

### Erasmus + Study Abroad Guide

### 2015/2016

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This document is intended as a guide and does not constitute a contract between the university and any other party, November 2014.

**International Office Contact Details**

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**The Erasmus Programme and ECTS**

All Maynooth University students have the opportunity to study and undergo training anywhere in the European Union. Over the last few years, the EU in cooperation with participating educational institutions has been facilitating mobility for students and professionals who wish to study in another Member State. The right of residence has been secured for students and workers throughout the EU and community-wide support programmes have been devised and are proving increasingly successful.

The ERASMUS programme aims to promote European cooperation and to improve the quality of education through partnership across national boundaries. Familiarity with other countries, languages and cultures is an increasingly necessary educational and professional asset. Mobility and exchange schemes are therefore an important feature of European programmes. At the same time the programme aims to provide a European dimension to learning at home as well as abroad. Further information on the Erasmus programme is available at [http://ec.europa.eu](http://ec.europa.eu/)

Before you can participate in an Erasmus exchange, there must be an agreement between Maynooth University and the university you wish to visit. Maynooth University has links with many universities in European countries, including Norway. A list of Maynooth University’s Erasmus partners is available on the International Office website – <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/international/partner-universities>. This site also provides links to each of the institutions’ home pages to assist you in learning about your host institution.

As well as being guaranteed recognition of the academic content of your period abroad under the ERASMUS programme, you do **not** have to pay any course fees in the host university. Students still have to register with Maynooth University and pay their registration fees for their year abroad. There is an Erasmus student mobility allowance available under the current programme but the allowance is designed to cover ***some*** of the cost of moving from Ireland to your destination and it does ***not*** cover full living expenses while abroad. This allowance is not paid in advance and students will only receive their first payment early in the December of their year abroad.

All Maynooth University students are encouraged to consider the option of participating in the ERASMUS programme. Once you have attained the required number of credits for the year, your study abroad period will be recognised in full by Maynooth University on your return and will be credited towards your course requirements. Under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) students are required to complete a full year course load of 60 ECTS credits. Most of our European partners participate in the ECTS system and will provide you with a transcript at the end of your stay which will indicate the number of ECTS credits you have completed. This helps to facilitate the process of academic recognition between universities. You should speak to your academic advisor before you leave to establish your workload requirements. You are also advised to speak to students who have been to the same university, quite often they can give you invaluable, practical advice on what to do, where to go and what you need to bring. (See BA International and BA European Studies Degree Guidelines included in this booklet) If you ask Alena or Wendy they can give you contact details for students who have been or who are currently abroad.

**Erasmus Application Procedure**

* Identify the institution you are interested in. A full list is available on the International Office website <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/international/partner-universities>   
  It is important that the host university can provide adequate credits for the subjects you need to study. Students of French, German and Spanish can also discuss their college choice with the departmental international coordinator; you will find a list of the international coordinators on our web site at <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/international/current-students/international-co-ordinators>. Please bear in mind that if you are not a language student you must ensure that the host institution offers adequate tuition in English.
* Call to the International Office or download an **Expression of Interest** application form from our website at www.maynoothuniversity.ie/international/going-abroad-maynooth/european-erasmus
* Discuss your intention to study abroad with both of your academic departments.
* If you are not a language student then you must choose which International Coordinator/Academic Advisor is best suited to assisting you through the year. If you are taking two languages then you will have to be overseen during the year by International Coordinators from both departments. Your Academic Advisor must sign your Expression of Interest form. You must submit the signed form to the International Office by **27th February 2015**.
* Your next step is to fill out a Learning Agreement, and get it signed by your Academic Advisor. You must bring this up to the International Office by **10th April 2015**.
* Completing the Expression of Interest form alone does not guarantee automatic acceptance to your chosen host university. Wendy Cameron and Alena Jurikova from the International Office will nominate you to your chosen university by email. They will also inform you which university you are being nominated to. **It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that all application forms, accommodation forms and other documentation required by the host university is completed and submitted on time.** Not all European universities will forward on information to students so it is very important for each student to check deadline dates for their chosen university (available on their web sites) and make sure applications are sent off in plenty of time. A copy of the application to your host university must be given to Wendy or Alena in the International Office.

