



WARWICK
SCHOOL OF MODERN
LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

YEAR ABROAD HANDBOOK
SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES
FOR STUDENTS ON THEIR YEAR ABROAD 2021-22
and for students planning for a Year Abroad in 2022-
23

A NOTE ON THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is the principal guide for all students in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures. It contains important information on every aspect of the Year Abroad, from preparation to arrival and from your time abroad to your return to Warwick. Ensure that you read it carefully and remember that the answer to most common Year Abroad queries can be found in these pages. Additional relevant information for different language sections may be found in the language appendices on the central School Year Abroad Moodle page. You should ensure that you read the relevant appendix for your Year Abroad activity carefully in addition to the material contained in this Schoolwide handbook.

A comprehensive list of FAQs can also be found on the Study Abroad webpage.

[Frequently Asked Questions \(warwick.ac.uk\)](https://www.warwick.ac.uk/studyabroad/faq)

Please note that because of Covid19 details might have to change at very short notice!

For further details see also
<https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/brexit-update>

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Happy reading and good luck!

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The primary objective of spending an academic year abroad is the improvement of your language skills (both written and spoken). Even after just a few weeks you will see your command of the language progress dramatically. The grammatical correctness of your chosen language will improve and your vocabulary will expand. But the long and intensive exposure to, and participation in, the genuine cultural and social contexts of the language will also help you learn to use the language appropriately, with the right register, the right forms of address etc. Moreover living in a country will also sensitize you to the non-verbal communication that can precede, accompany or even replace the spoken and written word.

In addition, you will enhance your academic development in other ways: you will increase your knowledge and understanding of contemporary society and culture, and according to your interests and activities, you will learn more about literature, history and politics.

Living abroad for ideally eight to twelve months will also help your personal development. By planning your Year Abroad, managing your time and money, solving problems, and coping with new situations, you will gain independence and increase your self-confidence. These are transferable skills which will almost certainly stand you in good stead for your further career. Do not be dispirited by the challenges: returning students who did not enjoy the Year Abroad as much as they had hoped are often very positive about how their experiences helped their personal development; conversely even those who later describe the Year Abroad the 'highlight of their degree so far' can find the settling-in period a difficult one.

Depending on the type of placement you go on, you are likely to develop a number of professional skills, some specific, others transferable. If you are studying at a university or an institute of higher education, you may, for instance, take advanced courses in translation. If you are taking up a post as a language assistant, you will have valuable teaching experience, which outside the teaching profession itself can count as a form of people management, organizational talent or interpersonal communication.

The overall success of your Year Abroad experience will be difficult to quantify. But your linguistic progress will be monitored during the year through language tasks set by SMLC, and your increased knowledge generally of culture and society will filter through into your final-year coursework and exams. Most importantly perhaps, the variety of experience you gain during the Year Abroad will help you build your career and prepare you for life after university.

To achieve this, the University of Warwick has responsibility for providing suitable placements, or for helping you to find one. The University is also responsible for providing the programme framework, preparatory briefing meetings, and relevant information and advice before, during and after the Year Abroad.

Your input and your commitment too will determine the smooth running of the programme, and its return in terms of the knowledge and experience you will have gained by the time you come back to Warwick. The following paragraphs set out what the University may - quite reasonably - expect from you, in organizing your placement abroad.

1.3. Before you go

- You are expected to attend **all** briefing meetings and workshops, and to read **all** material provided in preparation of the Year Abroad;
- You are expected to respect and adhere to the guidance, advice and recommendations (written or verbal) offered by tutors with regard to the most suitable option/institution/course of study available to you or to any other of your personal preparatory arrangements for the Year Abroad;
- You are expected to complete all paperwork within set deadlines and to respond in good time to any University, School, language section, or Warwick Study Abroad team communications (including e-mails) requiring a response; failure to complete paperwork by the required deadlines will almost certainly jeopardize your year abroad;
- You are expected to inform the language section and/or School of any major development, or change in circumstances, which may affect your Year Abroad arrangements;
- You are expected to familiarize yourself with details of the work (academic and other) you are to undertake whilst abroad, and with all relevant details regarding submission and assessment;
- You are expected to familiarize yourself with, and learn as much as you can about, the country and/or region of destination before you depart.

1.4. On arrival abroad

You are expected to provide the School and language section with accurate details of where you are living and how you can be contacted. Remember to inform the School and language section of any changes in these details.

1.5. Whilst abroad

- You are expected to abide by the laws, and show respect for the cultural traditions, of your host country;
- You are expected to respect the rules (including any health and safety advice) of your host institution (including any university at which you may be studying or any school or company you may be working for);
- You are expected to take responsibility for your own learning in developing your command of both spoken and written language, and for the development of your knowledge of the culture, history, traditions and social circumstances of the country in which you are staying;
- You are expected to undertake the work or programme of study agreed with the School and department prior to your departure. This includes being aware of, and keeping up with, all assignments set for the Year Abroad, and ensuring that all work for assessment reaches the department in good order and within the set deadlines;
- You are expected to respond in good time to any University, School, language section, or Warwick Study Abroad team communications requiring a response;
- You are expected to notify the School and language section, as well as relevant people/offices, of any major problems or emergencies;
- You are expected to notify the School and language section of any change in address or circumstances.

