

A person with a red backpack and a straw hat is seen from the back, looking towards a train. The train is white with a red stripe and is moving along a track. The background is slightly blurred, showing a clear sky and some greenery.

EUROPE AND NORDIC COUNTRIES

Departure Orientation
International Exchange Services and Education Cooperation
11.11.2025



AGENDA AND TOPICS OF THE SESSION

- Before the exchange

- Applying to your host university
- Online Learning Agreement
- Insurance
- Funding
- Accommodation

- Abroad

- Culture shock
- Changes to your LA
- Different way of studying
- Health and safety

Returning home

- Important documents and credit transfer
- Making use of your exchange experience



FEELINGS AND EXPECTATIONS

- Do you expect to experience a change in your life during your stay abroad?
- Does change stress you out, excite you or something else?
- Expectations are necessary, they can motivate and excite you
- You may also feel anxious – it's normal



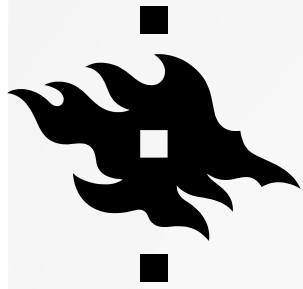
SET LEARNING GOALS FOR THE EXCHANGE

- Goals help you track your own learning and analyse what skills you have acquired, and how your attitude towards the world around you may have changed.
- Examples of goals
 - Improving academic expertise
 - New interactions and networks with experts in your study field
 - Development of language, interaction and cooperation skills: you'll know how to work in a multilingual and multicultural environment
 - Increased self-awareness, confidence and flexibility
 - You'll have developed critical thinking and problem-solving skills
 - You can follow your progress, for example, by keeping a learning diary. Be sure to start the process before leaving for the exchange and continue after returning!



PART 1: BEFORE THE EXCHANGE





INSTRUCTIONS – STUDY ABROAD

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI FLAMMA

SUOMI SVENSKA LOG IN

 STUDIES SERVICE
STUDIES.HELSEINKI.FI

Q
SEARCH

FRONTPAGE MY STUDIES INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS COURSES SISU ↗ SERVICES AND TOOLS ▼

[Home](#) / [Instructions for students](#) /

STUDY ABROAD

Select degree programme

By selecting a degree programme you are able to see the general content as well as the possible degree programme-specific content. You do not have to select a degree programme to see the Open University's instructions.

Bachelor's Programme in Cultural Studies ▼

INSTRUCTIONS

Corona: information for outgoing exchange students

The International Exchange Services has created this page for outgoing exchange students on COVID-19 virus and its influence on student exchanges.

→

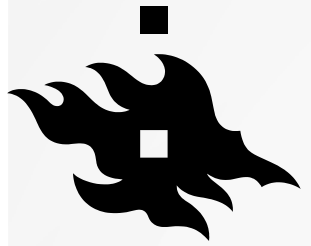
Do you want to study abroad?

You should begin to consider your destination and timetable as early in your studies as possible.

→

Feedback

Submit your request



APPLYING TO YOUR HOST UNIVERSITY

- Have you started making your application?
 - Application information has been emailed to you or can be found on the exchange university's website (be also sure to check your spam folder)
 - If you do not yet know the application deadline or instructions – find out as soon as possible
 - If you need international exchange service signatures on the application papers, make the request in good time before deadlines
 - Transcript of records: you can print it yourself from Sisu, or ask for an official one from Student Services

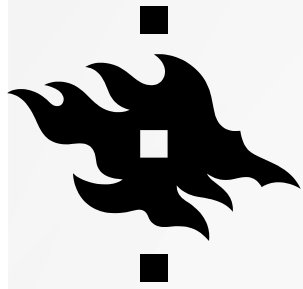




ACCEPTANCE LETTER

- The letter of acceptance usually comes via email → Remember to check the spam folder often!
- If you have applied correctly and on time, it is very likely that you will be accepted
- Sometimes approval information may be delayed if course choices are still being negotiated
- If you have not received a letter of acceptance about a month before your exchange starts, please contact the international unit of your exchange university. An exchange specialist can also contact the exchange university (studentexchange@helsinki.fi)
- Host universities usually don't give information about the progress during the application period





