

Warwick International Higher Education Academy:
An Institutional Review of Wellbeing Experiences for Students Working
or Studying Abroad

July 2019

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Funded by Warwick International Higher Education Academy
WIHEA/004/2018-19

Full Ethical Approval HSSREC 94/18-19

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Foreword

‘Going away and living abroad for a year is an exciting and potentially life-enhancing opportunity to travel, make new friends and explore new places but for most students there will be moments when the experience will present unexpected challenges, which may have an impact on wellbeing. This work, which looks at the approaches that students have taken to manage their wellbeing while working or studying abroad provides important insight into some of the complexities experienced by students while abroad and the coping strategies that they employ.



The research also helps us understand how the support that we provide as an institution to these students, makes a difference to student experience and suggests where this might be improved in different contexts to strengthen support in this area for students before the travel, during their year abroad and on return. This work provides important insight into the experiences of students studying abroad and will inform the development of practice in this area.’

Dr Rebecca Freeman SFHEA, Dean of Students, University of Warwick

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the History students who completed the online survey and all staff members who were interviewed and contributed in some way to our project. Your insight has been invaluable. Special thanks go to the WIHEA team, in particular Gwen Van der Velden. Without them, this research would not have been possible.

List of Illustrations

Figure 1: Flowchart illustrating the process by which Study Abroad Partnerships are reviewed by the University.

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Executive Summary

This research study was conducted by a team of undergraduate and postgraduate students from the School of Modern Languages and Cultures (SMLC) and Politics and International Studies (PAIS) as well as academic tutors from across the institution. This report presents a qualitative analysis of staff interviews and online survey responses from undergraduate students who have spent time studying or working abroad during their degree from departments across the institution.

Aim

The primary aim of this study was to examine how students who have spent or are spending time abroad in the course of their degree programme have managed their wellbeing abroad and how they have been supported in terms of their wellbeing by their departments and by the institution. Staff participants were also interviewed to facilitate understanding of institutional perspectives on support for students abroad.

The research sought to enhance students' experiences of wellbeing abroad through making initial recommendations as to how home departments and the University can better support students with their wellbeing and by identifying how students can better support themselves. By encouraging the implementation of an institutional framework of support for students abroad, this review also hopes to incite greater uptake of international learning opportunities.

Overview

Whilst this report suggests that the sampled students generally enjoyed the time they spent abroad and embraced the opportunity to travel and explore, it is evident that students would have benefitted from additional support from both their home and receiving institutions.

Though staff highlighted the extent of support offered by Warwick, the majority recognised the need to revise the way in which advice is communicated and students' concerns are listened to and seemed prepared to continue to implement additional measures to ensure student wellbeing.

Key findings

- *From staff interviews*
 - Students generally reflect on their time abroad in a very positive light.
 - Whilst Warwick does support students in a number of ways, staff have recognised that some students need more support than others and is prepared to revise the way in which it prepares students before they go abroad, such as running resilience workshops.
 - Staff are aware of the need to give students the opportunity to feedback on their return and are currently implementing changes.
 - Recent changes have led to enhanced collaboration between Wellbeing Support Services/Dean of Students/Senior Tutors to ensure tutors receive training, such as Mental Health Awareness Training.
- *From online student survey*
 - All students who participated in the survey are from the Department of History.
 - Students studied in seven countries across Europe, North and South America, East Asia and Australasia.

- Students generally enjoyed their experiences, loved the freedom they had to explore new places and make new friends – on average, students rated their experience 9/10 and only five out of 17 students felt homesick whilst they were abroad.
- Whilst the extent to which students felt supported by their home department, Warwick as a whole and receiving institution was mixed, a perceived lack of support did not seem to significantly impact students' experiences – even students who did not find their receiving institution welcoming or supportive rated their experience very highly.
- Other key contributory factors to students' overall satisfaction were location of accommodation, hobbies and contact with family and friends from home.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Ensure students see their wellbeing as a priority. Alternative approaches to pre-departure meetings, such as buddy schemes, should be considered to ensure students feel sufficiently prepared in terms of their mental and emotional wellbeing before they go abroad.
- Give students a platform to voice their concerns as well as the opportunity to help implement positive change for the next cohort of students. Departments should consider implementing frameworks for feedback, which should be progressively reviewed and enhanced.
- Ensure students are aware of whom their point of contact is whilst abroad. This will enable any issues to be solved more effectively.
- Highlight the importance of joining sports clubs and societies and staying connected with family and friends as a means of enhancing students' general wellbeing.
- Work towards an international framework of support with Warwick's partner institutions.

Limitations

The first limitation to highlight is that this study was focused only on undergraduate students. Aware of the time we had to interpret the data, we believed that opening the survey to both undergraduates and postgraduates would have inhibited careful analysis of the findings. Nevertheless, analysing the experiences of postgraduates and comparing the findings with the responses collated for this present study would be a fruitful avenue for future research.

This study was also limited by the launch date of our survey. Though we had planned to launch the survey in March, the project only received full ethical approval by the Committee at the end of May. As a result, the survey was launched towards the end of June/early July. It is therefore likely that the 'group chat' case, exam timetable mix-up and summer vacation all contributed to the low uptake.

It is also necessary to recognise that some key developments have taken place since the advent of this project, which have resulted in more institutional support now available to students. The development of the clinically-led Digital Mental Health Service, 'The Big White Wall' will allow students to seek wellbeing support online 24/7, regardless of what country they are in. Similarly, the appointment of the new Academic Director for Internationalisation and the restructuring of Wellbeing Support Services will bring about the implementation of new measures with a greater emphasis on student wellbeing. Our recommendations should therefore be considered in light of these new developments.

Introduction

Context

Warwick has long-standing partnerships with universities in more than 40 countries around the world, located in Europe, North America, South America, Australasia and East Asia. Whilst all language degrees comprise an integrated year abroad – usually in 3rd year – where students can choose to study or work abroad, many other courses also afford students the opportunity to spend a full academic year at one or two of Warwick’s partner institutions. Thanks to initiatives including the Undergraduate Research Support Scheme (URSS), undergraduate students from any degree programme have the chance to carry out a funded interdisciplinary summer research project, either in the UK or abroad.

As no extensive evaluation of how students’ manage their wellbeing whilst working or studying abroad has previously been carried out at Warwick, this research is essential in determining the changes that ought to be implemented to ensure all participants benefit from the rewarding experience it can bring. This report will serve as a springboard for the development of an institutional framework of support for students travelling abroad over the course of their degree.

