

Guidelines for Assessment and Selection: Application for contractual studies abroad and/or international placements at University West

Decision taken by	University Director
Document contact	Maria MacDonald
Version	3
In effect from	22 January 2024
Replaces	U 2019/321

1 Background

The opportunity for students to undertake studies abroad at one of University West's partner institutions is an important activity that enhances the intercultural competence of students and prepares them for an increasingly globalized workforce. This is therefore a key factor in the university's internationalization efforts, and we strive to create favourable conditions for such mobility.

To ensure that as many students as possible can participate in these activities, and that the conditions for the allocation of a place on the exchange programme are transparent and legally secure, the following guidelines have been established.

1.1 Application requirements

An overseas exchange period should be a complement to the student's study programme at University West and be an integrated part of the programme. Therefore, the following conditions for the validity of the application must be met.

1.1.1 The application must be complete and submitted by the deadline

Applicants must submit the application and required documentation via the Mobility-Online system by the application deadline. Students are given the opportunity to supplement documentation if it is damaged or incorrect.

1.1.2 The period of study abroad should align with the student's study path at University West

The period of study abroad should fall within the framework of an optional term or period of study with similar courses according to the programme syllabus or be scheduled in a way that does not prevent the student from graduating on time.

1.2 Eligibility requirements

The following conditions must be met for an applicant to be considered eligible for a place on the exchange programme:

- Normally, the applicant should be registered for full-time studies at University West.
- Students wishing to study abroad after the 7th term can apply for Erasmus+ placement within the EU/EEA or for studies at partner universities outside the EU/EEA. It is not possible to apply for Erasmus+ studies other than as part of the way the UW programme is set up (to be credited toward their degree).
- At the time of application, the student must have completed courses equivalent to at least 80% of the total number of HE credits awarded on the programme up to and including the previous semester. For example, the student who has completed three terms of study at the time of application, must have completed 80% of the 90 HE credits.

1.3 Selection

Applicants deemed eligible will be allocated study places based on priorities in the application process and the number of available places on the exchange agreement. Since the number of places is limited, there may be competition, requiring a selection, and further ranking may be necessary after this initial selection.

1.3.1 In case the of competition for advertised study places, the following selection criteria apply:

- Preference for students from the UW department with which the partnership agreement has been signed. This especially applies in cases where the department has identified so-called 'preferred partners'.
- Places on the exchange programme where the educational level (bachelor, masters, doctoral) is defined in the agreement cannot be applied for by students studying at a level other than the one specified.
- Academic performance (at University West) in terms of the number of HE credits completed at University West in relation to the period of study.

- Students applying for exchange studies in the term after having completed the programme (before applying for a degree) are eligible only for places not given to students who are still studying on the programme. As stated above, this does not apply to Erasmus+ studies within the EU/EEA but only to study places meant for exchange students coming from outside the EU and Erasmus+ placements.

1.3.2 Ranking is implemented as follows:

First, ranking is based on the number of HE credits completed at University West as a percentage of the student's period of study (including credits from studies at other schools, if the credits have been transferred to the UW study programme).

In cases where students cannot be differentiated based on these criteria, each department is free to assess students based on either of the following two ranking methods:

- Motivational letters (in English). Assessment is carried out by all department coordinators based on:
 - Linguistic abilities
 - How the student justifies their choice of institution and country
 - Thoughts about their studies and connections to study choices
 - What the student expects to gain from the exchange in terms of personal development
 - Connections to expected future employment opportunities
- Interviews with a focus on motivation and argumentation. Interviews may also be considered when being applied to the institutions' 'preferred partners'. The interview panel should consist of representatives from the relevant institution – excluding institution coordinators.

1.4 Reservations

If a student is allocated a study place in one advertising/admission round, they cannot apply for a study place in another advertising/admission round during the same academic year.

A paying student wishing to go on exchange must pay tuition fees to University West for the term granted for exchange studies.

For students who have applied for and been awarded a study place within the International Study Exchange Programme (ISEP), full payment of fees must be

made just before departure, as agreed upon with the programme coordinator at the International Office.

In the application round and before admission, University West relies on students' ability to obtain information and instructions communicated via email. In cases where applicants repeatedly fail to respond, the application will be closed after a 3-day warning, and the study place will be withdrawn.

1.5 Decisions and Appeals

University West has the right to decide upon the allocation of study places on exchange programmes at partner institutions where a mobility agreement has been established. This implies that the university also has the right to deny a student a study place on an exchange programme. The university must justify its decision, making clear on what grounds it was made. The fundamental principle is that studies abroad / international placements for students are not a right but an opportunity. The university's decision regarding the allocation of study places cannot be appealed.

Decisions on allocation of places on programmes are made by the institution where the student is enrolled and in consultation with the International Office.