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Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire
University College Cork, Ireland

ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

STUDENT WORK PLACEMENT GUIDE



Erasmus+

International Office, University College Cork

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1. ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to provide general information for students who are considering an Erasmus work placement.

This guide has been produced by the International Office. We are the office within the University that administers the Erasmus+ Programme, and are happy to assist you with the relevant paperwork.

Every effort has been made to provide both accurate and comprehensive information. If, whilst away, you find any information in this guide which is inaccurate or out-of-date, or you come across extra information which would be useful to future students, please pass it on to us so that we may improve our service.

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2. WHAT IS AN ERASMUS+ WORK PLACEMENT/TRAINEESHIP?

The Erasmus+ programme enables students to spend a placement/traineeship period abroad as part of a degree course. Student 'placement' is an alternative term to the widely used term 'traineeship' or 'internship'.

Erasmus work placements are supported by the European Commission

- Erasmus Work Placements must take place in another European country which participates in the Erasmus programme.
- The work placement must be for a minimum of two months and a maximum of 12 months.
- The work placement must be recognised by UCC and hence will contribute to your qualification.

3. WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Full-time registered UCC students who are carrying out a full-time placement that will be recognised as a part of the student's programme.

Student must be either a national of a country participating in the Erasmus Programme or a national of another country (third country) enrolled in regular courses in institutions of higher education in the participating country, under the conditions fixed by the participating country, taking into account the nature of the programme.

4. DURATION OF PLACEMENT

Students can do a placement between 2 and 12 months.

The period of mobility abroad may be interrupted by the enterprise holidays if the enterprise is closed during this period. The grant is maintained during this period. The closure period does not count towards the minimum duration of a placement period.

5. ELIGIBLE PLACEMENT

Host organisations for student placements may be enterprises, training centres, research centres and other organisations.

An eligible organisation is one that is involved in economic activities in the public or private sector. It can be any size, and can operate in any economic sector, including the social economy.

The following types of organisations are not eligible as host organisations:

- European institutions and other EU organisations managing EU programmes (such as National Agencies) in order to avoid possible conflict of interests and/or dual funding.
- National diplomatic representations (embassy/consulate) of the home country of the student.

Participating countries are:

- 27 EU Member States
- Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway
- Croatia, Turkey

6. WHY CARRY OUT AN ERASMUS WORK PLACEMENT?

- Work placements provide an excellent opportunity to gain work experience in an international environment and to apply theory to practice.
- They offer opportunities for personal, academic, cultural and linguistic development through living and working in another country.
- They enhance your curriculum vitae by providing international employment experience.
- They develop transferable skills, including communication across cultural boundaries, self management, independence, confidence, adaptability and self reliance.
- They enhance your employability potential and may lead directly to future employment.
- As an Erasmus student you will receive an Erasmus grant.

7. RECOGNITION FOR COMPLETING PLACEMENT

Students will receive full recognition from UCC for the period spent abroad as agreed in the Learning Agreement. Recognition shall be based on the training agreement approved by all parties before the period of mobility starts.

Credit for, or recognition of placement undertaken by the student at the host enterprise, may be withheld only if the student fails to achieve the level of academic/professional attainment required by the host enterprise or otherwise fails to satisfy the agreed conditions required by the participating institutions for recognition.

8. WHAT WILL THE EMPLOYER EXPECT FROM YOU?

Placement is a three-way relationship between the student, the employer and the University. Your performance and conduct reflects not only on you, but also on UCC.

As a paid employee, you will have similar responsibilities to other employees in the company and you will also have responsibilities to UCC.

These include the following:

- Act within the Terms and Conditions of Employment laid down by the employer.
- Approach your work diligently, take responsibility and use your initiative.
- Take care of your own Health and Safety and that of others, who may be affected by your actions.
- Respect the confidentiality of the employer.
- **Use e-mail and internet only in association with your work.** Misuse of e-mail or downloading of offensive or inappropriate material will result in serious disciplinary action or dismissal.

