

Higher education study or train abroad grant rates 2016-17

Frequently asked questions and answers for students and parents: 8 March 2016

Overview

- Erasmus+ grants are available to support UK higher education staff teaching and training and students who want to study or train, mainly in Europe.
- The Erasmus+ UK National Agency, a partnership between the British Council and Ecorys UK, has set the Erasmus+ study and train abroad grant rate for students taking account of the level of demand from institutions (mainly universities) and students to study or train/work abroad.
- The grant is a contribution to the costs of studying or training/working abroad, to help as many students as possible to take part in the scheme and receive Erasmus+ funding, and to make the best use of the funding available from the European Commission (EC).
- The monthly grant, for study and training/working abroad, is €100 more than the minimum figure allowed by the EC.

How much can students get?

- UK students who decide to spend up to a year of their course in Europe in 2016-17 through the Erasmus+ programme will be eligible for grants of up to €300 per month for study, or up to €400 per month for student traineeships, depending on the country they go to.
- For study abroad, disadvantaged students* will also receive €100 more per month.
- The grant rates for 2016/17 are the same as the rates set in 2015/16.
- This grant is a contribution to the extra costs of living abroad, which is why it varies by country.
- Students still receive their UK maintenance grant or loan, there are no tuition fees in the host country, plus for many students spending a full year of study or training/working abroad, there is a substantial discount on any UK tuition fees for that year away.

What can students spend the grant on?

- The grant is extra money, on top of the maintenance grant or loan and for long term study or training/working of a year, there is a substantial discount on any UK tuition fees for that year away.
- The grant is intended to make a contribution to the cost of living abroad.
- Many universities advise that students should not rely on it to cover every cost and should plan to have enough money to cover their first few months abroad themselves. Rent, food, socialising, travelling and how a student spends the money is very much down to the individual.

Notes:

**Disadvantaged students are broadly those with an annual household income of £25,000 or less, but students should check their eligibility with their student finance or study abroad office.*

Is the grant the same for everyone?

- How much each UK student can receive depends on the funding allocated to their university against the number of students from that university who want to take part. It will also depend on the country they go to, and if they want to do academic study or a student traineeship.
- All UK students are eligible for the same grant rate, but universities have some flexibility in managing their budget to meet demand.
- With a budget very similar to last year’s, the UK National Agency expects to fund the vast majority of the student activity predicted by universities, though this means that universities may decide to fund fewer study or work abroad months where necessary, depending on eventual demand from their students.
- UK students who want to study in countries where there is a high average cost of living, like Norway or Sweden, are eligible for up to €300 per month they are there, and in other countries, they can receive up to €250 per month.
- There is an additional €100 per month for students studying abroad and from disadvantaged backgrounds*.
- If students want to do a traineeship, the amounts are greater – up to €400 or €350 a month.
- These rates are €100 more than the minimum rate specified by the EC (which runs the Erasmus+ programme across all countries involved).

These are the high and lower cost of living countries:

400 train / 300 study (euro per month) High cost of living countries	350 train / 250 study (euro per month) Lower cost of living countries
Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Norway, Sweden	Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

How is the grant rate worked out?

- The total budget for Erasmus+ comes from the European Commission every year as they run Erasmus+ across the European Union and other countries.
- The European Commission decides each country’s budget and how that money can be split across the sectors and activities involved in the programme, according to a set formula.
- For the early years of this new Erasmus+ programme, which started in 2014 and runs until 2020, the budget stays about the same though more UK students want to study or work/train abroad than ever before.
- The amount available per student is then decided by the UK National Agency for Erasmus+, the British Council working in partnership with Ecorys UK, – in consultation with UK universities, and others involved in higher education in the UK, such as the UK Government and the UK Higher Education International Unit.
- The rate was agreed on 12 February 2016.
- Each year UK universities must apply to the UK National Agency for Erasmus+ funding for their students.

- The aim is to support as many UK students as possible, and to make it fair, so all UK students studying or working/training in the same countries are eligible for the same rate, though universities can decide to fund fewer study or traineeship months where necessary, depending on how much funding they are allocated and the demand from their students.

Is it expensive to study in Europe?

- According to an [independent survey by HSBC \(featured in The Telegraph\)](#), Erasmus+ students are said to be financially better off than those students who stay in the UK to study, due to tuition fees being covered in the host country and the cost of living abroad in some EU countries being cheaper than others, which is why there are different categories of countries and funding.
- Erasmus+ is an affordable opportunity to experience study in another country in Europe as students are able to receive their maintenance grant or loan, their tuition fees abroad are covered, there is an Erasmus+ grant while studying or training, and if there is a whole year of study or traineeship, there is a substantial discount on any UK tuition fees for that year away.

What are some of the benefits?

- The experience gained from studying abroad through Erasmus+ helps students stand out from the competition when applying for jobs after graduation.
- Employers value international experience, as 64% of employers think international experience is important for recruitment.
- According to the [EC's Erasmus impact study](#) the unemployment rate for Erasmus students is 23% lower five years after graduation than other graduates and 1 in 3 trainees were offered a position with their host company after graduation, which demonstrates the employability prospects and earning potential of having participated in the Erasmus+ programme.
- The British Council report '[World of Experience](#)' surveyed 1,148 UK residents between the ages of 25 and 65 and found that international experience is key to unlocking innovation in the workplace. Almost half of those surveyed who had spent time abroad went on to have an innovation focused role in their working life. Also, those with international experience were more likely to be in roles with an international focus, with 60 per cent liaising with international colleagues, suppliers and customers, compared with less than 30 per cent of those without international experience.

Do all students have the same grant across Europe?

- Hundreds of thousands of students from all over Europe take part in Erasmus+ every year, and students from each country receive a different grant rate, depending on their country's budget from the EU and how many students from each country go.
- The average grant rate for student mobility across the EU was €274 in 2013-14, according to the EC's [Erasmus statistics 2013/14](#) report published in January 2016, so these student grant rates are above that average.
- So students could make friends with someone getting a bit more money, the same, or less.
- When will students have their grant this year?
- Students receive their funding from their home university and not the National Agency.
- In a typical year, universities receive the funding sometime between June and the end of September, and then they make the grant payments to individual students. The timescale for funding is slightly different for each university, because checks have to be carried out, every university's application is different and each grant agreement needs to be tailored to the university.
- Each university then makes its own arrangements for paying its students.

- In summary, the funding process starts with the UK National Agency sending a grant agreement to the university, and continues with the university completing and returning the paperwork, then finishes with the UK National Agency issuing the grant payment to the university.
- We work closely with universities to ensure students know when to expect their grant.

What about students going abroad to countries outside Europe?

- In 2015 higher education institutions were able to apply for Erasmus+ funding to send students abroad to countries outside Europe, known as Partner Countries. The overall budget allocated for this element of the programme, called International Credit Mobility, is much smaller, fewer institutions apply for this funding and fewer places are available.
- Eligible students going from the UK to Partner Countries could receive a monthly grant of €650 and also receive a travel contribution based on the distance they are travelling.
- Students should first check with their institutions to establish if they offer this activity and then request further information from their Erasmus+ office.