

# study semester abroad

for master students of  
TU/e Department of the Built Environment



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academic year 2021 – 2022*

*Dear student,*

*The information in this handout is in addition to the [departmental](#) and [institutional](#) information on international experiences in the online TU/e education guide. If additional information is needed, you can send an e-mail to [exchange.be@tue.nl](mailto:exchange.be@tue.nl) schedule [an online appointment](#) with me in MS Teams. On Mondays, you can come to the VRT 2.12 info desk without a prior appointment between 12.00 and 14.00h. and ask for me there.*

*Henny Houben  
Student exchange coordinator / Erasmus coordinator  
Education and Student Affairs (ESA) – Team Built Environment*

**----- also check the last page for a clear step-by-step plan -----**

# Introduction

Independent research shows that the personal and international skills that students acquire during an international experience, strengthen their position on the job market. We are living in a globalized world, and in order to succeed professionally, graduates need to be able to interact effectively across borders and cultures. For this reason TU/e strongly encourages students to gain international experience during their higher education study.

At TU/e department of the Built Environment, graduate school students can gain this international experience by either spending a study semester at one of our exchange partners, or by doing a 15 EC research internship abroad. If your MSc thesis supervisor approves, it is also possible to go abroad as part of your graduation program.

In this handout the details concerning study semesters abroad are explained. If you are interested in a research internship or graduation project abroad, you are advised to download the handout *internships abroad* from the [ABP and CME study guide pages on international experience](#).

## Orientation and partner choice



### Exchange partners

From the [ABP and CME study guide pages on international experience](#) you can download the departmental *exchange partner survey*. At most European partners, the number of available exchange spots is limited to 1 or 2 per academic year. Outside of Europe the number of available semester spots is variable, and subject to yearly negotiations. Some semester places are more popular than others. If necessary, the available places will be assigned by lot.

### Course offer and exams

Our *exchange partner survey* also contains information on the master programs that are open to our students. In case of uncertainties you can best contact the partner's contact person for incoming exchange students that is mentioned in the survey.

You are advised to carefully study the academic calendar of the partners of your choice. You can find this calendar on the respective partner's webpage. Sometimes the academic year abroad starts with the autumn/winter semester (= our semester B). It also often happens that foreign semesters do not coincide with the TU/e semesters. This could have an impact on your exams - it could for instance mean that the start date of your semester abroad collides with the date of a TU/e exam or re-sit that you still need to take prior to your exchange. *In view of this it is important to know that our examination committee does not allow students to take any TU/e exams abroad.* Only in very exceptional cases students can be allowed to take at max. 1 TU/e re-sit abroad, but the conditions for this are very strict, and in practice it is quite difficult to succeed in actually arranging this. For more details see our department's [regulations of the examination committee](#).

## Mobility Online (MO)

Mobility Online (MO) is an online tool to guide our students through the internal TU/e exchange application process, including the mobility scholarship application. The tool should be used by **all** TU/e students going out for a study semester or internship abroad, and can be accessed through the [TU/e webpage on Mobility Online](#). From this MO webpage you can also download the [MO user manual – outgoing courses](#).

**Before registering in MO you should however carefully read the following additional instructions/remarks:**

All our exchange agreements are exclusively for the exchange of MSc level students. If you indicate in MO that you are still a BSc student, the program will not show any exchange options.

Do **not** use the MO option “*search for exchange possibilities*” as this option will list *all* the exchange agreements concluded by TU/e. This information is not relevant, as you can only make use of the exchange agreements that have been concluded by the Department of the Built Environment.

Some exchange partners are more in demand than others. To increase your chances, we advise you to indicate at least three (3) destination preferences in MO. Should the number of interested students for a certain partner exceed the number of available semester spots, then these spots will be assigned by lot.

