

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND PROCEDURES OF EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM, APPLICABLE TO ILIA STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

1. Information Placement

1. Information on the requirements, procedures and deadlines for the educational exchange programs shall be published on the Ilia State University [website](#).
2. Information on the ongoing call for applications shall also be disseminated via Argus, email and social media platforms. Regular information sessions will be held by the International Relations Office. The detailed information on information sessions will be spread by the communication channels mentioned above.
3. The candidates interested in the University-administered exchange program are required to comply with the competition terms, procedures and deadlines. No alterations shall be allowed after the end of the call.
4. The eligibility criteria for exchange students, along with the rules and procedures for evaluating, selecting, and nominating applicants, may be adjusted upon request from a specific partner university (Addendum 30.09.2021).

2. Selection of Exchange Students

Eligibility Criteria

2.1. The candidate must meet the following requirements:

- a) To be able to apply during the call for applications, the student must be enrolled at the relevant study level at Ilia State University and have an active student status.
- b) During the call for applications, candidates can only apply for mobility at the same study level at which they are enrolled. For example, an undergraduate student is not eligible to apply for mobility at the graduate level of study.
 - b¹) Candidates must submit all the required documents in accordance with the terms and conditions set by their home university as described in the call announcement. Each applicant can select up to five host universities. The universities shall be listed

according to the student's preferences. The rule of selecting a maximum of five host universities applies to the competition announced within the same academic semester under any exchange program administered by the International Relations Office of Ilia State University (including those administered by the host university) (Addendum 30.09.2021).

b²) The student, who is also an employee at Ilia State University under the employment contract, is not allowed to participate in the competition announced for the mobility of Administrative Staff within the framework of an exchange program in the same semester (Addendum 23.10.2020).

b³) For a master's degree student, the academic programs in the host and home universities must be identical or contiguous (Addendum 4.02.2021).

b⁴) Bachelor's and Master's level students are required to upload, in their application, the Learning Agreement approved by the curriculum expert with the faculty Dean's signature. The Learning Agreement must include courses equivalent to a minimum of 12 ECTS credits that can be recognized within the student's home curriculum. If the host university's minimum credit requirement differs, their requirement will take precedence. All applicants must consider the minimum credit requirement during the application period, and selected candidates must do so again before the start of mobility. Failure to comply with the request during the competition will result in the rejection of the application. Moreover, any changes to the learning agreement before the start of mobility that do not comply with the above-mentioned requirement may be grounds for the cancellation of the mobility (Addendum 12.09.2024).

c) The following candidates are not eligible to apply for the Erasmus+ exchange program:

c¹) First-year undergraduate students;

c²) Final-year undergraduates of the architecture program; (Amendment 8.10.2018)

c³) Students who have already received an Erasmus Mundus or Erasmus+ exchange program grant at the same study level, except for those who completed a mobility program under the Erasmus+ zero grant program (Amendment 4.03.2021);

c⁴) PhD students who have participated in Erasmus Mundus and Erasmus+ exchange programs, and whose planned or executed mobilities exceed a period of 12 months;

c⁵) PhD students who have not yet defended their dissertation prospectus. An exemption will be granted to doctoral students who, during the call for applications,

provide written consent from the dean of the relevant faculty enabling mobility before the prospectus defense.

c⁶) PhD students who have completed and submitted their dissertation (Amendment 01.02.2024).

d) (Extracted 01.02.2024).

2.2.1. The Participation Prerequisites for Final Year Students (Addendum 8.10.2018)

Bachelor's level:

1. During the application period, a Bachelor student whose future mobility period coincides with the final semester at their home university can submit a Bachelor thesis plan, signed by the student's academic supervisor at the home university, along with other required documents. During the application process, students will not be required to seek an academic supervisor at the host university.

Master's level:

2. For a Master's student whose future mobility period coincides with the final semester at their home university, the performance and completion requirements for the scientific research component must be determined individually, based on the master's project and thesis concept of the corresponding educational program of the relevant faculty/school at Ilia State University. Furthermore, during the application period, the student must submit a Master's thesis proposal, together with other required documentation, as well as letters of consent from the scientific supervisor (from the host university) and the co-supervisor (from the home university).

3. Bachelor's and Master's degree students must adhere to the faculty or school's deadlines for defending their Bachelor's or Master's thesis. It is not allowed to defend the Bachelor's or Master's thesis remotely.

