



FAQS & ANSWERS

1) In the acceptance letter it says "You will be considered fully enrolled as a MER MSc student once you complete the procedure as required. Please, go to the on-line Application procedure for further details and to proceed into the next steps (registration, fellowship applications, payment, etc.)" What exactly is "the procedure as required"? So I can check I have done everything necessary. I have applied to all the MCG and UPV/EHU grants. I haven't paid yet. What is registration? It was also mentioned that after confirmation is received by MER Secretariat, I will receive within a few days the Student Agreement and additional documents needed to proceed with administrative procedures.

This is a general text. Some applicants need to complete missing documents for registration, etc. Every applicant has this individual information clearly indicated on his/er corresponding entry and have received emails (registered in the message lists of the online application) with details.

Also, the Student Agreement Draft is available on line for each applicant. This will be the basis to agree a final Student agreement of which two originals will be produced and signed once the student has started the semester.

Full enrolment is only considered once the registration fees have been paid as declared in the SAD document and the bank transfer proof has been uploaded to the online registration system (or emailed to mer@merconsortium.eu). This must be achieved before the given deadline.

2) About the MCG waiver, will I find out if I have received it before the deadline to pay the registration fees on the 26th July? Will I then need to pay less or do I have to pay the full amount and then get refunded? I still don't know how much I need to pay on the last step as I don't know if any of the grants and fellowships that I asked for were successfully subscribed.

As indicated in the documents and letters provided beforehand, waivers are decided in parallel with the final admission procedure but you must apply for them using the same online application system you used as MER MSc applicant. As a general rule, waivers are automatically allocated to those who apply for them, so that your annual registration fee would be reduced as follows:

| APPLICANT | OFFICIAL ANNUAL REGISTRATION FEE | WAIVER | ANNUAL REGISTRATION FEE (to be paid) | TOTAL REGISTRATION FEE (2 years) |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| THIRD COUNTRY STUDENT | 9000 € | 5700 € (Smooth Fee 3C Grant)* | 3300 € | 6600 € |
| EU STUDENT | 4500 € | 1300 € (Waiver Minus Grant)** | 3200 € | 6400 € |
| EU STUDENT | 4500 € | 3000 € (Waiver Plus Grant)*** | 1500 € | 3000 € |

* ONLY APPLICABLE TO THIRD COUNTRY STUDENTS FOLLOWING PATHWAY A2

** APPLICABLE TO ANY EU STUDENT FOLLOWING ANY PATHWAY, PROVIDED THE STUDENT HAS DULY APPLIED FOR FOR THIS WAIVER

*** ONLY APPLICABLE TO EU STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND FOLLOWING PATHWAY A2, UPON APPROVAL BY THE MER JPB

If you indicated in the Self-Funded Student declaration that payments would be done in two installments, then you must pay 50% of the annual registration fee (1650 or 1600 €) before July 26th and the remainder 50% before December 15th. The same schedule applies for Year 2.



3) I'm still a little unclear about the costs the Erasmus Mundus scholarship will cover. Will I have to pay for the housing on my own or will that be included in the tuition fee? Will the scholarship cover everything from tuition, housing, and general living expenses or is there anything I will have to pay for now or later on my own? Will I receive part of the Mundus Travel Grant while I'm still in my home (3C) country in order to buy the flight ticket to Bilbao?

All the students pay for the housing on their own (except for the Youth Hostel during the 1st week of Semester 2 in San Sebastian; RiMER course) and maybe some field courses.

Erasmus Mundus Scholarship holders receive a monthly allowance to cope with these expenses. They do not have to pay anything to the universities because the participation costs cover tuition fees, field courses, language training, some accommodation and displacements (e.g. RiMER in SS, aforementioned) but the payment of travel and accommodation is responsibility of the students.

