



Quality Assurance Code of Practice

Student Exchange Arrangements

This document is primarily intended for: Departmental /School/ Faculty Exchange coordinators; Directors of Studies, Staff and Students interested, involved in or responsible for Programmes which include study abroad/exchange agreements.

First point of contact: Assistant Registrars

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[Annex A](#) – Support for students undertaking exchanges/study abroad

[QA37 Form 1](#) - New student exchange proposal

[QA37 Form 3](#) - Memorandum of Agreement For Student Exchanges

[QA37 Form 4](#) - Renewal of exchanges

1 Definition, purpose and scope

- 1.1 This statement sets out the principles to be considered and the procedures to be followed in the establishment, renewal and termination of arrangements with overseas partner institutions for the exchange of students registered on courses leading to an award from the University.
- 1.2 Guidelines for supporting students undertaking approved exchanges are set out in Annex A.

- 1.3 Study abroad is defined as learning achieved during an agreed period, generally one year or one semester, at a Higher Education institution in a country outside the United Kingdom, and where the learning outcomes are an integral part of and contribute to¹ the programme of study.
- 1.4 Where new partnerships which are wider than student exchanges alone are under consideration, this statement needs to be read in conjunction with [QA20 Collaborative Provision](#).
- 1.5 Where students undertake *work placements* while based at a partner institution under an overseas exchange arrangement [QA6 Placement Learning](#) should also be consulted.

2 Principles

- 2.1 The [University strategy](#) recognises that extending opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate mobility will help our students to enhance their employability in the global recruitment market and create the networks of the future.
- 2.2 Study abroad is normally undertaken at exchange partner institutions and with exchange student status. Students on exchange are registered both at their host institution and their home institution during their exchange period. They continue to pay tuition fees to their home institution but pay no tuition fees to their host institution.
- 2.3 Other opportunities for students to study abroad as visiting (fee-paying) students at non-partner institutions are sometimes available. The International Mobility Officer, International Relations Office (IRO) can be contacted for advice.

3 General criteria

- 3.1 Exchange partnerships should widen and develop learning opportunities to support or enhance the academic standard of the award and the learning experience for students.
- 3.2 Exchange partnerships are developed for Bath students on specified degree courses which integrate study abroad in the design of their degree scheme. Study abroad units should have clearly defined learning outcomes, integral to the programme of study clearly set out in information provided to students and staff. This information may include course specifications, course handbooks, and/or study abroad handbooks.
- 3.3 Institutions to be considered as potential exchange partners must be listed by the [ENIC-NARIC network](#) as recognised Higher Education institutions.
- 3.4 Exchange agreements involve the two-way exchange of students. A key criterion for approval will be the expectation that a broadly equivalent number of students will move annually between the two institutions and over the whole period of the agreement, so that the benefits of Bath students studying at the partner institution offset the cost of partner students studying at Bath.

¹ Integral to course/contributing to award: Both expressions cover a range of situations. Study abroad may be integral and contributory in the “hard” sense of a compulsory year abroad where the marks achieved abroad count towards the final degree classification (e.g. BA in Modern Languages & European Studies), or the “soft” sense of an optional year abroad during which the student only needs to achieve a pass in the courses taken abroad and can toggle between the standard programme and the programme with Study Year Abroad (e.g. BSc Physics/BSc Physics with Study Year Abroad), or a range of circumstances between these two.

- 3.5 Bids to participate in other Erasmus+ project-based programmes that provide for consortia hosting one another's students with no tuition fee or a reduced tuition fee will also be subject to the test of balance in the numbers to be exchanged. The International Mobility Officer (IRO) should be consulted from the outset on any such proposals.
- 3.6 Proposals for new or renewing exchange agreements which will be unbalanced numerically but are expected to bring exceptional indirect benefits can be considered on their individual merits (see para 5.3).

Exchange partnership limitations

- 3.7 Bath students going out on exchange will have access to the exchange agreements linked to their course and held by their Department/School or Faculty. They will not normally have access to exchanges held by other Departments within or outside their Faculty.
- 3.8 Incoming exchange students will normally be registered in the Department/School which holds the exchange agreement. In the case of Faculty exchange agreements, they will normally be registered in one of the Departments of that Faculty. In the small minority of Faculty-level exchanges where other Departments outside that Faculty will be expected to register incoming exchange students, the Departments will receive the agreed internal fee² and their consent or the authority of the Dean of their Faculty(ies)/the School will be required during the exchange approval process.

