

<https://erasmusmundus.univaq.it/assur>

Application reference number
Erasmus Mundus Action 2 Lot 1 - Syria

"IntegrAted Studies for Syrian and eUropean univeRsities"

ASSUR

**Application reference number 551742-EM-1-2014-1-IT-ERA MUNDUS-EMA21
Grant Agreement Number 2014-0845 / 001 - 001**

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS – FIRST COHORT

**Deadline for applications (for filling the form and submitting the documents)
From 19th December 2014 to 10th February 2015**

1. INTRODUCTION

ASSUR is a project funded with the support of the Erasmus Mundus-Action 2 Programme of the European Commission. ASSUR project intends to develop a structured mobility based cooperation between 18 universities: **7 Syrian Higher Education Institutions on the one side and 11 European Higher Education Institutions** from the second side.

Scholarships are available for **undergraduate, master, PhD students, post-doctorate** and also for **staff members (academic and administrative)** to undertake a mobility period or obtain a full degree in Europe. They include a monthly allowance, travel, insurance and participation costs. **The current call for applications cover mobility from Syria to the EU.**

Applicants are kindly requested to carefully read all the information contained in this document before proceeding to fill and submit the online application form.

2.- PARTNER UNIVERSITIES

The University of L'Aquila (Italy) is the Coordinator of this project and Arab International University is the Co-coordinator. ASSUR Partnership is composed by the following 18 partner universities:

European Institutions

1. University of L'Aquila (IT) - *Coordinator*
2. Université Pierre et Marie Curie (FR)
3. Universitat Politecnica de Valencia (ES)
4. Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki (GR)
5. Tallinn University (EE)
6. "Stefan cel Mare" University of Suceava (RO)
7. University Oldeburgh (DE)

Syrian Institutions

1. Arab International University – *Co-coordinator*
2. Al Baath University
3. International University for Science and Technology
4. Damascus University,
5. Yarmouk Private University
6. Aleppo University,
7. Tishreen University,

- 8. Johannes Kepler University Linz (AT)
- 9. Georg-August-University Goettingen, (DE)
- 10. Corvinus university (HU)
- 11. Artesis Plantijn University College (BE)

3.- TARGET GROUPS

Depending on their characteristics, all applicants fit in one of the three Target Groups established by the European Commission Programme. Each of the Target Groups has different types of mobility scholarship available.

Target group	Description of applicants	Level of mobility
Target group 1	Nationals of Syria who are registered as students or staff at one of the Partner Universities of the ASSUR project at the time of submitting their application to the partnership.	Bachelor (exchange), Master (exchange and full degree), PhD (exchange and full degree), Post-Doctorate, Academic and Administrative Staff
Target group 2	Nationals of Syria who are registered at a higher education institution of the country not included in the partnership, or who have obtained a university degree or equivalent from a Syrian institution. This includes the possibility of providing mobility opportunities to nationals of Syria working in public administration, public and private enterprises.	Bachelor (exchange), Master (exchange and full degree), PhD (exchange and full degree), Post-Doctorate, Academic and Administrative Staff
Target group 3	Nationals of Syria who are in particularly vulnerable situations, for social and political reasons. For example: 1) having a refugee status or asylum beneficiaries (international or according to the national legislation of one of the European recipient countries) or 2) it can be proved that they have been the object of unjustified expulsion from university on racial, ethnic, religious, political, gender or sexual inclination or 3) they belong to an indigenous population targeted by a specific national policy or IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons)	Full Master, full Doctorate

PLEASE NOTE: For the specific Lot 1 – Syria, as an exception to the general EMA2 rules, the partnership is encouraged to include Syrian students who have previously benefited from an Erasmus Mundus scholarship and/or who are studying or have recently finished their studies in any HEIs of the EU.

4.- GENERAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

In order to be eligible for an Erasmus Mundus scholarship under this project, applicants applying for a mobility scholarship must fulfill the following general criteria:

Students and post-doctoral candidates

- Must be **Syrian** nationals;
- Must have **sufficient knowledge of the language** of the courses or of one of the languages currently spoken in the hosting countries, or English.

