



# 4<sup>th</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC4)

University-Business Partnerships:

Asia and Europe Seeking 21<sup>st</sup> Century Solutions

26-27 March 2015, Hangzhou, China

#ARC4

## Policy Recommendations for the 5<sup>th</sup> ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME5) 27-28 April 2015, Riga, Latvia

The 4<sup>th</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC4) on “*University-Business Partnerships: Asia and Europe Seeking 21<sup>st</sup> Century Solutions*” took place on 26-27 March 2015 at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China. More than 100 university leaders and representatives from 43 ASEM member countries jointly developed Policy Recommendations in 3 parallel working groups on how universities and the business sector can better cooperate to equip students with employability skills, to cultivate entrepreneurship, and to innovate learning environments through information and communication technologies. The Policy Recommendations were handed over to the Minister for Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, Ms Māriņe SEILE, at the Closing Ceremony as a contribution to the deliberations at the 5<sup>th</sup> ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME5) on 27-28 April 2015 in Riga, Latvia.

The participants of the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC4) identified the issues below as priorities for ASEM policy-making with regard to university-business collaboration. They committed themselves to promoting 21<sup>st</sup> century-oriented university-business partnerships and to seeking solutions to possible challenges to cooperation. They called upon the ASEM members to engage them in working towards delivering tangible outcomes for the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME6).

### University-Business Partnerships for Employability Skills

In order to promote the development of employability skills among graduates, the state plays a dual role.

- In their legislative and administrative capacities, the ASEM members should
  - 1) remove barriers to international mobility for study and internship purposes, including those linked to visa matters and payment regulations for students;
  - 2) encourage initiatives to enhance Ph.D. students' employability in diverse careers; and
  - 3) promote student-centred and problem-based learning and practical training through internships, entrepreneurial courses, and inclusion of soft-skills as well as transversal competencies in all programmes.To better address the above issues, ASEM members shall establish and/or enhance various platforms for dialogue between universities, businesses, government institutions and communities.
- In their financial and service roles, the ASEM members should
  - 1) provide tax benefits, subsidies, insurance schemes and/or other incentives to encourage the provision of internships and practical training for students in businesses, community organizations and in the public sector;
  - 2) enable the development of open-access databases on Higher Education programmes to facilitate informed decisions by students; and
  - 3) better recognise the value of and investment in extra-curricular activities, and support these by facilitating an infrastructure of career-guidance centres, business incubators, innovation hubs, technology parks and student-led start-ups.

## **University-Business Partnerships for Entrepreneurship**

A university-wide entrepreneurial culture is vital to address the dynamic transformations societies are undergoing. While continuing to ensure academic excellence, fostering entrepreneurship has to be positioned as a core mission of universities. ASEM education policies should be formulated to support this endeavour.

- ASEM members should support universities to develop ecosystems to enable entrepreneurship. Universities should be empowered to develop policies and measures, within respective national contexts, to transform the university environment accordingly through
  - 1) broadening the curriculum to include entrepreneurship education;
  - 2) strengthening applied research and technology transfer;
  - 3) facilitating faculty development to embrace a new innovative mindset;
  - 4) supporting cross-cultural student mobility and leadership development; and
  - 5) introducing enhanced technologies and facilities, as well as incentives to drive innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Partnerships with governments, businesses and communities need be strengthened to foster the development of “engaged universities” for social betterment, for example through a “triple-helix plus one” partnership model. ASEM members should also provide incentives to encourage the business sector to provide mentorship, internship and research opportunities, and funding support for entrepreneurial student initiatives.
- ASEM members shall incorporate innovation and entrepreneurship as part of their national policies and strategies. This includes the facilitation of their infrastructures, which support entrepreneurship, such as the introduction of tax incentives, creation of knowledge transfer and innovation funds, local and regional incubators, entrepreneurship resource centres and platforms, development of finance instruments to support start-ups, and efforts to help them find new market opportunities locally and internationally.

## **University-Business Partnerships for New Learning Environments through Technology**

- ASEM members should facilitate and support universities to develop and execute clear policies that foster an environment and culture conducive to university-business partnerships, including the transfer of technology and knowledge. These policies should draw from evidence-based practices of existing effective university-business partnerships across Asia and Europe. The practices may include new metrics for evaluating faculty, such as
  - 1) recognition and reward for effective engagement with businesses;
  - 2) utilization of technology-based collaborative platforms to share information/resources and encourage cross-sector and cross-disciplinary dialogue; and
  - 3) funding models that allow universities, businesses, and/or governments to support the development and sustainability of university-business partnerships.
- ASEM members should encourage universities to provide flexible and innovative learning environments for students. Such learning environments should include, amongst others, external curricular options, such as online courses/platforms in MOOCs and possible credit recognition for students.
- ASEM members should support universities in developing strategies for evaluating university-business partnerships to assure the sustainability of high quality and effective partnerships. Based on policies, existing frameworks, and specific ecosystems within countries, these evaluation strategies may include
  - 1) the facilitation of technological platforms for communication to assure efficient networking across sectors as well as across countries;
  - 2) professional development for faculty and students to better understand the affordances of technology and effectively use technology in a learning environment; and
  - 3) continuous quality assurance indicators that include the students’ voice.

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Hosted by [Zhejiang University](#), the ARC4 Students' Forum was co-organised by the [Asia-Europe Foundation \(ASEF\)](#), the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) and the [Ministry of Education](#) of the People's Republic of China. The [International Association of Universities](#) and the [ASEAN University Network](#) contributed as ARC4 partners, and [Chulalongkorn University](#) and the [Office of Higher Education Commission of Thailand](#) as supporters.



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