



Erasmus
Mundus
Association

EMA Jobs Team

Annual Report 2006-2007

This document contains an overview of the activities of the Jobs Team of the Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association, undertaken in the period June 2006 to October 2007, and a draft of future actions and strategies to be discussed at the EMA General Assembly, October 12th, 2007. For comments or clarifications, please contact the Jobs Team at jobs@erasmusmundus-alumni.eu

Introduction

In this Annual Report, written for the first General Assembly of the Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association (EMA), the Jobs Team of the EMA will detail her activities and strategic approach in the launch period of the EMA (June 2006 till October 2007). Furthermore, a preliminary strategy and future activities for the coming years will be introduced. These future plans are subject to input and discussions at the General Assembly 2007. The Jobs Team consists of Hanneke Luth (team coordinator) and Sandra Oberhollenzer. This last year, we have been working with great enthusiasm at several activities for the Jobs Team of the EMA. It has been extremely interesting process, in which we were able to learn a lot. We are very proud of the progress the Jobs Team has made, and we hope that after reading this report, you will share our views about what the Jobs Team has accomplished.

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1. Jobs Team Activities during Launch Period

The Jobs and Career Responsibility was added to the activities of the EMA upon request of the Liaison Group in June, 2006, at the launch meeting of the EMA in Brussels. In October 2006, the Liaison Group (the aggregation of all Service Teams) came together in Brussels to start work on the EMA. At this meeting, a Jobs Team Working Agenda for 2006-2008¹ was drafted. This document has formed the basis of the tender that the EC launched for a new Service Provider in January 2008.

Since October 2006, the main activities of the Jobs Team have consisted of:

- Setting the strategy for the Jobs Team
- Writing a Jobs Entry in the Newsletter
- Online Database for career opportunities
- Setting up a Country Representatives Network
- Participate and contribute to the tasks of the EMA as a whole; the policy debate and cooperation with other Service Teams of the EMA

1.a Setting the strategy

When the Liaison Group came together in Brussels in October 2007, the Jobs Team consisted of only two people: Hanneke Luth and Sandra Oberhollenzer. To her sincerest regret, Paola Traversa was too heavily occupied by her new position that she could not continue working with the EMA.

The Jobs Team identified *acquiring and spreading information* as her primary objective and challenge. Information about career opportunities should be found and dispersed to EM members, whether this would regard to job openings, internships, PhD positions or volunteering possibilities. Furthermore, prospective employers should get information about the EM members and the EM programme as a label for quality. The activities of the Jobs Team would be mainly directed international career perspectives, as this would suit the EMA profile.

To increase the visibility of the Jobs Team and the EMA and get the placement project started, the primary focus for the short term was set on providing information about PhD scholarships to EM alumni. PhD positions in especially European universities are in high demand among EMA members. Also, starting with PhD scholarships was a logical choice considering the ties EM alumni have with universities, making it possible for us to acquire the information. Further reaching activities would be set up after that.

1.b Jobs Entry in Newsletter

The Jobs Team has devoted a considerable portion of her efforts to creating a Jobs Entry in the Newsletter, that has been published in four edition. A Jobs Entry has featured in the last three editions, and has received very positive response from EMA members. It has been perceived to be a great success. The Jobs entry features a “Helping you look” section, where general websites for finding information about (international) career perspectives are published. Furthermore, it lists numerous PhD positions, sorted according to study area, a classification set up by the EC. When available, the Jobs Section also featured other career opportunities.

¹ See for reference, the EMA Jobs Team Proposed Working Agenda for 2006-2008, provided in an addendum to this Annual Report, and to be found at http://www.em-a.eu/fileadmin/content/Program_Jobs06.pdf.

The forum in which the Jobs Section is published, the Newsletter, has one disadvantage, namely datedness. When the Jobs Team compiles an overview of available PhD positions adhering to the deadline given to us for input for the Newsletter, the respective Newsletter is usually published only two weeks later. Of course the information can be updated before the Newsletter is published, but valuable information about career opportunities is lost. To overcome this problem, we have arranged for the PhD overview is published on the EMA website the day it is compiled, besides being published in the Newsletter. Also, an online database with up-to-date information about career opportunities is going to be created on the EMA website. Setting up an online database has been agreed to by all involved parties, and will be the next priority of the Jobs Team. We will discuss with the Newsletter team how this will have impact on the Jobs Entry in the Newsletter, but foresee that a Jobs Entry in the Newsletter will continue to exist.

