



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

International  
Exchanges  
Unit.

# Erasmus Handbook For Outbound Students 2011–12.



Paris

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# INTRODUCTION

It is a tremendous opportunity to spend a year or a semester in Europe as part of your degree. You will benefit enormously from the academic and personal experiences gained from your period of study or work abroad. In addition, many employers, both in Europe and elsewhere, appreciate the added value that graduates with such experience bring to the workforce.

Erasmus is not all work! You will gain as much personally from the social aspect of this period as from the academic content. A thorough investigation into your host university and/or the organisation you work for, city and country before you leave the UK will make sure that you are well-prepared for the culture you will find there and that you are ready to participate in all aspects of being abroad.

Your Erasmus placement is something that you will need to think about and prepare for. It will require flexibility, new skills and considerable perseverance. You will learn to see your own culture in a new perspective and to look at problems in a new light. You will gain the confidence to handle new and challenging situations.

We hope that you will find the following information helpful. Of course, it does not tell you everything you need to know to make your Erasmus placement a success. It may not all sound very important at the moment but taking note of the advice you are given and thinking seriously now about what you are going to do while you are away from Sheffield and why, can make your life much easier and more rewarding during this important time.

Wishing you an enjoyable and rewarding time abroad...

*All at the International Exchanges Unit*



Berlin

# A. BEFORE YOU LEAVE

## 1. Your Responsibilities

- The work that you do at your host university or organisation forms an integral part of your Sheffield degree. You, therefore, need to ensure that you meet all the requirements. Your departmental Erasmus tutor, together with their counterparts in Europe, will facilitate matters, but you must alert them if you foresee and/or experience any problems in fulfilling your degree requirements.
- Make sure that you have a clear understanding of what your specific requirements are before you leave Sheffield. It is up to you to ensure that these requirements will be met during your time abroad. For example, if you are going to study at a university abroad, you must sign up for your required modules in good time to avoid being denied access to them later.
- Although you will be abroad, you will still be registered for your degree at Sheffield. This means you have an obligation to answer emails you are sent, to send copies of your academic work and generally to keep your department informed of your progress.
- You must fulfil all your academic and financial requirements for the University of Sheffield before you can be formally released to take up your study or work placement in Europe. This includes completing all your academic work, passing any examinations and discharging your debts.
- Your department should ensure that there is unambiguous guidance available on the way in which marks/grades brought back from your period abroad will be incorporated into your final degree assessments in Sheffield. General principles about the conversion of grade points/marks into the Sheffield numerical system should be explained to you before you leave the UK; as should procedures for the handling of course marks/grades for 'optional' or 'subsidiary' courses.

## 2. European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) was developed by the European Commission to establish common procedures for the academic recognition of studies abroad.

The following departments use this system:

- Chemical and Biological Engineering
- Chemistry
- Economics
- French
- Geography
- Germanic Studies
- Landscape
- Law
- Management
- Materials Science and Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Modern Languages Teaching Centre
- Russian & Slavonic Studies

### IMPORTANT:

All students taking part in an Erasmus study period must complete an ECTS Learning Agreement, regardless of whether or not their department uses ECTS. A copy of this document can be found in the Pre-departure Pack for Erasmus Study Periods.

These departments will provide further information on ECTS. The basic rule of thumb, however, is that an ECTS credit is worth half a Sheffield credit. Therefore, 30 ECTS credits are equal to 60 Sheffield credits.

## 3. Funding & Finances

### Tuition Fees

#### Host University tuition fees

As an Erasmus student, you are not required to pay any tuition fees to a partner university.

#### University of Sheffield tuition fees

The current policy regarding tuition fee arrangements for home fee paying students is as follows:

- One semester abroad as an Erasmus student: you will be required to pay the full amount of tuition fees you normally pay to the University of Sheffield
- An entire academic year abroad, but only half of it on Erasmus: you will pay half of the normal tuition fees to the University of Sheffield
- An entire academic year abroad as an Erasmus student: you will not pay any tuition fees to the University of Sheffield

Please note that the tuition fee arrangements for overseas fee-paying students can vary from one year to another. Please contact the University of Sheffield Fees Office for the most up-to-date information:

[www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssd/fees/contacts.html](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssd/fees/contacts.html)

## UK Student Loans

If you normally apply for a UK Student Loan, you should still do so for the forthcoming academic year. Make sure you tick any boxes on the form as required to indicate that you will be spending part or all of the year abroad.

