

# EMPLOYER MANUAL

Things to know when hiring internationals



This Employer Manual: Things to know when hiring internationals was carried out in the framework of the Erasmus + Key Action 2 Cooperation Partnership project:

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Expertise in Labour Mobility



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## Foreword

In today's interconnected global landscape, where workplace diversity continues to flourish, employers are on the lookout for candidates who excel in adapting to these dynamic environments.

In this manual we want to show how the **competences acquired by students through international mobility experiences match what employers are actively seeking in potential hires**. The Erasmus Careers consortium aimed to find out if participating in international mobility programmes as a student increases the chances of getting hired in today's job market. The findings underscore a crucial point: merely mentioning one's study abroad experience does not boost job prospects. It is all about strategically leveraging and showcasing these experiences to captivate prospective employers. This manual is designed to empower both employers and prospective employees to recognise, appreciate, and **capitalise on the competences gained through international mobility**.

Employers in the current job market benefit from recognising such qualities as they contribute to a **positive and inclusive work environment**. By embracing diversity and fostering a culture of understanding and respect, companies can benefit from a wider range of perspectives and innovative ideas, leading to increased productivity and overall success.



## Table Of Content

01

About Erasmus Careers

02

Why hire a student with international experience?

03

How can you hire a candidate with international experience ?

04

Competences gained from international mobility & their match with employers

05

Students' & Employers' Voices

06

Useful Resources

## What Is Erasmus Careers ?

The Erasmus Careers project aims to unlock the full potential of Erasmus+ participants' career prospects. Supported by thorough academic research and informed by the accomplishments of the Erasmus+ Programme, this initiative is positioned to transform the way competences gained abroad are recognised and integrated into students' career paths.

Our objectives include pinpointing the competences acquired during international mobility, enhancing students' understanding of their career trajectory post-mobility, and ensuring that employers recognise and value these competences. To accomplish this ambitious goal, the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), Universidad Autonoma de Madrid (UAM), Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), Tilburg University (TiU), Lifelong Learning Platform (LLL) and Expertise in Labour Mobility (ELM) have started to collaborate.

The Erasmus Careers project offers insight into the development of learning paths tailored to students' needs, research on the employability of international student graduates, and the creation of a competence framework specifically designed for Erasmus students. Our multifaceted approach encompasses various activities next to research initiatives to understand the impact of international mobility on competence development followed by a publication of guidelines, such as a digital self-learning tool, and staff trainings to ensure that both universities and students are better aware of what is gained through mobility. This is accompanied by local events, partner meetings, and a final conference in Brussels.

Recognising the challenges in measuring the impact of mobility abroad on students' career development, our project aims to bridge this gap by ensuring robust support from universities in identifying and assessing competences prospects.



By fostering mutual understanding between students and employers, we aim to empower Erasmus+ participants to leverage their international experiences for enhanced career prospects.

In addition to the Employer Manual, the project has already yielded notable research publications, including “Does studying abroad pay off during recruitment? Evidence from field experiments” as well as “Competence Frameworks in International Student Mobility” with further publications currently in development.

## **What Can Erasmus Careers Do For YOU ?**

This manual is specifically created for you – the employer. The Erasmus Careers consortium wants to ensure employers increasingly recognise the significance of internationalisation in career paths. Our recommendations are based on thorough research, combining academic research as well as going straight to the source, including both students’ and employers’ voices.

The Employer Manual will first tackle the question of why hiring a student with international experience is advantageous. By exploring the benefits of such candidates, you can better understand the value they bring to your organisation. Next, we provide practical guidance on how to effectively hire candidates with international experience. Additionally, we feature the voices of both students and employers, offering firsthand perspectives on the significance of international experience in the workplace. Finally, we explore the competences gained through international mobility and how they align with the needs of employers as well as offer a selection of useful resources to support you throughout the hiring process.





## The Consortium Partners



ESN, Europe's largest student organisation dedicated to mobility and higher education internationalisation, operates across numerous countries and institutions. With a focus on supporting international students, ESN facilitates mobility, promotes social cohesion, and enhances intercultural awareness and active citizenship. Through various initiatives such as trainings and seminars, ESN empowers students to engage in education policy and contributes to a more flexible learning environment. At the international level, ESN conducts research projects on mobility and higher education issues. With a professional secretariat and a team of experienced staff and volunteers, ESN's headquarters in Brussels is well-equipped to manage European projects effectively. ESN's involvement in the project is driven by its commitment to exploring employment opportunities and competencies gained through mobility experiences. Building on past initiatives, ESN will coordinate the project, lead the learning path, and contribute to policy discussions alongside LLLP.