MOBILITY ONLINE BEFORE THE EXCHANGE

After selection, before mobility					6 / 14
Application allocated	☒	06.03.2025	Anna-Maria Sillantaka		
- Stay from : 27.01.2026 - Stay to : 16.05.2026 - Duration in months : 3 - Duration in days : 110					
Decision about the allocated exchange placement	☒	09.03.2025		Accept/Decline	
Application nominated to partner institution	☐				
Personal data completed	☒	15.02.2025		Complete personal data	
Stay from / Stay to changed	☐			Change stay from / stay to - if needed	
Remember to re-read and accept the student exchange terms and conditions after updating the semester dates.					
Questionnaire regarding means of transport and travel days	☒	12.03.2025		Click to answer	
Student exchange terms and conditions read (and saved/printed as pdf)	☒	07.04.2025	Niina Haapasilta	Read student exchange terms and conditions ?	
Student exchange terms and conditions accepted	☒	12.03.2025		Accept student exchange terms and conditions	
Contact information of the coordinator reviewing the Learning Agreement at the host institution	☐			Enter the information of the coordinator reviewing the Learning Agreement at the host institution	
You can find the information on the host university website, application instructions or the acceptance letter sent by the host university.					
Learning Agreement created and signed	☐				
In order for the Learning Agreement to be signed, please click on "Final check before signing" and in the Learning Agreement preview scroll down and click on "Sign and transfer".					
Learning Agreement signed by the International Exchange Services	☐				
Learning Agreement signed by the host institution	☐				
You can download the Learning Agreement locally by clicking on "Show current version" button and on the printing icon on the top right of the screen.					
Learning Agreement (before mobility) printed	☐				
Scholarship payment processed	☐				



BEFORE THE EXCHANGE 1/2

Checklist: [Before your exchange - instructions for those chosen for student exchange](#) | [Instructions for students \(helsinki.fi\)](#)

After receiving the letter of acceptance / e-mail from the host university, **remember to update the exchange time** (start and end date of the exchange) in the Mobility Online system (Erasmus+) OR send the information by e-mail to studentexchange@helsinki.fi (Nordplus, SEMP or if not successful in Erasmus) -> Your grant amount depends on this!

NB: Orientation and first round of exams are included in your exchange time, not re-sit exams etc.

Accept the terms of the grant in Mobility Online no later than 2 months before the exchange. However, wait until you can specify the exchange dates first. Fill in your IBAN bank account information to receive the grant.



BEFORE THE EXCHANGE 2/2

- **Student Exchange Certificate** = The exchange certificate is an official document that includes the name of your exchange programme and the time of the exchange. It states that the exchange is part of your degree.
- → After updating the exchange dates and accepting the terms of the grant.
→ Kela provides an exchange grant for the period specified in the exchange certificate.
- Erasmus students are highly recommended to take the OLS language test before exchange. Instructions are found on our [website](#) and a reminder will also be emailed to you soon. → Possibility for an online language course.



ONLINE LEARNING AGREEMENT

For Erasmus exchanges

- 2 months before the exchange
- **Create and sign Learning Agreement** link in Mobility Online
- Learning Agreements should be signed before the beginning of the exchange
- Remember to fill in the section for the recognition at the University of Helsinki!
For example: *“KEK-yht kanditutkinnon muut opinnot”* or *“elective studies of Master’s degree”*.
- Message us if you need to make changes twice before your exchange
- A PDF version of the LA can be printed out from Mobility Online if needed
- It’s sufficient that the exchange university signs the LA at the end of your exchange



ALSO REMEMBER

- Notification of temporary move abroad to Kela (social security) and the Digital and Population Data Services Agency, DVV
- Notification of change in study grant (Kela)
- Acquiring an apartment (varies depending on the destination country)
Book (if necessary) temporary accommodation in advance and start looking for an apartment when you arrive.
- Register as an **attending student at the University of Helsinki** for the duration of your exchange
- Let us know by email if you are graduating as Bachelor (Erasmus) before your exchange!



