Placements Abroad Handbook

A practical guide for students undertaking a placement abroad, including Erasmus+, during the academic year 2017 / 2018 as:
- an element of their degree programme
- as an extra-ECTS placement

(#{ this handbook is not intended to support the following activities abroad:}
- MSc Global Innovation Design study placements abroad (administered by the Royal College of Art)
- final year undergraduate medicine clinical electives (contact the Faculty Education Office)
- vacation internships which are not part of a degree or assigned extra-ECTS credit
- field trips (unless they form part of a longer study-based or work-based placement)
- research in the field (unless they form part of a longer study-based or work-based placement)
- site visits (unless they form part of a longer study-based or work-based placement)
- gap year (interruption of studies) activities

Produced by the Registry: Version 1 (June 2017).

Available at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/placements/information-for-imperial-college-students/

Check the above web page for updated versions during the year, since guidance is subject to change. Any changes in subsequent versions will be highlighted.
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PLACEMENTS ABROAD HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is compiled annually by Registry.

The definition of a placement for the purpose of this Handbook is one where the College transfers direct supervision of a student to a third party organisation for a period of 2 weeks or more.

The aim of the handbook is essentially threefold.

Firstly, to assist any student (UG/PGT/PGR) for whom a placement abroad is an option (as part of their degree at Imperial College or in the case of undergraduates for whom extra-ECTS credit has been approved for a vacation internship) to understand the various issues which may come to prominence when planning and undertaking such a placement.

Exception: This handbook is not meant to be read by an undergraduate medicine student planning a final year clinical elective abroad. Specific guidance and support for such students can be obtained from Martin Kenton in the Faculty Education Office.

Furthermore, this handbook is not intended to cover the following activities abroad: field trips; research in the field, site visits; “gap” years; vacation internships which have not been approved for extra-ECTS credit. These activities are not considered to fit the definition of a placement, unless they form an element of a placement.

Equally, the handbook does not apply to joint degrees (where the purpose necessitates attendance at a partner university). However, a placement which takes place as part of a joint degree (and which fits the definition mentioned above) would be covered by this handbook if Imperial College were deemed the ‘placement manager’ as opposed to the partner university.

Secondly, to provide students with important information on logistical matters: for example, acquiring accommodation, considering insurance cover and assessing financial issues.

Thirdly, the content aims to help students consider other sources of information, e.g. placement provider, home department, students who have previously undertaken similar placements, students who have undertaken a placement at the same placement provider.

Departments are assisted in their management of placements by the College’s Placement Learning Policy (see pages 70-73): and via http://www.imperial.ac.uk/placements/information-for-imperial-college-students/

Additionally Good Practice (including roles and responsibilities) is available to departmental ‘placement managers’ (academic or administrative members of staff responsible for individual placements) at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/placement-learning/
Rest assured that the vast majority of placements are completed without any serious problems and that most students’ rate highly the experience. **It really is an exciting opportunity.**

Good preparation is essential if you wish your particular placement to be a practical as well as an academic success. This handbook raises many issues which you are advised to consider carefully.

While you should at some stage consult the whole handbook, you could as a first act glance through the contents page and decide what is important to you at this stage. There is also a ‘checklist’ on the rear cover.

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**Green Highlights** = Important Information & Actions

Please ensure you check the whole content of the handbook for its relevance to your personal situation as those highlighted are not designed to be exhaustive.

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The Assistant Registrar (Placements) is available to assist with any questions you or your department may have. The email contact for ALL students and departmental staff is student.placement@imperial.ac.uk

**Overseas students** (by tuition fee status) are asked to read the handbook as normal but to also consult the section entitled ‘Specific Information for Overseas Students’ on pages 68-69.

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This publication is intended for internal use only and is updated annually, and re-issued during the year when significant revisions are necessary. It is available in other formats as required. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this handbook at the time of issue. If readers spot errors or inaccuracies please email us ([student.placement@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:student.placement@imperial.ac.uk)). The College is not responsible for the content of external websites to which this publication may direct you.
ARRANGING A PLACEMENT (Part 1)

Section 1: Placement Scenarios

Broadly speaking placements fall into two types:
- Study-based, which might be wholly or partly research focused
- Work-based, which might be wholly or partly research focused

and at Imperial College can be encapsulated by the following two scenarios.

(Scenario 1) Within undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes at Imperial College opportunities may be available either on a compulsory or optional basis to undertake a placement (study or work based) abroad. Students receive full academic recognition for the time spent abroad and for any formal assessments which are undertaken as part of the placement.

(Scenario 2) Undergraduate students who undertake a vacation internship for extra-ECTS credit (applicable to students of participating departments: eligibility criteria apply.)

A note on Placement Providers: This covers any organisation (e.g. an institution of higher education, a research institute, a third sector organisation, an NGO, a company which provides a placement (to whom the College transfers direct supervision of the student for the duration of the placement). A placement provider must have been approved by College (see page 12).

Before we move on allow us to introduce the European Union’s Erasmus+ scheme which facilitates mobility for study and work placements within Europe (and despite the outcome of the UK referendum on EU membership the College's participation in Erasmus will not change in 2017-18 nor, it is envisaged, in 2018-19)

Erasmus was first introduced by the European Community in 1987 to promote co-operation between universities of the European Community (now the European Union) through the mobility of university students (bachelor/master/doctoral) for study periods. While traditional Erasmus “study” mobility still forms the core of the programme it has for some time also included work-based placements. From 2014-15 a re-modelled Erasmus+ programme for lifelong learning has absorbed the established mobility schemes for study and work. However, the aims of Erasmus remain focused on increasing mobility amongst students, to promote the European dimension of education, to improve the linguistic ability of students and to provide participating eligible students with financial assistance in the form of grants (see pages 58-59 for information on Erasmus+ mobility grants). Erasmus accounts for a significant proportion of all mobility from the College in any one year, most notably in support of the undergraduate year abroad experience. The College warmly recognises the co-funding which the EU has provided for Erasmus activities since the College began its participation in 1989.

Mobility has to take place to Erasmus+ “programme” countries which in 2017-18 are the member states of the EU (plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein as members of the wider European Economic Area). Turkey and FYR Macedonia also participate as “programme” countries.

Please note that the College has:
(1) opted not to participate in Erasmus+ graduate internships
(2) not yet established any Erasmus+ partnerships with universities in non-programme countries, what are termed as “partner” countries (a facility which has only been an option from 2015-16).

Caution: Switzerland is not an Erasmus+ “programme” country.
Placement Options

Please note that not all the options listed below are open to all students of every course so if you are at all unsure you should check with your Director of Undergraduate Studies or Director of Postgraduate Studies or MSc Programme Director (or equivalent) as appropriate.

Options applicable to Scenario 1

(A) Undergraduate Year Abroad: The Faculties of Engineering (except the Dyson School of Design Engineering and the Dept of Materials) and Natural Sciences operate a year abroad degree. The relevant degrees have a range of suffixes: Year Abroad; Year in Europe; Research Abroad; International Programme of Study; Language for Science. Admission to these degrees is either in Year 1 (UCAS) or by an on-course transfer onto the relevant year abroad degree, with in both cases progression to the year containing the year abroad determined by the student’s home academic dept during or at the end of the preceding year.

• The year abroad is a full academic year study-based placement at a non-UK uni/college.
• Such placements are compulsory and ordinarily operate as part of a student exchange.
• The study plan to be pursued at the host university/college is determined by the student’s academic department at Imperial in collaboration with the host university/college. In some instances it might incorporate an industrial placement managed by the host uni/college.
• Within Europe (except Switzerland) student exchanges operate within Erasmus (see page 5).
• Student exchange agreements are in place with ETH Zurich and EPF Lausanne in Switzerland (operating within the Swiss-European Mobility Programme)
• Language requirements ordinarily exist for Erasmus and Swiss student exchanges.
• Beyond Europe other bi-lateral agreements exist. See the table below for a list of non-Erasmus/Swiss links. If you are an undergraduate of the Dept of Earth Science and Engineering you should read the # note.
• A complete list of undergraduate year abroad exchange links, including Erasmus exchanges, is available at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/placements/student-exchanges/undergraduate-year-abroad/

For further information about the undergraduate year abroad option, contact your department’s Exchange Programme Co-ordinator (table correct as of May 2017).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aeronautics</td>
<td>Dr Siti Ros Shamsuddin (with Jackie O’Neill)</td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Dr Stelios Rigopoulos (with Tom Curtin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bioengineering</td>
<td>Dr Chiu Fan Lee (with Martin Holloway and Britta Ross)</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>UG Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
<td>Dr Andreas Kogelbauer (assisted by Margaret Gee)</td>
<td>Life Sciences: Biochemistry</td>
<td>Dr Dave Hartley (with Spencer Cockerill)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil &amp; Environmental Engineering</td>
<td>Dr Christian Onof (with Tina Mikelides)</td>
<td>Life Sciences: Biology/Biological Sciences</td>
<td>Dr Dave Hartley (with Jerzy Snelling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing</td>
<td>Dr Sergio Maffeis (with Andrew Rochelle)</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Dr Robert Nurnberg (with Donna Pile-Grant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth Science &amp; Engineering</td>
<td>Dr Lorraine Craig (with Dr Mike Streule)</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>Dr Ingo Mueller-Wodarg (with Laura Kington)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical and Electronic Engineering</td>
<td>Professor Alessandro Astolfi (with Clare Drysdale)</td>
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</tbody>
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Table (#): Other (Non-Erasmus) undergraduate student exchanges 2017-18. 
*All Year Abroad links except * 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Depts at Imperial involved in the link</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China : Hong Kong</td>
<td>Hong Kong Polytechnic University</td>
<td>Civil &amp; Environmental Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>National University of Singapore</td>
<td>College-Wide (active subject areas: Chemical Engineering, EEE, Mechanical Engineering, Bioengineering, Aeronautics)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>University of Melbourne</td>
<td>Faculty of Engineering (current active subject areas: Bioengineering, Chemical Engineering, Civil &amp; Environmental Engineering, Mechanical Engineering); Dept of Life Sciences (new 2017-18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering; Mechanical Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering; Civil &amp; Environmental Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australian National University</td>
<td>Earth Science &amp; Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Carnegie Mellon University</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Columbia University (New York)</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of California: all campuses via their Education Abroad Program</td>
<td>Faculty of Engineering (all engineering departments participate in a faculty-level selection of students except the Dyson School and Materials)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emory University</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgia Institute of Technology</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>MIT* (see option C below)</td>
<td>Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>University of British Columbia</td>
<td>Earth Science &amp; Engineering</td>
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</tbody>
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# This table excludes non-reciprocal links with certain campuses of the University of California (Dept of Earth Science and Engineering) which have been approved for the purposes of sending undergraduates for a year abroad.

(B) Undergraduates, depending on their department can arrange a work-based placement at a non-UK placement provider, e.g. **Year in Industry degree or a shorter placement**.

Table: Departmental Curriculum-based Industrial Placement Contacts (May 2017):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year in Industry</th>
<th>Shorter work or work-based Placements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aeronautics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bioengineering</td>
<td>Computing</td>
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<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Computing/Mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Sciences: Biochemistry</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences: Biology/Biological Sciences</td>
<td>Dyson School of Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Electrical &amp; Electronic Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life Sciences (final year)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Undergraduates in the Dept of Aeronautics can undertake their MEng final year project abroad in an industrial or university setting: contact Dr Errikos Levis (project co-ordinator) for options;

Undergraduates in the Dept of Materials can apply for a place to study at MIT in the first term of the final year (MEng): contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies. This might be associated with an extra-curricula internship at MIT immediately beforehand.

Undergraduate Medicine students on BSc pathways may be eligible to apply to McGill University (Montreal, Canada) and the Tokyo Medical and Dental University in order to undertake their BSc project and very exceptionally are allowed to undertake a placement abroad at another location (contact: Faculty of Medicine Education Office);

Note: undergraduate medicine final year clinical electives are not covered by this handbook.

Advice from Martin Kenton in the Faculty of Medicine Education Office.

Postgraduate Taught Masters students (MSc) & Postgraduate Research Masters Students (MRes) may have access to opportunities to undertake a placement abroad

- Depending on the degree programme a student may be able to undertake part of or their entire project (dissertation) abroad (via a study period abroad or a work-based internship). Where this is possible it is either normally available or it is at the discretion of the Programme Director. Established connections between a particular degree programme and industry/healthcare etc will often influence with whom placements can be undertaken. For example, the Institute of Shock Physics has several Erasmus+ student exchange agreements with HEIs in Europe as well as other non-reciprocal links. See here.

- Some degree programmes have a compulsory or optional work placement integrated into the timetable (options may be limited to UK-based orgs so a student should check first).

- Business School: Opportunities typically lasting 2-3 weeks (as part of, i.e. for credit, or in support of a postgraduate taught masters programme) are available in Europe and further afield. Contact: Sarah Wilsey. The Business School will also treat not-for-credit study periods as if they are a placement.

- The MSc/MA Global Innovation Design (which operates on a joint basis with the Royal College of Art) contains two integral study periods abroad, however these are not subject to the guidance contained in this handbook as they are organised by the Royal College of Art.

PhD students can consider spending part of their registration abroad (study-based or work-based). They should discuss the idea first with their principal supervisor, and it is their principal supervisor who has the final say (see also the regulations for PhD registration and the procedures for complying with “study leave” for placements normally lasting 2 weeks or more: see the note below).

Note on PhD Study Leave:
If your department agrees to you undertaking a placement abroad (commonly at another university but perhaps in industry) lasting two weeks or more (as part of your degree registration) then you should consult the College’s Study Leave guidance: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/student-records-and-data/for-current-students/research-degrees/administration/

For approved “study leave” lasting three months or more a tuition fee remission (reduction) may be agreed at the discretion of the home department.
Options applicable to Scenario 2

An undergraduate student may plan to undertake a vacation internship which is eligible to be considered for extra ECTS credit. You are advised to ask your Director of Undergraduate Studies (or equivalent) if your department participates in the extra-ECTS scheme and whether they include external internships (some departments just apply these rules to internal UROPs). As of May 2017 the following departments are involved: Aeronautics, Bioengineering, Computing, Electrical & Electronic Engineering, Materials, Mechanical Engineering, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics. The ‘extra’ credit is awarded upon successful completion of both the internship (typically in the summer vacation after Year 2, or Year 3 on a 4 year course) and the accompanying assessment. While such ‘extra’ credit will not constitute part of a student’s degree programme, it will be detailed on the student’s Diploma Supplement (a document issued upon the successful completion of a student’s degree and which includes the usual content of a transcript). The rationale for these new rules is mainly to allow undergraduate MEng & MSci students to accrue 270 ECTS credit by the end of their degree: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/placements/information-for-imperial-college-students/

A reminder that this handbook is not a source of advice for the following:

- Undergraduate Medicine final year Clinical Electives. Contact Faculty Education Office.
- MSc Global Innovation Design study placements abroad (administered by the Royal College of Art)
- “GAP” years in industry or study elsewhere: Please note that “gap” years are treated as interruptions of study i.e. they do not form part of a degree. However, it is noted that within Engineering – where gap years are accommodated within a department’s approach to undergraduate industrial training – that advice and support is often available from the designated departmental contact.
- Vacation Internships abroad for which extra-ECTS credit has not been approved
- Field Trips, Research in the Field and Site Visits: unless they form part of a longer study-based or work-based placement.

Section 2: Planning your placement

The College has a responsibility to ensure that all placements are well planned and that all three principal parties involved (the student, the College and the placement provider) work constructively throughout to ensure good preparation for and effective execution of the placement.

The student’s home academic department is responsible for all aspects of your placement from its planning through to its conclusion, plus your integration back into Imperial College upon your return (where this is relevant). However, every student should expect to make a contribution to the planning and organisation of their placement.
First steps
Before you do anything please review the College’s Placement Learning Policy Statement (also reproduced on pages 70-73 and explained at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/placements/information-for-imperial-college-students/)

Find out about the placement opportunities available to you. Speak to the designated contact in your department (see pages 6-8).

Whatever the level of degree (bachelors/masters/doctoral) which your placement will form part of, the following sections act as a guide to the types of questions/issues which may be relevant when planning your particular placement:

- Who approves a placement?
- Approval of a placement provider
- Hosting arrangements at the placement provider
- Academic recognition
- Study or Training Plan, including dealing with changes in circumstances during a placement
- Other issues:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervision</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>Adapting to a different environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation/training</td>
<td>Maintaining contact with your home dept</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedback/Debriefing</td>
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</table>

Please note that logistical questions (e.g. insurance) are covered in Arranging a Placement (Part 2)

As you read through the following pages you should ask yourself which elements of the process you can reasonably take charge of (perhaps working with others to achieve) and those that require to be pursued by your department.

How you and your department go about organising your placement will depend on which department you are in, the type of degree programme you are following, the type of placement to be undertaken and the location of the placement.

The timescales involved might vary, but obviously you should give yourself sufficient time especially if you know you require a visa to enter the host country or that the nature of the placement requires special planning.

There will obviously be differences depending on whether you are dealing with a company (work-based placement) or a university (for a study or work-based placement or perhaps both when undertaken within an undergraduate year abroad) as the host organisation (the placement provider).

Who approves a placement?
Since the decision as to whether you may undertake a study-based or work-based placement lies with your department it is worth detailing here what that actually means.

