Introduction

Your year or term abroad promises to be a fantastic experience and the memories will remain with you for the rest of your life. In order to make the most of your time abroad, you need to ensure that you are fully prepared. The Study Abroad team has produced this guide to help you with your time abroad, from planning before you go to help and support while you’re there, including useful contact numbers and guidance on what to do if you have any problems while abroad.

The following pages explain the things that you need to do before you leave, while you’re abroad, and when you are preparing for your return. There is also a checklist on page 20 to ensure that you’ve covered everything in plenty of time.

Enjoy your year or term abroad and we’ll see you on your return!

Angela Turton
Head of International Mobility

Preparing for your time abroad

The Study Abroad and Exchanges Office will have let you know which university you have been allocated to and forwarded your details on to your host institution. Your host institution will require you to fill out their admission documents too.

Admission to your host institution
The admission procedures will vary from country to country, and from institution to institution. If you are issued with deadlines for registering, applying for accommodation and so on, it is important that you respect these. You still need to fill out the host institution’s application documents.

Application form
Your host institution will usually send you their application materials by email or post. Some institutions have online application forms but you should receive an email telling you where to find these. We will provide your host institution with your University of Birmingham email address for correspondence. Application materials sent by post may be sent to your home address or the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office. If it comes to the Office, it will be automatically forwarded to you, or you may be asked to call in and collect it.

Other application documents
Your host institution will request other supporting documents, which should be included with your application. Transcripts are requested for all students but it is your responsibility to collect these – with ID – when asked to do so.

Submitting your documents
If your application is to be made electronically, please ensure that you print out a copy for yourself and a copy for the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office. Come to the Study Abroad desk in Room 131 of the Aston Webb Building between 10.00am–12.00noon and 2.00–4.00pm Mon–Fri during term time. If your application is to be made on paper, please bring the completed form, with all supporting documents, to the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office.

Accommodation
Some of our partner universities offer on-campus or other university accommodation for exchange students but others do not. Please check with your host institution whether you are able to apply for campus accommodation, and how and when you should do so. If you have not organised accommodation in advance, book into a hotel or hostel well in advance of your arrival, so that you will have somewhere to stay for the first few days while you search for permanent accommodation.

Paperwork to be completed before you go
You must complete a few University of Birmingham forms before you go. The deadline for these forms can be found in the checklist on page 20. The forms can be found on the Study Abroad webpages: intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/studyabroad/apply
These forms are available online:
- **Study Abroad approval form**
- **Student Mobility contract (Erasmus students only)**
  This is issued by the Erasmus National Agency, and you must sign it in order to be eligible to receive an Erasmus grant. By signing this contract you are agreeing to use the money for the purposes for which it is intended. If you do not complete your Erasmus exchange, you must notify the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office and your exchange tutor at Birmingham immediately. You will then have to pay back some or all of the grant.
- **The Changes to Original Proposed Study Programme (Erasmus students only)**
  If your chosen courses change once you arrive at your host university you must complete this form. It must also be signed at your host university by your departmental co-ordinator and institutional co-ordinator.
- **The Certificate of Attendance (Erasmus students only)**
  This must be completed, signed and returned at the end of your study period to prove that you attended your host institution. Remember that if you are splitting the year between two institutions, then you will need to return two Certificates of Attendance. The certificate must be sent to the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office by post or email studyabroad@bham.ac.uk
- **The Learning Agreement or Work Agreement (Erasmus students only)**
  Before the end of term at the University of Birmingham you will need to complete the Learning Agreement by listing the courses that you intend to study during your year abroad. This form must be signed by your departmental co-ordinator prior to your year abroad placement. Remember that if you are splitting the year between two institutions, then you will need to return two Learning Agreements. Once you arrive at your host institution you will need to complete the Learning Agreement. The form must be signed at the host institution by the department co-ordinator, institutional co-ordinator and returned to the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office as soon as you arrive.
- **The Certificate of Arrival (Erasmus students only)**
  This must be completed, signed and returned to the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office upon arrival at your host institution to notify us of your arrival. Remember that if you are splitting the year between two institutions, then you will need to return two Certificates of Arrival.
- **The Student Report (Erasmus students only)**
  At the end of your year abroad, you must complete an online survey summarising your Erasmus experience. This survey must be completed before the deadline. It is compulsory for all students participating in Erasmus to complete this survey.

