



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Studying Abroad 2025/26

Pre-departure
information for
Semester 2 outgoings

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University
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What 2024/25 students said ...

“It was truly the best experience I could have ever gotten in terms of personal and academic growth. I am very sad to be leaving, as I’ve made so many friends here and have fallen completely in love with the city. I see myself coming back here after I’ve graduated. I feel like I’ve discovered new parts of myself by being away from home for so long. I have made life-long memories that I will cherish forever.”

Paula, Utrecht

“Not only did I gain friendships, but I also gained so much more independence and self-confidence. I have become such a social butterfly now, as I was quite introverted before, and have learnt how to properly live by myself while balancing student life and my social life in a different country away from all my family and friends. Of course, it was difficult for a while as any new experience is, but it just took some getting used to ... This opportunity has changed my perspective on life and has helped me see there are more things in life to explore and discover.”

Faye, Malta

“I would absolutely choose the University of Richmond again, as my time as an exchange student there was the best year of my life. I grew so much as a student, made so many lifelong friends and had the most unique experiences I would not have anywhere else.”

Dara, Richmond

the
University
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College of Arts
homepage



“International
Students”



“Outgoing Students”

<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/colleges-and-schools/arts-social-sciences-and-celtic-studies/international-students/outgoingstudents/studyabroad/>

College of Arts study abroad web pages

Partner uni fact
sheets here



A range of
useful
documents here

Study Abroad

Overview

Current Students

Schools and Subject Areas

Undergraduate Programmes

Taught Postgraduate Programmes

PhD and Research Degrees

International Students

Collaborate with Us

Research


Arts in Action

College Office Staff


Strategy 2021-2025

Centre for Creative Technologies


On these pages you can learn more about the many study abroad opportunities for students of the College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies.




DESTINATIONS FOR STUDY ABROAD




WHO CAN STUDY ABROAD?




OPTIONS FOR NON-LANGUAGE STUDENTS



BA GLOBAL EXPERIENCE



NEWS & RESOURCES



TESTIMONIALS



Outline

Preparation checklist

Practicalities – money, paperwork

Accommodation (and scams)

Culture shock

Getting the most from mobility

Personal safety

What to do when problems arise

Mobility Assessment / Student Declaration



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PREPARATION: Checklist

- ☐ Passport
- ☐ Travel Insurance (& EHIC?)
- ☐ Online banking
- ☐ Erasmus paperwork (if applicable)
- ☐ **Register at University of Galway** (not relevant for Semester 2 outgoings!)
- ☐ Register with DFA
- ☐ ISIC and/or ESN card
- ☐ Unlock phone?
- ☐ Academic requirements & contacts





Travel Insurance

- EHIC for EU citizens within EU (www.ehic.ie)
- Private insurance mandatory for **all** University of Galway students on mobility
- Must cover
 - ✓ medical treatment
 - ✓ personal liability
 - ✓ repatriation
 - ✓ cancellation/curtailment
 - ✓ personal effects
- Possible providers:
 - www.collegetravel.ie
 - www.protrip-world.com (there are others, see Travel Insurance section here)

Please be sure to read the University of Galway's advice on insurance!

See <https://tinyurl.com/CASSCS-Outbound-Resources>,

Travel Insurance: "Insurance Recommendations for Students on Mobility"





ATTENTION ERASMUS STUDENTS!

Please be sure to read all the information provided and attend to your paperwork!

www.universityofgalway.ie/erasmus-programme/outgoingstudents/latestnews/#tab2

www.universityofgalway.ie/erasmus-programme/outgoingstudents/erasmustraineeships

[Home](#) > [GLOBAL GALWAY](#) > [ERASMUS](#) > [OUTGOING STUDENTS](#) > [LATEST NEWS](#)

Latest News

Overview	Paperwork Explained Outgoing Erasmus 2025/26	Registering at University of Galway You must be registered as a student here at University of Galway for the year in which you are going abroad. You will be able to register online in late August, and you should follow the instructions , "Returning to my Next Year". More Information
Study in Ireland	Some explanations to help you in managing your paperwork	
Offer Holders	DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION RESOURCES	
The Global Student Experience	Handbook for Outgoing Erasmus Study Visits - Please make sure to read this handbook very carefully.	
Incoming Visiting Students	PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION SESSIONS:	
Outbound University of Galway Students	Outgoing Erasmus+ Pre-Departure Information Session May 2025 (Study Visits) - This is a recording of the pre-departure information session that was held on Tuesday, 13th May, 2025,	





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The learning agreement

Who is the “responsible person” at the University of Galway?
That’s the person who must review and approve your course choices.
➤ Your **academic coordinator**.