Sustainability

- 3.9 The University of Bath recognises its responsibility to maintain its capacity to supply exchange places for those courses with study abroad arrangements, where course information advertises such opportunities.
- 3.10 The specific criteria for approval and renewal of exchanges are set out in para 5.16 below. In particular there must be an adequate standard of support for students both outgoing and incoming, including effective briefing before and upon arrival to prepare them for the different national, cultural and organisational systems to be expected at each institution (see Annex A).

4 Exchange Coordinators

- 4.1 Deans/Associate Deans are responsible for designating School/Faculty exchange coordinators and Heads of Departments are responsible for designating Department exchange coordinators.
- 4.2 Exchange coordinators are responsible for:
- representing exchange students' needs and issues in the decisions and other arrangements in the Department/School/Faculty
 - acting as a point of contact for exchange partners
 - ensuring that exchange agreements are put forward for renewal on schedule
 - coordinating the research and preparation of Department and/or Faculty-level exchanges including preparatory visits and renewal of proposals, and completion of the relevant documents
 - publicising and advising on exchange opportunities in place for the course, and any criteria for eligibility e.g. grade thresholds

² Agreed internal fee: This will be agreed annually between the Deans of Faculty and the International Mobility Officer, in consultation with the Finance Office.

- oversight of outgoing exchange students including briefing outgoing students in preparation for their exchange learning opportunities and pastoral elements (see Annex A)
- communicating with and/or arranging visits to students on exchange
- admissions decisions on incoming exchange students
- advising incoming exchange applicants on potential unit choices, welcoming and advising them on arrival, administering and monitoring their enrolment, progress, welfare arrangements and acting as their personal tutor
- liaising with the International Mobility Officer on feedback from both incoming and outgoing students
- ensuring that details of all outgoing students are recorded on the Placements Information Management System (PIMS) by the end of June for students leaving in Semester 1, and end of November for students leaving in Semester 2
- communicating with other Departmental and Faculty coordinators as appropriate

Other Departmental/Faculty staff may assist with or complete some of the above tasks, working with the exchange coordinator (see also Annex A: support for students undertaking study year abroad).

5 Approval of new exchange proposals (see also flowchart, page 13)

- 5.1 Proposals for new student exchanges may arise from a variety of sources e.g. a specific need for additional places on an individual course, or a new Strategic Partner presenting opportunities for student exchange.
- 5.2 Exchanges may be:
- single-Department/School: involving one or more than one course within a Department/the School
 - Faculty level: involving more than one Department in a Faculty
 - cross-Faculty: involving Departments in more than one Faculty/the School.

Exceptional grounds for approval

- 5.3 Where a Department/School/Faculty believes that an exchange (new or renewal) will bring exceptional indirect benefits but it does not align fully with the principles set out in para 3 and is not supported by the International Relations Office, the relevant Associate Dean (International) should be consulted. Where the Associate Dean (International) agrees that there is a case for proceeding, [QA37 Form 1](#), New Student Exchanges, should be submitted to Academic Programmes Committee (APC) for consideration. If APC supports the proposal, the exchange approval process will then be completed in the normal way. Generic secondary benefits applicable to most exchange partnerships, such as the potential for recruiting incoming exchange students for postgraduate degrees at the University of Bath, will not be considered as exceptional grounds.

Preparatory work

- 5.4 The approval process involves consultation and the gathering and evaluation of information, on standard documents, to assure conformity with the principles and criteria set out above and to provide adequate information for students and staff from both Bath and the partner institution.

Consultation

- 5.5 The following should be consulted as part of the approval and document preparation process:

- the partner institution
- the International Mobility Officer, IRO
- the Departmental exchange coordinators of all participating Departments
- the Faculty exchange coordinators (where in place) for Faculty level proposals
- Heads of Departments of other participating Departments, (noting that in some cases Departments other than those formally involved in the exchange may be registering incoming students for the agreed internal fee)
- for Faculty and cross-Faculty exchanges, the relevant Associate Deans to confirm that the proposed exchange fits well with Faculty strategy
- the University's Legal Adviser for agreements where the partner has requested changes to the Bath template or where the partner's template has been used.