The information you provide is used by the Erasmus National Agency (www.britishcouncil.org.uk/erasmus.htm) to monitor the quality of placements provided. The Study Abroad and Exchanges Office will also keep copies of the information and use it to help us improve the service that we offer to you, to evaluate our partner institutions and give advice to outgoing students.

All the information you provide will be treated in accordance with Data Protection legislation, in the same way as the information held about you in the Student Records Office.

For students undertaking a work placement in France you will need to complete the Convention de Stage prior to commencing your work placement. This form will need to be signed by your exchange tutor and the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office.

Registering with Birmingham on your year abroad
You will receive notification in late July 2015 about registering at Birmingham for 2015–16. Even though you will be going overseas, you will still need to register as soon as you can in order to have continual access to online University facilities through the portal and prevent delays with your student loan or other grant payments.

It is important to register with the University in time so that you can still access your my.bham account while you are away.

Through my.bham you will be able to access your University email account, which is how we will communicate with you while you’re away. You will be asked to check the details we hold on your student record and to confirm your registration. Please also check the following information under ‘Programme Details’:
- **Is the exchange scheme correct – Erasmus or International Exchange Scheme?**
- **Is the name of your host institution correctly entered?**

If you fail to register, you will not be covered by the University’s insurance policy and may jeopardise the exchange agreement between the University of Birmingham and your host institution.

Register your new home address in your host country as soon as you move in. To do this, click on the ‘update address’ option.
Remember to make a copy of your passport and other important documents and keep them somewhere safe.

Your passport
You must have a passport that is valid for the entirety of your period of study abroad. If your passport is due to expire during your study abroad programme, you should apply for a new one at least six weeks before you are due to travel. If you do require a visa you should apply for a new passport immediately. Further information and online application forms for UK passports can be found on the UK Passport Service website [www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports](http://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports).

International students should seek advice from their own embassy or consulate.

Visas
If you need a visa to study in your host country, it is your responsibility to apply for the correct one. This should be done in advance of booking your flights. If you need advice on your visa, please contact the visa section of the relevant embassy in London. Please note that staff in your school and the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office are not qualified to give visa advice.

Important documents to take

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)
If you are an EU national and will be going to a European country, you must have an EHIC.

Letter proving your student status for student finance
Students can request a letter for student finance from Registry.

International Student Identity Card (ISIC)
This card is internationally recognised as proof of student status to apply for various student discounts – buy yours online at [www.statravel.co.uk/ISIC-card.htm](http://www.statravel.co.uk/ISIC-card.htm).

Photos
It is useful to take several passport photos with you – they may be required for ID cards, for example.

### Packing

- **Clothing**
  Carry out some research into your host country before you go. Take suitable clothing for the climate and for the culture. Consult returning or incoming students for advice on appropriate clothing for your host country and whether it’s cheaper to purchase appropriate clothing overseas rather than take it all with you.

- **Medication**
  Remember to take any prescription medicines, contraceptives or other medication with you that you might need. Ensure you have sufficient to last you until your return home or check that you can get supplies within the host country – remember to take the name of any medication you use with you if you plan to obtain it overseas. It is always sensible to pack a small first aid kit.

Also see ‘Vaccinations’ on page 14.

### Baggage restrictions

Some airlines restrict passengers to 20kg of baggage. Find out how much your airline charges for excess baggage, and compare this with the cost of shipping to your host country. Don’t forget that you will have to get your baggage from the airport to your final destination, and that you may not be able to carry multiple suitcases. Please ensure that anything valuable in your baggage – laptop, camera, smartphone – is covered by your insurance.

