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Erasmus+ Outgoing Students Guide



International Programmes Office
London Metropolitan University

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to help you through the preparations for studying abroad under the Erasmus programme, and to give you some useful advice for when you arrive.

This guide has been produced by the International Programmes Office. We are the department within the University that administers the Erasmus programme, and we are also available to advise individual students about their study opportunities abroad. Our address and email is:

International Programmes Office
LCM-04 Learning Centre
Holloway Road

erasmus@londonmet.ac.uk

Every effort has been made to provide both accurate and comprehensive information. If you find any information when you are abroad which would be useful to other Erasmus students, pass it on to us so that we can improve our service.

We hope that you will have a wonderful semester abroad!

THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME

In 1987 the European Commission initiated a new programme for student and staff mobility in Europe called Erasmus. For the first time European undergraduate students were given the opportunity to study for part of their degree programme in another European country and to receive full recognition of this period as an integral part of their overall degree.

Erasmus+ is the new European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport. It runs for seven years, from 2014 to 2020, with organisations invited to apply for funding each year to undertake creative and worthwhile activities.

Erasmus+ aims to modernise education, training and youth work across Europe. It is open to education, training, youth and sport organisations across all sectors of lifelong learning, including school education, further and higher education, adult education and the youth sector. It offers exciting opportunities for UK participants to then study, work, volunteer, teach and train abroad in Europe.

Erasmus+ functions by way of a number of bilateral agreements between higher education institutions, through which the partners agree upon exchanges of staff and students. The University currently has agreements with 24 partner institutions in 13 countries across Europe for both staff and student mobility.

The agreements with each partner are for a specific number of students to be exchanged each year within an agreed subject area. Due to demand it may sometimes not be possible to arrange an exchange for every student wishing to go to a particular destination. It is a good idea to consider an alternative if one is available in your subject area.

The aims of the programme are to:

- Promote exchanges of students between universities in both EU member states and the European Economic Area (EEA) countries
- Support the pan-European mobility of university staff
- Promote the joint development of European study programmes

The Erasmus+ programme is funded by the Commission of the European Communities. Under the Erasmus+ programme you may be entitled to a student mobility grant in addition to any funding and support that you may already be receiving. These grants are meant to help towards the additional costs of studying abroad, as it is recognised that you are likely to incur extra costs, such as return travel, foreign language preparation and compensation for the higher cost of living in some of the host countries. For an explanation of how the grant is calculated see Appendix 1.

APPLICATION

You can take part in the Erasmus programme during your second year or during the first semester of your third year (if your school allows it), and will normally spend between 3 and 10 months studying at one of our partner institutions in another European country. If granted, this period of study will be fully accredited towards your final degree through the use of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). You will need to complete a learning agreement in consultation with your academic Erasmus Departmental Coordinator before going abroad, and follow courses at the host institution based on this agreement. A list of Erasmus coordinators is given in Appendix 2. Please note that you must have passed all your modules in order to participate in the Erasmus programme.

The first person to visit is your Erasmus Departmental Coordinator (EDC) to see how many places are available at your chosen university. You should then print an Erasmus application form from our study abroad web pages. This form includes a statement of motivation and it is important to complete this section carefully as it is used to evaluate how committed you are to participating in Erasmus. You then need to take the completed form to your Erasmus Departmental Coordinator. If your EDC approves your Erasmus exchange, s/he needs to sign the form. Then, return the form to the International Programmes Office in LCM-04.

CHOOSING WHERE TO GO

Once we receive this form, we will check to see if it is possible to send you to your chosen university. Our bilateral agreements let us swap a certain number of students for a certain number of semesters per year in an agreed subject area. As a result, the places for certain popular destinations, for instance Spain and the Netherlands, can get taken quickly. As well as that, some institutions ask for academic records or portfolios, and may have a rigorous selection process. Therefore, it's important to have a second choice in mind in case you cannot go to your first choice. Also remember that if your chosen university does not teach or set exams in English, you will need to be reasonably proficient in the relevant language.

There are eligibility requirements for taking part in Erasmus: you must pass all your modules from the preceding year / semester; you must have at least 80% attendance in class and you have to be able to put together a programme of modules in your intended destination that are a good match for what you would have taken at London Met.

