SOCIAL WORK-VIRCAMP CONSORTIUM

YEAR REPORT 2015-2016

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

In this year report, an overview of the VirCamp activities is presented for the academic year 2015/2016.

SW-VirCamp is a consortium of 6 universities and university colleges from 5 European countries at present that specialise in offering online courses in the field of social work.

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.

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 started 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. This project (PLACE) has been submitted by Complutense University on March 30th 2016 to the Spanish National Agency of Education (see below: future plans).

In this report we start with a description of the partners. Main part of this report will present the main activity of VirCamp, namely the educational programmes organised in the past year. For each module information is given about the course, the students, the evaluation and assessment results. At the end of this part, an overall evaluation is presented with points of attention regarding all the modules. To run the VirCamp courses, human and financial resources are necessary. An overview is given about the staff involved, the hours invested in workshare and the account and budget. In addition a brief overview of other activities is presented. We end this year report with the future plans of the consortium.

STATUS OF THE VIRCAMP CONSORTIUM

CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

Thomas More University College - Geel - Belgium (TM) Leading partner

Bergen University College – Bergen – Norway (HiB)

Inholland University of Applied Sciences – Haarlem – Netherlands (INH)

Complutense University – Madrid – Spain (UCM)

Mannheim University of Applied Sciences – Mannheim – Germany (HSMA)

Nord University, Bodø, Norway (UiN)

ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

Lund University – Lund – Sweden (LU)

Mittweida University of Applied Sciences, Germany (HSMW)

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

During the study year 2015/16, three modules have been organised by the SW-VirCamp Consortium: Module 1, Module 2, Module 3.

MODULE 1: SOCIAL WORK IN EUROPE

During the study year 2015/16, three modules have been organised by the SW-VirCamp Consortium: Module 1, Module 2, Module 3.

MODULE 1: SOCIAL WORK IN EUROPE

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

This is a 5 ECTS credits course about general social work aspects. Module 1 focuses on basic knowledge about social problems in Europe. The module starts with how to do comparative studies in international social work. Students describe, analyse and compare living conditions and the social problems in different European countries, and how these are met in social work. Students explore commonalities and differences in welfare systems and social policies, and how these may affect social work and social work education, related to one of the following themes they chose to work on: child welfare, elderly care or drug abuse, to concretise the context of social work in at least two other countries then their own.

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Table 1 – Amount of students per HEI - Module 1

HEI/YEAR	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
HIB	1	0	4	7	5
TM	9	5	7	18	12
UCM	5	2	12	17	8
HSMA	1	3	7	5	5

INH	10	8	7	15	6
HSMW	0	0	5	1	0
Total	26	18	42	63	36

Like every year, the course started in the beginning of the Autumn semester. The 8 weeks course started 21 September 2015 and ended 16 November 2015.

Table 1 gives an overview of students during the past 5 years. This year 36 students took part in this course. The amount of participants decreased compared to the year before, which was an exceptional year. All partners were able to deliver students. Some universities promote this course as an option for incoming students to complete the ECTS credits for their study abroad. In this course also three exchange students participated. It was possible to build a strong international group of students. This is a key success factor for 'comparative learning', one of the core learning aims in the course.

In module 1 Jochen Peter (HSMA) has been head teacher. Teachers in this course were: Katrien Verelst (TM), Inger Kristin Heggdalsvik (HiB), Ulla Törnig (HSMA) and David Alonso (UCM). Gudrun Ehlert (HSMW) and Birgit Hoffmann (HSMA) acted as external assessor.

RESULTS OF THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT

The final assignment in M1 is a combination of tasks done during the course. Of the 36 students who started, 30 students passed the exam and 2 failed for their first chance. 4 students did not submit their exam. The marks given on a scale from A-F (F is failure) were: 3A, 8B, 12C, 5D, 2E, 2F.

Re-examination was available for students in June. 2 students took this re-exam with 1C and 1E as a result.

