What should I know before I take off on exchange?
Agenda

- Covid-19 and your exchange
- Main actors
- Learning/ Training Agreement
- Exchange student application at Host Institution
- Eligibility check
- Specific info per scholarship
- Overview practicalities
  - Before departure
  - During mobility
  - After mobility
- Erasmus Student Network
How will Covid-19 have impact on my Exchange?

The International Relations office (IRM0 VUB) will closely monitor the situation and advice provided by all involved actors (eg. Foreign Affairs, DG EAC and National Agency EPOS). You will receive an official communication before departure.

You are NOT allowed to leave on exchange, before:

- Receiving the academic permission of the faculty (your exchange coordinator);
- Receiving the travel clearance by IRMO and your host university (COVID-19 related).

If your exchange can’t take place now, we promise that we – together with all involved actors - will do our utterly best to find an alternative solution.

We count on your patience, flexibility and understanding in this process.

Please keep on eye on our website for the latest information: https://www.vub.be/en/coronavirus#updates
# VUB (home university) Exchange Contacts

## International Relations office (IRMOS)
- Practical information & support
- Grants (beurzen)
- Language test (for Erasmus+)
- Mobility-Online (VUB Application)
- Ms. Isa Lemaitre
- Mr. Sander Verhoef
- Pleinlaan 5, 1050 Brussels
- T: 02 614 81 01

## Education & Student Administration Center (OWSA)
- Exchange administration
- (formal check) Learning Agreements
- Ms. Gwen Van der Smissen
- Pleinlaan 9, 1050 Brussels
- T: 02 614 87 07

## Exchange Coordinators
- Academic aspect
  - courses,
  - eligibility criteria,
  - study progress,
  - grades
- Consult student.vub.be/go-abroad
  ➔ contact details per Faculty/Programme

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[exchange.outgoing@vub.be](mailto:exchange.outgoing@vub.be)


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SOS administration

Some key documents:

- Learning/training agreement
- Grant agreement
- Application at host institution
- Certificate of Arrival/Certificate of Departure
- Transcript of Records / Traineeship certificate
- Travel visa (if applicable)
Learning/ Training Agreement (LA)

• A plan that details the courses/training activities you will achieve during your mobility

• Official document that you need to ensure that the exams/internship you pass will be recognized for your VUB diploma.

• NO complete Learning/ Training Agreement = NO exchange

• Applies to ALL mobilities (Erasmus+, Internship, Washington Center, Reisbeurs,...)
STUDIES - Learning Agreement (LA)

- Mobility-Online (*)
- BEFORE Mobility
  - Draft LA in consultation with your VUB Exchange Coordinator
  - Courses host institution? Consult website host institution for their exchange offer
  - Final course package (both host & home) in Mobility-Online: **deadline: May 20 (included)**
  - After May 20: LA will be accessible for approval by VUB Exchange Coordinator
  - Download the approved LA in your personal flow in Mobility-Online
  - Get LA signed by host institution & yourself
  - Upload LA (Mobility-Online) signed by all 3 parties: **deadline: the earlier, the better**
  - Formal check by VUB (OWSA)
STUDIES - Learning Agreement (LA)

• Mobility-Online
• DURING Mobility
  • Upon arrival (after submitting Certificate of Arrival): **ONE time changes to LA**
    • Consult Exchange Coordinator at host institution
    • Consult VUB Exchange Coordinator for confirmation
  • Specific step in Mobility-Online (mark you wish to make changes to LA or mark no changes are needed)
    • Add and/or delete courses
    • Changes need to be MOTIVATED (*reason for change*)
    • Approval by VUB Exchange Coordinator, download LA
    • Get LA signed by host institution & upload in Mobility Online, formal check by OWSA
  • **Deadline** Semester 1: 15 October 2020*
  • **Deadline** Semester 2: 28 February 2021*

*In case the academic semester starts late at the host institution, uploading later than the deadline can be approved.*
STUDIES - Learning Agreement (LA)

- Mobility-Online
- AFTER Mobility
  - Transcript of Records host institution
  - Grade Conversion done at your VUB Faculty
  - Recognition ECTS (*diplomasupplement*)
TRAINEESHIP - Training Agreement (TA)

