

UNIVERSITÀ DELLA SVIZZERA ITALIANA, LUGANO  
FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE ECONOMICHE

**STUDY-ABROAD / MOBILITY PROGRAMME  
INTERNAL GUIDELINES**

January 2015

**1 General considerations**

**1.1 Premises**

From the outset, the Faculty of Economics has firmly believed in the idea of student mobility, adopting a strategy of openness, and promoting cooperation with other universities also in the field of student exchange. A mobility programme provides students with an extra opportunity for enhancing their academic education, through access to different schools of thought, teaching methods, and cultures. The process is supported by the existence of bilateral agreements or special partnership contracts.

**1.2 Objectives**

<sup>1</sup> A period of study in another university or institution of higher education, preferably in a different language area, is designed to foster in students a wider cultural, scientific, and linguistic perspective, while helping them enrich and consolidate their acquired knowledge and skills.

<sup>2</sup> Although a mobility semester is strongly recommended at the graduate (Master's) level, it may also be undertaken as part of the Bachelor's curriculum.

<sup>3</sup> In general, it is advisable for Bachelor's students to spend their first two years (foundation studies) at USI, leaving the study-away period till the third and final year.

**1.3 Principles**

<sup>1</sup> This set of guidelines is intended for both Bachelor's and Master's degree students.

<sup>2</sup> While being temporarily the guests of another university, pursuing a study plan compatible with their degree curriculum, students remain matriculated at USI.

<sup>3</sup> It is worth stressing that mobility students remain subject to the *Regulations* of their home institution. Results of examinations or other course-work obtained outside USI will be integrated inasmuch as they satisfy the criteria of credit award of this University. The host institution provides guest students with the same resources and infrastructure available to its own students. Thus, guest students attend classes and take examinations by the same standards as resident students. At the end of the stay, students are issued with an official Transcript of results, which records details of successful examinations, related grades and credit points; if required, an attendance certificate may also be issued.

<sup>4</sup> Each student is responsible for organising his/her study abroad period. Note, however, that unless they elect to be free movers, students should not contact the host institution directly. This part of the procedure is conducted between the USI's International Relations and Study-abroad Service and its counterpart in the partner institution, according to the terms of the existing agreement.

#### 1.4 Duration

A stay abroad generally lasts one semester (30 ECTS points) when the student undertakes it as part of a Master's programme; and may be extended to a maximum of two semesters if it is undertaken during the undergraduate (Bachelor's) programme.

#### 1.5 Study plan and credit validation

<sup>1</sup> Pass results in examinations taken outside USI are fully recognised in accordance with the terms and conditions stipulated in the degree curriculum and the *Study Regulations*.

<sup>2</sup> To guarantee and facilitate the accreditation of his/her results, the student is expected to put forward a list of courses he/she plans to attend at the host institution. This is done by completing a form, '*Proposta programma di studio fuori sede*' (*Study-abroad programme proposal*), which may be downloaded from the web site. The study plan of a Bachelor's candidate needs to be approved by the Tutor for examinations; while that of a Master's candidate needs to be approved by the Master's programme director.

<sup>3</sup> As a rule, the host institution arranges for examination results to be sent directly to the Tutor for examinations and/or to USI's International Office. It is the Tutor for examinations' responsibility to register the corresponding ECTS points, and notify the student.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>4</sup> **Outside the ECTS area.** Students who spend their mobility semester outside the European Credit Transfer System area are advised to attend as many courses and take as many examinations as is necessary in order to obtain the number of credits corresponding to an equivalent semester programme at the host institution. The International Relations Office at USI checks and confirms *the number of credits considered to be equivalent to a full-time programme* before the student's departure. The study plan must in any case and ultimately be approved by the Tutor for examinations. The student who returns to Lugano with the appropriate results corresponding to the *equivalent full-time programme*, previously approved, will be awarded 30 ECTS points. If the full programme has not been achieved, the candidate will be awarded a pro-rata number of ECTS points on the basis of the *equivalent full-time programme*. Examination results for courses taken on exchange are not transferred to the diploma; only the name of the courses and the total credit for the exchange (normally 30) are. They are designated as 'exchange credits' on the final diploma. The exchange grades are not included in the calculation of the overall average grade achieved in the Bachelor/Master. For future use, students are entitled to document the received grade(s) by enclosing the transcript from the exchange institution.

<sup>5</sup> The fact of spending time abroad or elsewhere in Switzerland, attending a university other than USI, does not in itself earn students credits; the *value* of a study semester away from the home institution is measured or quantified by formal course evaluation (grades) and related credits which the candidate earns on the basis of passing examinations or assessed written work delivered (e.g. dissertation, term

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<sup>1</sup> The new Clause was formally approved by the Faculty on 31 March 2010 and came into force on that date.

paper).

## 1.6 Financial aspects

<sup>1</sup> Students who undertake a mobility semester recognised as part of the criteria for obtaining a degree (Bachelor or Master) are granted a 50% reduction in the semester tuition fee. Should a student (especially free movers) incur substantial extra costs, for example, the payment of very high registration fees, he/she may put in a request in writing for a further reduction in the semester fee at USI.