INSURANCE

- Purchase a comprehensive insurance policy for the duration of your student exchange or international traineeship! The required insurance coverage depends on your destination.
- Acquire a comprehensive travel insurance already before purchasing airline tickets and other payments related to exchange costs. When buying insurance, also check the crisis coverage provided by the insurance.
- The University of Helsinki provides an accident insurance for outgoing exchange students – valid only at the university premises and on your ways to and from -> **own travel insurance necessary for free time!**
- We recommend asking for an offer from your own insurance company or from other Finnish insurance companies. You can also ask offers from International insurance companies - please find a list of international insurance companies that sell student insurance here: <https://migri.fi/en/insurance>



EUROPEAN HEALTH INSURANCE CARD

- If you are a European citizen, request a [European Health Insurance Card](#) (EHIC) from Kela in good time
- With the EHIC, you receive medically necessary treatment in the host country with the same price as locals.
- The EHIC does not cover the costs of returning to Finland due to, for example, a serious illness or accident, so you should also purchase a comprehensive travel insurance policy.





FUNDING YOUR EXCHANGE STUDIES

- An exchange based on an agreement is tuition-free at the host university (does not exempt from tuition fee to UH).
- However, keep in mind other expenses such as: insurance, possible vaccinations, language certificates, etc.
- Read more about [funding for exchange](#)
 - Erasmus+-exchange: depending on which country you go to
Approximately 490-540 € per month (16,33 € / 18 € per day)
 - Erasmus travel grant based on distance: on average 200 – 400 euros
 - Mobility grant to Switzerland: Paid by Swiss government
- If you are entitled to [KELA](#) student benefits, you can also receive them during your exchange abroad. Remember to inform Kela if you study abroad. See the [Kela site](#) for more information.
- You can also apply for other grants or travel grants from, for example, foundations or organisations.



EXTRA ERASMUS+ SUPPORT POSSIBILITIES

- Green mobility grant: 50 € + 4 extra travel days + higher travel grant
Additional top-up grant to students with fewer opportunities
- Extra 250 € / month to those who
 - have families,
 - are family carers,
 - have disabilities,
 - suffer from a severe or chronic health condition, or
 - have received international protection
- Special needs and Inclusion support in Erasmus+
 - Based on real cost, should be applied at least 6 months in advance
 - Not for ongoing therapy



STUDENT EXCHANGE TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By accepting the Student Exchange Terms and Conditions you agree:

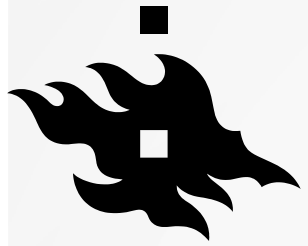
- To study full-time
 - You are required to complete academic studies for at least 5 ECTS/month
- To study within the agreed period of time
 - within the exchange period as stated in your student exchange certificate
 - Erasmus+ grant is paid **per day**
 - If you shorten or cancel your exchange you will need to pay back a part of the grant accordingly.
 - The duration of exchange will be checked from your "Confirmation of Stay" form.
 - The exchange period includes the orientation, participation in courses and the first exams (does not include re-take exams)
 - A failure to complete the required number of credits at your host university may lead to a claim for recovery of the grant.
 - The number of credits will be checked from your exchange transcript





COURSE FOR STUDENTS GOING ON EXCHANGE TO AUTHORITARIAN OR ILLIBERAL COUNTRIES

- It is essential to recognize that each nation's academic landscape varies significantly. As you prepare to embark on your academic journey abroad, understanding these differences becomes paramount.
- This course caters to students (and staff members) who are venturing to countries with distinct political and legal systems. Its purpose is twofold: first, to equip you with essential knowledge relevant to your destination, and second, to provide additional resources for further exploration.
- **New mini-course open on the [DigiCampus platform](#)** (Academic visit to an authoritarian country)
- The course has been developed in collaboration between the UH and the University of Turku



HOW DO I FIND ACCOMMODATION?

