

## INFORMATION RELEVANT FOR ALL THE MER+ EMJMD STUDENTS ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021 TRAVEL/VISAS: 2020 update + RECOMMENDATIONS AFTER COVID-19

The general information dealing with **preparation of the mobility** is provided in the Welcome letter and annexes sent to Year 1 students in early summer to help them in preparing the start of Year 1.

**DISCLAIMER 01: Visas and residence permits are responsibility of individuals and as such the MER Consortium partner universities and the MER Secretariat are not entitled to manage and proceed with visas and residence permits.** The MER Consortium can only provide **support** through information, contacts, letters or other documents and the experience of the international offices and the help desk and escort services. Thus, each student is free and absolute responsible to follow different procedures to obtain the needed permits to travel and line in Europe during the realisation of the programme.

**DISCLAIMER 02: The information on visas and permits provided herein is only for guidance purposes. The MER Consortium cannot be responsible of any changes or updates in requirements and procedures that might occur.** The MER Consortium strongly recommend the students to contact the International Offices of the Universities, the Embassies/Consulates and travel agencies to secure safe and successful completion of the visas and permits procedures. Links are provided to assist in these purposes.

### RECENT REGULATIONS (AFTER 2018)

1. Recent regulations (after 2018) make easier the mobility to study within the Schengen area
2. The **Schengen Visa Scheme** allows visitors to obtain one visa to visit the 25 EEA countries. Spain, France and Belgium belong to the **Schengen area**. A long stay Schengen visa allows the student:
  - To stay for more than 3 months and must be applied by person at the Embassy or Consulate of the Schengen country (e.g. Spain).
  - To travel or stay in other Schengen States (e.g., France, Belgium), while respecting the maximum duration of a "short stay" (a stay of "90 days in any 180 day period").

For instance, non-EU students who have obtained a long stay **Schengen visa in another EU Member State** (e.g., France) and come to complete semester 2 in EHU they are exempted from the obligation to obtain a Spanish visa for their studies. Instead of a visa, the student has to apply for a **Student Residence Permit (TIE)**<sup>1</sup>, either before the entry into Spain in the Spanish Consular Office where the student currently resides, or after entering Spain, within the period of one month after the entry, apply for it in the Foreigner's Office in Barcelona. The documents have to be presented personally by the student.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Student Residence Card for Foreigners (TIE) is a temporary permit to stay in the country for the study period. It is valid for a maximum of 1 academic year and can be renewed annually until the student finishes the studies. The academic performance will be taken into account when renewing this permit. The student will have a maximum of 30 days after entering the EU to begin the process of applying for the TIE. For this, the student will need to present the flight ticket (boarding ticket) or the stamp on the passport showing the date in which he/she entered the EU.

### 3. 2016 Directive<sup>2</sup>:

- After the completion of the study programme, foreign students will be allowed to stay for up to 9 months in a EU country to look for work or set up a business.
- **Foreign nationals do not need to apply for a new visa to move around Europe, but simply notify the second country to which they are moving.**
- The Directive does not apply in Denmark, Ireland or the UK.
- **This is not yet into full force in Belgium. This is why the students typically still have to apply to a visa for Belgium for their stay.**

## RECOMMENDED VISA PROCEDURES FOR YEAR 1 STUDENTS

1. **SPANISH VISA/PERMITS:** MER Secretariat's advice is to apply for a 2 yr student visa in Spain; this is possible because all the students are registered as full students for the 2 years of the programme in UPV/EHU (coordinating university), starting the Induction week (1st Sept 2020) and ending with the Graduation (10th September 2022).

- Apply for a **long-stay visa (Type D) with multiple entries** and for a period exceeding 180 days.

When applying for your visa the student must specify that the visa is needed for the entire duration of the study programme.

This type of visa will enable the student to ask for a residence permit.

### PROCEDURE FOR SPANISH VISA/PERMITS

To obtain the visa the student must apply at the **Embassy or Consulate in his/her country of origin**.

**Documents** to submit:

- proof of admission to the MER EMJMD and the UPV/EHU (provided by the MER Secretariat);
- proof of health insurance (provided by the MER Secretariat on the basis of the health insurance managed by UBx);
- a health certificate;
- proof of accommodation (e.g. as provided in the MER EMJMD acceptance letter);
- proof of sufficient financial resources to cover your living expenses, the costs of your studies and your return (provided by the MER Secretariat on the basis of the EM Scholarship Award or the Self-Funded Student Declaration)

The duration of the stay permit for the purpose of studies is equal to the length of the course for which you have been admitted and is renewable.