It is your responsibility to supply full information of your period abroad to your academic department and to Student Finance England when completing loan forms. This information will be used to ensure that University records are correct and the correct tuition fee is applied. The University will not contact Student Finance on your behalf.

If you receive a request from Student Finance to supply additional information regarding your period abroad that requires a University stamp/signature, please contact Jackie Parkin in the Taught Programmes Office:

J.Parkin@sheffield.ac.uk

## Erasmus Grant

Most students taking part in an Erasmus study period or work placement are eligible to receive an Erasmus grant to assist with the additional expenditure incurred through living abroad. Please note that the Erasmus grant is intended only to subsidise your period abroad and therefore should not be relied on for essential living expenses such as food and rent.

For comprehensive and up-to-date information on the Erasmus grant, please see the Erasmus grant fact sheet in your pre-departure pack. The fact sheet can also be downloaded here:

[www.sheffield.ac.uk/erasmus/outgoing/before/](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/erasmus/outgoing/before/)

## Travel Grant

You may be able to claim a retrospective travel grant from Student Finance England. The travel grant is income-assessed and can cover reasonable costs as decided by Student Finance England. It can sometimes also cover medical costs.

In order to apply for the travel grant, you must confirm your period abroad either in your original Student Loan application or via a CO1 Change of Circumstances form which can be downloaded from:

[www.direct.gov.uk/StudentFinance/](http://www.direct.gov.uk/StudentFinance/)

If you do this, an application form for the travel grant will automatically be sent to you towards the end of your period abroad so that you can apply for it when you return to the UK. Please make sure you keep all your travel receipts and any medical receipts for this purpose.

### **University Financial Support**

Students are only eligible for a bursary if they pay the full tuition fee to the University of Sheffield. However, you may apply for the Access to Learning (hardship) Fund for unforeseeable expenses or emergency costs. UK students who are assessed by Student Finance as being eligible for the low parental income means tested maintenance grant, mature students and those with children are encouraged to apply for this.

For further details on financial support at the University of Sheffield, please email:

[financialhelp@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:financialhelp@sheffield.ac.uk)

## 4. Cash, Banking & Credit Cards

### Some general advice....

- Apply for your Student Loan well in advance of your departure to your host country
- Check if Student Finance England will fund any of your travel, insurance or other costs on top of your regular loan (also see page 5)
- If you think you may struggle financially, please see the SSiD 'Funding your Study' web pages:  
[www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/finance/money.html](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/finance/money.html)
- Tell your bank of your intention to study/work in Europe and ask if they have reciprocal agreements with other European banks
- Set up a bank account before or on arrival in your host country – we recommend larger banks
- Check costs/ease of transferring money – this varies from bank to bank
- Take a credit card – obtain this well in advance if you don't already have one
- Take Euro cheques/travellers' cheques
- You can normally withdraw money from your UK account from any cash machine that displays the Cirrus symbol. It is usual to be charged a small amount for doing this, so try to withdraw money less frequently and in larger sums

## 5. Travel Arrangements

You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements. As soon as you have been accepted by the host university/employer and know when you are required to arrive, you should make your booking. Always check with the university or organisation the actual date that you are supposed to be there by.

### Some general advice...

- What about travelling with other Sheffield students? Find out who else is going to the same destination and contact them as early as possible to make joint arrangements
- Try to arrive during business hours so that staff might be available
- Download a map and some basic directions before you leave the UK
- Find out if there is a "meet and greet" service that you can use
- If you have pre-arranged your accommodation, make sure that you know exactly when and where to collect the keys
- If you want to take a car, check with the AA or RAC about using a British driving licence over a long period in your host country. Also, don't forget to tell your insurance company!

- Can't carry everything you want to take? Make enquiries with your travel agent about sending unaccompanied luggage
- An International Student Travel Card can help you get cheap flights/train fares (and can also be used as photo ID). Please contact your travel agent for further advice

**IMPORTANT:**

You must hold a current passport, which should be valid for at least 6 months beyond your return date.

## 6. Insurance

### I. European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

Students who are EEA/EU nationals and who are normally resident in the UK, but are spending time in another EEA/EU country as an integral part of a recognised UK course, can apply for a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

This entitles you, and any dependants that accompany you, to treatment for any condition during your period abroad. The website for the EHIC application is [www.ehic.org.uk](http://www.ehic.org.uk). You will need your National Insurance number to apply.

Please note that, in addition to providing you with medical insurance, it may be a registration requirement of a host university in Europe.