Before selecting your preferred partners in Mobility Online, you should have consulted the information on these partners in the departmental *exchange partner survey*. **The fact that MO allows you to choose a certain exchange partner does not automatically mean that all its MSc study programs are open to our students, or that the available programs will suit your specific field of study!**

Make sure to indicate your destination preferences in MO before the internal TU/e **deadlines:**

### **March 1\***

- For study exchanges in the autumn/winter semester (= our semester A).
- For study exchanges in our semester B, with partners with an *uneven* yearly number of available semester spots\*\*

*MO registration opens on November 1 of the preceding year.*

### **September 1**

- For study exchanges in the spring semester (= our semester B).

*MO registration opens on May 1.*

### **\*Exception:**

*Exchanges with RMIT, Melbourne, Australia*

*Students that would like to go out to RMIT, should send an e-mail to [exchange.be@tue.nl](mailto:exchange.be@tue.nl)*

*at least 3 weeks before the above mentioned internal deadlines. In view of the early RMIT nomination deadline, the allocations for RMIT will already take place on February 15 (autumn/winter exchanges) and September 15 (spring/summer exchanges).*

**\*\*Partners with an uneven number of available semester spots (e.g. 1 or 3 spots yearly)**

All yearly number of available semester spots of these partners will be allocated once a year (in the first week of March). Students that are interested in one of the available spots in semester B, should send an e-mail indicating their preferences to [exchange.be@tue.nl](mailto:exchange.be@tue.nl) before the deadline of March 1, even though the registration in Mobility Online for their semester is not yet open.

**Although it is technically still possible to indicate your preferences in MO after the above mentioned deadlines, late applications will not be taken into account by the international office.**

In the week following the internal deadline we will let you know through Mobility Online which partner institution abroad you have been allocated to.

Should you decide to refrain from your exchange after the above mentioned deadline, this would mean that your semester spot will be lost for other students. In this case you may be asked to give account to our departmental examination committee.

## Free movers

If you would like to do a study semester at a non-partner institution, it is sometimes possible to apply as a so called “free mover”. You have to bear in mind though that free movers will be charged tuition fee at both the home and host institution, and that in all likelihood it will only be possible to get accepted as a free mover by a non-European University. Within Europe all student exchange is arranged in bilateral Erasmus agreements, and universities are usually only willing to accept European students that apply with the Erasmus status. To get the required prior permission from the departmental examination committee, you need to file a well-motivated request with the [examination committee’s secretary](#) well in advance. As soon as the committee has approved your application, you should register in Mobility Online, and tick the box “I will arrange a place at an institution abroad myself”.

## Composing your exchange study program

### Course level and course restrictions

Most exchange partners impose a minimum number of credits on students applying for a study semester. This number usually varies between 20 – 30 EC (or equivalent). Students are of course obliged to adhere to the relevant requirements of the partner.

The available exchange spots are only open to our *master* students ABP or CME, and the courses and projects you will take abroad therefore need to be **master** level courses and projects.

Some exchange agreements have been concluded at institutional level, others at departmental level. Some agreements leave students the opportunity to compose a study program consisting of courses from different faculties, others have very strictly narrowed down the course offer to our

students. You should therefore carefully study the information on the available study programs in our exchange partner survey. For additional information you can best contact the international office of the respective partner.



## Using courses and projects for your master study program ABP or CME



*Once you know which partner institution you have been assigned to, you can start preparing your exchange study program. This study program needs to be approved by your mentor, and thereafter by our departmental examination committee through the form [approval form exchange study program](#). This form can be downloaded from our departmental education guide pages on international experience.*

The course components you are going to take abroad can be incorporated in your ABP or CME study program by (a **combination** of) the following options:

- A. having an international course or project count as *free elective* or *specialization elective*. These courses will be registered in your TU/e study program with the course name and course code of the host university, whereby the number of the local credits obtained will be converted to European Credits (EC).  
Remark: for AUDE register track students the *specialization elective* option is restricted as register track students are only allowed to replace at max. 1 specialization elective by a course taken abroad.



