FAQ Regarding All UniTrento Student Exchanges

UPDATED ON APRIL 7th 2020

Students Already Abroad on Exchange:

1. Can I continue my exchange, internship or research abroad even during the COVID-19 emergency?
   Yes. However, you must pay careful attention to recommendations from host institutions and the guidelines issued by the World Health Organization regarding safe travel and behaviour in the host country.

2. If classes and other academic activities at the host institution are cancelled am I required to return to Italy?
   No. You can decide to remain where you are and wait for activities to resume. If provided by the host institution, you can enrol in on-line courses or complete internships abroad from your house via “Smart Working” options. For this Internet-based alternative in the case of internships you will need the approval of your university tutor. In all cases, even if the host institution has not provided on-line or “Smart Working” options, the cancellation of academic or work-related activities will not be considered an interruption and you will keep your scholarship. Regarding Erasmus+, if the cancellation of activities occurred during the minimum period of study (3 months) or internship (2 months), you will need to extend your stay abroad for a time period equal to that of the duration of the cancellation of activities. This is the only way the entire period will be recognized from a financial perspective.

3. Can I return to Italy and finish my exchange courses on-line?
   Yes, if the host institution is equipped to offer distance learning and/or “Smart Working” options. In the case of internships, you must have the approval of your university tutor. You can contact your UniTrento Mobility Office if you need to modify your Learning Agreement. You will keep your scholarship or grant until you have completed your on-line courses or other such remote Internet-based academic activities and these must be certified as complete by the host institution. In parallel with Internet-based options offered by host institutions, students may also resume their UniTrento studies through participating in on-line courses. For information on course offerings and registration see: https://www.unitn.it/en/ateneo/87712/coronavirus

4. If I return to Italy now and definitively interrupt my period of exchange at the host institution and I do not participate in on-line activities will my courses and other academic activities be recognized?
   Activities carried out until the date of your return to Italy will be recognized based on the Transcript of Records issued by the host institution. Once back in Italy you can participate in UniTrento on-line classes. For information on course offerings and registration see: https://www.unitn.it/en/ateneo/87712/coronavirus
5. If I return to Italy now and definitively interrupt my period of exchange at the host institution and I do not participate in on-line activities what happens from a financial standpoint (scholarship and reimbursement)?

The scholarship or grant will be calculated based on the actual period of active exchange certified by the host institution. If you return to Italy after your academic activities have concluded at a later date than originally planned due to travel problems related to the COVID-19 emergency this postponed return travel date will be considered the final day of your exchange period.

For all programs the scholarship or grant is calculated based on the actual number of days each student actively participates in an exchange.

In case students have received a scholarship at the beginning of their study abroad period for an amount greater than expected, the students are asked to return the remaining difference. If the initial scholarship amount happens to correspond to less than the actual previously agreed upon period of study then student will receive an amount to cover the extra time period.

For exchanges interrupted by the COVID-19 emergency the principle of “force majeure” will be applied and in addition to the scholarship unforeseen expenses due to early return may also be covered. These itemized expenses must be authorized by the Italian National Agency for the Erasmus+ program and by UniTrento for all other exchange programs. In all cases reimbursement will depend on reasonableness of the costs and available resources.

Therefore, it is requested that each student in this situation submit proof of:

- all travel expenses (airplane tickets, trains, etc.), housing rental deposits and/or travel tickets purchased and then not used due to trip cancellation;
- official reimbursement requests sent to travel companies which have been rejected (i.e. the company refuses to reimburse you)

Reimbursements must be requested using the UniTrento on-line platform which will be activated soon. UniTrento will reimburse students within a time frame to be determined at a later date.

