

Welcome to your **ERASMUS+** Student Guide



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The ERASMUS+ Programme

1. Introduction

This handbook is intended to help University of Limerick students who undertake an ERASMUS+ academic placement in a European partner university to prepare for the academic placement abroad. It provides general information and practical advice regarding the ERASMUS+ exchange and life abroad. Do not hesitate to contact ERASMUS+ staff at any stage during your ERASMUS+ placement if you are experiencing problems or have queries, no matter how small.

Meanwhile we wish you an enjoyable experience and trust that you will come back to UL confident in the knowledge that you have made the most of the academic and cultural opportunities afforded by the ERASMUS+ programme.

NB: Every effort has been made to ensure that all information provided in this guide is comprehensive and accurate at the time of printing. For updates and latest version, please refer to the electronic version published on the following website: www.ul.ie/international/erasmus/outgoing-erasmus

2. ERASMUS+ Contacts

UL Global

The ERASMUS+ section of the international office manages the ERASMUS+ programme at UL. Contact details are as follows:

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Ireland

Web: www.ul.ie/international

Tel: +353 61 213153

Out-of-hours emergency number: +353 61 213333

ERASMUS+ Institutional Code:
IRL LIMERIC01

ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator

Each degree programme has an ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator. The academic coordinator is responsible for approving students' choice of university, advising on course selection and the number of ECTS credits required. The academic coordinator is also responsible for validating ERASMUS+ results and converting grades, where applicable. Students should consult the academic coordinator for all academic matters. The list of coordinators is available in the Annexes section of this guide..

Host University

International office

In most cases, the point of contact at the host university will be an office similar to the International Office in UL. In some universities, the departmental or faculty academic coordinator is the point of contact. Practical information regarding the academic placement, such as application procedures, accommodation, etc. is normally sent to students by the international office of the host university or is available on the University website.

Academic coordinator

Students are assigned an academic coordinator at the host university (also called Departmental Coordinator). The ERASMUS+ academic coordinator offers advice on courses available at the host university and approves the Learning Agreement.

Emergency Contact

In the event of an emergency outside of office hours, please call the University emergency number +353 61 213333 and the security person on duty will contact a member of our team.

The contact number for emergency services throughout the European Union is **112**. The contact number for the Irish embassy/consulate in your host country can be found on the DFA website: www.dfa.ie/embassies/irish-embassies-abroad/





My ERASMUS+ experience was truly life changing. It enabled me to learn new topics, language and the history of Poland. It enabled me to make new lifelong friends from across the world. It was a great, character-building adventure that I will never forget.

Shane Love, Kozminski University

3. Benefits of ERASMUS+

The ERASMUS+ programme, which stands for European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, was originally established as the SOCRATES programme in 1987. It has proved to be one of the most successful projects of the European Union and now offers a wider range of opportunities under the new ERASMUS+ programme. The main aim of the ERASMUS+ programme is to improve students' skills and ultimately their employability as well as to support the modernisation of education and training systems across Europe.

The University of Limerick has participated in the programme since 1988 and has the largest outgoing ERASMUS+ programme in Ireland.

The study placement abroad is fully recognised as an academic component of UL degree programmes.

What are the Benefits of Studying Abroad?

ERASMUS+ provides a unique opportunity to study at another European institution for a semester or full year. Each year, over 500 UL students study abroad at partner institutions. Taking part in an academic exchange programme can be one of the greatest experiences in a student's academic career. Some of the benefits may be academic, linguistic, social, personal and intercultural and professional.

While living away from home and studying in another country in a different educational system can be challenging, it can also offer a unique opportunity to travel, discover and explore new cultures, acquire academic knowledge and study modules that may not be offered in UL.

Many UL graduates have chosen to work or study abroad after graduating on the basis of their positive experience on ERASMUS+.

The programme is also highly rated by employers. A recent ERASMUS+ Impact Study shows that the programme enhances students' employability abroad, improves transferable skills and enhances career development.





4. Eligibility & Requirements

Full-time students registered at a European Higher Education Institution (HEI) which holds an ERASMUS+ charter may avail of the ERASMUS+ opportunity. The academic placement abroad is available at all levels of higher education.

The ERASMUS+ programme is available for most UL degree programmes. Most Humanities degrees include an integrated, mandatory ERASMUS+ academic placement.

Students registered on degree programmes such as Law Plus, Criminal Justice, Business Studies, Product Design & Technology, Architecture, Performing Arts, etc. may take part in the ERASMUS+ programme on an elective basis.

NB: Degree programmes which are accredited by an Irish professional association and do not include an integrated ERASMUS+ academic placement, such as Health Sciences, Education, Law & Accounting degrees, may be excluded from the ERASMUS+ programme. Students should check if the ERASMUS+ semester is available as part of their programme with the Course Director.

Courses with Integrated Academic Placement Abroad

A semester abroad is an integral and mandatory component of the following UL courses:

Course	Placement Period
Bachelor of Arts (LM002)	Year 3, Autumn Semester
BA Applied Languages (LM044)	Year 3, Autumn Semester
BA European Studies (LM040)	Year 3, Autumn Semester
BA International Business (LM056)	Year 3, Autumn Semester
BA Journalism and New Media (LM039)	Year 3, Spring Semester
BSc Psychology (LM102)	Year 3, Spring Semester
BA Psychology and Sociology (LM038)	Year 3, Autumn Semester
MA Irish-German Studies	Spring Semester

Students enrolled on the above-mentioned courses must complete an academic placement abroad in order to graduate. Students who do not complete the academic placement abroad or do not fulfil the academic requirements will not be able to graduate.

Eligibility Criteria

The ERASMUS+ academic placement may only be undertaken if the student meets the minimum academic requirements to progress to the next year. The required standard is a minimum cumulative QCA of 2.00 or greater, with no deficient grades (F, I, NG, N).

To take part in the ERASMUS+ programme, students must be in good academic standing with the University of Limerick. Students who are in breach of the UL Code of Conduct and/or on disciplinary or academic probation at UL may not take part in the ERASMUS+ programme.

Students in the first or final year of their degree programme may not take part in the ERASMUS+ programme.

Students who are due to start an ERASMUS+ mobility period in the Autumn semester and are to sit UL examinations in August are advised not to travel until the examination results are published and ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria. Students who do not pass the August examinations are not eligible for the ERASMUS+ programme. Students whose study placement abroad is mandatory must defer the ERASMUS+ placement to the following academic year.

For elective placements (e.g. Business studies, Performing Arts, Law Plus, Criminal Justice, Architecture, etc), students are advised to consult the UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator as specific selection criteria, such as a minimum QCA requirement, may apply.

ATTN: Students who do not meet the above eligibility criteria must inform the ERASMUS+ office that they are cancelling their placement.

Duration

The academic placement may be undertaken in Year 2 or Year 3, depending on the degree programme.

Students can study at a partner institution for one semester (approx. 5 months) or, in certain degree programmes, the full academic year (approx. 9 months).

Fees

As an ERASMUS+ student, you are not required to pay any university fees (for tuition, registration, examinations, access to laboratory and library facilities etc.) to the partner university you are attending. However, some universities may charge additional fees for student facilities such as membership of the Students' Union.

You are still liable to pay fees to the University of Limerick while away on a study exchange.

UL Academic regulations

The ERASMUS+ study placement is fully integrated and recognised as part of UL's curricula. Therefore, students are still required to comply with UL's Academic Regulations, Code of Conduct and associated procedures while abroad.

Please see links below for most up-to-date versions of UL's handbooks:

- University Handbook of Academic Regulations: <https://ulsites.ul.ie/saa/saa-policies-procedures>
- University Student Handbook: <https://ulsites.ul.ie/saa/saa-policies-procedures>

Extension of ERASMUS+ Placement

Any request to extend the duration of the mobility period must be submitted before 30th November of the academic year abroad (e.g. 30th November 2021 for AY 2021/22). Students who wish to extend their placement from one semester to the full academic year should first check with the host university if it is possible to extend the placement. If so, students must then seek approval in writing from the UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator and the UL Course Director for the relevant degree programme and must notify the Erasmus team (authorisation by e-mail is acceptable). This is to ensure that it is possible from an academic perspective to spend the Spring Semester abroad. Students should provide a list of the modules they intend to take in the Spring semester. The modules need to be comparable to what students would be normally taking as part of their UL degree programme. If the FYP process begins during the Spring semester, students will have to choose a supervisor,

submit their brief, etc. while studying abroad. Students who extend their academic placement to the full academic year should be aware that the Spring semester placement is quality-graded, i.e. the grades obtained abroad will impact on the UL QCA, and students are required to take 30 ECTS credits (NB: International Business students who extend their placement to the full academic year will be graded on Pass/Fail for both semesters). Students who extend their academic placement to the full academic year are entitled to the ERASMUS+ mobility grant for the full duration of their study placement.

Certain degree programmes, including Psychology and Psychology & Sociology, do not have the option to extend the placement to a full academic year.

Students whose ERASMUS+ academic placement takes place in the Spring semester do not have the option to extend the placement to a full academic year.



5. Placement Process

There are two application periods every year, one for Autumn and Full Year academic placements and one for Spring academic placements. The placement process starts two semesters prior to the mobility period.