Some universities offer help in finding an accommodation:

- Fill in their "housing application" form
- Follow deadlines and instructions
- Pay the deposit in time
- You may need to pay your rent in advance
- You may be asked to sign a fixed-term agreement.
- Don't sign any agreements before you receive an acceptance letter from your host university!

Make use of:

- tips and advice from students who have already been on exchange at that university.
- different sources of information; family and friends, acquaintances, local advertisements, online platforms, Facebook groups, social media, etc.

Private Market:

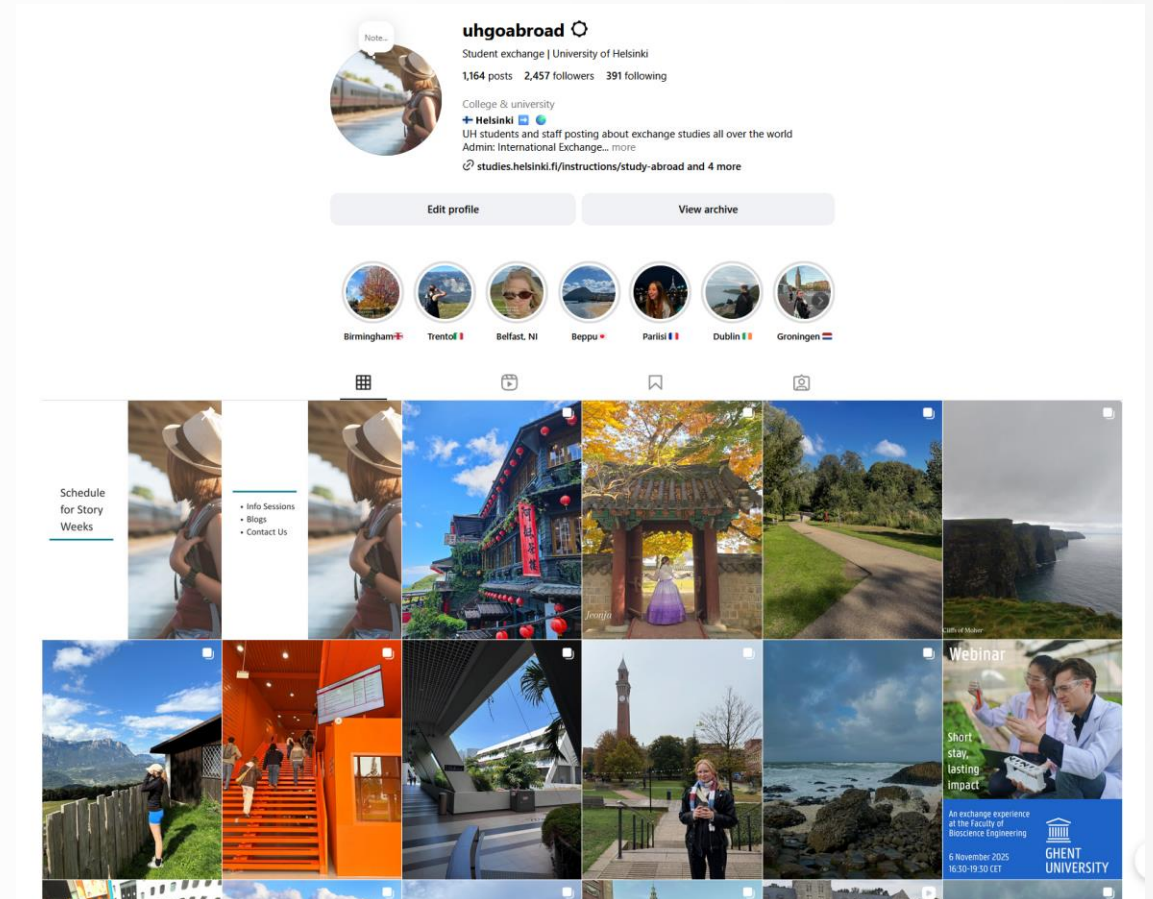
- Always ask for a written rental agreement.
- If you can, find someone local to go through the agreement with you.
- Find out what is included in the rental agreement.
- Find out your rights for terminating the agreement (when can you terminate it at the earliest and how?)
- Be aware of fraud! Don't sign any agreements before seeing the apartment.