- Use your work phone only in connection with work. Turn your private mobile phone off during work time.
- Be punctual and adhere to all rules governing time practices.
- Adhere to the company dress code.
- Be familiar with and abide by the contents of your Placement Handbook.
- Contact your Academic Mentor and Placement Officer at the agreed intervals.
- Complete the documentation that is required for your employer and for UCC.
- Be enthusiastic and prepared to join in out-of-office social activities, where appropriate.
- Act as an ambassador for your University - next year's placement depends on your performance this year.

9. WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM YOUR EMPLOYER?

When employers participate in the Placement programme, they agree to the following:

- Satisfactorily complete a Health and Safety Checklist for the Placement Officer.
- Provide a safe place of work, in line with Health and Safety regulations.
- Give you a short induction course on company codes and practices.
- Provide you with a work email address, where appropriate.
- Give an outline of the tasks, activities and training you are expected to complete.
- Provide work experience compatible with your knowledge and experience.
- Assign a member of staff as Industrial Mentor. This person will supervise and monitor your work and assist with any problems during placement.
- This person will complete an Industrial Mentor Report, which will be used as part of your Academic Assessment.
- He/she will check, approve and sign your Log Book each week, as well as your Placement Report and Work Summary at the end.
- He/she will meet with your Academic Mentor when they visit your workplace.
- He/she will report to the Academic Mentor and to the Placement Officer, any aspects of your performance or approach to placement, which are unsatisfactory.

10. ERASMUS GRANT

Students who complete a full-time work placement within the EU as part of their degree programme at UCC are entitled to receive the Erasmus grant. The grant is a contribution to covering the additional costs of a placement abroad. It is calculated per day and paid as a flat rate. *It is not intended to cover the full costs of the period abroad.*

Important Note:

The Erasmus Grant will be paid in two instalments. The first instalment (generally 80% of the total grant) will be paid before the student travels (provided that the Erasmus Grant Form and relevant forms are submitted at least four weeks before departure).

Local Authority Grants

If you are entitled to a local authority grant, this entitlement continues for the period of your stay abroad. **Students are requested to contact the Fees Office (North Wing, Main Quadrangle) to complete the necessary forms in order to receive their local authority grant whilst abroad.**

11. REQUIRED FORMS

Forms are available online at
www.ucc.ie/international/goabroadwithucc/outgoingerasmus/erasmusworkplacements

- **Work Placement Application Form**

Forms should be submitted to the International Office at least four weeks prior to departure.

The Erasmus grant will be paid electronically. Please ensure that you provide accurate bank account details.

- **Grant Agreement**

Please complete all sections.

- **Learning Agreement**

The Learning Agreement outlines the proposed work programme which will be carried out at the host organisation.

- To be completed electronically
- **Table A:** This needs to be completed in full by you the student. You need to outline in detail what work you will be completing during your placement at the relevant host organisation. Please liaise with your work placement coordinator.
- **Table B:** This section needs to be completed by your work placement coordinator
- The completed and signed form should be sent to the coordinator at the host organisation. The host organisation must complete **Table C**, sign and return the form.

The Learning Agreement is a Contract between you, UCC and the host organisation. Therefore, it needs to be completed in full. The International Office will not accept half completed forms.

Please consult the sample learning agreement (provided by the HEA) to assist you with completing this agreement.

- **Learning Agreement (After Section) – Traineeship Certificate**
(to be completed at the end of the placement)
 - To be completed electronically
 - All sections need to be completed in full. You need to outline in detail what work/tasks you carried out during your placement. This should correspond with the original learning agreement.
 - This needs to be signed by the host organisation
- **Host Organisation Confirmation Form**
Needs to be completed by the host organisation
- **Insurance Confirmation Form**
It is imperative that you have the required Health and Travel Insurance cover before going on placement. Please read carefully the Insurance Information leaflet provided. The signed insurance confirmation form must be submitted along with the other forms.
- **Acknowledgement of Erasmus Work Placement Grant**
Students are required to return this form to the International Office at the end of the work placement.

12. PREPARING FOR A WORK PLACEMENT

The following checklist is designed to help your preparation. It is not exhaustive, but if you are aware of the points listed below and ensure that you discuss them with your placement coordinator and employer, many of the problems which might arise can be avoided and you are likely to have a positive experience.