### Travel arrangements

How you travel to your host destination is up to you. We recommend that you book and pay for tickets for travel only when you have received your letter of acceptance from your host institution and your visa (if you require one). Before deciding on your travel dates, check your host university’s term dates, and find out if you are expected to attend an orientation course, a pre-sessional language course, or any other similar course. Orientation is usually compulsory and always very useful. Please ensure that you attend all orientation sessions.

I must admit that leaving home to go so far away for such a long time was a bit scary, but as soon as I arrived in Melbourne, it seemed that I left all these worries behind and everything went smoothly.'
Academic matters

Ensure that you start your year abroad prepared with as much information as possible about the courses on offer at your host institution. Learn all you can about the content, duration, assessment methods, and the amount of credit awarded.

You will need to discuss your planned academic programme with your exchange tutor in advance of completing your Learning Agreement. Your exchange tutor will advise you on all academic matters relating to your year abroad, including which subjects and levels you are allowed to study.

You must take a full credit load as defined by the host university; this means that you must take the same number of modules as a degree-seeking student at the host university, which may not be the same number of modules as at Birmingham.

Course selection
Academic systems vary greatly around the world, and this can sometimes be a challenge when researching and choosing your courses at your host institution. Information about your host institution’s courses will often be available on their website. However, some institutions may not publish course catalogues until shortly before the beginning of the academic year, so you may need to make your course choices based on information from the previous year or contact the host institution directly for further information.

Assessment
You should receive a full briefing from your exchange tutor on the assessment of your year abroad including:

- Criteria for assessment
- How marks will be translated if examinations taken abroad are to count towards your assessment
- Implications of failure

Please make sure that you have received this information before you leave and make an appointment with your exchange tutor to discuss it again if you are not clear about it.

European Credit Transfer System
The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is widely used throughout Europe. It is a student-centred system based on the student workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme. ECTS is based on the principle that 60 credits measure the workload of a full-time student during one academic year. Credits in ECTS can only be obtained after successful completion of the work required and appropriate assessment of the learning outcomes achieved. A full course-load for one academic year is 60 ECTS credits. This is equivalent to 120 University of Birmingham credits. Countries outside Europe have their own credit systems. If you are in doubt as to how many credits constitute a full load, please ask.

Attendance for students studying overseas
You are expected to attend all your classes in the same way that you would at Birmingham. If you cannot attend classes for an extended period of time for any reason, you must inform your host institution and your exchange tutor.

Erasmus students are required to complete a Certificate of Attendance. If this is not completed, signed and submitted to the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office by the date indicated, you will be required to repay your Erasmus grant.

Pre-sessional language courses at your host institution
Your host institution may offer pre-sessional language courses specifically designed for exchange students. These courses are a great opportunity to develop your language skills and meet other exchange students. Contact your host institution to find out about availability, dates, and fees.

While you’re away
Remember to keep in touch
It is essential that you keep in touch with your exchange tutor at Birmingham and check your University email account and Canvas regularly. Your University email address and Canvas will be used to communicate with you throughout your year abroad to give you information about your time abroad and your return to Birmingham.

You can access your University email account via https://owa.bham.ac.uk
You will then be prompted to enter your usual username and password.
You will also be able to access Canvas remotely as normal by going to www.weblearn.bham.ac.uk

Arrival at your host institution
Make sure you find out where you should go on arrival. Look for this information on your host institution website, or contact the Erasmus Co-ordinator or the study abroad office at your host institution. You may have to ring your host institution; be prepared for a telephone conversation in the host language, as there may not be anyone in the office who speaks English.

Even if there is an English speaker there, they may well regard it as an important part of your preparation to encourage you to speak in the host language. Please ensure that you check your host institution website regularly for information concerning their application process, registration information and arrangements for your arrival and the start of term.

Registration at your host institution may be a busy time, where you have to go from office to office organising different aspects of your study abroad experience. Do not be alarmed at the amount of administrative tasks involved in your first few days; it will calm down once you have settled in.

Be aware that in continental Europe, particularly in France, Spain, and Italy, many universities operate with minimal staff or shut down completely during July and August. Please bear this in mind and plan well in advance of the summer break.

