

# ERASMUS+ WILL CONTINUE IN THE WINTER SEMESTER – AND DUE TO THE CORONA-VIRUS PANDEMIC IT WILL FOR THE FIRST TIME INCLUDE VIRTUAL OPTIONS

Arguments for completing a study or work  
placement abroad as a virtual learning experience or  
“blended mobility” in unusual times

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# Arguments for completing an Erasmus+ stay abroad in the 20/21 winter semester as a virtual or – where possible – “blended” experience in combination with physical mobility (EP)

## 7. Multiple stays and extended deadlines possible

Erasmus+ moreover allows **multiple stays** – students can receive funding for a total of up to 12 months per phase of study.

Students wishing to apply for a **graduate work placement** must do so while they are still enrolled at the respective higher education institution. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the rules for 2020 state that work placements may be conducted within 18 months after graduation instead of the previous 12 month deadline.

## 8. Advantages for further Erasmus+ mobility

Students who are considering postponing their mobility in the winter semester until the 2021 summer semester should however bear in mind that there may be **capacity shortfalls** at the host institutions in 2021 due to increased numbers of applicants. You should therefore explicitly point out that this virtual stay abroad is not a student’s last opportunity to go abroad with Erasmus+; rather, funding can be provided for a period of up to one year.

## 9. Social dimension

Students are not alone in their situation. Extraordinary circumstances become easier to bear when others are also affected. Regular exchanges and mutual understanding are therefore essential to the Erasmus+ feeling. In Germany, local Erasmus+ initiatives are, for example, providing online sessions around well-being and social connections in the host country and at the host institution. Similar formats organised by, among others, the Erasmus Student Network and by AEGEE are also available in other European countries. Student initiatives and departments at the host institutions may also be organising corresponding exchange fora.

## 10. Addressing target groups with low motivation for mobility, as these are not so heavily constrained by application deadlines

Virtual mobility may be an attractive option, particularly for parents with children or people with disabilities. On the one hand, they gain documentation for a semester abroad, and on the other hand, the impact of circumstances that impede physical mobility is reduced. Such circumstances may include family organisation that makes it difficult to be away for longer periods, or other factors that are not available in the host country in the manner required by the respective individual.

## 11. Further development opportunities for higher education and teaching staff

Virtual language courses or courses in cross-cultural skills may be an incentive e.g. for specialist coordinators in staff mobility to access further training. Applications for these mobilities can also be submitted on short notice, rendering certain aspects of physical mobility, such as arranging lengthy absences from family, unnecessary.

## 12. Advantages of “blended mobility”

Some groups will benefit from the opportunity for “blended mobility”, as the period for which a person is abroad is reduced if presence at the host institution is, for example, only necessary in order to take exams. Even a shorter period abroad is better for the acquisition of cross-cultural skills than an exclusively virtual experience. This may also include further opportunities after the mobility has ended – e.g. a follow up work placement.