

Your studies

**GOODBYE
ESSEX**

**HELLO
WORLD**

Your Study Abroad Handbook

Iulia Popescu, University of Hong Kong 2017/18

2018/19



University of Essex

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MOVING TO A NEW COUNTRY AND EXPERIENCING A NEW CULTURE IS AN EXCITING BUT CHALLENGING EXPERIENCE MAKE IT COUNT

This handbook aims to help you prepare for your journey abroad. It will provide you with some helpful advice and tips but also important information for the duration of your studies abroad. The Essex Abroad team are happy to help with any queries you may have throughout this process. It's important not to forget the onsite support and assistance from the study abroad office and student support teams at your host university; they will be an invaluable resource and are there to help you.

Ivan Hutchins

Head of International Collaborations and Mobility
Essex Abroad
May 2018



Marcus Osinfolarin, Curtin University of Technology 2017/18



PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS

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

Make sure you complete any necessary applications or registration steps asked of you by your host institution in a timely manner.

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 have received 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 they may need to study/work in another country. This information can be found on the host country's immigration website or at the embassy or consulate of the country concerned. The host university may also be able to offer guidance in this area. You can also check our Exchange Finder online for some general guidance.

Students in the UK under a Tier 4 visa or other exceptional permission to be in the UK should check the separate leaflet with important information about what your Tier 4 status means whilst you are abroad.

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

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 once:

- you receive an official acceptance letter from your host institution
- you have received the relevant visa to study (if required)
- you have successfully passed your modules for 2nd year

For the cheapest fares it is a good idea to avoid travelling at weekends and to book well in advance. It may be a good idea to check when the local holidays are as this will also affect the prices of fares. 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.

TRAVEL TIPS

Our favourite travel websites for securing the best prices for flights are Skyscanner and Kayak.

Like '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: www.isic.org

To obtain an ISIC card, you will need proof of your full-time student status, a passport-size photograph and to pay a membership fee. Cards can be bought in person from branches of STA Travel, or online from their website: www.statravel.co.uk

If you're going to an Erasmus+ eligible country, you may be able to get an ESN (Erasmus Student Network) card which this entitles you to 15% off 8 one-way Ryanair flights. Check out www.esn.org 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 your arrival. The relevant embassy and/or your host institution 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.

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 may not always be possible. Setting off sometimes two or three weeks before the start of your study/work abroad period can be enough time for you to get ahead in your accommodation search. The extra time will give you more opportunity to settle and familiarise yourself with local amenities, travel etc, 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.

The standard of accommodation may not be the same to what 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.

If you're unable to secure university accommodation, your host institution should be able to signpost you to private accommodation options. Many institutions publish information on their websites designed to help incoming exchange students in their search for accommodation.

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 a more permanent accommodation.

Most places have cheap hostels, hotels or Air BnB. You can even check local Facebook groups to ask for options and advice.

Be cautious of housing scams. Don't make any payments or deposits before signing a contract. It is also best to try to view accommodation before agreeing to sign a contract. Try not to pay in cash.

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 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 (they are there for a reason, after all).

All the forms that we will ask you to complete are available on our website in the 'student resources' section and will also be sent to you electronically. You can return any of the forms to us by email at essexabroad@essex.ac.uk



Malin Kjolas, Radboud University 2017/18

BEFORE

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

- Select your modules and have your **learning agreement** signed by your Departmental Study Abroad Officer (DSAO) and host University (don't forget to sign it yourself too)
- Complete and sign your **Erasmus+ Grant Agreement***
- Complete the **Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support Assessment***

DURING

The adventure begins! Don't forget to:

- Have your **Certificate of Arrival** signed by the International/Study Abroad Office at your host University (you can't be registered as an Essex student until you've done this so please make this a priority)
- Keep us and your DSAO updated of any changes 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 International/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 institution

*Only applicable to students studying in an Erasmus+ eligible country

**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 ALL.**



PLEASE NOTE:

The UK National Agency can withdraw your Erasmus+ mobility grant if you do not adhere to their regulations, including the timely submission of documents to Essex Abroad, or failure to submit the online reports - you will be provided with these documents at the appropriate time.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS PAPERWORK MEAN?

