



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

#StudyAtUL



NON-EU EXCHANGE

OUTGOING
STUDENT GUIDE

Welcome to your **NON-EU EXCHANGE** Student Guide



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01

**THE EXCHANGE
PROGRAMME**

1. INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended to help University of Limerick students who undertake an EXCHANGE academic placement in a Non-EU partner university to prepare for the academic placement abroad. It provides general information and practical advice regarding the exchange and life abroad. Do not hesitate to contact Non-EU Exchange staff at any stage during your EXCHANGE 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 EXCHANGE 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/non-eu-exchange

2. NON-EU EXCHANGE CONTACTS

International Education Division (IED)

The ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE section of the International Education Division (IED) manages the EXCHANGE programme at UL. Contact details are as follows:

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ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE Academic Coordinator

Each degree programme has an ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE 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 EXCHANGE 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.



3. BENEFITS OF EXCHANGE

The main aim of the EXCHANGE programme is to improve students' skills and ultimately their employability as well as to support the modernisation of education and training systems across the world.

The University of Limerick has participated in the programme since 1988 and has the largest outgoing ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE 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?

EXCHANGE provides a unique opportunity to study at another 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 EXCHANGE. The programme is also highly rated by employers. A recent ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE

Impact Study shows that the programme enhances students' employability abroad, improves transferable skills and enhances career development.

When and how long is the EXCHANGE programme?

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).

Who is eligible for the programme?

The academic placement abroad is available at all levels of higher education. The following degree programmes include an integrated academic placement:

- Arts (LM002)
- Applied languages (LM044)
- European Studies (LM040)
- International Business (LM056)
- Journalism & New Media (LM039)
- Psychology & Sociology (LM038)
- Psychology (LM102)

Students from degree programmes such as Business Studies, Law Plus, Architecture, Performing Arts, etc. may undertake an academic placement abroad as part of their degree programme, usually in third year.

Other degrees offer an academic exchange in place of a Cooperative Education placement (e.g. Law Plus, Product Design and Technology, Sports & Exercise Science).

EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

64%

of employers think **international experience** is important for recruitment (37% in 2006)



92%

of employers are looking for **transversal skills** such as curiosity, problem-solving skills, tolerance and confidence when recruiting



64%

of employers say graduates with an international background are given **greater professional responsibility**

ERASMUS+ Impact Study, 22 Sept. 2014

The ERASMUS+ Impact Study is available online:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-1025_en.htm?locale=en

4. ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

The EXCHANGE programme is available for most UL degree programmes. Most Humanities degrees include an integrated ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE academic placement. Some degree programmes offer an EXCHANGE in place of a Cooperative Education placement, e.g. Law Plus, Product Design & Technology, Sport & Exercise Sciences.

Students registered on other degree programmes, such as Business Studies, Architecture, Performing Arts, etc. may also take part in the EXCHANGE programme on a voluntary basis. Degree programmes which are accredited by an Irish professional association and do not include an integrated EXCHANGE academic placement, such as Health Sciences, Education, Law & Accounting degrees, are currently excluded from the EXCHANGE programme.



Courses with Integrated Academic Placement Abroad

A semester abroad is an integral and mandatory component of the following 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 EXCHANGE 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). ATTN: Students who do not meet the above eligibility criteria must inform IED (ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE office) that they are cancelling their placement.

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

Students who are due to start an EXCHANGE mobility period in the Autumn semester and are to sit repeat examinations at UL in August are advised not to travel until the Repeat examination results are published and ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria. Students requesting a Grade Re-check are advised not to travel until the outcome of the appeal is known. Students who do not pass the Repeat examinations are not eligible for the EXCHANGE programme. Students whose study placement abroad is mandatory must defer the EXCHANGE placement to the following academic year.

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

Fees

As an EXCHANGE 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 will still be liable to pay fees to the University of Limerick while away on a study exchange.



I feel that choosing to go on Student Exchange was one of the best decisions that I have made. I found it to be an incredible experience and something that I will always cherish. It was not only great from a professional and educational perspective but also from a personal perspective. I learnt a great deal about myself and about the topics involved in my course.

