Promoting short-term mobility

Benefits of short-term mobility

As part of the University’s Internationalisation Strategy, Kent aims to offer as many of its students as possible the opportunity to have a documented experience of residence, study or work abroad at some point in their undergraduate or postgraduate degree. It is widely agreed that even short periods of mobility add to the student experience and can benefit academic and personal development and consequently enhance employability. In addition, short-term mobility can and should be used as an important tool in recruitment activities and as a way to differentiate a course at Kent from competitor institutions. Although new and different destinations year on year can be beneficial in creating a sense of variety, good practice in Schools has also shown that it can be equally effective to have at least one annual flagship’ trip with wide appeal. Short-term mobility is defined as a period of mobility of less than three months; this includes field trips and other study related trips. Typically, short-term mobility is used to enhance students’ personal understanding of the subject. International field trips give a different perspective of learning or research and provide a fascinating opportunity to study a specialised subject in contrasting environments. ‘Short-term mobility’ covers activities such as international field trips, conferences and summer schools.

Developing short-term mobility opportunities is particularly important within Schools who run programmes that do not currently allow longer term mobility, due for example to external accreditation requirements, or who have experienced a low take-up of term/year abroad options available.

Organisation of field trips

The organisation of field trips that are organised by a Kent School/Centre needs to address the following:

Nomination of Field trip Leader

A Fieldtrip Leader should be nominated who is responsible for ensuring that Kent procedures are followed (see section entitled ‘Kent procedures’ below).

Funding

If the field trip forms a compulsory component of a Kent module/programme, the complete cost of travel and accommodation will need to be covered by Kent. This will need to be done at School/Centre level. If the School is piloting the field trip, an application can be made for funding support from the Faculty Internationalisation Mobility Fund. If the fieldtrip is optional, a student can be asked for a contribution to cover the cost.

Faculty Internationalisation Mobility Funds

These funds are available at Faculty level to support strategic short-term, international mobility initiatives within Academic Schools/Centres. The funded activities should be beneficial to the School/Centre as a whole and should be in line with actions outlined in the individual School Plan. The School can submit an application to help cover part of the cost of a pilot field trip to test its
viability for a particular programme. The School would be required to find alternative funding options for subsequent years. The application must be approved by the Head of School. The decision on whether the application will be funded will be made by the Dean, Faculty Director of Internationalisation and the Faculty Administration Manager.

NB: Conference attendance or individual research-related activities are not normally covered by this type of fund.

**Further information on the Faculty Internationalisation Mobility Fund in the:**

- Faculty of Sciences
- Faculty of Humanities
- Faculty of Social Sciences

**Assessment**

In case of students’ authorised non attendance (due to sickness, child care issues etc) of a field trip to which an assessment is attached, alternative assessment needs to be arranged.

**Scheduling of mobility**

Students need to be advised of the timing of field trips with as much notice as possible in order to identify potential timetable conflicts.

**Inclusion of students from other modules/levels** – It may prove more cost effective to increase the number of students in a group taking part in the planned mobility. Schools therefore may consider including PG students to take part in field trips (at undergraduate level) and vice versa or opening up the trip to students on related modules of the same level.

**VISA issues for overseas students** – Students need to be advised of field trip destination with as much notice as possible so they can ascertain whether they need to make a visa application.

**Summer Schools**

University summer schools are usually run on a specific theme or subject area. They usually run between one and four weeks. Students have the opportunity to follow classes in an international setting with students from around the world.

Summer Schools take place at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Summer Schools at postgraduate level tend to take the form of a conference. This type of summer school is often organized at a national or international level.

Application and arrangements to attend Summer Schools are undertaken by the interested student. Schools can assist students in finding summer schools that may be of interest by displaying posters/circulating emails promoting suitable summer schools received from Kent’s partner universities.
Kent Procedures

Schools should be aware that all short-term mobility organised by Kent needs to adhere to Health and Safety regulations: Travelling and Working Overseas Performance Standard

The following document may also be useful: Higher Education Guidance on Health and Safety in Fieldwork USHA [Universities Safety and Health Association] in association with UCEA

Insurance

All University of Kent Students who undertake overseas work experience, fieldwork, study, research, or any other course-related activity, are now eligible to take advantage of University travel and personal accident insurance. There is no cost to the student or the department, subject to the following conditions being met:

Completion of Online Travel Notification Form

The online travel notification form must be completed no later than 5 working days before departure. Normally, each individual who is planning to travel needs to complete the form. For large groups, Schools should liaise with the Insurance Office.

Overseas Health Questionnaire

All staff and students travelling abroad on University business or as part of their studies are required to complete one of the Overseas Travel Health Questionnaires at least once prior to travel. Repeat trips of the same nature and to the same destination can be covered by the first assessment but a Self Declaration of Health needs to be completed before each. The type and extent of the health assessment required depends on the nature of your trip and what it will involve. Further information

Registration with Foreign & Commonwealth Office Locate service

UK nationals are recommended to register their intended presence in the destination country by making use of the FCO’s “Locate” facility so the British Embassy in that country has a record of their presence there. Locate website

Travel/Accommodation arrangements

Travel arrangements for short-term mobility must follow Kent Purchasing regulations. If the mobility is jointly organised by an institution in the host country, the partner concerned can usually advise on securing appropriate accommodation.