UAM, a renowned public university founded in 1968, boasts exceptional teaching and research standards, earning it recognition as one of Spain's top universities. With faculties spanning various disciplines, including Science, Economics, Law, Medicine, and Engineering, UAM offers a diverse range of programmes to its approximately 30,000 students. Supported by 3,200 professors and researchers, and nearly 1,100 administrative staff, UAM has excelled in research, earning the prestigious "Campus of International Excellence" recognition in 2009. Leveraging its extensive experience in managing international mobility and educational programmes, including those under the Lifelong Learning Programme and the VII Framework Programme for Research, UAM actively participates as a coordinator and partner in Erasmus+ projects across various key actions. Building on its past successes, UAM's involvement in this project stems from its expertise and leadership in similar initiatives, particularly as the coordinator of the Erasmus Skills project.



The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) is Greece's largest university, with 10 faculties, 40 schools, and over 88,000 students. The university offers a wide range of services and facilities, including University clinics, a Summer Camp, a University Farm, and the Tellogleion Foundation of Art. Administrative services such as the Department of Studies, the Department of European Educational Programs, and the Career Services Office play a crucial role in supporting students and academic staff. The Career Services Office (CSO), established in 1997, aids students and graduates in their transition to the workforce by providing job search assistance, further education information, and career counselling. With a focus on career guidance, AUTH's involvement in this project brings invaluable expertise to Erasmus Careers, where they will concentrate on career guidance for students.

## The Consortium Partners



Tilburg University (TiU), established in 1927, hosts over 14,000 students, including 2,064 international students from 102 countries. Ranked 18th in the US News Best Global Universities Ranking 2016, TiU focuses on social innovation to address societal challenges by fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge transfer. Through research, learning, and understanding, TiU strives to create value for society by engaging with companies, organisations, government, and citizens. The university emphasizes quality education, social orientation, and a vibrant campus atmosphere, facilitating an international community conducive to mutual inspiration and growth.



The Lifelong Learning Platform (LLLP), established in 2005, comprises 44 European networks in education, training, and youth, representing millions of stakeholders across Europe. Recognized by the European Commission in 2009 as a "unique representation" of lifelong learning, LLLP receives operational support from the EU since 2010. It advocates for equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship in European education and training systems by facilitating exchanges of good practices and expertise among stakeholders. LLLP actively monitors EU policy developments on lifelong learning and collaborates with European institutions through various forums and expert groups. LLLP's expertise in education, including competence development, and its extensive network make it a valuable partner in the project. Overall, LLLP's involvement in the project enhances its capacity to disseminate project results at the European level and contribute to the development of competence frameworks in education.



XPERTISE IN LABOUR MOBILITY

Expertise in Labour Mobility is a consultancy specialising in international labour mobility solutions, collaborating with corporate clients and higher education institutions globally. ELM advises governments on strategies to strengthen the link between recent graduates and employers. They also co-create and manage the International Student Barometer, a global higher education survey with over 4.3 million student responses, collaborating with over 170 universities and national education bodies in continental Europe. Additionally, ELM provides professional training on cross-border work and intercultural communication, along with personalised career coaching services. Their career guides outline pathways to international employment, complemented by the CareerProfessor.works app, delivering gamified global career advice. ELM's involvement in this project stems from their expertise in competences gained abroad during learning mobility, having previously collaborated with ESN.