1.6. On your return to Warwick

You are expected to participate in all debriefing and assessment activities regarding your time abroad; if requested, you are expected to participate in briefing meetings held for departing students.

1.7. Length of 'year abroad'

In the case of language assistants the School does regard the duration of a seven-month contract as an acceptable length of stay for the Year Abroad. In all other cases a period of eight months is the usual minimum and up to twelve months is the norm. Students on an Erasmus exchange who chose to spend their whole year abroad at a university are expected to complete the entire academic year, including exams, at their host institution.

“Staying on”: students who wish to stay abroad at the end of their Year Abroad (e.g. to take up a summer job) do so on their own initiative and responsibility. The same principle applies to “going early”. A stay over the summer months before or following the Year Abroad can only be regarded as falling under the aegis of the University if it is part of the student’s prearranged Year Abroad programme which carries the approval of the School (e.g. an eleven or twelve-month contract for a work placement).

1.8. Split year

Students on joint language degrees, BA Modern Languages and BAML with Linguistics (especially French and German, Hispanic Studies and French, or French and post-A-level Italian) sometimes wish to explore the possibility of spending a certain amount of time in both countries. If that is the case, you should discuss your plans early on with the relevant Year Abroad Coordinators. Please note, however, that your study placement must be at least 3 FULL months in duration to retain Erasmus+ eligibility and your work placement must be at least 2 FULL months in duration to retain Erasmus+ eligibility.

On the whole, there are three principal pathways for students spending their Year Abroad, i.e. teaching, work or study.

2.1 WORKING AS A LANGUAGE ASSISTANT IN A SCHOOL

2.2 Advantages:

- The placements are fairly easy to organize, since the assistantship scheme is run by a central, coordinating institution, the British Council.
- The assistantship gives you valuable work experience for your CV (people management, presentational skills, time management), even if you do not intend to pursue a teaching career after graduating.
- As a language assistant, you will earn a regular and reasonable wage, giving you a good degree of financial security during your time abroad.
- The modest workload (usually 12 contact hours per week) is such that you have plenty of spare time to explore other aspects of life in the country.
- You can express a preference for the region where you wish to be allocated, the type of area (urban or rural) and the age group you'd like to work with (from primary school age children to adults).

2.3. Prerequisites:

- You need to hold a UK/Irish or EU passport.
- You need to be highly proficient in English.
- You need to meet the language requirements (which vary between countries).
- You must have lived in the UK for a minimum of 2 years and be eligible to apply for an International Child Protection Certificate
- You will need to apply during the second-year of your degree in order to take up the post in your third-year. Therefore if you are spending your Year Abroad in the second-year of your studies you will not be eligible for this pathway.
- You will also need a good (confidential) reference from your Personal Tutor! Reference requests are sent directly to your Personal Tutor once you have completed the British Council's online form. You will receive further instructions from the relevant Year Abroad Coordinator in term 1 of your second-year.
- For further information see:
[Am I eligible for the English Language Assistants programme? | British Council](#)

2.4. Disadvantages:

- In the majority of countries, the scheme is not open to students older than 35.
- You do not have total control over the type of placement you will get, or over its location. But not ending up where you'd initially hoped you'd be, does not mean you cannot make a big success of your assistantship.

2.5. Application procedure:

The School Office oversees applications to the assistantship programme (the scheme as a whole is run by the British Council). The time schedule for returning completed applications to the Office is very tight. Instructions

will be circulated early in the Autumn Term. Please read these carefully and respect the deadlines stipulated (you will normally need to have completed the online form by Wednesday of week 8 of the Autumn term).

For further information see:

[How to apply to be an English Language Assistant | British Council](#)

Note for students applying for an assistantship in a francophone country: The assistantship often seems an attractive pathway to a Year Abroad in Canada (Québec) – Potential applicants should note that the 35 or so language assistant posts are predominantly in small towns in rural areas of the province. There are only ever a few posts in Quebec City, and none in Montreal. Candidates should bear in mind the severe winter temperatures, length of the winter, isolation of the towns where posts exist and limited network of public transport. Moreover, although the salary is considerably higher than in France, students will not qualify for either the Erasmus fee waiver or the Erasmus placement grant (see section 6.2, below, on financial arrangements for the Year Abroad).

The standard contract for language assistants in schools is for seven months.

3.1. OTHER TYPES OF WORK PLACEMENTS (STUDENT-NEGOTIATED)

Students are allowed to arrange their own work placement (usually an internship or *stage*). You will need a lot of energy and determination, and a clear idea of how your particular skills could make you employable abroad.

If it is your intention to pursue this particular pathway, you must discuss your plans early on with one of the Year Abroad Coordinators and possibly your Personal Tutor. At any rate, you may not finalize your arrangements without the agreement of the relevant Year Abroad Coordinator for work placements, completing where relevant a Work Placement Approval Form. Your plans are likely to be acceptable if:

- you can demonstrate you will be living and working in a target language environment which will develop your written and oral language skills;
- the kind of work you intend to do has some intellectual content or particular challenge to it;
- your employment conditions will be safe and reasonable, and described in a written contract.
- You are aware of any financial implications the placement may have for you.

In the past most students have found office work, but they have worked in a variety of places, from banks, to the opera, television stations and voluntary organisations. Jobs that are *not* likely to be acceptable as a Year Abroad programme are: working as an *au pair*, waiting tables in cafés or restaurants; heavy manual labour...

