



# ARC4 Students' Forum

University-Business Partnerships:  
Asia and Europe Seeking 21<sup>st</sup> Century Solutions

23-24 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 ARC4 Students' Forum on "*University-Business Partnerships: Asia and Europe Seeking 21<sup>st</sup> Century Solutions*" took place on 23-24 March 2015 at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China. On this occasion, 51 students from all ASEM member countries developed Policy Recommendations 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 students convey the following Recommendations for consideration of the ASEM Ministers for Education at the upcoming 5<sup>th</sup> ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting on 27-28 April 2015 in Riga, Latvia. Four Student Representatives personally handed over these Policy Recommendations on 27 March 2015 to the Minister for Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, Ms Mārīte SEILE, at the Closing Ceremony of the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC4). The students also address these Recommendations to their university and business leaders and relevant institutions amongst other stakeholders in ASEM countries.

The participants of the ARC4 Students' Forum have identified the following issues as priorities and commit themselves to promoting and finding ways of applying them. They call upon the ASEM members to engage them in working towards delivering tangible outcomes for the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEM Education Minister Meeting (ASEM ME6).

### University-Business Partnerships for Employability Skills

- Curriculum design processes should take a student-centred approach and be developed in partnership with students to provide flexible learning pathways and opportunities for soft skill development. This should be done in consultation with businesses and external stakeholders when deemed useful, without jeopardising academic integrity. Opportunities to develop soft skills outside of the classroom, including student-led activities, need to be actively supported technically and financially, promoted, and the learning completely recognised by relevant stakeholders.
- Transparent, independent and updated programme information for all Higher Education Institutions must be made accessible on centralised public platforms and available nationally and internationally to students, potential students, parents, teachers and employers. Career guidance services must also be available at all levels and adequately resourced. ASEM members should implement measures and provide resources to strengthen the role that universities and businesses take in supporting such services.
- University-Business Partnerships which deliver quality work-placed learning opportunities must ensure decent working conditions, be incentivised, practically supported by long-term national strategies, and designed by relevant stakeholders. Partnerships must ensure that expected learning outcomes are achieved, recognised academically, and that students are compensated for the completed work.

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

- The institutionalisation of entrepreneurship within university curricula, in partnership with businesses (SMEs and MNCs), is a must. This should include teaching material enriched with actual business cases, inter-disciplinary courses, and the creation of start-up incubators in universities that provide mentorship and advisory services.
- Universities, businesses and communities should work together to explicitly promote social entrepreneurship and develop business models that create shared value. This addresses problems in societies, encourages sustainable development and the notion that entrepreneurship is not exclusively for profit-making, but has a social role to play ultimately for the benefit of everyone.
- An improved funding system for university start-ups and entrepreneurial activities is needed. This includes tax incentives for investors, a system of preferential loans for entrepreneurs, and improved seed-funding channels, which allow universities to access more external funding and provide venture capital funding for entrepreneurial activities.

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

- Universities should have a policy framework that emphasises access to technology and training of faculty and students. This should include the establishment of strategic centres at universities to continuously improve technology use on campuses. Such activity should be supported by an international network to share good practices and close interaction with businesses.
- Flexible approaches to institutionalise recognition of online learning as a complement to traditional education in universities, such as through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) or other Open Educational Resources (OERs) are needed. For instance, these should be accredited and/or used as a supplement for admission applications to university.
- Universities and businesses should support national and international student initiatives in leveraging on technology to create opportunities aimed at acquiring additional experiences and skills. Examples include administrative support and funding for online workshops, cross-university forums, networking meetings and other innovative projects.

---

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.



For further information, please visit the website of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) at [www.asef.org](http://www.asef.org)

Further information on the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process is available on the ASEM InfoBoard at [www.aseminfoboard.org](http://www.aseminfoboard.org)



**ARC4**



**ASEF**



**ASEM InfoBoard**