Approval of a proposed exchange programme is a three-stage process:

1.1 Stage 1 – Strategic Approval

Strategic Approval for the proposed exchange programme shall be sought from the University, Schools should contact the Exchange and Study Abroad Manager in the Academic Partnerships Office (APO) in the first instance. Exchange partnerships should not be established in order to satisfy the wish of one particular individual, but rather as a longer-term partnership strategy.

For undergraduate Erasmus exchanges, the University will enter into exchanges of a single term or up to a full academic year in length. For PGT Erasmus exchanges, the University will not enter into agreements that involve more than one term (3-4 months).

It is anticipated that exchanges will be structured so as to satisfy the required process outlined below:

This process is outlined in further detail in section 4 of this policy and process document.

The Departmental Exchange Coordinator must complete the Strategic Approval form and the Risk Assessment of Proposed Partner form, and those forms will then be considered by the Education Strategy Committee and a recommendation made to the Executive Board as appropriate. Scrutiny at this stage will establish a preliminary view regarding the proposal before significant time and resources are invested in more detailed development of the proposal. The decision resulting from the scrutiny of the Stage 1 documentation will be communicated to the Partnership Sponsor and Departmental Exchange Coordinator with guidance regarding the next steps to be taken.
1.2 Stage 2 – Due Diligence and preparation of an Exchange Programme Specification to address programme delivery arrangements

The aim of this stage is to ensure that due diligence processes, which looks at academic, legal and financial information, are completed in an appropriate depth for every proposed partnership. This enables the University to assure itself that the partner and the University have the capacity to successfully deliver the proposed partnership; that risks are identified and mitigated; and confirm the rationale, benefits and opportunities presented by partnership. It is important to bear in mind that due diligence is often a mutual exercise and colleagues should expect to receive requests for similar information from the proposed partner as part of their own due diligence processes.

The Departmental Exchange Coordinator must complete:

- Due Diligence for Student Exchange:– Academic, Financial and Legal form;
- Collaborative Partner Institution Library and Learning Resources form;
- Exchange Programme Specification form.

The completion of these forms will provide an opportunity to explore elements of the proposed exchange programme including:

- definition of scope and fit with Brunel programmes – School/Subject Area/Programme/Level;
- definition of permitted schemes of study (modules) at the host institution for students on given Brunel programmes;
- definition of incoming student prior learning and English Language requirements;
- definition of module credit equivalence and the grade importation mapping for any outgoing student on the exchange programme (for European exchanges this is defined straightforwardly through ECTS);
- definition of support services available for incoming and outgoing students; academic management arrangements for the proposed partnership; definition of applicability of University and host institution regulations to students whilst on exchange; identification of key co-ordinators for the exchange programme at both Brunel and the host institution;
- definition of legal liabilities.

Visit to proposed partners

The requirement for a visit to the proposed partner institution will be established at Stage 1. The purpose and details of any visits will be agreed at stage 2, when information about particular aspects for follow-up will be available.

The completion of these forms will require potential partner institutions to provide detailed evidence regarding its own management and governance structures, resources and quality assurance. The information provided in the documentation and the visit report will be scrutinised by a specially convened panel with input from legal and financial expertise as necessary to ensure that the proposed partnership does not pose any unreasonable reputational or financial risk to the University and to make a recommendation to the Learning and Teaching Committee and Education Strategy Committee as appropriate.
1.3 Stage 3 – Full Approval
The Vice-Principal (Education and International) on behalf of Senate will normally approve exchange partnerships, and only in exceptional cases will the full membership of Senate be asked to approve the partnership. Following approval, the full exchange agreement will be prepared by colleagues in the Academic Partnerships Office and sent to the proposed partner for their consideration and signature (Inter-Institutional Agreement if Erasmus). The signed partnership agreement will then be presented to the Vice-Principal (Education and International) for final consideration and signature.

Partnership agreements cannot be entered into or signed by individuals or Schools/subject areas and can only be signed by the Vice-Chancellor (or their nominated representative).

2. Before mobility

Please note that this document uses the term ‘mobility’ to define the time spent at a host institution.

2.1 Individual outgoing Brunel students:

Before a student may commence their exchange programme, they must gain approval from their School and the host institution for the specific scheme of studies they will follow in the host institution within the constraints of the defined exchange programme approved by the University as in stage 2 above. This approval is formalised in a Learning Agreement for the student (signed by the student, the School and the host institution). The Learning Agreement shall include a definition of the Brunel credit equivalence of the specific modules to be taken at the host institution. The Learning Agreement requires a signature from the Institutional Coordinator; the Exchange and Study Abroad Manager will fulfil this role. Copies of the signed Learning Agreement shall be provided to the student and kept by APO, School and host institution.

The APO must provide each student with an International Risk Awareness Checklist to complete and submit prior to the student’s participation in the exchange.

Students wishing to commence an Erasmus exchange programme must also enter into a Student Mobility Agreement; completion of this agreement is facilitated by the Exchange and Study Abroad Manager.

