Get Ready to Go

Preparing for your Worldwide Exchange 2016–17
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Why Study Abroad?

The Study Abroad Programme allows you to be more than just a traveller, offering a rare opportunity to genuinely immerse yourself in another culture. It can provide you with not only unforgettable experiences, but also transferrable skills and personal contacts to benefit you for years to come. The University of Leeds is committed to internationalising the experience of its students and recognises the benefits of Study Abroad for its graduates, both on a personal and a professional level. If you choose to study abroad, the University continues to offer the support and assistance you may require throughout your time away from Leeds.

The decision to study abroad is a significant one, not least because of the increased financial burden of adding an extra year of study to your undergraduate degree. It is important to have a clear idea of what the benefits will be to you personally, as every student will have different priorities. For instance, you might particularly value the opportunity to study your subject in a different academic environment, or to develop a language and interact with students of different nationalities.

Whatever their motivation, most students return from a year abroad as more mature, focused individuals and evidence suggests that they go on to have greater success in their studies. Students also have the opportunity to develop their ‘global competencies’ – they become more aware, curious and interested in learning about the world and how it works, and more valuable to employers as a result. Most students will have recognition of their participation in the Study Abroad Programme reflected in their degree title, such as BSc Biochemistry (European), which further enhances their CV and employability.

Student feedback

“It is worth every penny and all the hard work to get here. DO IT! This is one of the best decisions I have ever made and the benefits are endless.”

Holly Cufflin (Communications): McMaster, Canada

“I have loved it! I feel as though I have made the most of it, and I have taken part in everything ‘Mines’ has to offer. I strongly recommend other people to study abroad as you will definitely have a fantastic time.”

Jason Fletcher (Earth Sciences): Colorado School of Mines, USA

“I found studying abroad has been really good for my confidence and made me a lot more independent. I’ve had so much fun and I’m so glad I came. I honestly can’t think of anything negative to say about the experience as a whole. I just wish I could spend another year here!”

Ailsa Manktelow (Music): Université de Montreal, Canada

“I think that every student should take the opportunity for studying abroad… it is an opportunity not to be missed. From the new learning advantages to the people and places you see, it makes your overall university experience complete… and one to remember!”

David Redfern (Theology and Religious Studies): Charles University Prague, Czech Republic

“It is an excellent opportunity and one that contains more benefits than may be obvious at first. It can develop a person and give them skills and awareness that can be used a long time into their future.”

Ceris O’Neill (Italian and Linguistics): Udine, Italy

“Would recommend it to anyone. Life changing experience, feel like you can take on the world.”

Annie Padwick (German): Leipzig, Germany
Study Abroad Office

The Study Abroad Office supports over 600 outgoing exchange students, as well as working with over 1200 incoming exchange students applying to the University of Leeds. The university has over 400 exchange partnerships across the world.

Web: students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroad
Email: studyabroad@leeds.ac.uk
Tel: 0113 343 7900
Location: Level 11, Marjorie and Arnold Ziff Building, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT
Opening Hours: 11am – 3pm

The Study Abroad Office will:

• Advise you about the application process
• Provide practical country-specific advice
• Help you find out more detailed information about your host university and host country
• Hold pre-departure briefings and orientations
• Provide support for you while you are abroad

Academic Advice

The Study Abroad Office is not able to offer academic advice about your studies overseas. All academic advice is provided by your School Study Abroad Coordinator who is there to support you and will be happy to hear from you at any point during the year. Discuss with them:

• Approval for module choices
• Advice on how many credits you need to pass during the year
• Any problems you encounter during the year that might affect your academic performance
• How and when your study abroad year will be assessed
• Signing of Learning Agreements on behalf of Leeds (for Erasmus+ exchanges)

A current list of coordinators is here: students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroadcoordinators
Further advice on academic matters can be found on page 28.

Data Protection Act

All personal information received by the Study Abroad Office will be processed in accordance with the University of Leeds’ Code of Practice. Your personal data will be processed by the Study Abroad Office for assessment of your application and this information, including health information, may be shared with your host institution.
Between Application and Departure
(dates given are for applicants going abroad for the first semester or full year)

- **December 2015**
  - Study Abroad Office confirms host destination with student and supplies information to assist with preparations

- **26th February 2016**
  - Students must formally reject their offer of a study place if they do not want it. Withdrawal after this date will incur a £100 administrative fee

- **Worldwide Country Briefings: 17th Feb 2016**
  - European Country Briefings: 24th Feb 2016

- Study Abroad Office to email student when application forms for host university are available.
  - Worldwide destinations: Jan - Apr 2016
  - European destinations: Mar - Jun 2016

- Study Abroad Office to send all application paperwork to the host university
  - European destinations: May - Aug 2016

- Host university to confirm acceptance by contacting:
  - Students to attend Pre-Departure Conference
    - European destinations: 4th May 2016

- **Before May 2016**
  - Study Abroad Office to inform Fees Office about University of Leeds students studying abroad. Student Services to inform Student Finance

- **From May 2016 – Departure**
  - Student to return completed Pre-Departure Checklist to Study Abroad Office
  - Student to return completed Risk Awareness form to their Parent School
  - Student to complete Change of Programme form with their Parent School (if relevant)
  - Student to contact School Study Abroad Coordinator if unsure of academic requirements or Study Abroad Office if unsure of practical aspects of period overseas
  - Student to apply for visa (if applicable) and make travel arrangements once formal acceptance is received from host university
  - **Erasmus+ students** July/August 2016 Study Abroad Office to contact students with Erasmus+ paperwork requirements
  - **Erasmus+ students** Before departure. Student to register with University of Leeds and return Erasmus+ Grant Contract and Learning Agreement so grant payments can be made

**Academic queries:**
- School Study Abroad Coordinator

**Practical queries:**
- Staff in the Study Abroad Office

**Study Abroad Office**
- Study Abroad Office will confirm acceptance with student

**The student**
- Student must inform Study Abroad Office if they have received confirmation directly from host institution

**Erasmus+ students**
- Study Abroad Office to contact students with Erasmus+ paperwork requirements

**Erasmus+ students**
- Before departure. Student to register with University of Leeds and return Erasmus+ Grant Contract and Learning Agreement so grant payments can be made
Between Application and Departure

Over the next few months you will be responsible for organising various important aspects of your period abroad, and the Study Abroad Office is here to assist with the preparations.

After reading the information provided in this booklet, if you are still not sure what you need to do to prepare for your time abroad please drop into the Study Abroad Office and we will run through the application process with you.

Application Forms for the ‘Host Institution’

The Study Abroad Office will contact you in the next few months via your University of Leeds email account to let you know about the formal application procedure for your host institution. Some host institutions expect students to apply early in the calendar year while others won’t expect applications until much later in the year. Application procedures can vary from year to year. As soon as we have this information we will contact students, working in order of host institution application deadlines.

Application forms for host institutions are essential documents which all students preparing for a period overseas must complete. The forms can vary considerably: some are extremely complicated while others are very simple; some are on-line while others are paper-based. The Study Abroad Office will provide students with the appropriate level of support.

Final acceptance is still dependent on the host institution approving your application. While the majority of students should automatically be accepted, you may not be able to enrol on your preferred modules. If you cannot demonstrate first year results of 60+, if your subject area is restricted at the host institution or if further application material is required such as portfolios or audition CDs, then the host institution will need to assess your full application file before they can guarantee you a place and this process may take some time.

We will let you know the deadline by which you should complete and return your host institution application form to the University of Leeds Study Abroad Office. Study Abroad Advisers will check the forms to make sure all supporting documents are attached before forwarding them to the relevant admissions office at the host institution. You should not send any formal application documents directly to your host institution.

