

Dear student,

The current outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19), first reported in China, affects the exchange studies of students of the University of Turku. You receive this message since you are currently conducting exchange studies abroad or about to do so.

[If you are currently on exchange abroad:](#)

The decision to stay in your host country or to return to Finland is for the student to make. Please note, however, that the Finnish Government now advises that Finnish tourists abroad return to Finland immediately. Please see the Government's guidelines here:

https://valtioneuvosto.fi/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/10616/hallitus-totesi-suomen-olevan-poikkeusoloissa-koronavirustilanteen-vuoksi?_101_INSTANCE_LZ3RQQ4vvWXR_languageId=en_US

If you do decide to stay in your host country, make sure to submit a travel notification to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland at

https://matkustusilmoitus.fi/public_html?command=browse&lang=en

Latest updates on COVID-19 by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare can be found at

<https://thl.fi/en/web/infectious-diseases/what-s-new/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-updates>

Please follow actively the updates from governmental and health authorities as well as any updates from the University of Turku and your host university.

[Discontinuing an Erasmus+, Nordplus or a FIRST+ exchange](#)

If you do decide to discontinue your exchange studies and return to Finland, please inform your host university and us by email to outgoing@utu.fi.

Please follow our after exchange procedure and complete all the required documentation as well as possible: <https://intranet.utu.fi/index/after-exchange/Pages/default.aspx>. The document stating your exchange period dates (Letter of Confirmation) is the most important one.

It may be possible for you to keep the Erasmus+, FIRST+ or Nordplus grant that has already been paid to you on the basis of force majeure treatment. We will fill in a force majeure form on your behalf and send it to the Finnish National Agency for Education for further processing. As an attachment to the form, we will need you to inform us the exact duration of your exchange and the travel and accommodation expenses related to your exchange. You do not need to send any receipts but please upload your Letter of Confirmation to SoleMove. Please see:

<https://www.oph.fi/en/news/2020/impacts-coronavirus-erasmus-and-european-solidarity-corps-programmes>

If needed, please approach your travel insurance company for reimbursements. If they do not reimburse you, ask for a decision on this. If the company is unable to provide you with such a decision, please let us know and we will inform the Finnish National Agency for Education. A missing decision of a denied reimbursement will not impede the force majeure treatment of your grant.

[Discontinuing a bilateral or a free mover exchange](#)

If you decide to discontinue your exchange studies and return to Finland, please inform your host university and us by email to outgoing@utu.fi. Please follow our after exchange procedure and complete all the required documentation as well as possible: <https://intranet.utu.fi/index/after-exchange/Pages/default.aspx>.

If you are currently studying abroad via a bilateral agreement or as a free mover, you may keep the grant that has been paid to you on the basis of force majeure treatment. If needed, please approach your travel insure company for reimbursements.

[Discontinued exchange and living in Finland](#)

If you decide to discontinue your exchange and return to Finland without an apartment, you can apply for one from the Student Village Foundation (TYS). Please note that upon your return to Finland, you will need to place yourself in quarantine-like conditions for 14 consecutive days. If you apply an apartment from TYS, please apply for an apartment without shared facilities. TYS will offer apartments as applications come in and will try to prioritize those who are without an apartment owing to a discontinued exchange. Please inform them of your situation in your application.

[The effect of a discontinued exchange on student financial aid](#)

Kela has notified the following: “The provisions regarding student financial aid make it possible to take into account the exceptional situation caused by the corona virus in the maximum periods of payment of student financial aid and when monitoring sufficient study progress. Information about other effects will be provided later.”

If you have further questions on the matter, please contact Kela directly.

[If you are about to embark on an exchange semester \(Spring Semester 2020\)](#)

According to the instructions given by the University of Turku, the employees and students of the University of Turku must not travel abroad. This applies to exchange studies as well.

Erasmus+, Nordplus and FIRST+ beneficiaries can use the force majeure procedure to request a part of their grant to cover expenses related to exchange studies. We will fill in a force majeure form on your behalf and send it to the Finnish National Agency for Education for further processing. As an attachment to the form, we will need you to inform us the travel and accommodation expenses related to your exchange. You do not need to send any receipts. If needed, please approach your travel insure company for reimbursements. Please see: <https://www.oph.fi/en/news/2020/impacts-coronavirus-erasmus-and-european-solidarity-corps-programmes>.

To cover expenses for students who were about to start a bilateral exchange, 500 euros will be paid to you to cover any possible expenses.

[Exceptional circumstances at the University of Turku](#)

The University of Turku adjusts its operations according to the Government's policy recommendations. The University of Turku operates under exceptional circumstances from 18 March to 13 April 2020. Make sure to read through UTU's instructions: <https://www.utu.fi/en/information-on-coronavirus>

[Exchange possibilities during the Academic Year 2020-2021:](#)

If you wish embark on an exchange semester during the academic year 2020 – 2021, you can fill in an application during our supplementary calls between 1 and 15 April 2020 or between 1 and 15 September 2020. The available places will be updated on our intranet pages. NB! Unfortunately we cannot automatically transfer discontinued spring 2020 exchanges to the following academic year. However, if your host university offers this as an alternative, we support it and will do our best to enable it.

We hope everything is well with you in your host country!

Kind regards,
Lassi, Suvi, Tarja and Annukka
UTU outgoing team
outgoing@utu.fi