This permit shall be extended annually if you show that you continue to meet the original conditions required for the first permit and that you meet the requirements for the activity.

To get and renew the stay permit for the purpose of studies (TIE), the student must apply to the **Bilbao Aliens Affairs Office**. Support will be provided by the MER Secretariat during the Induction Week.

Processing time could take several months for long term visas.

**Important:** All foreign official documents must be previously legalized and, if necessary, must be translated into Spanish or official language of the territory where the application is submitted.

Contact: [International Relations Office](#)

---

<sup>2</sup> DIRECTIVE (EU) 2016/801 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing

- Enter Europe via Spain, attend the Induction Week (incl. open a bank account and proceed with the Spanish Residence Permit).

Due to recent new regulations established by the Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry, EHU has the opportunity to get advantage of priority procedures to proceed with residence permits with "group appointments".

For this purpose **the MER Secretariat needs to know in advance when and in which consulate/embassy has the student applied for the visa** so that by early July a list of students is sent to the Foreigners Office in Bilbao. This will also facilitate visa procedures.

2. **FRENCH RESIDENCE PERMIT:** Being covered by the MER+ EMJMD Grant Agreement 2017-1919 and the MER Consortium Agreement, with this type of Spanish visa the Year-1 students can be at France (UBx) as students.

- For this purpose the hosting French university (UBx) must notify each individual student's mobility project to the French Ministry of the Interior.
- The **residence permit "student –mobility programme"** issued upon enrolment in the MER EMJMD programme in the first Member State (Spain) will enable the student to pursue his/her studies in France for a maximum of 12 months.

#### PROCEDURE FOR FRENCH RESIDENCE PERMITS

The student needs to provide the hosting institution in France (UBx) with the following **documents**:

- a copy of the valid travel document (passport)
- a copy of the residence permit as student issued by the first Member State (Spain)
- proof of sufficient personal resources to cover personal expenses during the stay in France (provided by the MER Secretariat on the basis of the EM Scholarship Award or the Self-Funded Student Declaration)
- proof of health insurance (managed by UBx)
- proof that you are a MER EMJMD student (provided by the MER Secretariat)
- proof you have been accepted in UBx (managed by UBx)

UBx is responsible for notifying the student's mobility to the Ministry of the Interior ("*Form Notifying The Mobility Of A Student Allowed To Stay In Another Eu Member State In France*"). This notification may be submitted when the student applies for a residence permit/visa in Spain, or afterwards.

Upon the reception of the application, the Ministry has a period of 30 days to issue a refusal. After this period, if there is no decision, the student is granted the right to stay in France with the residence permit/visa issued by the first Member State.

Contact: International Office

3. **BRITISH VISA/PERMITS: The UK does not belong to the Schengen area.** Year 1 students from outside the EU who wish to study in the UK will require a UK visa in addition to any Schengen visa they may already hold.

- As a general rule:
  - ✓ If the student is from outside the EU and wish to study in the UK for 6 months or less, he/she should secure a **Student Visitor Visa**.
  - ✓ If the student is from outside the EU and wish to study in the UK for longer than 6 months, he/she should secure a **Tier 4 Student Visa**.
- However, after the 2019/20 academic year, in SOTON the students can apply for a Tier 4 (general) student visa to commence a **full-time postgraduate masters programme of 13 months or less in duration**, and will be given an additional 6 months on his/her visa after the programme end date.

- SOTON has a dedicated team of staff to provide information and advice about visas and immigration for students and their dependants (**Visas Team**). They offer a variety of services for international students:
  - ✓ Offer advice and guidance on matters relating to UK Tier 4 immigration.
  - ✓ Support international students, their dependants and recent graduates with immigration issues relating to study in the UK.
  - ✓ Manage the application process and help to submit applications on behalf of current students extending their visas under Tier 4 (General).
  - ✓ Liaise with UKVI on compliance matters.
- SOTON is an **Alternative Collection Location (ACL) for Tier 4 visas**. SOTON recommends using the University as the ACL if they are applying for a **Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) card** for your Tier 4 visa. The ACL code is: 2HE382.

#### PROCEDURE FOR UK TIER 4 VISA

The students can apply for a **Tier 4 (General) Student Visa** if they are 16 or over and they:

- have been offered a place on a course
- can speak, read, write and understand English
- have enough money to support yourself and pay for your course
- are from a country that's not in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland
- meet the other eligibility requirements

The earliest a student can apply for a visa is 3 months before he/she starts the course. The student usually gets a decision on the visa within 3 weeks. The visa application fees are:

- It costs £348 to apply for this visa from outside the UK.
- You'll also have to pay the healthcare surcharge as part of your application.

