

Erasmus Student Guide

Romanian -American University

Erasmus Student Network UniBucharest



Table of Contents

Administrative Procedure	3
Tips and Tricks	8
Testimonials	16



Administrative Procedure

❖ What is Erasmus+?

ERASMUS+ is the EU's program to support the next subjects: education, training, students and sport, aiming skills development and professional insertion capacity, providing educational opportunities, training, activities for students and sport. The program connects seven European funding programs: Lifelong Learning, Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Alfa, Edulink and the cooperation programme with the industrialized countries.

❖ Where can you find information about Erasmus+ program studies and placement?

There are many ways for you to be informed about the Erasmus+ program for RAU's students. You can find more information on RAU website, on the official [Facebook page](#), you can also contact us at the erasmus@student.rau.ro e-mail address or in our Erasmus+ Office in the university, Room 306, 3th floor.

In our office you will find all the support that you need, and our advisors will always be there to inform you and to answer to all your questions about mobility studies and placement. Usually, during the academic year, the university organizes two information sessions for students, where you can find information about the mobility opportunities and selection process.

We advise you to access the following links:

- [About Erasmus+](#)
- [Dates for selection process, evaluation criteria, eligibility, destination](#)

❖ Why you should choose a Erasmus+ mobility?

Erasmus+ is suitable program for all the persons who are in a training process, especially for students who want to have an exchange experience with a partner university or an internship. Erasmus+ office will support you in your choices. Erasmus+ mobility has many advantages because the mobility studies and internship will be recognized and equated. Moreover, Erasmus+ offers you non-reimbursable funds (grants) for students who meet all the contractual obligations. Going on a Erasmus+ Mobility Program, you have the opportunity to discover another culture, to have an international experience, to grow yourself, and to have the right experience to be prepared for a globalised world.

❖ **Who are the eligible students for a Erasmus+ Mobility?**

If you want to apply for an Erasmus+ Mobility Program, you will need to be a RAU student enrolled in a full –time form study. To be eligible for a program you should have the GPA of 7.5 or above. For the Erasmus Selection for studies in March, the students who can participate are the students starting from the first bachelor year, following that the mobility take place in the next academic year. Being a selection for the current academic year, on the October selection, the students who can participate are the students starting with the second year, undergraduate or graduate studies. Also, the students from the last undergraduate year can participate in the Erasmus for studies, following that the mobility be in the first year of the master. For the Erasmus Selections for Placements can participate all the student from undergraduate years and also students from Masters Degree. It is very important to know that the student is entitled to 12 months of mobility in a university cycle of studies, for both studies and placements.

❖ **How to choose the right Erasmus+ destination?**

Because the choice of destination is the most important step in the mobility process, the options shall be chosen based on the field of study. Our university has concluded bilateral agreements for study with the most countries from Europe. Moreover, RAU has concluded partnerships with counties from Asia, Africa, South America, such as: Japan, South Korea, China, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Peru, Chile, Mexico, and South Africa. For those who want to go to America, is good to remember that RAU has a partnership with universities from USA, but for now the mobilities has no grant.

❖ **The list of partner universities is available on RAU website.**

Before you make a decision, you should see what kind of courses you can find in your desired university, in English or in their mother language, in case you are prepared to study in their language. There are many other aspects that you should be aware of: for example, how you can arrive to the host university, if the airport is closed to university, or what other transport you can access. Also, it is highly recommended to consider the costs of everyday living different from one country to another.

❖ **How is the Selection process going?**

You do not have to stress with the selection process, because our Erasmus+ Advisors will help you with the administrative part. You need to have attached to the application file some documents from university, some personal documents, and an intention letter.

The documents list is available on RAU website. Also, you will need an English Certificate, but if you do not have one, you should participate in our English test from the selection process. The last stage of selections consists in participation in a maximum 10 minute interview. The selection commission will ask you about your motivation for a Erasmus+ Mobility. The interview will be in English. The final mark will be made of: (40%) GPA, English test (at least 30%), interview mark (at least 30%). The result will be communicated after the end of the selection process.

❖ **Steps to follow until you reach the host university / company.**

After the nomination process by the coordinator at one of the universities you have chosen has ended, you will need to contact your academic coordinator to establish the courses you will study in mobility.

The first step is completed by signing the study agreement (Learning Agreement). It is necessary that the selection of the courses you will attend amounts to at least 30 ECTS per semester. Each university has different procedures for registering Erasmus+ students.

