

# STUDY ABROAD

## ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## Frequently Asked Questions

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## Planning

### **When can I study one or two semesters abroad?**

#### Bachelor

The assessment year – compulsory modules of the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> semester– must be completed before the stay abroad begins (not before applying for the exchange semester).

All other compulsory modules (3<sup>rd</sup> semester) and the research seminar (5<sup>th</sup> semester) must be taken at IKMZ.

The bachelor thesis (6<sup>th</sup> semester) may be written abroad with remote supervision by IKMZ.

It is also possible to write the bachelor thesis in the 7<sup>th</sup> semester. However, we do not recommend this, because in this case you have to find a supervisor on your own.

See also the sample curriculum:

[Bachelor Kommunikationswissenschaft & Medienforschung](#)

#### Master

The following compulsory modules must be taken at IKMZ:

- All compulsory modules from the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> semester
- The research seminar (2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> semester for Strat. Comm. & Pol. Comm. or 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> and/or 4<sup>th</sup> semester for I&S)
- The Master Colloquium (3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> semester)

The Master Colloquium is offered in either the third or the fourth semester. This depends on the division and the supervisor. In some divisions the focus of supervision is on the design (1<sup>st</sup> semester of the Master thesis) in other divisions on the analysis and interpretation of the data (2<sup>nd</sup> semester of the Master thesis). When and how (online or face-to-face) the colloquium takes place will be communicated in the preliminary meeting. It is best to register for two or three preliminary meetings and clarify whether the colloquium is compatible with the stay abroad. The preliminary meetings are held in December (start of Master thesis in spring semester) and May (start of Master thesis in fall semester).

The Master thesis (3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> semester may be (further) written abroad with remote supervision by IKMZ.

See also the sample curriculum:

[Master Kommunikationswissenschaft und Medienforschung](#)

[Master Internet & Society](#)

[Master Politische Kommunikation & Governance](#)

[Master Strategische Kommunikation & Management](#)

## Can I do an exchange semester more than once?

Yes. You may apply as often as you wish. However, students who have not yet had an exchange experience are prioritized at the time of allocation. In this way, we want to make such an experience possible for as many students as possible. As always, however, you can influence your own chances with a good application. Also, your chances depend on how many exchange places are available and how many other applications we receive. Please note that at least 60 of 120 / 45 of 90 ECTS must be obtained at UZH.

## Partner Universities

### Where can I go?

As IKMZ student, you can choose from about 100 partner universities in about 40 different countries worldwide. In the [search portal](#) and in this [overview](#) you will find all partner universities that are available for you to choose from. Here you can also see how many places are available and at which level the contract was concluded (UZH = university-wide or IKMZ = subject-specific agreement). In the search portal, you will also find the [experience reports](#). You apply for an exchange place via [Mobility-Online](#) (see also "[Application](#)"). You can also study in another city in Switzerland. You then apply at the Student Administration office. You can find more information [here](#). If you study at a partner university abroad or in Switzerland, you remain enrolled at UZH and pay the UZH semester fees. You will usually also receive a scholarship.

### My university of choice is not a partner. Can I still study there?

If you want to study at another university (outside the partner network), you can go abroad [self-organized](#). In that case we talk about a stay abroad instead of an exchange. Clarify as soon as possible with the university of your choice whether they accept so-called "free movers" and how much the semester fees are. In this case you do not need to apply for an exchange place at UZH. However, you will still need a credit recognition agreement for the transfer of credits obtained abroad (see also "[Credit Recognition](#)").

## Application

### When do I have to apply?

The application period runs from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 15<sup>th</sup> January each year for an exchange semester in the next academic year (fall semester and/or spring semester). There is no "first come, first serve." It is important that all documents are uploaded to [Mobility-Online](#) before the deadline. There is a second application round, starting 1<sup>st</sup> June and running until 15<sup>th</sup> July, for an exchange semester in the next spring semester. Here, only the remaining places can be chosen. These are the places that were not awarded or cancelled during the regular application round.

### What documents do I need to submit?

Here you can find which documents you need to submit:

[IKMZ partner university in Europe](#)

[UZH partner university in Europe](#)

### [UZH partner university overseas](#)

Even if you apply for different partner universities (IKMZ = subject-specific & UZH = university-wide), you still submit only one application.

