STUDY AND WORK ABROAD GUIDE
2017-18

For students on a study or work placement in Europe
CHECK LIST

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“For anyone who has any doubts – just do it! I was so nervous about my year abroad but it’s the best decision I ever made.”

Samantha Browning
English and American Literature and French,
Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3
INTRODUCTION

Studying or working abroad is an exciting opportunity to expand your academic and employment horizons, to experience other cultures in depth and to develop as a person.

This Guide is intended to give you general advice to help you prepare for your time abroad. It is an essential supplement to your own research and the information you will receive from your host institution, school or employer.

Please read this guide in its entirety before leaving Kent. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Erasmus Team.

The Erasmus Team is responsible for:
• Information about and help with all organisational aspects of the time abroad
• Liaison with partner universities
• Support for students before and during the period abroad
• Distribution of Erasmus+ grants to eligible students
• Collection of Year Abroad marks

Lastly we wish you the best of luck with your placement and encourage you to make the most of all of the opportunities that will come your way. Remember that you are also ambassadors for the University of Kent, so do us proud!

With best wishes

Janet Wilson-Sharp, Brechje Klok-White and Françoise McKee
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“As for my Year Abroad in general, I am having the most amazing time and don’t think I’ll ever want to come home!”

Rachel Bale
English and French Law
Université Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris 1

The University of Kent is pleased to acknowledge the support of the European Commission under the Erasmus+ programme for its Erasmus+ activities.
PERSONAL PREPARATION

Your time abroad will be an unforgettable experience, which will be made even more fulfilling if you prepare well before you leave.

Consider

The more you put into your time abroad, the more you are likely to get out of it!

• What do you hope to get out of your time abroad?
• What skills do you want to develop?
• What attitude will you take with you? Going with a realistic attitude can make a big difference.

Cultural awareness

On arrival you will need to learn new skills and be ready to adapt to the host country’s culture. You will probably encounter a range of differences over the period, some may be more obvious, or easier to get used to, than others.

There will of course be obvious cultural differences – history, language, religion, etc – but you may find that some differences are subconscious: assumptions about nationality, age, how relationships work, attitudes to authority etc.

Communication differences do not just affect those who are studying a foreign language: you might find there are differences of writing or speaking style, body language, or expectations of formality. For example, in some countries, calling an academic by his/her first name would be frowned upon.

You may also find that your expectations vary or even conflict with the expectations of those around you. This could be something as simple as expectations of personal space or as broad as the division of tasks between students and university staff. The latter can be an challenge as many host universities expect students to find information by themselves or to organise their own module registration and timetable. In some cases, this might be done in a low tech/high effort way rather than through an online system.

Culture shock

Whilst the best advice from our students is to “Embrace the differences”, it can take time to do so and many experience culture shock in some form during the time abroad. This is normal and can be valuable as you develop new skills and self-awareness to deal with the changes. Allow yourself time to adjust: some adapt very quickly (or appear to do so!), for others the process is much more gradual.

Resources

Make the most of the resources available to help you prepare for the time abroad.

• Kent student questionnaires: Completed by Kent students during their time abroad, these cover a range of important topics from accommodation to finance to socialising. (Available in International Partnerships)
• Other students: The Erasmus Team can help you contact Kent students who are at/ have been at your destination and incoming students from that city/country
• Academic co-ordinator in your Kent school: He/she will help you with academic matters related to the time abroad
• This guide

“Best year of my life, never have change and education in my life been so significant, also met some of the best friends I will ever have.”

Ryan Goodge
Drama and Film
Universiteit Utrecht
“I had one of the best years of my life so far, I really grew as a person, becoming a lot more confident and responsible for myself... if you’re interested in gaining new experiences, open to new things, living abroad and generally having an amazing year I definitely, definitely recommend it! You’ll gain experiences, friends and memories that will stay with you for the rest of your life!”

Emma Welch
BA in Social Anthropology with a year in the Netherlands
VU Amsterdam
ATTENDING A UNIVERSITY – WHAT TO EXPECT

Our partner universities have been hand-picked by your schools to allow you to have a useful and interesting academic experience. Some may be bigger and more bureaucratic than Kent, others may be surprisingly laid back! In most cases, the exchanges have been running for many years so the Erasmus Team and your Academic Co-ordinator know the partner well and have good contacts with staff there.

The host university will give you details of useful administrative and academic contacts there. Exchange students often get additional help with procedures or have sightseeing trips or parties arranged especially for them.

Don’t forget that adapting to the culture of studying in another country is part of the experience of the period abroad! The first few weeks may be challenging, but this can be overcome with an open mind and positive attitude. A few notes are given below to help you prepare for the differences:

Registration procedures

These can seem complicated and frustrating as the systems may not be what you are used to at Kent. (Incoming exchange students to Kent sometimes feel the same way!) Be prepared to devote time and energy to registration and don’t be afraid to ask local staff or students for help. Do participate in any orientation programmes offered by the university because these will often include help with registration.

Style of teaching

There is a wide variation in teaching styles. Some are similar to Kent, having lectures and seminars with an emphasis on discussion and analysis. Others teach primarily through lectures with an emphasis on the student learning from lecturers and set texts. It can be difficult to get used to the latter, but the knowledge obtained can be put to excellent use in adding depth to your work at Kent. (In some cases, lecture halls are packed and it is necessary to arrive early to get a seat.)

Assessment

Again, procedures may not be the same as in the UK. Invigilation may be more relaxed and notification of exam dates given at short notice. Universities in Scandinavia sometimes use “book exams”. Many universities, particularly in Italy, use oral examinations with a panel of examiners as well as (or instead of) written examinations for many different subjects, not just language modules. Some students appreciate this style of exam because less emphasis may be placed on grammar and, of course, spelling and writing style!

University staff

Exchange students will have an Academic Co-ordinator who can be contacted about academic problems. He/she may be more accessible than other tutors, who may not have office hours or an office in the university, and will be used to queries from Erasmus students. Contacting class tutors is best done by speaking to them after the class or by emailing to arrange an appointment.

The academic year

Most mainland European universities have a two semester system with exams at the end of each teaching period. A few universities have ‘blocks’ of teaching with students taking one or two courses in each block and then being assessed immediately. Term/semester dates will be made available by your host university either online or in the information they send you.

Social life

There is a greater distinction between study and socialising at most partner universities than at Kent. In some countries, like France, students will socialise at bars and clubs in the city where they are based and will keep the residences as places to study and sleep. The student questionnaires in International Partnerships give lots of information about the social life at each university, whether for all students or for exchange students in particular. Exchange students are often in the fortunate position of having parties, events and trips arranged especially for them by the local International/Erasmus Office or Erasmus Student Network (ESN).

You have only to speak to students who have returned from their year or to read the questionnaires to know that a full and rewarding social life is there to be enjoyed once you have found your feet and made contacts and friends.

Orientation

Many universities offer orientation meetings and events to help students to settle in. Orientation events are highly recommended: some include tours and events and help is often given with registration. Most universities also provide language classes for exchange students either before or during the academic year (see below).

Language courses

Many universities offer a pre-sessional or term-time language course. Although these courses are not usually compulsory, they are a useful way to improve language skills and an opportunity to make friends and start finding your way around. Most courses are free to Erasmus students but some may have a small administration fee. Course information will be provided by the host universities.

If the course takes place before the start of term, make sure either that you have accommodation for that period. In some cases, participants are awarded ECTS credits for successful completion of the course. If so, ask your Academic Co-ordinator at Kent whether these credits can be counted towards your degree.

Students studying a language as part of their degree will be registered for the Erasmus+ free, obligatory Online Linguistic Support.

More information about both these things will be sent by email.

“Get out of your comfort zone! I cannot stress it enough. It is going to be the best year of your life.”

Eugenie Valentin
European Studies (Combined Languages)
Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna
Your time abroad is an integral part of your degree. Because of this, you are expected to attend classes and obtain credits and marks.

If you have any questions after reading this information, please contact your Kent Academic co-ordinator or the Erasmus Team in International Partnerships.

