WE WILL BE STARTING SOON...

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW BEFORE I TAKE OFF ON AN EXCHANGE?
Questions throughout the session

- Replies will be private or published (if relevant to all students)
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 (IRMO @ VUB) will closely monitor the situation and offer advice, based on information provided by all involved actors (eg. Foreign Affairs, DG EAC, 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) and
- Receiving the travel clearance by IRMO and your host university (COVID-19 related)
- The VUB Travel Policy is currently being reviewed and updated for the upcoming semester(s)

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

We count on your patience, flexibility and understanding in this process.
VUB (home university) Exchange Contacts

### International Relations office (IRMO)
- Practical information & support
- Grants (*beurzen*)
- Language test (for Erasmus+)
- Mobility-Online (VUB Application)
- Mr. Eric Valck
- 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**

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
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 (yourself, VUB Exchange Coordinator & Supervisor host institution)
    - **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 2021 (included)*
  - **Deadline** Semester 2: 28 February 2022 (included)*
    
    *In case the academic semester starts late at the host institution, uploading later than the deadline can be allowed*
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 (organisation, 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. BUT the earlier, the better
  - Formal check by VUB (OWSA)
TRAINEESHIP - Training Agreement (TA)

- Both outside & through Mobility-Online
- DURING Mobility
  - Exceptional that changes are needed
  - Contact your VUB Exchange Coordinator & exchange.outgoing@vub.be 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 your VUB Exchange Coordinator
Mobility-Online – Ooops!

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

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

- **Studies**
  - Student’s responsibility
  - Check host university’s website (list universities on [student.vub.be/goabroad](http://student.vub.be/goabroad))
  - Comply with their requirements & regulations
  - Always contact the host institution in case something is unclear in their application process
  - 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
FAQ (see earlier sent mail to all students)

- All questions regarding the host institution's application process can be asked directly to the host.

- All questions on academic matters, such as courses, can be asked directly to your Exchange Coordinator. You can find their details, and much more information, on the Go Abroad pages.

- **Language certificate:** If requested, best to ask the host institution directly which document/proof is accepted. Often, there are 3 possibilities:
  1) An official language test result: TOEFL, IELTS, Education First online test, ...
  2) An overview of previously taken courses in the language of instruction
  3) A written statement from your professor/exchange coordinator indicating your level of the language of instruction meets the host’s requirements. In this case, we strongly advise to prepare this statement yourself and afterwards send the draft to the person who can sign it for you (in a word-document, so that the responsible person can modify where needed and sign it).

  ➔ As a general rule, the required level of language (e.g. B2) has to be assured when starting the exchange.

- If requested by the host, a Transcript of Records (= your previously taken exams with marks/grades) can be obtained via your faculty secretariat.
Application Host Institution Arrangement with Host Organisation

FAQ

- Re-check academic calendar, does the host institution organise a Welcome Day/Week? Does the start interfere with possibly your re-sit exams? Contact the host institution to ask whether a late arrival is possible.

- Keep an eye out for course updates. Some institutions only have the offer of current academic year, this may slightly differ from the one that will be used in 21-22. Feel free to ask the host directly for any questions on this and afterwards you can re-discuss the possible updated course list/Learning Agreement with your Exchange Coordinator.

- First come first served principle? In any case, we recommend to apply as soon as possible upon receipt of the applications instructions from the host. In some cases (but certainly not always) courses and/or accommodation are given on a first come first served basis.
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 2021; Accept – Reject - Postpone decision
  - After exam period August-September 2021; Accept – Reject

- You are 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 will only be sent to you if
  - Learning / Training Agreement is signed by all 3 parties & formally checked by VUB (OWSA)
  - Official confirmation is given by your VUB Faculty (exam period June *or* September 2021)
SCHOLARSHIPS
Types of grants

