

Travel Grants 2019-20: [Erasmus Staff Mobility for Training](#) (with the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union)

"This is a 'must do' experience and I'm encouraging other members of my team to consider taking part"

Are you keen to develop your knowledge of the sector, to transfer/share knowledge, consider good practice? Perhaps broaden your awareness of relevant roles in a wider context? Are there skills training opportunities to take advantage of? If so, does a short job-shadow, networking, training or study visit to a relevant higher education institution or commercial organisation within Europe appeal? Crucially do you have the initiative and perhaps contacts to further this goal? Perhaps you have been involved in hosting someone here at Imperial with similar aims, hence your interest in reading this.

Is this for you? Perspectives from previous participants (pages 4-8)

Important information about the grant

Up to 22 grants are available to contribute towards travel and subsistence costs.
Please note that this scheme is not impacted by the UK leaving the EU.

- **Who is eligible:**
 - **All individuals** (administrative and academic) **employed by Imperial College London** may apply, **except** employees who are also registered students of the College (*however, staff who are not employed on a permanent contract at date of application for the grant may be subject to further checks to ensure that the College is satisfied they would be able to report/disseminate the outcomes of the visit to the benefit of the College*).
 - Preference will be given to first-time participants and, amongst academic staff priority will be given to those in the earlier stages of their careers.
- **When:** The visit should take place between 1 April and 30 September 2020.
- **Where can you go:** The visit should take place elsewhere in the EU or within the wider EEA or in Turkey, North Macedonia or Serbia. *Switzerland does not participate*. Ordinarily priority will be given to visits to a single organisation in a single location, or to two or more organisations in the same town/city. While more complex visits can be considered please note the priorities.
- **Length:** A visit should last a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 7 working days (*which can include weekends if that is what the host organisation plans as part of a visit*) including travel to and from the host organisation (*e.g. two visit days with travel included; five visit days plus two separate travel days; seven days with travel on the first and final day*). Ordinarily the grant system will allow, for sightseeing purposes, one or two unfunded days between any outward and homeward travel days and the start/end of the visit itself. However, you can also travel on the same day as the start/end of the visit.
- **Eligible activity** (a combination of approaches is valid): Job-shadow, Networking, Training, Study Visit to a relevant higher education institution or commercial organisation within Europe. Read the perspectives to get an idea as to the approaches of past grant holders.
 - **Exclusions (ineligible activity) and other points**
 - Visits to solely undertake research.
 - Conferences.

- Formal meetings of organisations.
 - However, [university-based Erasmus labelled staff-training events](#) are not classified as a conference and neither are specific workshops or short courses.
 - A visit may include discussing research. However, any research conversations should be planned within the context of a “training” visit.
 - The College’s Erasmus+ KeyAction1 Co-ordinator will be the arbiter as to whether an activity is eligible or not.
- **The visit must be part of your role:** the visit should not involve a member of staff taking annual leave, except where necessary for any whole non-visit and non-travel days (e.g. for holiday/sightseeing purposes). Please note that applicants who tag on a holiday before or after the visit and travel direct to the host organisation from their holiday destination will forfeit the relevant travel days and the whole of the travel grant. Applicants are urged not to build holidays around their visit except for a maximum of two days before/after for sightseeing purposes.

How to be considered for a grant

Your application

Prepare a word document (MAXIMUM 2 A4 pages doubled spaced) with the following sections:

- **“Opening Statement”:** Briefly describe your role and why you, your role and the College would benefit from this type of activity.
- **“My proposed visit”:** Provide a statement outlining your potential visit. Include, but not limited to:
 1. Name & location of the host organisation(s) plus provisional dates of participation. If you do not have a host organisation confirmed at time of application for the grant please indicate two or three potential hosts explaining why they are relevant.
 2. The overall aim of the visit and the specific objectives. *Please note that a programme for the visit is not required at this stage.*
 3. How you will plan your visit, including the extent to which you are known to your potential host organisation (although it is perfectly OK for you not to be known to them at this stage).
 4. Expected outcomes of your visit and how you would disseminate all or some of those outcomes to relevant persons both internal and, where appropriate, external to the College.