**Orientation for Outgoing Students**

The International Office will host a pre-departure orientation session on **3rd June 2015**. This session will highlight the procedures involved in studying abroad and the importance of completing credit requirements and maintaining contact with your home departments here in Maynooth in relation to your course choices. You will have the opportunity to go through any queries you may have as well as talking to returned Erasmus students. You will be given an Orientation Pack which will include essential information for your year abroad. This is an important session and all students **must attend**. Students will be contacted directly about the time and venue.

**EU Residence Permits**

In order to study in a member state other than your own you will need, from a legal point of view, a valid passport. In some member states you may be required to register with the authorities. If you wish to stay for a period of more than three months, you are entitled to do so if you meet the following conditions: you must be enrolled at Maynooth University for the period, be covered by adequate health insurance which must include repatriation, and have sufficient means to prevent you becoming a burden on the social security system of the host country. Provided that you satisfy these conditions, the authorities in the host country should confirm your right of residence by issuing you with an EU residence permit. If you are staying for less than a year the permit will be valid for the duration of your study there.

**Registration**

All students are required to register at Maynooth University **and** at their host institution for their year abroad. Be patient, you may encounter a lot of bureaucracy at your host institution.

IMPORTANT!!

YOU NEED TO REGISTER WITH MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY AND YOUR HOST INSTITUTION

YOU CAN REGISTER WITH MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY VIA THE ONLINE REGISTRATION FACILITY.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT ALL OF YOUR DETAILS ARE IN ORDER BEFORE YOU LEAVE FOR YOUR HOST INSTITUTION.

**University Fees Abroad**

It is a condition of the ERASMUS programme that **no fees** (for tuition, registration, examinations, access to laboratory and library facilities etc.) are to be paid to the host institution. However, small fees may be charged for costs, such as insurance, student unions, the use of photocopiers, laboratory products etc., on an equal basis with local students.

**Registration fees must be paid to Maynooth University for your year abroad.**

**Grants And Scholarships**

**Higher Education Grants (SUSI)**

Students in receipt of a Higher Education Grant or VEC scholarship will continue to receive this during their year abroad. In order to facilitate this you should obtain a letter from the International Office stating that you are a full-time student at Maynooth University for the forthcoming academic year and that the time spent studying abroad forms an integral part of your course. This letter should then be sent to your grant authority. In cases where the maintenance component of a grant has been based on the fact that you are living at home, the higher ‘away from home’ grant should be payable during the period abroad. It is also important to note that the grant cheque may not be cashable abroad, so do not have it forwarded to you there. Most students opt to ask the Fees and Grants Office to redirect the cheques.

**NB: If students don’t pass their year abroad they won’t be eligible for their grant in their final year. If you pass your ERASMUS year you should continue to receive your grant.**

**Living Costs**

The Erasmus study abroad period can be a costly time so it is important for you to budget your money during your time abroad. Costs can vary from country to country but you need to budget for a number of things before you leave including a deposit for your accommodation, flights to and from your host university at the beginning and end of the academic year, and possibly flights home over the Christmas or Easter holidays. Try to budget for rent, food, travel, books and clothes on a monthly basis.

Most Irish ATM Cards will work abroad but you should check this with your bank before you leave. A student credit card may be a good idea in case any emergencies should arise.

