

Student Services Network Toolkit



arQus
European University Alliance



@ArqusAlliance



// Glossary

Administrative Services

Services responsible for managing the administrative processes related to the access, enrolment, study and academic success of the student (admission, administration of student data, examination administration, conferral of academic degrees and similar).

Career Services

Services responsible for providing support, resources, and guidance to students and alumni in their career development and job/ internship search efforts.

The primary goal of career services is to assist individuals in exploring career options, developing job search skills, and connecting with employment opportunities aligned with their interests, skills, and academic background.

Diversity and Inclusion Services

Services aimed at fostering a diverse and inclusive campus environment that values and respects the unique backgrounds, perspectives, and identities of all members of the university community.

These services work to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion across various aspects of campus life, including education, employment, programming, and campus culture.

Health and Wellbeing Services

Services that refer to the various resources, programmes, and facilities provided to support the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of students, faculty, and staff.

These services are aimed at promoting overall health, preventing illness, and addressing the diverse needs of individuals within the university community.

Student Life Services

These services encompass a broad range of programmes, resources, and support systems designed to enhance the overall student experience and promote student engagement, well-being, and personal development beyond the academic realm. These services aim to create a vibrant and supportive campus community where students can thrive socially, culturally, and personally.

Technology Services

Services responsible for managing and providing a wide range of technology-related resources, support, and infrastructure to support teaching, learning, research, and administrative functions within the institution.

These services are essential for ensuring that students, faculty, and staff have access to the necessary technology tools and resources to fulfil their academic and professional needs.

// General introduction and overview

The Arqus Student Agora is an umbrella initiative for diverse student-led groups designed to empower students to co-create our new European University in academic, social, and cultural areas. It provides a safe space for students at partner universities to actively enhance their European University experience.

As the Arqus Alliance grows to include more stakeholders, the perspectives of students are crucial in applying a bottom-up approach alongside a top-down approach. This combined strategy aims to create a future university that values diversity and sustainability in research, governance, and community.

Engaging services as stakeholders is vital in this process, as they play a key role in supporting and enhancing the student experience by providing essential resources, addressing challenges, and fostering an inclusive and supportive academic environment.



The objective of this toolkit is to enhance the student experience by providing comprehensive resources and support services tailored to the needs of students across the Arqus alliance institutions. It seeks to streamline access to student services, identify and address barriers, and facilitate the sharing of best practices to improve service delivery and student satisfaction.

The primary target audience for the toolkit is the administrative staff and service providers of all institutions within the Arqus alliance, who are involved in designing and delivering student services.

To achieve these objectives, the toolkit includes several key components. First, an inventory and mapping of local services allowing a clear overview of the resources and support systems accessible to students at each institution. Additionally, best practice information about the strategies and support mechanisms implemented by the services to overcome the identified challenges, gathering insights and best practices and leveraging strengths that can be applied to improve student services within the Arqus alliance.

The toolkit will also open the possibility to the implementation of collaborative transformation projects aimed at enhancing the student experience through improved student services. These cooperative projects will address specific needs and gaps identified during the earlier stages. The final step involves designing the toolkit itself, incorporating the information and insights gathered from the previous activities. The toolkit will be structured to be user-friendly and accessible, providing valuable resources and guidance to students and service providers.

The toolkit is designed to be a dynamic and evolving resource that continuously adapts to the changing needs of students and the educational landscape, ensuring that it remains relevant and effective in enhancing the student experience across the Arqus alliance.



// Co-creating with students

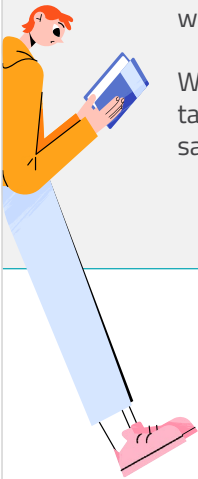
In co-creating with students, we explore a collaborative journey that places students at the heart of service design and delivery. This subchapter delves into the concept of co-creation, highlighting its numerous benefits and providing a practical guide on how we can actively engage students as partners in this process.

Harnessing the unique insights and experiences of our students ensures that our services are more relevant, effective, and closely aligned with their needs and preferences. This collaborative approach not only enhances service quality but also fosters a stronger sense of community and ownership among both students and staff. Together, we can create a more supportive and engaging campus environment.

