



Your studies

Bethany Evans-Brown, Australia 2018-19

GOODBYE ESSEX --- **HELLO WORLD**

Your Study Abroad Handbook

2021-22



University of Essex

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GOODBYE ESSEX, HELLO WORLD...

The last year has not been without it's difficulties, especially to those who have come through the postponing of the year abroad last year and are now ready to finally have your international experience...let's just hope that COVID doesn't affect your year abroad any further and well done for being as resilient as you have been so far!!

Your journey abroad has already started, and you have successfully completed your application. This deserves a huge congratulations and welcome on board! This was the first step in you taking charge of your own story and new adventure. There are now many things to consider, and do, to help make the next steps run as smoothly as possible. It won't always be easy, but the Essex Abroad team are here to help you along the way, starting with the pre-departure briefing.

This handbook has also been designed to keep you on top of what needs to be done, as well as offering some sound advice on various aspects of the study abroad journey. You are about to embark on what we hope will be a fulfilling experience, enriching your life and challenging your outlook on your degree and the world around you, so be prepared and **make it count!**

Kristi Connell
Essex Abroad Manager
March 2021



PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS

TIPS TO HELP MAKE SURE YOU ARE FULLY PREPARED TO GO ABROAD

APPLYING TO YOUR HOST UNIVERSITY

Although you have completed your study abroad application to Essex, you'll also need to officially apply to your host university. It's important that you complete this, and any registration steps on time. The deadlines they give are set for a reason, if you miss them we are unable to help.

PASSPORT

Check that you have a valid passport. Ideally, your passport should still have at least six months validity when you return to the UK. If it does require renewal to cover your stay abroad, begin this process immediately.

If you're an EU citizen going to an EU country, you may be able to use your ID card so it's best to check the validity before you go.

VISAS AND ENTRY RESTRICTIONS

Once your application has been accepted by your host university, you will receive an official acceptance letter and relevant documentation for obtaining a visa (if required).

It is your responsibility to research if and what type of visa you may need to study in that country. This information can be found on your host country's immigration website or at the embassy or consulate of the country concerned. Your host university may also be able to offer guidance in this area, and you can check our Exchange Finder online for general guidance.

Any visa related documentation must be kept safe with your passport in your hand luggage at all times when you are travelling.

Send important documents to yourself by email so you can easily access them at any time.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

We advise you to book travel arrangements only when:

- you receive an official acceptance letter from your host university.
- you have received the relevant visa to study (if required).
- you can proceed into the next year of study.

For the cheapest fares it is a good idea to avoid travelling at weekends and to book well in advance. Don't forget to check the start date of term so you can start planning accordingly and factor in any orientation events you may attend beforehand.

Remember to retain receipts and/or tickets required for reimbursement of travel costs. You will need these if you apply for the Student Finance Travel Grant.

COVID-19

Make sure you are regularly checking the entry requirements for the country you will be studying in. Requirements can change daily. You will also need to make sure you are aware of restrictions your host country may have in place e.g. self-isolation on arrival, social distancing, lockdown restrictions or curfews. FOLLOW THEM!!

Our favourite travel websites for securing the best prices for flights are [Skyscanner](#) and [Kayak](#).

Visit ['Secret Flying'](#) on Facebook for cheap flight deals all over the world.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CARD

An ISIC card is internationally accepted as proof of your student status. The ISIC card entitles you to obtain discounts and special services when you travel. More information on the cards can be found at the [ISIC website](#)

If you're going to an Erasmus+ eligible country, you may be able to get an ESN (Erasmus Student Network) card which entitles you to 15% off 8 one-way Ryanair flights. Visit [the ESN website](#) for more information.

RESIDENCY PERMITS

In certain countries, you may need to apply for a residence permit or register with the local council/police after you arrive. The relevant embassy and/or your host university should be able to advise you on the requirements, but it is a good idea to research this before arriving so that you know what to expect.

FINDING ACCOMMODATION ABROAD

One of the major concerns of any student going abroad is finding suitable accommodation. We advise you to research accommodation options as early as possible to try and organise something before leaving. However, this will not always be possible.

Setting off sometimes two or three weeks before the start of your study abroad period can give you enough time for you to get ahead in your accommodation search. The extra time will give you an opportunity to settle and familiarise yourself with local amenities before you officially begin your studies.

Although in many cases accommodation cannot be guaranteed, it may be possible to apply for accommodation in advance through the host university. Applying doesn't always guarantee you a place, so be prepared that you may have to find private accommodation.

PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION

If you're unable to secure university accommodation, your host university *should* be able to signpost you to private accommodation options. Many universities publish information on their websites designed to help incoming exchange students with their search for accommodation. Check [Essex's guide to safe accommodation](#) or the [SU guide to choosing accommodation](#). You could also check this [guide by GO.ABROAD](#).

Be cautious of housing scams. Don't make any payments or deposits before signing a contract. In some countries your word is the contract. It is also best to try to view accommodation before agreeing to sign a contract. Try to avoid paying in cash or via PayPal.

If you cannot organise accommodation in advance it is always a good idea to have somewhere secured to stay for a few days on arrival whilst you look for permanent accommodation. Most places have cheap hostels, or hotels. You can even check local Facebook groups to ask for options and advice.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The standard of both private and university owned accommodation may not be the same as you're used to in Essex. In some countries, it is not uncommon to share a room with one or more students, and the quality of accommodation can vary greatly so it is best to prepare for differences in standards.

PAPERWORK

IT'S GOT TO BE DONE...

Before, during and at the **end** of your time abroad there will be various documents we need you to complete, sign and return to us. It's really important that you check your Essex email regularly to make sure you don't miss anything.

Our advice? Keep this handbook which explains the paperwork we'll be asking for throughout your time abroad and stick to the deadlines we set.

All the forms that we will ask you to complete will be sent to your Essex email address. You can return any of the forms to us at essexabroad@essex.ac.uk

If you fail to return the required documents to us within the time frame we specify, there may be severe implications including a delay in receiving funding or your year abroad not counting towards your degree.



