Aalto University School of Science

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 Exchange Abroad**

**Exchange Studies**

Aalto University promotes full-time exchanges that will be 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 personal study plan (HOPS) of the student 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 degrees 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. Each destination’s application period and the placements available for the academic year is confirmed on an annual basis. Any exchange places leftover from an application period may be opened for applications during the next application period or, if the application schedule of the host university permits, even outside of the regular application 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 application form. All appendices mentioned in the application form as well as any others mentioned separately are included to the application. Students

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\(^1\) The School of Engineering, the School of Chemical Technology, the School of Science and the School of Electrical Engineering
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 schools of technology 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 manager of academic affairs at the proposal of the planning officer for student exchange.

**Selection criteria**

To be eligible for an Aalto University exchange programme in the fields of technology, the applicant must be enrolled as present at one of the technology schools at the time of application and have at least 60 credits 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 for student exchange if they have earned at least 25 credits at the time of their application and have 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 that begin at the end of their first year of studies at Aalto University, if the host university has a summer term. In such cases the students 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 that includes a plan for how the exchange studies will be included in the Aalto University MSc degree. The student must receive approval for the study plan from 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 selected for 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
a valid 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 fol-
lows: (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 present²). The score is calculated from the credits and grades listed in the student register by
the deadline specified separately.

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

²A 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 ex-
change application.
Decision by the dean
translation of the original
19 October 2018

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 Science

Aalto University’s student exchange destinations in technology

The School of Science awards exchange scholarships to its students who have obtained an exchange placement at a university abroad through an Aalto University exchange programme. The amount 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 the terms of the scholarship 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 the procedures 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.

\[^4\] The tuition fee charged by the destination university must be distinguishable from any other fees collected by the university.
Travel grants for summer schools and short courses

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

Free mover scholarships

School of Science’s BSc and MSc level students who have obtained a student exchange placement 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, it is also possible to apply for the scholarship after departure, provided that the student is completing the studies that he/she applies the scholarship for.

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.\(^5\)

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

Free mover tuition grants

School of Science does not award tuition fee grants for free mover destinations at the moment.

Scholarships for students working on their master’s thesis abroad

The School of Science 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.

\(^5\) Please see more information in section "International joint programmes"
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 criteria of selection 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.

**Grants for internships abroad**

Student who is going abroad to complete an internship can apply for the international internship grant of School of Science and, depending on the destination, for travel grant for internship. The amount of the grant is confirmed annually in connection with the school’s budget. In the externally funded programmes (for example Erasmus+) or in separate trainee programmes the amount of the grant may differ from the Aalto University’s international internship grant and the grants may contain separate requirements or extra benefits. The organisation where the internship is done and the employer can also have an effect on the amount of the grant.

The policy on Aalto University School of Science 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, 219 October 2018

Jouko Lampinen
Dean, School of Science