You may not be entitled to a full wage in such a role, so check whether your remuneration will actually cover your living expenses.

You must give the School a copy of your contract and Conditions of Employment.

3.2. Advantages:

- Meeting a challenge like this one can be a real bonus to your CV.
- As the initiative rests with you, you are in control of your choice of area, and field of work.

3.3. Prerequisites:

These will vary from placement to placement. Find out exactly what the job you are seeking entails. Also check with your prospective employer, and, if necessary the Embassy, whether, in addition to your passport, you need a work permit and/or visa.

[If you hold a UK passport and want to work in the EU you need to check what kind of work permit and visa you need well in advance!](#)

You must be able to satisfy the School (and the relevant Year Abroad Coordinator) that your plans constitute a serious and feasible Year Abroad programme (see above).

3.4. Disadvantages:

Work placements are often hard to organize. You may need to spend a lot of time making multiple applications, and this can be a frustrating process. Deals can fall through at quite an advanced stage of the application, even after you have in effect taken up the job.

You are responsible for negotiating acceptable work conditions and remuneration with your prospective employer. In the case of problems, you do not have recourse to a back-up institution like the British Council, a University's Warwick Study Abroad team etc. The School will advise you as best it can, but may only be able to offer you very limited help.

3.5. Application procedure:

You will need to tailor your application(s) according to the position you are seeking. The School office keeps information on previous placements used by our students and details of any suitable posts abroad signalled to the School in the course of the year will be conveyed by email to students known to be looking for work abroad. In general, it is advisable to seek a work placement with a large and/or reputable company or organization which has previous experience with, or standard procedures for interns. The University expects its students to receive a reasonable wage or remuneration for the work that they do, and in accordance with the law of the country they work in. The Careers Centre have books and leaflets available and are able to offer assistance when seeking a placement. Please see contact details at the back of this booklet.

4.1. EXCHANGE STUDY PLACEMENTS:

Like the language assistantships, the Exchange study placements provide a fairly straightforward way of spending time abroad. Placements are limited in number, but most years supply and demand are well matched to each other. Some exchanges are more popular than others, however, and the School will usually have to arbitrate on the allocation of placements.

If you are interested in the exchange study programme, you should be aware that life at university in other countries differs in many respects from student life at Warwick. For instance, students tend to have much less personal contact with their teachers; at the very least, contact is likely to be much more formal. Different emphases and approaches to teaching and studying will usually mean larger class sizes and more 'lecture' type classes than you are used to. Finally, students may continue to live at home whilst attending university, or return home for the weekend rather than stay at university for the whole term. This can, in some contexts, make campuses and university residences very quiet places at the weekend! However, if you are an adaptable sort of person and ready to make friends right from the start, the exchange study programme can offer you a unique insight into the culture, with much exposure to the language.

4.2. Advantages:

- The scheme is suitable for mature students;
- Placements are longer than an assistantship, so you have more exposure to language and culture;
- You are not liable for any tuition fees for the institution abroad;
- At the moment, an Erasmus mobility grant covers some of the *extra* expense associated with living abroad;
- Your 'transcript of studies' will be a worthwhile addition to your CV;
- The scheme lends itself to "Split Year" arrangements, for students on joint language or BA Modern Languages degrees (restrictions apply: see section above).

4.3. Prerequisites:

- You must satisfy the School that you will be a worthy "ambassador" for Warwick, as the continuation of the exchanges depends largely on the good will of the partner institutions.

4.4. Disadvantages:

- There is a limited number of places;
- You will have to pay for most or all of your maintenance costs, in other words, your normal funding arrangements still apply;
- The differences in student and administrative culture can be a bit of a shock.

5.1. OTHER TYPES OF STUDY PLACEMENTS (STUDENT-NEGOTIATED; ONLY APPLICABLE FOR STUDENTS SPENDING TIME IN FRANCE)

Occasionally students in French Studies are allowed to make their own study arrangements. As for student-negotiated work placements, you will have to be well-motivated as well as demonstrate resilience and initiative. It can also be an expensive option.

You are advised to discuss your intentions early on with the relevant Year Abroad Coordinator, and possibly your Personal Tutor. At any rate, you may not finalize your arrangements without agreement. Your plans are likely to be acceptable, if:

- you can demonstrate you will be living and studying in a target language environment;
- the course or programme of study you intend to undertake will make a real contribution to your personal and academic development;
- there will be no unacceptable risk to your safety and well-being.
- you show awareness of the possible financial implications the placement may have for you.

5.2. Advantages:

As the initiative rests with you, you are in control of your choice of university/institute, region, course etc.

This arrangement can be suitable for mature students (finances permitting).

5.3. Prerequisites:

These may vary from placement to placement. Find out exactly what the placement you are seeking entails.

You must be able to satisfy the School that your plans constitute a serious and feasible Year Abroad programme (as detailed above).

5.4. Disadvantages:

The placements can be difficult to organize in terms of practical and financial arrangements.

You may well be quite on your own 'out there', especially at the beginning, since there may not be any of your Warwick contemporaries at the same institute, or even in the same region. In the case of problems, you would not have recourse to the Warwick Study Abroad team in the same way that students on an arranged study placement do; the School may only be able to offer you limited assistance.

This can be an expensive option, as you will be liable to pay both the foreign institution's fees as well as the year abroad fee (15% of full fees) to Warwick; finally, your student loan for your tuition fees will not cover the fee payable to the institution abroad.

