European Commission

Erasmus+
International Credit Mobility

Handbook for Participating Organisations

Version 2.0 – November 2017

Erasmus+

Acronyms and abbreviations

We have tried to keep the language in this Handbook as simple and as clear as possible. When we have used acronyms or abbreviations we have made sure to spell these out at least once. Here they are, just in case…

DCI: Development Cooperation Instrument

EC: European Commission

ECHE: Erasmus Charter for Higher Education

ECTS: European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

EDF: European Development Fund

ENI: European Neighbourhood Instrument

EU: European Union

FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

HEI: Higher education institution

ICM: International Credit Mobility

IIA: Inter-institutional agreement

IPA: Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

KA107: IT terminology for International Credit Mobility

MT+: Mobility Tool+

NA: Erasmus+ National Agency

NEO: National Erasmus+ Office

OS: Organisational Support

PI: Partnership Instrument

PIC: Participant Identification Code

Introduction

For 30 years, the European Union has funded the Erasmus programme which has enabled over 4 million European students to spend part of their studies in another higher education institution (HEI) in Europe. In 2015, Erasmus+ opened up these opportunities to individuals and organisations from other parts of the world. Through the new "International Credit Mobility" action - ICM for short - European HEIs can now set up mobility agreements with partners around the world, to send and receive students and staff.

What's in it for individuals?

ICM projects aim to help participants acquire key skills, support their professional development and deepen their understanding of other cultures. The Erasmus Impact Study[1] finds that taking part in Erasmus+ is likely to boost a graduate's employability and transversal skills. Unemployment rates among Erasmus participants are 23% lower 5 years after graduation compared to those who did not go abroad. Two-thirds of employers think that international experience is a key asset for job candidates and leads to greater professional responsibility. Staff can acquire new competences for their professional development, improve their language skills and learn about new working methods.

What's in it for institutions?

ICM aims to increase the capacities, attractiveness and international dimension of the organisations taking part. International ties between institutions will be strengthened, giving the partners the opportunity to increase their visibility at local and global levels. Both incoming and outgoing students will be ready to share their positive experiences of studying at your institution.

Purpose of this handbook

This handbook aims to support both Programme and Partner Country HEIs[2] in the implementation of their ICM project, from application to final report. This handbook will provide you with information on the key documents, rules and guidelines you will need to be aware of. It will guide you through the various steps your institution will be expected to take, and tell you where to go for further information. This handbook does not replace the Erasmus+ Programme Guide[3], which you should refer to for more detailed information.

We hope you find this handbook useful, and wish you every success with your ICM project.

The International Credit Mobility Team

[1] Erasmus Impact Study, September 2014: ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact_en.pdf
[2] For the purposes of ICM, the 33 Erasmus+ Programme Countries are the 28 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. Partner Countries are all other countries in the world.
[3] Erasmus+ Programme Guide: ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/guide/index_en.htm

I – What is ICM and how do I apply?

International Credit Mobility (ICM) supports the mobility of individuals enrolled or employed at a higher education institution (HEI), from a Programme Country to a Partner Country or vice versa, namely:

- **Student mobility for studies**, open to short cycle, first cycle (Bachelor or equivalent) or second cycle (Master or equivalent) students, as well as third cycle doctoral candidates. The mobility period can last from 3 months (or one academic term) to 12 months.
- **Student mobility for traineeships**, open from call 2018 to short cycle, first cycle (Bachelor or equivalent) or second cycle (Master or equivalent) students, as well as third cycle doctoral candidates. The mobility period can last from 2 to 12 months. See dedicated section on 'Traineeships'.
- **Staff mobility for teaching** for academic staff and (from call 2018) for invited staff from non-academic organisations to teach at a partner higher education institution (HEI) abroad. The mobility period can last from 5 days to 2 months.
- **Staff mobility for training** for teaching and non-teaching staff in the form of training events abroad (excluding conferences), job shadowing, observation periods and/or training at a partner HEI. The mobility period can last from 5 days to 2 months. This activity also supports the mobility of staff from Partner Country HEIs to train at a non-academic organisation located in a Programme Country. See dedicated section on 'Staff mobility to and from non-academic organisations'.

Student and staff mobility can take place in any subject area or academic discipline. Moreover, there are no quotas for student or staff mobility with Partner Countries. In other words, HEIs are free to apply for staff mobility or student mobility, or any combination of the two.

Staff teaching and training activities can be combined. A study period and a traineeship can also be combined, for a minimum of 3 months (or one academic term) and a maximum of 12 months.

Grant breakdown[4]

Individual support

Mobility to…	Student monthly rate[5] (2018-2020)	Staff daily rate (2018-2020)
Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom	€ 900	€ 180
Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain	€ 850	€ 160
Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey	€ 800	€ 140
All Partner Countries	€ 700	€ 180

[4] These grant rates apply to projects selected from call 2018.
[5] The rates for student mobility for studies and for traineeships are the same. In ICM, there is no "top-up" amount for traineeship mobility.

Travel allowance

Travel distances[6]	Amount
Between 0 and 99 KM	€20 per participant
Between 100 and 499 KM	€ 180 per participant
Between 500 and 1999 KM	€ 275 per participant
Between 2000 and 2999 KM	€ 360 per participant
Between 3000 and 3999 KM	€ 530 per participant
Between 4000 and 7999 KM	€ 820 per participant
8000 KM or more	€ 1,500 per participant

Organisational support

The grant foresees an **organisational support (OS)** contribution of **€350 per participant**[7] to cover costs directly linked to the implementation of mobility activities, such as the selection of participants, linguistic preparation, visa and insurance costs. It is important that the distribution of the OS grant as far as possible reflect each partner's workload in support of the mobility project. The way in which the grant is used or shared between participating institutions should be agreed upon by all partners on a mutually acceptable basis and set out in the inter-institutional agreement.

For more information on the grant, please refer to Part B of the Erasmus+ Programme Guide.

Who can apply?

Any Programme Country HEI is eligible to apply for ICM funding to its National Agency (NA) as an individual HEI and/or via a consortium application:

- **For an application as an individual HEI:** The applicant HEI must hold a valid Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE)[8].
- **For an application as a national mobility consortium:** The consortium must hold a higher education consortium accreditation. Organisations that do not hold a valid consortium accreditation can apply for this accreditation at the same time as applying for a mobility project. All HEIs involved in the consortium must hold a valid ECHE.

Skip to section b "*Getting the right accreditation*" for more information.

Eligible partner organisations

Organisations from around the world are eligible to take part in ICM as partners, with the exception of those located in regions 5 and 12.[9]

[6] Travel distances must be calculated using the distance calculator supported by the European Commission (ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/distance_en.htm). The travel distance for one direction is used to calculate the EU grant amount for the round trip.
[7] Prior to call 2018, the OS grant was calculated as €350 per participant up to the 100th participant, and €200 beyond.
[8] Erasmus Charter for Higher Education: ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents-for-applicants/erasmus-charter-higher-education_en
[9] Region 5: Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, Vatican City State; Region 12: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates.

Participating **Partner Country HEIs** must be **recognised** as higher education institutions (HEI) [10] by the relevant authority in the Partner Country. They must sign an **inter-institutional agreement** with their partner in the Programme Country before any mobility can take place. Find out more about this agreement in section II of this Handbook.

If an exchange takes place with an organisation that is not a recognised HEI, the mobility is ineligible and the funds must be recovered. As the organisation submitting the application, the Programme Country HEI is responsible for verifying the eligibility of all partners in their application, and throughout the project lifecycle.

Other organisations in Programme and Partner Countries are also eligible to take part in an ICM project. These organisations can host students on traineeship or HEI staff in training, while staff from these organisations can be invited to teach at an HEI. These organisations must be active in the labour market or in the fields of education, training and youth. See dedicated section on 'Traineeships'.

Roles and responsibilities

Participating organisations involved in the mobility project take on the following roles and responsibilities:

- The **applicant organisation** (always the Programme Country HEI) submits an application to its NA on behalf of its partner(s). The applicant can also apply on behalf of a consortium of several partners from the same Programme Country.
- Once selected, the **beneficiary organisation** (always the Programme Country HEI) signs and manages the grant agreement, and reports at the end of the project. The beneficiary is financially responsible for the entirety of the grant.
- The **sending organisation** (from either a Programme or a Partner Country) is responsible for selecting the students and staff and sending them abroad. This includes preparation, monitoring and recognition activities.
- The **receiving organisation** (from either a Programme or a Partner Country) hosts the students and staff from abroad, providing support during their stay.

Students and staff apply directly to their institution. The selection criteria for participation in the mobility activities are defined by the HEI in which they study or are employed. The selection criteria and procedures should also be discussed with the receiving institution, who will be hosting the students or staff.

[10] According to the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, this is any type of higher education institution which, in accordance with national law or practice, offers recognised degrees or other recognised tertiary level qualifications, whatever such establishment may be called, or any institution which, in accordance with national law or practice, offers vocational education or training at tertiary level.

This table provides an overview of ICM activities and eligible organisations:

	Student mobility for studies (SMS)	Student mobility for traineeships (SMP)	Staff mobility for teaching (STA)	Staff mobility for training (STT)
Sending organisation can be…	Programme or Partner Country HEI	Programme or Partner Country HEI	Programme or Partner Country HEI *or* Programme or Partner Country public or private organisation	Programme or Partner Country HEI
Receiving organisation can be…	Programme or Partner Country HEI	Programme or Partner Country HEI *or* Public or private organisation	Programme or Partner Country HEI	Programme or Partner Country HEI *or* Programme Country public or private organisation

Timeline

The selection of projects for ICM is based on an annual call for proposals issued by the European Commission and published on the Erasmus+ website in October. The application and selection process is managed by each NA. This is the NA in the country where the applicant organisation (or consortium coordinator) is based.

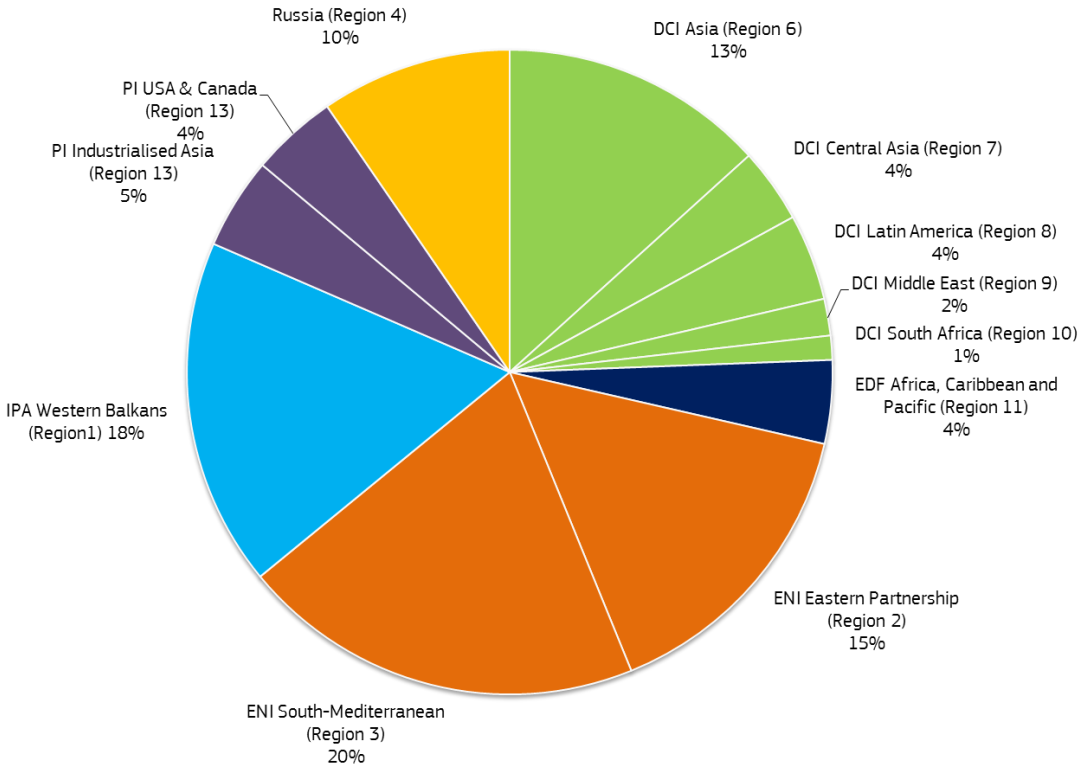
Applicants must submit their grant application to their NA by the deadline specified in the call for proposals published on the Erasmus+ website, at the latest by 12:00 noon (Brussels time) for projects starting on 1 June of the same year.