Enrolling for Modules

Host institutions have different module enrolment procedures. Some will expect you to list your preferred modules (sometimes referred to as classes, courses or papers) during the application process. Others will send you details about module enrolment together with your acceptance package. Others still will have a manual enrolment system and you will not be able to register until you are physically at the host institution.

Some institutions will not publish the module catalogue until a few weeks prior to the start of the academic year, although you can generally check their website to see which modules were offered the previous year.

You should research which modules you would like to follow while abroad and consult your School Study Abroad Coordinator for academic advice about what is expected of you by both your host institution and your Parent School here at Leeds.

For further academic advice please refer to the information on page 28.

Notification of your Acceptance

You should expect to receive a letter or email of acceptance from the host institution by the time you leave Leeds in June (if studying abroad for the full year or first semester). Note that students going to some destinations in Europe with later application deadlines may still be completing applications during this time. Please be patient while waiting for your acceptance and check your Leeds email account regularly for updates on your application.
status. If your host institution sends your acceptance documents to the Study Abroad Office, we will email you to ask you to come and collect them.

If you receive notification directly to your email account or to your home/ temporary address, it is important that you inform the Study Abroad Office of your acceptance so we can update our records accordingly.

**Applying for your visa or study permit (if applicable)**

Getting your student visa is your responsibility and can take longer than you think. Apply as soon as you've been accepted by your host institution, so your arrival isn't delayed. If you're an EU passport holder you won't need a visa to study in Europe, but you almost certainly will need a student visa to study elsewhere. If you're a non-EU national you need to check requirements for your country with the embassy (based in your home country) of the country you will be going to. Students studying in Turkey will require a student visa.

Detailed information about visa applications can be found on page 18.

**Compulsory Pre-Departure Conferences – 27th April 2016 (Worldwide destinations) and 4th May 2016 (European destinations)**

Compulsory pre-departure conferences for all students going to study abroad in European or Worldwide destinations will be held as follows:

- Students going to Worldwide destinations (outside of Europe): Wednesday 27th April 2016
- Students going to European destinations: Wednesday 4th May 2016

All students studying abroad for the full academic year or the first semester of 2016-17 must attend this meeting as you will be given important information on topics such as insurance, visas, financial issues and health and safety.

**Important! Failure to attend a pre-departure conference may result in your nomination to study abroad being withdrawn.**

**Completing a ‘Change of Programme’ form**

Most students will need to complete paperwork which will allow your Parent School at Leeds to change your degree programme to one which incorporates the period abroad.

Important: you must complete a Change of Programme form which you can get from your Parent School or the Student Services Centre. This is a simple procedure but necessary for you to remain registered at the University of Leeds and receive Student Finance funding, including your Maintenance Loan, for your time away from Leeds.

If you are already registered on a four year degree which incorporates a year abroad, you will not need to complete this document. If you’re not sure whether this applies to you, please check with your School Study Abroad Coordinator.

**Complete the ‘Pre-Departure Checklist’**

Available at: students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroadhandbooks

All students are required to sign a Pre-Departure Checklist before they depart for their studies overseas. You will sign this document to confirm that you have received advice and information about the important aspects of your time abroad. This is a compulsory checklist and you should spend time reading and considering each section carefully. If you do not think that you have been fully advised on any of the points, do not tick that particular section. It is then your responsibility to seek further advice from the Study Abroad Office and/or your School Study Abroad Coordinator until you are able to tick every box on the checklist.

**Important! Failure to submit a completed Pre-Departure Checklist may result in your nomination to study abroad being withdrawn.**
Complete the ‘Risk Awareness’ form
Your Parent School will ask you to complete a compulsory Risk Awareness form prior to departure. You should submit this to your School, not to the Study Abroad Office. This is an opportunity to consider a range of issues you may face whilst living and studying abroad. By considering these before you set off on your studies, we hope you will be able to find answers to important questions while you still have easy access to resources here at the University of Leeds. For further guidance on completing this form, please see page 15.

Important! Failure to submit a completed Risk Awareness form to your School may result in your nomination to study abroad being withdrawn.

Booking flights
The Study Abroad Office does not recommend that you book your flight until you have received official acceptance from your host institution and secured your visa (if required). However, if you do decide to take the risk (for example, to secure a cheap deal), you are advised to find out if your airline allows you to cancel or alter departure dates and how much this will cost you. Past study abroad students have been known to miss original flight bookings due to delays with their visa applications.

If you plan to buy a ticket valid for twelve months, do not do so before July as it may expire before the end of your studies or you may be limited in how long you can travel after you complete your studies. The Study Abroad Office cannot recommend any particular travel agencies or airlines. As well as doing some online research, you may find it useful to ask returning study abroad students for advice.

Register with University of Leeds for 2016–17
You must complete University of Leeds registration (available from August 1st) because you remain a Leeds student throughout your period abroad. Student Finance and grant payments will not be paid until you have completed online registration. For more information on registration, go to: students.leeds.ac.uk/info/10102/registration
Get Networking

The University of Leeds Study Abroad Facebook page and the student feedback pages on the Study Abroad Organisation on the VLE are great ways of getting in touch with past study abroad students who have been to your future host institution. These resources will also help you network with current incoming exchange students at the University of Leeds who can offer useful insights into your host institution, city and country.

Facebook – University of Leeds Study Abroad

Visit us on Facebook to see posts from the Study Abroad Office and groups specifically for cohorts of outgoing students: www.facebook.com/studyabroadleeds

Erasmus and International Exchange Society

You can join the Erasmus and International Exchange Society (IntEraSoc) where you will be able to meet students with an interest in studying abroad.

Email: luu.intsoc@leeds.ac.uk
Web: luu.org.uk/groups/interasoc

Global Community website

For UK and international students, the Global Community website connects you to intercultural activities that can bring you a world of different friends, ideas and experiences right here in Leeds.

Email: globalcommunity@leeds.ac.uk
Web: www.globalcommunity.leeds.ac.uk

Organised Events for Outgoing Students

Country Briefings

Worldwide – 17th February 2016; European - 24th February 2016

The Study Abroad Office will organise country-specific briefing sessions in the New Year, giving you the chance to meet other students going to your destination country, as well as incoming exchange students and Leeds students who have returned from their time abroad. More details will be circulated nearer the time so please keep checking your Leeds email for details.

Compulsory Pre-Departure Conferences

Worldwide - 27th April 2016; European - 4th May 2016

Compulsory pre-departure conferences for all students going to study abroad in European or Worldwide destinations will be held as follows:

- Students going to Worldwide destinations (outside of Europe): Wednesday 27th April 2016
- Students going to European destinations: Wednesday 4th May 2016

All students studying abroad for the full academic year or the first semester of 2016-17 must attend this meeting as you will be given important information on topics such as insurance, visas, financial issues and health and safety.

Important! Failure to attend the relevant pre-departure conference may result in your nomination to study abroad being withdrawn. Please put the date in your diary now, and keep it free.
Finding Out About Your Host University

Research your destination
The more you know about what to expect at your host institution/country before you go, the easier you will find it to settle in, and the less likely you will be to suffer from culture shock when you get there.

- Read all information you are given by both Leeds and your host institution
- Look at your host university’s folder under Exchange Partner Information on the Study Abroad Organisation on the VLE - this will be updated throughout Semester 2 with your host university’s website links on course selection, accommodation, term dates and other information for exchange students.
- Look at other websites – not just for the host institution, but for the town/region in which it is situated.
- Look at websites – not just for the host institution, but for the town/region in which it is situated
- Buy or borrow a guidebook, e.g. Lonely Planet or Rough Guide
- Read the feedback forms on the Study Abroad Organisation on the VLE – these give invaluable hints, tips and feedback from previous study abroad students
- Contact any other students who are going to the same institution or area as you – meet up before you go, arrange to travel together, help each other with paperwork
- Contact current study abroad students – emails available via the feedback forms on the VLE
- Contact current incoming exchange students in Leeds from your host institution or city

Host institution accommodation

The Study Abroad office can’t directly help you find accommodation and doesn’t monitor the housing situation in the many international destinations. You are responsible for all your accommodation arrangements and costs, as explained in the study abroad agreement (see: students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroadagreement).

