

## **Annex A: support for students undertaking exchanges/study abroad**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Study Abroad (SA) is defined as a period spent following a course of study (this may include a research project) in a Higher Education Institution overseas and is normally undertaken through a University approved exchange scheme. Where a student is undertaking a project in a University which is not an exchange partner a full evaluation of the host institution must be undertaken, and responsibilities agreed in writing, as set out in [QA6 Placement Learning](#).
- 1.2 The University has a duty of care towards its students undertaking SA and should take reasonable steps to ensure that students are adequately supported before during and after SA.

### **2. Roles and responsibilities**

- 2.1 The Director of Administration is responsible for ensuring that the Faculty / School provides a team to administer and provide support for SA and that staff are suitably equipped and supported to take up their roles.
- 2.2 The Head of Department is responsible for ensuring that academic and pastoral support roles are allocated appropriately and that an academic member of staff is appointed as Unit Convenor to the SA unit.
- 2.3 The Director of Studies is responsible for oversight of the SA unit within the programme of study.
- 2.4 The Unit Convenor is responsible for overseeing delivery and monitoring and review of the SA unit.
- 2.5 A member or members of staff must be appointed to support the administrative and pastoral, and academic elements of SA including evaluation of the SA and providing support for students.
- 2.6 Each student should be appointed an Academic Supervisor who is responsible for providing academic support and in particular, assessing the student's progress. The academic supervisor should normally be a member of staff within the Education and Research Job Family e.g. the student's academic advisor.
- 2.7 The roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in SA should be clearly established and communicated. The primary point of contact for a student on SA should be identified.

### **3. Support prior to embarking on Study Abroad (SA)**

- 3.1 Where teaching and/or assessment, in the host institution, is not in English, SA staff must be assured of a student's ability to complete a course of study in the language

of the host institution. The minimum requirements for language competency, set by the host institution, are normally stipulated in the exchange agreement.

- 3.2 Prior to going out on SA, all students should be fully briefed on their rights and responsibilities by the departmental exchange coordinator. This information must be provided in writing and cover the following:
- learning outcomes of the SA and how these will be assessed
  - making unit choices, including information on assessment practice, at the host institution
  - the criteria for translating credit and/or marks achieved at the host institution arrangements and expectations for communication (see 4.4) and details of principal contacts, including their Academic Supervisor, whom to contact in an emergency and the University's 24 hour security phone number to be used in case of an emergency out of hours
  - the student's responsibility to maintain contact with their designated contact at the University
  - cultural orientation and expectations
  - Health and Safety information and risks relevant to particular countries
  - any legal or ethical considerations
  - the need for personal insurance cover
  - any language or skills preparation available to them
  - the Department/School and University support services available to students whilst on SA
  - local legislation on equality and diversity and support for disabled students will apply and may differ from that which is provided in the UK
  - information on dealing with problems and complaints.

Advice is available from the International Relations Office to support exchange coordinators in this role.

### **Equality and Diversity**

- 3.3 Departments should take reasonable steps to ensure that students will study in an environment in which they are treated equally, whilst recognising any differences in the legal and cultural rules and standards of the host nation which may not accord with equalities legislation in the United Kingdom. For exchanges with universities in countries where there is no comparable equalities legislation (e.g. with regard to race, disability, gender, age, religion, sexuality), it is the duty of the exchange coordinator to brief the student on the difficulties which may be associated with undertaking the exchange and to help the individual to make an informed decision about undertaking it. Advice on local law and custom is available from the International Mobility Office and from the [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office](#).

### **Health and Safety**

- 3.4 Exchange coordinators should take steps to provide students with the means to make informed decisions about undertaking an exchange, particularly with regard to any legal and cultural differences which may be associated with a particular exchange.
- 3.5 Exchange coordinators should seek information which allows the approving body to be satisfied that that exchange partners have appropriate health and safety procedures in place which comply with the requirements of the host country.
- 3.6 If the study programme of outgoing Bath students will include laboratory elements,

exchange coordinators should evaluate the level of risk in discussion with their exchange partner contacts and ascertain how students will be briefed to mitigate the risk, and the level of supervision at the host institution. A visit to the partner institution is strongly recommended in this context.

