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Learning to tackle sustainability challenges in international teams: Virtual exchange course leading to implementation of social innovations

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Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

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Outputs

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Internationalised internship methodology

- Guidelines for the implementation of internships
- Recommendations for supervisors and mentors
- Quality assurance guidelines

Social innovation implementation framework

- Guidelines for social innovation implementation
- Recommendations for social innovation mentors
- Practical innovation toolbox
- Impact evaluation and quality assurance recommendations

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University of Bergen Sustainable Innovation course:

- Developing innovative solutions to real sustainability challenges in Bergen
- Student-led
- Theoretical and practical parts
- 10 ECTS
- **Design Thinking**

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Vilnius University Smart Internships:

- Real life problems / Business cases
- Interdisciplinary team of 5-7 students
- 3 months
- On voluntary basis or as a compulsory internship in a study programme
- **Design Thinking**

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International Team Project

- A practice-oriented course or project where students from different universities work in teams in order to provide a possible solution to case's problems provided by organizations or businesses connected to social and/or environmental challenges.

- The end goal of the project is to create a cross-institutional, international, practice-based, interdisciplinary and student-centred interactive learning course, that provide students with a chance to create and implement social and sustainable innovations as possible solutions for different real world sustainability challenges – and empower them to do so.

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International Team Project

1. Takes students through course modules, providing essential theory for efficient teamwork and communication, sustainability, innovation and design thinking skills
2. Provides opportunity to work on real world problems
3. Gives hands-on sessions with societal stakeholders (case partners)

In order to be as adaptable as possible, the International Team Project has a flexible structure, which can be adapted according to the institutions' needs.

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Skills trained

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Efficient work in teams

Complex problem solving

Intercultural communication

Modern innovation

Self-awareness and situation evaluation

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International Team Project in theory

University A	Local course or project management programme
University B	Local course or project management programme
University C	Local course or project management programme