EVALUATION

The first part of this evaluation is based on the survey at the end of the course. The questions in the survey are based on the quality standards, formulated in the Quality Guide. Students are asked to fill in the online survey at the end of the course. The response on this survey was (N=36, n=19).

Students are positive about the learning material: lectures, triggers and readings. They find the feedback helpful (94,7%) and constructive (94,7%). Most of the respondents would recommend the course to their fellow students (84,3%).

Although in general, students are positive about the learning material, they are more critical about the reading list. A suggestion for the year to come is therefore to update the reading material and relate it to tasks and assignments. As such students will find inspiration in the readings to execute the assignments.

Teachers also were asked to evaluate the course. They had a discussion in the teacher meeting.

Positive this year was that students were divided into groups in the beginning of the course. For the first time, students were asked to make their theme choice before the start of the course. In this way, it was possible to divide the groups at the beginning of the course. This was positive in building up the contact with the students.

Especially in the short period this course runs it was not good to re-install the groups after a few weeks. The decision to start with fixed groups from the beginning was a proposal out of the evaluation of the past year.

This year two new teachers entered the course. It was not possible to make duos with a more experienced teacher in the course and a newcomer like we did before, due to the amount of students and the available staff. Still it is important to guide new teachers into the course.

Since a few years now, the course is built on 3 topics: elderly care, child welfare and drug abuse. It would be good to introduce the themes with a screen lecture. Teacher meeting in 2016 decided that there will be made three short digital introductions to the three themes.

MODULE 2: COMPARATIVE SOCIAL WORK. SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN SOCIAL WORK

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

This module allows students to understand commonalities and differences in terms of the how societies marginalise certain groups of people. In what way are social work theories and methods suitable to deal with questions concerning discrimination and oppression. In some places, anti-discriminatory practice has come to be seen as integrated part of good social practice. In other words, one cannot have good social work practice without it. But how far is this reflected in the reality of everyday practice, and to what extent are students given the knowledge and skills they need to practice it? The module demonstrates that discrimination and oppression are not homogenous concepts but focus on different target groups in various ways, and therefore are different in their manifestations in relation to these groups. A range of disadvantaged groups will be considered, but particular emphasis will be put on cultural and ethnic diversity, and racism. The implications of discrimination and oppression of marginalised groups for European social welfare and social work will be considered.

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Table 2 – Amount of students per HEI - Module 2

HEI/YEAR	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
HIB	1	0	4	7	5
TM	6	3	5	23	2
UCM	9	2	3	8	4
HSMA	0	1	0	2	3
INH	1	0	0	0	0

Total	17	6	12	40	14

The course started 09. November 2015, and ended after 12 weeks on 14. February 2016. The number of students participating gives a significant decrease compared to the year before, but is in line with the previous years. The reason for the high amount of students in this module last year was due to the fact that in that year it was obligatory for students at Thomas More who took their practice placement abroad. This resulted in this high number of TM students. The student group was much more balanced this year. And this had also a direct impact on the recognition of the course by the students. You will find more information about this in the evaluation.

Because of the fact that Fernando De Lucas y Murillo de la Cueva left VirCamp as teacher after many years of teaching in this module there was a shift in the teacher team. Jose Ignacio Pichardo Galan started as a teacher in VirCamp. Remmelt Veenkamp (INH) has been head teacher and teacher. Tabitha Wright Nielsen (LU) acted as external assessor.

Three incoming students participated in this course.

RESULTS OF THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT

To finish M2, students have to deliver a portfolio exam. Tasks students have been working on during the course are assessed. All 14 students passed the exam in the first chance. The marks given on a scale from A-F (F is fail) were 2A, 8B, 2C and 2D.

EVALUATION

The first part of this evaluation is based on the survey at the end of the course. The questions in the survey are based on the quality standards, formulated in the quality guide. Students are asked to fill in the online survey at the end of the course. The response on this survey was 86% (N=14, n=12).

