

## Erasmus and Non-EU Exchanges Business Process

### PURPOSE

The Erasmus and Non-EU Exchanges section organises and coordinates all student, teacher and staff mobility between UL and partner universities situated in countries across the world. The Erasmus+ mobility is governed, monitored and evaluated by the Erasmus+ National Agency of the EU Commission, the HEA, through guidelines which are stipulated in the signed Erasmus+ Mobility contracts between the HEA and the University of Limerick. The Erasmus+ Charter governs all mobility activities, and the Erasmus Policy Statement describes UL's commitment to the programme; these are posted on the UL Global Website at: [Erasmus+ Charter | University of Limerick \(ul.ie\)rec](#)

The Non-EU exchange mobility is monitored by the UL Global office. Each partnership contract template is reviewed by the University solicitor and GDPR office to ensure compliance. Each Non-EU Exchange agreement is signed by the Associate Vice President Global and Community Engagement (AVPGCE) or UL President. The agreement is also signed by the partner institution. Agreement length varies between 3 to 7 years with a clause within it to allow cancellation, normally with a six-month notification period.

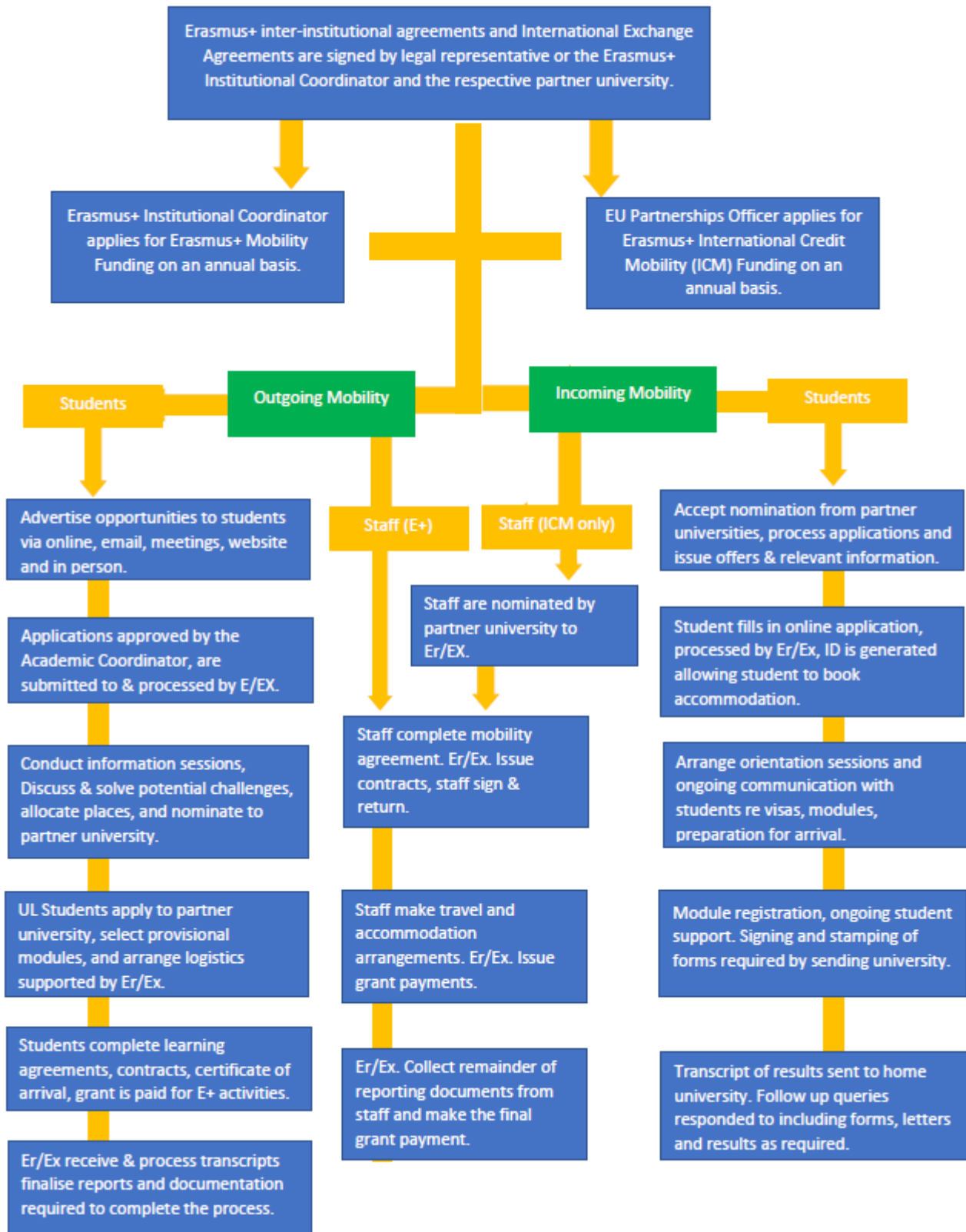
In order to plan for mobility numbers, in the future, ULG needs further information on new programme development as well as further engagement and reports on first year numbers required as a fundamental part of process mapping and to ensure internationalisation targets and met. Erasmus and Exchange must be seen as core to the Unique Selling point of the University of Limerick. A core staffing and academic mobility communication plan is to be developed post review of ULG.

