Erasmus+
International Credit Mobility

Guide on Amendments to the Beneficiary Grant Agreement

July 2016
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Disclaimer

This document is a revision of the Guide issued in December 2015 for projects selected under the 2015 Call for Proposals. The current version is applicable to projects selected under the 2015 and 2016 Calls for Proposals. If your project is financed under a later Call for Proposals, look for an updated version of this document.
Foreword

This guide on amendments is intended for institutions that have received funding for higher education student and staff mobility between Programme and Partner Countries (International Credit Mobility) under Key Action 1 of the Erasmus+ programme.

This document will provide you with useful information on the contract framework for International Credit Mobility and answer the most frequently asked questions regarding amendments to the contract (Grant Agreement) between the Beneficiary of the project and their National Agency.

While this document is primarily addressed to higher education institutions in Erasmus+ Programme Countries (KA107 beneficiaries), it may be useful for their partners in the Partner Countries to understand exactly which changes to the Grant Agreement are possible.

1. Contract between Beneficiary and National Agency

1.1) Structure and content of the Grant Agreement

Once your International Credit Mobility project has been selected for funding, you sign a mono-beneficiary Grant Agreement (or multi-beneficiary, if you are part of a national consortium) with your National Agency.

This Grant Agreement captures the core of the project and is based on the information in the application form. The activities that have been retained for funding and the breakdown of your grant are specified in Annexes of your Grant Agreement.

Under the 2015 call, this information was contained in two separate annexes (Annex I - Description of the project and Annex II - Estimated Budget).

Annex I - Description of the project includes the ‘Activity Details’ table summarising the mobility flows (e.g. incoming/outgoing, staff/student) selected for funding. The annex provides the description of the project provided in your application, in your answers to the four quality questions (award criteria). The selected mobility flows must be implemented in accordance with this annex.

Annex II - Estimated Budget provides the project budget summary and details the funds available for travel and individual support for participants and the funds allocated to organisational support.

The funds for travel and individual support with each Partner Country are also presented in separate tables for added clarity.

In 2016 there have been some changes in the content and the form of these annexes to simplify the implementation of these projects:

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1 The 33 Erasmus+ Programme Countries are the 28 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. Partner Countries are any other countries in the world.
These annexes have been merged into a single document (Annex II to the Grant Agreement) that includes the description of the project, the estimated budget and, for multi-beneficiary grant agreements, the list of other beneficiaries (consortium members)\(^2\).

The “Activity Details” are presented by Partner Country and the granted activities and the specific budget to implement them are shown in the same table.

Education levels are only indicated in outgoing mobility to Partner Countries if there are legal limitations on the level which may be funded – allowing the NA to check the legality of the mobility.

A list of the Partner Country HEIs and, where applicable, their respective PICs.

This is an extract from Annex II to the Grant Agreement for an institution that has organised both incoming and outgoing student mobility with a country that has limitations regarding education levels:

![Table of activities and details]

In the 2015 call the regions to which these restrictions applied were 6, 7, 8 and 10. In the 2016 call, region 11 was eligible for mobility for the first time and belongs in the same category of development assistance as the regions mentioned above. The detailed list of countries is available in the section “Eligible Countries” of the Erasmus+ Programme Guide.

### 1.2 Amendments to the Grant Agreement

Once the Grant Agreement has been signed and your project is underway, you may find that some of the planned activities can no longer be implemented as foreseen. The Grant Agreement and its annexes capture the core of the project approved by the evaluators. Certain amendments are possible as long as they respect the core of the project.

The following pages will guide you through which changes are possible without amending the Grant Agreement; which are the most common changes that require an amendment and the authorisation of your National Agency; and which changes are not possible under any circumstances.

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\(^2\) References to Annex II refer to 2016 projects. In 2015 projects that information may have been contained in Annex I or Annex II to the grant agreement.
Here are 5 Golden Rules for amendments:

1. Amendments are always done in writing
2. Any change must respect the core of the project as described in Annex II of the Grant Agreement, the rules from the Programme Guide and any secondary criteria which your National Agency might have set
3. Funds cannot be transferred from one Partner Country to another; in other words, any changes are only possible in mobility flows with the same Partner Country
4. Mobilities can only take place with partner institutions that are part of the contract
5. The final grant after amendments cannot exceed the grant requested at application stage for the entire project.

* For regions of the world where budget is limited, your National Agency may have chosen to limit demand by adding one or more secondary criteria on the degree level (e.g. limiting applications to one or two cycles), the activity type (e.g. limiting applications to staff mobility only), or the duration of mobility periods (e.g. limiting student mobility to 6 months). You should check with your National Agency whether any such secondary criteria apply and to which regions.