LEARNING AGREEMENT

This is a contract which officially maps which modules you, your Essex Department and your host institution 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 you make sure it is updated if you make any changes to your modules.

Before you go

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

Your DSAO and your host institution 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 ²	Sex (M/F)	Study cycle ²	Field of education ²
	Smith	Amy	21/04/96	British	F	3rd	Economics
Sending Institution	Name	Faculty/Department	Erasmus code ⁴ (if applicable)	Address	Country	Contact person name ⁵ ; email; phone	
	University of Essex	Economics	UK COLCHESTER	Wivenhoe Park, Colchester	England	Essex Abroad essexabroad@essex.ac.uk +44 1206 872682	
Receiving Institution	Name	Faculty/Department	Erasmus code (if applicable)	Address	Country	Contact person name; email; phone	
	Menzies University				Australia		

Before the mobility

Study Programme at the Receiving Institution			
Planned period of the mobility: from [month/year] to [month/year]			
Component ¹ code (if any)	Component title at the Receiving Institution (as indicated in the course catalogue ²)	Semester (e.g. autumn/spring term)	Number of ECTS credits (or equivalent) ³ 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
EC0307	Microeconomics	autumn	6
EC0309	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 approve 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 Inter-Institutional Agreement for institutions located in Partner Countries. The Sending Institution and the student should also commit 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 Smith	asmith@essex.ac.uk	Student	01/04/16	[Signature]
Responsible person ¹⁰ at the Sending Institution	Professor Willis	gwillis@essex.ac.uk	Departmental Representative	03/04/16	[Signature]
Responsible person at the Receiving Institution ¹¹	X	X	X	X	X

Making changes

It's not uncommon to find out you need to make some changes to the modules you originally decided on. Courses 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 changes to table form (this can be found on our website), listing any modules that you have added or dropped from your original learning agreement.
2. Submit the completed document with your original learning agreement to your DSAO, requesting approval of the changes. Copy Essex Abroad in to the email as required (this can be done digitally)
3. If your modules aren't approved, you will need to choose new modules and repeat the process until your DSAO approves.

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 ¹²	Number of ECTS credits (or equivalent)
	EC0309	Public finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Time table conflict	6
	EC0317	Intro to trade economics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Substitute	6



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*

Chances are, if you are studying in a European country (apart from Switzerland), you'll 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 your Essex email account in July.

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.

CERTIFICATE OF ARRIVAL

This document confirms you have arrived at your host university. Please make sure you get your Certificate of Arrival signed 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.

CERTIFICATE OF DEPARTURE

Similar to the Certificate of Arrival, this form confirms you've completed your studies abroad. Please get this signed by the International/ Study Abroad Office and returned to Essex Abroad after you have completed your studies at your host institution.

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.