- **For Target Group 1 (TG1):** students need to be registered at one of the Syrian HEIs within the partnership at the time of submitting their application. Undergraduate students must have successfully completed at least one year of studies in their home institution;
- **For Target Group 2 (TG2):** students need either to be registered in a Syrian HEI (not included in the partnership) or to have obtained a university degree or equivalent from a HEI of that Country;
- **For Target Group 3 (TG3):** students need to be Syrian nationals and be part of the vulnerable target groups.
- Must respect the specific and additional criteria applicable to each type of mobility (undergraduate, master, doctorate, post-doctorate).

Academic and administrative staff

- Must be **Syrian national**;
- **For Target Group 1 (TG1):** Staff must work in or be associated to one of the HEIs participating in the partnership.
- **For Target Group 2 (TG2):** Staff must work in or be associated to a Syrian HEI (not included in the partnership).
- The home and host universities and the individual staff must agree on the programme of lectures to be delivered by the visiting staff, on the research activities or on the type of training to be followed.

5. TYPES OF MOBILITY

ASSUR project includes 7 types of mobility according to the academic level of the candidates:

- Undergraduate (only exchange students)
- Master (exchange students)
- Full Master (degree seeking)
- Doctorate (exchange students)
- Full Doctorate (degree seeking)
- Post-doctorate
- Academic and administrative staff

Taking into account the above mentioned levels, candidates must meet the following specific requirements:

Specific criteria for all types of mobility:

- **Undergraduate students**

Syrian undergraduate students belonging to TG1 must have successfully completed at least one year of studies in their home institution.

- **Master students** exchange students

Master students must have finished their undergraduate studies (Bachelor or equivalent) and be registered at a master degree course at the home university.

- **Full Master students** (degree seeking)

Master students must have finished their undergraduate studies (Bachelor or equivalent)

- **Doctorate candidates** (exchange)

The applicant must have obtained a second higher education degree (e.g. Master’s degree) and be registered at a PhD degree course at the home university.

- **Full Doctorate candidates** (degree seeking)

The applicant must have obtained a second higher education degree (e.g. Master’s degree)

- **Post-doctorate**

Must have obtained a doctorate degree

- **Academic and Administrative Staff:**

Have to serve at a higher education institution either as academic or administrative employees.

It is noteworthy to mention that in addition to these criteria there may be other defined internally by each partner institution of the project, so applicants must make sure to ask the contact person of the institution about the **specific eligibility criteria established either in their home institution (if applicable) or in the host institution(s)** which they intend to apply to.

6. DISTRIBUTION OF MOBILITY

Type of Mobility	Cohort 1
Undergraduates	12
Masters	14
Doctorates	11
Post-doctorates	2
Staff	2

7. AMOUNT OF GRANTS

ASSUR will cover the following:

- **Subsistence Allowance**
- **Insurance Coverage (health, travel, accident)**
- **Direct visa costs and travel expenses for one economy class return ticket**
- **Participation costs (if applicable)**

7.1. Subsistence Allowance

A scholarship agreement that defines all the conditions, benefits and responsibilities related with the project implementation as well as the schedule of payments covered by the scholarships will be signed by each institution, the scholarship holder and the coordinating institution. Only after this document is signed it will be possible to transfer the scholarships. Each EU partner must provide to **incoming** scholars the first **two installments** right after the arrival of the scholar at the host university. For the rest of the mobility, the subsistence allowance will be provided on a regular basis and will be paid monthly to the grantee bank

account. Monthly subsistence allowance can only be paid as from the month of arrival and covers each full month of the mobility, based on the academic grounds.

Type of mobility Subsistence Allowance

- **Undergraduate** 1.000 €/month
- **Master** 1.000 €/month
- **Doctorate** 1.500 €/month
- **Post-Doctorate** 1.800 €/month
- **Academic and Administrative Staff** 2.500€/month

7.2. Insurance Coverage

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 since the moment and place of departure to the mobility period until the return, when the mobility period is over.