Note the remark in our [regulations of the examination committee](#) regarding language courses: "...language courses (not native language) are permitted at C-level; no more than 1 language course per student..."

- B. taking a project abroad and have it registered in your TU/e study program for **10 EC** with the course code and course name of one of our own master projects (so with the TU/e course code and TU/e course name). After your return at TU/e this project always needs to be re-graded by one of our own responsible master project lecturers. The project will be processed in Osiris with the grade assigned by the TU/e lecturer. If you would like to use this option, you need the prior permission of one of our own master project lecturers.

### Grading and cum laude graduations

All courses that you pass abroad will be graded alphanumerically (grade DN = done). If you qualify for cum laude you can ask the departmental examination committee to change this alphanumerical grade into a numerical grade. The grade you have obtained abroad will then be converted to the corresponding numerical Dutch grade.

## Additional requirements



### Language requirements

You should take into account that not all education at our exchange partners is conducted in English. Master study programs in Italy for instance are often still fully or partially Italian-language, and in Spain you will need some knowledge of the Spanish or Catalan (Barcelona

area) language. It may therefore be possible that a partner makes demands on your skills in the respective language. For more information you can best consult our *exchange partner survey*, and the partner's webpages for incoming exchange students.

#### **IMPORTANT:**

*Some partners have requirements for Spanish or Italian language proficiency even if you want to study there exclusively in English. So please bear this in mind when selecting your possible exchange partners. Our partner's requirements are quite strict and if official Spanish or Italian language certification is required, our partners will not allow any exceptions to their minimum requirements!*

Some partners might require an official English language test result. If an official IELTS or TOEFL test is required, you can sign up for it through the [IELTS](#) or [TOEFL](#) webpages. The costs for taking an official language test come on your own account. Make sure to take this test at an early stage, so that sufficient time remains to retake it if necessary. To determine your exact English language level, you can register in Osiris for an online diagnostic English language test – course code **SFC600**.

To brush up your language skills, you can sign up for a language course at (e.g.):

- English → [TU/e's Center for Languages and Intercultural Communication \(CLIC\)](#).
- Spanish → [TU/e Innovation Academy](#) or [Fuentes](#) in Eindhoven.
- German → [Goethe-Institut](#).
- Several languages → [Babel](#)

## Other requirements

To meet TU/e's requirement for an international experience, you need to generate a ***minimum*** of 15 EC abroad, and you need to reside in the host country for at least 3 consecutive months. Students that do not meet this requirement are not eligible for a TU/e mobility scholarship.

It is not possible to apply for a study exchange of one *quartile* only, as all our agreements are based on the exchange of students for a full *semester*.

Also note that most *partners* recommend or require students to generate a *minimum* number of credits during their exchange (mostly varying between 20 and 30 EC). If this concerns an actual requirement instead of just an advice, you are of course bound to this. It might furthermore be possible that a partner requires a portfolio, or a minimum obtained average study result (this especially goes for our partners in Australia and New Zealand). For more information you can consult our *exchange partner survey*, and the information on the respective partner's website.



## Accommodation

Most partner institutions offer housing to incoming exchange students, although the number of available accommodations is sometimes limited. If housing cannot be arranged, the host institution can provide you with information on how to find suitable student accommodation on the private market. There are also platforms like [Housing Anywhere](#) that may be of help to you in this regard.

## Financial issues



### Tuition fee waiver

During your international experience you need to remain enrolled at TU/e as a fulltime student. In case of agreement based student exchanges, tuition fee is only due at the sending institution (TU/e). At the host institution a tuition fee waiver applies.

### Reimbursement of travel costs

Students that receive Dutch study finance through DUO, remain entitled to this finance when they are doing an internship abroad as part of their Dutch study program. During your exchange you can put your Dutch “OV-kaart” on hold and apply at DUO for a partial reimbursement of your local travel costs ([OV-vergoeding buitenland](#): € 120,96 per month in 2023). The application form can be downloaded from the DUO site and should be signed on behalf of TU/e by the departmental international office.

