Frequently Asked Questions

This is an overview of the frequently asked questions that occur while planning to apply for a Global Exchange Programme. For the corresponding answers please scroll down.

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Orientation

Where can I find information about the student exchange programmes that the UvA offers?

Information about the different exchange programmes that the UvA offers can be found at www.buitenland.uva.nl (Dutch) or at www.studyabroad.uva.nl (English).

What are the differences between the Erasmus Exchange programme and the Global Exchange programme?

Erasmus is a programme for student exchanges within Europe. These are organised at faculty level. Therefore, for more information, you should approach the contact person at your own faculty (more information: http://buitenland.uva.nl/uitwisseling/erasmus-programma/erasmus-programma.html).

Global Exchanges are agreements with universities outside of Europe. In general they are open to all UvA students. However, there are universities that are only open for students from specific faculties. The Global Exchange programme is coordinated by the Office of International Student Affairs (BIS), which is part of Student Services.

Are there special information meetings?

Yes. BIS organises a number of meetings throughout the semester about the possibilities to study abroad and about the practical matters of the exchange. International offices at individual faculties also host their own meetings. These faculty meetings mainly cover student exchanges within Europe under the Erasmus programme. For the meetings of BIS please visit http://buitenland.uva.nl/nieuws-agenda (Dutch) or http://studyabroad.uva.nl/news-events (English).

Where to go when I have questions?

The first stop for your questions is the Central Student Service Desk. You can reach them by telephone, mail or in person at the Information Desk, Monday to Friday from 9.00 till 17.00. http://studyabroad.uva.nl/contact/international-student-affairs-bis/international-student-affairs-bis.html. The advisers of the international office of your faculty are also available to answer your questions.

Destinations

Do UvA partner universities accept students from all faculties?

In general, yes. However, some partners do impose their own programme restrictions. To check these restrictions, please consult the Digital World Map on http://www.wereldkaart-uva.nl/

What are the most popular destinations outside of Europe?

This is difficult to say, since the answer varies from year to year. The popularity of many destinations appears to fluctuate. However, New York, San Francisco, Vancouver, Melbourne, Sydney, Cape Town
and Stellenbosch always tend to be high on the list. This does not mean that you have no chance of being accepted if you choose one of these cities, but it does mean that you may be up against a lot of competition.

**What are the chances of placement?**

Applicants with the highest scores (total amount of points from the Selection Committee) will be granted a spot as an exchange student, depending on the number of available spots that the partner university has allocated to the UvA.

On our website there is a list of spots available. The spots reserved for students from a specific faculty/department are listed in this overview as well. The chances of being selected vary per destination. It all depends on the available spots and the popularity of the universities in question.


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**Application and selection**

**What are the chances of being accepted?**

This is difficult to predict, since it depends on many different factors: the quality of your application, how many other students apply for the same destination, the number of places available, etc. However, the most important factor is the quality of your application. Showing that you are highly motivated and that you have good average marks increases your chances of success.

**For how many destinations can I apply?**

You can apply for only one destination per application round. If your application is rejected, you can choose to apply again for a destination in the second and third round.

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**Language requirements**

**What language skills do I need to possess to go on exchange?**

For a number of destinations, you must pass an English, Spanish or Portuguese language proficiency test if you are not a native speaker. For English, the requirement is usually a TOEFL or IELTS test. You do not need to take this test until after the selection procedure has been completed. BIS will provide you with more information after completion of the selection procedure.

In order to study in Latin America, you are required to have an adequate command of Spanish or Portuguese. The selection procedure includes consideration of your past efforts to learn the language. You are also expected to submit a plan explaining how you intend to further improve your
proficiency prior to departure. Most Latin American partner universities will require you to take a language test after the selection and before the start of the exchange.

Courses

What kind of courses can I choose?

You can decide yourself which courses you would like to follow during your exchange. For the Global Exchange Programme you do not need to choose courses within your own field of study. However, it is your responsibility to choose courses that fit into your study curriculum. It is also important that there is a correlation between the courses that you choose and that you are able to motivate this choice of courses. Why do you want to follow them at the designated partner university? How do these courses fit into your present and future curriculum? In general it is best to choose courses that can be used either as electives or as a minor.

