ERASMUS

STUDY ABROAD GUIDE
Guide to Outgoing Erasmus Students

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

St Patrick’s College, Maynooth
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BATH INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES

The BATH (International) is a four-year degree programme. Students usually study at the Pontifical University for two years. Students must pass 2nd year before being allowed to study abroad. If students are not successful with exams they may take repeat exams in the autumn. Once they pass the repeat exams, they will be able to study abroad. The third year is spent abroad in the university of your choice (host university). Students then return to Maynooth for their fourth and final year. Students have the option to study in the Pontifical University for 3 years, with the final year spent abroad in the host university. In this case, students will not graduate from the Pontifical University until they have completed the Erasmus year. On successful completion of the 4-year BATH programme, students may qualify for the BATH International award, provided the necessary assignments/exams in relation to the credits/modules taken (60 credits in total) have been passed in the host university abroad.

Costs
No fees have to be paid to the host university. Students are entitled to an Erasmus contribution towards the cost of their mobility.

Credit for work done abroad
Students are assessed in their host universities for courses followed and such assessments are recognised by the home university, according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

BATH Erasmus students must take 60 credits in total, at least 30 of which must be in Theology. Erasmus students must pass these 60 credits to be eligible for the BATH International award. BATH Erasmus students complete four years of study in total.

Who may apply?
Full-time registered students on the BATH programme and on postgraduate programmes are eligible to apply.
Language Requirements
While abroad Erasmus students follow courses in the language of the host country. However, the following institutions deliver lectures in English:

Heythrop College, London
University of Leuven, Belgium
University of Palacky, Czech Republic
University of Helsinki, Finland
University of Malta
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Some universities offer free language courses to Erasmus students.

ERASMUS APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Institution
Identify the institution in which you are interested. It is important that this institution (i.e. the host university) can provide adequate credits in both of your subjects.

Expression of Interest Form
You must complete an Expression of Interest form. You can get this from our web site: http://maynoothcollege.ie/pontifical-university/erasmus/ or from the Pontifical University Office/Theology Office. You must submit the form to the Theology Office by 1st March. Completing the Expression of Interest form alone does not guarantee automatic acceptance to your host university. If you are successful, you will be notified. The ERASMUS Co-ordinator will then email the host university and nominate you to study there.

APPLICATION FORMS

Once you have decided on your host institution you should find out as much about the university and its location before you leave. As well as submitting an Expression of Interest form to the Admissions/Theology Office, and after you have been nominated by the Pontifical University to study in the host university, you will also need to complete an Application Form and an Accommodation Form from the host university. It is up to the student to post
these forms off to the host university **before their deadline date**, a copy of which must be handed into the Theology Office.

Universities in Europe all have different application deadline dates, from May to July, and it is the responsibility of each student to know when the deadline is for their chosen university. This is **VERY** important because if you miss the deadline you may not be accepted by the host university. The host university may contact you either directly, or through the Admissions/Theology Office, with instructions on completing their application form. Usually the host university will contact you directly.

**Remember: It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that all application forms, accommodation forms and other documentation required by their host university is completed and submitted on time.** Not all European universities will forward information to students, so it is very important for each student to check deadline dates for their chosen university and make sure applications are sent off in plenty of time.

**LEARNING AGREEMENT**
You must complete a Learning Agreement from SPCM. **The Learning Agreement must be agreed prior to your departure for your host university.** The Learning Agreement is agreed with and signed by the **ERASMUS Co-ordinator before you leave** for your host university. The Theology Office also requires a copy of the signed Learning Agreement.

When you register your modules at your host university please make any changes necessary to your Learning Agreement, have it signed by the host university and return it to the Theology Office. The reason for this form is simply to ensure that you, the Theology Office and your host institution are all clear on which courses you are taking while abroad. This helps to avoid confusion. If there is a problem with your registration it is better to detect and resolve the problem at the beginning of your stay abroad rather than when you return home – it may then be too late. The Pontifical University is required by the HEA to hold all students’ Learning Agreements.
The ERASMUS Programme and ECTS

As a national of an EU member state, 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

Before you can participate in an ERASMUS exchange, there must be an agreement between the Pontifical University and the university you wish to visit. The Pontifical University has links with a number of universities in European countries. A list of our ERASMUS partners is available in Chapter II, the Kalendarium.

