

Selection scholarships for exchange OUTSIDE the Erasmus area

Erasmus+ area = 27 EU Member States + North Macedonia, Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland, Serbia and Turkey

Academic year 2024-2025_Second Call Information for Ghent University students

Introduction

In this explanatory document, students at Ghent University can find specific information concerning the range of scholarship possibilities for an exchange outside the Erasmus area. This is the 'second call'.

These guidelines contain information on:

- The scholarship possibilities for an exchange outside the Erasmus+ zone.¹
- How to apply for such a scholarship.
- Selection criteria and prerequisites (i.e. the so-called selection mechanism).

Special points of interest:

- The United Kingdom doesn't belong to the Erasmus+ zone. Scholarships for an exchange to the United Kingdom are therefore part of this selection process.
- Through this call you can't apply for a scholarship for an exchange to Switzerland as it has its own scholarship program.
- The VLIR-UOS travel allowances for internship and research to Africa, Latin-America and Asia are also part of this selection mechanism.

SECOND CALL:

A first call with scholarship possibilities for an exchange outside the Erasmus area was launched in January 2024. After the first call, most of the scholarships were granted. If you were not able to apply during the first call (for example trainee post unknown, subject Master's dissertation unknown, a one-year Master's programme), you can apply for this current (second) call. For this second call, retroactivity is possible. That means that you can apply for a scholarship in December 2024 for a stay between 1/07/2024 and 31/08/2025 (validation required in your curriculum AY 24-25). The scholarship possibilities are limited to BIRAK Travel Allowances and VLIR-UOS scholarships, and the amount of scholarships is limited. When scholarships are in short supply, we apply the principle: the greater your socio-financial need, the more likely you are to receive a scholarship.

The Exchange

- The exchange concerns your study, internship or research as part of a master's dissertation and needs to be acknowledged and validated in the curriculum.
- The exchange has a minimum duration of one month (a bottom limit of 28 days as well as a minimum of 5 ECTS credits), and a maximum duration of twelve months.
- All disciplines are eligible for an exchange experience.
- You don't pay tuition fee in the receiving institution/company/organisation.

¹ Erasmus+ area = 27 EU Member States + North Macedonia, Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland, Serbia and Turkey.

- Your faculty decides which destination you can go to and also which period you can stay abroad during your study. For more information, contact your Faculty Committee for Internationalisation (FCI).
- Students of all nationalities are entitled to apply for an exchange grant. However, you cannot apply for a grant to an exchange destination (institution/work placement) in your home country (where you lived before your enrolment at Ghent University).
- You submitted an **exchange application** via OASIS (destination), which has been selected by your faculty. If you want to be considered for an exchange grant for destinations outside of the Erasmus+ area, please select '**Grant for exchanges outside Erasmus area**' as the appropriate funding channel in the application. The deadline for this is November 28. If your exchange application has already been approved, you can no longer change your funding channel yourself. In that case, please contact International@UGent.be.
- If your stay concerns study, your faculty needs to have a bilateral framework agreement ('BIRAK'), more specifically a Cooperation Agreement (or Student Exchange Agreement), with the partnering institution/organisation abroad. You can address your FCI for an overview of the Agreements or you can consult the following link: <https://kaartakkoord.ugent.be/> (use the following filter: Mobility Type = Student Mobility). This is not necessary in the scope of an internship or research as part of a master's dissertation.
- **Study**: as a student, you take 30 ECTS for one semester or 60 ECTS for a whole academic year, and you study at least one semester at the partner institution. The exchange starts after September 1 unless the guest institution requires the student to attend earlier because of the academic calendar or any other possible reason. The exchange concerns the academic year 2024-2025 and ends before the next academic year (2025-2026) starts.
- **Traineeship/research for Master's dissertation**: the minimum duration of the exchange is one month (5 ECTS). The scholarship application concerns a stay abroad as part of a course recognized in your curriculum in the academic year 2024-2025. For example:
 - If you stay abroad (internship/research) during the summer period, July-August 2024, and if your stay is part of a course in your curriculum during the **academic year 2024-2025**, please indicate that you wish to be considered for an exchange grant;
 - If you stay abroad (internship/research) during the summer period, July-August 2025, and if your stay is part of a course in your curriculum during the **academic year 2025-2026**, please DO NOT indicate that you wish to be considered for an exchange grant (you will have to wait for the next call for grants).

The Scholarships

There is one type of scholarship that can be awarded during the Second Call, which is the travel allowance. A student can only receive **one scholarship per academic year**.