5.6 In particular, the International Relations Office (IRO) should be asked to confirm that:

- there is likely to be regular, ongoing demand for this country and institution
- numbers are likely to be reasonably balanced
- the institution is recognised by ENIC-NARIC
- they are not aware of the University of Bath having had any prior adverse experience(s) with this institution
- they are not aware of anything adverse in the institution's reputation

and their advice sought on any issues around equality and diversity, health and safety, and insurance.

5.7 The Head of Department should be asked to approve proposals and renewals for Departmental exchanges in their initial stages of development, confirming that the proposed exchange fits well with Departmental strategy, and the relevant Associate Dean(s) (), that there is a fit with Faculty strategy for Faculty/cross Faculty exchanges.

5.8 The International Relations Office have produced a checklist for use in initial discussions within the Department, Faculty and with potential partner institutions.

Documentation for new exchanges

5.9 The documents supporting the approval of new exchanges, to be completed by the Departmental/Faculty exchange coordinator in liaison with the exchange partner are:

- [QA37 Form 1 Approval of new student exchanges](#) – internal approval form: captures course-related detail for approval at Faculty/institutional level
- In addition a signed legal agreement drawn up by the International Relations Office, working in conjunction with the exchange coordinator and as necessary the Legal Office, is always required to formalise the terms of the commitment between the two institutions: either
 - [QA37 Form 3 Memorandum of Agreement for Student Exchanges](#) is the University's standard template. This can be altered, or the partner's template used instead, provided that it is checked by the University's Legal Adviser for legal aspects and by the International Partnerships Officer (IRO) for non-legal, practical aspects. Work should begin on drawing up the legal agreement at the same time as the exchange is going forward for approval.

- 5.10 The International Relations Office can advise on generic University of Bath information for all forms.

Formal Approval

- 5.11 New student exchanges are approved at Faculty/School Learning Teaching and Quality Committee (F/SLTQC) and then on behalf of the University by the Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee (CPAC). Submission of the paperwork to the F/SLTQC assumes that the Heads of all participating Departments have agreed to the proposal going forward and for Faculty or cross Faculty exchanges the Associate Dean(s)() should also approve the proposal.
- 5.12 The standard period of approval is for five years.
- 5.13 If strategic issues which are likely to be of institutional concern are identified either by the F/SLTQC or by CPAC these should be referred to the Academic Programmes Committee for decision as to whether the proposal may proceed.

Stage 1 Faculty/School approval

- 5.14 A F/SLTQC may require the DLTQCs to review proposals and make recommendations to the F/SLTQC as the first stage of the approval process. If this is the case the steps set out in 5.15 – 5.18 below will be followed at Departmental level. The Assistant Registrar can advise if this stage is required.
- 5.15 The exchange coordinator submits to the F/SLTQC [QA37 Form 1](#) (new student exchanges). For exchanges on degree courses which are cross-Faculty (e.g. IMML) individual submissions should be made to the F/SLTQC of each participating Department.
- 5.16 The Committee will use the following specific criteria in deciding whether to recommend approval of the exchange. There is, or is likely to be:
- a need to support compulsory study abroad or demand for optional study abroad on the degree course;
 - enhancement of the course(s) and the student experience resulting from the exchange;
 - regular, ongoing demand for this country and institution;
 - a reasonable balance in the numbers exchanged;
 - high academic quality;
 - evident good academic fit, linguistic viability and compatible academic arrangements;
 - effective support for students on exchange;
 - evidence that equality and diversity and health, safety and insurance issues have been considered and that students will be briefed as appropriate;
 - adequate and appropriate facilities, particularly specialised facilities related to the programme of study, available at the partner institution for Bath students' use.
- 5.17 Where the new exchange institution is with an existing exchange and/or Strategic Partner, the Committee is able to take account of due diligence which has already taken place and ongoing evaluation of any recent and current exchanges in reaching its decision. The International Relations Office can advise in this respect.
- 5.18 The Committee(s) may take one of three decisions:
- agree to recommend that the proposal goes forward for institutional approval, which may be subject to provision of additional or clarifying information to the satisfaction of the Chair;
 - agree to request provision of additional information to be considered at the next meeting;
 - agree not to recommend the proposal for approval.

