

Version 2: Status of the situation in autumn 2022

European Student Card Initiative – ESCI

The European Commission has decided to digitalise the entire administrative management process of the Erasmus+ programme. This project called European Student Card Initiative is major and requiring the implementation of a network as well as various digital tools and modules. Here is a closer look at the different components of this European initiative and how it works, as well as the situation in Switzerland.

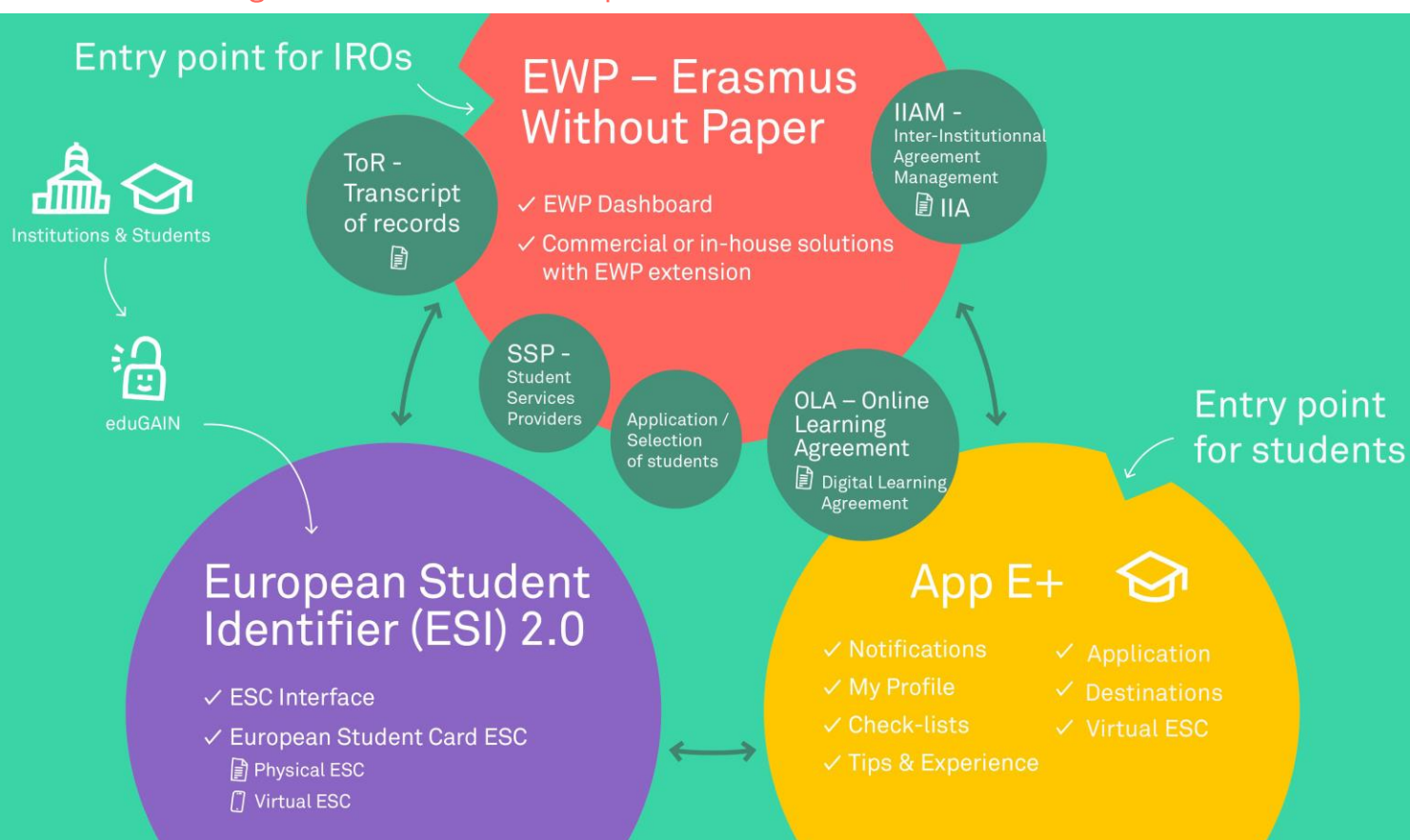
What is it about?