The OLA “contact person” can be Mary Lyons, but the “responsible person” must be your academic coordinator

(exceptions: Joint Hons students going to Uppsala, and BA Govt students going to Linköping, UPV/Basque Country, or Ghent – “responsible person” is Mary Lyons)

You’ll find more information about the learning agreement here: 

<https://tinyurl.com/CASSCS-Outbound-Resources> and here:

www.nuigalway.ie/erasmus-programme/outgoingstudents/latestnews/#tab2



Important requirement regarding the Learning Agreement

You **MUST** have a fully completed, fully signed Learning Agreement in place in order to receive an Erasmus grant.

If your learning agreement has not been completed and signed by

- you,
- your University of Galway coordinator (“responsible person”) and
- your host university coordinator (“responsible person”)

then your Erasmus grant cannot be paid.

Make sure you sort out your learning agreement right at the start of your Erasmus study visit.





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TRAVEL

The Dept of Foreign Affairs (DFA) provides guidance by country - read the advice on safety/security, local laws, health, etc.

<https://www.ireland.ie/en/dfa/overseas-travel/>

Irish citizens should register with the DFA.

Note the contact details of the Irish Embassy or Consulate in your host country (or your own embassy if you're not an Irish citizen).



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Money: What our students say

“The main thing I would say is to save more money than you think you’ll need. I saved extra money during the Summer. However, that ran out faster than I thought it would.”

“Be aware of the cost of a year living abroad, I would definitely tell people coming on Erasmus not to depend solely on the Erasmus grant. It is an expensive year, especially if you want to travel around and fully immerse yourself in the culture and activities.”

“The US is generally expensive and the indicated expenses that you need to prove for your Visa is a fairly accurate reflection of how much you will end up spending.”

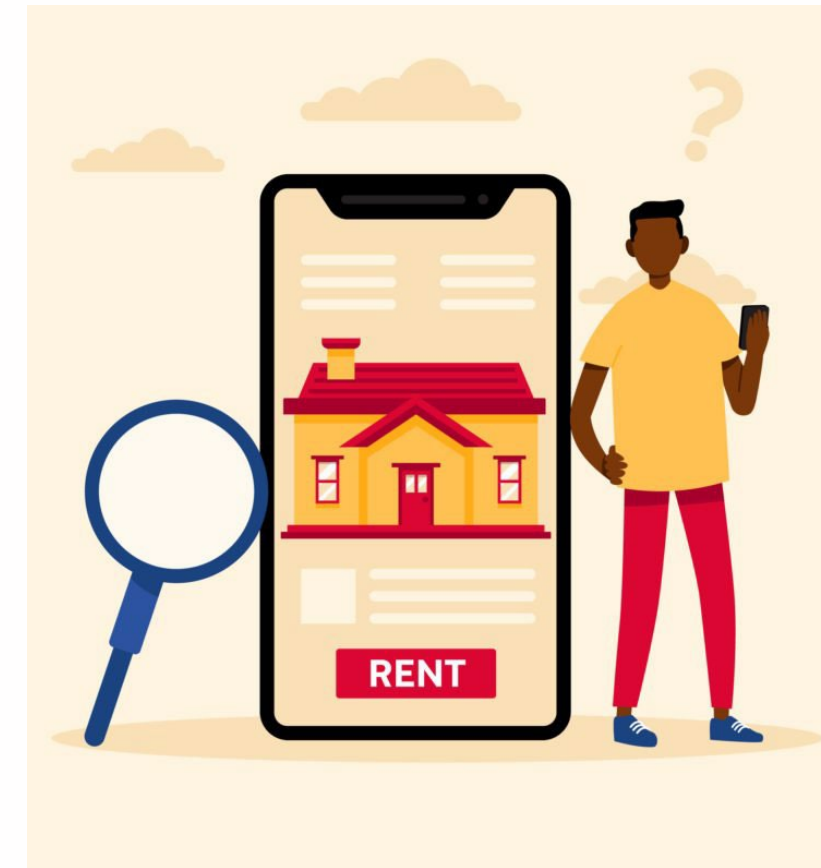
“I recommend saving up a decent amount of money before you go. Although there are many discounts available and cheap alternatives for things, I am glad I was able to afford all the travels I did and participate in all the events too without worrying too much about my expenses.”

