Guide for Students
Going Abroad in 2017/2018
Part I: Applicant Guide
“Before my year abroad, I was somebody too shy to give answers in French class as I felt I wasn’t as good as everyone else however since spending my year abroad in Bordeaux, I have much more confidence to interact in French. Added to that, the amazing weather and people I’ve met, it has been a year well spent.”

Heather Mudge
Education + French
Bordeaux, France
Explaining Erasmus

Introduction
Erasmus is a European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport. The current programme cycle, Erasmus+, will run from 2014 to 2020, with a proposed budget of €16 billion.

Erasmus+ provides students in higher education with the opportunity to study or work in Europe for two to twelve months (per university cycle) as part of their degree.

Erasmus exchange is not just for students of modern languages, it is directed towards students of all degree programmes. An Erasmus exchange usually forms an integral part of a student’s degree programme and so counts as part of the relevant minimum criteria as prescribed in the degree regulations. It does not add an additional year to your study programme.

All students, regardless of their nationality, are eligible to participate in this programme. Erasmus students must be registered as full-time students while abroad and fulfil the academic requirements.

Funding
Students arrange for their tuition fees to be paid as normal to their sending (home) institution while they are abroad.

Students studying abroad with the Erasmus programme are normally eligible to receive funding in the form of a grant.

For more information, go to: https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/
This section covers all you need to know about Erasmus exchange opportunities at the University of Aberdeen.

The Erasmus Team
The Erasmus Team, led by the Institutional Erasmus Coordinator looks after the over-arching organisation and administration of the Erasmus programme at the University of Aberdeen, including payment of the Erasmus grant. Any general questions about the programme, application procedures, grant payments or similar should be directed to the Erasmus Unit in the first instance.

Go Abroad Tutor
In every department at the University there is a designated Go Abroad Tutor who acts as the first point of contact for any academic matters relating to the Erasmus programme. To find details of your Go Abroad Tutor, check the list available on our website. Joint honors students will have two Go Abroad tutors, one from each subject area.

Your Go Abroad Tutor(s) can provide advice on suitable host institutions for your degree programme and curriculum choice while abroad.

Destinations
The University of Aberdeen has Erasmus links with around 120 universities. Exchange links exist between departments so where you can go will depend on what you study. There are also a small number of University wide agreements.

Joint Honours students may choose to study at a partner institution in either of their subject areas, provided suitable courses in the second subject area are also taught.

Many of our partner institutions offer courses taught in English so it is not necessary to speak another language to take part in an Erasmus exchange. Online language support may be available to you during your exchange and this is a great way to pick up some useful phrases in the language of your host country.

Erasmus Study & Placement
It is possible to undertake an Erasmus study period in a university and a period of Erasmus Work Placement at different times during your degree programme, subject to the approval of the relevant Department(s) at the University of Aberdeen. Both periods abroad must be recognised as counting directly towards your degree programme at the University of Aberdeen, and the maximum duration of both together should not exceed 12 months.

Go Abroad Desk, International Centre
The International Centre is now open on the ground floor of the Hub. There is a library of promotional materials from our partner universities available for you to access in the Centre at any time.

You can also drop in to the Go Abroad Desk in the International Centre and speak to one of our Go Abroad Ambassadors - Aberdeen students who have taken part in an exchange and are keen to share their experiences and enthusiasm with you. The Go Abroad Desk is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 14:00-16:00, and Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00-12:00.

“Meeting exciting and open-minded people every single day, getting to know more about the local customs and traditions, seeing the rapid progress you are making with the language and being able to communicate freely with the locals - to me these are the highlights of my extraordinary and unforgettable Erasmus experience in Spain!”

Ivo Atanassov
European Studies
Alicante, Spain

Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

A list of partner universities by subject area is available on our website: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/erasmus/outgoing-students/department-links/
Erasmus Study

General Eligibility
An Erasmus study exchange must be recognised by the relevant academic department(s) as contributing towards your degree programme. To participate in an Erasmus exchange you must have completed one year of undergraduate study, and remain registered as a full-time student at your home institution while abroad.

