



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

International Independent Study Module Handbook

Introduction

Creating Global Citizens

As part of our commitment to Internationalisation and creating Global Citizens we have a longstanding study abroad programme and a number of reciprocal exchange programmes with partner institutions.

We have links in the USA, Canada, Hong Kong and Malaysia. In Europe through the Erasmus programme and in China through the Chinese Studies programme.

Faculties are encouraged to explore opportunities for students to spend a period of study at a partner institution outside of the UK as an intrinsic part of their academic programme. The period abroad is usually undertaken in the second semester of the second year, in some instances it is the first semester of the 3rd year or part of the integrated masters.

Some Faculties/schools develop 3 week study abroad experiences in collaboration with the international office.

Please note that study abroad is only open to students enrolled directly with the University on the Carmarthen, Swansea, Lampeter and Cardiff campuses and is not available to students enrolled via our collaborative partner institutions.

This module handbook refers to arrangements made for students to undertake a period of study abroad as part of a programme of study. This is mandatory for all study abroad contributing to UWTSD programmes although it is recognised that how it is implemented will vary depending on local circumstances. It is informed by the Chapter B10 of the QAA Quality Code *Managing higher education provision with others* and supersedes the University's previous *Practice Placement Guidelines*. Chapter B10 includes, amongst other issues, the following requirements:

- Degree awarding bodies commit the necessary staff and other resources to arrangements.
- The risks of each arrangement are assessed at the outset and reviewed subsequently on a periodic basis.
- Degree awarding bodies ensure that they have thoroughly considered the financial standing of prospective delivery organisations or support providers.
- Provision is made to suspend or withdraw from an arrangement if the other organisation does not fulfil its obligations or if its ownership or status changes in such a way as to jeopardise the arrangements.
- Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others are reviewed periodically.
- Appropriate and proportionate due diligence procedures are determined for each proposed arrangement for delivering learning opportunities with other organisations.
- There is a written and legally binding agreement, or other document, setting out the rights and obligations of the parties.
- Mechanisms are put in place to monitor and ensure that the terms, conditions, and expectations that were originally approved have been, and continue to be, met.

- Degree awarding bodies are responsible for ensuring that students admitted to a programme who wish to complete it under their awarding authority can do so in the event that a placement fails due to circumstances outside of the student's control.
- An assessment is made of the appropriateness of the staff at the placement provider to deliver the type of learning or support involved on the relevant modules, for example mentoring or supervising skills.
- Degree awarding bodies need to consider the appropriateness of physical learning resources and the learning environment provided by a placement provider.

All Study Abroad schemes available at The University of Wales Trinity Saint David are governed by the following regulations:

- (i) Programme Director or Heads of School (or School Representative) must support and approve the application of each student who applies for a place on one of the University's Study Abroad schemes.
- (ii) A formal interview will be arranged, which will normally involve the Programme Director, Head of School (or School Representative) and Executive International Officer. Students must be of good academic standing.
- (iii) Successful students will be asked to agree, with Programme Director, Heads of School (or School Representative) and the Executive International Officer, a Programme of Study at their Study Abroad institution which is an acceptable alternative to the prescribed Programme of Study at The University of Wales Trinity Saint David.
- (iv) Relevant Study Abroad modules will be validated by Faculty Board and Quality Assurance Committee. Faculties/Schools will have the opportunity to include additional assessment components and learning outcomes. This will be outlined in the learning agreement.
- (v) On completion of the Study Abroad, a transcript of the student's results will be received by the student and the Programme Director or Head of School (or School Representative).
- (vi) Students will be informed that the mark ranges used by institutions abroad are not always consistent with those that are used within the UK. In order to ensure that they are not unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged, in terms of their marks acquired during their Study Abroad, all assessment will be re-assessed at Trinity Saint David and marked in accordance with the University's systems. Before being allowed to enter an exchange arrangement, students will be required to sign a declaration stating that they accept that the marks awarded by the University will be the ones recorded on their transcript and used to calculate their degree

classification. External Examiners shall be kept informed of Study Abroad arrangements on an annual basis and may be called upon in cases of appeal.