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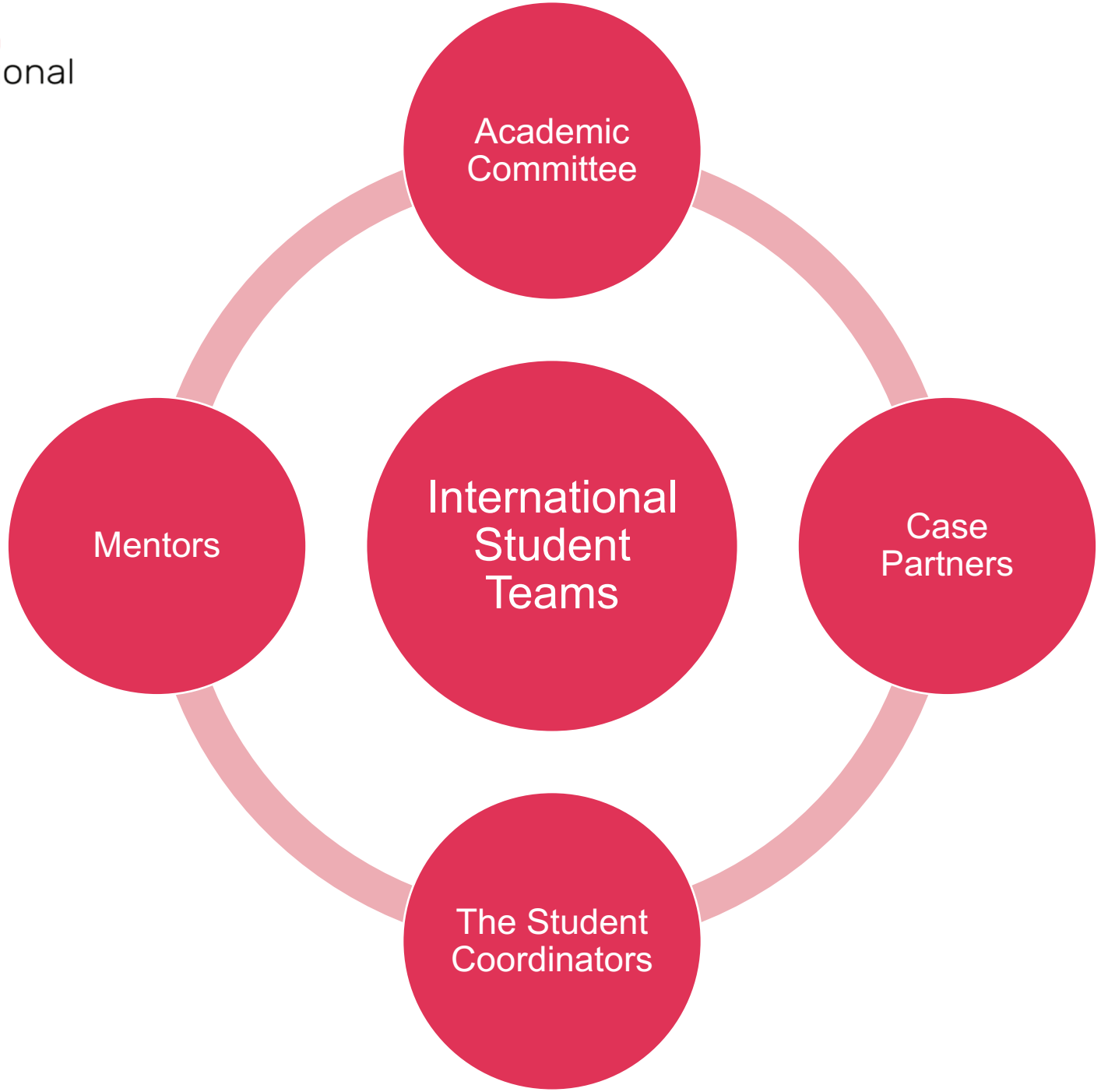
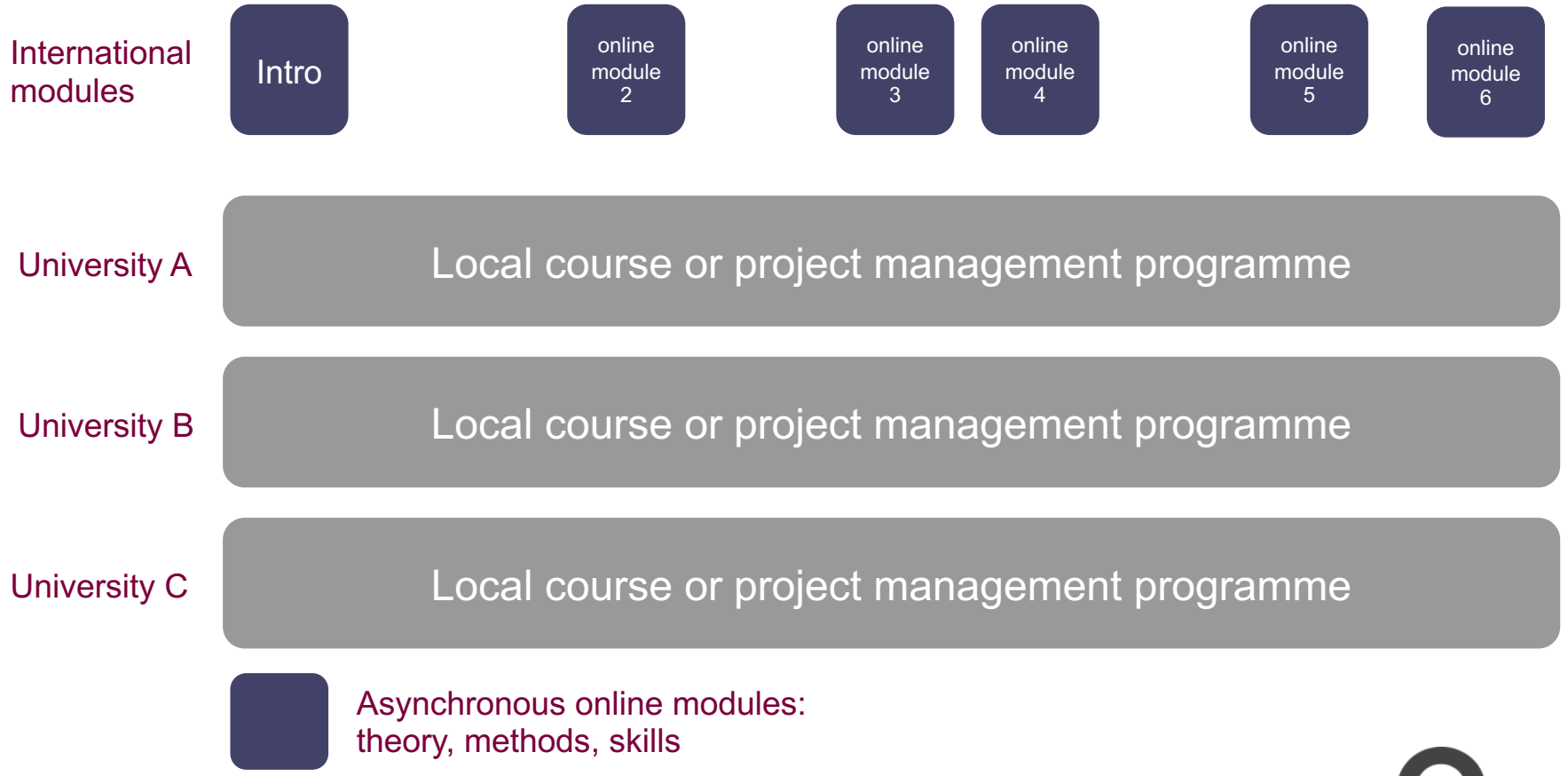
Roles


Academic Committee
Mentors
International Student Teams
Case Partners
The Student Coordinators