• Mobility-Online
  • Erasmus+ Traineeship (minimum 2 months, programme country)

• BEFORE Mobility
  • Fill in your traineeship details (organization, department, mentor, supervisor)
  • Draft TA in consultation with your VUB Exchange Coordinator
  • Make the necessary arrangements with host organisation
  • Get TA signed by all 3 parties (yourself, VUB Exchange Coordinator & Supervisor host institution)
  • Upload TA (Mobility-Online) signed by all 3 parties: deadline: at the latest two weeks before start mobility: the earlier, the better
  • Formal check by VUB (OWSA)
TRAINEDSHIP - Training Agreement (TA)

• BEFORE Mobility
  • Complete template TA in consultation with your VUB Exchange Coordinator
  • Make the necessary arrangements with host organisation
  • Get TA signed by all 3 parties (yourself, VUB Exchange Coordinator & Supervisor
    host institution)
TRAINEESHIP - Training Agreement (TA)

- Both outside & through Mobility-Online
- DURING Mobility
  - Exceptional that changes are needed
  - Contact VUB Exchange Coordinator & exchange.outgoing if changes are needed
- AFTER Mobility
  - You agreed upfront with VUB Exchange Coordinator how traineeship will be recognised upon satisfactory completion (part of Traineeship Agreement)
    - Based on final report, interview? ECTS or not?
  - Send traineeship certificate to VUB Exchange Coordinator
Mobility-Online – Ooops!

• Changes needed? Uploaded wrong document?
  → Contact exchange.outgoing@vub.be

• Changes to learning agreement needed?
  → Contact Exchange Coordinator
Application Host Institution
Arrangement with Host Organisation

- **Application Host Institution: Studies**
  - Student’s responsibility
  - Check host university’s website (list universities on student.vub.be/goabroad)
  - Comply with their requirements & regulations
  - Intercontinental exchange
    - Applications under review
    - Informed by host university: accepted or not
    - Not accepted: Erasmus+ back-up destination

- **Traineeship**
  - Student’s responsibility to make the necessary arrangements with the host organisation
VUB ELIGIBILITY CHECK
VUB Eligibility Check

• All exchanges are subject to **official confirmation** of your **VUB Faculty**
• Based on exam results
  • After exam period June 2020; Accept – Reject - Postpone decision
  • After exam period August-September 2020; Accept – Reject
• Not allowed to leave on exchange, if you did not receive an **official confirmation**!
Required documentation

- **Confirmed exchange:** following documentation is **required**
  - EVERY student
    - Learning/ Training Agreement
    - Certificate of Arrival & Departure (signed by host institution/organisation)
    - Transcript of Records/ Traineeship Certificate
  
  - **GRANT/scholarship holders**
    - Grant contract (scholarship agreement)
    - Specific requirements per grant (survey, language tests, ...)
    - Conditions often required by Grant Benefactors

- Grant administration only sent to you if
  - 1) Learning/Training Agreement is signed by all 3 parties & formally checked by VUB (OWSA)
  - 2) Official confirmation is given by your VUB Faculty (exam period June or September 2020)
Types of grants

• Erasmus+
• Erasmus Belgica
• Swiss-European Mobility Program (SEMP)
• Intercontinental exchanges
  • Generieke beurzen
  • Priority country program
  • Washington Center

• Non-EU & no scholarship: no contracts
Erasmus+

• **Erasmus + grant agreement** (*beurscontract*)
  - You will receive the grant agreement by e-mail, if
    - 1) Signed LA/TA by all three parties &
    - 2) Exchange has been officially confirmed by Faculty
  - Upload the signed copy in Mobility Online (signature must be handwritten!) or bring a signed copy to IRo.

• You will receive the grant in two instalments:
  - **70% upon arrival** at your Host Institution, after submission of
    - Signed grant agreement
    - Certificate of Arrival
    - Online Linguistic Support TEST I (online language test)
  - **30% after departure** from your Host Institution after submission of
    - your Certificate of Departure,
    - your Erasmus+ Survey
    - Online Linguistic Support TEST II (online language test)
Erasmus+ scholarship

• Scholarship amounts vary per destination:
  • Students receiving a scholarship from the Flemish community get a top-up of 100EUR to 150EUR/month based on your destination and purpose (studies/traineeship).