Submit your application by **Friday 14 February 2020** to a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk and, **very importantly copy your application to your line manager**. Applications will be considered by the Erasmus+ Key Action 1 Co-ordinator (Adrian Hawksworth, based in Registry) and a senior member of College staff. The criteria used are 1. benefit to the College; 2. potential for the visit to take place; 3. benefit to the applicant with more significance given to criteria 1.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome by 1 March. Successful applicants will be provided with further details and guidance. The nominated employee would have until the end of March 2020 to have provisionally arranged their visit and the visit should be scheduled to take place in the period April to Sept 2020. If your plan was to go in April then you would need to react quickly to that guidance. All participants would be required to agree a training plan (using a proforma provided by Mr Hawksworth) approved/signed by your line manager and the host organisation.

For successful applicants: The grant process and the value of the grant

- A grant holder will be guided through the process.
- The grant is calculated in Euros. An employee would sign a contract for a maximum grant value equal to 7 days. The final maximum value of the grant would be based on actual attendance (i.e. certified visit days at the host organisation) and any separate travel days, while the amount which is actually disbursed is based on receipted

expenditure (all personal expense claims on the part of the grant holder and any expenses incurred by the grant holder's department are also subject to the College's Expenses Policy.)

- Travel element (this aims at covering all or part of the cost of the main item of travel): calculated by distance from London (within Europe = minimum: €180; maximum: €530; most €275)
- Subsistence element (as well as meals this can also include local travel costs and any workshop/course fees): based on a daily rate set by the Erasmus+ programme for the country in which the visit takes place, with the range being €120-€180. For example, Croatia is €140, Germany is €160, France is €160 and Sweden is €180.
- Therefore, it is not guaranteed that all the costs incurred by a grant holder will be covered by the grant.
- Grants payments to the grant holder are ordinarily paid in sterling (normally using the appropriate College corporate exchange rates for the month a receipt is dated) to the bank account to which a grant holder's salary is paid while any payment due to the grant holder's department is paid using a GL Journal. A grant holder will receive a confirmation email as to the value of the grant. **Please note that the expense process is subject to change, and the finalised process will be communicated to a grant holder within the contract.** A grant holder may need to explore other means to cover costs beyond the scope of the grant.

***** Is this for you? Perspectives from previous participants can viewed on the next page *****

Please email queries to Adrian Hawksworth: a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

For background information on the Erasmus+ scheme: http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/staff_en.htm

Perspectives from previous participants

A staff member in our Disabilities Advisory Service (DAS) visited University College Dublin (UCD): 2019

I work for the DAS at Imperial College London providing one to one support for students. A full itinerary was drawn up with UCD for my two-day Erasmus+ Staff Training visit. With hindsight I would say that two days was not long enough as I had a very tight schedule. As well as my visit to UCD I was also able to fit in a meeting with a member of the DAS of Trinity College Dublin. It was an extremely valuable opportunity for me and I returned to College with insightful ideas for resources and ways of working. I was curious to find out that UCD has moved away from solely a one to one model of support to a comprehensive strategy which included tailored orientation programmes, promotion of inclusive technology for all, academic skills workshops, online resources and training for academic staff to provide support for students. I collected resources following my meetings with staff of the varying disciplines in the Access Centre for Lifelong Learning at UCD, and I have shared these with my manager and will deliver a short presentation of my perspectives to my team.

A staff member in our Graduate School visited the Doctoral Academy at the University of Graz: 2018

This was a brilliant opportunity to exchange ideas about Graduate Teaching Assistant training and postgraduate development with a team of highly respected colleagues. During my stay I was invited to speak at the University's High Noon lecture series, which is a forum for university teachers to discuss issues related to education. As a result of this trip, I have established a new network of colleagues working in my field, and I plan to invite one of them to speak at a future Perspectives in Education event at Imperial. I also took the opportunity to test some of our GTA courses on their doctoral students from a variety of disciplines at the University of Graz, which led to stimulating discussions about similarities and differences between higher education in the UK and Austria. I thoroughly enjoyed this experience, not only the work-related aspects but also the chance to explore another university and city.