7.3. Travel costs

The project's coordination will be responsible for booking and paying the grantee's two-way travel ticket between the home University's city and the host University's city having as reference the maximum amounts foreseen by the EACEA for each travel. In case the home or host institutions are not located in a city with an international airport, the scholarship holders must keep the invoices of the local transportation such as bus, subway, or train used to undertake the travel, so as to be able to submit a reimbursement request to the coordination. This request should be made as soon as possible, in a proper form that will be available online and that should be accompanied by the scanned original invoices of payment. The original documents must be sent to the coordinating institution that will analyse the possibility of reimbursement.

In case of long stays (more than 10 months) it will not be possible to buy the return ticket immediately. Therefore, all reimbursement requests will be put on hold until the coordinating institution can buy the return ticket and use the leftovers to reimburse other travel expenses. Taxi expenses are strongly discouraged. The coordination will carefully analyse each expense, not considering eligible taxi expenses between cities if there is other less expensive means of transportations. All the reimbursements will be made considering the exchange rate to the day in which the expenses were done. In case the scholarship holders wants to change the flight dates for individual purposes this may be allowed as long as the return date is not before the foreseen ending date of the programme of activities/mobility. All changes should be paid by the scholarship holder and not by the project. Please note that it will not be possible to reimburse neither any accommodation expenses nor a vacation travel to the grantee's home country.

Return travels of the scholarship holders with duration above 10 months will be booked by the coordination at least six months before the return date. Travels will be purchased based on the ending dates communicated by the host institutions and after receiving the approval of the scholarship holders. If there is any need to change the travel afterwards, the coordination will not be able to pay those costs, so each scholarship holder must assure together with the host institution that (s)he finishes all the activities in due time.

The following unit costs are **applied for travel costs, including airfares and visa related costs**, for the direct/linear distance ("as the crow flies"):

- For **Target Group 1** on one side the location of the sending HEI and on the other side the hosting HEI premises;

- For **Target Group 2** on one side the location of origin of the student/staff and on the other side the hosting HEI premises;
- For **Target Group 3** the location of residence of the student and on the other side the hosting HEI premises.

Distance (km)	Maximum amount (€)
< 500	250
500 – 1.000	500
1.000 – 1.500	750
1.500 – 2.500	1000
2.500 – 5.000	1500
5.000 – 10.000	2000
> 10.000	2500

For distance calculations, please refer to <http://www.mapcrow.info>

8. DURATION OF THE MOBILITIES

Candidates must take into account that mobility duration will vary depending on their academic level and their origin country:

a) Minimum duration of stay:

Undergraduate & Master exchange:	according to the academic calendar at the host university (in no case less than 8 months)
Master degree:	according to the official duration of the study programme (curriculum)
Doctorate exchange:	minimum of 9 months and 16 days
Doctorate degree:	according to the official duration the study programme (curriculum)
Post-doctorate:	minimum of 5 months and 16 days
Staff:	minimum of 30 days

The mobility must last at least the minimum period indicated above. In case of any shorter duration, the ASSUR consortium will evaluate the reasons for the shorter duration. In case the reasons are not considered as justified, the grant may be rendered void and may need to be reimbursed in part or fully.

b) Maximum duration of scholarships:

Undergraduate and Master exchange:	maximum of 10 months
Master degree:	maximum of 20 months
Doctorate exchange:	maximum of 10 months
Doctorate degree:	maximum of 30 months
Post-doctorate:	maximum of 6 months
Staff:	maximum of 1 months

FURTHERMORE

- For **Undergraduate and Master exchange students** the exact duration of stay always corresponds to the academic calendar at the host university, i.e. duration of academic activities carried out at the host university. Academic activities are activities which contribute to the academic success achieved at the host university (orientation programme, taking courses, studying for exams, doing research etc.)

Exchange students will receive a maximum of 10 months of scholarship payments. All scholars must check by themselves the exact duration of their mobility (mobility start and end date) according to the academic calendar¹ at the respective host university.

- All **Doctorate exchange students and Post Doc** scholars are responsible for negotiating the exact time frame of their mobility (within the minimum and maximum duration mentioned above) with the home and host university².