You can start applying once you have obtained approval. Applications are your responsibility, although the Year Abroad Coordinator may be able to help.

6.1. Practical advice for all students going abroad

Getting the paperwork together for your Year Abroad can seem like a bureaucratic headache. It needn't be, as long as you try to be organized, and start in plenty of time. Here follows a list of the main documents you need to obtain or complete before leaving to go abroad.

6.2. Confirmation of Warwick student status: ensure that you take your Warwick Student/Library Card with you.

Proof of Study: Current students based on campus are able to request a Certificate of Status in person from the Student Services Team, Ground Floor, Senate House. The team will print a letter for you while you wait or will stamp and sign your pre-printed digital Certificate of Status. You can also request a digital Certificate of Status via Student Records online:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/studentrecords/srforms/statusletter/>

6.3. Passport: check you have a valid passport, which will not need renewing during your Year Abroad, and remember to take it with you. If renewal is needed, make sure you apply for it in good time.

This is especially important after 31st December 2020!

6.4. Visas: If you hold a UK passport you will need a visa to study or work in an EU country. Check what kind of visa you need with the relevant embassy/consulate, [and apply for one in good time.](#)

Please check with the relevant government websites re visa requirements as a British citizen after 31 December 2020!

6.5. Driving licence: If you drive, remember to take your driving licence with you.

6.6. Birth certificate: Depending on the country, if you are working, you may need a certified translation of your FULL birth certificate. Procedures for this have recently been revised, and French public authorities, for example, now require a translation produced by an authorised translator in France (for which payment is required). The British Council will inform you of requirements in this respect prior to your departure.

6.7. Time-limited Student GHIC card: Before you leave, remember to **apply for a student GHIC card** (also known as a time-limited GHIC card). A normal GHIC card will not be considered as valid whilst you are on a study placement. For more information on the application process, go to this link: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/moving-abroad/studyingabroad/>

If you plan to travel after your placement, you will also need a normal GHIC card.

For further information see also: [News \(warwick.ac.uk\)](https://www.warwick.ac.uk/news)

In the summer before your YA, the central study-abroad team will send out an evidence letter that you will need to submit with your application for a student GHIC.

British Council assistants: The information pack you receive from the British Council will provide more information about the insurance situation in your country. The BC recommends that you take out more comprehensive insurance, especially if you have specific medical needs.

Students on work placements: You will probably have to apply for insurance. Your employer should be able to advise you on what to do and whether they have special arrangements with specific insurers.

6.8. Insurance: you should make sure that you take out fully comprehensive insurance before you start your Year Abroad. Prices vary and it is worth shopping around and reading the small print before purchasing. Points to consider:

Check whether the policy covers a *continuous* stay abroad and that it amply covers the entire period you will be abroad. If the policy requires you to come back to the UK for a minimum period of, say, two weeks every three months, it is unlikely to be suitable.

If you lose any luggage, money, etc. it is essential to report the fact to the police at once in order to have the required documentation for the Insurance Company. The small print of your insurance documents will describe this procedure.

Make a note of the **serial numbers** of any cameras, laptops etc. you are taking abroad with you, and keep a list (with copies left in safe places) of the numbers of your **credit/debit cards**. Do not forget to note (in several places) the phone number(s) for the emergency cancellation of your cards in the case of loss or theft.

The University offers **travel insurance** for all current students studying abroad with a recognized programme through a recognized scheme. This does not include any summer work placements or any departmentally organized placements. Please contact the Insurance Services Team for further information.

6.9. Health care: make sure you seek advice from your regular GP with regard to personal and general health recommendations. If you require regular prescriptions or other special treatment you should carry a letter from your GP outlining your needs. Check with your insurance company and/or your employer whether you would be covered for any **pre-existing medical condition** you may have.

6.10. Photographs: you are likely to need several passport-size photographs soon after you arrive abroad, so take some spare photos with you. Having them at hand may save you a lot of time.

6.11. ISIC: getting an International Student Identity Card in the UK will help you get discounts for cinema tickets, museums, and rail travel overseas.

6.12. Photocopies: it is advisable to take a photocopy of your passport, Student GHIC card, insurance policy and other vital documents, in case they should be damaged, lost or stolen while you are abroad. Keep them in a safe place, separately from the originals. Such photocopies are also often required by the local authorities, so take them along when you are dealing with your residence permit, etc.

6.13. E-mail: You are required to keep your Warwick e-mail address going, even whilst you are abroad. If you wish to use any other e-mail provider, you should set up an adequate forwarding system from your Warwick e-mail address.

Please note that students who forward e-mail to external email accounts which quickly become full risk missing important communications from the School, language section and the University. If you choose to access your University email in this way you should be aware of the need to manage your external account carefully.

6.14. Final-Year Accommodation: if you wish to apply for campus accommodation for your final year at Warwick, you may need to call into the Accommodation Office and complete an application form before you leave Warwick. Warwick Accommodation change the application process for Year Abroad students from year-to-year so do check their website for further details:

<https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/accommodation/studentaccommodation/apply>

The list above does not include any placement-specific documents, such as Erasmus learning agreements, or those relating to the allocation of language assistantships, etc. (for such documents, you can use the relevant **checklist in the Erasmus handbook** that the Warwick Student Mobility team will give you around the end of the Spring Term before you go abroad)

7.1. Financial arrangements

Please note that Academic YA Coordinators in SMLC are not responsible for the financial side of your YA!