All Erasmus+ students must fill in a Learning Agreement and keep it updated throughout the study placement. The Learning Agreement is an obligatory academic contract between you, Kent and your host university. The European Commission requires all Erasmus+ students to get their Learning Agreement signed by both universities before the start of the study placement and to keep it up-to-date in order to be eligible for the Erasmus+ grant.

Choosing courses
You should meet with your Academic Co-ordinator to discuss a provisional study programme and prepare your Learning Agreement in the Spring or Summer Term. A list of academic co-ordinators will be sent to you by email.

Before you go to see your co-ordinator, get as much course information as you can from your host university’s website/documentation or from the reference Learning Agreements in International Partnerships. Your co-ordinator at Kent will advise you about specific course requirements. Please note that many universities publish their course information much later than at Kent. In some cases, particularly in Spain and Italy, courses may not be finalised until shortly before the start of the academic year!

Therefore, the Learning Agreement is provisional until arrival when you will be able to make changes.

Credits
You should choose courses worth 30 ECTS per semester (60 ECTS in total). A few universities have agreed with us a different total number of ECTS which your co-ordinator will discuss with you. If, at any stage, you think it will not be possible to get 30 ECTS in total, please notify the co-ordinator and the Erasmus Team.

1 ECTS is equivalent to 2 Kent credits; so 30 ECTS is equivalent to 60 Kent credits, the normal workload for a term.

Completing a Learning Agreement
When you have chosen your courses, write them on your Learning Agreement and get it signed by your Academic Co-ordinator. It is easiest to do this before you leave Kent. Students who will split the year between two placements should prepare two Learning Agreements.

When it has been signed by the Kent co-ordinator, send it to the host university for signature, keeping a copy for yourself. Please ask them to return the signed Agreement to you. You should then give us an electronic or paper copy. You will take the original with you to the host. This is essential in order for you to get the Erasmus grant. If there is any delay/difficulty, please notify the Erasmus Team, erasmus@kent.ac.uk.

If your host university expects you to fill in their version of the Learning Agreement, that will be fine. It is not obligatory to fill in the Kent version as well. The important things are that you have a complete, correct, signed Learning Agreement and that the Erasmus Team has a copy of it.

Changing courses
On arrival you may find that your agreed courses are no longer available or clash with other modules. If you find yourself in this situation, you should follow the host university’s procedures for choosing new courses. (In many cases, the partner university allows several weeks for students to attend lots of different courses before deciding which ones they want to register for!)

When you have decided, contact the Academic Co-ordinators for approval. Make sure that you amend your course registration – following the host university’s procedures – and then update your Learning Agreement. Fill in the ‘During the mobility’ section of your Learning Agreement, get it signed by your host co-ordinator and then return it by email or post to Kent. You should repeat this process if you make changes later in the year.

Course registration
Although the Learning Agreement is an obligatory requirement for Erasmus, it may not complete your course registration. You must complete the host university’s process as well and register your modules with them.

You may find that the host university registers you not simply to a module but to a particular class and tutor as well. If you attend the right class but with the wrong tutor or do not register your modules correctly, it may be impossible to get your marks at the end of the year.

“The year abroad experience is very challenging but at the same time fulfilling. Each obstacle served to strengthen me as an individual. I learnt a lot about myself, I developed academically and even more so personally.”

Tiffani Jeffrey
Politics and International Relations (French), IEP de Paris
Academic stresses

The beginning of the time abroad can be stressful and it takes time to adapt to the new lifestyle and academic differences. Some find that their first marks are not what they have been used to or that they are struggling to adjust to the new system. This is a normal part of the study abroad experience and usually students find that the marks improve in the second semester when they are feeling much more settled and confident.

If you find yourself in this situation, don’t worry! If you have specific concerns, contact your course tutor or Academic Co-ordinator at the partner university for advice. Try to get to know other students in your class: they may be able to help you with notes and understanding the local systems. If you are very concerned about marks or settling in, notify your Academic Co-ordinator and the Erasmus Team at Kent.

Disruption of studies

Do your best to undertake all the classes and assessment in order to achieve the required marks and credits. If your work/exams are adversely affected by strikes, ill health etc, it is essential that you notify your Academic Co-ordinator and the Erasmus Team at Kent as soon as possible. In case of prolonged or serious illness, please ensure that you get a medical certificate from the doctor/hospital because it will be needed by your host university and by Kent.

Marks and transcripts

Before you leave the host university, check that you have completed the necessary procedures to obtain your marks. You should follow their procedures very carefully and submit any required documentation (eg Scheine or Libretto). You must also request a transcript before your departure. Bear in mind that it is much easier to sort this out while you are still at the partner university!

Students in Italy may be given a ‘Libretto’ which must be presented at the Erasmus Office at the host university at the end of the stay/exams so that a Transcript of Marks can be issued. The completed Libretto may be returned to you, in which case you should bring it to the Erasmus Team at Kent at the start of your final year. Students in Germany must prepare any required ‘Referat’ or ‘Klausur’, in order to obtain a ‘Leistungsschein’ or ‘benoteter Schein’ for each course. However, increasing numbers of universities are producing an ECTS transcript rather than issuing Scheine. Students at Lausanne should request their marks from each tutor.

Submitting your transcript

It is your responsibility to ensure that the Erasmus Team at Kent has received your transcript by Week 2 of your final year, whether from you or your host university. Check that all courses attended and the marks and credits attached to them are recorded on the transcript. The transcript should include the grade normally awarded by the local institution, the equivalent ECTS grades and the ECTS credits.

If you think a mark is wrong or a course is missing, you must contact the relevant office at your partner university to request an amended transcript. You must notify the Erasmus Team at Kent about this.

Qualifications

In specific cases, where this has been previously agreed between Kent and certain partner institutions, some students may be awarded a qualification from that university on successful completion of the examinations. The Erasmus Team will inform you if this is applicable to you.

Important note about failing courses

If you find that you have failed exams or other assessment, please notify your Academic Co-ordinator at Kent and, if possible, re-sit the exam.

Please note that failing to complete all the work/assessment could result in a Fail mark for your Year/Term Abroad, unless there are grounds for a concessions case. Students who do not achieve the required credits and marks without an adequate reason risk failing the Year/Term Abroad and having to repay the Erasmus+ grant.

“The teaching was great, with a remarkable competence for the English Language. As were the facilities, seminars and lectures and all people concerned with my learning around campus. (...)

A wonderful experience that I would strongly recommend, have met some extraordinary people and had a great time living in a foreign city.”

Eliot McGowan
Classics and Archaeological Studies
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
It's the best experience I've ever had so far and it's only getting better. Language skills have improved a lot and learning how to adapt in any given environment. It's the best way to grow as a person.

It's transformed me into a brave person and has given me a lot of confidence.

Michalea Antoniou
French and Spanish
Université d’Avignon et des Pays de Vaucluse
ASSISTANTSHIPS AND OTHER WORK PLACEMENTS

Working abroad is an exciting and challenging opportunity, providing an insight into potential careers and a chance to make useful contacts.

Assistantships
Assistantships will find that most information will come from the British Council and from interviews or meetings held before the start of the year. It is highly recommended that you visit the Council’s website as soon as possible for information on practicalities as well as reports from previous assistants:
• www.britishcouncil.org/language-assistants/become
• Essential teaching advice, downloadable materials and a web forum are available at: www.teachingenglish.org.uk

If you have not already done so, speak to assistants who have come back from the year abroad. They will often be very willing to pass on advice or helpful information or just have a chat about the year. Questionnaires completed by previous assistants are available in International Partnerships.

As soon as you are sent your school or local authority’s contact details, contact them. The British Council website has advice on how to do this. Make sure that you are aware of, and arrive in time for, any orientation meetings given by the local or national assistantship organisation. These meetings can be not only a helpful source of information, but also an opportunity to meet other assistants in your region.

Work placements
If you are undertaking a work placement, you must get approval from your Kent School and a contract/internship agreement signed by your employer. If you do not already have a signed contract, please contact the Erasmus Team urgently.

You should contact your employer for information about the work involved and documents you may need. Find out as much as you can about your job, the local area and the company you will be working for, before you go.