### II. Private Insurance

You must also take out a private insurance policy that covers you for medical expenses. This should cover you for claims that may not be met by the UK government such as incidental hospital expenses; repatriation home by air ambulance and travel costs of family members. You are advised to take out a policy which insures you for a minimum of £1 million.

**IMPORTANT:**

If you already have an EHIC, check that it is not due to expire before or during your period abroad.

You should also ensure you have private travel insurance to cover you for loss of personal possessions and money, missed flight, luggage delays etc. for the duration of your period abroad.

Some European universities require you to be subscribed to a third party liability insurance plan as part of their registration procedure. This would insure you against any injury you may cause to a third party, or damage you may cause to someone else's property, e.g. if you are involved in a car or biking accident. This type of policy would also provide limited legal assistance.

Students taking part in work placements or teaching assistantships within the EU should note that they may not be covered for third party liability by their host company/organisation's insurance, especially in France, Spain and Italy, where employment law sees placement students as different from normal workers.

In all cases, the University of Sheffield's insurance cannot cover its students for undertaking an Erasmus study period, work placement or teaching assistantship. The University does not accept liability for loss or damage to personal property nor does it provide personal accident, travel or health insurance.

Comprehensive insurance policies are available and many can be found online. However, you must read the terms, conditions and excess levels thoroughly and ensure that you are covered for as many items as possible. Don't just pick the cheapest policy!

## 7. Immunisation and Health

### Some general advice...

- You do not generally need immunisations if you are travelling from the UK, but if you are planning to enter from another country, please check with your doctor/GP practice
- If you have an unusual medical condition, take copies of medical records. Also take with you prescriptions for medications and a GP/hospital letter confirming your condition
- If you wear spectacles/contact lenses, take spares of these as well as a prescription in case you need to obtain replacements
- Dental care is not generally covered by national health services and can be very expensive so it is advisable to get all dental work done prior to departure
- If you have a long term medical condition, a disability (including dyslexia or other learning disability) you must discuss this with the University of Sheffield DDSS and/or your GP here and/or the Erasmus tutor in your department. This is so that your host university/employer can put appropriate support resources in place.

## 8. Accommodation

Organising accommodation in another country is not always easy. Remember that this is part of the challenge of going to live abroad!

You can find lots of useful resources on our web pages such as links to our Facebook group, uSpace area and other related web sites:

[www.sheffield.ac.uk/erasmus/outgoing/before/accommodation-autumn.html](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/erasmus/outgoing/before/accommodation-autumn.html)

### I. Students going on Erasmus Study Periods

- Housing information and application materials should be sent to you by your host institution if they provide such a service
- Check the web pages of your host university to see if this is the case

- If you do apply for university owned housing, submit your application well in advance of the deadline and chase up a confirmation that it has been received
- Do not expect that you will automatically be given University accommodation; be prepared to look for private sector housing
- If you do obtain a place in University owned housing, read your contract thoroughly before signing

## II. Students going on Erasmus Work Placements or Language Assistantships

- Contacts in your host organisation may be at hand to help you arrange accommodation, but do not automatically expect this
- Find out from the outset how much input your host contacts are prepared to have in your housing arrangements
- If you do receive help finding somewhere to live, think of this as a bonus and remember to say 'thanks'

## III. Finding Private Housing Abroad

### Some general advice...

- Try to arrange something before you go away but don't worry if you can't
- If this is impossible, arrive a few weeks early to start your search
- Be prepared to spend at least the first few nights in a B&B or hostel
- Use estate agents, internet, local magazines & papers
- Seek advice from returning/inbound students
- Be aware of your personal safety – try not to go for viewings on your own and insist that you meet up with owners and agents in the daytime
- Check your contract thoroughly before signing

## IV. Letting your Sheffield Room to Another Student

Some students who are spending only a semester abroad but have signed a full year housing contract in the private sector opt to let their room to another student during the time they are abroad so that they don't have to pay two amounts of rent. If you wish to do this, it is a good idea to post an advertisement on our Facebook group. Your advertisement can then be viewed by incoming exchange students who are preparing to spend a semester living and studying in Sheffield. The group can be accessed through our web pages:

[www.sheffield.ac.uk/erasmus/outgoing/before](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/erasmus/outgoing/before)

You will be responsible for making any arrangements with your potential tenant and current housemates. The University of Sheffield cannot play any part in negotiations and litigations in relation to private sector housing.