Processes are evaluated each year and digitised as much as is possible. The constant manual intervention with various disjointed systems that do not communicate with each other is a priority to minimise risk.

The Academic placement abroad forms an integral part of some degree programmes within the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Kemmy Business School and the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences. Other degree programmes in other faculties contain a voluntary academic placement abroad. Some students opt to take part in an academic mobility in lieu of the Cooperative Education Placement. The following process is used to implement the mobility programmes:

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## **PROCEDURE FUNDING**

### ERASMUS +

1. The Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator makes an application for an Erasmus+ Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) before each new programme cycle, every 7 years, on behalf of the entire Higher Education Institution. Based on the ECHE an annual funding application is made to the HEA to provide funding grants for outgoing student and staff mobility within the participating European Countries. Funding is awarded based on previous performance, for which financial and qualitative reports have already been submitted. This means that funding for the following year is guaranteed because the programme runs on a seven-year cycle. Funds are allocated based on application numbers and the cost of living in the destination country.
2. The EU Partnerships Officer writes an annual application for funding for the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility programme to fund both incoming and outgoing staff and students to and from countries outside the EU. Obtaining funding is a competitive process.
3. A contract is signed between UL and the HEA outlining the rules, regulations, and programme requirements for both Erasmus+ actions.
4. The University of Limerick will digitally sign inter-institutional agreements to arrange partnerships with EU/non-EU universities on a reciprocal non-profit based basis. These documents are signed by the University representative or the delegated representative. This representative is the President or Vice President or delegate in the form of the Erasmus Institutional Coordinator.

### Non-EU EXCHANGE

Some funding is available in the form of scholarships and through the new Erasmus+ programme funding mechanism. Scholarships are awarded in the form of funding toward accommodation or tuition. Separately scholarships are also available for UL students via the Kemmy Business School. The Exchange team promotes and actively advertises these opportunities and assesses the applications centrally.

## **PROCEDURE OUTGOING STUDENTS:**

1. The respective outbound officer advertise opportunities amongst eligible students through emails (to class lists, academic coordinators, course directors) and seminars. Deadline for application Autumn semester is currently early November and Spring semester late March. Late applications are processed on a case-by-case basis.