Make sure you know:
• What is expected of you (eg tasks, responsibilities, confidentiality, behaviour and dress)
• What your hours of work will be and your holiday entitlement
• Will the company help you to find accommodation?
• What salary are they offering you, if any, and when will it be paid?
• Will you be expected to pay taxes or social security payments?
• Will the company’s insurance cover you at work?

Contact the Careers and Employability Service and your School’s Placement Officer for more advice.

Essential documents
All students undertaking a work placement or assistantship which is eligible for Erasmus+ must complete an Erasmus Learning Agreement for Work. This is a contract between you, Kent and the school/employer and is an essential requirement of your grant. The Erasmus Team will send you a blank copy by email during the summer. You and your school/employer must sign the Learning Agreement for Work before the placement starts. If it is impossible to do this, you must notify the Erasmus Team to avoid jeopardising your Erasmus grant.

All Erasmus+ students on work placements/assistantships will have to get a Training Certificate filled in and signed by the employer at the end of the placement to confirm that it was successfully completed.

Work requirements
All students are expected to fulfil the terms of their contract and submit the work set by Kent. You will be given details of any required academic work, usually an essay or project, by your School’s Placement Officer.

Problems during the placement
If you have any difficulties or queries during the time abroad which affect your ability to do your job, you must speak to the staff member responsible for your placement at the school/company. The British Council’s website also gives advice on personal safety and the recommended process for problem solving.

If you do not feel able to speak the staff member responsible for your placement, try speaking to another colleague who you trust. Alternatively, assistants can contact the local assistantship office. The Erasmus Team and your School’s Placement Officer are also available to offer advice and support.

In the case of prolonged illness, you should obtain a medical certificate from the doctor/hospital concerned (See also page 18). You should also notify the Erasmus Team and your academic co-ordinator or Placement Officer at Kent.

“...My only advice would be to enjoy every second because it goes by in a flash. Homesickness was something that I worried about before I arrived, but apart from my first day here I have felt so at home and comfortable in Poitiers. Take every opportunity that comes your way and try to visit as many places as possible. As an assistant, you get the school holidays which is great! Make the most of the free time and travel. There will always be someone around to help you if you are unsure of anything - don’t be afraid to ask! Have fun!”

Maria Perry
French and History
British Council Assistant
ATTENDING TWO PLACEMENTS

If you split the year between two placements, remember to keep track of any preparation you need to do for the second placement during the first semester. If your first placement is coming to an end and you have not heard from the second placement for a while, please contact them directly and let the Erasmus Team know if you have any concerns.

If you will be studying at a (different) university in the second semester, make sure that you follow any instructions they give for pre-registration, arrival etc.

Many universities offer language courses or orientation programmes just before or during the second semester so make sure you take these into consideration when planning your arrival.

Documentation
Don't forget to return all the necessary documentation to the Erasmus Team for both placements. The Departure and Arrival certificates are particularly important but it is easy to forget them in the rush of moving between placements. Make sure that you let the Erasmus Team know your new address as soon as possible after arrival.

Work requirements
Make sure that you know the work requirements for each placement, particularly if you will split the year between a university placement and a work placement. The Work Requirements information will be published on Moodle or given to you by your School’s placement officer.

Term dates and exams
Although every effort has been made to avoid a term date clash in the case of two university placements, you may find that the start of your second placement starts before the first placement’s exams have finished. If this is the case, find out if your tutors would be willing to set you an alternative assessment or allow you to sit the exams earlier. This is unfortunately not guaranteed as it is dependent on the host university’s regulations and the goodwill of your tutors.

If it is not possible, you must then contact the second semester placement to find out if you can postpone your arrival for a few days in order to complete your exams. Notify your Academic Co-ordinator and the Erasmus Team at Kent if neither option is viable.

Remember…
Allow yourself time to adjust to the new placement because you may experience culture shock again! Ask local staff and students if you’re not sure what to do and don’t hesitate to contact the Erasmus Team if you have any concerns/problems.

“It’s a great opportunity and a lot of fun. The city is a beautiful place and the people are welcoming and slightly crazy (but in a good, fun way). I highly recommend doing a year abroad here!”

Charles Hall
Biomedical Science, Bogaziçi University
You can also get in touch on facebook: UniversityofKentStudyAbroad.

Important note about voting
British citizens can apply to vote in UK elections by post or proxy for one particular election or for a fixed time (eg one year). Voting by proxy means that you will assign someone at home the task of voting on your behalf in an election. Voting by post means that approximately 10 days before the election a voting pack will be sent to your address abroad with detailed instructions. In order to vote in this way, you must contact your local council as soon as possible.

Information and forms
We have nominated all those undertaking a study placement to the appropriate partner university/ies. You should expect to hear from them about registration and other matters by email or post in the next couple of months.

Assistants will receive instructions from the British Council, and possibly the local authority/school. It is really important to contact your school as soon as you receive the details. Those on work placements should check with their employer about forms that may be required in addition to the work placement contract.

It is essential that you meet any deadlines given so that you do not jeopardise your placement.

"So far it has been a unique and mind-opening experience as it has allowed me to meet many people from all over Europe, which has given me much insight into cultural differences. I have also partaken in activities I would usually not do such as visiting museums with friends and travelling around the city taking in the sights and sounds whilst adapting to a new culture."

Ryan Earnshaw
European Studies with Spanish
Universidad Carlos III Madrid
ACCOMMODATION

Study placements
Some universities provide accommodation and will send information or links by email. Universities without their own residences may offer help in finding private accommodation. Remember most universities have limited accommodation and allocate rooms on a ‘First come, first served’ basis; it is therefore crucial that any forms/financial requirements are completed correctly and returned well within the deadline. Some universities may charge a non-refundable deposit to cover administrative costs for the housing service.

Students who are allocated a room should read any information or contract very carefully. Deposits must be paid on time and the contract signed and returned as required. In some cases, students must obtain a certain type of insurance before they can collect their room key. Details will be given by the relevant residence office. Take careful note of any regulations and be prepared to follow them. Some regulations may be strict but these should be respected out of consideration for others.

Please note: Accommodation situations may vary from year to year. A university that could offer accommodation in previous years may be unable to do so due to an unexpected problem. In this situation, the Erasmus Team at Kent will do everything possible to get university accommodation for those concerned; however, students should be prepared to look for private accommodation.

Work placements
If you are doing an assistantship or work placement, the onus is on you to find accommodation. It is a good idea to research the town where you will be working and ask your school/employer for advice. Some students like to go out to the placement early with family so that they can visit possible rooms.

If you will be an assistant, it is worth attending any introductory briefing/training in your area as many students have found flat mates among the other local assistants. Others have been offered accommodation by a member of staff either permanently or short-term while they looked for permanent accommodation. In a few cases, students have been offered accommodation which is owned by the School or employer but this cannot be guaranteed.

Finding private accommodation
Contact the Erasmus Team of Kent and the local Erasmus Office, school or employer for help with finding private accommodation. Some may be able to help more than others. The student questionnaires are highly recommended: many offer advice on flat hunting techniques, good sources of information and occasionally give a landlord’s address.

Important advice:
• Find out about the safe/unsafe areas of the town before starting your search
• Avoid visiting flats/rooms on your own: take a friend as security and an extra pair of eyes to spot problem areas. If this is impossible, leave the address, your mobile number and expected return time with a friend
• Be careful what personal details you give in adverts or to potential flatmates
• Arrange meetings in a public place
• Be businesslike and confident
• Find out who might have access to the accommodation (landlord, landlord’s agent, etc)
• Read the contract carefully and if you have any concerns ask a native-speaker to check it on your behalf before signing.

Warning
Unfortunately, scams are increasingly frequent even on social media sites for exchange students. Make sure that the properties advertised do exist before you pay any money towards renting them.

Living in France
A lot of French landlords require tenants to have a French guarantor.

All those resident in private accommodation in France will be required to pay the Taxe d’Habitation. Please be aware that you may not receive the payment demand until your final year. You may be eligible for a rent rebate (the Aide au Logement) through the CAF (www.caf.fr).

