Annex 2: European Student Identifier factsheet

What is the European Student Identifier (ESI)?

It is a digital identifier enabling students to uniquely identify themselves when they access student mobility services online and for their student status to be automatically verified. It supports and eases international student mobility and trans-national cooperation of higher education institutions. Using ESI is crucial for all sending HEIs to be able to provide mobile students with an identification that will be used during the mobility journey to identify the student.

The [Communication for a European Strategy for Universities](#) endorsed the gradual deployment of the European Student Identifier stating that it will be "available to all mobile students in 2022 and to all students in universities in Europe by mid-2024." It is higher education institutions participating in the Erasmus+ programme that must implement this vision.

The ESI was developed through the [MyAcademicID](#) [EDSSI projects](#). By connecting the relevant European networks of identity providers –such as [eIDAS](#) and [eduGAIN](#)– and implementing a unique European Student Identifier, the project enables students to use either the credentials issued by their home university or their national citizen eID to access different student electronic services when going on mobility abroad, without needing to create new accounts or share their information more than once.

What is it for? What are the benefits now and in the future?

The ESI is crucial to allow the smooth transfer of student data during Erasmus+ mobilities, and it is an essential component to identify the student status through the different Erasmus+ digital tools, including the Erasmus+ App. ESI is the gateway to make the European Student Card available to students through the Erasmus+ App. Currently the digital European Student Card is generated through the ESI which confirms the student status.

The ESI is of paramount importance to build a robust student authentication system, in that it plays a key role in ensuring electronic systems correctly identify students and grant access rights accordingly. This is even more relevant for whitelisted HEIs, as currently they have no alternative ways to release academic attributes.

The ESI being a key element used for student identification means that it is being "carried" as an element of the various EWP APIs to ensure consistent identification of a student at any point of the mobility journey - if it was missing, it would hamper the data exchange chain. ESI is being used as a means of student identification in all systems that have been built for the digital Erasmus+ infrastructure, including the Erasmus+ User Management System and its Beneficiary Module.

The ESI is generated electronically and maintained and stored by the higher education institution, in its student registration system. For universities on the whitelist, the MyAcademicID platform will store this number. Students (or IROs) do not need access to this number, since this is a technical code that is being carried within the network when the student uses MyAcademicID for logging into any Erasmus+ mobility service systems (like the Online Learning Agreement or the Erasmus+ App).

What does the ESI look like?

The European Student Identifier is globally unique, persistent, non-targeted, technically independent and GDPR compliant:

- Globally Unique: Each student should be uniquely identified across organizational and national boundaries
- Persistent: The identifier should follow the student while he/she is on student mobility
- Non-targeted: The identifier should be the same for all services involved in the student mobility processes
- Technically Independent: The identifier is not impacted by the different technologies used by the systems involved during the mobility
- GDPR Compliant: No sensitive data from the student is exposed during the mobility.

The European Student Identifier can take on one of two forms, depending on the qualifiers needed to make a given student code globally unique:

- ESI with nation-wide (or region-wide) scope student code:
  urn:schac:personalUniqueCode:int:esi:<country-code>:<code>

- ESI with HEI-wide scope student code :
  urn:schac:personalUniqueCode:int:esi:<sHO>:<code>

How is ESI issued and by whom?

The optimal issuing process, for institutions which are part of eduGAIN federation, is as follows:

1. The process is initiated by the International Relations Office (or any unit that works with student mobility) at the institutional level by finding the right unit that works with identity management and by providing the necessary instruction for the correct deployment of the ESI.

2. The technical task – the publication of the necessary parameters towards the eduGAIN federation – is done by the IT department.

3. The International Relations Office shares the news with the stakeholders (students, coordinators, student organisations or any other relevant unit at the university).

- For institutions that are not part of eduGAIN and do not have national Identity Providers (IdPs): An alternative technical solution has been developed called the "Identity provider of last resort" (or "IdP of last resort"), which is required to ensure no entities and students are left out. Erasmus+ National Agencies provided the European Commission with a "whitelist" per each country associated to the Erasmus+ programme. There are around 500 institutions on the whitelist across the Erasmus+ programme countries. See more information here

- In practice, this means Erasmus+ students from the whitelisted institutions will be invited by IROs to register on the same platform, where their identity will be validated by the IRO. The MyAcademicID Operator will subsequently generate a European Student Identifier for this student and store it directly in the MyAcademicID platform. This will enable those Erasmus+ students to have access to the Erasmus+ student-facing digital infrastructure. After the application of the student is approved by an IRO, when they log in using Google or their national eID, they will be automatically recognised, and their ESI will be retrieved from the MyAcademicID platform and made available to the relevant service (e.g., Online Learning Agreement).

What is the state of play of issuing ESI?

There is a steady increase of identity providers releasing ESI in the last months with approximately 2216 HEIs releasing the ESI by September 2022.

Where do institutions find support?

Institutions can find information and support on the ESI deployment at the Wiki pages hosted by Géant and EUF and through the FAQ provided by MyAcademicID.

Sources

➢ About - MyAcademicID - European University Foundation (uni-foundation.eu)
➢ Webinar: European Student Identifier - MyAcademicID - European University Foundation (uni-foundation.eu)
➢ MyAcademicID Identity and Access Management Service - Student Mobility - GÉANT federated confluence (geant.org)
➢ European Student Identifier - MyAcademicID - European University Foundation (uni-foundation.eu)