

## Erasmus grants exercise — problem statement

B. Bernárdez et al., An experimental replication on the effect of the practice of mindfulness in conceptual modeling performance, *The Journal of Systems and Software* (2016), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jss.2016.06.104>

The transcript below corresponds to an interview with the Erasmus Coordinator of the Higher Technical School of Informatics Engineering (E.T.S.I. Informática) of the University of Seville (USE) that was held in order to identify the goals and requirements of a web application for managing the processes related to the Socrates–Erasmus program.

**Question:** Well, let's start. As I told you in my previous email, the goal of this interview is to get a first idea of the processes for application and assignment of Socrates–Erasmus program grants in order to computerize as many parts of the processes as possible. I am particularly interested in knowing the information that has to be managed by the web application to be developed.

**Answer:** All right. Where do we start?

**Q:** Let's start by the time an USE student thinks about applying for an Erasmus grant.

**A:** Well, interested students usually browse and query the Erasmus destinations offered by their centres (i.e. faculties or schools) for the next academic year. Each destination has associated information from the host university (e.g. University of Berlin), the student profile (e.g. “last–course students with less than 60 credits left”), the number of students accepted in the exchange, the number of months to stay, etc. If a student finds an appealing destination that fits her profile, then the student must submit an Erasmus Program Application (EPA) to the International Relations Service (IRS) of the USE. We want both the browsing of destinations and the submission of EPAs to be made using the web application to be developed.

**Q:** What information is recorded in the EPA?

**A:** Basically, student data (Tax ID number, name, address, studies in which is enrolled, etc.), requested destinations (up to 12 destinations can be applied for, indicating preference), and qualified foreign languages. Importantly, student information can be checked by the ID in the computer system of the Office of the Vice President for Students using an XML web services interface.

**Q:** Please, tell me about qualified foreign languages.

**A:** Each destination has one or more associated languages that are a requirement for applicants. For example, most universities in countries with little widespread languages (Scandinavian countries, Finland, Poland, Romania, etc.) accept candidates who know their official language or English. Universities in other countries like France or Germany require

almost always French or German at least. In order for a student to get a grant, she must either prove that is qualified for some level of a language (e.g. having passed several language courses, a TOEFL or Proficiency exam, etc.) or seat for the Foreign Language Test (FLT) that is freely organized by the Foreign Language Institute (FLI) for Erasmus applicants without qualified foreign languages.

**Q:** What does the IRS do with the EPAs?

**A:** Once the application period is closed, the IRS draws up a schedule of FLTs. In this schedule, the date, time and location of the FLTs organized by the FLI are indicated. Each applicant must take the FLTs corresponding to requested but non-qualified foreign languages. For example, if a student applies for destinations at universities in Germany and France, she has to take the German and French FLTs, assuming that she is not qualified for any of the two languages. We want both the FLT schedule and their results to be managed by the application and to be consulted via Internet.

**Q:** And once the FLTs have been taken?

**A:** Once the FLTs have been taken, the FLI sends the results to the IRS, where the lists of candidates (LoCs) for each USE centre which has offered destinations—almost all—are elaborated. The candidates are those applicants who are qualified for the requested levels of language of a destination, either because they present some evidence, either because they have passed the FLT for some language associated with a destination. Of course, the idea is that this whole process to be managed by the application and that the LoCs are published on the Internet.

**Q:** What do the faculties and schools with the LoCs?

**A:** In the USE centres, the Erasmus Commissions have to propose which applicants become holders of the grants and which become substitutes and in what order, using the criteria they consider as more appropriate. The lists of holders and substitutes (LoHSs) are sent by the Erasmus Commissions of each centre to the IRS. As I mentioned before, the idea is that the LoHSs are published on the Internet using the application.

**Q:** And what does the IRS do once it knows who are selected to be the grant holders?

**A:** Then it sends a Notification Letter (NL) by registered mail to each student selected as a holder. In the NL, several documents are included, but we can detail that in another interview. So far, we could point out that the web application should automatically send an email to the holders.

**Q:** OK, let's say for the moment that once a student receives the NL, she begins to "enjoy the grant." We will go into detail in the following interview. Thank you for your cooperation.

**A:** You're welcome. Happy to help.