- At the earliest possible stage speak to your Placement Coordinator. She/he will have considerable experience and be able to guide and advise you on all aspects
- Identify who will be your mentor in the host enterprise.
- Discuss with the host enterprise what they will expect and require from you during the placement.
- Find out the language requirements of your employer in order to ascertain whether you will need special language preparation and how you will be able to access this.

- Obtain a job description from the employer and ensure that your Placement Coordinator approves.
- Be aware of induction arrangements in the host enterprise and in particular make sure that you understand the company rules and expectations.
- Make sure that the arrangements for assessment and the form of assessment are agreed and that you understand what these are and that they are communicated to the host employer.
- Ascertain whether your supervisor will visit you during the work placement and the approximate timing of the visit and make sure that your employer knows about this.
- Understand the need for confidentiality and commercial sensitivity.
- Have a clear understanding of the respective rules and responsibilities of your host enterprise.
- Ensure that you are aware of the host enterprise hours of work, holiday entitlements, social security cover, insurance liability (and who will be responsible), general health and safety arrangements, whether support will be provided in finding accommodation and any civil registration formalities.
- Make sure that you ascertain costs involved; the nature and form of any remuneration or support in kind from the enterprise and whether this may entail further responsibilities in terms of social security and taxation payments.
- Try to find out if the employer has had any previous Erasmus work placement students and if they would be willing to put you in contact with them. If this is not possible make sure that you do talk to other students who have been on an Erasmus work placement.

13. BANKING

In general it is important to bring sufficient funds, in readily usable form, to tide you over for the early part of your stay abroad. It is advisable to open a local bank account when you get there. The use of internet banking is also a convenient way for you to access your Irish bank account details while abroad. You should speak to your local branch about this.

AIB Internet banking, for example, offers the following 24hour on-line services: View account balances and statements, order a statement, organise a fund transfer, pay bills online, mobile phone top-up, account maintenance.

14. INSURANCE

The Department of Foreign Affairs recommends that all students going abroad should be covered by a comprehensive health and travel insurance policy. UCC urges you to follow this advice.

Health Insurance

All students going abroad must hold a **European Health Insurance Card**. The EHIC provides basic health cover, but what constitutes basic cover may vary from one country to another, and it's advisable to check the website www.ehic.ie to get precise information on the different countries.

Travel Insurance

Students must secure **private travel cover** for the duration of the placement. Travel insurance protects you from a range of risks when you travel.

Travel insurance provides cover for a range of areas reflected in the main sections of a travel policy. Policies typically have the following six sections – medical expenses, personal liability, personal accident, cancellation and curtailment, delayed and missed departures, and money and belongings.

More specifically, travel insurance usually provides cover for the following:

- Cancellation or curtailment of your trip due to certain reasons beyond your control;
- Delayed or missed departure;
- Emergency medical treatment abroad and/or repatriation expenses, if you fall ill or become injured while abroad;
- Loss, damage or delayed arrival of your personal possessions;
- Loss or theft of money;
- Replacing a lost passport;
- Legal expenses and **personal liability*** cover in the event of you injuring a third party or damaging their property as a result of an accident;
- A fixed payment if you suffer permanent disability or death.

Each section of the policy may be subject to specified limits, excesses and exclusions. Therefore, it is important when choosing travel insurance not only to compare the cost of cover being offered but also the level of cover being offered.

***Personal Liability Insurance**

This is necessary so that you are covered for any fallout from an incident (including an accident in the workplace) where you were at fault and could be sued.
(please ensure that this is covered by your travel insurance policy)

Public Liability Insurance

This is provided by many employers but will only cover for accidents/damages that were caused by some sort of neglect or omission on the part of the employer (as opposed to an accident or damage that was caused by neglect or omission on the student's part). If it is the case that your host organisation does not provide this, then it is even more important that you have personal accident and liability cover.

Accident Insurance

Some employers will cover their employees (and interns) for accidents in the workplace and some will even provide cover for accidents on the way to or from work. This is one of the questions asked of the host organisation in the final section of the Learning Agreement for Traineeships, and it's important that you get clear answers. If the employer will not provide accident insurance, then you must make sure that you have some form of personal accident insurance, which is usually offered as part of a travel insurance policy – read the policy document carefully to see what is and isn't covered.