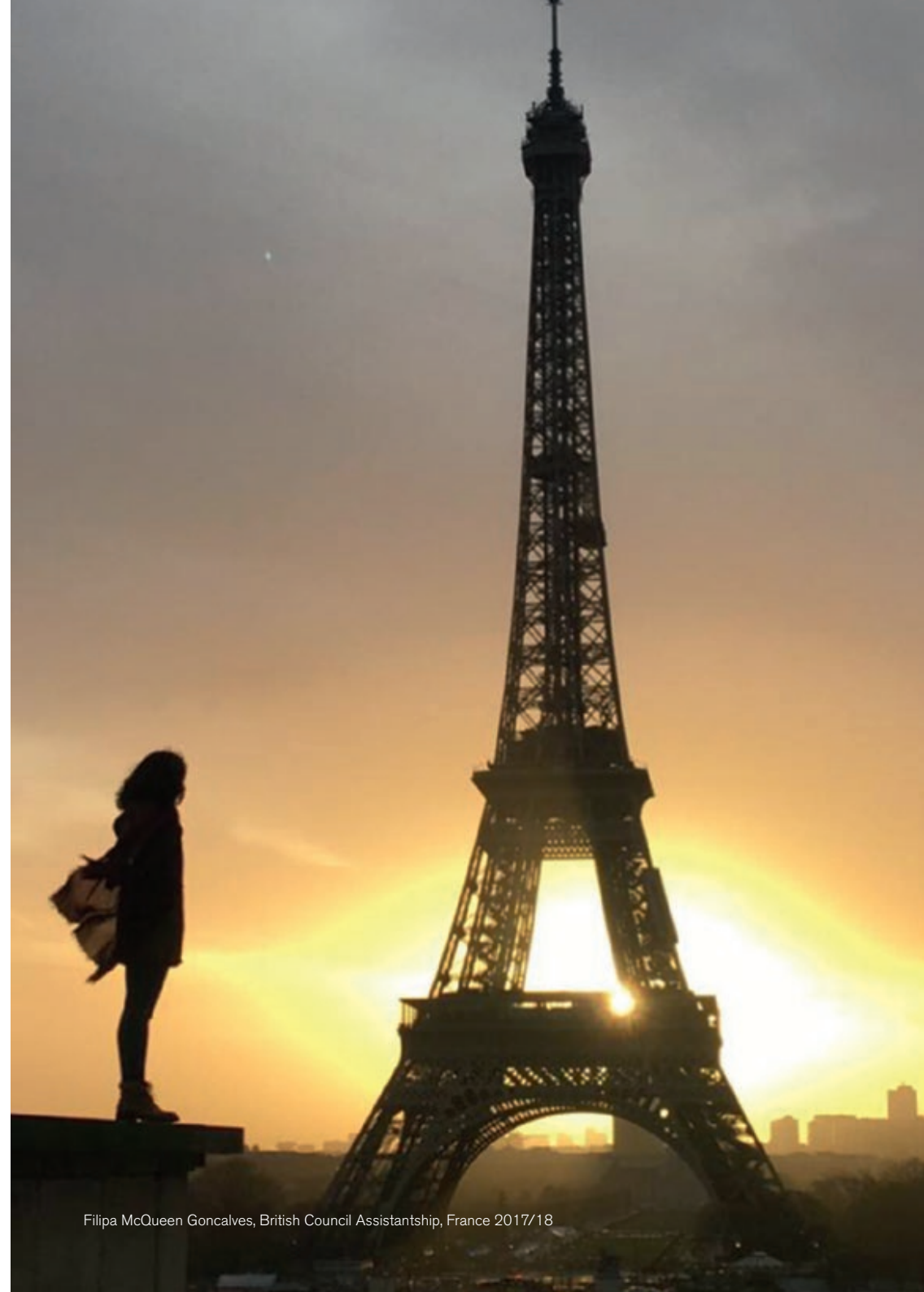
The purpose of the survey is to evaluate your time abroad, it won't take long to complete and it is a requirement of receiving the Erasmus+ mobility grant – failure to complete it may result in request for repayment of your grant.

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 improve.

Make sure you keep checking your Essex email while away and follow our registration process. If you're not registered at Essex during your year abroad, your Student Finance England could be delayed.

*Only applicable to students studying in an Erasmus+ eligible country



ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

WE'RE SURE THAT YOU ARE GOING TO LOVE YOUR TIME ABROAD, BUT DON'T FORGET THAT THE PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO STUDY - REMEMBER, YOUR GRADES COUNT!

THINGS TO CONSIDER

CREDITS

Say goodbye to 15 and 30 credit modules - institutions abroad vary greatly in the way their credits are counted. It's unlikely that 15 or 30 credit modules, like at Essex, will be the norm at your host institution. If you're studying in Europe, you will need to take 60 ECTS credits over the course of the year (30 per semester).

For those studying outside of Europe, you should be taking the maximum modules that a home student at your host university takes (not the minimum required by your visa). If you're unsure about how many credits you need to take, check our online Exchange Finder.

You need to be **enrolled on and attempt a full credit load** in order to pass the year abroad. However, we will only take **the best 75%** (rounded up to the fullest module) of your credits in to 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.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment (the way you are awarded grades for your class) 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 this 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.