Your department is responsible for confirming who your Placement Manager will be (normally the person mentioned on pages 6-7 for undergraduate, plus Programme Directors for postgraduate taught courses and research supervisors for PhD students) and deciding:
1. **With whom your placement will take place since:**
   - Its suitability on academic and non-academic grounds would need to be checked.
     - See “approval of a placement provider” (page 12).
     - A placement provider, of whatever description, must be able to provide a placement in which any intended learning outcomes (formally for undergraduate and postgraduate taught; perhaps informally for postgraduate research) can be achieved and both the level of knowledge and the level of skill/experience of the student are taken into account.
   - There may be competition for places.
     - Competition for university-based study placements or projects may exist at department level as places on a specific exchange may be limited.
     - Competition for work-based placements at popular/regular placement providers may again be competitive at department level as places may be limited, however, you may also be competing with students at other universities via regular company recruitment processes.
     - However, there may be little or no competition for some opportunities, perhaps because they are self-sourced and not advertised (e.g. a university-based research placement found by a PhD student using supervisor contacts).
   - And finally, the placement provider would ordinarily have the final decision.

2. **Whether, after a suitable placement provider has been identified (and possibly secured), you may progress to your placement** (the placement may be a compulsory or non-compulsory element of your degree), i.e. **are you academically and linguistically qualified** to undertake a placement and is it in your best interests;

3. **The study or work plan for your placement.**

4. **Whether a separate Placement Tutor (or supervisor) requires to be identified.** This would be a member of staff in your home department.

If your intention is to identify a placement provider with whom your department (or for PhD students your supervisor) has no established relationship (often the case with work-based placements), it is important that you first check if your department/supervisor will allow this. Undergraduates may have less room for manoeuvre than postgraduates. For example, it is not normally possible for an undergraduate student to suggest a full year university-based placement at a university with whom there is no existing student exchange agreement.

For some students the timetable for determining selection/approval will be a drawn out process while for others it will be completed quickly. Certainly, where competition for places does not exist your placement may be approved fairly quickly subject to satisfying any administrative requirements on the part of the host (but remember that the administrative requirements of the host may themselves take time).

The approval process for any one placement may be a two-staged process where you are first accepted as a candidate for a particular placement (i.e. you have received approval to plan and prepare for the placement) but where your final participation is not confirmed until nearer to the start date. **An example: an undergraduate Year Abroad student who would not have their final participation confirmed until they have successfully completed the year before the year abroad, but who through necessity had to apply to the host university and be offered admission well beforehand.**

**Whatever the route by which your placement is confirmed the natural endgame is that the College requires a placement provider to host you appropriately and safely.**
Approval of a placement provider
A placement provider, of whatever description, must be able to provide a placement in which any intended learning outcomes (formally for undergraduate and postgraduate taught; perhaps informally for postgraduate research) can be achieved and both the level of knowledge and the level of skill/experience of the student are taken into account.

All placement providers must be subject to scrutiny by the College prior to a placement being approved. This should normally be achieved by the use of one of the following methods:

1. **Student Exchange Agreements** are for ‘university’-based placements (normally study-based, but occasionally for work/research-based or a combination of both) taking place within such a framework (the agreement must be valid for the academic year in which your placement takes place). If you wish to double-check if a valid student exchange agreement exists for your particular placement you or your department should email: a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

2. **Placement Provider Information Form should be used for all other placements.**
   a. A Placement Provider Information Form should ordinarily be sent to the placement provider by your home department and be returned to your home department before (ideally, well before) the start of the proposed placement.
   b. A Placement Provider Information Form solicits information which will help the department make a decision as to whether the placement provider is suitable (e.g. up-to-date contact details; persons responsible for the placement; insurance cover; highlight issues which may be important to discuss, such as access by a tutor to a site; confidentiality).
   c. **Handling a Placement Provider Information Form is the responsibility of your “Placement Manager”**. The Placement Provider Information Form is additional to any other documentation which changes hands between you and the host organisation (placement provider) such as a contract of employment or student trainee agreement.
   d. A template Placement Provider Information Form is available on the College website, if your department does not have a version which they use: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/placement-learning/
   e. The use of a Placement Provider Information Form would be equally relevant where the placement is at a university but for which an exchange agreement is not applicable.

This is a good time to introduce Imperial College’s Off-Site Working Policy

All placements undertaken external to the College are subject to the Off-Site Working Policy. The Placement Learning Policy and Good Practice for Placements dovetail with the Off-Site Working Policy. The main aims for both the Good Practice for Placements and the Off-Site Working Policy are essentially threefold: (1) to check that the environment in which you will be undertaking the placement is safe (identifying necessary adjustments, training and orientation); (2) the means by which you will aim to achieve the objectives - of the whole placement or a particular element of your placement - are within your ability (identifying necessary adjustments, training and orientation) and (3) to ensure feedback is obtained and monitored for the best interests of your placement and any future student.

See also Health and Safety (pages 45-47)
The Placement Provider: Hosting arrangements

Contacts

- **In a non-exchange setting** (company/organisation, or possibly a university):
  - a correctly completed **Placement Provider Information Form** should confirm relevant contact details.
- **Study Exchange**;
  - for most placements organised within an exchange the **main contact** will be a student exchange office *(depending on the institution it may be called the International Office, ERASMUS Office, Student Exchange Office or another variant on the same theme)* at College or Faculty/School level. Contact details for exchanges can be obtained on university websites or you can contact a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk.
  - However, the most **relevant contact** may be a person in the host department or faculty (a supervisor or exchange programme co-ordinator)

If your **Placement Manager** identifies the person you should deal with in the first instance then please do not confuse matters by contacting others however relevant another person may appear, unless that is you reach a point when the initial contact is not responding and you need to try someone else.

Generally speaking, do not confuse matters by communicating independently on the same or other issues with another person. If you think it is necessary, COPY any correspondence to both your Placement Manager (and Placement Tutor if relevant) and your host contact. You may not be getting the answers you requested or answers may not be forthcoming. The key is to keep people informed while not submerging everyone with a continuous stream of emails.

Although you may be fortunate and deal with an individual who has the experience and knowledge to handle everything, including non-academic matters such as accommodation, you may end up dealing with more than one person or more than one Office.

**Hosting arrangements at a placement provider**

Your placement provider must ensure that you are hosted appropriately. There will be paperwork and email traffic to navigate. In your own interests, keep an independent record of what is decided by all parties.

- **For university placements** you might expect to be hosted as a student of that institution, however, that cannot be taken for granted *(unless you are mobile within an exchange agreement where it should be guaranteed)*. Your “contact” will be able to advise you. You obviously need to be hosted appropriately so that the host university’s responsibilities towards you are clear.
  - If you are informed that you must be hosted as a student then you should ensure that you have completed the host university’s student registration procedures. **Ensure you have applied in the appropriate manner to the host university in order to be hosted as a student and been formally admitted in writing/by email before you depart on your placement, remembering to register upon arrival or in advance depending on arrangements at the host.**

- **For placements based in companies/organisations** you need to consider what it is you are agreeing to as you will normally be hosted as an employee or as a student trainee/intern. It is extremely important that you and your Placement Manager understand the implications,
for example, if you are expecting to be paid what are the rates of pay and what is the tax burden and local social security arrangements.

- **In France**, it is normal for student internships to be managed within a national bespoke regime for student traineeships (the “stage” system) where bi-lateral contracts between student and company are replaced by tri-partite training agreements, including the student’s home university. A requirement is placed on placement providers by French law to pay student interns a monthly gratuity when an internship lasts 2 months/+.

- The College maintains a model Training Agreement for use in such circumstances where the host organisation does not have their own (email, including queries about the content of training agreements: a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk)

**Generally speaking**, a company or organisation may also wish to enter into agreement with you and the College regarding specific areas, such as intellectual property and confidentiality. If you experience these situations then speak to your Placement Manager, who can liaise with a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk as necessary.

- **Use of previous feedback (where available) to inform the process**: Placements undertaken regularly by students (at the same placement provider) ought to have yielded feedback, which in turn should influence the approach of the Placement Manager and lend itself to a structured routine having been developed for the planning and undertaking of a placement. On the other hand in the case of placements for which there is little or no feedback or history of students undertaking them the routine may not be as slick.

```plaintext
Placements within a Placement

It is quite feasible for part of a placement to take place at a location external to the placement provider. You may therefore be faced with further planning during your principal placement. You will need to be clear as to who is organising this leg of your placement. See also pages 45-47 (Health and Safety at your placement provider).

Example: an undergraduate engineering student undertaking their Year Abroad at university X and who is required by university X to plan and execute a placement (internship) at an external company as part of their “study plan”. In this case the responsible parties are university X, the student and the new placement provider, with the home department at Imperial being aware of those plans and agreeing to them (but not being directly responsible for its planning or management).
```

**Academic Recognition**

While you will receive academic recognition/credit for a placement from Imperial you may be unsure how this is organised.

- **Doctoral level students** should refer to the procedures for “study leave” (page 8);
- **MSc/MRes students** should map out how their placement fits into their masters degree;
- **Undergraduates**:
  - (where a placement forms part of their degree) should consider, for example, whether they understand the weighting for the whole placement and individual parts of the study plan within one particular year or against other years. Do you understand the means by which credit transfer of marks/grades obtained at the host university is undertaken. Your home department should be willing to answer your questions (in writing) if they have not already advised you (check your course handbook and blackboard/moodle for explanations).
  - (extra-ECTS credits) upon successful completion of the assessment a student should expect the College to include reference to the extra-credit in their Diploma Supplement.
Study or Training Plan

Your department (i.e. your Placement Manager) is responsible for formalising the learning content of the placement.

- The learning content should realise both learning outcomes (these would be informal for PhD students, if pursued) and workload which are both achievable and appropriate for the level of study within which the placement resides.
- This should be described/itemised in the form of a study or training plan. It is appropriate that you should have as much input into this process as possible. A study or training plan is a document or document trail used by your department to detail the component parts of your placement by indicating the specific courses / projects / work / experiences to be undertaken. It can be as complex or simple as it needs to be.
- Preparing a study or training plan may include one or more people (possibly including yourself) liaising directly with the placement provider (and most certainly in the case of many study-based university placements with on-line information, e.g. course syllabus).
- If another student has recently undertaken a similar placement at your chosen placement provider then their final study or training plan may be relevant.
  - This would be especially the case in the context of a study-based university placement where some insight into what level of courses suited or did not suit an Imperial College student is likely to be of value, and remember that if you plan/expect to undertake an internship as part of a study plan at a partner university that these need to be detailed too on your study plan (the management of such internships would be a matter for the partner university, and will normally involve a training agreement).
- Dealing with changes in circumstances during a placement: While most study and training plans will occur without any change, you might be faced with changes. Changes may be minor, may be discussed in passing with the Placement Manager or Tutor and may not require documenting. However, significant change requires discussion between the Placement Manager and the supervisor at the placement provider before being approved. It is possible, but rare, for a placement to be terminated by the placement provider and your Placement Manager would need to identify a solution.

Study-based university placements which form part of an undergraduate degree (e.g. Year Abroad): see pages 20-23 for full reference to Learning Agreements, a particular type of study plan document, which are compulsory for year abroad placements in particular within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme.

ADVICE: If you plan to undertake a free-standing placement in industry or perhaps even in a university or research institute then if you or your Placement Manager have queries regarding training agreements or other contractual issues please feel free to email a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk. In particular, any such placements undertaken within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme (page 5) require a particular type of learning agreement to be used.
A reminder to PhD students to consult the study leave guidance (page 8). However, you may also need to consider the following:

- **How they will transfer their work to the host?** Do you need to take equipment with you or arrange for it to be available at the host? Are there issues to do with confidentiality or ethics? Are there other constraints?
- **What about the transition back to Imperial College** at the end of the placement?
- **Will your funding still be accessible if you undertake a placement abroad?**

Think about your situation in detail with your supervisor.

Other issues to consider

Ensure you know how your placement will be supervised:

- All placements must be co-ordinated (for practical purposes) and supervised (for academic purposes) by your Placement Manager (perhaps with support from a designated Placement/Visiting Tutor/Supervisor) and by relevant staff at the placement provider.
- The learning content of the placement (i.e. the study plan or training plan) must be supervised by your department and the placement provider.
- In an industrial setting or research lab setting in an institute/university you should expect regular meetings with your host supervisor.
- In a university setting for study purposes regular contact with staff of the host may be limited, except with a supervisor of a project or generally if an Exchange or International Office takes an interest in your welfare. **As not all universities outside the UK provide the same pastoral care and tutorial system as you are used to at Imperial College you need to be ready for a change in the study environment.**

Ensure you know how your academic work will be assessed:

- Who will formally assess your work (courses, projects etc) or for PhD students your progress? Home or host organisation or both?
- **UG/PGT Study Periods at a University/College:**
  - Will you be required to conduct any formal assessments in the host language?
  - What method will be used for transferring relevant academic credit for any assessments undertaken at a university back to Imperial College?
  - Perhaps your host university/college may require you to adopt a significantly different approach to studying. Should you experience difficulties with this (and you keep your Placement Manager informed and discuss solutions) you need to know how your home department would interpret an academic performance which is below that which they would expect of you if you were in situ at Imperial.

The effect that a below-par academic performance has on overall degree performance is an issue which undergraduate students mention fairly regularly, so we would advise undergraduate students to discuss this with their department so that they are prepared.

Does a project form part of your placement or does it form your entire placement?

- If a project forms all or part of your placement remember that it is vital (if not a bit obvious) that you discuss the aims and objectives of the project before you commence it.
- However, where a project forms part of your study or training plan your Placement Manager and/or the placement provider may require you to choose the specific project after you arrive.
  - You may need to do this very soon after arriving.
Remember that where the placement provider is a university you may find yourself in competition with local students for internal and external projects. Therefore the search for a suitable project, maybe at a location external to the university, may need to start in advance of your actual arrival depending on competition, how much support you might expect to receive when you have arrived and when the project is to commence.

- If feedback exists check what worked best for other students.
- See also Health and Safety at your placement provider (pages 45-47).

**Undertaking a placement abroad means you must be open minded about experiencing a different university or industrial/organisational culture:**

- Whatever the placement the aim must be to enjoy the experience and to avoid any sense of isolation (socially or in terms of your academic work). This is obviously important in the first few weeks whilst you find your feet. Think carefully about how you might avoid isolation:
  - How proficient are you with the host language or languages and have you thought about technical vocabulary? *(undergraduate year abroad students should review pages 23-24)*
  - Consider your accommodation options carefully;
  - Make a visit beforehand if you have time and it is cost effective;
  - Work hard on creating helpful contacts which can be of support and assistance to you during your placement (see below);
  - Investigate how students study in the host country &/or the working culture;
  - Identify how you might continue the sports/pastimes you most enjoy or identify new experiences to focus your mind on.

- While the experience can often be challenging you can help yourself achieve the above by doing some or all of the following:
  - Ask and seek answers to as many questions as you can think of before departure;
  - Speak to academic staff from (or who have experience of) the country you will be visiting. Speak to full-degree & visiting students from the country you wish to go to. If you are going to Europe get involved in the activities of the ICU Erasmus Club;
  - Obtain useful email contacts of people who know the university or company where you are going *(or who will be there or close by for use during your placement)* so that you can seek assistance if you are at all unsure, especially when you first arrive;
  - Refer to learning resources available here. Do not hesitate to speak to relevant staff at Imperial about how such resources, especially the library and the careers service, can be accessed while abroad;
  - See “maintaining contact…” below.

**What can you expect in terms of orientation and training at the placement provider?**

- The placement provider should provide an appropriate amount of time in which to welcome and induct you (including initial health and safety training). What may be termed “Day 1 Induction” is extremely important.
- See pages 45-47 concerning Health and Safety at a Placement Provider.

**Maintaining contact with your home department**

- Don’t be reluctant to discuss issues/problems (and successes!) with your supervisor/contact at the placement provider and your Placement Manager and/or Placement Tutor. **Certainly you should not be reluctant to contact your Placement Manager or Placement Tutor during your placement if you have problems**, especially if you think you are not receiving the appropriate level of support at the placement provider. If you are reluctant for some
reason then contact the Undergraduate Senior Tutor or Director of Postgraduate Studies in your department or contact one of the College Tutors.

- While both your family home and your home academic department are normally an email, a WhatsApp, an Instagram, a skype or even a traditional phone call away, you should aim to keep your department (your Placement Manager or Placement/Visiting Tutor) well informed as to your progress. An email every two weeks allows you to get into the rhythm of thinking about your progress and can enable issues which might otherwise become a problem to be nipped in the bud or resolved in a timely manner (regular feedback would of course be in addition to any formal assessments which are required as part of your study plan). **College Good Practice is a minimum of one Skype interaction per month between you and your home department.**

- Email does not completely take care of communication between you and your home department, so **check with your department as to whether they plan to visit you whilst on placement.** If so, will they visit more than once and when? Such visits should not be viewed in isolation but as part of the normal process of supervision and pastoral care undertaken by your Department.

- **Please also see the section entitled ‘On Your Placement’ (pages 62-66).**

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**Ensure you know what feedback will be required of you by your department**

Your department should be keen to learn from you about the placement provider you have been with, any problems you have encountered and how you overcame them. **Your Placement Manager may debrief undergraduates as a group or individually or they may simply request that you complete a report form.**

Doctoral level students in particular are encouraged to submit a report to their supervisor and the departmental Director of Postgraduate Studies/Postgraduate Tutor.

The information you provide is useful to students who will undertake that placement in the future. Positive feedback can help to encourage mobility. Indeed, please make yourself available to students whilst you are on placement to answer questions and to help them prepare to follow you.

**College Good Practice is that your Dept should require one piece of written feedback from you at the completion of your placement.**

See also ‘At the End of Your Placement’ on page 67.
Section 3: Information for Disabled Students

If you are disabled and are planning on undertaking a placement, then it is a good idea to let your Placement Manager know about any access or support needs that you might have. You should also contact your Departmental Disability Officer to let them know that you’re planning a placement. You can then work together to ensure that your placement is a success.

Planning a placement

The College works hard to ensure that you are not put at a disadvantage because of disability, and that any adjustments that might be required are in place prior to the start of your placement. It is important that you work with your Placement Manager as early as possible so that this can happen.

