

# **Erasmus+ KA103 Frequently Asked Questions for National Agencies**

**October 2015**

This document covers the main questions and answers for National Agencies involved implementing the Erasmus+ programme.

If your question is not covered below, you are invited to raise the issue to the Content Helpdesk (restricted access – available from 26 October).

## KA1 Student Mobility

### **Is there a specific time limit by which a student has to return after the mobility?**

There is no specific provision concerning the actual travel back to the sending country. However, for the purpose of calculating the grant the student can receive, please note that the HEI-student grant agreement article 2.2 indicates that "the end date of the period abroad shall be the last day the participant needs to be present at the receiving organisation".

### **If a student extends their mobility, can they have a gap between the original end of their mobility and the beginning of their extension?**

Student mobility periods may be interrupted if this is agreed upon between the student and the institutions involved, independently from an extension or not. Therefore, this is fully allowed, provided the extension has been requested more than one month before the original end date of the mobility, and that the mobility period does not extend beyond the mobility project's end date. In Mobility Tool+, the beneficiary will encode the total duration in days of all interruptions that occurred during the mobility activity period in the field called 'Interruption Duration (days)'.

### **The Programme Guide states that students in one-cycle study programmes can be mobile for up to 24 months in total. What are one-cycle study programmes?**

What is meant here are integrated/long programmes leading either to a first or a second-cycle degree and which, in some countries, can still be better characterised by duration in years rather than credits. In most of these countries, the programmes outside the Bologna first-cycle model are in the fields of medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, nursing and midwifery and in most cases involve 1-8 % of the student population. The typical length of integrated programmes leading to regulated professions is in general 300-360 ECTS/five-six years depending on the regulated profession in question.

### **Which mobility opportunities does Erasmus+ offer to doctoral candidates?**

If the HEI considers doctoral candidates as students, they should opt for a student study or traineeship mobility as with any other student. They are also eligible for recent graduate traineeships, provided that they had applied for it when they still were enrolled at the HEI as doctoral candidates. If, on the other hand, doctoral candidates are considered to be staff by the HEI, they can apply for staff mobility, either for teaching or training.

### **Can an HEI give priority to students who have never been mobile?**

Yes, they can give priority to students that have never been mobile. The important thing is that this is clearly communicated before the selection process and is applied in a clear, fair, transparent and well-documented way to all applicants from the same HEI.

### **If a student is going on exchange to their "home" country, are they eligible for an Erasmus+ grant?**

Yes. However, HEIs can give a lower priority to those students returning to their "home" country, but such lower priority has to be communicated to all students as part of the selection criteria in a clear, fair, transparent and well-documented way.

### **Are recent graduates obliged to return from their training placement within one year of their graduation?**

The objective of traineeships for recent graduates is to facilitate the transition into the labour market by offering students the possibility to take up the opportunity of a traineeship for a period of up to one year immediately after their studies. So the "one year" includes both the start and the end dates. However, students are not obliged to return after their traineeship; they can stay on but be supported by other means such as employment or other training support.

### **When is a former student considered to be a graduate?**

We would propose the most pragmatic solution: when the student receives notice from the University that he or she has passed their exams and will be awarded a degree.

## **KA1 Staff mobility**

### **Is it possible to go for two days of staff training and then another three days in another month?**

There is no maximum number of staff mobility periods per year. It is up to the sending HEIs to define the selection priorities in a fair and transparent way. However there is a minimum of two days for each mobility period.

So 2+3 days is ok, but not 1+1+1+1+1.

### **If a travel grant has been awarded to a staff member based on unit costs and the travelling costs are in fact lower than the awarded grant, can the participant use the remaining sum for subsistence costs?**

Yes they can. This is the advantage of using unit costs instead of real costs. The payment amount is triggered by the event (destination and duration), not by the real costs incurred.

### **A teacher from Finland first travels to the Netherlands for staff training and then goes directly to Belgium for another staff training period. How should travel grants for such cases of consecutive staff mobility periods be calculated?**

These activities are represented by two separate mobilities. The 1st mobility covers the staff training that takes place in the Netherlands. The sending institution/city/country is the one of Finland, and the receiving

institution/city/country is the one of the Netherlands. The travel grant is calculated based on the respective distance band.

The 2nd mobility covers the staff training that takes place in Belgium. The sending institution/city/country is the one of Finland. The receiving institution/city/country is the one of the Belgium. The travel grant is calculated based on the distance band between Belgium and the Netherlands. An explanation in the Mobility Tool+ should be added in the field "Comments for a different location" to justify that a different distance band is used.

### **If a teacher is already abroad on a different activity outside of the programme, are they allowed to receive a travel grant for the mobility and if yes, which distance band should be used?**

In duly justified cases, it is possible for a participant who is occasionally in a Programme Country different from the country of the sending institution to travel from the third country to the country where the activity takes place. In those cases, the distance should be calculated based on the real place of departure of the participant. The sending institution/city/country will still refer to the home institution of the staff member. An explanation should be added in Mobility Tool+ in the field "Comments for a different location" to justify why a different distance band is used.