## Why Hire A Candidate With International Experience?

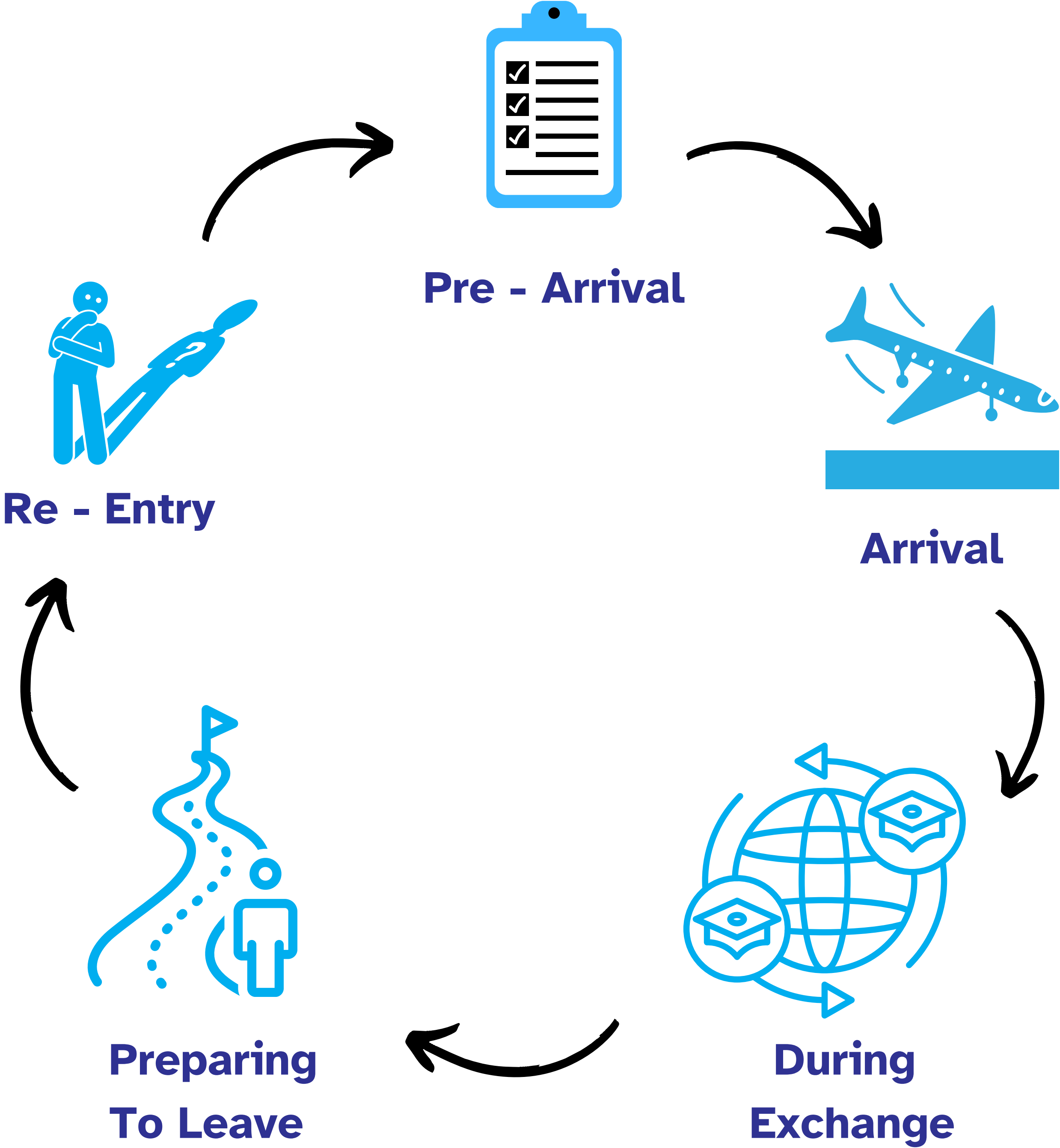
To answer this question we must first gain a better understanding of the learning that takes place during the International Student Lifecycle. The International Student Lifecycle is a tool developed by Erasmus Careers through extensive focus groups with students who have been abroad in order to create a better overview of which competencies are gained throughout the international exchange experience.

The International Student Lifecycle encompasses five key stages that students experience throughout their journey abroad: [Pre-arrival](#), [On arrival](#), [During Exchange](#), [Preparing to Leave](#), and [Re-entry](#). Within each of these stages, students acquire a diverse array of competences, some of which may come even as a surprise to the student.

We often forget that the journey of an international student is not merely an academic pursuit; it is a transformative experience that equips individuals with a rich tapestry of competences and perspectives, such as adaptability, communication, teamwork, creative thinking, and self-efficacy – all essential for success in today's global job market.

As per the World Economic Forum's Job Report 2023, the growing importance of international teams is a major trend in today's workplaces, largely due to the increasing use of remote work by employers. This guide is designed to aid employers in hiring individuals with the competences necessary to thrive in this trend. In the age of remote work, having a global mindset should be a key factor in recruitment to ensure adaptability and success in diverse environments.

# International Student Lifecycle



**1**

### **Pre-Arrival**

International students already develop planning, organisational and decision-making skills before leaving abroad. These skills are very useful for managing projects, including problem-solving, in any workplace.

**2**

### **Arrival**

International students confront the reality of cultural differences and unforeseen challenges. As they adapt to their new environment, they develop resilience, flexibility, and problem-solving abilities. In the job market, this helps to navigate diverse teams as well as rapidly changing landscapes.