In the UK disabled people are protected in law by the Equalities Act. Even though this might not be the case with some placements abroad, you are still protected as a student of Imperial College. The College will work with the placement provider to ensure that you are supported.

Before your placement you should check that:

- Study or work practices take into account your specific impairment / disability.
- The site you will be studying or working at is accessible.
- There is healthcare provision available at or nearby your placement provider.
- Any equipment you may need requires modification or installation.
- Accommodation is provided and as to whether or not it needs any modifications.
- Voluntary assistance is provided if required.

Your Placement Manager in your department will be able to help you with these and any other questions you might have. You can also approach your Departmental Disability Officer or the Disability Advisory Service for advice.

Before starting your placement:

- Make sure you know how your placement is going to be monitored and how you can contact your department should any difficulties arise.
- Ask yourself if your placement and your department have enough information about any support you will need.
- Approach your Placement Manager, your Departmental Disability Officer or the Disability Advisory Service with any concerns you might have.

Further assistance can be found from:

- Your Departmental Disability Officer:  
  http://www.imperial.ac.uk/disability-advisory-service/support/ddos/
- The Disability Advisory Service:  http://www.imperial.ac.uk/disability-advisory-service/  or email: disabilities@imperial.ac.uk
Section 4: ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) and University-based “Study” Periods Abroad

With reference to the Learning Agreement for Studies and the Transcript, plus the contractual relevance of these documents to the Erasmus+ programme.

Most universities/colleges in Europe use the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), although not necessarily at doctoral level. Imperial College itself has implemented ECTS as both a credit and accumulation system at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level.

ECTS aims to improve the mechanism by which academic recognition is achieved, and will be most readily visible to our undergraduate students who go abroad within Europe on ‘exchange’ within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme or the Swiss-European Mobility Programme.

While ECTS is a European-based academic credit system, most of our non-European student exchange partners are also familiar with ECTS and the role that a learning agreement contributes to the good management of a study period abroad, including credit transfer from host to home university.

It assists all parties in delivering a programme of study which carries an appropriate workload and where the level and amount of academic credit awarded is transparent to all parties.

ECTS is a system based on 3 core elements:
• Information (on study programmes and student achievement)
• Mutual agreement (between the partner institutions and the student)
• Use of ECTS credits (to indicate student workload)

The three core elements are made operational through the use of 4 key documents:
• A Course Catalogue or equivalent
• The Student Application Form
• The Learning Agreement (which may also form part of the application pack)
• The Transcript of Records (from the host university)

An ideal ECTS Course Catalogue should provide information on the institution, information on programmes and general information for students. If these are not put together in one document by the faculty/department/institution then an institution might expect to place them together on their website. Information on programmes should be divided into a description of individual units of teaching (e.g. courses; modules; projects etc) and should provide some or all of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>title</th>
<th>brief or detailed description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>level (also pre-requisites)</td>
<td>methods of assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching and learning methods used</td>
<td>key learning outcomes (where used)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECTS credit value</td>
<td>local grading system; local distribution of marks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A course catalogue will be of great use to both you and your department in deciding what would constitute an appropriate programme of study. This is particularly relevant should you expect to take “courses” and examinations plus project work, rather than just a project.
The Learning Agreement:

Your host university should require you to complete a study plan as part of their application process, perhaps in the case of European universities using a specific Learning Agreement document. You should do as requested by the host university and then use that document to comply with the Imperial College requirement outlined below.

Requirement: Imperial College requires all undergraduate students (as advised by their home department) to use a Learning Agreement for university-based study periods undertaken abroad during 2017-18. The host university is bound by the contents which have been approved in a learning agreement, subject to any formal modifications which may result.

In the case of study periods undertaken within the Erasmus programme this ought to be the new style ‘learning agreement for studies’ referred to below although it will depend on what, if any, version, the host university includes in their application pack).

There are 2 versions of the Learning Agreement in circulation.

Old Style Learning Agreement

- This version is preferred for all non-Erasmus study periods (includes Switzerland).
- A template ‘old style’ Learning Agreement can be obtained at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/placement-learning
- It has 2 sections or parts which generally speaking are easy to follow:
  - Part A is for you to insert your proposed study plan.
  - Part B is for subsequent modifications.
- However, we have noticed that it is still in use by a few of our European partner universities in 2017-18 when they should be making us of the “new style” version (below).

New Style Learning Agreement for Studies

- This version is preferred for all Erasmus study periods, although watch out because there are two, if not more, formats being used.
- Our preferred template (with notes for guidance) is a shortened version of the new style Learning Agreement and can be obtained at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/placement-learning
- It has 3 sections or parts which could be viewed as being quite complicated and you may need our guidance below and the guidance which serves as an appendix to the template to truly understand them. However, their function is clear:
  - **Before the Mobility** Section: for you to insert your proposed study plan.
    - In theory, the table to be completed by the home university should indicate what courses at the home university are being replaced by those at the host, however, this will be almost impossible for your home academic department to complete and therefore they are able to write something along the lines of “the recognised component of studies at the home university is a ‘mobility window’”.
    - **Remember** to remove superfluous instructions (in green) when you use the template.
  - **During the Mobility** Section for subsequent modifications.
    - **Remember** to remove superfluous instructions (in green) when you use the template.
  - **After the Mobility** Section: assisting academic recognition of your study period.
    - In theory the table to be completed by the host university should act as the “transcript” although it is unlikely that a university will do so as a replacement for a properly authenticated transcript document of the type a student is familiar with. It may take until after any “exam/assessment” marks have been released by the host university for the host university to complete their table.
In theory, the table to be completed by the home university should indicate what courses at the home university are being replaced by those at the host, however, again, this will be almost impossible for your home academic department to complete and therefore (regardless of how much of your study plan the home university was responsible for marking) your home academic department are able to write something along the lines of “the recognised component of studies at the home university is a ‘mobility window’”.

- **Remember** to remove superfluous instructions (in green) when you use the template.

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**OK, so you hopefully understand both what these Learning Agreements look like and their purpose.**

**Here are a few pointers and deadlines for their timely completion.**

Your department will obviously need to advise you as to what is acceptable to write in **Part A or the Before Section** of the Learning Agreement. Serious work has to take place at an early stage in your planning to investigate the options which are open to you (use of the Course Catalogue; discussion with home exchange programme co-ordinator, discussion with the host co-ordinator as to non-standard requests, for example, an extended project) before Part A or the Before Section can be completed. The host university is bound by the contents which have been approved in Part A or the Before Section, and as necessary in Part B or the During Section.

**Requirement:**

- **Part A or the BEFORE section** should be completed at the very latest within 30 days of your study period at the host university commencing *(signed by all three parties and a copy lodged with all three parties).* While it would be preferable for your study plan to be approved before your study period commences, it is realistic given timetabling constraints at universities to wait until you arrive to confirm the study plan in the learning agreement. However, you and your advisors should be 90% of the way there with regards to your study plan when you first arrive at the host university. It is not sensible, realistic nor reasonable for a student to arrive at the host university without a draft study plan to finalise and have approved in the learning agreement.

- **Part B or the DURING section** should be used as many times as is necessary. Common sense might dictate that you do these in advance of modifications becoming active, but it may be more reasonable to time them so that if you have more than one modification that you are having approved a Part B or a During section as few a times as possible. **If a modification means that your projected end date (at the host university) will change** beyond a matter of a few days then you should ensure that you have that change confirmed in writing (by email) between your home and host academic departments.

- **The AFTER section:** There is no strict time limit for the completion of the AFTER section, so we would suggest waiting for your results to be issued by the home university and to conclude it as soon as possible thereafter but no later than 30 Sept.

**Requirement:** Every time a section of your learning agreement is completed (all signatures) you should retain a copy (naturally) of the whole document and ensure that both your home and host departments also have a copy of the whole document. **Where a student is the recipient of an Erasmus Grant for Studies this is a contractual requirement.**

**Note:** wherever your study period dates are referenced please note that they are not linked to the administration of any Erasmus Grant you may be in receipt of. Certified dates are requested separately from the Registry or equivalent at your host university.

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**Transcript:** If you undertake formal assessments at the host institution they should issue you with a Transcript of Records as a formal record of your achievement *(check the host university’s orientation information for guidance on the issuing of transcripts).*

- A Transcript will:
list the local marks you have achieved in any assessments undertaken under the auspices of the host university and often will accord an ECTS grade to each, or, if the host university only uses ECTS just the ECTS grade.

- not list marks/grades for elements of your study plan which are marked only by your home department at Imperial.

- The Transcript will usually include a grade distribution table. It is very important that academic staff at Imperial College understand the meaning and value of the local ECTS and/or local mark.

- Your department at Imperial should inform you before your study period begins as to how any credit earned at the host university will be transferred back to your degree at Imperial.

- A “transcript” may be known by another name/title at your university, although within the Erasmus+ scheme it is the common term used for such a document.

Advice: If you have need for guidance on any of the above matters then please email the Assistant Registrar (Placements): a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

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Section 5: Language preparation (Undergraduate Year Abroad only)

These points of advice and information are for the general guidance of undergraduate “Year Abroad” students who are planning their study period in Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Spain, Switzerland and Italy.

Obviously it is very important that you are able to successfully complete your undergraduate Year Abroad. The role which language proficiency contributes to the successful completion of a study placement abroad should not be underestimated. The way in which language training is aligned with your degree depends on your academic department, but should conform to one of the following three scenarios if, that is, you have not been recorded by your department as a fluent speaker in the relevant language. The volume of language training you need to undertake in order to achieve the level of attainment set by your department will again depend on your starting point. The level of attainment you need to achieve will depend on the type of study plan you plan to pursue. A higher level of attainment is necessary where you will undertake courses and be assessed in the host language:

1. To receive as part of your degree programme assessed language tuition in the two years prior to the Year Abroad (2 hours per week as part of Horizons with an additional one hour per week tuition provided – normally at lunchtime - by the Centre for Languages, Communication and Culture).

2. As with 1 but only in the year before your year abroad. In this scenario the expectation of your department (depending on your proficiency starting point in the relevant language) may be that you attend assessed language tuition on a voluntary basis in earlier years (as described in 1 or at an external provider or via the College’s Evening Class provision). Your department might consider contributing to the cost of external or evening class provision.

3. Some departments do not incorporate any language tuition into their particular “Year Abroad” degree. In this scenario the expectation of your department (depending on your proficiency starting point in the relevant language) may be that you attend assessed language tuition on a
voluntary basis in earlier year(s) (as described in 1 or at an external provider or via the College’s Evening Class provision). Your department might consider contributing to the cost of external or evening class provision.

Ensure you know what (language) level you are aiming for (i.e. the level of attainment which your home department at Imperial require you to achieve prior to your Year Abroad) and find out about the procedure which is applied for assessing whether you have reached an acceptable level in order to be able to satisfy the language requirements for undertaking a Year Abroad. Your department will make the decision. The level of attainment will vary depending on the type of Year Abroad placement you are planning to undertake (structure/content of study plan, location of partner and language of instruction at host).

- Consult your language teacher regularly about your progress.
- If you feel that you need to know more technical vocabulary for your subject, please approach the staff who teach the Year in Europe hour, or one of the normal language class teachers and they will suggest sources of such information.
- The Centre for Languages, Communication and Culture operates a Language Pairs scheme. This is an informal scheme, intended to improve the spoken language, and which is not in any way a substitute for your language classes, but rather a supporting exercise to the classes. If you would like to find out more please go to: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/languages/language-pairs/
- Many European universities provide language/cultural courses for exchange students either immediately prior to or at the start of the study period (and often during the academic year as well). They can obviously be a really good idea but check whether you have to apply for a place in advance. The courses are often free of charge but if you are going to France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden or the Netherlands (Erasmus programme countries which Imperial sends year abroad students to) and you discover they involve the payment of a tuition fee and additional living cost expenses then see pages 59-60.
- Find out about other funding for language courses from organisations like the German DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst), or the Austrian AAS (Anglo-Austrian Society).
- Another idea is to consider working in the host country prior to your placement. If you are concerned about how you initially deal with using your language in the host country, this might give you more confidence as well as providing a chance to improve your language skills.
- **Important**: For 2017-18 all undergraduate year abroad participants in the Erasmus+ programme who will undertake part or all of their study plan in the official language of the host country will be required to undertake an on-line assessment *(managed by Imperial Registry in co-operation with the EU Commission)* prior to departure and upon completion of the period abroad. Information on this requirement will be provided alongside information concerning Erasmus+ mobility grants *(see pages 58-59)*. However, you can be assured that the outcome of this stand-alone “assessment” will not normally impact on any decision already made by your home academic department to approve your placement. **Students who are officially mobile under Erasmus can also access free on-line tuition courses during their placement (conditions apply)**, and they will either be reminded of this when they apply for a grant or they can email a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk
ARRANGING A PLACEMENT (Part 2)

Logistics

You have dealt with the academic side of your placement and now you need to think about the non-academic aspects and decide what you need to do prior to departure and upon arrival at the placement provider.

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The purpose of this section is not to act as an A-Z guide to all issues but to emphasise those issues which the College considers most important and about which we receive most questions. This section, for example, covers neither the moving of possessions to another country nor driving in another country.

The information should certainly not be taken in isolation, and you should refer to other sources of information as appropriate, especially information provided by the placement provider.

Section 1: Visas for the Host Country

**Do you require Entry Clearance (typically a Visa) to enter the Host Country for the purpose of undertaking your particular placement?**

Nationalists of the EU, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland can move freely for work or study in one another’s countries. No visa required. Job done! Well not quite, you should still ensure you possess a valid passport or ID card upon entry to the host country (also double-check whether your passport or ID card requires to be valid for a certain duration after your arrival) plus it is always a good idea to possess a letter from your host organisation confirming the particulars of your placement.

For countries where entry clearance is required (by the student concerned) you are advised as a first act to read the guidance provided on the website of the diplomatic representation (in London) of the country in question (e.g. Embassy or High Commission).

Your enquiries will indicate that one of the following applies to you:

1. **You are classified as a non-visa national** and you do not need to do anything, except ensure you possess a valid passport or ID card upon entry to the host country (but check whether your passport or ID card requires to be valid for a certain duration after your arrival) plus a letter from your host organisation confirming the particulars of your placement.

   Or
2. **You need to obtain formal entry clearance to the host country** (of the placement) **but it does not require approval prior to arrival in the host country** (i.e. you will undertake paperwork upon arrival at the port of entry or in collaboration with the host university once you have been admitted). As a bare minimum you would require to have with you when going through immigration to the host country a valid passport or ID card upon entry to the host country (but check whether your passport or ID card requires to be valid for a certain duration after your arrival) plus a letter from your host organisation confirming the particulars of our placement.

Or

3. **You need to apply in advance of travelling to the host country for a relevant visa:**
   i. If you must apply for a visa before departure to the host country it will depend on where you apply for that entry clearance as to the exact process you need to follow.
   ii. Certainly, if you need to apply for a Visa before travelling to the host country then you will require a document from the host organisation (in a format specified by the host country) to insert into your application.
   iii. **The time required to process a visa application varies widely from country to country.** Does the type of visa you are advised to obtain tally the expectation of the placement provider? **Investigate now.**
   iv. **Visa agencies/embassies need to know that you will be covered by travel insurance.** Check with the [travel insurance webpage](#) to ensure that your chosen country destination is covered for travel insurance purposes. Obtain the confirmation of travel from the Insurance team.

**Additionally:**
- If you plan to undertake a further period outside the host country as an integral part of your placement then you may have further visa issues to sort out. If you know in advance that this is planned and that a further visa will be necessary then while it is likely you would pursue this once you are resident in the principal host country you might wish to check if this second visa/entry clearance this can be done in advance of arrival in the principal host country (it will depend on the length of your whole placement and the timing of any further portion of placement in a “third” country).

**Further points to consider:**
- Think about your travel plans for the period leading up to your placement. Any application for a visa normally requires you to relinquish possession of your passport for a certain length of time.
- Also think about if your passport is due to expire soon. Do you need to have it valid for a particular length of time when applying for the visa? Even if you do not require a visa to enter the host country is your passport valid for the whole duration of the placement, or perhaps
the host country requires your passport to be valid a certain length of time after your placement is due to finish.

- Where do you plan to apply for your visa? In London or elsewhere? Are you required to apply in your home country or can you apply from another location, such as London.

- The visa must conform to what you are actually going to undertake in the host country. Naturally for a placement in industry you must obtain a visa which allows you to work full-time. Likewise, an undergraduate on a year abroad who has the option to pursue an internship as part of their study plan and wants to undertake it at a company in the host country should check that their visa for studying in the host country allows them to work.

- You could also consult the web site of your host organisation where information for students or interns from a non-EU country may be available. When in correspondence with the host organisation make your nationality clear so they can advise you appropriately.

- If you are applying for a visa is it a single or multiple entry visa. Naturally, a multiple entry visa is what you would prefer, but these might be available only if you can confirm that you are to be in the host country for your placement beyond a certain length of time (3 months for example).

- Last but not least, there is usually a cost involved in applying for a visa plus a specific way of making payment. In the USA there is also an immigration fee (SEVIS) payable ahead of any application for the visa itself.

Imperial College students who are in attendance on a TIER 4 visa should also refer to pages 68-69

Further information

This list is not exhaustive.

