International Experience
Study Guide for courses and research projects
Department of Chemical Engineering and Chemistry

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Websites: https://educationguide.tue.nl/
Go to MSc Chemical Engineering

https://educationguide.tue.nl/broadening/exchange-programs-for-studying-abroad/

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Nuffic scholarships website: http://www.nuffic.nl/
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1. Introduction
This document is the guide for your International Experience. It serves as the starting point for your enrollment. It should provide you with everything you need to know in order to organize your experience abroad.

1.1. International Experience
During your stay at a university abroad, you have the opportunity to further focus on courses from your Graduate School (GS) program or broaden your field of interest towards other courses. During your International Experience you will also experience the culture and lifestyle of the host country and live within a community of local and exchange students. Typically students describe their International Experience as a unique and exciting time.

1.2. Requirements and responsibilities
To be allowed to take part in the GS International Experience, TU/e has a number of requirements. These are as follows:
− You have successfully completed your Bachelor’s or Pre-Master’s program.
− Your VWO or HBO grade for English is equal to or higher than 7 (or comparable score: IELTS, at least 6.5; TOEFL, at least 90 points; Cambridge CPE-C including CAE-E); if you do not meet this requirement, you must take a diagnostic English test to assess your level of English. For more information.

As well as these requirements, there may be additional requirements depending on which university you apply to. The host university should state these requirements when you apply.

If you meet the above requirements, you are allowed to enter the International Experience. During this semester, you have a number of important responsibilities as a student. Below is an overview of the parties involved in your International Experience and their responsibilities:
− International Office: The international office is responsible for informing you about any procedure that apply to you, helping you through the host university’s application procedure and supporting you through the TU/e procedures.
− Your mentor: Each student enrolled in an MSc program is assigned to a lecturer in the department. This mentor is responsible for helping you to explore the type of study during the International Experience, the destination and the courses to enroll in. For any questions or comments about the role of the mentor, please visit the education guide: https://educationguide.tue.nl/.
− You as a student: Students enrolled in the International Experience are personally responsible for organizing their application and stay at a host university. Students have to make sure that the Experiences and/or projects they enroll in are approved by the Examinations Committee and therefore meet the requirements of their MSc program.

1.3. General Course of business
Your International Experience generally consists of one of the following three types of content:
− Courses. You enroll for a number of (elective) courses at a host university during your International Experience.
− Research project at a host university. You can carry out (part of) your graduation project at a host university, while being supervised by a staff member at TU/e and at the host university.
− Internship at a company or organization in another country. You carry out the Industrial Internship (6MA20) at a company. Supervision is done by an employee affiliated with this company and the coordinator industrial internship ir. Peter Koets.
This guide focusses on courses and research projects at a foreign university. In the next chapters, these steps are explained in detail. For the Industrial Internship we refer you to the internship guide.

1.4. Final thoughts
An important note is that for a successful International Experience a lot of responsibility lies with you. In addition, the International Experience requires some organizational effort from you to make sure you study abroad properly.

This guide will help you to deal with these tasks. The next section includes an overview of the actions that you have to take. You are strongly advised to stick to these steps and deadlines so you can make informed decisions and keep your options open in regard to the International Experience. Of course the Coordinator International Office, your mentor and STU are there to help you when needed.
2. Overview of actions
A list of the actions required throughout the International Experience, including deadlines, is given below. We also again remind you that you are ultimately responsible for meeting all requirements for successfully completing the International Experience.

Deadlines are defined for both semesters in an academic year. For your specific deadlines, you should first determine when you want to plan your International Experience, after September (fall semester) or after January (spring semester).