Step 1

Attend an ERASMUS+ information session

Information sessions on the ERASMUS+ programme are held each semester. Notification of upcoming sessions is sent to all 'compulsory' students via email. For elective students, each degree programme has an ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator who will arrange information sessions and/or provide individual advice.

Step 2

Choose and research the institution where you wish to go on exchange

Students choose their destination from a partner university list specific to their academic area. Students should thoroughly research the institutions with which UL has exchange agreements in the subject area of their degree. Students may select universities from the partner list for their degree programme/academic area only.

Full details of UL's ERASMUS+ partner universities may be found at:

www.ul.ie/international/en/home/ERASMUS-exchange/partner-universities/

Specific partner lists for UL degree programmes may be found at:

www.ul.ie/international/en/home/ERASMUS-exchange/ERASMUS/outgoing-students-ERASMUS/partner-universities-per-degree-programme/

Bachelor of Arts degree (LM002) Joint honours Arts students should select a partner university from one of their majors, e.g. a student studying English and Economics may select a destination from the English Studies partner list or from the Economics partner

list. Joint honours Arts students should be aware that it is not always possible to combine both majors at the host university, and they may have to focus on one major during their ERASMUS+ exchange. This does not impact on the degree programme at UL.

Students should consider the following factors when selecting a destination:

- Courses/Modules on offer
- Cost of living
- Student accommodation
- Accessibility (flights, trains, etc.)
- Academic calendar / Semester dates

Partner universities publish information in English on their websites, where practical information is provided. Information on partner universities, including module descriptions, brochures and accommodation information, is maintained on the UL website. In addition, reports from former ERASMUS+ students are available on the SharePoint site:

www.sharepoint.ul.ie/SiteDirectory/InternationalEducationDivision/ErasmusDocuments/StudentReports/Forms/AllItems.aspx

Students are also advised to contact other UL students who have attended the host university in previous years or students from that institution who have studied at UL as ERASMUS+ students. Please contact the Erasmus team for former ERASMUS+ students' contact details.

Step 3

Submit the ERASMUS+ application form

The application form requires the student's signature and that of the UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator, to indicate

approval of University selection. Students should select three destination choices, listed in order of preference.

The deadline for each application period is Friday of Week 8.

Students receive confirmation of their destination by email, 3-4 weeks after the application deadline.

The ERASMUS+ Administrator then nominates each student to the host university.

UL sends an information pack to the student's home address once nomination to the host University has been made. This pack contains all relevant forms, the ERASMUS+ handbook, the ERASMUS+ Charter and contact details of the host University.

Step 4

Apply to the host university

Students are required to complete an application with the host university. The host university advises students of the application procedures by email or makes this information available on their fact sheet or website.

Students then apply (usually online) to the host university, submit the application, print it and send it to the host University. Provided that a complete application has been submitted within the deadline, students should receive a Letter of Acceptance from the host university approx. 4-6 weeks later.

NB: Students must register at UL for the academic year and pay the annual registration fee to UL, even though they will be abroad on ERASMUS+ for part of the year.

6. Withdrawal from ERASMUS+ Programme

Students who wish to withdraw from the ERASMUS+ programme should contact the Erasmus office and the Academic Coordinator before making a decision.

Exemption from or Alternative to ERASMUS+

If, for exceptional reasons, a student wishes to withdraw from the ERASMUS+ programme, he/she may apply for an Exemption from ERASMUS+ or for the Alternative to ERASMUS+. This formal application is only for students registered on a degree programmes which include an integrated ERASMUS+ placement.

Applications should be made in consultation with the ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator / Course Director. Applications must be submitted to Student Academic Administration (SAA) and are then reviewed by the Student Status Committee (SSC).

The SSC meetings are held three times yearly following the end-of-semester exams and annual repeat exams in January, June and September. SSC will only deal with exceptional cases at the September meeting.

- Application forms for Exemption from/ Alternative to the Academic Placement can be obtained from Academic Registry (SAA).
- Applications must be submitted at least two semesters prior to the semester for which the exemption/alternative is being sought.

- The student should inform the Course Director, who may offer advice concerning application to the Student Status Committee.
- Completed forms must be submitted, with supporting documentation, to SAA for the attention of the Student Status Committee (ssc@ul.ie). Supporting documents may include a letter of support from UL Medical, Disability or Counselling services, birth certificate of dependent children, etc.
- Signatures on the form by ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator and Course Director are not a requirement but support the student's case.
- The student should attend the Student Status Committee meeting (schedule available on SAA website).

Further information is available from the Student Academic Administration (SAA) website: www.ulsites.ul.ie/saa/student-status.

Students who are granted the Alternative to ERASMUS+ will register for five alternative modules (30 ECTS credits) at UL, agreed with the Course Director. The modules will be graded on Pass/Fail basis, i.e. students must obtain at least C3 in each module to pass the semester.



Students who are granted the Exemption from ERASMUS+ do not take any modules at UL during that semester.

Early Return from ERASMUS+ Placement

If a student has to terminate their ERASMUS+ semester while abroad, they may be able to resume their studies at UL and register for alternative modules for the remainder of the semester depending on their circumstances and the time of termination (usually no later than Week 3 of the semester at UL).

If a student returns from ERASMUS+ later than Week 3 of the UL semester, depending on the student's circumstances, the credit shortfall and the grades obtained, it might be possible to make up the missing credits by submitting project work, agreed with the ERASMUS+ academic coordinator at UL. In cases where the student returns from ERASMUS+ with no or very few credits, he/she will be required to take additional modules or complete an additional semester at UL.

ATTN: Students who withdraw from the ERASMUS+ programme during the academic semester abroad will be required to reimburse the ERASMUS+ grant.





Academic Matters

The ERASMUS+ programme is wholly integrated into the existing UL curricula with fully recognised academic placements based on the ECTS credit system.

1. ECTS Credits

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a grading system used by Higher Education Institutions across the EU in an effort to standardise recognition of academic achievements between European institutions.

ECTS credits are indexed on the estimated workload required for a full-time student to achieve learning outcomes and successfully complete a module.

Students are expected to take 30 ECTS credits during their ERASMUS+ academic placement. The number of modules that students need to take will vary from one university to another. Modules may not all carry the same credit weighting at the host university and credit weightings may range from 1 to 15 ECTS credits per module.

2. Academic Requirements

Students are required to obtain 30 ECTS credits per semester (unless otherwise agreed by the UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator). Students must also submit an ERASMUS+ narrative report.

There are two Grade Registration types for the ERASMUS+ academic placement:

P (Pass/Fail) or N (Normal).

- The ERASMUS+ semester is graded on Pass/Fail basis for the following degree programmes. ERASMUS+ results do not impact on students' QCA:
 - Arts (LM002)
 - Applied Languages (LM044)
 - Business Studies (LM050) / BBS w/ Language (LM052/LM053/LM055)
 - European Studies (LM040)
 - International Business (LM056)
 - Journalism & New Media (LM039)
 - Psychology (LM102)
 - Psychology & Sociology (LM038)
- Elective academic placements are graded on Normal basis and impact on QCA (except Business Studies students). Results obtained at the host university are converted to UL grades by the UL ERASMUS+ academic coordinator.
- Academic placements undertaken in lieu of a Cooperative work placement are graded on a Pass/Fail basis and do not affect QCA.

The ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator for each degree programme should be consulted for specific advice with regard to module selection and credit requirements.

3. Module Choices and Learning Agreement

Module Choices

Students must ensure that the modules they register for at the host university equate to the required ECTS credits to pass ERASMUS+.

Students whose degree includes an integrated academic exchange are expected to take the majority of their modules in their own academic field. It may be possible to take a couple of modules from other academic areas, if permitted by the host university. Students on an elective academic exchange are expected to select modules that match the content of the UL semester as closely as possible.

The UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator should be consulted before departure to establish the agreed workload with regard to module selection and degree requirements. Students should discuss what courses they are expected to take while abroad. It is important that students know exactly what is expected of them, in terms of the types of courses to take, workload, credits, results etc., before leaving Ireland.

If there are changes to the initial module selection or any deviation regarding the number of subjects or credits, students should contact the UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator as soon as possible to verify changes. If there are any issues regarding courses at the host university, it is important to contact the UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator immediately for advice and guidance.

Learning Agreement

The Learning Agreement is an essential ERASMUS+ document. It is the contract of study agreed between the student, the UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator and the host institution. The Learning Agreement outlines the modules that the student intends to study at the host university, along with the ECTS credit weighting of each module and the required level of language competence. The Learning Agreement must be signed by the student, the UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator and the Academic Coordinator at the host university prior to the academic exchange. This helps to ensure that the choice of courses is approved by UL and thus can help to prevent any later misunderstandings.

Language Courses

Many host universities offer language courses to ERASMUS+ students. Those courses can take place before the start of the semester or during the semester. If the host university offers a language course, it is advisable to take this. If a certificate is issued on completion of the course, the credits will be recognised by UL. There is usually a fee for these courses. Students should contact the Erasmus team if they are interested in taking a language course, as there may be extra funding available to reimburse fees for credit-bearing language courses (usually up to €200).