International Team Project in theory



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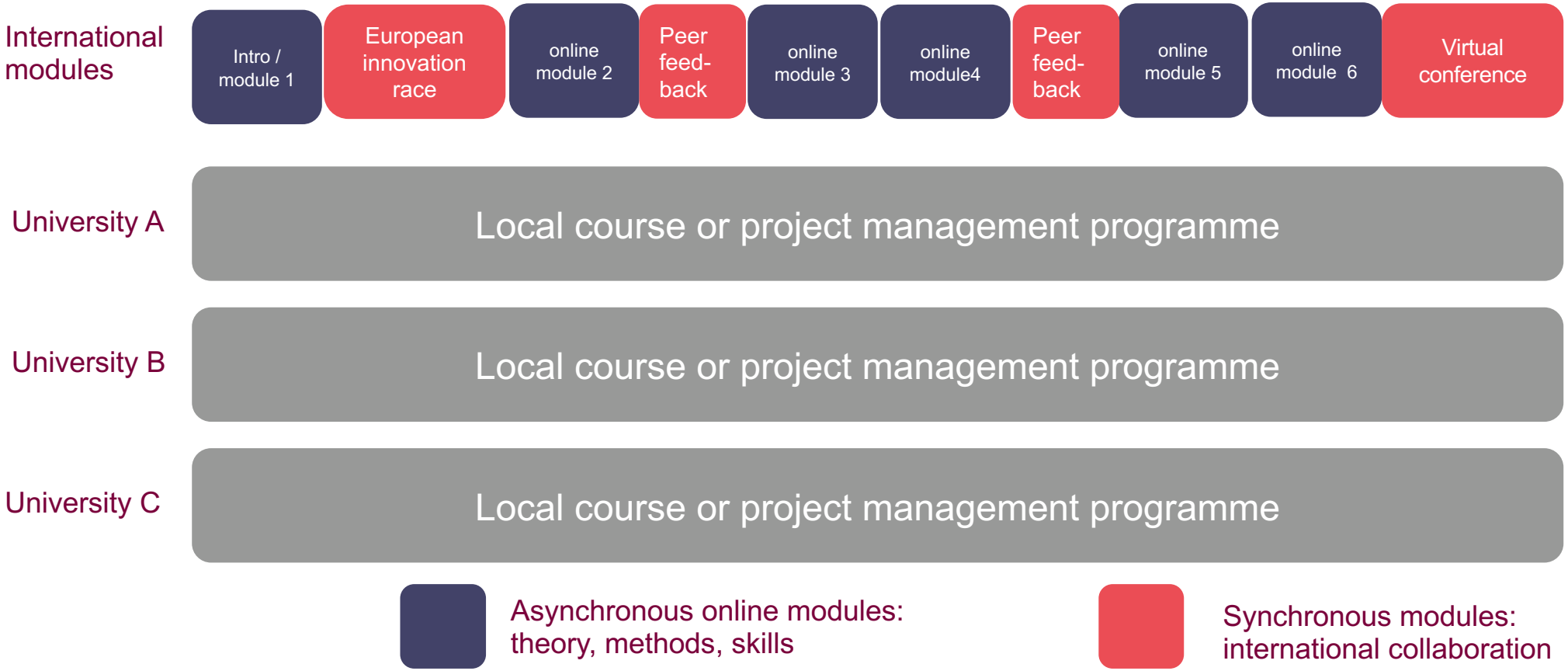
International Team Project in theory



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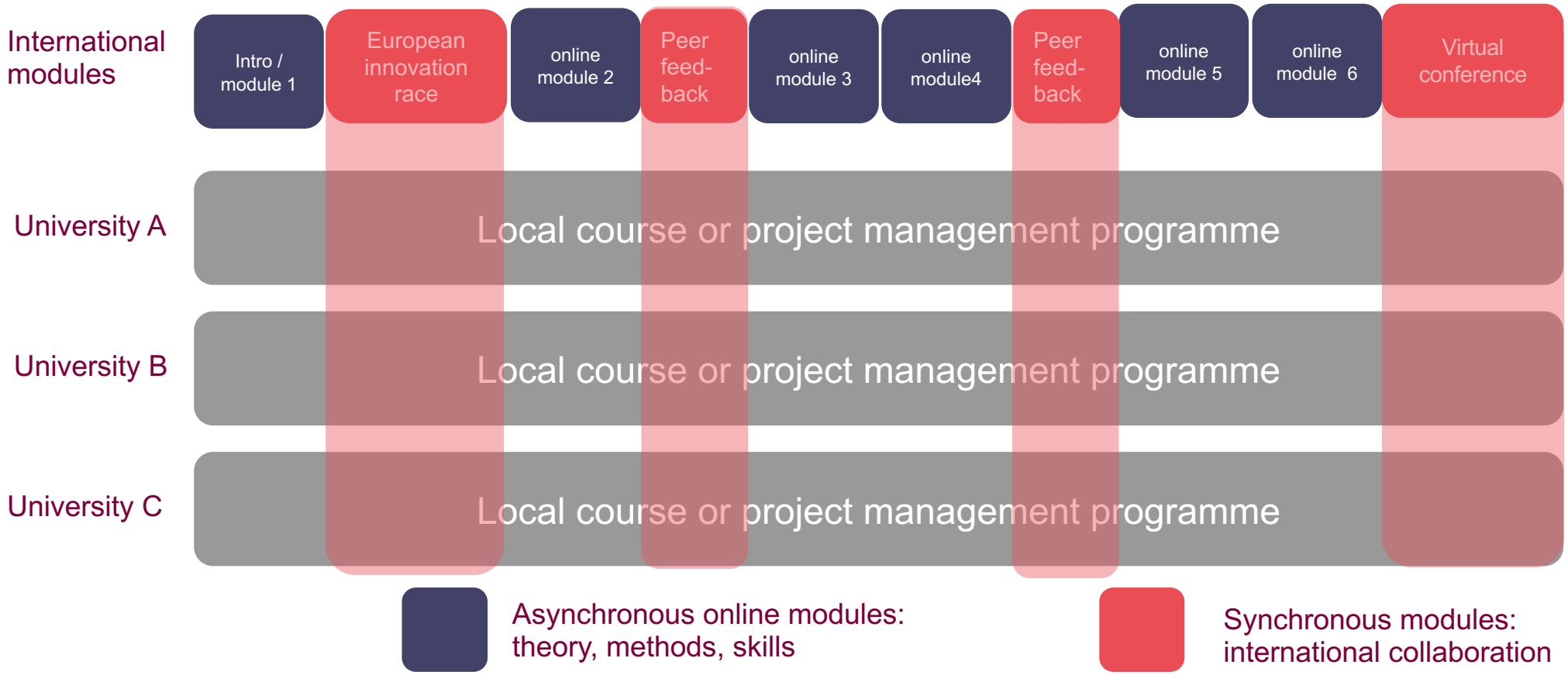
International Team Project in theory