“I can honestly say I’ve never been as genuinely content with life as I have been for the past few months.”

Ola Grabowska
European Studies (Combined Languages)
Université d’Avignon et des Pays de Vaucluse
TRAVEL

You may wish to consider travelling with other Kent students as this can often make the process of arriving at your placement much less daunting. Although you may be the only student going from your school, there may be other students travelling out to the same city or region. The Erasmus Team can help you contact them. The student questionnaires contain many useful travel recommendations.

STA Travel is a travel agent specialising in student travel, which has a branch in Canterbury (www.statravel.co.uk, E: usstatcanterbury@statravel.co.uk, T: 01227 504202).

By air
The many cheap flights offered make flying a popular option for getting to placements. However, you will be limited as to the amount of baggage you can take with you. If possible, ask a friend or family member to travel with you so that you can use their allowance. Make sure you know the current hand luggage allowances and restrictions.

By coach
Eurolines (part of National Express Coaches) run coaches from Victoria coach station to over 250 destinations in Europe. 26s and under can get discounted tickets but even the full fare is relatively inexpensive. You may find this a cheap way of travelling home after your initial journey. Reservations can be made through any Eurolines agent or National Express office (www.eurolines.co.uk, T: 08717 818177).

By train
Eurostar (www.eurostar.com) offers special cut-rate tickets to students under 26 to Paris, Brussels, and Lille. A return ticket is valid for 60 days but the date and time of return must be booked at the same time as the outward journey.

Taking a car
Be aware of different regulations and requirements in your host country. The AA (www.theaa.com) and the RAC (www.rac.co.uk) offer help and guidelines for driving abroad to their members. For information about taking a car abroad, including driving licence and vehicle licence enquiries contact the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency).

The Association of British Insurers (www.abi.org.uk click on the Information zone link) offers information and advice about motor insurance.

It is advisable to check about parking arrangements at your university residence or in the local city/town. Residences may not have any designated parking and municipal parking charges can be high.

Safety when travelling
The following tips will help you to have a safe journey:
• Always keep your passport, money and valuables secure, in a hidden money belt for example, but make sure that you can access the things you will need during the journey easily
• Act confidently and be aware of what is happening around you
• Plan your journey in advance so you do not have to refer frequently to a map/guidebook, which could mark you out as a stranger
• Make sure your luggage close to you at all times so that it cannot be tampered with or stolen
• Act confidently and be aware of what is happening around you
• Keep your luggage close to you at all times so that it cannot be tampered with or stolen
• Act confidently and be aware of what is happening around you
• Have some spare cash with you in case you need/want to take a taxi to your accommodation.

“It was one of the best decisions I made to go abroad and especially to Istanbul, so enjoy your time!”

Julia Dourish
Classics and Archaeological Studies
Bogazici Universitesi
ARRIVAL

At your accommodation
Make sure you inform the office responsible for your residence or your landlord of your proposed arrival date and an approximate arrival time. Don’t arrive after office hours or during a weekend/local public holiday, unless you have been told that you may do so. Remember that your journey could be delayed. Find out in advance what you should do if you are late and be prepared to organise a hostel/hotel room for the first night(s).

If you are looking for private accommodation, the earlier you can arrive, the more choice you will have. If necessary, book into a hostel/hotel for the first few nights. Assistants may be able to arrange temporary accommodation through their school.

Hostelling International may be of use, www.hihostels.com

At your university/placement
Make sure that the relevant office (host university, local assistantship organisation/school, or employer) is aware of your arrival date and that you know what to do on arrival. If in doubt, contact them at least a week before your departure or ask the Erasmus Team at Kent for help.

University
Contact the International Relations/Erasmus Office on arrival to sort out your registration. Arrange an appointment with your Academic Co-ordinator as soon as possible after arrival to introduce yourself and update your Learning Agreement if necessary. They can offer assistance with module choices and general problems. If you have problems during the year, it is very important that you make the Academic Co-ordinator and the International Relations/Erasmus Office aware of this.

Attend any orientation programmes which are arranged at the start of the year for exchange students: you may be given help with registration/module choices, and will have a chance to make friends and start finding your way around. Many are free of charge but places may be limited. Some universities run a student mentoring scheme, which may involve assistance with registration. The Tandem language learning scheme is also offered by some universities and is a great way to improve language skills.

Assistants
Make sure you are aware of, and arrive in time for, any meetings given by the local assistantship organisation/school. Not only will they give useful information but you will have an opportunity to meet other local assistants and may be given help with finding accommodation.

Work placements
Discuss your arrival arrangements with your employer.

In your area
Find out in advance whether you need to register with the local council or police. You may need to make an appointment or queue up at the relevant office. Make sure that you have all the required documentation and photocopies with you. This might include your passport, student card, proof of financial support (eg your student loan document or a letter from your parents), and accommodation contract.

“...so far my year abroad has honestly been one of the best years of my life! Once you overcome the scary parts at the beginning, everything gets a lot easier. You feel proud of everything you’ve been able to do for yourself in a foreign country where everything works differently. I’ve met some lovely people that I will never forget and had some amazing experiences here. Make the most of it because it goes so fast and not everybody gets the opportunity to do something like this.”

Jennifer Richards
French, Montpellier
FINANCIAL MATTERS

With careful preparation and budgeting, it is possible to pay for essential expenses and still enjoy nights out and weekends away.

Be prepared for initial expenses for travel and accommodation, particularly if the academic year will start before your loan is due to be paid. In some cases, there may be a higher cost of living but other exchange students are usually a good source of information about the best supermarkets, cheap cinema tickets and rail/bus passes. The student questionnaires also give some very useful information on these matters.

www.kent.ac.uk/goabroad/cost.html

The following information is correct at the time of going to press.

Erasmus+ Grant

If you will be participating in an Erasmus+ study or work placement (see Appendix), you may be eligible to receive an Erasmus+ grant.

The grant is a top-up for your normal source of funding which is paid by the European Commission through the University. It is designed to help you make the most of your time abroad but is not enough to live on by itself.

The grant rate is currently set by the National Agency according to the type of placement, host country and duration of the placement. It is not means-tested. Please note that we cannot guarantee how much the grant will be. When you plan your budget, treat the grant as a bonus rather than the main funding.

All or part of the grant will have to be repaid to Kent if you do not complete the placement.

How do I get it?

There are no specific application procedures. The Erasmus Team identifies eligible students and will contact them about the necessary forms. Eligibility criteria are given in the appendix.

Students will be asked to provide their bank details so that the grant can be paid directly to them.

Please note that we cannot pay the first allocation of your grant until these Erasmus documents are signed and returned:
- Grant Agreement
- Arrival Certificate
- Bank form
- Learning Agreement

When is it paid?

If you are eligible for an Erasmus+ grant, 70% of the estimated total grant will be paid to you as soon as possible after the start of your placement, providing that you have submitted the required documents promptly and have given your correct bank details. Please note that we cannot start grant payments to students until the Erasmus+ funding has been paid to Kent by the National Agency.

Make sure you will have enough to live on without the grant so that you will not be in difficulties if the grant payment is delayed or smaller than you expected.

Tuition fees

Undergraduate students will pay a reduced tuition fee to Kent if they will spend a full year abroad. The fee is expected to be 15% of the normal fee (£1,350). This fee is expected to be the same for students who normally pay overseas rate fees.

Undergraduate students will pay the normal tuition fees to Kent if they will spend one term abroad.

Postgraduate students will pay the normal tuition fees to Kent for a year or term abroad.

Tuition fees are not payable to any of the host institutions.

German universities charge a small semester fee which often provide benefits through student discounts and public transport passes.

Student loans

If you are eligible for funding through Student Finance, it is essential that you notify them that you will study or work abroad. This is particularly important if you have recently changed from a 3 year to 4 year degree programme. You should contact them directly about this as soon as possible.

Download your Study Abroad form from the Student Finance website, and bring/send it to the Erasmus Team for completion.

This should ensure that you get your funding at the right time. It may also be possible for students whose semester starts in August to receive the funding a bit earlier but this is not guaranteed.