In order to open a bank account in your host country, you are likely to be asked for the following:

* Passport
* Confirmation of your address in the host country (utility bill, rent receipt etc.)
* Confirmation that you are a registered student at the host university

Students who study abroad in Europe under the BA/BSc International and BA European Studies degree programmes are eligible for a small Erasmus mobility allowance contribution during their study period abroad. This grant is a relocation grant which is aimed at helping you with flights and other settling in costs that you are likely to encounter. The Erasmus Grant is not a large amount of money and is issued to Maynooth University by the Higher Education Authority and varies each year. Students **do not** need to apply separately for this grant as it is arranged by the International Office. The first payment of approx. 80% will be made to students at the beginning of December, this is also dependant on all forms being sent to Alena and Wendy, and if the forms are not returned then the payment cannot be processed. The remaining approx. 20% will be paid in July of the following year and again only if all the forms have been handed into Wendy or Alena in the International Office.

**Application Forms**

As well as submitting an **Expression of Interest**form to the International Office at Maynooth University, you will also need to complete an application form from the host university. It is up to the student to post this form (registered) off to the host university before their deadline date, a copy of which must be handed into the International Office. In some cases the application is on line but students must still bring/send a copy to Alena or Wendy.

**Accommodation**

Many of our partner institutions offer on-campus accommodation to visiting Erasmus students. You will need to complete an accommodation form at the same time as you are completing the host institution’s application form and you should ensure to return this form before the closing date as very often the accommodation is allocated on a ‘first come first served basis’. A deposit may also be required by a certain date. If the host university does not offer on-campus accommodation, the International or Residence Office at the university may help you with information on how to find rooms in private student residences in the town/city.

Many student residences are quite basic and may consist of bathroom and cooking facilities that may be common not only to one apartment, but to one floor. Living in student residences is an excellent way of meeting other students of different nationalities. It is worth arriving a couple of days in advance of the start of term to settle yourself in before lectures begin and to get to know the locality for supermarkets, telephones, the local police station etc.

* Try to contact students who studied the previous year at the university you wish to go to. You can call up to the International Office and ask Wendy or Alena who will assist you with this.
* Find out the cost of accommodation and any deposits that you will need to pay in advance.
* Check if bed linen and cooking utensils are provided
* Find out when the on-campus accommodation is open each term
* Remember to keep a paper trail of all deposits and monthly rents paid.

**It is the student’s responsibility to maintain contact with the host university during the summer months.   
 It is also the student’s responsibility to secure confirmation of accommodation from the host university.**

**Banking**

In general it is important to bring sufficient funds, in readily usable form, to tide you over for the early part of your stay abroad. Internet banking is also a convenient way for you to access your Irish bank account details while abroad. **Your Erasmus grant will be paid into your own Irish bank account**. If you are going over with a large sum of cash please do not keep it all in one place, divide it up into different pockets.

###### Health And Insurance

**All Students going away on an Erasmus year must have travel insurance which includes REPATRIATION.**

If you are going to another EU country, it is essential that you apply well in advance for appropriate health cover. Below are some of the health insurance options available to you. It is recommended that all students obtain a European Health Insurance Card (E111). This is in addition to also having your own private travel insurance which includes repatriation.

**European Health Insurance Card**

If you are an EU/EEA national and are travelling or staying temporarily in another state belonging to the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, you are entitled to receive medical care should you become ill or have an accident.

If you are a student, a seconded worker or if you are entitled to a social security pension in that state, you will be then be entitled to health care beyond the immediate treatment.

In the past, the E111 form made it easier for you to get medical care quickly and easily. It was evidence that you are part of a health insurance scheme administered by another state in the EEA/Switzerland. With the form, you could receive medical treatment without being charged. If you didn't have the form, you were still entitled to medical care, but you may have to pay for it on the spot and then claim for reimbursement at a later stage.

**From 1st June, 2004 the E111 and a number of other 'E' forms (i.e., E128 etc.) have been replaced by a new European Health Insurance Card**. Further information and an application form are available at [www.ehic.ie](http://www.ehic.ie).

### Where can I use my European Health Insurance Card?

The EHIC allows Irish residents to access health services in any EU country and in Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, if they become ill or injured while on a temporary stay in that country.

You may need a letter from the International Office stating that you are on a student exchange programme in order to obtain the EHIC.

**Private Medical Insurance**

If you are covered under your own or your parent’s private medical plan you should check the level of cover that you have while abroad for a year.

