

APPLICANT GUIDE FOR MASTER STUDENTS ONLY FOR MOBILITY WITH RUSSIA, SOUTH AFRICA, NAMIBIA AND BOTSWANA

What are the main steps in preparing an application for A4U Erasmus+ grant?



1. Read the call

Read the Call carefully, and ensure you meet the eligibility requisites. B1 level of English is equivalent to score 42-71 in TOEFL iBT (after October 2016) and score 4,0-5,0 in IELTS. A table of equivalences of B1 level to other English certificates is available on <http://alliance4universities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Tabla-de-equivalencia-de-niveles-en-idiomias-para-la-convocatoria-2017.pdf>.

Be aware that if you get selected for the exchange program, you would need to advance all the initial costs such as insurance, visa application, flights, accommodation and then have sufficient funds to cover living expenses for the first week or two, since you will receive the grant only once in Spain and once you opened a bank account at a Spanish bank. A significant sum is necessary to prepare for this exchange as Erasmus+ funds only reach the student once he/she is in the country of mobility. You may check if your sending university can assist with a loan or advance the funds on your behalf.

Those who receive the top-up grant for disadvantage participants will have their flight covered upfront.

2. Decide on the host university for your mobility

Applicants from Russia can apply for mobility only within existing agreements. Check Annex in the Call for the list of valid agreements.

Applicants from other countries can apply for any A4U university.

Only applicants from Russia, South Africa, Namibia and Botswana can apply for mobility at Master's level.

Applicants should check the course offer on the host university website, or use factsheets, published on <http://alliance4universities.eu/en/mobility-scholarships/>. Get an initial idea of courses that you might take during mobility, making sure they are relevant to your subject area. Talk to your academic tutor about the courses you would like to take during exchange and make sure that they can be recognised by your sending university upon return. Recognition, full or partial, is a compulsory component of Erasmus+ exchange.

Course offer at A4U universities can be checked on:

UAB: All Master courses: <https://www.uab.cat/web/study/graduate-1345666803994.html>

Master courses taught in English: <https://www.uab.cat/web/study/graduate/master-s-degrees-and-graduate-diplomas-in-english-1345671925069.html>

UAM: <https://www.uam.es/uam/media/doc/1606875620625/english-offer-22-23.pdf>

UC3M Master courses <https://www.uc3m.es/postgraduate/programs>

3. Obtain two Transcripts of Records: one for Bachelor studies and another for the Master courses you have already taken.

The Transcripts of Records should indicate all the courses that were taken and evaluated.

4. Obtain a nomination letter.

Obtain a letter of support from the International Office at your home university. The letter should indicate the average mark for each of your transcript of records and confirm that your level of English language is at least B2. The International Office at your sending university might want to make sure that you are suitable candidate for mobility and have an internal pre-selection procedure for applicants.

Important: there might be a minimum average mark required by A4U so please check the eligibility requirements in the Call.

5. Get your Learning Agreement signed

Familiarise yourself with the Learning Agreement available on <http://alliance4universities.eu/en/mobility-scholarships/>. Fill in the necessary information on p.1 of the Learning Agreement and obtain signatures for the “Commitment” table by your sending institution, and sign it yourself. Scanned signatures are accepted. It is not necessary to fill in the rest of the Learning Agreement at the application stage.

In case of any doubts on how to fill in the form, please check the footnotes in the relevant fields. The International Office at your home university may also be able to help you fill in and sign the Learning Agreement.

6. Get a recommendation letter

Identify a referee who can provide a recommendation letter for you in Spanish or in English. It can be your academic tutor or another member of academic staff who can comment on your skills, personal attributes and suitability for mobility. The referee should know you well enough to be able to write positively about you and they should also know you relatively recently to be able to comment on your present development. There is no pre-defined format for the recommendation letter but the referee might want to address questions like:

1. How long and in what capacity have you known the applicant?
2. What are the strengths of the applicant?
3. How will the applicant benefit from a stay abroad?