Learning Agreement Process

Step 1:

Complete the Learning Agreement with a provisional choice of modules.

Step 2:

Seek approval from the Academic Coordinator, and retain signed original. Provide a copy of the provisional Learning Agreement to the Erasmus team before departure.

Step 3:

On arrival at the host university, make contact with the Academic Coordinator to discuss module selection and examination arrangements. Students normally have the first two weeks to finalise module choices.

Step 4:

Record changes on the Learning Agreement and seek approval from the Academic Coordinator at the host university.

Step 5:

Return the completed, signed form to UL as soon as modules registration is finalised.

4. Mandatory Language Assessment

What is the Online Linguistic Support (OLS)?

As of 1st January 2015, a mandatory language assessment has to be undertaken both before and at the end of the mobility period in order to monitor students' progress in language competences. The Online Linguistic Support (OLS) is the platform used to assess students' level of the language they will use to study at the host institution. The Online Linguistic Support is currently available for the following languages: Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, German, Estonian, Greek, English, Spanish, French, Croatian, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Finnish, Swedish.

The table on page 26-27 shows which competency levels are available for each language.

Who Must Take the OLS Language Assessment?

The OLS language assessment is mandatory for UL students studying in a country where the **main language of instruction** is French, German or Spanish.

Students whose main language of instruction is English are encouraged to take the OLS test for the language of their host country. This will give them access to the online language course.

Students must take the assessment twice - before and at the end of the mobility period - in order to monitor progress. The student's language skills (listening, reading and writing) are assessed according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

The CEFR divides learners into three broad categories that are sub-divided into six levels, see table below.

Level Group	Level Group Name	Sub-level	Sub-level Name
A	Basic User	A1	Beginner
		A2	Elementary
B	Independent User	B1	Intermediate
		B2	Upper intermediate
C	Proficient User	C1	Advanced
		C2	Proficiency



Learning Languages	Language Assessment	Language Courses		
		Level A1	Level A2	Level B1
Bulgarian (BG)	×	×		
Czech (CS)	×	×	×	
Danish (DA)	×	×		
German (DE)	×	×	×	×
Estonian (ET)	×	×		
Greek (EL)	×	×		
English (EN)	×	×	×	×
Spanish (ES)	×	×	×	×
French (FR)	×	×	×	×
Irish* (GA)	×			
Croatian (HR)	×	×		
Italian (IT)	×	×	×	×
Latvian (LV)	×	×		
Lithuanian (LT)	×	×		
Hungarian (HU)	×	×		
Maltese* (MT)	×			
Dutch (NL)	×	×	×	×
Polish (PL)	×	×		
Portuguese (PT)	×	×	×	×
Romanian (RO)	×	×		
Slovak (SK)	×	×		
Slovenian (SL)	×	×		
Finnish (FI)	×	×		
Swedish (SV)	×	×		

*Language Assessment Only

Note: The results of the assessment carried out before departure will not impact on students' acceptance at the host institution.

What are the Assessment Steps?

Prior to the start of the ERASMUS+ mobility period, students will receive a login and password to access the OLS platform. Students must complete the first language assessment before the mobility period. Taking the OLS language assessment before departure is a pre-requisite for the mobility, except if duly justified.

At the end of the mobility period, students will be requested to take a second assessment to assess the progress made.

What Happens with the Assessment Results?

Only the students and the home institution receive the results of the assessments. The results will not be communicated to the host institution and do not prevent students from taking part in the ERASMUS+ exchange. The assessment results may be used by UL to identify the participants most in need of linguistic support. Those students will be given access to the OLS learning platform to follow an online language course before and during their mobility period. For more detailed information on how to participate, please consult the OLS website: <http://ERASMUSplusols.eu/>

5. Examinations

Students must complete the full placement period at the host university and are expected to take all examinations and assessment for the modules they are registered for. Assessment can take many forms so make sure that you know how and when each of the modules will be assessed, and plan your studies and revision carefully.

IMPORTANT: Autumn examinations are scheduled in **January** in the majority of European universities.

Students are expected to complete the full semester at the host university and therefore sit examinations at the host University, even if this means that students have to travel back to the host university in January, after the Christmas break. The Spring semester at UL does not start until the 3rd (sometimes 4th) Monday in January, which normally gives students enough time to write their examinations abroad and return to UL in time to start the Spring semester.

If there is concern about the examination timetable abroad, please get in touch with the staff at UL, either the ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator in the relevant subject area or the ERASMUS+ Coordinator in the International Office, as soon as the exam timetable is published. Each case is different according to the host University's academic calendar and the modules being studied. It is essential that students write all examinations and return from ERASMUS+ with a complete Transcript of Records, so that their results may be validated.

Students should be aware that the grading system in place at the host university will apply during the mobility period (not the UL grading system). The grading system, examination format, etc. at the host university will be different from that of UL. For example, most European universities have a 50% Pass rate, some universities have a 60% Pass rate. Some universities enforce an 80% attendance rule. Students who have an attendance record of less than 80% in a module may receive an automatic fail for that module.



Taking part in the ERASMUS+ programme has inspired me to travel more and I am considering going abroad to work after I finish college. Before I left I was nervous about it and wasn't sure that it was something I wanted to do but I can now say that it was a fantastic experience and I am thrilled I went.

Louise Burke, University of Winchester

6. Recognition of Academic Placement

Students are required to submit an official Transcript of Records (TOR) issued by the host University upon their return to UL. A Transcript of Records from the host university is the only proof that the placement has been successfully completed and academic requirements have been fulfilled.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they obtain all the examination results from the host university and submit them to the Erasmus team as soon as possible. Failure to submit the ERASMUS+ Transcript of Records to the UL ERASMUS+ office may prevent progression to 4th year.

Before returning to Ireland, students must ensure that they understand the host university's procedure for obtaining the Transcript of Records. It is the student's responsibility to find out when, to whom and in which format the Transcript Of Records will be issued and to complete all necessary steps to receive their Transcript.

Students who have taken a language course during the academic placement must submit the Language Certificate along with the ERASMUS+ Transcript.

The Erasmus team will transmit the Transcript of Records to the UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator and SAA. For study placements graded on Pass/Fail basis, the student must pass each module to obtain the credits. No credits are awarded for failed modules and compensating fails do not apply. Provided that the student has obtained the required credits at the host university, the Academic Coordinator will award a Pass to the student and will inform SAA of same. The ERASMUS+ grade does not affect the student's QCA.

For quality-graded placements, the grades received at the host institution will be converted to UL grades by the ERASMUS+ academic coordinator at UL. The converted grades will impact on the student's QCA.

Students should be aware that details of ERASMUS+ results, such as module titles and local grades, will not appear on their UL Transcript of Records.

Failure to submit ERASMUS+ results before the end of the academic year may delay progression to the following year and/or prevent graduating from UL.

7. Failed Examinations

There can be serious academic consequences to failing the semester abroad.

Any student who fails a module should take the repeat examinations at the host university in order to clear the Fail grade. However, this may not always be possible when repeat examinations take place at a time when students have left the host country. If so, where a student returns from ERASMUS+ with less than the required ECTS credits, it may be possible to compensate the missing credits (if the credit deficit is small) by submitting additional work agreed with the UL ERASMUS+ academic coordinator. Such decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, depending on the student's circumstances, the credit shortfall and the grades obtained. A decision on how to proceed can only be made once UL receives the student's official Transcript of Records from ERASMUS+. In cases where a student returns from ERASMUS+ with no or very few credits, he/she will be required to take additional modules at UL or complete an additional semester at UL.

Failure to secure a Pass for the ERASMUS+ semester will prevent graduation.





Financial Matters

1. Cost of Living

The cost of living varies from country to country. Students are advised to gather as much information as possible regarding flights, cost of living, accommodation, before choosing the ERASMUS+ destination. Certain countries or capital cities, such as Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, Paris, London, Stockholm, etc have high living costs. The extra expenditure will also depend on whether the student is currently living at home. For students who do live at home, accommodation will be a major cost; those who already live away from home will often find that accommodation costs are cheaper than in Ireland.

2. Fees

Under the ERASMUS+ programme, students have the status of exchange students and are not required to pay any university fees (for tuition, registration, examinations, access to laboratory and library facilities etc.) to the partner university you are attending. However, some universities may charge additional fees for such services as student facilities, liability insurance, etc.

Students are still liable to pay the annual registration fees to the University of Limerick while away on a study exchange. This means that students remain full-time registered students of UL but have the status of Exchange student at the host university.

Students must register on the UL online portal in Week 1 (as per UL academic calendar) of the period abroad. SAA will notify all students by email in the week prior to the registration deadline. Failure to register on the UL portal by Friday of Week 1 will incur a €200 fine. Students experiencing difficulties should contact SAA (saa@ul.ie).



3. ERASMUS+ Funding

ERASMUS+ Mobility Grant

Financial expenses associated with an academic placement abroad can be a source of concern for students and parents. While students do not pay tuition fees at the host university (semester fees are paid to the University of Limerick as usual), they will need to budget for flights, accommodation, food and other general expenses.

Under the ERASMUS+ programme, students are eligible to receive a Mobility grant, funded by the European Commission, when they spend between 3 and 12 months studying in a European higher education institution as part of their degree programme.