What Does Co-creating with Students Mean?

Co-creating with students means involving them directly in the design, development, and implementation of student services. This collaborative approach recognizes students as key stakeholders who can provide valuable insights and feedback.

While designing with and for students, we ensure that services are tailored to their actual needs and preferences, which leads to higher satisfaction and engagement.



The Benefits of Co-creating with Students



Enhanced Relevance and Effectiveness.

Services co-created with student input are more likely to meet their actual needs, resulting in higher satisfaction and better utilisation.

Empowerment and Ownership.

Students feel a sense of ownership and connection to the services they help design, which promotes a stronger sense of community.



Innovation and Creativity.

Students bring fresh perspectives that can lead to innovative solutions and improvements in service delivery.

Stronger Community Bonds.

Collaborative projects foster a sense of partnership between students and staff, promoting a more inclusive and supportive campus environment.



Having Students as Partners

Treating students as partners involves recognizing their expertise and valuing their contributions throughout the co-creation process.

This partnership should be built on mutual respect, open communication, and a shared commitment to improving the student experience. Key principles include transparency, inclusiveness, and a willingness to listen and adapt based on student feedback.





// Hints

Concrete Steps for Co-creating with Students

a

Establish Clear Objectives and Goals

Define the specific outcomes you aim to achieve through co-creation. Ensure these objectives align with the overall mission and goals of the student services network.

b

Engage Students Early and Often

Involve students from the outset in identifying needs, brainstorming ideas, and setting priorities. Use surveys, focus groups, and town hall meetings to gather initial input.

c

Create Diverse and Inclusive Teams

Form co-creation teams that include a diverse mix of students from different backgrounds, disciplines, and years of study. Ensure representation from underrepresented groups to capture a wide range of perspectives.

d

Develop Structured Frameworks for Collaboration

Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and processes for collaboration. Use project management tools and regular meetings to keep track of progress and ensure accountability.

e

Utilise Student Service Ambassadors

Appoint student service ambassadors to act as liaisons between the student body and service providers. Ambassadors can gather feedback, promote initiatives, and ensure student voices are heard.

f

Facilitate Regular Feedback Forums and Info Sessions

Organise regular feedback forums, webinars, and info sessions to keep students informed and engaged. Use these platforms to gather ongoing feedback and adjust services accordingly.

g

Implement Digital Components

Develop digital tools such as online forums, FAQs, and “Ask a Student” sessions to provide 24/7 support and engagement. Ensure these tools are user-friendly and accessible to all students.

h

Pilot Projects and Prototyping

Start with small-scale pilot projects to test ideas and gather feedback. Use iterative prototyping to refine solutions based on student input and real-world testing.

i

Celebrate Successes

Recognize and celebrate the contributions of students involved in co-creation. Highlight successful projects and initiatives to motivate continued collaboration.

j

Ensure Sustainability and Continuous Improvement

Develop a long-term strategy for maintaining student involvement in service design and delivery. Regularly review and update services based on changing student needs and emerging best practices.

// Overcoming Challenges



In the “**Overcoming Challenges**” section, we address common issues faced by both Arqus Alliance partner universities and the student community and highlight good practices implemented by various institutions. Here below you can find the challenges the Arqus Student Agora Working Group together with the Arqus Student Council have decided to focus on.

Throughout the toolkit you will find their corresponding good practices.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Reaching Students

Ensuring information reaches students in a timely and effective manner through various communication platforms and strategies. This also implies addressing the lack of awareness among students about available services and how to engage with them. Effective orientation programmes and information dissemination are key.



The Student Helpdesk



The helpdesk is a centralised point of contact with a team whose aim is to provide guidance, information and support to students. A primary objective of the team is to help raise awareness of the range of supports available, both personal and academic, and let students know how they can engage with these supports.

The helpdesk was established to act as the one-stop-shop for students, to answer their questions and to connect them with the correct support to assist them in overcoming challenges and to help navigate their time at Maynooth. The helpdesk is available in two on campus locations as well as virtually.

[Go to Helpdesk →](#)

Student Support Service



UGranada's Student Support Service (SAE) is dedicated to resolving general student issues and providing guidance when they're unsure where to turn. SAE helps students understand the university's academic offerings and addresses various problems during their stay. Key services include legal advice and support for students with disabilities, ensuring accessibility and comprehensive assistance throughout their academic journey.