BEFORE

You're off! Before you go, make sure you:

- ☐ Select your modules and have your **learning agreement** signed by yourself and your Departmental Study Abroad Officer (DSAO)
- ☐ Complete and sign your **Erasmus+ Grant Agreement***
- ☐ Complete the **Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support Assessment***

DURING

The adventure begins! Don't forget to:

- ☐ Have your **learning agreement** signed by the host university
- ☐ Have your **Certificate of Arrival** signed by the Study Abroad Office at your host university **within two weeks** (you can't be registered as an Essex student until you've done this so please make this a **priority**). You may have to pay a late registration fee if you fail to return this on time.
- ☐ Keep us and your DSAO updated on any changes made to your modules, gain email approval, and **update your learning agreement** (pg. 8 explains how to do this)
- ☐ Complete the final **Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support Assessment***

AFTER

All good things come to an end. Before you leave, make sure you:

- ☐ Have your **Certificate of Departure** signed by the Study Abroad Office at your host university.
- ☐ Complete the **Erasmus+ Online Feedback Survey***
- ☐ Complete the **Essex Abroad online feedback form** to evaluate your experience abroad
- ☐ Send your **transcript** to Essex Abroad if you receive it directly from your host university

*Only applicable to students studying on an Erasmus+ programme.

**CONFUSED BY WHAT ALL OF THESE DOCUMENTS ARE?
NO IDEA WHAT A LEARNING AGREEMENT IS? DON'T
WORRY, THE NEXT COUPLE OF PAGES WILL EXPLAIN
THIS.**

WHAT DOES ALL THIS PAPERWORK MEAN?

LEARNING AGREEMENT

This is a contract which officially maps which modules you, your department at Essex and your host university have agreed that you will study whilst abroad.

This is **compulsory** for every student. This document will be used to transfer your credit back to your degree at Essex so it is very important that you make sure it is updated if you make any changes to your modules.

Before you go

Before going abroad, we will send you a pre-filled learning agreement which you will need to complete with the modules you are intending to study whilst abroad (see Table A below).

Your DSAO and your host university must both approve these modules choices. They do this by signing in the commitment box at the bottom of the first page. This must then be returned to Essex Abroad essexabroad@essex.ac.uk prior to your departure.

Student	Last name(s)	First name(s)	Date of birth	Nationality	Sex (M/F)	Study cycle	Field of education
	Smiths	Amy	01/01/96	British	F	2nd	Economics
Sending Institution	Name	Faculty/Department	Erasmus code ¹ (if applicable)	Address	Country	Contact person name ² ; email; phone	
	University of Essex	Economics	UK-ESSEX-ESOL	Wivenhoe Park, Colchester	England	Essex Abroad essexabroad@essex.ac.uk +44 1206 877632	
Receiving Institution	Name	Faculty/Department	Erasmus code (if applicable)	Address	Country	Contact person name; email; phone	
	Monash University				Australia		

Before the mobility

Study Programme at the Receiving Institution				
Planned period of the mobility: from [month/year] to [month/year]				
Table A Before the mobility	Component code (if any)	Component title at the Receiving Institution (as indicated in the course catalogue)	Semester (e.g. autumn/spring term)	Number of ECTS credits (or equivalent) to be awarded by the Receiving Institution upon successful completion
	EC0301	Macroeconomics	autumn	6
	EC0302	International Economics	autumn	6
	EC0306	Current Affairs in Economic Policy	autumn	6
	EC0303	Microeconomics	autumn	6
	EC0304	Public Finance	spring	6
	EC0310	Monetary Economics	spring	6
	EC0311	Mathematical Economics	spring	6
	EC0308	Labour Economics	spring	6
				Total = 48
Web link to the course catalogue at the Receiving Institution describing the learning outcomes (web link to the relevant information)				

Commitment					
By signing this document, the student, the Sending Institution and the Receiving Institution confirm that they agree the Learning Agreement and that they will comply with all the arrangements agreed by all parties. Sending and Receiving Institutions undertake to apply all the principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education relating to mobility for studies for the principles agreed in the latest Institutional Agreement for Institutions located in Partner Countries. The Sending Institution and the student should also consent to what is set out in the Erasmus grant agreement. The Receiving Institution confirms that the educational components listed in Table A are in line with its course catalogue and should be available to the student. The Sending Institution commits to recognise all the credits gained at the Receiving Institution for the successfully completed educational components and to count them towards the student's degree as described in Table B. Any exceptions to this rule are documented in an annex of this Learning Agreement and agreed by all parties. The student and the Receiving Institution will communicate to the Sending Institution any problems or changes regarding the study programme, responsible persons and/or study period.					
Commitment	Name	Email	Position	Date	Signature
Student	Amy Smiths	asmiths@essex.ac.uk	Student	01/01/16	[Signature]
Responsible person ¹ at the Sending Institution	Professor Willis	gwillis@essex.ac.uk	Department Head	03/01/16	[Signature]
Responsible person at the Receiving Institution ²	X	X	X	X	X

WHAT HAPPENS IF I CAN'T GET IT SIGNED BEFORE I GO ABROAD?

Some universities are not able to sign your learning agreement until you have arrived and fully enrolled. It is your responsibility to make your best effort to contact them and ask them to sign it. If they cannot sign it, please forward this communication to us so we can save this to your file. In these circumstances, we will permit a delay in the submission of your learning agreement.

Making changes whilst abroad

It's not uncommon to find out that you need to make some changes to the modules you originally decided on. Some modules might not be running, some might be full, or you might just change your mind - it is fine to make changes but please make sure you:

1. Complete the 'During the Mobility' form listing any modules that you have added or dropped from your original learning agreement.
2. Send the completed document with your original learning agreement to your DSAO, requesting approval of the changes. Copy Essex Abroad into the email.
3. If your modules aren't approved, you will need to choose new modules and repeat the process until your DSAO approves.

Do not leave any changes to the last day of add/drop period at your host university. Remember that your DSAO must approve these changes, and you should give them sufficient time to reply and factor in any differences in time zones.

Your learning agreement can be completed and signed electronically; you don't need to complete it by hand.