Erasmus Mundus Scholarship holders receive travel allowance to cover main mobility (e.g., from/to home; between partners; semester 4 abroad; visa expenses and permit procedures; etc.) and monthly allowance to cover accommodation and maintenance. Travel allowance will be paid once the scholarship holder opens a bank account (see below), along September Year 1 (50%) and before September Year 2 (50%). If a payment in advance is needed the MER Secretariat could make a transfer to the home bank of the student (costs are deducted from the scholarship budget) but the promptness of this transfer cannot be secured since it depends on when the budget is received by the MER Secretariat from the Mundus Agency. Our experience is that often the money arrives after the student is travelling to Europe and therefore our advice is to pay in advance and get refunded once the EU bank account is open.

However, if you have economic difficulties to pay in advance, the MER Secretariat can manage your travel reservations if you send us the detail of your travel preferences.

4) Can we stay hosted at the university residence when in Bilbao at the first days? During the stay in the UPV/EHU, will we live in Bilbao or Plentzia?

Students coming to Plentzia the first week of September will go directly to the camping nearby the Plentzia Marine Station (PiE-UPV/EHU). Information on other accommodations can be found here: <http://www.ehu.es/en/web/nazioarteko-harremanak/en-your-first-nights>. You can take advantage to visit some apartments and maybe fix a contract to stay in Plentzia between February and June, or look for accommodation in nearby town for Semester 2.

5) When in Bilbao, who should I look in order to help with the procedures?

Sonia Monreal (MER Secretariat officer; PiE-UPV/EHU) will explain you the details upon your arrival. She and the MER-EHU buddies will assist you during this week and accompany to the Police Office and the Bank, to avoid language problems.

6) Can you tell me the exact date I need to be in Bordeaux to start with my first MER courses in September? I am a European student and not funded by Erasmus Mundus, so I do not have to go to Bilbao for my visa.



You do not need to come to Plentzia in early September for administrative tasks; however, you might benefit from meeting your future classmates, attending the MSc vivas of year 2 students and preparing your stay (e.g. accommodation) for Semester 2.

7) I am a European student and not funded by Erasmus Mundus. On the MER Consortium page on the funding label I read some fellowships that I may be able to subscribe. How can I apply to STUDENT MOBILITY (POSTGRADUATES) Erasmus - Socrates Programmes?

By now MEREMMC students do not seem to be eligible for these specific fellowships; we are working to change it. As soon as there is an opportunity for you to apply to grants or fellowships we let you know and we provide you with technical and logistic assistance according to our possibilities. We recommend you to use the Funding entry of the merconsortium website.

8) I was wondering if I can go earlier to Spain? Given that we need to be there on e.g. 3rd September for the procedure with the bank account and else, I was hoping to reach Spain by e.g. August 20th and then go to the French class that the university of Bordeaux are preparing for the International students starting on 26th August...

In August we cannot provide you with any support as most of the services and university offices are on holidays

9) I am trying to apply for the EHU mobility grant. I do not have census data for December 2013, this is requested as proof of residency, but is there any other document that would be accepted? for example I have my birth certificate and passport both registered in the UK. Could you confirm if this would be acceptable.

Although for some calls the conditions could be more flexible, the restrictive requisite is (e.g. Erasmus) that the place of residence should be verified on the basis of the provision of:

- a residence certificate issued in accordance with the candidate's municipality normal registration rules;
- a certificate from the candidate's place of work, study or training issued by the employer or institution in question.

10) To finish, would it be possible to know if I have a chance to be selected with my grade or is it useless to ask for it? I really need this scholarship and I am not sure to be eligible.

The MER Secretariat and the MER JPB do not decide on scholarships other than MCG's; we usually inform you about public calls and the conditions for eligibility but then the selection is done by the corresponding committees and institutions, external to the MER Consortium.

11) Which documents are needed to bring to open bank account to receive Scholarship?

IMPORTANT: if you can from outside EU by plane ask the customs police for an entry stamp in your passport. If you come by another way you have 72 h to get it in any police station and therefore you can do it directly in the Foreigners' Police Office at Bilbao on September 3rd-4th, before proceeding with permits.