## TU/e mobility scholarships

Students can apply in Mobility Online for one of the TU/e mobility scholarships listed below, on the condition that they will stay abroad for *at least* 3 consecutive months, and that they will earn *at least* 15 EC. **If, and which type of mobility scholarship you are entitled to, will automatically be destined by our Mobility Online tool during the application workflow.**



### Erasmus scholarships for study

Erasmus scholarships for study are possible for study periods between 3 and 12 months in an Erasmus country (EU-countries plus Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland, Turkey and Macedonia) on condition of the existence of a bilateral

Erasmus agreement between the host institution and our department. The scholarship amount (lump sum of approx EUR 1000,-) depends on the living standard in the country of destination. For more information students can download the Erasmus+ App from the Google Play store (for Android) or from the Apple Store (for iOS).

### Erasmus OLS test

If you are entitled to an Erasmus scholarship for study, and the language of education at your Erasmus host university is either German, English, Spanish, French or Italian, you will be asked to take an [Erasmus OLS test](#) at the start and end of your exchange semester. This Online Linguistic Support Test is compulsory, but the result will not have any consequences for your personal situation. It will mainly be used to monitor the linguistic development of mobility students in general. The program also offers the opportunity to improve your proficiency in the respective language for free.



Erasmus non-scholarship students

If our department has signed an Erasmus agreement with your host institution, and you are not eligible for an Erasmus scholarship (e.g. since you have already received a TU/e scholarship for an earlier mobility) you may get the status of *Erasmus non-scholarship student*. Although you will not receive any mobility scholarship in this case, the Erasmus status ensures that you are exempt from tuition fees at the receiving institution.



### **Fund International Experience (FIE) and Holland Scholarship (HS)**

The FIE scholarship amount is a lump sum between EUR 300 and EUR 500 (in 2023/2024). The exact amount depends on the nature of your exchange, and on your exchange destination. Students with the Dutch nationality that are entitled to a FIE scholarship, will automatically enter the selection for the Holland Scholarship grant (lump sum of EUR 1.250,-- in 2023/2024). This HS scholarship will be awarded based on a student's study progress and GPA (Grade Point Average = *gewogen studiegemiddelde*). Students that win a Holland Scholarship will automatically lose their right on the FIE scholarship.

### **Other financing possibilities**

For general information on the financial part of your international experience you can consult the [respective wilweg webpages](#).

#### **Beursopener**

The [Beursopener search engine](#) provides information on a wide range of grants and scholarships you can apply for instead of, or in addition to, your TU/e mobility scholarship.

#### **Cultureel Verdragbeurzen**

A number of countries offer study and research grants for Dutch students and graduates. Many of these scholarships are part of a Cultural Treaty with the Netherlands. Cultural Treaties promote cooperation between countries in cultural, educational and scientific fields. There are [Cultureel Verdragbeurzen](#) for study, research and summer courses. A country may decide for itself which students it wants to attract. The conditions, grant amounts and possibilities therefore vary greatly per country.

#### **Duitslanddesk**

An ample amount of grants is available for students that have been accepted for an exchange or internship by a German university or company. For more information you can consult the webpages of the [Duitslanddesk](#). It may be possible to receive one of their grants *in addition* to one of the Erasmus mobility grants.

#### **Student assistantship Taalunie**

Taalunie offers assistantships to outgoing Erasmus students that have Dutch as their mother tongue. You can check out the actual vacancies on their website "[student-assistenten Nederlands in de wereld](#)".

#### **Working alongside your study abroad**

It is important to orientate yourself well with respect to the conditions in your host country, and with respect to tax payment issues. Before you leave you can best ask the [embassy of](#)

[your host country](#) for advice.

### **Subletting your accommodation**

Maybe it is possible to sublet your room. Our institutional accommodation officer, [Ms. Johanna Mavromichalis](#) might bring you into contact with inbound mobility students looking for accommodation in Eindhoven for the same semester.