Australia

If you are undertaking a placement in Australia consult the Australian Government web-site [http://www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm] plus the information provided by the placement provider. Information provided by the Australian government is normally very detailed (many different types of visas), and placement providers (especially where they are a university) will know what visa applies to the placement you are offered. This is not necessarily a student-type visa for research/internship periods (including if undertaken at a university) so read the guidance from the placement provider very carefully and don’t assume anything.
United States of America:

Your host should be able to advise you as to what non-immigrant visa you require. The most common type is a J-1 visa although occasionally an F-1 would be appropriate:

- "Exchange Visitor" **leading to a J-1 visa** although the "exchange" label is mis-leading.
- "Students" **leading to an F-1 Visa** (very rare: but can be required for some year abroad placements).
- **Visas for placements at organisations who are unable to “sponsor” your visa application directly** (i.e. are unable to provide the necessary documentation demanded by the relevant visa application procedure):
  - **BUNAC** operate a range of “Work” programmes (e.g. Work Australia) which can adopt some short-term placements for a fee in order that you can obtain the necessary document to support a visa application: [http://www.bunac.org/](http://www.bunac.org/)
  - **InterExchange** provide a similar service mainly for the USA: [http://www.interexchange.org/](http://www.interexchange.org/)

Schengen Area

The Schengen Area is comprised of Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

*The UK, Ireland, Cyprus, Romania and Bulgaria are not part of the Schengen area.*

A student (who knows they require a visa) preparing for a study or work placement in a country within the Schengen Area (regardless of length) would normally be directed by the host organisation to apply (to the host country) for a visa which is applicable to the activity they plan to undertake.

In contrast a specific ‘Schengen Visa’ will normally only be applicable if:
- while you are on your placement you are seek to be a tourist in a country within the Schengen Area for which you need entry clearance.
- you are on a placement at a company which requires you to visit a country within the Schengen Area for a short visit, e.g. another Office of the company concerned; for a conference.

Further information on Schengen Visas at: [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/international-students/visas-and-immigration/schengen-visas](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/international-students/visas-and-immigration/schengen-visas)
If your placement is a study period at a university then allow at least 4 months between the host university acknowledging receipt of your study application and your proposed start date. Universities in the Netherlands will normally be obliged to manage the submission of your visa application.

If you are at all unsure about the procedures, including for countries not listed above, feel free to contact the Assistant Registrar (Placements) who will be happy to discuss the situation: a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

Imperial College students who are in attendance on a TIER 4 visa should also refer to pages 68-69.

!!!!!!! THINK ABOUT VISAS EARLY: DO NOT LEAVE IT TOO LATE !!!!!!

Section 2: Registration procedures

Registering at Imperial College London
You remain a registered student of Imperial College during the whole of your placement. Students undertaking a placement which requires them to be away from College at the start of the academic year should remember to register with Imperial. You should normally receive an email prompt from the College during the summer vacation so there is no excuse for not remembering! You can do this (and all the normal functions, e.g. recording changes to term-time addresses etc) online at: www.imperial.ac.uk/studenteservice

Registration formalities in the host country
Please note that not all placement providers inform in-bound students of the official paperwork they will be expected to take with them to satisfy their own and any local/national civil registration procedures, although typically a university would. If you do not receive information or the information you have at hand is unclear, email the appropriate staff at the placement provider to clarify what is required. Whether you receive advice or not, you will save yourself a lot of time and confusion if you gather the material mentioned here before your departure.

The documents most commonly requested (perhaps in electronic form) for university registration and civil registration are listed below, but this is intended as a guide only as procedures can vary.

Registering as a student at a host university/college
Documents: If this is relevant to you, you will need some or all of the following:
- Passport (national identity cards may prove an acceptable alternative);
- Proof of acceptance at your host university;
- Some passport-size colour photos (8-10 would be advisable);
Health insurance documents (European Health Insurance Card, private medical insurance if you have it and, very importantly, the College Overseas Travel Insurance travel certificate); See also Insurance section on pages 38-44 and Health care on pages 47-50.

Some money to cover possible cash charges upon arrival. You may be asked to make a non-tuition payment to cover such things as site visits, local travel concessions, social welfare contributions, catering facilities and additional insurance for housing and sports. However, more likely these days is an electronic payment;

Proof of registration at Imperial College for the academic year you will be away. This is not always required (but it’s easy to get: print from Student e-Service);

You can request a certificate from the Assistant Registrar (Placements) confirming your placement. This is sometimes required by students on arrival at the host university. Email a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

Just to note that some universities require a student to formally de-register at the end of their stay. Read those guidance notes from the host university carefully. This can be really important if you are not a national of the host country (even more so if you are present on a student visa) because it can impact on you obtaining a visa in the future.

Civil registration in the host country

Documents: You may need some or all of the following:

• Identification:
  - passport and/or national identity card
  - original of your full length birth certificate. We appreciate that some families might be reticent to allow you to take this document with you, so at the least take a shorter version if you know a birth certificate is required, plus a copy of the longer version.

• Proof of acceptance and/or registration/contract at the placement provider

• Passport photos

• Proof that you have sufficient financial support for your stay in the host country in the form of a letter from parents or bank statement

• Health insurance certificate: European Health Insurance Card; College Overseas Travel Insurance Travel Certificate and policy; private medical insurance policy if you have it. See also Insurance section on pages 38-44 and Health care on pages 47-50.

• Just to note that if you are not a national of the host country you may be required to formally declare your leaving at the end of their stay. Read those guidance notes from the host university carefully. This can be really important if you are not a national of the host country (even more so if you are present on a student visa) as it can impact on accessing the country in the future.

Translations: It is advisable to enquire whether translations of any of the above documents are required. However, translations are not usually required. The main exception can be in France where in some (very few these days) prefectures (admin districts) it is an absolute necessity for you to have an official translation of your full length birth certificate and the College Overseas Travel Insurance. Read the information provided by the placement provider!

Please note: these are only basic guidelines. You may not need all of the above and indeed you may need others. However, by taking all the documents listed and by reading carefully the information sent to you by the host institution/company, we hope you will not find yourself in the time-consuming situation of having the information sent to you.
Health service registration
See pages on health care 47-50

International Student Identity Card
Another good idea if you do not already have one is to purchase an International Student Identity Card (ISIC), available from STA Travel. This will be useful, for example for proof of age and student discounts in your host country. The cost in the UK is £12 (April 2017).

Section 3: Housing
While many of you will experience very few, if any problems, there is no doubting that securing appropriate accommodation is not to be taken for granted nor the work involved to be taken lightly. You must be prepared for all eventualities as on your arrival and especially during the first few weeks of your placement you will need to be concentrating on getting to grips with your academic programme of study or work placement and it really helps if you are not being distracted unnecessarily by other events, such as securing a room.

Give the whole process careful thought. You will find yourself much better prepared to manage the process to your best advantage. Should events not go according to plan you need to be prepared to deal with the situation and make alternative arrangements.

Generally the advice from students who have undertaken a placement abroad is pretty clear, that regardless of where you will be studying or working (and while for university-based placements halls often seem to offer the best solution to your needs) that you should not disregard the options which the private sector can offer.

For country/city specific information we recommend you speak to students who have previously undertaken placements in the same location or to students or staff who are familiar with the place you are going to. Always be wary of websites which purport to provide accommodation options. While you may not necessarily be planning to be mobile within the Erasmus scheme the pan-European Erasmus Student Network (ESN) provides a platform for discussing possible options with past and present mobile students (this is an external website and the College is not responsible for its content).

Perhaps you are one of a group of Imperial students going to the same destination. If so, benefit from each other's experiences and support each other as much as possible. If you want to check if another Imperial student is going to your particular university/college (or we have someone there currently) email a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

Student contacts, if available, can be obtained from a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk or from the departmental co-ordinator responsible for the placement type. However, such contacts are not always available.

There are two parts to this section:
- Part A: accommodation provided or facilitated by a university/college (pages 32-36)
- Part B: finding private sector accommodation (pages 36-38).
All students will find the information on private sector accommodation useful, at least as a starting point, because if you already have experience of dealing with agents/landlords you will have the background to deal with the process in a different location. However, it is important to stress that there may be significant differences in the process due to local practice (including legal requirements) and should language be an issue.

Part A: accommodation provided by or facilitated by a university/college

Ordinarily, this section will apply to students on placements abroad facilitated by exchange agreements; however, it might also be relevant to other students who happen to arrange a placement (research project/internship) at a university/college.

In the case of placements which take place within the framework of an exchange agreement it is the responsibility of your department to advise you on the accommodation options ordinarily provided by the host university/college, for example by referring you to feedback or providing contacts.

Most students apply for, accept and are happy with the accommodation provided by a host university/college. However, students are advised to take note of the following and not to necessarily feel constrained by this one option. Research the options as thoroughly as possible.

Here is a summary of what you need to do:

- Ensure you research the options beyond the sources/information provided by the university/college. If possible consult with students who are currently at the host university/college or who have recently studied there for advice on the overall options available to visiting students. Students who have gone through the study abroad experience can often provide valuable advice, but remember to draw your own conclusions;
- Unless directed otherwise by your department APPLY for the accommodation provided by the host university/college. Make sure you have a room offered to you even if subsequently you opt to obtain private or another form of accommodation;
- **Ensure that you meet all deadlines for returning accommodation application forms and any additional or subsequent paperwork.** Make sure you know whether, should you find alternative accommodation, you are able to withdraw your accommodation application made through the host university/college and whether there is a deadline;
- Keep copies or electronic records of everything you send;
- Think clearly about when your placement commences and whether it includes any preparatory language/cultural/orientation courses at the host university/college or in the host country. Are there separate accommodation arrangements for these courses?
- If you are keeping your options open, i.e. you are also considering accommodation in the private sector, think clearly about how much time you might need to be in the host town/city in order to obtain private accommodation, if, as is often the case, you cannot secure such accommodation from here in the UK.
- Be prepared linguistically for the questions you may need to ask when securing any type of accommodation.
- If you end up occupying accommodation provided (or facilitated) by the university/college be sure to check at the contract stage whether you are able to extract yourself from the contract if after a few weeks or months you consider the accommodation to be inappropriate. Normally
this is possible but only if you or the accommodation service has someone lined up to take your place. Do not give up your accommodation unless you have an alternative secured!

- If you are at all unsure about anything regarding accommodation feel free to contact the Assistant Registrar (Placements): a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

**Exploring the Options provided by a university/college:** Once you have confirmed the university/college at which you will be studying you should consider the following:

- When are you expected to start at the university/college?
- Does this start date take into account any intensive language/cultural preparation courses you are required or wish to attend at the university/college and will you need separate accommodation for such a course?

Seek out the web-based information intended for exchange students going to the relevant university/college. This is a task you should be undertaking in any event. Read it thoroughly but do not rely wholly on this.

**What might the options be?** They may include one or more of the following:

- university halls of residence (e.g. single/shared study bedrooms or flats);
- privately managed halls of residence (i.e. access organised by the university/college);
- halls of residence within one town/city that are pooled together and managed centrally for the benefit of all students in that particular town/city;
- facilitating access to or knowledge of private sector accommodation (lodgings; flat-share; sole-occupancy).

If possible discuss options with students who have been or who are currently studying abroad at the host university/college. Consult the feedback sheets of previous exchange students (ask your departmental exchange programme co-ordinator). But remember that the past experiences of students should be taken as insight/guidance only.

When possible discuss options with the local exchange co-ordinator or perhaps more purposefully with the student exchange office or equivalent at the host university/college. Certainly, this helps if you are attempting to make sense of the information sent to you by the host university/college.

**When investigating halls of residence you should consider the following (not an exhaustive list):**

- Where are the halls located? Is the information provided accurate or a sales pitch? Is a hall on campus, adjacent to a campus, in the centre of town or the suburbs?
- Which campus will you be studying at? How accessible will your normal study location be from a hall of residence?
- How much is local transport going to cost you? Can you obtain multiple tickets or make student savings? Some universities/colleges provide cheap or “free” access to local transport networks as part of the “deal” when you pay a local semester or trimester fee.
- Is a hall reserved for either males or females?
- How much does living in a particular hall cost? What are you paying for? What facilities do they offer? Does cost equate to standards and is this an issue for you?
- How quiet will the hall be at a weekend? Do a majority of residents go home at a weekend or are they normally occupied by international students (indeed, other exchange students)?
• Is there any history/problems concerning a particular hall of residence (e.g. noise by occupants or a nearby train line or its record on thefts)?

Check with your departmental exchange programme co-ordinator and ask to see previous feedback notes.

Making applications for accommodation through (or facilitated by) the host university/college:

First of all remember that your study application (which you may have already submitted) may have doubled as an accommodation application. It is usually obvious that this is the case but do check. Many universities have on-line application routines for study-applications and accommodation applications; however, many still use paper-based routines.

MEET ANY DEADLINE.

WHO’S DEADLINE? Is the deadline set by your own department (at Imperial) for sending forms to the host university or is it the host university's own deadline for the receipt of forms?

• Do you have the right deadline? Accommodation deadlines are often aligned to semesters. If you are applying for a full academic year there may be a deadline for such accommodation applications.

• Have you been asked to express one or more accommodation preferences?

• Have you found out as much information about that residence or residences as possible?

• Does the application form refer to finding accommodation in the private sector? If so, is this separate to the application for a room in hall (i.e. will they send you information about private sector accommodation regardless) or is it a preference (i.e. by expressing an interest in private sector accommodation in addition to checking a box for a particular hall, do you run the risk of not being offered a room in hall if demand for rooms in halls at the host university/college outstrips availability)? Be sure what you are filling in.

• Make sure you keep a record of who you have sent the form to. Is it the host who is processing your application or is it an agent of the host? If it is the host, remember to be aware about which office is processing your accommodation application.

• In some towns/cities a lot of university accommodation is pooled and handled on behalf of two or more institutions by an agent. For example, in France the main agent is CROUS: http://www.cnous.fr Howewer, check the information provided by the host university first.

• How are you going to chase the application up if required? You will hopefully receive an acknowledgement that it has been received and is being processed.

• How long do you have to wait to receive a decision? Were you told in the information provided? If not, does your departmental exchange programme co-ordinator know? Do not forget about the application. Agree a date with yourself as to when you will chase it up.

If you receive an offer of accommodation from the host or an agent of the host, what should you do next?

After giving a sigh of relief, think about:

• What hall have you been offered a room in? Is it your first, second, third choice? Is it none of your choices?
• Do the dates of occupancy relate to your study period as required by your department? Do they include any language/cultural/orientation course at the host university/college scheduled for prior to the study period proper?
• When do you need to accept the offer? How long do you have?
• What is it that you are agreeing to at this stage? Are you now being required to complete further documentation or are you simply being asked to send an email? Are you being asked to sign a contract and pay a deposit? Can you back out of it nearer the time or at the time of occupancy without financial penalty?
• What additional documentation, if any, are you being requested to return.

If you do confirm your acceptance, seek an acknowledgement that it has been received.

If you fax it (yes, some European universities still use fax as a formal means of communicating with students) keep the confirmation sheet that the fax went through successfully.

If you are undecided about taking the accommodation offered to you by the host at the time confirmation is required (especially if you will be held to it) is it best to consider seeking private sector accommodation?

If you decide to accept the accommodation offered to you by the host university/college or their agent, find out what you will be required to do upon arrival. Which Office do you need to present yourself at? What are the opening hours of that Office? Is there an after-hours service? What documents will you need to present?

Remember: If you are attending a language/cultural event at the host university/college or in the same locality in the run-up to your study period are you clear about accommodation arrangements for that period?

Perhaps you are one of a group of Imperial students going to the same destination. If so, benefit from each other's experiences and support each other as much as possible. If you want to check if another Imperial student is going to your particular university/college email a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

If, come the date of departure, you have applied for a room in a hall of residence but for whatever reason you are unsure (despite your efforts) whether arrangements have been confirmed, it is essential you make one last effort to gain confirmation before you depart for the host town/city.

Take all your correspondence with you and be prepared to argue your case if a room has not been reserved for you, or you have been placed in a hall which you had not expressed a preference for. In these circumstances it is a good idea (although not always possible) to have a friend or family member with you for support as you will probably need to discuss issues in the host language and, of course, you have only just arrived.

This is where liaising with other Imperial students going to your particular university/college or you having made the effort to contact a student from your particular host university/college (who happened to have been at Imperial as an exchange student themselves during the run-up to your placement) can prove invaluable.
Arriving a few days early (and booking into affordable student hostel-type accommodation) may prove a useful option if you are at all unsure about whether accommodation has been secured. Budget for this extra period so as to make your first few days in the host city/town feel comfortable and safe.

Even if you think all is OK - be prepared when you present yourself at the relevant accommodation office for the unexpected. For example, there have been rare instances of applications which have been lost/ignored or indeed your confirmed place has been given to another student. Take copies of applications made and have with you ALL correspondence entered into with the host regarding accommodation.

Part B: Finding Private Sector Accommodation

Many students find themselves coping with this without any prior knowledge of the location.

- Check any feedback sheets in your own department provided by previous students to the same placement provider.

- **Always be wary of websites which purport to provide accommodation options, and** - as you should have picked up on while looking for private accommodation in London - **be aware of the signs of fraud.**

- Every town/city will have its own favoured means by which private apartments, flat-shares and lodgings are advertised. While agencies will exist do not forget the universally popular methods of free/local newspapers, notice boards on campus or at specific locations in the town/city, web-based listings (and remember that you might be viewing these from home) and word of mouth.

- Students undertaking work (industrial) placements might be assisted in obtaining company or private sector accommodation by the placement provider.

Here are a few pointers. This does not claim to cover everything; rather its intention is to raise your awareness of the practical issues involved.

- Can you come to an agreement with other Imperial College students (going to the same location) to look for accommodation together?

- Should you arrive one or two weeks early to allow more time to find something appropriate? If so, where are you going to live? At least book yourself into one/two nights at an affordable hotel/hostel. Budget for this extra period so as to make your first few days in the host city/town feel comfortable and safe.

- Please note that if you are attending a language/cultural/orientation course (presuming you have had separate accommodation arranged for you for that period) will you actually have time to look properly? Perhaps you need to consider arriving in advance of that course.