Appointment in the Foreigners' Police Office at Bilbao is expected for September 3rd (or maybe 4th). You need one passport photo, an "entry stamp" on your passport and some cash (~20 €) to pay for the procedure. Once you obtain the due documents there, you will be able to open a bank account in Bilbao.



12) I am an EM Scholarship holder and I would like to receive the travel expenses only after opening a Spanish bank account, do I need to send you a copy of the Financial Identification Form?

No, you only must send us a copy of the Financial Identification Form if you want to get travel expenses paid at your home bank account before you come. Nevertheless, payments in advance are not ensured as the availability of the budget depends on when the funds provided by the EACEA Agency are available for the MER Secretariat.

13) Is it compulsory to open a Spanish bank account to get the EM Scholarship monthly allowance or could I use other EU country bank accounts?

If the EM Scholarship monthly allowance is paid in your Spanish bank account this means that you can use your card for payments and cash retrieval from cash dispensers (e.g. without charge in Euro6000 servers, etc.) in UK and France or you can transfer the money every month in a British/French account and pay the transfer fees. It can be also the other way round.

14) Which are the administrative procedures (administrative -police permits and bank account- issues) required to be done in early September 2013 in Bilbao? Are they compulsory at these dates or can them be done through a different way or in a different time?

14.1. MER students with EM Scholarship:

Option A:

You can open a bank account in UK or France. You will receive the monthly allowance and travel expenses there with a cost by the bank transfer (expected 3-5 €per transfer). Then for Semester 2 you have to open a bank account in Spain for which you would also have to follow the procedure explained in Option B (without group procedure arrangement).

Option B*:

You can come to Bilbao between 3-6 September (tentative dates) to proceed with the needed permits to open a bank account and the monthly allowance and travel expenses will be paid there without bank transfer costs. **Third-country students need to obtain a NIE (fiscal identification number for foreigners) at the police in Bilbao; a visa is not a requirement and indeed it is not sufficient. EU students need to obtain a Registration Certificate (Certificado de registro) at the Police in Bilbao.** http://merconsortium.eu/services/visas_spain.html

14.2. MER students without EM Scholarship:

Third Country Students:

You do not need to open a bank account in Spain now; but if you obtain the EHU Mobility grant you would also have to follow the procedure explained in Option B above (without group procedure arrangement) in order to open a Spanish bank account.

EU students*:

You can come to Bilbao between 3-6 September (tentative dates) to proceed with the Registration Certificate (Certificado de registro) needed to open a bank account and needed to apply for Spanish Education Ministry grants.



<https://sede.educacion.gob.es/catalogo-tramites/becas-ayudas-subsvenciones/para-estudiar/master.html>

* For this purpose, the MER Secretariat would arrange a group procedure at the Police offices one day 4-6 September depending on how many of you will follow this procedure and the officers' availability during these dates.

14.3. Accommodation in Bilbao during early September:

Accommodation costs during those days are not covered by registration fees and therefore you can make any choice on your own (see helpful links below). However, the MER Secretariat can assist you in booking accommodation at a camping bungalow (Camping Arrien; Gorliz) nearby the Plentzia Marine Station at a price around 20 €/per person/day in a group room. In such a case we need a quick reply with dates etc by email to mer@merconsortium.eu (ALWAYS BEFORE JULY 23RD).

<http://www.ehu.es/p200-shenhm/en>

http://www.relaciones-internacionales.ehu.es/p274-hmencont/en/contenidos/informacion/rrii_accommodation/en_inf/accommodation.html

<http://www.campinggorliz.com/en/home.html>

14.4. MER students with EM scholarship following the pathway B:

For MER students with EM scholarship following the pathway B and coming to Bilbao in early September to open a bank account the BIO-LON-BIO trip will be managed by each student and covered by his/her EM travel grant. Let us know your dates and if you need to make reservations for accommodation.