**Every student must have travel insurance or private health insurance which includes repatriation.** There are various companies such as backpackers.ie, AIB.ie, 123.ie, Ryanair, USIT, chill.ie, insureandgo.ie, multitrip.ie, axa.ie, and aaireland.ie that provide this so please search the internet and shop around for the cheapest but please make sure it does include repatriation. A copy of your travel insurance must be given to Wendy or Alena before your departure.

**Safety**

Students are advised to consider carefully their own personal safety. In particular, female students are advised to be aware that cultural differences can be misinterpreted in a foreign country, and should also be careful about being out alone at night. A personal alarm may be a good idea. This advice is not limited to females, all students should be aware of the occurrence of violence and theft. Incidents such as these occur in all countries and cities. If you are aware of your environment you are less likely to encounter trouble.

Follow the same precautions as you would at home. Hold on tightly to your bags, especially in a crowd, and keep your wallet close to your body so that it cannot be taken without you noticing. Watch out for pick-pockets, especially in large crowds and at train and bus stations. If you have a lot of cash on you, separate it into different pockets either in your bag or clothing, don’t keep it all in one place.

Remember that the less conspicuous you look, the less interest you will attract. If for example you have to consult a map, it is better to do it in a café than to advertise that you are unsure of your surroundings. If you lose any personal belongings or documents go directly to the police and report it.

Watch out for the cultural differences in relation to socializing at night in your host country. Young people in Europe do not in general drink to get drunk so ensure that you check the behaviour of your peer group in bars, cafés and discos. If one of your group is worse for wear, make sure that you accompany him/her home.

If you find yourself without any access to cash, without your passport, or in any other serious kind of trouble, the Irish Consulate will try to help. In the unlikely event of you being **arrested** for a serious offence, insist on the Consulate being informed: you will be contacted as soon as possible by a consular officer who can advise on local procedures, etc.

If you are robbed, you should report it to the police immediately. If you lose your credit cards or bank cards then get in touch with your bank as soon as you can to have them stopped; banks at home and abroad provide emergency phone numbers for use in the event of loss or theft, so be sure to make a note of the numbers and keep it separate from the cards themselves.

The Department of Foreign Affairs offers important travel advice to Irish citizens – this information can be found on [www.dfa.ie](http://www.dfa.ie) under the ‘Travel Advice’ section.

**Bureaucracy**

Some European countries are sticklers for following strict bureaucratic procedures. This can be frustrating. You would be well advised to go prepared and bring photocopies of all necessary documents and a generous supply of passport-sized photographs. Useful documents include your Passport, birth certificate, student ID, USIT card, CV’s and your driving license (if you have one).

It is important to integrate as quickly as possible into university life at your host university. If you stay grouped together with other Irish / UK students, not only will your language skills not improve but you will not reap the true benefits of being in foreign university. Join as many clubs and societies as you can and make as many new friends as possible.

Remember you are representing Maynooth University while abroad. How you integrate and perform may determine the success of the programme in future years. Students who wish to visit the same university in the future would, no doubt, benefit from your experiences. It would be useful if you could write a brief summary of your experience for their reference.

It is important to supply us with your contact details while abroad. We will contact you via the email address you gave us on your Expression of Interest.

**It is your responsibility to check your email for news and communication from home.**

Should you encounter any administrative or indeed personal problems while abroad please contact the International Office at Maynooth University and we will do our best to rectify the situation. If you have an academic problem you must email your academic advisor. Do not delay in contacting us, the sooner we are aware of a problem’s existence the better our chances of dealing with it effectively.

Your experience abroad should be beneficial to you personally, culturally and academically. If you encounter anything which prevents you from completing your work, if you feel you are being isolated as an international student or if indeed you are not enjoying your period abroad, **PLEASE let us know.**

**BA International Guidelines**

1. The BA (International) is a four-year degree programme. Students study at Maynooth University for two years, go abroad for their third year and return for their fourth and final year.