Travel allowance

- A travel allowance depends on the distance between the sending institution and the receiving institution. The travel allowances per country are known already and can be consulted [here](#).
- The number of available scholarships: around **50**.
- The VLIR-UOS travel grants for internship and research are part of this category. These are scholarships for an internship or research in a **country in the Global South** (Africa, Asia, Latin-America). Extra requirements for these are:
 - You must follow a **mandatory preparation moment** before your departure and add proof of this to your file. Ghent University offers in collaboration with UCOS - University Center for Development Cooperation - several preparation days on different dates. Of course you do not have to wait for the selection result to already register and/or participate. [Register for the preparation day](#).
 - Your studies at Ghent University are not part of a European exchange programme nor are they funded by a European grant. You are not a recipient of any other type of funding coming from the budget of the Belgian Directorate-General for Development Co-operation (in Dutch abbr. to DGD);
 - You have not been allocated a VLIR-UOS travel grant before;

- You are eligible only if your exchange destination features on the **VLIR-UOS list of destination countries**:

Africa		Asia	Latin America
Benin	Morocco	Bangladesh	Bolivia
Burkina Faso	Mozambique	Cambodia	Brazil
Burundi	Niger	the Philippines	Colombia
the DR of the Congo	Rwanda	India	Cuba
Ethiopia	Senegal	Indonesia	Ecuador
Ghana	Tanzania	the Palestinian territories	Haiti
Guinea	Uganda	Sri Lanka	Nicaragua
Cameroon	Zambia	Vietnam	Peru
Kenya	Zimbabwe		Suriname
Madagascar	South Africa		

Principles and Selection Criteria

General Principles:

- if there is a shortage of scholarships (demand exceeds supply), you will be more likely to get a scholarship if your socio-financial need is demonstrably greater;
- if you want to apply for a scholarship, you simply need to select **"Grant for exchanges outside Erasmus area"** as the appropriate funding channel in your exchange application (via OASIS). The deadline for this is November 28;
- also be sure to substantiate your request thoroughly in the 'motivation' text box (via OASIS).

The evaluation and selection is conducted based on the information that is available through OASIS. You will be awarded plus points and minus points for the different criteria, which allows for a ranking based on the total scores. Please read below how this works.

PLUS POINTS

The plus points are awarded based on your **status** and your **financial needs**, as well as on the **duration of your stay**.

- 1) The following categories merit HIGH plus points:
 - a. students who have been allocated a Flemish study allowance (corroborated by the Flemish Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education, Qualifications and Study Grants, in Dutch abbr. to AHOVOKS)²;
 - b. students with a disability (recognised by the Flemish Agency for Persons with a Disability)³;
 - c. working students. In this case, the student is either an employee or a job seeker and their university training is part of an employment track determined by the Flemish Employment Agency. To be eligible, the student cannot be a holder of a Master's degree or a second-cycle diploma.

ONLY for categories **b and c**, we ask that you contact International@UGent.be to substantiate your status with the necessary supporting documents. You can do this until **November 28, 2024**.

²the data in the data warehouse of the Ministry of Education and Training will be considered as correct.

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- 2) The following circumstances merit HIGH plus points: based on a limited portfolio, the International Relations Office determine that the need for an exchange grant is high.

We realise that although students may not belong to the categories described above (1), they may still have high socio-financial needs. In these cases, a study abroad experience is impossible due to the your socio-financial background unless you are allocated a travel allowance. The socio-financial needs you experience in this case do not concern the high expenses to be made in the context of a study-abroad experience. Rather, they concern your socio-financial situation and available income in general.

In case your socio-financial situation and general available income are such that a stay abroad is impossible without a travel grant we advise you to send **a short portfolio**, containing the following information:

a) Financial plan (maximum 1 page)

Explain how you plan to finance your stay abroad (marked in euro's). How much do you think your stay abroad will cost (accommodation, meals, transportation, costs of living in the area, etc)? What income can you count on (support parents, holiday job and/or job during the academic year, savings, etc)?

b) Socio-financial motivation (maximum 0,5 page)

Why do you need the scholarship the most from a socio-financial point of view? Here, you can also quote other personal reasons such as family situation, social circumstances, if you want to. If applicable, you can add supporting documents to your motivation. Possible supporting documents can be:

- Tax bill from your parent(s) or evidence of independent student with a minimum wage;
- Evidence of work process;
- Proof that you are part of a family with modified social circumstances;
- Pay slip of holiday job and/or job during academic year;
- Other

You can send your portfolio to International@UGent.be, You have time to do so **until November 28 2024 (included)**.

Evaluation

If the International Relations Office deems that your socio-financial need is very high, you will be allocated the same amount of high plus points as the students in category (1).

