
Departure orientation

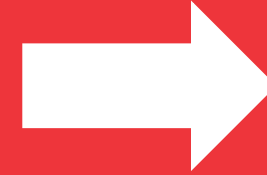
For students going abroad

What we'll cover today:

- Health care (YTHS)
- Pre-departure checklist
- Academic preparation
- Money Matters
 - Student financial aid
 - Exchange grants
 - Other
- Travel arrangements
 - Residence permits, visas
 - Insurances
- Support & safety
 - Mental wellbeing
 - Risk management
 - IT-security
- Life abroad
- After exchange

Checklists for outgoing students

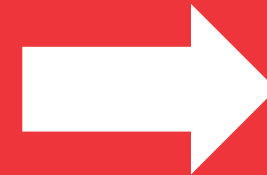
<https://www.aalto.fi/en/other-studies/exchange-studies>



Before the exchange

A check list for outgoing students.

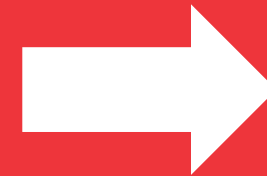
Other studies



During the exchange

Important things during the exchange.

Other studies



After the exchange

To do list for exchange students returning to Finland.

Other studies

What next in the process?

**Aalto
application**

**Selection as
Aalto's applicant
to an exchange
destination.**

Nomination

**Aalto
nominates
students as
Aalto's
applicants to
the partner
university.**

**Application
to
destination
university**

**Students apply
to the
exchange
destination
according to
partner
university
instructions.**

Acceptance

**Destination
university
sends the
acceptance
email/letter**

**Departure
preparations**

**Starting the
practical
arrangements.**



Aalto-yliopisto
Aalto-universitetet
Aalto University



Before the exchange

Academic preparation

- Erasmus+: Finalize Learning Agreement / Online Learning Agreement OLA
 - Erasmus+ students: OLA is created in Aalto's exchange portal Moveon
→ your exchange coordinator will send the instructions via email
- Aim: 30 ECTS (bachelor) or 24 ECTS (master) per semester
- Note that your exchange university/ visa application might require a certain minimum amount of studies
- Individual study arrangements
 - Ask for an English version of your certificate for individual study arrangements (Henkilökohtaisten opintojärjestelyiden suositus) from the contact person at your school.
 - Find out from the destination university exchange coordinator possibilities for individual arrangements.
- Enrollment logistics
 - Registration windows: learn the system (bidding, waitlists, add/drop deadlines).
 - Timetables: check for clashes across campuses; plan transit times.
 - Calendars: verify term start/end, exam period, holidays; avoid return flights before final exams.
 - Attendance policies: some institutions have strict attendance

Pre-departure checklist

- ☐ Keep your contact info in Sisu updated!
- ☐ Register as attending during your exchange
- ☐ Apply for the student financial aid from Kela!
 - ☐ <https://www.kela.fi/financial-aid-for-students-if-you-study-abroad>
- ☐ Notification of move: <https://dvv.fi/muutto>
 - You can make the notification at the same time to both Digital and Population Data Services Agency (DVV / Digi- ja väestötietovirasto) and Posti
 - Forward your mail e.g. to your parents address
- ☐ TECH students: inform your home school exchange coordinator if you change your Aalto school
- ☐ Check that you have all documents required by your host university & some extra passport-size photos



Tip: Make digital + printed copies of all important documents

Travel arrangements

- Read travel reports in the destination database for the best tips
- Reserve tickets after you have received the acceptance information from the host university and the exchange is confirmed (especially ARTS)
- Choose tickets with cancellation or change policy
- Pack essentials in your hand luggage

Visas and residence permits

- Information
 - Host university gives instructions about residence permits/visas
 - host country's embassy/consulate/immigration official's website
- Apply once you receive the official acceptance letter & other possible necessary documents from the host university.
- Often your passport needs to be valid for 6 months *after your exchange has ended*.

