



JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Organising BIPs at JYU

—

BIP Weeks Pilot

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International Office

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Introduction



Sanna, International office

Administrative coordinator of Jyväskylä Summer School: planning, advertising, application process, study rights, study data systems, student support, social program, visiting lecturers, budget and financial management, reporting

Administrative coordinator for Winter School in Sport Sciences and Winter School of Ecology: same as above but in smaller scale

Agi, International office

Outgoing Erasmus+ students: Mobility-Online pipeline, grants, reporting

Erasmus+ blended short-term mobilities: same as above + advising faculty-level international coordinators

BIP-processes, application for organisers, advising organisers and faculty-level international coordinators, reporting

Faculty-level international coordinator

Responsible for Erasmus+ agreements. Advises academics regarding partnerships. Handles Learning Agreements

Selecting what BIPs the faculty participates to (often together with the academics) and how many students can participate

Key figure between the faculty/academics and the international office

Academic

Owner of the BIP - in charge of deciding all practicalities of the course (with the support of the administration)

Develops the idea of the BIP together with the partners

Responsible for the academic content and its implementation (together with the partners)

Not involved in administrative matters

Others

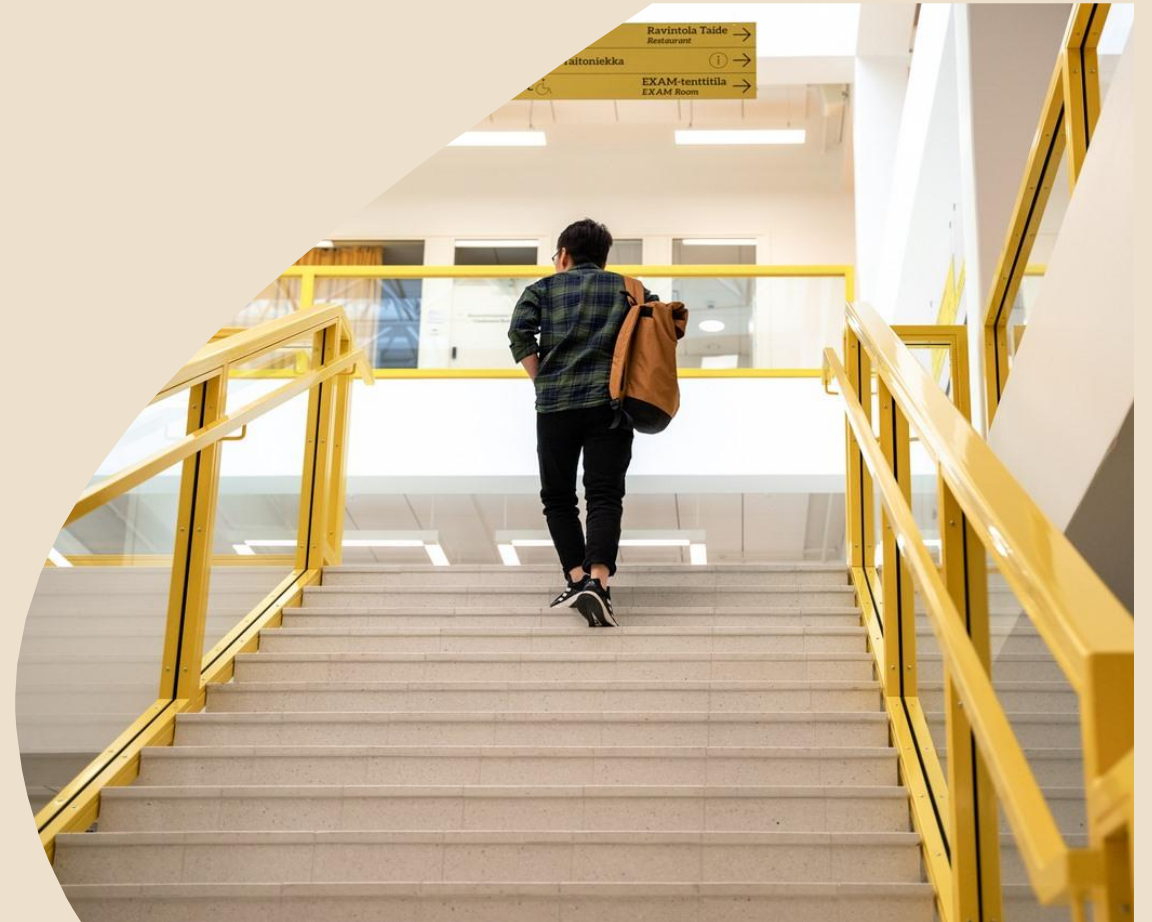
Educational coordinators

Digital Services (JYU account, Moodle)

Who are you?