- 3) You will be allocated higher plus points gradually, depending on **the duration of your stay abroad**. The exchange has a minimum duration of one month (5 ECTS credits). The longer the exchange, the more plus points you will receive. The plus points increase gradually up to a maximum duration of four months. The main reason why we use this criterion is to foster a more sustainable mobility. Another reason to stimulate longer exchange experiences is to hone your intercultural and international competencies. In addition, the expenses of short-term exchange experiences are higher, relatively speaking, than those of longer stays abroad.

MINUS POINTS

We allocate minus points to students who have had **previous exchange opportunities** during their study career, as well as to students who have **previously received a high grant** for a non-Erasmus+ exchange experience.

- 1) The following situations merit LOW minus points: you have had **a prior exchange experience during your study career**, either to an Erasmus or an 'outside Erasmus+' destination.
We allocate low minus points because we definitely do not want to dissuade students from participating in a second exchange experience. But we still allocate those minus points because we want to support students who have not participated in an exchange experience before, and give them priority in the grant allocation process.
- 2) The following situations merit HIGH minus points: you have had a prior exchange experience to a destination outside the Erasmus+ zone during your study career AND you **received a high grant (monthly allowance and travel allowance)**.

The grant allocation mechanism gives priority to students who have never received a high exchange grant before. However, the principles above do not necessarily mean that you are completely ineligible for a grant in the context of an exchange outside the Erasmus+zone. It does mean that your application will not be considered as high priority. In case of an insufficient number of grants, your application may be left out of consideration.

The MOTIVATION Text Box in OASIS

You will be awarded a score on the 'motivation' text box you add to your exchange application in OASIS (maximum length: 0,5 page). Be serious about writing a meticulous **academic** motivation for your exchange experience at the institution/organisation of your choice. For an already approved exchange application, send an email to international@ugent.be so we can make sure you can write down your academic motivation in the appropriate field.

Good to Know

- An exchange grant is **NEVER fully cost-effective**.
- A student can only be allocated one scholarship per academic year.
- There is always a chance you may NOT receive a travel grant. If the scholarships are in high demand, and the available funds are insufficient, your application may be left out of consideration. This does not mean that you cannot participate in an exchange experience, but it does mean that you will have to do so without a grant.
- If you have been allocated an exchange grant and it turns out that your exchange application does not meet the criteria (e.g. it does not meet the bottom limit of ECTS credits, or the minimum duration), the grant can be reclaimed.
- The selection results will be published on **Thursday January 23 2025** at the latest. You will receive a notification.
- Please take into account that your application also has to be accepted by the partner institution/host organisation. Whether or not they will receive exchange students is always their decision to make. Your selection is final only after acceptance by the host institution.
- **Safety situation** at your destination: sometimes for some countries travel restrictions apply or the general safety situation is uncertain. It's possible that you're granted a scholarship but that you will not be able to leave to your host country. For most destinations there are no problems but you will only receive admission to leave for an exchange if certain conditions are fulfilled: for instance positive travel advice from the Belgian authorities or no restrictive measures that seriously impede daily life in your host country. Receiving a scholarship is conditional and does not guarantee you will be given the green light to leave. We advise you not to incur any expenses for transport, accommodation, etc. prior to formal admission.
- Please make sure that you are **well-prepared** for your stay abroad. This includes securing the proper administrative processes and or documents (e.g. visa, insurance papers, passport, command of the language), protection against health risks (e.g. vaccinations, information from the Institute of Tropical Medicine and/or information on your own medical background: www.itg.be) and information on security risks (cf. any travel advice issued by the Federal Public Service of Foreign Affairs: www.diplomatie.be).
- Make sure to be as **financially well-prepared** as possible. Draw up a budget plan: what are the estimated expenses of a stay abroad (accommodation, meals, transportation, living expenses in the area, etc.)? What types of resources do you have (financial support by your parents, summer job, job during the academic year, savings, etc.)? Try to be as conservative as possible and factor in potential expenses as broadly as possible.

Summary

- You have an exchange application in OASIS, selected by your faculty.
- If you want to be considered for an exchange grant for destinations outside the Erasmus+zone, please select **"Grant for exchanges outside Erasmus area"** as the appropriate funding channel in the application.

- In case you experience a demonstrable high socio-financial need for a grant to fund your stay abroad, send a short portfolio to International@UGent.be.
- Be serious about writing a meticulous academic motivation for your exchange experience at the institution/organisation of your choice. Submit this motivation in OASIS using the corresponding text box.
- The selection results will be published on Thursday January 23 2025 at the latest.

Contact

Every student who is interested in a scholarship for a foreign stay outside the Erasmus area can contact his/her FCI in order to prepare the stay abroad. A list of FCI's can be found [here](#).

For additional general information on the existing grants or the selection mechanism, please get in touch with the International Relations Office at international@ugent.be