- Erasmus+
- Erasmus Belgica
- Swiss-European Mobility Program (SEMP)
- Intercontinental exchanges
  - Generieke beurzen
  - Priority country program
  - Washington Center
  - VLIR-UOS (Reisbeurzen)
  - ASEM WPP

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

- **Erasmus+ grant agreement** (*beurscontract*)
  - You will receive the grant agreement by e-mail, if
    - Signed LA/TA by all three parties &
    - 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 installments**:
  - **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:
  - [link](https://student.vub.be/en/exchange#financial-support)
  - Students receiving a scholarship from the Flemish community get a top-up of 150EUR or 50EUR/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
  - Signed LA/TA by all three parties &
  - 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 (approx. 440 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 (studies)

- 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/June (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 (GB) from the Flemish Government

Generieke Beurs Grant Agreement

- You will receive the grant agreement by e-mail, if
  - Signed LA/TA by all three parties &
  - Exchange has been officially confirmed by Faculty
  - 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 1.500 EUR)
- Monthly grant of 700 EUR
  - 900 EUR for students receiving a Vlaamse Studietoelage (beursstudent)
- You will receive the grant in three instalments:
  - Receipt of the lump sum for flight tickets after signing the Grant Agreement
  - 80% upon arrival, after submission of Certificate of Arrival
  - 20% after departure, after submission of your Certificate of Departure, essay and survey
Priority Country Programme (PCP)

- Guidelines are sent to students concerned by VLUHR
- Additional documents (to be uploaded in the VLUHR e-tool)
  - 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 duration and/or learning agreement: notify IRMO & VLUHR
  - Need ‘beursattest’/proof of grant for visa application? Contact VLUHR

- Specificities
  - Lump sum for flight tickets (depending on destination; max 1.500 EUR)
  - Monthly grant of: €700 (max. 4 months)
    - 900 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 (after upload of all documents & completed questionnaire)
The Washington Center (TWC)

- Additional documents
  - Letter of Acceptance (to be signed by you and uploaded)

- Specificities
  - Grant amount: €7.500 (€ 9.000 for ‘beursstudenten’)
    - 100% before start of exchange

- Students are contacted directly by TWC regarding application guidelines
- Afterwards, student has to upload a short essay and complete a questionnaire
Erasmus+ KA107

- **Erasmus + grant agreement** (*beurscontract*)
  - You will receive the grant agreement by e-mail, if
    - Signed LA/TA by all three parties &
    - Exchange has been officially confirmed by Faculty
    - 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** 1.500 EUR)
  - Monthly grant of 700 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
Buitenlandtoelage – exchange grant

- Get an indication how cheap/expensive living in the host country/city can be via [Numbeo](https://www.numbeo.com)
- 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](https://www.vub.be)
    - 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.
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
- Check **VUB Travel Policy**
- 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: VUB insurance ([NL](#) / [ENG](#))
- 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
  - Only required if your mother tongue differs from the language of instruction

- 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 while 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 host institution
- 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* and carefully take any possible quarantine measures into account (even earlier arrival might be required)

* 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 (semester 2))
  - 2nd semester exchange students: Do not forget to register for the courses (Student Selfservice) you will actually follow at VUB (the semester before your exchange (semester 1))

- **ENROLL at VUB as a VUB-student for the academic year 2021-2022**
  - 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 (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 2021 (included)
  - **Deadline** Semester 2: 28 February 2022 (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 checks 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 your Learning Agreement
- January 2022 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
  ❑ Join the welcome back session (organised together with the Orientation Day for incoming exchange students on 4 February 2022)
  ❑ Become a buddy of an international student (Erasmus Student Network)
  ❑ Join an International Student Association at VUB
student.vub.be/go-abroad
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- Academic aspect
- courses,
- eligibility criteria,
- study progress,
- grades
- Consult student.vub.be/go-abroad ➔ contact details per Faculty/Programme

exchange.outgoing@vub.be
Replies will be private or published (if relevant to all students)
GOOD LUCK, ENJOY!