

Tier 5 Government Authorised Exchange Scheme – Erasmus+ (Higher Education)

Application for a Certificate of Sponsorship

Guidance for Coordinators

Version 4.0: 23 November 2018



Overview of changes to the guide

This document is version 4 of the Tier 5 Government Authorised Exchange Scheme – Erasmus+ (Higher Education), Application for a Certificate of Sponsorship, Guidance for Coordinators. The table below gives an overview of changes made compared to previous versions of the guide:

Page number in version 3 of the guide	Change	Page number in version 4 of the guide
n/a	Added information on important points to note in the application form regarding regulated activity, overseas criminal check certificates and Disclosure and Barring Service check certificates	4
5	Updated on overseas criminal check certificates and added information on Disclosure and Barring Service check certificates	5 - 6

Overview

Participants from non-European Economic Area (EEA) countries who have been awarded a traineeship mobility in the United Kingdom (UK) through the Erasmus+ programme will require a Tier 5 visa through the UK [Government and Authorised Exchange Category](#) (GAE).

The GAE Category is for those participants coming to the UK through approved schemes that aim to share knowledge, experience and best practice through work placements, whilst experiencing the wider social and cultural setting of the UK. This category cannot be used to fill job vacancies or provide a way to bring unskilled labour to the UK.

Before the participant can apply for a Tier 5 visa they will need to obtain a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) number from the British Council who are classified by the UK Home Office as a licensed Category A sponsor.

What is a 'Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS)'?

The CoS is a unique reference number which holds information about the work placement and the participant's personal details. The participant will need to use this number when applying for a visa. The CoS number is issued by the sponsoring institution which for Erasmus+ in the UK is the British Council.

Eligibility – Will my application be successful?

The British Council issues CoS numbers where applications meet the eligibility criteria set out below:

- The job role offered must be a minimum skill level of NVQ Level 3 or above. For further information please click [here](#).
- The work experience placement must not replace a genuine job vacancy in the UK work force and must be in addition to normal staffing requirements.
- The work experience placement must be linked to the participants' course of study at their sending university.
- The work experience placement must be a minimum of 2 months and a maximum of 12 months.

How to apply for a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS)

Please read these instructions carefully as they detail how to apply for a CoS. The Erasmus+ Coordinator from the sending organisation needs to email complete applications to the [Tier 5 team](#). **All communication with the British Council in respect of the issuing of a CoS will be via the university coordinator who is responsible for updating participants on the progress of their applications.**

In order for the Tier 5 team to process applications we require the following documentation:

1) **A fully completed Tier 5 CoS Application Form (Available [here](#))**

Important points to note:

- **Passport information** must match exactly how it appears on the participants' passport.
- **Home address** needs to be the participants' current home address. Please include full address details and postcode as this is where a hard copy of the CoS form will be posted to.
- **Multiple Entry Visa** for participants travelling in and out of the UK on a regular basis in connection with their work placement. Please note if the participant's placement is 6 months or less if they leave the common travel area for leisure/domestic purposes they would not be allowed back into the UK on that visa.
- **Total weekly hours of work** needs to be equivalent to full-time working hours (a minimum of 30hrs and a maximum of 48hrs per week).
- **Main work placement address** needs to be completed in full including the host company/institution name.
- **Contact (mentor)** details need to be completed in full and it is important that these details are correct for reporting duties as stipulated by the Home Office.
- **Job title** of the participant at the work placement. This must be the job title detailed in the invitation letter from the host – **not** Erasmus+ student/intern.
- **Job type** must be selected from the drop down field. Details on the relevant SOC code can be obtained [here](#) and on the [ONS Occupation Coding Tool](#). The job description attached to the SOC code **must** match the job role to be undertaken at the work placement.
- **Project Reference Number (as per the Grant Agreement)** e.g. 2017-1---01-KA103-0123456.
- **Is the work placement supernumerary – not part of normal staffing requirements – not filling a job vacancy.**
- **Detailed summary of the tasks** the participant will undertake at the work placement. Please provide detailed information in this section.
- **Demonstrate how the work experience placement and the job role relate** to the participants **degree programme**. Please provide detailed information in this section.
- **Total monthly additional allowances if applicable – E.g. if the participant receives any additional funding on top of their Erasmus+ grant. If the host organisation covers accommodation costs. Any additional allowances from the host organisation must also be detailed in the appropriate section in the Learning Agreement for Traineeships.**
- If the participant receives **additional allowances** they should detail **each allowance separately** on the application form.
- If they receive a **monthly salary** from the host organisation please submit a **copy of the contract of employment** with the supporting documentation.
- **UK National Insurance number** – If the participant is **only receiving an Erasmus+ grant** then they **do not** need one. However **if they are being paid a salary** by the **host organisation** then they will need to provide us with a copy of their NI number if