2. Changes without amendment

The following 3 changes to the Grant Agreement are the only ones that do not require an amendment.

You may:

- set the duration of individual mobilities
- organise mobilities for a different number of participants than specified in Annex II of the Grant Agreement
- changes to study cycles within limitations set on development assistance Partner Countries (since 2016 call)
- transfer up to 50% of the funds allocated for organisational support to individual support and travel for student/staff mobility

These changes are possible as long as the minimum and maximum durations set out in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide (i.e. 3 months (or 1 academic term/trimester to 12 months for students; 5 days to 2 months for staff) and any possible secondary criteria set by the National Agency are respected.

Your National Agency will be made aware of these changes through your monthly reporting in Mobility Tool+ and via your interim report(s) and final report. Please contact your National Agency for more information on these reporting procedures.
2.1) Duration of mobilities and number of participants

Annex II of the Grant Agreement does not specify the exact duration of each individual mobility, but rather the total duration for all participants. It is therefore possible to organise:

- ✔ individual mobilities of the same duration for all participants;
- ✔ longer and shorter mobilities;
- ✔ shorter mobilities than the average duration so that additional mobilities may be organised with the left-over funds.

If you organise more mobilities than initially foreseen, these must be the same type, i.e. (student/staff), with the same Partner Country. Under the 2015 call, you were also restricted to the same student study cycle. However, in the 2016 call, study cycles are only fixed for outgoing student mobility to the development assistance Partner Countries mentioned on page 4 where there are limitations to outgoing short, first and second cycle mobility. In all other cases, in 2016 projects there is flexibility to organise additional mobilities for student mobility irrespective of the study cycle.

Your National Agency may be able to grant additional financial support for these mobilities if there are funds remaining for cooperation with that Partner Country or region.

When deciding on the specific duration of individual mobilities, bear in mind that mobilities between Programme and Partner Countries cannot be planned as a combination of a funded and a zero-grant period. Zero-grant extensions are the result of exceptional situations that occur during the mobility period.

2.2) Transfer of organisational support

The funds for organisational support are allocated to the entire mobility project based on the total number of individual mobilities (EUR 350 per participant up to the 100th participant, EUR 200 per person from the 101st participant). It is a unit cost provided to support the organisation of mobilities and ensure that the Beneficiary and its partner(s) fulfil the commitments and principles established in the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) and the Inter-Institutional Agreement. Any split between participating institutions should be agreed upon by all partners on a mutually acceptable basis and set out in the inter-institutional agreement.

If your institution is able to organise student and staff mobility of a high quality (including linguistic support) at a lower cost, or if it has financial resources in addition to Erasmus+ EU funds, then you have the possibility to transfer up to 50% of your total organisational support grant to travel and individual support, in order to (a) undertake longer mobilities or (b) carry out new mobilities. In the case of new mobilities, these do not need to be of the same type as those already granted.

Before you transfer organisational support funds, please bear in mind that:

- International Credit Mobility requires extensive preparation and follow-up by the Beneficiary and its partner(s), which is supported by the organisational support grant;
- these additional mobilities do not trigger any additional organisational support per participant.

It is therefore highly recommended that you and your partner(s) carefully think this through before undertaking any such change. This flexibility should only be used when the funds received for organisational support largely exceed the needs of your institution and of your partner(s) in terms of preparation and implementation of mobilities.
My institution has received funding for 4 student mobilities for a total of 40 months. We have organised mobilities for 4 students for a total of 36 months and now have some funds remaining for individual support. How could we complement the remaining funds to organise additional student mobility with the same institution?

Answer: You have enough funding to cover the individual support of a student for 4 months but probably lack the travel budget. You could transfer some of your organisational support funds to individual and travel support for this additional mobility, but only if you and your partner do not need all of the organisational support to adequately implement the mobilities.

Can I transfer some of my organisational support funds to organise mobilities for a different activity type or study cycle than already granted?

Answer: Mobilities funded by transferring some of the organisational support grant do not have to be of the same kind than those already granted, although they must be organised with the partner institutions in the contract. You are free to choose the activity type and study cycle, as long as you respect the rules set out in the Programme Guide and any possible secondary criteria set by your National Agency.

Can the transferred organisational support funds be used to support incoming mobility if exclusively outgoing mobilities were originally foreseen in the grant?

