



## Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

**Title:** Raising Awareness of Employment Opportunities in the EU

**Transition(s) the practice supports:** Transition to Employment

**Abstract:**

For students studying Sports Coaching and Development, SRUC's 2015 Erasmus+ project to Sweden provides an opportunity to enhance and develop employability skills in a European setting. Based at Bosön on the outskirts of Stockholm, home to the Swedish Sports Confederation, the students gain an insight into a national training academy which includes hotel, conference and multi-discipline sports and training facilities.

From this base, participants in the project travel out each day to link up and work with Swedish coaches in a variety of sports. The students specialise in their preferred vocational area and have opportunities to work at grass-roots, intermediate or club level – or even with international level performers in school, club and elite athlete programmes.

**Description:**

The "Sweden Project" is now in its fifth year of being offered at SRUC Elmwood Campus where it was previously funded through ESF Leonardo Project Funding. The current funding through Erasmus+ aims to develop "social mobility", with its key aim to offer opportunities to undertake a learning or professional experience in another country.

To fulfil the requirement that educational institutions link with employers both in the home and host country, SRUC Elmwood has worked closely with AMsportstours Limited as the home employer through which the link with the Athlete Sports Academy in Stockholm, as host employer, was established. AMsportstours specialise in football tourism offering teams from around the globe the opportunity to travel, train and compete in venues around the world. The Athlete Sports Academy (ASA) specialises in supporting and developing sports performers in a variety of sports from grass-roots to international level competition.



enhancement  
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This partnership emerged from close work between Elmwood and AMsportstours "Soccer Schools" programme where the vast majority of AM staff are former students of Elmwood. Working more closely together and utilising AMsportstours expertise and overseas connections was an obvious progression, and following an initial successful bid for Leonardo funding the partnership has strengthened. This year will see the largest ever travelling cohort from SRUC and includes students from both Elmwood and Ayr campuses.

Through recurrent successful funding bids this link has created opportunities for students from SRUC to travel and work alongside Swedish sports coaches in a variety of disciplines, and across the spectrum of athlete development from grass-roots participation to elite level performance and competition. There is a direct link to their studies, as students put into practice the skills, knowledge and expertise they have developed - and further enhance their understanding, confidence and ability in a different international setting.

A key component of the programme is for students to develop independence, confidence and competence in working within their specific vocational area of interest. This starts with a thorough recruitment process which this year has been extended to students studying at SRUC's Ayr Campus. Students are invited to apply, stating the specific vocational benefits the project may afford them which they are expected to expand on in a final selection interview. Successful participants identify the specific opportunity that would most benefit them and, working with ASA, we seek to match students with appropriate host country coaches.

This led in the past to students securing opportunities to shadow elite swimmers and coaches during final preparations for London 2012. Furthermore, students have worked with athletes preparing for European Athletics League competitions and shadowed Strength and Conditioning coaches' work across multi-discipline sports with national level players and squads. Participation over the years has seen numerous football coaches work with Svenska developing school and club grass-roots football, and work with coaches across the player development pathway through age-grade clubs and leagues leading to professional level performance.

These opportunities are not easy to secure, so the aim of the trip in developing awareness, confidence, enhancing employability and establishing links and sharing of practice is one of great value to the staff and students. Engaging in such an environment develops awareness and opportunity for students as they seek to progress their studies into employment and a career. The benefits to student are numerous and could not be achieved in a typical home country period of work experience.

The range of highly individualised placements allows the participating students to fully engage in a very specific aspect of their chosen industry. They can seek and gain hands-on experience, working with performers and coaches in exactly the context where they would like to gain future employment. The novelty of working in another country brings opportunities for comparison, sharing of practice, establishment and fostering of support networks and the consideration of employment overseas.

In addition, there are opportunities for travelling staff to engage in professional development with a strong focus of this year's trip on SRUC staff developing their own practice by working with colleagues from ASA and Bosön.

This trip, and a similar project SRUC runs to Spain for its Professional Golf students, has now become a very powerful tool in developing our learners into confident, independent and employable citizens of Europe. They have the benefit of the insight and the experience of working life, culture and opportunities that exist within the EU, and the skills and knowledge to identify and pursue these opportunities and develop a lifelong career in their chosen industry.

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