The European Student Card Initiative brings together several European projects, three of which are central:

- Erasmus Without Paper (EWP)
- The European Student Identifier (ESI) from the MyAcademicID project
- The Erasmus+ app

These three projects are interconnected and create an information hub between European students, home and host institutions. The initiative is helping to create a European digital education space. Currently, it only addresses (intra-European) student mobility.

Image – Overview of the European Student Card Initiative



Erasmus Without Paper (EWP)

This is a digitalised information exchange network designed for European (and Swiss) higher education institutions. Various types of databases exist on which student data can be exchanged: the EWP Dashboard, commercial solutions or “in-house” solutions.

The aim

- Replace the paper-based process with a digital one;
- Reduce the administrative burden for students and staff;
- Create a free public infrastructure;
- Standardise technical solutions for student mobility.

Tools, services and modules

Tool – database: EWP Dashboard (free)

The [EWP Dashboard](#) is a free tool designed to help (generally smaller) higher education institutions manage outgoing and incoming mobility online. It is linked to the Online Learning Agreement (OLA) module to create, sign and revise the Digital Learning Agreement (DLA), as well as the module for exchanging inter-institutional agreements between higher education institutions (IIA Management). The EWP Dashboard enables institutions that do not have commercial or in-house solutions to connect to the EWP free of charge. In the future, it is also planned to link the EWP Dashboard to the European Commission’s Mobility Tool+, which manages data from all Erasmus+ countries. The EWP Dashboard is also a communication tool for sending notifications to students, which they receive on the Erasmus+ app.

 [View the video “Start using the Erasmus Dashboard” \(EUF, 2022\)](#)

Tool – database: Commercial (or “in-house”) mobility management solutions

The majority of institutions in Switzerland use commercial management software (e.g., MoveOn, MobilityOnline) to manage their mobility. Most of the providers of these solutions have developed their product to connect to the EWP network, enabling the exchange of DLAs and IIAs through APIs¹ built into their systems. The APIs are freely available and can be downloaded from <https://developers.erasmuswithoutpaper.eu>. It should be noted that sharing the Digital Learning Agreement among institutions with the same commercial solution is now easier. Document exchange will eventually be operational among all the management systems (EWP Dashboard, commercial as well as “in-house” solutions).

Institutions with their own in-house solutions can also connect to the network. However, their IT departments must be involved in the development. The technical documents for implementation are available [here](#).

Inter-Institutional Agreement Management (IIAM)

The Inter-Institutional Agreement Management (IIAM) is a tool developed within the EWP ecosystem to create, finalise and update online inter-institutional agreements between higher education institutions.

More information on the features can be found [here](#).

Module: Online Learning Agreement (OLA)


The OLA is an interface between students and HEIs using the OLA module to generate a DLA. It makes exchanging Learning Agreements by e-mail or post redundant. A feature for generating DLAs for internships is currently under development.

Students receive OLA notifications on the Erasmus+ App, whence they are redirected to the platform, where they can log in via three identification options (eduGAIN – academic IDs, eIDAS – national ID or Google ID) – view the video to log in. The reverse is also possible if students initiate the process first; they can send the document to their home university. [View the video for creating a DLA](#). Please note

¹ API : Application Programming Interface – enables the integration of application software.

that institutions that are not connected to the EWP network will not appear in the drop-down menus in the DLA form.

Additional information for institutions: an API “course catalogue” is also available in the OLA module to link an institution’s course catalogue in order to facilitate data entry. This API is not mandatory. More information on the process can be found [here](#).

 [View the video “Managing OLA on the Erasmus Dashboard” \(EUF, 2022\)](#)

OLA for international and “non-Erasmus+” mobility: A study is currently being conducted in collaboration with the University of Bergen (Norway), as well as tests with Switzerland. Initial feedback has revealed that there are no obstructive differences and that technically, participating in the network is possible. Authentication will, however, be crucial for the management of “non-Erasmus+” mobility.

Module: Inter-Institutional Agreement Management (IIAM)

The Inter-Institutional Agreement Management (IIAM) tool was developed with the EWP network to create, finalise and update inter-institutional agreements between higher education institutions online.

More information on current and upcoming features [here](#).

 [View the video “Creating, changing and signing IIA” \(EUF, 2022\)](#)

New module: Transcript of Records (ToR)

This new feature is available to EWP Dashboard users, especially small institutions. The module on the EWP Dashboard enables users to connect *Table A* of the DLA to *Table C* of the ToR for the receiving institution, and to connect *Table B* of the DLA to *Table D* of the ToR for the sending institution. It is recommended that large institutions connect the electronic systems that generate their ToRs (option available for several years).