**Students must pass** **their 2nd year** in order to be able to go abroad. If students are not successful with exams they do have time to take repeat exams and as long as they pass the repeats they will be able to study abroad.

**If students fail their repeats they do not have time to appeal them and will not be able to take their place abroad.**

1. The third year of study is spent in a partner university abroad. Students who wish to qualify for a BA (International) by spending their third year abroad must submit a completed Expression of Interest form to the International Office by **27th February 2015** of their second Arts year.
2. Students must keep an eye out for when the deadline date for applications to your chosen university is. This is **VERY** important because if you miss the deadline you may not be accepted by the host university. Universities in Europe all have different deadlines, usually from May to July and it is the responsibility of each student to know when the deadline is for their chosen university. Once the application has been filled out and posted or sent online a copy **MUST** be given to Wendy or Alena in the International Office. You should notify the International Office if any problems arise.
3. The relevant Maynooth University departments will advise you on the academic requirements for your period abroad and will approve course selections in the form of a Learning Agreement.   
   **The Learning Agreement must be agreed prior to your departure for your host university.**
4. You will register for courses in your BA (International) subjects at the host institution. You must **also register on line with Maynooth University before you leave. You do have to pay the registration fee for Maynooth University while you are abroad.**  Students must register for 60 ECTS credits for the year, 30 per semester. **You should maintain contact with your academic departments throughout your year abroad.**
5. Students will take relevant assessments and examinations at the host institution. Your transcripts of results for the courses taken abroad must be sent to Wendy Cameron in the International Office as soon as you receive them.

All transcripts must be sent into Wendy by the very latest **3rd September 2016**.   
**It is up to the students to get their transcripts from their host universities.**

1. Your departments at Maynooth University will decide whether you have successfully completed your year abroad. Appropriate credit will be awarded for courses successfully completed. **It is your responsibility to confirm with your departments upon your return that you have fulfilled the requirements of your Learning Agreement.**
2. The result of the 3rd year of the BA (International) will be recorded on your record of transcript simply as Pass or Fail.
3. Upon your return, you will enter the final year of the programme.
4. Should you encounter circumstances during your study abroad period, which may impact on your academic performance, you should alert your lead department at Maynooth University immediately and alternative arrangements can be discussed.
5. Should you encounter administrative, social or other difficulties relating to your study abroad period, you should notify Wendy or Alena in the International Office as soon as possible so that assistance can be arranged.

**Important Dates for students in 2nd year –**

**27th February 2015:** Signed Expression of Interest must be give to International Office.

**10th April 2015:** Learning Agreement must be signed and handed into International Office.

**BA European Studies Guidelines**

1. The BA (European Studies) is a four-year degree programme. Students must reach the standard required in their First and Second Year Examinations.
2. The third year of study is spent in a partner university abroad. Students who wish to qualify for a BA (European Studies) please follow above guidelines for BA International.

**Important Checklist Prior To Departure**

**BRING:**

* Copy of your transcript of results from Maynooth (occasionally required)
* Passport photographs
* Copy of your birth certificate
* Copies of your CV if you intend to do some part-time work
* Your VALID passport
* Copy of your passport in case you lose it
* European Health Insurance Card (E111) or private medical insurance

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/schemes/EHIC/apply/>

* Copy of your travel insurance policy, including repatriation
* Maynooth University student card
* Driving licence
* Learning agreement
* Certificate of arrival/departure
* Terms of student grant
* Student charter
* Adapter – continental electrical sockets are different
* Confirmation of your acceptance at the host university
* Contact details for the following:
* International Office at Maynooth University
* International Office/Departmental Coordinator at your host university
* Residence abroad
* Irish embassy/consulate abroad
* Your bank in case of theft
* Useful web addresses