- The exact duration of mobility for **degree seeking students** (Master and Doctorate) is determined by the official duration/length of the study programme they are registered in at the host university. All scholars must check by themselves the exact duration of their mobility, i.e. the official start & end date as well as the length of the study programme (according to the respective curriculum)³.

- All **staff scholars** need to stay at the host universities for at least one month. Only in justified cases this duration can be reduced by a few days. Staff scholars also have the opportunity to split their mobility into 2x2 weeks. All staff scholars are responsible for negotiating the exact time frame of their mobility with their respective home and host universities⁴.

9. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

9.1. Preparing the application

In the phase of preparing the application, the candidate should follow the subsequent steps:

9.1.1. Verify the **General Admission Requirements** previously indicated;

Select at least one host institution among the set of institutions of the project. It is highly recommended that the applicants select up to **3 host institutions, which must be different**, of the available options but always in respect of the language, general information sheet and academic offer defined by each host institution. However, 2nd and 3rd choice institutions may decide not to evaluate these applications depending on the total number of received applications. When selecting the host institution(s), it is crucial to:

- Ensure that you master the language of tuition or English;
- Consider the identified areas of excellence in each partner institution;
- Ensure that you have the necessary academic background in terms of study areas/degree to apply to the type of scholarship and to the selected activity;
- Be aware of the real cost of living at each partner institution and analyse it considering the monthly amount of the scholarship, in case of selection;
- Consider the need to adapt to different cultural realities and also to different climate conditions, in case of selection.
- Consider the need to come to Host Country with some financial support for the first days

9.1.2. Collect **all necessary information and documents** to fill in the Application form

¹ Undergraduate and Master students need to start their mobility at the beginning of the academic year

² Doctorate exchange students and PostDoc scholars may start their mobility anytime between summer 2015 and December 31st, 2015

³ Full degree students need to start their mobility in the beginning of the academic year (December 31st at the latest)

⁴ Staff may start their mobility any time between summer 2015 and spring 2018

- ⇒ Several documents are **mandatory**. If not uploaded in the application form, the application cannot be considered submitted. In case of unreadable documents the application will be considered invalid and will not be evaluated.

9.1.3. Prepare the following documents:

Undergraduate (only exchange students):

- Three learning agreements for the three chosen host universities,

A template for the Learning Agreement is provided on the website.

- CV (Europass format)
- Copy of passport (*)
- Language certificates for the language of instruction at host university or English: all applicants need to check the general information sheet of the respective host university on the ASSUR website and upload the required language certificates which are mentioned in the general information sheet
- Certificates and transcripts of records
- Selected students must provide the original learning agreement signed by academic coordinator at home university within one month after the arrival. A copy of this will be sent to the project coordinator by email.

Master (exchange students):

- Three learning agreements (for the three chosen host universities)

A template for the Learning Agreement is provided on the website.

- CV (Europass format)
- Copy of passport (*)
- Language certificates for the language of instruction at host university or English: all applicants need to check the general information sheet of the respective host university on the ASSUR website and upload the required language certificates which are mentioned in the general information sheet
- Certificates (bachelor degree or equivalents) and transcripts of record
- Selected students must provide the original learning agreement signed by academic coordinator at home university within one month after the arrival. A copy of this will be sent to the project coordinator by email.

Master (degree seeking students):

- CV (Europass format)
- Copy of passport (*)
- Language certificates for the language of instruction at host university or English: all applicants need to check the general information sheet of the respective host university on the ASSUR website and upload the required language certificates which are mentioned in the general information sheet
- Certificates and transcripts of records
- Bachelor degree certificate or equivalent delivered by one Syrian partner university (TG 2 Applicants for a Master Degree programme will need to prove that they have completed a Bachelor Programme at a Syrian higher education institution by uploading the relevant documents)

Doctorate (exchange students):

- Study/research plan

A template for the study/research plan is provided on the website.