1.c Further reaching activities

The Jobs Team has started to set up further reaching activities, mainly constructing an online database with career opportunities, and a network for setting up contacts with multinationals and international organisations. Since the Jobs Team only consists of two member, we were in need of new members and the support of the Service Provider to work on these activities. Together with the Promotions Team, promotions material would be created, with which the Jobs Team could approach prospective employers of EMA members. The Liaison Group authorized a call for support through requesting Country Representatives to sign up for helping out the Jobs Team and the Promotions Team (see next paragraph, *Country Representatives*). Since only EM course representatives could join a Service Team, we could not expand the teams with official new members until the next GA (then to be scheduled in May 2007).

The timing of the recruitment of the Country Representatives (in the second Newsletter, November 2006) however was in hindsight very unfortunate. The contract with the then Service Provider ACA was about to end in the beginning of 2007 and would not be renewed. For administrative reasons, the contract with the Service Provider could not be immediately extended and a tender had to be launched. Due to a delay in the launching of this tender, the EMA was left with a gap of five months, in which there would not be support from a Service Provider. The European Commission took it upon itself to provide the most urgent services to the EMA itself (mostly consisting of authorizing new members to the EMA), but otherwise, no support could be given to the activities of the Jobs Team. We then decided to postpone all further reaching activities until a new Service Provider had been hired. At this moment, we are in discussion with the Service Provider and the rest of the Launch Committee about further activities of the Jobs Team (see next chapter, *Plans for the future*).

1.d Country Representatives

As mentioned above, the Jobs Team launched a call for Country Representatives to help out on the Jobs Team activities. We are very excited about the enthusiastic response we got to our request! We have the following members in our Country Representatives team: Jorge Amayan (Ecuador), Abdeltif El Ouahrani (Morocco), Ahmad Hamidov (Uzbekistan), Cristina Goens (Chile), Mendpara Manojkumar (India), Viradia Jigneshkumar Ramjibhai (India), Faisal Shah (Pakistan), Atif Iqbal (Pakistan), Thomas Chevalier (France), Xiaochen Zhang (China), and Sanou Dramane (Burkina Faso). More people applied, but we decided postpone allowing more people in the Country Representatives Team until the cooperation with the new Service Provider would begin. We very much appreciate the help they have provided until now, and look forward to work more intensively with them in the future now that we have a Service Provider yet again!

1.e EMA policy debate and cooperation with other teams

Together with the other EMA Service Teams, the Jobs Team has added to the Policy debate within the EMA, and has cooperated with the other teams to further the goals of the EMA. In this section, the input and help received to and from other teams is summarized. We have received more support than is listed here, and we want to acknowledge every Liaison Group member and everyone involved with the EMA who has provided us with information and advice about Jobs Team activities. Thank you very much!

Policy

The Jobs team actively contributed to and participated in the discussions about the Statute of the EMA. In our view, this has produced a very impressive document. We want to thank the Policy Team and all other teams on their continuing efforts and feedback to create this Statute!

Magazine

The Jobs Team has agreed to provide input for Magazine. The plan is to have an alumni section in the magazine, where a successful EM alumnus introduces him/herself and explains how the EM programme helped further his career.

Newsletter

The Jobs Team has provided a substantial amount of input for all Newsletters from November 2006 on. Responses to our efforts have been very positive, which we greatly appreciate. As mentioned above, the creation of an online database for career possibilities might change the Jobs Section in the Newsletter. With the Newsletter team, the Jobs Team needs to discuss how online database will relate to the Jobs Section in the Newsletter. We do see a place for a Jobs Entry in the Newsletter also in the long run.

Promotions

As has been mentioned above, Promotions and Jobs had set up plans to work together on contacting prospective employers of EM alumni, with the help of the Country representatives. Due to the gap in service provision, this cooperation has not been developed further. Now that a new Service Provider has been hired, we are very excited to extend our efforts into this direction, with the help of new team members!