ICM projects can run for either 16 or 26 months, to be specified at application stage. The start and end dates of all mobility activities must fall within the start and end dates of the project.

EU Budget – what you need to know

The EU budget available for this action is split into **12 discrete 'envelopes'** for each region of the world.[11] The size of each envelope is set according to the EU's external priorities, with some regions benefitting from bigger budget envelopes and therefore funding more mobilities. The largest budgets are allocated to the EU's neighbourhood regions – East and South – the Western Balkans, Asia and Russia.[12]

International credit mobility budget by envelope



Applicants should always keep the different budgets in mind when applying for mobilities. There may be little point in applying for the entire national budget available in a smaller envelope (for instance South Africa, Latin America or North America) when the NA, especially in large Programme Countries, will be under pressure to satisfy a large volume of demand from HEIs. On the other hand, competition may be considerably lower for larger budget envelopes, such as the South-Mediterranean, Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans.

Applicants should also be aware that NAs are required to ensure **geographical balance** within envelopes. This means that, all things being equal, NAs will be looking to fund projects with partners in low-income and least developed Partner Countries,

[11] The number and size of the budget envelopes will remain relatively stable under each call. The Region 11 envelope was added under the 2016 call and the Region 9 envelope under the 2017 call. Additional funding may be provided for specific countries. The detailed budget is communicated each year ahead of the call deadline.

[12] The budget is funded from 5 EU funding instruments: the Partnership Instrument (PI), European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA), Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and European Development Fund (EDF). Visit our website to find out more: ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/funding-instruments-programming/funding-instruments_en

as well as in the large emerging economies such as China, India, Mexico or Brazil.[13] So if the applicant has the choice between equally strong partners, a strategic decision may be to give preference to the partnerships they have with the least developed countries in a given region.

Due to restrictions on outgoing mobility from Programme Countries, the EU budget cannot fund **short cycle**, **first cycle** (Bachelor or equivalent) or **second cycle** (Master or equivalent) mobility, from a Programme Country to any of the Partner Countries funded by the **DCI** and **EDF** instruments[14]. This applies to mobility for studies **and for traineeships**. Outgoing third cycle (PhD candidates) or staff are eligible to be sent to DCI and EDF Partner Countries, and Programme Country HEIs can receive incoming students and staff without any restriction.

To compensate for these restrictions, NAs may choose to use a share of their intra-European budget (Heading 1) to fund outgoing short cycle, first and second cycle students to Partner Countries. Applicants should check with their NA before submitting their application.

All eligible Partner Countries are listed on the next page. For more information on the funding rules, budget restrictions and country priorities, please visit the NA's website[15] or see the relevant section in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide.

[13] In Asia and Latin America, the EU has set a number of explicit targets which will need to be achieved EU-wide by 2020:

- ✓ at least 25% of the budget available must go to projects with the least developed countries in Asia, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Nepal;
- ✓ no more than 30% of the budget available for Asia can go to projects with China and India combined;
- ✓ at least 25% of the budget available must go to projects with the least developed countries in Latin America, namely Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay;
- ✓ and no more than 35% of the budget available for Latin America can go to projects with Brazil and Mexico combined.

[14] DCI Asia, DCI Central Asia, DCI Latin America, DCI Middle East, DCI South Africa, EDF Africa, Caribbean and Pacific. All eligible Partner Countries are listed on the next page.

[15] National Agencies: ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/contact_en

Erasmus+ Partner Countries eligible for International Credit Mobility[16]

European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)

ENI Eastern Partnership	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Territory of Ukraine as recognised by international law
ENI South-Mediterranean	Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia
ENI Russian Federation	Territory of Russia as recognised by international law

Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA)

IPA Western Balkans	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*[17], Montenegro, Serbia

Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI)

DCI Asia	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, DPR Korea, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam
DCI Central Asia	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
DCI Latin America	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela
DCI Middle East	Iran, Iraq, Yemen
DCI South Africa	South Africa

Partnership Instrument (PI)

PI Industrialised Americas	Canada, United States of America
PI Industrialised Asia	Australia, Brunei, Hong Kong, Japan, (Republic of) Korea, Macao, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan

European Development Fund (EDF)

EDF African, Caribbean and Pacific states	Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Congo -Democratic Republic of the, Cook Islands, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Micronesia-Federated States of, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Niger, Nigeria, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Saint Kitts And Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent And The Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Timor Leste -Democratic Republic of, Tanzania, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, Vanuatu, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

[16] From Call 2018, Switzerland and the Faroe Islands are eligible to participate in ICM as Partner Countries, only for outgoing Student Mobility for Traineeships in 'digital skills' from Programme Countries funded from Heading 1. See section on 'Traineeships' for more information.

[17] *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Application process

The Programme Country HEI will fill in the application form on behalf of its partner(s) and submit the form to its National Agency. We encourage involving all partners in the application process, as the applicant will be asked to provide detailed information on their cooperation arrangements and on the wider impact of their mobility project.

- ### Finding a partner

To find a partner, we recommend you look at current or past cooperation agreements your institution might have, either at the level of the institution (typically via the international relations office), or at the level of individual faculties.

If you are looking for new partnerships, we encourage you to contact the relevant National Agency, who might know of interested partners, as well as the National Erasmus+ Offices[18] in a number of countries neighbouring the EU. The EU partner search tool may also prove helpful.

If you are reluctant to enter into new cooperation arrangements, you can think about starting with staff mobility to build mutual trust before extending the partnership to sending and receiving students.

Tips on choosing the right partner

The institution offers transparent descriptions of its programmes, including learning outcomes, credits, learning and teaching approaches and assessment methods;

Its learning, teaching and assessment procedures are quality assured and can be accepted by your institution without requiring students to take any additional work or examination;

Agreements may not only be made with institutions offering similar programmes, but also with institutions providing complementary programmes.

- ### Getting the right accreditation

Having a valid **Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE)** is a pre-requisite for all HEIs established in a Programme Country that wish to participate in a mobility project either as a single HEI or as a member of a national mobility consortium. A call for proposals for the ECHE is held annually, and this is managed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)[19]. The award of an ECHE is valid for the whole duration of the Erasmus+ programme.

HEIs established in a Partner Country must be **accredited** by the relevant national accreditation organisation and should not be subject to EU sanctions. As they are not eligible to receive an ECHE, the principles of the ECHE are enshrined in the **inter-institutional agreement** that they sign with their partner(s). You can find more information on this agreement under section II.

An organisation from a Programme Country, applying on behalf of a national mobility consortium, must hold a **valid consortium accreditation**. A call for consortium accreditation is published on an annual basis by the NAs. A consortium accreditation is valid for three years. Organisations can request accreditation and grants at the same time. Please read the relevant section in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide to find out more about the conditions to obtain a consortium accreditation.

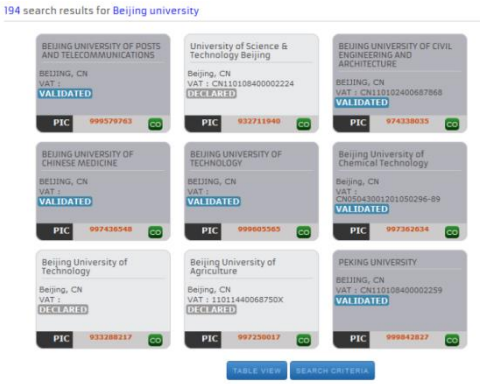
- ### The Participant Identification Code (PIC)

Before filling in the application form, the Programme Country applicant will need their institution's **9-digit Participant Identification Code (PIC)**, which is a unique identifier mandatory for every organisation involved in an ICM project. Partner Country HEIs are also required to have a PIC, albeit at a later stage of the project cycle when the mobilities are encoded into Mobility Tool+[20].

If the Partner Country HEI already has a PIC at application stage, it should be included in the relevant section of the application form. If either institution has already taken part in a European programme such as the former Framework

[18] National Erasmus+ Offices are responsible for the local management of the international dimension of the higher education aspects of the Erasmus+ programme in 27 Partner Countries outside the EU.
[19] Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency: eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/erasmus-charter-for-higher-education-2014-2020_en
[20] Mobility Tool+ is the web platform tool for collaboration, management and reporting for mobility projects under Erasmus+: ec.europa.eu/education/resources/mobility-tool_en

Programme (e.g. FP7), Horizon2020, or the Capacity Building in Higher Education action within Erasmus+, they will already have a PIC. Please carefully check whether your institution already has a PIC before requesting a new one. This is easily done via the European Commission's Participant Portal[21]. If you do not already have a PIC, then you will have to register your institution in the Participant Portal to obtain one. 'Declared' or 'Dormant' PICs are accepted for HEIs from Partner Countries in ICM projects.



Non-academic organisations (for traineeship or staff mobility) do not require a PIC.[22]

- The application form

The Programme Country institution can only submit **one application** for ICM per Call for Proposals, which should contain information on all the mobility activities they intend to carry out with their partner(s) in one or more Partner Countries. There is no limit to the number of Partner Countries in the proposal. The same institution can also apply for ICM as part of a consortium of HEIs in that country, in which case they are responsible for **preventing double funding** of the same mobility. In case of multiple submissions of the same application in the same selection round, the National Agency will consider as valid the **last version submitted** before the application deadline. Partners should discuss and agree upon the details of their cooperation before writing the application.

If **applying as a single HEI**, the Programme Country institution must hold the "Erasmus Charter for Higher Education" accreditation. As previously mentioned, the institution should have a single PIC linked to an Erasmus Code. The Erasmus Code is that institution's accreditation reference. The field "Accreditation Type" will be filled in with "Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ERASPLUS-ECHE)".

Once the applicant's PIC is entered, the field entitled "Accreditation Reference" will be automatically filled in with the corresponding Erasmus Code (e.g. A WIEN01). If the "Accreditation Reference" field remains empty, the PIC entered is not linked to an Erasmus Code. Please go to the EACEA website for the most recent list of PICs and corresponding Erasmus Codes and use the corresponding PIC displayed in this list. In case of any discrepancy in this list, please contact EACEA: EACEA-ECHE@ec.europa.eu.

If **applying on behalf of a higher education mobility consortium**, the "Accreditation Type" field will be filled in with "Higher Education Mobility Consortium Accreditation (ERAPLUS-ERA-CONSORTIA)". If the applicant has a valid consortium accreditation reference number from a successful application for accreditation (KA108) and it remains valid for the current call, it should add this reference number under the "Accreditation Reference' field. An accreditation reference number is structured as follows: 2016-1-ES01-KA108-095047. If the mobility consortium has no consortium accreditation yet, it must submit a KA108 application for the accreditation of the consortium in parallel to this application. In this case, you have to write "Requested" in the field "Accreditation Reference". In the case of national mobility consortia for *Higher education student and staff mobility*, **the coordinator of the consortium applies on behalf of the whole consortium**. The members of the consortium are not mentioned as they are already described in the consortium accreditation application form (KA108).