- (vii) On return to the UK the student will provide The Programme Director or the Head of School (or School Representative) with all relevant assessment materials and the process described in (vi) will be followed.

Periods of studying abroad (through Erasmus or other links with institutions) broaden a student's learning experience and contribute to the University's aim of producing Global Citizens. The University believes that study abroad benefits students in their future careers and therefore encourages students to partake of opportunities offered to them. A semester abroad handbook and designated web pages has been developed to promote study abroad opportunities and outline procedures to students.

<http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/international/study-abroad-and-exchange/international-opportunities/>

Principles for studying abroad

a) In general

All Faculties/schools whose students engage in studying abroad with a host institution should ensure there is:

- Sufficient capacity (in number and quality) of study abroad opportunities to meet the needs of students
- Designated, permanent staff responsible for the approval, organisation and evaluation of study abroad opportunities.

Appropriate training for UWTSD staff directly involved in study abroad activity. This should include guidance on identifying suitable studying abroad opportunities, how to brief outgoing students, what contact should be made with students during their time abroad, and how the period of study abroad is evaluated.

- A clear and transparent approval process to approve prospective.
- An up to date list of all students on study abroad
- A list which contains the name and address of host institutions. A central list of all host institutions, provided by the international office will be updated annually.

b) Setting up a period of study abroad with a new host institution

When a study abroad arrangement with a new host institution is set up for the first time, the University is responsible for ensuring that:

- Checks have been made (and records kept) on the hosting institution to ensure that it is an appropriate host for UWTSD students. This may include meetings at NAFSA, site visits and/or checks on a Higher Education Institution's standing in its own country, including that suitably qualified staff are involved teaching and assessment.

- Students studying at the partner institution will be able to undertake study which will contribute to the learning outcomes of the programme.
- There is a written and legally binding agreement in place setting out the rights and responsibilities of the host institution, the UWTSD, and any student hosted by the host institution.

c) Before a student starts on a period of study abroad

Before a student embarks on a period of study abroad, the **Executive International Officer** is responsible for:

- Checking the host country against Foreign and Commonwealth Travel Advice
- Reviewing background checks undertaken when the arrangement with the host institution was first set up, and renewing if there has been a known change of circumstances.
- Briefing students about the period of study abroad. Depending on the arrangement, this may include:
 - Details on what they should study when abroad (subject, level of study, number of credits)
 - Details on the International Independent Study module and how this will work.
 - Details of how the student will be able to evaluate their study abroad
 - Developing the learning agreement
 - A description of the contact the student should expect with the University during their time at the partner institution
 - Ensuring that all assessments (including Examinations) for Semester 1 will be completed on the due date, from their study abroad location
 - Any roles or responsibilities required of the student in the written agreement between the University and the host institution
 - Guidance on how to raise any concerns with the period of study abroad with the Faculty
 - Details of how to contact the University in an emergency
 - The name of the UWTSD contact the student should liaise with while studying abroad
 - Full information on health & safety matters
 - Full information on any professional requirements (DBS checks for instance).
- Briefing students on the consequences if a student fails or does not complete their period of study abroad.
- Ensuring that the host institution is provided with information about individual students' needs (for example, a disability) which is may be relevant. This should only be done after receiving the student's explicit permission.
- Working with the student to ensure that any conditions connected with their UK Tier 4 visa (for international students) have been met. This will require liaising with International office, registry and the faculty offices.

d) During the period of study abroad

During the time the student is away, the Faculty is responsible for:

- Maintaining contact with the student, as outlined to the student before they left UWTSD (already noted above, i.e. named contact). This may vary between informal and formal communications and in addition to the 10 contact points outlined in the learning agreement.