Failure to notify Student Finance could result in your funding being delayed or in Student Finance not arranging funding for your final year.

Emergency funding

If your Student Finance funding is significantly delayed or you need additional support after taking out your full entitlement, you may be eligible for emergency funding through Kent: www.kent.ac.uk/finance-student/funding/emergency.html

Erasmus+ support for Special Needs

Erasmus+ offers some additional financial support for students ‘who wish to take part in Erasmus+ and might be prevented from doing so because they have special needs incurring additional costs’. If you think this is appropriate for you, please contact the Erasmus Team.

The Erasmus Team has been informed that DSA funding may be reduced for Erasmus+ because of the possibility of this additional Erasmus+ funding. Students who normally receive DSA funding should check with the funding provider about this.

Benefit entitlements

If you are receiving any form of benefit, inform the department responsible that you will study or work abroad for a year/term and ask them how this will affect you. If you need a status letters to confirm that your time abroad is an official part of your degree email statusletters@kent.ac.uk.

Cash and bank accounts abroad

Your bank

Inform your bank that you will be spending the next academic year abroad. Failing to do this could result in your card being stopped: the bank might assume that your card is being used fraudulently!

The bank will be able to advise you on managing your finances. Exchange rate inequalities and bank/card fees (often surprisingly high) make it essential to manage your money in the most effective way possible. If using internet banking, make sure the necessary security precautions are in place.

Local banks

Whether, and when, to open a bank account abroad depends very much on individual circumstances. Check the student questionnaires for recommendations and speak to students on arrival for advice on the most ‘student-friendly’ banks.

When opening an account, remember to take proof of identification and, if applicable, university registration. You may also be required to pay some money in immediately. Please note that in many European countries it is illegal to have an overdraft.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF
Immediate costs
You will need a fair amount of easily available funds during the first few weeks of your stay, to pay at least the first month’s rent, plus a deposit, and for food and travel expenses. However, it is never sensible to carry large amounts of cash (see paragraphs below).

Money
If you plan to use your debit/credit card abroad or make transfers, find out what the charges will be. Make sure that your cards are widely accepted in your host country.

Pre-paid travel currency cards or cash passports may be of use. They can be used to make purchases and withdraw cash like a debit card. Tracking transactions and balances can be done online, by text or phone. There may be a fee for withdrawing cash or for purchasing the card so it is worth shopping around. As the travel cards are not linked to your bank account, there is less risk in case of loss or theft than with a debit or credit card and the travel cards can be cancelled and replaced.

Pre-paid cards can be purchased from various places, including Thomas Cook and the Post Office:

www.thomascookmoney.com/cash-passport
www.postoffice.co.uk/travel-money/card

Employment
If financial problems cause you to consider working to supplement your income, the following information should be useful. However, you must bear in mind the exigencies of your study programme when deciding how many hours per week you can work.

Within EU law, all residents of the EU have the right to seek employment in member countries, and do not require a work permit to do so. The only conditions that apply to this law are that you are in possession of a full British or other EU Passport and that you are not a Commonwealth citizen who has right of abode in the UK.

Teaching English privately is a good way to earn money; there is almost always a demand for native speakers to give lessons in English (see note below on safety). Do not be afraid to ask for the going rate. It is not advisable to undercut other people. Hotel and Catering work is another option and English speakers are often considered an asset, particularly in tourist areas.

Safety when looking for employment
The following points are aimed at helping you to find a suitable job safely:
- Speak to friends or colleagues who may be able to put you in touch with potential clients for language tutoring
- If advertising, be very careful about the kind of advert you write: ask a native speaker to advise you on the wording and do not give your home address
- Arrange to meet potential students/employers in a public place NOT your/their home
- Take someone with you or give the meeting location/time and contact’s name to a friend
- Dress smartly and behave in a businesslike way
- Keep the conversation off personal/social topics
- If you feel at all uncomfortable, excuse yourself politely and leave.

The majority of people are genuine but there have been some problems reported. This is not meant to put you off: it is simply to say that it is important to be vigilant.

Extra-curricular internships
You are welcome to find an extra-curricular internship as long as it does not adversely affect your official placement. Please note that such placements are a private matter and the University of Kent cannot sign an internship agreement or convention for a private internship which runs concurrently with your official study or work placement.

“Brilliant and invaluable experience; [I] would recommend it to all. Really good life learning, a great time to have fun, widen your perspective and outlook.”

Seema Aggarwal
European Legal Studies, Charles University Prague
INSURANCE

Insurance is an essential part of your preparation. It is always better to have insurance and not need it, than to not have it and get into difficulties!

European Health Insurance Card

All eligible students should obtain the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or equivalent from their home country (UK nationals and those with UK residency, EU and EEA nationals). The EHIC provides medical cover in other EU/EEA countries or Switzerland for short periods. If you are not a UK national, apply to the issuing body in your home country. The EHIC will almost certainly be a pre-requisite for university or police registration. Take several copies of the card and keep one with the original (it will be required if you need medical treatment).

The EHIC covers you for any state-provided treatment during the course of your stay including the treatment of chronic diseases and pre-existing illnesses. The state provision of medical treatment varies from country to country. Private treatment is not covered. This might include a journey by ambulance, dental/optical treatment, or repatriation costs. For more information and to apply, go to: www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/EHIC/Pages/about-the-ehic.aspx

Important note about Spain

If you need treatment at a hospital or medical centre, make sure that you go, or are taken to, one which is public/state-run. Private hospitals may not accept the EHIC and will have much higher charges than a public hospital.

Personal liability insurance

Some universities (particularly in France) require students to take out personal liability insurance, sometimes offering a policy which can be taken out on arrival. In addition, some French residences require students to take out a ‘multi-risques’ cover for their room before they can move in. Check with the host university if the Kent insurance policy is accepted. If it isn’t, allow plenty of time to buy the required insurance on arrival before you move in. It is usually inexpensive.

Note for students on assistantships and work placements

As well as getting the EHIC and Kent insurance, ask the British Council, local assistantship office or your employer if you will be entitled to local social security and accident cover.

Please note different countries have differing regulations on insurance provision for work placement trainees, and these should be checked well in advance of travel, to ensure that you understand and are satisfied with their arrangements regarding accident and liability insurance while you are commuting, at work or travelling for the employer.

Year Abroad Students Travel and Personal Accident Insurance

All students who do an official study/work placement as part of their degree, are required to register for the free travel and personal accident insurance which is arranged by the University of Kent with a leading travel insurer currently Chubb Insurance.

How do I register for insurance cover?

For cover to apply you need to complete the online travel notification form no later than 10 working days before you leave – www.kent.ac.uk/finance-staff/services/insurance/forms/student-travel.html

This insurance will commence when you travel to the airport and will remain in force for the period of your stay overseas until you finally return home. Please read the ‘incidental holidays’ note below.

University insurance covers a wide range of benefits and provides extremely generous insured sums compared with other stand-alone travel insurance policies. Here are just a few key insured benefits available to you:

• Unlimited emergency medical and dental treatment costs, including repatriation back to the UK, or your normal place of residence
• Up to £10,000 all risks cover for accidental loss or damage to personal possessions such as a laptop or mobile phone, but subject to a single item limit of £3,000
• Up to £10,000 for cancellation, curtailment or rearrangement of a planned journey caused by unforeseen circumstances which arise after you register for insurance cover.

Further information about your insurance cover is available from the Travel Insurance webpage – www.kent.ac.uk/finance-staff/services/insurance/travel/undergraduate/indexstudentsUG.html

How do I make an insurance claim?

In the event that you suffer a loss while overseas, all insurer validated claims will be paid subject to an insurance policy excess of £100. Information about how to claim is available at – www.kent.ac.uk/finance-staff/services/insurance/travel/undergraduate/indexstudentsUG.html?tab=claiming

Incidental holidays

Please note insurance cover also applies for incidental holidays taken within your host country. Cover can also apply for holidays taken away from your host country during midterm vacation breaks, but you must disclose these upfront when first registering online for insurance purposes or by confirming the holiday destinations and travel dates by email to the Insurance Office – Insurance@kent.ac.uk for cover to be agreed.