We recommend that you carefully read the advice at students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroadaccommodation and consider the following resources to help you find somewhere to live abroad:

Host university accommodation
You may be able to apply for university-owned accommodation at your host university, such as a room in university residences. The host university’s website can normally tell you what's on offer.

Host university housing advice on private accommodation
Most host universities will be able to provide you with some guidance on private housing in the area, but their levels of assistance will vary. You should also be able to find information on any services the host university provides on their website – look for the accommodation or housing office.

Study abroad feedback forms
Each student who studies abroad is asked to complete a mid-year feedback questionnaire, which includes information about where they are living and how they found their accommodation. This is a good first point of reference if you’re trying to decide between university and private housing.

Past and present outgoing study abroad students
Students who are currently living in your future destination or who spent the previous year at your host institution are an excellent source of information about housing. They will be able to tell you about their accommodation, which areas to focus on and how long it takes to find a room. You can contact them via VLE feedback forms.

Current incoming exchange students
The Study Abroad Office can also put you in touch with students from your future host university who are currently at Leeds who will have valuable first-hand knowledge of your destination.
Health, Mental Health and Disability Information

Why do we need to know this information?

The University of Leeds wishes to help students with mental health or other health conditions, disabilities or learning support needs to access support while studying abroad. So, we ask everyone to let us know of any issues that might have an impact on their time abroad. It is important that you give us this information so that we can talk to you about any support arrangements you might need.

You may already have disclosed this information as part of your online application to study abroad. If so, the Study Abroad Office will get in touch with you and your School Study Abroad Coordinator and School Disability Contact to make arrangements for your time abroad – if you have given your consent.

You need to consider your time abroad as a whole, not just the studying that is the main reason for going. The points below give you an idea of what you should be thinking about.

1. **What about the social/residential aspects of your time abroad?**
2. **How do you think living in a different country will impact on your disability or health condition? Think about how you will cope:**
   - With a different culture
   - With a different language
   - With unexpected issues that may cause increased anxiety
   - Without your usual support network of friends and family
   - If access to public transport is not as easily available as it is in Leeds/the UK
   - Without ongoing access to your GP/prescribing doctor. The NHS usually only issues a 3 month supply of prescription medication at a time. Will you be able to get any necessary medication abroad?
   - If you have accessible accommodation needs

3. **Do you have health insurance which covers you for any pre-existing medical conditions?**
4. **How do you think studying at a different University, in a different country, will impact on your disability or health condition? Think about how you will cope, for example:**
   - With larger classes where lectures may not be recorded, and notes are not provided in advance
   - If there are different expectations relating to deadlines, extensions and access to tutors
   - If you cannot get regular access to counselling or mental health support

All of the information you give us will be shared only with appropriate persons at Leeds and with your host organisation, on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Examples of the people in Leeds who might be informed are the Study Abroad Office, Disabled Students Assessment & Support (DSAS), Study Abroad Coordinators and School Disability Contacts.

If you are undecided about disclosing information and the impact this may have on studying abroad, you may talk in confidence to a member of the Student Counselling Centre, the Mental Health Team, or a member of the Disability Team (contact through DSAS).

Study abroad host institutions may not be able to accommodate all reported individual needs or circumstances, but it will be easier to put a support network in place if you let us know in advance of any disability or health condition. Also, we may be able to provide remote support from Leeds.

We will work with you, your department and other parts of the University, such as the DSAS Disability Coordinator Team, to make sure you’re well prepared for going abroad.
**Things you need to do**

If you have very specific support needs because of your disability or health condition, such as accessible accommodation and personal assistance support, it is your responsibility to let us know. This is so that we can start to put support in place as soon as possible, which can take up to a year in some cases.

**Who should you talk to?**

**Your School or Department**

Students applying to study abroad through the Study Abroad Office should contact their School Study Abroad Coordinator – see a list at: students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroadcoordinators and/or their School Disability Contact (different to a DSAS Disability Coordinator): students.leeds.ac.uk/disabilitycontacts.

**Disabled Students Assessment and Support (DSAS)**

If you currently receive support through the Disability Team in DSAS, please speak to your Disability Coordinator about your plans to study abroad, so that we can discuss how you can get support and can also liaise with your department.

If you don’t currently receive support from DSAS, but would like to discuss how they can help with your study abroad, see the contact details below. There are regular drop-in sessions in DSAS, between 12.30-1.30 every day during term time.

The Mental Health Team can also be contacted through DSAS. There are regular Mental Health drop-in sessions in DSAS, from 11.00-12.00 daily.

Chemistry West Building (building 55a on the campus map)
Tel: +44 (0)113 343 3927 (Calls from RNID Typetalk are welcome)
Email: disability@leeds.ac.uk
Web: students.leeds.ac.uk/supportandwellbeing

**The Student Counselling Centre**

If you have any concerns about your emotional, psychological or mental health or have any particular personal problems, the Student Counselling Centre can provide a range of services to help you prepare for your time abroad before you go. There are also useful services to access while you are away, including on-line self-help and online counselling using confidential chat room technology.

19 Clarendon Place
Tel: +44 (0)113 343 4107
Email: scc@leeds.ac.uk
Web: students.leeds.ac.uk/counselling

**Study Abroad Office**

The Study Abroad Office can give general advice about how to access support while abroad and – if available - contact details of student services at host institutions, such as disability support services, or counselling centres.

Level 11, The Marjorie and Arnold Ziff Building.
Tel: +44 (0)113 343 7900
Email: studyabroad@leeds.ac.uk
Web: students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroad
Disability Related Funding

Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSA)

If you are in receipt of DSA, this funding will usually continue during your period of study abroad. However, if you are in receipt of the maximum allowance, and your study period exceeds the length of a Leeds academic year, you may need to find additional sources of funding to cover that extra period.

If you have specific questions about disability support funding you should address these to the University of Leeds Disabled Assessment and Support Service located in Chemistry West Block. You can phone DSAS on +44 (0)113 343 3927 or email them on disability@leeds.ac.uk

Erasmus+ Funding

If you have a complex disability or exceptional special needs then you may be entitled to extra Erasmus+ funding to cover associated costs on your Erasmus+ placement in Europe. A formal application has to be made for this funding and strict eligibility criteria apply. You should also be aware that you may not receive any payment until part way through your placement. In previous years, Leeds students have been successful in gaining funds towards the costs of travel, accommodation and salary for support assistants.

Other sources of funding

Disability Rights UK (www.disabilityrightsuk.org) has information and advice on their website, including a factsheet which contains useful information for students. They also have a Freephone number and email address helpline service: 0800 328 5050 or email students@disabilityrightsuk.org
Health Advice

The relevant embassy (see Annex 1) will have the most up-to-date information on health advice for the country where you are going. In addition, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office website (www.fco.gov.uk) has travel health advice for UK travellers.

Immunisations

It is very important to check which immunisations are required by your destination country as some countries refuse entry if you do not meet their immunisation standards. Note that some host institutions (particularly in North America) have their own immunisation requirements, based on local legislation. Details of required immunisations are usually included in acceptance materials, giving you sufficient time to obtain the required documentation or shots before your start date. Your host institution may refuse to let you register, charge you a fine, or both if you do not adhere to their requirements.