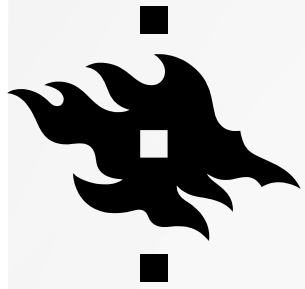
It is advisable to take care of your accommodation before starting your studies so that you can focus on studying properly. If necessary, book temporary accommodation in advance.



STUDENT EXCHANGE EXPERIENCES

You can read [blog posts and stories](#) by previous exchange students (some are in English) or follow us and read about the experiences of students who are on an exchange right now on [Instagram](#): **uhgoabroad** to get inspiration.





SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES ON INSTAGRAM

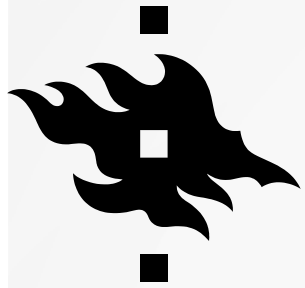
- You will receive an email about signing up for the possibility to update the Instagram account during your exchange.
- You will be given your own story week and asked to post regularly during your exchange.
- Instagram (@uhgoabroad) posts will be compensated (50€) after the exchange.
- If you are asked to tell about UH during your exchange, there are plenty of information and images you can use available in Instructions.
- Note: after the exchange you may be contacted regarding a blog post. Compensation 50€.
- If you don't want to update our account, but still wish to share your experience, use the hashtag #uhgoabroad when posting the photos from your exchange.





QUESTIONS?

- Applying to your host university
- Acceptance letter
- Before exchange
- Learning agreement



PART 2: ABROAD





EXPERIENCES DURING THE EXCHANGE

- 1. Honeymoon stage:** The excitement to experience everything from an outsider's perspective. A foreign culture is being viewed in a positive light, dismissing the negative parts.
- 2. Distress stage:** Small things start to annoy and the negative sides and practical problems surface. Tiredness, depression and feeling home sick is common during this stage.
- 3. Adjustment stage:** You will become better in getting through different situations and understanding differences between people. You will start to have less communication problems. Level of stress decreases.
- 4. Adaptation stage:** You are getting used to how things work and are starting to call this your new home.
- 5. Reverse culture shock:** While we often hear about culture shock when being in a new place, however, 'reverse culture shock' is also something that can occur when you return to your home after a period abroad. It can be worse than the culture shock in the beginning. Readjustment to your own culture can take time because of new experiences and possible changes in your self image.

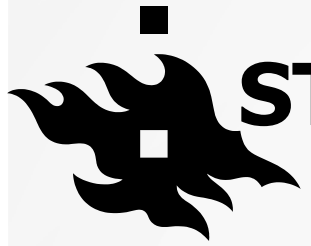
[You can read more about cultural shock on the Instruction for students pages](#)



COMMUNICATION AND SELF-REFLECTION:

You will get to know your destination thoroughly, but what about where you come from and who you are?

- Know your country - where are you coming from? What is your own cultural background? What types of thinking patterns do you have? What do you think of Finns?
- Know yourself – What are your hopes and dreams? What are you nervous about? How do you deal with changes? What would help when you are feeling homesick?