### 2.1. Choosing a host University

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Deadline (attention: while still enrolled in BSc program!)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact the coordinator International Office</td>
<td>December, Spring semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meet with your mentor</td>
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### 2.2. Applying at host University

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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Deadline (look at your specific university deadlines)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applying to host university</td>
<td>Look at your specific university deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit TU/e forms</td>
<td>June, November</td>
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### 2.3. Making arrangements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make arrangements for abroad</td>
<td>June, December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrangements at TU/e</td>
<td>June, December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for leaving</td>
<td>Before leaving</td>
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### 2.4. Studying abroad

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submit updated exchange contract in case any changes in the program occur</td>
<td>November, April</td>
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### 2.5. Returning home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Transcript of Records</td>
<td>March, August</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe your experiences</td>
<td>March, August</td>
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3. Choosing a host University

The first step to enter the International Experience involves checking and selecting potential host universities. In general, this means that you should become aware of universities you are interested in spending your International Experience and meet all requirements.

In general there are several factors that may play a role in what you consider to be an attractive host university:

- **Bilateral Agreement:** the department of Chemical Engineering and Chemistry has agreements with several international universities that allow exchange of certain number of students. For you as a student this may mean that, if you are allocated, you will not have to pay additional tuition fee. If you are not allocated, or if you want to study at a host university without an exchange agreement, you will probably have to pay a significant tuition fee. Bilateral Agreements may be at departmental or institutional level.

- **Courses a university offers:** consider courses that you want to focus on during your International Experience. This may include courses from your MSc program which you want to explore further. You can also consider courses that are somewhat outside your MSc program, although these should still be related to your program. You can select universities based on whether they represent courses in which you are interested. Keep in mind that you need approval from the Board of Examiners for the courses you plan to take at another university.

- **Quality of education:** In other countries, the quality of universities can vary more than you may be used to in the Netherlands. When considering a university, make sure the study level of the courses/projects that are offered meets the requirements of the Examinations Committee. Contact the Board of Examiners for more information (secretary: a.j.e.jansen@tue.nl).

- **Study schedule:** please be aware that the start of the host university’s semester could conflicts with the end of our semester (especially the spring semester). Make sure you will be able to take your TU/e exams!

- **Culture of the country:** Depending on the country or region, your International Experience may differ for cultural or geographical reasons. Aspects you could consider are climate, cost of living, crime rate, cultural habits, accessibility, travel costs etc. A destination may also be considered because of interesting sights, such as architecture, nature, history etc.

The International Office provides a number of ways to explore these aspects of possible destinations. The steps through which you can choose a possible host university are explained below. The steps are bounded by the deadlines on which you need to be finished; see chapter 2: Overview of actions.

3.1. Finding a university

In principle you are not limited to host universities that are known at the International Office; you can also apply to other host universities. A host university’s quality, location or choice of courses can also be reasons to study somewhere else. However, arranging a host university on your own is more complex. Some tips for organizing this are given below:

- **Start organizing early.** If you are considering a host university that is not known to the International Office you need to start checking potential universities and taking action at an early point. Applying in this case means considerable correspondence and getting through multiple stages with the host university.

- **Involve your mentor.** Discuss with your mentor which host university you are considering and try to involve your mentor in the application procedure: your mentor may have contacts with this institution and/or could give you a recommendation there. When checking potential universities, your mentor can also advise you which host university may be attractive to you (see below; Meet with your mentor).
- Involve the International Office. In the application procedure the International Office corresponds with the proposed host university on behalf of you. The International Office can also organize, or inform you about, additional matters such as insurance and scholarship.
- Think of a ‘Plan B’. Especially in the early stage of applying to a host university that is not known to the International Office or your mentor, it is usually uncertain whether you will be accepted. To make sure you have a destination when your International Experience starts, you should also have a back-up plan for a different host university.

3.2. Meet with your mentor
After you have finished reviewing potential universities, you must organize a meeting with your mentor. You can find the deadline for this under chapter 2: ‘Overview of actions’. During this meeting you will discuss all the universities you are interested in. Before this meeting, make sure you have prepared the following:
- If you are considering carrying out a project at a university abroad, you will need additional consultation with your graduation professor. In contrast to taking courses, you will need a supervisor and a good understanding of what is required for the project to be accepted.
- If you are considering taking not only elective courses but also core courses abroad, be aware that you must find appropriate replacements for the core courses of your MCE study package which are approved by the Board of Examiners.
- Make a selection of host universities that you like, if possible. Based on factors, experiences and requirements and your own review of possible host universities, try to come up with a number of universities that you prefer.