they have one already or submit a copy of their NI number after they've applied once they've arrived.

- Will the participant be undertaking [regulated activity](#) in relation to children and/or adults within their job role? Please check with the host organisation if they will be. If they are then we will require [overseas criminal record check certificates](#) from the participants' country of origin and most recent country of residence. We will also require a copy of the [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\) check certificate](#). Participants will be unable to undertake regulated activity until a satisfactory disclosure has been obtained.
- Will the participants be bringing dependants (family members) with them to the UK? Further information can be found [here](#)



Please complete ALL fields of the CoS application form accurately and in full. This information is entered onto the Home Office Sponsorship Management System (SMS). Irregularities with the information may cause delays in issuing the CoS number.

2) Copy of the participant's passport, including all ID details e.g. biometric page and leave stamps

Important points to note:

- Each page must be **easily readable**.
- The passport **expiry date** must be **valid for 6 months after the intended departure date** from the UK.

3) Confirmation letter from sending university

Important points to note:

- The letter from the **sending** university needs to be on **letter headed** paper with an **official stamp, signed** and **dated** by the appropriate signatory.
- It must detail what **faculty** the participant belongs to and the **degree** being **studied**.
- It must contain the name of the **host** organisation.
- It must contain the **start** and **end dates** of the placement.
- It must contain the grant amount in **euros** allocated **per month** to the participant.

4) Acceptance letter from host organisation

Important points to note:

- The letter from the host organisation needs to be on **letter headed paper** with an **official stamp, signed and dated** by the appropriate signatory. **Please note: if the organisation does not have a stamp we require an email from the host organisation confirming this.**
- It must contain the **participant job title** during the placement.
- It must contain a **description of duties** the participant will undertake during the work placement.
- It must contain the **start and end dates** of the placement.

5) Erasmus+ Learning Agreement for Traineeships

Important points to note:

- The Erasmus+ Higher Education [Learning Agreement for Traineeships](#) should be completed. **Guidance** on how to complete this document can be found [here](#).
- All fields **prior** to the mobility need to be completed in full.
- The Learning Agreement needs to be signed and dated by the **participant**, the **sending** institution and the **host** organisation.

6) Transcript of Records

Important points to note:

- Participants must be **currently studying** or have **completed a degree programme within the last 12 months** in order to be eligible to participate in a traineeship mobility.
- The **transcript** must be **translated** into **English**. Please check Home Office guidance [here](#) for further details on certifying a translation.
- The transcript must be on **letter headed paper**.
- It must **detail** the **participants' degree programme/subjects**

7) Copy of the participant's overseas criminal record check and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check certificate/s (if applicable)

Important points to note:

- **Criminal record checks** for overseas participants are **only required** if participants are undertaking [regulated activity](#) in relation to children and/or adults. We would urge participants to **consult** with the **host organisation** to clarify if checks are required.
- **If required** criminal record check certificates must be submitted **from the participant's country of origin and most recent country of residence**.
- The certificate/s must be **translated** into **English**. Please check [Home Office guidance](#) for further details on certifying a translation.
- In addition to overseas criminal record checks we are also required to keep a copy of participants' [DBS check certificate](#). Host organisations may be able to apply for a DBS check prior to participants' arrival if they have all of the necessary documentation needed to process an application for a DBS check. If a check prior to arrival is not possible then one must be carried out once participants are in the UK. A copy of the certificate must be submitted to the British Council. **Please note that**

participants will not be able to undertake regulated activity until a satisfactory disclosure has been obtained.