Maintaining records of students on study abroad, including contact details, the address of their hosts, and dates of the time to be spent away from the University

- Ensuring that the student continues to have an appropriate learning environment and/or working with the student to find a solution in the event of an issue beyond the student or university's control (civil disturbance, natural disaster, etc.) which may prematurely terminate the study abroad.
- Maintaining a student's record

e) After the period of study abroad

Once a student has returned to UWTSD after a period of study abroad, the Faculty is responsible for:

- Responding to the student's evaluation of their time away from UWTSD
- Translating marks gained during study abroad into an equivalent at UWTSD

f) Reviewing placements Placement providers should be reviewed on a regular basis in line with the requirements for setting up placements set out in this policy.

Health and Safety

Universities have a statutory duty to ensure, in-so-far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare of their employees, students and study abroad partners. With regard to the welfare of this latter group, the responsibility lies in not willingly placing a student whom they know, or suspect, may pose a risk to the institution, its customers, clients, pupils or patients.

There should be suitable local documented management arrangements in place within faculties that describe how placements are organised and implemented with specific roles and responsibilities of key personnel clearly identified. A risk assessment should be carried out which would identify key hazards of all aspects of the placement from travel and accommodation to local work that is to be undertaken at the time. Often other organisations will require a risk assessment to be completed, but the University still has the responsibility for ensuring that the risk assessment is suitable and sufficient. To assist with this staff should refer to the Health and Safety officer.

Particular attention to the information provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for a country or region they are going to.

Equality and Diversity

Any placement that is part of a higher education programme will be covered by both the education and employment provisions of the Equalities Act 2010. In particular, it is required that Universities do not:

- Treat a student less favourably than other students;
- Fail to make reasonable adjustments where such failure places students at a substantial disadvantage compared to their peer group. (This applies to all off-site activities including field trips, placements and organised social events.)

The International Office must therefore be pro-active in locating suitable studying abroad opportunities for those students with protected characteristics and vigilant that no discrimination occurs during the course of identifying, providing or assessing placement. Faculties should work with the Student Services to identify any equipment and/or assistance that can be provided to help individual students with specific needs.

Host institutions should be provided with information about individual students' needs (with the student's explicit permission) in order to plan for their learning. They must not be allowed to discriminate by refusing to take the student on placement without reasonable grounds or by providing a substantially different experience than that offered to other non-disabled students. The laws for non UK providers may be different, but it is important that the University establishes a position of protecting students enrolled on its programmes from discrimination, and enabling maximum participation. The University should consider whether to terminate a relationship with a provider which is unable to offer placements for all of its students.

Insurance and Indemnity

During the course of a placement, it is possible that things may go wrong. Generally, the main risks are:

The student may be injured as a result of placement activity;

The student may, without intention, cause injury or damage as a result of placement activity;

The student may deliberately cause injury or damage during placement activity.

All students attending overseas placements should have appropriate insurance cover. In some cases, this may be provided by the University's Insurers (short term programmes accompanied by UWTSD staff members for instance). However, most undergraduate students will need to purchase separate insurance cover, and there is an option to buy cover from the host University's insurers. In addition, travellers to EU countries need a Health Insurance Card obtained through the Post Office or online.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Confidentiality is an area which may impact on the University's liability for students on placement. Any information given by a student to the Faculty, or known about them, is to be treated as confidential.

MODULE CODE:**TITLE:** International Independent Study Module**DATED:** DD/MM/YYYY**LEVEL:** 5**CREDITS:** 60**JACS CODE:** W990

AIM(S)

To offer students the opportunity to pursue an appropriate range of learning experiences whilst studying abroad.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Undertake an appropriate range of courses whilst abroad on an approved student exchange;
- Engage critically with all aspects of the chosen courses;
- Demonstrate an appropriate understanding of the chosen agreed areas of study;
- Independently evaluate alternative approaches to their subject area as evidenced abroad;
- Critically assess/report on others' work abroad with justification;
- Evaluate and reflect critically upon their own contribution to the study abroad experience;
- Organise their knowledge and learning through use of a range of information resources, and present their work appropriately.

INDICATIVE CONTENT

The International Independent Study module represents a formal student learning framework within a programme of study for students wishing to study abroad on an approved exchange programme.

