

# ERASMUS

## European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students

### Higher Education Student Finance in England 2014/15 Academic Year

November 2013

#### HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT SUPPORT IN ENGLAND 2014/15: ERASMUS

Attached is guidance on HE Student Support for students who are participating in the ERASMUS scheme.

This guidance is designed to assist with the interpretation of the Student Support Regulations as they stand at the time of publication. It does not cover every aspect of student support nor does it constitute legal advice. Whilst every endeavour has been made to ensure the information contained is correct at the time of publication, no liability is accepted with regard to the contents and the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 as amended by the Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2012, The Education (Student Support and European University Institute) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, The Universal Credit (Consequential, Supplementary, Incidental and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2013, The National Treatment Agency (Abolition) and the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (Consequential, Transitional and Savings Provisions) Order 2013, remain the legal basis of the student support arrangements for the academic year 2014/15. In the event of anomalies between this guidance and the Regulations, the Regulations prevail. Please note the Regulations may be subject to further amendment.

#### ENQUIRIES

If you have any queries on this guidance, please contact:

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## **Introduction**

1. This guidance looks at the particular eligibility criteria for students who are undertaking a period abroad as part of their course under the ERASMUS scheme, either on a study placement, a work placement, or a combined work and study placement. References to regulations relate to the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 as amended by The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2012, The Education (Student Support and European University Institute) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, The Universal Credit (Consequential, Supplementary, Incidental and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2013, The National Treatment Agency (Abolition) and the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (Consequential, Transitional and Savings Provisions) Order 2013. Please note ERASMUS study and/or work placements cannot be undertaken if the student attends a private HEI in the UK.
2. The main eligibility criteria can be found in the guidance on 'Assessing Eligibility'.
3. Administration guidance relating to ERASMUS study can be found in the Administration section of this chapter.

## **Policy**

### **What is ERASMUS?**

4. ERASMUS (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) is the higher education strand of the Lifelong Learning European Community programme funded by the European Commission. The main aim of Erasmus is to promote mobility of university students, teachers and academic staff throughout Europe through a system of partnerships between universities and colleges in the 33 countries currently participating in the scheme (certain non-EU countries are also included in the ERASMUS programme). A full list of the countries taking part in the ERASMUS scheme can be found at Annex 1. As of 1 June 2011 Switzerland became part of the ERASMUS scheme.
5. ERASMUS placements abroad last from a minimum of three months to a full academic year ('a full year' is at least 24 weeks excluding weekends and the usual holidays). Students are not eligible for ERASMUS study placements in the first year of study (but these placements can take place in any year of study after that), however they are eligible for ERASMUS work placements in the first year of study. Students may be allowed more than one ERASMUS grant during a course.

### **Placements under the ERASMUS scheme**

6. ERASMUS allows students to participate in study placements, work placements, or combined work and study placements abroad. The programme works on the basis that the ERASMUS student must be enrolled at a higher education institution which holds an ERASMUS University Charter. ERASMUS work placements have to be recognised by the HEI and will contribute to the final qualification. This is because the training agreement between a student, an HEI and a host enterprise abroad sets out the specific programme for the student to complete. This means that the ERASMUS work placement is contained within a three or four year undergraduate course and students do not stay in higher education for

additional time like students on sandwich placements. ERASMUS work placements are not sandwich placements. It is participation in ERASMUS that is the overriding factor for determining the amount of statutory financial support received by the student, not the type of ERASMUS placement that the student undertakes.

## **Fees and fee support for ERASMUS students**

### Definition of an ERASMUS Year

7. The definition of an ERASMUS Year for 2014/15 in the 2011 Student Support Regulations (as amended) has been updated to take account of the new policy to charge English domiciled students starting their courses at English HEIs on or after 1 September 2012 (2012 cohort students) who are undertaking an ERASMUS study or work placement, up to £1,350 in fees (15% of the maximum £9,000 fee) and allow students to apply for tuition fee loans of up to £1,350 to meet the costs of their tuition at HEIs in England and Wales. Corresponding changes will also be made to Fees Regulations for 2014/15 in respect of maximum fees for English HEIs.
8. The existing definition of an ERASMUS year and the fee waiver for full year ERASMUS will continue to apply in 2014/15 for (a) English domiciled students who started their courses at English HEIs before 1 September 2012 and (b) English domiciled students studying at HEIs in Scotland and Northern Ireland..
9. The new definition of an ERASMUS Year for 2014/15 is set out in Regulation 4 of the Education (Student Support and European University Institute)(Amendment) Regulations 2013 which amends Regulation 2(1) of the Education ( Student Support) Regulations 2011.