Your mentor can help you check fields of study and possible host universities.
4. Applying to host university

Once the International Office has confirmed that you can apply to your preferred host university you need to start the application procedure. This is normally done through the host university's website.

Please note: during the application procedure it is usually made clear which specific documents and/or agreements have to be submitted. Gathering these forms can take quite some time. We therefore strongly recommend that you start applying as soon as possible.

The application procedure involves submitting a number of forms. These are needed to confirm your application, indicating your English level, scholarship grant etc. First, make sure you finish the application procedure with the host university. After you have finished applying and the host university confirmed that you have been accepted, you must submit the forms for the purposes of TU/e. During the application procedure, if anything is unclear to you please contact the International Office.

4.1. Submit host university forms

As well as different types of personal information, the host university may require a number of documents during the application procedure. This varies between institutions.

An overview of documents that may be required is given below:

− Academic Record / Transcript of Records: An overview of Experiences that have been completed (made by the International Office)
− Identification
− Learning Agreement: See description in the next section
− Motivation letter: Some institutions select, among other factors, applications based on a letter of motivation
− English level: Some institutions require an additional level of English skills based on a rating scale such as IELTS or TOEFL
− Résumé
− References: In some procedures references are required from lecturers who have experience of you in an academic context

Before or at least during the application procedure you should be aware of the requirements that apply to you. If you have any questions regarding these documents please contact the International Office.

4.2. Submit TU/e forms

Once you have been accepted by your host university you must submit forms for the TU/e. The following forms are required, which can be provided by the International Office.

− Learning Agreement. This contains information about the student, the host university, the proposed study courses abroad and the period of study. You, the TU/e and the host university all have to sign this form. Once this form is signed, the list of courses to be offered to the student is approved. Other requirements include a signed Learning Agreement to receive a TU/e scholarship grant.
− Request for approval by the Board of Examiners. This contains the entire overview of courses that you propose to study during your MSc program, including the courses you propose to study abroad. You, your mentor and the Board of Examiners all have to sign this form. Once this form is signed, you are authorized to study the list of electives and these will be included in your MSc program when successfully completed.
Form host institution. This form from the Education and Student Service Center (STU) is necessary for your scholarship. It contains information about arrival and leaving day at host university, and has to be signed and stamped by the host university.
5. Make the arrangements

As well as organizing your application to the host university, there are a number of matters that you need to take care of before you can start studying abroad. We strongly advise you to finish these arrangements at least before the indicated deadline; see chapter 2: Overview of actions. These matters are described below. The first section describes matters that mostly have to do with the host university. Matters in the next section are normally dealt with by TU/e. If you have any questions about any of these matters you can also contact the International Office (io.ce@tue.nl).

5.1. Make arrangements for abroad

Please note: the more important place to look for information to make the arrangements as an international student is on the website of your host university. The host university will provide you with the most up-to-date and relevant information that applies to you. The host university normally offers a guide covering all matters that you need to consider before arrival and during your stay abroad.

The most important things you should consider are given below. These can normally be found in a guide to your host university:

− Date of arrival / return home: Find out when the academic period of your semester starts and ends. Also consider possible introductory programs that you want to attend. Based on this information, decide on the date of arrival and possibly also the date time of returning home.
− Housing: Find out how accommodation is organized in the city of your host university and arrange accommodation for your stay abroad, while keeping in mind the planned arrival and departure dates.
− Travel arrangements: Decide how you want to travel to the city, your accommodation and the host university. Make sure you have enough time to buy your plane ticket if necessary.
− Introduction activities: Most host universities offer a number of activities to introduce you to your new study environment aimed at new Master’s students and/or new international students. Check what is available and what you would like to attend.
− Get in touch with fellow students: See which students from TU/e will join you to your destination. You can also look for active (international) groups on social media. Both can help you check any matters that might be important for you while making your arrangements and during your stay.