Orla Corcoran

Extension of EXCHANGE 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 2018 for AY 2018/19). 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+/EXCHANGE Academic Coordinator and the UL Course Director for the relevant degree programme and must notify IED (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).

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

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

UL Academic regulations

The ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE 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>

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.

The deadline for Autumn and Full Year applications is 31st October.

The deadline for Spring applications is 31st March.

STEP 1

Attend an ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE information session

Information sessions on the ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE programme are held each semester. Notification of upcoming sessions is sent to all 'compulsory' students via email. For 'non-compulsory'

students, each degree programme has an ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE Academic Coordinator who will arrange information sessions and provide individual advice.

STEP 2

Choose 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+/EXCHANGE partner universities may be found at: www.ul.ie/international/erasmus/outgoing-students/erasmus-exchange-partner-universities

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 EXCHANGE.

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. The words to use for searching are "EXCHANGE", "international".

"exchange students" or "incoming students". Information on partner universities, including module descriptions, brochures and accommodation information, is maintained on the IED website. In addition, reports from former EXCHANGE students are available on the IED SharePoint site: <https://sharepoint.ul.ie/SiteDirectory/InternationalEducationDivision/ErasmusDocuments/StudentReports/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

Student reports can also be sent by e-mail, on request.

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 EXCHANGE students. Please contact IED for former EXCHANGE students' contact details.

STEP 3

Submit the ERASMUS+/NON-EU EXCHANGE application form

The application form requires the student's signature and that of the UL ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE Academic Coordinator, to indicate approval of University selection. Students should select three destination choices, listed in order of preference. Places are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, unless otherwise stated on the Partner Universities list.

The deadline for Autumn and Full Year applications is 31st October.

The deadline for Spring applications is 31st March.

Students receive confirmation of their destination by email, 2-3 weeks after the application deadline. The EXCHANGE Administrator then nominates each student to 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 the website. Students then apply (usually online) to the host university, any hard copy applications should be sent through the EXCHANGE administrator in UL. Provided that a complete application has been submitted within the deadline, students should receive a Letter of Acceptance from the host university 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 EXCHANGE for part of the year.

6. ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Students are likely to need the following documents either as part of the application to the host university, or for registration purposes at the beginning of the academic placement.

- Valid passport (valid until the end of the EXCHANGE placement)
- UL Transcript of Records
- ID photos (saved in .jpg format)
- Birth Certificate
- Bank statement (proof of funds)

For students going overseas for their Coop placement prior to EXCHANGE, it is advisable to scan the documents and save them to a USB key/ e-mail/ dropbox, etc.

7. CANCELLATION OF EXCHANGE PLACEMENT

Students who wish to withdraw from the EXCHANGE programme are required to contact IED and the Academic Coordinator before making a decision.

Exemption from or Alternative to ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE

For degree programmes which include an integrated ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE placement, there is a formal process to apply for an Exemption from or Alternative to ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE. 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.

- Students may apply for an Exemption from, or for the Alternative to ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE.
- Application forms for Exemption from/ Alternative to the Academic Placement can be obtained from either SAA or IED.
- 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 or Counselling services, the birth certificate of dependent children, etc.
- Signatures on the form by ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE 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

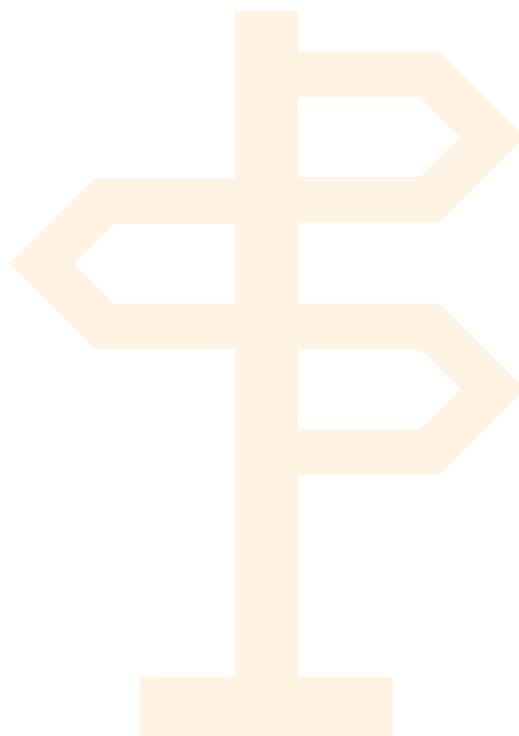
Students who are granted the Alternative to ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE will register for five alternative modules (30 ECTS credits) at UL, agreed with the Course Director. The modules will be graded on Pass/Fail basis, i.e. students must obtain at least C3 in each module to pass the semester.

