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**Application reference number**  
Erasmus Mundus Action 2 Lot 1 – Syria

***"IntegrAted Studies for Syrian and eUropean univeRsities"***

**ASSUR**

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

### What is the Erasmus Mundus Programme Action 2?

The Erasmus Mundus Programme is a cooperation and mobility programme in the area of Higher Education, implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Erasmus Mundus Action 2 main goals are:

- to promote the European Higher Education;
- to improve and enhance the career prospects of students;
- to promote intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries scheme for students, scholars, researchers and professionals;

This strand includes partnerships between European and third countries' Higher Education Institutions, exchange and mobility in several Higher Education levels, and also a scholarship scheme for students, scholars, researchers and professionals.

### **Which is my home institution?**

If you are a student, the home institution is the one where you have obtained your diploma, which endows your eligibility to apply to the Assur Project.

If you work as academic or administrative staff or you are a researcher, the home institution is the one where you work (full-time) or where you have any kind of contract, which endows your eligibility to apply for the Project.

### **Which is my host institution?**

The host institution is the partner university where the applicant wants to develop his/her study/work programme within the Assur Project.

### **What does “force majeure” stand for?**

Force majeure is an unpredicted or exceptional event or situation, beyond our control, that prevents from accomplishing the demands within the Project, despite all the diligences. Malfunctioning of materials or equipment, delays, labour disagreements, strikes or financial difficulties cannot be considered as force majeure.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **What is the difference between an exchange student and a degree-seeking student?**

- An exchange student/staff is registered/employed at a university (home university) and temporarily studies/researches at a partner university (host university). The exchange period for students lasts from 5 months to max. 10 months. Exchange scholars do not obtain a diploma from the host institution.
- Degree-seeking students will obtain a diploma from the host university in the EU. Students applying as degree students need to comply with the Host University entry requirements. The admission criteria are detailed under each course description at the point of application, and in the Partner Fact Sheet.

### **Can the Erasmus Mundus scholarship holders receive other scholarships from other European programmes?**

No, there cannot be double European financing. Being so, the Erasmus Mundus scholarship holders who are already benefiting from a European Union scholarship, cannot receive any other kind of European financing for the same purpose.

If the scholarship holder is benefiting from an additional support granted by another kind of financing (for example, a scholarship from a national entity of his/her home country and not European), he/she can benefit from both scholarships.

### **Do I need to speak the teaching language of the host institution?**

The Programme guidelines determine that the applicants must have enough knowledge of the teaching language of the institutions they want to apply to. Being so, that means that if the teaching language is English,

regardless of the country offering the study programme (for instance, Germany), it is enough that the applicant has adequate knowledge of English in order to be eligible.

There may be other situations in which the offered courses or activities by the host institutions demand the knowledge of another language (for example, Spanish or Italian). Consequently, the applicant must follow that condition and include, when required, the document that proves the demanded linguistic knowledge under penalty of considering the application not eligible.

As a result, it is extremely important that the applicant checks attentively all the available information about the institution to which he/she intends to apply to, as well as the specific requirements, namely in what concerns the linguistic knowledge. The applicant can easily access that information through the consultation of the “Institution” section available at the Consortium website

([https://erasmusmundus.univaq.it/assur/?page\\_id=22](https://erasmusmundus.univaq.it/assur/?page_id=22)) and, more importantly, through the direct contact (preferential) with the contact person of the host institution to which he/she intends to apply to.

The applicant shall never submit an application for a study/work programme if he/she does not have enough knowledge of the teaching/work language of the programme he/she intends to undertake.

## APPLICATION

### **Is there a minimum or maximum age in order to apply to the Assur Project?**

The guidelines defined by the European Agency responsible for the Erasmus Mundus Programme implementation do not establish any minimum or maximum age as an eligibility criteria. Any person, regardless of his/her age, can submit his/her application.

It is important to note that all eligibility criteria mentioned in the available information at the consortium’s website and in the guidelines for applicants are the minimum established by the partnership’s coordination. This means that every home institution can define more restrictive criteria, which will be applicable only to their applicants. Being so, it is crucial that the applicant does an attentive reading of the guidelines for applicants and contacts the Host Institutions.

### **Do I have to necessarily choose two mobility options? After concluded the selection process, can I choose another host institution?**

No, it is not mandatory to choose two mobility options. However, in order to considerably enhance the chances of being selected, the coordination advises all applicants to include more than one host institution. After concluded the selection process, applicants cannot choose another host institution.