### Motivation letter

You address the letter of motivation to UZH. In the letter of motivation you mention why you would like to apply for an exchange semester / year and which continents/countries/host universities you are particularly interested in. Go into detail about each partner university you have chosen and show that you have done some research regarding the course offering. The letter of motivation must be a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 2 A4 pages. If you are (also) applying for a UZH partner university where the language of instruction is other than German, the letter of motivation must be written in English. You only need to submit one letter of motivation, even if you indicate three priorities. In the letter of motivation, possibly also note a 4<sup>th</sup> priority in case you are not allocated to the first three priorities.

### Transcript of Records

Students in their first semester who do not yet have grades at the time of application must submit their transcript of records as soon as it is published (calendar week 8 and 38). If you have already received some grades, you may submit a screenshot from the student portal. Otherwise, upload a blank document.

### Language certificate

You do not need to upload proof of language proficiency at the time of application. However, you must credibly demonstrate that you are able to attend courses in the relevant language (e.g. expired language certificates, stays abroad, list of successfully completed courses in English at UZH, ...) and that the necessary certificate can be submitted by the registration deadline of the host university. If you do not have a language certificate, upload a document explaining how the required level is/was achieved. Students with German as their native language who apply for an exchange place at a German-speaking partner university do not have to submit a language certificate. In that case, upload a blank document. Find out early what kind of proof the host university requires (IELTS, TOEFL, CAE, CPE, PTE, DELF, DELE, signed statement, ...). Most of the time you can find this information in the factsheet of the host university. As soon as you are nominated at a university, it is mandatory that you provide the language certificate required by the partner university and therefore, if necessary, register for the desired test immediately. If you start the exchange in the fall semester, you will be nominated between February and May and if you start the exchange in the spring semester, you will be nominated between September and November. Once you are nominated, you will be contacted directly by the partner university and informed about the next steps. At this time, you will submit the required language certificate. At the [UZH Language Center](#) you can follow 7 or 14-week TOEFL, IELTS and Cambridge semester courses, take an English test, study for the test in the self-study center, as well as sign up for TOEFL and IELTS coaching and learning advice.

### Study Plan / Learning Agreement

The study plan is provisional and does not have to be detailed. It shows that you are familiar with the courses offered at the host university and have found modules that are relevant to your studies. You can refer to the courses offered this or last year. Please check the factsheet and/or the website of the host university. Please always look under "Exchange / Study Abroad" and not under "International Students". Much later in the process, once the final offer is known (usually about two months before you leave), the final Learning Agreement for the SEMP stipend and a Recognition Agreement for credit transfer will be drawn up. See also "[Credit Recognition](#)".

Subject-specific documents

You do not need to submit any subject-specific documents.

## **Wat are my chances of getting an exchange place?**

The allocation criteria are:

- Timely submission of complete application
- Grades
- Letter of motivation, especially mentioning the academic added value of the exchange stay
- Provisional study plan: Research done on course offerings & availability of relevant courses.
- Sufficient knowledge of the language of instruction at the partner university

The number of places to be allocated per partner university can be found in the [search portal](#). Of course, it then also depends on the competition (students from the entire UZH in case of UZH-wide partner universities or students from IKMZ in case of subject-specific partner universities) and how popular the destination is (big cities are usually more popular than small towns, English-speaking countries are very popular). If you do not have extremely good grades, but absolutely want to get an exchange place, it is worthwhile to indicate other priorities in case you do not get a place at your university of choice.

The decision about the final admission is up to the partner university. It is your responsibility to check with the partner university regarding semester dates, language requirements and courses offered and to obtain the necessary certificates/diplomas.

## **When will I know if I have received an exchange place?**

The allocation takes place directly after the application deadlines (15<sup>th</sup> January & 15<sup>th</sup> July, see also "[When do I have to apply?](#)"), but also takes time. You will be notified in January, February or March if you got the exchange place. If you are applying in summer, you will be notified in July or August. You have to accept or decline the exchange place within five days.

## **What are the next steps after accepting the exchange place?**

After you have accepted the exchange place, we nominate you at the partner university. If you start the exchange in the fall semester, you will be nominated between February - May and if you start in the spring semester between September - November. Once you are nominated, you will be contacted directly by the partner university and informed about the next steps: The registration at the host university (usually you will need to upload your passport, transcript of records and language certificate).

## **Credit Recognition**

### **What do I have to do for the recognition of credits obtained abroad?**

1. Familiarize yourself with the courses offered by the host university (preferably already at the time of application, see also "[Application - Study Plan / Learning Agreement](#)"). Inform yourself in the factsheet and/or on the website of the host university. Please always search under "Exchange / Study Abroad" and not under "International Students". The final course offer is usually known two months before your departure.