Academic Eligibility
Undergraduate students planning a period of study abroad must:
> be in good standing academically in accordance with Regulation 16.1 of the General Regulations for First Degrees. This means that you must achieve 120 credits by the end of year 1 and/or 240 credits by the end of the year 2, without any outstanding resit exams prior to your departure
> have achieved an average of C or above in all courses.
> have the support of the relevant Go Abroad Tutor(s)
> have satisfied any other academic criteria as determined by your subject area(s)

If you intend to complete a Joint Honours degree, you must meet the above conditions in both subject areas and have support from the Go Abroad Tutors of both departments.

When can I take part?
You can go on Erasmus exchange for one semester, or the full academic year.

Students from the majority of subject areas where an exchange is not a compulsory element of the degree programme, would generally be permitted to study abroad at level 2 or level 3. However there are some exceptions, normally due to professional accreditation requirements, so check with your Go Abroad Tutor to confirm when students of your degree programme can take part in an Erasmus exchange.

If you study abroad during your second year, the credits you achieve will be awarded on a pass/fail basis and you must achieve the equivalent of 60 University of Aberdeen credits per semester in order to proceed into Honours on your return. If you study abroad during your third year, the credits you achieve will be awarded on a pass/fail basis and individual grades will not count towards your degree classification.

For students on five year programmes where a study abroad period is compulsory, for example languages or law with a language programmes, exchange takes place at level 3.

Choosing your Curriculum
Students going abroad on an Erasmus study exchange are required to select courses prior to departing Aberdeen. It is essential that you agree your curriculum with your Go Abroad Tutor(s) before you go to ensure that the courses you study while abroad can be credited towards your degree. Similarly, if you need to change these courses while abroad, you must first seek the permission of your Go Abroad Tutor(s).

Generally, all students studying abroad as part of the Erasmus exchange programme are expected:
> to register for 30 ECTS credits per semester at the host institution
> to attend classes and submit written work as required by the host institution
> to participate in assessments for all courses of which registered, as required by the host institution

Recognising your Erasmus Exchange
If you have agreed your programme of study in advance and pass all required assessments at the host institution, the credits you gain will count towards your degree at the University of Aberdeen.

If you fail a course, or courses, while abroad you should explore the resit opportunities available at your host institution and endeavour to achieve the credits at a second sitting if at all possible. Otherwise you may have to take additional courses on your return to Aberdeen, or in extreme cases, repeat the entire semester/academic year (potentially meeting the costs of tuition fees).

If the period of study abroad is a compulsory element of your degree programme and you do not fulfil the academic requirements, you may be required to change to a different degree programme which can prove difficult if you do not have the pre-requisites for an alternative programme.

This information is not intended to scare you or put you off studying abroad. It is simply a reminder that when choosing to undertake an Erasmus exchange, you must take your studies abroad seriously.

Need to know
If your application does not have the support of the relevant Go Abroad Tutor(s), or you have not satisfied the specified academic criteria, and you choose to go abroad you will automatically be deemed to have withdrawn from the University of Aberdeen.

The host institution concerned will be informed that your intended period of study does not have the support of the University of Aberdeen and you will therefore be unable to register as an Erasmus student and will be liable for the payment of tuition fees if you complete their admission process.
Online Erasmus Application

Preparation
Students interested in participating in the Erasmus programme should register their interest via the link on our website.

Students on the mailing list will be kept up-to-date with news and events and will be notified when applications open and close.

Before completing the online application, you should research where you can go and your preferred host institutions. Refer to the Erasmus links by department and the links by country on our website for more information.

It is essential that you consult the Course Catalogues of your preferred host institutions, ensuring that courses suitable for your degree programme are offered at a relevant level and taught in a relevant language. We also recommend speaking to your Go Abroad Tutor(s), particularly Joint Honours students, prior to making your application so that they are aware of your intentions.