### **Can I choose several courses in the same host institution?**

No. Applicants can select up to 2 host institutions, but they can only choose one course per host institution.

### **Does it need to exist a cooperation agreement between my home and host institutions in order for me to apply?**

No, a previous bilateral cooperation agreement between the home and host institutions is not a requirement

### **What is a Learning Agreement?**

Learning Agreement is a plan that details what courses or research/training/teaching activities you intend to achieve during your mobility. The Learning Agreement should be signed by responsible authorities within the

home and hosting universities, as well as the student before the mobility starts. Any modifications to the Learning Agreement need to be agreed by all three parties. The Learning Agreement and the transcript of records guarantee the transfer of credits for courses passed successfully by the exchange student. The relevant person in charge at the home university carries out the recognition after the student returns to his/her home institution.

### **Do I need a support letter from my home institution in order to submit my application?**

No, recommendation letter is not mandatory. In the case of PhD Post Doc and Staff it is compulsory to upload the Letter of Interest.

### **What is a Letter of Interest?**

This letter from the host university aims to specify its academic interest in hosting the applicant. The letter of interest needs to be filled in and signed by the academic coordinator at the host university.

In the case of PhD Post Doc and Staff this letter is compulsory. The candidate must upload the scanned filled-in and signed letter of interest. This means that applicants **have to contact the host university, get the formal approval of the research programme and the signature** from the host University before submitting their application.

### **I will only finish my degree after the deadline for applications. Can I still apply?**

Yes. The applicant must submit the certificate degree or a certificate confirming the expected date of graduation which must be before the foreseen starting date of the mobility.

Undergrad exchange mobility applicants must be mandatorily enrolled in the undergrad course as they will get full academic recognition of their mobility period by the home institution.

Master exchange mobility applicants must be mandatorily enrolled in the master course as they will get full academic recognition of their mobility period by the home institution.

### **I do not have an official English language proficiency certificate, can I present any other Certification?**

Yes, you can ask for information about the online test to get the certification issued by Damascus University in the framework of a specific agreement with Oxford Test Center. Please, contact [nabeha70@yahoo.com](mailto:nabeha70@yahoo.com)

### **Where can I obtain further information about the different steps to be followed in order to officialise my application?**

All the information about the several steps to be followed in order to formalize the application is available at the "Guidelines for applicants". All applicants must read these guidelines very carefully in order to be completely acquainted with the application requirements and criteria. If there are doubts that the guidelines cannot elucidate, the applicants can contact the Project's coordination ([assur@univaq.it](mailto:assur@univaq.it)) or the partner institutions. ([https://erasmusmundus.univaq.it/assur/?page\\_id=22](https://erasmusmundus.univaq.it/assur/?page_id=22)).

### **Can I send my application by mail, fax or e-mail?**

No. All applications must be submitted online through the project's website ([https://erasmusmundus.univaq.it/assur/?page\\_id=26](https://erasmusmundus.univaq.it/assur/?page_id=26)). Under no circumstance any other kind of application (mail, fax, e-mail, letter or in person) will be accepted.

**I do not have all the documents required by the application. Can I finish my application?**

No. The application form can only be finalized after filling in all the required information in the respective fields and upload all scan required documents. Any mistake made by the applicant when filling in the application form or the lack of any required document will result in the immediate exclusion of the application.

If the applicant scans a wrong or blank document in a way that the system allows the submission of the application form, the partnership will immediately invalidate the submitted application and it will immediately be excluded of the application process.

**The selection process is over and I have been informed I am in the reserve list. Can I know my position on this list? When will I be contacted for a replacement?**

Please bear in mind your profile is not the only aspect taken into account for the allocation of the scholarship. The Consortium also needs to guarantee there will be an equal distribution of the scholarships among the countries and the host Universities, as well as cross-cutting issues among the scholarship holders.

Therefore, it is difficult to determine your position on the reserve list, since there are other aspects being considered apart from your academic profile.

Unfortunately, we cannot assure when the candidates on the reserve list could be contacted to replace a selected candidate. There could be withdrawals anytime, although usually most of them take place at the beginning of the project.

**ACADEMIC ISSUES****Am I going to receive any diploma or a degree from my host institution at the end of my mobility period?**

The awarding of a degree by the host institution will rely on the type of mobility of each scholarship holder.

Undergraduate scholarship holders undertaking a mobility flow in a European host institution will have this period recognized by their home institution. This home institution will be the only one issuing the diploma. The host institution will issue an academic certificate to verify the activities undertook during the mobility flow; this document will be the basis for the home institution to recognize the mobility period.