The mobility grant is intended as a small contribution towards the overall cost of the semester abroad. While students may make use of the grant as they see fit, they should not rely on the grant for all living expenses.

The ERASMUS+ grant is not means tested and does not affect students' entitlements to other grants such as SUSI, Back to Education, etc.

The monthly grant amount is €300 or €350, depending on the host country, and the total grant amount is calculated on the basis of the semester dates at the host university.

The ERASMUS+ mobility grant levels are subject to HEA review and approved on an annual basis. The table on page 34 shows the current monthly amount according to the country where the mobility is undertaken:

ERASMUS+ mobility grant levels (per month)

Austria	€300.00
Belgium	€300.00
Bulgaria	€300.00
Cyprus	€300.00
Croatia	€300.00
Czech Republic	€300.00
Denmark	€350.00
Estonia	€300.00
Finland	€350.00
France	€300.00
Germany	€300.00
Greece	€300.00
Hungary	€300.00
Iceland	€350.00
Italy	€300.00
Latvia	€300.00
Lithuania	€300.00
Luxembourg	€350.00
Malta	€300.00
Netherlands	€300.00
Norway	€350.00
Poland	€300.00
Portugal	€300.00
Romania	€300.00
Slovakia	€300.00
Slovenia	€300.00
Spain	€300.00
Sweden	€350.00
Switzerland	*
Turkey	€300.00
United Kingdom	€350.00**

* Switzerland: Following a popular vote on 9th February 2014 to limit access for EU immigrants, Switzerland has been excluded from the ERASMUS+ programme. Students may still take part in a study exchange at Swiss partner universities but the ERASMUS+ programme has been replaced by the Swiss-European Mobility Programme (SEMP) until further notice. The SEMP grant scheme is administered by the host university and the grant level is approx. CHF 300 per month.

**United Kingdom: Availability of EU funding may be subject to change, depending on UK participation in ERASMUS+ programme after BREXIT.

Students who withdraw from the ERASMUS+ programme during the academic semester abroad will be required to reimburse the ERASMUS+ grant.

Grant Payment Process

NB: To be eligible for the ERASMUS+ grant, the duration of the stay abroad must be minimum **3 months**. Students are only entitled to funding while they are mobile and present at the host university.

All ERASMUS+ forms, except the ERASMUS+ Grant Agreement and the EU Participant survey, are available from the UL website.

The ERASMUS+ mobility grant is paid in two instalments by bank transfer. To receive the grant, students must return the following forms to UL:

First instalment

To receive the first instalment of the grant, students are required to provide the following forms:



First instalment:

- **Confirmation of Studies: Certificate of Arrival**, which must be signed and stamped by the host university (this can only be done once the student has officially enrolled at the host university and has started the ERASMUS+ exchange)
- Signed **ERASMUS+ Grant Agreement** (grant contract), emailed to students by the Erasmus team upon receipt of the Certificate of Arrival
- **Learning Agreement**, which must be signed by the host university and the ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator at UL

The **Certificate of Arrival** is included in the ERASMUS+ pack sent to the student's home address. It is also available from the UL website. Once the document has been filled out, signed and stamped by the host university, students must upload the scanned form to the UL SharePoint site www.sharepoint.ul.ie/SiteDirectory/InternationalEducationDivision/ErasmusDocuments/.

Note: If logging on externally, use the prefix UL\ before the ID number, e.g. UL\17112233)

Please note that the dates on the Certificate of Arrival should reflect the semester dates. Changes in dates at the end of the semester may result in a reduced second instalment or a reimbursement of part of the grant by the student.

The **ERASMUS+ Grant Agreement** will be sent to the student's UL email address within 5-10 days of submitting the Certificate of Arrival. Students will be required to fill in the ERASMUS+ grant agreement electronically, print it, sign it (only original wet signatures are

accepted) and post the completed original form to the following address: **ERASMUS+ manager, UL Global, University of Limerick, Plassey Park Road, Castletroy, Co. Limerick, V94 T9PX, Ireland.**

Students are requested to provide bank account details on the ERASMUS+ Grant Agreement (name of account holder, BIC and IBAN). This information may be found on a bank statement or obtained directly from the bank. It is essential that correct bank details are provided as any error will result in a delay in the payment of the grant. Once we receive the signed ERASMUS+ Grant Agreement, the first instalment of the ERASMUS+ grant will be paid (usually within 10 working days of receiving the signed ERASMUS+ grant agreement).

The **Learning Agreement** must be uploaded to the SharePoint site: www.sharepoint.ul.ie/SiteDirectory/InternationalEducationDivision/ErasmusDocuments/

(Note: If logging on externally, use the prefix UL\ before the ID number).

Second instalment

To receive the second instalment of the grant, students are required to provide the following forms:

Second instalment:

- **Confirmation of Studies: Certificate of Departure**, which must be signed and stamped by the host university (to be requested before leaving the host university).
- **Finalised Learning Agreement** (if not already submitted)
- **EU Participant survey** (online survey emailed to students by the EU Commission)



If I was to offer some tips for future students, I would say to get out every day and do or see something new. What you put into your ERASMUS+ experience is what you will get out of it, so take every opportunity to create many memories for years to come.

Zara Hill, Metropolitan University Prague

Students will receive a personalised link to the **EU Participant survey** via an automated email sent to their UL email address at the end of the study placement abroad. This will be sent the day after the official end date of the semester at the host university. The final instalment cannot be released without these three documents being submitted.

ATTN: Please note that, at the end of your semester, if the dates on the Certificate of Departure are marginally different to those indicated initially, the last payment may be significantly reduced or you may have to refund part of the grant to the European Mobility Grant.

Additional EU Funding

Additional funding is available for students with an officially recognised grave disability and/or exceptional special needs. Applications should be made through the Erasmus office (information available from the ERASMUS+ Coordinator) and be supported with a medical certificate. Further details are available from the following website: www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/specnds.html

Additional funding may also be requested for students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Normally application is made through the Access Office at UL, but requests may also be made directly through the ERASMUS+ Institutional Coordinator.

Further information on EU funding can be found on www.european-funding-guide.eu/

4. Student Grant Scheme (SUSI)

Students who qualify for the Student Grant Scheme will continue to avail of this entitlement for the duration of the ERASMUS+ mobility period. The EU Commission has agreed with member States that regional or national grant schemes are separate from the ERASMUS+ mobility grant. The ERASMUS+ grant does not have to be declared on the SUSI system, unless the student is entitled to a higher grant for the duration of the mobility. SUSI's current regulations state the following:

- If you are participating in ERASMUS+ or a period of study abroad, in general you may continue to receive your grant as long as the period of study abroad does not exceed one year.
- If the ERASMUS+/Study Abroad is not compulsory, and you are in receipt of a maintenance grant, you will continue to receive the same rate of grant that was previously awarded (i.e. adjacent or non-adjacent rate).
- If the ERASMUS+/Study Abroad is compulsory, and you were previously in receipt of an adjacent rate of maintenance grant, you may be eligible for the higher, non-adjacent rate whilst studying abroad.

The Erasmus team will provide a supporting letter to all students as part of their Information pack. Please contact SUSI directly for most up-to-date information.

5. Bank Loans

Many banks offer banking facilities to students to help finance their semester abroad. Such facilities may include short-term loans with very low APR, standard student loans, credit cards with 0% interest for the first 6 months, etc. Please contact your local branch or the on-campus bank at UL for further information on student banking.

The on-campus bank at UL also offers advice on money management and budget planning.

6. Debts

Students should ensure that they understand what is required regarding payment of bills, particularly for accommodation. For instance, in University residences in Europe, students are expected to pay rent from the first to the last day of every month, even if the room is unoccupied for part of the month.

Any student who leaves bills unpaid will incur a debt and will need to discharge it. Failure to do so may result in the host university withholding the Transcript of Records, which in turn may prevent the student from progressing to 4th year graduating from UL. The student may also be referred to the UL Disciplinary Committee.





Preparation for the Stay Abroad

Spending a period of study in a foreign university presents a unique challenge and opportunity. The key to a positive ERASMUS+ experience lies in preparation, in selecting the right university, in obtaining all possible information about the subjects available, and in ensuring that suitable accommodation is reserved. It is helpful to contact students from the host university who have studied at UL as ERASMUS+ students, as they will be able to provide local knowledge on the city and the host university.

It should be understood that while UL has nominated the student to the host university and has facilitated a flow of information and communication between the university and the student, UL has little control over the student's experience in the host University. This will depend on the quality of the services provided by the International Office of the host university and the cultural practices of the country. Some universities receive huge numbers of ERASMUS+ students from all over Europe and have relatively few resources to support such a large and diverse student body.