You will need to send a file with some documents to the host university. The second step in preparing for mobility is to obtain a Letter of Acceptance. If you have been accepted for a non-EU university, you will need to obtain a study visa. The next step is to sign the finance contract.

The Erasmus+ scholarship will be calculated according to the number of days for which the Letter of Acceptance was issued. You will receive 90% of the total scholarship before departure, and the rest on the return, after complying with all the obligations stipulated in the contract. There is only one step left before leaving, participating in an online language test.

Documents to be obtained:

- Learning Agreement;
- Letter of Acceptance;
- Student visa; if it is necessary
- The financial contract.

❖ **Steps to follow during mobility.**

During your mobility you have one month from the beginning to modify the Learning Agreement (but this also varies from one university to another). Changes are made only with the agreement of the academic coordinator and the notification of the host university, so the Learning Agreement will be re-signed by all three parties: you, the academic coordinator at RAU and the host university.

After taking the exams and striving to get a minimum of 30 ECTS per semester, you will receive the Transcript of Records. It is often released after you have returned from mobility and will arrive at the Erasmus Office of RAU. Before leaving, you will need to obtain a Certificate of Attendance, a document that you will receive from the Erasmus Office advisor and will be completed by the host university.

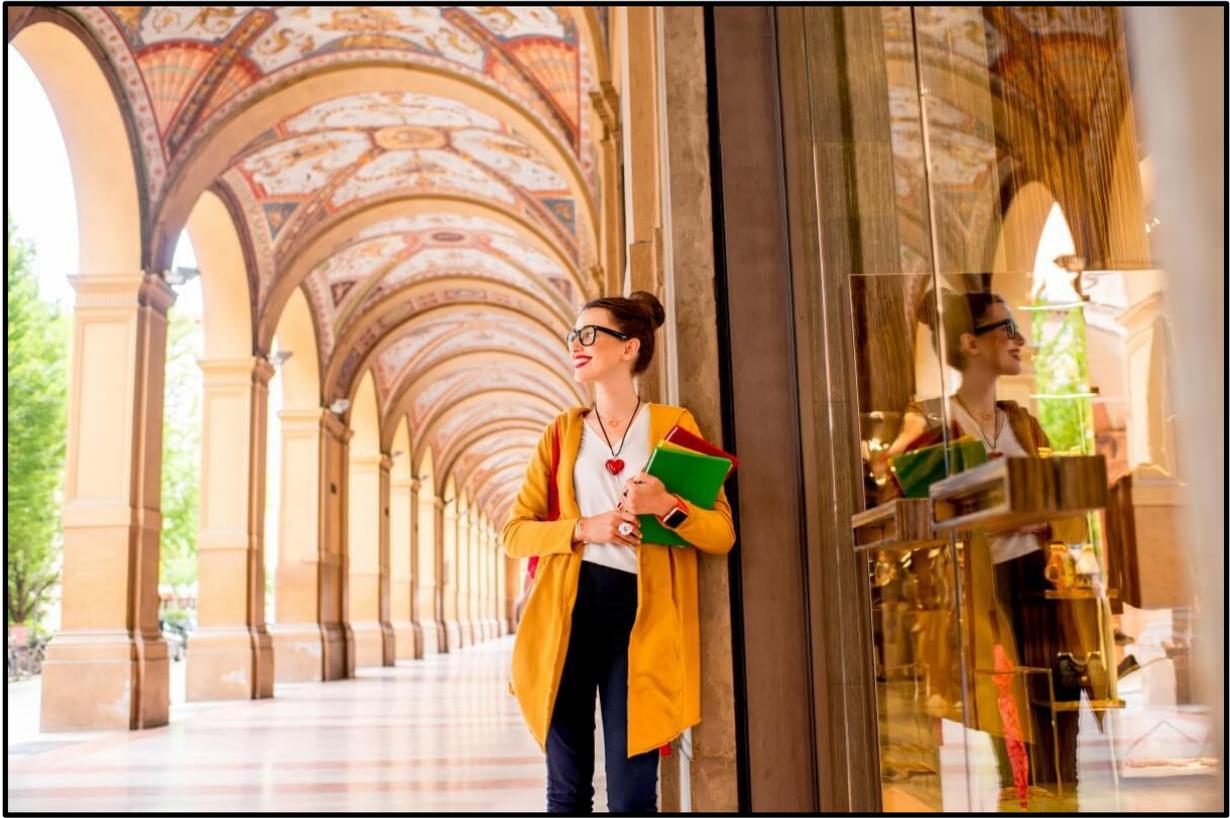
❖ **Steps to follow when you return to RAU.**

To complete the file, when you are back, you will need to present the following documents to the Erasmus Office: boarding passes, signed Learning Agreement, Transcript of Records issued by the host university, Certificate of Attendance also completed by the host university.