-An Erasmus year will make your CV shine… we’re going into a fierce job market full of very qualified people competing for not as many jobs; it makes sense to do what you can to really stand out."
Money matters

You are responsible for all costs during your year abroad. Plan ahead and make sure you budget for all of the below and are aware of the financial help available to you.

You should budget for the following:
- Room and board
- Books and other academic supplies
- Insurance costs
- Travel to and from your host country or countries
- Transport in your host country
- All personal expenses

**University of Birmingham tuition fees**
If you are on a full year abroad in 2015–16 and you are a home/EU student, you will be required to pay 15% of your Birmingham tuition fee. Please note that international students on a year abroad in 2015–16 are required to pay 50% of the Birmingham tuition fee. There is no fee reduction for any student going abroad for just one semester.

**Host institution tuition fees**
You will not be required to pay tuition fees to your host institution. You may be required to pay administrative charges for items such as student cards, orientation fees, and sports facilities. At some partner institutions you may also be required to pay for language courses for non-native speakers, following an evaluation of your level of proficiency. Please contact your host institution for further information.

**Other fees**
If you are undertaking your year abroad in North America, Australia, or Japan you may be expected to purchase local university health insurance. The costs will vary. Please check this in advance directly with your host institution.

**Erasmus grants**
The Erasmus grant is available to any student undertaking their year abroad within Europe (both study and work/teaching assistantships). This is intended to help you to meet the extra costs of studying abroad, and is not intended to cover all your expenses for the year abroad. All students (who have not been in receipt of an Erasmus grant in the past) are eligible to apply. It is usually paid in two instalments, the first in December and the second in June. The first allocation normally accounts for 70% of the total grant available, with the second allocation providing the remaining 30%. For more information about Erasmus, please refer to the Erasmus National Agency website [www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus.htm)

**Student finance and student loans**
If you receive a student maintenance grant or maintenance loan from the government, you may be eligible for additional funding towards your year abroad. You may receive a higher maintenance loan and possibly partial reimbursement of expenses such as flights, visas, and health insurance. You should apply for the loan in the same way as previous years, and you are advised to check with your student finance agency to see if you are eligible for partial reimbursement of costs. A letter confirming that you will be on a year abroad can be obtained from Registry.

For information and to apply online visit [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk). If you will be starting your year abroad before the start of the UK Autumn Term you should contact the Student Loans Company to discuss the timing of your loan payment.

**Additional sources of financial support**
There may be other external organisations and funds to which you can apply for financial assistance to support your year abroad. The Study Abroad and Exchanges Office can provide more information on some of these schemes, but you should also investigate possibilities yourself. For further information on funding please visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/studyabroad/funding.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/studyabroad/funding.aspx)

**Banking**
Before you leave on your year abroad, make an appointment with your bank to tell them about your plans and your dates of travel. You may want to ask the following questions:
- Does your bank have a branch or affiliation with a bank in your host country?
- What is the most convenient bank to use in your host country for transferring funds?
- What costs will you incur by transferring funds, and should you do this in sterling or in the host currency?
- Can you get a cash advance on your credit card, and what charges will you incur?
- How would you replace a lost credit or debit card while you are in your host country?
- What is the best way to communicate with your bank while you are away?

To find out more about scholarships available please visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/studyabroad/funding.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/studyabroad/funding.aspx)
Safety

You need to be aware that risks to health and safety when abroad can be more difficult to control due to varying health and safety standards, language, and cultural differences. With good planning you will be prepared for any issues that might arise.

Health and safety

If an accident or incident occurs the impact can be much greater when you are away from home. Good planning and sensible precautions are vital. This guidance should be read and acted on before you travel, in conjunction with the Health and Safety Guidance Travelling and Working Abroad document provided by the University’s Health and Safety Unit here: www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/external/international/documents/public/Health-and-Safety-Guidance-2012-13-(PDF).pdf

You may have to assess some risks yourself when abroad and make a measured judgement as to whether they are acceptable or how to minimise them. Advice may be obtained from the Health and Safety Unit here: www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/external/international/documents/public/Health-and-Safety-Guidance-2012-13-(PDF).pdf

You need to be aware that risks to health and safety when abroad can be more difficult to control due to varying health and safety standards, language, and cultural differences. With good planning you will be prepared for any issues that might arise.