[Go to Student Support Service →](#)

UGranada and the Student Information Centre



In the University of Granada there is a centre to assure that the students find the information. It does answer inquiries about the services of the Vice-Rectorate for Student Services and Employability.

[Go to Student Information Centre →](#)

Life at VU



Vilnius University offers a comprehensive guide to student services, support and extracurricular activities. This dedicated support system ensures that students have access to the resources they need for a successful experience during study period.

[Go to Life at VU →](#)

Presentation of the available services



The Lyon 1 university has a comprehensive presentation done by two students to introduce all the services offered by the university. The presentation can be found online at the following link:

[Go to Presentation of the available services →](#)

4students



This is the central student service unit of the University of Graz and offers students or prospective students targeted support with all questions concerning studying at the university. The staff can be contacted by email, telephone or in person - email enquiries are answered within 24 hours on working days. The unit sees itself as an information hub/ one-stop-shop that is in regular contact with other student services at the University of Graz and refers those seeking advice to the relevant offices for specific enquiries.

[Go to 4students →](#)

Career guidance



From the point of view of reaching high number of students on information about career building, in addition to synchronous services to be booked in advance (eg. career guidance workshop, individual career guidance sessions, etc), some asynchronous moodle courses and videos are provided, both in Italian and in English to reach a higher number of students and graduates.

[Go to Career guidance →](#)

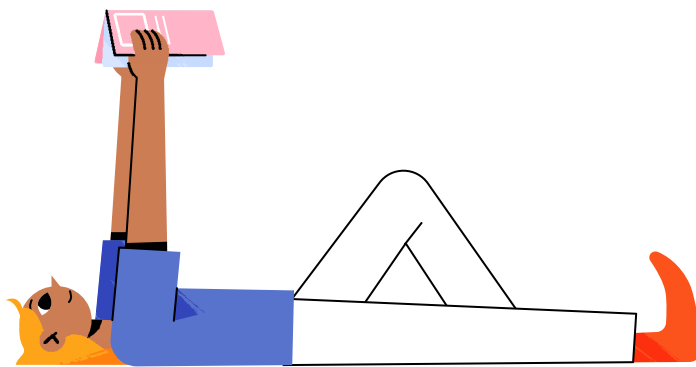
Student Engagement



UGranada's Student Engagement's Centre provides information about everything related to participation in university life. The Student Engagement Centre also works for improving and encouraging the involvement of students in university governance structures.

It also ensures the analysis of the different structures regarding student participation. One initiative of the centre is to get students involved in the university life. The centre has created a "Student's Guide", dedicated to what students can do during their studies and a "Prospective Student's Guide" Addressing future students of the university.

[Go to Student Engagement →](#)



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Website Content Organisation

Structuring website information in a user-friendly way to help students easily find what they need. This includes logical categorization, intuitive navigation, and updated content.



Central student website



At the University of Graz, the central student website is oriented towards the student journey and distinguishes between information for prospective students and information for current students at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of their studies.

The sub-pages of each section provide all the information, support offers and points of contact that students may need at any point in the course of their studies.

[Go to Central student website →](#)

Content organisation



“Studying at Leipzig University” webpage is organised to serve various groups. Prospective students can find information on admissions, study programmes, and applications.

Current students have access to essential resources and support services. Graduates can explore alumni services and career support, while international students get guidance and details on exchange programmes.

The Guidance and Services section offers academic advising and comprehensive support. Additionally, the website’s International Centre supports international relations for students, scholars, alumni, and German university members, facilitating global study, research, and teaching opportunities.

[Go to Content organisation →](#)

Centralised information hub



A single page on the UNIPD website provides comprehensive information on application procedures, key dates, required documents, and language requirements. This section is crucial for international students and is easily navigable with clear subheadings like “How to apply”, “Admission results,” and “Key Academic Dates”.

For example the Study with Us section highlights the variety of degree programmes available, including those taught in English and international joint programmes. It also includes information on funding opportunities, innovative teaching methods, and student testimonials, helping students understand the academic environment and support systems available. The page also includes a link to the Unibuddy ambassadors initiative.