New module: Applications/Student selection

In the EWP Dashboard, it is now possible to access a module that facilitates student applications and selection.

New service: European Digital Student Service Infrastructure (EDSSI)

The project is intended to harmonise the digital infrastructure of the European Student Card Initiative, facilitating connections among the various tools developed to access and exchange student data. The project is funded by the European Commission’s *Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) in Telecom*. One of the key points is interoperability among the community’s various systems. A portal is scheduled to go online in the autumn of 2022.

New module: Student Services Providers (SSP)

Also available in the EWP Dashboard, this new module is part of the EDSSI project. It enables users to share the range of services for students provided by an institution (e.g. accommodation) for its partners and mobile students in a visible way. This information can also be shared on the Erasmus+ app.

 [View the training video \(June 2022\)](#)

European Calendar

- 2021** Online Digital Learning Agreement (DLA) Management (intra-European mobility)
- 2022** Inter-Institutional Agreement Management (31.12.2022)
- 2023** Exchange of information concerning the designation and acceptance of students and transcripts of records related to student mobility
- 2024** Roll-out of the European platform of services for students and institutions for the digitalisation of the Erasmus+ programme (EDSSI)
- 2025** Full roll-out of all features

In December 2021, 85% of European institutions were connected to the EWP ecosystem.

Swiss institutions currently manage student mobility via databases in the form of commercial solutions, in-house solutions or Excel documents. Thanks to the “EWP Stats Portal” provided and supported by the Erasmus Without Paper project, it is now possible to find out which databases of European and Swiss institutions are used to connect to the EWP network and the SCHAC-codes².

Swiss higher education institutions have had access to test the dashboard since 2019. According to a survey conducted by Movetia in the spring of 2022, 13 of 24 Swiss institutions (that are part of the SEMP) have an account from which they can access the EWP Dashboard. Some Swiss institutions have already successfully tested the EWP Dashboard and have been able to send information to their partners (still in “test” mode). For the time being, Swiss institutions that use a commercial or in-house solution can also connect to the EWP network. To do so, they need to contact the supplier of their commercial solution – or the IT team of their own institution if it is an in-house solution.

European Student Identifier (ESI) 2.0

The “My Academic ID” project implemented in 2019–2020 aimed to find the best way for European students to identify themselves when applying for a mobility programme abroad. The final product is the MyAcademicID Identity and Access Management Service which enables students on exchange programmes abroad to register and authenticate themselves with higher education institutions, to manage their Erasmus mobility process and to access various student services in Europe. Please note that in the long term, this identification will also enable student files to be shared within the framework of the European Universities project alliances.

How it works

Higher education institutions that are connected to the eduGAIN network (operated by GÉANT) can register their students.

It will thus be possible for students at the university to authenticate themselves in the register:
<https://router.europeanstudentcard.eu/register>.

European Student Card (ESC)

The European student card is a product of the European Student Card initiative. It is a student card issued by an institution, supplemented by a European number, a QR code and a hologram.



Example of a European Student Card – Université Paris Nanterre

² The SCHAC code is the top website domain name of an institution for example Ghent University holds ugent.be as a schac code. The SCHAC code aims at making sure that each institution using platforms under the European Student Card initiative is uniquely identified.

Recognised on the campus of the partner institution, the card provides access to online courses, libraries, payment in the cafeteria and the use of student accommodation services, for example. It is also available in digital format on the Erasmus+ app. The services available are activated according to the specific European higher education institution. The card is created on the initiative of the institution following the registration of the institution on the [Router](#).

This is a key instrument in facilitating student mobility in the *European Education Area by 2025* and in the context of the *Digital Education Action Plan 2021–2027*. The European Commission plans that as many students as possible should have access to the ESC in all Erasmus+ countries by 2025. More information – [European Student Card in 2022](#)

Status

Swiss institutions are connected to the eduGAIN network via SWITCH edu-ID or SWITCHaai ([list of connected Swiss institutions](#)). Swiss institutions have to perform a special additional configuration to generate and issue the ESI. SWITCH is the contact for implementation projects at Swiss institutions.

