

International Relations Handbook for Student Exchange

Student and Educational Affairs – International Relations Office



**Universiteit
Leiden**
The Netherlands

Discover the world at Leiden University

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Many Leiden students will become true global citizens. They therefore need to have international and intercultural competencies....The University will achieve this by strengthening and reaping the benefits of a diverse student population, promoting an international classroom, further internationalising the curriculum and strongly facilitating the possibilities to study, do internships or gain research experience abroad. The University is broadening all the possibilities for achieving this. It will better inform students about the benefits of international experience for their later career and will encourage them to make use of the opportunities available.”

(Institutional Plan, 2015-2020)



Many Leiden University students would like the opportunity to undertake one or more components of their study programmes abroad, whether for studies, internships or research. This brief handbook outlines a few tips for getting started with student exchange, and where to go for more information.

Student exchange: a bilateral partnership in which students from each institution pay tuition fees to, and remained registered at, their home university, but spend a semester or year at a partner institution (for which they pay no additional tuition fees).

Partnerships

Leiden University operates two types of exchange partnerships: University-wide agreements and Faculty or Programme-based agreements:

Partnership type	Region	For students from	To study...	Managed by
University-wide	Outside Europe	All participating faculties across Leiden university	Generally at most/all faculties at the partner university	International Relations, Student and Educational Affairs (SEA)
Faculty	Europe	A specific programme, or in some cases, a faculty	Generally to study a specific subject (e.g. Art History or Psychology)	Faculty/Programme International Office/Coordinator
	Outside Europe	A specific programme or faculty	Generally at a related partner college or school within a university (e.g. a faculty of Law, a School of Liberal Arts)	Faculty/Programme International Office/Coordinator

A combination of any of the above options is possible: it's important to consider programme wishes, needs and capacity ahead of time. More information, an overview of existing partnerships, and templates can be found on our website (see back page). The SEA International Relations Office or your faculty's International Exchange Coordinator can help advise on these options.

Outbound Students: plan ahead

When planning a new programme, establish a 30 ECTS elective credit (*vrije keuze ruimte*) mobility window in one semester. This provides students with more choices, and removes significant roadblocks for students who want to study abroad.

Communicating opportunities to students

A few tips and tools to keep in mind:

Start early:

- Early = information should be available before students start programme, and actively communicated 1st semester, 1st year;
- Involve your Faculty's International Exchange Coordinator from the start;
- Involve the study coordinators, and keep them informed;
- Use mobility window opportunities in your marketing (but be careful not to promise too much!);
- Let students know about the options and minimum requirements during their programme's introduction days.

Use your resources:

- Use student advisor meetings to inform students about these opportunities: 1st semester, 1st year;
- Use your Faculty's International Office for promotion, or ask the SEA International Relations Office to come by: we are happy to meet with staff for updates and questions, or to give presentations to students;
- Be aware that there are scholarship opportunities for students who study abroad (more info on our website);
- Promote the Study Abroad Festival! This event is organised each fall by SEA and the faculty International Exchange Coordinators to inform students about opportunities and processes, and to get students enthusiastic about studying abroad:
<https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/saf>;
- Make sure your instructors know about the possibilities for students and where they can get more information. Our website for Leiden employees (<https://www.staff.universiteitleiden.nl/education/internationalisation>) is a good place to start.

Outbound Students: Practical Matters

Be sure to include the Board of Examiners, Study Coordinator and Faculty International Exchange Coordinator in the processes below:

Course requirements

Communicate clearly to students what the general coursework guidelines are for their semester abroad: e.g. Equivalence to 30 EC, required course levels, cohesion (or not), etc. Students should be able to confidently choose their courses based on this information. Keep in mind that the host university will also have restrictions and requirements for courses available to exchange students.

Course approvals

Have a plan in place for how students can request and quickly receive approvals for their proposed study plan. Particularly at the beginning of the semester, they may need to make changes for reasons outside of their control (schedule problems, course cancellations, etc.) with only a day or two to make a final decision on courses.

Credit and grade transfer

For programme/faculty partners, you can build a database of partner grading and credit systems. For students who have gone on exchange with a university-wide partner, the SEA International Relations Office can provide information if needed on our partners' credit and grading systems.