- The project

This section is crucially important as it will **determine which projects will ultimately be selected for funding** by the National Agency. To successfully complete this section, the applicant should have a clear idea of whom they are going to work with and how the responsibilities will be divided.

The applicant will list the Partner Countries with which it intends to cooperate. For each Partner Country, the full legal name of each partner institution must be clearly indicated (mandatory), together with their corresponding PIC, validated or non-validated, if one exists (optional at application stage). The applicant is also encouraged to name the non-academic partners that will host trainees or support staff mobility, although this information is not mandatory at the application stage.

[21] Participant Portal: ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/organisations/register.html

[22] For any questions in this regard, you can find an FAQ through the Erasmus+ webpage: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node/77_en

The description of the project and the names of all partner institutions provided in the application form will be included under Annex II of the grant agreement between the National Agency and the beneficiary institution, and will therefore become **legally binding**.

For each Partner Country, the applicant will enter the type, number and duration of mobility flows requested, generating the corresponding EU grant requested. Each Partner Country project will be assessed separately, meaning that the NA might decide to fund mobilities with one Partner Country and not the other, or reduce the number of mobilities requested.

For each Partner Country, the applicant will be asked to answer four questions relating to:

1) the relevance of the planned mobilities
2) the quality of cooperation agreements
3) the quality of the project design
4) its impact and dissemination for each Partner Country

Due to limited budget availability, National Agencies may limit: i) mobility flows in (a) particular degree level(s), for example limiting applications to one or two cycles only – short, first, second or third cycle,[23] ii) mobility for staff only or students only, and iii) the duration of mobility periods. Please consult the National Agency's website to find out if any of these limitations apply.

Applicants should use the Distance Calculator[24] to calculate travel distances. If the city of origin and the host city are the same for all mobility activities in a flow, you should introduce the travel distance between those two cities. If there is more than one city of origin and/or host city, applicants may (a) encode a single flow using the average distance band or (b) encode several flows with different distance bands.

Provided the National Agency supports first and second cycle outgoing student mobility to regions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, applicants who wish to apply for this option should clearly indicate how many students they plan to send to said regions. This information is required for the NA to ensure that the requested flows are eligible, according to the secondary criteria that they may have set.

Do's and don'ts for applicant HEIs

The following section details each of the four Award Criteria. Using feedback from experienced evaluators in different Programme Countries, it provides suggestions and useful examples of what to include and avoid in the application, in order to increase the chances of the project being selected for funding. The Guidelines for Experts on Quality Assessment[25] may also prove useful when filling in this section to shed some light on how each answer will be assessed.

[23] First cycle (Bachelor or equivalent), second cycle (Master or equivalent), third or doctoral cycle.
[24] Distance Calculator: ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources_en#tab-1-4
[25] Guidelines for Experts on Quality Assessment: ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents-for-applicants/model-application-forms_en

1. Relevance of the strategy

30 PTS

"Explain why the planned mobility project is relevant to the **internationalisation strategy** of the higher education institutions involved (both in the Programme **and** Partner Country). Justify the proposed **type(s) of mobility** (studies, traineeship, staff teaching or staff training)."

DO

- √ Explain why you want to foster mobility.
  Attract talent? Research purposes? Opportunities for staff development? Etc.
- √ Explain the preference given to a certain region/country.
  Is there any institutional policy favouring the cooperation with this region/country? Is there particularly strong faculty cooperation with a specific HEI?
- √ Explain why the mobility project is relevant to your institution's internationalisation strategy.
  Does your internationalisation strategy focus on building partnerships in education, innovation and research? Is the choice of the partner institution made for strengthening cooperation? How?
- √ Explain why the planned mobility project is relevant to the internationalisation strategy of the partner institution(s). *Please contact your partner(s) to find out.*
- √ Try to provide 'quantifiable information' on the profile of selected partners.
  Size and influence in a particular area? Complementarity of faculties/departments involved? Similarity of study programmes?
- √ Try to distinguish the specific aims for choosing mobility of students and/or staff.
  Do you need to strengthen the partnership before sending students? Build mutual trust? Ease the recognition process? Staff mobility might be the way to start.
- √ Keep it short and simple, but make sure that you get all your points across.

In case of new cooperation agreements, also:

- √ Explain why building cooperation with a new region/country is relevant for <u>all</u> the institutions involved.
  Diversification of your AND your partner's internationalisation strategy?
- √ Explain the complementarity of your and your partner's institutions.

DON'T

- ✘ Try not to be too generic in your answers.
- ✘ Do not target cooperation with each and every possible Partner Country, as budget is limited for International Credit Mobility. In 2015, the average number of Partner Countries in applications was 4 or 5.
- ✘ Do not focus only on your home institution, but describe what is in it for your partner and what the common benefits are. Refer to strategies in the Partner Country.
- ✘ Do not provide the same justification for the choice of different Partner Countries. Although you might have a largely similar reason for picking partners in the same country/region, benefits will vary depending on the institution. Be sure you make that clear in your description (e.g. by emphasising the differences).
- ✘ Do not copy-paste. If some parts of your answers are the same for each Partner Country or institution, answer them only once and refer to your first answer throughout the application.

2. Quality of the cooperation arrangements

30 PTS

"Detail your **previous experience** of similar projects with higher education institutions in this Partner Country, **if any**, and explain how, for the planned mobility project, **responsibilities, roles and tasks** will be defined in the **Inter-institutional Agreement**. If applicable, provide information about your previous experience and planned cooperation arrangements with receiving organisations for traineeships in your country and in this Partner Country."

DO

- √ Explain the division of competences which has been agreed with your partner, as outlined in the Inter-institutional Agreement.
  Who offers which courses and when? Who provides support for visa/insurance/accommodation? Who is in charge for the selection and/or evaluation of participants? What will the students/staff have to do? Etc.
- √ Detail how the finances will be split between you and your partner, if applicable.
  Will you share the Organisational Support grant? Will you provide funds in addition to the EU grant?
- √ Explain how communication channels will work between you and your partner.
  Who is responsible for the paperwork? How will you monitor and report on the mobilities? Beware that you will have to report on mobilities in the EU's Mobility Tool+ on a monthly basis.
- √ Make sure that you and your partner have the financial and operational capacity to carry out these activities.
- √ Talk about similar previous experience and what this means for future cooperation.
  If you have previous experience with institutions in the Partner Country chosen, explain how this application builds on and enhances existing partnership arrangements?

In case of new partnerships, also:

- √ Explain how previous international cooperation experience will be used to develop new partnerships.
- √ Provide information about your institution's experience in implementing credit mobility in general (between Programme Countries or between Programme & Partner Countries).

DON'T

- ✘ Do not assume that because you have previous experience, you do not have to explain how your project will work in future.
- ✘ Do not talk about cooperation arrangements only from your point of view. Explain what the partner institution will be doing.
- ✘ Be careful not to give the same information as in part 3: Quality of the project design and implementation, where you will be able to further develop the actual project implementation (in particular selection, support and recognition).
- ✘ Do not copy-paste.

3. Quality of the project design and implementation

20 PTS

"Present the **different phases** of the mobility project and summarise what partner organisations plan in terms of **selection** of participants, the **support** provided to them and the **recognition** of their mobility period (in particular in the Partner Country). Bear in mind that certain flows may not be eligible. Please consult the Programme Guide and your National Agency's website to know which limitations apply."

DO

- √ Try to organise this section around the 3 phases of the mobility period: Before, During & After.
  What is offered to the students/staff during the different phases? By whom?
- √ For outgoing mobility to countries in regions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, consult your National Agency to see whether it is eligible. *Outgoing mobility to these countries is eligible only at doctoral level or for staff, unless your National Agency has made additional funds available. If so, specify the number of students and total duration per study level (e.g. 3 BA students to Cape Town University for a total duration of 18 months and 2 MA students for 24 months).*
- √ Mention the completeness and quality of arrangements for the selection, support and recognition, both at your institution and at the partner institution.
  How will the participants be selected? Will they receive support for insurance/visa/housing? What kinds of facilities are available to the participants (libraries etc.)? How many credits or equivalent units will they receive? Etc.
- √ Try to address the additional support for disadvantaged people, language training, cultural integration activities, etc. - if planned.
  Will participants receive language courses? Will there be social and integration activities? How will participants from disadvantaged backgrounds or with special needs be encouraged to participate?
- √ Give an indicative timeline for each activity.
  When will the participants be selected? When will they receive language training? For how long? When will their mobility periods be recognised? Etc.

DON'T

- ✘ Do not forget that secondary criteria might apply (e.g. only staff or only student mobility).
- ✘ Do not forget to mention the study levels and total duration for outgoing mobility to countries in regions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.
- ✘ Do not focus solely on what you are going to do, but explain what your partner will be doing (recognition!).
- ✘ Do not forget to mention recognition for staff mobility. How will the home university capitalise on the experience abroad that their staff has undertaken?
- ✘ Do not simply repeat what you have already said in part 2: Quality of the cooperation arrangements. Try to develop. If need be, refer to the previous part, but do not copy paste.

4. Impact and Dissemination

20 PTS

"Explain the desired **impact** of the mobility project on **participants, beneficiaries, partner organisations** and at **local, regional and national levels**. Describe the measures which will be taken to **disseminate the results** of the mobility project **at faculty and institution levels**, and beyond where applicable, in both the Programme and Partner Countries."

DO

- √ Explain the impact and outcomes of the mobility project on the different stakeholders.
  What is the expected impact on the participants (e.g. what skills will they acquire)? What is the expected impact on your institution? What about your partner institution(s)?
- √ Explain the impact at local/regional/national level, including in the Partner Country.
  How will the outcomes be measured and evaluated? How will you know whether you have achieved the desired and expected impacts?
- √ Describe what dissemination activities you intend to carry out and through which channels.
  Do you have means to measure success and disseminate results (e.g. publications, surveys, newsletters, alumni networks etc.)? If not, how will you develop them? Will you work together with your partner?
- √ Explain who will benefit from the dissemination of project results.
  Will you keep the dissemination activity at the faculty/university level only or go beyond? What about your partner?
- √ The stated impact should be relative to the number and type of activities planned.
  While sending a Bachelor's student to a Partner Country might have an impact on the individual, it will hardly have a regional or national impact. But perhaps a focussed exchange of staff in a particular faculty is embedded within a strategy of developing joint curricula or joint research projects.

DON'T

- ✘ Do not forget to explain the expected impact at the partner institution, on its participants and at local, regional and national level.
- ✘ Do not mention only your dissemination strategy, but explain what your partner will be doing.
- ✘ If your dissemination activities are the same for each partnership, do not copy-paste. Mention them once and refer to them throughout the rest of your answers.
- ✘ Do not understand "desired impact" as what you wish to have as impact, but as what you can actually implement as a result of the mobility activities.

Evaluation procedure

Once the application has been submitted to the National Agency, it will undergo an evaluation procedure. The NA will appoint experts to verify the eligibility and quality of the application, supported by the Guidelines for Experts on Quality Assessment prepared by the European Commission.

The expert will start by **assessing the eligibility of all mobility flows requested**, taking into account the budget rules and restrictions outlined in the first section of this document.

Once they have passed the eligibility check, all planned mobilities with a particular Partner Country will be assessed separately according to the four quality criteria. Each question will be given a mark out of 20 or 30 as indicated in the guidelines. The total score for the four criteria must be over 60/100 in order to be considered for funding, with at least 15/30 for the first criterion on Relevance of the Strategy. In other words, no set of mobility flows with a Partner Country scoring below 60 in total and below 15 for the first criterion can be funded. According to the assessment of the quality criteria, the expert may recommend that the NA select only mobilities with certain Partner Countries (e.g. funding the project with South Africa, but not with Chile), or only some mobility flows within a given Partner Country (only students or staff, incoming or outgoing).