**MAKE SURE:**

* The International Office has your CORRECT IRISH BANK details
* The International Office has your emergency contact details
* Register with Maynooth University online
* Check semester dates before booking flights
* Arrange with your home doctor that you have supplies of any prescription medication that you may need while you are abroad
* Leave emergency contact with your family for a person abroad
* Leave address of your residence and contact details for your host university coordinator with your family
* Check you have access to accommodation at the time when you arrive. Some on-campus residences cannot receive students at weekends or out of hours. Find out if you need to provide bed linen etc.
* Organize money matters; make sure you have sufficient funds to cover initial expenses. Bring foreign currency (if applicable) to tide you over the first few days. Make arrangements with your bank to have access to your account while abroad
* Find out as much as possible about your destination before you go, especially from other students, tourist websites, embassies...
* Try budget for the entire period of your stay abroad. When budgeting, consider the following:
* Flights (first and last flight, Christmas flights, possibly Easter break flights)
* Accommodation + Bills
* Public Transport
* Food + Toiletries
* Phone + Internet
* Clothes
* Travelling (e.g. excursions, trips organized by the university...)
* Entertainment
* If doing repeat exams, please do not book your flight until after you get your final results

**\*\*Phone home once you arrive and let everyone know that you have arrived safely\*\***

If you experience any difficulties, please make sure to contact the International Office.

**Forms To Be Returned To International Office, Maynooth University**

**Prior to Departure:**

1. Expression of Interest Form - to apply for a place on the Erasmus programme.
2. Copies of host university application.
3. Copy of your signed Learning Agreement.
4. Bank Details Form – you must supply your Irish bank details as the Erasmus grant is paid by bank transfer only.
5. Statement of Responsibility.
6. Send Wendy or Alena a copy of travel insurance.

**On Arrival at Host Institution:**

1. Contact Details form – so that Maynooth University has your contact details while abroad;
2. **Learning agreement** must be filled in and signed by host institution coordinator as soon as possible. The learning agreement must contain 30ECTS per semester. Once you have filled your learning agreement out, please email a copy to Wendy or Alena or post it to the International Office. Please DO NOT send your learning agreement to your departments at Maynooth University.
3. Send/email to International Office your signed Certificate of Arrival.

**Before You Return To Maynooth:**

1. Get Certificate of Departure signed by Host University
2. Ensure that you have completed all necessary course work
3. De-register from the host university (if required)
4. Ensure that all your bills are paid in full
5. Close your foreign bank account
6. Find out when your transcripts will be sent to you

**Erasmus Student Charter**

The status of Erasmus student applies to students who satisfy the Erasmus eligibility criteria and who have been selected by their university[[1]](#footnote-1) to spend an Erasmus study period abroad at a partner university in Europe. Both universities must have an Erasmus University Charter awarded by the European Commission.

**As an Erasmus student, you are entitled to expect:**

* Your home university and your host university to sign a *learning agreement* with you before you leave. This agreement will set out the details of your planned studies abroad, including the credits to be achieved.
* A *transcript of records* at the end of your studies abroad, signed by your host university. This will record your results with the credits and grades achieved.
* Full academic recognition from your home university for credits achieved during the Erasmus study period, in accordance with the learning agreement.
* Not to have to pay fees to your host university for tuition, registration, examinations or access to laboratory and library facilities during your Erasmus studies.
* Your student grant or loan from your home country to be maintained while you are abroad.

**As an Erasmus student, you are expected to:**

* Respect the rules and obligations of the *Erasmus contract* with your home university or your National Agency.
* Ensure that any changes to the learning agreement are agreed in writing with both the home and host university immediately they occur.
* Spend the full study abroad period as agreed at the host university, including examinations or other forms of assessment, and respect its rules and regulations.
* Write a report on your Erasmus study period abroad when you return.

**If you have a problem:**

* Identify the problem clearly and check your rights and obligations
* Contact your department coordinator and use the formal appeals procedure of your home university.
* If you remain dissatisfied, contact your National Agency.

1. ‘University’ means any type of higher education institution, according to national legislation or practice, which offers qualifications or diplomas at that level, whatever such establishments may be called in the participating countries. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)