The MER+ EMJMD students:

- can arrive in the UK up to 1 week before the course starts (MER+ EMJMD semester 1/3 lasts 6 months or less)
- can study, work as a student union sabbatical officer, apply from inside or outside the UK, apply to extend the stay, and work in most jobs depending on what level the course is and what kind of sponsor they have.
- may be able to bring in family members (dependants).
- cannot get public funds, work in certain jobs or study at an academy or a local authority-funded school

The student is strongly advised to apply in plenty of time for your UK visa.

[Contact: Visas Team](#)

#### **RECOMMENDED VISA PROCEDURES FOR YEAR 2 STUDENTS:**

1. **SPANISH VISA:** The students with a **Long-stay visa (Type D) with multiple entries should renew the 1-yr old Student Residence Permit (TIE) as above detailed**. This is possible because all the students are registered as full students for the 2 years of the programme in UPV/EHU (coordinating university) until the date of the Graduation (10th September 2021).
  - There are different situations depending on the modality of physical mobility for Semester 3:
    - ✓ No additional action is required if there is **no physical mobility** towards the countries of semester 3 universities.
    - ✓ No additional action is required if the **physical mobility is less than 90 days towards a EU country**: e.g., the students might stay at Belgium (ULiège) and at France (Stareso) for up to 90 days at each Member State.

- ✓ If the physical mobility to Belgium (ULiège) is planned to be extended **beyond 90 days** then the students should obtain a **Belgian Student Visa**, as below detailed.
- ✓ A **Visiting Student Visa** might be required (check at SOTON Visas Team) if the **physical mobility is less than 90 days towards the UK** (SOTON) for up to 90 days and the students do not plan to work during their stay.
- ✓ If the physical mobility to the UK (SOTON) is planned to be extended **beyond 90 days** or the students plan to work during their stay then A **Tier 4 (General) Student Visa** is required, as below detailed.

2. **BELGIUM VISA/PERMITS:** Non-EU/EEA/Swiss citizens who want to study in Belgium for a period exceeding 90 days will typically need to obtain a visa D from the competent Belgian Embassy in their country of residence before arrival.

- In principle, they are entitled to a **Belgian Student Visa** if they are registered in a study program at an officially recognised institution of higher education in Belgium.
- To qualify for a Belgian Student Visa, students must fulfil the following:
  - ✓ The studies must be the main occupation of the students during their stay in Belgium.
  - ✓ The students must have sufficient resources to support themselves during their stay in Belgium.
  - ✓ The students must be covered by health insurance coverage.
  - ✓ They cannot pose a threat to public security (for example, have no pending criminal cases).
- It is important to note that you need to register for a specific study program in Belgium before submitting your visa application.

#### PROCEDURE FOR BELGIUM VISA/PERMITS:

The student must complete an application form for a long stay visa D in Belgium, and provide the following documents:

- a valid passport/travel ID;
- proof of acceptance as MER EMJMD student to follow semester 3 in ULiège;
- copies of educational certificates (available at the MER Consortium records);
- details about the course (available at the MER Consortium records);
- evidence of sufficient funds to cover your living costs, study, healthcare and repatriation costs (provided by the MER Secretariat on the basis of the EM Scholarship Award or the Self-Funded Student Declaration and of the health insurance managed by UBx);
- a medical certificate;
- proof that you don't have a criminal record, if you're older than 21 years.

They may need to have the foreign documents translated into German, French or Dutch by a sworn translator, and legalised or carrying an apostille stamp. **More information is detailed in the Immigration Office and by the foreign affairs, as mentioned in the Vademecum. They need to get additional information from each embassy:**

[https://dofi.ibz.be/sites/dvzoe/FR/Guidedesprocedures/Pages/Les\\_etudes\\_superieures\\_ou\\_annee\\_preparatoire\\_aux\\_etudes\\_superieures\\_dans\\_un\\_etablissement\\_organise\\_reconnu\\_subsidie.aspx](https://dofi.ibz.be/sites/dvzoe/FR/Guidedesprocedures/Pages/Les_etudes_superieures_ou_annee_preparatoire_aux_etudes_superieures_dans_un_etablissement_organise_reconnu_subsidie.aspx)

[https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/services/travel\\_to\\_belgium](https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/services/travel_to_belgium)

Contact: International Relations Office

3. **BRITISH VISA/PERMIT** (see above)