Based on the expert's assessment, an evaluation committee will then decide which projects are ultimately selected for funding. In keeping with the goals for geographical balance, the committee can modify the ranked order of projects within a given region in order to ensure better geographical spread. Where possible and in addition to the overarching criteria of order of merit and geographical balance, the NA will seek to spread the available budget widely to avoid dominance of a small number of HEIs. The NA will strive to be as inclusive as possible, maximising participation of stakeholders without undermining quality, geographic balance or the minimum critical size per mobility project to ensure feasibility.

Grant award decision

NAs will notify the institutions of their final grant award decision. Successful applicants will be invited to sign a beneficiary grant agreement with their NA.

If you have not signed an inter-institutional agreement with each of your partners yet, you should do so at this point, and in any case **before the start of the first mobility**. You will find more information in the next section.

II – Preparing and implementing the mobility

This section covers the main elements that relate to the management of your International Credit Mobility (ICM) project, using the experience of HEIs and their international office.

Contractual documents

- ### The beneficiary grant agreement

If the ICM project has been selected for funding, the beneficiary institution in the Programme Country will have signed a mono-beneficiary grant agreement (or multi-beneficiary, if they are part of a national consortium) with their National Agency (NA).

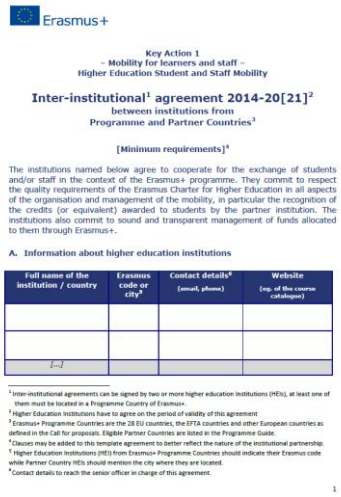
This agreement links the Programme Country HEI to its NA and provides the financial support for their mobility project. The partner institution is not a direct party to this agreement but their mobility project is described within the grant. This grant agreement captures the core of the project and is based on the information that was provided in the application form, assessed by a team of evaluators who will have selected the project – or parts of it – for funding.

The annexes of the grant agreement[26] detail the activities that have been retained for funding and specify the breakdown of the grant. As indicated above, the description of the project and the names of all partner institutions provided in the successful application form will be included under Annex I of this grant agreement and will therefore be **legally binding**.

In principle, the **selected mobility flows must be implemented in accordance with this annex.** However, certain modifications of the project are possible with or even without an amendment.

- ### The inter-institutional agreement

Before the mobility activity can take place, **your institution must sign an inter-institutional agreement** with the partner institution involved in the project. You and your partner may wish to discuss the content of the agreement while preparing the project application. You should sign this agreement once your project has been selected for funding, and **at the latest before the start of the first exchange**. It is crucial that the partners discuss the content of the agreement from the moment they start preparing their application. Inter-institutional agreements must be made available during monitoring visits.


Erasmus+

Key Action 1
– Mobility for learners and staff –
Higher Education Student and Staff Mobility

Inter-institutional[1] agreement 2014-20[21][2]
between institutions from
Programme and Partner Countries[3]

[Minimum requirements][4]

The institutions named below agree to cooperate for the exchange of students and/or staff in the context of the Erasmus+ programme. They commit to respect the quality requirements of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education in all aspects of the organisation and management of the mobility, in particular the recognition of the credits (or equivalent) awarded to students by the partner institution. The institutions also commit to sound and transparent management of funds allocated to them through Erasmus+.

A. Information about higher education institutions

Full name of the institution / country	Erasmus code or city[5]	Contact details[6] (email, phone)	Website (eg. of the course catalogue)
[...]			

[1] Inter-institutional agreements can be signed by two or more higher education institutions (HEIs), at least one of them must be located in a Programme Country of Erasmus+.
[2] Higher Education Institutions have to agree on the period of validity of this agreement
[3] Erasmus+ Programme Countries are the 28 EU countries, the EFTA countries and other European countries as defined in the Call for proposals. Eligible Partner Countries are listed in the Programme Guide.
[4] Clauses may be added to this template agreement to better reflect the nature of the institutional partnership.
[5] Higher Education Institutions (HEI) from Erasmus+ Programme Countries should indicate their Erasmus code while Partner Country HEIs should mention the city where they are located.
[6] Contact details to reach the senior officer in charge of this agreement.

1

Please use the template on the Erasmus+ website.[27] Beyond the minimum requirements laid out in this template, the partners are free to customise this template as they see fit detailing how they will select participants, recognise study credits, how they will share the organisational support grant, and so on.

By signing an inter-institutional agreement, the institutions commit themselves to respecting the principles and quality requirements of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) relating to the organisation and management of mobility.

Only the central authority at the institution can officially apply for ICM and sign related documents, not the individual faculties. This is the legal representative linked to the Participant Identification Code (PIC), which is typically the rector of that institution. The signature of official documents can be delegated to another representative (such as the dean of a faculty) in exceptional cases and on the condition that:

[26] In the 2015 grant agreements this information was displayed in two separate annexes. Since the 2016 call, this information has been merged into a single document, Annex II to the Grant Agreement.
[27] IIA template: ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/doc/partner-programme-iia_en.pdf

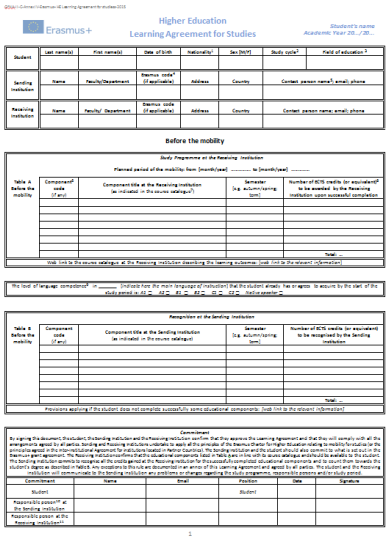
- The signature by duly delegated deans also commits other services of the institution, such as the admissions office, international office, student support functions, where necessary for the full implementation and respect of the inter-institutional agreement and the learning agreements.

- Cooperation with another faculty in that institution is covered by a separate inter-institutional agreement signed by the dean of that faculty.

The European Commission has not set any rules concerning the use of electronic signatures. Some National Agencies may accept scanned signatures based on national legislation.

For more information, the answers to the Frequently Asked Questions[28] on the inter-institutional agreement between Programme Countries also apply to agreements with Partner Country institutions.

- ## The Learning and Mobility Agreements


Erasmus+ Higher Education Learning Agreement for Studies

Student's name
Academic Year 20.../20...

Student	Last name(s)	First name(s)	Date of birth	Nationality[1]	Sex [M/F]	Study cycle[2]	Field of education [3]
Sending institution	Name	Faculty/Department	Erasmus code[4] (if applicable)	Address	Country	Contact person name[5]; email; phone	
Receiving institution	Name	Faculty/ Department	Erasmus code (if applicable)	Address	Country	Contact person name; email; phone	

Before the mobility

Study Programme at the Receiving institution

Planned period of the mobility: from [month/year] ..... to [month/year] .....

Table A. Before the mobility	Component[6] code (if any)	Component title at the Receiving institution (as indicated in the course catalogue)[7]	Semester (e.g. autumn/spring term)	Number of ECTS credits (or equivalent)[8] to be awarded by the Receiving institution upon successful completion
				Total: ...

Web link to the course catalogue at the Receiving institution describing the learning outcomes: [web link to the relevant information]

The level of language competence[9] in _____ [indicate here the main language of instruction] that the student already has or agrees to acquire by the start of the study period is: A1 ☐ A2 ☐ B1 ☐ B2 ☐ C1 ☐ C2 ☐ native speaker ☐

Recognition at the Sending institution

Table B. Before the mobility	Component code (if any)	Component title at the Sending institution (as indicated in the course catalogue)	Semester (e.g. autumn/spring term)	Number of ECTS credits (or equivalent) to be recognised by the Sending institution
				Total: ...

Provisions applying if the student does not complete successfully some educational components: [web link to the relevant information]

Commitment

By signing this document, the student, the Sending institution and the Receiving institution confirm that they approve the Learning Agreement and that they will comply with all the arrangements agreed to by all parties. Sending and Receiving institutions undertake to apply all the provisions of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education relating to mobility for traineeships in the Erasmus+ programme, as well as the provisions of the inter-institutional agreement for traineeships (where relevant). The Sending institution and the student should also commit to what is set out in the Erasmus grant agreement. The Receiving institution confirms that the educational components listed in Table A are in line with its course catalogue and should be available to the student. The Sending institution commits to recognise all the credits gained at the Receiving institution for the successfully completed educational components and to count them towards the student's degree as described in Table B. Any exceptions to this rule are documented in an annex of this Learning Agreement and agreed by all parties. The student and the Receiving institution will communicate to the Sending institution any problems or changes regarding the study programme, responsible persons and/or study period.

Commitment	Name	Email	Position	Date	Signature
Student			Student		
Responsible person[10] at the Sending institution					
Responsible person at the Receiving institution[11]					

1

Before the mobility can start, the participant, the sending and the receiving organisations, must agree on the activities that the participant will undertake during the period abroad.

The Learning Agreements for Studies and for Traineeships[29] set out the study or traineeship programme to be followed by the student, defines the target learning outcomes and specifies the formal recognition provisions. It must be approved and signed by the student, the sending and the receiving organisation, and the coordinating Programme Country HEI (if different)[30].

The Learning Agreement should include all the learning outcomes the student is expected to acquire during the exchange. For student mobility for studies, the Learning Agreement should set out the educational components that will be replaced in the student's degree upon successful completion of the study programme abroad. For student mobility for traineeships, the Learning Agreement should set out how the traineeship will be recognised depending on whether it counts towards the student's degree, or whether it is taken on a voluntary basis (not obligatory for the degree).

All parties signing the Learning Agreement commit to complying with all agreed arrangements, thereby ensuring that the student will receive the recognition for the studies or traineeship carried out abroad without any further requirements.

For more detailed information, please refer to these Guidelines on how to use the Learning Agreement[31].

The Learning Agreement must include the names of participating institutions, as well as the names and contact details of the student and contact persons at **both the sending and receiving institutions.**
We recommend using the templates provided as the basis for the Learning Agreement, however:

- Institutions currently producing Learning Agreements or Transcripts of Records using their own IT system may continue to do so.

- Institutions are free to **customise the template** provided by adding additional fields (such as information on the coordinator of a consortium) or adapting the format (e.g. font size and colours). Institutions may also decide to request less information in the Learning Agreement, if such information is already provided in other documents.

[28] FAQ: ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/doc/iia-faq_en.pdf
[29] Learning and Traineeship Agreements: ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents-for-applicants/learning-agreement_en
[30] See dedicated section on 'Traineeships'.
[31] Leaning Agreement templates and guidelines: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents-for-applicants/learning-agreement_en

Similarly, the Mobility Agreement[32] for members of staff sets out the teaching or training programme to be followed, and lists the rights and obligations of each party.

The selection of staff members will be made by the sending institution on the basis of a draft mobility programme submitted by the staff member after consultation with the receiving institution. Prior to departure, the **final mobility programme shall be formally agreed by both the sending and receiving institution** (by exchange of letters or electronic messages). In the case of invited staff from enterprises[33] and staff training at Programme Country enterprises, the enterprise must also sign this agreement.

Both the sending and receiving institution are responsible for the quality of the mobility period abroad.