University insurance

When you travel outside the United Kingdom as part of your studies, you are covered by the University of Birmingham’s insurance policy, as long as you register in advance.

What to do in an emergency

The University’s Security Services telephone line is open 24 hours a day and should be called in case of an emergency: +44 (0)121 414 4444

For other issues during office hours, contact the Study Abroad Office: +44 (0)121 414 4026/7696

You should ensure that you are familiar with the emergency numbers in your host country, as well as emergency numbers on campus.

What do I need to do in order to be covered?

You must register on the Travel Insurance website before you depart on your study period abroad in order to be eligible for cover. You will find online application forms along with a summary of the policy benefits and services on the insurance website at www.travel.bham.ac.uk

You will not be covered automatically – you must complete the form on the website.

You will need to satisfy yourself that you are fit to travel. This is particularly important if you have a pre-existing medical condition. If you are in any doubt, you should seek advice from your doctor and notify the University’s Insurance Office. You should also note that in the event of a claim, insurers may require evidence of your fitness to travel.

Please note that it is your responsibility to read the contents of the Travel Insurance website in detail and also the full terms of the insurance coverage. It is also your responsibility to take out additional insurance cover if you do not feel that the cover provided by the University meets your needs. Please contact the Insurance Office directly if you have any questions. Neither the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office or your exchange tutor are qualified to advise on this matter.

Your contact at the University’s Insurance Office is Gill Kelsall +44 (0)121 414 6111 or g.j.kelsall@bham.ac.uk

Does this policy cover me if I take a holiday during my period of study abroad?

No.

Does this policy cover sporting and other potentially hazardous activities?

No: this policy does not cover you carrying out potentially hazardous activities while you are studying abroad. Activities which are considered to be potentially hazardous include, but are not limited to: scuba diving, windsurfing, skiing, snowboarding, paragliding, quad biking, climbing, canyoning, bouldering and equestrian activities. If you intend to carry out such activities while you are abroad, it is your responsibility to take out suitable private insurance cover.

At some host institutions upon registration you will be required to purchase their own health insurance – please contact your host institution for further information.

European Health Insurance Card

If your host country is within the EU, it is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with how the EU reciprocal health agreements work. If you are an EU citizen, you should apply for a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). See www.ehic.org.uk for information.
The purpose of risk assessments is to allow you to make a systematic identification of significant risks so that they can be prevented or reduced and controlled to an appropriate standard. This exercise is for your own safety, and in case you need to make an insurance claim. The Study Abroad and Exchanges Office and your exchange tutor do not need to see a copy of your risk assessment. Remember to raise any concerns you have before you leave the UK.

British embassies, consulates, high commissions and consular assistance
The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is responsible for the conduct of business with other governments and international organisations, for the protection of British citizens abroad, and for the promotion of British commercial and other interests across the world. It does this through a network of 233 posts worldwide. Further details on the work of the FCO can be found on their website at www.gov.uk/fco

It is your responsibility to look at the FCO website and find the contact details of the British Embassy (or embassy of your own country if you are not British) or High Commission in your host country or countries. Make a note of them and program the numbers into your phone. The University emergency number is +44 (0)121 414 4444.

Risk assessment
Before travelling, you must complete a risk assessment. Failure to do so may mean your University insurance is not valid. You will find guidance on the University’s Health and Safety Unit web pages: www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/worksafe/topics/riskassessment

War, hostage, natural disaster, major accident, or crime situation
In the event of finding yourself in a war, uprising, hostage situation, natural disaster, major accident, or other situation, the University will liaise and take advice from the Foreign Office (www.gov.uk/fco). You are advised to contact the British Embassy (or your country’s embassy if you are not British) in your host country informing them of your whereabouts and contact details. You should also inform the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office and your exchange tutor where possible and maintain regular contact with them. If you are a victim of crime you should report this immediately to the local police and also inform the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office, as well as your exchange tutor.