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

Early Return from EXCHANGE Placement

If a student has to terminate their EXCHANGE 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 EXCHANGE 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+/EXCHANGE academic coordinator at UL. In cases where the student returns from Exchange with no or very few credits, he/she will be required to take additional modules or complete an additional semester at UL.





02

**ACADEMIC
MATTERS**

The NON-EU EXCHANGE 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.

A typical semester load in UL is 30 ECTS credits. Students are expected to take between 24-30 ECTS credits during their EXCHANGE academic placement (see credit requirements in table on next page). 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 a minimum of 24 and a maximum of 30 ECTS credits per semester (unless otherwise specified by the UL ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE Academic Coordinator).

All Students who take part in the EXCHANGE PROGRAMME must submit an EXCHANGE report, this can be emailed to the Non-EU Exchange administrator at the end of the exchange semester abroad.

There are two Grade Registration types for the EXCHANGE academic placement: **P (Pass/Fail)** or **N (Normal)**.

- Mandatory academic placements are graded on Pass/Fail basis and do not impact on QCA.
- Voluntary academic placements are normally graded on Normal basis and impact on QCA. Results obtained at the host university are converted to UL grades by the UL ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE academic coordinator.
- Academic placements undertaken in lieu of a Cooperative work placement are graded on a Pass/Fail basis and do not affect QCA.



Course	Registration Type	Number of ECTS required	ERASMUS+ Report
Arts (LM002)	Pass/Fail	24-30*	Compulsory
Applied Languages (LM044)	Pass/Fail	24-30*	Compulsory
Architecture (LM099)	Normal	30	Compulsory
Business Studies (LM050) / BBS w/ Language (LM052/ LM053/LM055)	Pass/Fail	30	Compulsory
European Studies (LM040)	Pass/Fail	24-30*	Compulsory
International Business (LM056)	Pass/Fail	30	Compulsory
Journalism & New Media (LM039)	Pass/Fail	24-30*	Compulsory
Law Plus (LM029)	Pass/Fail in Autumn Normal in Spring	24-30* 30	Compulsory Compulsory
Performing Arts (LM026)	Normal	30	Compulsory
Product Design & Technology (LM076)	Pass/Fail when undertaken in Sem 2 of Year 3 (in lieu of Coop placement)	30	Optional
Psychology (LM102)	Pass/Fail	24-30*	Compulsory
Psychology & Sociology (LM038)	Pass/Fail	24-30*	Compulsory
Sports & Exercise Science (LM089)	Normal when undertaken in Sem 2 of Year 2;	30	Optional
	Pass/Fail when undertaken in Sem 2 of Year 3 (in lieu of Coop placement)	30	Optional
Physical Education (LM090)	Normal	30	Optional

The ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE Academic Coordinator for each degree programme should be consulted for specific advice with regard to module selection and individual degree 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 (24-30) to pass their Exchange semester.

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 a voluntary academic exchange are expected to select modules that match the content of the UL semester as closely as possible.

The UL ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE Academic Coordinator should be consulted before departure to establish the agreed workload with regard to module selection and degree requirements. The Academic Coordinator

will usually have details of the courses available in partner universities and 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 provisional module selection, students should contact the UL ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE Academic Coordinator to verify changes. If there are any issues regarding courses at the host university, it is important to contact the UL ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE Academic Coordinator immediately.