STUDYING ABROAD: PART 1

- Be prepared to change your learning agreement, follow the instructions from the university closely.
- Notice that retaking exams may not be possible during your exchange.
 - If you have problems with your studies:
- The language or difficulty of the course are not acceptable reasons to drop a class and fall behind on the 5 cr / month goal.
- Always contact your host & home university's coordinator if something unexpected happens.
- Try to be prepared for problems and make arrangements ahead of time.
- You can read more about [changes during the exchange](#) on the Instructions for students' pages
- Students should complete exchange studies at their host university and only the ECTS completed at the host university are counted as part of the exchange. Some programmes at UH might require you to take courses from UH during the exchange.





MOBILITY ONLINE DURING EXCHANGE

During the mobility

0 / 2

Local contact phone number indicated

☐

(OPTIONAL) Changes to Original Learning Agreement

☐

Please fill in this step if there's been changes to your Learning Agreement during the exchange. It's technically possible to make changes once the original Learning Agreement has been signed by all three parties. In order for the Learning Agreement to be signed, please click on "Final check before signing" and in the Learning Agreement preview scroll down and click on "Sign and transfer".

Letter of Confirmation printed

☐

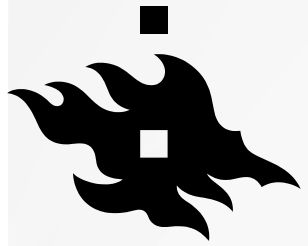


STUDYING ABROAD PART 2

Be prepared that while studying abroad you will face different ways of learning/studying:

- In UK usually broad topics in courses, not a lot of flexibility, active participation
- Netherlands: Problem Based Learning – many group assignments
- Italy: oral exams where your peers are your audience
- Sweden: large course entities (for example 15cr)
- Spain: Siesta – morning and evening classes.
- All exams during the last two weeks of the semester or academic year (for example Ireland)





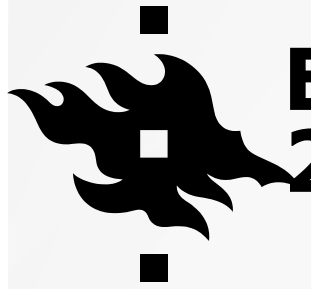
EXCHANGE AND HEALTH

- If you use prescription medication, make sure to have an EU prescription with you in English, and that you have enough medication for your stay. However, countries may have limits on how much you can bring so find out if your medication is available in your host country. Check e.g. [Fimea's website](#) on what you can bring abroad.
- If you are seeing a therapist or a psychologist on a regular basis, it is usually not best to discontinue your treatment entirely for the duration of your exchange. Contact your therapist or psychologist to discuss your treatment plan for the exchange.
- If you get sick during your exchange so that it affects your studies (also mentally)
 - **visit a doctor immediately. Get a medical certificate and contact International exchange services.**
- [Country-specific information about health services](#) can be found from the EU-healthcare pages



EXCHANGE AND SAFETY 1/4

- Visit the [Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland](#) website for current travel information
- On the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' website you find information on location-specific travel bulletins.
- Make a [travel notification](#). It allows the Ministry or Embassy to get in contact with you in the case of crisis or emergency.
- Take care of your travel documents. Before you travel, check that your travel documents are in order. You can check the passport and visa regulations at the mission or consulate of the destination country.
- Get travel insurance. It is important to take it already before first travel payments.



EXCHANGE AND SAFETY

2/4

Before you are familiar with your exchange city, please remember to be extra cautious.

- Take care of your things and ID -> remember insurance.
- Do not carry more cash with you than you might need at the moment.
- Get to know the traffic rules and laws of your exchange country. Find out how they deal with public intoxication, alcohol, drugs, etc.
- Follow the political situation. Stay away from unsafe areas.
- If you travel within your destination, make sure someone (for example another exchange student) knows where you are and when you are coming back.

Find out where the nearest Embassy of Finland or consulate is and follow them on social media.