For staff teaching mobility, a minimum of 8 teaching hours per week (or any shorter period of stay) has to be respected. If the mobility is longer than one week, the minimum number of teaching hours for an incomplete week shall be proportional to the duration of that week. If the teaching activity is combined with a training activity during a single period abroad, the minimum is reduced to 4 teaching hours per week (or any shorter period of stay). There is no minimum number of teaching hours for invited staff from non-academic organisations.

- ### The participant grant agreement

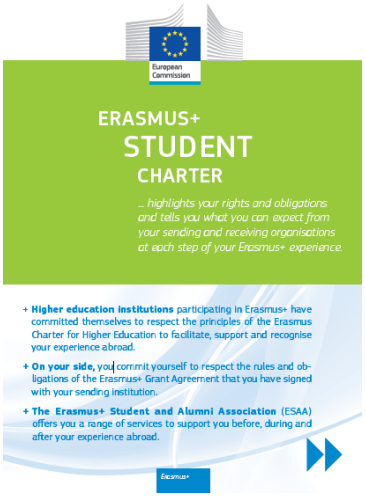
The participant grant agreement sets out the **financial support and payment arrangements** to the participant. Unlike other documents, this agreement is signed between **the participant and the beneficiary organisation in the Programme Country.** The grant agreement template will be provided by the NA.

The agreement must be signed by both parties before the start of the mobility. Unless otherwise specified in the inter-institutional agreement, **the Programme Country institution will administer all grant payments for mobility to the Programme Country ("incoming") and from the Programme Country ("outgoing").**

For more information, please refer to the section *'Grant payment to the participant'*.

- ### The Erasmus+ Student Charter

The sending institution must give every Erasmus+ student and trainee a copy of the Erasmus+ Student Charter[34] once they have been selected. The Student Charter highlights the students' rights and obligations, and is available in all Programme Country languages on the Quality Framework page.



Quality implementation of the project

The Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) provides the general quality framework for European and international cooperation activities a HEI may carry out with Erasmus+. The award of an ECHE is a pre-requisite for all HEIs located in a Programme Country and willing to participate in learning mobility of individuals and/or cooperation for innovation and good practices under Erasmus+. The Charter is awarded for the full duration of Erasmus+.

The ECHE Annotated guidelines[35] outline the requirements your institution must fulfil in order to comply with the Charter principles. Please also refer to the ECHE Monitoring Guide[36] for information.[37]

[32] Mobility Agreement: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents-for-applicants/mobility-agreement_en

[33] Any Programme Country enterprise or more generally any public or private organisation active in the labour market or in the fields of education, training and youth.

[34] Erasmus+ Student Charter: ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/doc/charter_en.pdf

[35] ECHE guidelines: eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/annotated_eche_guidelines_2016.pdf

[36] ECHE monitoring: ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/document-library/eche-monitoring-guide_en

While the ECHE is not required for Partner Country HEIs, the quality framework will be established through inter-institutional agreements signed by all partners.

Selection of participants

The sending HEI carries out the selection of all participants. The selection must be **fair**, **transparent** and well-documented, and shall be made available to all parties involved in the selection process. The **selection criteria** (e.g. the academic performance of the candidate, the previous mobility experiences, the motivation, etc.) **shall be made public**. The HEI shall take the necessary measures to prevent any conflict of interest with regard to persons who may be invited to take part in the selection bodies or selection process.

For students from Partner Countries, the first criterion for selecting students will be academic merit, but with equivalent academic level, preference should be assigned to students from **less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds** (including refugees, asylum seekers and migrants).

Lower priority will be given to those who **have already participated** in mobility actions in the same study cycle under the LLP-Erasmus Programme, Erasmus Mundus Programme or Erasmus+ Programme. In the case of Erasmus Mundus Master Courses and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees, previous participation is only taken into account for scholarship holders.

A student can go on mobility several times, up to a maximum of 12 months per study cycle. Prior experience under LLP-Erasmus Programme; Erasmus+ mobility for higher education students (both KA103 and KA107) and as scholarship holders of Erasmus Mundus Master Courses and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees is taken into account for the maximum of 12 months. However, participation in Erasmus Mundus Master Courses and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees as self-financing participants is not taken into account.

Once students are selected, they should receive **the Erasmus+ Student Charter** (see above) from their sending institution, setting out the student's rights and obligations with respect to her/his period of study abroad, and explaining the different steps to be undertaken before, during and after mobility.

The sending and the receiving institution should have a common understanding regarding selection of participants and should have set a basic timeline and identified the colleagues responsible for the nomination of students and staff.

Prior to their departure, **staff members** must have agreed on a mobility programme with the sending and receiving institutions.

Mobility Tool+

At the earliest once the participants are selected, the beneficiary must encode general information on each participant and the type of mobility activity they will carry out into an online tool, called **Mobility Tool+.**

Mobility Tool+ is an information system designed, developed and maintained by the European Commission. It allows Erasmus+ beneficiary organisations to access and manage information on their project, request individual participant reports and submit their final report to their NA. NAs also use **Mobility Tool+** to monitor and validate the project information entered by beneficiary organisations at any time.

As stated in the beneficiary grant agreement, the beneficiary organisation is responsible for updating the tool **at least once a month** during the lifetime of the mobility project with any new information regarding the participants and the

Did you know?

The names and email addresses of participants in Mobility Tool+ are shared securely with European Union Delegations around the world. With this information, they organise pre-departure events for students and staff before they go abroad. They also put returning participants in touch with those about to leave, to provide support and advice.

The list of Partner Country HEIs registered in Mobility Tool+ is shared with National Erasmus+ Offices in 27 Partner Countries, and European Union Delegations around the world who provide assistance to the institutions in their country.

[37] A website - Erasmus Charter for Higher Education: Make it Work for You! - is under development and will feature a self-assessment tool for checking ECHE compliance.

mobility activities.

Partner Country HEIs will have to be registered in Mobility Tool+ with their unique PIC. Please refer to 'PIC Code' section above. Once registered, the partners can be granted view-only access to information on individual mobilities and participant reports for which their institution is either the sending or receiving organisation.

Support to participants

The sending institution is responsible for selecting participants and providing them with all necessary support including pre-departure preparation, monitoring during mobility, and formally recognising the mobility period. The receiving institution offers participants a study programme, or a programme of staff training or teaching activities at their institution. The inter-institutional agreement details the obligations of each institution.

- ### Special Needs

Erasmus+ encourages the participation of students and staff with special needs. If one of your selected participants has a physical, mental or health-related situation that would prevent them from participating in a mobility activity unless extra financial support was made available, the Programme Country HEI may request "special needs" support from their NA in order to cover the extra costs involved[38]. You will find further information in Part B of the Erasmus+ Programme Guide.

- ### Visa

Participants in Erasmus+ projects may need to obtain a visa for staying abroad in the Programme or Partner Country hosting the activity. Participating organisations are responsible for ensuring that all required authorisations (short or long-term stay visas or residence permits) are in order before the planned activity takes place. These should be requested in good time, since the process may take several weeks or even months. The EU Immigration Portal[39] contains general information on visa and residence permits, for both short-term and long-term stays. NAs may also provide advice and support concerning visas, residence permits, social security, and so on.

HEIs must provide assistance, when required, in securing visas for incoming and outgoing participants. Information and documentation should be available on their website. Where possible, the HEI should provide a contact person who may assist with visa-related issues, with a description of the services offered and the support that can be provided.

In cases in which it is difficult to obtain visas (e.g. where diplomatic missions are not located in the countries of residence or if postal applications are not accepted), institutions should attempt to help by providing assistance in contacting diplomatic representatives. The European Commision encourages institutions to use their OS grant to offset participants' visa expenses, where possible. Participants themselves remain responsible for their visa application.

Note that higher education students from third countries who come to the EU for a period of study or for a traineeship are covered in almost all EU Member States[40] by **Directive (EU) 2016/801** of 11 May 2016 for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing.

Generally speaking, participants in Erasmus+ projects staying in the destination country for more than **three months** will need a long-stay visa and/or a residence permit before travelling. A short-stay visa is never an appropriate authorisation when the stay exceeds three months. Several documents are needed when applying for the necessary authorisation. The exact type of documents that are required will depend on the purpose of the stay and on the rules of the destination country.

[38] Provided funds are available.
[39] EU Immigration Portal: ec.europa.eu/immigration/do-i-need-a-visa_en
[40] With the exception of Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

The following table provides general **guidelines** on the issuing of visas and residence permits to Erasmus+ participants coming from Partner Countries:

Destination Programme Country	If short stay – three months or less	If long stay – over three months
Erasmus+ Programme Countries which are members of the **Schengen Area**: Austria Belgium Czech Republic Denmark Estonia Finland France Germany Greece Hungary Iceland Italy Latvia Liechtenstein Lithuania Luxembourg Malta Netherlands Norway Poland Portugal Slovakia Slovenia Spain Sweden	Non-EU nationals may need a **short-stay visa (or 'Schengen visa')** depending on their nationality. Check if a visa is needed[41]. In principle Schengen visa holders can travel freely within the 26 Schengen area countries. With a single-entry visa the holder can enter the Schengen area only once. With a multiple-entry visa the holder can enter and leave the Schengen area a number of times during the validity period of the visa. The following is needed to obtain a Schengen visa (indicative list): - A completed and signed application form - A valid travel document and a photograph in the right format - Documents related to the purpose of the trip (e.g. the Erasmus+ documentation) - Evidence of financial means - Documents related to accommodation - Travel insurance covering a minimum of €30,000 and valid for the entire Schengen area and for the duration of the stay. The **administrative fee** (in most cases €60 at the time of writing) is waived for students, postgraduate students and accompanying teachers who undertake stays for the purpose of study or educational training, as well as for researchers travelling for the purpose of carrying out scientific research. See the website of the competent Programme Country for detailed information. The EU Immigration Portal[42] contains links to the national authorities of the Programme Countries which are members of the EU.	Non-EU national participants will need **a long-stay visa or a residence permit** issued by destination country they will reside in. A short-stay visa is never an appropriate authorisation when the stay exceeds three months. Sometimes the destination country issues a residence permit replacing the long-stay visa once the non-EU national arrives in its territory. The rules differ depending on the length of the stay and on the country of destination. The EU Immigration Portal contains links to the national authorities of the Programme Countries which are members of the EU. If participants hold a residence permit or a long-stay visa issued by a Schengen area country, they can move freely within the Schengen area. Non-EU nationals travelling to a Schengen area country via another Schengen area country must make sure that they have a long-stay visa or residence permit issued by the destination country. Higher education institutions should cover fees, insurance and bank transfer costs (or part of these) using Erasmus+ organisational support funds, i.e. not deducting these from the participant's individual support grant. Any cost charged to the participant's individual support grant should be clearly understood by the participant and agreed, in advance, by both parties.
Destination Programme Country	If short stay – three months or less	If long stay – over three months
Erasmus+ Programme Countries which are **not members** of the Schengen Area: Bulgaria Croatia Cyprus The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Ireland Romania United Kingdom Turkey	Non-EU national participants will need a **national short-stay visa** or not, depending on the rules of the country of destination. Holders of Schengen visas valid for multiple entries can enter Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania without an additional national visa.	As above

[41] ec.europa.eu/immigration/do-i-need-a-visa/do-i-need-a-short-stay-visa_en
[42] ec.europa.eu/immigration/

Grant payment to the participant

As mentioned above, the Programme Country HEI will be responsible for signing the grant agreement with the participant and unless specified otherwise in the inter-institutional agreement[43], they will administer all grant payments for mobility to Europe ("incoming") and from Europe ("outgoing").

The student mobility grant is a flat rate grant calculated at a monthly rate. Grants are a **contribution** towards the costs of the planned Erasmus+ mobility period.