A member of staff in the Business School visited IE Business School in Madrid: 2019

The aim of my visit was to gain an understanding into the alumni engagement strategies of a leading business school, broaden my knowledge of higher education institutions in Europe and learn new types of strategic engagement opportunities. I was particularly interested in finding out about the School's alumni ambassador programme and its student engagement activities. I spent the visit with the Office of Global Alumni Relations and was met on my first day by the Deputy Head of Engagement who had helped to arrange a series of meetings with her team. I was also taken on a brief walking tour of the campus. The meetings enabled me to fulfil all the learning objectives I had hoped for, such as learning about the School's regional engagement programmes, alumni associations and the aforementioned student engagement activities. There was naturally a reciprocal element to the visit and overall it was very rewarding to speak with a peer at an equivalent institution as I discovered that some of the issues I face in my role day-to-day are not unique. At the same time though, hearing about different strategies gave me a fresh perspective on my role and sparked new ideas which I hope to implement in the near future. Since returning from Madrid, I have advised several colleagues to apply for the Erasmus training scheme if given the chance. It has helped me grow my professional network, motivated me to accept new challenges in my current role and I was also able to brush up on my language skills in a beautiful city.

A Research Assistant (School of Public Health) attended a summer school in epidemiology and biostatistics in Italy: 2018

Thanks to the Erasmus+ Staff Mobility Grant I was able to take part in the Summer School on Modern Methods in Biostatistics and Epidemiology. It is a long-standing annual course established and run by faculty from Karolinska Institutet, Harvard University and Bocconi University, with guest lecturers from other institutions. The summer school presented itself as a unique opportunity to obtain training on novel topics and practical skills in statistical analysis directly from the very leaders in their respective areas of expertise. There was a wide choice of courses, which allowed for tailoring the programme of my stay to my particular goals. I took Mediation Analysis, and Joint Modelling of Longitudinal and Survival Data. The former topic is increasingly becoming a mainstay of data analysis in modern epidemiology as a means to improve causal inference. The second topic was a recent development in medical statistics, and its inclusion in the summer school's programme illustrated the cutting-edge approach to teaching of its organisers.

In my judgement, I gained the practical skills necessary to apply both approaches in my own statistical analyses. I will commence a doctoral degree soon, which will provide ample opportunities to do so, with the potential to improve the quality of my prospective thesis. Also, the newly acquired skills and knowledge have stimulated new research ideas, both for my PhD and my scientific career in the long run. The summer school was also a favourable networking environment. Hosted in a small, secluded Italian village, it gathered several dozen participants, mostly of junior academic level. However, it is not only my peers who I had been able to establish contacts and exchange research ideas with, but also the faculty who were available for informal conversations throughout the day in between the classes.

Overall, participation in the Erasmus+ Staff Mobility has been an invaluable experience. I wish to sincerely thank all those involved in creating this opportunity.

A Clinical Trials Manager in the Dept of Surgery and Cancer travelled to a pharmaceutical company in Spain

I had made early contact with the R&D Manager of the company I wished to visit to develop a programme and was now looking forward to working on a project at the company that aimed to introduce an Advanced Therapy Medicinal Product (ATMP) across Europe.

The R&D Manager welcomed me warmly and introduced me to the heads of the various project areas. I learned about the company's origins, its close collaborations with academic institutions and success in becoming a leader in the development and production of advanced sterile biologics and drugs. My scientific background was naturally a huge asset in understanding the biological properties of the medicinal product and manufacturing requirements.

The following day I travelled to Madrid for a meeting with the Market Analyst of the International Division who was developing a market access strategy for the product. We exchanged our knowledge and experiences on regulations and processes. In the following session we developed a schedule for the rest of the visit and I started to investigate legal requirements of the targeted countries and analysing the applicable laws of the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and France, drafting specific approval processes for the individual countries.

The newly-gained knowledge from the various meetings and the progress I had made closed a gap in my understanding regarding technology transfer processes in medical research, i.e. between innovative academic research in basic science and clinical trials. At the same time, my knowledge as Clinical Trial Manager and my previous experience working on Clinical Trials of an ATMP in the UK meant I was effectively contributing to the work of the company. This was very important to me as it demonstrated the mutual benefit from the Erasmus+ programme to both the hosting and visiting party. It was also great to get a chance to "talk science" with laboratory staff and to meet with the company's Financial Controller to share experiences about the challenges of prospectively costing research activities and to learn about the future growth of the company. The visit came to a very satisfying conclusion when I delivered the results of my work on European regulations and application procedures for advanced therapies to the team.