**3**

### **During Exchange**

Throughout the duration of their stay, students immerse themselves in the host culture, often simultaneously grappling with financial constraints and budgeting challenges. This experience fosters cultural competence, empathy, and financial literacy.

**4**

### **Preparing To Leave**

Students reflect on their experiences abroad. This period offers opportunities for self-assessment, goal-setting, and career planning. Students can position themselves for success in the job market, demonstrating adaptability, self-awareness, and a proactive approach to professional development.

**5**

### **Re - Entry**

Students integrate their international experiences into their everyday lives, drawing upon lessons learned abroad to inform their decision-making and worldview. This ongoing process of reflection and adaptation reinforces resilience, cross-cultural communication skills, and a global perspective.



## **Skills Gained Through Mobility That Match Employers' Needs**

Our main goal is to help you build a skilled and diverse team that can support your organisation to success. Through in-depth focus groups with Erasmus mobility participants and surveys with employers, we've created a research report on employer competence recognition of mobility experience.

The following list presents the skills most sought after by employers, as identified through our research, which correspond with those acquired by students during their Erasmus mobility experience:

**Adaptability**

**Communication**

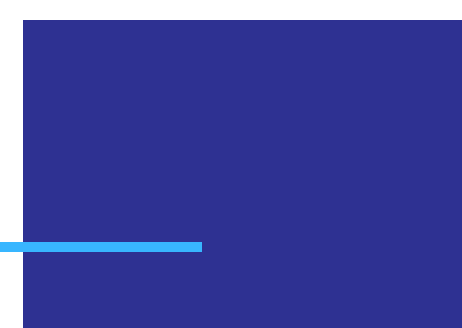
**Teamwork**

**Creative Thinking**

**Self - Efficacy**

A more extensive list is provided through the Competence Inventory and Framework, also designed by the Erasmus Careers consortium as part of this project.

Understanding that these competences manifest through different indicators across the stages of the hiring process (Job Posting, CV, Cover Letter, Interview, Hire) is crucial, as it will allow you to effectively adapt your approach to question or seek them out accordingly.



## Adaptability

The student gains the ability to assess their short, medium, and long-term goals, recognising their strengths and weaknesses both individually and as part of a team. They cultivate a mindset of resilience and confidence, empowering them to navigate uncertainties, setbacks, and challenges with conviction and determination.



## Communication



Students acquire the attitudes and behaviours necessary for effective and respectful interactions with individuals or communities from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. They develop cross-cultural competency, fostering understanding and empathy in their interactions, thereby promoting inclusivity and collaboration.

## Teamwork

Students acquire essential collaborative skills, working effectively with others to brainstorm ideas and translate them into actionable plans. They cultivate strong networking abilities. Furthermore, they develop conflict resolution skills and embrace healthy competition, turning challenges into opportunities for growth and advancement.



## Creative Thinking



Students actively generate multiple ideas and opportunities to drive value creation, exploring innovative solutions to address existing and emerging challenges. They engage in experimentation and exploration of novel approaches, combining their knowledge and resources to achieve meaningful outcomes and create tangible impact.

## Self - Efficacy

Students develop the skill of introspection, reflecting on their short, medium, and long-term aspirations and needs. They evaluate both their individual and group strengths and weaknesses. They believe in their capacity to shape outcomes, navigating through uncertainties, setbacks, and temporary failures with confidence and determination.



# Indicators Of These Skills In...

## ... An Application

VS

## ... An Interview

### Adaptability

- Side & part-time jobs
- Extra-curricular activities
- Travelling or team sports as hobbies
- Volunteer work (abroad)
- Community Involvement
- Interdisciplinary group projects

- Willingness to learn new things & take up new tasks
- A positive, 'can-do' attitude
- Self-reflection on past experience
- Demonstrating open-mindedness
- Being a good team player

### Communication

- Structure and wording of application e-mail
- Readability of CV & application
- Selection of information
- Communication - oriented experience
- Blogs, articles, publications etc.

- Using appropriate body language
- Listening carefully & showing empathy
- Being polite & dedicating the right amount of time to a particular answer
- Coherent argumentation & convincing presentation

### Teamwork

- Leadership roles or responsibilities within international teams
- Sharing detailed examples of successful teamwork in multicultural environments

- Describing projects in international teams
- Pointing out interesting elements of working in diverse teams

### Creative Thinking

- Competitions
- Research projects
- Event organising
- Presenting innovative solutions to problems encountered during international experiences

- Discussing relevant stories about your ability to resolve problems
- Demonstrating logical thinking
- Approach on complex issues
- Providing innovative answers
- Showing commitment & enthusiasm

### Self - Efficacy

- Highlighting achievements or successes in previous international experiences
- Providing examples of taking initiative and overcoming challenges independently

- Showing initiative
- Reaction when challenged
- Curiosity for new ideas
- Sharing stories of setting and achieving goals while studying abroad



## JOB POSTING

Make sure to promote an international workplace. Stress the importance of teamwork, open-mindedness and a global mindset in your organisation.