Learning Agreement

The Learning Agreement is an essential EXCHANGE 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+/EXCHANGE 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 the UL academic coordinator and thus can help to prevent any later misunderstandings.

*** Some host universities may insist that students take the full semester load (i.e. 30 ECTS credits) during the EXCHANGE semester, regardless of how many credits the home university requires. In that case, students will have to register for 30 credits.**

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 IED 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.

Please contact the UL ERASMUS+/ EXCHANGE Academic Coordinator once you are enrolled at the host university for advice on selection of subjects or if there is any deviation regarding the number of subjects or credits from that listed on the initial Learning Agreement.

4. EXAMINATIONS

Students must complete the full placement period as agreed 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: Students are expected to complete the full semester at the host university and therefore sit examinations at the host University. 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 examinations abroad clash with the beginning of the UL Spring semester, students may have to miss the first week or so of the UL semester. Each case is different according to the host University's academic calendar and the modules being studied. It is essential that students write the examinations at the host university and return from Exchange with a complete Transcript of Records, so that their results may be validated. However, it is inadvisable to miss more than two weeks of the Spring semester at UL. If there is concern about the examination timetable abroad, please

get in touch with the staff at UL, either the ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE Academic Coordinator in the relevant subject area or the ERASMUS+ Coordinator in the International Office, as soon as the exam timetable is published.

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. 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.

5. 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 IED as soon as possible. In some cases



the host university will send the TOR to the Non-EU exchange administrator at UL, it is the responsibility of the student to confirm this as soon as possible.

Before returning to Ireland, students must ensure that they understand the host university's procedure for obtaining the Transcript of Records. Some institutions forward the transcripts to the International Office in UL, some post them out to the student's home address, some do not issue a Transcript of Records unless students request it beforehand.

IED will transmit the Transcript of Records to the UL ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE 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 EXCHANGE 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+/EXCHANGE academic coordinator at UL. The converted grades will impact on the student's QCA.

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

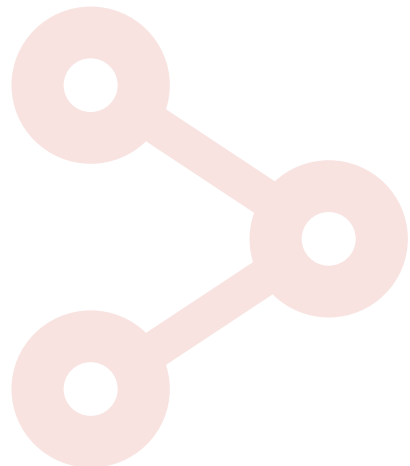
Failure to submit EXCHANGE results before the end of the academic year may delay progression to the following year and/or prevent graduating from UL.

6. 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 EXCHANGE 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+/EXCHANGE 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 EXCHANGE.

In cases where a student returns from EXCHANGE 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 EXCHANGE semester will prevent graduation.





I can honestly say that the time I spent on Student Exchange was the best part of my life to date and I know it's going to be hard to beat it in the future. I've met some of the best people there and made connections all over the world! The experience also made me feel more connected to the world, left me more confident and changed my outlook on life.

Anna Chec



03

**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 EXCHANGE destination.

2. FEES

As an EXCHANGE 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.

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. FUNDING

Students going on the Non-EU Exchange programme do not get any funding, there is no mobility grant available outside the EU. Students are required to pay for their flight, accommodation and living expenses while on exchange. A small amount of Non-EU universities offer a scholarship to UL students, to find out if you are entitled to any scholarship for your university please speak to the Non-EU Exchange administrator in UL.

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+/EXCHANGE 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. Students going on exchange outside the EU are not entitled to the mobility grant.

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.