Nordic citizens to other Nordic countries

- Passport / ID

EU-citizens to other EU-countries

- Registration in the host country

Other nationalities / destinations

- Usually residence permit/ student visa is required
- Applied beforehand in the destination country's embassy – Apply in time!
- Please note that in some cases visas can be very expensive (e.g. USA ~ 500eur, Australia ~ over 1000eur)

Accommodation

- Searching for housing is your responsibility.
- Check host university's instructions on housing.
- May be possible to apply for student housing through the university.
- When renting from the private sector, check what is included in the rent and read the agreement carefully! Consider booking a temporary accommodation for the first days/weeks (hostel, Airbnb) and see apartments in person.
- Note: Usually fixed-term leases cannot be terminated earlier than the end date. You might need to pay rent for the whole duration.
- Housing situation is challenging in many places. Get to know the situation in your destination and **beware of scams!**
<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/housing-scams-and-how-to-spot-them/>
- If you are planning to lease your own apartment during your absence, check the instructions from your landlord.
- AYY and HOAS tenants can lease their apartments according to the instructions:
 - AYY: <https://ayyasunnot.fi/en/for-residents/changes-during-tenancy/>
 - HOAS: <https://hoas.fi/en/tenants/payments/secondary-leasing/>
- You can search for a tenant for example by posting an advertisement on Aalto Marketplace / Housing: <https://aalto.sharetribe.com/?category=tilat>
- Make sure your tenant takes care of their duties (home insurance etc.)
- Some destinations: rent may be asked to be paid in total for the whole time period at the beginning of the exchange



Money matters

- Within SEPA area usually enough if you have a bank account in another SEPA-country
- Revolut
- Check your bank cards: validity period, withdrawal limits, security limits, countries of use
- Recommendation: have two cards e.g. debit card & credit card, keep them in separate places
- **Taxation:** Taxation of grants: you will have to pay tax, if the total grant income you received from public and private sources in 2025 is more than 26 671.92€ after the deduction of expenses
- See vero.fi for up-to-date information

Student financial aid

- Study grant (opintoraha) is the same as in Finland
- Housing supplement (asumislisä) (210 € / kk)
- Student loan (1000 € / kk)
- Apply: www.kela.fi
- If needed e.g. for visa application, you can ask Kela for a financial aid certificate in English.



Aalto University exchange grants

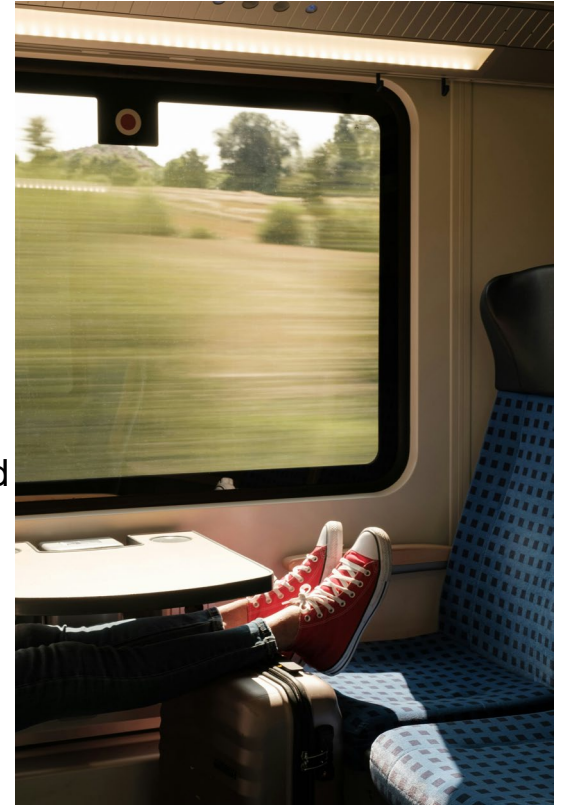
- You do not need to apply, it has been granted along with the exchange place.
- Instructions sent by your own Aalto school
- Does not affect the student aid or taxation
- Payment of exchange grants:
 - 2nd phase/grant form has to be returned (banking information!)
 - 1. installment is paid usually around Aug-Sept (autumn semester exchanges) and Dec-Jan (spring semester exchanges)
 - Requirement for the grant: physical mobility in the destination country (virtual exchanges are not eligible)
- Aalto exchange grant: 2000 € / semester or 3500€ / full academic year for bilateral destinations
- Erasmus+ grant for studies
 - Individual amount
 - The grant sum is determined by the destination country, distance from Finland, and the exact duration.
 - Final grant sum can be calculated after the completion of your exchange.
- Erasmus+ program additional support: green travel, fewer opportunities and inclusion support