The amount of students that would recommend the course to fellow students is 100%. All students think the course is appealing and interesting in content. All the respondentsmention that the case of Mrs. K and her Family stimulated them to reflect on social work interventions and all value the clear assessment criteria.

Points of improvement are the timetable of the course which 25 % of the students find not flexible. Another potential area for improvement is the way to guide students through the course and the timing of the feedback given.

For most of the students, the planning of this course is not congruent with the semester system. This means that the course interrupts with an exam period. This gives problems for students in planning their tasks. Students that took module 1 before, noticed that the structure is quite different than what they are used to.

MODULE 3: COMMUNITY WORK FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

Module 3 is a 15 ECTS course. The theme of the course is 'Community Work from an international perspective'. Community work is a planned process to mobilize communities to use their own social structures and resources

to address their own problems and achieve their own objectives. Community work focuses on participation and fosters empowerment, emancipation and change through collective action. Community work is closely related to work for human rights. The community work process is about people in communities creating opportunities for growth and change. The course focuses on different theories, methods and approaches in community work from an international perspective, and consists of several parts. One part focuses on theories and methods, another part consist of a case-study related to a virtual case. Students make a project plan related to the case, by collaborating and comparing different approaches. The students learn about community work and its historic background and come to understand the risk of manipulation when community work is not worked out from a grass-root level. Students also learn about the advantages and power in approaches carried out from a bottom-up perspective. One of the main aims of the course is that students develop a critical understanding of the wide range of theories and methods of community work, develop the ability to recognize these in current projects and are able to design a project plan of community work, and show which steps and facilities are needed for realising and managing processes and products.

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

The course started 25 January 2016, with a duration of 18 weeks until 30 May 2016.

Table 3 – Amount of students per HEI - Module 3

HEI/YEAR	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
HIB	14	0	3	2	7
TM	12	9	7	8	17
UCM	3	3	18	5	5
HSMA	5	1	6	6	4
INH	3	0	0	3	0
HSMW	0	0	1	0	0
UIN	14	5	0	0	5
Total	51	18	35	24	38

As shown in the table the amount of students varies every year. This year UiN included students from their partner University of Regina in Canada. Students from Thomas More did this course as part of the internship abroad in different continents, which caused difficulties for cooperation in real time among students. In the future, this has to be taken into consideration when the groups are settled. There were also five incoming students for this course.

Anne Karin Larsen (HiB) has been head teacher. Teachers in this course were Carmen Arenas Carbelido (external teacher), Bieke Dierckx (TM) and Asgeir Solstad (UiN). Katrien Verelst (TM) and Gudrun Ehlert (HSMW) acted as external assessors.

RESULTS OF THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT

To finish module 3, students have to deliver a portfolio exam. Tasks students have been working on during the course are assessed. Part of the final assignment is two group tasks.

33 students passed the exam in the first chance. The marks given on a scale from A-F (F is fail) were 21A, 7B, 3C and 2D. 5 students did not submit their exam. Re-examination is available for students in August.

EVALUATION

This evaluation is based on the survey at the end of the course. The questions in the survey are based on the quality standards, formulated in the quality guide. Students were asked to fill in the online survey before their final assignment was done.