1. Essential Documents

Students must ensure that they have the following documents:

	Irish Citizens	EU Citizens (non-Irish)	Non-EU Citizens
Passport or National Identity card (EU citizens) valid until the end of the semester abroad	✓	✓	✓
European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) valid until the end of the semester abroad	✓	✓	
IRP card valid until the end of the semester abroad			✓
Visa – Host university will send information regarding visa process			✓
Private health insurance	✓ (recommended)	✓ (recommended)	✓ (required)
Recommended: Travel insurance (including repatriation)	✓	✓	✓
Note: some universities make it compulsory for students to take out private health and/or travel insurance for the duration of the semester abroad			
Recommended: In Case of Emergency card (ICE)	✓	✓	✓
France only: Certified translated Birth Certificate	✓	✓	✓



2. Application to Host University

Students are required to submit a formal application to the host university. Most universities send information by email. Students then apply (usually online) to the host university, complete the application and submit it to the host University.

Application Procedure

Application procedures and deadlines are different for all partner institutions. Host institutions provide guides for incoming students, usually published on their website. Students are advised to consult the website of the host university and read the guide for incoming students.

Most partner universities publish a 'fact sheet' or 'info sheet' which contains essential information such as contacts, application process, deadlines, accommodation, semester dates, etc. Fact sheets can be found on the UL website: (<http://www.ul.ie/international/life-travel/partner-universities>).

The host university's application procedure is usually described on the fact sheet and/or on the host university's website.

Information on application procedures will be sent by the host university and/or forwarded by UL to the student's email address. Students are therefore advised to check their UL email account regularly and also check the SPAM folder as automated emails are often blocked. Information on application procedures is usually sent 6-8 weeks prior to the application deadline. Students who do not receive information from the host university should (i) look for the host university's fact sheet on the UL website or (ii) consult the host website to find application forms and other relevant information.

It is strongly recommended to complete the online application on a computer or laptop, not on a phone or tablet. Application platforms are generally not compatible with mobile devices.

Students will be asked about their language proficiency level on the application form. Host universities use the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) to describe language ability (see section on Online Linguistic Support). Usually, a B1-B2 proficiency level in the language of instruction is required. Students who will study through English at the host institution should rate their proficiency level as C2.

Note: Many French institutions require a Birth Certificate for enrolment. Students can obtain a certified translation of the birth certificate from Mrs Marie Hackett, French Honorary Consul for the Limerick region. Please send a copy of the birth certificate (long or short) with a stamped, self-addressed envelope and €10.

ADDRESS

**Mrs Marie Hackett,
French Vice-Consul,
Blackwater,
Ard Na Crusha, Co. Clare.
Tel: 061 343051
Mobile: 086 057 57 31
Email: mariehackett@outlook.ie**

Students with special needs should inform the host university. The host university will inform the student of the services they can avail of during their mobility period, in order to best support them during their stay.

Selection Process

For most universities, provided that a complete application has been submitted within the deadline and that all requirements are met, students should be automatically accepted at the host university and normally receive a Letter of Acceptance from the host university 4-6 weeks after the application deadline.

Some partner institutions require that students submit a portfolio (e.g. Architecture, Product Design) or recorded performance (e.g. Performing Arts). Students should seek advice and guidance from the UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator before submitting their application to the host university.

Application Deadline

Deadlines and application procedures differ for every partner university. Students are advised to submit the complete application, with all supporting documents, well before the deadline. Students who miss the application deadline may not be accepted to study at the host university and may have to defer the ERASMUS+ placement until the following academic year.

3. Accommodation Booking

It is the responsibility of the student to organise accommodation, in consultation with the accommodation services at the host University. Students should be aware that partner universities cannot guarantee accommodation to all ERASMUS+ students and private universities or schools are usually not in a position to offer student accommodation. Below are some points to consider when looking for accommodation:

- What types of accommodation options are available?
- What is the cost of each option?
- What is the procedure to book accommodation (form? online application?)
- What is the deadline to submit the application?
- What deposit is required and when must it be paid?



No matter where you might choose to go on ERASMUS+ make sure you make the most of it. Travel around and experience the country. Do as much as you can as soon as you can. Throw yourself into everything possible even if it means you have to move out of your comfort zone because you will only regret it if you don't. Be open minded and just enjoy it.

Meabh Kennedy, University of Jyväskylä

- Are utility bills included in the rent?
- From what date will the room be available?
- Is bed linen supplied?
- Is there a system to obtain access to the room if tenant arrives late at night or at weekend?
- What is the procedure for repayment of deposit?

University Accommodation

If available, students are strongly advised to apply for University residential accommodation, as it can be difficult to find accommodation in the private sector for a period of one semester. All host institutions should have an accommodation office, which either accepts university residential applications or provides support to students to find accommodation in the private sector.

University accommodation is usually allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, so it is advisable to apply as soon as the application process opens.

To apply for accommodation, there usually is a box to tick on the host university's application form, or there is a separate accommodation form to be submitted with the host university's application. Students are advised to apply for and accept University accommodation.

Special requests concerning accommodation (e.g. being placed in a single room, being located close to a friend, etc.) should be communicated to the host university. Students should also inform the host university of any medical condition. While the host university will do their best to accommodate special requests, students should be aware that host universities have limited control over room allocation as university residential accommodation in Europe

is often administered by national agencies such as CROUS in France, Studentenwerk in Germany, DUWO in the Netherlands, OeAd in Austria, etc.

Students should be aware that the standard of accommodation often falls below that in Ireland. In countries such as France, Italy, Spain and Germany it is normal for students to share facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms. Students should also be aware that university accommodation is not necessarily within a walking distance of the university buildings. Public transport may be required to get to college (bus, tramway, subway).

It is standard procedure for university residences to request a deposit in order to secure the room booking. Students should ensure that they understand what is required regarding payment of rent, bills, deposits, etc. For instance, in university residential accommodation, students are expected to pay rent from the first to the last day of every month, even if the room is unoccupied for part of the month.

ATTN: Students should arrive at their accommodation when advised. University offices and accommodation offices are normally closed during the weekend and on public/bank holidays so it is best to arrive during office hours on a weekday, a few days before the beginning of the semester. Students should notify the host university of their arrival date and of any changes. Students travelling late at night or at the weekend should make prior arrangements with the accommodation office to check in and get their key. If this is not possible, students should plan to book into alternative accommodation overnight.

When moving in, any issues or problems should be reported immediately to the accommodation provider. Bed linen is usually not supplied. Kitchens can be poorly equipped and may not be supplied with an oven, kettle, toaster, etc..

Private Accommodation

The normal procedure, where university residential accommodation is not available, is to obtain a list of accommodation providers from the International office of the host university. A good option is to book into a private student residence. These are quite common in European cities. It is best to arrange accommodation prior to the mobility period - some students assume that it will be easier to find somewhere to live after arrival in their new city; this is a risky strategy and can leave students stuck in hostels for weeks.

Students are advised to use caution and common sense when reserving private accommodation and signing contracts.

Accommodation leases usually expire at the end of a month. This means that, if the premises are vacated before the agreed term, students are still liable for the rent for the remaining period.

4. Insurance

All students are advised to take out comprehensive health and travel insurance. Students should note that participation in the study placement abroad does involve certain inherent risks which the exchange student must assume. The risks associated with study abroad include, but are not limited to, responsibility for damage to or loss of property, personal illness or injury and death while the exchange student is a participant in the programme. Although the University takes all necessary steps to mitigate these risks and to provide assistance in time of need, the student must take responsibility for ensuring personal safety and security during the study placement. The student must also assume responsibility for taking out adequate personal travel and health insurance, the options for which are detailed below.



European Health Insurance Card

Students are required to obtain a European Health Insurance Card. The application form may be submitted online on www.ehic.ie. This card entitles the bearer to free accident and emergency treatment in EU countries. The card does NOT cover all medical expenses and is not a substitute for travel or private health insurance.

Please consult the EHIC website for further information on medical cover in your host country.

Private Health Insurance

Students are strongly advised to take out additional private medical insurance to cover the period of study abroad. If you have a medical insurance policy (VHI, Laya, Aviva, etc.) in Ireland, contact the insurer to ensure that you will be covered while abroad and bring a copy of your policy or policy number.

In some universities, students are obliged to take out additional insurance, e.g. liability insurance, repatriation cover, etc. Read the host University's requirements on insurance or contact the host university directly to obtain this information. Please be aware that in recent years, accidents involving injuries such as broken limbs have occurred to students who were under-insured while abroad. This can incur serious problems for the student and their family, so please be attentive to this matter.

The following websites may be useful:

Aviva/Irish Life Health: www.avivahealth.ie

Laya: www.layahealthcare.ie

VHI: www.vhi.ie

As a registered student of the University of Limerick you will also be covered by the University of Limerick Students' Union Personal Accident Policy, which covers basic medical expenses resulting from accidental injury,

certain permanent disabilities such as loss of a limb or loss of an eye, and accidental death. This policy extends to most sporting activities except hang-gliding. Full details of this insurance cover are available from the UL Students' Union. Please note that this insurance does not cover medical insurance for illness.

Travel Insurance

In addition to private health insurance, students are strongly advised to take out travel insurance which includes repatriation to be transported home in the case of an illness. Please be aware that multi-trip insurance policies from most insurance providers do not cover an extended period abroad.

Students may take out travel insurance from any provider of their choice. Many institutions offer travel insurance, including insurance companies (Allianz, AXA, etc.), banks (Bank of Ireland, AIB, etc.), credit unions, etc.

