Directions for outgoing BSc Social Sciences ERASMUS students

1. The exchange is arranged for BA3 Social Sciences students.

2. Students attend Erasmus for a maximum of 1 semester per academic year
   a. The Erasmus exchange takes place during the 1st semester of the third bachelor year.

3. Number of exchanges
   a. Regular students can make use of the Erasmus+ and the Erasmus Belgica program twice:
      once in their 3rd bachelor program and once in their master year.
   b. For both exchanges, students can receive a scholarship (under condition of availability of
      Erasmus scholarships).

4. Location of exchanges
   a. A list of available locations will be yearly presented to the students.
   b. Students will be able to select from a list of BScSS specific destinations.
   c. Unused destinations from political sciences, sociology and communication studies will be
      presented to the BScSS students as well. Priority rules apply in this case: students from a
      particular program have priority access to the specific destinations linked to their
      program. E.g. political science students have priority access to political science
      destinations, sociology students to sociology destinations, etc.
   d. Students cannot negotiate Erasmus agreements themselves.

5. Conditions for the final approval - all of the following conditions must be met:
   a. Students need to have successfully terminated all courses from BA1
   b. Students need to have successfully terminated all first semester courses from BA2
   c. Students can have a maximum of 1 failed course of the second semester of BA2
   d. Students need to have obtained a rounded average score of at least 12/20 in BA1 and BA2
      combined
   e. Students cannot do an internship abroad
   f. All students must complete a non-binding language test before and after return, for which
      IRMO provides them with the link. Students who do not take the language test before
      leaving are not eligible for an exchange. Students who do not take the language test on
      return will not receive their full Erasmus scholarship.
   g. All students must submit a motivation letter which consists of their motivation and the
      grades of all previous years (this also applies to switching students from another
      institution) and the first semester of the year of application.
   h. Students make a top 3 selection from the available exchange locations within the BScSS and
      the programs in communication studies, political sciences and sociology.
   i. Students will use the specific template for their application that is available online.
   j. The deadline for submitting this file is announced each year during the information session
      (usually mid-February).

6. Conditions for applying for an exchange to a non-EU destination:
   a. Students need to have successfully terminated all courses from BA1 when handing in their
      nomination dossier
7. Allocation and approval
   a. At the beginning of the second semester of the year of application, the destinations are allocated. This assignment may be conditional, but allows to start with the application procedure. The allocation is based on the score sheets and motivation letter.
   b. Final allocation occurs after the first or second exam session, after checking the conditions.

8. Application procedure
   a. The exchange coordinators accompany the selected students through the application procedure of the VUB and the drafting of the Learning Agreements (see point 8).
   b. When the application procedure at the VUB is successful and the students have received a confirmation, students must also register via the host university website. This is the responsibility of each individual student.

9. Learning Agreements (LA) and ECTS (European Credit Transfer System)
   a. A LA describes the semester plan (study sections and ECTS) that you will follow at the host university.
   b. In the LA you indicate which courses you will replace and which courses you will follow abroad.
   c. Compulsory subjects and elective courses from the semester of exchange (i.e. from the first semester, see point 2.a.) must be replaced at the host institution.
   d. Compulsory subjects are replaced by subjects that closely match the content. For electives, students have more freedom.
   e. Students cannot replace the ‘Bachelor paper’ at the host institution; they have to take this course at VUB in distance learning.
   f. Under normal circumstances, students exchange 24 ECTS. However, because the equivalence of study units at our university and abroad does not always have a strict 1-1 equivalence, the number of subjects might differ. The ECTS of the external courses at the host university may have a maximum of 1 ECTS less compared to the VUB courses. This means that every student must select at least 23 ECTS at the host institution.
   g. Students with an individual course trajectory always contact the study supervisor for approval of their semester plan.
   h. The LAs that are drawn up during the second semester of the academic year prior to the exchange can still be adjusted during the exchange. The deadlines for passing changes are communicated to the students in a timely fashion. After this deadline, no adjustments will be accepted. LAs adjusted without the permission of the exchange coordinators are considered to be non-existent.
   i. As soon as the LA has been submitted in March, participation in the Erasmus program is official and final. This participation can only be canceled if there are reasonable arguments that can be proven (e.g. doctor's certificate) or if the admission conditions (see point 5) are not met.

10. Language
    a. The failure of the language test does not affect the approval of the departure.
    b. However, an additional effort is being made by the students to learn the language of the host university before departure. This is important in case examinations have to be taken in other languages (i.e. French, Spanish, Italian, German and English).
    c. Different host institutions also organize (free) language courses on the spot. These are very popular. Students who wish to follow such a language course are responsible for subscribing to them and respecting deadlines.
11. Deadlines
   a. Exact deadlines are always communicated by mail or on the website, as they differ per academic year.
   b. Usually the deadlines are as follows (summary for information only and not binding):
      i. Submit motivation letter and score sheets: mid-February
      ii. Selection of candidates and assignment: end of February/beginning of March
      iii. Application procedure VUB: March
      iv. Application procedure guest institution: March/April
      v. Approval departure: after 1st or 2nd session exams - after receipt of the score sheets
      vi. Departure Erasmus: August/September/October
      vii. Submit changes LA: September/October

12. Additional information
   a. Students applying for a foreign exchange engage in sharing their experiences for potentially other interested students via a blog post or a testimonial.
   b. Other relevant information can be found on the following website: https://student.vub.be/en/destination/faces#social-sciences