Answer: Yes, new mobilities can be incoming or outgoing, regardless of what was granted, as long as you respect the Programme Guide rules and any secondary criteria set by your National Agency.

Can organisational support be used to fund mobilities with any Partner Country?

Answer: No. Only those partner institutions already mentioned in your Grant Agreement or added through an amendment of the contract (check the section ‘Amendment of the partner higher education institution’).

Is it possible to modify study cycles without an amendment? Is there any difference regarding study cycles between 2015 and 2016 call projects?

Answer: In 2015 projects, additional mobilities that could originate from varying combinations of durations and number of participants had to be of the same study cycle as those initially granted. Otherwise, an amendment to the study cycles would be necessary.

In the 2016 call, study cycles are not specified in the application form. There is only a distinction on outgoing student mobility to development assistance Partner Countries for which there are limitations to outgoing short, first and second cycle mobility (see page 4). This means that:
- The beneficiary and its partner(s) can decide freely on the education levels for all other countries
- For development countries they can decide freely on the education levels for incoming student mobilities and outgoing student mobility is only possible for third cycle PhD candidates. In some cases NAs have made available funding for short, first and second cycle outgoing student mobility, check with your NA if that possibility exists.
3. Most common changes with amendment

This section covers the most common changes that always require an amendment. The cases mentioned here are not exhaustive, so contact your National Agency if in doubt.

3.1) Transfer of funds allocated to travel and individual support

The funds for travel and individual support can be transferred:

- Between most categories of staff and students, between incoming and outgoing mobility and between staff training and teaching.
- The sole exception is that if your original contract does not foresee outgoing student mobility at short, first and second cycles with development assistance Partner Countries mentioned on page 4, then it is unlikely that you can amend your contract to include these types of mobility. Contact your National Agency.

In the 2015 call the study cycles were fixed for all student mobilities, and it was necessary to amend the grant agreement to transfer funds between different study cycles in all cases. In the 2016 call, there is no need of an amendment to change study cycles, please see the FAQ above (‘Is there any difference regarding study cycles between 2015 and 2016 call projects?’).

Amendments between incoming and outgoing mobility were initially not allowed in the 2015 call. Changes in the budgetary rules of the Commission have made the scheme more flexible for both calls:

- The basic restrictions for development cooperation explained in section ‘1.2) Amendments to the Grant Agreement’ still apply.
- When this change is possible from a budgetary point of view, it requires an amendment to be approved by the NA. This is because the Grant Agreement describes your cooperation arrangements and how responsibilities are divided between you and your partner(s) (e.g. who will prepare and support the participants) which can vary strongly depending on the direction of the mobility flow.
And remember….

You may not, under any circumstances, transfer funds for mobility from one Partner Country to another.

All the changes as described in this section are possible with the approval of your National Agency (amendment of Annex II of the Grant Agreement), which will only allow changes if it considers that:

- they respect the core of your project. For example, you may request a transfer to undertake a type of mobility that was not initially foreseen in your Grant Agreement and your National Agency must make a value judgement about whether this is in the spirit of your application or not.
- any secondary criteria it may have set.
- they respect the budget rules and restrictions for outgoing student mobility in the Programme Guide.

3.2) Amendment for additional special needs support

If one of your selected participants has a physical, mental or health-related situation that would prevent him/her from participating in a mobility activity unless extra financial support is made available, you may apply to your National Agency for additional support for special needs.

If accepted, your National Agency will issue an amendment to the Grant Agreement if there are funds remaining for cooperation with that Partner Country.

This is the only case when your institution may receive more funding than initially requested at application stage.

3.3) Amendment of the partner higher education institution

In your online application you were asked to state which Partner Country institution(s) you were going to work with. It may be that one of these institutions is no longer able to participate, or that it has failed to respect the principles laid down in the Inter-Institutional Agreement signed by both parties.

If you need to add a new Partner Country institution or replace one of the Partner Country institutions, you request an amendment explaining why such a change is necessary. Please remember that it is only possible to select a different higher education institution in the same Partner Country.

This is considered an important change to your project, as your application was based on mobility with specific, named institutions. Your National Agency will assess whether the core of your project (described in Annex II of the Grant Agreement) is preserved before granting any such amendment.

3.4) Duration of the contract

In your online application you can choose between a project duration of 16 or 24 months (or 16 months only for projects selected under the second round of applications). For example, in the 2015 call, all projects started on 1 June 2015 (1 February 2016 for second round projects) and they can last until 30 September 2016 or 31 May 2017.