2.2. Student Selection Procedure

1. The International Relations Office of Ilia State University coordinates the selection process for students participating in Ilia State University's exchange programs.

2. After accepting applications, the applicants are evaluated and nominated to the host university following the steps and procedures outlined below:

a) reviewing application documents - Ilia State University;

- b) evaluating application documents - Ilia State University;
- c) interview with the Committee - Ilia State University (in some cases together with the partner university);
- d) nominating candidates to the host university - Ilia State University;
- e) final selection – the partner university.

3. The selection standards and procedures may be modified to meet the requirements of a particular partner university. Furthermore, at the request of the receiving university, a certain candidate may be nominated based on an official nomination letter from the Rector of Ilia State University.

4. No conflict of interest can exist between a member of the selection committee and any student participating in the competition.

A conflict of interest may arise if:

- a) the member of the selection committee and the student participating in the competition are contributing to the administration of the exchange programs;
- b) there are family ties between the member of the selection committee and the student participating in the competition;
- c) the member of the selection committee is not allowed to be a supervisor of the scientific work (bachelor's, master's, doctoral) of the student participating in the competition. In the event of a conflict of interest, the member of the committee shall provide a statement of conflict of interest that shall explain the reason for withholding the student's evaluation (Addendum 23.10.2020).

5. Subject to the self-recusal based on the conflict of interest referred to in the fourth subsection, the International Relations Office will designate a new member to the committee who will not be in conflict of interest with the student participating in the competition. In the case of recusal, the committee may consist of 3 professors nominated by the faculty (Addendum 23.10.2020).

2.3. Stage I - Reviewing Application Documents

1. The purpose of this evaluation stage is to determine the accuracy/validity of each applicant's application. The submitted documents must comply with the requirements of the competition.

2. At this stage, the following are examined:

- a) whether all mandatory documents are attached;
- b) whether all mandatory documents have been properly prepared;
- c) compliance of academic level with academic direction;
- d) compliance of foreign language proficiency level with the competition requirements;
- e) current semester/academic year of the applicant;
- f) previous experience and duration of participation in the exchange program at the same level.

3. Only fully completed applications containing all mandatory documents will be considered. Submission of incomplete or partial documents is not permitted. If this occurs, the candidate will be automatically disqualified from the competition.

3¹) The online registration form must be completed using the Ilia State University email. Applications submitted via personal or other email accounts will not be reviewed. (Addendum 8.10.2018).

4. Application documents will not be reviewed until the end of the application period. Therefore, if an incomplete application is submitted, the student will not be notified until the conclusion of the first selection stage.

5. If a student identifies an issue with their submitted application before the deadline, they may notify the International Relations Office of Ilia State University about the issue. Only after doing so can they resubmit their documents in accordance with the competition deadlines. In such cases, the latest submitted application will be considered.

6. After the first stage of evaluation, the International Relations Office will notify students who have advanced to the second stage. Students will be informed via Ilia State University email.

2.4. Stage II - Evaluation of Application Documents

1. Applications that qualify for the second stage will be assessed according to predetermined criteria based on the submitted documents.

2. The evaluation is carried out on a 0-80 point scale according to the following criteria:

Point Distribution

- Foreign language proficiency: 40 points (assessment scheme available [here](#)).
- Academic performance: 40 points (the average grades from all previous study levels and/or semesters will be considered. For master's and doctoral students, the average grades from both

the current and last completed study levels will be evaluated, with each level given equal weight (Amendment 30.09.2021).

3. After reviewing the application documents, applicants are ranked according to their total points. Only those with a minimum of 60 points will progress to the third (interview) stage of evaluation (Amendment 4.02.2021).

4. For each competition, a specific minimum threshold for the total assessment is established, based on the competition's criteria, quotas, and the requirements set by the partner universities. If requested by the partner university, preference will be given to candidates whose major at their home university aligns with the academic program offered by the host university.

5. The International Relations Office will inform students of the results from the second stage of evaluation. Notifications will be sent to students' Ilia State University email addresses.

2.5. Stage III - Interview

1. At this stage, interviews are conducted with students who have achieved the highest scores above the minimum threshold.

2. The interview is conducted in the foreign language required by the host university.

3. The Interviewing Committee is composed of three members: either two representatives from the International Relations Office and one professor nominated by the faculties, or one representative from the International Relations Office and two professors nominated by the faculties.