Methodology

With the assistance of staff, the student leadership team pooled ideas together to determine the best way to conduct the research. Whilst setting up and running a series of student-led focus groups would have given an extensive overview of how students have managed their wellbeing abroad, student leaders believed that conducting interviews with staff and creating an online survey aimed at students would generate responses which could be analysed most efficiently and effectively.

The student leadership team designed survey questions for students who have spent any time abroad as part of their degree programme, including integrated and intercalated time abroad and through University initiatives such as the URSS programme. This survey sought to gain an in-depth understanding of students’ experience of managing their own wellbeing and the extent of support they received from Warwick and their receiving institutions whilst abroad. Once the survey received Full Approval from the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC), an invitation email was sent to all students via departments’ administrative staff and the survey was open for three weeks. See Appendix 3 for the online student survey questions and Appendix 4 for the Participant Information Leaflet which students were required to read before consenting to take part in the survey.

The team also devised interview questions for tutors and co-ordinators with the aim of providing an institutional perspective on the management of students’ wellbeing experiences while abroad. The interviews were conducted over the phone and face-to-face. Among those interviewed were coordinators from the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, Student Support, Study Abroad Team, Partnerships Team in the Education Executive and the Dean of Students. The interviews were conducted over a two-week period. See Appendix 1 for staff interview questions and Appendix 2 for questions posed to the Dean of Students about Personal Tutoring.

The student leader also created a timeline with proposed deadlines and a workload model for analysing the survey responses. This ensured the efficient development of the project and the quality of the analysis produced.

Data analysis

This report first presents a qualitative analysis of the interview responses provided by academic staff and tutors. To facilitate in-depth understanding of institutional perspectives on support for students spending time abroad and the necessary improvements to be made to ensure enhanced support for students' wellbeing, the collated responses have been analysed and presented in five sections:

1. Experience
2. Support
3. Feedback
4. Personal Tutoring
5. Advice

The report then offers a detailed analysis of the data from the online student survey. As all 17 participants are students from the Department of History and studied at one of Warwick's partner institutions during their time abroad, a comparative analysis of the support offered across departments and of the differing experiences between those who studied and worked was not possible. Instead, the responses have been qualitatively analysed according to the different countries in which students studied.

This report will conclude by proposing recommendations for enhancing wellbeing support for students both abroad and, in the longer term, students away from campus on any form of formal placement.

Key findings: Staff Interviews

This section presents a qualitative analysis of the interviews conducted with eight academic staff and tutors. By structuring the interviews according to a series of set questions, it encouraged discursive dialogues and enabled clear parallels to be drawn between the responses. By examining staff perspectives on students' impressions of studying and working abroad as well as the level of institutional support afforded to students, this report will highlight the need for students to take responsibility for their own wellbeing as well as the importance of departmental proactivity to adopt new and improved means of communication and feedback.

Experience

On the whole, staff believed that students generally find their time abroad a very positive, enjoyable and rewarding experience, with one academic terming the year abroad a 'growth moment' for students.

It was also noted that time spent abroad seems to be an amplifier for students. In other words, if an individual has a curious nature, is up for a challenge and likes exploring new places and meeting new people, then this is amplified when they go abroad and the individual is able to make the most out of their time there. Similarly, if students are suffering from existing personal issues, such as anxiety and depression, these are exacerbated when they are abroad.

Whilst there are always some negative experiences, whereby students may suffer from anxiety, depression, a feeling of insecurity in the host country or even harassment, it would seem that on returning from their study abroad placements, students have a tendency to recount their experiences in a positive light. Whilst they may have struggled at the time, these situations are seen in a whole new light once they return.

In terms of preparation for their time abroad, staff were in agreement that students do not seem to adequately prepare themselves in terms of wellbeing. Whilst it was argued that students do have many other concerns before going abroad, for example finding accommodation and sorting out finances, students sadly do not consider their mental health and wellbeing until they are in need. This will be important to bear in mind when analysing students' responses in the following section and examining the extent to which they felt sufficiently prepared to cope with the stresses of everyday life abroad.

Support

With regard to support, staff believed that Warwick does offer a lot of support and agreed that advice is sufficiently communicated in meetings before students go abroad, in study abroad handbooks and in debriefing workshops for returning students. However, it was recognised that only a small number of students choose to engage in these meetings or even attend, so a new approach needs to be adopted. A number of the staff interviewed were open to new ways of working and the SMLC in particular has shown that it can readily adapt in emergency situations. After the terrorist attacks in Paris and Berlin, the system was reviewed.

Nevertheless, some academics and University staff have argued that a high level of support can also be a detriment to students, with one academic in particular arguing that so much support takes the adventure out of the experience and creates a 'dependency culture.' As Warwick offers a more supportive network than the vast majority of receiving institutions, it can be a struggle for students when they are abroad if their host institution does not assign them a personal tutor for example or if there are fewer societies, sports clubs or social activities they

can be involved in. Staff noted that European institutions seem to be the most problematic for History students. In these cases, one academic noted that it would be useful to ‘provide these institutions with information about the support that Warwick students are used to.’ It was also recommended that students who require the highest level of support ought to research and familiarise themselves with the support networks available at their chosen destination before they go abroad.

Other staff have nevertheless recognised that some students may benefit from additional support, such as the opportunity to undertake a resilience workshop before they go abroad to help them mentally prepare for what they may have to face. Staff have also argued that perhaps Warwick needs to be more proactive in finding out what support host institutions offer and giving this information to students as they make their choices about their study abroad placement. It will be important to bear this in mind when examining whether students have themselves recognised the need for additional information about Warwick’s partner institutions before they make their final decision. According to the Partnerships Committee, it seems that Warwick is already aware of the need for high quality host institutions with good support systems. It has been noted that proposals to make connections with certain institutions have been rejected because the institution does not provide enough student support. See Figure 1 for a brief outline of how partnerships are approved.



Figure 1: Flowchart illustrating the process by which Study Abroad Partnerships are reviewed by the University.

Feedback

In terms of giving students the opportunity to feedback on their return and implementing this feedback to help the next cohort, staff coordinators from History and the SMLC are currently reviewing systems to ensure students’ feedback is listened to and changes are made accordingly.

At present, the SMLC asks students to complete a thorough questionnaire about their year abroad experiences, whereas History only asks students to give a short reflective non-anonymous overview. As a result, students often seem reluctant to note their negative experiences. Among the new approaches suggested were peer-to-peer conversations through digital forums and open evenings. As it is proven that students listen to students, it is more likely that students will attend these sessions than department-organised briefings, thus helping students to feel better equipped for their time abroad as well as relieving tutors' anxiety.