### <sup>2</sup> Study grants

To find out more about grants and other funding sources, please go to: [http://www.ch-go.ch/repository/proxy/oi-files/10232/era/mob/2014\\_erasmus\\_MOB\\_Grants\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ch-go.ch/repository/proxy/oi-files/10232/era/mob/2014_erasmus_MOB_Grants_EN.pdf).

## 2 Typology of study abroad programmes

### 2.1 Introduction

Depending on individual demands, objectives and other personal reasons, students may choose from different types of 'stay abroad' opportunities: they may decide to remain inside the Swiss borders, and take part in the Swiss-mobility programme; or to benefit from one of the established European bilateral agreements (commonly referred to as 'Erasmus'); or to take advantage of a particular association of USI with a partner institution; or, finally, they may seek their own destination, by applying to study at an institution with which USI has no privileged connections, as a 'free mover'.

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### 2.2 Swiss Mobility (CH)

Students are entitled to spend a term of study at another Swiss university. While they remain matriculated at the Università della Svizzera italiana, they may, for one semester (maximum two), attend classes and take examinations in any of the institutions of higher education in Switzerland in the framework of the 'Swiss mobility' programme.

For detailed information on the Swiss mobility programme please consult USI's International Relations and Study-abroad Service web site: [www.relint.usi.ch](http://www.relint.usi.ch).

### 2.3 European programmes

<sup>1</sup> Students may apply to take part in the SEMP programme, by selecting one of the European universities with which USI has a bilateral agreement. The existence of a contract simplifies the administrative and financial aspects of the admission process considerably.

Fuller information on the programmes is available on the web site of the Study-abroad Service: <http://www.relint.usi.ch/en/studenti-usi/tipi-mobilita/erasmus-usi.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> An updated list of agreements and partner institutions may be viewed at the following web address:  
<http://www.relint.usi.ch/universita.htm>

## **2.4 Special agreements**

Students may also spend a semester studying in a university linked to USI through a special partnership agreement, set up by fellow academics of the two institutions in order to encourage and facilitate student exchange programmes.

## **2.5 Free-movers**

Where no agreement is in place, students may nonetheless seek information on a university of their choice and make an initial contact. The officer in charge of the Mobility programmes for the Faculty or the Master's director are ready to provide assistance especially during the initial phase, when an official introduction of the student to the host institution or an authorisation letter may be required to advance the admission process.

## **2.6 Summer Schools**

Students enrolled at the Faculty of Economics (both levels) can transfer up to 6 ECTS points earned by participating in a summer school programme<sup>2</sup>.

# **3 Organisation of mobility**

## **3.1 General information on enrolment and admission procedures**

<sup>1</sup> Students will find ample information on criteria and conditions of admission, contacts with the partner institution, closing dates for application, accommodation, insurance, study grants, end of stay report, and other items of practical information, on the web site of the International Relations and Study-abroad Service: [www.relint.usi.ch](http://www.relint.usi.ch). In particular, for more on Erasmus programmes, please read the following document: '[Study-Abroad Guide](#).'

<sup>2</sup> Remember that, in the case of reciprocal or bilateral agreements, the text of the contract stipulates a maximum number of admissible students per semester or academic year. Should one or the other party wish to deviate from the rule, exceptions can occasionally be granted, depending on the degree of flexibility of the partner institution. It is also worth stressing that exceptions to the rule might have a direct (negative) impact on the level of funding allocated to Erasmus grants.

## **3.2 USI's International Relations and Study-abroad Office**

<sup>1</sup> The International Relations and Study-abroad Service of the Università della Svizzera italiana provides targeted advice and practical assistance to undergraduate and graduate students as they consider joining a study-abroad programme in Switzerland, Europe, or extra-European countries.

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<sup>2</sup> The new Clause was formally approved by the Faculty on 26 March 2014 and came into force on that date.

<sup>2</sup> The Service's mission is to look after students who, having carefully examined the possibilities, require assistance with the administrative and organisational aspects of the stay, and with various steps in the procedure of admission to the chosen university.

<sup>3</sup> An information / orientation session is organised during the autumn term, for all students. The coordinators outline the essential aspects of the study-abroad programme; at the end of the presentation, students are invited to ask questions or more details on particular cases or related matters.

**Please contact:**

Head of Service: Arianna Imberti Dosi.

Telephone: +41 58 666 4626

Email: [relint@usi.ch](mailto:relint@usi.ch)

Room 229, Main Building. Office hours are posted on the office door.

### 3.3 The Tutor for examinations and the Examinations Secretary

<sup>1</sup> The Office of the Tutor for examinations must be kept informed as follows: (1) during the preparatory stages (submission of the study plan); (2) during the stay abroad (submission of any possible changes in the list of subjects previously put forward); (3) at the end of the stay abroad period (recording, conversion of grades and accreditation of ECTS points).

<sup>2</sup> The specific forms to be used are: '*Proposta Programma di studio fuori sede – Bachelor*', and '*Proposta Programma di studio fuori sede – Master*'. The student will choose the appropriate one, complete it with a list of the courses and examinations to be taken in the host institution, and return it as indicated at the bottom of the form.

<sup>3</sup> Examination results are notified as described in section 1.5 above.

**Please contact:** Edoardo Beretta, Director of examinations.

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Room 257A, Main Building. Weekly reception hours by appointment.