EXCHANGE AND SAFETY 3/4



If something serious happens in your exchange destination:

- Follow the instructions of local officials and your host university.
- Contact the Finnish mission or consulate.
- Contact University of Helsinki exchange services as soon as possible. You can also ask your friend or family member to inform us: studentexchange@helsinki.fi.
- International exchange services will contact you if there is a crisis in your exchange destination.
- Save your loved ones' phone number on your phone to your ICE information. A person assisting you in case of an emergency will have access to it even when your phone is locked.

The emergency number in Europe is **112**.



EXCHANGE AND SAFETY 4/4

- Everyday safety: what places are safe during night-time?
- Witnessing a violent situation: what to do?
- Demonstrations on campus
- Changes in the start of the semester or breaks during your studies





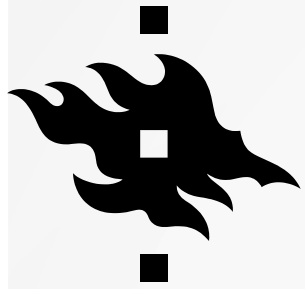
KEEP IN TOUCH DURING YOUR EXCHANGE

- During your exchange you can ask for help in exchange related questions from your host faculty and us at the International Exchange Services.
- Read the newsletter we send to your @helsinki.fi email.
- Follow us on Instagram: [uhgoabroad](#)
Use #uhgoabroad – hashtag when you post about your exchange
- Instructions for students will help you get started if you face problems during your exchange.



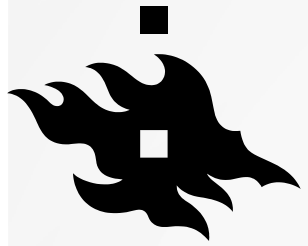
QUESTIONS SO FAR?

- Experiences and emotions during the exchange
- Studying abroad
- Exchange and health
- Safety during the exchange



PART 3: RETURNING HOME





BEFORE RETURNING HOME

Bring home from your host university:

- Have your letter of confirmation (Erasmus) signed at the end of the exchange
- Make sure your Learning Agreement is signed (Erasmus)
- Your local official transcript of studies (it might also be sent later or directly to you or International exchange services)
- A copy of course descriptions and syllabus (you may not have access to these later)
- Information concerning your credit points and grading scale
- Copies of your written work
- Read the [returning home instructions](#).
- Give us feedback on Mobility Online (Nordplus, SEMP) or with the EU Survey (Erasmus)
- All paperwork should be completed within two months after the end of your exchange.



CREDIT TRANSFER

- After you have uploaded all your exchange documents on Mobility Online, you will have to separately apply for credit transfer in Sisu.
- Your faculty's student advice is responsible for your credit transfer. If you have more questions, please contact them directly.
- Kela will check the progress of your studies from Sisu in mid-September.
- Instead of a grade you will receive a mark of approval (Pass).
- Please make sure that the studies will be located in the right academic year in your transcript.
- Read the instructions on [credit transfer](#).



MOBILITY ONLINE AFTER EXCHANGE

After the mobility

Signed Learning Agreement uploaded (only if the OLA hasn't been digitally signed) ☐

If the Learning Agreement has been digitally signed by all three parties you do not need to upload a signed pdf version of the Learning Agreement.

