

Exchange Program Guidelines for Undergraduate Students
Departments of Civil and Mechanical Engineering
Middle East Technical University

I. Background: In a well-designed exchange program, a student gains experience living in a different culture and strengthens language skills while taking courses at the “host” university that are transferred back to METU and count toward graduation. In contrast, work and study programs, language schools, and holidays are designed for students who want to gain experience living in a different culture and strengthen language skills without transferring credits from a host university to METU. **Therefore, a key characteristic of an academic exchange program is the transfer credits from the host university to METU that count toward graduation.**

It has been seen that too many METU students who go on exchange are unable or unwilling to transfer credits back to METU that will count toward graduation. Therefore, we are in danger of losing our status as an ERASMUS partner. Hence, the METU International Cooperation Office requires all students participating in Erasmus Exchange Program to transfer back 30 ECTS Credits per semester.

As result, the following policies are being implemented and will be applied to all METU CE & ME students going on exchange starting in the Spring 2018 semester.

II. Definitions

Minimum Number of Transferrable Credits

- Erasmus Exchange: 18 METU Credits (six 3-credit METU courses);
- Non-Erasmus Exchange: 12 METU Credits (four 3-credit METU courses).
- Note: For universities with different credit systems, the number of METU credits is the total number of lecture hours in the semester divided by 14, such that 42 lecture hours = 3 credits. In this situation, it is essential that the course packet provides information on the number of lecture hours per semester.

Signed Course Packet: A packet containing detailed course syllabi including total lecture hours and a weekly plan and other related material signed by relevant METU instructor for each course a student wants to transfer from the host university to METU explicitly indicating that

- “The course can transfer to METU and replace (CE/ME/etc..) xxx” where xxx is the course number;
- Or “The course can transfer to METU as a (technical/non-technical/free) elective.”

III. Exchange Guidelines Effective Starting with Spring 2018 Exchanges

Summary: The CE and ME Departments only recommend that students go on exchange in the **1st or 2nd semester of their 4th year** and transfer back the *Minimum Number of Transferrable Credits* through elective (non-technical, free, technical, and restricted elective) courses. The CE & ME Departments do not recommend students to go exchange in their 3rd year or after the 2nd semester of their fourth year, or to transfer back credits for required courses. Details are given below.

Details: All students with a C.GPA of 2.5 or greater can apply to go on exchange. However, the METU CE & ME Departments will only approve exchanges as follows. Importantly, below “proactively” means that the student takes the initiative to start and complete the process, and students who are not proactive can expect to have their exchange applications denied.

1. Exchange students are expected to transfer at least the *Minimum Number of Transferable Credits* from the host university to METU, and have these credits count toward graduation.
2. Students who go on exchange must have at least the *Minimum Number of Transferrable Credits* remaining until graduation; e.g., students will not be approved for Erasmus Exchange if they have less than 18 credits to graduation.
3. Exchange applications will be evaluated assuming only **elective (non-technical, free, technical, and restricted elective¹)** course credits can be transferred from the host university to METU unless the student proactively provides very strong documentation for each university she/he applied indicating the possibility of transferring back credits for required courses. Therefore, it is easy for 4th year students who can transfer back elective courses to go to on exchange, but difficult for 3rd year students who need to transfer back required courses to reach the *Minimum Number of Transferrable Credits* to go on exchange.
4. As a consequence of item 3, the **CE and ME** Departments will only approve exchanges for students going on exchange in their 4th year unless the student proactively provides very strong documentation for each university she/he applied indicating the possibility of transferring back the *Minimum Number of Transferrable Credits*.
5. The CE and ME Departments will only approve exchanges for students in good academic standing. In addition to the C.GPA > 2.5 requirement to be eligible to apply to go on exchange, students with good academic performance (e.g. GPA > 2.5 for each of the past two semesters with no NA/W in the past two semesters, having completed most must courses, etc.) will be given priority.
6. Students can only go to universities with a large number of courses given in English, unless the student proactively provides very strong documentation indicating that she/he can succeed taking classes in the language of the university. For example, students who have not demonstrated strong German language skills cannot go to a German language university where a small number of classes are given in English for exchange students.
7. Before going on exchange, the student must submit a *Signed Course Packet* (defined above) meeting the *Minimum Number of Transferrable Credits*.
8. Before leaving for exchange and upon return, students must leave a photocopy of the learning agreement and course packet with their Department's Erasmus Coordinator for archival purposes, such that these learning agreements and course packets can be used by future students going to the same university.

¹ The CE students should be eligible to take restricted elective courses before they go on an exchange program (i.e. all courses from 2nd year and 4 out of the following 6 courses (CE305, CE353, CE366, CE372, CE382, CE383) should be passed.)