Can I change the courses after I have submitted my online application?

Yes. In general, the listed courses in your online application will only be used during the selection process of the UvA. When BIS decides to nominate you for the exchange programme, you will again be asked to fill in a new list of courses in the application forms of the partner university, which they will assess. The partner university also checks if you meet the academic background requirements for the courses you have selected. Once you are accepted for the exchange programme, you will be given the information to enrol in courses at the partner university. In most cases you can still change your courses in the first few weeks of the semester.

At what level can I choose my subjects?

On the Digital World Map (http://www.wereldkaart-uva.nl/) you will find the level of study (Bachelor or Master) open to exchange students. You can only enrol in Master (graduate) courses if you meet the Bachelor (undergraduate) requirements at the UvA (having obtained your Bachelor’s diploma). Admission to the graduate programme at the partner university always requires a special permission from their admission office. It is therefore more difficult to enrol in Master courses. In some cases you are able to register as a Bachelor (undergraduate) student and enrol in one or two Master (graduate) courses. Usually this will be arranged after arrival.

How do I fill in the course request list in the online application?

The course request list is a wish list of courses. You should list more courses than you will actually take as a fulltime student. In this way, BIS will be able to get an impression of your academic interests and study plan.

The course catalogue for my period of exchange is not yet available: what should I do?

As the list you submit is just a wish list of courses, please choose courses from the older course catalogues, assuming the course offerings will not change dramatically. In general, most of the courses in the current year will also be offered in the next academic year.
**Where can I find the available courses?**

Where you can find the available courses is different for each university. Sometimes you can find courses by browsing through the general webpage of the host university and look for 'Course overview', 'Course Catalogue', 'Subject List'. Sometimes course information is provided on the webpage of the faculty or academic department. Most universities also provide specific information for international students on the website of the international office.

**What is meant by course code?**

The course code is usually listed in the Course Catalogue and consists of numbers or letters representing the code of the course, e.g. LAW310. In this case the letters stand for the programme and the numbers for the level of the course (3rd year). Usually courses are divided in figures of hundreds (100, 200, 300, 400) and thousands (1000, 2000, 3000, 4000). In general you can assume that 100 or 1000 stands for a first year’s course, and so on. If in doubt, check the partner university website, go to the study programme website and search for an explanation of the academic programme. This will usually explain the build-up of the programme with the (mandatory) courses.

**What is a full time course load?**

A partner university may have a different semester system from the UvA and therefore a different understanding of a full time course load. On the Digital World Map (http://www.wereldkaart-uva.nl/) you will find a brief description of Credit & Grading per destination. By comparing their amount of credits for a full time course load to the UvA system (30 ECTS for a full time semester), you are able to calculate how many credits you should obtain at the partner university for a full time course load.

**If I want to use my exchange courses for my UvA minor, should I only select courses from the minor programme of the partner university?**

No. The minor programme of the partner university is meant for students from the partner universities interested in a minor programme. You are of course able to select courses from the minor programme abroad, but you will not receive a minor certificate from the partner university. If you are thinking about using the exchange courses for a minor programme at the UvA, please consult the study adviser of the minor programme for information on what type of courses you should select.

**When and how are the courses that I passed on exchange recognized by the UvA?**

After your exchange the partner university will issue your official transcript. Some universities will send a transcript with your achievements to the Office of International Student Affairs (BIS), some will send it to you directly and others will only send a digital copy, either to us or to you. In case your transcript is sent to BIS, we will notify you when you can pick up your transcript. After you have received your official transcript, you can start the credit recognition procedure. The procedure differs per UvA study programme but usually means the Board of Examiners of your study programme will review your transcript. As this always happens afterwards (after your exchange), it is wise to contact your study adviser in advance (before you go on exchange) to be informed about the procedure. What documents are needed, what is the deadline, what should you do if you change any courses upon arrival? Sometimes your department will use a document called a ‘learning agreement’.
The online application

What are the differences between the first, second and third application round?