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Online modules

M1	Introduction
M2	Sustainability , climate change
M3	Disruptive and transformative innovation
M4	Design Thinking toolbox
M5	International and interdisciplinary collaboration
M6	Communication and implementation of innovations

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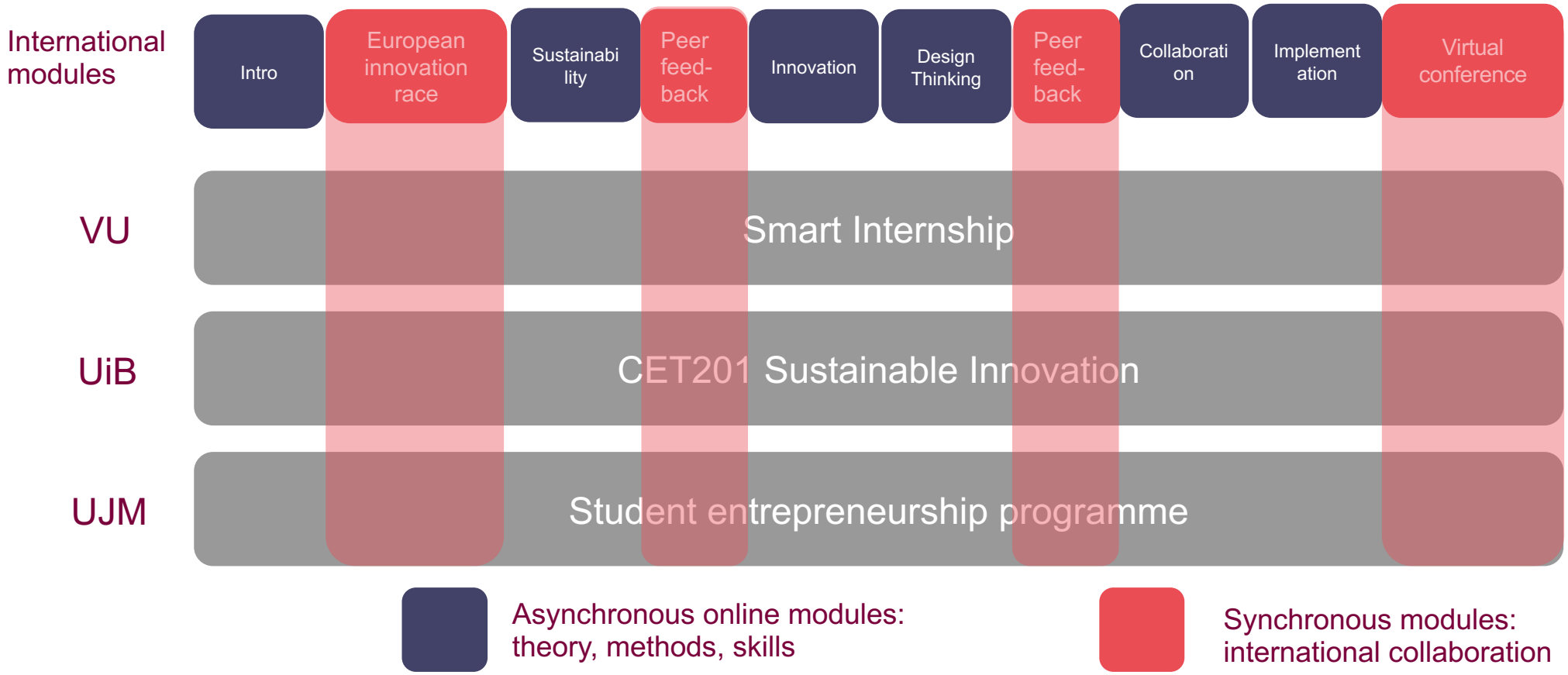
International Team Project in practice



Level of collaboration – flexibility of the approach

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Separate teams, but joint feedback session	Teams	Few joint inter-institutional	All joint inter-institutional
Any local case owner	Problem	Similar local case owners	Same international case owner
Synchronized modules	Timeframe		Same timeline all the way
Extra-curriculum activity	Formalization	Part of formal curriculum	

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Example of different scenarios for the implementation of the joint course