## **Insurance**

### **Travel insurance**

TU/e has arranged [collective travel insurance](#) for all students going abroad for their study. Once registered in Mobility online, you will automatically be registered by TU/e for this collective insurance for the duration of your internship abroad.

### **Health insurance**

In general Dutch health insurances already include some coverage for medical costs abroad. If this coverage appears to be insufficient, the remainder can be claimed from TU/e's collective travel insurance. In some countries it is compulsory to take out specific student health insurance, even if your health insurance is already offering the required coverage. In this case this compulsory health insurance is needed to be able to apply for a student visa for that country. This goes for e.g. Australia and South Africa. If this indeed applies to your exchange, you will receive further instructions directly from the respective host institution.

### **Liability insurance**

TU/e's collective travel insurance only covers liability insurance for damages on the study or internship spot. This means that you are responsible for arranging proper liability insurance abroad yourself (e.g. through [AON Student Insurance](#)).

### **Cancellation insurance**

Note that TU/e's collective travel insurance does not include any cancellation insurance. Before taking out cancellation insurance, you can best read the points of attention that are summarized on the [Consumentenbond](#) pages.



### **International students**

International students that have taken out AON student insurance should check if their insurance policy also covers health and liability insurance during their internship activities (this also goes for traineeships performed in the Netherlands). If not, they should take out additional insurance.

For more information on insurances during your internship, you may contact Ms. Petri van de Vorst from our institutional international office (e-mail: [p.g.j.v.d.vorst@tue.nl](mailto:p.g.j.v.d.vorst@tue.nl)).

## Visa



If you need a visa, this visa is often either fully arranged by the host institution, or the host institution will assist with the visa application. If the host university does not offer any support in this respect, you can arrange your visa through the respective foreign embassy in The Netherlands. Bear

in mind that visa procedures might take a couple of months, so you can best apply for it well in advance.

Unless this advice has explicitly been given by the embassy, we advise you not to go abroad on a *tourist* visa. If time allows it, you can best wait with buying an airplane ticket until you have received word from the host institution about your acceptance, and until your visa has come through.

## EuroTeQ Engineering University



TU/e is partner in the EuroTeQ University, which is funded under the European Commission's Erasmus+ scheme. EuroTeQ University offers selected **virtual** courses organized by its partners DTU (Denmark), TU München (Germany), L'X (France), CTU (Czech Republic), TalTech (Estonia) and TU/e. The course offer in their [online course catalogue](#) is currently still limited but will be further expanded.

Enrollment is free of charge. If you would like to incorporate a EuroTeQ course in your MSc study program you can ask for our examination committee's approval by including this course in your Personal Study Plan (PSP).

## Useful information

### Points of attention:

- For more information on specific exchange destinations, you can consult our students [travel reports](#) are published in TU/e's online education guide.
- Consult [GGD](#) for information on vaccinations and health advice in the country of destination.
- **IMPORTANT:** Consult the [travel advice webpage](#) from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning possible Covid-19 regulations and other safety issues in the country of destination and download the BZ reisapp on your cellphone. When you subscribe to your destination country, you will automatically get a notification from the app when the situation in your destination country changes.

- Take care of arranging your banking business – if necessary, authorize your parents/partner.
- You can buy an international driving license (needed outside the EU) at [ANWB](https://www.anwb.nl/).
- An [ISIC card](https://www.isiccard.com/) is an official student identification card, and is supported by UNESCO, the European Union and many ministries of education worldwide. It is the only international proof of being a fulltime student.