Scholarship holders selected to undertake a full master in a European host institution will obtain a master diploma issued by that host institution – in the same conditions they are issued for national students – after the successful end of their studies.

Scholarship holders selected to undertake a full PhD in a European host institution will obtain a PhD diploma issued by that European host institution – in the same conditions they are issued for national students – after the successful end of their studies.

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT****How will I receive my scholarship?**

In order to ease the integration process at the host country and institution, the coordination has determined that all students and academic and administrative staff receive the first scholarship payment (amount already pre-defined according to the mobility type) after their arrival to the host institution and signature of the

“Scholarship Contract”. This document is essential to execute the scholarship payment, so we advise all scholarship holders to immediately contact their host institution after their arrival to the host country in order to start the required procedures for the payment of the monthly allowance.

This monthly allowance is designed to cover the expenses with accommodation, subsistence and all costs regarding the stay in the host country.

The payment of the scholarship will be done on a monthly basis, according to the information provided in the “Scholarship Contract”.

The total number of scholarships awarded is directly related to the exact period of the mobility in the host institution.

The scholarship holders will only be granted a scholarship for their exact period of stay at the host institution and not for the period initially foreseen.

For the academic and administrative staff mobility flows, the coordination will transfer the scholarship in one time. Syrian scholarship holders will need to open a European bank account or to directly receive the scholarship in the host institution (check or cash) according to National Regulation. Each case will be analyzed between the coordination, the scholarship holder and the host institution in order to define the better procedure to follow.

### **Am I going to benefit from medical assistance during my mobility period (health insurance)?**

Yes. All scholarship holders are covered by a health insurance during all the duration of their mobility period. The coordinating institution will provide directly to each scholarship holder a comprehensive health, travel and personal accidents insurance valid in the host country, in line with the demands of the EACEA – Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. This insurance will be valid from the moment and place of departure until the return, when the mobility period is over.

## **MOBILITY FLOWS: PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

### **How and when shall I require for the issuing of my visa?**

The selected applicants must require for their visa, which will correspond to the type of mobility to which they were accepted, in their home country or in the closest country where there is a diplomatic representation of the country where they will undertake their mobility flow. Scholarship holders shall contact the Embassy or Consulate of the host country immediately after the Consortium’s coordination formal communication in which is stated that the applicant was effectively selected to undertake a mobility flow within the Assur Project.

Scholarship holders must collect as soon as possible all the required documents by the Consulate/Embassy, by contacting the responsible institutions which issue those documents, namely the host institution. Any obstacle found in this contact must be immediately reported to the Consortium’s coordination, which will support the applicant in all the procedures.

Full master students must possess a valid passport for two or more years in the moment they require the visa issuing so as to avoid any difficulty may arouse in the visa issuing.

Full PhD students must possess a valid passport for three or more years in the moment they require the visa issuing so as to avoid any difficulty may arouse in the visa issuing.

Please be aware that the visa can take 2 months or more to be issued, so we strongly advise the applicants to contact the Embassy immediately after the formal communication of acceptance by the Consortium coordination.

### **When do I have to undertake my mobility period?**

The mobility flows of the first cohort must start before December 31<sup>st</sup> 2016.

The mobility flows for undergraduate, master, Post Doc and PhD mobility must start with the academic year of each institution. This is a very relevant aspect when it comes to select the host institution, since the beginning of the academic year varies from institution to institution.

The academic and administrative staff mobility flows may start at any moment from the selection of applicants (whenever all the requirements are met – work programme, visa, travel, insurance...)

All applicants must take this aspect into account in the moment they formalize their application to ensure that, in case they are selected, they will be available to undertake their mobility.

### **Which is the procedure and what warranties can I have regarding accommodation in the host city?**

There are no guarantees. What we can assure is that all the Consortium institutions have committed to provide all the necessary support to the applicants regarding accommodation, although this may differ between countries and between institutions.

### **Can I finish my mobility flow before the initially stated date?**

No. To finish the mobility period before the foreseen date means a substantial alteration in what was agreed and signed in the Scholarship Contract and established at the beginning of the mobility period.

If the Beneficiary resigns from the scholarship or abandons the host university before the official end of the mobility period, the payment of the scholarship will be stopped immediately. In this case, the Scholarship holder might be requested to pay back the whole or a part of the grant already received.

Full master students or full PhD students who finish their academic degree, including the defense of their thesis, before the end of their ASSUR scholarship duration, are obliged to inform the ASSUR contact person at the host university and the ASSUR project coordinator. The scholarship transfer will then be stopped and the mobility is considered completed.