

During the exchange

Changes in the learning agreement / study plan

If you make changes to the approved learning agreement / study plan either at enrolment or later on during the semester, you must contact your own school and get the changes approved. This way you make sure that there will not be problems with the credit transfer after your exchange. Please save all the e-mail correspondence between you and your Aalto school.

Please remember the minimum requirements for the completed courses during your exchange. Leisure courses (e.g. sports) will not be transferred to your degree in Aalto, and thus they do not count towards the minimum requirement for credits / semester. If your host university is not using the ECTS system, please check the correspondence of the local credits/units, so that you will complete enough courses.

If there are changes in the duration of your exchange period (e.g. due to sudden illness) or if you have difficulties in finding enough courses etc., please contact your exchange coordinator at Aalto as soon as possible!

Erasmus students

Before returning to Finland, you should update the final page of the learning agreement, and get both the original learning agreement and changes to it signed by the exchange coordinator at the host university. If there are no changes in the learning agreement, the exchange coordinator signs only the original learning agreement. In both cases, the approved final learning agreement has to be returned to your own Aalto school after your exchange.

Important documents - prepare yourself for the end of your exchange

Transcript of records

- Please remember to ask for a transcript of records and course descriptions for the completed courses before you leave the host university.
- In some universities the teachers might give you a separate course certificate for each of the courses, the main thing is that the name of the course and the number of credits is marked in the document.
- The transcript might also be sent to you or to Aalto by regular mail after your exchange; please check that the host has the right contact information.
- The transfer of credits will be completed after your mobility period and it cannot be done without the transcript of records and the course descriptions.

Erasmus students

- Please ask for a signature and a stamp for *the letter of confirmation* before you leave the host university.
- This document shows the exact dates of your mobility period and it is needed for the payment of the exchange scholarship.

You are an ambassador for Aalto University

The student exchange is based on reciprocity. We send our students abroad to partner universities, and in turn receive incoming exchange students from these universities. Therefore, it is very important to promote Aalto, your own school and Finland during the exchange. Many universities organize exchange fairs or similar events where exchange students can present their home country and school. We strongly encourage students to take part in these events in order to promote Aalto in the exchange destination.

- [Presentations and brochures about Aalto](#)
- [Aalto University's Youtube channel](#)
- About the Finnish education system in English: [Ministry of Education and Culture](#)
- [ThisIsFinland](#)
- [Study in Finland](#)
- You can also collect brochures, posters, fact sheets etc. from your exchange coordinator.

Culture shock

Studying and living abroad means you will face changes and new situations that might make you feel a bit stressed. Most of the exchange students experience the so called culture shock when they move to a new country and start the adaptation process in a new culture. Culture shock means anxiety or feeling of not belonging, which is caused by facing a foreign culture.

In the middle of all the confusion, it is good to remember that the culture shock is the beginning of an adjustment process during which you will gain valuable tools for improving your self-knowledge and understanding different cultures.

- Honeymoon period – when everything is wonderful and new, you are enthusiastic and active.
- Frustration – everything is better in your home country! Taking care of the practical matters might seem complicated. You might feel depressed, anxious and frustrated. You might also be tired and lose your appetite.
- Adjustment / acceptance – your language skills have improved and you accept the differences between your home country and the destination. You feel more comfortable, maybe like at home.

- Returning home. Find out more from the page [After the exchange](#).
- Get to know your destination as well as you can before leaving Finland (from climate to religion and from political system to customs etc.)
- Be open-minded, willing to learn
- Take a language course
- Get to know new people, dive into the new culture - do not be alone!
- Travel within the host country
- Maintain a sense of humour
- Keep in touch with people at home
- Read Finnish newspapers, listen to your favourite music, write a diary
- Remember that by getting to know the host country, you will have an asset in the future when e.g. applying for a job.

Problem situations and emergencies

Despite making careful planning, everything might not go as you have planned. In problems related to courses and arrangements at the host university, you should first contact the exchange coordinator of the host university. Please also contact your School's exchange coordinator.

- In emergency situations that require immediate attention (fire, sudden bouts of illness, etc.), contact the local emergency number.
- Submit a [travel notification](#), if you have not already done so.
- If you get ill for a longer period or face any other problems that may affect your course performance significantly, please inform your exchange coordinator. Please remember to obtain a medical certificate.
- Aalto expects all students who are travelling or visiting abroad longer than three months to register with the local or nearest Embassy. Also, in any exceptional situations at the host country, you should be in contact with the local Finnish embassy (or, if there is no Finnish Embassy in the country, an embassy of another EU country).
- In any exceptional situations caused by epidemic, natural disasters or other emergency situations students are contacted through email, sms-message or Internet. The final decision to leave the country and return to Finland will be left up to the student.