



Information Systems Student Exchange Network

: Short Summary for Universities



IS:link

Information Systems Student Exchange Network



: Challenges and Solutions

Providing an attractive choice of partner institutions around the world is an important success factor in the competition between universities. However, organizing student and staff exchange programs is time-consuming and laborious. This applies, in particular, to the field of Information Systems, which is characterized by a notable disparity of university curricula.

Barriers for Student Exchange

Maintaining student exchange programs is a resource-intensive task, mainly since international relations are commonly established on a bilateral basis, which is not always efficient. As a consequence, universities are forced to evaluate the program of each partner institution separately, in some cases even for each student individually. Hence, well designed student exchange programs have to systematically address the challenge of matching local curricula and the ways in which cooperating universities are interconnected.

Particular Challenges for the Information Systems Field

All these issues weigh heavily in the Information Systems (IS) discipline. Research and practice within IS predominantly take place in an international context. Due to the diversity of its rapidly changing domain (e.g., new technologies and business models) and its different academic origins, the IS field is characterized by a considerable disparity of national and local curricula. Hence, the field is well suited for testing new ways of organizing student exchange.

Setting Standards for Academic Mobility

IS:link strives to overcome the student exchange barriers for the IS field by forming a worldwide network of universities with distinguished IS programs committed to a set of corresponding standards for academic mobility. Its innovative instruments help universities lower their corresponding administrative load.



: Network Approach

The IS:link network pursues a novel way to organize student exchange. It strives to form a network of renowned universities with elaborate IS programs around the globe. It is dedicated to advance and facilitate student exchange and academic fellowships within the IS field. The IS:link network gives each member access to all other network members as partner institutions – without the need to evaluate their local curricula and to cultivate personal contacts at each partner institution.

Students and Academics as Target Groups

IS:link assists students and academics in planning a rewarding time of studying and researching abroad that is seamlessly integrated with their academic interests and personal study requirements. IS:link promotes different forms of exchange for different target groups:

- Student exchange on a Master's degree and advanced Bachelor level (recommended duration of stay: 1 to 2 semesters).
- Student exchange on a doctorate level (recommended duration of stay: 2 to 6 months).

IS:link is currently in its founding phase; in a later stage the network will also support academic fellowships and sabbaticals (recommended duration of stay: 1 to 2 semesters).



: Standards and Instruments

To effectively foster the different forms of exchange, IS:link offers a well balanced set of inter-related standards and instruments.

IS:link Curriculum

IS:link maintains a list of general course and assignment descriptions for IS Master's degree and Ph.D. programs – the IS:link Curriculum. The IS:link Curriculum is a new instrument for organizing student exchange. The study programs of all IS:link members are linked to this reference curriculum, simplifying the process of matching and acknowledging courses from different universities.

On-site Support Services

Each IS:link member university provides a defined core of on-site support services for domestic and foreign students, including assistance for visa application, housing, and enrolment.

Online Planning Tool

A central online planning tool informs students and academics about the network and supports them in planning their stay abroad, including the pre-selection of a university that best suits their academic interests and study requirements (see: www.is-link.org).

Application Process

A well structured application process guides students – in a latter stage also academics – who are applying for a stay abroad through different administrative tasks and planning stages.

Central Coordination Office

The network standards and instruments are maintained by a central coordination office. It is currently located at the University Duisburg-Essen in Germany, where the IS:link concept has been developed and IS:link has been founded. The office additionally performs quality assurance measures for the network, organizes the acquisition of new member universities, and supplies all members with professionally designed information and advertising material.

www.is-link.org





: Benefits of Participating

There are several good reasons for universities to participate in the IS:link network:

Enhance your Portfolio

Participating in IS:link connects your organization with a prestigious circle of partner institutions around the globe without the need to establish and maintain individual contacts to each member organization.

Reduce Administrative Load

Organizing student exchange on a bilateral basis is a complex and time-consuming administrative task. In particular, the individual evaluation and acknowledgement of credits conferred from foreign universities is a common challenge. IS:link reduces the related administrative load significantly. It structures and simplifies the application and enrolment process for incoming students. For out-going students, the IS:link Curriculum provides a set of standardized courses and assignments that can be accepted without further individual inspection.