During my stay I was also given the opportunity to see the company's drug manufacturing, packaging and quality control facilities. I was very impressed by the state-of-the-art unit which was certainly a highlight of the visit.

My host company went out of their way to make this an incredibly stimulating and rewarding experience and am grateful for their hospitality and for having been granted this opportunity as part of the Erasmus+ programme.

Upon my return I presented a visit summary to my colleagues at Imperial to benefit present and future projects.

A Research Contracts Administrator visited the University of Malta: 2019

This Mobility Grant enabled me to visit the University of Malta (UoM) to exchange Research Administrative strategies and develop my understanding of Institutions in the EU as a whole. My hosts were very accommodating, and I was able to spend a day in each of the various sections of the team responsible for managing awards from proposal to award closure. This gave me insight into the challenges my colleagues at Imperial may have and I learnt ways to reduce these challenges through altering the way I work. I was particularly interested in how the team maintain a paperless office as this is something which had been mentioned by my managers at Imperial. I passed on the outcomes when I was back in the office.

There was a great deal of difference between UoM and Imperial, unsurprisingly this was mostly related to scale. But it was interesting to see the different research fields that made up the majority of the research volume, in particular I enjoyed speaking with Marine Biology Professors about their Research and how they acquire funds for new projects as this was the subject of my BSc. This was an excellent opportunity to learn more about EU universities, especially at a time of great uncertainty surrounding the UK and Brexit. We discussed the implications this may have on collaborations between EU and UK institutions; but also, on a less formal note, the potential impact on both the British and Maltese economies.

I learnt a great deal, and this training was accentuated by my living life in a beautiful country for a week. I am grateful to all who were involved in facilitating this incredible experience.

A member of the College's Advancement Team visited the Alumni Relations team at Lund University: 2018

I spent most of my trip with the central Alumni Relations team, discussing their overall alumni engagement strategy. As my role focuses mainly on events, I was particularly interested to learn how the team at Lund design and deliver their events programme, and was lucky enough to have the opportunity to attend an event the team were coordinating in Malmö. The team were also keen for me to share my experience planning Imperial's flagship alumni event, Alumni Weekend, as they had used our webpages as inspiration when planning Lund's Homecoming Weekend.

The Alumni Relations team also arranged for me to have meetings with colleagues across the University who work closely with alumni, including staff from the Business School, the Faculty of Engineering and the International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics (IIIEE). This helped me to get a better understanding of how the faculties and research institutes develop their own alumni engagement programmes while also supporting the work of the central team. I had a particularly interesting discussion with the IIIEE about their new online alumni network – which uses the same platform as Imperial. It was very useful to share experiences of using this relatively new system, and the different ways we use the platform to connect with alumni.

I would highly recommend the Erasmus+ staff mobility scheme to anyone looking to gain a new perspective on their role. It was a great experience, and it was extremely useful for me to learn how the alumni team at Lund deliver such a varied events programme with limited resources. It has also given me the opportunity to expand my professional network, and I have already arranged for the Lund Alumni Relations to visit Imperial when they are in London for an event later in the year.

More on the next few pages.....

A Research Associate in the Dept of Materials visited a research institute in France: 2017

Under the Erasmus+ scheme I visited a research institution in France. The visit allowed me to both meet and network with the lead professor and his team. The group has been responsible for helping to establish a major new research field (organic bioelectronics), an area which I am starting to enter through my work at Imperial College. With limited experience and resources of this field at Imperial, the trip established both a baseline for potential future collaborations as well as direct practical training and understanding about how to run similar experiments back at Imperial. In addition, I also had the opportunity to meet and discuss with the Head of Department, about her team's research and latest findings. Specific training included: learning about how particular equipment and process choices are used to improve productivity and workflow; different approaches to sterilization in the context of organic bioelectronics; discussions about the theory of underlying physical mechanisms in these systems. I had the opportunity to present my own research and promote the work of the research group at Imperial through a departmental seminar. I will also be presenting the outcomes of the trip back to my research group at Imperial in order to stimulate other potential collaborations. Overall, the Erasmus+ grant allowed me to meet and talk to researchers, learning about relevant and useful ideas and concepts in their own lab. This allowed a level of training and understanding that would have been difficult to achieve without visiting in person

A one week Erasmus-labelled training course in Germany: 'New Challenges and Developments in University Life'

undertaken by a staff member in the **Student Recruitment and Outreach Team** (a mix of workshops & job shadowing).

