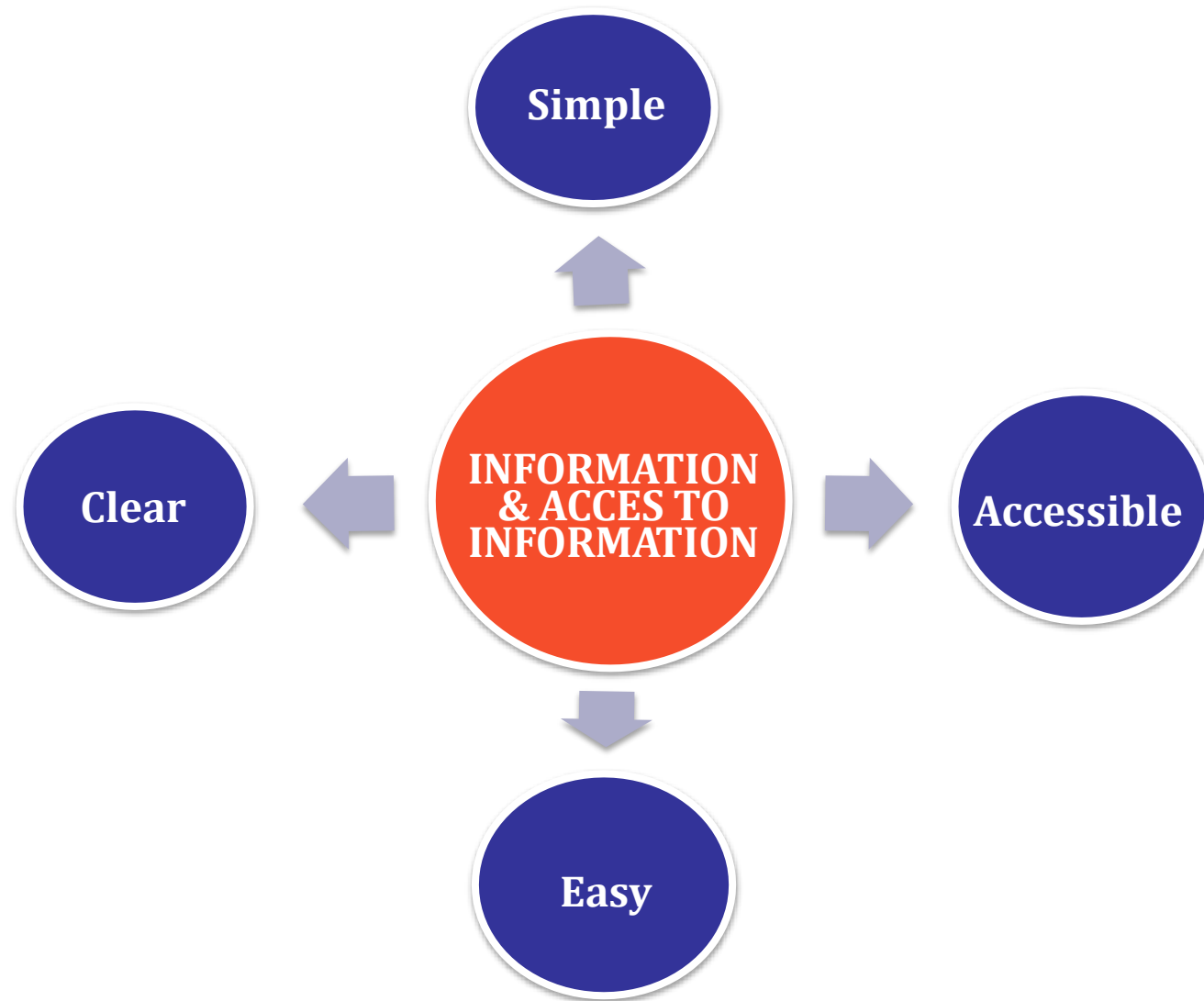


The IRO way...

how to improve the exchange experience while in the office. Case study: Mobility Management

IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCE OF INCOMING STUDENTS

Basics: Information



Case study: information about the course offer incoming exchange students will have access to while on exchange at our Faculty.