- Do you work with BIPs, or do you have any experience with BIPs?
- What is your angle on working with BIPs? Are you part of the administrative or the academic staff, or do you do both?



What is a BIP – Blended Intensive Programme?



- **B** blended: includes both a mandatory physical and virtual component.
- **I** intensive: short duration (5–30 days), minimum 3 ECTS credits.
- **P** programme: can be a course for students of any degree-level or a staff week-type event

- A fairly new mode of cooperation financed by Erasmus+
- BIP offers opportunities to gain international teaching experience and experiment with new teaching methods and course ideas.
- It's a great way to deepen collaboration with selected Erasmus+ partners and potentially establish long-term cooperation.
- The coordinating role can rotate among partners.

Why BIP Weeks?



- From an administrative perspective, centralising the timing of BIPs makes the organising easier
 - Enables advising the organisers simultaneously, improves synchronization
 - Facilitates planning and managing internal workloads more efficiently
- Expertise required for organising international intensive courses already exists at the International Office vs. individual BIP organisers need to learn everything separately for each course
- From the perspective of BIP organisers, it is beneficial if certain support services are integrated into the organisational process
 - Lowers the threshold for potential organisers, especially first-timers, to run a BIP
 - Frees organisers' time to focus on the academic content rather than administrative tasks
- Previously, a summer school was offered as a service to partner institutions
 - A need and wish for a similar framework enabling intensive courses to continue
- As BIP fundings were not competed in JYU, there was a need to ensure the opportunity is fully utilised

BIP Weeks concept



- International Office provides BIP organisers with enhanced support services - broader than those available when a BIP is organised outside the designated BIP weeks
- Support with administrative processes, budgeting, scheduling, student guidance, and when needed, additional services such as social programme, information materials, and accommodation arrangements
- A more detailed process description and division of responsibilities between the International Office, BIP organisers, educational coordinators, and faculty-level international coordinators outlined as part of the pilot
- Primary target group for BIP organisers included first-timers and individuals with no prior course-organising experience (e.g., doctoral students), but anyone could apply for the funding
- A designated share of the BIP funding is reserved for central services, which also covered the costs of the social programme.

Services BIP Weeks vs outside BIP Weeks



BIP organiser

- Continuing working on the course content with the partners
- **Hiring a technical assistant (recruitment, training, instructing) – highly recommended!**
- **Active communication with partners, both academic and administrative sides**
- Collaboration with the international office and the faculty's international coordinator on administrative matters
- **Scheduling the steps of the process with the help of the int. office and the faculty's int. coordinator**
- Planning participant recruitment together with int. office and partners
- **Instructing the partners about the student recruitment timeline and the information we need**
- Providing course description and other necessary information related to the course
- **Getting the course approved by the faculty council**
- **Budgeting (together)**
- **Guidance and advising for students including possible accommodation arrangements**
- **Freetime activities**
- **Information materials**
- Course implementation
- Final reporting (brief text)
- Etc.

International office and/or faculty's international coordinator

- Advising the organizer along the process
- Support in scheduling the process
- Advising about Erasmus+ partners and checking Erasmus+ agreements are in place
- Ensuring that BIP and Erasmus+ rules are followed
- Overseeing reporting in the Beneficiary Module (BM)
- Processing Learning Agreements for students and mobility agreements for staff
- Processing study rights and user accounts for the students
- Issuing Transcripts of Records after the course
- Etc.