If you want to change the duration of your project from 16 to 24 months or vice versa, you request the amendment to your National Agency. An additional flexibility is that for beneficiaries having difficulties in finding suitable candidates during the first year of their mobility projects you may wish to extend the project
duration (from 24 months to 26 months; or from 16-18 months for projects from the second round) so that they finish on 31 July 2017.

Similar requests are possible for 2016 projects.

### Frequently Asked Questions

**What is the difference between changing the number of participants and transferring funds between activity types? Why does the first not require an amendment while the second one does?**

*Answer:* Annex II of the Grant Agreement does not specify the duration of individual mobilities and it is not compulsory to set equal durations for all mobilities.

When transferring funds between activity types, the National Agency must approve the amendment as this implies using funds (for travel and individual support) for different activity types than originally foreseen in your Grant Agreement. Bear in mind the restrictions explained previously.

**I have received funding for two incoming Bachelor students and one PhD candidate. Instead, I would like to organise mobilities for three BA students. How should this change be considered?**

*Answer:* In 2015 projects, it was necessary to introduce an amendment to transfer funds between study cycles. In 2016 projects, it is no longer necessary. However, you will have to bear in mind the restrictions explained previously on student mobility to development assistance Partner Countries.

**Can I transfer part of the funds for travel and individual support with Canada to finance mobility in a different study cycle? What if the funds were allocated for cooperation with Paraguay?**

*Answer:* Canada is not among the development assistance countries listed on page 4, changes to incoming and outgoing student mobility in all study cycles are eligible with the agreement of your National Agency.

Paraguay is a country covered by development assistance and it is not possible to organise outgoing student mobility for short, first or second study cycles, unless your National Agency has made intra-European funds available. Check with your National Agency.

**In my application I requested funding for mobilities with a single institution, but my partner can no longer take part in the project. Is it possible to add another institution from the same Partner Country?**

*Answer:* Yes, you may request an amendment to change, increase or reduce the number of partner institutions within the same Partner Country. Your National Agency may accept this change as long as it believes that the core of the project described in the Grant Agreement is preserved.

**My project originally included two institutions from a Partner Country, but one of them is having trouble selecting participants for the next academic term. Is it possible to remove this institution or add a new one?**

*Answer:* In principle, this change is possible (see explanation above). However, if your project lasts 24 months, you and your partner could decide to start those mobilities during the following term. If your project duration is only 16 months, you may extend it with the approval of your national Agency.

In addition, you may request to extend the duration of your project from 24 months to 26 months (or from 16-18 months for projects from the second round).
4. Zero-grants from Erasmus+ EU funds

As explained in the Programme Guide, mobilities with a zero-grant from Erasmus+ EU funds are possible under the International Credit Mobility action. This means that additional participants can be sent abroad (or received) under the Erasmus+ brand without additional EU funding. Zero grant mobilities do not require an amendment, unless you wish to receive additional organisational support funds (see green box below).

However, there are certain conditions:

- Zero-grant mobilities are possible if the participant is a zero-grant for the whole duration of the mobility, or
- Exceptionally a zero-grant extension is possible if the participant (once on mobility) requests an extension of his/her mobility period (because the exam period is delayed for instance) and you do not have sufficient funds to meet his/her request.
- It is not possible to plan mobilities combining an Erasmus+ grant with a period of zero-grant before the mobility starts (e.g. sending the participant for twelve months, but paying him/her for only six, effectively reducing the grant by half).

Zero-grant mobilities can only be organised with partner institutions that are already part of your Grant Agreement. However, you are completely free to choose the type of activity, study cycle and flow direction, as long as the minimum and maximum durations set out in the Programme Guide are respected.

In short, zero-grant mobilities can be organised:

- for student mobility at all levels and in all directions;
- for staff teaching in all directions;
- for staff training in all directions.

Any secondary criteria that your National Agency may have set do not apply to zero-grant mobilities as the participants do not receive a grant from Erasmus+ EU funds (they may receive a regional or national grant, or any other type of financial contribution).

In most cases, it will be enough to create these zero-grant mobilities in Mobility Tool+ (or, in case of a non-funded extension, to flag the mobility as such). These additional mobilities do not require an amendment.

The only case where you will need to introduce an amendment is the following:

As zero-grant mobilities do not automatically trigger organisational support, you will need to request these additional funds from your National Agency. Be aware that:

- your National Agency will only be able to grant this support if it has funds remaining for cooperation with that Partner Country;
- you cannot receive more funding than requested in the initial grant application for the entire project;
- you will not receive any organisational support if you organise mobilities that had been rejected during the selection process because the quality threshold was not reached.