- ### Unit costs

The Commission Decision on Unit Costs in Erasmus+[44] establishes a **simplified form of grants** intended to "*considerably simplify, streamline and reduce the time needed for the financial management of projects, at beneficiary level*". The entitlement to the unit cost is subject to proof at organisational level that the planned activities were put into effect, i.e. the HEI demonstrates that the action requiring the travel for instance took place as foreseen – the so-called "triggering event".

The use of unit costs only represents an administrative simplification if the HEI beneficiary can be persuaded to abandon the historical practice of reimbursement based on real costs: such as travel tickets or hotel receipts associated with staff mobility.

When organising mobility of participants under the KA107 contracts HEIs have the option to either provide the **unit costs** (travel, individual support) directly to the participant or via provision of **services-in-kind**, for instance by purchasing travel tickets in advance. All payment procedures and deadlines must be agreed upon before the mobility and included in the grant agreement.

The Commission's Unit Cost Decision is based on the principle that "*the average Union contribution to costs is far below the maximum Union co-financing rate, which ensures the compliance with the co-financing and no-profit principles*". This principle sees the project as a whole, and therefore whether the beneficiary makes a loss or a small gain on each individual unit cost is beside the point. The total costs (travel, individual support and organisational support or 'OS') of all mobilities undertaken would be expected to average out, with many mobilities incurring a loss and the occasional mobility breaking even or being cheaper to organise than the corresponding unit cost.

When all the mobilities planned in the contract have been undertaken and the beneficiary HEI has implemented 100% of what was promised, **any remaining funds** belong to the beneficiary, and the beneficiary is free to use these funds as it sees fit. It can use these funds to support the implementation of the current mobilities to a high standard, or organise "zero-grant" mobilities (in most cases funded from sources other than Erasmus+ EU funds) and use these remaining funds to offset the cost of the additional mobilities.

Interruption, early termination and extension of the mobility

- ### Interruption of the mobility

When a mobility period of a student is interrupted, for example because the student decides to take a break in his mobility to pursue another short project, the number of days of interruption shall be encoded in Mobility Tool+ and the grant amount adapted accordingly. Interruptions are not common as other breaks such as holidays are considered a part of the normal academic period.

- ### Early termination of the mobility

According to article 3.6 of the student grant agreement, the NA can define the rules for recovery of the grant after early termination of the mobility. The NA can also decide in which cases the return of students was due to *force majeure*.

[43] Partners can choose to delegate the payment of the grant for incoming Partner Country students and staff to their sending HEI. This should be agreed in the inter-institutional agreement. The Programme Country HEI will always remain accountable for the entirety of the grant.

[44] Commission Decision: ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/more_info/awp/docs/c_2013_8550.pdf

If the NA considers the student's reason to terminate the mobility to be due to *force majeure*, the mobility has to be marked as *force majeure* in Mobility Tool+. Depending on the recovery rules set by the NA, the student might have to return (part of) the grant.

If the NA does not consider the early return to be a case of *force majeure*, the student will have to refund the amount of the grant already paid, unless otherwise agreed with the institution. If the new mobility period is below the minimum eligible duration, it will not be possible to encode it in MT+ and the grant will have to be fully refunded.

- Extension of the students' mobility

An extension of an ongoing mobility period may be agreed between the sending and the receiving organisations subject to the following:

1. the request for extension of the mobility period must be introduced at the latest one month before the end of the mobility period initially planned;
2. if the request is accepted by all parties, the grant agreement must be amended and all the arrangements completed;
3. if the student receives an Erasmus+ grant, the sending institution may either amend the grant amount to take into account the longer duration, or reach an agreement with the student that the additional days are considered as "zero-grant from EU funds" period;
4. the actual start and end dates of the mobility period shall be included in the receiving institution's Transcript of Records accordingly:
   - the start date should be the first day that the student needs to be present at the receiving organisation (for example, this could be the start date of the first course);
   - the end date should be the last day the student needs to be present at the receiving organisation.
5. the actual duration defined as indicated above is the period to be indicated by the HEIs in their final reports and is the maximum number of months to be covered through the EU grant. When the prolongation of the student's mobility is considered as “zero-grant from EU funds” days, these days shall be deducted from the total duration of the mobility period to calculate the final grant amount;
6. the additional period must follow immediately after the ongoing mobility period.

Making changes to your project

Once the grant agreement has been signed and your project is underway, you may find that some of the planned activities can no longer be implemented as foreseen. The following section highlights which changes are possible (with or without an amendment) and which are not. The following applies to contracts awarded under call 2017 onwards. Grant agreements signed under the 2016 Erasmus+ call for proposals can be amended to include the same level of flexibility[45].

[45] These changes are possible as long as the minimum and maximum durations set out in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide and any possible secondary criteria set by the NA are respected. Please note that the final grant after amendment can never exceed the grant requested at application stage for the entire project.

WITHOUT AMENDMENT

You may:

- ✓ Set the duration of individual mobilities
- ✓ Increase or reduce the number of mobilities specified in Annex II of the Grant Agreement
- ✓ Change staff teaching mobility to staff training mobility, and vice versa
- ✓ Change student mobility to staff mobility, and vice versa, provided the type of mobility is eligible
- ✓ Transfer up to 100% of funds allocated for individual support to travel support, and vice versa. This is possible also between all student and staff mobility categories, provided funds are used for cooperation with the same Partner Country
- ✓ Change incoming mobility flows to outgoing, and vice versa, provided the sum total of the changes incurred does not exceed 40% of the total project budget allocated in Annex II, and provided that the type and direction of the mobility is eligible. The 40% threshold is set to ensure that the core of the mobility project is respected.
- ✓ Transfer up to 50% of the funds allocated for organisational support to individual support and travel for student/staff mobility as well as special needs support
- ✓ Change or add non-academic organisations to the project, provided the NA is notified

WITH AMENDMENT

Conditional upon the NA's approval, you may, with an amendment:

- ✓ Change incoming mobility flows to outgoing, and vice versa, where the sum total of the changes incurred exceeds 40% of the total project budget allocated in Annex II, provided that the type and direction of the mobility is eligible
- ✓ Add new Partner Country HEIs, that did not figure in the original application

NOT POSSIBLE

- ✗ You may not, under any circumstances, transfer funds for mobility from one Partner Country to another.

Support and monitoring

- In Programme Countries

The **National Agency (NA)** will provide support and guidance to the Programme Country beneficiaries throughout the project, and will conduct regular monitoring of ICM projects, both remotely and through on-site visits.

Monitoring visits will be used primarily to support and counsel the beneficiary as well as to gather and disseminate good practice examples. They can also contribute to collecting information on qualitative aspects of Programme management and on the effectiveness and impact of the granted project on the beneficiary organisation. The NA may complement these monitoring visits with fact-finding missions to Partner Countries to gather information on project implementation.

- In Partner Countries

National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs)[46] are responsible for the local management of the international higher education dimension of the Erasmus+ Programme in 27 Partner Countries neighbouring the EU.

NEOs will conduct monitoring visits to partner HEIs in their countries, to ensure that ICM projects are being correctly implemented and to provide support where needed. The results of these monitoring visits are a key resource for the European Commission, the NAs and the HEIs involved, insofar as they provide a valuable insight into project implementation from the Partner Country perspective. They serve to shed light on potential issues with implementation, and to highlight best practice which can be shared among all HEIs.

Specifically, NEOs will be looking to:

- monitor compliance with the principles laid down in the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) as embedded in inter-institutional agreement(s);
- ensure that all binding documents have been correctly filled out and signed (e.g. inter-institutional agreement), and on a sample basis, learning/mobility agreements for students/staff and grant agreements;
- ensure that Partner Country institutions use fair criteria for the selection of their participants and organise a transparent selection process;
- ensure that the Partner Country institutions offer the services foreseen for the participants which they send abroad or host;
- enquire about the recognition by the sending institution of the credits earned by the participant during his/her time abroad. According to the national context, the NEO can also report to the Ministry potential problems in order to contribute to overall improvement of the recognition procedure and with a view to promoting best practice;
- formulate recommendations to the Partner Country institution and contact the NAs (if necessary);
- keep the European Commission and the NAs informed of the monitoring visit results and follow-up, and bring any serious implementation issues to their attention.

[46] http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/node/588_fr

Traineeships in ICM

From call 2018 onwards, the International Credit Mobility action is open to non-academic organisations, funding **traineeships (or work placements)** between Programme and Partner Countries for students currently enrolled in higher education institutions (HEIs) at short, first (Bachelor or equivalent) and second-cycle (Master or equivalent), as well as for doctoral candidates[47]. The scheme is open to all budget envelopes[48].

By doing a traineeship abroad with Erasmus+, students can improve their communication, language and inter-cultural skills, their soft skills highly valued by future employers, as well as become more entrepreneurial. Read more about the benefits of an exchange abroad[49].

- ### Which organisations are eligible?

As indicated above, non-academic organisations in Programme and Partner Countries are eligible to host students on traineeship. These organisations must be active in the labour market or in the fields of education, training and youth, such as[50]:

- a public or private, a small, medium or large enterprise (including social enterprises);
- a public body at local, regional or national level;
- a social partner or other representative of working life, including chambers of commerce, craft/professional associations and trade unions;
- a research institute;
- a foundation;
- a school/institute/educational centre (at any level, from pre-school to upper secondary education, and including vocational education and adult education);
- a non-profit organisation, association, NGO;
- a body providing career guidance, professional counselling and information services.

It is not compulsory to include the names of the non-academic partners in the application form, although this may strengthen the quality of your proposal.

- ### What you need to know

A traineeship can be combined with a study period. HEIs applying for combined study and traineeship mobility should encode this as 'Student Mobility for Studies' in their application.

The traineeship abroad can last from 2 months to 12 months, or from 3 to 12 months if combined with a study period[51]. Traineeship placements must be full time, applicable to the type of work.

The travel and individual support rates remain unchanged and no financial distinction is made between student mobility and traineeships. Participating organisations always have the option to provide top up funds if they wish from their own

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[47] These opportunities are not open to recent graduates.

[48] The DCI and EDF instruments cannot fund the mobility of short, first and second cycle students and trainees from Programme Countries to Partner Countries. In contrast, the mobility of trainees from Partner to Programme Countries is possible at all levels of study. National Agencies may use intra-European Erasmus+ funds (Heading 1) to compensate for these DCI and EDF restrictions.

[49] Erasmus Impact Survey: http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact_en.pdf

[50] The following organisations are not eligible to receive students on traineeships: EU institutions and other EU bodies including specialised agencies and organisations managing EU programmes such as the Erasmus+ National Agencies, in order to avoid a possible conflict of interests or double funding.

[51] The total combined traineeship and study period should last for at least 3 months and a maximum of 12 months.

sources or from sources other than Erasmus+ funds. The trainee will sign a grant agreement with the Programme Country HEI specifying the duration of the mobility, the amount of the grant and any other rights and obligations.

Unlike partner HEIs, non-academic partners do not sign the interinstitutional agreement. The rules and obligations of all parties should be detailed in the Learning Agreement for Traineeships.

- The Learning Agreements

Before the traineeship abroad, the trainee and participating organisations must sign a Learning Agreement[52] to ensure a transparent and efficient preparation of the exchange abroad. They sign a Learning Agreement for Traineeships or a Learning Agreement for Studies if the traineeship is combined with a study period. This agreement sets out rights and responsibilities of the various parties, a detailed programme of the traineeship, information on insurance, and how your traineeship will be recognised upon successful completion.

