Aalto University School of Engineering
Policy on International Student Exchanges

*If the Finnish and English version differ, the Finnish version will stand in effect.*

Aalto University supports international student exchanges by awarding scholarships for bachelor’s and master’s degree students to pursue exchange studies abroad. ‘Student exchange’ refers here to the administration of the exchange agreements made by Aalto University and to the student mobility occurring within those agreements.

Studies abroad support the academic studies at Aalto. The general goals of Aalto’s student exchanges include: personal growth – including academic and ethical growth; development of intercultural and international competencies; acquiring the readiness for an international career as well as a practical fluency in foreign languages.

**STUDENT EXCHANGES ABROAD**

Exchange studies

Aalto University promotes full-time exchanges that are integrated into the degree of the student. The exchange studies completed abroad must be included in the degree pursued at Aalto University. The exchange study plan must also be included in the student’s personal study plan (HOPS) and the student must be enrolled at Aalto as an attending student during the exchange.

The minimum length of an exchange is three months. In one application period students may apply for exchanges up to, but not exceeding, 12 months in length (one academic year).

The exchange is considered completed as part of the student’s bachelor’s degree if all or part of the credits for the studies completed in the exchange are transferred to the bachelor’s degree, and as part of the student’s master’s degree if all of the study credits are transferred to the master’s degree.

Application periods

The exchange programmes available through Aalto schools of technology[^1] are listed on the Into pages (into.aalto.fi). Applications for exchange programmes in technology fields take place during application periods. The application period and available placements for the academic year are confirmed for each destination on an annual basis. Any remaining exchange places from the previous application period may be filled during the next period or, if the application schedule of the host university permits,

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[^1]: The School of Engineering, the School of Chemical Technology, the School of Science and the School of Electrical Engineering
even outside of the regular periods. Students will be informed on the Into web pages of any additional application periods.

Application procedure

Students apply for exchange programmes by completing the online application form. All appendices mentioned on the application form as well as any others mentioned separately, are included to the application. Students may not apply for more than three destinations during one application period. New exchange applications will not be accepted if an earlier application by the student is still pending. Students list their chosen destinations in order of preference. The list is binding.

Student exchange implementation and decision-making in the schools

The policy on the international student exchanges of Aalto University School of Engineering is decided in respective schools. The various Learning Services of the schools of technology are responsible for applying the principles of the policy, while the policy lines are developed in cooperation with the other Aalto University schools and the Aalto University Student Union (AYY).

The exchanges are implemented and the applications processed by the persons in charge of student exchanges for the respective school’s Learning Services. The decisions on the selection of students and the awarding of scholarships are made by the specialist in international affairs/manager of international relations at the proposal of the planning officer for student exchange.

Selection criteria

To be eligible for an Aalto University exchange programme in technology, the applicant must be enrolled as present at one of the technology schools and have at least 60 credits at Aalto at the time of the application as well as a weighted grade point average of at least 2.0 in the Aalto transcript of records.

Enrolled attending students admitted to Aalto University to pursue a master's degree are eligible only if they have earned at least 25 credits at the time of their application as well as a weighted grade point average of at least 2.0 in the Aalto transcript of records. Students admitted to pursue a master's degree may go on an exchange during their second year of studies at the earliest. By exception, however, these students may be eligible for exchanges beginning already at the end of the first year if the host university has a summer term. In such cases the student will be informed of the matter.

Non-attending students may, however, apply for the exchange programme or for a free mover scholarship if their non-attendance is due to: (1) serving under the Conscription Act (1438/2007), the Non-Military Service Act (1446/2007) or the Act on Voluntary Military Service for Women (194/1995); (2) being on maternity, paternity or parental leave; or (3) being unable to study due to a medical condition. In such cases, applicants are required to provide documentary evidence of the reason for non-attendance in their application documents. Even on these cases, the student must be registered as attending for the duration of the exchange.
Admission criteria

In order to be admitted to an exchange programme, the applicant must meet the requirements of the Aalto schools of technology as well as any additional criteria set by the host university. A condition for admission is that the studies abroad will be counted towards the student’s degree at Aalto University. During the application period the applicant is required to draft a study plan of at least 30 credits/term and also a plan for how the exchange studies will be included in the Aalto University MSc degree. The student must receive approval for the changes to his or her degree programme; possible changes made to the study plan during the exchange must also be approved.

