



## **Guidelines for students who wish to raise concerns about their Erasmus Mundus experience**

Have you applied for an Erasmus Mundus EM scholarship?  
Are you an EM scholarship/ fellowship grant holder already?

The following guidelines are designed to help you if you are facing difficulties with:

- A. the way your application for an Erasmus Mundus scholarship has been dealt with, or
- B. the way your Erasmus Mundus study period and/or scholarship grant is being managed

### **A. You consider that your scholarship application has not been properly treated by the consortium / partnership**

Each Erasmus Mundus Action 1 consortium or Action 2 partnership is obliged to follow very strict guidelines for the implementation of its scholarship application and selection procedures. These guidelines are published on the Agency's website:

- [For EM Action 1 Master courses](#)
- [For EM Action 1 Doctoral programmes:](#)
- [For EM Action 2 Partnerships](#)

Under these requirements each consortium/partnership must set up and publish an appeal procedure for their scholarship application and selection process. As a result, applicant students should therefore use this procedure in order to appeal against a decision taken by the consortium/partnership towards their application.

This appeal procedure can only come into play if a candidate feels that the consortium/partnership has not handled his/her own application in line with the scholarship application and selection process as described on their website and as presented to the Agency. In other words, the appeal cannot concern the decision itself, (usually negative) but only an alleged error made in the process that has resulted in the contested decision.

If such an error can be demonstrated the Agency will assess the impact of this error on the final decision taken by the consortium/partnership and, if applicable, support the student's appeal with the consortium. It should be noted though that as autonomous bodies, universities are sole responsible for their final decision to select and enrol a student into their study programme. As a result, students should realize that although the Agency can support their request, it does not have the power to impose a particular resolution to an issue.

## **B. You have concerns about your study period.**

*You have been awarded an Erasmus Mundus scholarship*

This implies that, following a very tough selection process, your academic and linguistic credentials, as well as your motivation and commitment to participate in this exclusive study programme have been recognised and acknowledged by the European and non-European universities in charge of organising your study period.

Universities which manage an Erasmus Mundus Action 1 Joint Programme or Action 2 Partnership have also gone through a very severe selection process aiming at ensuring that they will provide the best academic provisions and the best services to the Erasmus Mundus scholarship holders as well as to any other students enrolled in their study programme.

The selection criteria applied to these universities cover the quality of their academic offer, the level of integration and coordination among the partner universities, as well as the quality of the services provided to students during the period these students will be hosted in their premises.

In order to ensure these universities maintain the high level of standards promised in their grant application, Action 1 Joint Programmes and Action 2 Partnerships are monitored by the Executive Agency (EACEA) during their entire life cycle through regular reporting, monitoring visits, and contacts with the coordinators by e-mail and phone and/or during their visits to the Agency.

These monitoring activities have shown that the implementation of an Erasmus Mundus scholarship project is often much more complex than initially foreseen. Despite their best efforts and commitment, the participating universities are confronted on the one hand with institutional and/or national constraints difficult to adapt to the EM requirements, and on the other hand with a diversity of needs and expectations expressed by students with very different academic, linguistic or cultural backgrounds.

This is the reason why we invite you to consider our Erasmus Mundus study period as a journey you will undertake jointly, not only with your fellow students but also with the host university staff in charge of your studies and your stay. As has been the case within Europe for the ERASMUS Programme, international mobility in the context of Erasmus Mundus has to be seen as a collective experience that aims not only at providing direct benefits for the individuals involved, but also to contribute in strengthening the capacity of participating universities to manage as efficiently as possible their international mobility for the benefit of future generations of mobile students.

This can only be achieved through mutual respect between the parties concerned, joint responsibility and full transparency in their rights and in obligations, as well as in difficulties and concerns they may be facing during this learning experience.

This being said, it may occur that despite of this understanding of your Erasmus Mundus experience, you are not satisfied by the answers or the support given by your Erasmus Mundus host university in addressing your needs and concerns.

The purpose of these short guidelines is to help you following the most appropriate and efficient way for having your concerns or complaint heard and addressed by the appropriate body(/ies).

### **Your concerns**

As a student interested in or participating in an Erasmus Mundus study period, you may raise particular concerns, either:

- During your EM study period
- After your EM study period.

In either case, you should bear in mind that **the European Commission or the Executive Agency has no contractual relations with the individual students benefitting from the programme.**

It is through the grant agreements signed with consortium or partnership of universities implementing the scholarship schemes that the Agency ensures that the objectives of the Erasmus Mundus programme as well as its implementation requirements are respected by the universities concerned.

