The Spring Academic Meeting
"Moving from Analogue to Digital with Quality: How do we do that?"

Meet peers facing similar challenges in providing students with high-quality education and with international opportunities in a forced online environment.

Learn what support Aurora is organising to assist academic teachers in meeting these challenges.

On March 30th, from 9 am to 1 pm (CET), Aurora is hosting its Spring Academic meeting. It will be a platform to meet with peers and discuss how to provide high quality learning under the currently restricted conditions.

Aurora community

The Aurora Spring Academic meeting is a follow up to the Aurora Community building event of January 28th, 2019, focusing on the same domains. It is part of the Aurora Alliance European University programme. This programme aims to strengthen the way in which Aurora students are equipped with the skills and mind-sets to act as social entrepreneurs and innovators in addressing societal problems.

Academic domains

The Spring Academic meeting aims at academic who feel attached to the following domains:

1. Sustainability & Climate Change
2. Digital Society & Global Citizenship
3. Health & Well-being
4. Culture: Diversity & Identity
5. Social Entrepreneurship & Innovation.

Academic peers and the challenge of virtual education

The core of the programme focuses on key challenges in higher education caused by the pandemic and the move to online education:

1. How are we as academic teachers finding our way from high-quality analogue (or offline) to digital (or online) education,
2. How can we continue to provide our students with a meaningful international experience, particularly in the pandemic and post-pandemic context,

The Spring event is organised in parallel strands for each of the domains to meet. There will be ample time in the programme to freely discuss topics of mutual interest – in education, research or otherwise.

Topics and tools

The Aurora Spring Academic event is an excellent opportunity to find out how you can benefit from Aurora: as a platform to meet with peers, to find out how you can learn from and with each other, and to learn about Aurora tools to support the member universities in providing academically excellent and societally relevant education.

In the sessions, you will have the opportunity to discuss what you see as the most pressing issues in these two key challenges – and how these can be addressed.

When education goes virtual, the maintenance of quality is about the transfer of knowledge and the value of higher education beyond the subject-related knowledge and skills. With continued international dimensions with less physical mobility, there will be specific attention on tools and platforms for virtual mobility and online joint courses.

The Aurora Spring Academic meeting will be hosted on the Gatherly platform, allowing you to freely move and chat with participants in groups of two or three or more.

Info-desks

Before and after the sessions, you may visit info desks on the various tools and platforms developed in the Aurora European University Alliance programme; see below under the programme description.

You can stop by the info desks of your interest and get in touch with the colleagues involved.

Take-aways

So what can you expect as takeaways from this event?

- ◬ Meet, discuss and arrange follow-up contact with peers on your issues and concerns in the transit from analogue to high-quality digital education and/or students' international opportunities
- ◬ Find out about existing good practices in high-quality digital education and virtual international experience
- ◬ Learn about useful Aurora tools and platforms for these challenges and meet the experts who can help you use them.

Pre-conference Registration

You can register through this link to the registration page on the Aurora Alliance website. After registration, you will receive the link to the Gatherly Aurora Spring Academic event conference venue. The Aurora Spring Academic meeting will be hosted concurrently and in the same virtual conference building as the Aurora Student Conference.

Programme
On-site registration

We ask all participants to stop by the registration desk in the Gatherly lobby so we can attend to any questions you may have and help you find your way in the virtual surroundings.

After that, feel free to wander around, meet with other participants and stop by the information desks.

We will have many information desks open for specific tools and programmes developed within Aurora during registration. There will be desks on:

- ◬ Models and tools for structured mobility among Aurora universities
- ◬ Mobility grants for students and staff available in the Aurora programme
- ◬ Initiatives to support doctoral candidates in developing employment skills
- ◬ Aurora courses using the Service Learning teaching & learning approach
- ◬ Aurora international internships
- ◬ Aurora Open Educational Resources: courses and digital educational tools

Programme overview

Start time	1. Sustainability & Climate Change	2. Digital Society & Global Citizenship	3. Health & Well-being	4. Culture: Diversity & Identity	5. Social Entrepreneurship & Innovation
08.45	Registration Opportunity to visit info desks[i]				
09.15	Opening words by Mirjam van Praag, Aurora Alliance president Introduction to the purpose and set-up of the Spring Academic meeting KK/SSR				
09.30	Open discussion	Open discussion	Open discussion	Open discussion	Open discussion
10.00	Transit from Analogue to Digital with Quality	Transit from Analogue to Digital with Quality	Virtual international student experience	- Virtual international student experience	Virtual international student experience
10.45	Short refreshment break				
10.50	Virtual international student experience	Virtual international student experience	Transit from Analogue to Digital with Quality	Transit from Analogue to Digital with Quality	Transit from Analogue to Digital with Quality
11.35	Short refreshment break				
11.40	Further open discussion	Further open discussion	Further open discussion	Further open discussion	Further open discussion
12.00	Domain take-aways and wrap-up	Domain take-aways and wrap-up	Domain take-aways and wrap-up	Domain take-aways and wrap-up	Domain take-aways and wrap-up
12.15	Closing words by Jon Atli Benediktsson, president of the Aurora Universities Network				
12.25	The lobby remains open until 12.45 for informal meet-ups among academics from the domains.				
13.00	Aurora Gatherly conference venue closes				

Programme description

Opening session
Mirjam van Praag president of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and president of the Aurora Alliance European University programme, will open the Aurora Academic Spring meeting. Kees Kouwenaar (Aurora secretary-general) or Sabine Sainte-Rose (Aurora Alliance programme director) will introduce the meeting's purpose and set-up.