Vaccinations
Make sure you’ve got all the vaccinations you need for your host country by checking the NHS vaccination website www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk or asking your GP. Normally, if you grew up in the UK you would be routinely vaccinated against diphtheria, polio, and tetanus. If you haven’t had these vaccines, this is an ideal opportunity to get them. If you have previously been vaccinated, you might need a booster dose. Your GP will be able to advise you on this.

It is advisable to visit your GP at least two months before your trip as you may not be able to get all the vaccinations you need all at once and some may take a few weeks to become effective.

Although this is an exciting and interesting time it can occasionally be nerve-wracking, tiring, and frustrating; you should be prepared for the highs and lows of your experience.

The first few weeks are often referred to as the ‘honeymoon period’ where everything is new and exciting and there are new places to discover and people to meet, and it seems like one big holiday. Then comes the period of real adjustment when you are trying to settle in to your daily routine and the cultural differences may make you miss everything about home and a familiar environment.

Try to relax as much as possible through this stage. You will soon start to adapt to your new way of life and develop friendships as you feel more comfortable in your new environment. You soon won’t want to leave! Then you return to Birmingham and have to re-adjust to your usual routine where things may not be as exciting and stimulating as being in a foreign country.

The following suggestions may help you deal with any transitional difficulties that you experience during your first few months in your host country.

Remember that adjusting to a new culture is natural
Make the effort to meet local people. Interacting with members of the host country will enable you to learn more about their culture, practise your language skills, and try new activities or foods. Joining a local club or interest group may be a good way to do this.

Become familiar with the area and frequent local establishments
Visit the local shops, cafes, cinemas, parks and places of interest. Make sure you get to know where everything is and even get to know local waiters, shop owners, and other customers so you feel at home. Read and speak the local language. Read newspapers, magazines and watch local television programmes and films. Consider joining the local library so you can borrow books in the host language. The better your language skills, the easier it will be to join in with the local way of life.

Keep a journal
Write down your experiences of each day and how you are feeling. This can be a time to reflect and assess how you are settling into your host country. It will also be a great keepsake and lasting memory of your experience.

Living in another country for an extended period of time will give you the opportunity to develop a proper understanding of a different way of life, experience new tastes and customs, and adapt to a different routine.

Cultural adjustment
Take lots of photographs
These will be a great way of remembering friends, places and experiences and you can enter our photo competition!

These photos and any diary entries are a great way to build your CV too. We always welcome your quotes and images in our publications and also conduct video interviews with our students, so let us know if you’d like to get involved.

Don’t spend all your time emailing or contacting home
Being in constant contact with home will prolong the adjustment period. It is better to throw yourself into making new friends and enjoying new things.

Remember that you are not alone. Every person involved in a year abroad will be experiencing similar feelings. If you do have any major concerns or difficulties adjusting, then contact the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office or the local exchanges office who will be happy to put you in contact with someone to talk to.

It is important that you read this information thoroughly and respond in a timely manner ensuring that you adhere to any deadlines set by your school.

If you do not receive any information on this matter, then it may be a good idea to contact your personal tutor or your exchange tutor to check if you should have received something.

Registering with Birmingham
You will be able to register for your final year with the University of Birmingham in the same way as for your previous years of study. Online registration is likely to open at the end of July 2016.

You may encounter some delays that will prevent you from registering due to the official confirmation that you have successfully completed your year abroad not being available. This should become available following the September Examination Boards. If you need more information, contact your school or email registration@bham.ac.uk.

Debriefing
It is important that you recognise the great achievement you have made by completing your period abroad. Your school may run a debriefing session, which will enable you to assess and verbalise the skills that you have gained during your year abroad.

If your school does not run a debriefing session then you may like to make an appointment with the Careers Network. They will be able to advise you on how to write up your experiences on your CV and expand upon them in interview.