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

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.

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

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

You should inform both your host university and Essex whenever there are serious matters that have influenced your academic achievement. You may be advised to submit an extenuating circumstances documentation. This document is designed to support your circumstances and will be reviewed during the Exam Board when your marks are verified and converted back to Essex marks.

You can find the form online at www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ.aspx

YOUR TIME ABROAD AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR DEGREE

Take some time to read the [rules of assessment to clearly understand how studying abroad impacts your course progression and overall degree at Essex](#). www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/general/assess-rules.aspx

CONVERSION SCALES

When you return from studying abroad, the marks you have achieved will be converted to Essex marks using our approved conversion scales. This scale shows how marks in different countries are converted to Essex equivalents. We will then use these converted grades to calculate your 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.

HOW YOUR YEAR ABROAD AFFECTS YOUR ESSEX DEGREE

Your overall Essex degree classification is calculated two ways, (1) with and (2) without your year abroad. You are awarded whichever gives you the higher classification. Your overall year abroad average numerical mark will still appear on your transcript, whether or not this has been applied to your final degree classification.

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

If you're studying abroad for one term only, it will count for 30% of your final degree.

SELECTING YOUR FINAL YEAR MODULES AT ESSEX

You will need to make decisions about your Essex final year modules while you are away. When your department requests information on final year options respond as soon as possible. Module selection and enrolment will take place online. It is essential that you check your Essex email account on a regular basis for instructions, and that you observe published deadlines. 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.
- If your average converted mark is between 20-39% you may be able to revert back to the 3 year variant of your degree (if possible).
- If your average converted mark is below 20% you may be asked to withdraw from the University.

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 back 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: www.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/changing-course.aspx

BUDGETING AND FUNDING

Budgeting can be tricky while abroad with different currencies and living costs to contend with but it doesn't always have to be expensive, here are some useful things to think about before you go abroad.

Explore some of the budgeting information 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 will not be liable to pay tuition fees during your year abroad in 2018/19.

STUDENT FINANCE ENGLAND – TRAVEL GRANT

If you receive funding 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 and 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 on reimbursement 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 the overseas institutions 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:

► www.gov.uk/travel-grants-students-england

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 www.essex.ac.uk/essexabroad/study/funding to find out more about what is on offer. Usually you don't need to apply. Scholarships are awarded based on academic merit (this means on the basis of your Year One and Two marks) 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 charges 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 in to their **compulsory health insurance** scheme. This can sometimes amount to a few hundred pounds - 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.

Other fees which students 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.

Make arrangements to 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 accounts.

If you're studying abroad in an Erasmus+ eligible country, you don't need to apply for **Erasmus+ funding**. We'll be in touch shortly to explain the funding time line so you know what to expect & when.

WIN £500 FOR YOUR YEAR ABROAD SNAPS!

Photography is one way of reflecting on the fact that your Study Abroad period is as much a visual experience as anything else. Each year we ask students to submit photos taken during their Study Abroad period. You can enter up to three photos into the competition. You'll also have the chance to apply in the competition the following year, not just the year you're studying abroad.

The top prize is **£500**, if awarded to more than one student the prize will be shared equally between the winners.

Photographs are judged by merit. This means that we look at composition, framing, and focusing, as well as whether the photo is interesting either as an image in the abstract or as a social or political commentary. A winning entry might also be chosen because it captures or communicates a strong sense of place. Any camera can produce an interesting image.

The winning photograph will be framed by Tempest Photography and presented to the winning student at their graduation reception.

Please visit our website to see more information on how to enter the competition. www.essex.ac.uk/essexabroad/prepare/competition.aspx

WHILST YOU ARE ABROAD

CUSTOMS AND CONVENTIONS IN YOUR HOST UNIVERSITY AND EVERYDAY LIFE WILL PROBABLY BE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE YOU ARE USED TO. THE INTEREST OF THE YEAR LIES IN DISCOVERING, ENJOYING AND ADAPTING TO THESE RICH AND VARIED DIFFERENCES

ACTING IN AN EMERGENCY

- Upon arrival at your host institution, please **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. Please remember that your parents 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.
www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/email-signup.

