

Are you thinking of spending a year **studying abroad in Europe**? Or maybe you would like to study a whole degree? When planning your **studies abroad in Europe**, there are some things you should consider, such as the length of your studies, your status as a foreign student (exchange or free mover student) at the host university and what you will do after you finish your studies abroad. Below are some pieces of advice and information to help you get started to **study abroad in Europe**.

### Your student status: will you be an exchange or a free mover student?

If you are already studying at university or college, you may choose to **study abroad in Europe** as an exchange student or as a free mover. Here is a table below with some key data for you to evaluate which status will best fit your objectives:

	Exchange student	Free mover
<b>Tuition fees</b>	You are usually exempted from paying tuition fees or you have to pay very low tuition fees regardless you are <b>an EU or a non-EU student</b>	Unless you are an EU student, you will have to pay full tuition fees
<b>Length of studies</b>	You are allowed to study at the host institution for a limited period of time, which may vary from 3 months to over 1 year. After the study abroad period is over, you are required to return to the home institution	There is no limited period of time and you can study abroad for as much time as you would like
<b>Applications</b>	The application is carried out through coordinators, one at the home institution and another one at the host institution. The coordinator at the home institution provides you with the application forms and will submit them on your behalf	You are responsible for preparing all the necessary documentation and take care of the application submission on your own
<b>Deadlines</b>	Application deadlines follow specific dates for this type of students	You will have to submit your application on the usual dates as set forth by the host institution. Note that in some cases, EU students and non-EU students have different application

		deadlines
<b>Quota</b>	Every year, the home and the host institution agree on the number of study places available for their exchange students. This means that some institutions may have more applications than available study places. Therefore, you should list various institutions in order of preference when filling in your application	There is not limitation in the number of study places for EU students. In some cases, you will be required to take competitive admission tests as any other student. Some institutions in Europe have limited study places for students from outside Europe, above all those institutions with very low or no tuition fees. Therefore, you should always check whether there are available study places for you at the institution of your choice
<b>Recognition of studies</b>	Before your departure, you will sign a so called "learning agreement" through which your home institution will recognize the courses you passed and the grades received at your host institution once your are back. [Download a sample "Learning agreement" used for the Erasmus exchange program]	If you decide to study a complete degree abroad in Europe, there is no need for you to sign a learning agreement. However, if you intend to study abroad in Europe as a free mover for some months, and then come back to your home institution, make sure you agree with your home institution in written form on which courses from the host institution will be recognized once you are back

### Haven't you started higher education studies?

If you have just finished your upper secondary studies ([learn more about the European education system and the different levels of education](#)) and have never enrolled in studies at university or college, you can still **study abroad in Europe**. If this is your case, you will be required to prove you meet the requirements to apply for higher education studies in your home country. For example, by presenting your upper secondary school diploma. If you are not an **EU student**, or your home country didn't sign the **Lisbon Convention**, you may even have to take admission tests to ensure you meet the necessary level of knowledge to successfully complete your studies.