- Earlier semester/term start dates than you are used to are worth thinking about. Perhaps you need to arrive much earlier than you first thought and therefore you need to think about any summer work (or other activities) you have lined up in the UK or elsewhere. If you have no work lined up, have you considered working over the summer in the town/city where you will be studying (if your immigration status to the host country allows you the scope to do so) so that you have lots more time to find something appropriate. Obviously, you would need to find accommodation while you work as well.

- **Investigate what the most common means by which private rented accommodation is advertised?** This could be paper adverts at particular town vantage points or agencies
providing you with lists of vacancies (please note that these may be at a price and possibly struggling to be up-to-date).

- **Always be wary of websites which purport to provide accommodation options, and** - as you should have picked up on while looking for private accommodation in London - **be aware of the signs of fraud**.
- Please note that a high proportion of room/flats etc in a university town/city will
  - be snapped up before you arrive,
  - not be open to foreign students and
  - not be luxury standard.
- Make sure you know what to say when you phone to ask to see a property.
- Make sure when you view a room/property that you check things you would take for granted here in London, for example electric sockets in your room and accessibility to basic facilities, especially if you are lodging rather than renting a room on an equal basis with the others in the flat.
- Will you need to buy anything because it either does not exist in the flat you are about to rent or it belongs to another person and you will not be able to use it?
- What if a room/flat is offered to you? What do you do? Accept straight away or run the risk of that room/flat not being available the following day? When you have to make a decision take the stance that:
  - the landlord is **very likely** to rip you off for your deposit (deposit management schemes like we have in the UK are not always in existence elsewhere);
  - but the rent is almost certainly cheaper than in London for similar standards of accommodation.

The advice of many who have made the effort to obtain private accommodation, in France in particular, will be to take it when it is offered to you although if you have the chance to think it over overnight then obviously do so. **Weigh up the pros and cons quickly and be prepared to make a decision at the time the landlord/agent offers the accommodation to you.** It is often helpful to consider whether you can see yourself getting used to the accommodation.

- **If you wish to say yes, how does the landlord wish you to secure the property/room?**
  - If this is by cash, you will need to have it on you.
  - Is the landlord requesting a deposit plus one or two months rent?
  - If you hand over cash how is the landlord going to confirm receipt.
  - If you have said yes at the time you are viewing the room/flat, will the landlord/agent produce a contract there and then for you to sign? Whenever you are confronted by a contract, check what you are signing. How long are you signing for? Can you get out of it or are you liable for the whole period should you wish to move, possibly because you are returning early to the UK for some reason. Do you understand the local/national rules governing tenancy agreements? Will you receive a copy?
  - Is the landlord/agent asking for further proof of who you are, which will often be the case because you are a non-resident. The best course of action here may be to obtain a guarantor’s letter from a parent, guardian or bank stating you have sufficient funds available or a letter from the Assistant Registrar (Placements) confirming your student status. All students may request a certificate confirming their placement at the placement provider from the Assistant Registrar (Placements). Do not delay in asking for such evidence as you will not wish to lose your room.
  - What if you are not asked to sign a contract? The answer we hope is obvious!
Finally, despite all your language preparation do you feel confident about using your language in what can be a testing situation? If you have been on the language course at the host, try to get someone who speaks the language to come along with you. In these circumstances it is a good idea (although not always possible) to have a friend or family member with you for support as you will probably need to discuss issues in the host language and of course, you may have only just arrived.

Section 4: Insurance

For any trip abroad it is essential that you have sufficient insurance to cover you and your possessions. If you intend to live abroad it is even more important to be adequately covered. Consider the information provided carefully and ask yourself a fundamental question: will all possible circumstances be covered by one form of insurance or another?

This section covers:

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A: Imperial College’s Overseas Travel Insurance Policy

Please note that what is included here is a guide only and not a legally binding statement. Any claims made under College insurance policies will be governed by the relevant policy wording, available from the College website (see below). Please Note (June 2017): the College is about to change Insurers and therefore this Handbook will be updated sometime in July 2017. While you should follow the guidance and actions below please be ready, if you plan to commence your placement (including outward travel) on or after 1 August 2017 to repeat some of the actions in order to be fully acquainted with the new policy (contact details; travel certificate etc).

Both students and staff of Imperial College are insured under a policy whilst on College business for up to 12 months outside the UK. This includes students who are away on placement as part of their degree or for extra-credit. However, all students should take note of the exceptions listed later in this section, especially if you are travelling to your home country or plan to be away for more than 12 months. You also need to register your trip (see below) in advance of travel. While it is not mandatory to use the College’s travel insurance we strongly suggest you do, even if you have additional cover (it’s free after all!) It is important that students understand that while travel insurance includes emergency medical cover it is not a replacement for a health insurance (see later sections).

Current cover provided: The summary of travel benefits, the travel certificate, complete policy and further information is provided on the Imperial College intranet: https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/FKB/Overseas+Travel.
As noted at the beginning of this section, the College is changing Insurer so if your placement (including outward travel) is due to commence on or after 1 August 2017 be sure to check the Finance Insurance intranet web page again before and after you depart on your placement and check for any changes.

To access elements of these pages you will need to log in using your Imperial College log-in/password. This webpage provides the most up-to-date information about the coverage of the College’s policy.

What you need to do:

The document to carry with you (the Travel Insurance Certificate) is always available as a pdf file.

- You should print the Travel Insurance Certificate off and add your name and the whole period of travel (but please note the advice below about period of travel beyond 12 months).
  - It explains what you or someone acting on your behalf should do in a real emergency (a helpline for medical related emergencies is available).
  - **You should consider carrying the Travel Insurance Certificate (cover note) with you at all times, and have a spare copy available.**
- **VERY IMPORTANT: Register your trip by completing the on-line questionnaire at:** https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/FKB/Overseas+Travel
  - You need only do this once for your whole trip, although if your trip is extended you should notify the Insurance Manager. Please also take note of the guidance below about visits which last more than 12 months.
  - Failure to register your trip may result in you not being covered by the College’s overseas travel insurance policy.
  - You do not need to inform the Insurance Manager if you terminate your trip early or do not go at all.
  - **IMPORTANT: when completing the questionnaire** answer the questions as a student as the form has been designed more with employees/staff in mind than students. Your Dept is responsible for managing your placement. Therefore the references to risk assessments (risk-based assessments in the case of placements) are the responsibility of your home academic department to undertake.

Please also make yourself familiar with the College’s Emergency Procedure for Placements (page 62).

As noted at the beginning of this section, the College is changing Insurer so if your placement (including outward travel) is due to commence on or after 1 August 2017 be sure to check the Finance Insurance intranet web page again before and after you depart on your placement and check for any changes.

Summary of Travel Benefits, Important Points & Exclusions & How to Claim

The terms of the travel insurance cover are broadly in line with those applying to package travel insurances generally available.
Summary of Travel Benefits (until 31 July 2017; journeys commenced on or before 31 July 2017)

- Unlimited Emergency medical and Emergency Expenses received during an overseas journey, including Repatriation Expenses incurred in bringing an Insured Person to their normal Country of Domicile following injury, sickness or death
  
  **Excess:** £25 per claim excess or £100 in cases of dental treatment unless arising from an accident occurring outside of the mouth.

- Additional accommodation and travel costs necessitated by illness. £10,000, subject to £50 per claim excess.

- Travel cancellation, curtailment or re-arrangement due to illness, accident, bereavement, jury service or other unavoidable and unforeseeable causes. **Cover:** £10,000, subject to £50 per claim excess

- Personal public liability; **Cover:** £5,000,000. See part C below for guidance on understanding public liability.

  - **Personal Property** (hyperlink to College Insurance intranet webpage : further link to specific guidance document)
    
    **Cover:** £1,500 (limited to £1,000 per item), subject to £50 per claim excess

- **Money and tickets**; **Cover:** £150, subject to £50 per claim excess. (hyperlink to College Insurance intranet webpage : further link to specific guidance document)

**Important Points and Exclusions**

- You have a duty of care regarding personal possessions.

- You are advised to consider carefully when you need to purchase air/rail tickets (and to make yourself aware as to the cancellation conditions used by the travel carrier) and to try where at all possible to confirm travel arrangements only when the outcome of any visa application you are required to submit is known.

- The College Insurance Manager must have been consulted by a student’s home department prior to placements being approved (i.e. well before a student travels) in remote regions where search and rescue operations may become necessary and difficult or extremely expensive to arrange.

- Any partner/spouse or dependent child accompanying an employee or student travelling on College business is also covered under the same insurance policy.

- Residents of the United Kingdom are usually entitled to subsidised state healthcare in European Economic Area countries (although there are some important exclusions: for EHIC eligibility see pages 47-50). The College expects those eligible for the relevant EHIC to carry a valid European Health Insurance Card (“EHIC”). See pages 47-50 for how to apply for an EHIC.

- The Insurer must be contacted as soon as possible in cases requiring major medical treatment/hospitalisation (refer to travel insurance certificate for helpline phone number). **Please do not contact the Insurer directly, except in cases of emergency.** It is best to have clearance ahead of such events if at all possible (and obviously while there may be instances of emergency medical treatment where that would not be possible, you may be in a country where a hospital would need to seek that clearance on your behalf before deciding on what treatment they can provide. **Always find out how the medical system operates in your host country before arriving.**

- In the event of losses for which you wish to claim you MUST notify the police (or perhaps the transport carrier if en route) immediately and obtain an official written report.
- Holiday travel is included providing such travel is incidental to College business and that the holiday takes place in the same country as the placement. There is a sliding scale for the number of days covered in accordance with the number of days that you have been on the placement. See the Travel Insurance website for further details.
- Always check whether you have other insurances which more adequately cover certain scenarios e.g. as mentioned, the European Health Insurance Card for non-emergency medical care as a resident or perhaps parental household insurance for expensive personal belongings.
- Check whether your host placement provider has a mandatory requirement to purchase their own health insurance. This is often the case in the USA where the placement provider is a university. Even if you purchase mandatory health insurance you may still be eligible to claim under the College policy for costs not met by that mandatory policy.
- Check whether you have to pay for housing insurance for the accommodation you occupy and what is the cover provided.
- This point might not apply when the College knows its new Insurers: Until 31 July 2017 (for journeys commenced on or before the 31 July) you can also register on the current Insurer’s website in order to access a wealth of information, including country reports and their app for your phone. You need to create an account (as a new member) for which you need your College email address (which will act as your login) and the policy number (0015865153) to register. BEWARE: This facility may change in July 2017.

Please note the following key exclusions under the policy (review the full policy wording available on the finance website):

- if you are normally domiciled in the country which will host your placement or you are a national of the host country in which case you are not covered by the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance for medical expenses cover whilst in the host country. However, you may still be covered by the other travel benefits such as travel cancellation, loss of personal possessions and personal liability to third parties which may occur whilst you are in the host country.
- **Travel exceeding one year in duration** – contact the Insurance Manager to make arrangements. The last exclusion may affect some undergraduate students on “year abroad” or “year in industry” degree programmes or PhD students on long-term placements. Individuals who think they will be abroad for the purpose of undertaking their whole placement for more than 12 months must email a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk & insurance@imperial.ac.uk to discuss alternative arrangements BEFORE they depart on their placement. Please be aware that the additional 28 days of additional cover for additional holiday time does not apply if any part of it takes the whole time spent abroad beyond 12 months. Students must be prepared in such circumstances to obtain private travel insurance for their whole placement abroad.

(from the College website: June 2017)

- Failure to take reasonable precautions to avoid loss (includes non-refundable costs incurred prior to visa applications);
- Travelling against the advice of a medical practitioner;
- Disinclination to travel, unless for unforeseen and documented personal or health reasons;
- Non-emergency medical costs (e.g. check-ups, ongoing prescriptions and vaccinations);
- Third party liability arising from motorised vehicles;
- Airline or travel agent insolvency;
- Suicide, intentional self-injury or use of non-prescribed drugs;
- Dental or optical expenses (other than in exceptional circumstances);
- Travel to "disturbed areas" (link provided on aforementioned webpage) – please contact Insurance Office for details;
- Visits to off-shore facilities (e.g. oil platforms);
- For travel cancellation/rearrangement claims; loss arising from events which were known about, or the possibility of which existed, at the time trip booking was made.

As noted at the beginning of this section, the College is changing Insurer so if your placement (including outward travel) is due to commence on or after 1 August 2017 be sure to check the Finance Insurance intranet web page again before and after you depart on your placement and check for any changes.

How to claim
- In all cases the College Insurance Manager must be notified of claims as soon as is practicable giving brief details of the reason for your claim.
- Claim forms are obtainable from the Insurance Manager: Email: insurance@imperial.ac.uk  Tel: +44 (0)20 7594 8666
- Include with your claim form, or send as quickly as possible, any relevant documents (e.g. police incident report form, receipts, proof of refund). Ideally these should be the originals but photocopies will be accepted except for any proof of refund. The insurer is entitled to require you to provide documentary evidence for every aspect of your claim.
- Minor insured expenses, such as small medical bills, should be paid on the spot and then submitted as a claim. Students travelling within Europe should first claim on their European Health Insurance Card, and should not try to claim twice for the same costs.

You can expect the policy to be renewed for the twelve month period from 1 August 2017 under broadly the same terms; and again from 1 August 2018. The version of the insurance policy for the previous year will be retained on the website. As previously indicated: review later updates of the Handbook.

B: Imperial College’s Personal Accident Insurance Policy
- Covers any student of the College who is normally resident in the UK or enrolled in a course of study with the College. The operative time is whilst in or on College premises or whilst participating in official activities organised by College, including abroad.
- The benefits under the policy are: Accidental Death, Losses of eye(s), limb(s), speech or hearing and permanent total or partial disablement. There is no cover for temporary disablement.
- Potential claims must be notified to the Insurance Manager.

C: Imperial College’s Personal Liability Cover
Provides insurance cover in respect of bodily injury; sickness or disease of any person; or accidental loss or damage to the property of any person (up to £5m per trip). The personal liability cover in the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance applies to a student when they are abroad but not at the placement provider, while the College’s Liability Insurance extends the cover to when the student is at their placement provider, with the exception that it does NOT include cover for motorised vehicle liabilities.
Some countries and individual placement providers may require you to provide evidence of the insurance cover you enjoy for personal liability.

While you are covered for purposes of personal liability insurance, you should not assume that the College’s insurers will always deal favourably with a claim of whatever type, especially if it is seen as proper that the placement provider or another party is liable or you were criminally responsible.

In France: all students, including visiting Exchange/Erasmus students, are required under French law to take out personal liability insurance cover (civile responsabilité) whilst attending a higher education institution. The College’s Overseas Travel Insurance currently covers you for this purpose to the extent described in the previous section. You ought not to have to pay for additional cover.

Please note that personal liability may not extend to circumstances arising whilst undertaking a placement in an industrial environment away from the host university (see also point F below on industrial placements).

D: Contact Sports
If you play certain contact sports your host university may request you to take out additional, compulsory insurance. The cost of this additional insurance may not amount to much. Please note that the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance does cover you for sports (e.g. skiing) subject to the policy wording.

E: Housing Insurance
You may have to pay for separate housing insurance to comply with the terms and conditions of any housing contract.

F: Industrial Placements: Insurance in the Workplace
Scenario 1: A standalone industrial placement abroad (e.g. UG Year in Industry; PGT industry-based projects)
- Your home academic department should check in advance what administrative arrangements are in place at the placement provider for hosting a student undertaking a placement and what the specific insurance arrangements are for the study or work-based element of your stay (i.e. as opposed to your personal time). See page 12: the Placement Provider Information Form asks the pertinent questions.
- If the placement provider does not have the equivalent of UK Employer Liability Insurance or indicates that they will not apply the equivalent of UK Employer Liability Insurance to the student concerned then the home academic department should as part of their approval process be satisfied that the placement provider is demonstrating an intention to fulfil its health, safety and training responsibilities. If this is demonstrated then a placement may be approved by the home academic department based on insurance cover for the student provided by Imperial College’s Liability Insurance.
  - Industrial Placements in France:
    - In France, student placements in industry are normally managed within a national bespoke regime (the “stage” system) where bi-lateral contracts between student and company are replaced by tri-partite training agreements (a convention de stage).
    - French companies presume that students have Personal Liability Insurance (what is termed civile responsabilité: as it is a condition of being registered at a French HEI).
- An appropriately approved placement (by your home academic department) in France would be subject to the Personal Liability cover of both the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance and the College’s Liability Insurance.
- The College maintains a model Training Agreement for use where the placement provider does not have their own version (*nb: many French companies just expect the student’s home university to provide a convention du stage*).
- Departments can email a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk if they need access to the template training agreement or they have queries.

- However, **you should not assume** that the College’s insurers will always deal favourably with any claim if it is seen as proper that the placement provider or you were criminally negligent. **Needless to say that you are expected to act responsibly at all times.**

**Scenario 2: A placement as part of an undergraduate year abroad:**

- Where placements are organised by the hosting university/institution as part of the study plan (learning agreement) it is equally important that your home department can tell you that they are satisfied with the administrative processes in place at the hosting university/institution for organising such a placement (including insurance arrangements).
  - Where such a placement takes place in France you would be able to inform your host university that you are covered by the Personal Liability Insurance element of the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance and Personal Accident Insurance policy.
- Extraordinarily, if you consider organising a placement as part of your study plan which your host university/institution has told you it would not be able to assume the management of, then your home department must first agree to this approach and secondly assume responsibility as if it were a standalone industrial placement (see above). However, it is perfectly reasonable for a department at Imperial to say no to such a request.

If you are in any doubt about any of these issues contact the Assistant Registrar (Placements) on a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

**G: Health Insurance:** See pages 47-50 including College Health Clearance (page 47).

**H: Separate Cover**

Of course, you may wish to take out a policy which covers you for everything regardless of that cover provided by the means described above. Your search might start with Endsleigh Insurance, not that we recommend their policies, but because it is widely appreciated that they provide insurance policies for placements.
**Section 5: Health and Safety at your Placement Provider**

All placements undertaken external to the College are subject to the Off-site Working Policy. The Good Practice for Placements dovetails with the Off-Site Working Policy (see also pages 12 and 70-73).