You will receive an e- mail with a questionnaire from the European Commission, which you will need to answer, and you will have to take the online language test again. If you have complied with the terms provided by the contract, you will receive the rest of the grant, otherwise it will be recalculated. The last step is the academic recognition.

The documents that need to be presented to end the file

- Learning Agreement (signed by all three parties);
- Transcript of Records;
- Certificate of Attendance;
- Travel documents (boarding passes);
- Declaration for avoiding double financing.



Tips and Tricks

❖ Who should you contact before the Erasmus+ mobility?

Once you find out that your application for mobility has been accepted, you are advised to get in touch with your academic coordinator from the host university. In addition to the administrative procedure, you will be able to contact the coordinator for any questions related to your stay. The coordinator will present you the semester calendar from the host university, invite you to the welcome meeting and inform you about the student associations activating in the host city. You will be able to get in touch with the Erasmus Student Network, which creates online groups for international students. These groups will allow you to virtually meet other students, also about to begin their mobilities. Furthermore, you will be able to ask questions that will be answered by the local students who manage these groups. In addition to this, there are also groups that bring together local landlords and international students, allowing you to look for and find accommodation as early as possible. By staying permanently connected, you will begin your mobility already having basic information to help you integrate faster.

❖ Which are the criteria that should you take into consideration when choosing your accommodation?

From the moment you are selected for an Erasmus mobility, you will have to take care not only of the administrative procedure, but also of other aspects, such as your future accommodation. Given that you will be living in your host country for a considerable amount of time, you'll have to go through the process of searching for accommodation, just like you normally would in your home country.

First of all, ask the Erasmus coordinator from the host institution if the university offers accommodation in dormitories or if they have any collaboration with a real estate agency for international students. In addition, it is recommended to ask for detailed information about the accommodation, such as the number of students per room, location of the bathroom and kitchen, what is included and not included in the rental price, the existence of blankets, pillows or crockery, and even additional costs that may arise during your stay. Last but not least, you need to be familiar with the procedure that you need to go through to obtain the accommodation. You can also ask your coordinator, who should have experience in the field.

Afterwards, be sure to check the distance between the accommodation and the faculty or institution where you will carry out your academic activity. Also, take into consideration the possibility that

some courses may take place in several locations. Check if public transport is available, and if so, inform yourself about the kind of transportation, the costs and the route that you should follow from your place of accommodation to the university, to the city center, which is where you will carry out the majority of your social activities, and, lastly, to a shopping mall or supermarket. Ask for opinions from former students and choose the option that best suits your needs and budget. Due to the fact that they went through the same experience, former students are able to provide you with real-life, practical advice.



❖ **Things you will need during mobility.**

Before leaving for mobility, it is first of all important to have all the documents that are necessary in order for you to leave the country, i.e. the plane ticket and passport. You will also need documents proving that you will study at the university in question, such as the letter of acceptance and the learning agreement.

You must also have a European health card or a private health insurance. It is recommended to also have your national health card. Furthermore, four headshot/ID photos will definitely be useful for you, especially for your student card issued by the host university and for the ESNcard. However, these photos can also be taken upon your arrival in the host country.

Take into account the climate of the country and the city in which you will study, the specific time of year, and the central heating systems of homes in that country. Hence, be sure to pack multiple types of clothing, but don't take more than you would need, because your luggage will certainly be bigger when you will return. Consumables, such as personal hygiene items, can be bought directly from the

host city. Also, if you are under any sort of long-term medical treatment, stock up before leaving for the host country, since medicine doesn't always have the same names or dosages from one country to another. When preparing your luggage, take into account the climates of other countries you plan to visit during your mobility. If you have a camera, you will certainly not regret taking it with you. Lastly, you should have a manual scale, the flag of the country of origin, souvenirs, and non-perishable food specific to the country of origin. Given that you will most likely live in a room or apartment with young people of other nationalities, and also that you will study or work in an intercultural environment, taking these with you will definitely be worth it!