Please note: as agreements are signed within specific subject areas, it means that only students within that area can use that link. There are subject areas/departments that do not currently have Erasmus agreements. Please check the Erasmus website to see if your area has available links before planning your placement.

Take into consideration the climate, economy, housing options, food, nightlife and flight costs for your destination. Research it thoroughly so you don't get a shock when you arrive. Also check to see if you will require a visa for the host country. Countries in northern Europe will be costlier than those in southern Europe and places like Scandinavia and Paris will cost you a lot more in things like accommodation and living expenses. Do not rely on the Erasmus grant to fund your semester – you must have enough money to see you through regardless of the grant.

LANGUAGE TRAINING

Some placements, e.g. in Spain, Italy, Germany and France, require a good command of the local language. As any grades that you obtain at the partner institution will count towards your final degree at London Met, please ensure that your knowledge of the relevant language is at a high level of proficiency. If you need some extra language training, contact the Open Language Programme or your Hub, who can give you information on studying additional modules in French, German or Spanish. (<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/courses/short/open-language-programme/>)

The promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity is one of the objectives of Erasmus+. The EC has provided an Online Linguistic Support (OLS) system that is designed to assess the competence in the language of study or work before and after the mobility. The assessment is mandatory for those undertaking a mobility for a period of two months or longer in one of the following 12 languages where it is not the student's native language: English, Spanish, Italian, French, German, Dutch, Czech, Danish, Greek, Polish, Portuguese and Swedish.

For other languages, HEIs may use other established tests. The results of the language assessment test carried out by participants before their departure will not stop them from taking part in the mobility activity, whatever the result, unless the receiving HEI has specified the language level required in the Inter-Institutional Agreement. By taking this assessment before your exchange abroad, you will be able to determine your proficiency in the language you will use to study or work. Taking this assessment before departure is a pre-requisite for all higher education students, to make sure that they meet the recommended level at their receiving organisation. The results of this assessment test will only be available to you, your sending institution and the European Commission. Based on your assessment results, you may be granted access to a free online language course before and during your stay abroad, in order to improve your language competences and help you get well prepared for your mobility abroad. Access to the course includes tutoring, forums, tips from former Erasmus+ students, and more. In case your main language is not covered by the OLS, linguistic support may be provided through other means by your sending or receiving organisation. Upon your return, you will be asked to take a final assessment which will allow you to measure the progress you made during your stay abroad. It will also allow the European Commission to know to which extent participation in Erasmus+ has an impact on students' language skills.

APPLYING TO THE HOST UNIVERSITY

When the International Programmes Office has received your signed Erasmus application form, we will nominate you to your chosen host university. For 1st semester/whole year placements, we normally contact the universities in April. For 2nd semester placements it will be in October.

Your chosen university should then normally send you their application form, information about their university and details about arranging accommodation. This mainly comes in the form of web links or email attachments, so please ensure that you have a reliable email account and that you check it regularly. Also, do not forget to adjust your Junk Mail Filter to accept unknown email addresses and make sure that there is enough memory capacity to accept around 5 MB of attachments.

When you receive their application form, fill it out and return it to them as quickly as possible (remember to keep copies of all documents). It is always a good idea to respond quickly and efficiently and within their deadlines. Do not leave it to the last minute.

ACCOMMODATION

If the host university offers help in finding accommodation, we suggest you take it. It will make your arrival a lot less stressful, and will help you to meet other students. You should make an application for accommodation at your host university at least three months before you arrive.

ORIENTATION

Some institutions organise orientation courses for incoming students to introduce them to the university, the local area, the culture and each other. They are rarely compulsory, but if you have the opportunity they do help as 'culture shock absorbers' and help you to meet other Erasmus students.

IF THEY DON'T CONTACT YOU...

If your chosen university does not contact you, then you should let us know in the International Programmes Office. We will contact them again, to see if there are any problems or reasons for the delay.

Some of our partner institutions are a little slow in providing forms, information, etc., and subsequently there are destinations about which we have very little information. For such places, it is nearly always a good idea to contact them yourselves as well as us contacting them: you may get a more informative response from a personal inquiry.