Towards the end of your year abroad or at the start of the UK summer vacation you should expect to receive information from your school regarding your final-year module choices.

To allow us to continue offering the same wide range of year abroad destinations to Birmingham students we depend on you, our outgoing exchange students, to act as ambassadors and generate interest in the University. This could involve:
- Volunteering to participate in a study abroad fair
- Giving a presentation to prospective students
- Talking to your housemates and classmates about Birmingham
- Informing the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office about promotional events happening at your host university

It is vital to us that you take advantage of any of these opportunities. The Study Abroad and Exchanges Office will support you in this by providing Powerpoint presentations, literature, and promotional items if you request them.

Send us your photos and feedback!
We want our students to tell the next study abroad students how to make the most of their time abroad.

Email: studyabroad@bham.ac.uk or you can upload your videos and images to: scrapbook.bham.ac.uk/submit-video-files

Return to Birmingham

Send us your photos and feedback!
We want our students to tell the next study abroad students how to make the most of their time abroad.

Email: studyabroad@bham.ac.uk or you can upload your videos and images to: scrapbook.bham.ac.uk/submit-video-files
Volunteering to become a Student Ambassador is a great way to keep your memories alive, gain valuable experience to put on your CV, and achieve professional development – you may also have the opportunity for some paid work. There are several ways that you can get involved:

- **Mentoring** – give the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office permission to pass your email address on to outgoing students so you can give them the benefit of your wisdom
- **Study Abroad Fair** – volunteer to help out on a stand at the fair for an afternoon
- **Share your experiences** – in the Autumn Term share what you have learnt with first- and second-year students who are considering a year abroad

If you are interested in applying for the role of Global Ambassador then email studyabroad@bham.ac.uk

Please remember that your academic studies take priority and the above activities should be fitted around your study commitments.

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**Returning to the UK**

Some of you will find it easy to slip straight back in to life back in Birmingham but others may not. A great way of dealing with this is to talk to other people, particularly students who have also just returned from a year abroad, about your experiences and try to get involved in other activities to aid the reorientation process.

**Our top tips for settling in when you’re home:**

- **Meet up with other returning students** – join Eurobrum or attend any events organised by your school or the Study Abroad and Exchanges Office
- **Share your experiences** – often you’ll arrive home just in time for the University’s undergraduate open days, where future students would love to hear your experiences
- **Keep in touch with your friends from your host country and maybe plan to visit them**
- **Join a new club or organisation** – this is a great way of making more new friends
- **Continue foreign language training or take a course relating to your host country**
- **Try to obtain newspapers, radio or films from your host country so you can keep up-to-date with life there**
- **Stay positive** – change is always unsettling but you’ll feel at home after a few weeks

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‘I had no difficulty in meeting and making friends with fantastic people from all continents. I will keep in touch even after my exchange.’

If you have any serious concerns about returning to Birmingham, then there are places that you can go for help. In the case of academic concerns then you should go to your personal tutor or your exchange tutor. You may also like to contact the University’s Counselling and Guidance Service for advice on any personal issues that you may have.
Checklist

The following checklists should enable you to ensure that you have undertaken all the necessary preparation for your year abroad. You should tick the column marked 'done' when you have completed the activity.

### Before you go

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete and hand in Study Abroad Approval Form</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign and hand in ERASMUS Student Mobility Contract</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check with your school about academic and assessment requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete and hand in any school documents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for passport (where necessary)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for visa (where necessary)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register with/complete application for host institution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for university accommodation (where applicable)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete University insurance details form on website</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase additional insurance (where required)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for European Health Insurance Card (if travelling to an EU country)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check vaccinations are up-to-date and have any additional ones where necessary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Make travel arrangements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book hostel/hotel for arrival (where necessary)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Health and Safety information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete risk assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have necessary documents translated</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult host institution website for information about arrival, orientation and any additional requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Erasmus Learning Agreement and send to your exchange tutor for signature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book language course (if desired)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Before you go (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find out when to register for courses and complete registration if necessary to do this in advance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check Year 2 results in Online Results Systems on portal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NB: If you have not achieved enough credits in your second year you will not be permitted to go on your year abroad. If you have resits to do and are required to travel before results are available you should seek advice from your school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register online for University of Birmingham on portal from end of July</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### When you arrive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Register for courses at host institution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register with local police/obtain residence permit (where necessary)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete and send Certificate of Arrival</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Any revision to your learning agreement needs to be completed within one month of your arrival</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete and submit contact details form</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enter the photo competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure Certificate of Attendance is signed by your host institution</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Returning to Birmingham