The Good Practice for Placements is available on the Placements website: [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/placements/information-for-imperial-college-students/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/placements/information-for-imperial-college-students/)

The sector Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) has produced guidance which can be viewed at: [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/placement-learning/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/placement-learning/)

The main aims for both the Good Practice for Placements and the Off-Site Working Policy are essentially threefold: (1) to check that the environment in which you will be undertaking the placement is safe (identifying necessary adjustments, training and orientation); (2) the means by which you will aim to achieve the objectives - of the whole placement or any particular element of your placement - are within your ability (identifying necessary adjustments, training and orientation) and (3) to ensure feedback is obtained and monitored for the best interests of your placement and any future student.

You should ensure that the objectives of the placement, as it constitutes part of your degree programme, can be fulfilled. To achieve this, your home department must obviously liaise with the placement provider to ensure that the content of the placement is appropriate and achievable and the means by which you are assessed is also achievable. Additionally, your department should follow College guidance on managing placements.

**Assessing Risk:** Your home department should ensure that the risk factors (associated with, for example, your personal circumstances, your attendance in a particular location, the activities you will pursue) have been considered.

The main aims are twofold: (1) to check that the environment in which you will be undertaking the placement is safe (identifying necessary training and orientation); (2) to check that the means by which you will aim to achieve the objectives of your placement are within your ability (identifying necessary training and orientation).

The level of risk might be presumed to be higher for industrial placements, projects in industry and projects undertaken in a university than it is for any lecture-based element of a placement where the “working/studying” environment is of a known quantity and you yourself are familiar with it.

Therefore your home department is advised to consider the following before approving a placement (or any changes to a placement once you have commenced it): a) that the placement provider:

- Can provide appropriate supervision and training;
- Has disclosed its insurance arrangements for students on placement and considered any limitations (see Approval of a Placement Provider on page 12 and importantly Insurance in the Workplace 43-44).
It can be assumed that in case of universities with whom the College has official student exchange agreements that the insurance issue has been resolved:

- Has appropriate safety and emergency procedures in place (including the ability to report accidents to your home department) plus an ability to ensure you are made familiar with them and can require extra training/induction as necessary.

b) where necessary a full risk-assessment is completed for any element of a placement (perhaps the whole placement) which is not considered low-risk (e.g. regular university teaching: lectures, seminars, tutorials, supervised site visits, supervised field trips, timetabled lessons in on-site supervised laboratories and workshops; office-based industrial placement work might be considered low-risk, although the location may warrant a full risk assessment).

c) that both the student and the home department establish the ground rules for:

- maintaining contact during the placement in order to reflect on the experience, review the effectiveness of supervision and to discuss any changes which might be required to the placement scenario;
- providing and discussing formal feedback at the end of the placement. Feedback is important so as to guide and inform the process in future years.

Please note that the principles above apply even if, for example, part of your placement is organised by a third-party (e.g. a host university offers an internship at an external company). It is very important that the process undertaken by the third party is known to the home department. However, allowances may need to be observed since the local health and safety legislation may be different to that which is applicable in the United Kingdom. In the case of student exchange agreements these bring with them a level of trust that the other party will act responsibly.

While other persons are very important in organising and confirming your placement, you too have a role. You have a responsibility to make sure you are well informed and work with your home department and the placement provider to ensure your placement is well organised and is safe. Therefore, you too are strongly advised to make yourself familiar with the placement provider’s health and safety policy and procedures (especially for non-university settings). You can obviously apply the principles of health and safety which you have learnt at Imperial College.

This is especially important:

- Since health and safety legislation maybe different to that applicable in the UK.
- Where a placement is organised by a third party such as a host university.
- If the placement organiser (your home dept or a third party, e.g. host university) is not already familiar with a particular placement provider. For example, (i) you may be the first student to be seeking a placement at a particular placement provider or (ii) perhaps you are the first foreign student to be placed there or (iii) there may have been a gap since a student was last hosted and knowledge of that particular placement provider is not up-to-date. In any of these situations you could assist the process by requesting pertinent details when you are in the process of having a placement confirmed (e.g. when you are sent a contract of employment, a student traineeship agreement or a letter offering admission as a student).
- Where the onus is on you to find an industrial placement or where you prefer to find your own industrial placement or where you have been given authority by your home dept to seek a university-based placement but for which no reciprocal student exchange agreement exists.

The message from the College is that you should work with your Placement Manager in your home department to have your placement approved.
You may wish to consider the following issues **before or at the beginning of your placement (as appropriate)**. This does not claim to be a full list of everything you need to be aware of but should serve to point you in the right direction:

- Have you been notified that a **Day 1 Induction** will take place (are you presuming one will. It obviously should).
- Are there factors (e.g. health or disability related, materials to be used, accessibility to study areas/work places etc) which might hinder your progress or make it unfeasible to start with?
- Will you or have you received training for any equipment and/or materials you will be expected to use in the course of your placement?
- Do you know of any other factors you will be exposed to, e.g. noise or other hazards?
- Are you aware of the procedures for reporting incidents and injuries at the placement provider, especially in a laboratory or workplace? Who is responsible for first-aid?
- **Are you familiar with the procedure for reporting incidents (what is termed as a near-miss) and injuries to Imperial College?** : [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/safety/safety-by-topic/accidents--incidents/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/safety/safety-by-topic/accidents--incidents/)
- If you are working outside normal hours does this restrict what you are able to do?
- Do you know the means of escape (emergency evacuation procedures) for your workplace, for your main study environment, your accommodation etc.? What are the escape routes?
- Have you received such advice/information/procedures in writing?
- Have you acquainted yourself with the College’s own procedure for handling emergencies (affecting students whilst on placement) which are brought to its attention: [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/placement-learning/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/placement-learning/)

It obviously goes without saying that you should respect the rules and regulations of the placement provider, that you should fully acquaint yourself with any policies and procedures which are relevant to you, that you respect the persons in charge of you or who are supervising/advising you and to act responsibly at all times. **Remember, that you are representing Imperial College and remain registered with Imperial College and as such are bound by the student regulations.**

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**Section 6: Health Care in the Host Country**

This section covers:

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**A. Important: Health Clearance from the College**

All students undertaking a placement abroad lasting 3 months or more (or any placements to a tropical country of any duration) should seek approval to travel (**'fitness to travel'**) from the College’s Occupational Health Service. For more information¹: [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/occupational-health/travel/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/occupational-health/travel/)

¹ When completing the **Travel Health Questionnaire** provided please ensure that you provide full details of your vaccination history (without which it is very difficult for Occupational Health to make recommendations) and **to quote the name of your departmental exchange co-ordinator to whom the decision will be sent**. Please note that clearance in the vast majority of cases can be given by email. All students must obtain clearance before proceeding to their placement and should be prepared to act on the guidance OH provide, however, if you have already departed to your host country ahead of your placement commencing please still complete and submit the questionnaire.

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You should try to do this at least 6 weeks before you travel. For most students your fitness to travel will be approved very quickly and you and your dept informed by email\(^2\) (it should form part of your dept’s procedures for managing a placement). Obviously, on the rare occasion a student may be declined approval to travel. **Naturally, for the avoidance of doubt, your dept remains responsible for giving you the green light to proceed to your placement.**

**B. Medical care in the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland**

The advice you need to take note of depends on your nationality, your destination and your type of placement (*this part will cover study-based and work-based placements separately*). Therefore, this section will highlight the UK government’s [Department for Health website](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx) and the pages you need to consult. However, there may be other websites/publications you need to consult. **Please note:** Brexit has no impact on the current situation during the period 2017-18.

The UK NHS website is: [http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx)

Study-based (University-based) Placements

Go to the above website and click first on Moving Abroad/Studying Abroad to find out about the European Health Insurance Card.

The NHS website provides full details on how a student should apply for a UK-issued EHIC and what it is designed to cover (with country specific sections). Please read carefully.

A few notes to help you understand the **European Health Insurance Card** (EHIC):

- Entitles eligible individuals to reduced-cost, sometimes free, medical treatment that becomes necessary while you are in a European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland. For EU/EEA/Swiss nationals a student EHIC is valid for the duration of their placement, while a normal EHIC (useful for short visits) is normally valid for up to 5 years. **See also the reference to pre-existing conditions below.**

- **Please note that students who are legally resident in the UK for their whole degree as a consequence of having a valid TIER 4 Student Visa** (i.e. have leave to remain in the UK) **are ALSO eligible for a UK-issued Student EHIC or normal EHIC up to the expiry date of their visa, and should attach a copy of their passport ID page and their TIER 4 visa to the EHIC application form. Incidentally, a non-EEA/Swiss national would therefore apply by post to the address stated on the application form. However, there may be restrictions on which countries your EHIC will be valid in and what it can cover.**

  **Please remember:** if you are intending to utilise the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance that you MUST have in your possession at least the normal EHIC, if your study placement is in the EU/wider-EEA/Switzerland and you are eligible for an EHIC.

- Of course, if you are normally resident elsewhere in the EEA or in Switzerland (i.e. your home country) you may already have a EHIC or if not you may prefer or find it easier to apply for an EHIC in your home country (although you will need to check that any EHIC you may have is appropriate for a study placement in yet another country).

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\(^2\) When reading your approval email, please note that you are sent a template email which is only partly amended to address your particular circumstances. You will therefore possibly read about some pre-travel and post-departure preventative actions that may not appear entirely relevant to your particular circumstances, e.g. Malaria when you are going to a non-malaria country. Please respond to the Occupational Health Service if you have any queries about your fitness to travel email notification.

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In advance of, upon arrival and during your time in the host town/city within EU/EEA/Switzerland:

- Ensure you have your EHIC (as well as other insurances: College/private) on your person at all times and that you keep a copy somewhere off your person (and know how to obtain a replacement should you lose it).
- Refer to the UK Gov Department for Health Website (see above): how to receive treatment in the host country; for information on how to go about paying for consultations and treatment; claiming part or full refunds to which you may be entitled.
  - Incidentally, non-EU/EEA/Swiss nationals might wish to consult their own country’s government health dept websites for appropriate advice on whether there are reciprocal arrangements in place between your home country and the host country.
- Refer also to information from the placement provider (university) about what to do to receive treatment locally. You should find out the names of local doctors and dentists, as well as the location of the local public hospital. **However, not all providers of treatment will be available to holders of the EHIC as only treatment provided under the relevant state scheme is covered.** For example in Germany a student with a EHIC would normally present it at the local sickness insurance office where they would discover what local health services they were entitled to and could use.
- Be mindful that access to **dentists** may be limited and may involve payment which might not be refundable.
- Remember: keep all original receipts, bills, prescriptions & labels (take photocopies for yourself).
- Generally speaking, should you need to make a claim for a refund under EHIC you should do so whilst you are still in the host country, although there are countries where this is not possible. However please note that the section on the UK EHIC website entitled ‘Claiming a Refund’ (ensure you read this) refers to a UK-based service which can handle claims made when you return to the UK as claims can take a long time to resolve. If your onward destination is not the UK (maybe you are graduating straight away upon completion of your placement) then do try and claim when you are still in the host country. Make sure you know what you cannot claim on the EHIC and ensure that you submit a claim on the College Overseas Travel Insurance policy. However note that this can only be for emergency medical (not including dental/optical) treatment received whilst on your placement (see the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance: pages 38-44).

**Pre-existing Conditions:** If you are in need of treatment, regular medication, injections or blood tests for pre-existing conditions while abroad, EHIC normally covers you. In the case of medications it will be necessary to check that the medicines you require are available in the host country. If it is possible to take supplies with you, do check beforehand that there are no restrictions on their entry into the host country. If you have special dietary requirements you will need to check the availability of foodstuffs, etc., in the host country and be prepared to take additional supplies with you. If you are being prescribed special foodstuffs by your GP, consider how this will be continued.

- Of course, if you are relying on a private health insurance policy you should contact the Insurer for advice as to who you are authorised to use in a particular country/city.

**Work Placements: Working for a Foreign Employer**
If you go to work in another EEA country or Switzerland for a foreign employer you may be required to pay insurance contributions to that country’s social security scheme. That means you do not require an EHIC for accessing health care in the host country. However, you will need to
get an EHIC from the country you are working in to cover you for any visits you make to other countries. If you currently hold a UK-issued EHIC, you should return it to the EHIC Enquiries service.

C. Medical care outside the European Economic Area and Switzerland

All students (study-based and work-based placements) are covered by the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance (subject to certain actions on the part of the student, about which see the relevant section of this Handbook), however, they are advised to check whether such insurance satisfies the host country’s health insurance requirements for visitors (often linked to visa requirements where those are applicable).

If not then you will need to consider what private medical insurance you need (or may already have and in which case whether it is sufficient).

- As a starting point, UK nationals should consult the Department of Health’s HealthCare Abroad web-site and any information provided by the placement provider. The UK website is: http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx
- While, non-UK nationals should consult their own government health web-site as well as any information provided by the placement provider.

However, students planning to undertake university-based or other types of placements in the following countries will wish to note:

- **Australia**: If you require a student visa in order to enter Australia you will be required to purchase compulsory health insurance as part of the visa application.
- **USA**: Most, if not all, US universities require the compulsory purchase of a health insurance policy to comply with visa requirements.
  - While some may have waiver procedures in place should you be able to identify an acceptable private insurance plan, please note that it is highly unlikely that the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance will meet with waiver requirements because it is not an explicit health insurance, rather it provides cover for medical expenses. The cost of such health plans is normally quite expensive and you need to factor the cost into your budget. If you choose to purchase a suitable policy from those recommended by the host university then you might also wish to check when you would need to pay for it (perhaps the option to pay in instalments is available).
  - We can also bring your attention to an insurance product provided by Gallagher Student Health and Special Risk which we have been advised will meet with visa requirements. Access to their website is for UK resident students and includes a Policy Summary/Key facts and Policy Wording, how to access medical care, find a doctor etc (helpline): www.gallagherstudent.com/UKiss
ARRANGING A PLACEMENT (Part 3)

PLANNING YOUR BUDGET, and OTHER FINANCIAL ASPECTS/ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN UNDERTAKING A PLACEMENT ABROAD

In the context of your whole degree, undertaking a placement abroad (either for part of the academic year or for those for whom it is possible for the whole academic/calendar year) does not necessarily mean that your overall costs will increase, although for some students they may.

This part of the handbook aims to provide insight into various financial aspects of undertaking a placement abroad which will hopefully assist you to plan your budget and gauge when funds will be available. However, again it does not claim to be an a-z guide. Therefore, in planning your budget you should always discuss with others, who may include your bank, your family and other financial sponsors (providers of grants, scholarships and loans).

Key aims are to identify:
1. Whether undertaking a placement will impact on the tuition fee you pay to Imperial College for the year in which your placement takes place. Note: This is strictly limited to some full year undergraduate placements and postgraduate research study leave.
2. If access to your normal sources of funding (tuition and/or living costs) will vary as a consequence of undertaking a placement; Note: The section below on UK government financial support is only relevant to Home students. Other students who access funding from their own country of residence may need to investigate the impact of undertaking a placement abroad with the relevant source.
3. If any existing costs may vary as a consequence of undertaking your placement; for example, some placements may be sufficiently long enough for you to dispense with the cost of accommodation in London for the duration of your placement, and with a few exceptions accommodation elsewhere will be less than that paid in London.
4. What additional costs you expect to incur while undertaking your placement; for example, travel and visa costs, or perhaps new accommodation costs due to you having to continue to pay for existing accommodation in London.
5. Whether there are any new sources of funding which may be applicable to your placement.

Students may find this external website of use: http://www.taxguideforstudents.org.uk/
Section 1: Tuition Fees payable to a host university/college

For a study-based or work-based placement arranged within the framework of a bilateral student exchange agreement a student is not required to pay any tuition fees to the host institution.

Otherwise, you should be prepared to pay a fee to the host institution.

Undergraduate year abroad students in the Department of Earth Science and Engineering given the opportunity by their home department to apply to other approved institutions (but with whom no bi-lateral student exchange agreement exists) will also normally need to pay a fee to the receiving university/college. Such students should check with the Academic Tutor in the Department of Earth Science and Engineering what that fee will be.

Section 2: Other non-tuition charges levied by a host university/college

Some students will be charged a semester or registration fee at the beginning of each university semester/term, especially in Germany and USA. This is legitimate if students of the university concerned normally pay them as they often allow you subsidised access to services, including local transport. They are common in the USA and Germany.

Business School PGT students preparing for a student exchange placement as part of the Campus Abroad Program at Bocconi University will pay a “participation fee”. The “participation fee” is reduced for exchange students to remove the tuition element.

Other service related payments required by universities might be on an individual basis and if students of the university concerned normally pay them they are also legitimate, e.g. compulsory medical insurance, housing insurance or sports insurance, local transport concessions, printing costs, perhaps local taxes levied by universities (e.g. stamp tax in Italy).

If you are an Erasmus student (Europe) then you should not be charged anything entitled a tuition or application fee. If you are then you should contact a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

The relevant office responsible for visiting students at the host institution will be happy to respond to queries.

If you are in doubt about any fee you are requested to pay please feel free to email a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk. Registry can check the agreement in place with the partner university if necessary.

Section 3: Tuition Fees (payable to Imperial College in 2017-18) by Undergraduate Year Abroad students

Some students will benefit from a tuition fee reduction.

Go to: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/tuition-fees/undergraduate-tuition-fees/2017-18
Section 4: Tuition Fees (payable to Imperial College in 2017-18) by Undergraduate Year in Industry placements abroad

All students will benefit from a tuition fee reduction.