Premises: Incoming students can access courses from all the bachelor degrees offered at our Faculty (regardless of the study field for which the agreement has been signed –Business, Economics, Sociology or Statistics).

So, our course offer is very wide and includes courses from 5 different Bachelor Degrees, and most of our courses have different groups, and some of them may be in Catalan, some in Spanish and some in English.

Faculty webpage for bachelor studies: [Link](#)

Bachelor's degrees

- Business Administration and Management
- Economics (former plan)
- Economics (new)
- International Business
- Statistics
- Sociology
- Business Administration and Management + Law
- Business Administration and Management + Mathematics
- Business Administration and Management + Chemistry
- Business Administration and Management + Sociology
- Economics + Statistics (former plan)
- Economics + Statistics (new)

Grau d'Administració i Direcció d'Empreses

Informació del grau

- Presentació
- Objectius i competències
- Accés i preinscripció
- Pla d'estudis
- Pràctiques
- Metodologia docent i sistema d'avaluació
- Sortides professionals
- Suport a l'estudi
- Matrícula
- Calendari, horaris, aules i avaluació
 - Calendari acadèmic
 - **Horaris de classe**

Horaris de classe

Curs 2021/2022

Informació general ^

Generador d'horaris CHRONOS ^

Quadre d'horaris ^

Fitxa d'assignatures (grups, professors, aules i idioma) v

En el següent enllaç podreu consultar, de cada assignatura, els horaris dels diferents grups, el professor assignat a cada un d'ells, l'idioma de docència, l'aula on es desenvoluparan les classes així com les dates de les diferents convocatòries d'examen.

Tindreu també accés al pla docent de l'assignatura i al seu Campus Virtual.

[Vegeu la fitxa d'assignatures](#)

Comparteix-ho:



Information in Catalan about courses, schedules and language of instruction at the Faculty's webpage: [Link](#)

Each degree has to be checked separately.



Information about courses, schedules and language of instruction in English at the Faculty's webpage: [Link](#)

Non existent. When English is not the language of the country, most of the times not all information is available in this language. Institutions tend to translate the first “levels” of their webpages but not all the other information.

Business Administration and Management

About the bachelor's degree

Timetables

Share:





Conclusion: If students had to navigate the Faculty website to get the information about the course offer they will have access to, the schedules, language of instruction, etc. of each course.. They'd probably rather die.

So... the IRO way: Save students and our staff time –as it would suppose having to answer all the doubts and questions are bound to have, solving the guaranteed problems they would encounter when selecting wrong courses and groups (in regards of their schedule, language of instruction, etc.)

By.. Providing helpful, simple, accessible and clear information!



An example: the Academic information in the IRO's website

IRO's website: [Link](#)

- 3 obvious clicks away.
- All the information can be found in English by navigating in the English version of the website.
- It contains all the course offer incoming students will have access to and
- It contains all the information students may need to select their courses: schedules, language of instruction, year, number of credits, term in which are offered, etc.

IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCE OF INCOMING STUDENTS

Basics: Processes & Attention and Support

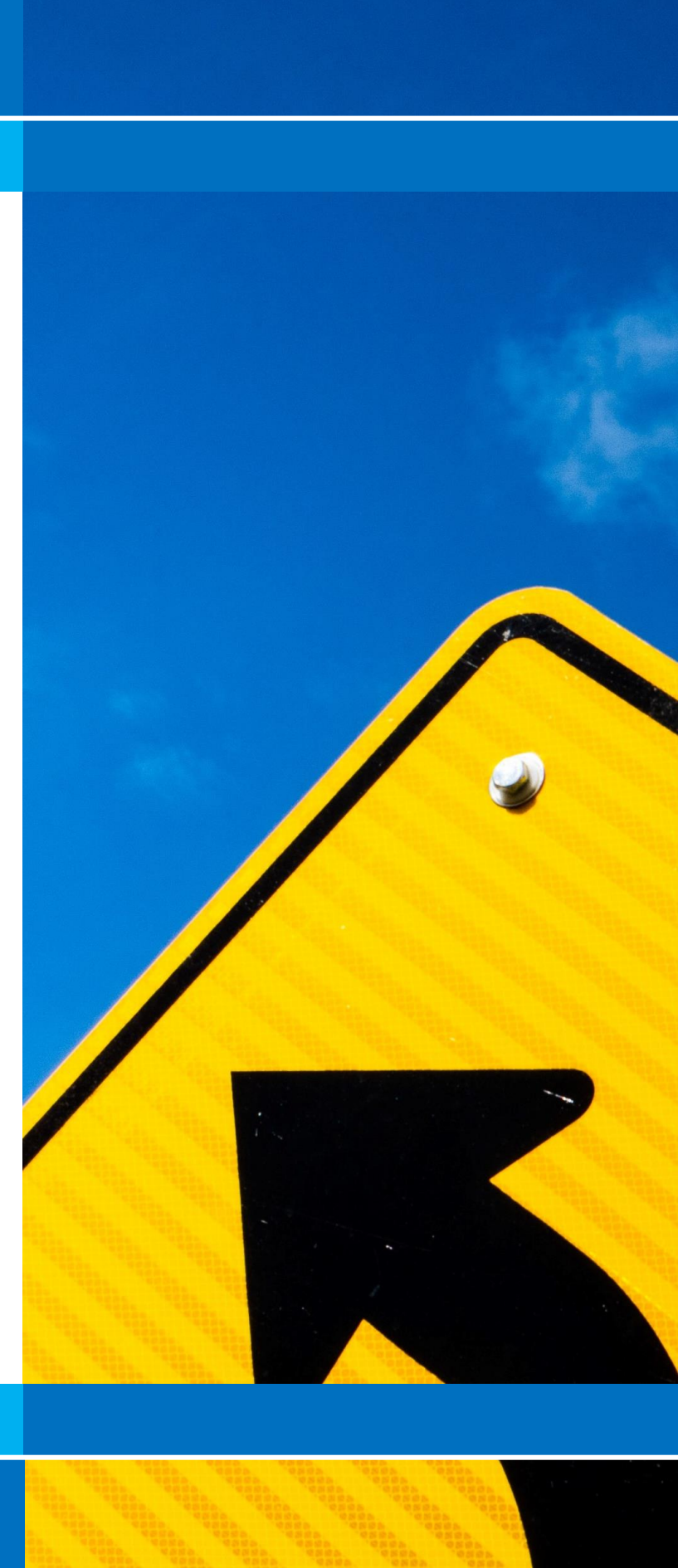
Processes: It is important to try to make processes as simple as possible. If a significant number of students fail to successfully complete a process, the process must be changed!

Attention and support: Very important! A good feedback, answering the questions students may have, before and during their exchange, in due time, being able to solve the possible problems that may occur, etc. is basic in order to give a good service for incoming students.

A step further: Channels of Communication and Surveys

Channels of communication: One could say students have never been very eager to read thoroughly all the information we provide them, but it seems the ratio of students who actually reads it is decreasing! So we encourage you to think in alternative ways: tutorial videos, virtual meetings, etc.

Surveys: Do not be afraid to ask students their opinion, it can give you valuable information on your strengths and on what to improve.



IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCE OF INCOMING STUDENTS

Our focus: Comprehensive welcome program

So, we have just shown you some of the ice-breaking/get to know activities we do in our welcoming session, because we wanted to focus our attention on the **welcoming of incoming students.**





There is a huge set of skills that are associated with studying abroad...

Tolerance and
intercultural
awareness

Problem resolution

Self-knowledge

Matureness and
independence

Adaptability

Personal growth
and development

Resilience

Among many others...

...Why?



Your comfort zone



One of the main reasons is attributed to fact that when going on exchange you are...

stepping out of your comfort zone.

And as you may well know, stepping out of your comfort zone...

Your comfort zone



Where the
magic happens

...is where the
magic happens!

(and learning
happens as well –
at all levels!)



And most of the times it does.