- 3.7 A similar risk evaluation should also be undertaken if the study programme includes work experience organised by the exchange partner. Again information should be sought on how students and employers will be briefed and the level of oversight the host institution will have.
- 3.8 The University Health, Safety and Environment Service (UHSE) and the International Mobility Office can provide advice and support in evaluating exchange opportunities

### **Insurance**

- 3.9 Exchange coordinators should verify that exchange partners have insurance cover in accordance with the laws of the host country, and whether this includes public liability insurance. If the study programme includes work experience organised by the partner, the exchange coordinator should also clarify whether students will be covered by the companies' employer's liability insurance policies.
- 3.10 Outgoing exchange students will be personally responsible for taking out an insurance policy to cover medical expenses, personal injury and accident benefit, personal belongings, cancellation and curtailment expenses, personal liability and legal expenses, while overseas.

## **4 Support during Study Abroad**

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of SA staff to ensure that students follow a course of study at the host institution which enables them to meet the learning outcomes of the SA unit. A course of study, to be undertaken at the host institution, must be approved by SA staff prior to or at the outset of the SA.
- 4.2 Students should be supported throughout their SA and reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that:
- the student is progressing satisfactorily in their course of study;
  - the student is satisfied with the course of study they are following and receiving adequate support from the host provider;
  - sufficient progress is being made for the student to meet the learning outcomes of the SA unit;
  - adequate health and safety measures are in place.
- 4.3 All departments should develop protocols for supporting students during and after SA, which should be approved by their Faculty/School Learning Teaching and Quality Committee. Protocols should include guidance for staff on how to conduct a visit or how to manage support mechanisms if a visit is impractical.
- 4.4 Contact should be made several times with students on SA – on arrival to confirm that arrangements at the provider are adequate and thereafter during the SA as often as is necessary. Students should be made aware that they are expected to contact the SA staff if they have any areas of concern during their placement.

- 4.5 Departments are encouraged to visit students on SA, where practical. Where it is impractical for students to be visited, departments must have mechanisms in place for providing commensurate support for students.
- 4.6 The University's [Procedure](#) for responding to significant events overseas sets out the processes which to be followed should an emergency situation arise.

## 5 Assessment

- 5.1 The criteria for assessment of SA units must be made clear in the unit description and all information to students on the SA unit. Where credit and/or marks are considered as part of the assessment of the SA unit, there must be clear criteria/guidelines in place for their translation into University of Bath credit and/or marks. It is good practice for these guidelines to be agreed with the External Examiner for the unit and subsequently by the Department Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee.
- 5.2 Where SA contributes to the degree classification, the External Examiners should be involved in approving the final marks for the unit under standard Board of Examiners processes.
- 5.3 If a student fails the SA component of their programme, on their return to full time education within the University he/she will normally change to studying a related degree without SA, where this option exists.
- 5.4 If a student fails the SA component of their programme, on a programme where there is no related degree without SA, where possible, the student will be given the opportunity to repeat the SA either at the same host institution or with an alternative institution. Where a student fails the SA, and where there is no other means of achieving the learning outcomes of the SA, and no alternative programme exists, the student will be required to withdraw from the programme.

## 6 Premature termination of SA

- 6.1 If a SA opportunity is terminated prematurely:
- the student should contact a member of SA staff immediately (except where the SA opportunity has been terminated by the University)
  - it is the responsibility of the Director of Studies to decide whether the student should continue with the programme and therefore to look for an alternative means of achieving the learning outcomes of the SA unit
  - where the Director of Studies has agreed that the student may continue on the SA unit, it may be the responsibility of the student to find an alternative means of achieving the learning outcomes of the unit. Where the placement opportunity has been terminated through no fault of the student, SA staff will make every effort to assist the student in finding an alternative
  - where a student is unable to secure another means of achieving the learning outcomes of the SA unit, or the Director of Studies considers that it would not be appropriate for the student to continue, the student will be required to suspend their studies for the remainder of that stage. With the agreement of the Director of Studies, the student may repeat the SA. Where the student is unable to repeat the SA, the procedures set out in 5.3 will apply
  - Individual Mitigating Circumstances may apply.

## **7 Return from Study Abroad**

- 7.1 SA Students should be provided with a re-induction to the University which should take into consideration both their academic and welfare needs.
- 7.2 On return from SA, students should be asked for an evaluation of their experience at the host institution, which should cover the academic elements of the unit and the level of support they received from the University and the host. A record of this evaluation should be kept by the department and it should form part of the evaluation process for renewal of the exchange arrangement.