DANUBIUS INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

ERASMUS+ INTERCULTURAL PREPARATION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

Preparing for an International Learning Experience

Danubius International University, International Relations Office
Revision 2026



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1. WELCOME TO YOUR ERASMUS+ EXPERIENCE!

Congratulations on taking an important step towards your international academic and personal development!

Participating in an Erasmus+ mobility is much more than studying or completing a traineeship abroad. It is an opportunity to discover new cultures, develop international friendships, improve communication skills, explore different educational systems and become an active member of the European academic community. Living and learning in another country will expose you to different traditions, values, attitudes, communication styles and ways of thinking.

This guide has been developed by Danubius International University to prepare you for your immersive intercultural experience, understand cultural differences, adapt to a new environments and make the most of your Erasmus+ mobility.

Our message to you: Be open-minded, be respectful, be curious and embrace diversity!

2. WHAT IS INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE?

Intercultural competence is the ability to communicate and interact effectively and respectfully with people from different cultural backgrounds.

It involves :

1. Cultural awareness – understanding that people may have different values, traditions and social practices.
2. Open-mindedness – being willing to learn from perspectives different from your own.
3. Empathy – trying to understand other people's feelings, experiences and viewpoints.
4. Respect – recognizing cultural, linguistic, religious and social diversity.
5. Adaptability – adjusting your communication and behaviour to unfamiliar situations.
6. Active listening – paying attention to what others say without making premature judgements.

Remember: Cultural differences are not obstacles. They are opportunities to learn.

3. GETTING READY FOR A NEW CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Before travelling abroad, take some time to learn about your host country and institution.

3.1. Discover your host country

Find reliable information about:

1. The geographical location and main characteristics of the country.
2. Its history, cultural heritage and national traditions.
3. Official and commonly spoken languages.
4. Social customs and everyday etiquette.
5. Public holidays and religious celebrations.
6. Local food and eating habits.
7. Public transport and communication systems.
8. Student life and social activities.

Do not rely exclusively on stereotypes or information from social media. Use reliable sources and ask your host institution for practical information.

3.2. Understand cultural differences

You may encounter differences in:

1. Greetings and forms of address.
2. Personal space and body language.
3. Communication styles: direct or indirect.
4. Attitudes towards punctuality and time management.
5. Classroom interaction and relationships with teachers.
6. Group work and academic expectations.
7. Social relationships and everyday routines.

Avoid assuming that your own cultural habits are universal. What is considered polite in one country may be interpreted differently in another.

3.3. Be aware of cultural misunderstandings

Misunderstandings can occur even when people have good intentions.

If you experience an unfamiliar situation:

1. Stay calm and avoid immediate judgements.
2. Ask questions politely.
3. Listen carefully to the other person's explanation.
4. Consider different cultural perspectives.
5. Clarify your intentions and communicate respectfully.
6. A willingness to understand is the first step towards successful intercultural communication.

4. COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES

Effective communication is essential for a successful international experience.

During your mobility:

1. Speak clearly and use simple language when necessary.
2. Avoid slang, expressions or jokes that may be difficult to understand.
3. Be patient when communicating with people who speak another language.
4. Respect different accents and levels of language proficiency.
5. Pay attention to non-verbal communication.
6. Do not interrupt or dismiss different opinions.
7. Ask for clarification whenever something is unclear.

Remember: Good communication is not about speaking perfectly. It is about understanding and respecting one another.

5. ADAPTING TO A NEW ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

The educational system of your host institution may differ from the one you are familiar with.

You may encounter different approaches to:

1. Teaching and learning methods.
2. Classroom participation and discussions.
3. Independent study and research.
4. Group assignments and teamwork.
5. Examinations and assessment.
6. Academic communication and feedback.
7. Your responsibilities as an Erasmus+ student
8. Attend classes and participate actively in academic activities.
9. Respect the academic calendar and deadlines.
10. Follow the Learning Agreement.
11. Communicate with your teachers and academic coordinators.
12. Respect academic integrity and avoid plagiarism.
13. Inform the relevant coordinators about any difficulties.
14. Request changes to your Learning Agreement through the established procedures.
15. Your mobility is an academic commitment as well as a cultural experience.