Your whole scholarship is dependent on you fulfilling ALL the requirements – you need to return mandatory documents!

Travel green!

- Erasmus+ Green Travel Support

- Aiming to minimize environmental impact of travel
- Erasmus+ students can get additional support for green travel:
- Max. 6 additional travel days + travel grant based on the distance
- Eligibility
 - Either the outbound or inbound trip is done fully with green means of transport.
 - Majority of the overall kilometers (outbound + inbound trip) are traveled with lower emission means of transport.
 - Green travel: train, shared ride, bike or bus. Starting from 2026/27: ferry travel can be considered green mobility if it is combined with low-emission modes of transport.
 - Route should be as direct as possible from starting point to destination (zigzagging around Europe would not be accepted)
- More information: <https://www.aalto.fi/en/other-studies/erasmus-scholarships>
- The green travel support is paid along with the 2. grant instalment after the exchange



ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME IS FOR ALL

Special needs (e.g. disability or learning difficulty) do not have to be a barrier for internationalization. If you have special needs, you might be entitled to fewer opportunities or inclusion support for your exchange. More information:

<https://www.aalto.fi/en/other-studies/accessible-exchange-studies>

Fixed support (fewer opportunities top-up)

- Not based on actual costs
- For students who have families, are family carers, have disabilities, a severe or chronic health condition, or have received international protection.
- Student fills a declaration form and sends it to the exchange coordinator.
- Fixed amount 250 eur/month



Special needs and inclusion grant

- Based on actual costs
- The student and the coordinator at their school will fill in their specific parts to the same application form.
- Aalto sends the application to the National Agency of Education (Opetushallitus).
- The minimum support amount is 200 euros.



Other funding

- Start applying as soon as possible. Some organisations issue grants also during the exchange, but usually not afterwards.
- The application can usually be supplemented by sending the admission letter afterwards (check this when you apply for the grants)
- Tips:
 - Keep an open mind. You may also be able to apply for grants from other organisations than those related to your study field.
 - SYL grants database
 - Study-related organisations
 - AYY
 - Foundations, etc. Tekniikan edistämmissäätiö.
 - More information: <https://www.aalto.fi/en/other-studies/funding-for-exchange-studies>
 - Google 😊

Insurances

- Students are not insured by Aalto during exchange
- Have your own travel insurance – this is not the place to save money
- Check the insurance provider's policy on crisis coverage
- If your exchange is later cancelled due to a pandemic/other crisis, Aalto cannot provide financial support for travelling, living or moving costs
- Some host universities (especially in AUS and the USA) have mandatory, sometimes costly, insurance. Check the coverage and what else you will need.
- Aalto's statutory student insurance covers study-related accidents during practical assignments (e.g., studios, workshops, labs, field practice), not during lectures or general time on campus <https://www.aalto.fi/en/support-for-studying/statutory-insurance-for-students>
- Travel insurance
 - for the whole duration of your exchange!
 - Travel insurance may be part of your home insurance, check.
 - Compare different insurance companies, check what is covered.
 - A continuous insurance might be less expensive (check the duration period)
 - For some destinations, you might need a certificate of your insurance coverage. Ask for a certificate in English from your insurance company.