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submit Certificate of Attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit Student Report Form online</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Make final-year module selections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sign up as a Student Ambassador</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Erasmus Student Charter

The status of ‘Erasmus student’ applies to students who satisfy the Erasmus eligibility criteria and who have been selected by their university to spend an Erasmus period abroad – either studying at an eligible partner university or carrying out a placement in an enterprise or other appropriate organisation.

For study mobility, both universities must have an Erasmus University Charter awarded by the European Commission. For placement in enterprise the home university must hold an extended Erasmus University Charter (ie, also covering rights and obligations relating to placements).

As an Erasmus student, you are entitled to expect:
- Your home and host universities to have an inter-institutional agreement.
- The sending and receiving institutions to sign with you and before you leave a Learning/Training Agreement setting out the details of your planned activities abroad, including the credits to be achieved.
- Not to have to pay fees to your host university for tuition, registration, examinations, access to laboratory and library facilities during your Erasmus Studies.
- Full academic recognition from your home university for satisfactorily completed activities abroad, covering the studies/work carried out and signed by your host institution/enterprise. This will record your results with the credits and grades achieved.
- To be treated and served by your host university in the same way as their home students.

- To have access to the Erasmus University Charter and Erasmus Policy Statement of your home and host universities.
- Your student grant or loan from your home country to be maintained while you are abroad.

As an Erasmus student, you are expected to:
- Respect the rules and obligations of your Erasmus grant agreement with your home university or your National Agency.
- Ensure that any changes to the Learning/Training Agreement are agreed in writing with both the home and host institutions immediately they occur.
- Spend the full study/placement period as agreed at the host university/enterprise, including undergoing the relevant examinations or other forms of assessment, and respect its rules and regulations.
- Write a report on your Erasmus study/placement period abroad when you return and provide feedback if requested by your home university, the European Commission or the National Agency.
- Identify the problem clearly and check your rights and obligations.
- Contact your departmental co-ordinator for Erasmus and use the formal appeals procedure of your home university if necessary.

If you remain dissatisfied, contact your National Agency.

Useful contacts

Emergency contact details
If you have an emergency while you are overseas, please call the University’s emergency number +44 (0)121 414 4444 in the first instance

Study Abroad and Exchanges Office (SAEO)
Tel: +44 (0)121 414 4026/7696
Email: studyabroad@bham.ac.uk

Disability Team (advice and support for students with disabilities and dyslexia)
3 Elms Road
Tel: +44 (0)121 414 2897
Email: disability@bham.ac.uk
www.as.bham.ac.uk/studentlife/disability/learningsupport/

‘Eurobrum’ – the Erasmus and Study Abroad Society
Guild of Students
Email: erasmus@guild.bham.ac.uk

The ARC
Guild of Students
Tel: +44 (0)121 251 2400
www.guildofstudents.com/thearc

Housing Services
University Centre
Tel: +44 (0)121 414 8000
Email: ugradaccom@bham.ac.uk
www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/accommodation

Insurance Office
Aston Webb Building
Contact: Gill Kelsall
Tel: +44 (0)121 414 6111/6628
Email: g.l.kelsall@bham.ac.uk
www.insurance.bham.ac.uk

Finance Office
Aston Webb Building
Tel: +44 (0)121 414 6073
Email: studentfees@bham.ac.uk
www.finance.bham.ac.uk/payments

www.birmingham.ac.uk
All information correct at time of printing, March 2015