IED 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

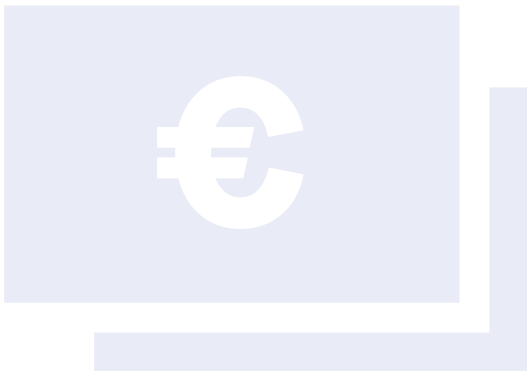
Many banks offer banking facilities to students to help finance their semester abroad. Such facilities may include short-term loans with very low APR, standard student loans, credit cards with 0% interest for the first 6 months, etc.

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 about payment of bills, particularly for accommodation. 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 graduating from UL. The student may also be referred to the UL Disciplinary Committee.





Many people would tell you that Student Exchange changed their life and they've met people whom they will remain friends with for the rest of their life. I was sure this wasn't the case and they were just sensationalizing the experience. I was wrong. You will love it and miss it when it is over.

Kevin O'Donovan



04

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 EXCHANGE 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 EXCHANGE 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 EXCHANGE students from all over the world and have relatively few resources to support such a large and diverse student body.

The vast majority of UL students have found participation in the scheme rewarding, despite some occasional problems either related to accommodation or to homesickness, with some 20% being 'wildly enthusiastic' about their experience.

1. APPLICATION TO HOST UNIVERSITY

Students are required to submit a separate application to the host university. Most universities send information by email. Students then apply (usually online) to the host university, complete the application, print it and send it to the host University. If needs to be sent by hard copy to the host university it should be done through the Non-EU Exchange administrator at UL.

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 IED 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 IED to the student's external email address (Gmail, Yahoo, Live, etc). Students are therefore advised to check their personal 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 IED 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 with special needs should inform the host university. The host university will inform the student of the support they can receive during their mobility period, in order to best support them during their stay.

Selection Process

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+/EXCHANGE Academic Coordinator before submitting their application to the host university.

For other 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.





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. The majority of partner universities use online registration but still require that hard copies of all documents be sent by post. Some applications require a UL Transcript of Records, photocopy of passport, ID photos. These documents must reach the host university before the application deadline. Students who miss the application deadline may not be accepted to study at the host university and may have to defer the EXCHANGE placement until the following academic year.

Visa application

Students going on exchange to the following countries will be required to apply for a visa in order to study at one of their universities:

- USA
- Australia
- New Zealand
- Japan
- China
- Peru
- Chile
- Mexico
- Brazil



Guidelines on the visa process will be provided by the host university and the Non-EU Exchange administrator at UL, prior to application. Students are advised to consult the Embassy website of the country they are going to for visa information also.

2. 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 EXCHANGE 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?
- 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 University accommodation initially.

Students are advised to apply for and accept university residential accommodation if it is available.

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 a 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.

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 re payment of rent, bills, deposits, etc. For instance, in university residential accommodation, students are



I was very apprehensive and worried about Student Exchange and dreaded having to study abroad. However, studying in a different country and having to be completely independent of my usual support network has provided me with a number of new skills such as flexibility and adaptability.

Joanna McNulty

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. 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 landlords from the International office of the host university or to follow up on advertisements placed at the university by students wishing to share accommodation or by landlords wishing to let accommodation. Please note that many landlords prefer to rent out the property for the full academic year. 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.

3. INSURANCE

All students are advised to take out comprehensive health and travel insurance. Please confirm with the host university if it is required to take out their medical 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.

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 most of the US universities they request students to take out their campus medical insurance policy, in some cases they will waive it against a student's own insurance once it meets their requirements. Read the



University requirements on insurance, in case the student must join the University scheme. 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 incurs serious problems for the student, their family, UL and the host University. 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 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.

A package has been negotiated with the

following local insurance company, Oaktree Financial Services. Contact details:

Oaktree Financial Services

20 Kent Street, Fermoy, Co Cork

Tel: 1890 876 077

E-mail: students@oaktreefinancial.ie

Web: www.collegetravel.ie/

www.oaktreefinancial.ie

Oaktree Financial can be contacted

Monday to Friday from 9.30am

to 1pm and 2pm to 5.30pm.