### IMPORTANT:

If you are looking to advertise a room in a private house, you must speak to your landlord/lady and make sure that he/she is happy with this as it is classed as "subletting" and may be a breach of your contract

## 9. Registration for 2011–12

If you are studying/working/teaching abroad in the first semester or for the duration of the 2011–12 academic year, you must register with the University of Sheffield before you leave the UK.

Instructions on how to do this will be sent to you by Registry Services over the summer vacation. You should complete your registration as soon as possible and indicate where appropriate that you will be spending the semester/academic year studying/working abroad.

If you are going away for semester 2 only, you will register in September as usual.

### IMPORTANT:

You must register with the University of Sheffield for the 2011–12 academic year. Otherwise your record will be changed to 'temporarily registered' and subsequently 'withdrawn from the University'. You will also be blocked from receiving any grants or bursaries.

## 10. Keeping in Touch

Once you know your new postal address, please ensure that you inform the relevant people e.g. University Health Service or doctor, bank, family, friends etc. You can update the term-time address on your university record here:

[www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/record/pin.html](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/record/pin.html)

You must keep checking your Sheffield email account during the summer vacation and throughout your period abroad. Your academic department(s) and the International Exchanges Unit will contact you regularly via this account.



## B. WHILE YOU'RE AWAY

### 1. Settling In

It's not always easy to settle into a new environment. Cultural differences can take time to get used to – and this is very normal. Considering the following observations before you go away should go some way to helping you maintain a balanced perspective during that initial phase of adjustment:

- Registration and general bureaucratic procedures may seem arduous and frustrating. Be prepared to devote considerable time and energy to these matters
- Teaching and working styles may be very different in your host country. E.g. in some countries lectures are frequently very busy and it may be necessary to arrive early to secure a seat
- Academic and support staff may be around less than in Sheffield. They will often have set times when they will see students and you may have to book a slot in advance
- Making new friends can take time. Try to get involved in any activities put on for exchange students and make an effort to get to know your classmates/colleagues. Joining an established club or a gym can be an excellent way of socialising and is far less likely to lead you into any uncomfortable situations you may find yourself in at a bar/nightclub
- Be adaptable and remember that one of the reasons you are spending time abroad is to gain experience of life in another culture
- If none of the above are working for you and you are feeling very down, remember that there is a great deal of support for you at the University of Sheffield. We are only a phone call away!

### 2. Useful documentation to take with you

During your stay, you may be asked to provide documents containing information about your financial situation or proof that you are an Erasmus student. You might, therefore, find it useful to take copies of the following documents with you:

- A written statement from your host university or company confirming that you have been accepted to study/work there under the Erasmus programme
- Copy of Certificate of Student Status from Sheffield (SSiD) showing that you have been registered as a regular fee-paying student in the UK
- Evidence of financial support for your period abroad, e.g. a copy of your Student Loan award letter, a written statement from one of your parents guaranteeing financial support etc.

In some instances, you may also be required to register with the civil authorities, i.e. with the Alien Registration Office, usually located within the city or town hall. Check with your contacts in your host university/organisation to see if this will be a requirement for you.

**IMPORTANT:**

If you are going to study at an Erasmus partner university, make sure you know where, when and how to register. Arrive in good time to do so.

### 3. Academic Matters

If you have any queries or problems of an academic nature whilst you are abroad, your first port of call should be your departmental Erasmus tutor. Make sure you have a note of his/her contact details before you go. During busy times or vacation periods, an instant response may not always be possible. Try not to wait until the issue becomes very urgent before getting in touch.

If you are studying at one of our partner universities, your department in Sheffield may send you a Course Registration Form once you have arrived. You must complete and return this to your departmental Erasmus tutor so that he/she can confirm that your module choices are appropriate.

You may also be required to keep a portfolio of your work to bring back to Sheffield, do not discard your work whilst you are away.

### 4. Personal Safety

Much of this comes down to common sense, and being alert to local circumstances, especially when they differ from what you are used to. However, below are some guidelines to observe for helping you to avoid finding yourself in a difficult situation:

- Check Foreign Office guidelines and advice for visitors (via website or phone call) if events in the news about a particular country worry you
- To avoid attracting attention, notice how the locals dress and behave, and copy them
- Don't be afraid to change seats on a bus or train if someone makes you feel uncomfortable
- Don't hitch a ride
- Try to find accommodation via personal/work contacts or school/university support systems
- Never go alone to visit a prospective flat, especially one found via a newspaper ad
- Arrange to meet people in public places (bars, cafés) until you know them
- When you go out alone, let someone know where you've gone, and who with
- Only go back to someone's flat or house if you feel absolutely safe with them
- Make sure you have enough cash for a taxi at the end of a night out

