

Procedure for recognizing periods of study or training abroad completed within the framework of international mobility programmes

Art.1.

The study and training programmes completed abroad as part of mobility programmes in which the University of Siena participates must be considered an opportunity to expand the educational offering of Departments through course modules that are consistent with the curricula of specific degree courses but are not offered at the Department or are delivered in a different way.

Art. 2.

It is incumbent on the Departments to monitor and systematically update the interinstitutional agreements underpinning the mobility programmes offered to students.

Art. 3.

Each new interinstitutional agreement must be submitted for approval by the Department Council so that the initiative of the proponent teacher is disclosed and shared.

Art. 4.

Recognition of the teaching or training activity to be carried out abroad and of the credits acquired is decided by the Academic Board, which is responsible for verifying that the programme to be completed abroad is consistent with the scientific fields and disciplines of the student's degree course.

Any exams present in the mobility student's degree course (including electives chosen by the student) may be sustained abroad, regardless of their placement in the course year in which the mobility is carried out, without prejudice to any preliminary requirements.

Art.5.

The Academic Board shall assign to each of the course modules to be completed abroad the scientific disciplinary sector with which said teaching must be reported in the student's academic records and in the Diploma Supplement.

The Boards must verify that the distribution among the specific scientific disciplinary sectors of credits acquired abroad is congruous with that of the degree course; differing credit distributions must be agreed in advance with the student. The same boards are required to monitor the situation of training credits awarded abroad: both those planned at the start and those subsequently recognized.

Art. 6.

Before departure

- 1) At least three months before they leave, students must fill in the Learning Agreement (LA), sign it and submit it to the Student and Course Administration Office (*Ufficio Studenti e Didattica*, USD) which will forward it to the Academic Board (*Comitato per la Didattica* - CD) for approval.
 - should the host university request the LA as part of the application, the deadline for submission of which falls before the CD meeting, the board's Chair shall sign the LA which will subsequently be submitted for approval by the CD. The student shall collect a copy for submission to the host university.
 - should it also be impossible to obtain the signature of the Chair of the CD, the student shall take the LA to the International Relations Division for signing by the Institutional Coordinator. In this case, the student shall collect a copy to send to the host university, while the International Relations Division shall send the original to the appropriate Student and Course Administration Office (USD).
 - Should the host university request the original LA as part of the application, the student must fill in two original copies of the LA: one shall be used in the application process, the other shall follow the normal internal procedure for approval (except for retrieval of a copy).

- 2) Once the LA has been approved, the Students and Course Administration Office (USD) shall complete section III of the LA: the Chair of the Academic Board shall sign the “Sending institution – Responsible person’s signature” box, whereas in the field “For internal use only”, the Students and Course Administration Office shall indicate the date on which the Academic Board approved the LA, signed by the Head of the USD.
- 3) Before leaving, the student **must** collect the original LA and deliver it to the host university for signed acceptance. A copy must remain at the Students and Course Administration Office.

During the mobility period

Within 15 days after leaving Siena, students shall deliver the document certifying their arrival at the host University to the International Relations Division. The International Relations shall send a copy to the Students and Course Administration Office (USD).

Should students need to make any changes to the LA, they must fill in the During the Mobility section, have it signed by the host university, and then send it by e-mail to the Students and Course Administration Office (within 2 months from the start of the mobility), which will then pass it on to the Academic Board for approval. Once changes are approved by the Academic Board, the Students and Course Administration Office shall complete the part for which it is responsible and send the document back to the student by e-mail.

On returning

The student shall deliver the following to the International Relations Division: a copy of the LA, with all sections filled in, whereas the original must be delivered to the USD, along with the Transcript of Records (ToR), for completion of the recognition procedure. The recognition procedure will start only once the ToR is submitted.

Once the Academic Board recognizes the credits, the USD shall fill in table F, returning the original to the student and a copy to the International Relations Division.

Art. 7

The Academic Board shall be responsible, as set out in articles 3 and 4, for approving the plan of studies to be completed during the mobility. The plan must be approved before students begin their mobility. Only in cases of specific, documented difficulties in submitting a study plan by the deadline, students may complete the approval process within two months after their departure.

The Academic Board may request students to supplement studies completed abroad in exceptional cases only and if duly motivated, based on the provisions of the following art. 8. The student must be informed when approving the study plan.

Art. 8

Should students obtain a higher number of credits abroad than those foreseen for the corresponding exam of their degree course, they may use the excess credits as free credits.

In contrast, if students obtain a lower number of credits than those required for the corresponding exam in their degree course, up to a maximum of 2, they shall be awarded the number of credits assigned to the corresponding exam in their degree course, based on the Academic Board's approval of the study plan and the equivalent workload carried out within the specified time frame.

Art. 9

When validating the exams completed abroad, the USD will automatically apply the current ECTS grade conversion table once the student submits the application for recognition and the TOR issued by the foreign University. If the grade conversion table does not lead to the clear identification of a specific grade, the CD will convert the exam mark. In exceptional cases where marks are not reported in the TOR according to the ECTS scale, the Offices will refer to the "Conversion Table for the National Grading Scales within the European Community" (annex 1) and any modifications and supplements. In any case, the Offices undertake to adapt the conversion system on the basis of indications received from the relevant European authorities. The upcoming updates of the current system aim to improve the clarity, fairness and transparency of the conversion, and shall be communicated promptly to all interested parties.

In the case of exams taken in non-European universities, in order to facilitate the recognition procedure, a comparison table of local marks on the ECTS scale may be attached to the TOR, unless explicitly reported in the TOR itself.

Art. 10

While respecting the autonomy of the individual Boards, these should provide greater incentives to promote student mobility and take measures to guarantee the quality of mobility. The latter can be quantified both through the number of credits accrued in the period abroad (which should not differ from 30 per semester) and through the preparation of standard study plans to be recommended to students, guaranteeing their recognition in advance.

No limitations should be placed in advance on exams that may be replaced by teaching activities and study programmes carried out abroad. The evaluation criterion for recognition is that of overall consistency with the scientific fields and disciplines relevant to the mobility student's degree course.

Art. 11

In the event of disagreement with the Academic Board's decision on the recognition of activities carried out abroad, students may appeal to the Department Council of the Degree Course on which they are enrolled.