But, for students who have just:

- arrived to a different country
- a new institution
- who have to adapt to the new environment, culture, etc.

This also can suppose a great challenge.

Being out of their comfort zone also means they do not have their **social network of support**:

Family and Friends

And, with our many years of experience managing international mobilities, we have learnt it is critical to ensure not only a good, self-growing, enriching experience but also the **mental wellbeing** of students. Without the latter, you cannot have the former.





May it be when dealing with:

- The adaptation to the new environment.
- The available resources at their disposal (help, know-how).
- Problems, whatever these may be (advice, help, support).
- An illness.
- Enjoying and making the most of these experience and having an unforgettable memory of it.

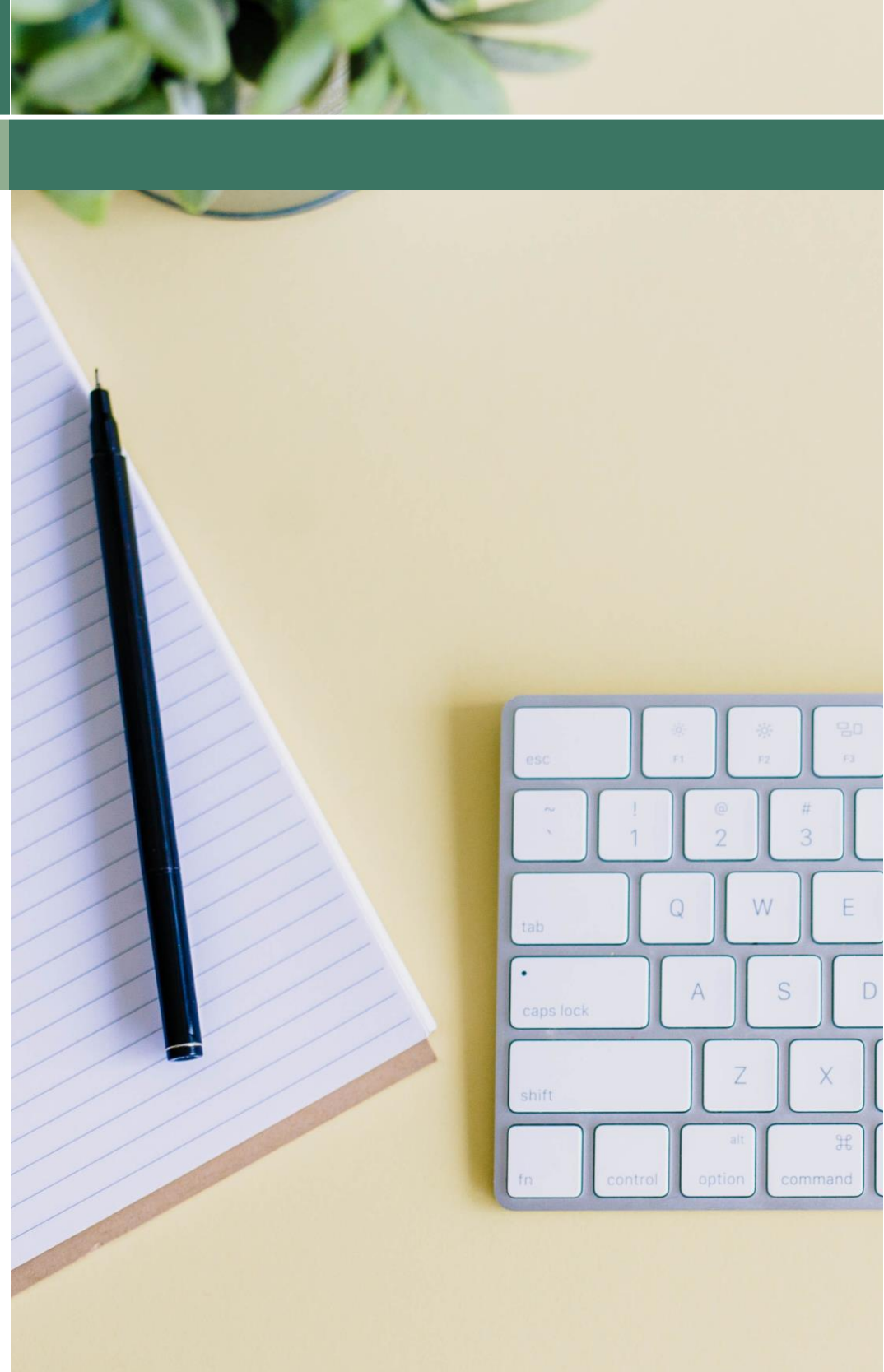
It is crucial they create their own social network of support, the friends they can go to and share everything, good or bad, that such an intense experience may bring.