- CV (Europass format)
- Copy of passport (*)
- Recommendation letter(s) (max 2)

* Selected candidates must pay due attention to the expiring date of their passport since the short validity can be a serious obstacle for getting VISA and stay permit in Europe

- Language certificates for the language of instruction at host university or English: all applicants need to check the general information sheet of the respective host university on the ASSUR website and upload the required language certificates which are mentioned in the general information sheet
- Certificates (Master degree or equivalent)
- Transcripts of records
- Letter of interest: This letter from the host university aims to specify their 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.
The candidate must upload the scanned filled-in and signed letter of interest. This means that doctorate 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.
- Selected students must provide the original study/research plan signed by academic coordinator at home university within one month after the arrival. A copy of this will be sent to the project coordinator by email.

Doctorate (degree seeking students):

- CV (Europass format)
- Copy of passport (*)
- Research plan
- Recommendation letter(s) (max 2)
- Language certificates for the language of instruction at host university or English: all applicants need to check the general information sheet of the respective host university on the ASSUR website and upload the required language certificates which are mentioned in the general information sheet
- Certificates and transcripts of records
- Master degree certificate or equivalent (TG 2 Applicants for a PhD programme will need to prove that they have completed a Master Programme at a Syrian higher education institution by uploading the relevant document)
- Letter of interest: This letter from the host university aims to specify their 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.
The candidate must upload the scanned filled-in and signed letter of interest. This means that doctorate 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.

Post-doctorate:

- Study/research plan

A template for the study/research plan is provided on the website.

- CV (Europass format)
- Copy of passport (*)
- Recommendation letter(s) (max 2)
- Language certificates for the language of instruction at host university or English: all applicants need to check the general information sheet of the respective host university on the ASSUR website and upload the required language certificates which are mentioned in the general information sheet
- Certificates (PhD degree or equivalent)
- Transcripts of records
- Letter of interest: This letter from the host university aims to specify their 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.

* Selected candidates must pay due attention to the expiring date of their passport since the short validity can be a serious obstacle for getting VISA and stay permit in Europe

The candidate must upload the scanned filled-in and signed letter of interest. This means that post doc 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.

- Selected students must provide the original study/research plan signed by academic coordinator at home university within one month after the arrival. A copy of this will be sent to the project coordinator by email.

Academic and administrative staff:

- Research/teaching/training plan

A template for the Research/teaching/training plan is provided on the website.

- CV (Europass format)
- Copy of passport (*)
- Language certificates for the language of instruction at host university or English: all applicants need to check the general information sheet of the respective host university on the ASSUR website and upload the required language certificates which are mentioned in the general information sheet
- Letter of interest: This letter from the host university aims to specify their academic/administrative interest in hosting the applicant. The letter of interest needs to be filled in and signed by the academic coordinator at the host university.

The candidate must upload the scanned filled-in and signed letter of interest. This means that staff applicants **have to contact the host university, get the formal approval acceptance and the signature** from the host University before submitting their application.

- Academic record, list of publications (applicable for academic staff)
- Description of work experience (applicable for administrative staff)
- Selected staff must provide the original study/research plan signed by academic coordinator at home university at the arrival. A copy of this will be sent to the project coordinator by email.

NOTE: Applicants belonging to Target Group 2:

- must upload a document which certifies that they are currently registered as regular students at a non-partner Syrian University (study confirmation); or
- If they are not students anymore, but graduated some time ago at any Syrian university (partner as well as non-partner universities), applicants are asked to upload their degree certificate in order to prove their eligibility status.

NOTE: Applicants belonging to Target Group 3:

- will be taken into special consideration in the context of the promotion and selection procedure and receive special support by the consortium.
- they must upload a document proving that they find themselves in a vulnerable situation.

It is the responsibility of the applicant that all obligatory documents are uploaded.

Applicants are requested to upload scanned versions of all original documents (transcripts of record, diploma, degree certificates, language certificates etc.). In addition, scanned versions of certified translations/official translations of all these documents into English or the language of the host country are obligatory.

All selected scholars are advised to check with their host universities if there are specific deadlines for submitting original documents. Admission criteria of all partner institutions in the consortium have to be respected. All applicants need to check the general information sheet of the respective host university.