Students undertaking this module will have followed formal Study Abroad regulations And will sign a Learning Agreement that details agreed in-country programmes, courses and associated assessments will fulfil the aims of the appropriate home programme of study.

LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

The student undertaking the module is expected to take full ownership of their learning during the overseas period. During the study abroad phase, students will undertake all aspects of the agreed Learning Agreement. In addition, the student will maintain regular contact with relevant staff at the home institution to monitor their progress.

Pre-Study Abroad Phase

The Learning Agreement will be created to include:

- The specific details of the courses which the student agrees to attend and complete assignments for whilst studying abroad;
- Details of additional compulsory practical tasks to be completed during the Study Abroad (e.g. ways of keeping in contact via a series of blogs/skypes/emails)
- Details of any additional assessment tasks which could be deemed necessary to fulfil the aims of the programme of study. These agreed additional assessment tasks would normally involve the negotiation of :
 - (a) specific suitable titles for additional areas of study;
 - (b) the intended learning outcomes of the areas of study;
 - (c) the process by which learning outcomes are to be achieved;
 - (d) the proposed assessment tasks, designed to provide evidence that the learning outcomes have been achieved;
 - (e) the proposed assessment criteria linked to the learning outcomes.

In consultation with Personal tutor(s) the student will negotiate:

1. a programme of reading and/or research;
2. arrangements for interaction with the tutor during the Study Abroad;
3. Date for the final submission of work.

Post-placement phase

Students must ensure that a full record of all work, including copies of all formal assessments undertaken during the Study Abroad, is kept and brought back to the home institution following the Study Abroad. These must be re-presented and final marks will be agreed according to the academic regulations.

Activity type	Hours	Percentage
Scheduled learning	30	5%
Independent learning	570	95%
Placement learning		
TOTAL	600	100%

ASSESSMENT

Description of each assessment component and its weighting, together with an example for new forms of assessment:

Assessment Component 1 (Coursework 100%)

(As per the Learning Agreement)

This will include the associated assessments for each course studied at the host institution but could include additional assessments tasks (e.g. Study Abroad Journal) as per the agreed Learning Agreement.

Full details to be agreed and approved in the formal Learning Agreement.

Assessment Summary

Activity type	Percentage
Written exam	
Coursework	100%
Practical	
TOTAL	100%

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD)

Does the module contribute to ESD?	Yes
If yes please provide brief details (no more than 100 words): This module seeks to help the student develop the fundamental skills of research and visual inquiry and self-directed study. This forms part of the sustainable assessment/sustainable teaching agenda which sees the assessment process as developing skills that can be used beyond the end of the programme of study and also the skills the individuals need to know in terms of working learning and thriving in a future which is as yet unknown. International education also contributes to the global citizenship agenda. Boud, D, Assessment 2020: <i>Creating Sustainable Assessment for Long-term Learning</i> University of Technology, Sydney (2020) Available at https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/davidboudKeynote.pdf Accessed 10:30, 17 th October 2014	

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Full details to be agreed and approved via international course outlines and approved additional assignments and activities.

Learning Agreement for students undertaking a semester abroad

Programme of Study:

Name of student:

Student Number:

Sending Institution: UWTSD

Country:

DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED STUDY PROGRAMME/LEARNING AGREEMENT

Receiving Institution:

Country:

Module Code	Module Title	Number of UWTSD Credits
Put your Programme/ school code here	International Independent Study Module	
Code	The modules I will undertake at the host institution are (list below):	Number of credits / hours

	<u>Semester 2 outgoing students only</u> Can you list semester 1 modules/codes and assessment below whether it is an exam or essay & due date (as we may need to organise alternative assessments):	

Learning Agreement

1. What do I have to do on this module?

To fulfil the learning outcomes of this module you must complete the following three elements of the module:

1. Complete courses at the host institution that have been agreed with the Faculty/School.
 - a. In most cases, these courses will be finalised once you are at the host institution. It is your responsibility to liaise with your UWTSD personal tutor so that you inform the tutor of your proposed choices and receive agreement from your tutor to undertake them.

