



INTERCONTINENTAL ACADEMIC EXCHANGE PROGRAMME - ICON

Guidelines for Applicants



About the ICon Programme

The **InterContinental Academic Exchange Programme (ICon)** has been created as a result of long-lasting collaboration links between the SGroup Network (and its members) with non-European regions. Its aim is to promote and facilitate collaboration between SGroup members and its overseas partners through a short mobility scheme for academic and administrative staff members. As part of the ICon Programme, member universities can apply for a SGroup scholarship of up to €1000 to visit a partner institution of their choice outside Europe.

The main objectives of this programme are as follows:

- To facilitate collaboration in research and education between the EU and Latin America, China and Africa;
- To encourage joint projects that can be submitted for EU-funding and other relevant programmes;
- To promote true partnerships through the establishment of co-tuition double / multiple / joint degrees.

The ICon Mobility Partnership

The ICon partnership for 2021 is composed of the SGroup member universities on the European side, and institutions of **Latin America (members of the Grupo Montevideo Association)**, **China** and **Africa**. These institutions must represent the quality standards and values inherent to SGroup members, including the three levels of higher education studies.

In the forthcoming years, the programme is expected to expand to other countries and also other strategic regions of collaboration.

The ICon Programme Conditions

The ICon Programme is now open for applications for the year 2021 with the aim of **awarding 6 scholarships for Latin America (members of the Grupo Montevideo Association)**, **6 for China** and **2 for Africa**. Each scholarship is up to 1000 EUR. The application and selection criteria are indicated below.

Only one candidate per SGroup Member University can apply for the programme in each year and for each region.

The candidates will be evaluated by the **SGroup ICon Selection Committee** within **15 working days** after the submission of the application. The application procedure is open continuously until all scholarships for a given year have been awarded.

The duration of the mobility proposal for academic or administrative staff may be **from 7 days up to one month**.

Candidates will be asked to evaluate the mobility from the point of view of the accomplishment of the set goals, both personal and institutional. The results of the evaluation will be reviewed on an annual basis with the aim of ensuring maximum impact of the programme.

Application Procedure

1. General Eligibility Criteria

- Academic or Administrative staff working at SGroup member universities;
- Relevant background regarding cooperation with Latin America, China or Africa;
- Willingness to generate or consolidate cooperation links among the SGroup and the given region;
- Formal support from home and host institutions (support letters) at the stage of the application.

All applicants must receive the formal support from both their home and host institutions by presenting support letters at the stage of the application.

2. Eligibility period

The programme is available for the year 2021 (from January to December 2021) during which 14 scholarships (6 for Latin America, 6 for China and 2 for Africa) of 1000 Euro will be awarded. The programme will run until all scholarships foreseen for 2021 are awarded.

3. Mobility direction

In this fourth edition, the ICon mobility scheme is available in both directions: from Europe to Latin America, China or Africa, or from Latin America, China or Africa to Europe.

4. Application and selection criteria

During the phase of preparing the application, the candidate should go through the following steps:

1. Verify the **eligibility criteria** previously indicated;
2. Provide a short version (maximum 2 pages) of the candidate's **CV**;
3. Provide a **motivation letter** in which the candidate justifies the objectives, impact and possible benefits of the proposed exchange programme both for the candidate and the involved institutions;
4. Provide a **programme of activities** to be carried out during the stay at the host institution;
5. Provide a **Statement of the home institution** with a brief description of the applicant's main activity;
6. Provide a **Letter of support** from the candidate's home institution;
7. Provide a **Letter of support** from the host institution;
8. The application documents must be sent electronically to the SGroup Secretariat at sgroup@sgroup.be;
9. The application process will continue until all grants are awarded for a given year;
10. The application will be evaluated within 15 working days after its submission;
11. The selection results will be communicated by email to the candidate and to the home and host institutions;
12. Candidates are responsible for the organisation of the mobility e.g. contact with the host institution, purchase of the flight ticket and booking accommodation, visa procedures, etc.;
13. The academic and administrative staff exchanges can start at any moment once the selection of applicants is announced and whenever all the mandatory documents (work programme, visa, travel and insurance) are duly prepared;
14. The grant of €1000 is awarded to the selected candidates after the exchange period (through a reimbursement). Participants must present their boarding passes or/and other relevant invoices and the SGroup ICon Selection Committee must approve their end-of-mobility report.

5. Special requirements

Candidates will be asked to:

- Set realistic but relevant goals;
- Identify the impact both at personal and institutional levels;
- Identify the mobility's multiplying effects;
- Represent the excellence of the SGroup Network and its members;
- Report to the Executive Committee after the mobility has taken place. The report will be based on a self-assessment with a special emphasis on the accomplished goals and impact to the network.

The report and the results will be analysed by the Executive Committee on an annual basis and the achievements will be shared during the annual Think Tank Academy and Liaison Officers' meetings, reviewing the impact of the programme. The feedback will be used to make informed decisions about renewing the mobility scheme and assigning financial support accordingly.

6. Obligations of the grantee

The SGroup has the right to **suspend the scholarship** if:

- The grant holder withdraws from the programme except in case of *force majeure*;
- The grant holder does not comply with the internal regulations of the home institution;
- The grant holder does not comply with the internal regulations of the host institution;
- The grantee holder leaves the host institution before the foreseen end of the mobility period;
- The grantee holder does not fulfil the requirements of his study/work programme.

7. Information and support

All the information related to the ICon Programme's implementation can be consulted on the SGroup website <https://sgroup-unis.eu/> and at the following email address of the SGroup Secretariat: sgroup@sgroup-unis.eu.

The Liaison Officers will be in charge of disseminating the information on this opportunity within their institutions and are expected to provide guidance concerning the interpretation of the programmes' criteria.