You should seek medical advice on immunisation as soon as you can, as some vaccinations need an initial shot followed by a booster. You may also need to leave several weeks between different immunisations.

If you plan to travel during or after your studies abroad, you should also obtain any necessary vaccinations for the countries you plan to travel to during the holidays. Speak to your doctor's surgery about the requirements for your destination(s).

General check-ups at the Doctor, Dentist and Optician

We recommend that you see your GP, dentist and optician over the next few months before you travel to check your general health. It is much easier to get necessary health care in the UK where you know the system.

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, it is advised that you have a check-up at your opticians for an up-to-date prescription.

If you take any prescription medicine (including the contraceptive pill), speak to your doctor about getting sufficient supplies as it may be difficult to obtain or even prohibited in your host country.

Bear in mind that dental care isn’t normally covered by health insurance policies and you are going to be away for a significant length of time. Make sure you have a check-up at your dentist before you leave the country and get any work done so you try to eliminate the possibility of having problems overseas.

Health checks required by host institutions

Some host institutions or embassies require exchange students to undertake health examinations, such as a chest x-ray, or obtain additional immunisations such as the MMR vaccine. It is your responsibility to find out whether these requirements are applicable to you. Your host institution may refuse to let you register, charge you a fine, or both if you do not adhere to their requirements.

You may have to pay for these checks or vaccines, which are normally available at the Leeds Student Medical Practice.
Risk Management of Study Abroad Programmes

The University of Leeds has a Health and Safety policy to support you before and during your Study Abroad programme.

Further information can be found at: wsh.leeds.ac.uk/info/193/study_abroad/115/study_abroad

In particular you should familiarise yourself with the ‘Risk Awareness’ form and download the document ‘Study Abroad – Guidance Notes for Students’ which has been devised to help you:

- Work out how much time you will need to plan all aspects of your trip pre-departure to ensure you make the most of your time abroad.
- Identify in advance any problems you may have with your period abroad relating to the academic setting you will be in and your day-to-day life.
- Consider ways of reducing the potential for these problems by using the information and resources available here at the University before you leave.

Compulsory Risk Awareness Form

Risk Awareness forms must be downloaded from the above web link, completed and returned to your Parent School prior to departure. Some Schools arrange ‘School-specific’ pre-departure meetings where the forms and guidance will be discussed. You should speak to your School Study Abroad Coordinator about any School-specific pre-departure events and deadlines set for returning the Risk Awareness forms.

Important! Failure to complete and submit a Risk Awareness form to your School may result in your nomination to study abroad being withdrawn.
Insurance Requirements

Travel and Medical Insurance

All students undertaking a study abroad year as part of their degree will be covered by the University of Leeds’ travel insurance policy at no additional charge. However, you may wish to consider purchasing extra insurance because the Leeds policy has some exclusions, including small electronic gadgets, dental work, and travel outside the geographical region of your placement. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate insurance. Pre-existing medical conditions are covered provided travel is not contrary to medical advice.

A summary of the Leeds policy can be found at: www.leeds.ac.uk/insurance/travel and any questions should be addressed to insurance@leeds.ac.uk

Compulsory Health Insurance Policies

Many students will be required to purchase an additional health insurance policy, either nationwide or university-specific, depending on local legislation. The information below will give you an idea of insurance costs in countries that are known to operate mandatory insurance policies, but it is your responsibility to research the exact requirements of your host university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Type of Policy</th>
<th>International students must:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Purchase health insurance from provider based in Argentina before beginning classes. Host university can advise on providers. Costs vary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Purchase Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) to be eligible for a visa. Cost: up to $750 AUD. Several providers are authorised to offer OSHC and students can shop around for the best policy. Most universities will recommend a preferred provider. It is important to seek the host institution’s advice about the required length of coverage before buying from an alternative provider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>University-Specific</td>
<td>Purchase health insurance dependent on the university they attend. Cost: varies between universities, up to approx. $1050 CAD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Register for National Health Insurance on arrival. Cost: average is approx. ¥20,000 per year (divided into monthly payments) but varies considerably as it is heavily subsidised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>University-Specific</td>
<td>Purchase a health insurance policy dependent on the university they attend in order to complete registration. Cost: approx. $600 NZD. All students must purchase the policy unless the university agrees to waive it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>University-Specific</td>
<td>Purchase a health insurance policy dependent on the university they attend. Approx. costs in Singapore dollars based on 2015/16 academic year: NUS: S$203; NTU: S$300; SMU: S$250.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Purchase a South Africa-based health insurance policy to be eligible for a visa and to register at their host university. Several providers offer suitable policies. Students can to shop around for the best policy, with advice from their host university. Cost: approx. R350 per month of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>University-Specific</td>
<td>Purchase the university-specific policy unless the US university agrees to waive it. US universities have their own health insurance policies. Cost: varies greatly, up to $2850 USD for a full academic year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the information in this table was last updated in August 2015. Students must carefully check policies at their host institution.
Insurance waivers

In the past, some institutions have agreed to accept the University of Leeds insurance policy as a waiver for their own policy. However, host institution policies change each year and the vast majority of host institutions do require all international students to purchase a local policy. If you would like to enquire about the possibility of an insurance waiver, please contact your host institution directly once you have been fully accepted as an exchange student.

EHIC (European Health Insurance Card)

All students who are normally resident in the UK but plan to study in another EEA country should also obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). An EHIC is free and it could save you a lot of money – and hassle – if you need medical help while you’re away. Some institutions will also want to see proof of this card when you are registering. The EHIC entitles you to the same emergency health care provision as a national of the particular country you are in. If you do not have the necessary documentation you will be asked to pay for all medical costs and then make a claim to receive some of the costs incurred – this process can be lengthy and complicated!

Do not rely on the EHIC to cover all your medical expenses. We recommend that you familiarise yourself with the University of Leeds insurance policy to fill any gaps in cover provided by the European Card.

The quickest and easiest way to apply for an EHIC is online at: www.ehic.org.uk/Internet/home.do

Alternatively, you can apply by post using the form and pre-addressed envelope available from your local Post Office branch – your card will be delivered within 21 days.

If you already have an EHIC card, remember to check that it is still valid before you go abroad.

You will not be able to use the EHIC in Turkey although it is advisable to obtain the EHIC so you are covered for emergency cover if you travel into Europe.
Visas and Immigration

It is your responsibility to take the necessary steps to acquire your student visa and you should do this as soon as you have been accepted by your host institution so that your arrival is not delayed.

The Study Abroad Office is not qualified to offer detailed visa advice. Immigration legislation changes frequently, so please check the relevant embassy/consulate websites for the most up to date information. Any student who is not travelling on a British passport must make their own enquiries about the visa regulations and procedures for citizens of their home country.

It is advisable to inform the Study Abroad Office as early as possible of anything which may affect your visa application. For example, if you have a criminal record (even if it is for minor offences) this may affect or delay your application considerably.

Visa Application Guides

Students going to the following countries should download and carefully read the relevant Visa Application Guidance (taking note of the date of publication) from the Study Abroad website: students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroadvisas

- Argentina
- Australia
- Brazil
- Canada
- Chile
- China
- Hong Kong
- Israel
- Japan
- Mexico
- New Zealand
- Singapore
- South Africa
- South Korea
- Turkey
- USA

These guides are just a starting point for your research. You will need to get up-to-date visa information from the relevant embassy or consulate websites as immigration legislation changes frequently and without warning. Always treat the embassy or consulate websites as the accurate source if the information on their website differs from that given here. Consular web addresses can be found in Annex 1.

European Placements

For most European countries, European students do not require visas to enter or to live in the country. Some countries will require students to register with the local authorities and, if this is the case, you will be briefed on arrival at the host university. You may also be required to officially register with authorities if you decide you want to work part-time in the host country.