On the following page are examples of pricing for travel insurance. Students will be required to give exact travel dates to receive a quote from Oaktree Financial.

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

4. CHECKLIST

Over the next few months, you will be finalising all the arrangements for your Exchange 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 EXCHANGE 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 on page 40 refers to the EXCHANGE forms to be submitted to UL.

Type of Placement	Placement Period	Length of Trip	Pricing
ERASMUS+ / Study Abroad	Semester dates vary depending on country of destination and partner university but are typically of 5 or 9 months duration.	5 months - US/Canada	from €125
		5 months - Australia/New Zealand	from €85
		5 months - Europe	from €80
		5 months - Other	from €105
		9 months - US/Canada	from €175
		9 months - Australia/New Zealand	from €140
		9 months - Europe	from €125
		9 months - Other	from €160



9-6 months prior to NON-EU EXCHANGE 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 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 IED.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3-1 months prior to NON-EU EXCHANGE placement	Complete
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>
1-2 Weeks into NON-EU EXCHANGE placement	Complete
Contact family as soon as you can to let them know that you have arrived safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>
1-2 months after NON-EU EXCHANGE placement	Complete
Write an EXCHANGE Student Report on Host University and upload it to the IED SharePoint site.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Submit an official Academic Transcript of Records (EXCHANGE results) to IED as soon as you receive it from the host institution so that your EXCHANGE results may be evaluated.	<input type="checkbox"/>



05

**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 EXCHANGE 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 EXCHANGE 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. If the course is certified, the credits will be recognised by UL. There may be a fee for some of these courses, which you may have to pay yourself. Please check with IED 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 (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.

4. ACCOMMODATION

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. 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 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 places 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

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

Exchange 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 EXCHANGE students at the host university. Students must organise their own timetable. The number of modules that students need to take will vary from one university to another as credit weightings can range from 1 to 15 ECTS credits per module. Modules must add up to 24-30 ECTS credits in total.

Students normally have 1-2 weeks at the start of the EXCHANGE 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.

In some universities students may be required to make an appointment with the lecturer for an individual assessment.

Note: Whilst it is often the norm in Ireland to address lecturers by their first name, this is generally not acceptable in other countries. Lecturers at the host university should be addressed as Mr, Ms, Dr or Professor, as appropriate.

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 EXCHANGE 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 EXCHANGE 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. In cases where a student returns from EXCHANGE 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 EXCHANGE report within one month of finishing the EXCHANGE placement. The report, if deemed satisfactory, carries 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. EXCHANGE students must adhere to the academic calendar and exam schedule of the host university.

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. The student must also assume responsibility for taking out adequate personal travel and health insurance.

Common sense should be exercised at all times while living abroad.

Students should take care with displaying valuables; wallets, cameras, mobile phones etc should be hidden from view. Passport and money (kept in several places and taken as travellers cheques where practical) should be kept separately inside zipped pockets. Only a minimal amount of cash, sufficient to reach the destination, should be carried.

The International office of the host University can provide information on areas or places which are considered unsafe. Students are advised to remain with a group in certain areas of cities and to travel or go out in the evening with a group of friends rather than alone. If returning home late at night, it is advisable to get an identifiable taxi.

Students are advised to:

- Attend orientation, apply for the Buddy programme if offered, obtain local information
- Take out travel insurance and private medical insurance
- 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.
- Stay in a group when going out at night, take taxis, do not carry much cash or valuables, be wary at all times
- Enter local telephone contact on UL student portal
- Reduce alcohol consumption to avoid 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)
- Inform International Office at host University and UL immediately in emergency

Any incident, however small, should be reported to the police, the host university and UL International Office as soon as possible.

If required, the list for Irish embassies in European countries are available on the following website: www.dfa.ie/embassies/irish-embassies-abroad/

8. 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. As the University wishes to maintain excellent relations with partner universities and does not want to prejudice staff or landlords against future generations of Irish 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.