Application window
The online Erasmus application window will open on Monday 16 January 2017 with a deadline for submission of Friday 27 January 2017. Application information sessions will be held during the first week of the second semester.

Online application
To access the online application you must first enter your University of Aberdeen student ID number. The below information will then be auto-filled into the form:

- personal information
- contact details
- information relating to your studies

If any of this information is incorrect you MUST update it via your Student Portal. The online Erasmus application cannot be used to amend any of the details the University holds on record for you.

The application also includes a number of questions for you to complete about languages spoken (if any) and at what level; details of previous Erasmus exchange (if any); and proposed timing and duration of your exchange. You must then give your preferred host institutions for Erasmus exchange. It is strongly recommended that you give three options.

Finally you are required to upload a Statement of Motivation. In your Statement, you should detail the specific reasons behind your choice of host institutions and your personal motivations for studying abroad. The maximum word count for the Statement is 300 words.

“My year abroad on Erasmus has been brilliant so far. As a keen traveller, discovering more of Spain has provided me with amazing experiences and cherished memories. The chance to meet so many like-minded people, from various countries all across the world, has enriched my life as a student, and helped me learn more about different cultures, as well as making close friends.

Rebecca Endersby
Hispanic Studies + Linguistics
Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain
What happens next?

**Selection**
At each partner institution we have a limited number of exchange places. With some destinations being more competitive than others, a selection process is necessary to allocate successful applicants to host institutions. This process is undertaken by the Erasmus Office, working closely with Go Abroad Tutors. The selection decision is based on academic merit, your Statement of Motivation and in some cases, the suitability between your degree programme and courses on offer at the partner institution.

**Offer Letter**
You will be notified of the outcome of your application in March. Successful applicants will receive an offer letter with details of their allocation and the terms and conditions of the offer. You will need to sign and return the Offer Letter by the stated deadline in order to confirm your place.

It is important to note that all selection and allocation decisions are provisional at this stage, subject to you meeting the specified academic criteria by the end of the academic year.

**Nomination**
Once you have returned your Offer Letter the Erasmus Unit will send a nomination email with your contact details to the host institution.

**Host institution procedures**
After receiving your nomination, the host institution will normally contact you directly with further information about their application procedure which you must complete. **The procedures will vary between institutions.**

Although you have been nominated by the University of Aberdeen for exchange, you will not be officially accepted by the host institution until you have completed their application procedure. **It is your responsibility to do this.** Please check the website of your host institution to familiarise yourself with their application process and importantly, any application documents which are commonly, but not always, required as part of the host institution’s application include:

- a nomination certificate
- a language certificate
- your Transcript of Records
- your course choices

If you require a nomination or language certificate, please request this by emailing erasmus@abdn.ac.uk.

To receive your Transcript of Records, an official University document which details the grades and credits you have achieved thus far, please email erasmus@abdn.ac.uk. Do not order your Transcript of Records from the Online Store, or send a print out of your Student Portal. The version we provide is free of charge, and understood by our partners. Please allow one week for transcript requests.

You may be required to provisionally choose your courses at the host institution, or provide this information as part of Section 1 of the Erasmus+ Learning Agreement. For support when selecting courses, speak to your Go Abroad Tutor. Any documents pertaining to your course choice must be signed off by your Go Abroad Tutor(s).

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**Important**
It is your responsibility to check deadlines for your host institution and submit any applications on time.

Some application forms will require you to enter the Erasmus ID code of the University of Aberdeen. The code is UK ABERDEE01.
Rather than participate in an Erasmus+ study exchange, you may prefer to undertake an Erasmus+ Work Placement. This could be an internship or traineeship you secure independently, a British Council English Language Assistantship, a final year Chemistry or Engineering project or an industrial placement. To undertake an Erasmus+ Work Placement you must remain registered as a student at University of Aberdeen.