[Go to Centralised information hub →](#)

International Office page



The University of Wroclaw exemplifies good practices in website content organisation. The site features clear and logical categorization, making navigation intuitive for users. Key sections such as “Exchange,” “Study,” “Accommodation,” and “Visiting Staff and Faculty” are easily accessible, each containing relevant and updated information.

The inclusion of FAQs, detailed programme information, and contact details further aids in creating a user-friendly experience, ensuring that students and staff can efficiently find the information they need.

[International Office page →](#)

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Contacting Services

Providing tools for students to contact services, such as booking slots or online query systems. This ensures accessibility and ease of communication.



ASK - digital assistant for students



ASK is a digital assistant for students that answers general questions about studying, uniIT, library and Admissions Department, at the University of Graz.

[Go to ASK →](#)

Administrative processes



UMinho's Academic Management Services is responsible for managing the administrative processes related to the access, enrollment, path and school performance of the University's students, as well as providing assistance to students through a diversified means of contact (on-site, video call, email, electronic desk, telephone, chatbot) ensuring all the types of needs for all profiles, with an increased capacity at the beginning of the academic year.

[Go to Administrative processes →](#)

UMinho chatbot



This is a digital assistant for students that answers various questions about applications, registration and enrollment, accreditation, certificates and diplomas, exams, school awards, special attendance regimes, tuition fees, electronic services, and more.

[Go to UMinho chatbot →](#)

Information page



At the University of Padua each service has its own information page with the details on how to get in touch. Mostly, besides email and calls, students have the possibility to book slots directly.

[Go to Information page →](#)

Centralised contact point



Members of the Vilnius University community and applicants for studies can contact academic counsellors at the Student Affairs and Career Office (SACO) or at each academic department (faculty) to discuss issues related to the study process, finances, and internship opportunities.

[Go to International Centralised contact point →](#)

Centralised student service



At Leipzig University, the Studierenden Service Zentrum (SSZ) is the central service facility for all prospective students, applicants and current students. It brings together the information, advice and services offered by the Career Service, the International Centre, the Student Office, the Student Advisory Service and the Studentenwerk Leipzig.

Each service has its own information page with the details on how to get in touch. Mostly, besides email and calls, students have the possibility to book slots directly.

[Go to Centralised student service →](#)

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Response Time from Services

Managing service response times and potentially having a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with students to guarantee timely support.



Electronic Desk



UMinho's Electronic Desk allows students and alumni, using their login and password, to access various online services (e.g. update of personal data, certificates, declarations, working student status, accreditation of training and professional experience, and information requests), allowing them to keep track of their requests.

As a ISO 9001 certified service, the proposed Service Level Agreement (SLA) for requests handled by the Academic Management Services is always present.

[Go to Electronic Desk →](#)

Central service facility



The SSZ is the central service facility for all prospective students, applicants and current students of Leipzig University.

It brings together the information, advice and services offered by the Career Service, the International Centre, the Student Office, the Student Advisory Service and the Studentenwerk Leipzig.

[Go to Central service facility →](#)

Opportunities section



This section lists various opportunities available to students, including internships, research projects, and exchange programmes. This underscores the university's commitment to providing enriching experiences beyond the classroom.

The Services section details a wide range of support services, from career support to healthcare, ensuring students have access to essential resources during their studies.

Effective features include user-friendly navigation with a well-organised menu, detailed subsections breaking down complex information, and comprehensive coverage of all aspects of student life.

[Go to Opportunities section →](#)



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Orientation in the First Semester

Providing comprehensive orientation programmes to help new students understand what it means to study at the university and integrate into the academic community.



The basic module



This is a University of Graz entry and orientation guide at the beginning of the study programme. The basic module teaches the basics of everyday study, provides an initial approach to networked thinking and is the perfect introduction to a bachelor's or diploma programme.

The entire basic module consists of three parts, from which two - the subject-specific and the faculty-wide module - are anchored in every curriculum. After completing all parts of the basic module, students can obtain a certificate.

[Go to The basic module →](#)

Orientation week



At UGranada there is an Orientation week at the beginning of each semester. Also, a special week for orientation for international students and talks in every faculty take place.

Arqus Students have a special stand in the Orientation Week of the University, involving also the ESN Granada local section.

[Go to Orientation week →](#)

Orientation Tutorials



The University of Graz tutorials are led by students from the higher semesters of the respective degree programme. With their experience, they are able to guide first year students through the start of their degree programme and help them with any questions or problems.

