


# First ever blended mobility programme in the school of business

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Students and teachers from partner universities in Germany and Romania are joining a blended study programme called ‘Practical Business Skills: Exploring Local and Global Markets’’ coordinated and set up by two SeAMK lecturers, Kaija-Liisa Kivimäki and Saija Råtts. The main learning objectives of the BIP include increased understanding of local markets as well as similarities and differences of international markets.

The last week of April will witness a dozen SeAMK business students join and collaborate with a similar number of students from both the German Technical University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt and the Romanian Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu. The new Erasmus+ program offers several possibilities to implement student and teacher mobility, one of them being a blended mobility programme, BIP. A BIP consists of virtual and physical mobility components where a completely new type of an intensive course will be organized and implemented between university teachers and students representing a minimum of three different EU countries.

## Setting up the programme

The set up of the programme has been the main responsibility of SeAMK lecturers since SeAMK is also hosting the intensive study week, but there are certain didactic responsibilities shared and assigned between the team of seven lecturers.

Each partner institution was in charge of selecting a certain number of students for the programme. SeAMK student selection was conducted on the basis of written applications and the participating students are first and second year business students.

Before the visitors pack their suitcases and travel to Seinäjoki, the participants were offered two scheduled online study sessions, one in March and another one in April. The participating students had an opportunity to meet and greet as well as start working on their pre-course task while operating online via SeAMK Teams environment. The highlight of the program will be 24 April, as the intensive study week starts at SeAMK premises and the participants will meet face to face for the first time, after having collaborated online twice.

The intensive week offers all the participants many opportunities to learn and develop their skills and knowledge about the participating countries and cultures, not to mention the regional environment of South Ostrobothnia. Kivimäki and Råtts have been busy preparing the programme for the week making it interesting and educational, including a field trip to another city while exploring the given topic of the study programme.

# Expectation and anticipation

The new method of promoting core international skills and competences offers the students as well as lecturers an opportunity to experience a modern, more flexible implementation of virtual and physical study modes. The students are earning credit points while the lecturers gain experience in setting up a study programme in an international framework. Somehow the whole idea brings together the experience of living through the pandemic and the shift into online work combined with the face-to-face mode which is again strongly used here at SeAMK. The lecturers, Claudia Lopes Victorio and Jana Reiter from Germany, Silvia Marginean, Alma Pentescu and Raluca Sava from Romania, as well as SeAMK lecturers Kaija-Liisa Kivimäki and Saija Råtts are all equally excited about setting up a new type of a study programme.

Noora Tienhaara is a first year student of international business who says that she decided to apply for the programme to get to know new people and cultures while being able to share insights about her own culture. On top of that, she is simply hoping to have a good time with some international students from abroad.  The blended intensive programme is implemented in English and it offers an opportunity to develop communication skills while getting to know new people, says Eveliina Piispanen, a first year business student as well. She hopes to enhance her skills in English while making new friends from abroad.

All the lecturers, Claudia Lopes Victorio and Jana Reiter from Germany, Silvia Marginean, Alma Pentescu and Raluca Sava from Romania, as well as SeAMK lecturers Kaija-Liisa Kivimäki and Saija Råtts are all equally excited about setting up a new type of a study programme. It is a privilege to gain hands-on experience in such a pioneering implementation and to offer students the opportunity to increase their competence in international teamwork and intercultural communication, says Råtts.

Find out more about BIPs

European mobility for higher education 2021–2027 – general information | Finnish National Agency for Education (oph.fi)**Kaija-Liisa KivimäkiSaija Råtts**

Kirjoittajat työskentelevät Seinäjoen ammattikorkeakoulun lehtoreina ja ovat järjestämässä ja vastuuopettajina “Practical Business Skills: Exploring Local and Global Markets” monimuotoliikkuvuusjaksolla.