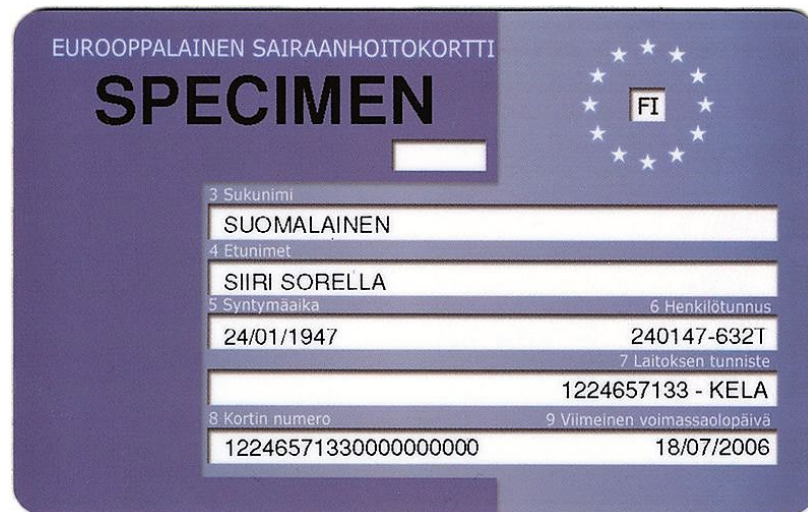
Health insurance

EU-citizen: destinations in EU, Norway, Iceland, UK, or Switzerland:

- European Health Insurance card
- Apply free of charge: www.kela.fi
- Public health care with same costs as locals
- Own travel insurance to complement this

Other countries:

- Own travel insurance



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Safety and support

Remember, whether or not you face mental health challenges, an exchange can stir up different emotions—joy, self-confidence and a sense of achievement, but also nervousness, fear, and uncertainty.

→ This is all part of the experience and is precisely what makes the exchange so memorable!

Mental wellbeing

- Mental health challenges cannot be left behind at home → may even worsen, as an exchange requires the ability to tolerate uncertainty.
- Before exchange
 - Be realistic about your expectations: the beginning may feel lonely or confusing, but over time you will settle down to the daily life.
 - Build a support network: have regular contact with family and friends (e.g., weekly calls).
 - Foundations of daily life: think about in advance how you will balance your everyday life (sleep, exercise, diet, hobbies) — what can you take with you? How will the new environment support your mental well-being?
- During exchange – tools for daily life
 - Routines: regular sleep, meals, daily time outdoors/physical activity, and exposure to light
 - Recovery time: reserve time for rest and moments for using your native language, as well as a weekly check-in with yourself.
 - Self-compassion: remember that culture shock, homesickness, and performance pressure/anxiety are common. Progress is not linear.
- When to seek help
 - Sleep is disrupted for weeks, mood is low most days, or you are unable to manage daily life.
 - Recurrent panic symptoms or substance use is getting out of control.
 - Thoughts of self-harm or intense feelings of hopelessness.
 - Seek help immediately in these cases: call the local emergency number (112 in the EU) or go to an emergency clinic.

Stay safe - Risk management

- Consider a backup credit card and phone
- Save an ICE (in case of emergency) contact on your phone so helpers can access it even when locked (see <https://yle.fi/aihe/a/20-10004939> (in Finnish))
- Learn local traffic rules and local laws (public intoxication, alcohol, drugs), unsafe areas, pickpockets are common
- Pay attention to local culture and customs, dress code
- Follow the political situation, and do not join demonstrations
- If you travel during exchange, make sure someone knows your itinerary and return time
- Know the emergency number (112 across Europe)

Read Ministry of Foreign
Affairs travel advisory
(matkustustiedotteet):
<https://um.fi/matkustaminen>

Make a travel registration:

