

Spotlight



Erasmus+ Application Procedure

MITTEL AUDIO by Clare Maas

It is recommended that you plan your stay abroad about a year in advance. This will give you time to prepare the application documents and arrange a learning agreement with your ERASMUS+ Coordinator. For most undergraduates, preparation should start in your 3rd semester to go in the 5th semester.

The application deadline is around March for students wishing to go on the exchange in the following winter term (September/October). Prior to that, there are talks and Q&A sessions (usually in January). You should take advantage of these, because any problems you foresee can be dealt with then.

Candidates for ERASMUS+ exchanges are chosen by each university. They also pay you the scholarship money.

There's a short list of documents you will need to submit as your application. Once you send your application to your university's International Office, it is forwarded to the departmental coordinator who reads all the applications, and may ask candidates to attend an interview. In general, the decisions are based on proof of suitability for studying. Evidence that you will make the most of your stay abroad and that you are well informed about the university you are applying for is more important than grades.

To apply to study abroad with the ERASMUS+ programme, you'll need to complete and submit certain documents to the International Office before the application.

1. Online application form

This is a basic form where you fill in your personal and contact details.

2. Programme list

This is where you list all the universities you would like to apply for. To increase your chances of being offered a place as an ERASMUS+ student, pick a first, second and third choice of partner institution.

3. Transcript of previously completed modules or classes

4. CV

CVs, or résumés, should not be longer than 1-2 pages, and give details of your educational achievements, as well as any previous work experience or jobs. Details on your degree progress should be included — especially if you have changed universities or degree subjects.

5. Covering letter

In this application letter, you'll need to explain your motivations for applying for the ERASMUS+ study abroad programme and for applying to your particular choice of partner institution. You should highlight what you bring to the programme as an individual, as well as what interests you about your choice of exchange university. It should probably be about two pages long.

Remember that the "goal" of the ERASMUS+ study abroad programme is to encourage international cooperation in the academic arena — so even if you have previously not been a "straight-A" student, or if you feel that your language is not yet perfect, you should emphasize what you can bring to the international exchange. Inform yourself about your first choice of partner university and the classes that interest you. Make your application specific to your person, purpose and university!

Ask yourself: What strengths do you have? What interests will you be able to follow in the country you're applying for? What career aims might this exchange help you to fulfil? What previous experience do you have that shows that you are prepared for a challenge and excited about really making the most of your time in that country and/or at that university? These are the kind of things that make applicants stand out.

Once you've been picked and given a spot at one of your university's partners, you'll need to think about what classes to take. This will be based on ECTS, which is the European Credit Transfer System, created by the European Commission. It aims to standardize and unify academic systems across the European Union. Completing classes earns you credits/points, which are the reflection of the hours of work you put into studying. Typically, exchange students are expected to earn about 25–30 ECTS points per semester. So a typical language class might be worth

about 6 ECTS points. Writing term papers or sitting exams, as well as attending weekly lessons, possibly also giving a presentation, means that you can usually earn up to about 10 or even 15 points per seminar. Of course, you'll need to speak to the individual lecturers to check the requirements and the available points.

Once you've chosen some classes, you need to prepare a Learning Agreement prior to your departure. This is like a contract which lists the classes you intend to take at your host university as well as the courses you would like to be accredited at your home university. Most universities publish the courses they offer. Your ERASMUS+ Coordinator can also help you find appropriate classes. The classes may change from year to year, but the learning agreement will still help you to achieve the necessary number of ECTS points and guarantees your work counts towards your degree. The Learning Agreement must be signed by your ERASMUS+ Coordinator as well as by an advisor from the subject department or International Office abroad. But if you need to make amendments to your Learning Agreement after you arrive at your host institution, there is another form for this which also needs to be signed by the coordinators at both universities.

EXERCISE

Text production: In your own words, answer each of these students' questions about applying for the Erasmus exchange programme in 3–5 sentences. Try to use the passive voice.

Do lots of complicated documents need to be submitted for an Erasmus application?

How can my average grades be counteracted in my application?

What information is included in a covering letter?



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