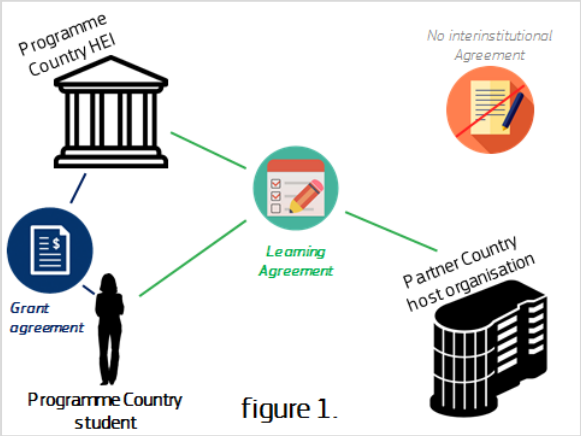


figure 1.

Depending on the direction of the mobility and whether it is combined with a study period, the Learning Agreement could be tripartite or quadripartite:

- Programme Country trainees would sign either a tripartite Learning Agreement for Traineeships involving the trainee, Programme HEI and non-academic Partner organisation (see figure 1) or, if combined with a study period at a Partner Country HEI, a quadripartite Learning Agreement for Studies also involving the Partner HEI (see figure 2).
- Partner Country trainees would always sign a quadripartite Learning Agreement involving the trainee, the Partner HEI, the Programme HEI and the Programme non-academic organisation, regardless of whether the traineeship is combined with a study period, since the Programme HEI is the beneficiary and must be party to the agreement (see figure 3).

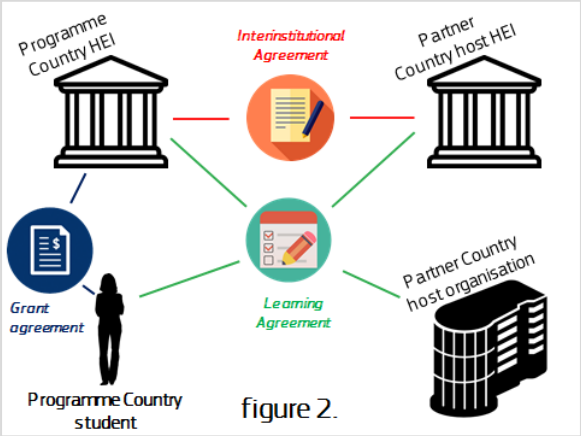


figure 2.

The trainee will also receive the Erasmus+ Student Charter, detailing their rights and obligations with respect to their traineeship abroad.

After the traineeship abroad, the receiving organisation/enterprise should provide the trainee and its sending institution a Traineeship Certificate within five weeks after successful completion of the traineeship.

The sending HEI must recognise the traineeship abroad, according to the commitments agreed upon in the Learning Agreement and without any further requirements. It is recommended that the

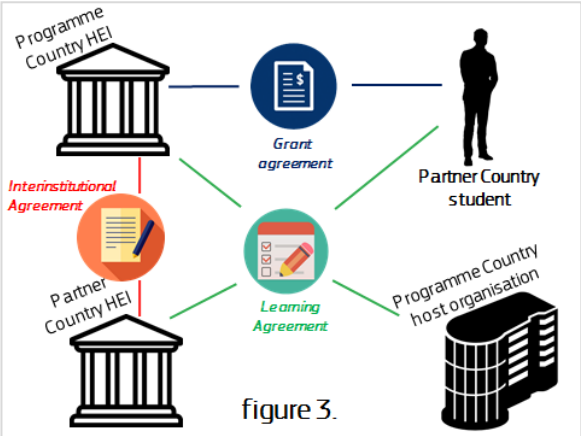


figure 3.

[52] Learning Agreements: ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents-for-applicants/learning-agreement_en

Traineeship Certificate also be included in the Diploma Supplement, if one is provided.

- Making changes to your project

The participation of non-academic organisations is only available from call 2018, and projects selected under previous calls cannot benefit from these new opportunities.

From call 2018, the Programme Country HEI will be able to change student mobility for studies to student mobility for traineeships, and vice versa, without the need for an amendment. The Programme Country HEI coordinating the mobility project may add, remove or change a non-academic partner during project implementation, provided the National Agency is notified. A formal amendment is not required.

- Visa

Trainees are covered by Directive (EU) 2016/801 of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing. See 'Visa' section for more information.

- Traineeships in 'digital skills'

The Commission will be tracking traineeships in 'digital skills'[53], which are also open to Horizon 2020 Associated Countries including Switzerland and the Faroe Islands. The participation of Switzerland and the Faroe Islands in ICM is strictly limited to outgoing Student Mobility for Traineeships in 'digital skills', from a Programme Country to Switzerland or the Faroe Islands funded from Heading 1.

- Where can my students find traineeship opportunities?

When applying for ICM funding for traineeships, you may already have identified a host organisation for your students.

Alternatively, it is possible for students to find their own work placement, provided this is approved by the participating HEIs. The Erasmus Intern Traineeship Portal[54], developed by the Erasmus Student Network, can help Partner Country students find an Erasmus+ traineeship in Programme Countries. In Partner Countries, participating HEIs will have to rely on contacts through their institution, and on the support of National Erasmus+ Offices or EU Delegations where possible. You can find out more about Erasmus+ traineeships, including videos and testimonials, on our website[55].

[53] Any traineeship will be considered as a "traineeship in digital skills" when one or more of the following activities are practised by the trainee: digital marketing (e.g. social media management, web analytics); digital graphical, mechanical or architectural design; development of apps, software, scripts, or websites; installation, maintenance and management of IT systems and networks; cybersecurity; data analytics, mining and visualisation; programming and training of robots and artificial intelligence applications.

[54] Erasmus intern: erasmusintern.org/

[55] Erasmus+ traineeships ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities-for-individuals/trainees/students_en

Staff mobility to and from non-academic organisations

From the 2018 call, International Credit Mobility also supports the mobility of staff to and from any public or private non-academic organisation, for the purposes of teaching or training, within certain limits.

- ### Which organisations are eligible?

The eligible non-academic organisations are the same as for traineeship mobility. See the dedicated section on 'Traineeships'. It is not compulsory to include the names of the non-academic partners in the application form, although this may strengthen the quality of your proposal.

- ### What you need to know

For the purposes of this scheme, Staff Mobility for Training is always **from** a higher education institution (HEI) **to** a non-academic organisation, and not the other way around. Likewise, Staff Mobility for Teaching is always **from** a non-academic organisation **to** an HEI, and not the other way around.

According to the 2018 Erasmus+ Programme Guide, non-academic organisations located in **Programme Countries** can send a member of their staff to teach at a Partner Country HEI (see figure 4). They can also receive staff from a Partner Country HEI for the purposes of training (figure 5).

Non-academic organisations located in **Partner Countries** can send a member of their staff to teach at a Programme Country HEI (figure 6). However, they cannot receive a member of staff from a Programme Country HEI for the purposes of training. In short, outside of traineeships for students, the only possible activity for non-academic organisations in Partner Countries is sending their staff to teach at a Programme Country HEI. Please refer to the summary table on page 8 of this Handbook.

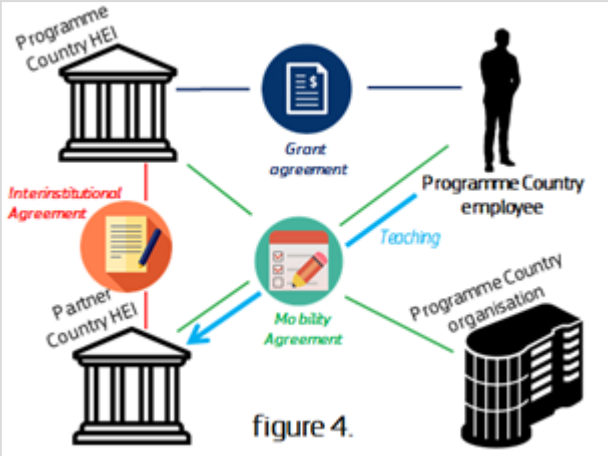


figure 4.

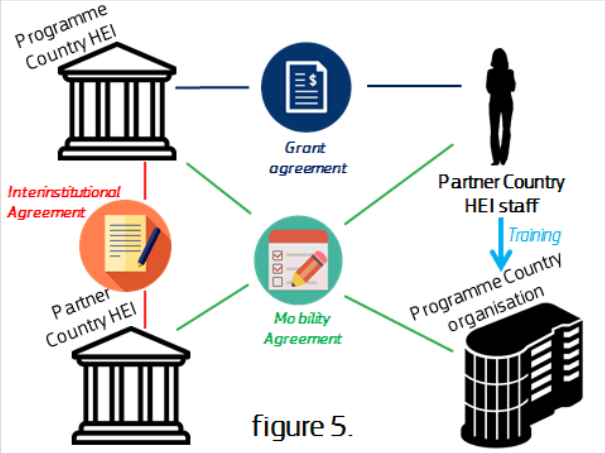


figure 5.

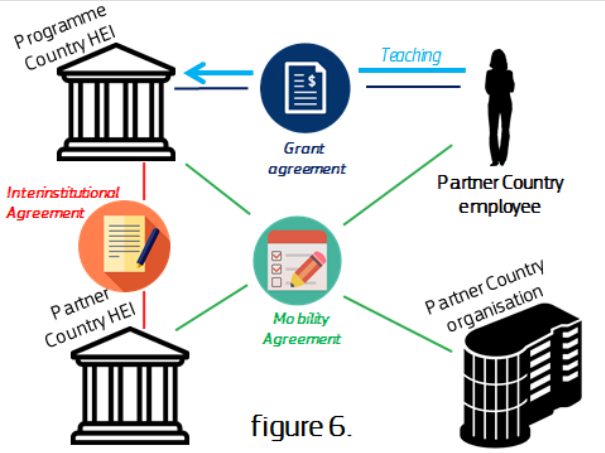


figure 6.

- ### The Mobility Agreements

The Mobility Agreements for Teaching and for Training[56] are valid for staff mobility with academic and non-academic organisations. The agreement sets out the teaching or training programme to be followed, and lists the rights and obligations of each party. The minimum and maximum duration of staff mobility remains unchanged (5 days to 2 months).

- ### Making changes to your project

The participation of non-academic organisations is only available from call 2018, and projects selected under previous calls cannot benefit from these new opportunities.

[56] Mobility Agreements: ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents-for-applicants/mobility-agreement_en

The Programme Country HEI can make changes to the type of staff mobility without the need for an amendment. The Programme Country HEI coordinating the mobility project may add, remove or change a non-academic partner during project implementation, provided the National Agency is notified. A formal amendment is not required.

III – After the mobility: recognition and reporting

Credit recognition

- Recognition of credits and enhancing quality

Mobility periods must be **recognised by both HEIs** as stipulated in the **inter-institutional agreement and in the Learning Agreement**. The receiving institution provides the sending institution and the student with a **Transcript of Records** (or equivalent document) within a reasonably short period of time (stipulated between the two institutions) after the issuing of the student's results at the receiving institution. The Programme Country HEI is responsible for encoding the number or recognised credits or equivalent units in Mobility Tool+.

Upon successful completion of the set of educational components included in the Learning Agreement and confirmed by the Transcript of Records sent by the receiving institution and made available to the student, **the sending institution should fully recognise the agreed number of credits**. It must then transfer them into the student's programme and use them to satisfy the qualification requirements. The sending institution should specify clearly how the educational components taken abroad have been integrated into the home degree programme (when applicable, grades are converted).

In case the students have not completed them successfully at the receiving institution, **institutional procedures should be defined for assessment of educational components**. Such procedures should be communicated to students before the beginning of the mobility.