LEGAL MATTERS

- Make yourself **aware of the local regulations** related to the drinking of alcohol. 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. This is a particular issue in the USA where this matter is taken very seriously and where the drinking age is 21.
- **Drug legalisation may also differ in other countries**, however innocent they may seem. It is your responsibility to be informed. More information on drugs and legalisation in certain countries can be found here: www.talktofrank.com
- 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

You are automatically covered for your studies abroad under the University's travel insurance policy.

Our insurance provides you with the following services:

- Emergency travel and medical assistance
- Travel security advice and alerts
- Country Guides
- Online security training and guidance

We'll send you an email with the policy documents before you depart for your studies abroad.

EHIC

If you're studying abroad within Europe, don't forget to get an EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) - it's free. If you have one, check that it is still in date.

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.

Please visit our health and safety pages for more detailed information about each of these topics.

www.essex.ac.uk/health-safety/activities/overseas-travel

CULTURAL ADAPTATION

New food, unfamiliar road signs, no decent tea bags, chocolate that is no match on Cadburys – 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.

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, to worry more than necessary.

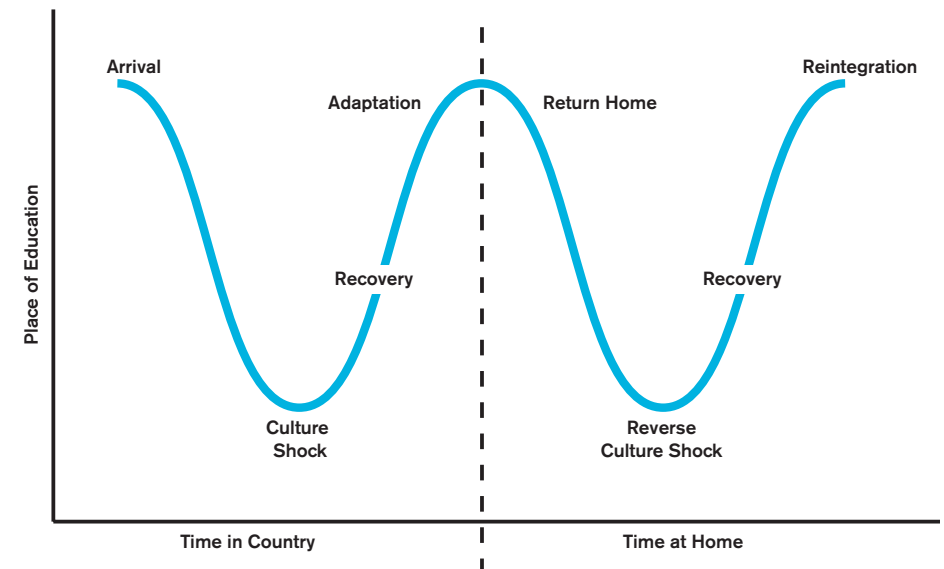


Image courtesy of www.uwec.edu/cie/studyabroad

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.

First of all, 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 international 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 2018/19 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 new 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 particular arrangements or support during your time abroad.

You are welcome to contact Student Support at Essex to discuss this. It is also really 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.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

We conduct **termly monitoring calls** with all students abroad to check in on your progress, safety and answer any questions that may arise. This is a mandatory requirement of the year abroad programme,



GETTING SUPPORT:

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 institution and their services such as a health centre or counselling service.

If you do experience difficulties of any kind, no matter how small, cannot find help in your host country, remember that Essex Abroad is always available to support you. Contact us or your Departmental Study Abroad Officer (contact details in the last pages of this handbook) for help and advice.

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 making contact with 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 some of 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, then 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 institution 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.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Let your friends, parents, and anyone else who needs to know, your address and telephone number abroad as soon as possible.

VISITORS TO YOUR HOST INSTITUTION

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.