LEARNING AGREEMENTS

The learning agreement sets out what you are going to study whilst abroad. It requires a number of signatures to show that your programme of studies is approved by London Metropolitan University and by the partner institution and ensures that you are accredited for your study abroad. However, as it can be difficult to guarantee which modules you will be studying until you arrive at the host institution, the learning agreement is used to state in writing what you *hope* to study and that you agree to undertake a programme of study that is equivalent to your programme at London Metropolitan University. Once you arrive at your host you may find that you have to make changes to this programme (with the permission of your EDC) due to classes being full or timetabling conflicts, and there is a section on the learning agreement for amendments which needs to be completed in the case of any changes to your agreed programme of study, signed by all relevant parties and returned to the IPO.

Whichever university you go to you must take 30 ECTS per semester. A standard module at London Metropolitan University is worth 7.5 ECTS credits. At other European institutions, modules may have varying ECTS values. Make sure you find out how much your chosen modules are worth, and that your final programme of studies adds up to 30 ECTS per semester of study. If you fail to be credited with enough ECTS at the end of your stay then you will have to make up the missing credits at London Met by taking extra modules. This is not something you want to have to do in your final year when you already have a heavy workload.

If the International Programmes Office has any course information from our partner universities, we will pass this information on to you to help you research the modules available. However, it is up to you to research the website of the host university as to what modules they will offer. It is also worth checking with your Erasmus Departmental Coordinator to see if they have any information on your chosen university. Lastly, it also helps to talk to your coordinator in the host university.

The signed (by your EDC) learning agreement should be taken with you to the host university. When you have confirmed a programme of study, you need to get it signed by your departmental (academic) coordinator at the host university or by their Erasmus Institutional Coordinator who will normally be based in the International Office.

If there are any enforced changes to your programme of study, you **MUST** discuss the available choices with your London Met Erasmus Departmental Coordinator, before making changes to the learning agreement. Once the learning agreement has been signed, return it to the International Programmes Office.

GRADE TRANSFER

European Credit Transfer System – ECTS is an arrangement between European educational institutions which makes it possible for your marks from your host university to be translated into grades at London Met. The grades translate as follows:

75%	A	EXCELLENT: outstanding performance with only minor errors
65%	B	VERY GOOD: above the average standard but with some errors
56%	C	GOOD: generally sound work with a number of notable errors
46%	D	SATISFACTORY: fair but with significant shortcomings
40%	E	SUFFICIENT: performance meets the minimum criteria
0%	FX	FAIL: some more work required

This means that for every A grade you receive at the host institution you will receive 75% on your London Met student record. For every B grade you receive you will be allocated 65% at LondonMet, and so on. The percentages or marks you receive at the host will not be taken into consideration. Therefore, if high percentages are very important to you you need to be aware that it is not possible to receive more than 75% for any module taken abroad.

THE STUDENT MOBILITY GRANT

London Metropolitan University receives a grant for Erasmus student mobility from the European Commission, through the British Council. This enables us to provide eligible Erasmus students with grants to help them with their time studying abroad. There are a number of basic requirements for eligibility and there are conditions of payment which you must consent to before you receive any money. Two important things to note are:

We will require proof that you have enrolled at the host university before we can give you your grant. Make sure that you have enrolled at London Metropolitan University as well: this is also necessary for the grant to be paid. Please ensure that you have enough money for your first few months.

If you do not complete your period of study and then do not return the grant, then you will be deemed to be a debtor to the University and will not be able to graduate unless you settle that debt.

The amount you receive depends on:

- how long you are going away for
- how many LondonMet students also go away
- what country you go to.

The answers to most questions about the mobility grant can be found in Appendix 1.

APPLYING FOR THE GRANT

The student grant contract requires your bank details and your signature as the beneficiary, stating that you agree to the conditions listed. Please make sure you read the conditions and understand them. Although they are nothing too demanding or severe, they are legally binding and you are signing a legal document. The grant contract needs to be signed while you are still at London Met so that both you and the IPO has a copy before your study period starts.

The grant money may be paid into a UK or foreign bank account although the transfer time will be greater for non-UK accounts and we would require an IBAN number and SWIFT code rather than the usual account number and sort code. Payments to UK accounts will be made in Sterling; payments to non UK bank accounts will be made in Euros so there may be a conversion charge if you have a non Euro bank account or are not in a country using the Euro.