During the Mobility

Exceptional changes to Table A					
(To be approved by e-mail or signature by the student, the responsible person in the Sending Institution and the responsible person in the Receiving Institution)					
Table A2 During the mobility	Component code (if any)	Component title at the Receiving Institution (as indicated in the course catalogue)	Deleted component (tick if applicable)	Added component (tick if applicable)	Reason for change ^{1,2}
	EC0309	Public Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Timetable conflict
	EC0117	Intro to trade economics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Substitute



PLEASE NOTE:

If you fail to receive approval from your Departmental Study Abroad Officer before undertaking a new module, this could result in you receiving a mark of 0 for this module and therefore failing your year abroad.

ERASMUS+ GRANT AGREEMENT*

If you are studying in a European country (except for Switzerland), you may be eligible to receive Erasmus+ funding for your studies abroad. The Erasmus+ grant is funding from the European Commission that Essex receives to fund students to study abroad in Europe.

To receive your grant, you'll need to sign the Erasmus+ grant agreement - this is the funding contract between yourself, the European Commission and Essex.

You will not receive the grant without the completion of this document, and it **must** be returned before your studies abroad begin. This document will be emailed to you.

ERASMUS+ ONLINE LANGUAGE TEST*

This is a **compulsory** online language proficiency test for all Erasmus+ students. Even if you will be studying in English, you are required to take the tests. You will take one assessment before you go abroad, and one at the end. This will measure the improvement in your language skills.

What happens if I fail?

The result does not affect your grade at Essex or your year abroad mark.

In addition to completing the language assessment, you will also be offered a free online language course whilst you're abroad to help improve your skills.

You will receive an email inviting you to set up your account and complete your first assessment in July/August.

Please ensure you visit our website regularly. It is updated with [information regarding Erasmus+ funding](#) as well as other useful information.

CERTIFICATE OF ARRIVAL

This document confirms you have arrived at your host university. Please make sure you get your Certificate of Arrival signed by the Study Abroad Office and returned to Essex Abroad as soon as possible. You can't be registered as an Essex student for the year you're away until we receive this. If you fail to provide it within two weeks of arriving, you will be at risk of being withdrawn from the University of Essex. You will be sent a copy of the Certificate of Arrival by email.

CERTIFICATE OF DEPARTURE

Like the Certificate of Arrival, this form confirms you've completed your studies abroad. Please get this signed by the Study Abroad Office and returned to Essex Abroad after you have completed your studies at your host university. The end date stated on the Certificate of Departure must be the last date you were required to be at the host university.

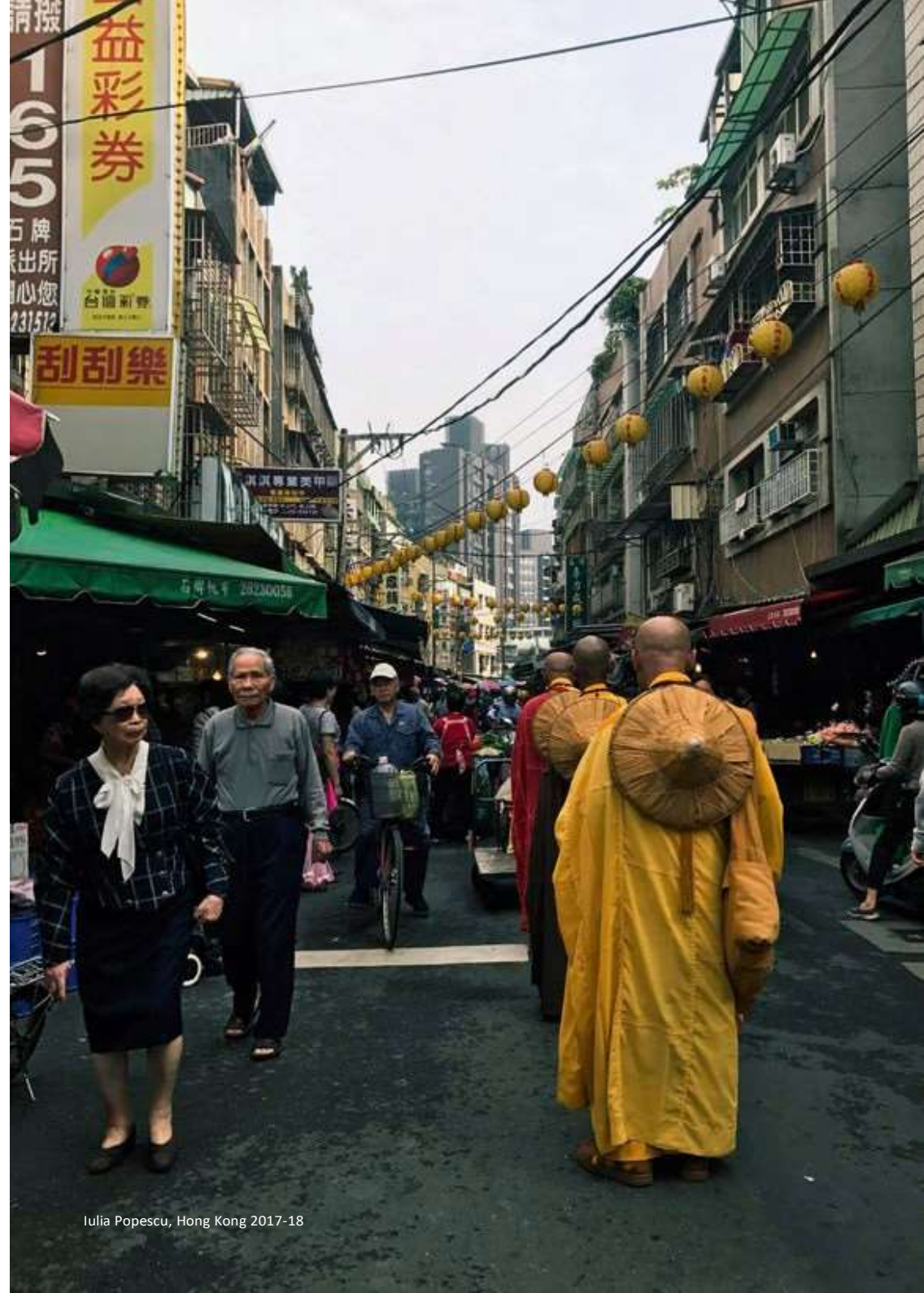
ERASMUS+ STUDENT REPORT*

At the end of your studies you will be asked to complete an online report for the European Commission **within one month**. The email will come directly from the European Commission so check your emails (and spam) regularly towards the end of your time abroad.