- b. You must remember to stay in touch with your tutor when you are overseas. Any changes that may be necessary in your planned programme can only be made following consultation with the International Office and your UWTSD module tutor.
- 2. Document and analyse your learning through the preparation and submission of Blog or series of emails covering all aspects of study abroad. Please note the following key points and ensure you comply with them:
 - a. The blog or emails can include any activity, curricular or extra-curricular, that might be considered as contributing to your knowledge and understanding your programme of study.
 - b. Extracts should be submitted electronically for tutorial advice and scrutiny.
 - c. The format and content of the Blog/emails are to be determined by you with due regard to the guidance offered for your of Level of study.
 - d. You must include in the blog/emails all assessment feedback sheets and marks that you receive from tutors at your host institution.
 - e. You must include in the emails / blog all module booklet(s) or course syllabi for the courses you take in the overseas institution.
 - f. The two points above are important since they will form a key part of your overall module assessment when you return to UWTSD.
- 3. Upon return prepare and deliver a 15-20 minute presentation to staff and students of the Faculty/School. This presentation should identify and analyse key moments in your learning while abroad.

2. When do I submit my Blog/Emails?

Mid-term submission to your UWTSD tutor: Last Friday in October for semester 1 students / **Last Friday in February for semester 2 students.**

Final Submission to your UWTSD tutor: **portfolio of evidence**

First Monday in January (semester 1 students)

First Monday in June (semester 2 students)

3. How is my work on this module assessed?

The module's learning outcomes will be assessed through the following criteria:

Criterion 1

The level of your achievement, as indicated by the marks awarded for your work on the agreed overseas courses. This mark is to be determined via the conversion diagram outlined in this Agreement (See below).

Criterion 2

The level of your knowledge and understanding as evidenced in the series of emails or blog.

Criterion 3

Your ability to analyse, select and communicate key learning experiences through the medium of a short seminar presentation.

4. What are the grading differences between the overseas Universities and UK and how will they be reflected in my module mark?

It is important that you understand that the grading philosophy at overseas universities differs from that used at UK universities.

In principle lecturers are used to using a much broader range of marks and grades. This means that it is common for a lecturer to award marks in the 90% or 100% range. There is also a view that lecturers use higher marks or grades as a means of encouraging or rewarding promising students. In contrast it is argued that UK lecturers operate in a more conservative way when looking at assessments and examinations.

You will know already that confusion may arise between English as spoken in the UK and English spoken overseas. What seems identical may sometimes refer to something very different. This is also the case between marks and grades, where the numbers may look the same, but the meaning is very different.

PLEASE NOTE:

The assessment of your work will take into account the academic LEVEL of your overseas courses. An A+ mark on a sophomore level course is not the same as an A+ mark on a senior level course. The academic levels of your courses will be considered in your assessment so that your work can be assessed in line with the academic demands of the UWTSD module on which you are enrolled. In brief, if you take a *lower* level course overseas, receive an A+ mark, do not think that it automatically equates to a Level 6 Top Excellent at UWTSD.

Example

North America - UK Grade conversion

The following conversion table will be used to convert the marks you gain in the USA so that they are consistent with those used at UWTSD:

UK Class	UK	US Grade	US GPA
First	70+	A	4.0
Upper second	60-69	B+/B	3.0-3.33
Lower second	54-59	B/B-	2.67-3.0
Third	42-53	C	2.0
Pass	40	D	1.0
Fail	0-39	F	0

Contact Information

Name:

Telephone:.....

E.mail:.....

Student's Signature:

Date:.....

SENDING INSTITUTION – University of Wales Trinity Saint David

I confirm that this proposed programme of study/ learning agreement is approved.

Module Tutor should this be Programme Director?

.....

Date:.....

Contact point schedule to be agreed prior to departure

Blog entry / email	Date
End of first week	

Mid-Term Submission	
Final week of overseas study	