Personal Tutoring

With regard to Personal Tutoring, the Dean of Students' Office (under the leadership of Professor Louise Gracia, Dean of Students 2016-19) noted that Personal Tutors have felt the need to be contactable 24/7 when their tutees are abroad, due to a 'lack of a visible protocol to invoke in emergency situations.' However, as previously stated, an effective approach was put into place after the terrorist attacks and continues to be relied upon today.

Whilst the responsibility of tutors is to provide signposting and referral for students to professional support services, there is now enhanced collaboration between Wellbeing Support Services, Dean of Students and Senior Tutors to ensure tutors receive training, such as Mental Health Awareness Training, to be able to deal with the everyday wellbeing concerns of their personal tutees more effectively.

Advice

During the interviews, all staff participants were asked to provide helpful tips for prospective students taking part in the study abroad programme. By asking staff whether such advice is sufficiently communicated to students before they go abroad and then examining in the following section the extent to which students appear to have taken such advice on board, this study endeavours to draw parallels between staff and students' responses.

One of the key pieces of advice staff afforded to students was to ensure they sufficiently prepare themselves in terms of wellbeing. By researching different universities or work placements and familiarising themselves with the support networks they offer, students will be able make their decision according to their own emotional needs. Whilst abroad, students will therefore be able to embrace the opportunities they are given in the knowledge that they have a supportive environment to develop and progress.

Staff also recognised the importance of having resilience. Naturally, students will be confronted with challenges whilst abroad. However, seeing challenges as opportunities will enable students to learn and grow. By running resilience workshops, students will be more able to put things into perspective when faced with difficulties abroad.

Moreover, staff highlighted the need for students to immerse themselves in the 'real' country and culture. Whilst students may feel isolated in a village or small town as opposed to a city, staff believe that students will not only have a more authentic experience by interacting with the locals and becoming acquainted with local customs, but will also have greater opportunities to enhance their language skills.

Most importantly, staff emphasised that students should enjoy the experience. They believe that students should be encouraged to view this year abroad as a once-in-a-lifetime experience and make the most out of the freedom they have to explore new places and meet new people.

For staff, it is not a matter of whether this advice is sufficiently communicated to students, but rather whether it is listened to and acted upon. It is evident that departments and study abroad teams look to organise events to ensure this information is heard as well as give students the opportunity to ask questions:

‘The advice given by our team is primarily through the series of briefings held through the spring term [...] We try to cover as much as possible from Brexit to insurance, and wellbeing. We also discuss scams and try to help students understand the importance of deadlines, conforming to partner’s deadlines and preparing official documentation in good time (visas). There is a lot to take in and by referencing the FCO [Foreign and Commonwealth Office] [...] and also putting on networking sessions to enable students to meet each other we hope to support students as much as possible.’

Nevertheless, staff highlighted that students do not always attend. It is therefore clear that departments need to consider adopting an alternative means of communicating this vital information to students. When analysing students’ responses in the following section, it will be important to examine whether students propose their own revisions to the way in which home departments and Warwick prepare and support students who choose to study or work abroad.

Key findings: Student Survey Responses

This section presents an analysis of the online survey responses provided by 17 undergraduate students who have spent time abroad during the academic year 2018/19. Whilst a larger sample size would have provided a more extensive overview, it is evident that events including the group chat case and exam timetable mix-up, resulted in a relatively low uptake. Nevertheless, the responses collated will prove essential for drawing parallels with staff responses, proposing recommendations for an enhanced structure of support for students while working or studying abroad, and ensuring concerns over wellbeing do not prevent prospective students from engaging with international experiences.

Initial findings

Whilst this survey was open to all students who have spent or are spending time abroad either as an integrated or intercalated part of their degree programme, the 17 participants are all undergraduate students from the Department of History, with one student studying Joint Honours in History and Sociology.

Although the findings limit the extent to which this report can provide an overview of the wellbeing experiences of students across different departments, they nevertheless offer an understanding of the extent to which students perceived that the Department of History helped its students. These results also offer deep insight into the varying levels of support students received from Warwick's different partner institutions across the world, with nine students studying in Australia, three in the USA, two in Canada and the remaining four students in South Korea, Japan, Chile and Italy.

Whilst it could be argued that the sampled students are not representative of the annual cohort who spend time abroad – as students from the SMLC often mainly study or work in Europe on their year abroad – their responses will nevertheless highlight the strong support networks available at Warwick's East Asian and Southern American partner institutions, such as in South Korea and Chile, and hopefully encourage a greater number of students to recognise the benefits of choosing to study there.

Whereas students from departments including the School of Modern Languages and Cultures have an integrated Year Abroad, degree programmes such as History offer an intercalated placement abroad. As these 17 students opted to spend either one or two semesters studying at a foreign university, it is evident that they had a longing to experience different cultures and explore new continents. Whilst a more detailed analysis of the findings will determine whether they researched the university and area before they went and embraced the opportunities whilst they were there, it is important to note that all 17 students generally enjoyed the experience and would consider doing another study abroad placement in the future.

As students' experiences could not be analysed cross-departmentally, with all student participants belonging to the Department of History, this report analyses students' responses according to the country in which they studied. This approach endeavours to determine the extent of continuity in the level of support received by students who studied at the same institution and whether additional support ought to be offered to students by their home department and Warwick as a whole. It will also identify the institutions which seem to support students in a similar way to Warwick, as well as facilitate the development of an international framework of support.

Australia

All nine students really enjoyed their time spent in Australia, rating their experience 8/10 on average. In general, students ate healthily, exercised regularly and felt safe, with only one student commenting that they had no one to talk to about how they were feeling and another noting that they did not eat enough whilst they were abroad.

Although two of the nine students said they felt homesick and isolated, this did not appear to be the result of a lack of support whilst abroad. Overall, students were very well supported by Monash University. Whilst one student noted that they did not feel sufficiently supported by the receiving institution, it did not appear to significantly impact their overall experience, with this student personally commenting that they settled in well to life abroad and maintained a healthy work/life balance. As one student felt alienated by living in halls, it could be argued that the location of accommodation was a contributory factor in how integrated students felt. Nevertheless, the other student who felt isolated very much enjoyed their experience of living on campus and getting involved with societies and events.