Spots that were not filled up during the first round will become available again during the second and third application round. This usually means that there are more spots available during the first round than in the following rounds. It is possible that some destinations are already closed in round 2 and 3. Also, in round 3 (and for some of the destinations in round 2), you can only apply for an exchange during semester 2. Before the start of the second application round a new list of available spots will be published on the website: http://buitenland.uva.nl/uitwisseling/global-exchange-programme/aanmelden/aanmelden.html (Dutch) or http://studyabroad.uva.nl/exchange/global-exchange-programme/application/application.html (English)

What do I need to include in the online application file?

For full details on how to apply and the documentation required, please visit: http://buitenland.uva.nl/uitwisseling/global-exchange-programme/aanmelden/aanmelden.html (Dutch) or http://studyabroad.uva.nl/exchange/global-exchange-programme/application/application.html (English)

How many study credits do I need to have to qualify for a Global Exchange?

UvA students must hold at least 120 ECTS credits at the start of the exchange. Students at Amsterdam University College and Faculty of Economics and Business must hold at least 90 ECTS credits at the start of the exchange. For the summer programmes and international student conferences there are different requirements. When you submit your application, you may not yet hold the required number of credits. You need to provide a copy of your current course transcript showing how many credits you have obtained so far.

Which credits count?

All ECTS credits obtained in higher education (WO and HBO programmes) count towards the requirement described above. This includes the grades obtained in any past programme you did not complete.

How do I obtain an official course transcript?

You can obtain your current UvA course transcript (cijferlijst) from the Education Desk (Onderwijsbalie) of your study programme or at the Central Student Service Desk (CSSD). See http://buitenland.uva.nl/contact/nav (Dutch) or http://studyabroad.uva.nl/contact (English). The online application requires an English version, sorted by date. If you have accrued ECTS credits at another university or college, you will also need to obtain a transcript from that institution. It is also accepted to submit a SIS overview. In this case it is important to make sure that your name and student number is clearly visible.
**Does my application have to be in English?**

Yes, the entire application and all the documents that need to be uploaded should be in English. For this reason, the online application form is available in English only. Remember that this applies to your course transcript too, so ask for an English version of it.

**How do I calculate my weighted average grade?**

Your average mark is the weighted mean of the marks awarded for all the modules you have passed so far. This means that a module worth 10 study credits is weighted twice as heavy as one worth 5 credits. In order to calculate the weighted average mark, you will have to multiply your grades with the corresponding amount of ECTS per course, then add these numbers up and divide the total by the total number of ECTS.

An example: *how to calculate your GPA*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>ECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic English</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>AVV</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The weighted average mark is calculated by multiplying the grade with the ECTS for the course. Please omit courses that do not list a specific grade (like AVV). Then calculate the total number of obtained ECTS (also omitting the courses without a specific grade) and total number of “Grade x ECTS”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>ECTS</th>
<th>Grade x ECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic English</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>48.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>AVV</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 22.5 163.75

Then divide the total number of “Grade x ECTS” by the total number of obtained ECTS, and you will have your weighted average.

163.75 (Grade x ECTS) 22.5 (total ECTS) Weighted Average 7.277 7.3

The weighted average mark is 7.277 which may be rounded up to 7.3
Which average grade do I need to qualify for a Global exchange?

As a general rule, you should keep in mind that an average mark of 7,0 or higher across all your modules is best to secure a place in a Global Exchange Programme. Some partner universities require a minimum of 7,0 (so not a 6,9) as an entrance requirement. If your average grade is lower you may still submit an application. Keep in mind that your average grade is just one of the criteria in the selection process. If your average grade is lower than 7,0 try to compensate your lower average grade with a good motivation and résumé.

My preferred destination requires a minimum grade of 7,0: do I need to have this average grade during the application round?

For some partner universities an average grade of a 7,0 is a minimum requirement. Although it is not recommended, and it is at your own risk, you may submit an application for these destinations if your average grade is lower than a 7,0. In case you get selected by BIS, you will have to apply again at the partner university. If your average grade does not meet their required minimum by the time of this application, you will probably get rejected by the partner university.