Another important document used in the European Higher Education Area is the Diploma Supplement. This document is designed to provide graduates with a transparent record of their achievements. Therefore, the educational components successfully completed abroad will be attached to the Diploma Supplement with their original titles (and their translation into the language(s) in which the Diploma Supplement is issued), the indication of the institution where they have been taken, and the credits and grades awarded[57].

Experience has shown that **these good practices facilitate the management of credit mobility and recognition**. Specific institutional rules should be developed to deal with the recognition of other learning experiences, to allow for credit accumulation and transfer through various types of mobility, work experience, virtual learning, prior and informal learning.

The institution should clearly define responsibilities for implementing and monitoring credit mobility and ensure that application procedures and selection criteria for credit mobility are transparent and fair, and that an appeal mechanism is in place. A staff member should be appointed in each department or subject area and formally authorised to discuss the programme of study abroad with the student and to approve and sign the Learning Agreement on behalf of the sending institution, before the start of the mobility period and the Transcript of Records after the mobility period. Individuals should not be asked to negotiate academic recognition with staff members who are not authorised to do so or with a committee, before or after their study abroad period, neither should the student be asked to sit for any other examinations or have to do extra work after having returned.

- Integration of credit mobility into programmes

Structuring credit mobility in the curricula facilitates recognition. Institutions can:

[57] Diploma Supplement: ec.europa.eu/education/resources/diploma-supplement_en

1. identify the semester or year when a period of study abroad would best fit into the programme (mobility window);
2. schedule in that semester/year the educational components with learning outcomes that can be easily achieved abroad (e.g. international or comparative courses, supplementary/ elective courses, preparation of dissertation, language courses, work placements);
3. identify partner institutions, where compatible/complementary learning outcomes could be achieved.

- Grade distribution

European educational systems have developed **different national grading scales** and **different ways of using them** within the same country. While it is essential to acknowledge these differences, it is also important to make them transparent within the European Higher Education Area, so that grades awarded in all countries, subject areas or institutions can be properly understood and correctly compared.

Mobile students have the right to fair treatment and to transparency of their grades when credits are transferred from one institution to another. Transparency of performance levels is particularly important for graduates applying for a job in their own or in another country.

To ensure transparent and coherent information on the performance of the individual student, each HEI should provide **a statistical distribution table of the passing grades** awarded in the programme or field of study attended by the student (grade distribution table) showing how the grading scale is actually used in that programme.

Even in cases when transferring the grades is not necessary in the local academic tradition of receiving institutions, **calculating a grade distribution table will facilitate fair treatment** of the incoming students upon their return to the sending institution. It should be noted that it is also good practice to **provide internal boards of examiners with detailed statistical data on examination grading** in order to make the process more transparent and indicate any disparities which may indicate issues for further consideration.

Partners in joint degree programmes should agree in advance within their consortium how they will deal with grading and transfer of grades.

Grade distribution tables have to be developed in a standardised format for reference groups of students enrolled in degree programmes belonging to the same field of studies. Such groups should be of reliable size in terms of number of students and number of years considered.

Calculating the grade distribution tables is a task that will be undertaken at **centralised level in many institutions**. The production of distribution tables should not cause undue difficulties in institutions as the required data are generally available in institutional information systems and the calculation of percentages is easily done with simple software. It only requires the following:

1. **Identify the reference groups within your institution** by using objective and transparent criteria which should be attached to the grade distribution tables produced. In the absence of methods based on comparable learning outcomes, it is recommended to use the ISCED-F classification which offers a standardised and hierarchical classification of fields of study.

2. **Calculate the absolute number of passing grades awarded to each reference group identified in at least the last two years**. Remember that information on success rates may be provided in general terms but not in this calculation.

3. **Calculate the grade distribution in terms of percentages of the passing grades awarded to the reference group and develop cumulative percentage**s. As a result, there will be a grade distribution table with percentages and cumulative percentages for each reference group identified.

The following is an illustrative example of a **grading table**:

Grades used in institution (from highest to lowest passing grade)	Number of passing grades awarded to the reference group	Percentage of each grade with respect to the total passing grades awarded	Cumulative percentage of passing grades awarded
10	50	5%	5%
9	100	10%	15%
8	350	35%	50%
7	300	30%	80%
6	200	20%	100%
Total	*1,000*	*100%*	

When included in a student's Transcript of Records and Diploma Supplement, **the table facilitates the interpretation of each grade** awarded and will not require any further calculation.

- Grade conversion

When institutions decide to transfer their mobile students' grades, the academic responsible for credit transfer should compare the grade distribution table from his/her reference group with the one developed by the other institution for the parallel reference group. **The position of each grade within the two tables can be compared and**, on the basis of this comparison, **individual grades are converted**. Typically, the percentage ranges of the grades overlap. The objective of the exercise is transparency. Therefore, the receiving institution should decide in advance whether they will take the minimum, average or maximum comparable grade.

The ongoing **European Grade Conversion System project** (EGRACONS[58]) has developed an online tool to facilitate grade conversion and is free for universities to use.

For more information on credit transfer and recognition, we encourage you to read the ECTS Users' Guide[59].

[58] EGRACONS: egracons.eu/
[59] ECTS Users' Guide: ec.europa.eu/education/ects/users-guide/docs/ects-users-guide_en.pdf

Reporting

- ### The participant report

At the end of the period abroad, **all students and staff will be required to submit a final report**. Students will receive the survey by email one month before the end of their mobility period, and submission of the report will trigger the payment of the final grant instalment to the participant. Staff will be expected to complete the survey at the end of their mobility.

A **further complementary survey specifically on recognition** will be sent to the student after the mobility period to assess the quality of the recognition provided.

- ### The interim report

Interim reports are a precondition for further pre-financing to beneficiaries. They also allow National Agencies (NA) to keep track of project implementation and provide a precise picture of budget spending at a stage where corrective measures can still be implemented.

Beyond triggering the next pre-financing payment, interim reports also serve to:

1. implement changes to activities in the project (without additional funding);
2. reallocate funds (amendment of activities and budget), if these are available;
3. grant additional funds for special needs support, if these are available.

Each NA will decide on the frequency, timing and content of these interim reports.

- ### The final beneficiary report

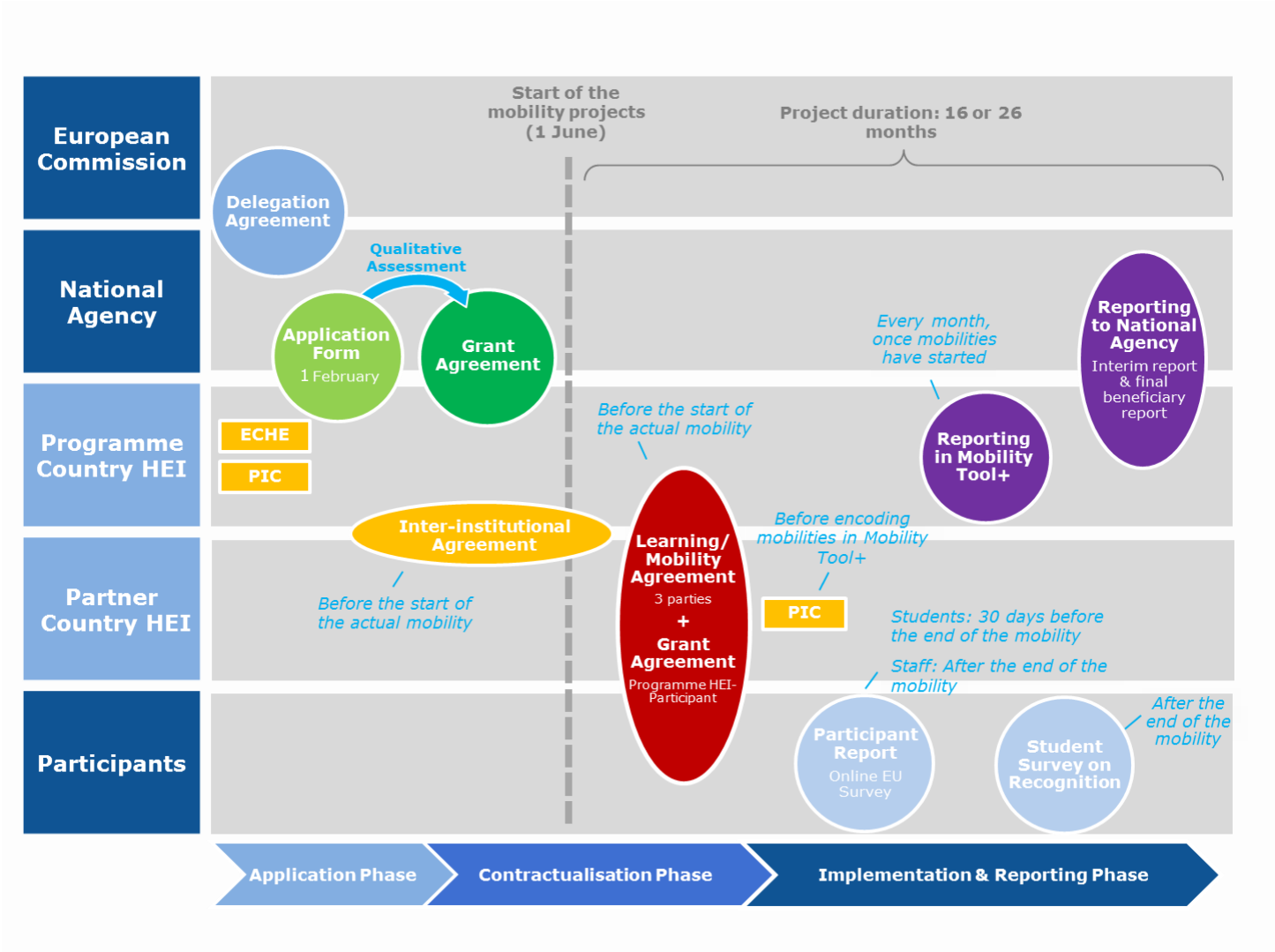
At the end of the project, the beneficiary will submit their **final report** to their NA. This should include a short description of the project, highlighting the successes and shortcomings in the project implementation. A **budget section** will provide a detailed overview of the budget usage during the project. This and other parts of the report will be prefilled with information from Mobility Tool+, which is why it is crucially important that the information in Mobility Tool+ is accurate and up-to-date. The beneficiary should ensure that all sections are complete before submitting the report and that all required annexes are attached.

The final report will be assessed on the basis of **quality criteria** and scored out of a total of 100 points. If the final report scores below 50 points, the NA may reduce the final grant amount for organisational support on the basis of poor, partial or late implementation of the project even if all activities reported were eligible and actually took place.

The final report will be assessed in conjunction with the participant reports, using a common set of quality criteria focusing on:

1. The extent to which the action was implemented in line with the grant agreement.
2. The extent to which the action was implemented in respect of the quality and compliance requirements set out in the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education and in their applicable inter-institutional agreement(s).
3. The extent to which the grant amounts due to the participants were transferred to them in accordance with the contractual provisions set out in the agreement between the beneficiary and the participant following the template provided in Annex IV of the Agreement.

Project timeline



Useful resources

Erasmus+ Programme Guide:
ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/guide/index_en.htm

All guidelines & supporting documents:
ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/guide/documents-applicants_en.htm

FAQs for HEIs:
ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/international-cooperation/documents/mobility-faqs_en.pdf

FAQs for Students & Staff:
ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/doc/students-questions-answers_en.pdf

FAQs on the Inter-institutional Agreement:
ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/doc/iia-faq_en.pdf

Contact

National Agencies in the Programme Countries:
ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/contact_en

National Erasmus+ Offices in 27 Partner Countries:
eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/contacts/national-erasmus-plus-offices_en

If your institution is located in a Partner Country where there is no National Erasmus+ Office, you should contact your partner in the Programme Country for information.