Academic approval and recognition of outgoing student mobility

Purpose

1. This policy outlines the academic approval and recognition processes for modules and credit undertaken as part of a voluntary Study Abroad Placement within a University of Reading degree.
2. The policy does not relate to inter-campus mobility between the University of Reading and University of Reading Malaysia; nor does it relate to Summer School or short duration mobility activities.
3. The policy aims to ensure that there is:
   a) Transparent and consistent practice across all Department / Schools;
   b) Formal academic recognition of the study abroad placements;
   c) Consistent practice in relation to the conversion of the grades awarded by partner institutions into University of Reading degree programmes.

Eligibility

4. Undergraduate study abroad placements can take place either for the equivalent of one semester[1] or for a full academic year. The timing of any study abroad placement within a degree programme must be clearly articulated in the relevant Programme Specification and advertised on the Study Abroad website.[2]
5. Students can only study abroad as part of a University of Reading degree if they meet the University of Reading 'Eligibility Criteria for Outgoing Student Mobility'.[3]
6. Part time students are eligible to study abroad but must be registered as full-time students at the University of Reading and at the partner institution during the study abroad placement.
7. Students are only permitted to study abroad if they have:
   a) explicit approval of the School / Department Study Abroad Coordinator, acting on behalf of the Department / School;
   b) completed the formal University of Reading application process and have been allocated a place at a partner institution by the Study Abroad Office.
8. In the case of Joint Degree programmes, the Study Abroad Coordinator of the primary subject area within the degree programme is responsible for ensuring that all relevant Schools/Departments approve the mobility.
9. For voluntary mobilities (i.e. not an integral component of the degree programme) the application and selection process is managed by the Study Abroad Office, working with the designated Study Abroad Coordinator representing their Department / School.
10. For degree programmes with an integral mobility period abroad the application and selection process is managed by the School that owns the degree programme(s).

[1] Dependent on the academic calendar of the partner institution, likely to be either Semester 1 or Semester 2.

2 https://studyabroad.reading.ac.uk/outgoing/

3 https://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/-/media/project/functions/cqsd/documents/qap/eligibility-to-study-abroad.pdf

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Academic requirements / approval

11. Students must achieve the required 120 credits (60 ECTS) per academic year to progress, including any credit transferred back to the Degree gained at a partner institution.
12. Unless stated to the contrary in the relevant Programme Specification, participants are expected to undertake a full workload of study at the host institution for the period that they are abroad. This is normally:
    a) One semester: the equivalent of 60 credits (30 ECTS) at the partner.
    b) Full academic year: the equivalent of 120 Credits (60 ECTS) at the partner.
    Participants should study a sufficient credit at the University of Reading before / after the mobility to ensure that the 120 credits per academic year is achieved.
13. Department / Schools should not require students to gain more than a fulltime workload equivalent whilst abroad as partner institutions will not allow this. Information regarding fulltime workload equivalents in each country will be confirmed with Departments / Schools annually by the Study Abroad Office, before students start module registration processes.
14. If a School requires a student to gain fewer credits than noted in Point 12, it is the responsibility of the Study Abroad Coordinator to inform the participant in advance of the mobility taking place.
15. There should be consistency of practice regarding expected credit accumulation for students within each Department / School whilst abroad, where possible.
16. The Department / School must ensure that participants are aware of any implications that study abroad will have on their degree programme, in advance of participation e.g. impact on degree classification, potential change of degree title or duration *etc*..
17. Modules to be studied at the partner must be approved in advance by the Study Abroad Coordinator and documented in a Learning Agreement. The Study Abroad Coordinator is responsible for approving module selections on behalf of the Department / School.
18. Modules to be studied at the partner institution should be in an appropriate subject area in order meet the expected learning outcomes of the participant's degree programme. They should be at the appropriate level of difficulty based on the timing of the study abroad placement within the student's degree programme. The Study Abroad Office can provide guidance, if required.
19. Changes to the pre-agreed programme of study that might take place when the student is at the partner will need ratification by the Study Abroad Coordinator and must be reflected in an updated Learning Agreement. This should be as soon as the changes take place.
20. The Study Abroad Office will provide participants and Study Abroad Coordinators with the relevant *pro forma* and further information regarding the Learning Agreement process.
21. The final Learning Agreement should match the Academic Transcript provided by the partner institution.

Academic recognition

22. Formal academic recognition of the programme of study and successfully completed modules at the partner by the participant must be provided by the Department / School. It is the responsibility of the Study Abroad Coordinator to ensure that grades and credits achieved whilst abroad are formally recognised within the participant's degree programme.
23. Schools must create clearly identifiable Study Abroad modules into which the credits and grades achieved by the participant at the partner institution can be transferred upon return to the University. They should have appropriate module descriptions that indicate the student has studied abroad and outline the expected learning outcomes.
24. Students should be registered onto these Study Abroad modules if they participate on a study abroad placement.

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25. Departments / Schools should acquire a copy of the official Academic Transcript provided by the partner institution as soon as possible after the student completes their placement so that the grade conversions can take place.
26. The Study Abroad Office will provide Schools with a Grade Conversion Guide which should be used by the School Study Abroad Co-ordinator to ensure a consistent conversion of grades and marks achieved by individual students whilst abroad to the Reading equivalent. The guide provides suggested grade conversion tables and outlines the process for converting from the partners' credit system. Grades and marks achieved whilst abroad which contribute to progression or classification should then be ratified by the relevant progression or Examination Board in the usual manner, with reference to the Grade Conversion guide as necessary.
27. Participants should be informed of the outcome of the grade conversions once they have been ratified.
28. If a participant queries the grade conversions, this should initially be dealt with by the Department / School on an informal basis. If the participant chooses to continue to question the grade conversion, the standard University Complaints procedure should be followed.[4] In the event of any disputes regarding grade conversion appropriate Teaching and Learning Dean should be notified and consulted.
29. Details of the mobilities undertaken will appear on the student's Diploma Supplement upon graduation. The Study Abroad Office is responsible for ensuring that the correct information is entered into RISIS to enable this process.
30. For further information please contact the Head of Mobility (m.a.dowse@reading.ac.uk)

Document control

Version	Section	Keeper	Reviewed	Approving authority	Approval date	Start date	Next review
1.0	Study Abroad Office	MD	3 years	UBTLSE	6 March 2020	Immediately	
1.1	Study Abroad Office	MD	3 years	UBTLSE		Republished 4/6/24 with minor textual changes	2026-27

[4] https://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/-/media/project/functions/cqsd/documents/qap/master_copy_-_student_complaints_procedure.pdf

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