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Accommodation

- Standards may vary!
- Research areas/prices in advance.
- Bring enough money to pay a deposit if renting in private sector.
- Read your rental contract carefully.
- Good idea to record and report any existing damage or anything missing at the time of moving in.
- Best not to enter into subletting arrangements.
- Carefully consider with whom you want to share.
- **BEWARE OF SCAMS!!!**





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Choosing your roommates: advice from a student


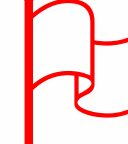
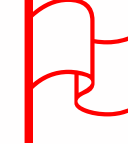

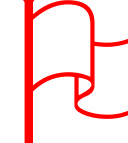
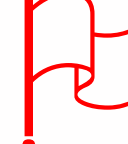
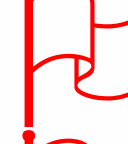

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“While having Irish roommates is a very comforting idea, I found that it really hindered me from getting the most out of the Erasmus experience. I felt obliged to spend time with my roommates because we came together, but this in turn stopped me from meeting new people. It took me a long time to change this mentality, but once I did my experience got so much better! Erasmus is such a unique chance to meet people from all over the world and become part of the local community, and it can be so easy to get trapped in a bubble of familiarity and Irishness. This also gives you less opportunity to practice speaking your target language, which is the whole point of the year/semester. Chances are you won’t get the chance to live your day-to-day life in that country again, in the near future at least, so make the most of it while you are here!”

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Accommodation Scams: some red flags!

-  Rent below the going rate
-  Bad spelling/grammar in the ad.
-  Contact is made only via social media, Whatsapp, etc
-  A story about renting for a relative / not in the country / can't be there to meet you ...
-  Pushy approach
-  Demands money up front
-  Additional charges appear – legal fees, cleaning, etc
-  Western Union money transfer, PayPal, etc – avoid!





Accommodation Scams: Tips and hints

- Don't be pressurised.
- Do some research online; try to verify the person's identity.
- Letting agency: check if the website is genuine.
- Google the address of the property.
- Check if the "property" has been advertised in multiple cities.
- Look for inconsistencies.
- Trust your gut feeling.
- Avoid paying till you've seen the property.
- Payment by credit card is safest.
- Get a proper rental contract.





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Before you head off ...



?

Have you read thoroughly
all the information and instructions
sent to you by your host university or your
student residence?





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Settling in ...

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"It takes a while to settle into a new environment, new culture, different language, different food and different systems and you must be prepared for that and accept that it's normal to feel like you want to go home and you're uncomfortable, but I promise it gets a lot better, and this is where you must be resilient. You also must do things you don't do very often like introducing yourself to random people and trying to make a relationship, ask for directions to your classroom, try asking questions in a foreign language in the classroom amongst other natives and even text in the ESN group chat asking to meet up with someone for a drink or coffee. "

Thomas, Salamanca 2025



Some tips for the early days

- Be sure to take part in the host university's Orientation Programme.
- Sign up for a Buddy Programme if this is offered.
- Take part in ESN (Erasmus Student Network) events.
- Avail of a language course if possible.
(if there's a fee, keep receipts and evidence of participation!)
- Expect a little chaos for the first few weeks. 😊
- Be prepared for Culture Shock.
- Be prepared for shops being closed on Sundays.
- Don't get caught on public transport without a valid ticket!



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Making connections ...

“Don’t be shy in your classes, say hi! They’re probably feeling as awkward as you are. The way I saw it, was that it was like first year of college all over again. “Hi, how are you? What course are you doing? Where are you from?” If you’re brave enough to move country, you’re brave enough to make a new friend. Have fun!”

Tasha, Bologna



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Thoughts on homesickness

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“I did struggle a lot with homesickness for the first two months or so even though I have never experienced homesickness before in my life and this was only heightened by being reprimanded at my host university for not being able to deliver a presentation. I am glad though that I didn’t go home at all until I was over this homesickness because I would have found it a lot harder to return after being home. This is something I would definitely recommend to anyone going to study abroad next year. Use your breaks from college to explore the country – don’t spend the same money to fly home. I found these travel breaks helped me to get over the homesickness as I finally felt I was enjoying myself.”

