



# **Study Abroad/Student Exchange**

## **Programmes:**

## **Policy and Process**

## **Documentation Management**

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## **1. Introduction**

All UK higher education providers, must demonstrate the following Core Practices set out in [The Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education \(2018\)](#):

*"Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure, irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them"*

A student's period abroad under a Study Abroad/Exchange agreement normally contributes to the student's final award through importation of grades, and it is therefore important that the quality and standards of the student's academic study are assured through scrutiny of the providing institution.

This document provides specific advice and guidance to staff who wish to develop Study Abroad/Exchange partnerships. Partnership proposals can originate from various sources, including senior management, Colleges, individuals or prospective national or international partner institutions. In all cases there will need to be a preliminary evaluation of the fit of the partnership to the University's strategy, after which the process will depend on the risk level of the partnership.

The Academic Partnerships Office (APO) will offer guidance regarding the process and requirements to prepare a submission for approval.

**This policy should be read alongside [Managing Partnerships: Code of Practice](#) which provides details of setting up and managing partnerships.**

## **2. Approval of Proposed Study Abroad/Exchange Programmes**

Approval of a proposed Study Abroad/Exchange programme is initiated by completing the [Study Abroad and Student Exchange Partnership Proposal form](#), which requires information on the proposed partnership to allow an initial evaluation of the proposal. This will be undertaken by the Vice-Provost (International and Academic Partnerships) in consultation with the College Vice-Deans (International), and the outcome of this risk-based evaluation will confirm the required stages, additional information and timeframe for completing the partnership development and approval.

## **3. Specific Considerations relating to Study Abroad/Student Exchanges**

a) Please note that for undergraduates, the University will enter into study abroad/exchanges of a single term or a full academic year in length at Level 5. For postgraduate taught exchanges, the University will not enter into agreements that involve more than one term (3-4 months).

b) The Exchange Programme Specification Form should be completed to ensure that details of the proposed Study Abroad/Exchange is captured succinctly before it is approved. An indicative module mapping is recommended, but this will have to be confirmed for each individual student at the time of Study Abroad/Exchange (see below), as the curriculum at Brunel and host

institution may change over time.

#### **4. Managing the delivery of a Study Abroad/Exchange Programme**

##### **BEFORE MOBILITY**

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

##### **Individual Outgoing Brunel students:**

Before a student can commence their Study Abroad/Exchange programme, they must gain approval from their College and the host institution for the specific scheme of studies they will follow in the host institution within the constraints of the defined Study Abroad/Exchange programme approved by the University. This approval is formalised in a Learning Agreement for the student (signed by the student, the relevant Brunel Department/Division and the host institution):

- [Erasmus+ Exchange Learning Agreement](#)
- [Study Abroad/Exchange Learning Agreement](#)

The Learning Agreement shall include a definition of the Brunel credit equivalence of the specific modules to be taken at the host institution. Copies of the signed Learning Agreement shall be provided to the student and kept by the APO, College 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 Study Abroad/Exchange.

Students wishing to commence an Erasmus+ exchange programme must also enter into a Grant Agreement; completion of this agreement is facilitated by the APO.

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

A pre-departure briefing will be provided by the College and the APO, which will address induction and on-going support for Study Abroad/Exchange students. The College briefing will be provided in line with guidance in the Handbook for Academic Exchange Coordinators (under review) along with the Erasmus+ Student Handbook (under review) and the Exchange Student Handbook (under review).

##### **Individual Incoming students:**

Applications are co-ordinated by the APO in consultation with the relevant Department and Admissions.

##### **DURING MOBILITY**

Incoming and outgoing students shall be provided with the support as set out in the partnership

agreement. Key coordinators for the Study Abroad/Exchange programme at Brunel and the host institution shall communicate any issues and will, where necessary, follow the University's [Student Placement Emergency Procedure](#).

## **AFTER MOBILITY**

### **Transcripts**

After students return to Brunel, the APO will receive an official transcript for each student from the host institution which will then be forwarded to the Academic Exchange Coordinator.

The student's extended transcript shall, for the period covered by the Study Abroad/Exchange programme, state the specific modules taken at the host institution, the Brunel equivalent credit rating, ECTS credit rating if appropriate, and the imported grade. Grades are imported according to the approved grade translation mechanism for that particular host institution.

#### **Individual Outgoing Brunel students**

The Academic Exchange Coordinator will be responsible for completing the [Block Exemption and Grade Importation Form](#) and sending it to TAG, with copy to the APO, who will record the outcomes in SITS.

The relevant Board of Examiners will consider the student's profile, including the imported grades, in the normal manner. This includes providing reassessment as required.

#### **Individual Incoming students**

For incoming Study Abroad/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 College will provide the student and their home institution with a transcript within one week of the Panel. The International Mobility Manager must ensure that copies of all transcripts for departing Study Abroad/Exchange students are provided to both those students and their home institution.

## **5. Study Abroad/Exchange Programme Management**

The Exchange Programme Specification and the Study Abroad/Exchange Partnership Agreement will give the framework for the delivery and management of the programme. Normal University 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 Study Abroad/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.

### **Renewing Agreements**

Renewal arrangements for exchange partnerships are outlined in the Study Abroad/Exchange

agreement. In order to renew an 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 Academic Exchange Coordinator and submitted to the APO by the end of **November** each year in order for agreements to be renewed for the following academic year. That case for renewal will then be subject to scrutiny by a panel chaired by the Vice-Provost (International and Academic Partnerships).

### **Terminating Agreements**

Study Abroad/Exchange partnership agreements may terminate through the natural completion of the agreed partnership or by either party initiating the termination of the partnership within the terms of the agreement.