Choosing an Insurance Policy

Students are advised to research the different policies on offer and to ensure that any insurance policy purchased meets his/her needs, covers the full duration of the stay abroad and includes the eventualities mentioned above.

Requirements

- Obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)
- Ensure that your host organisation fills in **Table C of the Learning Agreement** and check what insurance the host organisation provides.
- You will need to take steps to ensure that you will be covered for any eventualities not specifically covered by the host organisation, in particular, **accidents** (the host might cover you; if it does, you should get the name of the insurer) and **personal liability** (this will not be covered by any host organisation), as well as medical treatment and repatriation.
- This means you should arrange suitable travel insurance; it should include all of the above-mentioned eventualities.

In Summary:

Ensure that you are covered for **accidents at work** (if not covered by the host organisation), **emergency medical treatment**, **repatriation** and **personal liability**.

15. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CARD (ISIC)

The ISIC is internationally accepted as proof of your student status. Although you are *not required* to carry an ISIC card, some of the benefits of ISIC are:

- Access to special student air fares
- Student prices on coach, rail and ferry travel aboard
- Access to the world-wide student travel office network
- Savings on accommodation, sightseeing and entertainment
- Access to the ISIC 24 hour free helpline - this can help with health, legal and general emergencies

Students can apply for the International Student Card (ISIC) from any USIT office.

<http://www.isic.org/>

16. MAKING TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Consider all travel options and shop around for the best fares. Check with USIT, local travel agents and airlines/ferry services for the best deals. Booking in advance sometimes gives financial advantage.

You will need a valid passport for all destinations except the UK.

Make sure that your “International Student Identity Card” (ISIC) is valid for the duration of your stay as it can enable you to gain significant discounts on both travel and leisure activities as well as on shopping.

17. BEING ABROAD

It is important to keep in touch with your Placement Coordinator during your placement. Students are advised to regularly check their UCC email account as all correspondence from UCC will be sent to your UCC email address.

If you experience any significant problems during your placement please contact your placement coordinator who should be able to help.

Culture Shock

Culture shock is to be expected! Don't worry if it happens to you. Many students are surprised by how homesick they feel in their first few weeks overseas. It can be quite stressful getting used to living in a different country, new culture, interacting in a new language (if relevant) and not being able to go home for the weekend. In most cases getting over it is simply a matter of time and nothing to worry about.

18. PERSONAL SAFETY

Students are advised to consider carefully their own personal safety. Follow the same precautions as you would at home.

Hold on tightly to your bags, especially in a crowd, and keep your wallet close to your body so that it cannot be taken without you noticing. Watch out for pick-pockets, especially in large crowds and at train and bus stations. Do not try and retaliate should someone try to mug you; your personal safety is more important than any amount of money you may have on you.

If you are robbed, you should report it to the police immediately. If you lose your credit cards or bank cards then get in touch with your bank as soon as you can to have them cancelled; banks at home and abroad provide emergency numbers for use in the event of loss or theft, so be sure to make a note of the numbers and keep it separate from the cards themselves.

Remember that the less conspicuous you look, the less interest you will attract. If, for example, you have to consult a map, it is better to do it in a café than to advertise that you are unsure of your surroundings. If you lose any personal belongings or documents go directly to the police and report it.

If you are finding your own accommodation, get advice from the host enterprise about suitable areas. For safety, take someone with you when you go flat hunting. Also have an idea what the going rate is in the area to avoid being overcharged.

Watch out for the cultural differences in relation to socialising at night in your host country.

If you find yourself without any access to cash, without your passport, or in any other serious kind of trouble, the Irish Embassy/Consulate in your host country will try to help. In the unlikely event of you being arrested for a serious offence, insist on the Consulate being informed: you will be contacted as soon as possible by a consular officer who can advise on local procedures, etc.