INFORM THE STUDENT LOANS COMPANY OR ANY GRANT PROVIDERS

For students who get funding from either Student Finance England or another provider it is important that, before you leave for your placement, you inform them that you're going on an Erasmus exchange. Normally, students who already receive funding are sent a financial assessment renewal form. Within this form there will be a section asking whether you will be spending a period abroad on an academic placement. Indicate in this section the details required of your placement and intended dates. If you tell them early enough, there should be no problem with them continuing to give you any financial assistance you are entitled to. You may also require a signature of confirmation of your participation in the Erasmus scheme to send to them. The International Programmes Office will provide you with this before you leave.

STUDENT LOAN

If you are in receipt of a Student Loan, SFE will continue to pay all of your loan payments into your bank account while you are abroad. Students going out during the first semester please note you must be re-enrolled at London Met in order for the loan payments to be released.

TUITION FEES

Home: If you are classified as a Home/EU student by London Metropolitan University and intend to spend a full academic year in a partner institution(s) you will pay £1385. However, if you study abroad for one semester only, you will have to pay tuition fees as normal. For students classified as International Students, you will still need to pay your full tuition fee, whether you are going abroad for one semester or a full academic year.

Host institution: You do not pay the following:

- Tuition fees at the host university (except for intensive language training)
- Fees for the right to use library, IT and laboratory facilities
- Examination fees

TRAVEL GRANT

Student Finance England offer a travel grant to students spending part of their degree programme abroad. You have to apply for it and you are responsible for the first £303. After that you should keep receipts for travel and apply for a refund from SFE. Your travel grant will be reduced by £1 for each £8.73 of household income over £39,796. You can apply for up to 3 return journeys between your home and the overseas institution during a full academic year abroad; help with essential expenses, medical insurance and travel visas; you may be able to apply for your children's travel costs if you're a single parent.

INFORM YOUR HUB

The Hubs will need to know that you are going abroad under the Erasmus programme. Although the IPO will send each office a list of who is going away, it may be worth you going to see them yourselves, or send them an email, stating your student number and length of period abroad. Make sure you re-enrol in August via evision. If you do not inform them, they may assume that you have not attended any of your lectures and have decided to leave the university. This has serious ramifications for your academic records.

STUDYING IN FRANCE

If you are going to France, take a French translation of your birth certificate so that you can register for a Carte de Séjour when you arrive. This will give you access to French housing grants and other benefits.

MONEY

Opening a bank account in your host country could prove to be difficult, especially if you are only there for one semester. It is probably a better idea to keep your money in your UK bank account, and then access it from abroad. Talk to your bank about your options. Metrobank does not charge for withdrawals in Europe (Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain and Sweden).

STUDENTS WITH CHILDREN

Students with children are advised to contact the Student Advice, Information and Funding Service to discuss the effect on their funding and benefits, of their placement abroad.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Some institutions require that you have proof of insurance before you can enrol; but even if they do not, make sure you insure yourself for £1,000,000 medical costs and repatriation in case something goes seriously wrong while you are away. Turkish universities will ask you to buy their own health insurance as it is now a requirement to have the policy written in Turkish, with your name and date of birth on it, in order to secure a Turkish residency permit. This can cost around £165 but is one of the extra expenditures that your Erasmus grant is intended for.

There is free travel insurance cover available for students under London Met's insurance policy. The cover is fully comprehensive, however it does not provide cover for civil liability required by some French universities. The cover is for London Met students only and it does not cover dependents. You will receive your insurance policy by email.

EUROPEAN HEALTH INSURANCE CARD

This is an important card which 'entitles the bearer to receive aid in case of urgent medical necessity in any EU country'. It also allows you to receive healthcare in any European country for the same price (whether free or charged) as the locals. You will need to apply for a time limited European Health Insurance Card – a "student EHIC". To apply, you'll need to download the EHIC application form on the NHS website and return it to the NHS Business Services Authority, you cannot apply for a student EHIC online or over the phone, and you need either an NHS number or a National Insurance number and a letter from the IPO to make the application. You are eligible for an EHIC if you are a resident of the UK or a national of any EEA (European Economic Area) country. For more information check: www.ehic.org.uk Do not pay anything for this card – it is free. However, some bogus companies are charging for it on the internet so make sure you go to the correct site.