Stage 2 – Institutional approval

- 5.19 The Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee receives [QA37 Form 1](#) (new student exchanges) with the recommendation and any minuted discussion from the F/SLTQC. The criteria for approval are as listed above in 5.16.
- 5.20 The Committee(s) may take one of the following three decisions:
- agree to approve the new exchange on behalf of the University; this may be subject to provision of additional or clarifying information to the satisfaction of the Chair;
 - agree to request provision of additional information to be considered at the next meeting;
 - agree not to approve the proposal.
- 5.21 Subsequent to approval the International Relations Office will liaise with the exchange co-ordinator and Legal Office to complete legal agreement required to finalise the exchange (see para 7 below).

6 [Renewal of exchanges \(see also flowchart, page 14\)](#)

Preparatory work

- 6.1 At least three semesters (i.e. approximately 18 months) before an exchange is due to expire a review should be conducted by the Department/School/Faculty to ensure that any decision not to renew is taken before commitments are made to incoming and outgoing students and to ensure that an adequate supply of exchange places remains available to students. The International Relations Office will remind Departments, Faculties, the School at an appropriate point for exchanges which are approaching their renewal date.
- 6.2 In renewing exchanges the emphasis is on evaluation of student experience and demand based on evidence from individual student evaluations, recent periodic review (Degree Scheme Review), and annual monitoring, and evaluation of the relationship with the partner.

Consultation

- 6.3 The same range of people should be involved in renewal as with initial consultations for new exchanges – see para 5.5. Confirmation of support must be provided by the International Relations Office (IRO), as set out in para 5.6.

Documentation for renewal

- 6.4 The exchange coordinator (or equivalent) submits to the Head of Department (or, in the School of Management the Associate Dean ()) form QA37 Form 4 setting out the case for renewal and referring to the evidence mentioned in 6.2 above.
- 6.5 Submission of the paperwork to the Head of Department/ Associate Dean (Education) in the School of Management assumes that the Head(s) of all participating Departments and in the case of Faculty and cross-Faculty exchanges the Associate Dean(s) (Education) have been consulted and agreed to the proposal for renewal going forward.

Formal approval

- 6.6 In considering proposals for renewal, the Head of Department/ Associate Dean (Education) in the School of Management should use the original approval criteria i.e. that there is or has been:
- an ongoing and future demand for and need to support study abroad on the degree course(s)
 - enhancement of the student experience resulting from the exchange
 - regular, ongoing demand for this country and institution

- a reasonable balance in the numbers exchanged
 - high academic quality
 - evident good academic fit, linguistic viability and compatible academic arrangements
 - effective support for students on exchange
 - adequate and appropriate facilities, particularly specialised facilities related to the programme of study, available at the partner institution for Bath students' use.
- 6.7 The Head of Department [or, in the School of Management the Associate Dean (Education)] considers the evidence to support the renewal of the exchange summarised on form QA37 Form 2, and covering the operation of the exchange to date, evidence from periodic review (Degree Scheme Reviews), annual monitoring, evaluation by students, achievement of students on exchange and on return to the University.
- 6.8 If strategic issues which are likely to be of institutional concern are identified these should be referred to the APC for a decision as to whether the proposal may proceed, as set out in para 5.3.
- 6.9 The Head of Department/ Associate Dean (Education) in the School of Management may take one of the following three decisions:
- approve the proposal, which may be subject to provision of additional or clarifying information to the satisfaction of the Head of Department/Associate Dean.
 - Refer the proposal to the F/SLTQC (or CPAC in the case of the School).
 - request provision of additional information
 - not approve the proposal.
- 6.10 The standard re-approval period is five years.

7 Finalising the legal exchange agreements (new and renewed exchanges)

- After approval the International Relations Office (IRO) will finalise the Legal Agreement, arrange for the Dean of the Faculty/School and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) to sign it and seek the signature of the partner institution.
- 7.1 A definitive copy of exchange agreements will be retained on the Central Contracts Repository (CCR).