* Selected candidates must pay due attention to the expiring date of their passport since the short validity can be a serious obstacle for getting VISA and stay permit in Europe

In case applicants do not have all required degree certificate at the end of the call (e.g. they don't have obtained their degree yet, but will have obtained it once the mobility starts), a **certificate confirming the expected date of graduation, which must be before the foreseen starting date of the mobility**, must be issued by home university, dated, signed and stamped, otherwise it will not be considered valid and the application will be immediately excluded. In case the application is successful, scholars will be conditionally accepted and given a certain deadline in order to submit the missing document.

9.1.4. Ensure that the Learning / Research / Work Agreement is objective and specific concerning its methodology and viability, impact and benefit, as well as the capacity of attaining the project's purposes within the timeframe established by the duration of the scholarship. The lack of detailed information or objectivity will reduce the chances of success during the process of application's evaluation;

9.1.5. Make sure that the motivation answers included in the application form **are clear and reflect each one of the options selected (maximum of 3 host Universities)**;

9.1.6. Create a log in a password: Once all the information is gathered and compiled in a teaching/training project, the applicant should **create a log in a password** to be granted access to the **Application Form** available on the project's website <https://erasmusmundus.univaq.it/assur>

9.2. Online Submission

To fill in the Application Form, the following steps must be considered:

- The applicants should have a valid e-mail address and an Internet connection.
- As a way to access the form, the applicants should create a new login in the "Apply" section.
⇒ Only **online applications are considered eligible**.
- The applicants should then fill in the online Application Form available on the project's website. They can save&resume their application. After every saving, they are informed whether all required information is completed, or not.
- Once all required information is filled in, the applicants receive a confirmation letter that the application is complete. However, the applicants can continue editing the application until the deadline comes.
⇒ Once the deadline for applications comes, the application cannot be changed any more by applicants.

The online application form is only available in English. However, before starting to fill in the Application Form, the applicants must be sure of having all the certificates and language skills required to attend the sought programme(s) and the Institution(s). Candidates have to submit all supporting documents as described above in 9.1.3. Prepare the following documents

The **deadline for the submission of the online applications for the Call** is 10th February 2015 at 11.59 pm and has as reference the Central European Time (CET). The Coordination Office will do everything possible to avoid system failures but cannot assume any responsibility if it is not possible to submit the application in the very last minutes before the deadline. Applicants must avoid the last minute applications so as to guarantee there will be no problems in the submission of the application form. It is reminded to all candidates that **applications sent by mail, fax or e-mail will not be accepted**.

⇒ **The confirmation letter does not constitute a confirmation of eligibility or of selection**, it just confirms the submission of the application.

Please include a **valid e-mail address** in your application for communication purposes. Do not include in the application form the e-mail of another colleague or friend that is also applying as the communication of results will be done exclusively by e-mail and this could generate problems in interpreting the selection results. The applicants should only have one valid application at the beginning of the selection procedure. Being so, if the same applicant submits several online forms, all of them will be disregarded.

In the case of **applications to master and doctorate mobility scholarships**, we recommend the applicants to request the cooperation of a **home institution's professor** who supports them in the preparation of the application. Such support will allow an easier selection of the host institution where the research can be carried out and the mobility project is more feasible. Simultaneously, the home institution's contact will help the applicants to ensure the quality of the working/study plan, guaranteeing a well structured project that puts together the applicants interests and the priorities of scientific research and local technologies.

9.3. Documents to be submitted by the applicants

The applicants should submit, in the online application, a digital copy of several documents described in section 9.1.3. Prepare the following documents.