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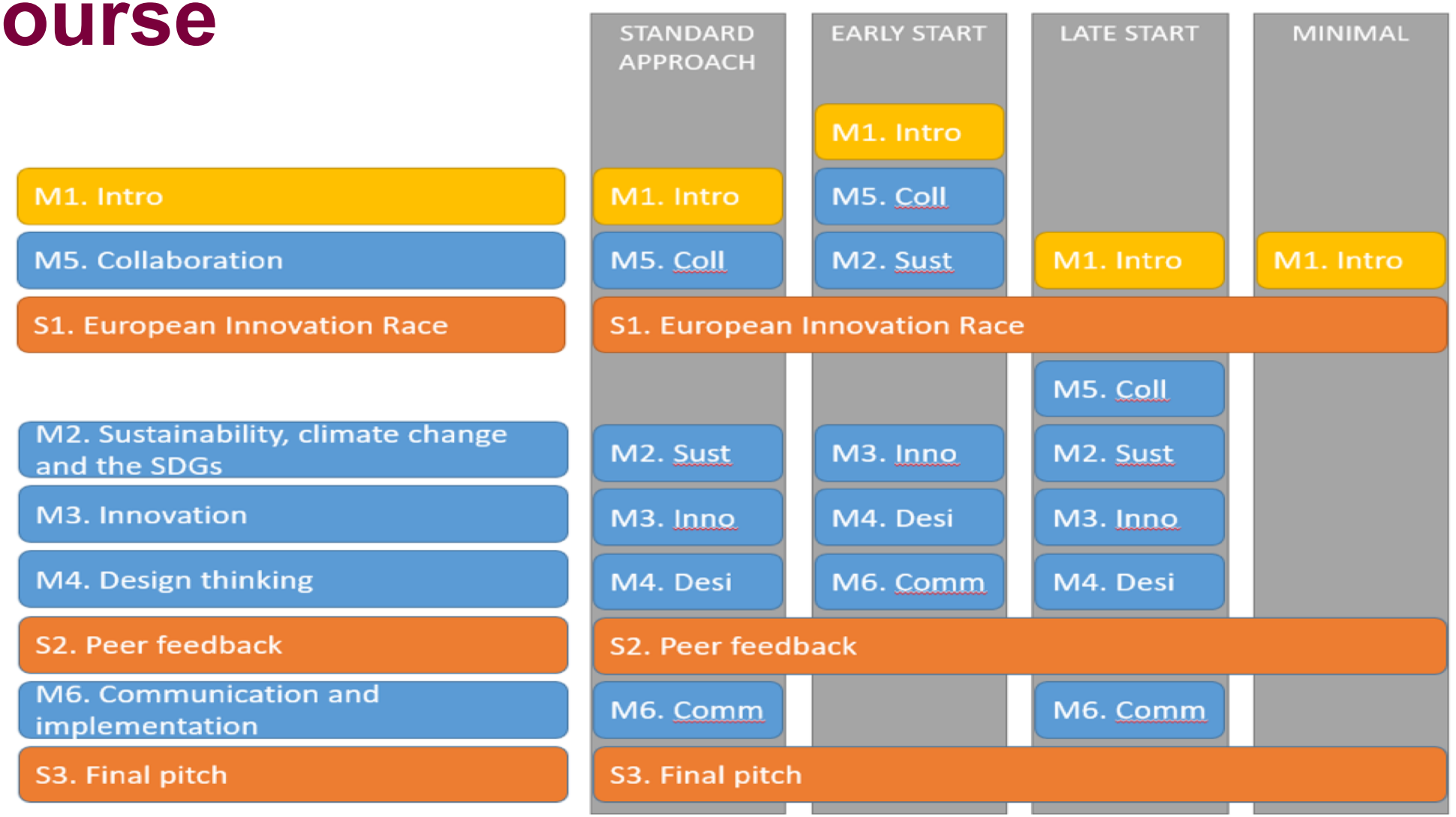

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European Innovation Race: Reinventing universities for a sustainable future

- International students during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Rethinking academic travel and international collaboration
- How to encourage students to more consciously decide on study direction?