8 Amendments to exchange agreements

- 8.1 The following minor amendments to existing exchange arrangements may be agreed between the Department/School/Faculty, the partner institution and the International Relations Office during the life of the agreement by means of an exchange of e-mail messages. Such changes should then be included in the next renewal where relevant:
- adjustments to participant numbers in a particular year at the request of Bath or of the partner
 - change to the length of individual students' exchange durations at the request of Bath or of the partner
 - change of name of the partner institution or partner Department/Faculty or of the Bath Department/School/Faculty or of the degree course (i.e. not addition of courses or Departments – see 8.3 below)
 - change of personnel or contact details
 - correction of error or factual inaccuracy.

- 8.2 For other amendments the renewal procedure should be followed.
- 8.3 Extensions of agreements to cover additional courses and/or Departments should be submitted to FLTQC(s) and to CPAC for approval under the above processes on the basis of updated documentation.

9 Termination of exchange agreements

- 9.1 If the monitoring and review processes result in a decision not to renew an exchange agreement which is due to expire³, or before it is due to expire, formal notice of the intention not to renew/to withdraw should be given to the partner institution as early as possible and no later than three semesters before termination is due to take effect, in order to take into account normal student nomination timetables and community practice.
- 9.2 Committee approval is not needed but the Department/School/Faculty exchange coordinator is responsible for informing the International Relations Office and the Assistant Registrar of the decision not to renew.
- 9.3 The International Relations Office is responsible for giving notice to the partner, and for informing the Academic Registry.

10 Expired exchange arrangements

- 10.1 In the event of the Department/School/Faculty neither following the procedure to renew an expiring exchange nor terminating it, the International Relations Office may submit a case directly to Academic Programmes Committee (APC) with a recommendation to give notice to the partner institution to terminate the agreement. The Department/ School/Faculty will be invited to submit its comments alongside the International Relations Office's case.
- 10.2 APC may either authorise the International Mobility Officer to give notice to the partner institution to terminate the agreement, or invite the Head/Dean of the Department/School/Faculty to complete matters within a given timeframe, at the expiration of which the International Relations Office will give notice to the partner institution to terminate the agreement if matters have not been completed.

11 Reporting

- 11.1 The Academic Registry will report all exchange arrangements including renewals and terminations to APC and to Senate annually by the presentation of the Register of Exchange Agreements as part of the Register of Collaborative Provision.

12 Monitoring

- 12.1 Monitoring of exchange arrangements is essential so that the University can assure itself of the quality of the learning experience and the continuing benefit of the exchange and to provide supporting evidence for the renewal of an exchange.

³ Expiring exchanges: The expiry date for the exchange is set down in the legal agreement. Exchanges which include an "umbrella clause" will be considered for the purposes of University of Bath regulations to expire prior to the engagement of the umbrella clause.