The EHIC entitles you to treatment in the country's hospitals should you need any emergency treatment. Please note that the EHIC will not cover all medical expenses or repeat treatment for known conditions. Be sure to take photocopies of your EHIC. Leave one copy at home with your next of kin. Ensure that you have carefully read the booklet that accompanies the card, with special reference to the section on the country that you are travelling to. Each country has its own rules and regulations on the administration of health care, so be prepared. More information is available at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/countryguide/Pages/EEAcountries.aspx>

This card is not valid in Turkey.

ACCOMMODATION ABROAD

In most cases, the host university will send you accommodation information and/or an accommodation application form for their halls of residence. However, there is no guarantee that a room will be made available for you during your period of study. In these instances, here are some suggestions:

*Remember to book a room in a hotel or hostel in advance as somewhere to use as a base if you have not arranged any permanent accommodation for when you first arrive. It is not a good idea to arrive in a foreign environment complete with your luggage whilst worrying about where you will sleep for the night.

*It may be a good idea to live with local students. This will give you a more complete experience, assisting you with your language skills and knowledge of the culture.

*A good place to look for rooms is the host university's accommodation office. Also, check the notice boards around university for adverts.

*If you are struggling to find a place to live you can seek professional help from an agency. However, be careful and only register with genuine agencies. Unfortunately there are people who will try and exploit your situation so be careful and don't be pressurised into signing a contract or handing over money.

*For many rooms and flats you will need up to one month's rent as a deposit plus one month's rent in advance. Make sure you have access to this money, that you get a receipt for any money you hand over, and that you fully understand any contracts that you sign. Talk to the International Office at your host university for advice, if necessary.

TRAVEL

How you get to your host destination is up to you. For some destinations, flying may be the only realistic option. However, you can get excellent rates on train fares by booking well in advance and there is the added advantage of being able to take as much luggage as you wish without paying extra baggage allowance fees. You might even

decide to take a couple of weeks travelling overland and begin your Erasmus period with an adventure through Europe.

If you are looking for flights make sure you take advantage of STA Travel for reduced student fares plus the comparison sites on the internet such as

<http://flightchecker.moneysavingexpert.com/>

<http://www.skyscanner.net/>

<http://www.kayak.co.uk/flights>

ISIC

However you travel, get an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) before you go. This will be sufficient ID to get any student discounts that are available (both here and abroad) on anything from air travel to museum visits. ISIC Cards are available from STA Travel at a cost of £12.

THINGS TO TAKE

Most travellers will tell you the same thing: you will not use most of the stuff you take with you. Erasmus students generally say the same, in hindsight. Try this method: select what you think you will use, and then take half. Saying that, there are some unerringly useful items:

- A first aid kit: you can buy them ready-made from chemists.
- A good pair of shoes: i.e. ones that are versatile and will last.
- A sewing kit: for emergency repairs.
- A tin/bottle opener: for obvious reasons.

Remember that you can buy clothes as you need them; you do not need to pack a range of clothes for all possible (although unlikely) situations. You must also be aware that airlines have strict limits on the amount you can take (usually about 20kg – please check with your airline). You will be charged for any excess baggage over the airlines stated limit. If you do not want to pay the charge you will either have to post the excess home or to where you are going. Otherwise, it may be helpful to travel with a friend or family member.

MOBILES

If you are travelling with your mobile be sure to contact your service provider who can give you details on international roaming. Your mobile may not operate unless your provider registers your phone for international access. Some students find it cheaper to buy a SIM card in the host country. Remember that data charges are ridiculously expensive overseas so it is often better to have your phone unlocked before you go and buy a local SIM card or buy a cheap phone when you get to your host country.

TAKING YOUR OWN CAR?

If you are taking a car abroad, remember to drive on the RIGHT-HAND SIDE of the road in most EU countries! Address all legal issues beforehand, making sure your insurance, MOT, etc. will cover the period that you are abroad. Make sure you reset your headlights and respect the local Highway Code. If your vehicle has British licence plates you are required to have a GB sticker on it. If you sell your car whilst abroad you will need permission from the Customs Authorities.

INFORMATION

HOST UNIVERSITY: Try and find out as much as you can about your host institution and its academic system. The International Programmes Office will give you any information we have. However, universities are sending out information packs less and less as they move to web-based resources. Consequently, it's best to refer to the internet for detailed, up-to-date information.