The purpose of the survey is to evaluate your time abroad, it won't take long to complete and it is a requirement of receiving the Erasmus+ mobility grant – failure to complete it may result in a request for repayment of your grant.

ESSEX ABROAD FEEDBACK FORM

This is an online form we'll ask you to complete once we receive your Certificate of Departure. You are bound to have suggestions and recommendations about the year abroad and this is your chance to give us some feedback on how we can make improvements for future students.



Iulia Popescu, Hong Kong 2017-18

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

STUDYING ABROAD IS A CHANCE TO TRY NEW THINGS, TRAVEL TO NEW PLACES AND CHALLENGE YOURSELF DAILY. BUT THE PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO STUDY. REMEMBER, YOUR GRADES COUNT.

THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

CREDITS

It's unlikely that 15 or 30 credit modules, like at Essex, will be the norm at your host university. You should take the required number of credits/modules indicated in your learning agreement.

You need to **be enrolled on and attempt a full credit load** to pass the year abroad. However, we will only take **the best 75%** (rounded up to the fullest module so we discount up to 25%) of your credits account when we convert your grades back to an Essex mark.

If you are studying abroad for one term only, you are required to pass **all** modules studied abroad. The best 75% rule does not apply to term abroad students.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment (the way you are awarded grades) may take various forms and is often very different from the UK. Be prepared for the possibility of more regular assignments and exams. Remember that part of the study abroad experience is challenging yourself and pushing your own boundaries. Don't give up if things get tough and don't be afraid to speak to your tutors or lecturers whilst you're there.

The new academic environment is likely to be very different to Essex and it can take some time to adapt. You may struggle at times; this is normal and nothing to be embarrassed about.

Go in with an open mind and remember that the struggles you may face will develop you. You'll adapt, show flexibility, independence, and a drive to learn!

MODULES

Modules must be taken for numeric or letter grade credit. Modules taken on a pass/fail basis will not be counted towards your Essex credits.

RESITS

Your host university may give you an opportunity to resit an exam, but this is at their discretion. We are unable to influence the decision if your host university does not offer you resits and be mindful that **it is not possible** for students to take resits back at Essex for modules taken abroad.

If you are taking any resits, make sure you let us know the expected result notification date and ensure a revised transcript is issued before you return to Essex.

If you receive the Erasmus+ grant, your funding will not be extended to cover any period of resits over the summer.

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

If there are serious matters that influence your academic achievement whilst abroad, you should inform us. You may be advised to submit extenuating circumstances documentation. This supports your circumstances and is reviewed during the Exam Board when your marks are verified and converted back to Essex marks.

Please contact essexabroad@essex.ac.uk and we will email you the extenuating circumstances form.

YOUR TIME ABROAD AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR DEGREE

We recommend that you read the [rules of assessment](#) to understand how studying abroad impacts your course progression and overall degree at Essex.

CONVERSION SCALES

When you return from studying abroad, the marks you have achieved will be converted to Essex marks using our **approved** conversion scale. This scale shows how marks in different countries are converted to Essex equivalents. We use these converted grades to calculate an average year abroad mark. This will show on your official transcript as one average numerical mark so you won't see the converted grade for each module you studied abroad.

You can find the conversion guidelines for each country to the right.

HOW YOUR YEAR ABROAD AFFECTS YOUR ESSEX DEGREE

Your overall degree classification is calculated in two ways, with your year abroad, and without your year abroad. If your year abroad mark lowers your degree classification, you'll be awarded the higher classification, but the numerical mark will stay the same.

Your year abroad will count towards 20% of your final degree mark.

If you're studying abroad just for one term, it will count for 50% of your stage 3 mark.

SELECTING YOUR FINAL YEAR MODULES AT ESSEX

You will make decisions about your Essex final year modules while you are away. Module selection and enrolment will take place online. Please note that if you are studying abroad under Special Syllabus, you might not be able to use online enrolment.

FAILING YOUR YEAR ABROAD

When you finish your studies abroad, we will receive your transcript and your marks will be converted into Essex marks.

- If your average converted mark is below 40% this will be classed as a fail and you will be converted to a three-year variant of your degree.

If you are studying abroad for just one term, the process is slightly different. Contact us for more information.

If you do not complete your year abroad or revert to a 3-year degree, there may be Student Finance England funding implications due to study rules. Refer to the ['practical issues'](#) on our website.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Country	Essex Grade vs country equivalent			
	70	60	50	40
Argentina	8.5	7.3	5.3	4
Australia	80	70	60	50
Austria	1	2	3	4
Belgium	16	14	12	10
Brazil	8.7	7	5.9	5
Canada	80	70	60	50
Canada (UVIC)	7	6	3	1
Chile	7	6	5	4
China (HK, Macau)	3.7 (A-)	2.7 (B-)	2.1 (C+)	1.0 (D)
China (mainland)	90	80	70	60
Colombia	4.5	4	3.5	3
Czech Republic	1	2	3	-
Denmark	11	8	7	6
Finland	5 (A)	3 (C)	2 (D)	1 (E)
France (10)	8	7	6	5
France (20)	16	14	12	10
Germany	1.7	2.5	3.3	4
Israel	89 (A-)	79 (B-)	69 (C-)	59 (C-)
Italy	28+	25	22	18
Japan	3.4 (A-)	2.7 (B-)	2.1 (C)	1.0 (D)
Malta	85	70	60	50
Mexico	92	85	78	70
Netherlands (pass mark may be 5 to 6, check with your host University)	8	6.5	5.7	5
New Zealand	A-	B	C+	C-
Norway	A	C	D	E
Peru				
Poland	5	4	3.5	3
Portugal	16	13	11	10
Romania	A – 10	B – 9	C – 7	E – 5
Singapore	5 or A	3.5 or B	2.5 or C+	1 or D
South Korea	A	B	C-	D-
Spain	8.5	6.75	5.5	5
Sweden	A	C	D	E
Switzerland	5.5	5	4.5	4
Turkey	85	70	60	50
Uruguay	10	6	4	3
USA	GPA 3.4 or A	GPA 2.7 or B	GPA 2.1 or C+	GPA 1.0 or D-



Malin Kjolås, Netherlands 2017-18

BUDGETING AND FUNDING

Budgeting can be tricky while abroad with different currencies and living costs to contend with, here are some useful things to think about before you go abroad.