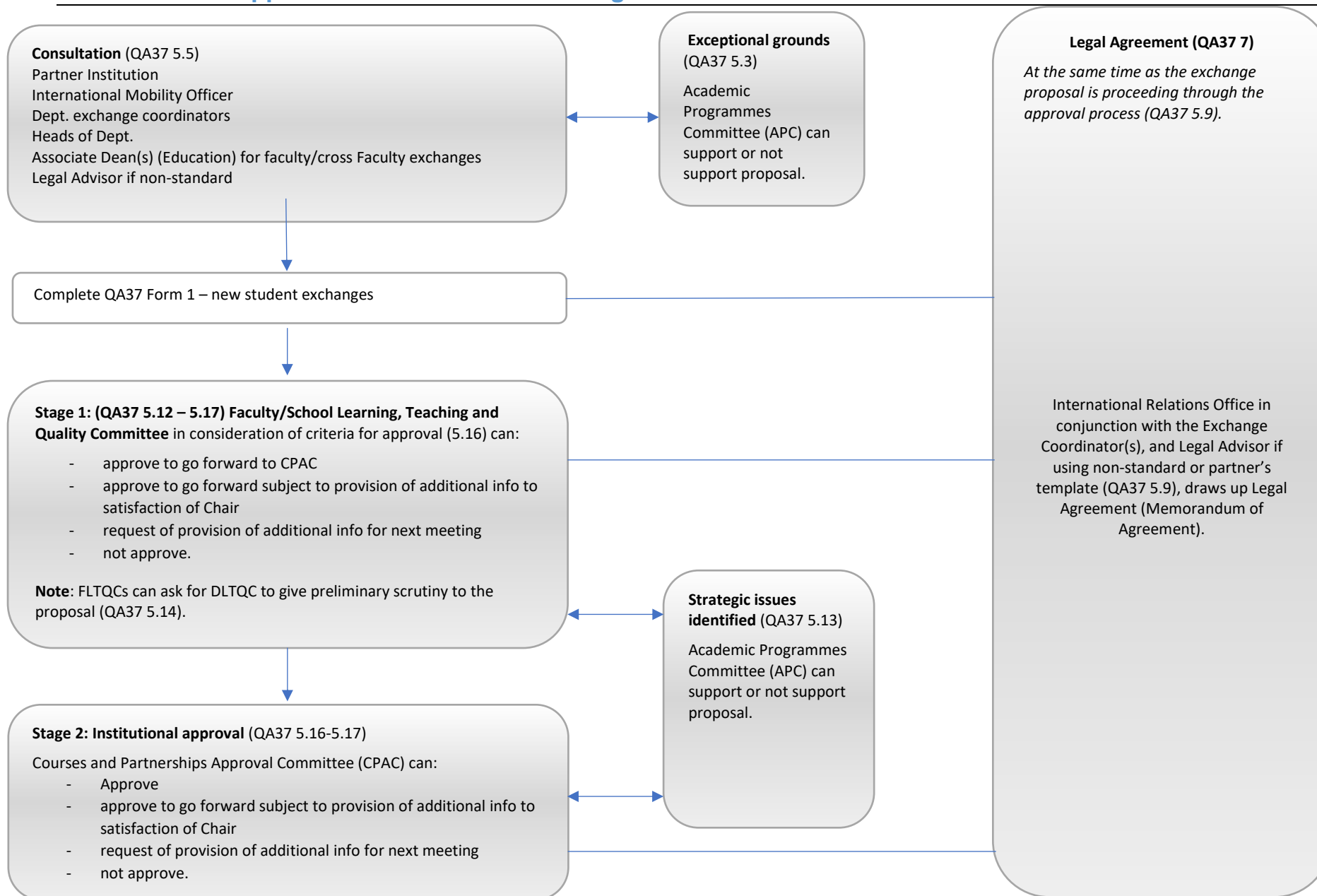
- 12.2 Departmental/School/Faculty exchange co-ordinators are responsible for the ongoing monitoring of exchange arrangements.
- 12.3 The International Relations Office (IRO) will monitor overall number balances using information provided by Departments. If an exchange becomes unbalanced, in the partner's favour, steps should be taken to redress the balance, if it remains this way over a three-year period, the agreement should be reviewed between IRO and the Department/School/Faculty, to decide the most appropriate way forward.
- 12.4 All outgoing exchange students should be asked for an evaluation of their experience on return which should cover the academic elements and the level of support they received from the University and their exchange provider. 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.
- 12.5 An evaluation of this information should be considered by Study Abroad unit convenor, Director of Teaching and the Director of Studies (Taught Provision) as part of the annual monitoring process for the course and will form valuable evidence when exchanges are due for renewal.
- 12.6 Where required, periodic review (Degree Scheme Reviews) for courses which involve exchange agreements will include an overview of the operation of any student exchange agreements.
- 12.7 Departmental/School/Faculty Exchange Co-ordinators, study abroad unit convenors, Directors of Studies and the International Relations Office will share information as appropriate on issues identified in the operation of exchanges and legal agreements, and from student feedback, annual monitoring and periodic review (Degree Scheme Review).

13 Review of exchanges

- 13.1 Exchanges are normally established for a period of five years. The quality and standards of exchanges must be reviewed at a maximum of five yearly intervals. Departmental/School/Faculty exchange co-ordinators are responsible for the five-yearly review. The process should begin at least three semesters before expiry in order to collect the views of the latest group of exchanging students and to establish the likelihood of renewal before further students are offered options for the year ahead. The outcome of the Review will feed into the annual monitoring of courses and periodic course review (Degree Scheme Review or equivalent) as well as the renewal process.

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Flow Chart 1 – Approval of new student exchanges



Flow Chart 2 – Renewal of Exchange Agreements

Termination of Exchange Agreements