It is therefore necessary to examine the level of support students received from their home department and Warwick in general so as to determine the extent to which this impacted their overall experience. Whilst students generally felt well supported, two students did not feel supported by the Department of History and two did not feel supported by Warwick. Despite the perceived lack of support, these two students noted that they coped very well with the stresses of everyday life, liked where they lived and had a generally positive experience, rating their experience either 8 or 9/10. The findings therefore indicate that if students had other supportive outlets, as noted by these students who enjoyed living with others on campus, volunteering at a student café and visiting family/friends once or twice throughout the year, then they were still able to make the most out of their time abroad.

Although it is questionable whether a perceived lack of support significantly influenced students' overall impressions of their study abroad placement, it is evident that some students believe that there needs to be more support available to students during the challenging times. One student noted that the year 'was an incredibly informative experience which enabled me to challenge myself academically, explore new perspectives and study modules not available at Warwick [...] [as well as] develop my confidence and intercultural awareness.' They added that: 'I did struggle with my mental health at times – doctors and my friends abroad were great, but no support at Warwick.' Whilst we do not know the extent to which this student reached out to Warwick and sought advice, it is clear that this student was not alone in feeling the effects of Warwick's apparent distance, commenting that: 'I know many of my peers also on study abroad struggled with their wellbeing and mental health and believe Warwick requires drastic improvements in the support they provide during what can be a challenging experience for students.'

Whilst viewing their overall experience as very positive, another student noted that: 'In the second semester, my anxiety and stress did increase a bit and I did feel increasingly more homesick.' Though this student does not provide any suggestions for how they could have been better supported, their response confirms that students do struggle and would like to see more support from Warwick. Home departments must therefore continue to examine ways to improve students' general wellbeing.

In contrast, another student noted: ‘Warwick made a very good job and provided excellent assistance but it was rather Monash who were the problem and were way too intrusive in my privacy. The teaching and accommodation rules did not give us any responsibility and my friend and I felt like we were in high school again’. Whilst this student believes that Warwick was very supportive, it is important to note that this student very much enjoyed their experience, had a healthy work/life balance, felt safe and kept in regular contact with family. As a result, it could be argued that they may not have actually required the same level of support as the previously cited students, so found Monash too overbearing – the other students clearly found Monash a very welcoming environment. The findings therefore emphasise how every student requires a different level of support.

- ✓ **Recommendation 1:** In order to prevent creating what staff called a ‘dependency culture’, there is a need to maintain a balance between offering students support and ensuring to give them the freedom to make their own decisions. By making students aware of Warwick’s support services – and those of its partner universities – and periodically checking-in with them, Personal Tutors will equip students with the resources to be able to reach out for help as and when they require, whilst nevertheless demonstrating concern for their general wellbeing.
- ✓ **Recommendation 2:** The responses highlight that ‘preparation is key.’ One student said that they would have benefitted from more information about the campus, accommodation and cost of living in Australia and another would have liked a better understanding of what to expect and how to cope. Whilst there is a need for students, as staff have recognised, ‘to think through emotionally about where their support is from and [...] make sure they have other channels abroad to go to’, it is evident that all school and department organised pre-departure meetings must offer students more information about Warwick’s partner institutions as well as the cultural differences they may encounter and the best ways to overcome them. By inviting returning study abroad participants to these meetings, students would have an opportunity to gain practical advice from those with fresh insight into the challenges of living abroad.
- ✓ **Recommendation 3:** As eight out of the nine students said they continued and/or started a new hobby whilst abroad – one student joined a music group, one did some volunteering, three did a lot of travelling and others became integrated into student life on campus – and all of these students enjoyed their experience, there is a need to inform students in these meetings of the importance of reaching out into the community and continuing their interests whilst abroad in order to feel more connected to those around them.
- ✓ **Recommendation 4:** Likewise, all nine students noted that they kept in regular contact with home whilst abroad and eight out of nine students significantly benefitted from visits to and from friends and family. Members of staff should therefore advise students to find a balance between feeling connected to home and becoming integrated into their local community.
- ✓ **Recommendation 5:** Finally, it is important to note that eight out of nine students embraced the opportunity to travel during their study abroad placement. As the opportunities they had to explore new places and the memories they made along the way clearly outweighed their negative experiences, it is evident that the advice given to students to ‘make the most of it’ ought to be more widely communicated in study abroad meetings.

The USA

All three students loved studying in the USA and rated their experience 10/10. In particular, students loved living in a city, being able to travel, experience a different culture, make new

friends and believed the whole experience contributed to their personal development. One student enjoyed the experience so much that they have chosen to return this coming September.

Two out of the three students had hobbies whilst they were abroad – one student did some modelling work and another followed American sports. Interestingly, neither of these students felt lonely or homesick whilst abroad and felt very well supported by their home department, Warwick and their receiving institution.

The other student, however, perceived that they were completely unsupported by the Department of History and Warwick in general. It could be argued that because this student did not benefit from other supportive outlets, such as pursuing a hobby whilst abroad, they felt they needed more support from their home department and Warwick than the other two students sampled. Whilst this lack of support did not seem to affect their overall experience to any great extent, having noted that they did not feel homesick or lonely during their time in the USA, coped with the stresses of everyday life abroad ‘moderately well’ and felt the whole experience ‘was like living in a movie’, it is clear that more support needs to be available.

- ✓ **Recommendation 6:** Though this student did not give any specific details as to what would have personally helped them, it is evident that the support offered by home departments and Warwick could perhaps be more visible and accessible to those who require it.
- ✓ **Recommendation 7:** Warwick should consider encouraging all students to take up a new hobby whilst abroad. Being part of a sports club or society clearly helped the students who studied in the USA and Australia to integrate into their new community and build a supportive network.

Canada

Both students who studied at a Canadian university very much enjoyed the experience, giving an average score of 8/10. Whilst they loved the opportunity to travel, experience new places and meet new people, one student also noted how their placement had significantly contributed to their personal development: ‘I felt truly independent and the challenge of living abroad has made me a much more confident person.’

Both students, however, said they felt lonely and isolated a lot of the time. As similarly noted by students who studied in Australia and the USA, the location of their accommodation was a key contributory factor to their overall level of enjoyment. Although both students did volunteering, went travelling and tried different sports, neither enjoyed the experience of living on campus, with one student commenting that: ‘My university was very boring and located in a small city with not much to do. People there were very antisocial and it made it hard to start friendships and develop connections.’ Whilst both students argued that they were very well supported by the Department of History and Warwick as a whole, it is evident that further opportunities to interact with former students of their chosen institution prior to going abroad, would have enabled them to make more informed choices regarding where to live and how to get more involved in university life. Students listen to students and would more readily ask questions and seek advice.

