#ARC6

# 6th ASEF Rectors' Conference & Students' Forum (ARC6) 2017, Singapore

## Future-ready Universities and Graduates: Quality Education Beyond the Horizon

Students' Forum 9 - 12 October
Rectors' Conference 12 - 13 October

# Overview

Co-organised by

In Partnership with

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## BACKGROUND

Since its establishment in 2008, the ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC) has been a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform for university leaders, policy makers and education practitioners, business representatives and students to discuss higher education issues and shape the education landscape in Asia and Europe.

ARC is recognised as the Official Dialogue Partner of the ASEM Education Ministers Meeting (ASEM ME)[1]. Its results, including policy recommendations and research, feed into the preparation of ASEM MEs, which ARC rectors and student representatives are invited to attend. Moreover, as part of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (GAP), ARC contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

ARC takes place on biennial basis alternating between Asia and Europe. It addresses 3 areas in higher education: 1) quality and inclusive education, 2) university governance, and 3) university-business partnerships. To date, over 650 university leaders representing 226 universities from 51 Asian and European countries have participated in the conferences.

**Key characteristics of ARC:**

Engagement in the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Education Process, including the bi-annual ASEM Education Ministers' Meetings (ASEM MEs)

Opportunity to shape the evolving Asia-Europe educational landscape, from policy recommendations to thematically responsive capacity trainings

Experiental higher education conference fusing content-focused session with hands-on workshops

## ARC6

The 6th edition of the ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC6) will take place on 9-13 October 2017 in Singapore. ARC6 will focus on "Future-ready Universities and Graduates: Quality Education Beyond the Horizon".

ARC6 explores the needs, demands and expectations of future-ready universities and graduates. In a VUCA-world (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous), both institutions and individuals have to continuously evaluate and adapt their approach to disruptive times. This entails an on-going conversation and a constant balancing of values, knowledge development and skills-training. Higher education institutes, academics and students alike hold a social responsibility in the societies in which they operate and live.

ARC6 results in 2 Policy Recommendations sets, representing the perspectives of universities as well as students, which will be channelled and conveyed at the 6th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME6), 21-22 November 2017 in Seoul, Korea.

[1] The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is an intergovernmental forum for dialogue and cooperation established in 1996 to deepen relations between Asia and Europe, which addresses political, economic and socio-cultural issues of common concern. ASEM brings together 53 partners: Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, the Lao PDR, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and Viet Nam plus the ASEAN Secretariat and the European Union. For more information, please visit www.ASEMinfoboard.org

## PARTICIPANTS FROM 51 COUNTRIES

The ARC6 Rectors' Conference will gather around 150 rectors from renowned universities. Furthermore, the conference will invite over 50 representatives from governments, international and non-governmental education organisations, business leaders and industry representatives from up to 51 ASEM member countries. Participation is by invitation only.

The ARC6 Students' Forum, which precedes the Rectors' Conference, will gather participants from the 51 ASEM partner countries selected through an Open Call. The Open Call and selection process will ensure a geographical and gender balance as well as a diversity of participants from various fields, academic disciplines and other relevant experiences.

## BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPANTS

The multiple benefits for the ARC6 rectors and student participants are:

* Contribution to the policy dialogue agenda and practices on higher education collaboration in Asia and Europe
* Direct channels for the ARC6 Participants to Asian and European Education Ministers and the 6th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME6)
* Experiential agenda formats facilitating cross-sectoral conversations and collaborations, as well as integrated real-scenario workshops
* Access to an Asia-Europe network of over 150 on-site participating university leaders and 51 Students' Union/Association representatives
* Funding for all student representatives based outside of Singapore and also available upon request for the rectors

## PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

ARC6 consists of 2 programme elements: 1) a Students' Forum and 2) the following Rectors' Conference.

**The ARC6 Students' Forum will take place on 9-12 October 2017 and includes:**

**2-day Forum + ½ day Rectors' Conference**

Participants attend plenary and working group sessions, skills trainings, study visits and collaboratively develop policy recommendations. To stimulate exchange between rectors and students, students are invited to attend the Opening Ceremony and a 'speed-dating' session at the Rectors' Conference. Furthermore, 4 rectors will act as mentors during the Students' Forum and 4 students will attend the Rectors' Conference as observers.

Additional elements of the ARC6 Students' Forum are:

**Asia-Europe wide Open Call for Application and Online Survey:**

During the Open Call for Application period an online perception survey on quality education will be conducted. The results will be presented at ARC6, at the ASEM ME6 and shared online.

**5-week Online Preparatory Phase**

ARC6 student participants will have the opportunity to join webinars led by renowned researchers and professionals, conduct research and develop position papers.