Explore some of the budgeting templates and resources available on our webpages. By researching and planning well, you will be able to limit any surprise expenses and stress less about your financial situation.

HOW EXPENSIVE WILL IT BE?

We recommend using the website numbeo.com to review the average cost of living for the new city you'll be living in. Take some time before you depart to calculate your estimated expenditure to best prepare for the year ahead.

STUDENT FINANCE ENGLAND – MAINTENANCE LOAN

Most students continue to be eligible for any funding you would normally receive from Student Finance England, including the Maintenance Loan. Apply for Student Finance for your study abroad year via your online account as **soon as possible**. Don't forget to notify them that you will be studying abroad (even if you are an EU student).

Similar arrangements are in place for Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish students who are receiving support from their national funding councils.

As a University of Essex student, you are required to pay 15% of your Essex tuition fees for 2021-22.

STUDENT FINANCE ENGLAND – TRAVEL GRANT

If you receive a Maintenance Loan from Student Finance England, you may also be eligible for a travel grant to cover some of your travel expenses. There are rules on eligibility, based on household income, which determine how much you'll receive, but unlike a loan you don't have to pay it back. Be mindful that the grant is only awarded as a reimbursement for certain costs so you'll be expected to cover the initial costs. You can claim for the following:

- Up to 3 return journeys between your home and your host university during a full academic year abroad (depending on your course structure and number of terms/ semesters).
- Help with essential expenses such as medical insurance, vaccinations and travel visas.

For further information visit: the [travel grants information pages](#).

More questions about Student Finance England? Contact the University's friendly funding team for any enquiries - funding@essex.ac.uk

GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES

You may be eligible for scholarships or grants offered by Essex Abroad, visit our [funding and finance webpages](#) to find out more about what is on offer. Usually you don't need to apply. Scholarships are awarded based on academic merit and successful students are contacted directly. We also recommend researching external funding opportunities offered by the host university or Government/Embassy/Trusts in the country you are visiting.

COSTS YOU MAY NOT HAVE CONSIDERED

You may be expected to pay some fees for services such as academic/administration and registration charges imposed by your host university. Bear in mind that many universities, particularly in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, require you to opt into their **compulsory health insurance** scheme. This can sometimes be a large sum of money - don't let this be a unexpected surprise when you arrive. Research and enquire beforehand so you are aware of any immediate payments you may need to make. Some universities may waive the fee if the cover provided by Essex is sufficient, but not all institutions will do this.

Other fees which you might incur include:

- Student Union fees
- Residential services
- Rent
- Utilities
- Council tax
- Meal plan (usually in campus accommodation)

At some of our partner universities, unpaid debts from the first semester of study can prevent students from registering and continuing into the next semester, and in most cases a host university will not issue your transcript until all debts are settled.

Ensure you have access to sufficient funds when you get there so that you can pay for items until such time as your student loan instalments are paid into your bank account.

If you're studying abroad on an Erasmus+ programme, you don't need to apply for Erasmus+ funding. If the funding is available, we'll be in touch shortly to explain the funding timeline, so you know what to expect & when.



Avinash Ramrakka, Canada 2016-17

HEALTH & SAFETY ABROAD

THE INTEREST OF THE YEAR LIES IN DISCOVERING, ENJOYING AND ADAPTING TO THE RICH AND VARIED DIFFERENCES IN CUSTOMS AND CONVENTIONS ABROAD. MAKE SURE YOU'RE AS PREPARED AS YOU CAN BE.

IN AN EMERGENCY

- Upon arrival at your host university, **familiarise yourself with the local arrangements** of what to do in case of an emergency (i.e fire or personal emergency).
- Save **key contact numbers for police and ambulance services** in your phone. Remember that the emergency number is not 999 in all other countries.
- At an appropriate time, **get in touch with [Essex Abroad](#)** to let us know that you are ok. Remember that your family are likely to be concerned if there are situations which have been reported in the media and you have not been in touch recently (even if you are completely fine).
- Have a copy of travel insurance details as well as the **contact details of your host university** easily to hand.

With many threats around the world, we may contact you in the event of a serious incident to check you are safe. We are aware that many students spend their spare time travelling, so don't be alarmed if we check in with you and you're not studying where the incident has taken place - we do this as a precaution.

Sign up to the Government's [foreign travel advisory page](#) for daily/weekly travel advice by email. You can choose to receive alerts to as many countries as you wish.

LEGAL MATTERS

- Make yourself **aware of the local regulations** related to alcohol consumption. Even if you are of legal age, if you are in the presence of 'minors' and alcohol, you could risk arrest, imprisonment, revocation of visa and deportation. Particularly in the USA where this matter is taken very seriously and where the drinking age is 21.
- **Drug legalisation can differ in other countries.** It is your responsibility to be informed.
- Be aware of what you **can and can't photograph in public.** In some countries taking photographs of police or military establishments or personnel can result in arrest, likewise so can taking photos of aircraft at airports.
- Not all countries will have a Westminster Legal system and therefore the presumption of innocence can be different in other countries.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Essex provides comprehensive travel and health insurance cover whilst you are abroad. It is **compulsory** for each student to apply for this insurance. Our cover provides you with the following services:

- Emergency travel and medical assistance
- Travel security advice and alerts
- Country Guides
- Online security training and guidance
- Medical expenses from Covid-19 are not excluded but there is no Covid-19 cover in respect of any claims under the Disruption section (cancellation, curtailment, rearrangement etc).

The cover does not include personal possessions or personal holidays. You will need to purchase your own insurance for this. You should make sure that the policy you take out covers the whole period you are away, including any additional travel plans you may have.