Some frequently asked money questions:

7.2. Q: What fees will I pay to Warwick?

All students on the year abroad will be charged a fee at the rate of 15% of full fees to Warwick. Home/EU students in receipt of a Warwick National Scholarship will receive a fee waiver to cover the year abroad fee.

Those on an Erasmus study exchange will not have to pay fees to the university they are attending abroad.

7.3. Q: Will I continue to receive my student loan (and maintenance grant)?

If you are currently eligible for a student loan then normally you will still be able to claim this during your Year Abroad. However, if you choose to work as a language assistant, or undertake a work placement, then you may not be eligible for the full amount of the loan because Student Finance England (SFE) may take your salary into account. Moreover, if you currently receive a **maintenance grant or bursary** in addition to your loan, it is likely that you will either receive a significantly reduced amount or nothing of this at all if you are being paid a salary while abroad. If you are concerned about this you should check with the Student Loans Company (SLC) on the precise financial implications of your proposed year abroad plan before committing to it. If you do receive a bursary or grant in addition to your loan and wish to continue to do so then you may find it most financially advantageous to opt for an Erasmus study placement because if you do you will normally continue to receive your maintenance grant.

If you choose to do an independently organised student placement, you will not be eligible for a tuition fee loan from the UK Government to cover the fees of the institution abroad.

If you are considering such a pathway, you should check in advance on the financial implications in this respect

7.4. Q. Are there any additional sources of funding?

THE FOLLOWING IS DUE TO CHANGE VERY SOON, the Erasmus grant has come to an end, however, you will receive some Erasmus funds from Warwick University in 2021-22.

In addition to your student loan (and, in some cases, maintenance grant and bursary), the main source of funding for the Year Abroad is the **Erasmus Plus scheme**, which forms part of the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus scheme provides a grant for eligible students who undertake Year Abroad placements which meet its criteria. This **Erasmus Plus grant** is intended to provide some **extra help** with the additional costs of living abroad but it will not be nearly enough to cover all your expenses during the year so you should still make whatever financial arrangements you would normally make in preparation for a year of university study.

The total amount of grant for the year is normally paid in 2 instalments (70% at the start of your placement and 30% at the end of your final placement). This should normally be done after your host university, school or employer has confirmed your arrival and completion dates.

7.5. Q. Do I need to complete any paperwork to qualify for Erasmus scheme funding?

Yes and you must do so by the required deadlines. The Erasmus Plus scheme is mainly administered by our Warwick Student Mobility team (based in University House). You will be required to complete an Erasmus training agreement and if you are on a student-negotiated work placement then you will also have to provide the Warwick Student Mobility team with a copy of your contract, if you have one. If you are on a study placement then you will also have to complete additional paperwork once you arrive at the host

university. You should check on the Warwick Student Mobility website about additional paperwork they may require.

7.8. Q. Do I pay tuition fees if I have arranged my own study placement?

If you are undertaking a student-negotiated work placement you will normally also take on any tuition fees that may be levied (unless you have successfully applied for any grants that may be available) and, in addition, you will have to pay the standard year abroad fee (15% of full fees) to Warwick. Please note also, as mentioned in section 4.3.2 above, that you will not be eligible for a tuition fee loan from the UK Government to cover the fees of the institution abroad.

7.9. Q. Can Warwick help me with the cost of my year abroad?

Unfortunately the School of Modern Languages and Cultures does not have additional funds available to assist with students' expenses relating to the year abroad. If you are in severe financial difficulty then you may be eligible for a hardship loan, either from the Student Loans Company, or from the University's hardship fund. Contact the Student Funding Team for more information:

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/ourservices/funding/contact us/>

Make sure you have a clear idea of where you stand financially, well before you leave. Consider right from the start what financial implications your preferred Year Abroad programme may have, and check with the relevant offices about any figures, payments, or arrangements you are not sure of.

8.1. Money matters

You will need to take money with you to tide you over until either your loan/grant comes through or until your first wages are paid (they could be delayed). Apart from basic living costs this amount will need to cover any registration fees and accommodation/rent; you are likely to have to pay two months' rent in advance, as well as a deposit. You should take some of this money in cash, in Euros; it may be handy to have some banknotes in small denominations as well as small change on arrival. For the bulk of this money, you would do better to provide other means of payment:

8.2. Credit/debit cards can be used for payments in large shops, as well as in many hotels and restaurants. Check with your bank on the costs involved. Also make sure that you have made all necessary arrangements to pay your credit card bill when it arrives every month at your home address in the UK.

8.3. Money can be transferred (by your parents, or whoever you decide to employ for the purpose) by International Money Order, or by direct transfer from a UK bank to a bank of your choice, where it can be withdrawn in the form of cash. Service charges will normally apply.

You can open a **bank account** and have your bank or your agents (normally your parents) transfer your money, grant, etc. directly into it. Ask your UK bank, in good time, whether it has a special arrangement with any particular bank (ask to speak to the Branch manager or the International Accounts

Manager and explain your situation). You will require proof of identity, address and income (or student status) to open an account. If you are working, check with your employer (school) how your salary will be paid, before opening an account locally.

