

Chemistry student mobility activities during the pandemic.



Learning mobility activities, like many other sectors, have been negatively affected by the Covid-19 outbreak, causing an uncertain future and a falling demand in student mobility applications. To limit the risk of infection, participating countries introduced social distancing measures; the interruption of face-to-face lessons and the closure of educational institutions had an immense impact on internationalisation and mobility. More than 107 000 participants in Erasmus+ mobility were negatively impacted by the situation caused by the Covid-pandemic.

It is worth highlighting the efforts of many chemistry institutions and educators who have adapted their courses for distance learning and have been able, through the use of new tools, to communicate, respond, and examine their students remotely. The level of students' satisfaction regarding virtual activities was generally positive.

Different surveys were run to better understand the way European Universities jointly addressed common challenges caused by the health crisis. In a recent survey^[1] carried out by Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, only 25% of students' mobility were unaffected by the Covid-19 situation. Of the remaining 75%, only 42% of students continued their activities often using distance learning arrangements and carrying out virtual activities, while the remainder opted to temporarily suspend or entirely cancel the mobility period.

We should point out that one of the biggest advantages of studying abroad for many international students is the chance to become immersed in a totally different environment, learn a new study system and language – all of which was very limited by the pandemic. Spending time abroad often results in a higher level of maturity and personal independence. Students often learn a lot about themselves and what they are capable of by living in a foreign environment.

Therefore, regarding the next academic year, the impact on internationalisation and mobility remains a big issue until the COVID-19 pandemic is over. Unfortunately, early surveys suggest there is a long way to go.

To make up for the lack of common activities of the ECTN Chemistry Student Mobility Working Group <http://ectn.eu/work-groups/student-mobility-and-mobicchems-database/>, the web page was regularly updated, reporting new job opportunities and training for students and PhD.

The ECTN Chemistry Student Mobility Working Group aims to increase the quality and relevance of mobility periods of students and young researchers' providing information and promotion for exchanges in all three cycles in Chemistry and Chemical Engineering.

When a student wants to study abroad and find a suitable program, the ECTN [Chemistry Student Mobility Database](#) is a complete online tool to find a programme in Chemistry and Chemical Engineering throughout Europe. Through the database Users can compare different opportunities and make the best choice for them. Students can find several types of programs to choose from, and decide which one might be best for them. The [Chemistry Student Mobility Database](#) is now in the process of updating information from different institutions, and improving the search system in order to make it easier for Students to find information on the website.

Gabriella Borzone
Chair of Chemistry Student Mobility WG- ECTN
<http://ectn.eu/work-groups/>

Source

[1] "Survey on the impact of COVID-19 on learning mobility activities Main conclusions"
http://sepie.es/doc/comunicacion/prensa/2020/participants_survey_main_conclusions.pdf
participants_survey_main_conclusions.pdf

See also https://www.iau-aiu.net/IMG/pdf/iau_covid-19_regional_perspectives_on_the_impact_of_covid-19_on_he_july_2020_.pdf