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. There is a 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.

All BATH 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 the Pontifical 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 the Erasmus Co-ordinator 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.

**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 covered by adequate health insurance and travel insurance including **repatriation** for the entire period of your stay. The E111 card is not enough. You must have repatriation cover. You might be covered for this on your family travel insurance. AIB or the Airline you are travelling with may offer travel insurance with repatriation.
- be enrolled at the Pontifical University, Maynooth for the period,
- 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.

**Health And Insurance**

If you are going to another EU country, it is essential that you apply well in advance for appropriate health cover. It is recommended that all students obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).
European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)
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 then be entitled to health care beyond the immediate treatment.

Further information on applying for an EHIC consult the website: [www.ehic.ie](http://www.ehic.ie).

Where can I use my European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)?
You can use your EHIC in any EU/EEA Country. 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 Theology 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 (Global insurance cover).

All Students going away on an Erasmus year must have travel 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 aairedland.ie that provide cover so please search the internet and shop around for the cheapest but please make sure it includes repatriation. A copy of your travel insurance must be given to the Theology Office before your departure.
REGISTRATION

All students are required to register with the Pontifical University and at the host institution for the year abroad. Be patient, you may encounter a lot of bureaucracy at your host institution. Please contact the Theology Office in relation to registration. It may not be possible to receive your student card before you leave. If that is the case, arrangements will be made to forward your student card.

IMPORTANT!!
YOU NEED TO REGISTER WITH THE PONTIFICAL UNIVERSITY AND YOUR HOST INSTITUTION

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.) have 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.

Where appropriate, normal fees are payable to the home institution.

GRANTS

Higher Education Grants
Students in receipt of a Higher Education (SUSI) 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 Theology Office stating that you are a full-time student at the Pontifical 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 SUSI. In cases where the maintenance component of a grant has been based on the fact that you are living at home, the higher ‘non-adjacent’ rate should be payable during the period abroad (check with SUSI). Your grant will be paid into your Irish bank account.

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 under the BATh International degree programmes are eligible for an *ERASMUS* 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 the Pontifical University by the Higher Education Authority. Students do not need to apply separately for this grant as it is arranged by the Pontifical University.

**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 over there may help you with information on how to find rooms in private student residences in the nearby 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 to which you wish to go
- 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 Irish bank account.

**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 the fact 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 drinks too much, 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. (Contact details of Irish Embassies abroad are included in this booklet)

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 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 under the ‘Services to the Public’ section and then click into 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 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 a foreign university. Join as many clubs and societies as you can and make as many new friends as possible.

Remember you are representing the Pontifical 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.

Should you encounter any administrative, academic or indeed personal problems while abroad please contact the Theology Office and we will do our best to rectify the situation. 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 a visiting student or if indeed you are not enjoying your period abroad, PLEASE let us know.

COMMUNICATION

To telephone Ireland while abroad, dial the international access code of the host country (+ 353) then the area code (less the ‘0’) then the local number. For example, to dial the Theology Office from abroad dial: +353-1-708-3600 / 3892.
112 is the Emergency Telephone Number throughout Europe. As European Countries are not required by law to use this number exclusively most states continue to use their existing emergency numbers as well as 112.

A Guide to Emergency Services and International Telephone Codes:

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IRISH EMBASSIES ABROAD

Belgium
Chaussee d'Etterbeek / Etterbeekse
Steenweg 180
1040 Brussels
Belgium
Telephone: +32-2-282 3400
Fax:+32-2-282 3396
Email: brusselsembassy@dfa.ie
Website: www.embassyofireland.be

Czech Republic
Velvyslanectvi Ir ska
Trziste 13
118 00 Praha l
Cezch Republic
Telephone: +420-257-530-061

Fax: +420-257-531-387
Website: www.embassyofireland.cz

Finland
Erottajankatu 7A
00130 Helsinki
Finland
Tel: +358-9-68 24 240
Fax: +358-9-68 24 240
Email: helsinkiembassy@dfa.ie