2. In case you will study at university outside of Europe, you do not need a Learning Agreement and can skip number 3, 4, & 5 below.
3. In case you will study at a university in Europe, you have to list the courses for the Learning Agreement including links to the course descriptions at the host university in Mobility-Online. You do not need to indicate an exact UZH equivalent under "Course unit title at the home institution", but the module group (see also "[Which credits can be transferred to your studies at IKMZ](#)"). Please send an e-mail to [mobility@ikmz.uzh.ch](mailto:mobility@ikmz.uzh.ch) as soon as you have listed the courses in Mobility-Online.

Example:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Host institution                          | Universiteit van Amsterdam - AMSTERD01  |
| Study area                                | general study area  |
| Study field                               | Communication and Media Research - 7254   |
| Academic year                             | 2022/2023   |
| Semester                                  | Spring Semester 2023  |
| Course unit code at the host institution  | 77643SP06Y_B4+B5  |
| Course unit title at the host institution | Marketing Communication   |
| Number of credits at the host university  | 12,00   |
| Link to course at the host institution    | <a href="https://studiegids.uva.nl/xmlpages/page/2022-2023/zoek-vak/vak/100434">https://studiegids.uva.nl/xmlpages/page/2022-2023/zoek-vak/vak/100434</a> |
| Course unit code at the home institution  | -   |
| Course unit title at the home institution | Forschungsbereiche der Kommunikationswissenschaft   |

The departmental coordinator at IKMZ assesses the courses and drafts a credit recognition form.

4. As soon as the courses have been booked definitely at the host university, please confirm them in Mobility-Online. The Learning Agreement will then be signed by the departmental coordinator at IKMZ and automatically sent to the host university.
5. In case of changes in the course choice, please go back to number 2.
6. In case you will study at university outside of Europe, please send the courses including links to the course descriptions at the host university to [mobility@ikmz.uzh.ch](mailto:mobility@ikmz.uzh.ch). The departmental coordinator at IKMZ will then draft a credit recognition form. On this form, you will find the credits of the host university. These will be converted into ECTS at the end of your stay.
7. After the stay abroad, you send us the Transcript of Records (ToR) from the host university. We send the ToR including the credit recognition agreement and eventually also the grade / credit conversion to the credit recognition office. All passed courses will be visible in your student portal within one week. If you wish to graduate immediately after the exchange semester, the ToR must be submitted to us no later than 20<sup>th</sup> September if you graduate in the spring semester or 20<sup>th</sup> February if you graduate in the fall semester. Please notify us if you are unable to meet this deadline.

## Which credits can be transferred to my studies at IKMZ?

For the transfer of credits it is important that the modules are

- level appropriate (Master students cannot take Bachelor courses, but the other way around is possible)
- related to the field of communication and media

The credits are transferred to the module group:

- „Weitere Themenfelder ...“ (Bachelor)/ „Forschungsbereiche ...“ (Master) in case of lectures
- “Anwendung ...” (Bachelor)/ “Qualifizierung ...” (Master) in case of seminars
- "Further Topics in the Field" (Master Internet & Society)
- “Gegenstandsbereiche...” (Bachelor)", only if the content of the module abroad corresponds exactly with our core elective module from this module group.

Seminars can also be credited as lectures (e.g. if you rather need ECTS in the module group “Weitere Themenfelder ...” (Bachelor)/ “Forschungsbereiche ...” (Master). It does not work the other way around (lectures cannot be credited as seminars).

## **What happens when the module abroad has more or less credits than the modules at IKMZ?**

The number of credits does not have to match exactly. You get the (converted) credits you acquire abroad. That means, if you take a seminar worth 10 ECTS abroad, you will get these 10 ECTS in the module group “Anwendung ...” (Bachelor)/ “Qualifizierung ...” (Master) / "Further Topics in the Field" (Master Internet & Society), although at IKMZ the seminars are worth 6 ECTS each. If you attend a lecture abroad worth 2 ECTS, you will get these 2 ECTS in the module group „Weitere Themenfelder ...“ (Bachelor)/ „Forschungsbereiche ...“ (Master)/ "Further Topics in the Field" (Master Internet & Society), although at IKMZ the lectures are worth 3 / 6 ECTS each. Excess credits cannot be transferred to other modules.