Not to mention...

...the added advantage of not having them recurring to the IRO for anything they may need or may happen to them... which is always a good sign!

We are always there, but if they don't need us, better for everybody...

No news, good news!





So in the welcoming session, when all international incoming students meet each other for the first time it is very important:

Ensuring, not only giving the most important information they may need, but also **providing time and space** for the **social interaction**. Doing this in the first days of their mobility is a must do and can be a **game changing dynamic**.

It may be complemented with many others: city tours, one day trips, welcome dinners, buddy program, etc.

In any case we want to stress one of our biggest learnings in all these years: It is very important that during the first days, when these **human bonds** -sometimes lasting forever- are to **be created** we take into account we work with human beings and we have in mind what's most important above all:

That we are **social animals**
(at least most of us!)





After this, there are many other things that we shall be devoting our attention to, such as good psychological support services.

Luckily it seems more and more attention is paid to these questions lately and universities are starting to work – or have already fully developed – specific units which are to help students in this sense, if required.

In any case, according to our experience, 99,6% of mobilities are a success just by ensuring social interaction and that students are given the appropriate chances to create these bonds that will help them through all the exchange, in the first period of their stay in the new environment.






As such, we know our offices/areas are quite often shorted-staff, and so there is a limitation of time, resources and even lack of comprehension when it comes to developing activities such as these.

But some of them: rearranging the welcome session, to ensure it is given time and space for social interaction, organizing a welcome dinner/lunch or even a city tour; should not suppose such much work in comparison to the benefits they may have.



An example: the Welcome session

A good arrangement, for not an excessively demanding but yet effective, welcome session could be...

- **Presentations:** 1 or 3, depending on their length: Welcoming, IRO important information, academic information, university facilities and services, etc. (1h)
 - **Ice-breaking activities:** 1 or 2, depending on their length, it is always easier for students to start with not a highly demanding social activity (Kahoot is perfect for that end!) (15m)
 - **Get to know activity:** The stranger next to me, Find someone who, etc. (15m)
 - **Break:** Some free time, so they can also freely interact, now they have started to get to know each other, it's also important! (30m)
 - **Presentations:** 1 to 3: Cultural information (language, city, culture), Safety tips, ESN (1h-1.20h)
 - **Ice breaking activity and get to know activity:** Two truths and a lie, Who am I? (30m)
 - **Tour/Cultural activity:** Exhibition of a popular sport/tradition, tour through the university facilities, city tour... students have the opportunity to freely interact once more before everything officially finishes (30m to 2-3h). If it is 2-3h, give them time to eat!
- 

Finally, not only is it important students have a memorable experience while on exchange at your institution, for the value it has in itself, but this can also create positive dynamics and have long-lasting good effects for the internationalization strategy of your institution!