EHIC EU students:

If you're studying abroad within Europe, don't forget to get a student EHIC (European Health Insurance Card). This is different to the regular EHIC as it covers you for the extended period of time you'll be studying abroad.

GHIC UK students:

If you are an **Essex Student from the UK** studying in an EU country **you must ensure you have a [GHIC](#) (UK Global Health Insurance Card) before your travel.** The GHIC provides you with the right to access state-provided healthcare during your time limited stay in the EU (based on your course dates). You'll only be able to use the GHIC in the country that you are studying in so it's important that you also make sure you have the correct level of travel insurance.

- **You cannot apply for this online.** You will need to complete the [GHIC application form](#) and post with a letter from Essex Abroad which was sent to you in May.

If you are an Essex Student from the UK and planning to travel to [Norway](#), [Iceland](#), [Liechtenstein](#) or [Switzerland](#) old EHICs and GHICs are not valid and you will need to ensure you are medically covered for the duration of your stay. Please check the requirements for the planned destination as they all vary.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Your health, safety and security when working or studying overseas are extremely important. Safety standards in many countries may not be to the same standard you're used to in the UK.

There may be hazards that you don't usually worry about, such as disease, natural disasters, poisonous animals, or civil unrest. When things go wrong the lack of familiarity with the country, its cultural differences and language barriers, can make a relatively minor incident into a major incident. However, with good preparation many of the potential travel pitfalls can be avoided. [Visit our health and safety pages](#) for more detailed information about each of these topics and how to stay safe abroad.

CULTURAL ADAPTATION

New food, unfamiliar road signs and no decent tea bags, – all seemingly little things, but ones that can often cause big emotional reactions. Culture shock is defined as feelings of disorientation and homesickness when familiar surroundings change, and it can affect anyone in unfamiliar surroundings.

The **W Curve** is a diagram, as seen below, that illustrates the ups and downs of culture shock and reverse culture shock.

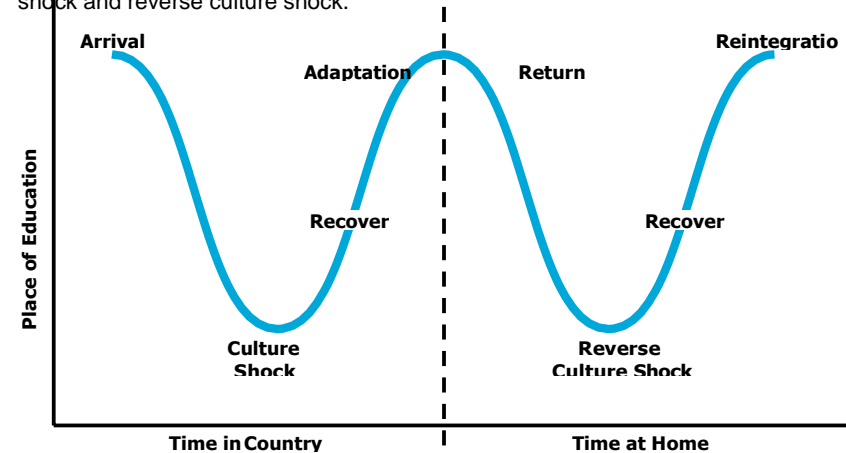


Image courtesy of www.uwec.edu/cie/studyabroad

On your year abroad, these feelings may be magnified initially by the impact of a long journey on your own. Small things can be upsetting and harder to deal with. In the longer term, you may also feel anxious about being separated from friends and family for extended periods, or worried about the added challenge of your new university. These anxieties may make you lose your appetite, experience headaches or stomach aches, or to worry more than necessary.

The most important thing to know about this is that it is normal; everybody will be experiencing this to some degree and there is more than likely someone in the same situation just around the corner.

Firstly, accept that these feelings are more than likely just culture shock and believe that they will pass. There is nothing childish or weak about missing home. Your culture is part of your identity and you will need some time to adjust. Try to talk to someone, a new friend or another Essex student on a study abroad placement. Skype and email conversations will be just as good as the real thing for sharing frustrations and experiences.

Culture shock isn't just about the initial stages however. Although you might find that your initial confusion and anxiety passes as you start to appreciate the quirks of your new surroundings, the feelings of gloominess will sometimes resurface if you have a bad day or come up against some difficulty. Try to avoid comparing your new country to home, because the chances are, you would be having just as miserable a day if your laptop packed in or you had been to a really difficult lecture back at Essex as well.

So, how do you help yourself to overcome culture shock and adapt to the new culture? Here are a few tips which should help you make it through the tougher days:

- Prepare yourself for the outward journey, the fewer surprises, the more in control you will feel and the more confident you will be for your first few days.
- Don't worry about making mistakes, and don't expect to get everything right straight away. You're bound to get lost, forget things or accidentally buy 14 bananas instead of 4 (quatorze as opposed to quatre in French!). It's all part of exploring your new country. Remember that these mistakes will probably make excellent pub stories next year, so try to find the funny side. Even if it's not funny, you may have learned something which could be useful to you in the future.
- Make sure you can connect to people if you need to. Set up Skype and add friends and family before you go, even Facebook and Whatsapp allow you to video chat now - all you need is wifi. Join the 2021-22 study abroad Facebook page so you can easily keep in contact with others in your situation.
- Keep busy and say yes! Go to every event organised for international students and in between get coffee with the people you meet. The more you do, the less time you have to worry about the small stuff!
- Arrange for people to visit. This may give you something to look forward to if you're feeling low. They can also bring you supplies of Dairy Milk, Marmite and tea bags!

STUDENT SUPPORT

If you have a medical condition or learning difficulty that affects your studies, consider whether you need any arrangements or support during your time abroad.

You are welcome to contact Student Support at Essex to discuss this. It is also important that you inform Essex Abroad so that support facilities at your host university can be arranged.

Students with exceptional special needs who participate in the Erasmus+ programme may be eligible for extra funding to meet additional costs. Information about this can be obtained by emailing eagrants@essex.ac.uk.



GETTING SUPPORT WHILST ABROAD:

If you do find yourself experiencing any difficulties abroad, whether emotional, medical, financial, or otherwise, seek help as soon as you can. Your first point of contact will be your host university and their services such as a health centre or counselling service.