Please Note:

- If a candidate fails to upload mandatory documents, the application will be excluded without any possibility of appeal.
- **CV** (Europass format)
- **Certificate proving the obtained degree or Certificate confirming the expected date of graduation (which must be obtained before the foreseen starting date of the mobility)** must be issued by home university, dated, signed and stamped, otherwise it will not be considered valid and the application will be immediately excluded. In the case of having achieved more than one academic degree, the uploaded file must contain the scan of all documents. It is not necessary to homologate the diploma during the call for applications phase. In case the host institution requires the homologation of the diploma, the scholarship holder will have to do it immediately after the notification of selection.
- **Transcript of Records** must be issued by the home university, stating in detail all courses taken and grades obtained. This document must be dated, signed and stamped by the institution, otherwise it will not be considered valid and the application will be immediately excluded.
- **Certificate of language skills** applicants need to check the general information sheet of the respective host university on the ASSUR website and upload the required language certificates which are mentioned in the general information sheet.
- **Letter of interest:** mandatory for Doctorates, Post Docs, and Staff. This letter from the host university aims to specify their interest in hosting the applicant. The letter of interest needs to be filled in and signed by the academic coordinator at the host university.
- **Certificate issued by the home institution regarding the applicant's enrollment in the University (Mandatory for TG2).** The certificate has to specify the expected ending date in which the student will finish his/her studies at home university. If they are not students anymore, but graduated some time ago at any Syrian universities (partner as well as non-partner universities), applicants are asked to upload their degree certificate in order to prove their eligibility status.
- TG3 applicants: **Document proving that they find themselves in a vulnerable situation**

All documents abovementioned must be attached to the Application Form. It is important to highlight the fact that **incomplete applications or with blank or unreadable documents will not be considered eligible and will immediately be disregarded.**

An applicant can upload several files at the same time. Each file shouldn't be more than 3.8MB in size. Only PDF files are accepted. If more than one document needs to be uploaded in one file, the scanings should all be combined into one file.

10. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

All valid applications received will be included as read-only documents in a protected database. All the legal requisites concerning the manipulation of personal data will be observed and it will always be kept confidentiality of the information submitted online. The database will only be accessed and revised by authorized persons in the home and host institutions who have an access code. This is also the case of the offices of the Coordination Office, the technical experts that will participate in the evaluation process.

a) Eligibility check

- Target 1 Candidates:

During the selection period, the **Local Management Team (LMT)** at the home university will be in charge of checking eligibility by reviewing the submitted applications of its students and staff belonging to TG 1. It will take responsibility and guarantee that applicants have proper documents in place to ensure that the exchange period at the host university is recognized and constitutes part of the student's study record at the home university (Learning Agreement, ECTS, Transcript of Records, and Diploma supplement when applicable). The LMT at the home university will also check the eligibility of the applicant in relation with the EM Action 2 eligibility criteria as well as clarify whether the applicant is registered at or employed by the home university (Target Group 1) and review, check completeness and authenticity of attached documents, check whether the documents have been correctly translated, and validate applications of their outgoing students/staff belonging to Target Group 1. In case applications are formally not ok and therefore cannot be accepted, reasons for rejection have to be clearly justified.

- Target 2 and Target 3 Candidates:

For TG 2 and TG 3 applications, the project co-coordinator is responsible for checking the completeness of uploaded documents, whether the eligibility requirements are met, and consequently for validating the applications.

In case applications are not accepted, reasons for rejection have to be clearly justified.

Formal requirements according to p. 6.1.2.A. of Programme Guide (ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS AND PARTNERSHIP COMPOSITION) are

- at least 1 year of BA, PhD, post-doc studies completed at home university before coming to EU for continuation of studies there,
- in case of MA students - at least bachelor diploma or another master diploma in matching study area,
- in case of MA and PhD degree seeking candidates, there may be additional requirements due to national and local rules of the hosting institutions,
- in case of staff – full employment at sending institution, institutional support of candidature, mobility assignments must be based on agreements between the members of the partnership (TG 1 candidates).

b) Ranking procedure

Validated applications will then be reviewed and ranked by the **LMT at the host university**, which guarantees an absence of conflict of interest as well as that students and staff will be selected in a manner respecting principles of transparency and equal treatment. The LMT of host institution will review the applications, check if the admission and language requirements are fulfilled, find an adequate academic solution for the selected applicants and rank the applications.