Please find below examples of ERASMUS+ insurance providers:

Oaktree Financial Services

Tel: 1890 876 077

E-mail: students@oaktreefinancial.ie

Web: www.collegetravel.ie /
www.oaktreefinancial.ie

Study & Protect (previously O'Driscoll O'Neill)

Tel: +353 (0)1 6395800

Email: support@studyandprotect.com.

Web: www.studyandprotect.com/Erasmus.aspx

ATTN: Insurance policy must be taken out prior to travelling abroad. Cover cannot be provided once students have left Ireland.

Many insurance providers require that students have been residing in Ireland for at least 3 months prior to taking out insurance.

5. Checklist

Over the next few months, you will be finalising all the arrangements for your ERASMUS+ study placement. Please use the checklist below to ensure that all the necessary arrangements have been taken care of.

For the majority of UL students, the ERASMUS+ study placement takes place immediately after the Coop work placement. Consequently, you will probably be off campus (some of you abroad) when you submit your application to the

host university. It is therefore advisable to obtain the application documents before the start of the Coop work placement. You are advised to scan the documents in Pdf format and save them on a USB key, email or online storage.

The checklist below refers to the ERASMUS+ forms to be submitted to UL. All ERASMUS+ forms, with the exception of the ERASMUS+ Grant Agreement, are available under the ERASMUS+ Section of the UL website (www.ul.ie/international/).



9-6 months prior to ERASMUS+ placement	Complete
Ensure that your passport is valid until the end of the mobility period. If not, apply for a new passport at least three months before the host university's application deadline (see host university's fact sheet).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) for emergency medical cover (www.ehic.ie/). If you already have one, check that it is valid until the end of the mobility period. If not, contact the HSE to renew the EHIC card.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obtain an official transcript of records from Student Academic Administration (SAA) in case this is required by the host University.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scan UL transcript of records, passport, EHIC and some ID photos and save all documents on a USB key, personal email or online storage.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange travel insurance and/or private health insurance (recommended). NB: Many providers require that the insured person reside in Ireland for at least three months prior to going abroad.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete and submit all application documents to the host institution within the specified deadline(s). Instructions are usually sent via email or available on the host university's website.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apply to the host institution for accommodation or make arrangements for private accommodation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Select provisional modules at the host institution and fill out the Learning Agreement. Get the form approved and signed by the UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator, submit it to the host institution and send a copy to the Erasmus office.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3-1 months prior to ERASMUS+ placement	Complete
Take the OLS language assessment (compulsory if the main language of instruction at the host university is French, German or Spanish; voluntary if the language of instruction at the host university is English).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finalise accommodation arrangements (pay deposit, confirm arrival date, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make necessary travel arrangements, i.e. book flights, train tickets, know your itinerary, inform host university of time of arrival, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take at least 4 passport photos with you and a photocopy of the ID page of your passport.	<input type="checkbox"/>
If required, bring a copy of your birth certificate, translated into French if you are going to France.	<input type="checkbox"/>

1-2 Weeks into ERASMUS+ placement	Complete
Contact family as soon as you can to let them know that you have arrived safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get the Certificate of Arrival signed and stamped at the host institution and upload it to the SharePoint site.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Once the Certificate of Arrival has been submitted, we will email the ERASMUS+ Grant Agreement to the student. Fill out and sign the ERASMUS+ Grant Agreement and post it back to UL (UL Global, University of Limerick, Plassey Park Road, Castletroy, Co. Limerick, V94 T9PX, Ireland)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finalise your module choices at the host university and upload the complete Learning Agreement to the SharePoint site.	<input type="checkbox"/>
1-2 Weeks before departure from Host University	Complete
Get the Certificate of Attendance signed and stamped at the host institution and upload it to the SharePoint site.	<input type="checkbox"/>
For those who completed the initial OLS language assessment prior to the mobility period, take the OLS language test again.	<input type="checkbox"/>
1-2 months after ERASMUS+ placement	Complete
Complete and submit the online ERASMUS+ survey (questionnaire) to the European Commission (link will be sent by the EU commission via email).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write an ERASMUS+ Student Report on Host University and upload it to the SharePoint site.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Submit an official Academic Transcript of Records (ERASMUS+ results) to the Erasmus team as soon as you receive it from the host institution so that your ERASMUS+ results may be evaluated.	<input type="checkbox"/>



Living Abroad

1. Arrival

Students are advised to arrive in the host country during opening hours on a weekday, when offices, universities, shops, etc. are open for business. It is advisable to arrive a few days prior to the Orientation programme, to have time to settle in.

Students should receive directions from the host university on travelling from the airport or train station and be informed where they should go first, i.e. the Accommodation office, the International office, the Coordinator's office, etc.

Buddy / Mentor Programme

If the host university offers a Buddy or Mentor programme, it is a good idea to sign up for it. The Buddy Programme is a free programme whereby the host university assigns a local student (a Buddy or Mentor) to incoming ERASMUS+ students. The 'Buddy' will usually greet you at the airport or the train station and help you get to your accommodation and show you around the university and the city.

Remember to contact your family upon arrival to let them know that you are safe and sound.

2. Orientation & Registration

Host universities normally organise an orientation programme for incoming ERASMUS+ students. It is very important to attend, as this session will provide essential information about the host University and local facilities. It may also include consultation with an Academic Advisor and enrolment. If the host university offers a pre-session language course, it is advisable to take this, especially for students studying through the local language. If the course is certified, the credits will be recognised

by UL. There may be a fee for these courses, which you may have to pay yourself. Please check with us if you are interested in taking a pre-session language course, as there may be extra funding available for the fees.

On arrival, students should establish who their point of contact is at the host university. In many cases, this will be an office similar to the International Office in UL. It can however be the academic coordinator in the department.

Students will be required to register at the host university. The registration process is different for every university so students should be prepared to find differences in practice between their host university and UL. Students should establish how to register as soon as they arrive at the host university.

3. Registration with Authorities

In some countries, students may be required to register with the local authorities. There are two elements to this, i.e. registration with the host University and registration with the local/national authorities. Students should register with the University before they register with the authorities. The registration process can be time-consuming, so make sure you have all the documents you need (you may be asked for the European Health Card, student card from host university, passport, passport photos, guarantee of financial support, etc.).

In some countries, if the placement is only for one semester, students may not need to register with the authorities. It is advisable to confirm this with the International Office of the host university.

Please check the Department of Foreign Affairs website for further information.

4. Accommodation

Students should arrive at their accommodation when advised. Students should notify the host university of their arrival date and of any changes.

University offices and accommodation offices are normally closed during the weekend and on public/bank holidays so it is best to arrive during office hours on a weekday, a few days before the beginning of the semester. Students travelling late at night or at the weekend should make prior arrangements with the accommodation office to check in and get the keys. If this is not possible, students should plan to book into alternative accommodation (hostel, Air BnB) overnight.

When moving in, any issues or problems should be reported immediately to the office responsible. Bed linen is usually not supplied. Kitchens can be poorly equipped and may not be supplied with an oven, kettle, toaster, etc.

If you live in a student residence, remember that in most European countries, it is not acceptable to socialise noisily at night. Academic work is taken seriously and rowdy behaviour is not tolerated.

If you are finding your own accommodation, contact the host accommodation office or speak to local students to find out what the going rate is in the area to avoid being overcharged and if there are areas that are to be avoided. For safety reasons, do not go flat hunting on your own. Students are advised to be careful when signing contracts for private accommodation.

5. Studies

As stated in the ERASMUS+ Student Charter, students should take full advantage of all the learning opportunities available at the

host university and endeavour to perform to the best of their ability in all relevant examinations or other forms of assessment.

Timetable

ERASMUS+ students may choose modules from various disciplines and various years. Therefore, unlike in UL where students would follow a specific course within a specific year, there is no pre-established timetable for ERASMUS+ students at the host university. Students must organise their own timetable. The number of modules that students need to take will differ from one university to another as credit weightings can vary widely. Modules must add up to 30 ECTS credits in total.

Students normally have approx. two weeks at the start of the ERASMUS+ semester to organise their timetable and register for modules. This can be a stressful exercise due to clashes, classes being full or not running, etc. It is advisable to set realistic goals, for example, undergraduate students will find Master's modules very difficult; registering for an Economics module if you have never studied Economics is inadvisable, etc. Issues in organising the timetable should be discussed with a member of staff in the International Office or the academic coordinator at the host university.

Assessments and Examinations

Students should make sure that they understand the exam structure and grading system at the host University. It is imperative to attend classes, adhere to all deadlines and write all examinations at the host university. Students should save any work, assignment, project, etc. submitted during the semester, so that these can be presented to the UL academic coordinator if needs be. Students should be aware that the grading system in place at the host university will apply during the mobility period (not the UL grading system). The grading system,



examination format, etc. at the host university will be different from that of UL.

Any student who fails a module should take the repeat examinations at the host university in order to clear the Fail grade. However, this may not always be possible when repeat examinations take place at a time when students have left the host country. If so, where a student returns from ERASMUS+ with less than the required ECTS credits, the UL ERASMUS+ academic coordinator will review the student's results and decide how the credit deficit may be compensated. Such decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, depending on the student's circumstances, the credit shortfall and the grades obtained. A decision on how to proceed can only be made once UL receives the student's official Transcript of Records. In cases where a student returns from ERASMUS+ with no or very few credits, he/she will be required to take additional modules at UL or complete an additional semester at UL.