1st Academic peer session
In parallel groups, the academic participants from the four pilot domains and Social Entrepreneurship & Innovation will explore shared interests related to their research or educational work. There is no agenda for these five sessions, but participants will be invited to note their interests in academic collaboration and/or technical support using the Quizlet-app. The sessions will be chaired by the leaders of the pilot domains.

1st Round Pandemic challenges

In parallel groups, the academic participants will be invited to discuss the key challenges from the pandemic for university education:

- △ The transformation from analogue to digital education with quality
- △ Maintaining students' opportunities for international experience and perspective with no/decreasing options for physical mobility

The transformation from analogue to digital education

In groups 1, 5, the discussion starts with an open exchange of views and experiences on the challenges academic have met or are meeting in transforming their education into a digital mode:

- △ What is the impact on quality, particularly in terms of the more general learning outcomes and the focus on societal relevance?
- △ What examples of good practice can be shared, what common challenges can be identified?
- △ What might tools and platforms could supporting services offer to help academics to meet these challenges?

The second part of this session in groups 1, 5, will offer a short presentation on the Aurora Competence Framework that is being developed to address these challenges.

Group 2 follows a reverse order:

They start with a short presentation on the Aurora Competence Framework that is being developed to help address these challenges.

The second part of their session will consist of an open exchange of views and experiences on the challenges academic have met or are meeting in transforming their education into a digital mode:

- △ What is the impact on quality, particularly in terms of the more general learning outcomes and the focus on societal relevance?
- △ What examples of good practice can be shared, what common challenges can be identified?
- △ What might tools and platforms could supporting services offer to help academics to meet these challenges?

Students' opportunities for an international experience without physical mobility

In group 3, the discussion starts with an open exchange of views and experiences on how the pandemic impacts students and staff's physical mobility and how the wider sustainability and climate change reality will continue to hamper physical mobility and the post-pandemic period.

- △ What are the opportunities and difficulties for virtual mobility or blended (virtual and short-term) mobility? How would academics want to use the Aurora alliance to develop these?
- △ What models and support tools to build virtual mobility modules are needed?
- △ What changes in the curriculum and teaching/learning modes are needed for impactful virtual mobility – examples of good practice?

The second part of this session in group 3 will offer a short presentation on Collaborative International Learning to address these challenges.

Group 4 follows a reverse order:

They start with a short presentation on Collaborative International Learning as an approach to help address these challenges.

The second part of their session will consist of an open exchange of views and experiences on how the pandemic impacts students and staff's physical mobility and how the wider sustainability and climate change reality will continue to hamper physical mobility and the post-pandemic period.

- △ What are the opportunities and difficulties for virtual mobility or blended (virtual and short-term) mobility? How would academics want to use the Aurora alliance to develop these?
- △ What models and support tools to build virtual mobility modules are needed?

⊿ What changes in the curriculum and teaching/learning modes are needed for impactful virtual mobility – examples of good practice?

NB this mirroring of these sessions allows for the expert presentations to be made in each group – with discussion and Q&A within the group of similar academic interests.

2nd Round Pandemic challenges

For the second round:

⊿ For groups 1 and 5: see the 1st round programme for group 3.
⊿ For group 2: see the 1st round programme for group 4.
⊿ For group 3: see the 1st round programme for group 1.
⊿ For group 4: see the 1st round programme for group 2.

2nd Academic peer session

In the same parallel groups, the academic participants from the four pilot domains and Social Entrepreneurship & Innovation will continue to discuss shared interests, explore opportunities for academic collaboration, and use Aurora tools to address the Pandemic challenges. Again, the discussion is not structured, but participants will be invited to note their interests in academic collaboration and/or technical support using the Quizlet-app. The sessions will be chaired by the leaders of the pilot domains.

Domain take-aways and wrap-up
Within each of the 5 groups, the chair will moderate the formulation of key take-aways: these can be specific ideas or initiatives for academic collaboration, identified uses of Aurora tools, or suggestions for further meetings and/or identifying weak points in the set-up of the Spring Academic meeting.

[i] Confirmed for Mobility, Virtual Mobility, Doctoral, SWAFS. To be confirmed for other info desks; choice to be made on the basis of willingness of the people involved.