Go to: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/tuition-fees/undergraduate-tuition-fees/2017-18

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Section 5: Tuition Fees (payable to Imperial College in 2017-18) for any other undergraduate or postgraduate work or study placement

Undergraduate students continue to pay the appropriate tuition fee at the full rate to Imperial College for the year in which the placement takes place.

Postgraduate students will also continue to pay the appropriate tuition fee at the full rate to Imperial College for the year in which the placement takes place EXCEPT PhD students who if they spend 3 months or more abroad under study leave procedures (see also page 8) might be eligible for a tuition fee remission (reduction) at the discretion of the home department.

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Section 6: UK Government Financial Support and the Imperial Bursary
(Information for Home undergraduate students only: work & study-based placements abroad)

"Home" undergraduate students who will be spending a year or part of a year away from College in 2017-18 remain eligible to be assessed for the following sources of student support:

- **UK Government Financial Support** A “home” student can apply as usual for 2017-18 UK government financial support using their student finance account and will be get sent a Course Aboard form to complete. Registry will then certify your placement to your UK student funding authority. Please email student.records@imperial.ac.uk to confirm your placement details and remember to copy your email to your departmental Undergraduate Office who will need to verify your provisional dates of attendance for your placement. If you are not sent a Course Abroad Form, but are asked to verify your placement details by some other means email a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

- **Imperial Bursary** A “Home” student will be assessed by the College’s Student Financial Support Team for their Imperial Bursary: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/ug/fees-and-funding/bursaries-and-scholarships/imperial-bursary/
  - A Year Aboard student will receive 15% of their Bursary,
  - A Year in Industry student will be assessed based on whether it is a paid placement or not.
Additionally, you may be entitled to a tuition fee reduction for the year in which your Year Abroad or Year in Industry takes place (see sections 3 and 4 above) you will need to request a smaller tuition fee loan or grant from your Student Finance Authority.

**Please note that Undergraduate Year Abroad students who plan to be away from College in 2018-19 should refer for up-to-date information to the Year Abroad Hand-out (which is issued in late January 2018 via Departmental Exchange Co-ordinators).**

Further information and contacts for UK Government Financial Support and Imperial Bursaries
General advice from the College’s Student Financial Support Team:
- [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/undergraduate-funding](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/undergraduate-funding)
- [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/undergraduate-funding/loans-and-grants/funding-for-placements/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/undergraduate-funding/loans-and-grants/funding-for-placements/)
- [https://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/ug/fees-and-funding/bursaries-and-scholarships/imperial-bursary/](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/ug/fees-and-funding/bursaries-and-scholarships/imperial-bursary/)
Submit an enquiry at: [https://imperial.service-now.com/student/new_request_list.do](https://imperial.service-now.com/student/new_request_list.do)
For full information regarding student support:
- Student Finance England [https://gov.uk/student-finance](https://gov.uk/student-finance)
- Students Finance Northern Ireland: [www.studentfinanceni.co.uk](www.studentfinanceni.co.uk)
- Student Awards Agency for Scotland: [www.saas.gov.uk](www.saas.gov.uk)
- Students Finance Wales: [www.studentfinancewales.co.uk](www.studentfinancewales.co.uk)

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Section 7: **Experiencing Financial Hardship?**

If you are experiencing financial problems please review the information at: [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/student-support-fund/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/student-support-fund/)

If this occurs during your placement seek advice from the host organisation.

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Section 8: **Managing and accessing money (Banking) whilst abroad**

This section was last updated with the kind assistance of the University Liaison Manager at the Imperial College (Walkway) branch of Santander. As a student of Imperial College London you are very welcome to seek the guidance of the University Liaison Manager by emailing santander.universities@santander.co.uk (if you email please write “Enquiry from Imperial College London Student” in the subject line.)

**General:** There are three things you will need to do well before leaving the UK:
1. Draw up a budget for the year. What items are new (such as travel), what items costs less (perhaps accommodation) and what items cost more? Do some calculations and take into
account any extra sources of finance (such as extra student loan or a mobility grant) and any savings (such as on tuition fees).

2. Then talk to your existing bank about how to manage your bank account while away, as the guidance which follows maybe open to local variation depending on your personal situation. **Please note the information here is open to change so do rule out the need to seek up-to-date guidance.**

3. Consider the option of opening an account in the host country. Will you benefit? How easy is it? *See page 56.*

**A good relationship with your bank is important** because you will not be on hand to check things on a day-to-day basis. So it is certainly worthwhile making an appointment with your branch to arrange the following:

- **Change of address:** make sure the bank knows where you are and when. If you have credit cards, make sure they know your new address. If you are not confident about security in your host country, amend your address to ‘care of’ your parents or a reliable contact. Think about how you will access your bank statements especially for the purpose of checking if money sent to you has been received.

- **Overdraft facilities:** banks should be encouraging you to plan your finances in advance and will normally look for a rough budget planner for the whole year to substantiate your requests. If you make a realistic, albeit slightly exaggerated (always be prepared for an emergency) estimate of your needs, an overdraft limit sufficient to keep you liquid while away would normally be considered favourably.

- **Cards and cheque books:** most UK debit cards will work under the Maestro/Cirrus system abroad. This means that you will have access to a vast network of ATMs abroad in order to obtain local currency direct from your current account at home. However, while the exchange rates used by a UK bank are better than at a Bureaux de Change transaction charges apply so perhaps this is mostly convenient as a way of getting cash only in an emergency. Of growing relevance is the fact that your card can be used as a debit card at retailers and banks abroad. Your bank should be able to tell you how you can use your card and the degree of availability of such services in your host country. If you have a sterling cheque book this cannot be used abroad but you may need to take it with you so you can mail cheques to cover any bills at home as they fall due.

- **Travellers’ cheques:** again, these are normally commission-free to students, although notice is normally required when ordering. American Express and Thomas Cook normally issue them on the spot but always compare at least two issuers to make sure you are getting a good exchange rate. Travellers’ cheques are a secure way of taking funds abroad as they are insured against loss. They can either be deposited in an account or cashed at a bank or Bureaux de Change. You can also use travellers’ cheques to spend in shops but keep them somewhere other than your wallet/purse in case of loss.

- **Credit cards:** these are both convenient and cost effective to use, as well as giving you access to an additional borrowing source if need be.

  - For purchases they offer the safest and most efficient option. In general, if goods or services bought by credit card are not received as contracted and a refund is not given by the retailer, your credit card company will honour the commitment.
Credit cards can also be used to obtain money from ATMs but only do this as a last resort. It is better to keep track of your spending by using your debit card than by borrowing money on your credit card. If the balance is not repaid in full when due, cash advances attract a higher rate of interest than purchases. With some credit cards interest is applied automatically upon using the card for a cash withdrawal, and will be charged on the bill regardless of whether the repayment is made in full or not. This may be quite important if you plan on using your credit card to make regular cash withdrawals, as you could end up incurring fees/interest charges with every transaction.

Settling a Credit Card Bill: You also need to think a month or so ahead to when the credit card bill will arrive. It may be best to set up a direct debit to repay the full balance every month direct from your current account. Alternatively, you can post a cheque back to Britain, although if this arrives late you might be charged a late payment fee as well as interest. If possible, try to increase your interest free/reduced rate overdraft rather than paying the much higher rates on outstanding credit card balances.

- **Internet banking:** this option is increasingly more convenient and gives you much more control. All banks now offer it, normally free of charge, so the only reason for not taking this up would be if you did not have the hardware or software to access your account this way.

- **Telephone banking:** UK banks use local call rates for their automated telephone banking, so this is not an option to keep track of your account while away. Of course, you could arrange fortnightly bank statements to be sent if you wished.

- **SWIFT:** in an emergency, friends or relatives can wire funds to you using SWIFT. If you provide the sender with the name, full postal address of the bank most convenient to you and that particular branch’s SWIFT number (each bank branch has a SWIFT number also called a **BIC code**, a ‘routing’ or ‘ABA’ number), money can be urgently wired to you. This will cost the person sending the money in the region of £20 and they will have to arrange it through their bank. The sender can also have your bank charges paid from their own bank account to save you that money. Alternatively, an International Bank Account Number (**IBAN**) may assist with this type of transaction and your UK bank will be able to provide it.

**Opening a bank account in the host country**

By now you may be thinking of opening a bank account in your host country. Remember, banks are profit-making institutions and unless they charge fees for account holders, they are not likely to make a profit out of a student wanting an account for less than a whole year. So they may not be too receptive to your enquiries.

However, goodwill is a different thing altogether. Some banks are prepared to open limited loss-making accounts in order to retain a good international reputation or to satisfy educational institutions which bank with them. Always check carefully the benefits of opening an account compared with banking direct from the UK, as services vary and what might be the norm in the UK may be different elsewhere. In Germany for example, payment of rent by direct debit can save you money on a monthly basis. In France overdrafts are illegal. In Italy the post office (La Posta) has been recommended as a good alternative, whilst in Spain, accounts are fairly easy to open. The best advice, if you are not sure, is to consult the largest “high street” bank.
To open an account you will probably need:

- identification (passport or international driving license), address and proof of university registration/employee/student trainee status;
- a reference from your UK bank or six months' bank statements and proof of income.

There may be delays in the actual account being ready for use. You should not expect to be offered any credit facilities (e.g. credit cards) so you would be advised to take your UK ones with you for emergencies and purchase protection (see above). Trying to open an account in your host country by post before you leave the UK is in most cases impossible and it is often better to get a ‘feel’ for a bank in person rather than trusting correspondence.

The following countries (2017) use the Euro: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Ireland, Austria, Slovakia, Estonia, Slovenia, Malta, Cyprus and Finland.

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Regarding the following sections: 9, 10 and 11

Ensure you have read the explanation about the Erasmus+ Programme on page 5, including eligible host countries.

With the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union

The content of sections 9, 10 and 11 is the sole responsibility of Imperial College and the European Union is not liable for any use that may be made of the information.

Erasmus+ Grants for Mobility and financial support for language courses is provided by the EU Commission, as described below, are managed nationally by the UK Erasmus National Agency (currently the British Council) and managed locally by Imperial College London (by means of a grant agreement between Imperial College & the British Council).

Section 9: Erasmus grants for “studies” (study placements) and for “traineeships” (work placements): Undergraduate and Postgraduate students

What is an Erasmus+ Grant for Mobility?
Erasmus grants target undergraduate and postgraduate\(^4\) students who undertake study (study placements) or traineeships (work/research/project placements) in eligible “programme” countries (see page 5) as part of their degree, or perhaps in the case of undergraduates for extra ECTS credit. Please note that Switzerland is not part of Erasmus+.

An Erasmus mobility grant (managed by a contract between the student and Imperial College) is based on a monthly rate (using the EU’s assessment of the living costs in the host country), and should be viewed as a supplementary award, the objective of which is to contribute towards

\(^4\) This includes postgraduate research students, so long as the placement period in question is managed formally as “study leave” as part of the student’s PhD degree registration.
any additional costs of undertaking a period abroad most notably travel. It is not meant to be a full living allowance.

There are two types of Erasmus grant, both of which are calculated against certified dates of attendance at the host organisation (which means a grant is disbursed in two amounts with a first payment amounting to c.70% of the grant’s provisional value disbursed normally in the two month period after the student has confirmed their arrival at the host organisation and then a second payment disbursed normally in the two month period after the student has confirmed their departure date from the host organisation):

- **Erasmus Grant for Studies**: study placements of 3 - 12 months organised within the framework of an official Erasmus student exchange agreement. Students who have low household incomes (criteria apply) or who have a disability may qualify for extra support.
- **Erasmus Grant for a “traineeship”**: For work/research/project periods of 2 – 12 months. Students who have a disability may qualify for extra support. To remind you that this includes relevant internships undertaken for extra-ECTS credit, including the IAESTE scheme.

Recipients of an Erasmus grant sign up to the Erasmus Student Charter: [https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/higher-education-study-or-train-abroadgrant-rate-2017-18](https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/higher-education-study-or-train-abroadgrant-rate-2017-18) (British Council) general grant information, including eligibility criteria, grant rates and how to apply for a grant. Please note that this information may not be posted until 30 June 2017 so don’t be puzzled if it still reads for 2016-17 if you click on the links before then.

In the meantime you can view here (British Council) general grant information, including information on grant rates for 2017-18 so that you have a good idea how much you might expect to receive should your application be approved: [https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/higher-education-study-or-train-abroadgrant-rate-2017-18](https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/higher-education-study-or-train-abroadgrant-rate-2017-18)

| Important: | In 2017-18, all participants in the Erasmus+ programme who will undertake part or all of their study or work-placement plan in the official language of the host country (as opposed to undertaking the whole study or work placement in English) will be required to undertake an on-line assessment (managed by the EU Commission) both prior to departure (i.e. undergraduates will typically do this “assessment” over the summer if it has not proven possible to undertake it before the end of the academic year) and at the end of their period abroad. Information on this requirement and how students are identified will be provided by the College alongside information concerning Erasmus+ mobility grants. However, you can |

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5 The vast majority of exchange agreements apply to the undergraduate Year Abroad, although there are a few linked to PGT courses in EEE and the Institute of Shock Physics. Your learning agreement for studies will be integral to the grant process.

6 Your learning agreement for a traineeship will be integral to the grant process.

7 While the Erasmus+ programme allows universities the option of using this type of funding for post-graduation work placements you should note that Imperial College has opted not to pursue this at this current time.
be assured that the outcome of this stand-alone “assessment” will not normally impact on any decision already made by your home academic department to approve your placement.

Free Erasmus on-line language tuition course: A student who is officially mobile under Erasmus but whose study or traineeship period is only delivered in English OR they did not apply for a grant, can also request access to free Erasmus on-line tuition courses (for the language of the host country; some countries are not covered) for use during their placement. They will be reminded of this when they apply for a grant or if they have not applied for a grant they should email a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk. The proviso being that they submit their request at least a week before their intended start date at the host organisation and that they undertake a language assessment in the language they wish to receive tutoring in before being provided with access to the tuition module (ideally all before they commence their placement).

Important: Students going to either ETH Zurich or EPF Lausanne in Switzerland for their UG Year Abroad should read section 13 since Switzerland is no longer a programme country within Erasmus+.

Section 10: Tuition Fee costs for Language Courses in the Host Country
(limited to countries which are also Erasmus ‘programme countries’)

With the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union

If you undertake a language course (tuition in the language of the host country or region) in the host country (perhaps at the host university or company) immediately prior to a “study” or “work/research/project placement” period abroad commencing or during the said period you are advised to inform the Registry (email: a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk) since the College will consider you for additional support as follows and if funds allow:

- Language Course Tuition Fee Award: this award would form a contribution of normally no more than 50% towards any tuition fees you may have paid for such a language course.
  - Please submit proof of payment for the course and identify the exact amount which has been paid for tuition fees (since sometimes you may have paid en masse for more than tuition, i.e. accommodation for that period, meals etc). This would normally be a copy of the receipt from the language course provider.
  - To be clear: this language course tuition fee award is administered separately to any Erasmus grant, and you don’t have to be in receipt of an Erasmus Grant to benefit.
- Any extra payment you are eligible for will be made retrospectively, so ensure you are able to support yourself financially for the course itself.

Section 11: Subsistence costs for Language Courses undertaken in Erasmus Programme Countries (where not factored into an Erasmus Grant)

With the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union
Subsistence Award:
- If you attend a language course this particular financial award is normally limited to language courses which end more than 2 weeks (14 days) before the official start of the “study” or “placement” period (i.e. before the certified start date).
- Please submit dates of attendance/completion of the language course to a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk. This would normally be a statement issued by the language course provider.
- Such an award would not exceed the value of an Erasmus grant studies for the same duration/country, but may be less, regardless as to whether the placement being undertaken is an Erasmus traineeship.
- To be very clear: this subsistence award is administered separately to the Erasmus “study” or “traineeship” grant.
- If you happen not to be in receipt of an Erasmus Grant for your Erasmus mobility period just submit proof of attendance regardless of the end date of the language course ahead of your placement commencing.
- Any extra payment you are eligible for will be made retrospectively, so ensure you are able to support yourself financially for the course itself.
- Please note that if the end date of the language course is within 2 weeks (14 days) of the official start of the “study” or “placement” period (i.e. before the certified start date) then if you expect to be in receipt of an Erasmus grant attendance on the language course will be factored into your Erasmus grant and this will also cover the period between the end of the language course and the official start of your placement period.

Section 12: Departmental support

Where there are no 3rd party sources of funding it is possible that a student’s dept (or their faculty) may provide support for travel or have knowledge of funding that can be applied for. Ask your department (Senior Tutor or Director of UG Studies; PG Tutor or Director of PG Studies or Research). However, please note that your home department is not obliged to assist you.

Section 13: Other awards

- Mobility Grants for official exchange placements (ordinarily study-based UG Year Abroad; Year 3 Materials Industrial Placements) at ETH Zurich and EPF Lausanne:
  - In 2014 Switzerland was suspended indefinitely as a “programme country” of the Erasmus+ Key Action 1 programme for the mobility of higher education students. Consequently, the College signed Swiss-European Mobility Programme (SEMP) exchange agreements with ETHZ and EPFL.
  - Imperial College students mobile under these new arrangements to either ETH or EPFL will be considered for a SEMP mobility grant by the host university.
    - A separate application for this grant is NOT required, and the host university will inform students about their eligibility for such a grant once their admission has been confirmed. Therefore, while it cannot be guaranteed it is highly likely.
    - Payment is made in Swiss Francs. A year abroad student will normally be paid in two instalments (Sept and February). The value of the grant is currently c.360
CHF per month of registered attendance (approximately 300 €). The funds are kindly provided by the Swiss Gov and the host university.