Students are also required to submit an ERASMUS+ narrative report within one month of finishing the ERASMUS+ placement. The report, if deemed satisfactory, may carry up to 6 ECTS credits.

6. Academic Calendar

Students should be aware that the semester dates at the host university will be different to those at UL. For example, the Autumn semester may start as early as August in some universities, or not until October in others. ERASMUS+ students must adhere to the academic calendar and exam schedule of the host university.

In the majority of European universities, Autumn examinations take place in January/ February. Student are expected to travel back after the Christmas break to finish classes

and write examinations. If exams at the host university clash with the start of the Spring semester at UL, students are advised to inform the International office at UL or their UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator as soon as possible. This can be an issue in universities in Germany, Austria, Poland, Malta, etc.

Term Dates and Exams at German Universities

Universities in Germany begin and finish later than in most other countries. The typical semester dates are mid-October to mid-March and students going to Germany sometimes experience difficulty because of the overlap in term dates between UL and the German partner. Instead of an official Transcript of Records, lecturers in Germany will issue certificates or Scheine at the end of January, as proof of studies; these include details of attendance, marks for essays and tests, as well as the Lecturer's assessment of the student's academic performance. The issue of the certificates should be arranged by the student at the beginning of the semester.

7. Personal Safety

Students should note that participation in the study placement abroad does involve certain inherent risks which the exchange student must assume. The risks associated with study abroad include but are not limited to responsibility for damage to or loss of property, personal illness or injury and death while the exchange student is a participant in the programme. Although the University takes all necessary steps to mitigate these risks and to provide assistance in time of need, the student must take responsibility for ensuring personal safety and security during the study placement. We strongly advise that students Take out travel insurance and private medical insurance for the duration of the stay abroad.

Please inform the International Office at the host University and UL immediately in case of an emergency.

Safety Advice:

- Attend orientation, apply for the Buddy programme if offered, obtain local information (e.g. areas or places which are considered unsafe)
- Obtain the number of a GP who speaks English (from the International office of the host institution) and have emergency contact numbers at hand at all times.
- Take care with displaying valuables; wallets, cameras, mobile phones etc should be hidden from view. Only carry a minimal amount of cash, sufficient to reach the destination
- Be wary at all times, stay in a group when going out at night, take identifiable taxis
- Enter your local telephone contact on the UL student portal
- Avoid alcohol/drug consumption to minimise high-risk situations and remain vigilant of potential danger
- Avoid travelling in a car with a driver who is not well known to the passenger(s)
- Follow the host university on Facebook and Twitter to be informed of safety messages



Don't expect it to be all plain sailing. It's likely that you will be lonely at times. It is challenging at the start trying to organize everything, adapting to a new city, a new culture and a new group of people but I know now that if you work through it little by little, keep an open mind, you'll have a great time.

Aine Duggan, Université Montpellier 3

Advice regarding important documents

Have your **European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)** on you at all times.

Have an In Case of Emergency (ICE) card on you at all times or add your ICE contacts to your phone's Lock screen.

Do not carry your passport with you everywhere; keep it in a safe place and only carry a **copy** with you. Use a Passport card instead (see Department of Foreign Affairs website) or your ERASMUS+ student card as form of photo ID.

Register your details with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) so that you can be contacted quickly if there's an unforeseen crisis like a natural disaster or a family emergency.

Download the DFA TravelWise app and add an alert for your destination.

8. Emergency Assistance

The emergency number in all EU countries is 112.

The contact number of the International office at UL is **+353 61 213153** (during office hours only).

In the event of an emergency outside of office hours, students are advised to call UL's emergency number **+353 61 213333**; the security person on duty will then contact a member of the international office at UL.

If required, the list for Irish embassies and consulates in Europe is available on the DFA website: **www.dfa.ie/embassies/irish-embassies-abroad/**



Any incident, however small, should be reported to the host university and UL International Office as soon as possible. More serious incidents should also be reported to the local police station.

The best help is often close at hand so if you have problems, talk to the International office of the host university (check their Facebook page and Twitter account).

As a safety precaution, we advise students to register with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DAF) while they are out of the country. This ensures that they can be contacted quickly in case of an unforeseen crisis.

Irish citizens can register with the Department of Foreign Affairs here: www.dfa.ie/travel/citizens-registration/

For students from outside of Ireland, we advise contacting your country's Department of Foreign Affairs and making them aware of your ERASMUS+ semester.

We also advise that students download the DFA TravelWise app on their phone and add an alert for their destination.

9. Conduct

Students are reminded that they represent the University of Limerick and Ireland when abroad. Whilst students must adhere to the rules and regulations of the host institution, they also remain registered as UL students and the UL Code of Conduct applies.

Please see links below for most up-to-date versions of UL's handbooks:

- University Handbook of Academic Regulations: www.ulsites.ul.ie/saa/saa-policies-procedures
- University Student Handbook: www.ulsites.ul.ie/saa/saa-policies-procedures

As the University wishes to maintain good relations with partner universities and does not want to prejudice staff or landlords against future cohorts of UL students, issues such as non-payment of rent or utilities or bad behaviour are considered to be a breach of this Code, which may result in disciplinary action.

Please be aware that throughout Europe, drug/alcohol abuse is taken very seriously. Students whose conduct does not comply with local laws may be asked to leave the ERASMUS+ placement and become involved in legal issues leading to prosecution.



ERASMUS+ **and You**

1. Culture Shock and Homesickness

It takes a while to adapt to a new culture. After the initial excitement of meeting new friends, trying new foods, experiencing new academic settings, etc., it is common for students to experience some homesickness. Many students are surprised at how homesick they feel in the first few weeks. What seems strange at first will soon become familiar. It is important to keep a positive attitude and be open-minded about people, cultural differences and new experiences, and not to compare everything with Ireland. There will be some advantages and some disadvantages, and people gradually adapt to new ways.

What is Culture Shock

Culture shock is a logical reaction to differences we come across when experiencing a foreign culture. Most students experience culture shock or homesickness. This is usually due to the stress of adjusting to the new customs, foods, language, people, and activities of a foreign culture. It is a good idea to prepare yourself for the ERASMUS+ exchange:

- Find out as much as possible about your destination
- Make contacts if possible before you go: get in touch with other UL students going to the same destination through the goXchange app, or contact students from the host university who previously came to UL on ERASMUS+.
- Talk to the ERASMUS+ coordinator and get some information and advice
- Bring mementos with you that remind you of home: photos, treats that you cannot get abroad, etc.

Dealing with Culture Shock and Homesickness

The following suggestions can help minimise homesickness/culture shock:

- Be prepared to feel up and down in the few weeks after arrival. Give yourself time to adapt to the cultural differences.
- Keep an open mind and a positive attitude. Try not to compare with home - this will allow you to be more objective and facilitate cross-cultural understanding.
- Isolation only causes more adjustment problems. Find things to do, especially at the weekend, and seek out people (Irish students, local and other international students) even if you think you might not have much in common.
- Make an effort and study the language daily to enhance your communication skills - this will help you integrate better.
- Sign up for Buddy programmes, student associations such as ERASMUS+ Student network (ESN), etc where available.
- Take advantage of cultural activities and social clubs organised by your college.
- If you play sports, join a local sports club or find out if there is a GAA club in the area.
- Look after yourself - exercise and keep a healthy diet to reduce stress. Try and achieve a healthy balance between study, leisure and rest.
- Allow yourself to see the humour in misunderstandings and embarrassments.
- Talk with someone in the International Office of the host University.

- Get in touch with UL for assistance.
- If you consider dropping classes or withdrawing from ERASMUS+, please see a member of staff in the International Office immediately. Students can feel discouraged at times, but the staff at the host university will try to help you find a solution.

2. Making the Most of the Exchange Abroad

Studying abroad is an incredible opportunity and can be one of the greatest experiences in a student's academic life. The ERASMUS+ experience has academic, social, personal and cultural benefits; it can widen your horizons, enrich your knowledge of other cultures, and change your outlook on life.

Whilst leaving your friends and family and living abroad can seem daunting, a semester abroad can be an amazing social experience. Below are a few pointers to help make the most of the experience.

Prepare

Planning and organisation are key to a successful semester abroad.

Before embarking on an ERASMUS+ exchange, read student reports and get contact details of UL students who went to the same destination the year before, and see if they have any advice or contacts there.

Looking online is also a really useful way to see who will be joining you for the year; sites like Facebook can help you to meet new people before you even arrive. Meeting other students online can make the

experience less daunting and make it easier to settle into your new environment.

Keep on top of the paperwork to avoid last-minute stress and panic. Make sure you know what documents are required and do not leave form-filling exercises to the last minute.

Get Involved

Each year over 250,000 students take part in the ERASMUS+ programme. Wherever you are, there will be activities and events organised for ERASMUS+ students; this is the best way to meet other students. Take advantage of all opportunities offered to ERASMUS+ students, especially in the first few weeks.