HOST COUNTRY: Get yourself a good guide book. Lonely Planet or Rough Guide books are well respected, and will give you a wealth of information on the country you are moving to, the town/city you will be living in, places to visit and other important information.

Look out for local entertainment guides, which can highlight the more distinctive cultural elements of a particular country. Everyone makes a variety of entertaining faux pas when they first move to another culture, but it is always useful to know the ones that really offend, so that they can be avoided. Again, the internet is always good for up to date information on a particular town or country. For instance, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Travel Advice site is worth a visit, and is also good for health and safety related information. Additionally, you might want to contact the relevant cultural institute here in London.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Much of what we can tell you about health and safety whilst abroad is common sense, but even if you are an experienced traveller we advise you to read through this section as a precaution.

If you have a particular health condition, discuss the details of continuing your prescription abroad with your GP. Also be sure to get translated copies of any important health documentation you may have. Once you have settled in to your new accommodation it is a sensible idea to find out the location of the nearest hospital and A&E department in case of an emergency.

ACCIDENTS

In the event of sudden illness or accident, please seek help from local health & emergency services and inform the Assistance Company whose telephone number would have been included on your travel insurance. They may refuse to pay if they have not been kept informed of proceedings. You should inform a member of staff at the host university as well as the London Met International Programmes Office (erasmus@londonmet.ac.uk).

HOSPITAL TREATMENT

If you require hospital treatment, do not hesitate to call the local emergency phone number, ask for the ambulance service and give full details of the problem and the building address. Then call the reception desk (if there is one), warn them to expect an ambulance and tell them where to send the crew.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

You should familiarise yourself with the location of fire alarm points, emergency telephones, exits and designated assembly points for the buildings that you use. Any students with mobility disabilities, or other problems which may prevent them from evacuating a building quickly and unaided (when lifts are not available), should contact the campus Health and Safety Office for a Personal Safety Plan to be drawn up.

- **ON HEARING THE ALARM:** Leave the building by the nearest escape route (not necessarily the way you came in), by following the FIRE EXIT signs or as directed by any member of staff. If you come to a locked door, push/turn the handle or break the glass bolt and exit.
- **DO NOT** stop to collect personal belongings that are not immediately at hand.
- Offer assistance to anyone with special needs or visitors who are unfamiliar with the building.
- **DO NOT** use the lift, but walk quickly to the stairs and go down to the nearest exit, then go out to the assembly point.
- **DO NOT** wait by the building obstructing the pavement (at risk from falling glass) and preventing access by the emergency services.
- **DO NOT** try to re-enter the building, but wait at the assembly point until you receive instructions from the Fire Brigade/evacuation controllers (reception staff).
- If an external bomb threat affects any university building, the situation will be managed by the Police and evacuation instructions will be passed to staff.

PERSONAL SAFETY

- The less conspicuous you look the less unwelcome attention you will draw to yourself. For example, avoid coming across as a lost and confused foreigner by consulting your map or guidebook in a shop or café, rather than in a back street.
- Remember that attitudes towards drinking and alcohol vary considerably from country to country. Most young people living in mainland Europe tend to be more sensible when it comes to drinking than the average person in the UK and if you get really drunk you risk leaving yourself vulnerable to unwelcome attention. If someone in your company is in a bad condition, do make sure they get home safely.
- Avoid wandering aimlessly, or going into areas of town which are known to be dangerous, especially after dark.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash or valuables on your person. Try to divide up what you do carry on you. A money belt or wallet that fits inside your clothing is a good place to hide valuables and documents.
- 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 finding your own accommodation, talk to other students in the same areas that you are looking at and who have been through the same process. For safety, take someone with you when you go flat hunting. Also have an idea of what the going rate is in the area to avoid being overcharged.
- Hitchhiking is not advisable as a method of transport, and in some countries (e.g. France) is illegal.
- Beware of taking taxis from unlicensed operators.
- Speak to a local or the host accommodation office about where the dangerous places are in the area.

DOMESTIC SAFETY

- Check the electric/gas/water connections, etc. where you are living. If they look suspect, call someone in to fix them.

- Fit a smoke alarm. They can save your life and for a small price you will get peace of mind.
- Most European countries use electric currents of 220 volts AC. with two pin plugs as standard. Take a few adapters with you.