Student in France, 2025

“My heart really breaks at the thought of leaving! That’s the hardest part of Erasmus... you think at the beginning it’s the moving away from home part, but you’ll learn by the end that you were wrong.”
Paula, Utrecht, 2025

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Thoughts on homesickness (2024)

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“Homesickness hits hard, even if you consider yourself to be quite an extroverted and independent person like I do.”

“I definitely would do it again – I miss it a lot, and it was a great experience. The only thing I wish I’d known beforehand was the culture shock really does hit you when you arrive and you miss home immediately, but try not to let it overwhelm you! It definitely overwhelmed me and I had second thoughts about going through with the semester, but I’m so glad I gave it time and stuck it out because it was definitely worth it.”

“Of course, at times you will miss home; it would be crazy if you didn’t ... but just know that that is so normal and that home and your hometown is still there and will always be there but this experience won’t.”

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Visiting home during the semester?

Consider:

- Difficulty settling back in afterwards, interrupting the momentum
- Lost time = lost opportunities to travel, explore or take part in local activities
- Unnecessary air travel and your carbon footprint



LANGUAGE

COMMUNICATION
STYLES

CULTURE SHOCK

CUSTOMS

CLIMATE

MEALTIMES

FOOD

POLITICS / RELIGION



Features of Culture Shock

- Disorientation due to new environment
- Psychological or physical effects:
alienation / boredom / withdrawal / isolation / irritation /
homesickness / aches
- Frustration, uncertainty, distress
- Adjustment
- Adaptation
- Reverse Culture Shock