### **How should travel grants for consecutive staff training mobilities be calculated if the two mobilities take place in the same Programme Country?**

This will depend on how distant the receiving institutions are from one another. If there is less than 100km between the two receiving institutions, then the activities are considered to be one combined mobility. There will be one mobility agreement (information on the shorter period can be added to the mobility agreement related to the longer period) and one grant agreement. The beneficiary should enter the name of the organisation providing the training activities during the shorter period, its location and the duration of the training in the field "Mobility Comments" in the MT+. If there is more than 100 km between the two receiving organisations, the activities are considered as two different mobilities. There will be two mobility agreements and two grant agreements.

### **What is the definition of teaching? Can preparation time replace teaching time?**

Teaching assignments can come in various forms and take place as seminars, lectures and tutorials, for example. Actual teaching in this context should require the teacher to be physically present with the students. Although e-mail tutoring or any other forms of distance learning as well as preparation are highly encouraged, they do not count in the minimum number of eight hours of teaching.

Apart from this, Higher Education Institutions have the flexibility to judge themselves which types of teaching should be funded by the programme by assessing the added value of the content proposed in the mobility agreement in terms of quality and impact on their internationalisation and modernisation strategy.

## **A Marie Curie fellow would like to undertake staff mobility. Would they be eligible for Erasmus+ funding?**

A Marie Curie fellow cannot receive at the same time a fellowship from MSCAs and an Erasmus+ grant.

## **Mobility Consortia**

### **Would it be possible to have a consortium dealing with Comenius assistantships or recent graduate traineeships?**

Yes, the Programme allows for the creation of consortia on specific subject fields and/or for specific target groups.

### **In a consortium, can the HEI partners sign their students' and staff's contracts, or can only the consortium coordinator sign it?**

Both the coordinator and the other members of the consortium can sign participants' contracts, provided that the signing institution is paying out the grants and has clear responsibilities as such in the consortium's application for accreditation. Consequently, it is possible that the coordinating HEI signs the grant agreement with the student and not the sending HEI. However, learning/mobility agreements should always be signed by the sending institution and not the coordinator, because the sending institution is responsible for matters related to recognition.

### **Can a consortium add a new partner? Can they simply send the request to the National Agency to add the partner to the existing consortium or do they have to have new accreditation because the partnership will be changed?**

If a new partner is added to a consortium, the request for amendment should indeed be sent to the National Agency. The National Agency assesses the implications of this change on the consortium and checks if the eligibility criteria are fulfilled. If this does not have an impact on the overall scope and quality of the consortium, there is no need for a new accreditation.

## **Organisational Support (OS)**

### **Is the OS granted per mobility or per person?**

OS is given per mobility (and not per person as the cost to organise the mobility is the same, no matter who is the person participating in the mobility).

### **Can the HEI cover insurance costs with the OS budget?**

Yes, they can. For traineeships, it depends on the provisions agreed in the Learning Agreement, and it should normally be the receiving enterprise's responsibility to cover these costs. If not, it is up to the sending HEI to consider whether it can be covered by the OS budget.

## Management of a mobility project

### **Are there guidelines with regards to the possibility of extending the duration of a mobility project?**

A KA1 beneficiary (a single HEI or a coordinator of a national mobility consortium) can request to change the duration from 16 to 24 months, but this would require an amendment of the grant agreement between the NA and the beneficiary. You will find more information on amendments in Article II.11 of the grant agreement.

### **Can grants for student mobility be adjusted from one semester to another?**

No. Behind the two approaches that are open to NAs (fixing amounts at national level or granting flexibility to HEIs by fixing ranges), the same principle applies: HEIs should inform their students about the level of grants they are entitled to receive either at the publication of the call or at the latest when they sign the learning agreement and before the start of the mobility. If you leave it up to the HEIs to decide the rates themselves within the range you publish, they will have to fix their rates and stick to them until the end of the mobility project.

### **In the extended period of 24 month agreements, are HEIs only allowed to finance mobilities that are not directly tied to specific academic year (SMP and ST) or can they also finance mobilities in the first semester of the next academic year?**

Yes, this is possible. However, it should be kept in mind that for two year projects, higher education institutions/consortia should really use the budget to the maximum in the first academic year. They should apply and receive funding on an annual basis, like before. If they still have any budget remaining for a given mobility project, they can spend their leftover funds in the second academic year of the grant agreement. Furthermore, it is not possible to award a grant to one individual with a budget from two different contract periods under two different Calls.

No restrictions apply in terms of when leftover funds can be spent, as long as the earliest starting date and latest end date of supported activity under each EU Call for proposals are respected. Furthermore, with actions such as traineeships for recent graduates and mobility to and from partner countries, a prolonged contract period allows for a more efficient use of funds.

### **Can an HEI with a 16 month agreement send recent graduates for placements after completion of the 16 month period? Or can/should they ask us to change from a 16 to a 24 month agreement?**

A participant's mobility period has to take place between the mobility project's start and end dates. It is not possible to encode an end date of a mobility period in MT+ beyond the project's end date. For that reason, an HEI with a 16 month agreement cannot send recent graduates for placements after completion of the 16 month period. If they wish to do so, they should ask the NA to change from a 16 to a 24 month agreement.