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 are allowed to 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 is possible to arrange a job in advance; however you should discuss any employment opportunities with the International Office.
- 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

WORKING IN OTHER CULTURES

Be aware and sensitive to the local culture in the workplace, it may be very different to what you have experienced in the UK. Some things, such as casual jokes with managers, using your email for personal use or showing affection through a hug may not be appropriate in the workplace.

If you choose to work whilst abroad, spend some time observing the set of standards your workplace is currently abiding to and try to adapt accordingly. Remember to always respect your colleagues and their work, and keep in mind that their job is their permanent livelihood and should be taken seriously. Also check the health and safety and emergency arrangements for your workplace.

REPRESENTING ESSEX

Just by studying abroad, you are self selecting yourself to act 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 where you will be able to represent your host country/institution and talk to other Essex students about your experience.

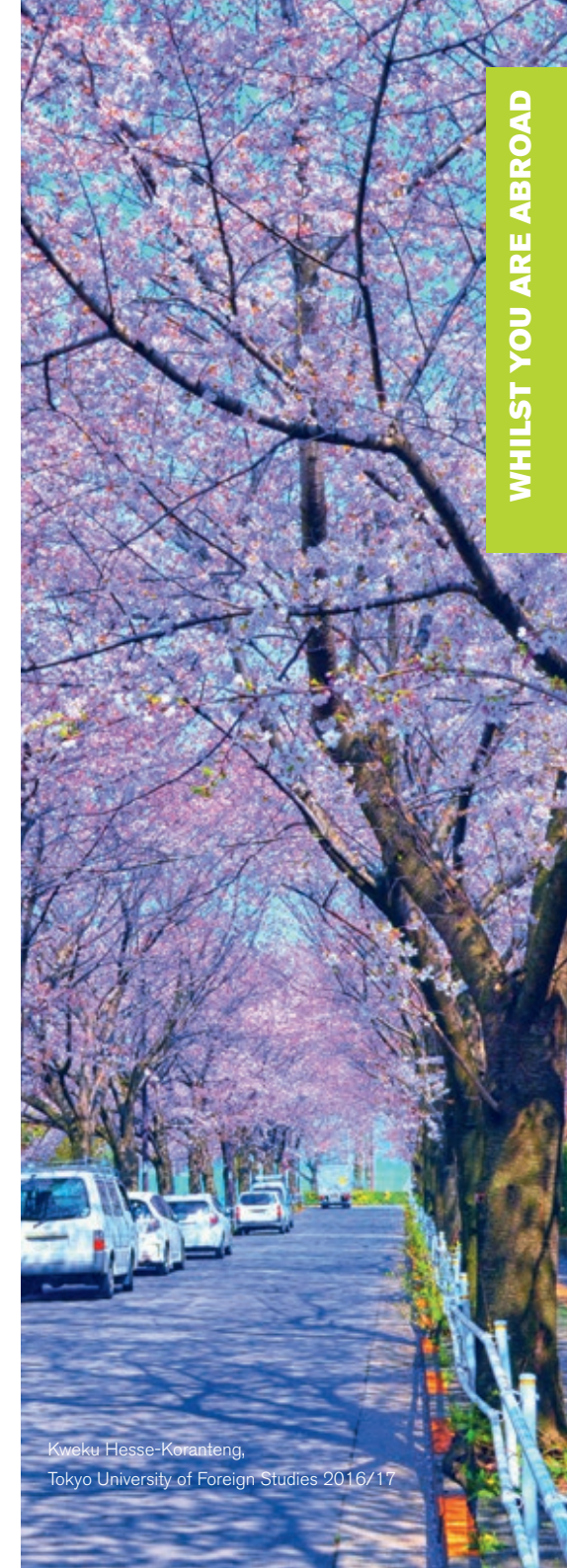
Blogging or vlogging your study abroad story? Let us know! We love to feature our students, real life stories and experiences. Instagramming? Share your photos by using **#EssexAbroad** and **#GlobalEssex** and watch out for monthly prizes for the best photos - especially those with the Global Essex t shirts and postcards.

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.