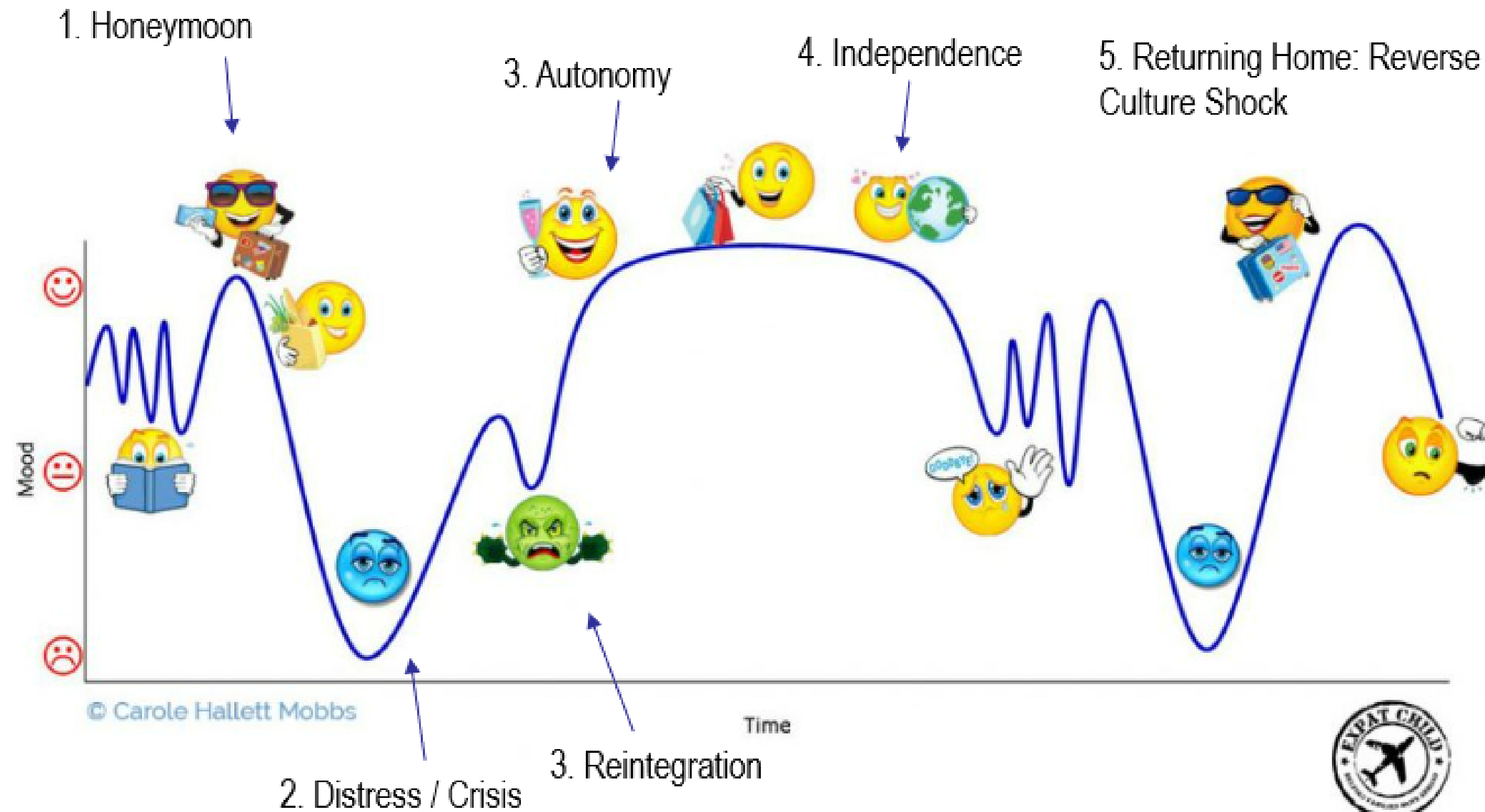


TYPICAL DIFFERENCES

- Climate
- Language
- Communication styles
- Food and mealtimes
- Mindset (and politics, religion ...)
- Customs and rituals
- Behaviour and societal norms
- Formality
- Approaches to the law



STAGES OF CULTURE SHOCK



Coping with Culture Shock

- Be aware that this is normal and that adjustment takes time.
- Be **patient** with yourself.
- See it as a **learning experience**.
- Good **self-care** and routine
- Reminders of home; comforting, familiar objects
- Find ways to **integrate**: be creative in this!
- Significant problem? Ask for help.
- Resources for all students incl. external supports & self-help:

<https://sway.office.com/N7VYxq6kaGfcE9vA?ref=Link>

Tips

- Do your research before you go so you have an idea of what to expect.
- Remember that you are rarely alone in what you are experiencing.
- Try to approach things with openness, curiosity and humour.
- Respect for host country and its culture





General Survival Tips and getting the most out of the experience



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Do PREPARE, but don't STRESS

“Something I wish I knew beforehand was not to stress so much! Everything worked out in the end”

Faye, Malta 2025

“The only thing that I wish I had known beforehand is to try and relax a bit more about the whole process. I got myself very worked up over the summer about all the small details, but they all work themselves out in the end.” Tara, Poitiers, 2024

Anything you wish you'd known beforehand? “Only that everything was going to turn out alright, and all the worry and fear I felt at the start was only a natural response to being in a new environment.” Paula, Utrecht 2025



Getting the most out of it

- Make the most of the time abroad, because it will go by very quickly!
- **Assimilate** with native and other international students
e.g. when arranging accommodation, or pursuing interests/hobbies.
- **Travel** when you can, but get to know your host city too.
- **Be open-minded!**
- Be aware of and **respect cultural differences ...**
- **Embrace the differences!**
- Journal, blog, photographic record?
- Be diligent and consistent about your **academic work.**





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Assimilate, and be open ...

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“My advice would be to make friends from different countries and to get out of your comfort zone. If you meet only people from England or Ireland, you will end up speaking in English and miss the opportunity to practice your Spanish.

I love native people in Murcia. I am used to their attitude in shops or cafeterias as people in Spain (and Italy) do not have small talks. Everything is always straightforward so if they do not chat to you as much as it would happen in Galway, I would not take it personal.”

Ines Murcia 1014



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Getting the most out of it

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“My best advice is to get involved in every way you possibly can. I believe that is what helped me to have one of the most amazing and memorable semesters of my college life so far. Try local foods, mix with local students if you can, travel within the country, attend Erasmus organised events. Do it all and most importantly enjoy every moment!”

Kamile, Liège, 2025

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A unique opportunity for language students

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“The shopkeepers and restaurant waitresses ... don’t speak much English there and they don’t appreciate English, so using Spanish, even if it’s bad, really puts you in their good books and they’ll help you understand and learn when you try. Sometimes when they tried to practice English on me, I would reject and use Spanish instead because you’re not there to use your own language, and they’re more than willing to help you with theirs.” *Caitlin, Valladolid, 2024*

“*Would you change anything?* Maybe to try and make more native friends as I was so scared to speak as I have no confidence and I was so scared they wouldn't understand me. However, Erasmus taught me to be confident and to trust yourself in your language.”