Non-European students applying to study outside of the UK will almost certainly require a visa. Students should check with the embassy of the host country if a visa is required and how to apply for the correct type of visa.
Additional Information about Applying for a Visa (if applicable)

Mailing your passport

You should never send your passport via ordinary mail. If the embassy you are applying to requires your original passport (rather than a photocopy), then be sure to use Special Delivery envelopes which can be bought at the Post Office. You will need one Special Delivery envelope to mail your passport there, and a second self-addressed one so that the embassy can return your passport to you securely.

Passing through Immigration Control

Make sure you carry your passport, all your immigration paperwork, your letter of acceptance from your host institution, and any bank letters, etc., that you have as evidence of your ability to fund your year abroad in your hand luggage when passing through immigration to your host country. You are guaranteed to be delayed in the airport if you forget to take them with you!

One-way tickets

Please contact the embassy of the country you are going to in order to check any restrictions on one-way tickets. Consular web addresses can be found in Annex 1.
Financial Matters

A study abroad year will usually be more expensive than a year at Leeds but the costs will differ depending on your personal lifestyle and the cost of living in your host country. While you will not need to pay tuition fees to your host university, there are a number of other costs to consider. This information is designed to give you an idea of the associated costs of a study abroad year but may not be an exhaustive list. Please read it carefully and begin to plan how you will fund your study abroad year as early as possible. Further information on all the topics below is available at: students.leeds.ac.uk/fundingandcosts

Costs to Consider

Visa Application
Visa applications vary in cost up to £500. Students going to some countries will also have to show evidence that they have the funds to support themselves financially while abroad as part of the visa application process. Students selected for the USA, Japan and Hong Kong should be prepared to provide this evidence at the point of formal application to the host university (as early as February). Read more at students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroadvisas and students.leeds.ac.uk/financialevidence

Travel and Health Insurance
All students taking a study abroad year as part of their degree will be covered by the University of Leeds’ travel insurance policy at no additional charge. The Leeds policy offers relatively comprehensive personal property and emergency health cover. However, some countries/universities also have their own mandatory health insurance policies for international students costing anywhere from £50 - £2000. Please see students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroadinsurance for more details.

Travel Expenses
Factor the cost of return travel to your study abroad destination into your budget for the year, and consider whether you will want to visit home during the holidays. A study abroad year is a fantastic opportunity to explore a new region of the world, so also think about how you might fund travelling and excursions before, during and after your period abroad. The Study Abroad Office advises you not to book any flights until you have received formal confirmation of your acceptance from your host university and you have obtained your visa (where applicable). For many students, this means it will not be possible to take advantage of cheaper advanced flight bookings.

Living and Accommodation
Feedback forms completed by previous study abroad students and partner university websites will give you an idea of the cost of living in the host country. This will vary greatly depending on both country and city. Accommodation costs are the student’s responsibility and are not covered by the exchange agreement. Please see students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroadaccommodation for more details.

Ad-Hoc Institutional and Study Related Costs
Host universities may charge a variety of standard ad-hoc fees for services such as orientation events, use of campus healthcare and gym facilities, IT facilities, etc. These charges will vary depending on your host university and students are responsible for all non-tuition institutional charges. Previous study abroad students (particularly in the USA and Canada) have also reported that they have been expected to purchase their own textbooks at considerable cost, and have been unable to rely on borrowing books from the library.

Language Courses
If your host university teaches in another language, you may wish to take a pre-sessional language course over the summer to prepare yourself. Some language courses are offered at a reduced rate for exchange students. The Study Abroad Office is sometimes able to offer financial assistance for pre-sessional language courses but this does vary from year to year. If applicable, further information will be released in the spring prior to your study abroad year. Please see students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroadlanguages for further details.
Tuition Fees & Student Finance

We strongly recommend that you read through the full information available from the Funding Team. This is available on their website at: students.leeds.ac.uk/finance

Tuition Fees

If you take a study abroad year, you will pay a significantly reduced tuition fee to the University of Leeds for the year spent abroad. Tuition fees for a full year abroad have been set as follows:

- Home/EU Students: £1350
- International Students: £4000

If you study abroad for less than one academic year, you will continue to pay your usual tuition fee to the University of Leeds.

You do not pay a tuition fee to the host university. However, there may be occasional other fees (such as student union membership, sports membership, insurance, travel passes, etc.). Some of these will be optional, some mandatory. For further details please see students.leeds.ac.uk/fundingandcosts and students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroadinsurance

You should make arrangements to pay your tuition fee with the Fees Office before you move overseas. The easiest way to make payment is by using the online payment facility: students.leeds.ac.uk/info/10210/paying_fees_and_charges

Student Finance Applications (UK Students)

The Student Funding section of the Student Services Centre website provides detailed information about funding and finance for your year abroad: students.leeds.ac.uk/finance

If you are required to transfer from a three year to a four year programme to include a year abroad, you will need to complete a Change of Programme form with your school or department so that your university administrative record can be updated. Please complete your Change of Programme form as soon as possible and preferably before applying to your finance provider for your loans (e.g. Student Finance England). The University (Financial Administration) will then inform your finance provider of the new course name and the new end date of your course.

It is your responsibility and extremely important to complete the student finance application for your year abroad as early as possible and remember to state that Study Abroad is a compulsory part of your degree. The application system for 2015-16 student finance was available from January 2015 so we expect the system to be available for 2016-17 applications from a similar date – our advice is complete your application as early as possible so your loans and grants are in place by the time you leave the UK.
Completing the application for Student Finance England (SFE):

1. When completing your application for student finance it is very important to enter the degree description applicable to your year abroad, for example your standard language degree or integrated masters that already includes a year abroad, or, the four year ‘International’ or ‘European’ programme variant you have changed onto: for example, from BA History to BA History (International).

2. You should make it clear if your period abroad is via the Erasmus+ programme (European exchanges) or not (Worldwide exchanges).

3. For those of you who start your year abroad in July or August you should make this clear on your application. Financial Administration at the University will also confirm your ‘early start’ with your loan provider.

Once SFE have approved your student loan application and prior to your period abroad you will be sent a declaration form from Student Finance or Student Support Agency Scotland outlining your financial notification which you must sign and return immediately and **you must also register online with the University of Leeds for your loan to be released**.

In exceptional circumstances your loan provider may ask you to provide a letter from the University of Leeds which confirms your study abroad details. If you receive a letter or email asking for this, you should forward the email or a scan of the letter to:

**Contact:** Student Funding  
**Email:** funding@leeds.ac.uk  
**Tel:** 0113 343 2007

**Maintenance and Tuition Fee Loans from Student Finance England**

Study Abroad students are still entitled to apply to their student finance provider for a maintenance loan and a reduced tuition fee loan. Remember to ask for the reduced fee amount (see ‘Tuition Fees’ section above).

The amount of Maintenance Loan you are eligible for depends on your individual situation. The amount of loan you can receive can also be affected by your household income. 65% of the Maintenance Loan is not means tested and it is available to all eligible students. The remaining 35% may be available for those students who are means tested. These are the figures for 2015/16 and we do not anticipate that the funding for 2016/17 will be significantly different.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount not depending on household income</th>
<th>Amount depending on household income</th>
<th>Total possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£4433</td>
<td>£2387</td>
<td>£6820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Maintenance Grant from Student Finance England**

There is also a Maintenance Grant available to students who fall into the eligible household income category and if you apply to be means tested then you are automatically assessed for the maintenance grant. In 2015/16 the maximum maintenance grant was £3387.
**Travel Grants from Student Finance England**

You may also be eligible to apply for reimbursement of some travel / insurance costs through Student Finance England if you are a means tested student. You will be automatically sent a ‘Course Abroad Form’ if you are eligible.