Kweku Hesse-Koranteng,
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies 2016/17

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 the Essex Student Support team or speak to your personal tutor for guidance. You could also volunteer for Essex Abroad by helping out at some of our events. The Study Abroad Society is a relatively new society started by Essex students who loved their time abroad and wanted to continue the fun back at home! This is a great way for you to still be involved in the Study Abroad environment while making some new friends (not forgetting that society involvement is a great CV booster).

FEEDBACK

All Essex Abroad students are required to complete a short online feedback form to help us to evaluate your Essex Abroad programme. This is also your opportunity to reflect on your experiences and feedback to Essex Abroad with any suggestions you may have to improve our programmes.

ACCOMMODATION AT ESSEX

We are aware that this is always a concern for students going on a year abroad. The current information from the Accommodation Office at Essex is that they cannot guarantee there will be rooms available for study abroad returners.

The number of new undergraduates and international students fluctuates year to year, and this affects room availability on campus. Students can apply to the waiting list from September 2019. The online accommodation form can be found in the Student Resources section of the Essex Abroad website.

If you are an international student, you **can** apply for guaranteed accommodation - apply by November 2018.

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.

KICKSTARTING YOUR CAREER

Through studying abroad it is likely that you will develop skills which will be very attractive to potential employers. Citing this experience on your CV can potentially be of great benefit in career terms. Living abroad, adapting to a new environment and culture, developing confidence and taking risks, and most probably gaining new language skills, are all valuable assets to employers.

But in a competitive global employment market, it is important to think about what else you can do to enhance your CV. If you're thinking of making a career in a specific area, consider whether you might be able to forge some useful professional connections or gain some work experience (visa regulations permitting) whilst you're there. Is there an international association you might be able to tap into such as Rotary International or an international branch of a UK professional body? If you're not yet sure what career path you want to follow, any work experience abroad within most industries will demonstrate skills.

Once you've returned to Essex for your final year, we recommend having a chat with the Employability and Careers Centre about your plans for the future and what experience and skills you can draw from your time abroad when it comes to applying for jobs. Don't forget that applications for some graduate jobs open as early as October. If you have not previously obtained advice on preparing your CV make sure you do so now. If you already have a CV, update it to reflect your newly acquired skills and take it to the Careers services for expert advice on how you might further hone and improve it.

You will continue to receive the Careers Bulletin from the Employability and Careers Centre to keep you in touch with the careers and employment scene. You can also read careers news and opportunities such as the

Big Essex award on the Essex Employability and Careers web site: www.essex.ac.uk/careers/ or through their Facebook page.

Check out some links to the database Going Global and advisory notes on topics from networking, career decision-making and applications and interviews.

WELCOME HOME - SELLING YOUR STUDY ABROAD TO FUTURE EMPLOYERS

Once you've adjusted back to life in the UK, it's time to think about how the last year abroad has developed your skills and experience in a way that is transferable to your CV, job applications and future job interviews.

Each year we team up with the Employability and Careers Centre to hold an event for returning year abroad-ers, not only to get feedback on your experience but to also learn how to sell those extra skills to future employers and carve your personal edge. So pencil in October 2019 - it's time to unpack your study abroad experience!

CONTACT LIST

ESSEX ABROAD AND UNIVERSITY CONTACTS

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

TITLE	NAME	PHONE NUMBERS
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
Insurance Team	insurance@essex.ac.uk	

The University's 24-hour emergency telephone number is +44 1206 87 2125. Please note this number is for serious emergencies ONLY. If necessary, calls will be forwarded to staff's home telephone numbers over the weekend.