There are also limitations to outgoing student mobility to development assistance Partner Countries, check with your NA.
5. Form and timing of amendments

5.1) Form of amendments

Amendments are always done in writing (Article II.11 of your Grant Agreement). It is possible to amend the Grant Agreement through:

- an exchange of letters (or emails, if accepted by your National Agency) with acknowledgement of receipt;
- an amendment signed by both parties (with paper/electronic signatures, depending on your National Agency).

In both cases, the signed amendments and letters/printed emails are filed together and become part of the original Grant Agreement.

Check the procedure established by your National Agency and whether amendments templates exist.
5.2) Timing of amendments

As soon as it becomes apparent that your project needs to be implemented differently than originally foreseen, you should contact your National Agency to request an amendment.

In order to avoid sending several requests for amendments, you may group similar requests and send them to your National Agency at once. However, you should bear in mind that costs for amended mobilities that were not approved by your National Agency will not be eligible.

The General Conditions of the Grant Agreement (Annex I)\(^3\), explain in this regard that:

\(^{3}\) In 2015 projects, the same information was provided in Article II.11.3 of the Grant Agreement: “Any request for amendment shall be duly justified and shall be sent to the other party in due time before it is due to take effect, and in any case one month before the end of the implementation period. Point (c) does not apply in cases duly substantiated by the party requesting the amendment if the other party agrees.”

\(\text{II.13.3 Any request for amendment must:}\)

(a) be duly justified;

(b) be accompanied by appropriate supporting documents; and

(c) be sent to the other party in due time before it is due to take effect, and in any case **one month before** the end of the implementation period.

Point (c) does not apply in cases duly substantiated by the party requesting the amendment if the other party agrees.
6. Summary table of flexibility for 2015 projects

(1) Modifications are only possible between mobility flows with the same Partner Country.

(2) Modifications must not change the core of the project (Annex I of the Grant Agreement) and respect any secondary criteria set by the National Agency.

(3) It is not allowed under any circumstances to transfer funds to mobility with another Partner Country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions as defined in Erasmus+ Programme Guide</th>
<th>Modifications with amendment</th>
<th>Modifications without amendment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direction (between out/incoming)</td>
<td>Incoming student mobility*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Western Balkans</td>
<td>Yes, for all activities</td>
<td>Yes, between all cycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Eastern Partnership</td>
<td>Yes, for all activities</td>
<td>Yes, between all cycles</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) South Mediterranean</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Russia</td>
<td>Yes, for all activities</td>
<td>Yes, between all cycles</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) Asia</td>
<td>Restrictions for student mobility***</td>
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<tr>
<td>6) Central Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>8) South Africa</td>
<td>Restrictions for student mobility***</td>
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<tr>
<td>10) Other Industrialised countries</td>
<td>Yes, for all activities</td>
<td>Yes, between all cycles</td>
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</tbody>
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* Unless your National Agency has set additional secondary criteria.

** Either to undertake longer mobilities or to carry out new mobilities.

*** Changes affecting outgoing short, first and second cycle student mobility are only possible if your NA has made additional funding available. Check with your NA.
6. Summary table of flexibility for 2016 projects

(1) Modifications are only possible between mobility flows with the same Partner Country.
(2) Modifications must not change the core of the project (Annex II of the Grant Agreement) and respect any secondary criteria set by the National Agency.
(3) It is not allowed under any circumstances to transfer funds to mobility with another Partner Country.

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<td>Outgoing student &amp; staff mobility*</td>
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<td>Yes, for all activities</td>
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* Unless your National Agency has set additional secondary criteria.
** Either to undertake longer mobilities or to carry out new mobilities.
*** Changes affecting outgoing short, first and second cycle student mobility are only possible if your NA has made additional funding available. Check with your NA.

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7. Useful resources

As the links and documents are frequently updated, some of the references below may be out of date. Please always make sure that you have the latest version of the documents applicable to your call. In other words, please refer to the 2016 Programme Guide for projects selected under the 2016 Call for Proposals, and so on.


**Erasmus+ Programme Guide**  

**Quick reference guide for selected higher education institutions in Partner Countries**  

**FAQs for Higher Education Institutions**  
https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node/245_en

**FAQs for Students & Staff**  
https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/library/students-staff-frequent-questions_en

8. Contact

If you have any questions regarding International Credit Mobility and the management of your grant agreement, please refer to your National Agency. You can find the contact for your country at the following link:  [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/contact_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/contact_en)