Interestingly, it was the student who felt very disconnected from the receiving institution who also never saw family or friends from home during their placement. As the other student enjoyed visits to and from family and friends once or twice throughout the year and noted that they did not require additional support from the receiving institution, it can be concluded that

face-to-face contact with loved ones significantly increases the extent to which students feel encouraged to reach out in their new community and build connections. Should these visits not be possible for financial reasons, students must ensure that they are thoroughly informed about the support networks available at their chosen university. This will naturally lessen the impact of culture shock and help them to integrate.

Most importantly, students believed they had a good work/life balance and would consider doing another study abroad placement. These experiences are evidently invaluable for students and it is necessary to implement the appropriate measures to ensure they are able to reap the full benefits.

South Korea

The student who studied in South Korea loved their time abroad and rated the experience 10/10. Whilst South Korea may not be perceived as the safest of places to visit, let alone a place to spend an extended period of time, it is evident from this student's response that they found the experience overwhelmingly positive. As with the students who studied in Australia, the USA and Canada, this student loved living in the city, as it gave them the opportunity to 'experience so many new things and develop as a person.' This student's experience should therefore encourage prospective students to consider all of Warwick's international partnerships when choosing their study abroad destination. By examining what each institution has to offer, students may find a university more suited to their personal needs and interests in a country where they had not previously considered studying.

Whilst this student believed to have been generally well supported by their receiving institution, they nevertheless felt lonely and homesick. Although they saw family and friends once or twice throughout the year, which significantly helped them and enabled them to settle in well to life abroad, they argued that they would have liked more frequent contact with their home department and Warwick.

- ✓ **Recommendation 8:** Warwick ought to consider adopting a system where Personal Tutors are required to check-in with their students at least once a month whilst they are abroad to ensure their students' general wellbeing, give them the opportunity to discuss any issues they may have and generally help them feel at ease.

Japan

This student generally enjoyed their time abroad, giving the experience 7/10. Unlike students who studied in other countries, this student did not find living in a city overwhelmingly positive. Whilst it was not a matter of feeling unsafe in the city, it seems that it was the culture shock this student experienced – and the receiving institution's apparent lack of assistance – which made their time abroad less enjoyable.

Whilst they found the experience 'empowering and interesting' in terms of volunteering, travelling, getting involved on campus, meeting new people and living independently, this student added that: 'I hadn't realised how different the institution would be to my home university. I didn't enjoy long, school-like classes with homework style assignments and no feedback.' Though claiming not to have been supported by Nagoya University in Japan, stating that the 'receiving institution could've been more attentive towards culture shock', it could be argued that perhaps this student had not carried out sufficient research about university life before going abroad. Prior recognition of the customs adopted by Japanese universities may

have prevented this student from making comparisons with Warwick's supportive and personable environment. Nevertheless, as we naturally thrive in supportive and encouraging environments, it may be necessary for Warwick to review its partnership with Nagoya University if a larger study found that other students who studied there had a similar experience.

This report has shown that visits to and from family and friends considerably impacted the extent to which students were proactive in exploring places and making friends. Believing to have significantly benefitted from seeing family and friends, this student was no different and their response only serves to emphasise how regular contact is a key contributory factor in how students regard their overall experience and whether they would consider doing another study abroad placement in the future.

- ✓ **Recommendation 9:** Though this student believed that they were very well supported by Warwick whilst abroad and especially the Department of History, this report argues that in fact Warwick may have failed to highlight to students the importance of preparing themselves mentally and emotionally for the potential differences and difficulties they may come across. Whilst finding accommodation and sorting finances are naturally important – and often what students are more concerned about – Warwick must ensure to stress the need for students to research their university and the surrounding area as well as seek out different support networks before they go.

Chile

One student out of the 17 sampled opted to spend their study abroad placement in Chile. This student had an extremely positive experience – rating their experience 10/10 – and like the majority of the sampled History students, very much enjoyed living in a city. Whilst this student did not continue any hobbies whilst abroad, they travelled and met lots of people, which significantly enhanced their language and intercultural skills.

Although this student only felt 'moderately well' supported by the Department of History and Warwick as a whole, they did not believe that additional support would have enhanced their experience. As is the case with many of the students sampled, this student benefitted significantly from visits to and from family and friends once or twice throughout the year. It could therefore be concluded that these visits and regular contact in between helped them feel connected to their life back home, eased their integration into their new community, and as a result, prevented them from needing to seek external help from academic staff at Warwick.

Moreover, this student notes that the receiving institution in Chile was very supportive. Whilst this student may have researched the university and the area beforehand, which would have helped to lessen the culture shock, being in a supportive environment – unlike the student at Nagoya University – would have naturally encouraged them to make the most out of their free time and maintain a good work/life balance.

Italy

Like the majority of the sampled participants, this student found their time abroad extremely positive and rated their experience 10/10. Whilst this student loved living in a city, they did not feel that their receiving institution was very supportive. This therefore confirms what staff have said about European universities:

Europe seems to be the most problematic for History students, which I believe is caused by two factors: 1) Language barrier and 2) Lack of office hours. This means long queuing and lots of paperwork to fill out [...] Students are used to the online accessibility of Warwick.

Being very aware of what seem to be recurring issues with European institutions, it appears home departments have been proactive in implementing measures to reduce the culture shock students may experience – this student highlighted how the Department of History, in particular the Year Abroad Coordinator for History, was very supportive and always quick and flexible when responding to queries and requests.

Whilst this student's response only offers us a brief overview, it nevertheless emphasises how everyone is different and requires different levels of support. Not believing that visits to and from family and friends helped them to any great extent and liking the fact that Warwick 'did just leave us to it', it is evident that this student is not someone who depends on others for support and advice. By adding that further support would not have benefitted them in any way, it would seem that the lack of support received from the Italian university did not prevent them from enjoying their study abroad experience to the full: 'My language improved significantly and I really threw myself into life in Italy meaning I got a lot from the experience.'

Other students, however, may not have been as able to overcome the 'culture shock in the way things are dealt with' in European institutions. Whilst Warwick's readiness to help has been evidenced, this report argues that preparatory meetings should endeavour to equip students with a deeper understanding of cultural differences to make them fully aware of the challenges they may encounter.

- ✓ **Recommendation 10:** In order to ensure all students embrace the opportunities to learn, explore and be independent during their time abroad, this report argues that there should be an opportunity for students to discuss any concerns they may have, either with their Personal Tutor or Study Abroad Coordinator, before starting their placement. Whilst these meetings cannot hope to resolve all issues – as often more problems arise when students are actually living and studying/working in the host country – they will give students the reassurance that there are staff members to whom they can reach out for support and that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon.