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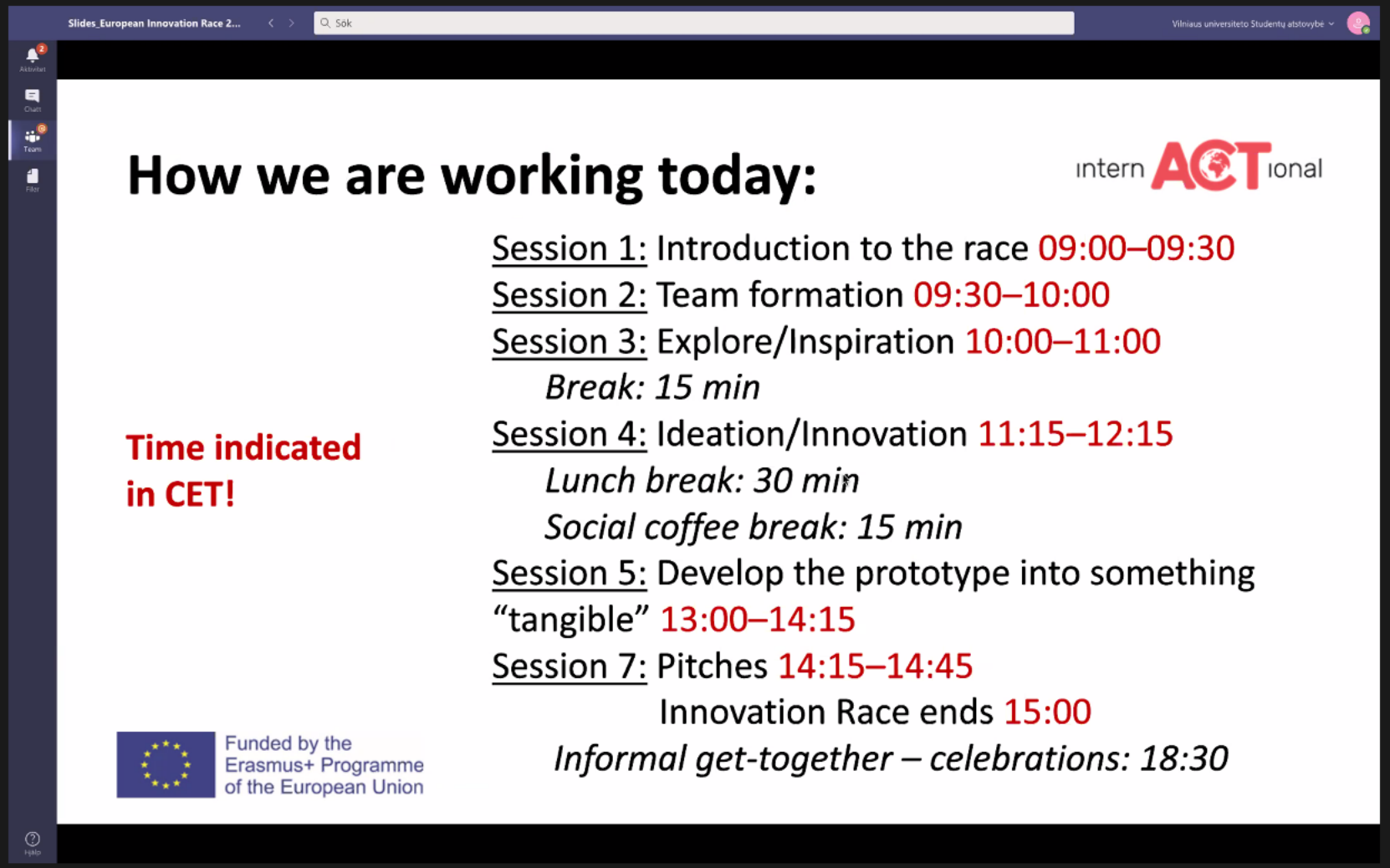
Slides_European Innovation Race 2...
Sök
Vilniaus universiteto Studentų atstovybė
Aktivitet
Chatt
Team
Filer
Hjälp
How we are working today:
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Time indicated in CET!
Session 1: Introduction to the race 09:00–09:30
Session 2: Team formation 09:30–10:00
Session 3: Explore/Inspiration 10:00–11:00
Break: 15 min
Session 4: Ideation/Innovation 11:15–12:15
Lunch break: 30 min
Social coffee break: 15 min
Session 5: Develop the prototype into something "tangible" 13:00–14:15
Session 7: Pitches 14:15–14:45
Innovation Race ends 15:00
Informal get-together – celebrations: 18:30
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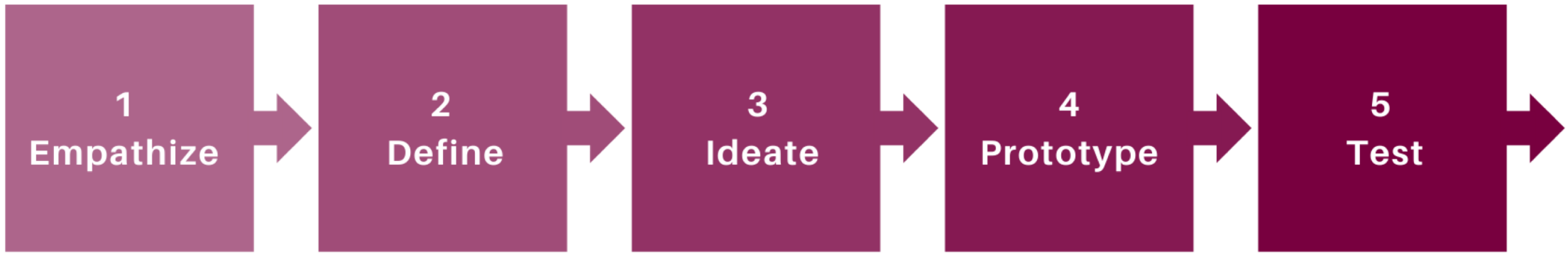
Jakob Olof Grandin

DESIGN THINKING STEP-BY-STEP

5-Step Problem-Solving Process



- Client interview
- Media analysis
- Best practice analysis
- Mind-mapping

- Defining the precise problem
- Client analysis
- Value proposition

- Generation of ideas
- Selecting the idea to implement

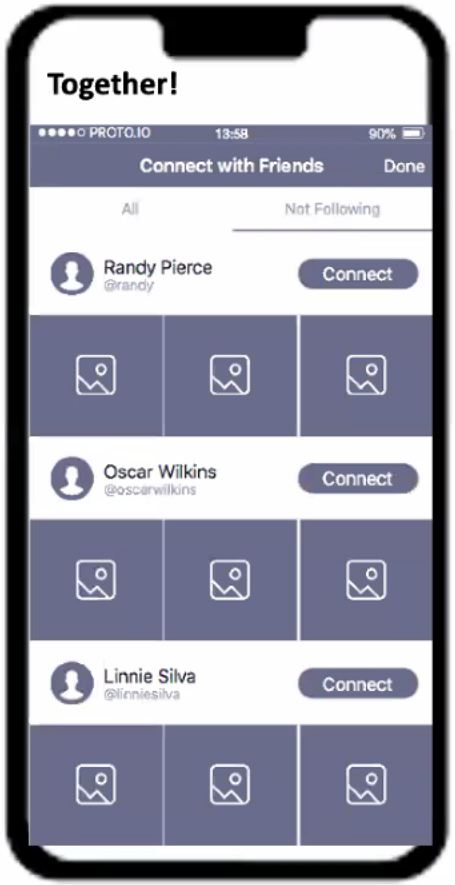
- Creation of a visual prototype
- Preparing to test it with the target group

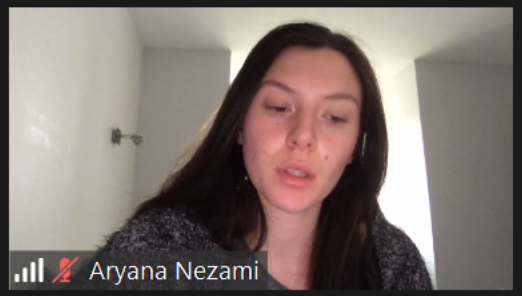
- Testing the solution with the target group
- Receiving feedback
- Preparation for the final presentation
- The pitch

Zoom Meeting

Together!