The admissions process considers the student’s motivation and references as well as the language proficiency that is required by the host university. Preference will be given to students who have not previously been admitted/selected to an Aalto University exchange programme or been awarded an Aalto University scholarship for outgoing exchange students. If there is more than one applicant for the same destination, priority will be given to those whose nationality is other than that of the exchange country. For some destinations, restrictions on applicants originating from the destination country may apply. For certain destinations, preference may be given to students of a particular field or school. A minimum academic index or grade point average may be required for certain host universities.

Students who have already obtained the number of credits required for an MSc (Technology) at Aalto may only be accepted into the programme for particularly compelling reasons. Students whose right to study is expiring or who have already received an extension may not be admitted to an exchange programme without an adequate reason.

Students who were previously awarded an exchange place or an exchange scholarship, but cancelled their exchange or failed to comply with the terms of the exchange without a valid reason, may be disqualified from the selection process.

Additional terms may apply in programmes that have external funding.

Academic index

Students are selected mainly on the basis of their academic index. The academic index is calculated as follows: (credits / full terms enrolled as an attending student) * weighted grade point average of the courses. The academic index is calculated as C/T x G (the weighted GPA times the quotient of credits over terms enrolled as present\(^2\)). The score is calculated from the credits and grades listed in the student register by the deadline specified separately.

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\(^2\)A student who enrols as present for the same period as service under (1) the Conscription Act (1438/2007), the Non-Military Service Act (1446/2007) or the act on women’s voluntary military service (194/1995), or in which the student is (2) on maternity, paternity or parental leave, or (3) unable to study due to illness or disability may exclude such terms from the total terms enrolled as present by providing proof of the grounds for the exclusion when submitting the exchange application.
The terms and conditions of the exchange programme

Students commit to earning a minimum of 20 credits that will be counted towards their Aalto University degree during their exchange at the host university. Studies completed in Aalto University during the exchange period abroad are generally not considered part of exchange studies. Students are obliged to inform their home school immediately of any impediments to study, failure to reach the set targets, or cancellation or changes to the duration of their exchange. Students may in such cases be required to return the scholarship money in full or in part.

Aalto University has a waiver of responsibility concerning students who are selected for exchange studies. The waiver form, 'Waiver and responsibility for students going abroad', is appended to the Aalto University 'Policy on International Student Exchange'.

Once the exchange period has ended, students submit the required attachments and see to the transfer of credits for the studies completed during the exchange. Aalto University directions and policies concerning credit transfer are followed. Students who take part in exchanges are obliged to take part in at least one information session for prospective Aalto University exchange students.

SCHOLARSHIP AND GRANTS IN THE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

Aalto University’s student exchange destinations in technology

The School of Engineering awards exchange scholarships to Aalto University students who have obtained a placement at a host university abroad. The size of the scholarship is confirmed annually in connection with the school budget. Externally funded programmes (such as Erasmus+, Nordplus and FIRST) may award scholarships that differ in amount from those of Aalto. Aalto University may supplement the externally funded scholarship in case it does not amount up to the sum of the Aalto University scholarship.

If the externally funded scholarship that has been granted for the duration or for part of the duration of the exchange period exceeds the amount of the Aalto University scholarship for the whole duration of the exchange period, the student is not entitled to receive the Aalto University scholarship on top of the externally funded scholarship.

The scholarship for outgoing exchange students is paid in two instalments: The first instalment (80%) is paid prior to the exchange once the student has submitted a written confirmation of acceptance by the host university and any required additional materials. The second instalment (20%) is paid at the end of exchange once its terms have been met and the student has submitted the documents relating to the end of the exchange within the time limits (to be announced separately). The scholarship disbursement procedures for exchanges with external funding may differ from those of Aalto University.
Tuition fee grants in Aalto University exchange programmes

Students who take part in the Aalto University exchange programme and are charged a tuition fee by the host university are eligible for a tuition grant. The grant covers up to 50% of the actual paid tuition or up to 2000 euros per term, whichever comes first. The tuition fee grant is awarded in euros using the exchange rate on the day of the payment.

