

## Introduction

This Guide is intended to provide general information for students who are considering an Erasmus study period. It must be stressed that the advice is general and cannot be regarded as a substitute for the detailed advice and regulations from your home Higher Education Institution (HEI). Nevertheless, it is hoped that this guide will encourage you to enquire further and provide an answer to basic questions.

## What is Erasmus?

Erasmus is part of the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme, established to promote inter-University co-operation and in particular student mobility. **The Erasmus programme enables higher education students to study or do a work placement (see separate work placement guide) for typically three to 12 months in one of 32 other European countries as part of a degree course.**

- Student mobility is available to students in all subjects and at all levels:
  - Bachelors, Masters, Doctoral
- It is available in two forms:
  - study mobility which involves studying for part of your degree in a Higher Education Institution (HEI) with which your own HEI has a formal agreement
  - work placement mobility in which you spend part of your degree working in an enterprise in another European country
- 33 countries currently participate in the Erasmus programme and over 4,000 Higher Education Institutions hold an Erasmus University Charter
- A list of the countries participating is provided in these notes

## Combining Study and Work Placement

It is possible, that, provided your HEI agrees and has appropriate agreements with partner HEIs in other European countries, you could combine a work placement experience with a study mobility experience in another HEI with full credit recognition.

## Erasmus Grants

Erasmus grants are available for both study and work placement mobility although it should be noted that there are some restrictions about second Erasmus grants, which mean you cannot have more than two Erasmus grants in all.

## Start Now

The earlier your preparation for an Erasmus study period, the more likely it is that you will find a suitable one and that it will be successful. Your departmental or institutional Erasmus coordinator will be able to help you find a suitable course, which will form part of your degree.

You may already be enrolled on a course which includes an Erasmus period. There is still much preparation you must complete before the start of your period abroad.

## What is an Erasmus Study period?

Erasmus study periods are periods of study in a HEI in another European country which participates in the Erasmus programme.

- Erasmus study mobility is supported by the European Commission
- The study period must be for a minimum of three months and a maximum of 12 months
- The course of study must be recognised by your HEI and hence will contribute to your qualification
- Eligible institutions are those with which your home HEI has a bilateral agreement.
- Students must be registered for a qualification at an HEI which holds an Erasmus University Charter
- The Erasmus University Charter is awarded by the European Commission to Higher Education Institutions who submit a successful application
- Almost all HEIs in the UK hold an Erasmus University Charter.

## Why?

- Erasmus study periods provide an excellent opportunity to gain experience in an international environment while doing your degree
- They contribute credits for your degree; students who have undertaken an Erasmus period tend to do better in their degree overall\*
- They offer opportunities for personal, academic, cultural and linguistic development through living and working in another country
- They develop transferable skills, including communication across cultural boundaries, self-management, independence, confidence, adaptability and self-reliance
- They enhance your curriculum vitae with your international experience, recognised by your HEI
- They enhance your employability potential; employers are increasingly looking for international experience as much as high academic achievement
- They help you stand out from the crowd
- As an Erasmus student you will normally receive an Erasmus grant
- Read more on the Erasmus benefits.

## How?

You can find out more:

- Through your course leader or departmental Erasmus coordinator
- Through the European/International Office
- Through information provided by HEIs in other countries – though course descriptions may vary
- Through speaking to other students about their experiences and contacts, including contacting the Erasmus students society in your HEI
- The British Council and EU Erasmus Websites where you will find write-ups by students of their experiences in the form of Case Studies as well as short films, many made by former students

\* Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) 2009: "[Attainment in higher education of Erasmus and placement students](#)".

## When?

- The timing and duration of your study mobility will depend on your course
- You must be in at least the second year of an undergraduate degree
- The study mobility must be for a minimum period of three months and for a maximum of one year. However you could do a combined period of study and work placement with the same host, allowing you to do, for example one month of a work placement and two months of study
- The duration and timing must be agreed and approved by your HEI which will be responsible for giving “recognition” to the learning outcomes achieved
- Talk to your academic supervisor and European/Erasmus Officer about the possible timings.

## Where?

- Erasmus study mobility takes place in 32 other countries
- Your study mobility must be to an institution with which your institution has an agreement. Erasmus study may be an integral part of your course, and your department may have agreements that you will study in certain institutions.
- Do not be conservative in your choice of country. Indeed, going to a smaller (perhaps slightly less well-known) country may provide an enhanced cultural experience and will certainly be a distinctive feature of your CV
- A key requirement is that the course will be recognised by your HEI.

## Responsibilities

- Erasmus students must sign a tripartite agreement: Student/your HEI/ the host HEI
- This is a commitment by all three parties to the success and recognition of your study and entails mutual obligations, rights and responsibilities
- The obligations, rights and responsibilities are reflected in the Learning Agreement which will cover the key components of your study, the intended learning outcomes and a range of other matters
- It will explain how your HEI will recognise the study: what form of assessment there will be and who will be involved in the assessment
- If for any reason you cannot sign an agreement before you go, you **must** do so as soon as details of your study are clear.
- The Erasmus Student Charter will be given to you by your home institution. It contains information on your rights and responsibilities and lists entitlements such as free tuition and recognition of studies abroad, and your responsibilities, such as observing the rules and regulations of the host institution.
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To be eligible for an Erasmus grant students must be registered at a UK Higher Education institution which holds an Erasmus University Charter (EUC).

Erasmus students can go to:

Austria  
Belgium  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland  
France  
Germany  
Greece  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Italy  
Latvia  
Liechtenstein  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Malta  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
Slovak Republic  
Slovenia  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
Turkey

## Preparing for Study mobility

- The following checklist is designed to help your preparation. It is not exhaustive but if you are aware of the points below and discuss them with your HEI, many of the problems which might arise can be avoided and you are likely to have a positive experience, like the great majority of Erasmus students
- At the earliest possible stage speak to your European/International Office. They will have considerable experience and be able to guide and advise you on all aspects. Your HEI may have web pages or a handbook on Erasmus
- Find out the language requirements of your intended course to ascertain whether you need special language preparation and how you will be able to access this
- The majority of countries participating in the Erasmus programme offer Erasmus Intensive Language Courses (EILC) – in many cases twice a year. Information on this will be available from your European Office. If there are no EILCs, then enquire about possibilities for language preparation through your university's language department
- At the earliest stage of decision making, speak to all the key people in your HEI (including your Department and the European or Study Abroad Office) and ascertain their requirements, especially your academic Department, Faculty or School requirements for recognition
- Be clear about named contacts in your institution and the host and make sure each party knows who these are
- Identify who will be your academic supervisor/tutor in the home and host HEI if this is different from the named contacts. Again, make sure that each knows the name of the other
- Be aware of induction arrangements in the host HEI, and in particular make sure that you understand the rules and expectations
- Make sure that the arrangements for assessment and the form of assessment are agreed and that you understand what these are
- Ascertain whether your supervisor will visit you during your studies and the approximate timing of the visit
- Be provided with emergency contacts in your HEI and ensure that these are known to both parties
- Provide details of a family contact to your HEI in case any problems should arise
- Be clear about the respective rules and responsibilities of your HEI and your host HEI
- Make sure that you are clear about details such as course and exam timetables, holidays, social security cover, general health arrangements, whether support is provided in finding accommodation and any civil registration formalities
- Find out as much as you can about costs involved
- Find out what other financial support will be available to you in terms of loans and grants and how and when these will be paid
- Try to contact students who have studied similar courses or at the same host HEI. Here again, your Erasmus society and the Erasmus student network will be helpful. Read our student 'Insider Guides'

[www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus](http://www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus)



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