- App that allows to meet new people!
- Just create a profile with your interests/ hobbies etc. and meet people with similar interests from your university!





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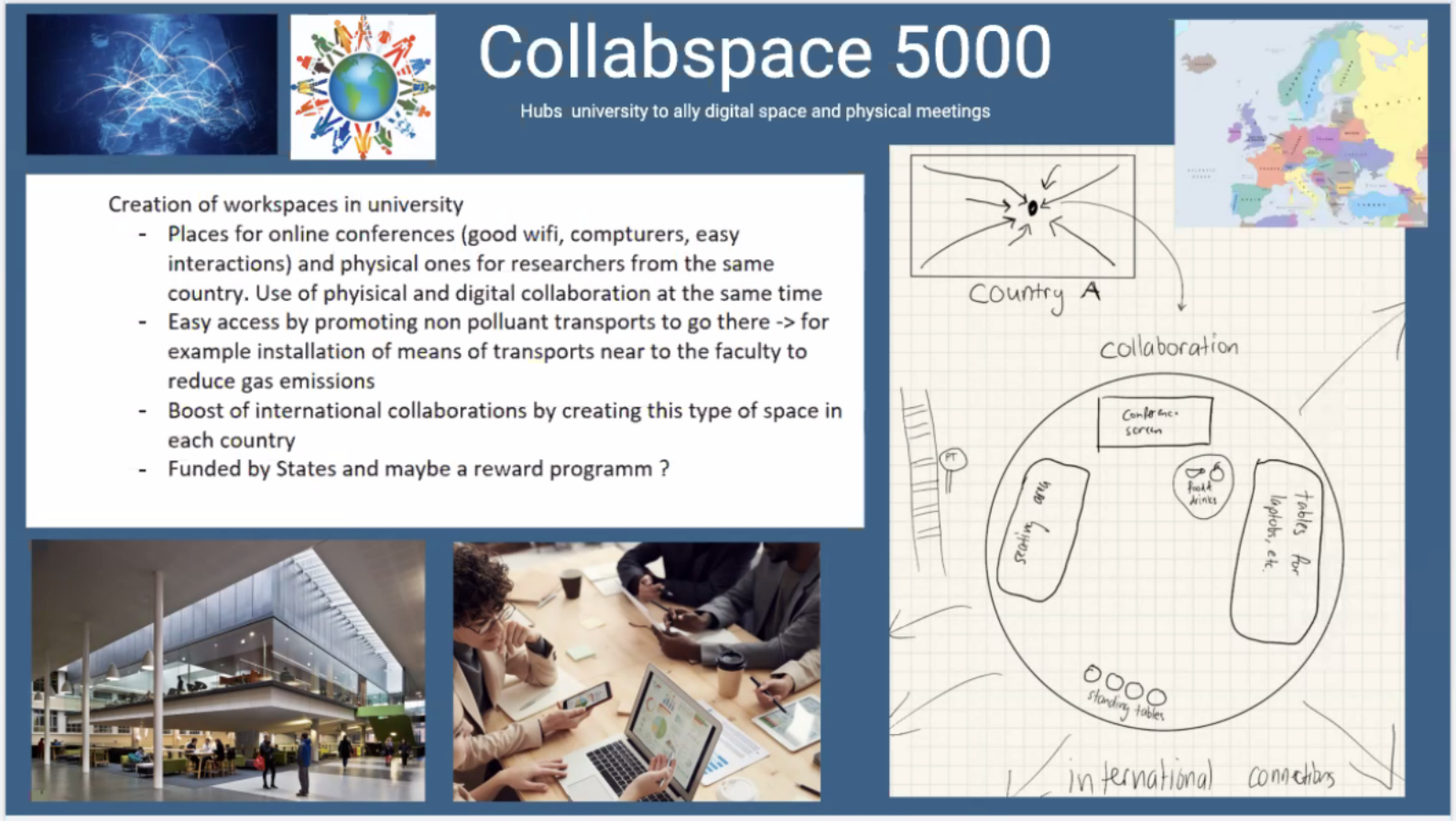
2/9/2021