“Erasmus year” means an academic year of a course where a student is participating in the action scheme of the EU for the mobility of university students known as ERASMUS and the student’s course is a course referred to in regulation 5(1)(d) and—

- (a) where the course began before 1st September 2012, all the periods of study or work placement during the academic year are attended at an institution or workplace outside the United Kingdom (as the case may be);
- (b) where the course began on or after 1st September 2012 and is provided by an institution in Northern Ireland or Scotland, all the periods of study or work placement during the academic year are attended at an institution or workplace outside the United Kingdom (as the case may be); or
- (c) where the course began on or after 1st September 2012 and is provided by an institution in England or Wales—
  - (i) at least one period of study or work placement is attended at an institution or workplace outside the United Kingdom (as the case may be); and
  - (ii) either—
    - (aa) in respect of that academic year the aggregate of any one or more periods of full-time study at the institution in the United Kingdom is less than 10 weeks; or
    - (bb) in respect of that academic year and any previous academic years of the course the aggregate of any one or more periods of attendance which are not periods of full-time study at the institution in the United Kingdom (disregarding intervening vacations) exceeds 30 weeks;

### **Students undertaking ERASMUS for a full academic year who are eligible for the ERASMUS Fee Waiver.**

10. Students listed at paragraph 11 below who are undertaking a full year ERASMUS placement are not charged fees by their HEIs (tuition fee waiver) and are not eligible for tuition fee loans. .
11. The tuition fee waiver, or concession, is available in 2014/15 for:
  - English domiciled students who started their course at a UK institution before 1 September 2012 and who go abroad for a full academic year on an ERASMUS placement in 2014/15
  - English domiciled students who started their course on or after 1 September 2012 who are attending an HEI in Northern Ireland or Scotland and go abroad for a full academic year on an ERASMUS placement in 2014/15.
12. The tuition fee waiver does not apply to:
  - Students who are not eligible for tuition support because of previous study;
  - Students who are not eligible for any student support under the Student Support Regulations, for example because they do not meet the residence criteria. The fees for these students are set by HEIs themselves and it is for the institution concerned to determine what fees a student in this situation should pay.
13. The ERASMUS tuition fee waiver only applies to eligible students who spend a full academic year abroad under the ERASMUS scheme (including any periods of work experience under the scheme and regardless of the subject of study). The definition of a complete academic year for this purpose is at least 24 weeks (excluding weekends and the usual holidays). Within the rules of the ERASMUS scheme, students cannot spend a full year abroad on an ERASMUS placement if it is spread across two different academic years.

**Students undertaking ERASMUS for a full academic year who are charged tuition fees and are eligible to apply for a tuition fee loan**

14. For 2014/15, students who started a course on or after 1 September 2012 (2012 cohort students) at an HEI in England and who are undertaking a full year ERASMUS study or work placement may be charged up to £1,350 for tuition at a publicly funded HEI (or up to £900 if no access agreement is in place with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA)).
15. 2012 cohort students undertaking a course at an HEI in England and who are undertaking a full year ERASMUS study or work placement in 2014/15 can apply for a tuition fee loan of up to £1,350 to meet the costs of their tuition. Fee loan caps for 2012 cohort students are set out in Regulation 9 of the Education (Student Support and European University Institute)(Amendment) Regulations 2013 which amends Regulation 23 of the Education ( Student Support) Regulations 2011.

**Part-year ERASMUS**

**Students starting their courses before 1 September 2012**

16. For 2014/15, current system students who started their courses before 1 September 2012 at institutions in England can be charged fees of up to £3,465 or up to £1,725 where the periods of full-time study at the UK institution are in aggregate less than 10 weeks. Students can apply for a tuition fee loan of up to £3,465 / £1,725 to meet the cost of their fees.
17. Current system students who started their courses before 1 September 2012 at institutions in England and who are abroad for a whole academic year, but only part of that year is under the ERASMUS scheme, are liable for tuition fees of up to £1,725. Eligible students can apply for a tuition fee loan of up to £1,725 to meet the costs of their fees
18. Current system students who started their courses before 1 September 2012 at institutions in England who spend time on an ERASMUS placement that spans two academic years can be charged fees of up to £3,465 in the first academic year and up to £1,725 in the second academic year of their course.