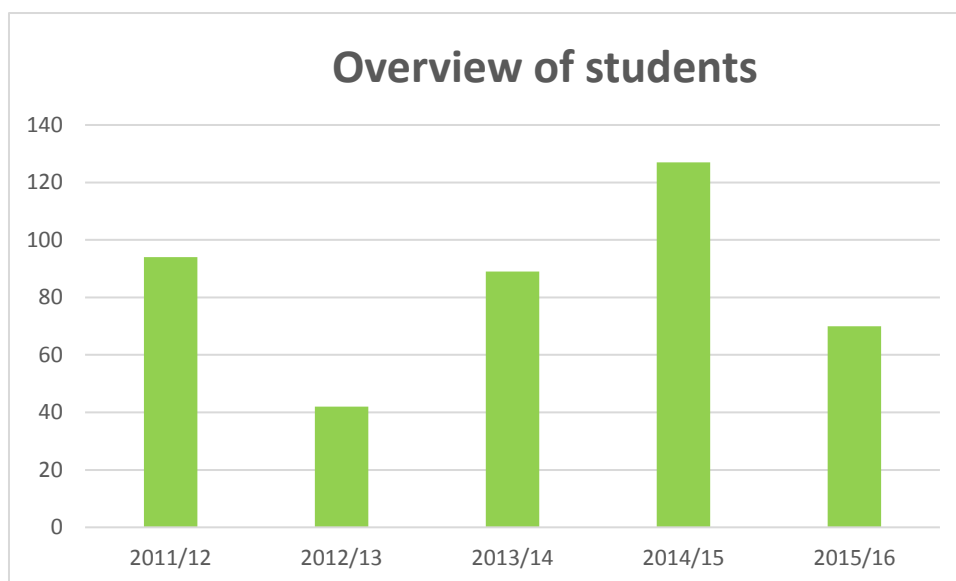The response on this survey was 66,6% (N=33, n=22).

86,4% of the students would recommend the course to fellow students. Regarding the learning material, students are very positive about the case. A 100% of respondents acknowledge that it helped to put the theory into practise. 81,9% says that feedback is helpful and 86,3% of the respondents thinks that feedback is given in a constructive way.

What is striking is that 55,6% of the student indicates the reading list is not easy to understand. The consortium will invest in what puzzles them exactly since on the other hand 94,4% of respondents indicates that this same reading list provides multiple representations of the content. Problems with understanding the literature may also reflect some students lack of English language skills.

OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE COURSES

STUDENTS

Graphic 1 –Overview of students M1, M2, M3- 2012/2016

Overview of students

As shown in the graphic above the amount of students participating in the VirCamp courses reached the highest number in 2015, although some partners left the consortium during the past years. This has to do with a more stable integration of the modules in the curricula at the various institutions.

EVALUATION

In the yearly teacher meeting, some general actions were formulated regarding all the VirCamp courses.

The first point of attention is the intake procedure. It requires that all students are interviewed in English, have the necessary level of English and understand the amount of work. Students should write a motivational letter when they apply for the course, which is in line with our Quality Guide - Standard 2.1. SW-VirCamp management of students.

Drop outs at the beginning of the course happen. Partner institutions need to support students at the beginning of the course. Home teachers need to have special attention for students in the first week and the teacher(s) will send an e-mail if problems arise.

Secondly all partners recognise the problems of students regarding academic writing. Complementary to the lecture on academic writing, tutorials on English writing have be made available. All partner institutions are taking action in their programme to deal with this problem. Within the VirCamp consortium, experiences with specific approaches and actions can be exchanged.

From 2014/15 onwards, some changes in the assessment were introduced. Teachers are the internal assessors of their own group of students. In each group, some students are assessed by the external assessor up to half of the total group of students. In this way, the assessment feedback is more related to the feedback students get during the course. The external assessment makes it possible to monitor the expected level in all the groups.

INTEGRATION OF VIRCAMP COURSES IN THE HOME CURRICULA OF PARTNERS

The integration of the various VirCamp courses in the home curricula of the consortium partners has proven to be a key success factor to attract students for the courses. The consortium has shared good practices on that regard.

This information will be integrated in the promotional material to attract new institutions to the partnership.

Table 4 – Overview workshare

Partners	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
HIB	298,5	275	322,5	263
UCM	409	391	241,5	297,5
TM	311	275	445,5	371
INHOLLAND	249	223	337,5	324,5
Mannheim	222	172,5	291	221,5
Nordland/Nord	347	77	20	174,5
Mittweida	127	161	47	45
VIA	204	127,5	0	0
Lund	0	30	35	15
TOTAL	2167,5	1732	1740	1712

Table 4 gives an overview of the workshare in the past years. Due to the fact that the leading coordinator left his position at Thomas More on short notice for professional reasons, Thomas More as the leading partner needed time to sort out the internal responsibility for VirCamp. This has led to a situation where other partners had to take over some parts of the job.