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Academics: one student's experience

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“The academic set-up was quite different from what I am used to in Galway. No lectures are recorded and the slides that the professors use during the lectures are not available for students online. This means that you **MUST** attend your classes otherwise it will be hard for you to get notes that you have missed, especially as an ERASMUS student where you may not have someone to ask notes from.”

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If you do not complete your studies abroad ...

- Erasmus students: If you do not complete 60 days at your host university, you must return any Erasmus grant money you received.
- Erasmus students: if you return home without completing agreed mobility period (but having completed the minimum of 60 days), you can be asked to return a proportion of the Erasmus grant.
- Erasmus students: You may have to repay your Erasmus grant if you fail to complete the *agreed study programme* abroad (as per learning agreement).
- All Joint Honours students: Returning home without completing “International” year *also* has implications for your subsequent studies, your final degree and your fees at University of Galway. Upon return to college the following year, you will have to enrol in 3BA1 (3-year programme) and will be liable for fees of approx. €2,140 (if EU rate) as well as forfeiting your SUSI grant, if applicable.
- (Leave of absence application deadlines: 30 Oct. [full year] and 30 Jan. [Sem. 2])



Avoiding problems

- Take precautions to prevent unpleasant experiences.
- Healthy awareness of risk – don't take chances.
- **Alcohol ...** if you drink, please drink responsibly.
- Please read the yellow Safety Advice Sheet.
- University of Galway **Code of Conduct** applies to our students while abroad for studies or traineeships.





CONDUCT

- You are an **ambassador** for your country & University.
- Remember that you are bound by the regulations and the **Code of Conduct** of both the host university and of University of Galway.
- <http://www.universityofgalway.ie/codeofconduct/>
- It is expected that you show respect for the host country, its people and its customs.





PERSONAL SAFETY

- Arriving with a large amount of luggage, be extremely vigilant at railway or bus stations!!!
- Don't look conspicuous or carry valuables / large amounts of cash. Avoid carrying your passport if it's not necessary.
- Lock your door when going out, even briefly (and even in a residence!)
- Exercise caution generally when out and about, especially at night. Look out for each other!
- Alcohol ... if you drink, please drink responsibly.
- Read the yellow Safety Advice sheet.
- **Don't take risks. Heed your gut feeling.**





YOUR SAFETY

- It is not advisable to be out alone at night.
- NEVER, EVER go off somewhere at night on your own without telling someone where you are going. This applies regardless of whether you are male or female.
- Identify and avoid districts known to be unsafe.
- After dark, avoid deserted areas, public parks* and badly-lit streets and alleyways. (*some public parks might be unsafe even in the daytime!)
- Don't walk home alone late at night: travel in groups or take a taxi.
- Avoid political rallies and demonstrations.





Ladies ... some words of caution

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“I was also made aware by many local students, particularly girls, that my host city was less on the safe side and to always be cautious. I found that it helped to always have company walking home late at night or in the dark evenings, and to also unfortunately be more wary about your choice of clothing (especially when going out). To avoid feeling unsafe/uncomfortable, I advise to avoid miniskirts, dresses, heels, etc for nightlife as they tended to attract more unwanted attention. From my observations, and from what local students advised me, the dress code for nightlife is more casual!

“Of course, you are allowed to wear whatever you please but to avoid any unsafe situations, unwanted attention, etc, I recommend blending in with the crowd and wear something more casual. As annoying as it may be to have to dress casually to prevent inappropriate behaviour from men, it is better to be safe than sorry and to be able to fully enjoy yourself. I found this more possible when I was underdressed.”

from a 20-yearold girl “who experienced a lot of nightlife while abroad”



SAFETY AND WELFARE

- Good idea to note local emergency numbers just in case ...
- Register with a doctor in the host town or city.
- If you have a medical condition, take translated copies of any documentation and ensure you will be able to get your medication.





If an INCIDENT should occur where you are ...

- Contact your family without delay to let them know you are ok.
- Follow instructions issued by the authorities.
- Avoid crowded areas if possible.
- Report any suspicious packages or persons to the police.
- Your host university or organisation should issue advice. Contact them with any concerns.



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Keep in touch!

We like to hear from you and know how you are getting on!

If **problems** arise, do not hesitate to contact either:

Mary Lyons, your CASSCS Mobility Officer

(mary.lyons@universityofgalway.ie) , *or*

your University of Galway academic coordinator, *or*

Global Galway Erasmus staff

or, if in distress,

University of Galway Counselling Service

****Contact your family on a regular basis!****

****Check your @universityofgalway.ie e-mail regularly!****






E-mail communication

Impressions matter, and courtesy is always appreciated: an e-mail is not a text message ...