As a result, it will be through these grant agreements with the universities responsible that the Agency will be able to act and, if justified, support your valid request against the partnership/consortium.

We advise the following steps to resolve your concerns:

### **Step 1. Check the student agreement / doctoral candidate agreement**

The student / doctoral candidate agreement constitutes **the mandatory cornerstone for a common understanding between the student/doctoral candidate and their hosting universities for all aspects related to the Erasmus Mundus study period.**

The agreement and its relevant annexes (e.g. the course programme or the internal code of conduct) must provide a comprehensive overview of the rights and obligations of both parties regarding the academic, administrative, and financial conditions under which their Erasmus Mundus experience will be organised, as well as the expected conduct of both parties.

In this context, the comprehensiveness of the document and its acceptance by both parties through their joint signature constitutes an essential element for the success of an Erasmus Mundus study period.

Erasmus Mundus students/doctoral candidates should know that

- The respective agreement is a public document that should be available on the website of the Erasmus Mundus Action 1 Joint Programme or Action 2 Partnership. If it is not available, students should be provided with a copy of it prior to enrolment in their Erasmus Mundus host university;
- Prior to signing the agreement, they can (/should) ask for clarifications if particular aspects of their future study period are not covered at all or precisely enough;
- When they have signed the agreement they are bound to respect the elements it contains, as is their host university.

N.B. The academic environment is a world in constant evolution in order to remain as close as possible to the needs of the students as well as of the professional sector. As a result, it is important that you look at your student /doctoral candidate agreement with some flexibility in order to allow your host university to adapt its academic and/or administrative offer to this evolving environment.

This being said, if the obligations imposed on the students and doctoral candidates or their rights have been substantially altered from those under the original agreement, they are entitled to ask either for a formal revision of the agreement or for the respect of what had been agreed.

## Step 2. Dialogue

The best way, and in any circumstances the first way to obtain a revision or an enforcement of the student / doctoral candidate agreement is through dialogue within the appropriate authorities within the host university and within the consortium or partnership in charge of organising the study programme.

In order to do so you should:

- Contact the course representative of your hosting institution. There should be a forum or system in place that allows for student feedback of this sort.
- If necessary, contact the project coordinator.
- For students and doctoral candidates under joint programmes (Action 1): discuss the issue with the student [representative](#) on your course. This representative may have additional information from similar cases in the past and/or may wish to refer an issue to the [EMA<sup>1</sup> Course Quality Advisory Board](#).
- Use your case to improve the student agreement for future generations of EM students.

## Step 3. A formal complaint procedure within your consortium/partnership

If after this dialogue (which should preferably result in summary minutes circulated among the parties concerned) you still consider that your concern has not been properly addressed, you may choose to start a complaint formal procedure within the consortium or partnership in charge of the mobility project.

In order to do so you should

- Ask for the formal complaint procedure that applies within your consortium/partnership or your host university.
- Follow the required steps.
- If consider it appropriate, copy the [Agency](#) and/or EMA into your correspondence with the consortium.
- Ensure you receive an acknowledgement of receipt with the timing for an answer.

With the copy of your appeal to the partnership, consortium or host university, the Agency will be in a position to:

- assess the elements on which you have decided to launch your complaint;
- inform you personally about the result of this assessment;
- if applicable, support your complaint vis-à-vis the consortium / partnership / host university.

## Step 4. Scope for Agency intervention

The Agency can assess whether the situation or practice that you have described goes against the objectives or requirements of the Erasmus Mundus programme as a whole or the commitments taken by the applicant consortium / partnership when submitting in its grant application selected and funded by the Agency.

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<sup>1</sup> EMA: Erasmus Munds Students and Alumni Association

If this is the case, it may invite the coordinator to take corrective action, depending on the type of issue.

**The Agency may intervene if:**

- Erasmus Mundus requirements have not been respected (such as payment of scholarship payment, insurance, degree recognition issues).
- Some of the elements contained in the official information provided by the consortium/partnership provided to the student have not been respected (this applies particularly to the student/doctoral candidate agreement and its annexes, as well as the information provided on the website of the project).

If the Agency confirms that these requirements or commitments have not been respected, it may request the consortium to address the issue.

**The Agency may not intervene in cases of:**

- Assessment of academic performance and supervision.
- Issues relating to the internal regulations of the higher education institution(s) in question.
- National regulations (such as visa requirements, residence permits).

In these cases, the decision by the consortium has to be accepted.