06

**EXCHANGE
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 EXCHANGE:

- Find out as much as possible about your destination
- Make some contacts if possible before you go (e.g. with UL students going to the same destination, or with students from the host university who previously studied at UL on EXCHANGE)

- Talk to the ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE 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 EXCHANGE 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 EXCHANGE 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+/EXCHANGE programme. Wherever you are, there will be activities and events organised for EXCHANGE students; this is the best way to meet other students. Take advantage of all opportunities offered to EXCHANGE students, especially in the first few weeks.

Meeting students from the host university can be more difficult. 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 EXCHANGE students.

INTERNATIONAL LIFE

ERASMUS+ Students

Non-mobile Students

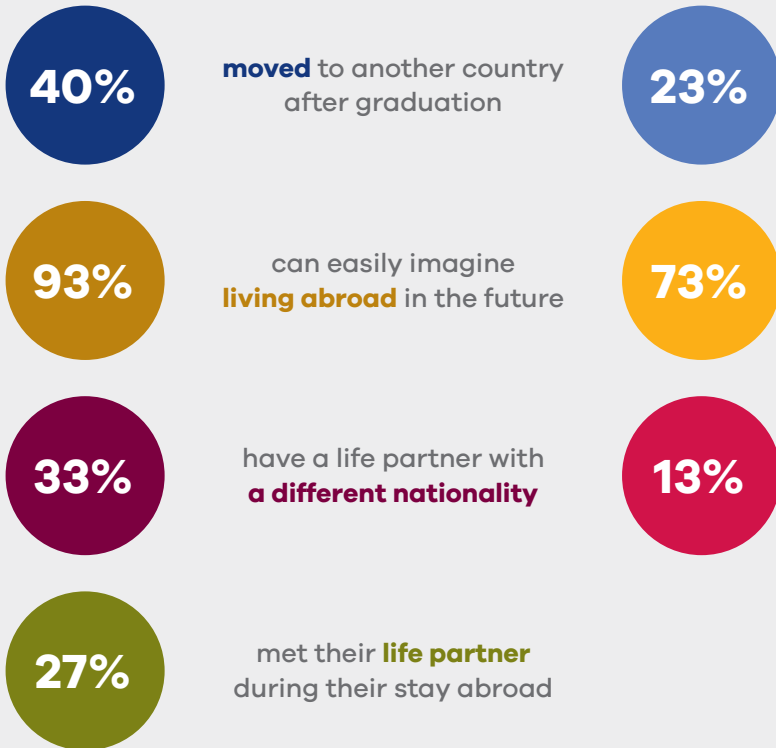


Figure 2
ERASMUS+ Impact Study, 22 Sept. 2014

3. LIFE AFTER EXCHANGE

The EXCHANGE semester 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 'EXCHANGE blues':

- Share your experience and contribute to making other EXCHANGE students' exchange a success - contact the International Office to volunteer as an EXCHANGE 'ambassador' and speak to future students at the International Fair and/or ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE Information sessions.
- Volunteer for the Buddy programme at UL (Buddyprogramme@ul.ie)
- Become a member of the UL International Society and meet new EXCHANGE 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 EXCHANGE friends.
- Transform what you learnt during EXCHANGE into new opportunities for experience and networking.

The ERASMUS+/EXCHANGE 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.





I loved my Student Exchange experience. It's something I'll always look back on and be glad I did it. There were days where I was homesick, but even on those days I knew I was incredibly lucky. I got to see the world and meet new people. If given the opportunity to study abroad again, I would do it in a heartbeat. It was a wonderful experience.

Mairead Cunnane

07

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1.

EXCHANGE Forms

PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FOR EXCHANGE

LEARNING AGREEMENT

To be completed before the EXCHANGE placement. The form must be approved by the UL ERASMUS+ Academic Coordinator before sending it to the host university.

UPON RETURN FROM EXCHANGE

EXCHANGE 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+/EXCHANGE 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 submitted in electronic format only.