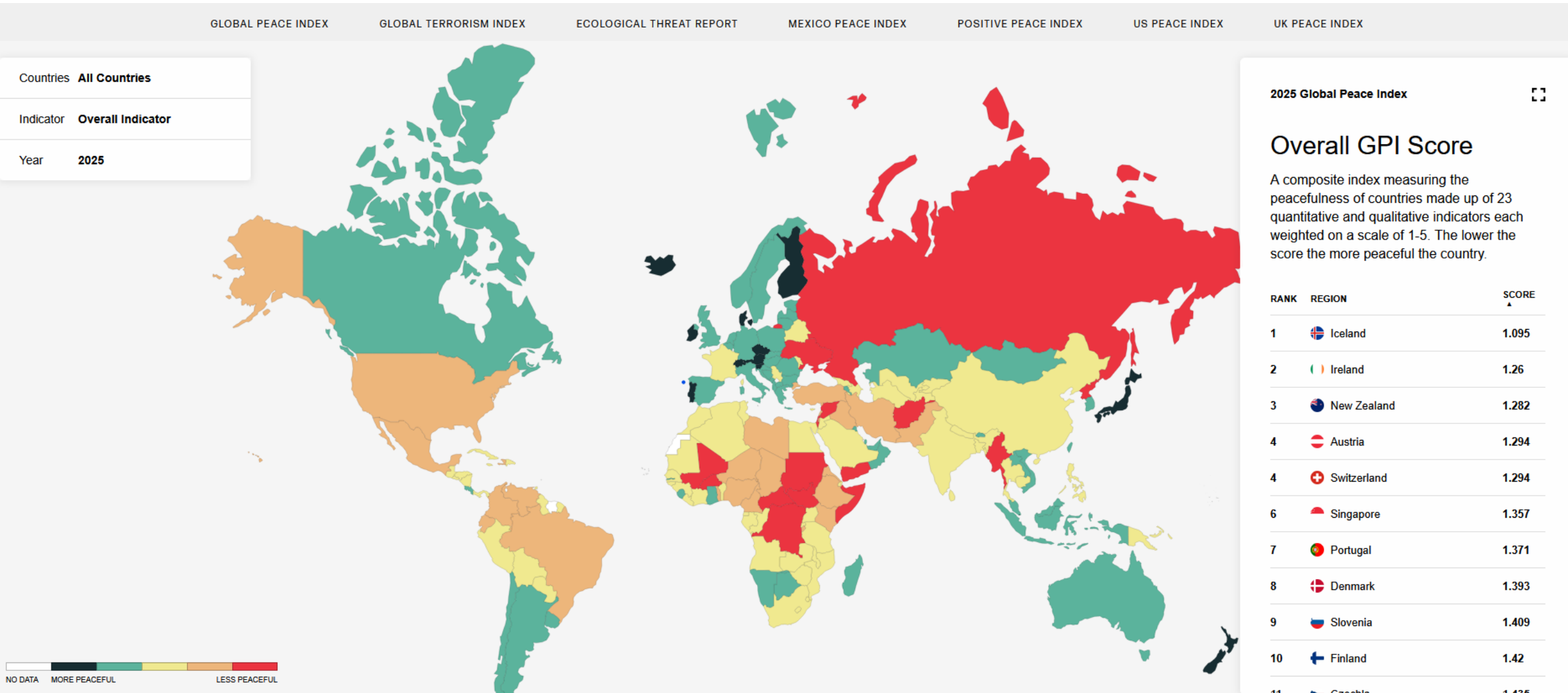
- Ministry webpages or
- Text message

<https://um.fi/matkustusilmoitus>

Crisis situation

- Follow the instructions of the local officials.
- Ask locals and the Finnish Embassy (or another Nordic) for advise.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland has a 24/7 service line (+358 9 160 55555, email: paivystys.um@gov.fi).
- Information about crisis situations is provided in the travel advisory, the ministry and embassy webpages and social media channels.
- In crisis situations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can also contact those who have made the travel registration directly.

Area specific safety



2025 Global Peace Index

Overall GPI Score

A composite index measuring the peacefulness of countries made up of 23 quantitative and qualitative indicators each weighted on a scale of 1-5. The lower the score the more peaceful the country.