In case applications are not accepted by the LMT at the host university, reasons for rejection have to be justified based on academic reasons (such as language requirements and admission requirements).

c) Ranking criteria

The selection will be based on a number of criteria:

- Learning agreement or Study/research/teaching/training plan
- Motivation and capacity to bring positive impact to home country on return will be assessed on the base of the motivation questionnaire included in the application form, and in case of doctoral, post-doc students and staff candidates on the letter of interest.
- Academic performance in the past will be assessed on the base of submitted academic records (transcript of records, relevant diplomas, other academic achievements proved by other records (certificates etc.)), and in case of PhD and post-doc applicants, on the quality of the additional required description of their research proposal, methodology, feasibility and expected outcomes (mobility and post-mobility scientific projects).
- Language skills in English and/or language of the hosting institution will be assessed on the base of the threshold established by the selected EU hosting University of 1) result of TOEFL/ IELTS and scoring of other official English language proficiency certificates, 2) other official documents which confirm knowledge of English (e.g. English summer schools certificates, local courses diplomas or certifications),
- CV & additional activities/documents will be assessed.

In order to evaluate the Language credentials' reliability candidates can be subject of verification by partners formally or empirically (eg.: skype interviews with applicants who have not submitted renowned certificates like TOEFL/ IELTS or home university certification).

The above criteria will be ranked from **1** (excellent) to **5** (rejected):

- 1** Outstanding performance
- 2** Above the average standard
- 3** Generally sound work with a number of notable errors
- 4** Performance meets the minimum criteria
- 5** Rejected: the application is not selected by the host university

After ranking the single criteria, an average value (i.e. ranking result) will be calculated as final ranking of the application.

d) Selection procedure and allocation of scholarships

After the ranking procedure has been completed, the allocation of the scholarships will be carried out at the selection committee meeting by the SQC according to the following criteria:

- ranking result
- fair distribution of host universities
- gender balance
- balance of fields of study
- level of vulnerability (for TG 3)
- applications from disadvantaged groups will be favored
- commitment to contribute to the network of the consortium (for Post-doctorates and staff)

By the end of April 2015, the consortium will inform applicants about the selection results.

Once the allocation of scholarships has been confirmed by all partner institutions, the selected candidates receive a nomination letter, via e-mail. By accepting the distribution result through the website, the scholar

accepts the nomination for a scholarship within the ASSUR project as well as confirms his/her acceptance of the guidelines and pledges to take all the necessary measures to start and complete the mobility successfully and in accordance with all the stipulated administrative and academic requirements. The award letter is issued after final confirmation from the hosting institution.

Rejected applicants will receive an official letter of rejection via email, providing them with the opportunity to appeal against the decision within a given deadline.

All mobility flows of the cohort 1 have to start by December 31st, 2015 at the latest (except for staff who can start their mobility any time between September 2015 and 2016).

11. INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

All the information related with the project's implementation can be consulted on the official website: <https://erasmusmundus.univaq.it/assur>

The consortium has created two Coordination Offices, responsible for the implementation of the tasks seeking the preparation and development of the scholarships' programme, in strict cooperation with the EACEA and the European Commission.

Address and contact of the **Coordination Office:**

ASSUR project

International Relations Office
University of L'Aquila via
Giovanni Di Vincenzo n. 16B
67100 L'Aquila (Italy)
Phone number: +390862432767
Fax: +390862431217
E-mail: assur@univaq.it
Coordinator: Professor Anna Tozzi

Address and contact of the **Co-Coordination Office:**

ASSUR project

International Relations Office
Arab International University – Co-coordinator
Mezzeh Office - P.O.Box: 16180
Damascus – Syria
Phone number: 00963 11 611 9341/7 Ext.102
E-mail: t-rieke@aiu.edu.sy
Coordinator: Prof. Dr. Abdul Ghani Maa Bared
Team: Dipl. Hdl. Thomas Rieke

All partner institutions have nominated a contact person responsible for assisting and counseling potential applicants of their institutions. The official contacts of each institution can be accessed on the site, in the **Contacts** section.

It is strongly recommended to regularly consult the **e-mail address** indicated in the application form, as this will be the **only means of communication between the applicant and the coordination.**