14.5. For MER students with or without EM scholarship following the pathway A (either A1 or A2)

For MER students with or without EM scholarship following the pathway A the BIO-UBx-SS-BIO trip by bus will be organised by MER secretariat and covered by registration fees. It will depart from BIO on e.g. September 7th Monday afternoon, from BDX to SS on e.g. January 31st Sunday morning and from SS to BIO on e.g. February 6th Saturday afternoon. Let us know whether you are willing to use this bus service and if you need to make reservations for accommodation in early September.

15) Accommodation in Southampton for Semester 1:

In order to apply for the university halls as well as for the Southampton Accreditation Scheme for Student Housing a student ID is necessary. The MER MSc officer at SOTON should have contacted you with this purpose; otherwise please contact the administrative officer at mscenq@soton.ac.uk with CC to the MER academic coordinator at Soton (Prof. D Purdie: duncan.purdie@noc.soton.ac.uk)

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DEADLINE FOR THE SOTON HALLS IS USUALLY BEFORE AUGUST.

<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/accommodation/>

16) Accommodation in Bordeaux for Semester 1:

The MER MSc officer at UBx should have contacted you with this purpose; otherwise please contact Mrs Audrey Sidobre at audrey.sidobre@u-bordeaux1.fr

Students were requested to complete an online form for accommodation reserves.



JULY 3RD WEEK IS THE DEADLINE; THE ADMINISTRATION IN UBx IS CLOSED FOR ONE MONTH INCLUDING THE LAST WEEK OF JULY ONWARDS!!!!!! OUT OF THIS DEADLINE WE CANNOT SUPPORT YOU IN GETTING ACCOMODATION IN UBx AND YOU WILL HAVE TO DO IT ON YOUR OWN.

17) Are the REVISED STUDY PLAN accepted on line and the STUDENT AGREEMENT DRAFT definitive documents or can some changes be made later on? Are the MSc THESIS RESEARCH SUBJECT and CENTER definitive before enrolling or can they be decided later on?

Changes in the revised study plan might be possible even along September Semester 1 but the MER Secretariat will try to keep them at a minimum. Overall, the revised study plan recommended by the MER JPB is aimed at merging as much as possible (there might be mistakes, misunderstanding and biases; obviously) each student's profile and background with the MSc thesis research field; though seldom might also occur that there are limited seats for certain courses or that a course is not a part of the offer in a given academic year. On the other hand, the MSc Thesis subject, lab and supervisor will be only definitive before starting Semester 3.

18) Will you publish an official list of who has been accepted onto the course?

The MEREMMC JPB wish to encourage you to self-organise as MEREMMC students. For this reason a preliminary student list with indication of pathways and emails is provided to the students starting each year.

19) Visa procedures:

| QUESTIONS | REPLY |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should I have to apply for three different visas (Spain, France and UK) BEFORE leaving my country? Should I ask all three visas to be valid for 6 months each? My resident permit document will be Spanish? It would be valid for the 2 years? Thank you very much for this. It is clear that I should apply for VISA at the French Embassy. What kind of VISA will I be applying, Schengen VISA? Also, should I still submit a VISA application at the Spanish Embassy since you have provided me a with a letter for the Spanish Consul? I have just received my long stay French visa . If I reach France first and then Spain on 3rd September by train, is it possible to get that permit to attend the appointment at the police department? I will apply for Spanish visa at the end of my first semester to start my 2nd semester in Spain. As far as I know, last year some non- EU students followed this procedure and they had only French visa. Do I need a Spanish visa? This means that I should obtain 2 visas - France visa and Spain visa? My entry or my plane ticket should be to Bilbao, Spain right? Regarding the Spain visa, what type should I apply for ? Transit, short-term or long term? If I have French visa only is it possible to get the residence card from Spain? Or do I need to have Spanish visa too? Since we need to go to Spain first to open the account | <p>All the 3C students will finish semester 2 in Bilbao; thus, our advice, at least for those in UBx in Semester 1, is entering EU via Bilbao and going by bus to Bordeaux for Semester 1 and departing back home after semester 2 from Bilbao.</p> <p>Thus, ONLY ONE SCHENGEN VISA TYPE is needed (Spanish, French or English*, depending on where you enter EU); with this you can obtain residence permits in Spain to open the bank account and travel to study.</p> <p>* Soton may have special requirements for students visas: http://www.southampton.ac.uk/uni-life/international/visas.page</p> <p>You do not need additional visas to come to Bilbao in early September for a few days to do the police permit and the bank account procedures.</p> <p>Note that you will be fully enrolled in UPV/EHU and in UBx or SOTON; therefore you will receive original letters and documents from UPV/EHU and either UBx and SOTON, indicating acceptance and registration in the universities. For the effects of visa you can be considered full student in Spain (registered in UPV/EHU) with a mobility to France for Semester 1 or full student in France (registered in UBx) with a</p> |