Finally, bear in mind that life in the major cities and tourist areas is likely to be expensive. So go easy on the spending, especially at the beginning. It is also advisable to enquire about loans and overdrafts with your UK bank, before leaving.

8.4. France only: In some cases, e.g. if your wages are paid late, it is possible to arrange a temporary overdraft with a French bank: explain your situation, and show them your *arrêté de nomination* (allocation of a language assistantship), or any other relevant document. (Unauthorized overdrafts are illegal under French law).

9.1. CONTACTING YOUR HOST INSTITUTION

As soon as you have the details of your placement, you should contact the school, university, institution or workplace where you will be spending your Year Abroad. Try to find out who the person responsible is, within the organization. You may wish to clarify a number of points, or simply touch base. It is also a good idea to ask them whether they can offer you any accommodation (or can help you find any), and to alert them of when you intend to arrive. Remember, however, that contact may be much more formal than the (normally) friendly, personalised “service” you get at Warwick. So be polite and keep to the point.

10.1. ACCOMMODATION

Please note that Academic Coordinators are not responsible for finding accommodation!

10.2. Arranging accommodation

Finding accommodation for your year abroad is possibly one of the most stressful aspects of the whole experience. It can be difficult, time-consuming and expensive.

The information on these pages is largely compiled from student responses to an accommodation questionnaire sent out during the year abroad. You will receive a copy of this questionnaire when you are abroad and do please take the time to respond in full as this is the only way that we can provide accurate and up-to-date advice for outgoing students.

10.3. Private accommodation

10.3.1. How to find private accommodation

Visit letting agencies; read the local press; telephone places advertised in the press; look for adverts on notice boards (in schools, local businesses, etc); go by word of mouth – use whatever local contacts you can find at your school, university or work place. If going on a study placement, it can be useful to

make friends with the students who have come to Warwick from your future host-institution.

10.3.2. When should you start looking?

In general, it depends on the accommodation offers at your destination and we would advise you to look sooner rather than later (for Germany we advise you to start looking a few months in advance). It is likely to be a very busy, stressful, and potentially expensive time. Some students have found they needed to return for repeat visits before they could find something suitable. Bear in mind, too, that if you are based in a university town, the local students may already have taken many of the available rooms and apartments by the end of August.

You might look at a dozen or more properties before you find something suitable. In some places, especially smaller towns, there may be quite a limited supply of furnished apartments which could further lengthen your search – it would obviously be very expensive to furnish your own flat and very impractical to bring your own furniture with you. You are also advised not to sign a contract for the whole year without having seen the accommodation and having satisfied yourself that you are happy with all arrangements. Deposits and rent paid in advance may make it difficult to change, so explore various possibilities and look around before deciding. **Please remember that whatever accommodation arrangements you make, it is ultimately your responsibility to make sure that you have taken all necessary legal and safety precautions.**

11.1. CAREERS: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR YEAR ABROAD

For many, the year abroad will be the highlight of their degree course, a truly formative experience. Indeed, your year abroad, as well as being fun, can offer you opportunities to develop your career.

When it comes to making applications for graduate jobs and work experience, recruiters look for evidence that you would make an effective employee. Many students use their experiences on a Year Abroad to back up their claims to have the necessary profile and skills. You will get the chance to develop skills such as:

- **Adaptability:** as you are only there for an academic year, you will need to get used to life abroad pretty quickly, demonstrating you can cope with change and adjust to new situations.
- **Problem-solving:** day-to-day challenges like finding your way around a new town and a new university/school/workplace will test your analytical skills and resilience.
- **Communication:** using another language in a range of social and academic settings will help you develop your interpersonal skills.
- **Confidence:** many students see the main benefit of their Year Abroad in the development of their self-belief.

If you are working, you will also be developing more job-specific skills: as a teaching assistant, you may develop leadership qualities and people management. If you work in an office, you may gain a valuable insight in administration, learn to adopt the right telephone manner etc.

If you are studying, a careful choice of courses may help you acquire new kinds of knowledge, or teach you new approaches to learning (see the guidelines on selecting your programme of studies). Make sure to bring back a *transcript of studies*: you can add it to your CV.

Some of those who opt to study during their Year Abroad take part-time jobs. This is allowed by the School, so long as the job conditions are fair and safe, and the job does not interfere with your agreed programme of study. The School will not be in a position to assist you in this, however.

If you think you might want to work abroad in the longer term, your Year Abroad gives you the chance to track down information, which may not be available on your return. Make the most of your time to develop contacts and find out how organizations operate, especially their recruitment practices and their views of UK graduates. Things to find out include:

- Which organisations typically recruit graduates? What skills and qualifications do they look for?
- Which sectors are recruiting well at the moment? What jobs are advertised for English native speakers?
- How and when should you apply? Where are vacancies advertised? What documentation will you need? What do a CV and letter of application look like?
- Check local papers, university notice boards, recruitment agencies...
- Talk to your fellow-students, colleagues, friends, landlords etc. The grapevine is a great source of information.

Are there any professionally qualified people whom you might ask for a job reference. Ask them whether they would be willing to act as your referee, how and when you should contact them, and what supplementary information they might need.

Keep a record: it might be one or two years before you need this information.