6. After I am back in Italy can I return to the host institution when the situation improves?

The answer depends on the circumstances of your exchange described below (A or B):

A) If you had to return early, did not have the opportunity to participate in remote on-line activities, or you did not want to participate in on-line activities that were offered and the duration of your exchange period was so brief that you were not able to earn any credits (CFUs) nor accomplish other previously planned objectives then it will be possible to continue your exchange starting at a later date. For Erasmus+ this applies to exchanges which were shorter than the required minimum duration (3 months for study abroad and 2 months for internships). In order to continue the exchange at a later date, students must have the approval of the host institution and verify compatibility with the time frames established within their study plan so as not to postpone graduation. In this case an interruption of the exchange will be considered a suspension and will not be covered by the scholarship or grant. Regarding Erasmus+ study and internship programs in Europe, the 2019-2020 academic year which was scheduled to end on September 30th...
2020 has been extended to May 31st 2021. With regard to bilateral agreement and double degree exchanges, students must conclude all activities abroad during the 2020-2021 academic year. Requests to continue your exchange period starting at a later date must be submitted using the on-line platform (which will be activated soon) and each request is subject to approval.

B) If you had to return early, did not have the opportunity to participate in remote on-line activities, or you did not want to participate in on-line activities that were offered, but you were able to earn some credits (CFUs) or partially accomplish previously planned objectives then your international exchange experience is considered to be finished. Your scholarship or grant will be calculated based on the number of days you actively participated in the exchange.

In both cases (A and B) you can request reimbursement for expenses incurred due to early return caused by the COVID-19 emergency.

**Students Waiting to Begin Their Exchange Abroad**

1. **Can I begin my exchange, internship or research abroad now?**
   No. According to indications from the Italian government and the European Commission all outgoing and incoming exchanges have been cancelled until further notice. After approval from the host institution, we recommend that all students reschedule their exchange starting from July 2020. We strongly suggest that you DO NOT make travel and lodging arrangements too far in advance because the worldwide health emergency is still constantly evolving. Expenditures incurred after March 17th 2020 will not be reimbursed even in the case of further cancellations. If a student already happens to be abroad as part of a previous program they can start an internship upon agreement with their university tutor.

2. **Can I remotely carry out my exchange, internship or research from Italy?**
   No. The European Commission and the Italian National Erasmus Agency do not consider this to be a valid exchange. This ruling applies to all exchange programs promoted by UniTrento.

3. **What should I do if the internship I was supposed to do abroad negatively affects my study plan and potentially postpones my graduation date?**
   If possible, the student and their tutor should try to convert it to another internship abroad or to an internship in Italy through the Job Guidance Office. In the latter case without financing.

4. **What do I do if I have already spent money on my exchange that was cancelled?**
   For exchanges interrupted by the COVID-19 emergency the principle of “force majeure” will be applied and expenses related to a cancelled exchange may be reimbursed. These itemized expenses must be authorized by the National Agency for the Erasmus+ program and by UniTrento for all other exchange programs. In all cases reimbursement will depend on reasonableness of the costs and available resources.
Therefore, it is requested that each student in this situation submit proof of:
- all travel expenses (airplane tickets, trains, etc.), housing rental deposits and/or travel tickets purchased and then not used due to trip cancellation;
- official reimbursement requests sent to travel companies which have been rejected (i.e. the company refuses to reimburse you)

Reimbursements must be requested using the UniTrento on-line platform which will be activated soon. UniTrento will reimburse students within a time frame to be determined at a later date.

5. *Can I return to the host institution when the situation improves?*

If the exchange is cancelled, the student may have the possibility to postpone the exchange if approved by the host institution and if compatible with the time frames established within their study plan (i.e. without postponing graduation).

Regarding Erasmus+ study and internship programs in Europe, the 2019-2020 academic year which was scheduled to end on September 30th 2020 has been extended to May 31st 2021. For internships within the Erasmus+ program and for those outside of Europe, a student selected for a study-related internship can still postpone and carry out their planned activity abroad up to 18 months after graduation. Requests to continue your exchange period starting at a later date must be submitted using the on-line platform (which will be activated soon) and each request is subject to approval.

If a student decides to postpone their exchange, we strongly suggest that you DO NOT make travel and lodging arrangements too far in advance because the worldwide health emergency is still constantly evolving. We remind you that expenditures after March 17th 2020 will not be reimbursed.