For academic queries, contact your DSAO - you can find an up to date contact list of Departmental Study Abroad Officers on our website www1.essex.ac.uk/essexabroad/contact/default.aspx



Ylenia Mestriner, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina 2017/18

GOODBYE ESSEX, HELLO WORLD

SCHEDULE SATURDAY 5 MAY 2018

12.30 – 1pm	<p>It's time to get ready for your adventure abroad! Pick up your lanyard and study abroad handbook from the Tony Rich Teaching Centre Foyer. Peckish? A bottle of water & energy bar is also waiting for you! Check the schedule below to decide which sessions you will attend.</p>						
1.15 – 1.45pm	TC2.12 / 13	TC2.14 / 15	TC2.6 / 7	TC2.8 / 9	TC1.8	TC1.11	TC1.13
	<p>You're off to the USA! Things to know before you go</p> <p>Kathleen McKeiver Northern Arizona University</p>	<p>It's ok to not be ok – managing your mental health abroad</p> <p>Wellbeing Team</p>	<p>Erasmus+ Grant: what you need to know</p> <p>Lauren Holden Essex Abroad Funding</p>	<p>Student Finance: Funding for UK Home students</p> <p>Rachel Clewley Funding Team</p>	<p>Travel Insurance – what you need to know</p> <p>Essex Abroad Team</p>	<p>Selling your year abroad to future employers</p> <p>Employability & Careers</p>	<p>Health & Safety: Looking after yourself abroad</p> <p>Essex Abroad Team</p>
1.50 – 2.20pm	<p>Study Abroad: Expectations vs Reality</p> <p>Essex Abroad Team</p>	<p>It's ok to not be ok – managing your mental health abroad</p> <p>Wellbeing Team</p>	<p>Erasmus+ Grant: what you need to know</p> <p>Lauren Holden Essex Abroad Funding</p>	<p>Student Finance: Funding for UK Home students</p> <p>Rachel Clewley Funding Team</p>	<p>Travel Insurance – what you need to know</p> <p>Essex Abroad Team</p>	<p>Selling your year abroad to future employers</p> <p>Employability & Careers</p>	<p>Health & Safety: Looking after yourself abroad</p> <p>Essex Abroad Team</p>
2.20 – 2.45pm	<p>Time for a coffee and a biccie Ask the Essex Abroad staff any questions you have & don't forget to pin where you're going on the map downstairs</p>						
2.45 – 3.15pm	<p>Study Abroad: Expectations vs Reality</p> <p>Essex Abroad Team</p>	<p>It's ok to not be ok – managing your mental health abroad</p> <p>Wellbeing Team</p>	<p>Preparing for your Summer Abroad (Summer Schools , internships & summer programmes only)</p> <p>Natalia Ciofu Essex Abroad</p>	<p>Student Finance: Funding for UK Home students</p> <p>Rachel Clewley Funding Team</p>	<p>Travel Insurance - what you need to know</p> <p>Essex Abroad Team</p>	<p>Selling your year abroad to future employers</p> <p>Employability & Careers</p>	<p>Making the most of social media when studying abroad</p> <p>Essex Abroad Team</p>
3.20 – 3.50pm	<p>Making the most of social media when studying abroad</p> <p>Essex Abroad Team</p>	<p>Grants, Bursaries & Budgeting for abroad</p> <p>Lauren Holden Essex Abroad Funding</p>		<p>Study Abroad: Expectations vs Reality</p> <p>Essex Abroad</p>	<p>Health & Safety – looking after yourself abroad</p> <p>Essex Abroad Team</p>	<p>My study abroad story</p> <p>Year Abroad students 2016/17</p>	<p>My study abroad story</p> <p>Year Abroad students 2016/17</p>
4 – 4.30pm IVOR CREWE B	<p>The conference isn't over yet. Head over to our final session as we take a look at where you are all going – there are nearly 300 of you heading to different corners of the world. Each of us from the Essex Abroad team will also be giving you our best piece of advice from our own experiences studying/working abroad. If you've still got questions, there will be also be time for a Q&A.</p>						
4.30 – 6pm IVOR CREWE A	<p>That's it – you are now briefed and ready for your time abroad! Pop next door to Ivor Crewe A and share a drink with us to toast the experience you're about to embark on. We'll also be joined by some of our students who have been there, done that and got the t-shirt. Talk to them about their experience & ask them anything – silly or serious! Oh, and did we mention nibbles & a photo booth? Share your photos on Instagram using #EssexAbroad</p>						



Essex Abroad

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