• Minimum duration:
  • Studies: min. 3 months
  • Traineeship: min. 2 months

• Actual amount
  • Official Start & End date of the exchange (based on Certificate of Arrival & Departure)

• ! Part of VUB curriculum
• **Erasmus Belgica grant agreement** (*beurscontract*)
  • You will receive the grant agreement by e-mail, if
    • 1) Signed LA/TA by all three parties &
    • 2) Exchange has been officially confirmed by Faculty
  • Upload the signed copy in Mobility Online (signature must be handwritten!) or bring a signed copy to IRo.
• **One time pay-off of 100 EUR**
  • Additional 100 EUR per month subsistence allowance (*verblijfsvergoeding*), if
    • Host institution outside of Brussels
    • You can present a rental contract for student housing
• **Additional requirements: survey**
Swiss Mobility Programme

- Swiss programme for Erasmus+ provides the financial support
  - Host Swiss Higher Education Institution
    - Takes care of the scholarship arrangements (such as grant agreement)
    - Payment of the scholarship (420 CHF/month)
    - Get in touch with the International Relations office of your host institution directly.
Intercontinental exchanges

- For an **intercontinental exchange** (studies & traineeship) a scholarship/grant is not guaranteed
  - If accepted by the host institution, exchange can still take place without a scholarship
  - Tuition fee waiver applies

- If you met the eligibility criteria, you were invited to apply for the following scholarship programmes:
  - Generieke Beurzen (GB)
  - Priority Country Programme (PCP)
  - Erasmus+ KA107
  - Washington Center
  - Selection results will be known in May (PCP & GB)
  - You will be informed by email about the results (effective or reserve list)
  - IRMO will get in touch with you regarding the grant administration
Generieke Beurzen from the Flemish Government

- **Generieke Beurs Grant Agreement**
  - You will receive the grant agreement by e-mail, if:
    - 1) Signed LA/TA by all three parties &
    - 2) Exchange has been officially confirmed by Faculty
    - 3) Accepted by the host institution
  - Upload the signed copy in Mobility Online (signature must be handwritten!) or bring a signed copy to IRMO.

- **Specificities**
  - Lump sum for flight tickets (depending on destination; max 1.100 EUR)
  - Monthly grant of 650 EUR
    - 850 EUR for students receiving a Vlaamse Studietoelage (beursstudent)
  - You will receive the grant in two instalments:
    - 80% upon **arrival**, after submission of signed grant agreement & Certificate of Arrival
    - 20% after **departure**, after submission of your Certificate of Departure, essay and survey
Priority Country Programme

• Additional documents
  • Letter of Acceptance – VLUHR (to be signed by you and sent to IRMO for signature)
  • Copy flight ticket
  • Certificate of stay/arrival (VUB template or host institution’s template)
  • Changes to learning agreement: notify IRo & VLUHR
  • Need ‘beursattest’/proof of grant for visa application? Contact VLUHR

• Specificities
  • Lump sum for flight tickets (depending on destination; max 1.100 EUR)
  • Monthly grant of: €650 (max. 4 months)
    • 850 EUR for students receiving a Vlaamse studietoelage (beursstudent)
    • You will receive the grant in two instalments:
      • 80% advance (upload flight ticket)
      • 20% at the end (upload all documents & complete survey)
The Washington Center

• Additional documents
  • Letter of Acceptance – VLUHR (to be signed by you and uploaded)

• Specificities
  • Grant amount: €7.500 (€ 9.000)
    • 80% after uploading Letter of Acceptance (+/- June)
    • 20%: upon return: Report, completing online survey

• Guidelines send to concerning students by VLUHR
Erasmus+ KA107

- **Erasmus + grant agreement** (*beurscontract*)
  - You will receive the grant agreement by e-mail, if
    - 1) Signed LA/TA by all three parties &
    - 2) Exchange has been officially confirmed by Faculty
    - 3) Accepted by the host institution
  - Send or bring a signed copy to IRo (no email)

- **Specificities**
  - Lump sum for flight tickets (depending on destination; **max** 1.100 EUR)
  - Monthly grant of 650 EUR
  - Two instalments:
    - **70%** upon **arrival** at your Host Institution, after submission of signed grant agreement & Certificate of Arrival
    - **30%** after **departure** from your Host Institution after submission of your Certificate of Departure, Erasmus+ Survey
Experience difficulties financing your study period abroad?