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| <p>and register, do you recommend taking the Spanish visa first and then applying for the French one? We always have to hand in our passport when applying for either one, so it is not possible to do so simultaneously.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My first semester is in University of Bordeaux. So I have already applied for French visa. My appointment was on 18th June and my passport is being submitted in French embassy. Without passport in hand, i can't apply for Spanish visa right now. I will be very grateful if you please inform me if there is any other procedure to have residence permit and bank account in Spain after reaching France with French visa only. • I have been selected for Erasmus Mundus Masters Course "European MSc in Marine Environment & Resources " 2015-17. I have some confusions regarding visa processing. According to scholarship grant letter, my first semester is in University of Bordeaux, France and starting date is 2nd September. They also mentioned that I need to stay in Spain 3-6 September to open bank account and other procedures. For this purpose do I need residence permit too?. • I am currently organizing my documents to take my French visa with a 6-months length. With regards to the Spanish visa, because I first have to open a bank account in Bilbao in early September, do I have to leave Brazil already with a student visa valid from February - July in Spain? Taking a visa in Brazil demands lots of time and I am sure it will be very difficult to leave the country with both visas by August. Hope you can send some information to clarify that. • When applying for visa at the French embassy, this means that I am applying for a Schengen Visa type D? Is it correct that since Spain is a Schengen member country, I no longer have to apply for another visa at the Spanish embassy? I understand that I will have to apply at the French embassy since Bordeaux is my main destination for the semester. It is quite confusing since MER consortium has also provided a letter addressed to the Spanish Consul. • In what embassy should I submit my application for visa? I understand that since my first semester is at University of Bordeaux in France, I should apply at the French embassy in the Manila, Philippines. You have mentioned in the Award and Admission letters that I should stay for 2-3 days at Bilbao at the beginning of the semester to proceed with permits and procedures to open a bank account, and you have also provided a letter for the Spanish Consul. Please clarify where and when will I apply for visa to enter Spain for the purpose of opening a bank account? Should I apply for visa to enter Spain after arriving in France? Is my understanding correct that I will apply for a French visa here in the Philippines and apply for a Spanish visa upon arriving in France? • The Spanish consulate in my city told me it is not possible to get a Spanish visa ("<i>Verificada la documentación nos informan que no es posible realizar un visado en este Consulado General. Los paso que</i> | <p>mobility to Spain for Semester 2; etc.</p> <p>In addition, you have original acceptance letters and documents (SAD) provided by the MER Consortium, and additional documents provided by EACEA for those who are holders of a Erasmus Mundus (now Erasmus+) scholarship.</p> <p>The same applies for the Year 2 but for this purpose you will have to apply for additional visas (e.g. for Semester 4 mobility to do research at any part of the world) during Semester 2 (in Bilbao) or after returning home after Semester 2.</p> |
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Erasmus Mundus Joint
Master Degree in
Marine Environment