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Iceland	1.095
2	Ireland	1.26
3	New Zealand	1.282
4	Austria	1.294
4	Switzerland	1.294
6	Singapore	1.357
7	Portugal	1.371
8	Denmark	1.393
9	Slovenia	1.409
10	Finland	1.42
11	Czechia	1.435

IT security

Information Security training for students in MyCourses:

<https://www.aalto.fi/en/information-security-management-systemisms/students-information-security-training>

- Check that all your programmes (including anti-malware, apps etc) are up to date
- Make backups from important files before you travel (to e.g. an external drive that you will not take with you)
- Take only necessary devices with you
- Be careful where you keep your devices, do not leave them unattended in public spaces
- Encrypt the device's hard disk/mass storage in case the device is stolen
- Remember that you can use the Aalto VPN <https://www.aalto.fi/en/services/establishing-a-remote-connection-vpn-to-an-aalto-network>
 - In certain countries the authorities can block, monitor and record data traffic
- You can also use the Virtual Desktop (VDI): <https://www.aalto.fi/en/services/vdiaaltofi-how-to-use-aalto-virtual-desktop-infrastructure>

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During exchange

Goals of exchange studies at Aalto

- ✓ **Personal growth** – including academic and ethical growth
- ✓ **Developing** intercultural and international **competencies**
- ✓ Being **ready for a career** in the increasingly international working life
- ✓ **Fluency** in a foreign language.



Studies

- Exchange studies are planned before the exchange.
- If challenges to find enough courses (30 ECTS / 24 ECTS), contact your Aalto exchange coordinator!
- Erasmus+ Online Learning Agreement (OLA)
 - Erasmus+ students make a digital study plan called OLA. The instructions are sent to all Erasmus students before the exchange. Create the OLA at the latest when your exchange semester is starting.
 - Possible course changes need to be made and approved also in the OLA.
- Keep your Sisu HOPS/PSP up-to-date.
- **Immerse yourself in the new environment and your studies at the new university during your exchange!** Even if remote courses at Aalto would be possible, focus on your studies in the host country.

HOX!

- Be prepared to encounter different ways of learning and teaching. Oral exams and mandatory attendance might not be what you are used to at Aalto!
- Exchange students are expected to stay until the final exams.
- However, retaking exams might not be possible during the exchange semester.

Representing Aalto

You have an important role!

- Exchange agreements are based on reciprocity. A student arriving at Aalto has opened the door for you to their own university.
- Our marketing campaigns can only do so much, potential applicants would rather hear from another student why it is worth coming to Aalto on exchange.



Your experience is enough

- You do not need to know about the application processes or all of Aalto's programmes.
- Share **your experience!** Tell about your studies, Finland, and the vibrant student culture in Otaniemi!
- Many universities organize exchange fairs and other international events. Seize the opportunity to showcase Aalto if you have a chance. These events are a great way to step outside your own "exchange student bubble" and connect with local students.
- You can ask for Aalto's promotional materials from your exchange coordinator if needed.

Should I pull the emergency brake?

- Don't make hasty decisions to cut your exchange short unless your health or another serious situation requires it.
- Pause and assess the situation. Contact the exchange coordinator at Aalto and at your host university. Let's find solutions together!
- The exchange grant depends on the duration of the exchange and the number of credits completed. Changes may therefore affect the grant amount.
- Struggling with your studies? Check out the Starting Point of Wellbeing, where you can find experts, online materials, and other support resources.

<https://www.aalto.fi/en/study-at-aalto/starting-point-of-wellbeing>





After the exchange

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All good things come to an end...

- Practicalities (termination of your lease, closing local bank account, phone plan if needed etc.)
- Save course descriptions for the credit transfer.
- Erasmus+ student: Ask your host university to sign your Letter of Confirmation (LoC) and check that your Online Learning Agreement (OLA) is in order.
- Apply for credit transfer in Sisu as soon as you receive your transcript!
- Towards the end of your exchange, you will receive after exchange instructions from your own school. The instructions are also available in the Student Guide.

Documents to return:

- After exchange -form
- Transcript from the host university
- Aalto transcript (including transferred credits)
- Exchange report

In addition, Erasmus+ students return:

- Online learning agreement (OLA)
- Letter of Confirmation (LoC)
- Answer the EU Survey

Note! To meet the grant requirements, you must submit the After exchange –form and attachments.