Apply for an additional exchange grant (buitenlandtoelage)
- Managed by the VUB Team studentenstatuut & studiefinanciering
- Finance the study costs abroad (transport, housing, study books, etc.)
- General and specific conditions apply
  - For more information consult their website
  - Belgian students (*)
    - (*) Some EU/EEA-students can be entitled if they have been living in Belgium for at least five years or if they (or their parents) have been working in Belgium at least one year.
    - (*) Non-EEA-students can be entitled if they have a permanent residence in Belgium.

(*) Some EU/EEA-students can be entitled if they have been living in Belgium for at least five years or if they (or their parents) have been working in Belgium at least one year.

(*) Non-EEA-students can be entitled if they have a permanent residence in Belgium.
BEFORE DEPARTURE
Before departure

- Housing
- Travel
- Insurance
- Language preparation
- Erasmus Student Network
- Paperwork at home
Housing

• Your room in Brussels,
  • Contract of 1 Year/1 semester
  • Sublet (check with landlord)
    ➔ International Students @ VUB (Facebook group)

• Your room abroad?
  • Host institution: dorms (sometimes ‘first come first served’), information on private market, collaborate with certain service providers?
  • Private market
    • Rental price: short-term vs long-term
    • Electricity, Gas, Water & Internet included?
    • Insurance (fire, third party liability) needed?
    • Contract (termination, etc.) & deposits
    • Use your common sense (money transfers, etc.)
Travel

- **Travel advice:** consult website Foreign Affairs
- **ID and/or passport (validity date)**
  - Non-EEA citizens: check whether you need to apply for a student visa (stay longer than 90 days)
- **Non-EU countries: valid Visa**
  - Student visa (no tourist visa)
  - Apply at Embassy in Belgium
  - Vaccinations (mandatory/recommended)
- **Take copies of all documents**
- **Luggage:** Check airlines allowance & post order companies
- **Bank:** debit vs credit card
Means of transportation

• Think about your ecological footprint and consider alternatives!
  • By Train
  • BlaBlaCar
  • Eurolines
  • Flixbus
Insurance

• Covered by **VUB**: Accidents & 3rd party liability (**STUDY related!**)  
• Need to be covered by **STUDENT**  
  • **Health insurance**  
    • Cover for ENTIRE period  
    • Ask current provider, extra insurance needed?  
  • **Travel insurance** (‘reisbijstand’): recommended  
• More information: [student.vub](mailto:student.vub), Verzekeringen  
• Erasmus+ Traineeship **AFTER** graduation  
  • Own health & travel insurance  
  • Accidents & 3rd party liability cover (receiving company, not via VUB!)
Language preparation

• Online Linguistic Support (OLS), online language test
  • ERASMUS+ (studies, traineeships)
  • DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, NL
  • 2 Tests: 1 before & 1 end of mobility
  • B1 or less: automatically invited for online courses
    B2 or higher: online course upon request
  • To be completed in order to receive scholarship payment

• Language courses
  • ACTO: Academic Language Center of VUB; [ACTO](#)
  • Host institution (credits, participation fee?)
  • Private institutions or summer crash courses
Erasmus Student Network (ESN)

- Local ESN chapter or International Students Club
  - Student organisation for international & exchange students
  - Social & cultural part of exchange (buddy program, practical info, trips, parties ...)
- Exchange VUB classmates
- Former VUB exchange students
- Join ESN VUB EhB Brussels
Paperwork at home

• Useful guide regarding your paperwork will being abroad: kamiel.info
  • Inschakelings- en werkloosheidsuitkering
  • Belgian taxes