6. CULTURAL SHOCK AND THE PROCESS OF ADAPTATION

Moving to another country may involve emotional and psychological challenges.

You may initially feel excited and enthusiastic, but you may also experience uncertainty, homesickness or frustration.

Cultural adaptation is a personal process and may develop differently for each student.

Common stages of cultural adaptation

Stage 1 – The excitement phase

Everything seems new, interesting and exciting. You enjoy discovering the country and meeting new people.

Stage 2 – The adjustment challenge

Differences in language, food, communication and daily routines may become more noticeable. You may feel tired, frustrated or homesick.

Stage 3 – The adaptation phase

You gradually become more familiar with your surroundings, understand local customs and develop new routines.

Stage 4 – The integration phase

You feel more confident, establish meaningful relationships and become comfortable participating in the host community.

These stages are not universal or strictly sequential. It is perfectly normal to experience different emotions throughout your mobility.

How to manage cultural adjustment

1. Keep in touch with family and friends.
2. Build friendships with local and international students.
3. Maintain a healthy daily routine.
4. Explore your host city and participate in student activities.
5. Ask for support when you need it.
6. Give yourself time to adapt.

If you experience persistent emotional difficulties, contact the student support services of your host institution and the International Relations Office representatives at Danubius International University.

7. RESPECTING DIVERSITY AND PROMOTING INCLUSION

Erasmus+ promotes equal opportunities, inclusion, diversity and fairness.

Every student deserves to feel safe, respected and included, regardless of their:

1. Nationality or cultural background.
2. Language or ethnicity.
3. Gender or age.
4. Religion or beliefs.
5. Disability or health condition.
6. Social or economic background.
7. Personal circumstances.
8. Be an inclusive Erasmus+ participant
9. Respect people whose experiences and opinions differ from yours.
10. Avoid discriminatory language and behaviour.
11. Challenge stereotypes and prejudices.
12. Be supportive towards students who may experience barriers to participation.

13. Respect different cultural and religious practices.
14. Contribute to a welcoming and inclusive academic environment.

Students with fewer opportunities will receive additional support to participate fully in international mobility.

If you need specific arrangements or assistance, immediately contact Danubius International Relations Office before departure so that appropriate support can be discussed and organized.

8. EVERYDAY LIFE IN YOUR HOST COUNTRY

Successful intercultural adaptation also means understanding how everyday life works.

Before departure, make sure you know:

1. How to access accommodation and university facilities.
2. How public transport operates.
3. Where to find supermarkets, pharmacies and medical services.
4. How to contact emergency services.
5. What local laws and regulations apply.
6. How to manage your personal budget.
7. Which communication applications are commonly used.
8. Respect local laws, institutional regulations and community standards.

Be responsible when using social media and sharing photographs or information about other people. Always respect their privacy and obtain consent when appropriate.

9. HEALTH, SAFETY AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Your safety and well-being are essential throughout your Erasmus+ experience.

Before departure:

1. Check your health insurance coverage.
2. Prepare the necessary travel and identification documents.
3. Obtain information about medical services in the host country.
4. Save emergency contacts.
5. Inform yourself about local safety regulations.
6. Keep copies of important documents.

During your mobility:

1. Follow the rules of the host institution.
2. Avoid situations that may put your safety or the safety of others at risk.
3. Respect local legislation.
4. Report serious incidents or difficulties to the appropriate institutional representatives.
5. Ask for assistance whenever necessary.

For emergencies, use the official emergency services number applicable in your host country.

Within the European Union, the common emergency number is 112.

10. GREEN ERASMUS+: TRAVEL RESPONSIBLY

Erasmus+ encourages environmentally sustainable practices and responsible behaviour towards the environment.