By summarising the recommendations in the final section, this report endeavours to ensure that prospective students from a number of departments across Warwick are sufficiently supported in terms of their wellbeing and, as a result, are able to make the most out of their time abroad.

Conclusions

The findings from staff interviews gave us an overview of the different departmental frameworks for support for students abroad and the online survey responses presented us with the experiences of History students at a range of Warwick's partner institutions across the world, from Europe to the Americas to East Asia. Both staff and students have demonstrated that time spent abroad is a very positive experience for students, which significantly contributes to their personal and academic development. In particular, students love the freedom they are given to experience different cultures and explore new places.

Whilst it is evident that students thrive in a supportive environment, the findings highlight that a lack of support did not significantly impact the extent to which the sampled students were able to enjoy their experiences to the full. Whilst students felt generally supported by the Department of History and Warwick and although recognised the difference in the level of support offered by their receiving institution, especially in Japan and Italy, one of the main conclusions to draw from the staff interviews is that there needs to be more of an equal balance between students preparing themselves for their time abroad and support received from Warwick.

Whilst students need to prioritise preparing themselves mentally and emotionally and take some responsibility for their own wellbeing, this report argues that such preparation cannot be left to students alone. Discussions about preparing for life abroad must happen earlier and it was suggested that there should be initial meetings as early as the final term of First Year. As Warwick cannot force students to attend these meetings, however, this report hopes to encourage departments to implement an additional approach. A very effective way of enabling students to gain an insight into what it can 'really' be like to live abroad and the steps they should take to ensure they make the most out of their time there, would be to set-up a buddy scheme. Such a scheme would form a crucial part of the proposed institutional peer mentoring framework. It would also be useful to run informal study abroad evenings with former study abroad participants. These open evenings would provide an excellent opportunity for students to ask any specific questions they may have about Warwick's partner institutions, such as where to live and what sports are on offer, as well as give staff the opportunity to provide useful preparatory advice in an informal context.

Whilst staff clearly endeavour to respect the opportunity these study abroad placements give students to gain confidence and independence, the survey responses highlighted that students argued that they would have appreciated more contact from their Personal Tutor or Year Abroad Coordinator whilst they were abroad. Whilst staff recognised that departments have a framework in place, which allows students to feedback on their experiences, this report encourages staff to not only progressively review and enhance this framework, but to offer students a platform to voice their concerns throughout the year. By periodically checking-in with their students over the course of their placement, it would enable students to feel at ease knowing they have a supportive environment to develop and progress. Moreover, home departments must ensure that students know who their first point of contact is whilst abroad. At pre-departure meetings or open evenings, students should be made aware of the role of their Personal Tutor as well as Wellbeing Support Services so that they can direct their queries most appropriately.

With regard to how this report will directly benefit future cohorts of study abroad participants, the sampled students have provided a number of recommendations which ought to be integrated into departmental handbooks and given to students when they are considering what to do, where to go and where to live during their time abroad. Whilst the options available to the sampled students may be different to those students on an integrated Year Abroad – especially if those students choose to teach with the British Council – it seems that living in the city is likely to be more beneficial to students than living on campus. A number of students found living in halls isolating and had they been better informed about the distance of their university campus from the inner city, they would have chosen to live elsewhere. Whilst this contrasts to the advice given by staff about living somewhere rural, we must recognise that it depends on whether students are spending time abroad to enhance their language skills and intercultural awareness or using the year to travel and explore. The very positive experiences the sampled students had in less popular study abroad destinations, such as Chile and South Korea, should encourage students to think outside the box with regard to where they choose to spend their time abroad. By considering what they really want to get out of the year – whether it is studying in a different culture or travelling to new places – and looking at all of the available options, students will be able to choose the institution which best affords them the opportunities they seek.

As the findings highlighted that continuing or starting a new hobby whilst abroad was an effective way for students to become part of a new community and make new friends, this report encourages staff to advise students to get involved in sports clubs and societies as a means of enhancing their general wellbeing. Home departments should also highlight in pre-departure meetings the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between keeping connected to family and friends – if possible through occasional visits to and from home – and integrating into the local community and culture. In the knowledge they are supported by family and friends at home, students will want to reach out and understand the country's customs and culture, explore new places and meet new people.

With regard to the level of support offered by Warwick's partner institutions, it is evident that some universities provide a more supportive environment than others, with students in Australia, the USA, South Korea and Chile finding their whole university experience very rewarding and encouraging. Whilst the students who studied in Japan and Italy had a generally very positive experience despite the unsupportive and often disorganised university environment, this was often due to the fact they had hobbies and kept in contact with family and friends whilst abroad. Though a larger study would provide a more extensive overview of students' experiences and highlight certain partnerships, which Warwick ought to review, this report encourages Warwick to consider developing an international framework of support. By engaging in discussion with its partner institutions about how Warwick supports its students whilst at home, Warwick could work towards an international agreement with its partners to ensure its students are fully supported whilst abroad. As staff recognise that 'there is support in overseas institutions, but our students do not always know how to approach their overseas tutors', it is important in the short term that home departments make students aware of these cultural differences in year abroad preparatory meetings.

Recommendations

- ✓ **Recommendation 1:** Ensure students are aware of Warwick's Wellbeing Support Services and the supportive networks available at the receiving institution, as well as increase the support offered by Personal Tutors.
- ✓ **Recommendation 2:** Tailor school and department organised pre-departure meetings to the demand for information about Warwick's partner institutions and cultural differences. A buddy scheme could also be a useful means for students to gain insight into life abroad as well as open their eyes to the benefits of studying at one of Warwick's less-travelled partner institutions.
- ✓ **Recommendation 3:** Encourage students to reach out into their communities.
- ✓ **Recommendation 4:** Ensure students are aware of the benefits of maintaining contact with family and friends from home whilst abroad.
- ✓ **Recommendation 5:** Always encourage students to 'make the most' out of their experiences abroad.
- ✓ **Recommendation 6:** Support from Warwick needs to be more visible and readily available (links to Recommendation 1).
- ✓ **Recommendation 7:** Encourage students to recognise the value of continuing an interest or starting a new hobby whilst they are abroad (links to Recommendation 3).
- ✓ **Recommendation 8:** Adopt a system where Personal Tutors check-in with their students at least once a month to ensure their general wellbeing (links to Recommendation 1 and 6).
- ✓ **Recommendation 9:** Encourage students to research their university and the surrounding area as well as seek out different support networks before they go.
- ✓ **Recommendation 10:** Ensure students have the opportunity to speak with their Personal Tutor before going abroad to raise any issues and give them the confidence to know there is always someone whom they can reach out to for support (links to Recommendation 1 and 6).