The tuition fee grant can be applied for by including an account of the tuition fee to the exchange application. To receive the tuition fee grant, students must submit a receipt of their payment of the tuition fee. The receipt may be submitted prior to or during the exchange. The grant is paid in one instalment each term. To receive a tuition fee grant for a second term, the host university's transcript of records showing progress in studies must be submitted.

Travel grants for summer schools and short courses

Within its budgetary limits, the School of Engineering may award travel grants for studies in the summer schools of partner universities or in similar short courses. The technical schools have different procedures concerning application periods, travel grants and their conditions. The application periods and conditions are published in the INTO pages.

Free mover scholarships

School of Engineering BSc and MSc level students who have obtained a student exchange place independently may apply for a 'free mover' student exchange scholarship for their period of study abroad. Free mover students are subject to the same eligibility conditions, application procedures and rules applying to studies abroad as outbound exchange students in Aalto schools of technology. The academic index or grade point average, which is required of Aalto technology students for some destinations, does not apply to free mover applicants.

The scholarship can be applied for by completing the free mover application form. While the form is ordinarily submitted before departure, students whose studies commence before the end of the scholarship application period may apply later.

The scholarship is awarded for studies at a university or university-level institution. The scholarship is not awarded for programmes in which students, on completion of the programme, receive a degree from the foreign institution. Joint international programmes that Aalto University is participate in are an exception to this.

Students previously awarded a place in an Aalto University exchange programme, but who cancelled their exchange or failed to comply with the terms of the exchange without valid reason, may be disqualified for a free mover scholarship.

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3The tuition fee charged by the destination university must be distinguishable from any other fees collected by the university.
Discretionary free mover tuition grants

School of Engineering BSc and MSc level students who independently obtained an exchange place and pay a tuition fee for their studies abroad may apply for a free mover tuition fee grant. The grant covers up to 50% of the actual tuition fee paid or up to 2000 euros per term, whichever comes first. The grant is awarded in euros at the exchange rate on the day of payment.

The tuition fee grant can be applied for by including an account of the tuition fee to the free mover application. A receipt of payment of the tuition fee must be submitted. The grant is paid in one installment each term. To receive a tuition fee grant for a second term, the host university's transcript of records showing progress in studies must be submitted.

The grant is not awarded for programmes in which graduating students receive a degree from the foreign university. In addition, the tuition support is granted only to students who have performed exceedingly well in studies (GPA of 4.0) and for studies at preeminent foreign universities. The awarding of free mover tuition grants is decided by the school annually within its budgetary limits.

Scholarships for students working on their master's thesis abroad

The School of Engineering also awards exchange scholarships for students working on their master's thesis abroad. Students may be awarded the scholarship only once during their studies. Applications for the scholarship are submitted during the application periods for technology student exchanges. The attachments mentioned in the free mover application form must be included.

The scholarship is awarded for a three-to-six-month stay abroad. At the end of the stay, the master's thesis student must submit to his or her school's student services either a statement by the host university supervising professor on the student's thesis or a transcript of records showing the work done by the student on the thesis. If the statement indicates that progress on the thesis has been inadequate, the student may be charged for full or partial reimbursement of the scholarship.

Students who receive an international internship scholarship for their thesis work may not simultaneously receive the scholarship for outgoing exchange students.

International joint programmes

Aalto University degree students who have been admitted to an international joint programme may be awarded a scholarship for the study abroad component of the joint programme if the student is not granted a scholarship from the joined programme or does not receive other scholarships for mobility from Aalto University. Students cannot receive more than one scholarship funded by the European Union. Fulfilling the selection criteria will be checked case-by-case in cooperation with the student's degree programme coordinator. The application procedure may differ from that of the exchange programme.
Entry into force

The policy on Aalto University School of Engineering student exchanges shall enter into force with the undersigned decision of the dean. The policy shall apply to student exchanges beginning on 1 November 2018 and those subsequent.

In Espoo, 26 October 2018

Gary Marquis
Dean
Aalto University School of Engineering

Niina Huovinen
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