Conferences

The Jobs Team plans to support the Conferences Team in their conferences by helping them get connected to companies that might be interested in EM alumni. For the Climate Change Conference, contacts have been made with some companies already, on an informal level. This has been discussed with the Conference Team in July. Cooperation with the Conference Team on the Climate Change Conference should be discussed later this year.

IT

The IT team has been very helpful with setting up email addresses for the Jobs Team early on. We will continue to request the support of the IT team when constructing the online database. Furthermore, in cooperation with the IT Team, the Jobs Team has achieved that professional experience can be added to the profile of EM members on our community website. This way, EM members can contact alumni that work in the company or field of their choice.

2. Plans for the future

To a large extent, the plans the Jobs Team developed in the Working Agenda for 2008 are still valid. We will continue to work on realizing these plans. Specific issues are highlighted below.

2.a Actions to undertake

The following actions are planned to be undertaken by the Jobs Team in 2007/2008, subject to further input and discussion by the GA and the Steering Committee of the EMA:

1. Continue with the Jobs Entry in the Newsletter
2. Set up an online database (jobs, internships, PhD positions, other including volunteering)
3. Improve information provision to EMA about career perspectives and other useful information
4. Continue building a network of Country Representatives to help out with Jobs activities, and for EMA members to contact for information
5. Start setting up contacts with international organisations and multinationals
6. Look into further issues (see below)

2.b Challenges

Getting the information

The Jobs Team is an information provider; information about career perspectives should be acquired and spread to EM alumni, and information about EM alumni and the EM quality label should be disseminated to prospective employers. As has been recognised from the start, getting the information is the key to success for the Jobs Team. It has also proven to be her major challenge. It is difficult to set up an information flow from alumni to the Jobs Team. However, the Jobs Team cannot acquire all this information by herself. The network of Country Representatives is a good start. A related challenge is the small size of the Jobs Team, which has led to a high workload for the two members of the Jobs Team. Even when the Jobs Team acquires information, this information needs to be put in a format suitable for dispersing it. This also requires quite some effort. Information needs to be found and spread, and we need people to help us work on this. We want to improve our effectiveness in this area, and are open to all suggestions from the General Assembly.

Budget

Since June 2007, the EMA is supported by ICU-net, a company that serves as Service Provider to the EMA. In the contract ICU-net signed with the EC, a budget for the support of the EMA is listed. In this budget, no funds are allocated to the Jobs Team activities. 10% of the entire budget has not been allocated, and is left to allocate to the discretion of the Steering Committee. Upon requesting, the Jobs Team has been reassured by the Launch Committee that part of this non-allocated budget will be used for the Jobs Team (July 3-4, Brussels). Furthermore, the Conference team has offered to free part of their budget to support the Jobs Team. We are very appreciative of both offers! The Jobs Team would like to devote part of the budget to hiring someone (a trainee, student) to work on the Jobs activities for a number of hours a week. This option will be further looked into with the new members of the Jobs Team and with the Service Provider, and the final proposal will be subject to approval by the Steering Committee.

Preventing a brain drain

EMA members and the European Commission have stressed several times their concern for a possible brain drain that might occur as a negative side-effect from allowing more non-Europeans to do a high level education in Europe. The Jobs Team is very much aware of these concerns. To address these concerns, we have tried to find and provide information about career opportunities both inside and outside Europe. Our current focus on PhD positions also is directed at this concern: getting a doctoral degree is a limited period position, after which more skills and knowledge can be brought back to the country of origin. We welcome any further suggestions on how to further prevent a brain drain from occurring.