As an Erasmus+ participant, you can contribute to a greener mobility by:

1. Choosing sustainable means of transport, such as trains and buses, whenever feasible.
2. Exploring the host city on foot or by bicycle.
3. Using public transport instead of private cars whenever possible.
4. Reducing plastic consumption and avoiding unnecessary waste.
5. Saving water and electricity.
6. Reusing materials and recycling whenever possible.
7. Using digital documents instead of printing whenever appropriate.
8. Participants may be eligible for additional financial support for green travel, according to the applicable Erasmus+ rules and institutional procedures.

Small actions can make a meaningful difference!

11. MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR ERASMUS+ EXPERIENCE

Your international experience should not be limited to academic activities.

We encourage you to be an active participant in the academic and social life of your host community.

1. Participate in cultural events and student activities.
2. Join international student associations.
3. Meet students from different countries.
4. Explore museums, historical sites and cultural institutions.
5. Participate in volunteering and community activities.
6. Share your own culture and traditions.
7. Learn basic expressions in the local language.
8. Develop friendships and professional connections.

12. YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN ERASMUS+ STUDENT

The Erasmus+ Student Charter provides important information about your rights and obligations before, during and after your mobility.

You have the right to:

1. Receive guidance and information before departure.
2. Benefit from fair and transparent mobility procedures.
3. Be treated equally and without discrimination.
4. Receive information about academic activities and recognition procedures.
5. Access the support services available at the host institution.
6. Have your successfully completed learning activities recognised in accordance with the Learning Agreement.
7. Receive the financial support provided under the applicable grant agreement.

You are responsible for:

1. Respecting the rules of the host institution and host country.
2. Completing the agreed learning activities.
3. Maintaining academic integrity.
4. Respecting cultural diversity and the rights of others.
5. Taking care of your health and safety.
6. Informing the relevant coordinators about difficulties or changes.
7. Completing the required participant report after mobility.
8. Read the Erasmus+ Student Charter carefully before departure.

13. BEFORE YOU LEAVE – YOUR INTERCULTURAL CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to make sure you are prepared.

Cultural preparation

1. Learn about the host country's culture and traditions.
2. Research the local language and basic expressions.
3. Familiarize yourself with social customs.
4. Identify possible cultural differences.
5. Academic preparation
6. Read the information provided by the host institution.
7. Check your Learning Agreement.
8. Understand the academic calendar and assessment system.
9. Contact your academic coordinator if you have questions.

Practical preparation

1. Arrange accommodation and travel.
2. Check your insurance coverage.
3. Prepare your documents.
4. Save emergency contacts.
5. Plan your personal budget.
6. Personal preparation
7. Be open to new experiences.
8. Prepare yourself for cultural differences.
9. Be willing to communicate and make new friends.
10. Know where to ask for support.

14. AFTER YOUR MOBILITY – SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE!

Your Erasmus+ journey does not end when you return home.

Take time to reflect on your experience:

1. What have you learned about another culture?
2. How has your communication improved?
3. What new academic and personal skills have you developed?
4. What challenges have you overcome?
5. How has your international experience changed your perspective?
6. Share your experience with other students at Danubius International University.

Your feedback, stories and recommendations can inspire future Erasmus+ participants and contribute to improving the university's international mobility activities.

GO BEYOND BORDERS. DISCOVER CULTURES. BUILD YOUR FUTURE!

An Erasmus+ mobility is an investment in your education, your personal development and your future.

Be curious. Be respectful. Be inclusive. Be responsible.

Be an Erasmus+ Ambassador!

USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

European Commission – Erasmus+ Programme Guide

https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-programme-guide

Erasmus+ Student Charter

https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/resources-and-tools/erasmus-student-charter-0

Erasmus+ Online Language Support

https://academy.europa.eu/

Europass – European Skills and Qualifications

https://europass.europa.eu/

Erasmus+ National Agency – Romania (ANPCDEFP)

https://www.erasmusplus.ro/

Danubius International University – International Relations Office

https://univ-danubius.ro/departartamentul-de-relatii-internationale/misiune

Dr. Emanuel-Stefan Marinescu-Head of Foreign Affairs

Danubius International University

International Relations Office

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