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It is a great experience! I have learned so much about Thai culture and history, something I could have never learned from a book! Attending Chula really shows you how tradition is kept very much alive, and it reflects many of the country's national norms and attitudes.

BA International Studies student on exchange at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

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I wanted to do something else than I did in Leiden. So I signed up for 'Advanced criminology theories', 'Legal research and writing', 'Cantonese for non-local speakers', 'Constitutional law' and 'Political dynamics in South-East Asia'. It was a diverse program where I learned a lot; it was nice to be introduced to common law also. It really broadened my way of thinking. I also became aware of the problems Hong Kong had with mainland China.. Political awareness in a judicial context was the best way for me to analyse their problems.

Law student on exchange at City University of Hong Kong





Incoming students: plan ahead

Student exchange works on the basis of reciprocity: exchanging approximately equal numbers of students over the course of several years with a partner university. It is important that Leiden is a welcoming and attractive destination to incoming exchange students, with a well-organised programme of courses and a good variety of subjects to choose from.

Tips for achieving a successful and smooth programme for incoming students:

- Open a wide number or all English-language courses to exchange students. Prerequisites and limits on the number of exchange students can be set if necessary. Course approvals for exchange students are processed by your faculty's International Exchange Coordinator.

Be sure to indicate in the e-Gids that a course is open to exchange and study abroad students!





- Make information about courses available in the e-gids as early as possible. The deadline for fall exchange student applications is April 1st. If it is not possible to add all courses by early March, courses that repeat each year and are open to exchange students could be added to the e-gids before the deadline.
- Where possible, schedule exams before Christmas for courses in the autumn that are open to exchange students. Create a policy for students who need to be home at the beginning of January to satisfy course requirements. (e.g.: alternative assignment, take-home exam, proctored exam at home university).
- Incoming exchange students have a unique set of needs. Particularly at the beginning of their time in Leiden, there is a lot to quickly get used to, – language, cultural habits, customer service culture, etc. – while at the same time, they have a lot to organise (housing, course approvals, finding classrooms, transportation). All students who are here via a university-wide partnership meet with their International Programmes Officer for an intake appointment after they arrive. We strongly recommend that all students coming via a Faculty agreement are also personally contacted on arrival to help settle them in and to answer any questions. SEA and some faculties also organise very brief exit meetings with departing exchange students, to get feedback on their experience and take care of any final paperwork.

Exchange students heading back to their home universities around the world will bring their experiences at Leiden University the good and the bad – back home with them. A well-supported student with largely positive experiences is a uniquely positioned ambassador for Leiden University!

Safety

Leiden University has a strict policy regarding student travel for purposes related to studies at Leiden, whether an internship, exchange, for research, or other study-related activities. The university follows the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs travel advice.

This colour-coded advice can be found on the Ministry's website (<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/reisadviezen>) and is categorised as follows:

	Green	No particular safety risks
	Yellow	Use caution, some safety risks
	Orange	Essential travel only
	Red	Do not travel here



Students may travel to/through areas that are categorised as Green or Yellow. They may not travel to areas that are categorised as Orange or Red. Leiden University does not sign student exchange agreements with universities in these regions, and if the travel advice changes to Orange or Red for an area where we have a partner, we will not send students to that partner for as long as the advice remains negative.

Programmes should be aware of these regulations when considering new partnerships and for management of their exchange programme. It is also important to be aware that students should not receive study credits or receive approval for study-related activities in these regions. All students travelling abroad for study-related activities outside an exchange agreement must notify their faculty of their plans.

For more information see our employee website:
www.staff.universiteitleiden.nl/education/internationalisation