Find out more about Travel Grants at: www.gov.uk/travel-grants-students-england/overview

The Course Abroad Form should be completed with **details of where you will be and the dates**, and sent to the following address for authorisation:

Student Funding Team, Student Services  
University of Leeds  
The Marjorie and Arnold Ziff Building  
Leeds  
LS2 9JT

The Course Abroad Form should be issued automatically to students who are eligible, but if you don’t receive it and feel you are eligible to apply then please contact Student Finance England (www.gov.uk/student-finance) directly.

**Welsh, Scottish, and Northern Ireland Student Finance providers:**

Student Finance Wales: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk  
(SAAS) Student Support Agency Scotland: www.saas.gov.uk  
Student Finance Northern Ireland: www.studentfinanceni.co.uk

**Help Resolving Funding Issues**

If you have problems with your funding whilst you’re away, you may need the University to speak to Student Finance to help resolve this. We can only do this if you have set up a ‘professional password’ for someone from the University to speak to them on your behalf. Although you may not need to use it, you should set this up before you go abroad.

Call your student loan provider and ask to set up a ‘professional password’.

You will be asked to state the relationship between you and the person who will be speaking to Student Finance on your behalf. Give this as: Student Advisor

You will be asked for the University name and address. This is: University of Leeds, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, LS2 9JT

Give your student loan provider a password and keep a note of this for yourself.

If you do have problems with your funding, phone or email the Funding team, explain the issue and give us your password. We can then contact Student Finance and discuss your account.
Sources of Funding

University of Leeds Scholarships
If you receive a scholarship from the University of Leeds, please contact the scholarship administrator to find out whether you will be entitled to receive the scholarship during your year abroad. Not all scholarships will be applicable to a year abroad.

Leeds Financial Support
Please note that the ‘Leeds Financial Support’ package is not available during a study abroad year.

External Scholarships
There are a limited number of scholarships available to students studying outside of Europe. These are all funded by organisations unattached to the University of Leeds on an application basis and should not be relied upon as a guaranteed source of funding. Further details are available at: students.leeds.ac.uk/info/10325/funding_and_costs/727/scholarships

Working Abroad
Many students work while they are abroad but you should not depend on this as a source of funding. Seek advice from your host institution and from past students about the availability of student jobs. If you require a visa to study in your host country, you must also check the conditions of your visa to clarify whether or not you have permission to work. The ‘Visa Guidelines’ documents on our website may contain information about permission to work, where we have it: students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroadvisas
Money Management

This is a very important area that will require some research. Don’t leave it to the last minute! Here are some aspects of financial preparation you should think about:

- **UK bankcards/credit cards**: Check the expiry date of all your bankcards. They don’t take long to renew, but it would be more difficult to do it from abroad.

- **Internet banking**: A good way to control your money from anywhere in the world. Contact your local branch to arrange it with them.

- **Use a UK account**: Several UK banks and building societies offer accounts where overseas transactions are free of charge if you use one of their ATM machines (although the ATM provider may charge a fee for using their facility). It is recommended students shop around to find which banks offer this service and open one of these accounts if they intend to continue using their UK account whilst abroad. It may also be a good idea to look at pre-loaded cards like the Travelex card where money can be pre-paid onto the card and then used like a debit card, but without fees. Remember that Travelex or similar cards may not be accepted everywhere so make sure to have a back-up option as well, particularly for smaller day to day purchases.

- **Banking overseas**: It is often useful to ask previous students which banks they would recommend. Not all banks will accept you as a customer and you are unlikely to be offered an overdraft on a non-UK bank account. Host institutions can also offer you with advice at orientation sessions.

- **Letter of introduction**: Ask your UK bank to provide you with a letter recommending you as an account holder. This is a standard letter which most banks will provide to their customers, except in the case of a particularly poor banking history.

- **Partnerships**: Ask your bank if they have partnerships with banks overseas which would make opening an account more straightforward for their customers.

Useful documents to take with you, which may be needed for opening a bank account, are:

- Birth certificate
- Copies of your passport
- Passport photos
- A secondary form of photo ID (e.g. driving licence)
Subsidised Summer Language Programmes

The Study Abroad Office is able to offer several subsidised summer language programmes. Applications will open on 25th January 2016 and the deadline for applications is 3pm, 15th February 2016. Please see our website for more details: students.leeds.ac.uk/info/10345/short_programmes

Spanish
  Successful applicants who are currently in receipt of Leeds Financial Support will receive a fully funded place on the programme. For all other successful applicants tuition costs will be waived.

French
- Université du Maine. Three weeks: 22nd June – 15th July 2016
  Tuition costs will be waived for successful applicants.

German
  Tuition costs will be waived for successful applicants.
- Bayreuth University. Four weeks: 2nd – 26th August 2016 or three weeks: 29th August – 16th September 2016. All levels.
  Tuition costs will be waived for successful applicants.

Italian
- Università degli Studi di Bergamo. Three weeks: 27 June – 23 July 2016
- Successful applicants who are currently in receipt of Leeds Financial Support will receive a fully funded place on the programme. For all other successful applicants tuition costs will be waived.

Language Courses provided by the host institution

You are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the language courses that many institutions offer before the start of session. These are often free of charge to exchange students and provide an excellent opportunity to acquire important language skills, familiarise yourself with your host country and meet fellow exchange students from across the world.

In addition to pre-sessional courses, some institutions offer in-session language courses for exchange students although there may be small charges for language courses which run throughout the academic year. If these courses are credited you may be able to use the credits towards your overall workload - you should check with your School Study Abroad Coordinator.

The Study Abroad Office keeps some literature on language courses provided by partner institutions and private organisations, and their websites will provide further details. We advise you to also do independent research about courses on offer outside your host institution.
Tandem at Leeds Language Exchange

What is the Tandem at Leeds pilot?

Tandem at Leeds is a language exchange project which will run as a pilot in Semester 2, 2016. It involves 2 students who are learning each others’ language to help each other improve their language skills and develop a better understanding of each other’s culture. For example, if your native language is German or you are a competent speaker of German and you want to improve your Spanish, and another student speaks Spanish and wants to improve their German, this is a Tandem match. To be a success, it requires both Tandem partners to take responsibility for the partnership.

Who can take part?

You must be a University of Leeds student in Semester 2, 2016, and you must have at least GCSE/CEFR B1 in the language you want to improve. Tandem is not suitable for beginners.

How does it work?

Tandem at Leeds requires participants to have 10 meetings over the semester and to submit an individual reflective diary. You agree to meet on a weekly basis e.g. for an hour twice a week, focussing on one language in the first meeting and the other in the second meeting. You each decide what you want to focus on and what you wish to improve.

Your reflective diary includes your language learning goals, evidence of each meeting and evidence of your learning both in terms of the language and your cultural awareness. This can include audio, video and/or written evidence of learning. It is assessed on a pass/fail basis. Tandem participants who submit a reflective diary which meets the assessment requirements will receive a certificate of successful completion.

The Tandem pilot relies on being able to find a suitable match. If it is not possible to find a suitable match, you will be informed.

How do I get involved?

If you are interested in taking part in the pilot, send an email to Caroline Campbell c.campbell@leeds.ac.uk stating:

1. the language you speak as a native speaker or to a very high level
2. the language that you want to improve and your current level
3. why you would like to be selected to take part.
Academic Matters

All questions relating to academic matters should be directed to the School Study Abroad Coordinator in your Parent School, rather than the Study Abroad Office.

It is important you understand that it is your Parent School at Leeds that assesses your overall studies overseas. Your School will use the marks you obtain while abroad to make this assessment.