Do fails count when calculating my weighted average grade?

No. A module only counts towards your average mark if you have passed it, either first time or on a retake. When collecting your current course transcript from the Education Desk, you should therefore ask for a copy omitting failed courses.

Academic progress

What is meant by academic progress?

We are looking for steady study progress. In principle, you should have earned at least 45 ECTS credits per academic year.

My studies have been slowed down by personal circumstances. How do I explain that?

Briefly describe the situation in the “Personal profile” section of your application form. If the delay in your studies has already been officially registered with the UvA, mention that as well. The information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence.

I have a disability or medical condition that affects my studies. How do I explain that?

Briefly describe your circumstances in the “Personal profile” section of your application form. If you have an official document explaining the situation, mention that as well – you may be asked to produce it at a later stage.
Letter of motivation

*Do I have to write a letter of motivation?*

Instead of writing a letter, you will be asked to answer six questions in the online application form. The combined answer will be your motivation for your chosen destination.

Resumé

*Do I need to provide a Resumé?*


Academic approval form

*How do I obtain Academic Approval?*

The Academic Approval Form is an entry requirement to apply for the Global Exchange Programme. You can find this form on [http://buitenland.uva.nl/uitwisseling/global-exchange-programme/aanmelden/aanmelden.html](http://buitenland.uva.nl/uitwisseling/global-exchange-programme/aanmelden/aanmelden.html) (Dutch) or [http://studyabroad.uva.nl/exchange/global-exchange-programme/application/application.html#anker-start-the-online-application](http://studyabroad.uva.nl/exchange/global-exchange-programme/application/application.html#anker-start-the-online-application) (English). Download the form, print the page belonging to your faculty / academic department and have it signed. The instructions of the form will explain who you need to contact for approval.

Selection

*Who carries out the selection procedure?*

The selection is carried out by a selection committee under the supervision of International Student Affairs (BIS) and is conducted by student advisors working at Student Services or at the various faculties.

*When will I hear if I have been selected?*

Refer to: [https://studyabroad.uva.nl/exchange/global-exchange-programme/application/application.html#anker-online-application-and-result](https://studyabroad.uva.nl/exchange/global-exchange-programme/application/application.html#anker-online-application-and-result) for dates.
**What happens if I am selected?**

We offer two information cycles, depending on the application procedure and deadline of your host university you will be assigned to ‘information cycle 1’ (starting 1 February) or ‘information cycle 2’ (starting 1 July). This date we will start with the information cycle to help you prepare your application for the host university. Until then you do not need to take any action.

On the date of the start of your ‘information cycle’ you will also be added to a group on Canvas that provides all the information needed to prepare you step-by-step for your exchange.

**What happens if I am not selected?**

In case you are rejected in the first application round, you are still eligible to apply for this programme again during the second or third round if there are still spots available. In case you are rejected and you decide to apply again for the next round, we advise you to attend the Feedback meeting for general tips on improving your application. The feedback meeting will be announced on the website: [http://buitenland.uva.nl/nieuws--agenda](http://buitenland.uva.nl/nieuws--agenda) (Dutch) or [http://studyabroad.uva.nl/news--events](http://studyabroad.uva.nl/news--events) (English).

**Can I be put on a waiting list if I am not selected?**

No, there is no waiting list. If you did not get selected in the first application round you can apply again during the second application round.

**Are there any further deadlines to consider?**

If you want to apply for an Erasmus exchange through your faculty, this procedure has its own deadlines. You can also apply for a short term exchange, such as a Global Summer Programme or a Global Student Conference. For more information see: [http://buitenland.uva.nl/uitwisseling/global-exchange-programme/na-selectie/na-selectie.html](http://buitenland.uva.nl/uitwisseling/global-exchange-programme/na-selectie/na-selectie.html) (Dutch) or [http://studyabroad.uva.nl/exchange/global-exchange-programme/after-selection/after-selection.html](http://studyabroad.uva.nl/exchange/global-exchange-programme/after-selection/after-selection.html) (English)