19. COMMUNICATION

To telephone Ireland while abroad, dial the international access code of the host country + 353 + the area code (less the '0') + local number. A guide to emergency services and international telephone codes:

COUNTRY	INTERNATIONAL ACCESS CODE	COUNTRY CODE	POLICE	AMBULANCE
Austria	00	43	133	144/122
Belgium	00	32	101	100
Denmark	00	45	112	112
Finland	990	358	10022	112
France	00	33	17	15
Germany	00	49	110	112
Italy	00	39	112	118
Netherlands	00	31	112	112
Norway	00	47	112	113
Portugal	00	351	115	112
Spain	07	34	091	061
Sweden	009	46	90000	90000
UK	00	44	999	999

112 is the universal emergency number for EU member states. As they are not required by law to use this number exclusively most states continue to use their existing emergency numbers as well as 112.

20. CODE OF CONDUCT

Remember that, while you are away, you are ambassadors for your country and for UCC. As a registered student of UCC while abroad, you will be subject to UCC regulations. You are expected to observe the regulations and the code of conduct of your host enterprise.

21. ERASMUS STUDENT CHARTER

The Erasmus Student Charter highlights the rights and obligations of students participating in the Erasmus programme. It informs students about what they are entitled to and what is expected of them during their secondment for studies or for a placement.

In particular, the Erasmus Student Charter outlines the basic entitlements of the Erasmus students, such as free tuition and full recognition of studies or placements abroad. The Charter also specifies the main obligations of the Erasmus students, providing them with a concise idea of their duties with regard to both their home and host higher education institutions.

The text of the Erasmus Student Charter:

As an Erasmus student, you are entitled to expect:

- Your home and host universities to have an inter-institutional agreement.
- The sending and receiving institutions to sign with you and before you leave a Learning/Training Agreement setting out the details of your planned activities abroad, including the credits to be achieved.
- Not to have to pay fees to your host university for tuition, registration, examinations, access to laboratory and library facilities during your Erasmus studies.
- Full academic recognition from your home university for satisfactorily completed activities during the Erasmus mobility period, in accordance with the Learning/Training Agreement.
- To be given a transcript of records at the end of your activities abroad, covering the studies/work carried out and signed by your host institution/enterprise. This will record your results with the credits and grades achieved. If the placement was not part of the normal curricula, the period will at least be recorded in the Diploma Supplement.
- To be treated and served by your host university in the same way as their home students.
- To have access to the Erasmus University Charter and Erasmus Policy Statement of your home and host universities.
- Your student grant or loan from your home country to be maintained while you are abroad.

As an Erasmus student, you are expected to:

- Respect the rules and obligations of your Erasmus grant agreement with your home university or your National Agency.
- Ensure that any changes to the Learning/Training Agreement are agreed in writing with both the home and host institutions as soon as they when they occur.
- Spend the full study/placement period as agreed at the host university/enterprise, including undergoing the relevant examinations or other forms of assessment, and respect its rules and regulations.
- Write a report on your Erasmus study/placement period abroad when you return and provide feedback if requested by your home university, the European Commission or the National Agency.

If you have a problem:

- Identify the problem clearly and check your rights and obligations. Contact your Erasmus coordinator and use the formal appeals procedure of your home university if necessary.

22. UCC CONTACTS

For further information please contact:

International Office

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Roseleigh,
Western Road.

Tel: (021) 4904726; Fax: (021) 4904735

Email: claremurphy@ucc.ie

Web:

www.ucc.ie/international/goabroadwithucc/outgoingerasmus/erasmusworkplacements/

Careers Service

Careers Service
3/4 Brighton Villas,
Western Road.

Tel: (021) 4902349; Fax: (021) 4903558

Email: careers@ucc.ie

Web: www.ucc.ie/careers

23. FINAL MESSAGE

We hope that you enjoy your placement. This is an excellent opportunity to gain work experience in an international environment and to apply theory to practice. It is also an opportunity to experience and enjoy a new culture. Throw yourself into your new life and be willing to meet new people at any events organised by your host enterprise. Be proactive.

Remember E is not only for ERASMUS but also for enjoyment, experience, exploring and education!

If you are experiencing any difficulties, please contact your placement coordinator or the International Office.

Enjoy your placement!