No matter how small your issue may seem, remember that Essex Abroad is always available to support you. You can [book a Zoom or Skype call](#) with one of the Essex Abroad Advisers at any point throughout the year.

Don't forget that whilst you are abroad, you are still an Essex student which means you're able to access the resources available through the University.

NIGHTLINE

[Nightline](#) is a service run by students for the welfare of students, it provides confidential listening, emotional support and information service. This service is open every night during term time from 10pm-8am GMT. You can telephone **+44 1206 872020** or email nlhelp@essex.ac.uk.

SILVERCLOUD

If you're worried, feeling low or stressed, finding it hard to sleep, you may want to [explore the mental health programme from SilverCloud](#). There are four courses for help with anxiety, depression and low mood, stress and body image. It uses clinically proven tools based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

Validium VClub

An [online support option](#) which all university of Essex students can access

STUDENT WELLBEING SUPPORT LINE

With this support line, you will be able to have an initial chat, in confidence, about the difficulties you're experiencing and the support available to you. Lines are open 24 hours a day **+44 1412 717168. this is staffed by counsellors from our partner counselling provider Validium - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

[More information](#) about the above resources can be found online.

WORKING WHILE ABROAD

With a student visa it may be possible to work, but unfortunately this is not the case in all countries, and you should not rely on income by this means. Jobs on campus are the only legal option in some countries, but these can be difficult to come by.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- There may be limits to the number of hours you can work in term/ out of term time.
- Volunteering may be considered as work and take the form of the designated hours in some countries. Make sure to check the local regulations.
- It might be possible to arrange a job in advance; however, you should discuss any employment opportunities with the Study Abroad Office at your host university.
- If you do work whilst you are abroad, you will be liable for any local taxes that are required by your host country.
- If you have a visa, check the rules of entry and re-entry under your student visa status.
- **Brexit has impacted what UK students are able to do whilst they are studying in an EU country. Please ensure that if you wish to work whilst you are away many visas no longer allow working whilst studying abroad!!**

TRAVELLING OUTSIDE OF YOUR HOST COUNTRY

All students need to inform us if they plan to leave their host country for any amount of time, this includes if you are coming back to the UK to visit. Travel outside of your host country may have implications on any funding being received, so please take this into consideration before arranging travel.

Most student visas have a degree of flexibility which permits travel before and after the approved period of study – please double check this allowance with the respective embassy/consulate website information.

We'll be in touch to explain how you should keep us up to date with your travel plans.

VISITORS TO YOUR HOST UNIVERSITY

At certain times of the year Essex staff may make pastoral visits to our various study abroad partner universities. These are extremely important, and we expect you to meet with the member of staff while they are there.

Friends and family may also wish to take the opportunity to visit you while you are abroad. When planning these visits, you should ensure that wherever possible these take place during the official 'breaks' at the host university, rather than during term time.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

We conduct **two monitoring calls** with all students abroad to check in on your progress, safety and answer any questions that may arise during your first few weeks of each semester. This is **a mandatory requirement** of the year abroad programme, and we ask that you regularly check your Essex email account and respond to our efforts to arrange these contact calls quickly.

If you are a Tier 4 student, we'll be contacting you every month.

For safety reasons, you are required to provide us with your **local contact details**. We will explain how you can do this closer to your departure. You should also update your details through your **MyEssex portal** in the contact address section (your term-time address should reflect your new overseas address).

We understand how things can seem to be out of your control when you are in a different environment. Don't be afraid to send an email with your concerns. If things are addressed in the early stages, they can often be sorted out quickly, before they have a chance to escalate to a more complex situation. In the first instance, we recommend that you visit the Study Abroad Office at your host university to discuss your situation, but we are also here to liaise on your behalf.

EMAIL

All correspondence will be to your **Essex email address**. Remember to regularly log in to your account to keep it active.

It is best not to rely on email redirected from your Essex address to your personal email address (e.g. Yahoo/Google/Gmail/Hotmail) as sometimes these providers do not accept attachments, or they will file mail in the junk folder.

Regular newsletters from Essex Abroad will keep you up to date and remind you about key information, so do look out for these.

REPRESENTING ESSEX

Just by studying abroad, you are acting as a global ambassador for Essex. However, you may also be invited by your host university to participate in events such as a Study Abroad Fair or information sessions for potential exchange students.

We can provide you with some basic information materials for this purpose. After you have returned to Essex we also may ask you to talk to Essex students considering studying abroad during some of our information sessions, or to help out at our annual study abroad fair and pre-departure conference. You will be able to represent your host country/university and talk to other Essex students about your experience.

Instagramming? Share your photos by tagging us **@EssexAbroad** and **#EssexAbroad**. Send us a DM if you'd like to do an Instagram story takeover for Essex Abroad.



Chiara Baruta, Spain 2018-19

RETURNING TO ESSEX

REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

Although it will not affect all students, be prepared for some reverse culture shock when you return home after your time abroad. Settling back into your old life may seem simple, but it can often be a big change from the excitement of studying abroad. The small things you struggled with initially may have become customary for you and adapting back to life in the UK isn't always easy.

Take lessons from your time abroad, if you feel low, make sure to keep busy and share your feelings rather than dwelling on your emotions. There will be plenty of opportunities to return so make the most of the things you have missed and focus on the positive.

If you do find yourself struggling to settle back in, seek advice from [Student Support](#) or speak to your personal tutor for guidance.

RESIDENCE LIFE

If you're looking for a job to fit around your studies when you return to Essex and want to live on campus, think about applying to be a part of the [Residence Life team](#).

Each year our Residence Life team look for a team of full-time students to join us as a Resident's Assistant or Senior Resident's Assistant. You'll be helping to support and develop the campus experience for the thousands of students living on campus. You'll be given exciting opportunities to develop your skills and experience in supporting students living in our accommodation, across a range of wellbeing and adjustment issues, as well as contribute to our sense of community and belonging through the organisation of events

that promote making friends and adjusting to University life. This is usually a popular choice for returning study abroad students. Applications usually open in January.