Foster your Prestige

IS:link provides its members with a valuable advantage in the competition for good students and excellent research personnel. IS:link is currently in its starting phase but is striving to become a prestigious brand for IS student exchange.

Gain International Flair

IS:link students and scholars bring a global touch to your campus. The opportunity to live, study and work together with international students and research fellows provides your domestic students with important intercultural experiences and cultivates an appealing international flair at your university.

Attract Skilled Staff Members

In our globalizing world, universities are not only competing for research funding but also for skilled students and gifted researchers. Attractive partners improve the appeal of your institution and bring you in touch with excellent scholars from all around the world.

Stabilize Long-term Cooperation

Academic exchange programs are often pushed on by particularly committed individuals. IS:link reduces the related dependency from single persons and stabilizes the exchange program over time by institutionalizing relationships and establishing a continuous network management.



Going abroad starts with us.

www.is-link.org

: Requirements

IS:link is committed to assuring a discriminating level of academic excellence and to facilitating efficient and reliable exchange processes. Therefore, all IS:link members have to abide by the following requirements.

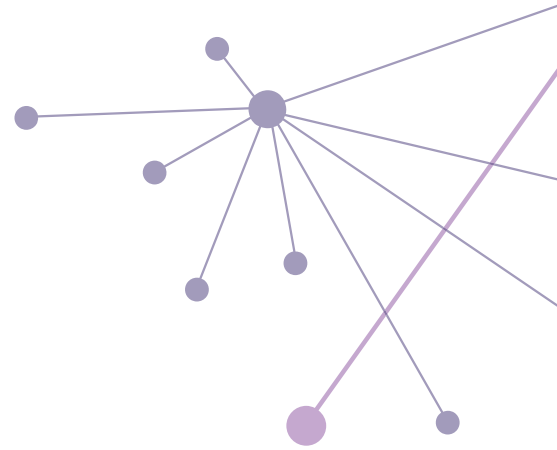
Only universities and colleges with an excellent reputation in teaching and research in the Information Systems field are eligible to participate in the IS:link network. High academic standards are assured by an international expert committee that takes part in selecting new partner institutions.

All IS:link member institutions have to comply with the requirements of the IS:link Curriculum and have to actively participate at the IS:link curriculum development process.

Each IS:link member confers dedicated Information Systems degrees on a Master's degree and Ph.D. level.

All IS:link members acknowledge credits earned at IS:link partner institutions in those courses that are mutually held at home and abroad and are compatible with the IS:link Curriculum.

Every IS:link member has to offer a set of on-site services for incoming and outgoing students.



: Funding

Due to generous funding by the foundation Stiftung Mercator (www.stiftung-mercator.de), the IS:link project is fully funded until August 2010 and partly funded until 2012. Consequently, IS:link participation is free of charge for universities until 2010. Although project members plan to apply for continued funding through initiatives such as the EU Erasmus Mundus program, all uncovered costs for the network administration will be shared among the participating universities after 2010. And even without additional funding, the program can continue, as administration costs are relatively low, consisting mainly of wages for one research assistant and one student assistant at the network's central coordination office.

Stiftung Mercator is one of Germany's largest foundations. It initiates and funds projects that promote better educational opportunities in schools and universities. The foundation provides a platform for new ideas to enable people – regardless of their national, cultural or social background – to develop their personality, become involved in society, and make the most of the opportunities available to them. Stiftung Mercator takes an entrepreneurial, international and professional approach to its work. It has a particular affinity with the Ruhr area, the home of its founding family.