2.c Other issues

Cooperation with Service Provider

The Service Provider of the EMA, ICU-net, and the European Commission have, in the view of the Jobs Team, have underestimated the efforts and time it takes to set up an effective and well-run Jobs and Career function for the EMA. The fact that no budget has been allocated to Jobs activities in the contract the ICU-net signed with the Commission about service provisions to the EMA is a clear indication of this. In July, at the first meeting between ICU-net and the Launch Committee, the Jobs Team has vocalised her concerns towards ICU-net and the EC. Jobs needs more, and possible hired, help in finding information about job openings, scholarships, etc. Upon experience with another alumni association, ICU-net was relying on information spontaneously emerging from the alumni database (EM alumni who work and know of openings in their company would alert the EMA). However, the EMA has a very specific alumni database. Not only is the EMA a very young organisation, meaning that most of the EM alumni do not have a job yet, most of the EM members are not European, and do not work in Europe. As mentioned above², we are not looking only for European positions. However, we do need to realize that the European positions are the ones in demand by EM alumni. The Jobs Team has made ICU-net to understand that the EMA cannot rely on her alumni database only to provide information about job openings and other career opportunities solely. The Jobs Team has scheduled a meeting with Sebastian Popp from ICU-net to discuss solving the specific challenges the Jobs Team faces, and what options seem feasible in light of the limited budget.

Getting a (hired) hand

The Jobs Team has been given approval to use some of the non-allocated budget for Jobs Team purposes. We have been discussing hiring a trainee for the EMA, to help us find information about career opportunities and get in touch with prospective employers. The workload has proven to be too much for the Jobs Team alone. Of course, this does depend on how many new members will join the Jobs Team at the GA in October 2007. However, as mentioned above, acquiring the information is only part of the story. It needs to be spread as well. The Jobs Team wants to approach prospective employers of the EMA. However, the modus for approaching these parties needs to be well thought out and consistent. When these parties in turn contact us, the EMA needs to be able to address the requests of prospective employers accurately and promptly. For all these reasons, the Jobs Team is of the opinion hiring a trainee to help out with Jobs Team activities would be a great investment for the EMA. We will look into this option further and of course it will be subject to final approval of the Steering Committee.

² See under section 2b: *Preventing a brain drain*, page 7

Hiring a professional recruitment agency

The request for contacting a recruitment agency on behalf of all EMA members, and allowing all members to request their assistance in finding a position has been brought forth by the Liaison Group (the aggregate of all Service Team members)³. After feedback from the European Commission and the then Service Provider ACA, the Jobs Team decided to include this in the working document, but first focus on other initiatives. The budget of the EMA and the Jobs Team in general has limits. Before the EMA invests funds to hire a professional recruitment agency, a cost-benefit analysis of these plans should be undertaken. The growing membership of the EMA, which we are thrilled with, would imply that the costs of this option would be substantial. We first need to assess how many members of the EMA would request hiring of a professional recruitment agency, how effective hiring a professional agency can be, and whether the costs would outweigh the benefits to all members of the EMA as compared to other services the EMA and the Jobs Team want to undertake⁴. It is a very interesting option, which will be looked into in the near future.

3. Join the Jobs Team!

At the General Assembly, the members of the General Assembly will be entitled to join the Service Team of their choice. We would greatly welcome any GA member that would want to contribute to the activities of the Jobs Team, expand these activities and take them to a higher level!

We are looking for the GA members with the following profile:

- Enthusiastic
- Pro-active
- Thinking outside the box
- Flexible
- Able to invest time (estimated 5 hours a month on average, depends on your initiatives)
- Easy to make contacts

If you want to help out with finding and providing information about career perspectives to EM alumni;

If you want to build a network for EM alumni to contact when looking for a job or other information;

If you want to contact international organisations and multinationals to spread the word about the EM quality label and the potential of EMA members;

And if you think the profile fits you like a glove,

Please join the Jobs Team! We would be more than happy to welcome you and look forward to a successful cooperation in this challenging and exciting next phase for the EMA!

Most sincerely and with the warmest regards,

The Jobs Team of the EMA

Hanneke Luth

Sandra Oberhollenzer

³ Jobs Team Working Agenda, point 20 (see above, note 1)

⁴ The Conference Team has offered to redistribute the funds for organizing conferences to increase the funds of the Jobs Team, since the Jobs Team has no funds in the current EMA budget set up by the EC and ICU-net. This offer is greatly welcomed by the Jobs Team! The Jobs shall discuss internally and with the Steering Committee how the total of EMA funds for the Jobs Team can be allocated in the most efficient and effective way.