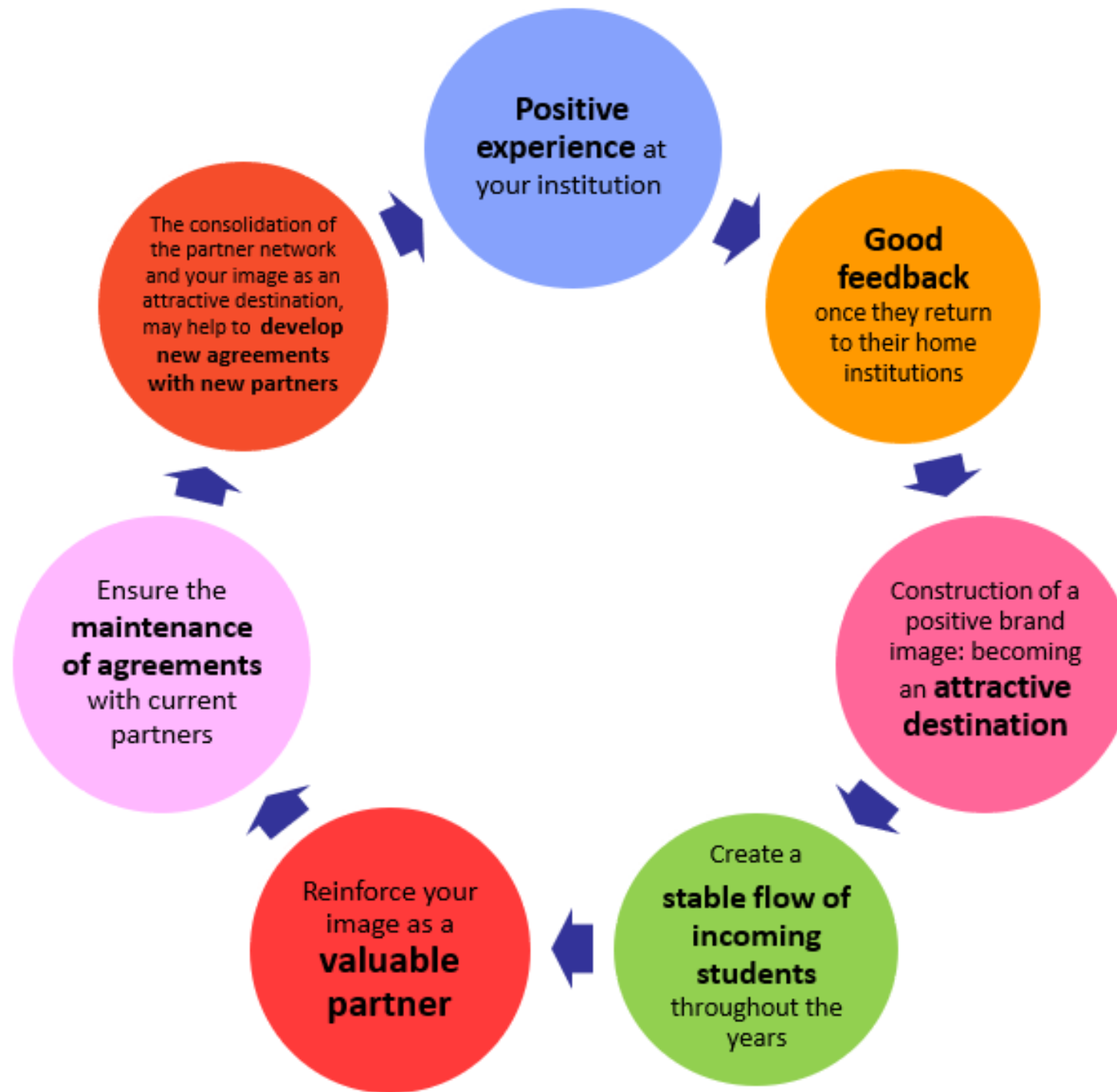


In this sense, to finish our presentation, one could say that, regarding international mobility, success could be assessed by:

- The number of agreements and its quality (reputation of partner institutions, attractiveness of destinations, positive experience of students at the partner institution, etc.).
- The number of exchange students (Incoming and Outgoing).
- The experience of incoming and outgoing students during their exchange.



A positive exchange experience of incoming students at your university...