### Interesting and informative websites:

<https://www.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/>

[www.wilweg.nl](http://www.wilweg.nl)

<http://about.couchsurfing.com/how-it-works/>

<http://www.craigslist.org/about/sites>

## Step-by-step plan



*We understand that you might feel somewhat uncomfortable with the prospect of all the administrative processes involved with your study semester abroad. It is also quite comprehensible that you sometimes find it difficult to see a common thread in what needs to be arranged.*

*The step-by-step plan below will hopefully give you more guidance in this respect. Should you still run into something, you may always ask the*

*international office for advice. Judging by the stories of students that preceded you, their experience abroad was well worth the effort. 😊*

### Before the exchange

1. Orientate yourself towards the possibilities offered by our official exchange partners, and discuss your study abroad plans with the **mentor** that has been appointed to you. He/she can advise you how you can best fit a study semester abroad in your personal TU/e study program.
2. **Register yourself in Mobility Online** before the respective deadline, and indicate the three partners of your 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice.  
Approx. one week after the internal deadline you will be notified through Mobility Online

which partner has been allotted to you. These deadlines are March 1 (for autumn semester exchanges, and September 1 for spring semester exchanges).

**3. Get approval for your exchange study program.**

Once you know where you are heading to, you can ask our departmental examination committee to approve the courses/projects you would like to take abroad. To do so, you need to complete and sign the form [approval exchange study program](#) and have it approved by your mentor and the departmental international office before sending it through to our study advisor for the master, [Ms. Josée Pulles](#). Josée is mandated to approve your exchange study program on behalf of the examination committee. Do not forget to also include your changed Personal Study Plan (PSP) and the required documents that are mentioned in the approval form. Josée will notify you once your exchange study program has been approved and will archive the approved form and PSP in your student file in Osiris.

**4. Apply at the partner.**

Once the nomination procedure at the partner officially opens, the BE departmental international office will officially nominate you at the respective partner as our candidate for this exchange, of which you will be notified through Mobility Online. Once the respective partner now knows your name and e-mail address, he will probably contact you directly with details on their (online) application procedure. If not, you can best consult the partner's webpage for incoming exchange students for more details on the procedure.

**5. Proceed with the TU/e application process in Mobility Online.** Part of this process is the application of a TU/e mobility scholarship.

**6.** You can best wait (if possible) with booking your (flight) ticket till your intended host institution has confirmed your acceptance as an exchange student. You should also not forget to arrange housing, visa, insurances etc. (possibly in consultation with the host institution). If applicable apply at DUO for an "OV-vergoeding buitenland" and purchase an international driver's license from ANWB if you are travelling to a non-European country.

## **During the exchange**

Should you like to (or need to) change the content of your study program abroad you will need to resubmit the form "approval exchange study program" to obtain our departmental examination committee's approval. This means that you need to redo the procedure that is described under point 4. listed here above. In this case it is also necessary to have the "during the mobility" form of your learning agreement signed by all parties involved (this is one of the mobility scholarship requirements).



## After the exchange

### 1. Confirmation of stay

At the end of your stay abroad, you should ask the host institution's international office to complete, sign and stamp the form "statement of the host institution". In this document the partner needs to confirm your period of stay/enrollment at the host institution. You should download this form from Mobility Online and upload it again once it has been signed and stamped.

### 2. Transcript of records (= grading list)

A couple of weeks after the official end of your exchange semester, the host institution will provide you with a Transcript of Records (TOR) that gives a survey of the grades and credits you have obtained during your exchange. If you do not receive this transcript within 5 weeks counting from the last day of the partner's examination week, you should contact the host institution's international office. Once you have received the transcript, you should:

A) Upload it in your Mobility Online workflow when you are asked to upload *the after the mobility part* of your learning agreement (At TU/e we do not use the *after the mobility part* of the learning agreement).

B) Send it to me as PDF per e-mail ( [exchange.be@tue.nl](mailto:exchange.be@tue.nl) ). The information on the transcript should be verifiable, and will be compared with the info in the form "approval exchange study program" in your student file in Osiris. If the courses match, the results will be processed in Osiris as indicated in the approved form "approval exchange study program".

### 3. Close your TU/e mobility application

To officially close your exchange, and to secure your right to the mobility scholarship you need to finish the last steps in the Mobility Online tool.