❖ **What can you do to integrate into the host city community?**

As you begin your mobility, you will experience a cultural shock in one way or another. Language, customs, and other cultural aspects characterising the host country may differ considerably from the country of origin. The interaction with locals can be often challenging at first. At the same time, being far from family, friends, and your usual environment may amplify this shock considerably.



There are, however, multiple ways to minimise this cultural shock in order to be able to successfully integrate yourself and make the best out of the experience.

For starters, we recommend being open in communicating with both local students and with other international students. In most cities, you will find student organisations which have the role of creating a friendly context for interaction and supporting international students in the process of getting adjusted. For example, the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) offers its services to international students in over 1000 universities from 42 countries. ESN is the largest student association in Europe and enjoys support from both the European Commission and local higher education institutions. It organises activities centred on various topics, such as: socialization, culture, education, and active citizenship. Events may differ from one context to another, but they often include trips and visits, international dinners, creative workshops, or sports competitions. In addition, ESN offers the BeBuddy Programme, which allows international students to receive a local buddy who is meant to help international students academically, as well as through tips and tricks related to daily life. Importantly, the BeBuddy Programme is an opportunity to make long-term friends.

In addition, during your mobility, you are more than encouraged to get involved in the life of the local community. You can do this by participating in local festivals and celebrations, or by taking part in initiatives designed to address community issues. You can also get to know various traditions by engaging in them alongside locals, when you have the chance. Generally speaking, it is important to manifest your curiosities and explore the local culture. An Erasmus+ mobility is the best opportunity to increase your degree of intercultural understanding, a skill that will prove to be essential for your career and personal life later on.

❖ What facilities do you have as an Erasmus student in the host city / country and how can you enjoy them to the fullest?

According to the Erasmus Student Charter, as an international student, you have the same rights as local students. Therefore, you will benefit from access to all the facilities that the host university has to offer, such as access to libraries, computer rooms, canteen, or gyms. For these as well as other benefits, the host university will issue the student card shortly after the start date of your mobility. You will need it as proof in order to obtain free or reduced transportation. Local contexts can differ considerably, so you should inform yourself about all the discounts that come with your status as a student.

In addition to your student ID, you also have the opportunity to get your own ESNcard. This service is provided by the Erasmus Student Network in an attempt to offer discounts across Europe. Internationally, Erasmus Student Network has partnerships with RyanAir and FlixBus, as well as Hostelling International, which can help you organize your own trips at an affordable price, and Eurosender, a service through which you can send your extra luggage back home at the end of your

mobility, in order to travel as light as possible. Various discounts also exist at the national and local levels, the latter often including cafes, restaurants, places for socializing, or bookstores. To get an ESNcard, you need to contact Erasmus Student Network's local branch in the host city. Afterwards, you need to reach their headquarters, making sure to have a valid ID, a headshot of yourself, and a document proving that you are participating in an Erasmus+ mobility, such as the student ID issued by the host university.

❖ **How can you plan your budget for the whole mobility period?**

You should create your personal budget plan as soon as you reach the host country. Firstly, you should take into account that, at the beginning of the mobility period, you will have slightly higher expenses, compared to the rest of the period. These expenses include adjusting yourself within your new place of accommodation and purchasing necessary household goods. During the entire mobility, you will have to put your personal needs first, assigning them the largest part of your budget. These will include, among others, rent, utilities, food and transportation. After the first month of your mobility, you should be aware of the exact spending for each, thus being able to plan your budget from that point on with a lot more accuracy. If you assign about 80% of your budget to personal needs, you will be able to keep the remainder for trips and other activities. Even before your mobility begins, you should inform yourself about the cost of living in your host city and country. Although this can be a challenge, there are multiple ways to overcome it.



First of all, you need to be informed about all the discounts that you are eligible for as a student. Check the previous sections for some examples of facilities usually available for Erasmus+ students. The most common one is transportation, and a reduced price for it can help you save significant amounts. If your accommodation will be located near the university campus, you will be able to opt for a bicycle, scooter, or even walk. During the welcome meetings organized by the Erasmus + offices and/or local ESN branches, discounts that are specific to the host city will be brought up.