In order to do so, it is recommended that they comply with the following procedure:

- Contact the IT department of your own university to clarify the purpose of the ESI and to agree on the next steps. SWITCH has already notified IT departments of this information.
- Most universities are already connected to SWITCH edu-ID or SWITCHaai for interfederation, as can be seen here: <https://www.switch.ch/aai/participants/homeorgs/>
- For the option of activating interfederation as well as providing ESIs according to <https://wiki.geant.org/display/SM/European+Student+Identifier>, we recommend that you contact SWITCH via eduid@switch.ch
- Implementation by IT departments will be carried out according to known models, similarly to the provision swissEduPersonUniqueID (unique ID).

According to current information, this would not be supported by any Swiss institution in the SWITCHaai network. However, the ESI could be created in the institutions without necessarily being added to the SWITCHaai identity federations, which would then enable Swiss institutions with a PIC Number ([search by institution](#)) to register on the ESC router (mentioned above).

The Erasmus+ app

The [new Erasmus+ App](#) is one of the most integral parts of the new Erasmus+ programme (2021–2027). It is based on the original app launched in 2017 but has been redesigned to be the sole entry point for Erasmus+ participants. The goal of the app is to guide participants through the entire journey of an Erasmus+ exchange.

Features

The new version, launched in September 2021 (release II), has the following features:

- Private profile with detailed information related to the mobility, linked to the European Student Identifier.
- Access to the Online Learning Agreement ([OLA](#)) for drafting the DLA, Online Linguistic Support ([OLS](#)) and [Skills Assessment](#).
- Find out about events, discounts, advice, and stories concerning your destination or tips on how to best prepare for your exchange.
- Mobility destinations possible according to students' home institutions (via the institution's dashboard).
- Applications for mobility and receipt of nominations (via the institution's dashboard).
- Access to the Digital Student Card.

Access

Students can access the app in several ways:

Students can access the app in various ways:

- eduGAIN – academic ID
- eIDAS – national ID
- Google ID

International Relation Offices can send all information directly to the app by accessing the EWP Dashboard (OLA, mobility destinations, etc.).

For a visual representation of the app, please consult the separate PDF, “Zoom on the Erasmus+ App”.

Status

Swiss students can log in to the app with their academic IDs (linked to SWITCH edu or SWITCHaai) or via a Google account. Students can use the OLA platform as long as the Swiss institutions have access.

In the Erasmus+ app, students from Swiss universities can log in, but they cannot use most of the features, as Swiss universities are not mentioned. For this reason, Swiss universities cannot promote their events for incoming students via the app either.

Data protection

In Switzerland, the totally revised Data Protection Act (DPA) and the implementing provisions in the new Data Protection Ordinance (DPO) and the new Ordinance on Data Protection Certifications (DPC) will come into force on 1 September 2023. In particular, data protection will be adapted to technological developments, self-determination over personal data will be strengthened and transparency in the procurement of personal data will be increased.

The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) also applies in Switzerland. The European regulation applies when the personal data processing concerns people established in the European Economic Area.

Current situation for Switzerland

So far, Swiss institutions have been able to connect to EWP and test the tools. However, Movetia cannot guarantee, due to the changeover to the new programme generation 2021–27 (for example with the new Erasmus Charter for higher education), to what extent Swiss institutions will have access to the services or whether it will be (partially) blocked in the future.

Different scenarios and developments to be considered:

- If associated to Erasmus+, Switzerland will have full access to the ESCI tools.
- A partial opening of the tools and services for countries not associated to Erasmus+ is planned. When this will be implemented is not yet known and is not considered a priority.
- Status quo: Swiss institutions are granted provisional access to certain areas. However, this access can also be revoked.

As soon as more updates and innovations become available, Movetia will revise this factsheet.

Useful links

European Commission – European Student Card Initiative

https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-student-card-initiative_en

Erasmus Without Paper

<https://www.erasmuswithoutpaper.eu/>

European Student Card

<https://europeanstudentcard.eu/>

European University Foundation EUF – YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/EuropeanUniversityFoundation>

Agence Erasmus France – Kit d'utilisateurs (in French only)

https://digital.erasmusplus.fr/kit_utilisateurs

Explanatory video “Initiative carte étudiante européenne” (in French only)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJM_epLANmI

“EWP Stats Portal” search engine

<https://stats.erasmuswithoutpaper.eu/>

Contact

If you have any questions, please contact the Movetia agency.

erasmus@movetia.ch