ANNEX 2. UL EXCHANGE Academic Coordinators

* Subjects that are part of a UL programme with an integrated ERASMUS+ academic placement

For the latest list of ERASMUS+/ EXCHANGE academic coordinators, please refer to the IED website: www.ul.ie/international/erasmus/outgoing-erasmus/erasmusexchanges-academic-coordinators

Academic Area
Architecture
Business/Business with Lang.
Environmental Science
Computer Science
Digital Media Design
*Economics
Engineering
*English
Electronic Engineering
*French
*Gaeilge & Lesser Known Languages
*German
*History
*International Business
*Journalism
Law / Criminal Justice
*Linguistics
Materials Science & Technology
*Mathematics
Mechanical & Aeronautical Eng.
*New Media & Cultural Studies
Performing Arts (IWAMD)
*Politics & International Relations
*Public Admin. & Leadership
Product Design and Technology
Physical Education & Sports Science
*Psychology
*Sociology
*Spanish

Academic Coordinator	Office	E-Mail	Tel. (061)
Jan Frohburg	ER3-015	jan.frohburg@ul.ie	213698
Caroline Murphy	KB2-17	caroline.murphy@ul.ie	213710
Bernadette O'Regan	B3-047	bernadette.oregan@ul.ie	202552
J.J. Collins	CS1-28	j.j.collins@ul.ie	202409
Gabriela Avram	CS2-031	gabriela.avram@ul.ie	202782
TBC			
Reiner Dojen	D3-002	reiner.dojen@ul.ie	213442
Carrie Griffin	ER3-022	carrie.griffin@ul.ie	202336
Ian Grout	C2-044	ian.grout@ul.ie	202298
Annie Halpin	LC2-013	annie.halpin@ul.ie	213432
Aengus Finnegan	LC2-010	aengus.finnegan@ul.ie	234736
Joachim Fischer	MC1-008	joachim.fischer@ul.ie	202354
Alistair Malcolm	C1-090	alistair.malcolm@ul.ie	202604
Kieran Gallery	KB3-43	kieran.gallery@ul.ie	213319
Kathryn Hayes	ER3-023	kathryn.hayes@ul.ie	234678
Andrea Ryan	FG-003	andrea.ryan@ul.ie	234190
Angela Farrell	LC2-008	angela.farrell@ul.ie	202244
Gerry Higgins	B3-030	gerry.higgins@ul.ie	202069
Norma Bargary	B2-012	norma.bargary@ul.ie	234759
Hassan Kaghazchi	A1-103	hassan.kaghazchi@ul.ie	202107
TBC			
Mats Melin	IW1-19	mats.melin@ul.ie	202542
Bernadette Connaughton	F1-022	bernadette.connaughton@ul.ie	202792
Bernadette Connaughton	F1-022	bernadette.connaughton@ul.ie	202792
Niall Deloughry	PDC-2	niall.deloughry@ul.ie	213111
Brigitte Moody	P1-008	brigitte.moody@ul.ie	202807
Eric Igou	E1-036	eric.igou@ul.ie	234657
Lee Monaghan	F1-006	lee.monaghan@ul.ie	213346
Barrie Wharton	SG-31	barrie.wharton@ul.ie	202974

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

**Department of Foreign
Affairs and Trade**
www.dfa.ie

Aviva / Irish Life Health
www.aviva.ie/health

Laya healthcare (AIG)
www.layahealthcare.ie

VHI
www.vhi.ie/home

Oaktree
[www.oaktreefinancial.ie/
other-insurance/travel](http://www.oaktreefinancial.ie/other-insurance/travel)

**Student Universal
Support Ireland (SUSI)**
www.susi.ie

ESN
www.esn.org

Global Graduates
www.globalgraduates.com

Just landed
www.justlanded.com



UNIVERSITY *of* LIMERICK

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

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University of Limerick,
Limerick, Ireland
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www.ul.ie/international

 [/ULInternational](https://www.facebook.com/ULInternational)

 [/ulinternational](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ulinternational)

 [@InternationalUL](https://twitter.com/InternationalUL)

 [/internationalul](https://www.instagram.com/internationalul)

 [@InternationalUL](https://www.weibo.com/InternationalUL)

 [/ULInternational](https://www.snapchat.com/add/ULInternational)

 [@InternationalUL](https://www.whatsapp.com/channel/0029va213153)