5.2. Arrangements at TU/e

The most important matters that are normally dealt with through TU/e are given below:

− Scholarship: There are many scholarships that might apply to your International Experience. Which scholarships apply can depend on factors such as the type of enrollment (e.g. exchange contract or not), the destination (e.g. inside or outside Europe), tuition fees etc. A good place to start checking for scholarships that might apply to you is the scholarships section of Nuffic. If you are studying abroad within Europe, the Erasmus+ scholarship program may apply. If so, the International Office will apply on your behalf for a scholarship, and you will be informed about any further action that you need to take. For any questions about Erasmus+ or other scholarships you can contact the International Office.
− Insurance: TU/e has arranged collective business travel insurance for students who are going abroad for a study or an internship. The International Office will apply for such insurance through the Education and Student Service Center (STU).
− Visa: The government of the destination abroad may require you to apply for a study visa. If you are not sure, visit the relevant government’s website for more information about the policy and the application procedure.
5.3. Prepare for leaving

When all the above arrangements have been made, you should start preparing for your departure to your destination. A number of suggestions to consider when preparing for your departure are given below:

− As stated in 5.1, Make arrangements for abroad, host universities typically offer a guide for incoming international students. This normally contains a general checklist, but also aspects that apply specifically to your destination. It is important to take these aspects into account.
− Consult the website of your destination’s government to find out about any specific policies and/or requirements, especially for intercontinental destinations.
6. Studying abroad
During your stay abroad there will normally be little contact with the TU/e International Office. However several matters may arise between you and your institution abroad. Make sure you know your contact person at your institution with whom you can discuss these matters if necessary. Generally every university will have an International Office; this is a good starting point to address your questions to.

6.1. Change in Experiences
During your stay abroad you may want to change the courses you want to complete. Before doing so, consult your mentor to get advice about the courses you want to change/take. If you want to take other courses than those you have indicated on your learning agreement, it is important to notify the International Office (io.ce@tue.nl) of these changes and to ask approval from the Board of Examiners, contact the secretary (a.j.e.jansen@tue.nl).

Two forms must be updated and sent to TU/e: the Learning Agreement and the Preliminary Study Program. You can revise your former documents or you can fill them in again. It is important that your Preliminary Study Program and Learning Agreement correspond with your Transcript of Records. You can find these forms on the digital study guide in the TU/e digital study guide. You must send the updated Learning Agreement and the updated Exchange Contract to the International Office (io.ce@tue.nl).
7. Returning home
After you have finished your courses or internship you will return home. Before you depart there are some matters you should arrange. After returning, and to finish the semester properly, you need to complete a few procedures.

7.1. Before leaving
Before you leave the host university you must request a final Transcript of Records of the courses you have completed, including the corresponding grades. If possible, bring the original document back to TU/e. If your host university cannot provide this document before you leave, arrange for the original document to be sent to you in the Netherlands. Make sure your host university officially signs and stamps the Transcript of Records document.

7.2. After returning home
Back at TU/e you must deliver some forms to the International Office.
- Learning Agreement: deliver the Learning Agreement that corresponds to the experiences you have completed during your International Experience at STU.
- Transcript of Records: deliver, by letter, the Transcript of Records that you requested before leaving from your host institution to the Education and Student Service Center (STU) as well as to the International Office.
- Form of host institution: containing your arrival and departure dates. This should be signed and stamped by the host university and delivered to the Education and Student Service Center (STU).

7.3. Describe your experiences
A final task you need to complete is to write a short report about your international experience (2 A4 pages max). Your experiences, suggestions and assessments about your International Experience will help future students to make an informed decision about preferring a destination.

It is important that you describe your experiences in an objective, honest and generalized way. The content of this report will have no consequences for the acceptance of your International Experience in your Master’s program.