[Go to Orientation Tutorials →](#)

Sou.uminho.pt 5.0



UMinho's Sou.uminho.pt 5.0 Portal is a central hub for first year students to access important information and services related to their academic journey at the University of Minho.

Here the community can also access information about the ways of engaging in the welcoming of these new students.

[Go to sou.uminho.pt 5.0 →](#)

Orientation



School graduates interested in enrolling as undergraduate students have numerous opportunities to look around the Leipzig university campus.

They can take part in the open days, guided tours and talks, and get a taste of student life in the beautiful city.

[Go to Orientation →](#)

MyMaynooth



The new Maynooth University Student Orientation programme “My Maynooth” provides a warm welcome to new students and supports them as they begin their academic journey. The programme begins with a dedicated website which is promoted to students when they receive an offer with the university. This provides the starter information they need to know to begin their registration process and get ready to arrive on campus.

Once they register online, students then have access to an online orientation course delivered on our VLE Moodle. The course combined information on services and supports, strategies for learning, student-led video content, and activities empowering students to become familiar with the university experience before they arrive on campus for in-person orientation.

Next, the on-campus ‘Welcome Week’ is the first in-person event for students which focuses on providing a warm welcome, beginning the process of connecting students with their faculty and each other, and preparing students for their academic life. The ongoing orientation then continues throughout the academic year through the release of new content on the Moodle course complimentary with on-campus activity.

[Go to MyMaynooth →](#)

First year? See how it works



The University of Wroclaw provides a comprehensive orientation page for first-year students, exemplifying best practices in student orientation. The page is structured to offer essential information in a user-friendly manner, addressing common concerns and providing practical advice.

Key sections include details on campus navigation, contact information for key services, and guidance on academic procedures such as registration and scholarships. The clear organisation and accessibility of information ensure that new students can quickly acclimate and find the resources they need.

[Go to First year? See how it works →](#)

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Organisational and Educational Support for Students

Offering structured support services to help students manage their academic and personal responsibilities effectively.



Face to face, peer to peer guidance and tutoring



Every year, the University of Padua announces a competition that takes account of university merit, abilities and aptitudes, evaluated by way of a selection interview. Tutors can be involved in different positions, based on their interest and aptitudes:

1. Informational
2. Educational
3. Coordination

[Go to Face to face →](#)

Peer-to-peer welcoming initiative



The UMinho Ambassadors programme is a peer-to-peer welcoming initiative. Ambassadors are students from all schools and institutes who volunteer to welcome new students to UMinho's undergraduate programmes. Ambassadors undergo training sessions where they build team spirit, deepen their knowledge of the university, develop communication skills, and learn how to embrace the diversity of their new peers. They play a crucial role in helping new students feel welcomed and supported as they begin their academic journey.

[Go to Peer-to-peer welcoming initiative →](#)

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Job and Career Guidance

Providing career services that offer guidance, resources, and support for job searches and career development.



Mentoring Programme at UNIPD



In collaboration with the Alumni Association, the University of Padua has launched a mentoring project whose aim is to support students, graduates and PhDs by providing them with professional guidance. Mentors are managers and experts who provide mentees with their expertise in various sectors of interest, offer them the opportunity to explore career paths and the skills required in today's labour market, and provide support and guidance in making professional choices. The enrichment of the mentee and also of the mentor stems precisely from the possibility of exchanging views and establishing a relationship of trust. The mentoring course is reserved for a small group of participants (students enrolled in a bachelor/master degree, PhD, students enrolled in a post-graduate course, Graduates or PhDs up to a maximum of 12 months after graduation).

[Go to Mentoring Programme at UNIPD →](#)

Student careers at Vilnius University



The career services provided at Vilnius University can help students get to know themselves better, find the most suitable career path, set future goals and set milestones to achieve them. Vilnius University Career Centre provides personal and group career counseling, provides CV and LinkedIn profile analysis and conducts job interview simulations.

[Go to Student careers at Vilnius University →](#)

Professional Orientation and Insertion



Lyon1 University has a service (SOIE) dedicated to guide students in their studies and professional career. The SOIE proposes workshops on different themes all over the year on higher education programmes, careers, the job market, and companies. Students can find guidance in career choices, and support for their professional integration.