: How to participate

IS:link is open for new members. If you are interested in making your institution a member of the IS:link network or if you have further questions regarding the IS:link network, please do not hesitate to contact one of the IS:link coordinators:

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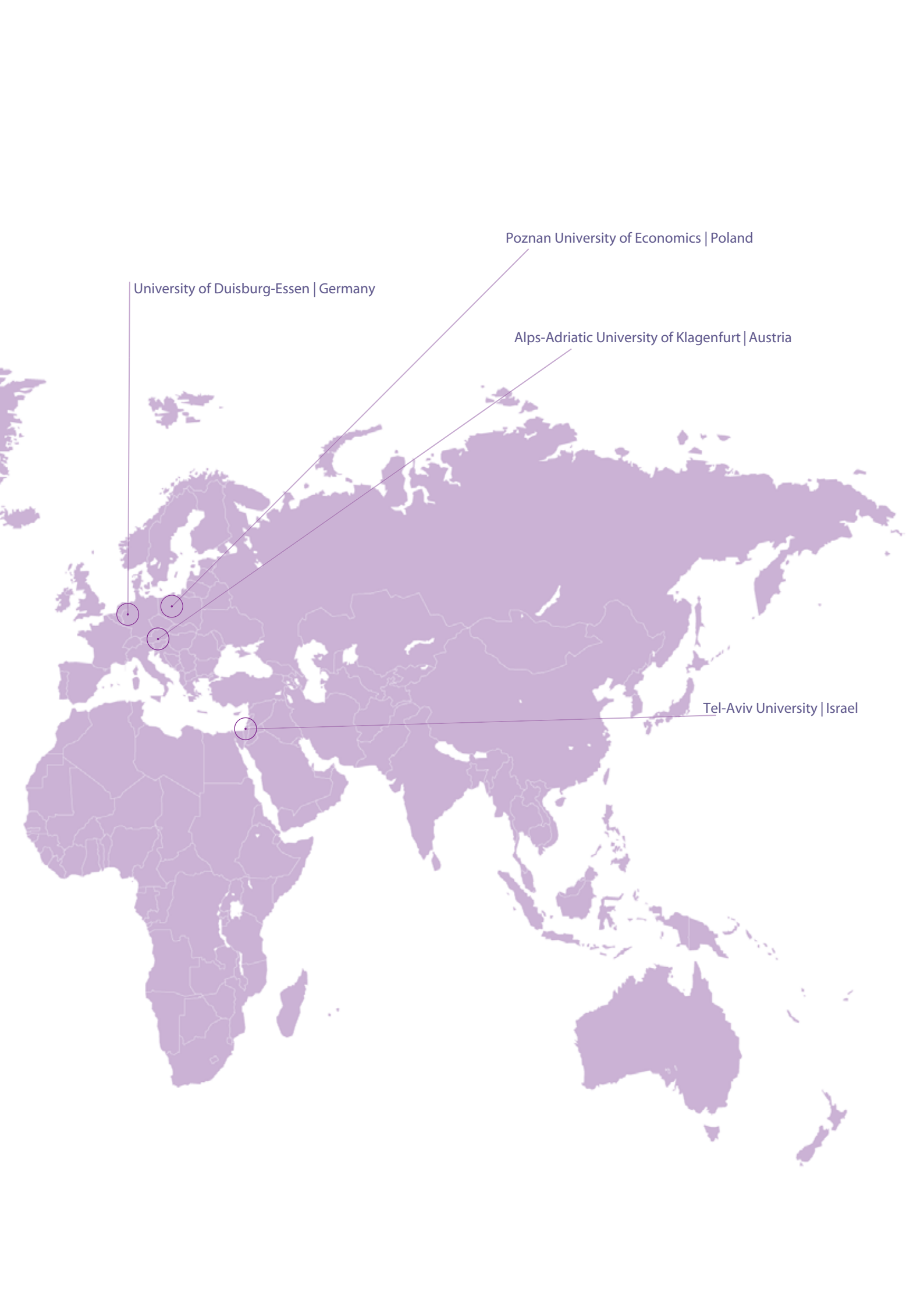
: Worldwide Network

www.is-link.org



IS:link

Information Systems Student Exchange Network



University of Duisburg-Essen | Germany

Poznan University of Economics | Poland

Alps-Adriatic University of Klagenfurt | Austria

Tel-Aviv University | Israel