

INTERNATIONAL NOVIA

In 2024, the International Office (IO) of Novia UAS has been actively working towards the vision and objectives outlined in the strategy launched in the beginning of 2024, with a strong focus on global orientation and Nordic cooperation. The IO's efforts have centered on developing and expanding mobility activities, enhancing global competence within the organization, facilitating the integration of students into the Finnish working life, and starting the journey of evolving the Novia brand.

International Staff Week arranged by Novia

After a four-year break, Novia's 7th International Week was held on May 6–8 in Turku and Raseborg. The event was aimed at teachers teaching multicultural groups, providing them with knowledge, insights, tools, and peer support to navigate this challenging task. Students often come from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds, with different learning methods and expectations. Also local students might need support in adapting to a multicultural classroom.

Nearly all 17 participants had extensive experience in multicultural teaching and everyone was eager to share and learn more. This led to rich discussions where attendees shared their insights. The program included presentations by Novia teachers on various aspects of multicultural education, followed by open discussions. All participants came from Novia's partner universities in Norway, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Hungary. Beyond the sessions, they had the opportunity to network and discuss future exchanges and projects.

Over three days, participants explored Turku and Raseborg on guided tours, enjoying spring weather and blooming anemones. A visit to Fiskars, shared meals, and networking made the event highly valuable. Such opportunities are made possible by the Erasmus program.

Advancing Global Competence

In spring 2023, Novia established a working group to promote global competence in education. The vision for global competence at Novia is that most staff possesses the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to support Novia's future international focus.

In 2024, we continued our efforts to enhance global competence by organizing seminars for Novia staff. In May Professor Ankie Hoefnagels from the Netherlands gave the presentation "Global Competence in Higher Education: Why? How?"

Additionally, online seminars for staff were held in October and November, where colleagues and external speakers with international backgrounds shared their experiences of moving to Finland and entering working life. These sessions aimed to enhance global competence and foster discussions.

In October, the online course "Developing a Global Mindset – Foundations of Global Competence", was launched and this is offered as an elective course for all students.

Vaasa International Talents – a summary

From 2020 to 2024, Novia UAS coordinated the Vaasa International Talents project, helping international students

integrate into working life and stay in Finland after graduation. The participants have gained insights into Finnish culture, learned job search strategies, and built industry connections. Around 100 students took part, with excellent follow-up results.

Originally a project, Vaasa International Talents became a permanent initiative in 2024, continuing as a key collaboration between Vaasa's five universities. Round 5 (April 2024–March 2025) marks its first phase as an ongoing programme, supporting international students' transition into the local job market.

The programme has shown strong impact: A 2023 alumni survey (90% response rate) found that 81% were employed, with 83% in jobs matching their skills—two-thirds remained in the Vaasa region. A July 2024 survey (63% response rate) reported 78% employment, with 97% in roles aligned with their qualifications and 62% based in Vaasa or nearby.

Novia joins The Kvarken Council

In spring 2024, Novia became a member of the Kvarken Council, joining universities and stakeholders from Finland and Sweden to strengthen cross-border cooperation in the region. The Council serves as a neutral platform to foster regional development.

In autumn, a small-scale collaboration project was launched among universities to address the region's growing industrial workforce needs. As demand for specialized skills rises, educational institutions in the Kvarken area see opportunities for cooperation despite structural differences.

The project brings together Umeå University, Mid Sweden University, the University of Vaasa, Hanken School of Economics, Vaasa UAS (VAMK) and Novia UAS. Through dialogue, institutional mapping, and joint sessions, the initiative aims to identify common challenges and synergies. The goal is to enhance coordination, support knowledge sharing, and lay the foundation for future projects, including potential funding applications for continued collaboration.

Evolving the Novia Brand

In 2024, Novia formed a team to explore its identity and refine its brand, aligning it with the university's strategy and enhancing its international profile and vision. The branding initiative was introduced to employees at the end of the year, marking the start of Novia's branding strategy and development journey, which will continue into 2025 and beyond.

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