If for any reason the period of holiday exceeds the overall period of study in your designated year abroad country, you will have to arrange separate insurance for the extended holiday only travel.

Evidence of cover

When you submit your details online please print the confirmation page as proof of registration for University travel insurance. You should also download evidence of insurance cover from one of the links available on the confirmation webpage.

Retain printed and electronic copies of your cover information so you know exactly what to do in the event of an emergency.

Illness and injury

If you suffer from illness or injury while overseas, you must call Chubb Assistance Helpline +44 (0)207 895 3364 for immediate help and advice, or alternatively email medicalassistance@chubb.com. Further guidance about what to do in an emergency is available in the cover information document.

Health and risk assessments

It is most important that you read and comply with the University’s Travelling and Working Overseas Performance Standard. You will be asked to fill in the Overseas Travel health questionnaire by the Erasmus+ team.

Further information please visit the Occupational Health webpage – www.kent.ac.uk/safety/oh/help/travelinfo/overseas-travel-health-ass.html and ensure health and risk assessments are carried out before registering for University travel and personal accident insurance.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Finally, before embarking on any overseas journey, please read information available from the UK Government Foreign and Commonwealth Office – www.fco.gov.uk.
HEALTH AND WELFARE

The period after arrival abroad can be disorientating as you adjust to a different culture.

Home sickness and the difficulty making yourself understood, or understanding others, can make small difficulties seem much worse! Many students get anxious or stressed in their first few weeks which can occasionally result in feelings of depression or loneliness.

Fortunately, these feelings do not usually persist, and the long term results are often closer friendships with other students and an improved sense of your own capabilities. Past experience suggests that with time and a positive attitude the adventure just gets better and better. Most students are very sorry to leave.

Dealing with stress – Don’t suffer in silence

If you do find you are suffering from culture shock, anxiety or home sickness, talk to someone about it; you may well find that other students have similar feelings and you can help each other get through it. Remember to keep in contact with friends and family at home but don’t spend too much time doing this because it can make home sickness worse.

Don’t forget...
- Allow yourself time to settle in
- Make sure you eat and sleep well
- Get to know other students
- Take time to do things you enjoy
- Keep yourself busy

Don’t hesitate to contact the Erasmus Team at Kent. We are here to help and can empathise with the anxieties and problems facing all students who worked abroad ourselves! In addition to our Team, you can also get help from the local Erasmus/International Relations Office, your employer or a teacher at your school, or the local assistantship office.

Counselling support

Kent’s Student Wellbeing team (www.kent.ac.uk/studentwellbeing/) is also available to you while you are abroad if you feel you would benefit from this. They are happy to arrange free, confidential appointments by phone for Kent students who are abroad. You must be registered with a doctor in your host town to access this service.

Health questionnaires

You will be asked by the Erasmus Team to fill in an Overseas Travel Health Questionnaire as part of your preparation. If you declare a health condition/disability, you may also have to get a ‘Fitness to Travel’ certificate from the Medical Certificate. This procedure is obligatory but completely confidential.

Prescriptions

Make sure that you have supplies of any necessary prescription medicines before you leave. (You may need to check that your medicine is allowed in the host country.) It can also be useful to have a small first aid kit with the basics (eg aspirin, plasters, antiseptic cream, antihistamines…) for the start of the year. You may also want to stock up on your favourite toiletries!

Medical Facilities

It is not obligatory for you to register with a local doctor during your time abroad, but this is worth considering, particularly if you will be there for a year. It is recommended for those who have a pre-existing medical or mental health condition.

In some countries, patients can go directly to a hospital for treatment by a specialist rather than having to be referred by their GP. Many host universities have their own medical centres or clinics for students’ use, which could simply be access to a doctor or nurse or cover a whole range of services including clinics and psychologists. Assistants and those on work placements should contact their employer for advice about the local medical facilities.

Read the Health Advice for Travellers information online for more details about the health-care system in your host country. This website also says what is or is not covered by the EHIC card. www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/country guide/Pages/EEAcountries.aspx

Pre-existing conditions

If you have a pre-existing health condition – eg depression/severe anxiety, epilepsy, etc – it is very important that you meet with your doctor, specialist or Student Support (www.kent.ac.uk/studentsupport/) to discuss your plans. This will help you to work out any practical, psychological or medical support you might need there. Even if you do not currently need support or a prescription, it is worth discussing this in case your circumstances change while you are abroad. Having a back-up plan will mean that if something does happen, you will be prepared and it can be dealt with promptly.

We also strongly recommend that you notify the Erasmus Team as soon as possible, so that we can advise you appropriately and liaise with your host university/school/employer on your behalf (if this is necessary). All information is kept confidential.

You may wish to get a letter from your GP confirming details of your condition and current treatment in case you need further treatment or prescriptions while abroad. However, local doctors might decide to run their own tests before prescribing medication or treatment.

Disability support abroad

Although most host universities will have a disability support service, they may not offer exactly the same facilities or support that Kent offers. Many services are focused primarily on assisting students who have mobility, vision or hearing impairments, for example with accessible rooms, note-takers, etc.

‘Unseen’ disabilities and conditions like dyslexia or autism are not always covered by these services. In some cases, this is because local students get support through their own doctors or social services. In others, it seems to be because unseen disabilities do not yet have the prominence that they do in the UK.

Awareness and support is growing gradually, but it is important that students contact the Erasmus Team and Student Support early so that we can find out what support you need and what is offered at your placement.

“Don’t put pressure on yourself. Be free. It is the most incredible experience, embrace it. Embrace the differences between you and your new international friends. It’s OK to be homesick but try and get as stuck in as possible. Have fun”

Elizabeth Asher
German and Business Administration
University of Freiburg
PERSONAL SAFETY

The following information is aimed at helping you to make the most of your time abroad!

Many issues can be avoided simply by raising your awareness of the world around you and using your common sense.

In your community

Be aware of local norms of behaviour and clothing: what is acceptable in the UK may give the wrong impression in other countries. Blending in with local young people can help you to avoid attracting unwanted attention or causing offence. Good guidebooks may give some useful information about this.

It may sound cynical and unfriendly but don’t take strangers at face value: be cautious about accepting/offering invitations, lifts or unsolicited offers of help. Remember that some countries have more strict/formal social norms than the UK; for example, in some areas, inviting someone you have just met to your accommodation can give the wrong signals.

Young people in mainland Europe go out to enjoy themselves and have a few drinks, but do not in general drink in order to get drunk. If you become unwell on a night out, go home with a friend, if possible, or book a reputable taxi. Don’t accept a lift from someone you have just met. If a friend becomes incapacitated, help them to get home safely.

It is best to avoid areas where protests or demonstrations are taking place.

Getting around

Every town or city has areas which should be avoided: try to find out about this before or as soon as possible after arrival, particularly if looking for private accommodation. If you have to consult a map, it is better to do it sitting in a café than to advertise that you are unsure of your surroundings in the street.

Avoid poorly-lit, deserted or isolated areas or shortcuts.

Be aware that places or routes which are ok during the day may be less safe at night. If you’re going to a new place, try to arrive during the day time. When out late, try to avoid travelling alone and make sure you have a plan B for getting home just in case, eg details of a reputable taxi firm. On public transport, sit with other people, if possible, and move to be near the bus driver/train emergency alarm if you feel concerned. If you think you are being followed, go to a populated place where you can get help, so the person does not find out where you live.

Attitudes

You may come across attitudes to gender, race, ethics, religion or other issues which are different to those common in the UK, or might even be unacceptable here. Some countries are very liberal in their prevailing views, others are much more conservative, and this can sometimes lead to discomfort.

Bear in mind that something which gives offence may be due to a cultural misunderstanding rather than being intended to hurt or demean. This can also work the other way because it is easy to be inadvertently rude when you are still learning another culture’s norms, particularly in countries which are more formal than the UK. Personality differences can also be a factor: one person’s poor attitude may be due to their own bad manners, personal history or lack of empathy, instead of being a reflection on the wider community.

