

# University of Sheffield celebrates 30th anniversary of Erasmus+

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- With almost 400 students taking part in Erasmus+ each year, the University of Sheffield is one of the most active sending institutions in the UK
- Staff and students get the opportunity to travel to one of 25 countries across Europe
- Erasmus+ students double their chances of employment a year after graduation

**The University of Sheffield is celebrating the 30th anniversary of Erasmus+, the world's largest exchange scheme, which has helped transform the lives of thousands of its students and staff.**

With almost 400 students taking part in the Erasmus+ programme each year, the University of Sheffield is one of the most active sending institutions in the UK.

They get the opportunity to travel to one of 25 countries across Europe for a unique experience – which not only enhances their learning, but helps to shape their future careers.

[embedded content]

Through Erasmus+ the University of Sheffield also welcomes 400 visiting students and adult learners every year who choose to experience life at the UK's number one university for student experience.

Erasmus+ (the European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) was initially launched by the European Union in 1987 to provide educational opportunities to study abroad – the underlying fabric was a drive to integrate students across the continent and to foster relationships for future generations.

Over the past 30 years, more than 300,000 people in the UK and nine million across the continent have taken part in Erasmus+, which recently expanded to include adult learners, vocational students and those on work placements, in addition to students.

For many, Erasmus+ has been a life-changing experience which they will never forget. As part of the Europe-wide 30th anniversary celebrations, Erasmus+ participants from the University of Sheffield have been sharing their stories.



Law and Criminology student Katie

Morris studied at the University of Oslo in Norway for a year.

“The main reason I decided to study abroad was because of how many opportunities I knew it could bring in the future, but I also saw it as a chance to experience different cultures whilst living in an international community, allowing me to broaden my horizons in every sense,” said Katie.

“Being alone in a new country meant I had to learn how to efficiently manage my time, especially my finances, which in the long run has definitely enhanced my independence.

“It also gives you the chance to make so many new friends from all over that can have a

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major impact on your opinions and your knowledge of the rest of the world – this is something I would have never experienced had I not studied abroad and is something I now realise is so valuable as I have come out of the experience so much more open minded.”

Katie said she would encourage more people to spend a period of time abroad.

“Of course it is a scary thing to do regardless of whether you will be a one-hour flight or a 24-hour flight from home, but it is important to look beyond those initial nerves that everyone faces and to consider what you will get out of the experience,” she said.

“The best advice I could give is to look at the opportunity rationally. It’s so easy to get caught up worrying about not making friends or not enjoying yourself, when realistically the chances of this are so miniscule – I didn’t encounter a single person whilst abroad who regretted their decision to be there!

“It will help you to grow so much in confidence and as a person in general. It will enhance future career prospects. The scariest part is the build up to leaving but once you arrive you’ll be so thankful you jumped at the chance to go and you’ll have so much fun!”



Erasmus is an experience you will never forget.

Sheffield still represents a significant part of my life. I had a wonderful time there.

**Mayte Alcantra**

For Sheffield students, France, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands are the most popular destinations to spend a semester or year abroad. The UK remains one of the most popular destination for European students.

Teacher Mayte Alcántara spent a year at the University of Sheffield as an Erasmus student in 1992-1993.

“Erasmus is an experience you will never forget,” said Mayte.

“I am from the Canary Islands and I was studying English language and linguistics at the University of Seville in Spain.

“The practical skills I acquired at the University of Sheffield during my stay have been essential for my career as a teacher.

“The best thing about my time in Sheffield was all of the people I met. Some of them are still very close friends who were with me on my wedding day in 1999. Sheffield still represents a significant part of my life. I had a wonderful time there.”

Erasmus+ which has received €14.7 billion in grants over the past seven years, now offers opportunities for millions of Europeans to train, volunteer or gain professional experience abroad. The development of the scheme has led to a stronger international dimension with more opportunities than ever before now available.



2016 was the most popular year so far for Erasmus+ in

the UK with even more students and adult learners expected to take part in 2017.

However, as Erasmus+ is a programme of the EU and established by EU law the UK’s future membership in the scheme remains uncertain, after Brexit.

The House of Commons Education Committee has stated continued membership of Erasmus+ would be the best outcome for the UK. Other European – non-European states, are part of the Erasmus programme – such as Iceland, Norway and Turkey – however future Erasmus+ opportunities in the UK are currently unknown.

Addressing Brexit the Erasmus+ website states: “We cannot speculate on any possible future scenarios following the UK’s exit from the EU, but we note the Government position is that UK participation in some EU programmes ‘promoting science, education

and culture' may continue subject to the negotiation as stated in the Prime Minister's speech delivered in Florence on 22 September 2017."

Dr Malcolm Butler, Director of Global Engagement at the University of Sheffield, said: "The University of Sheffield has one of the most successful Erasmus schemes in Europe. This affirms Sheffield's position in the global academic community and demonstrates our commitment to not only providing our students with an international dimension to their studies but also to welcoming students from across Europe to the city."

"Erasmus provides both students and staff an opportunity that will stay with them for a lifetime.

"We will play our part in ensuring that any future arrangements continue to support staff and student mobility, promote borderless research collaboration and support an internationally engaged higher education system."

The University of Sheffield is passionate about making sure the contribution of international students, on our economy and culture, is recognised. It leads the #WeAreInternational campaign which is supported by over 160 universities, education institutions and international organisations.

Current students can find out more about opportunities to study abroad visit the University of Sheffield's Global Opportunities Fair on Thursday 2 November 2017 in the Octagon between 11am and 3pm.

Read Erasmus stories from Sheffield staff and students

## Erasmus facts

- Erasmus alumni double their chances of employment a year after graduation
- One in three youth mobility participants come from a disadvantaged background
- One in three Erasmus trainees are offered a position by the company they trained in
- One-in-four Erasmus students meet their long-term partner whilst abroad, according to an EU study.

## Additional information

### The University of Sheffield

With almost 27,000 of the brightest students from over 140 countries, learning alongside over 1,200 of the best academics from across the globe, the University of Sheffield is one of the world's leading universities.

A member of the UK's prestigious Russell Group of leading research-led institutions, Sheffield offers world-class teaching and research excellence across a wide range of disciplines.

Unified by the power of discovery and understanding, staff and students at the university are committed to finding new ways to transform the world we live in.

Sheffield is the only university to feature in The Sunday Times 100 Best Not-For-Profit Organisations to Work For 2017 and was voted number one university in the UK for Student Satisfaction by Times Higher Education in 2014. In the last decade it has won four Queen's Anniversary Prizes in recognition of the outstanding contribution to the United Kingdom's intellectual, economic, cultural and social life.

Sheffield has six Nobel Prize winners among former staff and students and its alumni go on to hold positions of great responsibility and influence all over the world, making significant contributions in their chosen fields.

Global research partners and clients include Boeing, Rolls-Royce, Unilever, AstraZeneca, Glaxo SmithKline, Siemens and Airbus, as well as many UK and overseas government agencies and charitable foundations.

## Contact

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