



Becoming a SW-VirCamp partner

1 Introduction

SW-VirCamp is a consortium of 6 universities and university colleges from 6 European countries at present that specialise in offering online courses in the field of social work.

The purpose of this document is to give you information about the SW-VirCamp consortium and about how Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can become a partner in SW-VirCamp.

First a short history of the consortium is presented. Then a description of the current activities are given and finally it goes into the steps that have to be taken to become a partner.

For more information see our website www.vircamp.net.

2 History of SW-VirCamp

SW-VirCamp started in 2002, when some of our partners joined the international EU-financed Thematic Network European Social Work (EUSW). Within this network a working group for a summer school programme started to plan online courses. This became the beginning of what was called the Virtual Classroom for Social Work in Europe (VIRCLASS). Initially VIRCLASS was a task force group under EUSW, with funding that came from Norway Opening Universities (2004). Bergen University College was the leading partner.

In 2007 the VIRCLASS Consortium applied for a grant from the ERASMUS Lifelong Learning programme, and received it for a two year period (2008-2010). In October 2010 the new SW-VirCamp Consortium was established and since then it has been financed by the partners' own contributions, given to the leading institution every year. Work is shared in a work share agreement for teaching, assessment, development and research, the three pillars of the SW-VirCamp Consortium.

In 2011 InHolland University of Applied Sciences was the leading partner of the Consortium for a three year period and from 2014 the new leading coordinator has been Thomas More University College.

Since 2004, the main outcome of VIRCLASS and SW-VirCamp has been the development of online courses. Due attention is paid to the quality of the virtual learning materials, which has resulted in three virtual books including screen lectures, triggers and virtual cases. Since the very beginning courses have been arranged in the learning management system 'its learning', a user-friendly and highly functional platform hosted by Bergen University College.

The development of both VIRCLASS and SW-VirCamp has gone hand in hand with research, presented at conferences and in publications. An overview of this can be seen at our [website](#).

3 Activities

3.1 Courses



The SW-VirCamp consortium organises three online courses for Bachelor students in Social Work.

- ✓ Social Work in Europe (5 ECTS)
- ✓ Comparative Social Work (10 ECTS)
- ✓ Community Work from an International Perspective (15 ECTS)

For lecturers, there is a possibility to apply for an E-pedagogy course (10 ECTS) to become a trained e-teacher. Teachers in the SW-VirCamp courses have succeeded this course.

At the website the most recent [curriculum plans](#) and data for the courses can be consulted.

Partner institutions in SW-VirCamp have integrated the online courses as option courses for BA students in different ways. Since the courses demand a lot of work from the students it is important that the courses are included in their total workload, and not taken in addition to their degree programme. Partners can choose between 5, 10, 15 or more credits for their students, depending on the possibilities their own curriculum plan allows. Students who take the courses must be able to read and write English adequately (minimally a B1-level of the CEFR) to be able to attend the course and to cooperate with fellow students.

Our courses have been well evaluated by students who recommend the courses to other students.

3.2 Future plans

SW-VirCamp will be further developed as a Virtual Campus. To do so, the partners continually apply for grants within the existing possibilities. In September 2015 partners will start planning an Erasmus+ project to develop a learning and practice community on e-learning. The aim is to broaden the activities to field partners and research.

4 Becoming a partner

4.1 Why become a partner in SW-VirCamp

- ✓ You will be part of a dynamic group of HEIs that offers high quality courses for students and want to be at the top of online challenges on education.
- ✓ The courses creates possibilities for internationalisation@home and they allow you to expand the number of internationalised students (cf. Bologna requirements)
- ✓ SW-VirCamp courses create the opportunity to expand the English taught courses in your curriculum.
- ✓ Students find the courses demanding but recommend the courses to fellow students.
- ✓ HEI teachers and staff involved in the SW-VirCamp activities experience this as a learning community and as an important way of professionalization

4.2 How to become a new partner

The SW-VirCamp consortium offers various kinds of membership. A HEI can become a full member or a member with a letter of intent.

4.2.1 Full member

A full member will fulfil all the duties as described in the consortium agreement. This involves:

- ✓ paying an administrative fee to cover the administrative costs. The total amount will be divided amongst the partners with full membership. In 2015-2016 the fee will amount to 3,300 euro per partner.
- ✓ contributing with an equal work share agreement to organise and run the courses. There are jobs to be allocated as head teachers, teachers, external assessors, chairperson and steering committee members. In 2015-2016 the estimated workload for the SW-VirCamp activities is 1,750 hours. With the existing partners this means an investment in work hours of around 350 hours. With more partners the number of hours will decrease.
- ✓ joining the yearly meeting, which takes place at one of the partner institutions' locations. A two day teachers meeting (all teachers involved in courses) and a one day consortium management group meeting (representative managers of the partner institution). In 2016 the yearly meeting will take place in Norway at Bergen University College in Bergen. For teachers this will be on 23 and 24 May 2016 and for managers on 26 May 2016.

Full members can register 10 students in each module. This number can be increased if possible, depending on the available teaching staff and on how nationalities among students are mixed at that time.

4.2.2 Member with a letter of intent

The SW-VirCamp consortium is aware of the fact that it can take some time to establish a good framework and to get support from the institution. Therefore it is possible to become a member with a letter of intent for a period of two years.

- ✓ The first year half of the administrative fee has to be paid. In 2015-2016 this will be 1,650 euros. The institution will contribute in the work share by providing external assessment at a rate of 20 hours of workload.
In this year, two students can apply for each module.
- ✓ The second year the full administrative fee has to be paid. In 2015-2016 the fee will be 3,300 euros per partner. The institution will contribute in the work share by providing external assessment at a rate of 40 hours. In this year four students can apply for each module.
- ✓ During the period with a letter of intent, teachers of the institution will be prepared as future teachers in the SW-VirCamp courses. This means that they attend the yearly meeting and participate in the online E-pedagogy course.

SW-VirCamp will only accept members with a letter of intent if the institutions are committed to becoming a full member after the period of two years. This means that the partner has to plan on how to include the SW-VirCamp courses in their own curriculum for second or third year BA students and/or for incoming students. The students that apply for courses will have the ability to take these courses as option courses in their regular curriculum and do not do them on top.

5 Practical information

5.1 Leading partner

Leading coordinator

Wim Wouters

Thomas More University College, Geel, Belgium✉

✉ wim.wouters@thomasmore.be

Mobile: +32 479 44 92 08

5.2 Partners

InHolland University of Applied Sciences, Haarlem, the Netherlands

Contact: Rimmelt Veenkamp

✉ rimmelt.veenkamp@inholland.nl

Bergen University College, Bergen, Norway

Contact: Anne Karin Larsen

✉ anne.larsen@hib.no

Complutense University of Madrid, Spain

contact: David Alonso

✉ dalonso@ucm.es

Mannheim University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Contact: Ulla Törnig

✉ U.toernig@hs-mannheim.de

5.3 Associated partners

Lund University, Sweden

Contact: Tabitha Wright Nielsen

✉ Tabitha.wright.nielsen@soch.lu.se