Next steps?

- Begin discussions about adopting an additional approach to pre-departure meetings to ensure a greater number of students have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of how to make the most out of their time abroad as well as the challenges they may face. Informal open-evenings and a buddy scheme would highlight to students the importance of taking some responsibility for their own wellbeing.
- Study Abroad handbooks should be enhanced and updated to ensure students are made aware of what Warwick's partner institutions offer, the cultural differences they may encounter as well as the benefits of reaching out into the community, starting up a new hobby and maintaining contact with their family and friends from home.

- Establish a university-wide framework of support, whereby Personal Tutors play an essential role in ensuring students' general wellbeing. It is important that the support afforded to students is consistent among departments. Warwick could also consider an international agreement with its partners to ensure its students are fully supported whilst abroad.

Appendix 1

Interview Questions for Staff

We are running a WIHEA funded project in order to review the wellbeing experiences of students on work or study placements abroad. The central aim of this project is to examine how students have managed their wellbeing abroad and the support they have received.

Thank you for your time!

1. What is your general impression of how students find their study abroad placement? Generally positive/negative? Do you have any first-hand feedback?
2. If students have a positive/negative experience, what do you think the possible causes are?
3. Do you think there is an equal balance between students preparing themselves for their study abroad placement/making the most out of their time abroad and receiving support from Warwick?
4. Do you think home departments, e.g. School of Modern Languages and Cultures, History etc. sufficiently equip their students for their study abroad placement as well as give them an opportunity to feedback on their return?
5. To what extent do you think a negative experience may be due to a lack of support from receiving institutions? Do you think international institutions offer the same level of support as Warwick does? When Warwick is forming partnerships with international universities, does it take into account how the institution would look after Warwick students?
6. What advice would you/do you give to students about to embark on their study abroad placement? Do you think advice from home departments/Warwick is sufficiently communicated before students go abroad?
7. Please add any further comments below.

Appendix 2

Interview Questions for the Dean of Students

We are running a WIHEA funded project in order to review the wellbeing experiences of students on work or study placements abroad. The central aim of this project is to examine how students have managed their wellbeing abroad and the support they have received.

Thank you for your time!

1. How effective is personal tutoring across Warwick with students who are studying or working abroad? What are the major challenges you have faced?

2. Is there additional support available for students who are abroad? Is this made known to students before they commence their placements abroad?

3. Do you have a system in place that allows for feedback on the operation of the Personal Tutor system? If so, please explain how this works.

4. How often is the Personal Tutor system reviewed? Have you had to implement changes in the way the system is run as a result of major incidents, e.g. terrorist attacks in Berlin and Paris?

5. Does student mental health and wellbeing play a principal role in the training delivered to Senior and Personal Tutors by the Dean of Students? Do you collaborate with Wellbeing Support Services?

6. Please add any further comments below.

Appendix 3

Online Survey: Student Wellbeing Experiences whilst Working or Studying Abroad

Thank you for your interest in our survey!

The results of this survey will help us review student experiences whilst abroad and ensure that the necessary wellbeing support networks are in place for students working or studying abroad. We ask you to answer the questions as honestly as possible. Please note: * indicates a mandatory field.

Support for students with wellbeing concerns related to study abroad is available from the Wellbeing Support Services team. For contact details, please visit: Wellbeing Support Services.

Before completing this survey, please download and read the Participant Information Leaflet.

As a thank you for participating, you will receive £5 on your Eating at Warwick card!

Please read our Privacy Policy and complete the Consent Form. Please select all statements and sign below to show your consent.

Privacy Policy:

We are students at The University of Warwick, running a project funded by WIHEA (Warwick International Higher Education Academy) in order to review the wellbeing experiences of students on work or study placements abroad. The central aim of this project is to examine how students have managed their wellbeing abroad and the support they have received.

This survey will collate experiences in order to develop a student-designed institutional framework for supporting students with their wellbeing whilst abroad. The questions we are asking will therefore enable us to compare experiences across degrees, departments, placements and countries and identify what needs to be put in place. The information you provide is meant for internal use only. We respect your trust and privacy and therefore your data will not be shared with third parties.

We ask for your student number in order to give you £5 on your Eating at Warwick card. Student numbers will then be erased.

Consent Form:

Title of Project: An Institutional Review of Student Wellbeing on Study Abroad programmes
Name of Researchers: Dr David Lees; Halina-Joy Gadbury; Izzy Gatward; Faustino Mc Calla St Luce; Hanna Ward

I confirm that I have read and understand the Participant Information Leaflet (version 1, 09/04/2019) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my education being affected.

I understand that data collected during the study, may be looked at by individuals from The University of Warwick, where it is relevant to my taking part in this study. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.

I give permission for my anonymous questionnaire responses to be quoted directly in the project report.

I am happy for my data to be used in future research.

I agree to take part in the above study.

To confirm your consent, please sign below.

1. Please input your student number.
2. Please input your degree title and department, e.g. French Studies: School of Modern Languages and Cultures/History: Department of History
3. In which country/countries did you reside during your Year Abroad? Please select all that apply.
 - a. Australia
 - b. Austria
 - c. China
 - d. France
 - e. Germany
 - f. Italy
 - g. Japan
 - h. Spain
 - i. Switzerland
 - j. Other: please specify
4. What did you do during your time abroad? Please select all that apply.
 - a. Study
 - b. Work
 - c. Other: please specify
5. Please give a brief description of your job role(s).
6. Did you enjoy what you did during your time abroad?
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
7. Where did you live? Please select all that apply.

- a. Village
- b. Town
- c. City
- d. Other: please specify

8. Did you like where you lived?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

9. Did you continue any interests whilst abroad and/or start a new hobby? If yes, please specify.

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. In general, how did you cope with the stresses of everyday life abroad, e.g. language barrier/work demands/accommodation/managing finances/getting around etc?