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2. Students complete an Erasmus/International Exchange application, where they select three university partners for mobility. The Departmental Erasmus academic coordinator reviews the student selection and makes the nomination. This application contains specific requirements that ensure the students research academic requirements, financial requirements and that they are aware of what is expected from students. ULG receives the applications, identifies potential problems if applicable, nominates the student, and advises students accordingly.
3. The Erasmus/Non-EU Exchange Senior Administrators create a student database for that academic year. The outgoing Senior Administrators allocate places and inform all applicants by email. Further information sessions are held to inform students about their forthcoming placement and country specific information.
4. The outgoing Erasmus/Non-EU Exchange team send the students' nominations to each partner university and emails information packs to all students. Students receive application information from the host university. Students are reminded that they must submit a complete application within the deadline to secure a place on the Erasmus/Non-EU Exchange programme at the host university. The Erasmus & Exchanges group follows up with students to make sure that a complete application is submitted within the deadline to secure a place at the host University. Students receive administration support in relation to visa application, accommodation, etc.
5. Students complete an Acknowledgement of Responsibility Form which asks the students to consent that they are aware of the Department of Foreign Affairs requirements for their country of destination. The form also refers to the mandatory requirements for insurance, Covid, regulations and In Case of Emergency updates on the student's portal. This is then manually input into our access system and saved on Emergency folder on SharePoint for access by the entire ULG team in case of an emergency call.
6. The Erasmus outgoing Administrators inform students of formalities to be completed in order to receive the Erasmus funding (Learning agreement, grant agreement, letter of confirmation), and offers administrative, academic and personal support to students prior and during the study placement abroad. The Erasmus Outgoing Senior Administrator and Institutional Coordinator follow up with students to ensure that grant forms are submitted to ensure that the grant is paid. Currently the Access Data Base is designed to track the stage of cycle of the student, the grant payments of students, and with a notes box so that progress is recorded and checked on through the generation of excel reports.
7. Exchange students receive information in relation to their funding from the Non EU Exchange administrator, if applicable.
8. Once students have returned from their study placement, ULG ensures that students return all required forms, participant report on the Beneficiary Module while also reviewing and processing their Erasmus/International Exchange Transcripts of Records, which are forwarded to Academic Registry and the UL Academic Coordinator. Once the UL Academic Coordinator confirms that the student is deemed to have passed the study placement, Academic Registry enter a Pass on the student's record. The student status is tracked on the respective access database and progress recorded.

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## PROCEDURE INCOMING STUDENTS:

1. Nominations are received via an online form that is hosted by UL from partner universities. The nominations are processed by reviewing the IIAs and ensuring that the academic area is correct.
2. Once the nomination deadline closes an online application link is sent to partners and students. Once completed, an offer is processed using the SI system and sent to the student along with links to the student handbook, accommodation information, module information etc. Nomination control in respect to numbers and disciplines is monitored by the Incoming Erasmus /Non-EU Exchange Administrator, who approves the online applications by comparing these with nominations and checking against the signed agreements. Source information for incoming students is the SI Online application system and reports generated from there. This is compared to the manual nomination file that both Administrators keep. To support students during their placement, a report is generated with all student details, as a reference for members of the Erasmus & Exchanges group during the semester or year. This report is also saved in an Emergency file on SharePoint for the ULG team.
3. Once the student applies online, a UL application ID is generated. The student's application is assessed for a current transcript, language ability and proof of ID. Students automatically receive their UL student ID once their offer letter is issued via SI. Their offer letter contains given further information on modules, accommodation and orientation. Erasmus+ Learning Agreements (LA) are submitted to the academic coordinator by email currently and returned to students once approved. The LA is a contract of studies completed and signed by the student and approved by the home and host institution, confirming agreement on modules to be studied. It is signed before, during and after the academic placement.
4. The team work with PCC to work toward allocation of students with on campus rooms. The team also work with the Student Support team and Student Off Campus accommodation team member to source and disseminate information regarding off campus accommodation.
5. Orientation is organised by the incoming team and members across UL Global. Ordinarily, it comprises a seven-day programme on site with a mix on blended and in person events. Currently, students receive an eight-week countdown communication which concentrates on a different theme for each week. These range from information on airport travel to Irish culture to practical advice regarding packing. The team concentrate on organising a comprehensive orientation programme with tasks ranging from venue reservations, contacting speakers, preparing presentations, organising events for on campus and off campus, alerting the UL community to the supports needed, preparing documents and hiring student assistants. The streamlined ULG Orientation Committee oversees the procedure for the planning and organisation of orientation, so that each admissions area orientation session coordinates with general sessions, campus tours and the academic enrolment process.
6. Module Registration forms are submitted via an on line mechanism after students arrive in Limerick. The UL timetable is finalised prior to orientation week. Erasmus+ students meet with their UL Erasmus Academic coordinator to have their modules registration form approved. The respective Incoming team collate an online form and work with AR to register the students on the SI system. Erasmus Certificate of Arrivals and Learning Agreements are signed by Student Academic Coordinator and Institutional Coordinator and returned to home university.