Ask the referee to send the recommendation letter directly to A4U at coordinacion@a-4u.eu with “Recommendation letter” in the subject line, before the application deadline.

7. Write your motivation letter

Write a motivation statement in Spanish or in English outlining why you would like to go on mobility, and justifying your choice of host institution. There is no pre-defined format for the motivation letter.

8. Participants from disadvantaged backgrounds

If applying for a top-up grant for disadvantaged participants, gather the official documentation that confirms your status as a disadvantaged participant.

9. Submit your application

Fill in the application form on <http://alliance4universities.eu/en/mobility-scholarships/>, and attach two Transcripts of Records (one for Bachelor studies and the other for Master courses already taken), the letter of support, the signed Learning Agreement, the motivation letter, and if applying for the top-up grant, the documentation certifying the disadvantaged background.

Make sure your referee sends the recommendation letter before the deadline. Your application will be checked by to make sure it is eligible and complete, so it is highly recommended you submit the application well in advance of the deadline to allow enough time to do this check.

It is possible to apply for two or more destinations, in which case the applicant should submit two separate applications. Transcripts of Records, letter of support and recommendation letter can be the same in both applications. Learning agreement and motivation letter should each be specific to the receiving institution.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- **What is a cure period?**

The cure period is a time during which applicants can remedy any deficiencies in their application, such as adding missing information or documentation.

Let us go over the timeline published in the Call and clarify how applications will be processed:

Call opens	Upon publication on A4U website
Call closes. From 31 March to 17 April, all applications will be checked for completeness and eligibility.	31 March
Publication of provisionally admitted applications on A4U website.	17 April

<p>Cure period: candidates can remedy their applications in case of any clerical errors or incomplete documentation.</p> <p>Only applications submitted by 31 March can be remedied during the cure period. It will not be possible to submit a new application after 31 March.</p>	<p>18-27 April</p>
<p>Publication of the final list of admitted applications.</p> <p>These applications will now undergo evaluation by A4U Selection Committee.</p>	<p>5 May</p>
<p>Publication of selection results</p>	<p>26 May 2023</p>

- **How do I choose courses to take at the receiving university, and who signs the learning agreement?**

It is the student who checks the courses available and chooses those that are relevant to his/her study programme at home university. This choice has to be validated by an academic responsible for mobility/international relations at the faculty/department (at A4U universities: el coordinador académico de movilidad), or head of your academic programme (e.g. Director of Bachelor Studies). In any case this person, usually an academic, has to have the authority to recognize credits obtained at the host university upon student's return to home university and it is him/her that signs the learning agreement. It can also be signed by the International Office provided they have the agreement of the academic in charge of recognition.

- **Is there a minimum or maximum credit requirement?**

While there is no a minimum or maximum number of ECTS that you have to take during mobility, the general rule is that your work load should be comparable to full-time work load at your home university, taking into account that you will studying in a different country, environment, possible in a different language. So check with your home university that your planned work load is comparable to that you would do at home.

Important: Erasmus+ Programme requires courses that you take abroad be recognized by the home university and become part of your transcript of records.

- **Should I leave the ECTS field blank if the course catalogue does not specify the ECTS?**

No, you should get in touch with the receiving university and clarify it.

- **Can students take courses outside the field of study/faculty? E.g. students majoring in psychology might want to take courses on leadership.**

As a general rule, students should choose the majority of their courses from the same department/area of studies in which they are enrolled at their home universities. The host university will advise you on the possibility and specifics of taking courses from other departments, but please make sure first that your sending university will recognize courses that are outside your main field of study.

- **What happens if I fail to pass courses taken during mobility?**

This is a rare occurrence to start with, since the vast majority of students try their best to pass their chosen courses. If it does happen, A4U won't apply any penalties, and you will not be asked to reimburse the grant. It is up to the home institution to take any action if necessary.