- a. Extremely well
- b. Very well
- c. Moderately well
- d. Slightly well
- e. Not well at all

11. Please select from the options below all of those that applied to you whilst abroad.

- a. I felt a lot of pressure from work/university whilst abroad
- b. I had a good work/life balance
- c. I made the most out of my free time, e.g. hobbies/travel
- d. I felt safe
- e. I felt lonely/isolated/homesick a lot of the time
- f. I settled in well to life abroad
- g. I ate healthily
- h. I didn't eat enough
- i. There was no one I could talk to about how I was feeling
- j. I kept in regular contact with friends and family
- k. I exercised regularly
- l. I managed my finances well
- m. None of the above

12. How often did you see family/friends from home during your time abroad, e.g. trips home or visits to you?

- a. About once a month
 - b. During the main holidays
 - c. Once or twice throughout the year
 - d. Never
13. To what extent do you think you benefitted from these visits? 1 = not at all, 10 = very much so
14. How well did you feel supported by your home department at Warwick whilst abroad?
- a. Extremely well
 - b. Very well
 - c. Moderately well
 - d. Slightly well
 - e. Not well at all
15. How well did you feel supported by Warwick as a whole whilst abroad?
- a. Extremely well
 - b. Very well
 - c. Moderately well
 - d. Slightly well
 - e. Not well at all
16. How well did you feel supported by your receiving institution whilst abroad, e.g. workplace/university?
- a. Extremely well
 - b. Very well
 - c. Moderately well
 - d. Slightly well
 - e. Not well at all
17. Would you have benefitted from additional support whilst abroad? If yes, please give a brief explanation from whom you would have liked more support (e.g. your home department/Warwick in general/receiving institution) and what would have helped you.
- a. Yes
 - b. No
18. Overall, to what extent do you view your time abroad as having been a positive experience? e.g. 1 = not at all, 10 = very much so
19. Please give a brief explanation for your answer above.

20. Given the opportunity, would you consider doing another study/work abroad placement?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know

21. Would you be interested in being part of a focus group to help implement positive change for students on their Year Abroad? (Yes/no choice)

- a. Yes
- b. Maybe
- c. No
- d. I don't know

22. Please add any further comments below.

Appendix 4



Participant Information Leaflet for Participants in the Wellbeing and Study Abroad WIHEA-funded project

Study Title: An Institutional Review of Student Wellbeing on Study Abroad programmes

Investigator(s): Dr David Lees
Halina-Joy Gadbury
Izzy Gatward
Faustino Mc Calla St Luce
Hanna Ward

Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

Please ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Who is organising and funding the study?

This project is funded by the Warwick International Higher Education Academy (WIHEA).

What is the study about?

The aim of this project is to examine student experiences of wellbeing during Study Abroad programmes. It is aimed at current undergraduate students at Warwick who either have already undertaken or are currently undertaking study abroad as part of their degree programmes. The project aims to examine the support students receive for their wellbeing from Warwick and how students have managed their wellbeing while abroad.

What would taking part involve?

You will be asked to complete a short online questionnaire, which should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. You will be asked a series of questions about your experiences of wellbeing during your study abroad programme.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and choosing not to take part will not affect you or your education in any way. You can also choose to withdraw your participation at any time, without giving a reason, by contacting one of the research team. Further details about withdrawing from the study are provided later on in this document.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

You will have the opportunity to share your experiences of managing your wellbeing during your study abroad programme. Your comments may have a direct impact on the development of an institutional framework for support for students abroad.

What are the possible disadvantages, side effects or risks, of taking part in this study?

It may be possible that your experiences of wellbeing during your study abroad programme have been negative. It may be that detailing these experiences provoke some concern or discomfort on your part. You should not feel obliged to disclose especially personal experiences and you will be signposted to sources of support—including Wellbeing Support Services—upon completion of the survey.

Expenses and payments

You will receive £5 Eating at Warwick credit for completing the questionnaire.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

Your data will be collected through the online questionnaire. Your responses to the questionnaire will be stored securely for the purposes of analysis by the project team. Your identifiable data—your student ID number—will be used only to process the payment of your Eating at Warwick credit for taking part in this questionnaire. Once this has been processed, and no later than 30 June 2019, this identifiable data will be deleted permanently. After that point, your data will be entirely anonymous and your questionnaire responses will be stored securely until the project team has written the final report, by 1 August 2019. Your anonymous responses will be stored securely until the 1 August 2029.

In the final report, your responses may be quoted directly in their anonymous form. You will not be able to be identified from this quotation. However, if you have any concerns about your data being used in this way, you should contact the project team. In the event that you disclose anything in your responses which suggest you are at risk of harm – and before your University ID code has been deleted from our records – the project team may be required to report this to relevant support teams or authorities.

What will happen to the data collected about me?

As a publicly-funded organisation, the University of Warwick have to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information from people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, such as this, we will use your data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the research study.

We will be using information from you in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. We are committed to protecting the rights of individuals in line with data protection legislation. The University of Warwick will keep identifiable information about you for the purposes of this project until 10 July 2019.

Research data will be **anonymised** as quickly as possible after data collection and it will not be possible to withdraw your data after this point. Your University ID code will be used for the purposes of paying your Eating at Warwick credit. Our records of this data will be permanently deleted on 10 July 2019. If you wish to withdraw your data from the study, the deadline for doing so is the 30 June 2019. After this point, you will not be able to withdraw your data.

Data Sharing

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. The University of Warwick has in place policies and procedures to keep your data safe.

This data may also be used for future research, including impact activities following review and approval by an independent Research Ethics Committee and subject to your consent at the outset of this research project.

For further information, please refer to the University of Warwick Research Privacy Notice which is available here:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/idc/dataprotection/privacynotices/researchprivacynotice>

or by contacting the Information and Data Compliance Team at GDPR@warwick.ac.uk.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on being part of the study?

You may choose to withdraw your participation from the study at any time. However, if you withdraw from the study: it will often not be possible to withdraw your data which has already been collected, after it has been anonymised. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible and keep the data secure in line with the University's Information and Data Compliance policies.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of the study will be published in a written report which will be hosted in online form on the WIHEA (Warwick International Higher Education Academy) website and in a short print run of hard copies to be distributed to departmental study abroad and wellbeing contacts. The results may be disseminated at academic conferences linked to Year Abroad and Study Abroad programmes.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the University of Warwick's Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC).

Who should I contact if I want further information?

Dr David Lees (d.w.lees@warwick.ac.uk; (00 44) (0) 2476523331).

Who should I contact if I wish to make a complaint?

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm you might have suffered will be addressed. Please address your complaint to the person below, who is a senior University of Warwick official entirely independent of this study:

Head of Research Governance

Research & Impact Services
University House
University of Warwick
Coventry
CV4 8UW
Email: researchgovernance@warwick.ac.uk
Tel: 024 76 522746

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer, Anjeli Bajaj, Information and Data Director who will investigate the matter: DPO@warwick.ac.uk.

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not lawful you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Leaflet.