The aim is 30 ECTS for BSc students and 24 ECTS for MSc students. If you fall significantly short of the aim, it may affect the grant (the 2nd installment might not be paid, or you might need to return part of the grant).

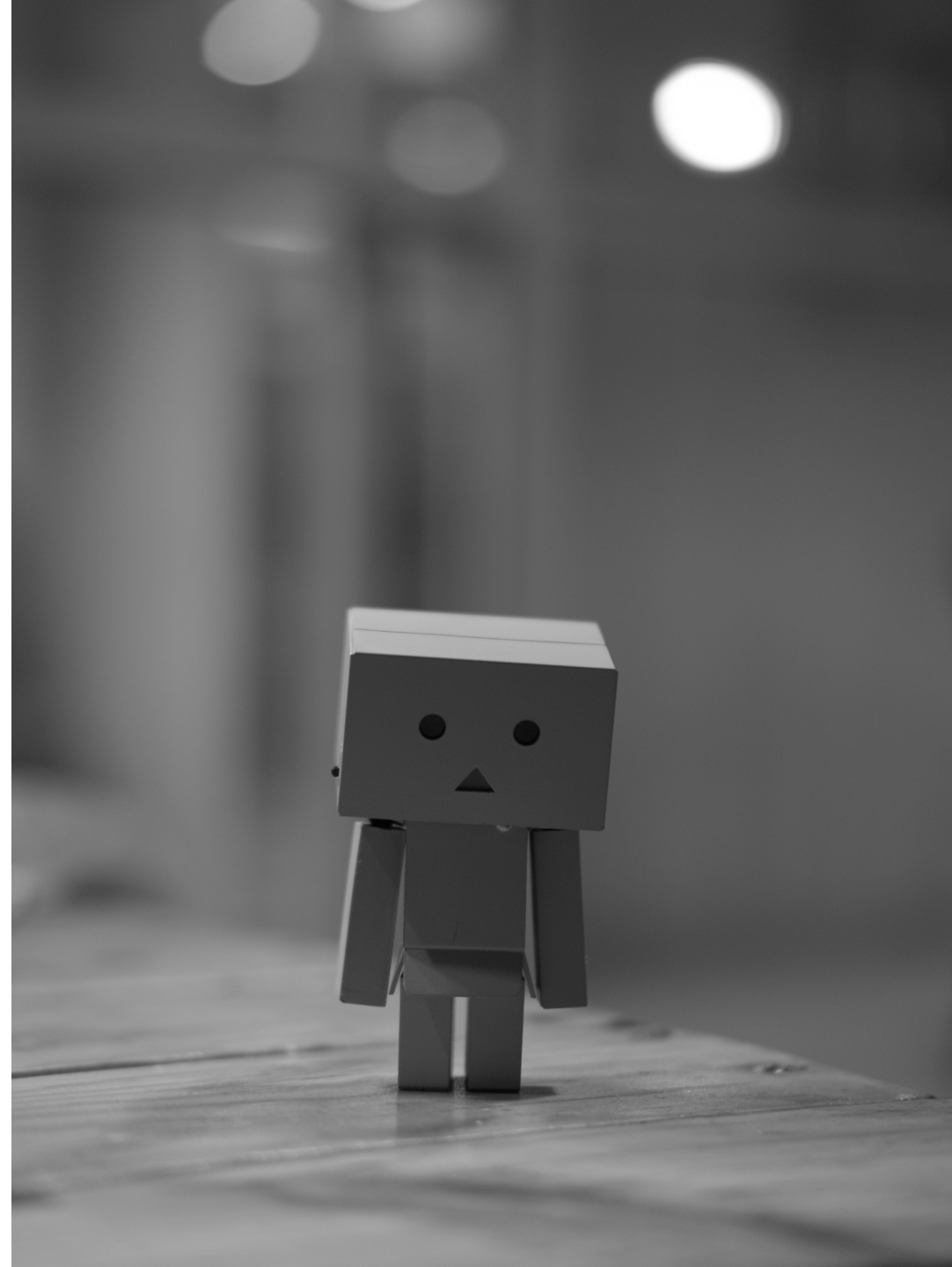
Credits and scholarship

BIZ students: If you need to supplement the international study minor with Aalto courses, the Aalto courses must be first approved before the second part of your scholarship can be paid.