It is vital you have a clear idea of the types of modules you should be taking and the number of credits required to pass the year before you go abroad and we recommend that you obtain this information in writing so you can refer to it later if necessary. Different Schools at Leeds have different requirements for their students so it is essential that you understand the requirements for your own School. Do not assume that the requirements for other Leeds students will necessarily apply to you.

Feedback from past study abroad students has shown that the academic requirements can be one of the most confusing aspects of a study abroad year. The practical arrangements for moving overseas can often take up considerable time, so understanding the academic requirements is an area which can be overlooked. You are strongly encouraged to fully understand what is expected of you and if you have any doubts or queries speak to your School Study Abroad Coordinator before you leave Leeds.

School meetings

Many School Study Abroad Coordinators will arrange a time to meet students who will be studying overseas the following year in order to provide academic advice. Your School will contact you directly about these meetings. Note that School meetings are in addition to the compulsory Study Abroad Office Pre-Departure Conference.

If you are the only student from your School, or if there are very few students going abroad, you should arrange to meet your School Study Abroad Coordinator individually to discuss the period overseas.

How study abroad counts towards your degree

If you are not sure how your period abroad counts towards your degree, you should speak to your School Study Abroad Coordinator who will be able to advise you. It is normally one of the following:

Pass/fail period abroad:

- You will be expected to pass the period overseas and your School will set the requirements of passing. These requirements may vary depending on factors such as the language of tuition.
- Your marks from overseas will not count towards your final degree classification, although they may be used in certain cases where, for example, a student is borderline between two degree classifications. Good results from a period studying overseas can influence the decision.
- If you pass the year you will obtain a ‘European’ or ‘International’ enhanced degree title, e.g. BA History (International). If you were to fail the year overseas, it is normally possible to revert to a three year degree programme. However, a failed year abroad will still show on your final Leeds transcript.

Mark conversion:

- The marks you obtain overseas will count towards your degree classification.
- Schools which use mark conversion have rigorous conversion practices so the marks you obtain overseas can be converted to the mark system used at Leeds. You should be aware that your grades may be cut quite significantly on your return as, for example, in the USA it is expected that you will gain grades of 68%-100% on a regular basis. This is equivalent to approximately 59% –70% at Leeds.
• Schools which use mark conversion normally have links with specific institutions where mark conversions have been in place for a number of years. Your School may convert your grades differently to another School at Leeds, so make sure you know before you leave how your School will assess your studies abroad.
• Mark conversion takes place typically only for students on an Integrated Masters programme in science, such as MGeol, MChem, MMath and MPhys, when the year abroad is an integral year (year 3) of the four year programme. MEng programmes now assess the year abroad on a pass/fail basis.

Research placements:
Students going overseas to undertake research should obtain a clear idea from their School Study Abroad Coordinator of what is expected.

Module Selection

Some host institutions require students to apply for modules at application stage; others expect you to select modules on arrival. You will be advised by the Study Abroad Office at application stage what has been common practice in the past for your host institution. Module selection is very different at every institution so it is vital you do your own research about the modules available and the pre-requisites required.

You should be aware that some modules taught at the host institution may be unavailable to exchange students. These are generally in more practical subjects such as Art, Design, Communications or where there is a professional qualification gained at the end of the degree such as Law, Medicine, Dentistry, etc. However, some institutions simply have restrictions on high demand subject areas. Information related to restrictions will normally be clearly listed on the Incoming Exchange section of the institution’s website or within their application/module selection guidance. Bear in mind that published restrictions are not normally flexible and should be taken seriously.

Module selection at application stage:

If you are expected to provide a list of modules you wish to follow at application stage (January – April for Worldwide destinations; March – June for European destinations), you should seek advice from your School Study Abroad Coordinator about the academic requirements expected for your degree programme.

It may be possible to drop/add modules on arrival, although it is often easier to think about module selection carefully at application stage so you can be pre-enrolled on modules (if this is the practice at your host university) and you don’t have too many changes to make when you first arrive*.

*see ‘Differences to Expect at your Host institution’ on page 32.

Module selection after application, but before arrival:

Some institutions will send you module information (and possibly additional module selection forms to complete) together with your official acceptance. By the time you receive this information, you will almost certainly have obtained academic advice from your School Study Abroad Coordinator. Following this advice you can put together a list of modules you wish to study at the host institution.

You will not be reminded by the Study Abroad Office to return any information which the host university request after acceptance so you need to ensure you read your acceptance letter / pack carefully. If host universities request a list of modules, send these as soon as you can as places on modules will almost certainly be given to exchange students on a first come, first served basis.
**Module selection on arrival:**

It can be frustrating not to know what you will study whilst overseas but some institutions will expect you to select modules on arrival. It may be possible to attend several modules and see which ones you think you would like to continue with. You can use module catalogues from previous years or semesters to get an idea of the modules that will likely be available to you but bear in mind that module availability is subject to change and have some back-up options ready.

Ensure you have understood the academic requirements for your period abroad so you are able to select the correct number of modules when you arrive. Arrival in a host country and at a host university can be a very daunting time. With this in mind, it is advisable to fully understand what is expected of you by your School at Leeds before you arrive to avoid additional uncertainty at what can already be a stressful time.

**Erasmus+ Learning Agreement (requirement of the Erasmus+ programme)**

A requirement of obtaining the Erasmus+ funding is that you complete a Learning Agreement. You must submit a ‘provisional’ Learning Agreement to the Study Abroad Office when you hand in your application form for your host university. This will be sent to the host university with a request that they check your module choices and return a signed copy to the Study Abroad Office as soon as possible. If for any reason, we have not received a signed copy back from the host university before you leave for your year abroad, it is your responsibility to ensure a signed copy is returned to Leeds within a month of your studies commencing. **Failure to return a signed Learning Agreement by the required date means that you will not be able to receive your Erasmus+ funding.**

On the Learning Agreement, you need to list the modules and number of credits you wish to take at the host institution and obtain approval from your School Study Abroad Coordinator at Leeds. A template Learning Agreement can be downloaded from the Study Abroad website. If there are any issues with your proposed list of modules either the Study Abroad Office or your School Study Abroad Coordinator will contact you via email.

**Credit Load**

Partner institutions will use different credit systems than the University of Leeds. Institutions in the same country may also use varying systems. The Study Abroad Office may be able to tell you how many credits past study abroad students have taken at your host institution although you must check this fulfils the academic requirements of your School. Students studying in a foreign language are sometimes allowed to take a reduced credit load.

**ECTS – European Credit Transfer System**

Most institutions within Europe use ECTS. 1 ECTS credit is equivalent to 2 Leeds credits. For example, a 20 credit Leeds module is equivalent to 10 ECTS. Students studying in a foreign language are normally expected to take between 45 – 60 ECTS credits across the full academic year although you should obtain accurate advice from your School Study Abroad Coordinator.

**Research projects/ Work placements**

If you are intending to undertake a research project or a work placement which forms part of your studies overseas this may mean you can reduce the amount of credits you take. Research projects or work placements must be agreed in advance by your School Study Abroad Coordinator.

**School Learning Contract**

Some Schools outline the academic requirements of the year abroad within a ‘Learning Contract’. You will be expected to sign this document prior to your departure and you should take a copy overseas with you. You are normally given this Learning Contract in the meeting which your School Study Abroad Coordinator will organise.
before the semester ends. If you are not sure if your School requires you to sign a Learning Contract, please check with your School Study Abroad Coordinator.

**Consequences of failing the year abroad**

Failure to pass the year abroad will usually result in your study year being discounted from the degree and you will normally revert back to a three-year degree programme. However, a fail grade on the year abroad module will remain on your transcript. In the case of some four-year degrees, e.g. an Integrated Masters degree or a language degree, a failed Study Abroad year could have a serious effect on your ability to graduate the following year, and you may be required to transfer to a BSc programme to complete your degree. You should be aware of the consequences by discussing the possibility in advance with your School Study Abroad Coordinator.