Use a greeting, and use paragraphs to set out your message clearly.

Communicating with University of Galway

- Use a meaningful subject line ("Re:")
- Tell us what programme you're on and where you are
- Quote your student number
- Please don't send the same message individually to several people: send one e-mail to all, so everyone can see who has been copied. 
- Think about the title you give to attachments



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Don't expect everything to go well all of the time

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"I do also think people have too high of expectations and expect the journey to always be enjoyable and comfortable. You will experience a lot of difficult moments when you're abroad as it's not as simple as just moving there and you'll feel the same as you always did ... While in the moment it may feel like a waste of time and money, you will look back see how much that experience made you grow and how much resilience you have gained."

Thomas, Salamanca

Would you change anything? A few months ago I might have said yes. But in hindsight, every mistake I made was a learning curve I'd rather have to deal with now rather than next year. I find that I've changed vastly as a person and only in good ways.

Máirtín, Munich

"I would not change a single thing, as even through the mistakes and challenges I learned valuable lessons about myself."

Dara, Richmond

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Building resilience

“I’ve increased my resilience massively by going to a country by myself and working out the day-to-day problems that go with it. The key was not to be afraid to ask for help and use the services provided. They are literally there to help with your issues that’s their job so use it. I learned that the only way you’ll make friends is by sticking your neck out from time to time and using every opportunity possible to meet people. Take the risk and feel the pain of putting yourself out there. Getting used to handle the pain of doing things will make that pain decrease eventually and you’ll be more comfortable doing things you used to think were uncomfortable.

I also found getting into a routine during university was essential for my well-being. I also wrote little goals I wanted to achieve each day whether it was small or big and I would tick them off at the end of the night and start again. I was a lot more likely to get it done once I had it written down. I also wrote at the end of the week what I achieved like stopping the procrastinating and doing more than thinking for example. This whole concept made me so much more mentally stronger and helped me get through the tough times. Taking little steps every week is a lot more sustainable and by the time you have finished the experience you’ll be twice the person you were when you started. There is a general stereotype that Erasmus is amazing, but its not all rainbow and sunshine. There are tough times, and you should accept this as an inevitable. When you get through the ups and downs it makes the experience so much more memorable and impactful on your life. This is what people really mean by it being an amazing experience.”

2024/25 student

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If mental health issues arise during your time abroad, take action

- You can e-mail counselling@universityofgalway.ie
- Assessments and counselling sessions can be offered via MS Teams or Zoom.

OR

Consider approaching the counselling service at your host university.





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Spread your wings

“Remember that you don’t have to have the exact same experience on Erasmus as everyone else, do what makes you happy. I know I felt that I missed out for not travelling as intensely as other students would have, but immersing yourself in one new city is an adventure of its own. Comparison is the thief of joy. On that note, get out of the house!”

Tasha, Bologna 2025

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Go for it!!!

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“It can be a very scary experience at the beginning and the first few months or so can be honestly very daunting and lonely, but it’s like that for all Erasmus students and everyone wants to do things together but is too scared to say, so simply put yourself out there and you will have an amazing time.”

Finn, Avignon, 2025

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Go for it!!!

blank

If I could change anything, I would go back and be less shy at the beginning. It's nervewracking for everyone, and everyone is looking to make friends.

Kíla, Urbino, 2025

I encourage you to say yes to every opportunity you get, meet as many people as you can, and really make the most of the year abroad, for me it's been lifechanging.

Chloe, Leuven

"...arrive early, find your bearings, do well academically, but also enjoy your experience over here...It will not last forever. But the memories will ...Your year will pass by in no time. Make the most of this once in a lifetime opportunity and who knows...You may return home a better student and person."

Eoin, Groningen

University
of Galway.ie



Mobility Assessment and Student Declaration

- The **Mobility Assessment** is an online form which you must complete no less than 2 weeks before travel.
- It requires you to consider topics like travel, risks, health issues, safety, etc
- It contains, at the end, 2 questions relating to the **Student Declaration**.
- The **Student Declaration** is about **your responsibilities** regarding academic performance, good conduct, your health, insurance, safety, risks, etc
- I will send you the Declaration by e-mail: please read it carefully, as you will be asked to indicate your agreement to it in the Mobility Assessment.





Thanks for your attention!

Any Questions?

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