4. The maximum score for the interview is 20 points. Each committee member evaluates candidates individually, awarding up to 20 points. The final interview score is the average of the evaluations from all committee members. During the interview, committee members will assess the student's motivation, communication skills, professional goals, extracurricular activities, and academic compatibility between the home and host programs (Amendment 4.02.2021).

5. The student's final grade is determined by the combined score from the second stage (document evaluation) and the third stage (interview), with a maximum possible score of 100 points. After the interview, applicants are ranked according to their final evaluation points (Amendment 4.02.2021).

6. The International Relations Office will inform students of the results from the third stage of evaluation. Notifications will be sent to students' university email addresses.

2.6. Stage IV - Nomination of Candidates to the Host University

1. When nominating students to the host university, the following factors are considered:

- a) ranking of candidates according to the final evaluation points*;
- b) quotas and requirements set by the host university;
- c) students' preferred list of universities indicated in their application form (Addendum 8.10.2018).

2. The International Relations Office sends the list of nominated and reserve candidates, along with their application documents, to the host university for final selection.

2¹) Once a student is nominated to a specific host university, their candidacy will not be considered for nomination to other universities listed in their application. This rule applies to all competitions announced in the same academic semester within any exchange program managed by the International Relations Office of Ilia State University (including those administered by the host university) (Amendment 30.09.2021).

3. The International Relations Office informs both nominated and reserve candidates of the preliminary results. Notifications will be sent to students' Ilia State University email addresses.

***Rule of selection of students with identical final score for nomination:**

a) In case the applicants have identical final scores, preference will be given to the student who presents a certificate verifying one of the criteria outlined in the fourth paragraph of Article 3. (Amendment 12.09.2024)

b) If applicants have identical final scores and meet the conditions outlined in Subsection A, preference will be given to the student with a higher score in language competence; (Amendment 8.10.2018)

c) If students with similar final scores also have matching scores in language competence, preference will be given to the student with higher academic performance scores;

d) If students with identical final scores do not differ based on the above-mentioned criteria, they shall be interviewed again.

2.7. Stage V - Final Selection - Partner University

1. The partner university will select the final candidate from the nominated students within the specified timeframe and notify the selected student(s) and/or the International Relations Office.
2. Upon selection by the host university, the student is required to notify the International Relations Office in writing within 3 working days whether they accept the opportunity to participate in the exchange program.
3. The student must accept or decline the offer in writing within three working days of receiving it, even if they are awaiting confirmation from multiple host universities. The International Relations Office will contact the student via email and phone. Failure to meet this deadline will be considered a refusal, and the opportunity for mobility will automatically be granted to the next candidate on the reserve list (Amendment 23.10.2020)

2.8. Rule of Appeal

1. The student has the right to appeal only the assessment from the second (evaluation) stage. The results of the third (interview) stage cannot be appealed.
2. After the announcement of the second stage results, the student has three days to contest their evaluation. The candidate must submit a letter of complaint addressed to the head of the International Relations Office, either in person to the university Chancellery or electronically via email at info@iliauni.edu.ge, as well as through Argus (Amendment 8.10.2018).
3. The application must include the following information:
 - a) the name and surname of the student;
 - b) the student's ID number;
 - c) the student's phone number and Ilia State University email address;
 - d) the name of the host university/universities;
 - e) the content of the letter of complaint.
4. Within five days of receiving the complaint, the International Relations Office will review the matter and inform the student of the final decision in writing.

3. Scholarship

1. Candidates selected through university-administered exchange programs (Erasmus+) will receive the corresponding scholarship and travel allowance according to the pre-established rates (see [Erasmus+](#)) (Amendment 01.02.2024.)

2. The scholarship is awarded by the host university, and the rules for awarding it may vary based on the regulations of the specific university or country. The selected candidate must discuss and agree on the details regarding the scholarship and travel reimbursement with the host university prior to the mobility.

3. If needed, the candidate may contact the International Relations Office for advice and assistance in communicating with the host university.