In the first instance you should contact your Go Abroad Tutor to discuss whether an Erasmus+ Work Placement contributes towards your degree programme. If so, get in touch with us to be informed of the relevant administrative procedures.

In order to be considered for Erasmus+ funding, the traineeship you intend to undertake must:

- be of minimum duration 2 months
- be deemed ‘academically relevant’ and approved by your academic department(s) at the University of Aberdeen
- be located in a Programme country in Europe (please note that we cannot fund students undertaking a placement in their home country) – a full list of Programme countries is available [here].

Your host institution/company must also be prepared to sign off all Erasmus+ paperwork as required.

**Tuition Fees**

When studying or working abroad as part of your degree programme, you should continue to be entitled to assistance from public funds towards your tuition fees. Erasmus students do NOT pay tuition fees to the host institution, but continue to do so to the University of Aberdeen as follows:

**Students funded by SAAS (Scottish/EU students)**

- Full year study – SAAS cover full fee
- Full year traineeship – SAAS cover 50% fee, remainder waived
- Part year study – SAAS cover full fee
- Part year traineeship – SAAS cover full fee

**Student Finance England/Wales/Northern Ireland and International Students (RUK students)**

- Full year study/traineeship – fee waiver switched from final year to year abroad*
- Part year study/traineeship – standard fee applies

* only applies if it is your first ‘year abroad’ during the programme

You must apply to the relevant funding body as normal, indicating that you are going abroad. The Erasmus Unit will confirm to your funding body that you are abroad on a University-organised programme in the summer preceding your time abroad.

**Student Loans**

If you are going abroad as part of your degree programme, you will most likely still be entitled to a student loan. Generally, you should still also be eligible for means-tested bursaries and grants, however students undertaking a paid traineeship may no longer qualify.

Scottish students funded by SAAS, who are studying abroad as a compulsory element of their degree programme, may be entitled to claim the cost of a return flight and health insurance from SAAS. For more information, check the SAAS website.

**Erasmus Mobility Grant**

If you are undertaking an Erasmus exchange, either study or traineeship, and have not received an Erasmus Mobility Grant previously, you should be eligible to receive this funding.

The Erasmus Mobility Grant is intended to contribute towards the extra costs involved in studying abroad, but will by no means cover your full expenditure.

Grant levels are determined by the British Council each year and have not yet announced for 2017/18. In 2016/17, grant levels were set between 280 and 430 EUR.

Prior to beginning your mobility you will be issued with a set of personalised documents relating to the Erasmus Mobility Grant. Each document must be completed as instructed and returned to the Erasmus Unit. The grant is paid into your UK bank account in Pounds Sterling in two allocations. The first allocation, amounting to approximately 80% of the overall amount, is paid shortly after your arrival at the host institution. The second allocation is paid on your return. Failure to return paperwork will delay grant payments.

If you return from your Erasmus exchange earlier than planned you may be required to repay some of your grant. If you do not meet the minimum duration of 2 months for Erasmus+ work placements, or 3 months for Erasmus+ study exchange, you will have to repay the full grant amount.

Additional funding for students from low income backgrounds and for students with disabilities may be available.
So what’s next?

Research your options!
Use our website to research available destinations and check out our partner’s websites to decide if it’s the right Erasmus exchange destination for you. For a positive goldmine of student-generated information, blogs and invaluable tips about study and work abroad visit: www.thirdyearabroad.com.

Speak to your Go Abroad Tutor
For academic advice about studying abroad, or specific questions relating to your degree programme and when and where you can take part in an Erasmus exchange, speak to your Go Abroad Tutor.

Dates for your diary
Online Application opens Monday 16 January 2017
Application information sessions Monday 16 January 2017
Online application deadline Friday 27 January 2017

And finally join our Facebook page for updates, news and events at www.facebook.com/ErasmusABDN

For more information, go to: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/erasmus/

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