**The Rectors' Conference will take place on 12-13 October 2017 and includes:**

**2-day Conference**

The ARC6 Rectors' Conference is designed as a thought-provocative and content-strong platform for university leaders to interact and exchange good practices. The programme fuses plenary and working group sessions as well as unconventional formats such as accessibility workshops and leadership swaps.
A highlight of ARC6 will be the Ministers-University Leaders Dialogue, with the Korean Education Minister as the host of ASEM ME6 and the Romanian Education Minister as the host of the 7th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME7) in 2019 as well as the Singaporean Minister of Education (all proposed).

**Moreover, ARC6 Rectors' Conference also includes:**

**Preparatory Survey**

Together with our partners, the European University Association (EUN) and the ASEAN University Association (AUN), ASEF will conduct an online survey among the ARC6 Rectors' on quality education and Asia-Europe educational collaborations. The survey results will feed into the ARC6 Policy Recommendation draft.

**Handover of Policy Recommendation and link to ASEM ME**

ARC6 closes with the personal hand-over of policy recommendations by Rectors and Students to the Korean and Romanian Minister of Education (both proposed). Representatives from ARC6 shall also participate in the ASEM Education Ministerial Meeting in Korea on 21-22 November 2017.

## THEME & SUB-TOPICS

Under the overall theme **"Future-ready Universities and Graduates: Quality Education beyond the Horizon"** ARC6 working group sessions evolve around 3 topics:

**1. Interdisciplinarity in Education and Research**

How can education/research build upon the diversity and inherent interdependencies of academic disciplines?

**2. Lifelong Learning: Holistic and Global Education**

What are the suitable approaches in combining values, knowledge and skills training to make universities a hotspot for building more socially and environmentally responsible universities and graduates? Is learning on-the-go the future of education?

**3. Access to Quality Education**

Which strategies could universities adopt to integrate disability, technology and financial issues in ensuring an inclusive education curriculum and what could be the role of the students in this process?

## RESULTS OF ARC6 FEED INTO

**ASEM Ministerial Meetings and ASEM activities:**

6th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME6),
21-22 November 2017, Seoul, Korea

7th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME7),
May 2019, Bucharest, Romania

ASEM Initiatives on Higher Education Collaboration across ASEM countries

**ASEF Projects:**

ASEF Capacity Trainings for University Staff/Students' Unions,
2018, Japan and the United Kingdom

7th ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC7),
2019, Bucharest, Romania

## REFERENCES

ARC5 at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, 4-8 April 2016
"Employability: Asia and Europe prepare the new generation"
Video link

ARC4 at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China, 23-27 March 2015
"University-Business Partnerships: Asia and Europe seeking 21st century solutions"
Video link

## CO-ORGANISED BY

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF enhances dialogue, enables exchanges and encourages collaboration across the thematic areas of culture, education, governance, sustainable development, economy and public health.

ASEF is an intergovernmental not-for-profit organisation located in Singapore. Founded in 1997, it is the only institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

ASEF runs more than 25 projects a year, consisting of around 100 activities, mainly conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures, publications, and online platforms, together with about 125 partner organisations. Each year over 3,000 Asians and Europeans participate in ASEF's activities, and much wider audiences are reached through its various events, networks, and web-portals.

For more information, please visit www.ASEF.org

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning, and for its technologically enabled pedagogy of seminar-style teaching in small class sizes.

Home to around 10,000 undergraduate, postgraduate, executive and professional, full- and part-time students, SMU is comprised of six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, School of Law, and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in interdisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU has an emphasis on generating rigorous, high-impact, and relevant multi-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities from USA, Europe, China and India, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector, through its research institutes, centres and labs. SMU's city campus is a state-of-the art facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community.

For more information, please visit www.smu.edu.sg

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**COMPASS & TANGRAM**

A compass – used in geography to orientate oneself relative to cardinal points. With approaches and views that will converge and diverge, stakeholders are given their bearings, both practically and thematically, in this overview.

The ARC6 design combines 2 components: measuring tools as used across various academic disciplines and tangram puzzle pieces.

The measuring tools portray methodical calculations while the tangrams portray creativity and disruption. The contrasting use of these elements depicts two divergent views of quality education: 1) that quality education can be measured through fixed parameters, and 2) that quality education is a process with outcomes that go beyond mere assessment tools.

Historically, tangrams were invented in China and then taken to Europe by sea voyagers in the early 19th century. This resonates with the role of ARC in promoting intellectual, people-to-people exchanges between Asia and Europe.

ASEF's contribution is with the financial support of the European Union.