## **What happens if a different credit system and grading scale is used?**

No problem. We convert the credits into ECTS. We convert the grades into Swiss grades. Here you can convert the grades yourself:

[www.phil.uzh.ch/en/studium/studentenleistungen/erkennung/notenumrechnung](http://www.phil.uzh.ch/en/studium/studentenleistungen/erkennung/notenumrechnung)

## **Do I have to take a minimum amount of ECTS abroad?**

If you will be studying at an IKMZ partner university (subject-specific), no minimum number of ECTS is required. For UZH-wide destinations, a minimum number of 15 ECTS is required. In exceptional cases (failed course, bachelor thesis, etc.) also less ECTS are accepted.

## **Can I also take modules at UZH during the semester abroad?**

Yes. Since you remain enrolled at UZH, you may take online-only modules at UZH at the same time. If you are on [leave of absence](#) for the semester, you may not take any courses at UZH.

## **May I also have credits transferred to my Minor?**

We allow you to take minor modules abroad as long as approved by the departmental coordinator at your Minor. Not all faculties allow this. For the credit recognition of Minor modules you need a separate credit recognition agreement. This will be drawn up by the departmental coordinator at your Minor. You can find the responsible person [here](#). The host university must also agree with the course selection. Most of the time the host university requires that the majority of the courses are from your Major.

## **Can Bachelor students take Master modules abroad to have their credits transferred to their future Master studies at UZH?**

You are allowed to take master modules abroad as long as the host university agrees. If you take more than 30 ECTS of Master modules, only 30 ECTS of them will be transferred to your future Master studies at UZH. The rest of the credits will appear under "Academic Achievement Not Counted toward Degree" on your Transcript of Records.

## **What is the difference between Learning Agreement and Credit Recognition Agreement?**

The Learning Agreement (LA) is a contract between you, UZH and the Erasmus+/ SEMP host university. You need the LA for the SEMP scholarship (see also "[Finances and Scholarships](#)"). You have to upload the LA in Mobility-Online in time. The Credit Recognition Agreement (AV) is a contract between you and IKMZ for the credit transfer and must be drawn up before the start of the semester abroad (see also "[What do I have to do for the recognition of credits obtained abroad](#)").

## **I will complete my studies at the end of the exchange semester. By when do I have to submit my grades from the host university at the latest?**

After the stay abroad, you send us the Transcript of Records (ToR) from the host university. We send the ToR including the credit recognition agreement and eventually also the grade / credit conversion to the credit recognition office. All passed courses will be visible in your student portal within one week. If you wish to graduate immediately after the exchange semester, the ToR must be submitted to us no later than 20<sup>th</sup> September if you graduate in the spring semester or 20<sup>th</sup> February if you graduate in the fall semester. Please notify us if you are unable to meet this deadline.

## **Finances and Scholarships**

### **How much does a semester abroad cost?**

If you study at a partner university abroad or in Switzerland, you remain enrolled at UZH and pay the UZH semester fees. You do not pay semester fees at the partner university. You will usually also receive a scholarship. Check with the partner university (website/ factsheet) regarding accommodation. How much you spend abroad depends mainly on the travel fees & accommodation, but also how you organize yourself regarding food and excursions. The partner university may be able to make an estimation.

### **What scholarships are available?**

There are various scholarships available to financially support the exchange semester, such as the SEMP scholarship, SEMP Goes Worldwide scholarship, Strategic scholarship, Inclusive scholarship, etc. More information about these scholarships and other funding opportunities can be found [here](#).

## **Summer / Winter Schools**

### **Can I also attend a Summer School**

Yes, if you cannot spend a full semester/ year abroad, you could attend a Summer School and have the credits transferred. Here you can find information about Summer / Winter Schools: [www.int.uzh.ch/en/out/summerschools](http://www.int.uzh.ch/en/out/summerschools). You may also choose a Summer / Winter School yourself. It depends on the content of the course (the Summer School) itself whether the credits will be transferred (must be related to communication and media and offered by an accredited university). Whether and in which module group the credits can be transferred is assessed by the departmental coordinator (see also "[Credit Recognition](#)").

## Contact

### **Whom can I contact if I have more questions?**

Academics related questions

Your departmental coordinator at IKMZ: [mobility@ikmz.uzh.ch](mailto:mobility@ikmz.uzh.ch)

IKMZ website: [www.ikmz.uzh.ch/en/studies/study-mobility](http://www.ikmz.uzh.ch/en/studies/study-mobility)

Administrative questions

UZH Global Student Experience (GSE): [incoming@int.uzh.ch](mailto:incoming@int.uzh.ch)

GSE website: [www.int.uzh.ch/en](http://www.int.uzh.ch/en)