• Child allowance/ “Kinderbijslag” continues
SAY GOODBYE

Tell your family & friends where you’re going!
UPON ARRIVAL

DURING MOBILITY
Upon Arrival

• Arrival
• Registration at VUB
• Travel, meet new people
• Emergencies
• Prolongation exchange
Arrival

- Registration at host institution!
  - Certificate of Arrival (VUB template via Mobility Online or host institution’s template)
  - Student card
  - Course schedule (often updated in spring/summer period)
  - Other information & documents
- Join welcome days & activities of the university
- Join local ESN chapter / International or Local Student Organisations
- Advice: arrive 1 week before start of the semester*

* If departure is allowed at that time
Registration at VUB

• Registration of COURSES
  • No need to register for courses part of your Learning Agreement
    • Courses at the host university → Registration done by VUB Faculty
    • Corresponding VUB courses (= courses that are replaced by the courses at the host institution) → Done by the VUB (Your Faculty)
  • 1st semester exchange students: Do not forget to register for the courses (Student Selfservice) you will actually follow at VUB (the semester after your exchange)
  • 2nd semester exchange students: You will not be able to register courses yourself for the whole academic year (including 1st semester). Inform your Faculty secretariat which courses you would like to register.

• ENROLL at VUB as a VUB-student for the academic year 2020-2021
  • You are a VUB-student on exchange!
Travel, meet new people, have fun
Travel, meet new people

• **BUT**
  • Rules scholarship program
  • Rules host institution
  • Weekend and/or academic holidays
  • Check your private insurance cover

• **NON-EU**
  • Check visa regulations & travel advice Belgian foreign affairs
Emergencies

- Local emergency services
- Belgian Embassy or Consulate
  - Or other EU Embassy
  - Register at [travellersonline.diplomatie.be](http://travellersonline.diplomatie.be) (In each country crises, attacks of accidents can occur. Inform and support, if necessary. Contact information remains confidential.)
- Host institution
- Family/friends
- IRMO
- Create “ICE-contact” on your phone (In-Case-of-Emergency)
Learning Agreement changes

• **ONE time changes to your Learning Agreement (Studies) upon arrival**
  • Upon arrival (after submitting Certificate of Arrival): **ONE time changes to LA**
    • Consult Exchange Coordinator at host institution
    • Consult VUB Exchange Coordinator for confirmation
  • Specific step in Mobility-Online (mark you wish to make changes to LA (or mark no changes are needed!))
    • Add and/or delete courses
    • Changes need to be MOTIVATED (*reason for change*)
    • Approval by VUB Exchange Coordinator, download LA
    • Get LA signed by host institution & upload in Mobility Online, formal check by OWSA
  • **Deadline** Semester 1: 15 October 2020 (included)
  • **Deadline** Semester 2: 28 February 2021 (included)
Prolongation Exchange

• **ONLY** students who *can* prolong their exchange with one semester will be informed (depends on Faculty regulations)

• IRMO informs eligible students by email – December

• Interested students inform IRMO by email
  - IRMO if agreement between VUB and the host institution allows for a prolongation (available number of months/ slots)
  - Request has to be approved by
    - VUB Exchange Coordinator (motivation and adjusted Learning Agreement).
    - Host Institution
  - Need to adjust you Learning Agreement

• January 2021 IRMO informs whether extension of the grant is possible
STAY IN TOUCH #VUBabroad
Testimonials

• Photos, testimonials, etc.
• #deweekvan on VUB Instagram
• VUB Facebook page
• Post your pics #VUBabroad

• Interested
  • Contact exchange.outgoing@vub.be
WELCOME HOME
Return to VUB

• Finish your final documents
  • *Every* student
    • Submit Certificate of Departure
    • Transcript of Records/Grade Sheets or Traineeship Certificate
      • Grade conversion: Faculty/department Exchange Coordinator
  • *Specific* requirements per grant/ scholarship programme
    • Complete survey (e.g. Mobility Tool+ survey for Erasmus+ exchanges)
    • Complete the second OLS- test (online language test) (Erasmus+)

• Remain internationally active
  • Become a buddy of an international student (Erasmus Student Network)
  • Join an International Student Association at VUB
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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**exchange.outgoing@vub.be**

GOOD LUCK,
ENJOY!