selection of placements and identify what placements that may work for those who do not speak the language of the country. These placements should be presented especially as possibilities.

If this project – let us call it “Placement with Northern/Indigenous Focus” – is something we agree upon, we must also make a plan for information on this possibility.

Our plan may be to spend the time from April to September on building the web of contact persons. And then use the autumn to make this possibility well known in our institutions. Hopefully the first students are at placements in spring 2016.

Doug Durst and Asgeir Solstad