France
12 Avenue Foch
75116 Paris
Telephone: +33-1-44-17-67-00
Fax: +33-1-44-17-67-50
Website: www.embassyofireland.fr
Germany
Jägerstraße 51
D-10117 Berlin
Tel: + 49 30 220 720
Fax: + 49 30 220 72299
Email: osloembassy@dfa.ie
Website: www.embassyofireland.de

Malta
Whitehall Mansions
Ta' Xbiex Seafront
Ta' Xbiex XBX 1026
Tel: 00356 21 334 744
Fax: 00356 21 334 755
Website: www.embassyofireland.org.mt

Poland
ul. Mysia 5 6th Floor
00-496 Warsaw
Tel: +48-22-849-6633.
Fax: +48-22-849-8431

Portugal
Rua da Imprensa
A Estrela 1-4
1200 684 Lisbon
Portugal
Telephone: +351-21-392-9440
Fax: +351-21-397-7363
Email: lisbonembassy@dfa.ie

Spain
Ireland House
Paseo de la Castellana 46-4
28046 Madrid
Spain
Telephone: +34-91-436-4093
Fax: +34-91-435-1677
Email: madridembassy@dfa.ie

Slovakia
Carlton Savoy Building
Mostova 2
811 02 Bratislava 1
Tel: +421- 2- 5930- 9611
Fax: +421- 2-5443- 0690
Website: www.embassyofireland.sk

Switzerland
Kirchenfeldstrasse 68
P.O. Box 262
CH-3000 Berne 6
Switzerland
Tel: +41-31-352-1442
Fax: +41-31-352-1455
Website: www.embassyofireland.ch
IMPORTANT CHECKLIST PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

✓ Make sure you have returned the following documentation well in advance:
  ▪ any registration forms required by the host University
  ▪ accommodation forms and deposit if required
  ▪ booking forms for special language courses or orientation programmes

✓ Other documentation:
  ▪ Passport photographs
  ▪ Copies of your birth certificate
  ▪ Transcript of results from Pontifical University (occasionally required)
  ▪ Several copies of your CV if you intend to do some part-time work

✓ European Health Insurance Card

✓ Private Medical Insurance

✓ Arrange with your home-doctor that you have supplies of any prescription medication that you may need while you are abroad.

✓ Have a valid passport and bring them with you, together with travel documentation. Take out travel insurance.

✓ Make sure you have registered (or discussed registration) with the Pontifical University prior to departure.

✓ Letter from the Pontifical University stating that you have been nominated as an ERASMUS student.

✓ Letter/ID card showing that you are a registered Pontifical University student.

✓ Confirmation of your acceptance at the host university.
✓ Obtain the name/address/phone/fax/email details of your contact persons abroad. Bring them with you and leave details with your family also.

✓ Have details of your accommodation and make sure that you will have access to your accommodation at the time when you arrive. Some institutions cannot receive new arrivals at weekends. Find out if you need to provide bed-linen. If in doubt, bring a sleeping bag - it could be useful if you plan to travel while abroad.

✓ Organise money matters before you go and make sure that you have sufficient funds to cover initial expenses. Make arrangements with your bank to have access to your account while abroad – online banking is recommended. It is a good idea to keep cash and cards in different places and if you have large amounts of cash on you split it up into different pockets and compartments of your bag or person.

✓ Bring your ISIC card, your student ID card and your Driving Licence

✓ Continental electrical sockets use different voltages, so bring an adapter if you are planning to use appliances brought from Ireland.

✓ Find out as much as you can about your destination before you go (from other students, advisors, websites, embassies, tourist offices abroad)

✓ Bring a letter from your parent or bank proving that you will have sufficient funds to support your period of study abroad (occasionally required for residency permit).

✓ When booking your flights make sure that you have checked the start and end dates of the academic year at the host university

✓ If you are staying in campus accommodation, ensure that you check the opening times of their reception desk before your arrival

✓ Once you have arrived, remember to phone home and let everyone know that you have arrived safely.
If you experience any difficulties while abroad please contact the Theology Office:
Tel: 00 353 1 708 3600 / 3892 Email: theology.office@spcm.ie

FORMS TO BE RETURNED TO PONTIFICAL UNIVERSITY, MAYNOOTH

Before you return to Maynooth:

1. Make sure the Certificate of Attendance (Arrival/Departure) is 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\(^1\) 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.

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\(^1\) ‘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.
• 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.