#### **Students starting their courses on or after 1 September 2012**

19. The new reduced rate tuition fee loan for 2012 cohort students undertaking a full year on an ERASMUS placement for 2014/15 is also available to students on an ERASMUS work or study placement for part of the year. For 2014/15, students who commence their course on or after 1 September 2012 (2012 cohort students) at publicly funded HEIs in England can be charged up to £1,350 for their tuition or up to £900 where no access agreement is in place with OFFA. Students can apply for a tuition fee loan of up to £1,350 to meet the costs of their fees.
20. From 2014/15, students who started their courses on or after 1 September 2012 and spend time on an ERASMUS placement that spans two academic years and started their courses on or after 1 September 2012 (2012 cohort students) may be charged fees of up to £9,000 in the first academic year and up to £1,350 in the second academic year.

#### **Students studying at HEIs in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on an ERASMUS placement in 2014/15**

21. 2012 cohort students studying on a course in Wales who are undertaking an ERASMUS study or work placement in 2014/15 will be subject to the same fee charging and student support arrangements as a 2012 cohort student studying at an English HEI. The full year ERASMUS fee waiver will continue to apply to all English domiciled students studying at HEIs in Scotland and Northern Ireland in 2014/15
22. Maximum fee loans for students studying at HEIs in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland who are undertaking an ERASMUS study or placement year in 2014/15 as defined at paragraph 9 above are set out in the following tables:

<b>1. Fee loan caps for English Domiciled Students undertaking Full-Year Erasmus Study or Full-Year Erasmus Work Placements in 2014/15</b>				
<b>Public/private?</b>	<b>Course provided at institution in...</b>	<b>Fee loan cap</b>		
		Course started before 1st August 2012	Course started between 1st August - 31st August 2012	Course started on or after 1st September 2012
Publicly funded institution only	England	n/a (fee waiver)	n/a (fee waiver)	£1,350
	Wales	n/a (fee waiver)	n/a (fee waiver)	£1,350
	Northern Ireland/ Scotland	n/a (fee waiver)	n/a (fee waiver)	n/a (fee waiver)
<b>2. Fee loan caps for English Domiciled Students undertaking Part-Year Erasmus Study or Part-Year Erasmus Work Placements in 2014/15</b>				
<b>Public/private?</b>	<b>Course provided at institution in...</b>	<b>Fee loan cap</b>		
		Course started before 1st August 2012	Course started between 1st August - 31st August 2012	Course started on or after 1st September 2012
Publicly funded institution	England	£1,725	£1,725	£1,350
	Wales	£1,725	£1,350	£1,350
	Scotland	£1,725	£4,500	£4,500
	Northern Ireland	£1,835	£4,500	£4,500
Private institution	England	£1,725	£1,725	£900
	Wales	£1,725	£900	£900
	Scotland	£1,725	£3,000	£3,000
	Northern Ireland	£1,835	£3,000	£3,000

23. Please refer to the guidance in the chapters on 'Assessing Eligibility' and 'Assessing financial entitlement' for students who spend a period abroad, which is not under the ERASMUS scheme.

#### Students from elsewhere in the EU

24. EU nationals studying at an English HEI and taking part in the ERASMUS scheme will be subject to the same fee and fee support arrangements as English domiciled students.

#### Maintenance support (grants and loans)

25. There are no special provisions in the student support regulations for the assessment of living costs support (grants and loans) for students undertaking a period abroad under the ERASMUS scheme. Such students should be considered for grants and loans for living costs in the usual way depending on whether they are (i) old system students or (ii) current system students who are 2008, 2009 or 2012 cohort students and current system students who are not defined under the cohort categories. The overriding

factor for consideration is that such students participate in the ERASMUS scheme, and it is not relevant whether they undertake a period of ERASMUS mobility for the purpose of work, study, or combined work and study. Work placements under ERASMUS scheme are not sandwich placements, as explained in paragraph 6.