If however, you find that you are significantly affected by such an issue, please notify the Erasmus Team. We expect you to receive fair and equal treatment at your host university or place of work and for you to extend the same treatment to others.

Avoiding theft

Be on your guard and follow the same precautions as you would at home. Hold on tightly to your bag or sling it securely across your shoulder or in front of you, especially in a crowd. Keep your documents, phone and money on your person, rather than in a bag, which could be easily snatched.

Only take out large sums of money when absolutely necessary. Lock your room securely when you leave it. If you do get into difficulties, remember that your safety is more important than any possessions.

Keep your bank’s emergency numbers, a note of your card numbers (not your PIN) and photocopies of your insurance documents in safe places. Keep them separate from your purse/wallet in case of loss or theft.

In the event of crime or loss…

Report the loss/theft of any personal belongings/documents to the police immediately and get a police report. Notify your bank at once if your credit/bank cards are stolen or lost so that they can be stopped and replaced. If your passport or national ID card is stolen or lost, the police will write out a temporary form, and you should then obtain an emergency passport/ID at the nearest British Consulate or the Embassy/consulate of your home country. Please also contact the Insurance Office if you need to make a claim (see page 17).

If you find yourself without your passport, any access to cash, or in any other serious trouble, the Consulate will try to help.
KEEPING IN TOUCH

Once abroad, please keep in contact with us. We like to hear from you – don’t wait for a problem before you get in touch! An email from you will always get a response, albeit sometimes brief, and postcards are always appreciated. If you come to the University during the year, please visit the Erasmus Team and tell us how you are getting on.

We do our best to keep in touch and contact you about specific matters (most frequently by group email), but unless you contact us we assume that all is well. If you have not heard from us for a while and are concerned, please do not hesitate to contact us. You will find our contact details at the beginning of this guide.

Contact details

Please ensure that your home, term-time and emergency contact details are correct on your Student Record. You should list your contact details for your time abroad in the term-time section. Update your details during your time abroad if you move or change your phone number or email address.

This is very important because we and other University offices will need to contact you during your time abroad.

Using email

Please let us know if it is difficult for you to access email at least once a week. If you want us to contact you additionally at another email address let us know.

You can access your Kent email from abroad through the University’s web mail service or you can have your emails forwarded to another inbox. This can only be done on a PC at Kent. Contact the Student Helpdesk if you need assistance (see details below).

- T: + 44 (0)1227 824999
- E: helpdesk@kent.ac.uk
- www.kent.ac.uk/itservices

Important note:

If your inbox goes over quota, this will prevent you from receiving or sending emails. If you have problems with your Kent email address, contact the Student Helpdesk for assistance.

Phones

It is often worthwhile getting a local SIM card for internet and cheaper local phone calls.

Facebook and Skype

Get in touch with other students through the Study Abroad Facebook page: UniversityofKentStudyAbroad.

While Facebook and Skype are great ways to keep in touch with home, please be wary of using them too much. Focusing on what is happening at home can make home sickness worse and make it much harder to make friends in the new place.

The internet

You may find that access to PCs and/or the Internet is more limited at your host university than at Kent. There are often fewer PCs per student which can lead to queues and time limits for use. Students may not be expected to use IT as much as at Kent.

Some students recommend buying a dongle to improve internet access.

Most students find they can access the Internet at local Internet cafes or, occasionally, at some post offices/telecommunications outlets (for example Swisscom). Prices for access vary from place to place.

Staff visits

Kent staff visit some destinations each year to meet students and monitor progress. If someone will visit your city or a place near you, we or the academic will contact you about arrangements. If a visit is not possible, staff can still be contacted by email or phone and can often arrange skype conversations.

“Get involved, make the most of it, and don’t worry. It’s a lot easier to settle in than you might think.”

Mark Purrott
English and Spanish Law, University of Deusto
EMPLOYABILITY

Whatever your degree subject, it will be enriched by the experience of living, studying and/or working in another country. It will develop your language abilities and cultural awareness as well as more general skills, like adaptability and initiative, which employers look for.

Please note the following points before you leave Kent:

- UK employers need staff who have language skills and international experience. [Source: British Chamber of Commerce]
- Early preparation is vital. Now is the time to start thinking about what you want to do after you graduate – not the beginning of your very busy final year. Many popular employers will have closing dates during the Autumn Term: some (such as solicitors’ firms) even before the start of your final year. Don’t miss the boat!

A great opportunity to enhance your skills

In the course of your degree, you will have many opportunities to develop skills and attributes prized by employers (see examples below), through your studies and extracurricular activities, such as volunteering. Studying and working abroad enriches this, particularly in areas such as intercultural awareness, communication and perseverance.

Skills development

It is important to consider these things before you go abroad, so that you are able to get the best from it and can see your personal/skills development more clearly.

Study and work abroad can be intense, so it is often difficult to see changes in language or other skills day to day. Keeping a blog or journal to record your activities and then taking time out to review them can help you to see progress more clearly. It will also come in useful when you prepare your CV and job applications.

The following questions may help you to do this:

- How is my time abroad helping me to communicate more effectively with others?
- How is it developing my transferable skills and attributes?
- Am I working on some skills more than others?
- What am I learning about my own culture and view of the world, and those of the host country or other students?
- What have I learnt through dealing with challenges or difficulties?

Career planning

If you don’t yet know what you want to do or want to find out more about graduate opportunities in the UK or abroad, now is the time to do this. The Careers and Employability Service (CES) at Keynes College offers appointments with Careers advisers and has information about working abroad, career choices and preparing CVs and job applications.

This is a good starting point if you would like to return to your host country for work or postgraduate study. The CES can help you prepare so that you can make the most of your time abroad, carrying out careers research and making contacts.

The CES website (www.kent.ac.uk/ces) and the Prospects website (www.prospects.ac.uk) have useful information about all these things.

“...This is a fantastic way to improve your language skills and to discover more about work experience placements and job opportunities in future.”

Marina Ivanova
European Economics, Université de Grenoble 2
RETURNING TO KENT

Final year accommodation
If you will be away for the full academic year, you can find private accommodation through:
- www.studenttenant.com/kent
- www.homestampkent.co.uk/Accommodation
  (Canterbury)
The off-campus housing pages give a lot of useful information at: www.kent.ac.uk/accommodation
If you have medical or disability needs, you can apply for campus accommodation in the usual way.
If you are a Canterbury student and you will spend a term abroad, you will be able to apply for campus accommodation in mid-November.

Module registration
Module Registration for your final year will be online from March. It is very important that you register your module choices within Kent’s deadline. The Faculty Undergraduate Office or your School will contact you by email about this.

Registration
Students returning to Kent after their time abroad will be expected to register online. Check the Student Guide for details.

Transcripts and year abroad essays
Don’t forget to complete any end of year/semester procedures at your host university, for example handing in your Libretto or Scheine to the Erasmus/International Relations office. You should bring the original transcript to the Erasmus Team when you return to Kent. If you are expected to do a project/essay, submit completed work to your School via Moodle by the deadline.

Culture shock
Many students find the transition back to being at home can bring on culture shock. Having got used to the culture at the host, there’s a new time of adjustment. This can be unsettling and like an anti-climax, as you are expected to slot straight back into your UK life. Just remember to give yourself time to adjust again.

“Erasmus has encouraged me to learn for myself and not for a grade which is a teaching I shall keep with me for life. I have engaged much more with my course at Kent since returning from Prague.”
Roxana Willis
European Legal Studies, Charles University Prague
PROBLEM SOLVING AND EMERGENCIES

Basic advice

• Read all the information sent to you by Kent and the host university/British Council/employer and refer to it during the year
• If you are unable to access the internet, let the Erasmus Team know as soon as possible so that important messages can be sent to you by post
• If you are not receiving information from Kent or your host university that other students have received, contact the Erasmus Team.

Problems during the year

Speak to your contacts at the host in the first instance if you have administrative or academic problems. This could be the host university’s International Office and academic co-ordinator, the mentor at your school or your supervisor at your work placement. This is particularly important if you have problems with courses and exams. In the case of unexpected absences (e.g. due to illness or bereavement), make sure you notify your tutors or follow your school/employer’s procedures.