ACCOMMODATION AT ESSEX

We are aware that this is always a concern for students going on a year abroad. Campus accommodation cannot be guaranteed for study abroad returners.

The number of new undergraduates and international students fluctuates year to year, and this affects room availability on campus. You will be able to apply to the waiting list from September 2022.

If you are a UK or EU student, we encourage you to look for private accommodation as there is no guarantee that you will secure on campus accommodation for your final year.

If you are non-EU overseas student, you can apply for **guaranteed campus accommodation** if you started your degree in 2017/18 or earlier - you will need to apply by January 2022.

SELLING YOUR STUDY ABROAD TO FUTURE EMPLOYERS

Once you've adjusted back to life in the UK, it will be time to think about how studying abroad has helped you develop and strengthen your skills in a way that is transferable to a professional environment.

We work with the Employability and Careers Centre to run a workshop for returning year abroad-ers. It is a chance for you to learn how to sell those extra skills you developed abroad to future employers and carve your personal edge. So, pencil in November 2022 and get ready to **unpack your study abroad experience!**

CONTACT LIST

ESSEX ABROAD AND UNIVERSITY

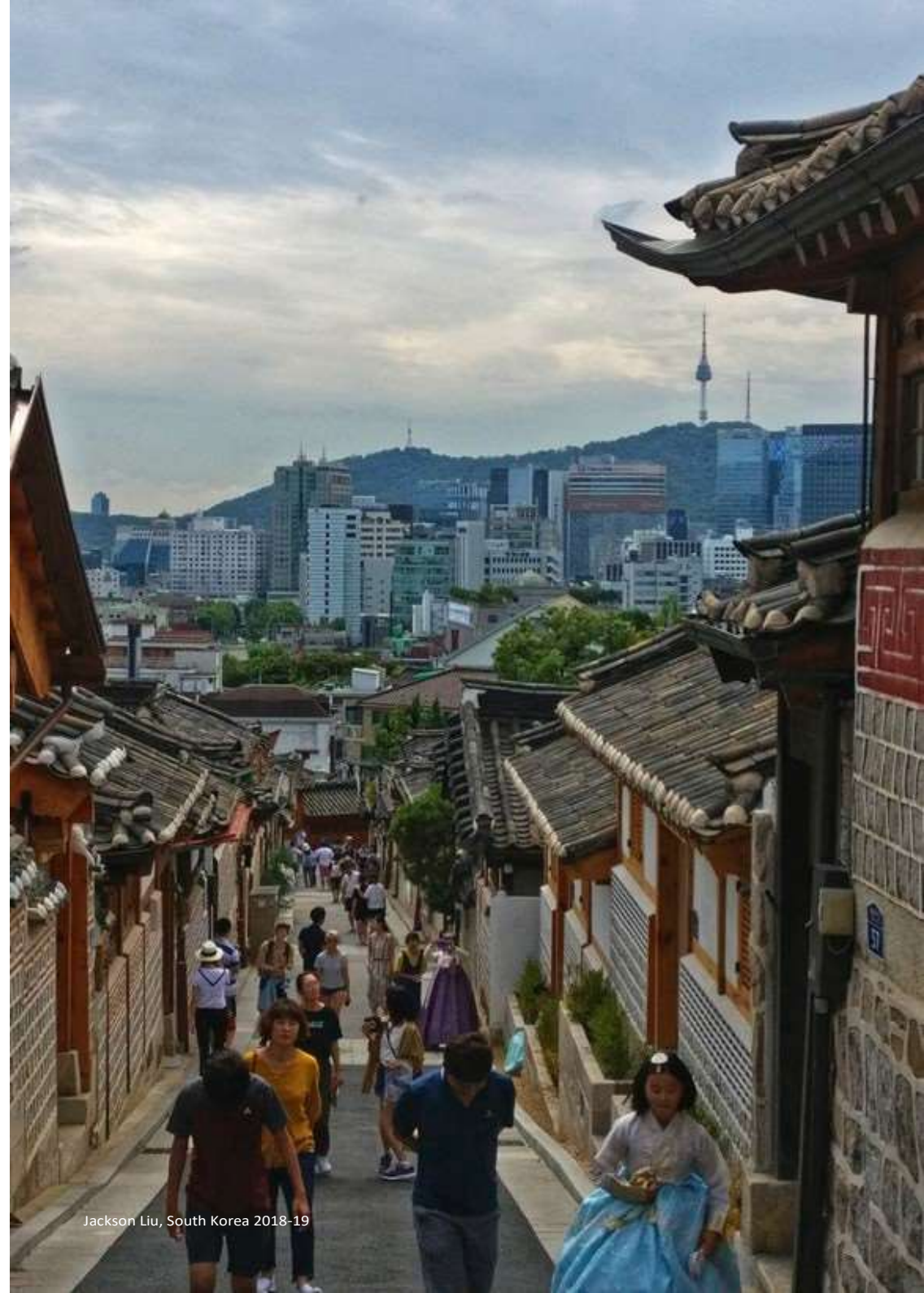
CONTACTS

No doubt you'll have questions whilst you're abroad about various aspects of your Essex degree - here is a list of useful contacts to make sure your question reaches the right team.

CONTACT	EMAIL ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER
Essex Abroad general enquiries	essexabroad@essex.ac.uk	+441206 873976
Essex Abroad Funding	eagrants@essex.ac.uk	+44 1206 873565
Student Finance Funding	funding@essex.ac.uk	+44 1206 873978
Student Services Hub	askthehub@essex.ac.uk	+44 1206 873913
General insurance enquiries	insurance@essex.ac.uk	
Insurance emergencies, advice & assistance	UMAL@global-response.co.uk	+44 2920 662425

The University's 24-hour emergency telephone number is **+44 1206 872125**. Please note this number is for emergencies only and will be answered by a member of security staff at the information centre. If necessary, calls will be forwarded to a manager on call out of hours.

For academic queries, contact your DSAO - you can find an up to date contact list of [Departmental Study Abroad Officers](#) on our website.



Jackson Liu, South Korea 2018-19



Essex Abroad

T +44 1206 873976

E essexabroad@essex.ac.uk



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