12.1. SAFETY AND WELFARE ISSUES

During your Year Abroad you will learn many things beyond just improving your language skills. The learning experiences will differ according to your individual background and personality as well as the Year Abroad programme you have chosen. No doubt you will have both positive and negative experiences. It is the latter kind that the following paragraphs want to address, in order to promote well-being and enjoyment in the Year Abroad.

Your welfare during your Year Abroad is of prime concern to the School of Modern Languages and Cultures. The School will do everything in its power to help you deal with problems, or - better still - to prevent problems from occurring. Often, too, the British Council, the Warwick Student Mobility team or our partner university, or even your employer can offer help and advice. In most cases, however, **you** are best placed (and can reasonably be expected)

to sort things out. When problems do occur, follow the procedures set out under point 6, 'problems and queries' and remember to follow guidance issued in pre-departure briefings.

12.2. Come prepared!

Did you check you have the appropriate insurance(s) to cover illness, accidents, etc. both whilst you are at work/studying and during your leisure time?

If you are working (as an assistant or otherwise), did you check that your **contract** gives a clear work description and stipulates working conditions? When in doubt, clarify these in advance, or at the earliest opportunity.

Did you bring a list of useful addresses and telephone numbers, not just those of friends (incl. the language section and School) and family (to keep in touch), but also that of the British Embassy and British Consulate (e.g. in case your passport is stolen), your bank and credit card company (e.g. in case you lose your payment card) etc.? Make a duplicate to keep in a safe place.

Did you bring your regular medication? A spare pair of glasses? ...

12.3. Personal Safety

When it comes to personal safety, *prevention* is the best remedy. Whilst women students are often perceived to be at greater risk, the following advice is intended for both men and women.

Basically, for your Year Abroad, the same ground-rules for personal safety apply abroad as in Britain. But even if you are used to 'looking after yourself', you may still feel more vulnerable abroad than you would at home. So, it makes sense to take extra care.

12.4. Halls of residence and other forms of accommodation:

Unfortunately, student halls of residence are often an easy target for intruders (thieves and prowlers). Remember to **KEEP YOUR DOOR LOCKED** at all times, especially at night and even when you leave the room for a very short while (e.g. to go to the kitchen, or to have a chat in a neighbour's room). Check who has a spare key, in case you lock yourself out, and how to raise the alarm, if need be.

When you first arrive, the accommodation offered by a school or university may not live up to your expectations despite the best efforts of the language section, the School, the Warwick Student Mobility team, or the British Council, who all insist on adequate security: if you feel the accommodation is not particularly safe, immediately make your concerns known to the person responsible and see whether there are any solutions or alternatives. You may find that the room on offer is the best starting-point from which to find another room or flat to rent (though not at the price of your personal safety!).

If you make your own arrangements, check out the safety features of your flat, room or house. Is there a fire escape? A smoke-alarm? Can the curtains be fully drawn, or the shutters completely shut after dark? Who is responsible for the maintenance of gas heaters, electric appliances etc.? What is the insurance cover?

12.5. When out and about:

- Awareness of your surroundings and a few simple precautions can make all the difference to your safety. Be streetwise and bear the following checklist in mind:
- Ascertain the nature of the neighbourhood you are living in or going to: is it safe (by day/after dark)?
- Check the street-lighting (how much of it where?)
- Take a note of the last bus times. Is it wise to take the very last bus or metro?
- Take a note of the cost and location of taxis for when you've missed the last bus.
- Take a note of the emergency number(s) for police, ambulance and fire service. Make sure you have a phone card or the appropriate change to make a call. Or, if you have a mobile phone, is it charged and does it work in that area?
- Take a screech alarm with you (available from the Students' Union, Education and Welfare Office): it will give you confidence – hopefully you'll never have to use it. Carry it in your hand or pocket (not your handbag or rucksack), where it's ready for use.

12.6. And remember the basic rules:

- Try to look as if you know where you're going. Walk purposefully.
- Strength often lies in numbers: avoid going out on your own at night, or even by day in certain unsafe areas.
- Women: carry a sensible handbag. Men: maybe your back pocket is not the best place to carry a wallet. Bear in mind that your mobile phones, cameras, and designer sunglasses are as covetable to thieves and pickpockets abroad as they are in Britain.
- Do not put all your money and payment cards in one place. In particularly busy and/or touristy places a moneybelt may be advisable.

12.7. Sexism and sexual harassment (not just for women)

Although attitudes to sexism and sexual harassment are changing abroad as they are in Britain, sexist remarks and sexual harassment may still occur. Female tourists and foreign students may particularly find themselves at the receiving end of it, but men can be the object of unwanted attention too.

Nasty as it is, sexism and sexual harassment can feel even more intimidating in a foreign country than at home, because of incomplete knowledge of social codes and of language. If this relative vulnerability is exploited, it can spoil a good time – and that is unacceptable.

Here is what you can do:

To avoid the worst, **be aware of possible threats** to your personal safety (without becoming neurotic) by using the checklist mentioned above. Take the same precautions as you would in your own country (e.g. do not invite strangers in to your flat for private language lessons; do not accept lifts from strangers - better still: do not hitchhike at all).

Become a keen observer of **social codes and conducts**: try to learn, by absorption, a few effective ways of reacting to, or rebuffing, indiscretions, unwanted attention, indecent proposals. Maintaining total indifference and/or avoiding eye contact is often the best answer. Imagine how you would deal with any unpleasantness if it occurred: having a few phrases ready in your mind will mean you are not lost for words at a crucial moment. But remember: the correct body language can be just as expressive.