The principle in the consortium agreement is that there is an equal workshare. This is not always possible. Partner institutions need to have the necessary resources. Teachers need to be qualified as e-teachers and for the subjects and content of the courses.

Some partners invest year after year above the average (270 hours) per partner. This is the reason why we suggest this year a revision of the appendix 2 Financial Model/Workshare for compensation of work.

STAFF INVOLVED 2015 - 2016

CONSORTIUM MANAGEMENT GROUP

- Ulla Törnig, HSMA (Chairman)
- Knut Simonsen, HiB till December 2015; Svanaug Fjær, HiB from January 2016
- Judith Smit, INH till 1 April 2016; Carla Rinkel from 1 April 2016
- Marta Blanco Carrasco, UCM till January 2016, David Alonso from January 2016
- Jurgen Basstanie, TM

STEERING COMMITTEE

- Wim Wouters (TM) Consortium Coordinator till March 2016; Katrien Verelst (TM) from March 2016
- Remmelt Veenkamp (INH) Coordinator of Education
- Anne Karin Larsen (HiB) Coordinator of Webportal
- David Alonso (UCM) Coordinator of Development Research.
- Ulla Törnig (HSMA) chairwoman for CMG

TEACHERS AND ASSESSORS

	TEACHERS	EXTERNAL ASSESSORS
M1	Jochen Peter (HSMA) *Head teacher* Inger Kristin Heggdalsvik (HIB) Ulla Törnig (HSMA) Katrien Verelst (TM) David Alonso (UCM)	Gudrun Ehlert (HM) Birgit Hoffmann (HSMA)
M2	Remmelt Veenkamp (INH) *Head teacher* Remmelt Veenkamp (INH) Ignacio Pichardo (UCM)	Tabitha Wright Nielsen (LU)
M3	Anne Karin Larsen (HiB) *Head teacher* Carmen Arenas Carbelido (EXT) Bieke Dierckx (TM) Asgeir Solstad (UIN)	Gudrun Ehlert (HSMA) Katrien Verelst (TM)

ACCOUNT

VIRCAMP ACCOUNT 2015-2016			
Revenu		**Expenditure**	
Booked			
Contributions 2015 - 2016	€ 18 600,00	Staff coordinator	€ 17 600,00
		Webhosting	€ 210,17
		Zoonlog	€ 190,00
		M3 Extra cost	€ 1 795,00
Expected			
		Website	€ 783,00
		Working hours M3 external teacher	€ 1 795,00
		Travelling Costs Saxion	€ 142,87
TOTAL	**€ 18 600,00**	**TOTAL**	**€ 22 516,04**
RESULT 2016	-€ 3 916,04		
SURPLUS 2015	€ 24 659,21		
TOTAL SURPLUS 2016	**€ 20 743,17**		

ACTIVITIES

MEETINGS

TEACHER MEETINGS

The yearly teacher meeting took place in Bergen on 23/05/2016 and 24/05/2016.
In all modules, teachers meet only online during the course.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The SW-VirCamp Steering Committee (SC) is an executive committee. The SC monitors the Virtual Campus. Decisions about amendments in budget allocations will be taken by the Steering Committee. From this year on, Ulla Törnig, as chairwoman of the VirCamp consortium takes part in the SC meetings.

Besides the daily care about the courses, the main themes on the agenda were: website, future plans for a European strategic partnership, new model of workshare and fee, redefinition of the roles of steering committee members.

The steering committee met 5 times online. The yearly meeting took place in Bergen 25/05/2016.