If you have a serious problem which the host cannot help with (or you feel unable to speak to the host yourself for some reason), please contact the Erasmus Team as soon as possible. Copy any relevant correspondence to erasmus@kent.ac.uk and keep the Team up-to-date with the situation.

In the event of a serious medical problem, please contact the Chubb emergency medical helpline (see page 17) and notify the Erasmus Team. Make sure that you obtain a doctor’s note. This may be needed for an insurance claim, your employer’s sickness absence policy or for a concession application at Kent. The Erasmus Team will provide advice and support, as appropriate, and can liaise with other Kent departments, for example the Insurance Office, or your host university/the British Council/your employer if necessary.

Important note

Please do not assume that staff will guess that you have a problem or worry! It is important to speak to the Erasmus Team and your mentor, supervisor, or exchange co-ordinator about it early. Many problems can be sorted out quickly once you have talked to staff.

Emergencies

In the event of a natural disaster, terrorist attack or other major incident, please follow the advice of the local authorities to keep yourself safe.

Please make sure that you inform your family, friends and the Erasmus Team that you are safe. The Erasmus Team will contact you to make sure you are ok and to offer support. We will monitor the situation, liaising with the Insurance Office, the University authorities and partner universities, and will advise you as appropriate.

The Wellbeing Team at Kent will also be available to offer counselling support if you are registered with a doctor in the host country.

If you have been directly affected, you can contact your home country’s embassy or consulate in the country for help and advice.

Consulates and Embassies

You can find details of British embassies and consulates overseas at: www.gov.uk/government/world

If you are not a UK national, you should contact the embassy/consulate of your home country.

British Consulates provide advice and support for British nationals experiencing serious problems overseas, for example emergency passports, help contacting family/friends if you need emergency funding, advice about local legal/medical support. If you are arrested for a serious offence, you should insist on the Consulate being informed. A consular officer will contact you to advise about local procedures and help notify relevant parties who could help you, but he/she will not bail you out of trouble!

“Although I am less than halfway through my year abroad, I would undoubtedly say that it has been one of the best experiences of my life. It isn’t something that is always easy but I have no doubt that I have matured and become more self-sufficient than ever before.”

Victoria-Anne Bulley
BA in Drama and English and American Literature
University of Porto
APPENDIX I
— Regulations

Please ensure that you are familiar with the following regulations.

In order to complete the year satisfactorily, you must:

1. Be aware of and comply with the regulations regarding marks.

2. Be resident in the approved place for the requisite period, as agreed with Kent and the host university, school or employer. Obviously short visits home are permissible. If a major personal difficulty seems to require a longer absence you must get in touch with the Erasmus Team and, if possible, receive confirmation of approval before acting.

3. Satisfy any requirements that go with your placement. Follow university courses seriously and take all exams wherever possible. Assistants and students on work placements are expected to carry out their duties conscientiously and to comply with all instructions given by the authorities in their school or their employer.

4. Conduct yourself, whether in a University, school or work placement, in a manner consistent with the norms of your Host University, school or employer and in a manner that will reflect creditably on the University of Kent.

5. Promptly notify the Erasmus Team of any serious problems during the time abroad, whether academic or otherwise, which are affecting or may affect your studies/work.

6. Do not leave behind you any debts or other liabilities.

7. Where applicable meet the member of staff from the University of Kent who may visit you during the course of the year.

8. Keep the Erasmus Team informed of your address and complete and return the forms sent to you.

9. Provide information on your placement for future students by means of a questionnaire sent by the Erasmus Team.

10. If dividing the year between two placements, transfer promptly to your second institution or work place.

11. Submit any work required of you by Kent by the due date.

12. Obtain a copy of the Transcript of your Examination marks from your Host University and pass it on to the Erasmus Team on your return to Kent or submit any required work within the deadline. This is your responsibility.

“It’s fantastic! Vienna is an amazing city and I am loving everything about the year abroad: the people, the work, the city, the travel opportunities, the chance to learn some more German. I would recommend this opportunity to everyone.”

Olivia Chambers
European Legal Studies, University of Vienna

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APPENDIX II
Erasmus+

What is Erasmus+?
Erasmus+ is the European Union programme which aims to increase ‘skills and employability through education, training youth and sport.’
Source European Commission
http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/index_en.htm

Part of the programme focuses on promoting and enabling student mobility within the eligible countries:

Programme countries within the EU
Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom

Programme countries outside the EU
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey

Students who undertake a study or work placement in an eligible country can receive an Erasmus grant (see page 15).

Erasmus+ study placements
The University of Kent has signed Erasmus+ exchange agreements with partner universities in many eligible countries. Partner universities agree to help Kent students with issues such as finding accommodation and academic/administrative support. Study placements must last a minimum of 3 months in order to be eligible for the Erasmus grant.

Erasmus+ work placements
If your work placement has been approved by the University of Kent, will take place in an eligible country and will last for a minimum of 2 months, you will be eligible for the Erasmus grant. British Council Language assistantships in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Spain are eligible for Erasmus+.

Non-Erasmus+ placements
Study and work placements, including assistantships, outside the eligible countries are not Erasmus placements so students will not receive the Erasmus grant. Host universities undertake to support students in the same way as Erasmus universities do.

Switzerland is not currently part of Erasmus+.

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)
The University has adopted ECTS in the context of our participation in the Erasmus+ programme and other European connections and activities.

ECTS was developed by the European Commission in order to provide common procedures to guarantee academic recognition of studies abroad. It provides a way of measuring and comparing learning achievements, and transferring them from one institution to another.

Students will receive full credit for all academic work successfully carried out at an ECTS partner institution and they will be able to transfer these academic credits from one participating institution to another on the basis of prior agreement on the content of study programmes abroad between students and the institutions involved.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/ects/ects_en.htm

CONTINUED OVERLEAF
APPENDIX III
– University of Kent contact details

Accommodation Office
T: +44 (0)1227 766660 (Direct line)
E: accomm@kent.ac.uk

Financial Aid Office
T: +44 (0)1227 823488 or 824876
E: FinancialAid@kent.ac.uk

International Partnerships (Erasmus Team)
T: +44 (0)1227 827818 or 824042
E: erasmus@kent.ac.uk
www.kent.ac.uk/goabroad

Medical Centre
T: +44 (0)1227 469333
www.umckent.co.uk

Student Income Office
T: +44 (0)1227 824242 or 823953
E: incomeoffice@kent.ac.uk
www.kent.ac.uk/finance

Student Records Office
(for lost ID cards, etc)
T: +44 (0)1227 824884
E: sturec@kent.ac.uk
www.kent.ac.uk/student-records/index.html

Student Support
(Support for disabilities and specific learning difficulties)
T: +44 (0)1227 823158
E: accessibility@kent.ac.uk
www.kent.ac.uk/studentsupport

Student Wellbeing
T: +44 (0)1227 823206
E: wellbeing@kent.ac.uk
www.kent.ac.uk/studentwellbeing

University Switchboard
+44 (0)1227 764000

For queries relating to your degree programme,
final year modules, concessions, etc,
please contact:

Faculty of Sciences
www.kent.ac.uk/stms

Computing
T: +44 (0)1227 827168
E: csplacements@kent.ac.uk or
computing@kent.ac.uk

Pharmacy
www.msp.ac.uk

Humanities and Social Sciences
Undergraduate Office
E: hsugo@kent.ac.uk
www.kent.ac.uk/humanities
www.kent.ac.uk/socsci

“Academically, the year abroad has been fantastic and I have really enjoyed both studying new things and learning a different approach to material I have studied at Kent. A fantastic experience which I would recommend to any student.”

Georgia Kelly
History and Philosophy of Art, Alma-Mater-Studiorum,
Università di Bologna
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Registry
University of Kent
Canterbury
Kent CT2 7NZ, UK
T: + 44 (0)1227 827818 or 824042
E: erasmus@kent.ac.uk

Student enquiry hours:
Monday-Friday
10.00-12.00 and 14.00-16.00

www.kent.ac.uk/goabroad