On the left the bolded tasks are that ones that are moved to the int. office's tasks in the case that the BIP is organised during the BIP weeks

BIP Weeks



- The BIP weeks were held during weeks 19, 21 and 22
- Five BIPs were organised across four faculties, all by first-time BIP organisers, some first-time course organisers
- Each BIP involved the BIP organiser(s), two staff members from the International Office and the faculty-level international coordinator. No technical assistant was recruited.
- For the social programme, two coordinators (JYU degree students) were recruited to plan and implement the activities
 - The programme was mostly common between BIPs, with events every evening from Monday to Thursday
 - The total combined number of working hours amounted to 91.5 hours

Reflection



- Complexity from many stakeholders
 - Coordinating multiple actors with different roles and expectations made the overall process difficult to manage
- Five simultaneous BIPs
 - Each program had unique goals, needs, and faculty-specific practices, adding layers of complexity
- Different organizer styles
 - Personal differences in working style and how much control organizers wanted to keep influenced the workflow and required flexibility
- Communication as the core
 - The success of planning depended heavily on how well the various parties worked together
- Unexpectedly heavy workload
 - The pilot nature of the project, the abundance of details, and very limited time resources made the process significantly more demanding than anticipated
- A preliminary framework of the process and division of responsibilities was created at the start of the project
 - The intention was to produce a comprehensive process description as an outcome of the pilot
 - The pilot nature meant building while moving, which created uncertainty and made expectation management difficult
 - Unclear division of responsibilities caused confusion

Reflection



- The more concise the process, division of tasks, and schedule are, and the more strictly they are followed, the easier the process is to manage
 - However, even the best planning cannot eliminate unexpected elements!
- If the International Office holds the main responsibility, consistency is crucial
 - It is essential to adhere to the agreed, unified operating model
 - Without a unified approach, the true benefits of centralizing BIPs are lost and the work becomes scattered
- Working as a pair a definite strength
 - Made it possible to share tasks, reflect together, and benefit from our complementary areas of expertise.
Main challenge was the lack of time to communicate and coordinate tasks

Discussion



- Question 1 – What are the best practices related to BIPs or other short-term mobilities that you know of and that you think will make all our lives easier?
- Question 2 – What are the biggest challenges related to BIPs or other short-term mobilities that if you managed to tackle your life would be easier?

Best practices



- Start with a structured plan
 - A detailed process description with tasks, responsibilities, and timelines as the foundation for planning. Involve stakeholders already in the planning phase.
- Kick-off meeting
 - Ensure everyone understands their roles, responsibilities and the schedule from the outset
- Early sharing of contact information
 - BIP organizers must promptly provide contact information of all partners in order to avoid delays
- Continuous communication is key
 - Regular check-ins and a shared communication platform (e.g., Teams) help keep all parties up-to-date
- Collaborative budgeting
 - Budget planning should happen early and jointly; possible special requests must be communicated in time
- Central coordination of social activities
 - International Office recruits and trains social programme coordinators who plan and execute social activities for all BIPs
 - This ensures that all BIP participants have the chance to participate to social programs

Best practices



- Agree with partners on required documents in advance
 - Clarify which documents each partner needs and when they must be delivered
 - Development of streamlined and lighter processes. Eg. Is a "group" Letter of Confirmation accepted?
- Potential for improved synchronization
 - Combining guidance and meetings could be beneficial in the future, though we did not yet feel comfortable doing it

Lessons learnt



- Involvement of stakeholders already in the planning phase
- Dare to take the lead
 - Many kinds of personalities and many kinds of reactions but you need to be determined
- Be systematic with the process plan and use it actively all the way through
- Don't underestimate the workload
- First-time course (not just BIP) organisers need much more support, also from outside our area of expertise

Now what?



- Despite challenges, the experience was highly educational and valuable, and if this were carried out again, we would have a much clearer understanding of the process and better tools for managing it effectively
- Of course, every BIP is unique, and it is unlikely that we can ever fully eliminate the fact that BIPs are inherently complex and labor-intensive, nor can they always be fully controlled
- Perhaps the true potential and benefits of the BIP-week concept would become visible in the next round, where there would already be much more concrete groundwork to build on and tools to streamline the process
- The future of BIP Weeks comes down to availability of resources

Thank you!



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