Signed Letter of Confirmation uploaded ☐

Transcript of Records from the host university uploaded ☐

All documents after the mobility have been uploaded ☐

Letter of Confirmation checked ☐

Number of completed credits at the host university ☐

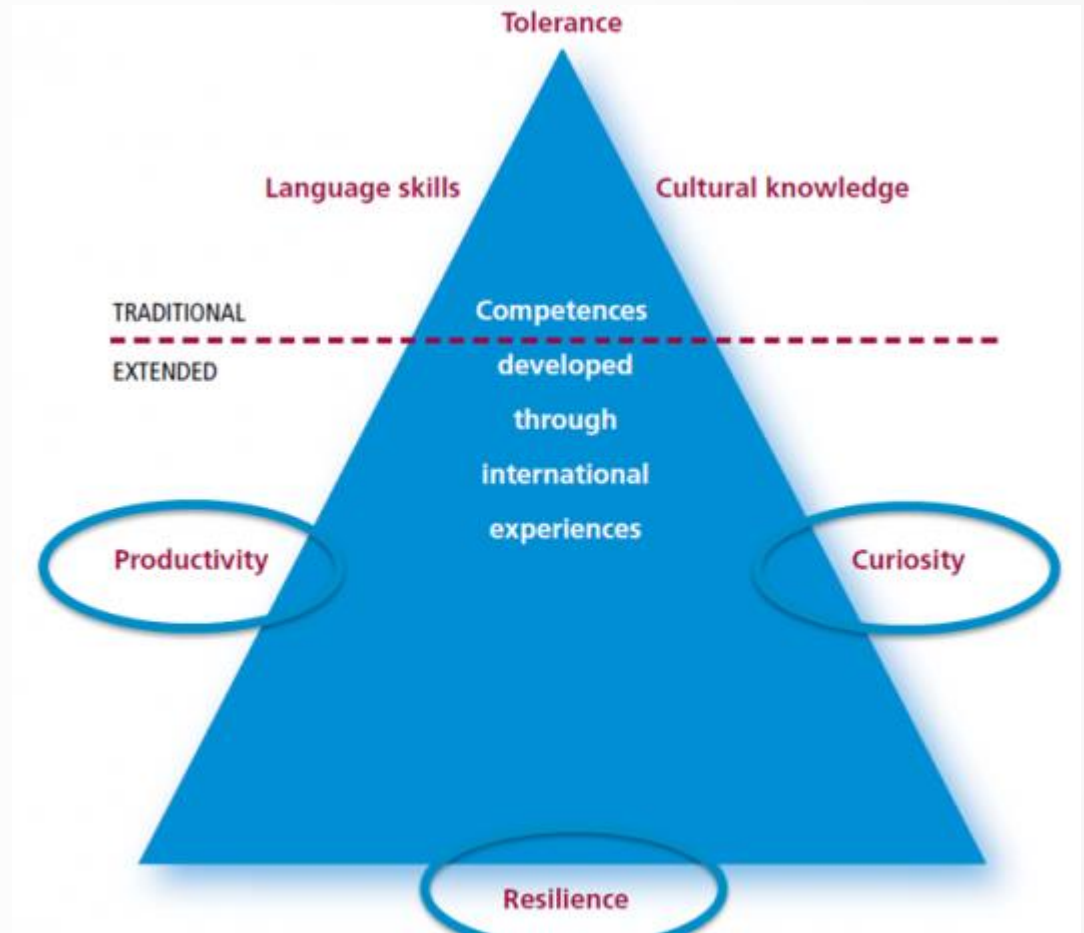
- Number of completed credits :

Learning Agreement checked ☐

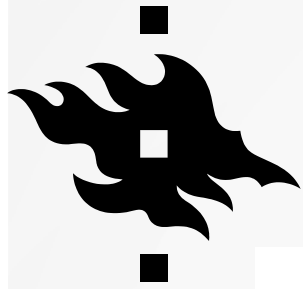


MAKING USE OF THE EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

- Continue your international experience and become part of HYY & ESN
- Share your exchange experience, for example, by writing an exchange blog post and / or acting as a tutor
- Identify your hidden skills with the SkillMill application designed to assist students in utilizing the experience gained while studying abroad and applying it to their professional lives



Lähde: Linkki: <https://www.oph.fi/en/development/hidden-competences>



FEELINGS AFTER THE EXCHANGE





QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!

International Exchange Services and
Education Cooperation:

- E-mail:
studentexchange@helsinki.fi
- Online individual appointments:
[Booking Service Vihta](#)
- Tel: +358 2941 22401 (weekdays
between 12:00-14:00)
- [Drop-in services](#) on different
campuses