Overall, it will be up to you to become responsible and develop some key habits, adapted to the context. For example, it might be helpful to buy your food from the same place every time, preferably a supermarket, in order to accumulate discount coupons and other benefits over time. You can also reduce costs by buying groceries rather than ready-to-eat meals and learning how to prepare a few simple dishes. University canteens usually offer meals at a lower price compared to locations outside the campus. Another method of reducing costs is to plan your own trips in advance or sign up for ESN trips as soon as they are announced. In both cases, you will pay less than if you wait until the last minute.

❖ **How can you balance academic performance with cultural and social life?**

Attending classes is always important, but even more so when the learning process takes place in a new academic environment, with a grading system and a course structure different from those of the home university. Therefore, at least in the first part of mobility, it will be necessary to dedicate a considerable amount of time to studying, so that you can become familiar with each course you take. You can also count on local students or other international students attending the same courses, as well as your local buddy, if you decide to participate in the BeBuddy program offered by ESN. Throughout your mobility, you should keep in touch with your host university coordinator. If you encounter academic difficulties, do not hesitate to contact him to solve any issues in a timely manner. Feel free to also contact your teachers if you have questions about the content of a course or if you feel the need for extra tutoring.

At the beginning of your mobility, you will certainly have a large flow of activities organized by the host university, ESN or other organizations, to which the time needed to arrange your place of accommodation will be added. However, it is not at all recommended to set your studies aside. Rather, you can organize your schedule from the beginning of the semester, through an app on your smartphone or through any other method that is effective for you. This will help you dedicate time to study in a moderate but constant manner. This will enable you to balance your academic experience with the sociocultural sphere. At the same time, you will prevent the crowding that sometimes occurs at the end of the semester and low performance in exams, which will allow you to successfully complete your mobility.

❖ **How do you organize your return from mobility?**

When mobility is about to end, it is once again time to organise yourself. A few things which you should consider when returning home include looking for a plane ticket, which must be purchased for a suitable date, after exams completion. Make sure you know in advance the end date of the semester. In this regard, take into account the time spent on the way to the airport or to the city of departure. Select the flight that is right for you, taking into consideration that you will spend quite some time moving from one point to another with a heavy luggage. Don't forget to weigh your luggage before you leave and have on you the documents required by the Erasmus+ office of your home university, as well as your ID, and your proof of transportation, i.e. boarding pass, train ticket, etc. Also, with your ESNcard, you benefit from a 10% discount and 20kg check-in luggage free of charge, if you purchase your plane ticket one month before the departure date. Once again, the ESNcard can be obtained from the local ESN branch that is present in your host city.



During your stay, you will gather quite a lot of things, from dishes to clothes and many more, and you may not have enough space in your luggage to take them back home. An option is to donate them to future international students.

❖ **How can you capitalize on your Erasmus experience even after completing it?**

The Erasmus mobility, like any other type of international mobility, offers you a unique experience, helping you develop both personally and professionally. Increased self-confidence and maturity are just a few of the life skills which you are very likely to acquire with your Erasmus mobility, and once you get home, the desire to continue to grow will not stop. Hence, you can continue your Erasmus at home by volunteering within ESN, helping international students in Bucharest, and motivating local youth to seek a mobility abroad.

With such an experience, there is a good chance that you will become a more responsible and proactive citizen, who is better acquainted with the rights and obligations of a European citizen, more aware of European values, which later be able to promote by volunteering and applying for other European programmes. You are also likely to manifest increased interest in multiculturalism, history, equal rights, and more, depending on what you will experience abroad.

Professionally, because such an experience brings great benefits from this point of view, it is advisable to mention your mobility in your personal CV. Due to several factors, such as the fact that you learned and took exams in a foreign language, that you managed on your own in a new country, interacted with people of different nationalities, cultures, and that you got in touch with another type of education, it will be easier for you to get started in the job market.

At the same time, choosing a future study programme in a foreign language or in a foreign country will become a much more attractive option than it might seem now, and it will definitely bring you additional personal and professional advantages.

Testimonials



Liviana Strambeanu

Erasmus+ Mobility for Studies in Bologna, Italy
(2020)

I chose to participate in the Erasmus+ Programme because I wanted to experiment a different academic system and to have access to more resources. Ever since I began my higher education, I had the objective of diversifying my student years academically and socioculturally. Due to the fact that I've always taken great pleasure in travelling and learning foreign languages, I saw the Erasmus+

mobility as an opportunity to improve my communication skills and discover my host country's culture through its language, art and unique sights. I was also motivated by my involvement in the Erasmus Student Network. I joined the organisation before going on mobility, enabling me to constantly interact with international students in Bucharest. However, I sought to also experience internationalisation away from home.