Checklist and timeline for Getting Started with Exchange

<input type="radio"/> Create a mobility window so that a semester abroad fits into the students' programmes	Before 1 st year of programme
<input type="radio"/> Decide what kind of opportunities you want for your students: your own partnerships and/or university-wide partners	
<input type="radio"/> Meet with the International Relations Office or your faculty International Exchange Coordinator to discuss logistics	
<input type="radio"/> Put a plan and timeline in place for establishing partnerships, if applicable (keep in mind that exchange agreements can take a long time to set up and generally only allow for a few students per year!)	
<input type="radio"/> Ensure there is a good selection of English-language courses available to incoming exchange students, keeping in mind their needs regarding semester dates. Publish as many as possible of these courses in the e-Prospectus before April 1 st each year.	
<input type="radio"/> Create a communication plan regarding study abroad for your students. This needs to be in place for their first year in the programme	
<input type="radio"/> If you have your own partnerships, identify who will manage the partnerships and selection process	
<input type="radio"/> Identify who will support your outbound and incoming exchange students	1 st year: Introduction programme
<input type="radio"/> Include information about opportunities and minimum requirements in introduction programme	1 st year: 1 st semester
<input type="radio"/> Discuss opportunities and requirements with students during meetings with Study Coordinators	1 st year
<input type="radio"/> Create a process to ensure students can quickly receive approval for their courses abroad	2 nd year: 1 st semester (1 st years welcome, but special efforts should be made to encourage 2 nd years to come)
<input type="radio"/> Communicate to students about the Study abroad festival, talk to faculty International Exchange Coordinator about opportunities for your students to hear specific and relevant information	2 nd year: Dec 1 st
<input type="radio"/> Application deadline university-wide partners, for next academic year (ex: 1 Dec 1 st 2021: for autumn 2022 or spring 2023)	2 nd year: At least one month before or after Dec 1 st
<input type="radio"/> Application deadline faculty/programme partners	Typically 3 rd year: 1 st semester
<input type="radio"/> Exchange semester	



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The academic programme at the University of Michigan is tough. It is one of the best universities in the USA, which means the students are very competitive and driven. The workload was high, but all of my classes were very interesting. The professors are very friendly and helpful and are always willing to guide or help you whenever you need it. I was a bit scared of the fact that it is such a big place, with a huge campus and thousands of students. In the end, all of my expectations have been exceeded. It was amazing to experience the Michigan culture and spirit first-hand.

BA Psychology student on exchange at the University of Michigan, USA

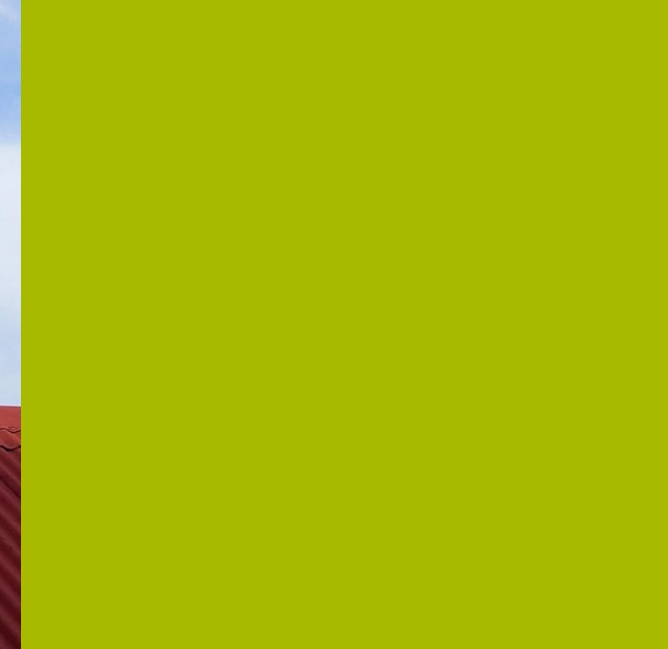




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This is my favorite picture of my time abroad at McGill University in Montréal. It's a picture taken in front of McGill's iconic main building, with snow in the background, with my Australian friend, both representing the school, the international friends I have gained, and the intense cold I have experienced while being there!

Leiden University College student on exchange to McGill University, Canada



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Go and see this city. Jerusalem is an amazing place with a lot of differences, similarities and opposites in every aspect, but all in the same city. And: talk to the people.

BA International Studies student on exchange at Hebrew University of Jerusalem



Leiden staff website, International Relations: www.staff.universiteit leiden.nl/education/internationalisation

International Relations, SEA

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Setting up partnerships, general questions about inbound/outbound exchange programmes, International policy, or any other question relating to internationalisation of education

Faculty International Exchange Coordinators

<https://www.universiteit leiden.nl/international-exchange-coordinators>

Erasmus (European) partnerships, inbound / outbound exchange and internationalisation of education within the faculty



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