

IELTS Listening Lesson 31

Setting:

This is a conversation between a university student and the exchange program coordinator discussing possible exchange destinations, program timelines, and funding opportunities.

Questions

Fill in the blanks:

1. The most popular exchange destinations mentioned are Germany, Japan, and _____.
2. Applications for the fall semester open in early _____ and close at the end of November.
3. Most exchange stays last for about _____ to five months.
4. The university offers an International Exchange Scholarship that provides up to _____ to help with expenses.
5. Students need to submit a personal statement and _____ letters as part of the scholarship application.

Multiple Choice:

6. When applying for exchange programs, students should:
 - A) Wait until the last minute to apply
 - B) Apply before the deadlines in October or March
 - C) Only apply in the summer
 - D) Apply after receiving confirmation from the host university
7. What is the language requirement for most courses at partner universities?

- A) Fluent in the local language only
 - B) All courses are in the student's native language
 - C) Many courses are offered in English, but some knowledge of the local language is helpful
 - D) No language skills are necessary
8. The Erasmus+ program is funded by:
- A) The student's home university
 - B) The European Union
 - C) Private companies
 - D) The United Nations
9. Which type of accommodation is often recommended for exchange students?
- A) Hotels
 - B) Dormitories or student housing
 - C) Luxury apartments
 - D) Staying with a host family only
10. What should students do to ensure their courses abroad count towards their degree?
- A) Choose courses randomly
 - B) Have their study plan approved by their home faculty
 - C) Only take elective courses
 - D) Take courses unrelated to their major
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Script

Student: Hi, I'm interested in finding out more about the exchange programs available through the university. I heard there are several options for destinations, but I'm not sure which ones are open this year.

Coordinator: Hello! Yes, we do have a variety of exchange programs, and it's great you're thinking ahead. For the upcoming academic year, we have agreements with partner universities in Europe, Asia, and South America. The most popular destinations tend to be in Germany, Japan, and Brazil.

Student: That's quite a range. I've heard a lot about the program in Japan, but I'm wondering how the timeline works. When would I need to apply, and how long would I be there?

Coordinator: The application period for the fall semester usually opens in early October and closes by the end of November. If you're aiming for the spring semester, applications open in March and close mid-April. Most exchange stays last one semester, which is roughly four to five months. However, some students opt to stay for a full academic year if they want a longer experience.

Student: Okay, so I'd be applying quite a bit in advance. If I wanted to go to Germany, would the timeline be the same?

Coordinator: Generally, yes. The deadlines are consistent across all partner universities. The academic calendars do vary a bit, but for our planning and application purposes, the deadlines remain fixed. Just be sure to check the specific semester dates once you receive confirmation from the host university.

Student: That makes sense. What about language requirements? For example, would I need to speak German or Japanese to study in those countries?

Coordinator: Good question. For many of our partner universities, courses are offered in English, especially at the undergraduate level. However, some programs might require a basic proficiency in the local language. For Germany, many courses are in English, but learning some German beforehand will definitely help with daily life. Japan is similar—there are programs taught entirely in English, but knowing some Japanese is recommended.

Student: I see. I'm also curious about the funding. Are there scholarships or financial aid options for students going on exchange?

Coordinator: Yes, there are several funding opportunities. Our university offers a few scholarships specifically for exchange students. One popular option is the International Exchange Scholarship, which provides up to \$3,000 to help with travel and living expenses. Additionally, some students apply for grants through external organizations, such as the Fulbright Program or Erasmus+, depending on their destination.

Student: That sounds promising. Is there an application process for these scholarships?

Coordinator: Absolutely. Usually, you need to apply separately for the scholarships. For the university's International Exchange Scholarship, the application deadline coincides with the exchange program application. You'll need to submit a personal statement explaining why you want to participate in the exchange and how it fits your academic and career goals. Letters of recommendation are also required.

Student: How competitive is the scholarship? I'm a bit worried since it sounds like many students apply.

Coordinator: It is competitive, but don't let that discourage you. We encourage all eligible students to apply. Make sure your personal statement is clear and reflects your motivation well. Also, maintaining good academic standing helps.

Student: Got it. You mentioned the Erasmus+ program. Can you tell me a bit more about that?

Coordinator: Erasmus+ is a European Union-funded program that supports student mobility across European countries. If you choose a partner university within Europe that participates in Erasmus+, you might be eligible for additional funding and support. It's important to check if your destination is part of the program because that can really help with costs.

Student: And what about living expenses? I imagine places like Japan or Germany could be quite expensive.

Coordinator: Yes, living costs vary quite a bit by location. Japan and Germany tend to be on the higher side, especially in major cities like Tokyo or Berlin. On the other hand, some cities in South America might be more affordable. We provide estimated budgets for each destination on our website, which include accommodation, food, transportation, and other daily costs.

Student: That's helpful. Do students usually live on campus or find their own accommodation?

Coordinator: Many partner universities offer dormitories or student housing specifically for exchange students. It's often more affordable and

a good way to meet other students. But some students prefer renting apartments off-campus for more independence. It depends on your preference and budget.

Student: Thanks. Now, about the application itself—what kind of documents do I need to prepare?

Coordinator: You'll need a completed application form, your academic transcripts, proof of language proficiency if required, and a study plan outlining the courses you intend to take while abroad. Some universities might ask for a letter of motivation or recommendation letters as well.

Student: For the study plan, does it have to be approved before I go?

Coordinator: Yes, your home faculty usually reviews and approves your proposed courses to ensure they count towards your degree. This process helps avoid surprises when you return.

Student: That's reassuring. What about health insurance? Is that arranged through the university?

Coordinator: Good point. Health insurance is mandatory for most exchange programs. Sometimes it's included as part of the program fees, but in other cases, you need to arrange it yourself. We help guide students through the requirements and options.

Student: Lastly, are there any support services available once I'm abroad?

Coordinator: Definitely. Most partner universities have an international student office that offers orientation sessions, counseling, and assistance with any issues that arise. Plus, you'll have our university's support team to contact in case of emergencies.

Student: Excellent, this has been really helpful. Is there anything else I should know?

Coordinator: Just to keep track of deadlines and stay in touch with us throughout the process. It's a great opportunity, so planning ahead is key.

Student: Thanks so much for your time and all this information!

Coordinator: You're very welcome. Feel free to drop by anytime or send an email if you have more questions.

Answer Key

- 1 Brazil
- 2 October
- 3 Four
- 4 \$3,000
- 5 recommendation
- 6 B) Apply before the deadlines in October or March
- 7 C) Many courses are offered in English, but some knowledge of the local language is helpful
- 8 B) The European Union
- 9 B) Dormitories or student housing
- 10 B) Have their study plan approved by their home faculty