**International Students and Attendance Monitoring**

The UK Border Agency requires universities in the UK to monitor the attendance of students holding Tier 4 General Student visas and this must continue during a student’s Study Abroad programme at a host institution. If you hold a Tier 4 General Student Visa, towards the end of each term at the host institution you will be required to write a brief report of your academic activities and have this verified by a member of staff at the host institution before returning it to your Study Abroad Coordinator at the University of Leeds. Further information about the continued attendance monitoring by the University of Leeds will be provided to you and your Parent School towards the start of your studies overseas.
Differences to Expect at your Host Institution

One of the reasons many students decide to study abroad is to experience a different culture and academic learning environment. Many students spend a considerable amount of time preparing for their studies overseas, although this is often spent on the practical arrangements and academic and institutional differences can be overlooked.

Feedback from past study abroad students has shown the difference in university systems and academic teaching is an area where they felt least prepared, so we recommend that you consider some of the differences you may experience before you move overseas so it is less of a shock when you arrive.

The University of Leeds has over 400 exchange partnerships so the staff in the Study Abroad Office and your School Study Abroad Coordinator cannot be expected to have detailed knowledge of the systems used by all institutions. We aim to cover many of the differences you may face briefly in your country-specific briefing but you should be prepared to do some further research as well. It is a good idea to seek advice from past study abroad students or current exchange students in Leeds (from your host institution) about the way things work.

Below are just a few of the areas which may differ considerably from the University of Leeds.

Registration procedures

Registration procedures at host institutions vary widely. Some will have a similar online system to Leeds which you can complete prior to departure, while at other institutions you will be expected on arrival to queue up (sometimes for hours) with the home students at the admission/registration office. Some institutions will have a two (or more) part process that involves both online and in-person procedures.

Registration at your host institution is an important procedure which you must undertake so spend some time before you leave finding out how this works.

Module enrolment / exam registration:

Modules may be called courses, units or classes at the host institution. Some host institutions do not need you to officially enrol onto modules, others will need you to add/drop modules by a certain date in a similar way to Leeds. Try to find out about the system used at your host institution before you go or very early on during the arrival period.

At some institutions you may be required to register for exams 2-4 weeks prior to the exam date. This is a very different process to the one at Leeds and not a system you would automatically be told about. As you can imagine, there could be serious consequences of not registering for an exam and not obtaining a mark for a module you had followed for a semester or a year. You should enquire about this during the orientation period at your host institution. In some institutions, failing to attend your classes on a regular basis can lead to you being barred from taking the formal examination, so familiarise yourself with attendance policy at your host university.

Teaching style

Teaching styles vary considerably across host institutions. In some cases, especially in Europe, students will be expected to direct their own studies even more so than at Leeds. Most teaching will be done in large lectures with less opportunity for interaction with the academic staff. In contrast, there is a strong culture of continuous assessment in North America and you will be expected to hand in assignments and take tests on a more regular basis. In North America, attendance at lectures is usually required to pass a module and active participation during lectures/seminars is counted towards your overall mark. You will also encounter different study cultures among both home and other international students when studying abroad.

It is strongly advised that you network with study abroad students from or at your host institution to find out more about these differences.
The Study Abroad Agreement

This agreement explains the actions and responsibilities you, your school and the Study Abroad office agree to. Make sure you understand, and are happy to do, everything in it. The agreement applies to students going abroad on an exchange organised by the Study Abroad office.

Student Responsibilities
You will:

- regularly check your University of Leeds emails during the application process and period abroad
- proactively follow application procedures and adhere to all deadlines
- respond promptly to requests for information and documents
- ensure application forms are completed accurately before submission
- attend briefing sessions and orientations - attendance at the pre-departure conference is compulsory
- use resources available to research accommodation overseas and make the necessary arrangements to secure accommodation
- declare any disabilities or health conditions that may affect your period abroad as early as possible to ensure appropriate assistance is provided
- do sufficient independent research into your host university and ensure the academic subject offerings available will be appropriate to your interests
- ensure you understand the academic requirements of your year abroad before departure
- inform the Study Abroad office of any issues that may affect your application
- obtain documents (i.e. visas etc) necessary to travel to, and study in, your host country
- complete a pre-departure checklist by the deadline
- keep in touch with the Study Abroad office and your school while you are abroad
- provide feedback on your experience on request
- return end of year paperwork as required by the Study Abroad office
- agree to pay a £100 administration fee if you withdraw after 26th February 2016.

Study Abroad Office Responsibilities
We will:

- communicate with you via your University of Leeds email address
- provide you with general advice about the application process for your host university
- provide you with relevant information about your host university
- provide practical country-specific advice
- provide general advice on how to find accommodation overseas
- enable you to find out more detailed information about your host university and host country
- hold briefing sessions and orientations
- provide practical support for you while you are abroad.

School Responsibilities
Your school will:

- advise you on academic matters for your studies both prior to and during your period abroad
- confirm your chosen modules are appropriate during the application period and after registration
- provide academic support while you are abroad
- provide pastoral support, if required, while you are abroad
- provide all details about how your year abroad will be assessed.
Checklist

☐ EMAIL ADDRESS
Check your Leeds email account regularly as the Study Abroad Office will use this to contact you.

☐ CHECK PASSPORT VALIDITY
Your passport should be valid for at least six months after the end of your period abroad. If you need to renew it, do this as soon as possible as it can take at least 4 weeks to process here in the UK.

☐ DISCLOSED DISABILITY AND/OR HEALTH OR MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION
Disclosing any medical conditions means the University of Leeds can assist you in any preparations required for your time abroad. Also make a note of important contact details, such as the disability or counselling service at your host institution.

☐ VISAS (if necessary)
Ensure you apply for your visa as soon as you can (normally after you have received official acceptance notification from the host institution). Applying for visas can be quite a lengthy process.

☐ CHANGE OF PROGRAMME
Have you changed your University of Leeds degree programme to a 4 year variant (if applicable)?

☐ RISK AWARENESS FORM
Have you completed this document and provided a copy to your Parent School? Download from: wsh.leeds.ac.uk/info/193/study_abroad/115/study_abroad

☐ PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST
Have you completed the Pre-Departure Checklist and returned it to the Study Abroad Office? Download from: students.leeds.ac.uk/studyabroadhandbooks

☐ HEALTHCARE
Have you had a dentist/optician check-up? Have you had all necessary vaccinations? Have you got all the prescription medication you will need while abroad, as well as a covering letter for Customs officials?

☐ INSURANCE
Health, travel and property insurance is your responsibility. Have you familiarised yourself with the University of Leeds Student Travel Insurance policy and understood the cover exclusions? Have you checked the requirements of your host country/university and arranged extra cover where necessary?

☐ STUDENT FINANCE
Have you completed application forms for Student Finance and informed them of your changed programme and early start date (if applicable)?

☐ ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS
Talk to your School Study Abroad Coordinator before you go. Are you clear about how the year abroad will count towards your degree at Leeds? Do you know what you should study and how many credits to take?

☐ COPIES OF DOCUMENTATION
Have you made copies of your passport/birth-certificate / driving licence (for ID purposes)? Do you have several spare passport photos ready to take with you?

☐ RETURNED ERASMUS+ DOCUMENTATION (if studying in Europe)
Have you returned your Grant Agreement and Learning Agreement to the Study Abroad Office?
Annex 1:

Foreign Embassy websites (within the UK)

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# UK Embassies Abroad

## Worldwide

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