HEALTH AWARENESS

- Find out where the nearest emergency hospital is to where you live, and where you study. Also make sure you know the local emergency phone numbers.
- Register with a doctor.
- Have a dental check up before you go.
- Generally, local water can be used to wash things and to boil for cooking purposes, but if in doubt, do not make ice with it, and if your gums are bleeding, use bottled water to brush your teeth.
- EMOTIONAL & MENTAL PROBLEMS: Studying abroad can be a stressful experience and known, or new, emotional and mental problems can (re-) surface. Students who have serious, unresolved emotional problems could jeopardise themselves and their programme. If you have any worries about the emotional challenges involved with your Erasmus exchange, please contact the university's counselling service and ask for advice (<http://student.londonmet.ac.uk/life-at-london-met/health-and-wellbeing/counselling-and-personal-development/>)

CRISIS PREVENTION

- Keep your family and your host university informed of where you are living, and make plans for regular contact.
- Always make sure that you have access to some money; if something does go wrong, it will help you cope with most situations.
- Take a First Aid kit with you.
- Make sure you keep photocopies of all your important documents in a safe place.
- If possible try to have a back-up bank card that you can leave in a safe place. This can be used whilst waiting for your replacement cards which can often take some time to reach you. Some banks will not post new cards abroad so you will have to write a letter authorizing someone else to pick up the card on your behalf and send it to you.
- Keep a note of emergency numbers for your bank and credit cards so that you can cancel them if they are lost or stolen.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW

- Drugs. Just say no! You really do not need the hassle.
- Do not carry weapons around with you (that includes CS gas canisters).
- Remember to carry ID if the country you are staying in requires it.
- Obey the host country's laws

- In the unlikely event of you being arrested, insist on the British Consulate being informed. That way, a consular officer can advise you of the local procedures, etc.

ADVICE FOR WOMEN

Unfortunately women still need to take extra precautions when travelling abroad. Specifically, try to avoid moving into a ground floor flat or somewhere that is easily accessible from an outside staircase. If travelling at night, try and stay with a group of people. If you think someone may be following you, make it obvious that you've noticed him or her and stay somewhere with a lot of people around until you judge it safe to continue.

The way you dress could influence the way you are treated. Young women in short skirts and bare midriffs will find themselves verbally and physically harassed in some countries. Talk to your peers for guidelines to avoid any unpleasant situations.

GENERAL

Guide books such as Lonely Planet or Rough Guide have good hints on health and safety in the host country and are good sources of countless other information that will be useful during your stay. Most importantly, just relax and try to feel at home as quickly as possible. Just like in your hometown, a little common sense goes a long way.

By now you have a lot of information to help you successfully integrate yourself into your country. If you need any more advice, please do not hesitate to contact the International Programmes Office.

We hope that you will enjoy your exchange. Please remember that the Erasmus exchange is not just for academic purposes but is also an opportunity to experience and enjoy a new culture whilst making friends from all over Europe. Throw yourself into your new life and be willing to meet new people at the many events organised for you by the host university. You will not be the only person alone in a new country so do not be scared, just be proactive. This will make the transition period easier for you. Have a great time.

APPENDICES

1. Student Mobility Grants
2. Erasmus Departmental Coordinators

APPENDIX 1

WHAT IS THE ERASMUS STUDENT MOBILITY GRANT AND WHO PROVIDES IT?

Erasmus student mobility grants are intended to contribute to the additional costs of studying abroad. **They are not intended to cover the full costs of being abroad.** The grant is allocated by the European Commission in Brussels and distributed to each country's National Agency. For the UK this is the British Council based in Cardiff. From there, the money is then distributed to each participating university in the UK.

AM I ELIGIBLE FOR AN ERASMUS STUDENT MOBILITY GRANT?

To be eligible you must:

- Not have previously received an EC grant for more than 9 months (the maximum available is 12 months)
- Be registered on a course at the University, full-time, at undergraduate or postgraduate level, for which the period of study abroad is recognised towards your final degree.

However, satisfying these criteria does not guarantee that you will receive a grant and because the grants are allocated on an annual basis we will not be able to give you any guarantee in advance.