4. Socially vulnerable students and other special categories (so-called 'fewer opportunities'), may be eligible for an additional top-up grant if it is included in the Erasmus+ project at the host university. Information regarding this will be provided to the selected candidates by the host universities, along with their own eligibility criteria for participants with fewer opportunities. If the host university does not have its own requirements, a student may be nominated for the top-up by Ilia State University based on the following criteria (the student must submit the relevant documentation in the application form):

- Single mother/single father status;
- Member of a large family;
- Internally displaced person status (IDPs);
- Persons with disabilities status;
- Socially vulnerable person status;
- Resident of a high mountainous region;
- Residents of the villages adjacent to the dividing line with the occupied territories of Georgia;
- Family member of a person who died in defense of territorial integrity. (Amendment 12.09.2024)

4. The Administrative Rules and Procedures of Educational Exchange Program, applicable to Ilia State University Students

To see The Administrative Rules and Procedures of Educational Exchange Program, applicable to Ilia State University Students, please visit the [website](#).

5. Recognition of Credits at Home University

1. The student selected through the competition is required to have the Learning Agreement approved by both the home and host universities and obtain the signatures of all three parties (home university, host university, and student) before the start of the mobility. (Amendment 12.09.2024)
2. The Learning Agreement must be approved by the home faculty. For this, selected students should submit the completed 'Before the Mobility' section of their Learning Agreement in MS Word format to erasmusplus@iliauni.edu.ge. The agreement will be reviewed by the relevant faculty and approved by the Dean. After arriving at the host university, students can modify their pre-selected courses by sending the completed 'During the Mobility' section of the Learning Agreement in MS Word format to the same email address. Once the faculty approves the changes, the student will receive the signed agreement.
3. Once both parties have signed the Learning Agreement, the student must send it to the International Relations Office. The Learning Agreement must be signed by the student, as well as by representatives from both the home and host universities.
4. Upon returning to the home university, the credits earned at the host university will be recognized following the relevant [regulations](#).

6. Obligations of Selected Candidates

6.1. The selected candidate shall:

- a) accept or decline the scholarship within 3 working days after receiving the first admission offer from any host university and inform the International Relations Office in writing. If the student fails to respond within this timeframe, the scholarship will be automatically revoked and offered to the next candidate on the ranking list;
- b) follow the terms and procedures specified in the [Decree No. 10-03](#) to be granted the status of an exchange student at Ilia State University;
- c) in the event of changes to the mobility period, notify the International Relations Office in writing and provide a confirmation document from the host university;
- d) attend the pre-departure orientation meeting;
- e) prepare the Learning Agreement before departure and communicate any changes with the home faculty through the International Relations Office. The student must send the mutually signed agreement to the International Relations Office;

- f) follow the host university's rules and submit all required documents and information on time;
- g) verify and agree on matters related to insurance, scholarship, and visa application procedures with the host university;
- h) obtain an international passport, if they do not already have one;
- i) make arrangements with the host university regarding accommodation in the host country. Any changes made by the student must be agreed upon in writing with the host university;
- j) upon arrival at the host university, contact the local coordinator, follow their instructions and maintain regular communication with them throughout the mobility period;
- k) comply with the host university's terms for the start and end of mobility, as well as the set travel dates;
- l) when traveling outside the host country, inform the local coordinator of the date and duration of their absence;
- m) after the completion of the mobility period and returning to their home university, the student should contact the International Relations Office to get informed about the following steps;
- n) after the completion of the mobility period and returning to their home university, the student must have their credits recognized according to the established rules and procedures preferably before the start of the next semester;
- o) to have their credits recognized, the student must present the academic transcript issued by the host university and the final, mutually signed Learning Agreement to the faculty (this includes both the Before the Mobility and any During the Mobility amendments, if applicable);
- p) if a selected student wishes to decline a scholarship offer, they must notify both the International Relations Office and the host university before the commencement of mobility.

7. Extension of the Mobility Period at the Host University (Addendum 8.10.2018)

A student undertaking single-term mobility may continue their studies at the host university only under a zero-grant program.

A zero-grant program means the student will not receive a scholarship but will retain their status as an exchange student and will be exempt from paying tuition fees at both the host and home universities.

8. Changing the Mobility Period at Host University in the Event of Force Majeure (Amendment 17.06.2020)

In the event of force majeure, a student's mobility period, nominated by Ilia State University under an exchange program at the host university, may be adjusted if the following three conditions are met simultaneously:

- a) The host university initiates the change in the mobility period due to force majeure;
- b) The change aligns with the internal regulations of Ilia State University;
- c) The relevant faculty or school at Ilia State University agrees to recognize the study courses offered by the host university if there is a change in the mobility period.