UPV/EHU-SOTON-UBx-ULiège

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| <p><i>deberá dar es obtener el visado como estudiante para Francia, cuando vaya a estudiar a España acudir a la Delegación de Gobierno con su visado francés para que se le emita una autorización para estudiar en España").</i> You can read their email down below. Instead they said I should use my French visa to get my documentation in Spain. I kindly assure you that I followed their instructions, with all documents and the letter in Spanish explaining why I would need both visas (written by Mr Ionan), and actually paid for the visa fees. Yesterday I applied for the French visa with no problems. Please let me know if holding only the French visa I will be able to register in Bilbao and open the bank account in early September as we are expecting to do.</p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have sent my signed admission letter last week. As EU Delegation advised me to apply for visa as early as possible, so I applied for appointment in embassy just after receiving the scholarship grant letter. Embassy has fixed my appointment on 18th June at 10.30 A.M.. French Embassy has enlisted admission letter from French university and housing certificate as compulsory documents to submit. I have been chosen for Erasmus Mundus Masters Course "European MSc in Marine Environment & Resources " and my first semester is in University of Bordeaux, France. But i don't have admission letter of University of Bordeaux and housing certificate yet and i need this documents before 18th June. So, I am requesting your kind consideration on this regard. | <p>Note that you will be fully enrolled in UPV/EHU and in UBx or SOTON; therefore you will receive original letters and documents from UPV/EHU and either UBx and SOTON, indicating acceptance and registration in the universities.</p> <p>In addition, you have original acceptance letters and documents (SAD) provided by the MER Consortium, and additional documents provided by EACEA for those who are holders of a Erasmus Mundus (now Erasmus+) scholarship.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will you be mailing the hard copies of the documents you have sent through email, especially the signed documents to mention (1) grant letter; (2) admission letter; (3) acceptance as student in EHU; (4) financial guarantee letters; (5) Letter to the Spanish Consul; and (6) introduction letter to embassy services. I'm afraid the original copies will be asked when applying for visa. Please advise what was your previous experience with the letters, if electronic copies are already acceptable. | <p>Usually electronic versions are not accepted by the Embassies and Consulates. Thus, the International Office of either UBx or Soton mail the hard copy of the documents; also the MER Secretariat and the UPV/EHU MER office. This can only be done after mid June and whenever possible before mid July but the calendar is very compressed.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm an MER scholarship holder. I'm applying for a pre-visa and visa now. In visa documents list, they said all the candidate need to provide parent's bank prove and an agreement document signed by parents to prove that they are willing to give financial support to candidate. I mean as a full scholarship holder, do I need to provide these documents(these are really troublesome)? I've saw that the scholarship details, which contains our visa fee. Does this mean I don't need to pay for my visa? If so, what do I need to fill in the sponsor's blank? | <p>Erasmus Mundus scholarship holders are provided with the EACEA Scholarship Selection Document (that is competed with the official export file from the EMTOOL, especially relevant for updates such as promotion from Reserve to Main lists), the Scholarship Award Letter and Financial declaration documents provided by the MER Secretariat.</p> <p>Other financial sustainability proofs are only needed for those students without a Mundus Scholarship.</p> <p>Each one pays for his/er visa procedures costs and taxes; Erasmus Mundus scholarship holders receive the mobility allowance to cover these expenses.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please, if it is not too much of a burden to you, may I request for a step by step process/procedure, starting from visa processing (what embassy should we apply) to arrival in the country of destination (what country - | <p>This is not a question of work load. Apart from the above guidelines and comments nothing can be more formally established; procedures and requirements may change substantially depending on each</p> |



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France or Spain) to the processing of residents permit and the opening of bank account. This process flow will be a great help for us new students.

Embassy/Consulate office and a common useful process flow cannot be directly provided; it will create more confusion and procedural problems.

20) IMPORTANT NOTICE:

ANY COMMUNICATION MUST BE SUBMITTED TO

mer@merconsortium.eu

THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF WILL BE ON HOLIDAYS UNTIL LATE AUGUST AND NO OTHER EMAIL ADDRESS WILL BE RESPONSIVE; HOWEVER, WE WILL TRY TO CHECK THE mer@merconsortium.eu EMAIL ADDRESS ON A REGULAR BASIS, ALTHOUGH NOT EVERY DAY, ONLY FOR URGENT ISSUES.