It appeared the perfect opportunity to tailor the training to my own needs as well as taking part in discussion groups with the other delegates. My aim was to gain a better understanding of marketing & student recruitment in European universities as well as improving my general understanding of Higher Education in the different European countries. In particular, my specialist group for job shadowing, the most attractive element of the week, was the Press Office and Marketing department with a colleague from Portugal where we were able to share experiences. The host team were very welcoming with both the training and social programmes allowing extensive opportunities to network with the other delegates in both formal and informal settings. I particularly enjoyed learning about the different cultures of the countries represented and had the opportunity to practise my Italian. The care that the host team put into the week was evident creating a warm, friendly environment. Their enjoyment in meeting us all and in representing their institution was very clear. When reporting back to my team the key lesson I learnt is that it is very easy to assume that HE institutions around the world run in the same way as the UK, with the same priorities, but this is not the case. To anyone attending an Erasmus+ training, I say go with an open mind – you will learn a lot, but it might not be what you expect to learn and in that way the training benefits us all as it challenges our preconceptions.

An International Relations Officer organised a networking trip to the University of Lund in Sweden: 2017

I undertook an Erasmus study trip to Lund University in order to learn more about the university's Africa strategy. Like Imperial, Lund University is a LERU (League of European Research Universities) partner institution and is the only one with an explicit Africa strategy.

I spent the majority of the trip having interesting discussions with the Africa coordinator from the International Relations Office at Lund. We talked about how the strategy had been formulated, what level of consultation had been done with academics and how it had been implemented across the institution. In addition to these discussions the Africa coordinator had set up a number of meetings with other teams across the university including with: The Faculty of Engineering International Office, the Africa recruitment officers, the alumni team, the student mobility team and the Commissioned Education team. All of these meetings helped to give a greater insight into how Lund works and everyone I met was incredibly knowledgeable and patient at answering my endless questions! I found it fascinating how some of the challenges they are facing, both within the institution and in the general higher education policy environment are very similar to our own while others were completely different. I think experiences such as these are an excellent opportunity to gain greater understandings and new perspectives but are also a time to reflect on our own working practices. I had previously undertaken an organised staff training week however I found this individual 'work shadowing' approach was on this occasion more productive and beneficial to my work and I would thoroughly recommend it to others. Finally, I was delighted to take part in the weekly 'Fika' breakfast on Friday morning where the whole division sits down together for a breakfast, supplied by the university.

A Research Fellow in the School of Public Health visited a research institute in Austria: 2016

I participated in a visit to the **Vienna Institute for Demography** (Wittgenstein Centre for Human Capital). It was a great experience. The Institute for Demography has researchers with many overlapping interests to my own. For this reason I choose to propose working there in order to exchange ideas as well as to develop a network of contacts.

Upon arrival I joined a weekly seminar related to global migration. The seminar was a great way to meet everyone at the Institute and to introduce myself. It gave me the opportunity to see the range of topics, interests and international collaborations already in progress, and I felt at home there right away. For the remainder of the week I met with colleagues to discuss my own recent research and future plans, and I learned about their research. This was a perfect opportunity to get to know about work that is in progress and not yet published.

This opportunity has allowed me to develop links with the Vienna Institute of Demography, and to link my colleagues in the UK at various institutions with colleagues in Austria. I'm certain that we will continue to work and contribute to each other's work in the future. Such mobility has immeasurable value in terms of creating new understanding both scientifically and in a humanitarian sense as we come to understand our international colleagues and their reasons for conducting their work the way that they do, which is often similar to our own objectives but often different with respect to methods. I'm very grateful for this opportunity.