You are viewing Alessandra Corsten's screen
View Options
View



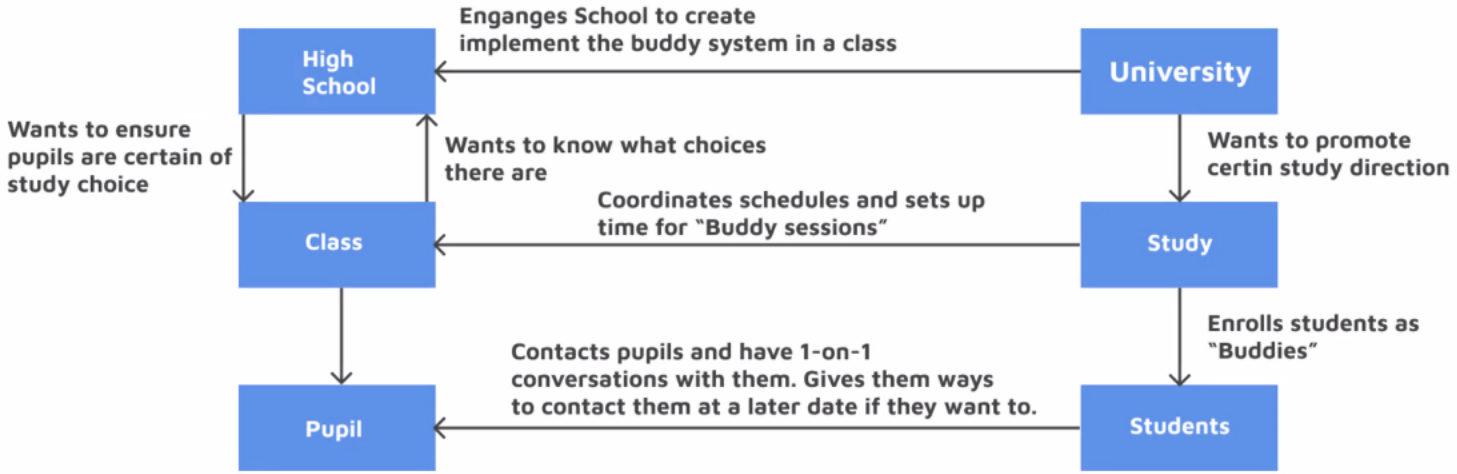
Bjarte Erstad

Unmute | Stop Video | Security | Participants 37 | Chat | Share Screen | Record | Reactions | Leave

Zoom Meeting

The solution

- **Buddy** program organized in **groups**



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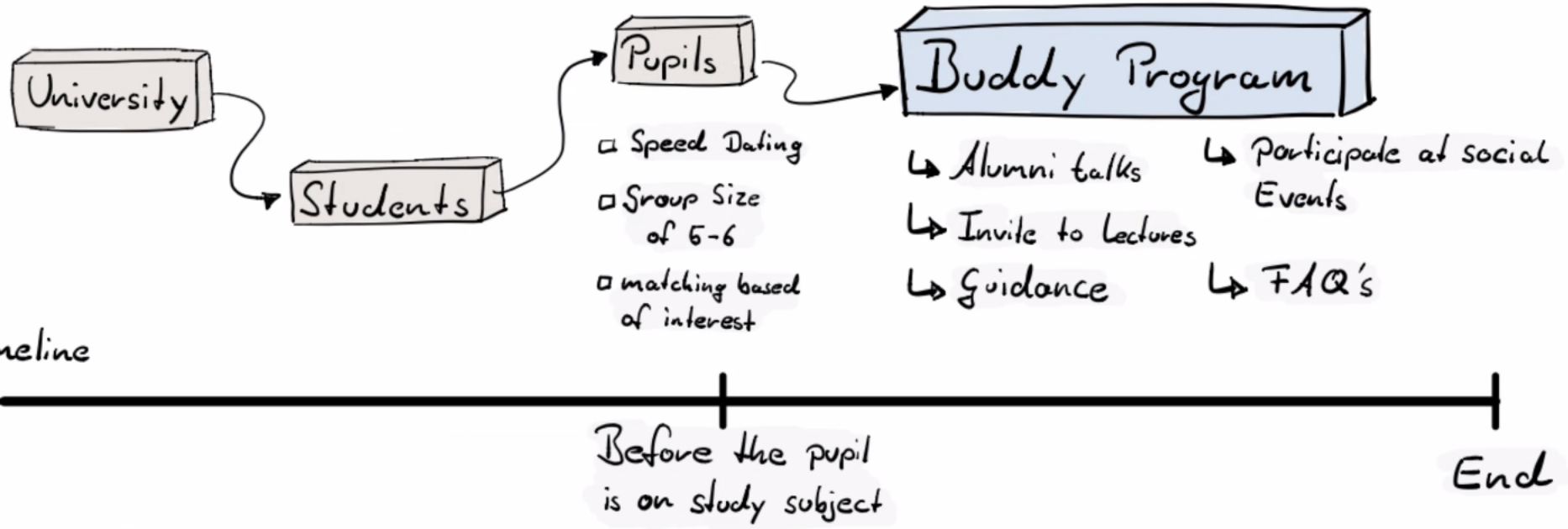
Zoom Meeting

The solution



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Lessons learned

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- Coordination: Different schedules across institutions: prolonged international teams working together for 10 weeks needs a lot of coordination in synchronous sessions
  - Build a solid project team with teachers and administrative people
  - Have the recommendations originally placed in introduction about group forming/course to adapt etc.
- Communication: Digital contact can involve digital issues (zoom etc.)
  - Define adequate tool for collaborative work of the project team - distance learning - videoconference etc. which are safe and suitable for external communication and cooperation
  - Bring IT and digital support teams of your institution on board
  - Also ask the students about the tools they use
- Cultural differences: Terminology, international mindset, interdisciplinary approaches, cultural differences, institutional and company relations, business sectors etc. are not the same in every country
  - Clarify terminology, mindset, approaches, cultural differences, relations etc. with your project partners
  - Be sure you understand each other beyond these differences before going in wrong directions
  - Be open and non-judgemental for other ways of communicating and preferences of work practices

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