- If you offer private English classes, the safest way to arrange them is via personal recommendation; ads in newspapers for 'English lessons' can be read as the equivalent of 'Swedish massage'
- If you give private English classes, it is recommended that you give them in a public space (easy for conversation classes) and only go to the client's home (always tell someone where you're going) when you feel confident

All this said, it is important not to be paranoid. Most European cities are generally no more dangerous than Sheffield. The greatest risks usually come from resisting opportunist grabs for personal property (cameras, watches, etc.): valuables are always less valuable than your personal safety.



## C. RETURNING TO SHEFFIELD

You may find returning to Sheffield quite strange to begin with. You will have immersed yourself in a different culture and you may find Sheffield is quite different from what you got used to whilst abroad. You may find that your friends from Sheffield are no longer around as they may have finished their courses and there could be more pressure on you as it is your final year. These are not things to worry about, but it is worth bearing them in mind if you feel a little down when you return. Don't worry – it can almost be a reverse feeling of culture shock.

### 1. Housing on your return

If you wish to apply for University housing for your final year, you should contact Accommodation and Campus Services in November. The allocation of accommodation will take place in around mid-February, so try to submit your application as early as possible. Return housing is not guaranteed for students returning from a year abroad. If you are not successful or you do not wish to apply for University accommodation, you will need to come to Sheffield on returning from your period of study/work abroad, and sort out private accommodation locally.

Further information can be found at:

[www.shef.ac.uk/accommodation/return](http://www.shef.ac.uk/accommodation/return)

### 2. Registering for 2012–13

Once your academic department has made any necessary grade conversions and organised for the marks to be entered on your University record, you will be able to see them in MUSE.

Registry Services will be in touch in the summer with instructions on how to register for 2012–13.

You can either organise the module sign-up with your academic department(s) whilst you are abroad or wait until you are back in Sheffield, taking a risk that some modules will be full. Academic departments have different systems in place for managing this, so make sure you know how it works in yours before you go abroad.

## D. USEFUL ADDRESSES

### 1. Websites

Description	Web address
University of Sheffield Erasmus info	<a href="http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/erasmus">www.sheffield.ac.uk/erasmus</a>
Erasmus National Agency	<a href="http://www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus">www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus</a>
Erasmus student network (ESN)	<a href="http://www.esn.org">www.esn.org</a>
Erasmus students review their experiences	<a href="http://www.iagora.com/istudy">www.iagora.com/istudy</a>
ISIC, International student identity card	<a href="http://www.ISICcard.com">www.ISICcard.com</a>
University of Sheffield Student Support & Guidance	<a href="http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssd/ssg">www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssd/ssg</a>
University of Sheffield Fees Office	<a href="http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssd/fees/index.html">www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssd/fees/index.html</a>
University of Sheffield Registry Services	<a href="http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssd/reg">www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssd/reg</a>
University of Sheffield Taught Programmes Office	<a href="http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssd/tpo">www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssd/tpo</a>
University of Sheffield Accommodation Office	<a href="http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/accommodation">www.sheffield.ac.uk/accommodation</a>
University of Sheffield Student Services Information Desk	<a href="http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/">www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/</a>

### 2. International Exchanges Unit Contact Details

#### Postal address:

International Exchanges Unit  
Level 6, University House  
Western Bank  
SHEFFIELD  
S10 2TN

**T:** 0044 (0)114 222 1253 / 9871

**E:** [ieu@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:ieu@sheffield.ac.uk)

Out-of-hours emergency: 0044 (0) 114 222 4085

#### Contacts:

Mrs Dörte Stevenson, Head of International Exchanges Unit  
Miss Angela Roper, Erasmus Administrator  
Miss Katie Bell, International Exchanges Assistant

#### IMPORTANT:

The International Exchanges Unit operates an appointment system. If you wish to speak to us face-to-face, please arrange this with us in advance by telephone or email.



Prague



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

### Contact

International Exchanges Unit

**T:** 00 44 (0)114 222 1253/9871

**F:** 00 44 (0)114 222 1304

Out of hours emergency: 00 44 (0)114 222 4085

**E:** [erasmus@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:erasmus@sheffield.ac.uk)

**W:** [www.sheffield.ac.uk/erasmus](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/erasmus)



Education and Culture DG

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