You will not normally be eligible for an Erasmus student mobility grant for the following reasons:

- Your study period abroad lasts for less than 3 consecutive months or more than 12 months.
- You have previously received an Erasmus student mobility grant which would take you over the 12 months.
- You are in the first year of higher education.
- You are receiving an award from another EU funded programme for the same period.

It may be necessary, depending on the uptake of Erasmus places in the year you are participating, to have "zero grant months" during your mobility. As we only receive a certain amount of funding from the EC/British Council there may not be enough for every student to receive a grant for every month of their stay abroad. We will allocate funds fairly between students which may mean that for some months you will not receive a grant.

WILL THE ERASMUS GRANT REPLACE MY STUDENT LOAN?

If you are eligible for the Erasmus student mobility grant, the payment will be in addition to any other funding that you would normally be eligible for. Therefore, if you are getting a student loan, as well as possibly getting a subsistence grant from somewhere, you will still be eligible for all these payments and get the Erasmus student mobility grant on top. The International Programmes Office will provide you with a letter to confirm your status as an Erasmus Student, which you can use as proof for any sponsor who requires it.

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF PAYMENT?

In order to receive your Erasmus grant you will be asked to sign an Erasmus grant contract with the university. The contract clearly states certain conditions and obligations that are attached to the grant. Be sure to read the contract thoroughly before signing it. This excerpt is from the EC guidelines:

"Students that receive an Erasmus+ grant from EU funds will have to fully or partially reimburse the EU grant if they do not comply with the terms of the grant agreement. You should carefully check the grant agreement

before signing it and keep it in mind during your period abroad. For example, if a final instalment is foreseen at the end of the period abroad, it will be subject to the submission of the compulsory online assessment at the end of the mobility, and you may be asked to partially or fully reimburse the EU grant received if you do not complete and submit the final online report."

Your grant will not be paid unless all required paperwork is completed satisfactorily and returned to the IPO promptly. This includes: the grant contract; the learning agreement (and any amendments to it); a certificate of arrival and departure; the British Council's online questionnaire.

HOW AND WHEN WILL YOU RECEIVE YOUR ERASMUS STUDENT MOBILITY GRANT?

Step 1: Prior to going to the host institution, you will be given a grant contract (which needs to be signed only by you and the IPO) and a certificate of arrival and a (signed by your EDC) learning agreement, which will have to be signed and stamped by your host institution. Once these forms are signed and stamped, they must be returned to the International Programmes Office at London Met.

Step 2: After receiving the forms, the International Programmes Office will process and authorise payments for students. We are unable to award grants to students who have not returned their arrival certificate and learning agreement. We also cannot make any payments until we have received the money from the British Council.

Step 3: Once the International Programmes Office has authorised the grant payments, the Finance Department will transfer the money directly to the students' bank account. This can take up to 10 working days depending on work pressures within the Finance Department. Approximately 70% of the grant will be paid in the first installment with the remainder paid after all forms (certificate of departure and online British Council questionnaire) have been returned at the end of your stay.

Please note: the amount you receive will depend on in which country your study/work period takes place. There are three different bands according to the cost of living in those countries and are as follows:

Country		Study Placement Monthly grant
Group 1 Programme Countries with higher living costs	Denmark, Ireland, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland, Luxembourg	€350
Group 2 Programme Countries with medium living costs	Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Cyprus, Netherlands, Portugal, Malta	€300
Group 3 Programme Countries with lower living costs	Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey	€300

APPENDIX 2

ERASMUS DEPARTMENTAL CO-ORDINATORS

Depending on your subject area you will need to contact one of the following coordinators, who will discuss a learning agreement with you and authorise your form for participation in the Erasmus Programme.

Subject Area	Coordinator	Address	Telephone	email @londonmet.ac.uk
Business	Riette van Wijnen	MT2M-01	0207 320 1674	r.vanwijnen
Translation	Zoubida Mostefai-Hampshire	BR5-04	0207 133 3859	z.mostefai-hampshire
International Relations, Political Science	Steven Curtis	TM1-24	0207 133 2049	s.curtis

Erasmus Departmental Coordinators (EDC) will be responsible for all academic matters relating to your period of study abroad, including the approval of your study programme abroad. They will need to sign your learning agreement. For the EDC's office hours, please contact them directly, using the phone numbers or email addresses given above, or you can contact the relevant departmental administration office.