Meeting students from the host university can be more difficult. If the host university has a language tandem or intercambio programme, sign up for a conversation partner – it can be a great way to improve your language skills and get to know native speakers. Student societies and sports clubs can be limited at the host university. Take the initiative and find out about clubs and associations in the town/city where you live.

Travel

The exchange abroad is not just about studying; it is a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in a new culture and explore the host country. Make the most of your spare time, plan weekend trips and explore.

Share

Photos, videos, blogs, journals, scrapbooks, sketchbooks, memory boxes – record your adventures and share your experiences with your friends back home and fellow ERASMUS+ students.



ERASMUS+ has been one of the best experiences of my life, I would advise anyone to do it, and to see as much and make as many friends as possible. It may take some time to settle and subdue your nerves but once January comes you will be heartbroken to leave. The memories you make and the friends you make will last forever.

Éamonn Courtney, University of Salzburg

3. Life after ERASMUS+

The ERASMUS+ exchange can be one of the most exciting experiences in a student's academic life and readjusting to normal life at home can be a challenge. It is not unusual for students to feel sad and confused after their stay abroad - after being away for 6 or 12 months, it is as if nothing has changed yet everything is different.

The following suggestions can help overcome the 'ERASMUS+ blues':

- Share your experience and contribute to making other ERASMUS+ students' exchange a success - contact the International Office to volunteer as an ERASMUS+ 'ambassador' and speak to future students at the International Fair and/or ERASMUS+ Information sessions.
- Volunteer for the Buddy programme at UL (Buddyprogramme@ul.ie)
- Become a member of the UL International Society and meet new ERASMUS+ students
- Take part in the Language Exchange programme (contact Language Hub administrator in LC1-010)
- Plan your next experience abroad: internship, overseas programme etc.
- Plan a get-together with your ERASMUS+ friends.
- Transform what you learnt during ERASMUS+ into new opportunities for experience and networking.

The ERASMUS+ programme has changed the lives of over 3 million students. As students move on in their personal and professional life, it will continue to inspire and influence them in their choices.



International Life

ERASMUS+
Students

Non-mobile
Students

40%



Moved to another country
after graduation

23%

93%



Can easily imagine
living abroad in the future

73%

33%



Have a life partner with
a different nationality

13%

27%



Met their life partner
during their stay abroad

Figure 2
ERASMUS+ Impact Study, 22 Sept. 2014



ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. - ERASMUS+ Forms

Prior to Departure for ERASMUS+

Provisional Learning Agreement

To be completed before the ERASMUS+ placement. The form must be approved by the UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator before sending it to the host university. Students must also upload the form onto the SharePoint site.

OLS Assessment

Students must take the OLS language assessment if the main language of instruction at the host university is a European language other than English.

On Arrival

Confirmation of Studies - Certificate of Arrival

Proof of enrolment to be signed and stamped by host university following arrival; to be uploaded on SharePoint site. This form is included in the UL information pack.

ERASMUS+ Grant Contract (Financial Agreement)

This form is emailed to students towards the beginning of the ERASMUS+ placement, upon submission of the Certificate of Arrival. Bank details must be included in the contract (BIC and IBAN) for the lodgement of the grant to the student's bank account. The completed original form must be posted back to the following address: **ERASMUS+ Manager, UL Global, University of Limerick, Plassey Park Road, Castletroy, Co. Limerick, V94 T9PX, Ireland.**

Finalised Learning Agreement

Once your module choices are finalised and approved by the host university, the signed original must be uploaded onto the SharePoint site.

Prior to Departure from Host University

Confirmation of Studies - Certificate of Departure

To be signed and stamped by host university at the end of the semester abroad; to be uploaded on the SharePoint site. This form is included in the UL information pack.

Upon return from ERASMUS+

ERASMUS+ Narrative Student Report

This report is to be submitted upon return from the semester abroad and is worth 6 ECTS credits. It should have a minimum length of 1,500 words and maximum of 2,500 words. It is graded on a Pass-Fail basis by the ERASMUS+ academic coordinator. It should be submitted within a month of returning to the University of Limerick. Detailed instructions will be sent to the student's UL email address. The report is to be uploaded on the SharePoint site.

ERASMUS+ Participant's Report (Eu Survey)

This questionnaire must be submitted online following completion of ERASMUS+ placement. The questionnaire is a requirement of the EU. It will be emailed by the European Commission to the student's UL email address at the end of the semester abroad.

OLS Assessment

Students who took the OLS language assessment before the ERASMUS+ semester and availed of the online courses must re-take the OLS assessment at the end of the semester.

ERASMUS+ Transcript

ANNEX 2. UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinators

On the following page, you can find the contact details for the academic coordinators:

For the most up-to-date list of ERASMUS+ academic coordinators, please refer to the UL website:
www.ul.ie/international/erasmus/outgoing-erasmus/erasmusexchanges-academic-coordinators

Academic Area	Academic Coordinator	Office	E-Mail	Tel. (061)
Aeronautical Engineering	Trevor Young	L1-028	trevor.young@ul.ie	202531
Architecture	Jan Frohburg	ER3-015	jan.frohburg@ul.ie	213698
Business/Business with Lang.	Elaine Berkery	KB2-35	exchange.kbs@ul.ie	202314
Environmental Science	Bernadette O'Regan	B3-047	bernadette.oregan@ul.ie	202552
Computer Science	J.J. Collins	CS1-28	jj.collins@ul.ie	202409
Digital Media Design	Gabriela Avram	CS2-031	gabriela.avram@ul.ie	202782
Economics	Rita Buckley	KB3-29	rita.buckley@ul.ie	202624
Engineering	Reiner Dojen	D3-002	reiner.dojen@ul.ie	213442
English	Sinead McDermott / Yianna Liatsos	ER3-007 SG01	sinead.mcdermott@ul.ie yianna.liatsos@ul.ie	213020 234684
Electronic Engineering	Ian Grout	C2-044	ian.grout@ul.ie	202298
French	Annie Halpin	LC2-013	annie.halpin@ul.ie	213432
Gaeilge & Lesser known languages	Ailbhe Nic Giolla Chomhail	LC2-013	Ailbhe.NicGiollaChomhail@ul.ie	202584
German	Joachim Fischer	MC1-008	joachim.fischer@ul.ie	202354
History	Alistair Malcolm	C1-090	alistair.malcolm@ul.ie	202604
International Business	Kieran Gallery	KB3-43	exchange.kbs@ul.ie	213319
Journalism	Kathryn Hayes	ER3-023	kathryn.hayes@ul.ie	234678
Law / Criminal Justice	Andrea Ryan	FG-003	andrea.ryan@ul.ie	234190
Linguistics	Angela Farrell	LC2-008	angela.farrell@ul.ie	202244
Materials Science & Technology	Gerry Higgins	B3-030	gerry.higgins@ul.ie	202069
Mathematics	Valentina Balbi	B2-040	valentina.balbi@ul.ie	202388
Mechanical Engineering	Philip Griffin	L1-031	philip.griffin@ul.ie	234235
New Media & Cultural Studies	Maria Rieder	LC2-007	maria.rieder@ul.ie	234858
Performing Arts (IWAMD)	Mats Melin	IW1-19	mats.melin@ul.ie	202542
Politics & International Relations	Andrew Shorten	F1-014	andrew.shorten@ul.ie	234265
Public Admin. & Leadership	Andrew Shorten	F1-014	andrew.shorten@ul.ie	234265
Product Design and Technology	Niall Deloughry	PDC-2	niall.deloughry@ul.ie	213111
Physical Education & Sports Science	D.J. Collins	PG-049	d.j.collins@ul.ie	213075
Psychology	Jennifer McMahon	DM-035	jennifer.mcmahon@ul.ie	212663
Sociology	Lee Monaghan	F1-006	lee.monaghan@ul.ie	213346
Spanish	Barrie Wharton	SG-31	barrie.wharton@ul.ie	202974
Geography	Catherine Porter		catherine.porter@ul.ie	

ANNEX 3. - Useful UL Contacts

Student Academic Administration

saa@ul.ie

Student Status Committee

ssc@ul.ie

Fees Office

student.fees.office@ul.ie

Students Union

SUReception@ul.ie

ITD

itss@ul.ie

Access Office

access@ul.ie

Disability Office

caoilinn.kennedy@ul.ie

Mature Students Office

mso@ul.ie

Counselling

counselling@ul.ie

Chaplaincy

john.campion@ul.ie

ANNEX 4. - Useful Websites

Handbook of Academic Regulations

www.ulsites.ul.ie/saa/saa-policies-procedures

Student Handbook

www.ulsites.ul.ie/saa/saa-policies-procedures

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

www.dfa.ie

Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI)

www.susi.ie

European Health Insurance Card

www2.hse.ie/services/ehic/ehic.html

Erasmus Student Network

www.esn.org

Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association (ITIA)

www.translatorsassociation.ie/en

Aviva / Irish Life Health

www.aviva.ie/health

Laya Healthcare (AIG)

www.layahealthcare.ie

VHI

www.vhi.ie/home

Oaktree Insurance

www.oaktreefinancial.ie/other-insurance/travel

Study and Protect Insurance

www.studyandprotect.com/Erasmus.aspx

GAA Europe

www.gaelicgameseurope.com