### **Travel grant**

26. Where ERASMUS students meet the eligibility criteria for travel grant under regulation 52, they shall be eligible for a grant equal to such reasonable expenditure which they are obliged to incur within or outside the United Kingdom for the purpose of attending, as part of their course, an overseas higher education institution or undertaking a work placement overseas or a combination of both. The travel grant is therefore available for all eligible ERASMUS students undertaking study, work or combined work and study periods overseas as part of their course. The first £303 of such expenditure is disregarded when determining the amount of travel grant due. The travel grant is also subject to an income assessment
27. SFE are responsible for assessing the eligibility for and entitlement to the travel grant. It is therefore for SFE to determine whether expenditure is reasonable. However, in determining whether expenditure is reasonable, SFE should not take into account the students' income from other sources such as ERASMUS grant, for example. The student's contribution depends on the household income which is determined in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 4 of the Regulations and is applied to grants and loans in accordance with regulation 101 for current system students who are not 2008, 2009 or 2012 cohort students, and regulations 100 for 2008, 2009 and 2012 cohort students as described below and in the 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' guidance chapter.

### **The financial assessment**

28. Paragraph 4 of Schedule 4 to the regulations provides for the calculation of students' income by reference to 'taxable income'. Any payments made to students under the ERASMUS scheme shall be disregarded when determining students' income because such payments are non-taxable.

### **Application of the household contribution**

29. For current system students who are not 2008, 2009 or 2012 cohort students, the household contribution is applied in full first to any grant for dependants, then the income assessed portion of the student loan and lastly, any travel grant (regulations 101 and 104). For current-system students who are 2008, 2009 or 2012 cohort students, the household contribution is applied in full first to any grant for dependants, then the long courses loan and lastly, any travel grant (regulations 100 and 103).
30. See the chapter on 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' for further information on the calculation of the student or household contribution and its application to the assessed student support.

### **'ERASMUS year' and previous study**

31. Full year ERASMUS study and work placement Years which are being undertaken by English domiciled students who started their courses in England and Wales on or after 1 September 2012 (2012 cohort students) will be included for the first time in the definition of 'ordinary duration' and 'standard academic year' in 2014/15. This means that **full-year ERASMUS**

**study and work placements undertaken by 2012 cohort students at institutions in England and Wales in 2014/15** will be counted as years of previous study when calculating entitlement to tuition **fee** loans'. See the chapter on 'Assessing Eligibility' for further information.

## **Administration**

32. Where a student indicates on the online or paper application for new or returning students that they have been accepted onto the ERASMUS exchange scheme the system may flag the application status as 'Pending SFE manual assessment' if the time spent on ERASMUS is **not** for the full year, otherwise that application should switch over to 'Awaiting validation' ready for assessment and approval.
33. As stated above at paragraph 5, ERASMUS **study** periods cannot take place in the student's first year of study, but ERASMUS **work** placements may.
34. Students need to have taken at least one year of prior study to be eligible for an Erasmus study period.
35. Therefore, SFE should be careful to check the validity of an indication on form PN1 (and any PR1 form completed by a first year student in error), either paper or on-line, that the student will be taking part in the ERASMUS scheme. Form PN1 is most likely to have been submitted by a prospective first year student.
36. The SFE assessor will be required to validate (Validate Evidence Screen) that appropriate evidence/information has been received from the student's HEI and is satisfactory.
37. The Assessment Summary screen will display a message for the SFE assessor to check the information shown on the screen. Generally, the rules engine will return an assessment to show that tuition fees are not payable (as these are funded through the tuition fee waiver concession if a student is on an ERASMUS placement for a full academic year, as stated in paragraph 8). The value of maintenance loan shown will depend on the student's circumstances.
38. Using information provided by the student, it is the responsibility of the SFE assessor to determine the student's entitlement, check the entitlement result returned by the rules engine, edit and amend fields where appropriate and resubmit to the rules engine.
39. Refer also to the LA Portal System User Guide Section 12 'Performing the Assessment' which explains automated, semi-automated, manual assessment and using the assessment summary screen.

## **Annex 1**

### **LIST OF COUNTRIES IN THE ERASMUS SCHEME**

All member states of the EU participate in the ERASMUS scheme. These are:

Austria	Latvia
Belgium	Lithuania
Bulgaria	Luxembourg
Croatia	Malta
Cyprus	Netherlands
Czech Republic	Poland
Denmark	Portugal
Eire	Romania
Estonia	Slovakia
Finland	Slovenia
France	Spain
Germany	Sweden
Greece	United Kingdom
Hungary	
Italy	

ERASMUS also includes the EU candidate country (Turkey) and the European Economic Area (EEA) countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). From academic year 2011/12 Switzerland now participates in the Erasmus Scheme. Please note the scheme in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is currently suspended.