Addendum: Working agenda for period 2006-2008 (20 October 2006, Brussels)

The EMA Jobs Team structured their work around the following aspects:

Tasks of the Jobs Search and Placements team

- Provide information to students about positions at companies, organizations and universities
- Provide information to companies, organizations and universities about EM alumni
- Communicating results to use as promotion for EM programs (in cooperation with Promotions team)

Focus

- Contact with companies, organizations, universities
- Career section on EMA website
- Organization
- Communication
- Our network

Contact with companies, organizations, universities

1. Contact with companies and organizations is a very important task. Our channels to get in contact with companies and organizations of interest to EM alumni will be:
 - Alumni
 - University search databases and other databases
 - Current jobs and traineeships on offer within individual masters
 - PhD positions at all top universities
2. To approach companies and organizations we will promote the EM alumni with a special label, that creates awareness about the specific skills EM alumni have. For instance: international experience, multilingual, willingness to undertake challenges, open-minded, flexible, high level of education. This could also be used in the identity building of the EM alumni. We will cooperate with the Promotions team on this.
3. To increase our visibility and get the placement project started, our primary focus in the short term will be on:
 - International organizations
 - Multinationals
 - Universities (PhD's)
4. First focus is on PhD positions in universities, since they seem very popular with EM alumni. All EM alumni have links to universities, so the ads for PhD positions should be relatively easy to find. We need help with getting this information (see organization, Placement Representatives).
5. We (and our Placement Representatives) will get in touch with university career centers to ask for advice and contacts.
6. Keeping in touch with the companies and organizations that placed ads is crucial to see how satisfied they are with the results, how we can improve, and whether they have been able to fill the position and hire EM alumni.

Contact with EM students and alumni

7. A career section on the EMA website will be set up.
8. The new ads for positions can be posted in the EM newsletter, with a link to the ad in the career section.

Career section on EMA website

9. Offers to be fully up-to-date, accessible at all time, and all together. Initially, there will be four sections that are general and will have something to offer for all EM alumni, namely:
 - Jobs and traineeships
 - Internships
 - PhD positions
 - Other (including volunteer work)

As mentioned, the first focus will be on PhD positions since that will be easiest to arrange for us and we want to have something on offer to increase our visibility.

10. When the database is up and running and ads are being added frequently, a feature of the career section to subscribe to receive new ads the minute they get posted would be convenient. We can also have ads that address specific masters instead of general positions. Only then, we can structure the ads according to a cluster. That is not our first priority.
11. Feature of the database: ask students to write comments on the database and tell us when they find a position through the database.
12. Ads should have a similar format.
13. We want a profile for our career section. Our career section offers international positions, which appeal to a wide range of disciplines. Alumni should know what sort of jobs to find through the EMA website.
14. Other information will also be provided in the career section, for instance:
 - Career fairs organized throughout the world
 - Links to international search databases
 - Scholarships for PhD positions

Organization

15. This is a lot of work; we need a larger team. Since course representatives for the new masters will only be elected for the GA meeting in May, we will need Placement Program and Country Representatives. We will ask for people to help out in the newsletter, and through this document.

Our network

16. We need contacts at all top universities (not limited to participating universities, therefore increasing with time) to forward PhD positions that are of interest to EM alumni.
17. Our network will also consist of the alumni; ideally, they would forward us the ads for positions in their companies or organizations.
18. We need your help! Tell us all information that you think would be useful to us! An alumni network is all about diffusion of information!

Other issues

19. A database with alumni that students can contact for getting information about companies or general questions about looking for jobs will not be set up separately. The IT –team will ask EM alumni to update their profile with the position they have now and add to the requests for information when you register for the EM website something like the following: Did you graduate? No/Yes ? If yes, did you already find a job? No/Yes ? If yes, current position:(position) at (company or organization you are working with). This should be (optionally) viewable to all EMA members, so everyone can contact alumni working at companies or organizations of their interest.
20. We will look into contacting a recruitment agency, and allowing all members of the EMA to request their assistance in finding a position. This however is not a priority.
21. Career fairs organized by the EMA will be considered at a later stage.
22. Career fairs that are organized now could be used as a way of getting in touch with companies and promoting the EM label. We will cooperate with the Promotions group on this.
23. There is a lot of work to be done, and we could really use the help of all the representatives and any other EM student who could give us advice and information! We appreciate it very much.

Jobs & Placements team

Hanneke Luth

Sandra Oberhollenzer