If need be, resort to clear messages in loud and expressive English.

13.1. KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH WARWICK

You will be in touch with Warwick, or Warwick with you, at various points in the year. Some communication will occur as a matter of course, but there will also be other opportunities for contact between you and the University.

13.2. Regular contact

Remember that you need to inform the language section and School of your contact details, and of any changes in your circumstances that may occur.

Towards the end of your stay, the School will send you information via email about the option choices for your Final Year. If you want to have an idea of current reading lists, then please check the language section and School website (though bear in mind that it is not possible before the Easter vacation to say which modules will and will not be running the following year).

13.3. Pastoral care

You will have been allocated a personal tutor at Warwick, whom you may contact in the case of a problem or to let us know all is well (see below). Your tutor will also contact you periodically to check that all is well.

You will also be able to access Wellbeing Services at Warwick when abroad!

13.4. Problems and queries

For simple queries regarding course regulations, reading lists, deadlines etc., the School or University website may provide the answer.

If there is a specific problem for which you need to seek help or advice from a member of staff, you can contact the School by e-mail.

Your first port of call would normally be your personal tutor, who may forward or discuss your case with the relevant Year Abroad Coordinator.

It may be a good idea to check whether the person you wish to contact does not happen to be on leave (there will be a replacement, in that case). Out of term, academic staff may be away on research business, so e-mails may not be dealt with immediately; the School office (smlcoffice@warwick.ac.uk) may be able to advise you on the best way of proceeding: always clearly leave your name and a contact number.

Please do not ask your parents to contact the School for you, unless it is absolutely necessary. We are not legally allowed to speak about you and your placement to anyone other than you unless we have received express written permission to do so from you in advance. We can sometimes speak in very general terms to a concerned parent or carer, but in most cases, when we

need to address a problem and discuss an appropriate course of action, we are obliged to communicate with you directly.

We do not just want to hear from you if and when you have a problem. It is always a real pleasure for us to receive a postcard, or a brief e-mail that tells us how you are getting on.

14.1. MONITORING POINTS

Students should expect to receive regular contact from the School Office, personal tutor and Year Abroad Coordinator while on their year abroad. This is to ensure continued engagement with study/work and to identify any welfare problems at an early stage. All students will be expected to:

Term 1

- Submit address and contact form to School Office by week 2
- Contact personal tutor in week 2-3

Term 2

- Submit change of address form (where applicable for those on split year placements)
- Contact personal tutor in Week 2-3

Submission deadlines for assignments are:

Week 11 term 1:

- Submission of Task 1 assignments. **ALL students.**

Week 9 term 2:

- Submission of Task 2 assignments - **ALL MAJOR LANGUAGES** (= 500 words minimum for three-language students; 1000 words minimum for two-language students and 1500 minimum for one-language students).
- Submission of Task 2 minor language assignments (= 500 words minimum) **EXCEPT FOR STUDENTS ON A STUDY PLACEMENT IN CHINA, JAPAN OR RUSSIA**

Week 5 term 3:

- Submission of Task 2 minor language assignment by **students studying in China, Japan or Russia.**

Week 9 term 3:

- Submission of Task 3 assignments (= 500 words minimum). **ALL students.**
- Submission of **questionnaire with reflection. ALL students.**

All essay- style assignments are to be submitted on **Tabula**.

Grammar exercises will be submitted through the **Perception** test platform (see Moodle for more details)

The Questionnaire and reflection will be submitted on the online survey platform, **Qualtrics**.

For further advice and information please see the SUBMISSIONS area of the Moodle page here: <https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=36200>

In addition, students on a Tier-4 visa will be subject to the monitoring requirements of the Office for Global Engagement

15.1. BACK IN WARWICK

15.2. Preparation

You must make sure that you have taken care of all the necessary preparation before you get back to Warwick. This includes **academic matters** (e.g. choice of options) and **personal arrangements** (e.g. accommodation).

Make sure you have carried out all the required **course preparation** (e.g. preparatory language work) and that you bring the necessary books, notes and other documentation with you.

15.3. Life after the Year Abroad

It may feel quite strange to be back at Warwick after a year 'out'. You will have to adapt again to Warwick's ways of teaching, to essay deadlines, etc. Soon after you've come back, you will be asked to complete a Year Abroad Report form and an anonymous questionnaire. The Year Abroad Report Form is intended to encourage reflection on your Year Abroad experience, and as an additional way of monitoring whether you have fulfilled your Residence Abroad requirements. The report will be filed in the School student records for staff use: it may, for instance, be helpful for any job references you ask us to write. The anonymous questionnaire gives you a chance to provide us with

feedback and advice, which will help us to improve our management of the Year Abroad and to update the advice we give to our out-going students.

As returnees from a year abroad, we will also invite you to take part in information meetings, discussion groups and preparatory seminars etc. for second-year students who are now making their own Year Abroad arrangements. You should be prepared to take part in at least one such a meeting or activity, as well as to talk more informally to second-year students who might wish to hear about your experiences in a particular location, type of year abroad placement, etc.

-END OF SCHOOL YEAR ABROAD HANDBOOK-

-PLEASE CONSULT RELEVANT SECTION APPENDICES FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION ON SPENDING YOUR YEAR ABROAD IN DIFFERENT
COUNTRIES-