CONSORTIUM MANAGEMENT GROUP

The CMG Meeting is the General Assembly of the Consortium. In order to take decisions on the overall organisation of the Virtual Campus and its activities.

The CMG met 1 time online: 11/12/2015
The yearly meeting took place in Bergen 26/05/2016.

DISSEMINATION

PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCE

Larsen, Anne Karin
Teaching community development within an international context. EASSW Conference in Milan 29/06/2015 - 02/07/2015, SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN EUROPE: TOWARDS 2025, Available online:< http://vircamp.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Teaching-community-development-within-an-international-context.pdf>

BOOK CHAPTER

Larsen, A. K. & Hole, G.O. (2015)
Study Abroad from Home: VIRCLASS and SW-VirCamp Promoting International (Ex)change in Social Work in Europe, in Elke Kruse (ed.) *Internationaler Austausch in der Sozialen Arbeit, Entwicklungen - Erfahrungen - Erträge*. Springer VS 2015 ISBN 978-3-531-17319-1.

PRESENTATIONS TO POTENTIAL NEW PARTNERS

Basstanie, J.
Jurgen Basstanie has had an extensive meeting with Vaasa University of Applied Sciences and Seinäjöki University of Applied Sciences (Finland). Also Helmo Liege (Belgium) showed an interest.

WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK

The VirCamp website has been restyled by the HiB media center. Main reason was that it was not compatible any more with all devices like tablets and smartphones. The website has a more contemporary 'look and feel' now. Some changes in the structure of the website are planned for the coming year. The aim is to improve the structure and see it from the view of one that has no connection with VirCamp and want to know more.

The VirCamp Facebook page is not an active page. Until now it has not much added value for the consortium. Therefore, In the coming year, Facebook updates must appear frequent. This is a point of attention for all the steering committee members.

FUTURE PLANS

SW-VirCamp partners prepared a Key Action 2 Erasmus+ project for the 2016 call. Complutence University Madrid took the lead and filed the project on 30. March 2016 with project number 2016-1-ES01-KA203-025299. The overall goal of the project is to increase knowledge, skills and competences on online social work of students, social workers and managers in social work organizations. To achieve this, a programme will be developed and deployed that enables HEI and social work organizations to be in touch with the most innovative tools and good practices for online social work in Europe and worldwide. It will challenge students, social workers and managers in social work organisations to digitalize the social work practice and contribute on

innovation and innovative tools working together with technical experts. In this way processes in social work and social work organisations can be more effective and efficient and meet the needs of users and future workers that want to use the existing and future digital possibilities. At the same time it stimulates entrepreneurship and 'out of the box' thinking. New technology always brings up ethical questions and part of the programme therefore needs to focus on tuning social work values and ethics with new technology.

At the end of July 2016, the Spanish national agency published the results of the Project evaluation. The PLACE project obtained 62 points. With this score the application passes all the fields but the mark is insufficient to obtain financing. The consortium members agree to apply again in the next application round.

WHY BECOME A PARTNER IN SW-VIRCAMP?

Participating institutions are part of a dynamic group of HEIs that offers high quality courses for students and want to be at the top of online challenges in education.

The courses create possibilities for internationalisation@home and they allow HEIs to expand the number of internationalised students (cf. Bologna requirements). SW-VirCamp courses create the opportunity to expand the number of English taught courses in HEIs curricula.

Students find the courses demanding but recommend the courses to fellow students.

HEI teachers and staff involved in the SW-VirCamp activities experience the virtual Campus as a Learning community and as an important way of professionalization.

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.

FULL MEMBER

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

a) 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 amounted to 3,300 euro per partner.
b) 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 was 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.
c) 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 took place in Norway at Bergen University College in Bergen.
d) 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.

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.

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, participate in the online E-pedagogy course and/or are external assesor for a module.

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.

The first year an institution becomes a full partner half of the administrative fee has to be paid. In 2015-2016 this was 1,650 euro. 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. 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.