



Risk Management of Student Study Abroad Programmes

Guidance for Heads of School or Service

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Doc control no: PRSG10.3 WELLBEING, SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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Introduction:

Study abroad is a period of study undertaken by a taught student (usually but not exclusively an undergraduate), while registered with the University of Leeds. The period of study is organised and managed through the University and takes place at another overseas educational institution (Partner Institution - usually a University). Periods of study abroad are initially proposed and approved within a School and must be supported by both the School and Faculty's Taught Student Education Committees prior to final support for the proposal by the Standing Group on Study Abroad (SGSA) to the University Taught Student Education Board. The periods of study abroad are often administered through the Study Abroad Office, but in some cases, they are administered within the School.

It does not cover:

- Incoming overseas exchange students from other Universities
- Student Work Placements (see the Placements protocol on the health and safety services website)
- Periods of specific voluntary work such as "V Volunteering"
- Programmes such as the Leeds for Life Foundation – for more information see <https://leedsforlife.leeds.ac.uk/Foundation.aspx>
- Fieldwork studies (see the Fieldwork protocol on the health and safety services website)
- Staff sabbaticals or staff studying or working at another institution, or
- Anyone undertaking a programme of study or work at the University of Leeds, from another organisation – including School, Colleges and other Universities.

Defining roles and proposed actions

Heads of School or Service should see the accompanying document – Proposed roles and actions

Guidance:

1. The Erasmus or Worldwide Student Exchange Agreement is agreed before study abroad begins

- Each study abroad proposal must follow the agreed academic approval process of the University, as set out by the University Quality Assurance Team:

"All programmes of study that include a study abroad element need to be approved separately. Programmes of study are considered at School Taught Student Education Committees, Faculty Taught Student Education Committees and are approved by the Taught Student Education Board Standing Group on Study Abroad (SGSA). In addition to the programme form proposers complete a Proposal for a New Student Exchange Agreement form which focuses on the choice of partner and the learning and teaching arrangements and a partner report form which focuses on student support. Further consideration of the specific support arrangements are undertaken by the SGSA." (Source: Quality Assurance Team)."

 - As part of this academic process the Erasmus or Worldwide Student Exchange Agreement must be agreed and signed by both the University of Leeds and the partner institution – these agreements are available from the Study Abroad Office.
 - In addition, each programme must be supported by all committees at all stages to gain final approval.
 - **If both academic approval and Erasmus or Worldwide Student Exchange Agreement is not completed then the period of study abroad must not go ahead.**

2. Briefing students

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- The health and safety information and briefing given to students should be appropriate to the level of risk involved with the period of study. This should be included in the supporting information given to all students for the academic requirements of the period of study.
- It should cover areas such as the nature of study (laboratory based etc); possible transport issues; any relevant information on accommodation; the types of cultural issues that may be encountered; insurance issues and individual considerations such as ongoing medical treatments.
- The briefing could be carried out by the academic tutor responsible for the programmes, or the study abroad coordinator - the decision should be made locally and reflect the level of risk involved.

3. System for raising and resolving problems/ concerns

- Schools should have a process in place for the students to raise problems and concerns with the school. This should be communicated to all involved.
- This could include all types of concerns from academic problems to major issues such as a natural disaster or serious injury.
- Where significant problems or concerns have been raised these should be recorded within the school.
For example: if a student raises a concern about a process within a laboratory that they feel is potentially hazardous, or should there be a personal safety concern raised.

4. Contingency and emergency plans

- Contingency plans should be in place to respond to **major** problems,. This should follow the emergency procedures in the School and where required involve appropriate members of the University should be included (e.g. Secretariat, Head of Corporate Affairs, the Insurance Officer, Health and Safety Manager, Head of Study Abroad).
- Where significant problems or concerns have been raised these should be recorded within the school.
- For student crisis please see http://www.leeds.ac.uk/secretariat/student_crises.html

5. Significant accidents and incidents

- A significant accident would include a student being hospitalised following an injury - e.g. a broken leg whilst undertaking a study related activity.
- Each School will have its own local processes for recording these and the Study Abroad Coordinator/ other key role holders should be aware of how to do this. These significant accidents should be reported on Sentinel (the University's online accident reporting system).
- Any significant injury that is as a result of the activities on the Study Abroad Programme should be considered when reviewing the programme so it is essential that this is recorded and the information made available.

6. Relevant health and safety information

- Relevant information may depend on the individual student, but as a general rule this will include information pertinent to the activities being undertaken, e.g. consideration of laboratory practices in a different country.
- Information should be recorded appropriately and should fit the process for recording information about the study abroad programme. The way information is recorded may vary in Schools - e.g. where there may be an electronic file of information on a Partner, health and safety information could be included in this file.
- It is recommended that copies of the New Partner Report, the New Student Exchange Agreement, Erasmus or Worldwide Student Exchange Agreement, the initial proposal, any

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correspondence and the risk awareness form are kept on file. In addition, should there be an incident, this should also be documented.

7. Reviewing partner institutions

- It is useful when reviewing partner institutions to consider any health and safety concerns that have been raised.
- Feedback is mainly for academic purposes but it is useful to know if there have been any problems, therefore asking for this information will inform the overall review.
- Schools should also seek feedback from students. This can be done as part of the general feedback; in some cases this has been carried out through paper based questionnaires and in others through the VLE.
- This feedback should be kept as a minimum until the student has graduated, unless there has been a significant concern or accident, in which case they should be kept for 5 years following the period of study abroad.
- Significant or recurrent issues would result in a review of the Partner.

8. Students completing the risk awareness form

- Students need to complete the risk awareness form before they take part in study abroad, to help them plan for it. The form is supported by a short guidance document, with some useful web links. The Study Abroad Coordinator may be able to support this but shouldn't be writing the forms for them.
- The forms require a signature to say it has been completed and submitted to the school. This signature is on behalf of the school and does not mean the individual signing it is approving or taking responsibility for the content.
- The form is what the University expects a student to consider - it can be added to in consultation with the Health and Safety Manager but nothing should be removed.

If you have any further questions or need advice, guidance or support please contact your Health and Safety Manager.