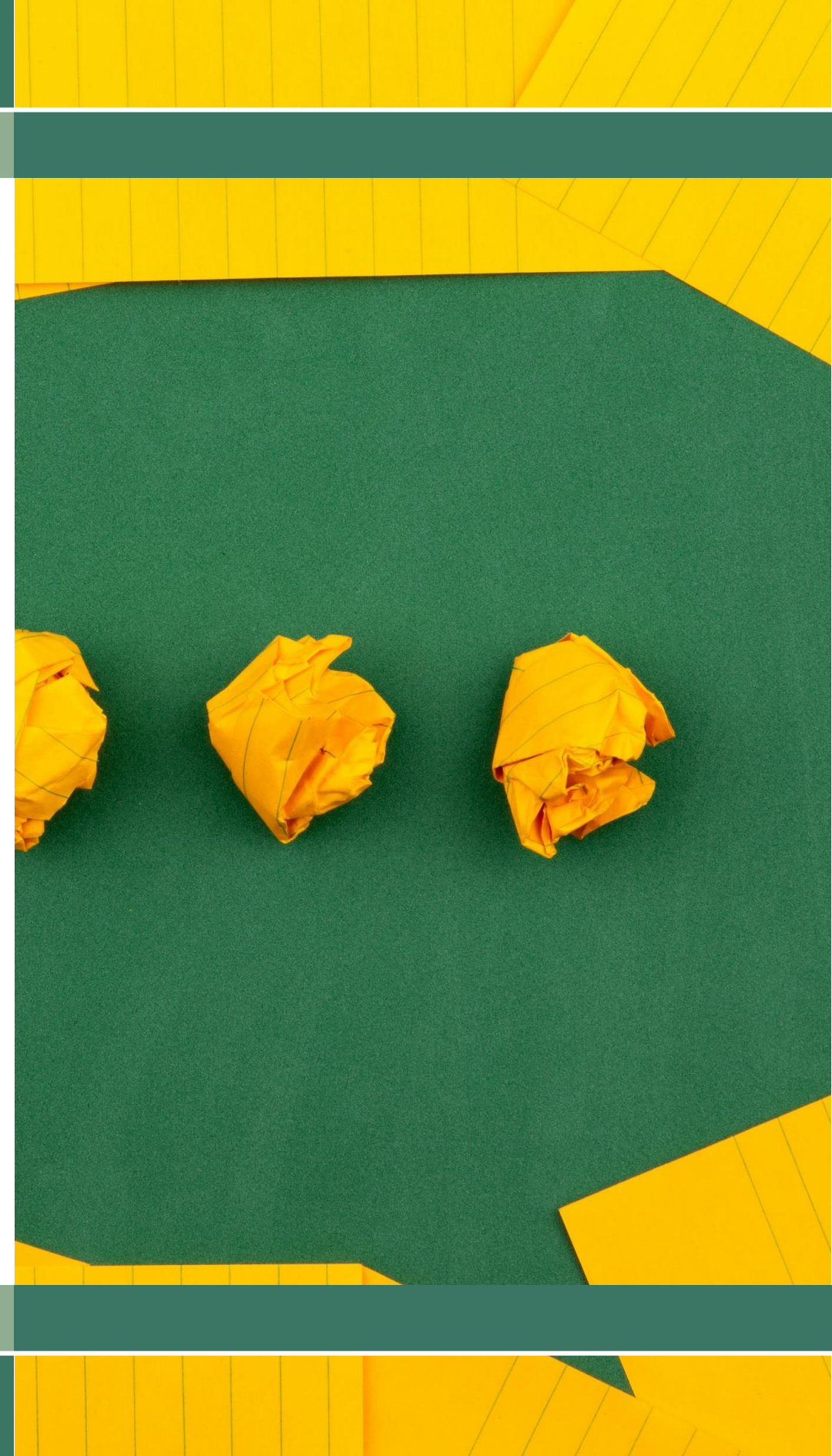
...makes of your institution a reliable and attractive partner.



So if this were an example of our welcome session, we would now be finishing by playing who am I -sticking stickers of worldwide famous personalities on your forehead. Luckily for you, we are not going to do that.

Instead, we would like to propose you a little questionnaire, so we can assess what is the trend and the global picture of the welcoming program of our institutions here!

Afterwards, we invite you to share with everyone your best practices -the ones you think are most valued among your incoming students!





Thank you!

Eva Gea

Montse Cervera

International Relations Office

Faculty of Economics and Business

Universitat de Barcelona