## CV

Be sure to pay attention to hard and soft skills: language skills, international experience, volunteer work (abroad) which demonstrates adaptability and a can-do attitude.

## COVER LETTER

Look out for interesting elements of working in diverse teams, showing off interest or knowledge on global issues.

## INTERVIEW

Ask targeted questions regarding their international experience. Such as what did they learn overcoming language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and adapting communication styles.

## HIRE

When hired, they will showcase their skills through utilising language proficiency to bridge cultural gaps and by quickly adapting to diverse environments.

# 5 stages of hiring your ideal candidate

# Students' Voices

"Yeah, my experience was definitely challenging. I faced a lot of difficulties, but looking back, I'm grateful I went through it. It made me realize I'm stronger than I thought and boosted my self-confidence quite a bit."

– Natalie, 27

"I'd have to say it's led to a more mature outlook on life post-internship. It definitely expands your horizons and opens up new possibilities. Plus, it gives you a lot more mental resilience to handle future challenges."

– Leon, 24

"For me, it was like stepping out of my comfort zone. Being in an environment where I had to adjust and meet new people. And now, that's a skill I use in my job too. I find I'm much more communicative these days."

– Konstantinos, 24

"I feel like I'm better equipped now to adapt to professional situations where I might not feel entirely comfortable with the culture. And, you know, it's about finding that balance – adjusting when needed but also staying true to myself. That's something I've really learned along the way."

– Marie, 23

"During my first mobility experience, there were a lot of adjustments to make, and it was challenging. But by the second time, I was more prepared and had the right mindset. However, being older, it wasn't easy to immediately adapt to an international setting – it's something you have to get used to all over again. Working with people from other countries, I noticed that our values and norms might be different."

– Christopher, 43

# Employers' Voices

"In general, I am looking at the overall vibe, to see what people are passionate about, things that motivate them, and it's not so much the international experience I'm looking for, but rather the interpersonal skills and the indirect skills that this experience brings with it. I try to find those skills in between the lines."

– Project Manager, IT

"(...) And also, what I've found is that generally, if I'm employing candidates with international experience, they normally have a greater sense of self-awareness, a greater sense of maturity. And this is obviously important in a professional organisation"

– Vice President, Financial Services

"Mobility, particularly international, is the tool that allows people to break their own personal limits. Mobility gives them new learning and resilience capabilities, which are ones of the most valuable skills for any employer working in a continuously changing domain. We don't know how the future will look like for our jobs but we know we can adapt to it with the right skills, such as those gained in a mobility experience."

– CEO, Consultancy

"...To be honest, the perfect candidate for the next Management Trainee opening would be a Erasmus alumni. An open minded individual with a passion, resilient and able to adapt, work under pressure for uncertain situations (Hotel Operations is a new animal every day), curiosity and willingness to learn..."

– Sales Manager, Hospitality

"International experiences cultivate adaptability, cross-cultural communication skills and a global mindset. These skills help in navigating in diverse work environments and understanding different perspectives for successful collaboration."

– Team Lead Projects, Chemicals



# Useful Resources



Explore the resources below to discover the alignment between students possessing international mobility experience, their invaluable skill sets, and the precise qualities you, as an employer, seek in a prospective hire, yourself :

1. Publications
2. European Employment Services (EURES)
3. WeForum - The Future of Jobs Report
4. OECD - Adult skills and work

## 1. DG EMPL

Insights into the skill sets acquired through international mobility, and their relevance to the job market. Data, analysis, and resources that help understand how these experiences shape competencies crucial for success in professional settings.

## 2. EURES (European Employment Services)

EURES promotes labour mobility through information, support services, and cooperation among its member organisations, including coordination offices and public employment services across EU countries.

## 3. The Future of Jobs Report

By delving into emerging job trends, skill demands, and global workforce dynamics, this report provides a comprehensive understanding of how international mobility cultivates invaluable skill sets.

## 4. OECD - skills & work

The OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour, and Social Affairs (ELS) supports individuals, firms, and countries with the necessary tools with changing skills needs.

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