Supplementing may slow down the scholarship payment process.

Feelings upon returning

- **Reverse culture shock**
- Can be even more intense than the culture shock experienced at the beginning of the exchange.
- You can take part in return orientation!
Organized in autumn and spring.



Contact information

ARTS: outgoing-arts@aalto.fi

BIZ: outgoing-biz@aalto.fi

CHEM: outgoing-chem@aalto.fi

ELEC: outgoing-elec@aalto.fi

ENG: outgoing-eng@aalto.fi

SCI: outgoing-sci@aalto.fi

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Part 2 of the orientation (Tuesday 27 October at 16-17) is canceled!

**NO country groups for these
today**

***(3 or less than 3 students
for spring 2027)***

A!

Country	Students
Colombia	3
Egypt	1
Greece	1
Hungary	1
Indonesia	1
Morocco	1
New Zealand	2
Peru	3
Poland	1
Slovenia	2
South Africa	2

Country groups today 20.10.

Country	Students
Argentina	9
Australia	19
Austria	28
Belgium	7
Brazil	6
Canada	10
Chile	6
China	21
Czech Republic	14
Denmark	8
France	23
Germany	23
Ireland	5
Italy	45

Country	Students
Japan	22
Korea, Republic of	16
Mexico	9
Netherlands	15
Norway	12
Portugal	34
Singapore	54
Spain	30
Sweden	14
Switzerland	16
Taiwan	11
Thailand	15
United Kingdom	5
United States	27

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Country	Students	
Colombia	3	ENG, BIZ
Egypt	1	BIZ
Greece	1	ENG
Hungary	1	BIZ
Indonesia	1	CHEM
Morocco	1	BIZ
New Zealand	2	BIZ, ARTS
Peru	3	BIZ
Poland	1	BIZ
Slovenia	2	BIZ
South Africa	2	BIZ

Country	Students		Country	Students	
Argentina	9	ENG, BIZ, SCI	Japan	22	SCI, BIZ, ELEC, ARTS
			Korea, Republic of	16	BIZ, SCI, ARTS, ELEC, CHEM, ENG
Australia	19	BIZ, ARTS, SCI			
Austria	28	BIZ, CHEM, ELEC, SCI, ENG, CHEM	Mexico	9	BIZ, ENG, ELEC
			Netherlands	15	ARTS, BIZ, ELEC, SCI, ENG
Belgium	7	ARTS, BIZ, SCI	Norway	12	SCI, BIZ, ENG, CHEM, ELEC
Brazil	6	BIZ	Portugal	34	ELEC, ENG, SCI, BIZ, CHEM
Canada	10	BIZ	Singapore	54	ELEC, ENG, SCI, BIZ, CHEM
Chile	6	BIZ, ELEC			
China	21	BIZ, ARTS, CHEM, SCI, ENG, ELEC	Spain	30	BIZ, CHEM, ENG, SCI
Czech Republic	14	ELEC, CHEM, ARTS, BIZ, SCI, ENG	Sweden	14	ARTS, SCI, BIZ, ENG, ELEC, CHEM
			Switzerland	16	BIZ, SCI, ARTS, CHEM
Denmark	8	SCI, ENG, CHEM, ARTS, ELEC, BIZ			
			Taiwan	11	CHEM, ENG, SCI, BIZ,
France	23	ARTS, BIZ, SCI, ENG, CHEM, ELEC			
			Thailand	15	BIZ, CHEM, ELEC, ENG, SCI
Germany	23	ARTS, BIZ, SCI, ENG, CHEM, ELEC	United Kingdom	5	BIZ, ENG
Ireland	5	SCI, CHEM, BIZ	United States	27	BIZ, ENG
Italy	45	ELEC, CHEM, ARTS, BIZ, SCI, ENG			

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Kiitos
aalto.fi