Reflecting on my mobility, I begin to realise the tremendous impact that it had on me. Academically speaking, I participated in interactive courses, which included team projects, simulations and debates, in spite of the fact that everything took place exclusively online because of the pandemic. As a result of my courses, I was able to plan the remainder of my years of studies more precisely and to have a much better picture of the professional career that I envision for myself. I acquired the necessary knowledge for getting started on my bachelor thesis.

During the beginning of my mobility, I accomplished the objective of visiting as many cities that were in close proximity as possible. However, I continued to connect with my host country and its culture even afterwards, through a comprehensive Italian Language course. Aside from significantly improving my Italian, the course also allowed me to delve into the country's history, get a taste of its art and enjoy its music.

Because my mobility took place in the second semester of the 2019-2020 academic year, the conditions were not at all optimal, which added to the challenge that Erasmus+ represents. I acquired some essential life skills, such as managing my time, as well as my budget, and constantly taking care of my physical and mental state, all in the midst of a global pandemic.

As a result of my mobility, I substantially increased my degree of adaptability to new environments and unforeseen situations, developed creative learning methods, improved my interactions with others and became more confident in my own abilities.



Mădălina Nichita

Erasmus+ study mobility in Gdansk, Poland (2017) and Braganca, Portugal (2018)

In the first place I took the decision to apply for an Erasmus+ mobility thanks to my curiosity and desire to have a wide range of academic and personal experiences to help me evolve and discover myself.

Thinking of the 5 months spent in Poland for my first Erasmus mobility, I can say that from an academic point of view it was an experience far beyond my expectations, which aroused my interest in new subjects and based on these subjects I further on chose the master's program. At the same time, I had to adapt to a different teaching style, more interactive. I also learned to work in a team and to think critically. I managed to overcome language barriers, the fear of public speaking and I became much more confident in myself. My mentality has changed a lot and the places I visited will always remain amazing memories to me and the people I met, friends.

The second mobility turned out to be a totally different experience compared to the first one, where I got to learn new things; and the adaptability gained from the first mobility allowed me to focus on the parts of this experience that I could not in the first mobility, such as intercultural dialog and deeper understanding of local culture.

Although different, both experiences included challenges, from an academic, cultural and social point of view, but certainly the emotions and fear were not lacking from either of them. Cultural diversity, differences encountered in the education system and the need to do everything on my own have had a positive impact on my personality and I became more opened to new opportunities, to volunteering (joining ESN right after finishing the first mobility), to international relations, public speaking, a better understanding of multiculturalism and the list could continue until a potential future mobility.



Andreas Wahl-Lupu

Erasmus + mobility for studies in Brescia, Italy (2016)

Erasmus is the most vivid memory of my student life experience. I've met so many challenges, situations and people. I'll share with you a little part of my story. My Erasmus mobility for studies started with a lot of fears and worries, including administrative procedures but also as I had to start a new life. Once arrived at my destination, I felt alone among strangers. I lived in a dorm in the downtown. The

other students in the dorm felt also loneliness, we were all strangers to each other. In the beginning it was difficult get along with them, local and international students. English was not a strength for many of us. Soon the local students arrived in the dorm, the courses and the events were about to start. The best strategy was to try to integrate as much as possible in groups, whether social or academic events. It had become more and more enjoyable. I lived in a city built since antiquity, with a strong medieval atmosphere, rich history, fortified castle and duomo. Nearby are major tourist attractions, the lakes, Como and Garda, Verona, Milan, Venice and Bergamo. I managed to enjoy most of northern Italy, but also to reach Florence.

The university seemed to be somehow detached from the future, as I was used only to Romanian academic experiences. There were reading rooms, university libraries all over the city. The facilities for the students were very well organized. I got so much helped by the local students, we shared notes with other Erasmus colleagues, teachers helped us to understand their courses. The fact that I lived in the dormitory made it easier academically but also for my social life.

The people, the cultural diversity that I met there, freed me from some lessons collected from childhood, as I gained multicultural experience. I am the happiest because I have managed to empathize with other people and I opened to a new me. I came back to Romania a stronger person, but gentler with the others and with me. After 4 years, my story continues. Once Erasmus, always Erasmus.