Students may not commence their exchange programme until all required documentation has been completed and submitted.

A pre-departure briefing will be provided by the School and the APO that will address induction and on-going support for exchange students. The School briefing will be provided in line with guidance in the Departmental Exchange Coordinator Handbook and the Exchange Student Handbook (an example Handbook from the School of Social Sciences can be found on the University’s Quality Assurance webpages).
The Registry will enter the individual scheme of studies as defined in the Learning Agreement into the SITS student record system for later entry of grades and production of transcript.

2.2 Individual incoming students:

Applications are co-ordinated by the Exchange and Study Abroad Manager who gains confirmation of availability of modules and (if applicable) appropriateness of entry qualifications; the application is then forwarded to Registry Admissions for processing and the offer of an Associate Student place.

3. **During mobility**

Incoming and outgoing students shall be provided with the support as set out in the partnership agreement; key coordinators for the exchange programme at Brunel and the host institution shall communicate any issues and will, where necessary, follow the University’s Student Placement Emergency Procedure.

4. **After mobility**

4.1 Individual outgoing Brunel students

After students return to Brunel, the APO will receive an official transcript for each student from the host institution. The Exchange and Study Abroad Manager will forward the transcript on to the relevant School’s administrative staff who will then liaise with the Departmental Exchange Coordinator. A process of moderated grade importation must then take place in the School. For international exchange programmes (i.e. non-Erasmus) students are required to submit to their School a portfolio of all assessed work undertaken and assessed at the receiving institution. For Erasmus exchange programmes, the ECTS grade importation methodology shall be followed; please refer to the University’s Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy.

The Departmental Exchange Coordinator must, together with colleagues from the subject area as appropriate, review the student’s transcript and portfolio, and complete the ‘Graded Exemptions Moderation’ form. This form sets out the Departmental Exchange Coordinator’s recommendation of the student’s imported grades for the modules studied at the host institution.

An Exchange Moderation Panel (including External Examiner(s), an officer and chaired by the relevant Department’s Chair of the Panel of Examiners) shall then be convened, which shall be responsible for confirmation of Brunel grades for the graded exemptions. Care should be taken to ensure that there is no conflict of interest between members of the Exchange Moderation Panel and the student. The Exchange Moderation Panel shall take place in a timely manner in order to avoid delays for the student. The Exchange Moderation Panel shall be provided with the completed Graded Exemption Moderation form and have available to it the student’s portfolio of assessed work (international exchanges only), the transcript from the host institution, the student’s Learning Agreement and the Exchange Programme Specification.

Once the Exchange Moderation Panel has agreed the imported marks/grades, the External Examiner and the Chair will sign the Graded Exemption Moderation form. Once signed by all
parties, the Graded Exemption Moderation form should be submitted to the TAG office to record the outcome on SITS, copying in the APO.

The relevant Board of Examiners will consider the student profile, including the imported grades, in the normal manner.

4.2 Individual Incoming students

For incoming exchange students, transcripts must be made available within five weeks of their return to their home institution. Panels of Examiners must take place in a timely manner, therefore, and, following the confirmation of grades by the relevant Panel of Examiners, the School will provide the student and their home institution with a transcript within one week of the Panel. The Departmental Exchange Coordinator must ensure that copies of all transcripts for departing exchange students are provided to both those students and their home institution.

5. Transcripts (Brunel students)

The student’s extended transcript shall, for the period covered by the exchange programme, state the specific modules taken at the host institution, the Brunel equivalent credit rating, ECTS credit rating and Brunel imported grade.

6. Reviewing exchange agreements

The Exchange Programme Specification and the exchange partnership agreement will give the framework for the delivery and management of the programme and normal annual monitoring processes and quality assurance mechanisms should be followed. Modifications to the partnership agreement can be outlined in amendments to the formal agreement, which may be made as a result of annual monitoring or periodic review, for example. When reviewing exchange agreements, it is imperative that any modifications are taken into account and that the equivalency of the learning outcomes is maintained. A review of each agreement is compulsory prior to the renewal of any agreement.

7. Renewing exchange agreements

Renewal arrangements for exchange partnerships are outlined in the exchange agreement. In order to renew an exchange agreement, a case must be made regarding the on-going viability of that agreement. The Renewal of a Student Exchange Partnership form must be completed by the Departmental Exchange Coordinator and submitted to the Academic Partnerships Office by the end of November each year in order for agreements to be renewed for the next academic year. That case for renewal will then be subject to scrutiny by Education Strategy Committee and the University’s Learning and Teaching Committee, as appropriate, to ensure that the exchange agreement remains appropriate.

8. Terminating exchange agreements

The delivering School should plan for the orderly closing down of the partnership within the contracted period of notice. Any legal, financial or resource aspects must be managed as part of this process. Throughout the termination process, both partners must consider their obligations
to offer support to students (or applicants) in order to ensure that they are able to complete their studies within the expected registration period. A clause pertaining to termination will be included in each exchange partnership agreement.

Pro-Vice Chancellor (Quality Affairs)

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