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7. Immigration appointments are arranged for impacted students who require visas. The process is managed by and in liaison with the Visa officer in the full degree team. Appointment details and an official signed letter are sent to students in advance so that they are aware of what documents are required and have all of the necessary materials available for their appointment. All letters are available for the students via their UL student platform.
8. Students are supported by the Incoming team during their time in UL by platforms such as BrightSpace as well as with one to one engagement where necessary.
9. Students receive a preparation for end of semester exams presentation.
10. Once exam results are published, Transcripts of Results are issued via Digipass by the Incoming team to the students' home universities within five weeks of the end of the study period. This procedure completes the academic placement.

#### **PROCEDURE STAFF:**

1. Incoming staff under ICM are nominated to the EU Partnerships Officer by the sending partner. The host department at UL makes the decision to host the visiting staff member. The EU Partnerships Officer confirms with the sending partner and provides information on accommodation, travel, visa letters and required documentation.
2. All staff complete a mobility agreement signed by ULG, the participant, the host university and the sending university. The EU Partnership Officer issues the contracts, which staff sign and return. Staff make their travel and accommodation arrangements.
3. The EU Partnerships Officer issues the grant payments.
4. After the mobility, remaining documentation is sent to the EU Partnerships Officer in compliance with the programme for the remaining grant payment to be made.

#### **RECORDS**

All records are currently maintained on Commvault server, Sharepoint and SI.

ITD backs up these Access systems daily.

Databases are archived annually in a folder once the academic year is complete.

Archived records are maintained on Commvault.

All records are stored on SharePoint for the time required by the process. ULG operates in accordance with the [University's Records Management and Retention Policy](#). Any personal data that is used as part of this process is processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) / Data Protection Acts 1988-2018, the [University of Limerick Data Protection Policy](#) and [privacy notices](#).

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New IT system, Move On, to be implemented in 2023 and 2024 will greatly assist records management.

**PROCESS EFFECTIVENESS:**

The Erasmus Institutional Coordinator sends financial reports to the EU Commission at the end of each annual finance period. Financial Reports are submitted to HEA and EU Commission on Erasmus+ (EU mobility) for student, teacher and staff mobility. The EU Partnerships Officer follows the same financial process for Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility (ICM). Financial reports for all areas are verified and signed by the UL finance department and submitted along with a qualitative narrative report signed by the UL President. These are kept as a folder on Commvault, as a record of the overall financial process.

Erasmus and Non-EU Exchanges are audited internally in a self-assessment process on an annual basis. The HEA carries out a formal desk top audit every year requesting 12% of documents as proof of mobility and of spending. An audit visit taking place over a full day is conducted every fourth year by the HEA, including an audit of Finance Division records for Erasmus & Non-EU Exchanges funding and randomly selected documents to prove quality and effectiveness of student, teacher and staff mobility.

Covid 19 resulted in many processes now being conducted online. Post Covid19 lockdown a blended implementation has taken place with events and orientation for incoming students. For outgoing students a blended approach also takes place with preparation and information sessions mixed between online and in person. Communication with all students now occurs via BrightSpace.

**REVISION HISTORY:**

Revision No.	Date	Approved By	Details of Change	Process Owner
Rev 2	17/06/2015	Deputy Director	Added “Late applications are processed on a case-by-case basis and mean that the student may not be able to attend the University of choice.” in Paragraph 3 of Procedure (Outgoing).	Patricia O’Flaherty
Rev 3	13/08/2015	Deputy Director	Corrections to Revision History	Patricia O’Flaherty

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<b>Rev 4</b>	20.05.2020	Deputy Director	Name change to process/IED Changed to UL Global/Staff mobility added to process diagram & narrative/funding process moved to own section as applies to both students and staff/ minor text changes/amendments to processes. Further inclusion of information on Non EU Exchange. Inclusion and reference to Covid 19.	Madeline Molyneaux
<b>Rev 5</b>	22.11.2023		New digital processes updated.	Madeline Molyneaux

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