8) Copy of the contract of employment from the host organisation, signed and dated by all parties (if applicable)

Important points to note:

- Contract is only required if the participant is being paid a salary
- The contract should clearly show the names and signatures of all parties involved, the start and end dates of the contract, details of the job and an indication of how much the participant will be paid.
- Any allowances that the participant receives as part of their salary package must be detailed in the contract.



All documentation has to be consistent; we require the start and end dates of the work placement to match those in the Learning Agreement for Traineeships, confirmation letter from the sending university, acceptance letter from the host organisation and Tier 5 CoS application form. Dates will not be amended once the Certificate of Sponsorship has been issued.

All of these documents must be completed in full and sent from the Erasmus+ Coordinator by email to Tier5erasmus@britishcouncil.org for the application to be considered. All communication will be via the university coordinator.

Do not send documents as web links like google, RAR or one drive attachments as these will be refused.

Please note due to size constraints within our systems we can only accept one email per CoS application. If you have trouble with the file size of your email, this [link](#) might be useful in advising you how to reduce the size or please consult your IT department for help.

How long does it take to issue a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS)?

Please note it can take up to **four weeks** to issue a CoS once we receive all **fully completed** and **correct documentation**. We recommend no travel plans are made or costs incurred until a decision has been made regarding the participant's CoS and a visa has been approved by the Home Office.

Upon assessing the documentation and the application successfully meeting the eligibility criteria, the Tier 5 team will make an application to the Home Office for a CoS. The Tier 5 team will produce a Letter of Maintenance and email this to the Erasmus+ Coordinator and the participant along with Annex E – Participant Tier 5 Guidelines and Sponsorship Duties, Safety First 2017-18, Tier 5 Online Visa Application Guidance, Tier 5 UKVI Reporting Form.

A hard copy of the Letter of Maintenance will be sent to the postal address specified on the Tier 5 CoS application form. Please note it can take up to two weeks for the letter to arrive. A hard copy of the letter may be needed at a later stage in the visa application. However participants may wish to contact their local visa centre to ask whether the UKVI would accept a printed scanned copy of the letter.

To allow participants the opportunity of taking part in a traineeship mobility in the UK, the Tier 5 team would advise Erasmus+ Coordinators to submit applications in sufficient time. Please note that **March through to September** is the **peak period** when the majority of applications are submitted. To avoid disappointment please submit applications **early** but no more than **3 months** before the placement start date.

Next Steps - Applying for a visa

Once the participant has been issued their CoS number they will be able to apply for their Tier 5 Government and Authorised Exchange (GAE) visa through UK Visas and Immigration where they must complete an online Entry Clearance Visa online form available [here](#).

The participant can apply for a visa up to three months before their intended travel to the UK.

Processing times differ from country to country. You can check visa processing times [here](#).



As part of the visa application process participants staying in the UK for longer than 6 months will have to pay a health surcharge (called the 'immigration health surcharge' or IHS). Further details on this can be found [here](#).

The Tier 5 team have compiled a guidance document for visa applications which you can access [here](#). Please note that the information and links contained within the document are correct at the time of writing and may change. We would advise you to consult the [Home Office website](#) for the most up to date information regarding the visa application process.

Useful Links

[UKVI Tier 5 \(GAE\) Guidance](#)

[Guidance on application for UK visa under Tier 5](#)

If you have any further questions in regards to submitting an application for a CoS please contact the [Tier 5 team](#).

The Tier 5 team will be happy to look into your enquiry and provide you with further information on the CoS application process.