[Go to Professional Orientation and Insertion →](#)

From university to the working world



Leipzig University's Career Service is the central point of contact for students and companies during the transition from university to the working world. The advisory services and skills development opportunities offered by the Career Service prepare students for their individual career paths early on, provide orientation and open up new perspectives.

Students are offered workshops for professional skills development, orientation talks by alumni, advice on the application process and preparing application documents, perfecting their CV and other events, extensive information on occupational fields and a mentoring programme.

[Go to From university to the working world →](#)

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Tools for Prospective Students to Directly Contact Current Students

Using platforms to facilitate direct communication between prospective and current students, providing real-life insights and answering questions about university life.



Unibuddy at UNIPD



The University of Padua uses Unibuddy to connect prospective students with current students for real insights into university life. Through Unibuddy, students can ask about the application process, what makes a strong application, and why they should join UNIPD.

It also helps prospective students explore living in Padua, discovering the best places to socialise and enjoy the city. Interested students can register with the Unibuddy webpage and start chatting with Padua students to learn more about studying and living in Italy.

[Go to Unibuddy at UNIPD →](#)

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// Explore Local Services

In this section, we explain the comprehensive mapping and taxonomy of student services across Arqus Alliance partner universities. We have meticulously mapped these services to ensure clarity and accessibility.

Each service has been categorised according to our established glossary and taxonomy, facilitating a unified understanding of the diverse support systems available.

The taxonomy corresponds to our glossary, which includes:

1. Administrative Services:

Managing admissions, enrolment, and academic processes.

2. Career Services:

Supporting career development and job search efforts.

3. Diversity and Inclusion Services:

Promoting equity and inclusion on campus.

4. Health and Wellbeing Services:

Supporting physical, mental, and emotional health.

5. Student Life Services:

Enhancing student engagement and personal development.

6. Technology Services:

Providing essential technology resources and support.

Visit our [Student Services Database](#) for a detailed look at these services and how they are mapped.

This database is designed to facilitate easy exploration and understanding of the support systems available at each partner university.



// Transformational projects

With the comprehensive mapping of student services now complete, there is an exciting opportunity to develop synergies between partner universities through collaborative projects to pinpoint common challenges and opportunities.

This opens the door to establishing contacts and forming focused working groups in specific service areas, such as Career Services and Health and Wellbeing Services.

Through these collaborative efforts, we have the potential to significantly improve the overall student experience by leveraging shared knowledge and resources.



Down below, we propose a structure to develop these projects to enhance services within the Arqus Network:

1. Identification of Common Needs and Opportunities

- ✓ Conduct workshops and brainstorming sessions with key stakeholders, including students, service providers, and administrative staff, to gather input and ideas from various partner universities, ensuring diverse perspectives and expertise.

2. Project Planning

- ✓ Define clear goals and objectives for the collaborative project, aligned with the overall aim of enhancing student services.
- ✓ Clearly assign roles and responsibilities to participating institutions and individuals.

3. Collaboration Framework

- ✓ Establish regular communication channels (e.g., monthly virtual meetings, collaborative platforms).
- ✓ Encourage blended learning and shared training sessions within the Network to build team cohesion and share expertise.

4. Resource Sharing

- ✓ Pool resources and best practices from each partner university - check the section [Overcoming Challenges](#) in this document.
- ✓ Document and disseminate best practices, innovative solutions, and lessons learned from the collaborative projects

5. Implementation

- ✓ Execute the project plan, each partner university contributing to the implementation of agreed-upon initiatives.
- ✓ Monitor progress, evaluate the output and its sustainability, and make adjustments as needed.

6. Evaluation and Feedback

- ✓ Collect feedback from students and staff involved.
- ✓ Evaluate the impact of the projects on student services.

7. Continuous Improvement

- ✓ Use insights gained to refine and expand collaborative efforts.
- ✓ Create a community of practice in the identified areas.
- ✓ Systematically update the Student Services Database with new resources and outcomes from the projects.

// Next Steps



1. Future contributions and updates in terms of good practices

Conduct workshops and brainstorming sessions with key stakeholders, including students, service providers, and administrative staff, to gather input and ideas from various partner universities, ensuring diverse perspectives and expertise.

2. Feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement

To provide feedback on the toolkit or suggest improvements, both student services and students can reach out to the Arqus Student Agora team at student-agera@arqus-alliance.eu.

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