

## Frequently Asked Questions : Erasmus Programme, how does it work ?

Launched in 1987 with 3,000 young, adventurous students, the Erasmus programme offers the opportunity to carry out a study period at a partner university abroad in the 31 participating countries. In the past 20 years, the programme has seen a constant rise in both the number of participants - which it is hoped will reach 3 million students by 2012 - and in the quality and diversity of the proposed activities.

### How does the programme function ?

#### 1. How can one participate in the Erasmus programme ?

A student must fulfil the following conditions:

- be enrolled in a formal programme of study at higher education level leading to a degree or a diploma (including doctoral level) in one of the **31 participating countries** (EU 25 + Romania, Bulgaria + Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland + Turkey) .
- to have successfully completed at least the first year of his/her university studies.

The international relations office or the Erasmus office of the university is the first port of call for information on how to participate in the Erasmus programme. They can provide information on all the exchanges which the institution is involved in.

The "Europa" website and the universities' websites also have details of the activities as well as of the participating countries and institutions.

#### 2. What is the Erasmus Charter signed by Higher Education institutions ?

Professors, departments, and faculties that are keen to give a broader international scope to their activities may decide to participate in the Erasmus programme. This involves applying to the European Commission to be awarded an Erasmus University Charter. **90% of the EU's universities participate in the Erasmus programme.**

The **Erasmus Charter** is the entry ticket to start running the various possible strands available in the framework of the Erasmus programme. All these activities benefit the end users of the educational system, the students, but may be expressed in actions directly targeting the students themselves – in the form of mobility grants – or an institution and its staff – in the form of curriculum development initiatives, teaching assignments – etc.

The **Erasmus Charter functions** as a declaration of intents and a statement of actions which a given institution implements with a view to matching the fundamental principles defined by the European Commission.

Prominent among the principles is the need for the signature of a **bilateral agreement between the institutions willing to exchange students**. The institutions should have set up mechanisms for a full recognition of the satisfactorily completed activities of the students participating in Erasmus mobility.

### **3. Is the Erasmus period recognised in the student's degree ?**

The Erasmus study period is **an integral part of the programme** of study of the home university. Full academic recognition must be given for the study period abroad, as stipulated in the "learning agreement".

To facilitate academic recognition, the **majority of European universities** have adopted the **European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)**. This system, as well as the Diploma Supplement of the Europass, are entering more and more into the normal procedures of the higher education sector. On the one hand they provide a common scale for measuring the student workload, and on the other they allow a clear view of the achievements in a given subject area at the end of the academic career.

### **4. What is the learning agreement signed by the Erasmus student ?**

ERASMUS students are expected **to complete a learning agreement**, to be signed by them, their own university and the host institution. The learning agreement is an **informal contract to be completed before the study period starts that indicates precisely what modules the student will be studying**. Subsequent modifications are permitted as long as they are agreed by all parties concerned. At the end of the study period abroad, the host university will provide the exchange student as well as the university of origin with a report recording the results obtained in the agreed programme of study. Refusal by the university of origin to recognise the credits obtained by a student under the learning agreement would be a violation of its obligations set out in the Erasmus University Charter.

### **5. What is the amount of the Erasmus grant ?**

Grants are allocated to students after a selection process organised and under the responsibility of the home university. **Not charging of fees in the host university** is a fundamental precondition for the Erasmus mobility.

The amount of the Erasmus grant varies from one participating country to another, but it is not intended to cover all the expenses of the student.

The Erasmus grant is intended to offset part of the difference in the cost of living in the other country. It can be combined with additional funds provided by the university, the Member States, Regions or by other public or private bodies. The National Agencies in charge of the Erasmus Programme, or the international relations offices of the participating universities, inform the students about other grants which may be available in their respective country.

An increasing number of **private companies** propose mobility grants and more and more students have now access to student loans from a bank.

## **6 - What about the exams?**

The examination procedure to be followed will be the one applied by the host institution. This may involve written papers and/or oral examinations. Unless there are good reasons to do otherwise, the language of the examination will be that of the host institution. In general, an Erasmus student will not have to pass a new exam at his/her university of origin to receive academic recognition for it. It all depends on the learning agreement signed before the departure.

## **7. What is the impact of an Erasmus study period ?**

Employability increases after a period spent abroad learning and living in a new context.

Many former Erasmus students and especially “long-period” Erasmus students tend to find jobs and tasks linked to the use of the international expertise acquired or consolidated during their period abroad, and they usually demonstrate more flexibility and understanding of the complexity of the job environment.

Furthermore, statistics indicate that about one third of the students receive a job offer abroad and half of those who accept are employed in the country where they carried out their Erasmus placement.

Also see [MEMO/06/467](#)

More information :

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus20\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus20_en.html)