- To confirm: a student mobile under such arrangements is no longer an Erasmus student and will receive no Erasmus funding from Imperial College.
  - Students who plan to pursue other “work/project placement” periods at either ETHZ or EPFL should note that the SEMP grant may also be available at the discretion of the host university. Such students are encouraged to draw their plans to the attention of the Assistant Registrar (Placements): a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

- **DUO-Singapore Exchange Fellowship Award:**
  - This is relevant to UG students spending a full academic year at the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University. Successful candidates will receive a maximum of €4000 that can help greatly with their expenses.
  - Information and an application form can be found on the partner university’s website. Application window for the DUO Awards is **normally February to March**.

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**Section 14: Miscellaneous Financial Information**

- **Aide au lodgement in France**
  - Students occupying certain types of accommodation can normally apply for housing allowance (or benefit) which is commonly called **Aide au lodgement** (managed within the Caisse d'Allocations Familiales process).
  - Read very carefully the general guidance for Exchange students provided by the host university to find out if you would be eligible and how to apply. It is normally worth the effort to secure this allowance.

- **Taxe d’habitation in France**
  - (equivalent to UK Council tax) is due from an individual who on 1 January is registered as officially renting a flat (furnished or unfurnished) or living in property that they own.
  - The liability for the **taxe d’habitation** is not related to the amount a person earns or to whether he/she pays income tax. This means that English students are liable as much as any other French citizen in France.
  - The French authorities issue bills for the **taxe d’habitation** in October. However, avoid admin complications as far as possible (and the possibility of being charged interest), by settling any account you find yourself responsible for before leaving France. **Please Note:** the French authorities are often extremely late in issuing the demand notice which may well reach you after your return to the UK, even a year later. Should you rely on the tax office to catch up with you after your departure, you must at least ensure that you pay promptly when they do, or you will be charged 10% interest on each subsequent bill. Bear in mind that once you return to your studies, you might find it much harder to pay than you would at the end of your placement. If you persist in refusing to pay, you run the risk of court action or ending up an international credit backlist.
  - **Read very carefully the general guidance for Exchange students provided by the host university to find out if they make reference.** An external website which has insight is: http://www.frenchpropertylinks.com/essential/taxe-fonciere.html
ON YOUR PLACEMENT

See also previous sections: including ‘planning your placement’ on pages 9-18 and the health and safety section on pages 45-47.

Reminder:

**Before departing on your placement** you will have completed a:

Pre-departure Checklist and Emergency Contacts Form (or a departmental equivalent).

[http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/placement-learning/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/placement-learning/) (scroll down to “forms”)

Remember to:

- hand a copy to your departmental Placement Manager, and Placement Tutor if applicable;
- hand a copy to your supervisor/co-ordinator at the Placement Provider upon your arrival;
- retain a copy on your person throughout your placement

Students must appreciate that there are differences in the way universities, research institutes and companies abroad operate. Finding your footing and adapting to these differences is all part of the placement abroad experience. Finding out about how your host institution/company functions before you leave on your placement will help you be better prepared for these differences.

For example, in a university abroad a personal tutor system might not exist and often it is the culture for students to be left to discover for themselves what they are required to do at the start of term, such as registering for examinations.

However, if you believe you are being treated in a way which runs contrary to that experienced by the local students/staff at the placement provider you should discuss this immediately with your home department. This covers issues related directly to the placement itself but it also covers issues related to basic equal opportunities in the host environment. Most placement providers in most countries should have statements on equal opportunities and these should be applicable to you whilst you are on placement (however, cultural differences may exist in some countries so it may depend on the country in which your placement is taking place).

Section 1: Keeping in touch and dealing with emergencies

**Maintaining Contact**

Your department should indicate to you how they plan to stay in contact with you.

- Ideally, your Placement Manager/Tutor should provide you with at least two, preferably three, reliable email contacts that are open to being contacted in the routine course of events and in an emergency (although obviously you will be aware that staff would normally be only available in office hours) and a monthly Skype meeting with your Placement Manager or Tutor would also be a constructive means of maintaining contact (and is the minimum as advised by College).
• It is also recommended that you advise your home department about any unscheduled/irregular absences from your placement provider, especially if you are undertaking a study-based placement at a university/college and need to be absent during term/semester/exams. For example, prolonged illness and accidents, trips home which impact on attendance at the placement provider. But not holidays or weekend trips home/in the host country.
• If you return to London during your placement and have time to come back to Imperial then that would be another opportunity to keep in contact with your Placement Manager or Tutor.
• See “visits from your dept” below.
• Students in attendance at Imperial on a TIER 4 Student visa should also see pages 68-69.

Email obviously makes keeping in contact much quicker, but only if all parties are aware of each other’s obligations in this respect.

Organise yourself:
• Before you arrive at your placement provider ensure you have an appointment to see your supervisor/contact.
• Email your home department at Imperial College as soon as you have arrived. Please note that a placement provider, especially a university, may be slow at giving you working access to computer work stations and wi-fi access so if you do not have private wi-fi access make safe use of free-to-access on-campus provision to begin with.
• Subsequently, you may also benefit from sending regular bulletins to your department rather than waiting for problems to arise. This way you might find assistance and advice being offered which stop niggling issues, both academic and non-academic, evolving into major problems. Perhaps your home department requires you to keep a log of your activities at the placement provider, and even if they do not you may find it a useful way of reflecting on your experiences come the end of the placement.

Emergencies
Make yourself familiar with Imperial College’s own procedure which explains how the College will respond to emergency situations communicated to College (by you, by friends and family, by emergency services, by the placement provider) including when received out of office hours or concerning situations which the College itself becomes aware of (e.g. natural disasters).
http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/placement-learning/

Your “study or placement/training plan”
Whatever your type of placement you will need to confirm at some stage its content. All departments should indicate at what stage the content needs to be finally approved. Ideally this will be before your placement commences. Subsequent modifications should be agreed to by all three parties. Always refer to guidance from your department on this subject. See also pages 9-18 and 20-23 (ECTS)

Visits from your department
If you are a Year Abroad student on placement in Europe your department at Imperial College may undertake one or more visits to see you. However, the College does not consider it compulsory if contact is being satisfactorily maintained by other means.
If you are undertaking other types of placement you should ask if your department intends to undertake any supervisory/pastoral visits.

You may wish to have input into when such visits take place. Any visits should not be seen in isolation but as part of the normal process of supervisory action and pastoral care undertaken by your department (by phone, email or by personal visit, including should you come back to London during your placement).

To confirm that visits by your home department to see you whilst on placement are not compulsory.

Thinking about your return (as appropriate)
- If you are a Year Abroad or Year in Industry student on placement in your penultimate year, you will wish to ensure that your department are keeping you abreast of the normal routine for deciding upon final year options/projects. Indeed, you might need to think about this as early as your second year as study abroad options may be influenced by what you might envisage doing in your final year.
- PhD students: see page 16.

Section 2: Arranging accommodation for the next academic year (if relevant)

If this applies you may need to think about this earlier than you might do otherwise.

Private Accommodation
- Imperial College’s Student Accommodation Centre
  [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/campus-life/accommodation/private-accommodation/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/campus-life/accommodation/private-accommodation/) should not be overlooked especially if you have not had cause to use their facilities in the past, so check this out before you leave to see if they can help you while you are away.
- If you need assistance with finding suitable private accommodation maybe your friends who are staying in London can help you while you are away.

Undergraduate Imperial College Halls of Residence
Rooms in Imperial College halls of residence are not normally available to final year undergraduates. However, if you are an undergraduate and think you have grounds for applying for a room in a College hall of residence for the period upon your return you are free to ask the Student Accommodation Centre ([student.hub@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:student.hub@imperial.ac.uk)).

Section 3: Thinking beyond the placement – planning your career

If your placement is to last a full year we suggest you consider your career options before your placement and visit the Careers Service. The Careers Service is available to help you make career decisions and guide you through the opportunities available. Being away from College does not mean you need to be isolated or miss out on career opportunities.

Graduate Careers
If you are out in your final year, you may have to make career decisions prior to leaving or during your placement. Discuss your position with the Careers Service. Initially, you can find help on
their website (www.imperial.ac.uk/careers) as well as information on how to book an appointment with one of the team. There is a large range of resources to keep you informed. If, whilst on placement, you need help with your CV and covering letters you may email careers@imperial.ac.uk and a one of the team will give you guidance.

It is becoming increasingly evident from research undertaken by the university sector that work or work-based placements are a gateway to permanent employment.

Vacation Opportunities
For those undergraduates undertaking a placement abroad in their penultimate year there may be options to gain valuable experience in the summer vacation on your return. Vacation work is ever an important part of employers’ recruitment strategies. Your penultimate summer also offers you the chance to work for an employer before you apply for graduate positions in the autumn. Vacation internships for 8 – 10 weeks in large organisations can often be offered exclusively to penultimate year students.

The Careers Service advertises vacancies on line through their JobsLive service which is available at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/services/jobslive and information on different types of internships can be found at http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/opportunities/internships. For advice and help with your vacation internship applications please contact internship.unit@imperial.ac.uk.

For both the above, do not forget to contact your Departmental Careers Adviser as they can inform you of opportunities directly. Also, set up email alerts with JobsLive and other student job sites to be keep abreast of vacation and graduate opportunities. You could also look into international research options such as IAESTE (www.iaeste.org.uk).

Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP)
UROP gives undergraduates the opportunity to participate in the research activities of Imperial College. Students can participate in UROP during any of their summer vacations, including the summer after they graduate. Participation will give you a chance:
- To learn at first-hand what research is all about
- To learn at your own pace by actually doing a project
- To contribute to knowledge in a field of research
- To further interests you have already developed
- To cross disciplinary boundaries
- To get your name on a scientific publication
- To get a flying start on your final-year project
- To fix yourself a PhD place for when you graduate
- To get a useful summer vacation job

Some, but by no means all, research experiences are advertised on the UROP web-site at www.imperial.ac.uk/urop or (which is most common) they can be set-up by negotiation with individual members of staff. Opportunities are mainly focused on the summer vacation. Many students receive a bursary for the work undertaken. Bursaries are normally made available by the member of staff but UROP students have been funded from a variety of sources including Imperial College, and external organisations such as The Biochemical Society, the Society of Biology and the Wellcome Trust.
You can keep up-to-date on all matters related to UROP, including funding opportunities, by checking out the web-site: www.imperial.ac.uk/urop

Applying for a Ph.D. at Imperial College while you are abroad

If you are thinking of this route after you have completed your undergraduate or postgraduate taught degree do not forget to speak to the Director of (Post) Graduate Studies in the departments which interest you before you depart on your placement so that you are aware of presentations, research funding deadlines etc.

Applying for further study abroad

Of course the world is your oyster when you are fluent in another language or have experienced a different culture. Having experienced life elsewhere returning to the UK does not always appeal!

Specifically, the following might be of interest (definitely not exhaustive!):

- DAAD for studying in Germany: www.daad.de
- the Fulbright Commission for studying in USA: www.fulbright.org.uk
**AT THE END OF YOUR PLACEMENT**

Please take note of the following:

- Your Placement Manager should naturally have specified in discussion with you when your placement provider expects your placement to end.

- Ensure you meet all deadlines for completing any academic work and do not leave it until the last minute. A reminder to ensure that before you depart on your placement you know for sure how your placement is to be assessed (and, if relevant, how any transfer of credit will be made and when this process will be undertaken).

- Study placements at a University/College: ensure you obtain a transcript (or know how to once you have left the country)

- Have you completed and returned all “grant” paperwork to the relevant person?

- **Feedback**: Your department should require you to provide one piece of formal feedback: find out what form this will take (in person, electronic or paper-based). See also pages 16-18. A generic template feedback sheet is available [here](#).

- Your home academic department may also require you to participate in a debriefing meeting to discuss the feedback. If you have any issues to raise then the feedback mechanism obviously assists, but please raise issues as soon as possible during the placement and do not wait necessarily until any debriefing.

- Specifically, your home academic department should be keen to obtain a report from you on the non-academic aspects of your placement, basically gleaning from you any information which will be of interest to future students on that placement. Please provide a report even if for some reason you are not asked.

- If you are back in your department the following year a.) volunteer yourself to speak to students who are planning to undertake that placement in the future and b.) volunteer for the **Erasmus Club** as it cannot survive without your input.

- If you graduate at the end of your placement PLEASE leave a contact email address with your department (specifically, the academic in charge of the placement opportunity). If you become a PhD student at Imperial College please do not disappear off the radar. Help the exchange programme co-ordinator in your undergraduate department if at all possible.
**SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL (OVERSEAS) STUDENTS**

This section contains information specifically for students who fit one or all of the following categories:

- those who are present in the UK on a Tier 4 Student Visa.
- those who will pay tuition fees to Imperial College at the overseas rate in 2017-18.
- Healthcare in Europe for those who are nationals of countries outside the European Union

However, it should be read in conjunction with the rest of the handbook.

**VISAS: Are you a student studying at Imperial on a Tier 4 Student Visa?**

Students who are studying at Imperial College on a Tier 4 visa have a responsibility to double-check before commencing a placement abroad as part of their degree that their visa:

- Allows provision to be able to undertake a placement; and
- Will remain valid throughout their placement abroad and allow re-entry into the UK after the conclusion of the placement. Remember that you remain enrolled at Imperial for the whole duration of your placement and must be able to travel freely in to and out of the UK during the whole of your degree.

Should your Tier 4 visa be scheduled to expire before the end of your placement abroad then contact the International Student Support team now to discuss your options: https://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/international-students/visas-and-immigration/changes-to-course-of-study/

Whilst you are studying in the UK on a Tier 4 visa the College is required to monitor your attendance when you are studying abroad on a placement. Please ensure you report to your home department (at Imperial) any unscheduled/irregular absences from the placement provider, e.g. prolonged illness and accidents, prolonged visits to the UK or to your home country which impact on attendance at the placement provider, but not formally scheduled holidays or weekend trips. This is in addition to the monitoring of your attendance (at the host organisation) by your home department.

Please refer to the International Student Support website at http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/international-students/visas-and-immigration/ for further details on protecting your immigration status in the UK.

*For advice on obtaining visas for the host country of a placement see pages 25-29.*

**Tuition Fees Payable to Imperial College (2017-18)**

*Please refer to information on pages 52-53.*

**Healthcare**

- Nationals of countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland undertaking a placement within the EEA and Switzerland are normally eligible to be considered for a UK-issued European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). However, there may be exceptions depending on the country the student is going to (see pages 47-50).
• If the placement is outside the EU, overseas students should decide whether they require extra private health insurance over and above that provided by the College’s overseas travel insurance (where applicable) and any private policy they may have. **Before you pay for private healthcare insurance, check whether your own country provides any reciprocal healthcare arrangements with the host country.**

**Insurance**

• To reaffirm that all registered students of Imperial College are normally covered by the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance when undertaking a “placement” *(except for emergency medical cover when a student is a citizen of or ordinarily domiciled in the country in which they will undertake their placement)*, which includes cover for personal liability and Personal Accident Insurance (see pages 38-44).

• You may wish to check that any private insurance cover you have (health, personal belongings, travel etc) for studying in the UK also covers you when you are resident for study or work in the host country.

• If you require a visa for the host country then there may be insurance requirements (including healthcare insurance).

**Queries** on these issues can be addressed to Registry at the usual address: 
[a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk)
Appendix

Imperial College’s Placement Learning Policy (pages 70-73)

This policy statement covers all placements which are approved components of a degree programme of the College or which receive extra ECTS credit.

The College is committed to:

1. providing placement learning opportunities of the highest quality which meet the aims and intended learning outcomes set, and provide added value within the whole learning experience;

2. providing well managed placements by making available to academic departments the administrative guidance and financial support that enables the College to meet its obligations and responsibilities as the placement organiser, including coherent staff development;

3. providing high quality student support and information for students planning, undertaking and returning from placements;

4. ensuring that, wherever possible, students with disabilities have access to placements;

5. placing students at placement providers who understand their role in providing an appropriate learning opportunity and who can meet all their obligations when hosting a student, especially regarding insurance and health and safety;

6. evolving manageable means of supporting, monitoring and evaluating placement learning opportunities;

7. extending the range of placement opportunities available to students. Departments are encouraged to develop placement learning opportunities.

The College has introduced a framework of Good Practice for External curriculum-based placements to help support and deliver on its commitments at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, including PhD study leave.

June 2014
1. Responsibilities of Imperial College

- To promote placement opportunities at the pre-admissions stage by ensuring that all relevant paper and web-based literature clearly identifies placement opportunities.
- To ensure that if access to a particular placement opportunity requires admission to a particular degree programme (especially where transfer to such a degree programme is not guaranteed after registration) that candidates are provided with clear guidance, for example in relevant paper and web-based literature, at open days, at interviews and in correspondence.
- To ensure that for each placement learning opportunity the relevant learning outcomes and added value are identified and made clear in relevant programme descriptions.
- To ensure that placements only take place in settings where the intended learning outcomes can be achieved.
- That as a minimum requirement a risk-based assessment is undertaken for each placement or group of placements at the same Placement Provider. This enables the College to demonstrate that it has taken into account statutory requirements and shown duty of care in placing a student.
- To ensure that only appropriately qualified students are able to progress to undertake the placement, and that each placement will be approved in writing by the student’s department and communicated in writing to both the student and the Placement Provider.
- To ensure that each student who participates in a placement receives appropriate guidance and support (before, during, and as appropriate, after the placement) from a designated departmental Placement Manager. Specifically, provision should be made for each student:
  - To receive detailed information as to how work undertaken on placement will be supervised (including the scheduling of any visits by the Placement Manager and/or Placement Supervisor/Tutor) and assessed/marked, and how those assessments will be moderated (including for placements undertaken abroad in a university setting, the transfer of credit);
  - To partake in relevant briefing and training before and during the placement, including general health and safety advice and being made aware of the College’s emergency procedure.
  - To engage with the Placement Manager to discuss features of the placement, feedback from the Placement Provider and to raise issues of concern.
  - To receive continuing support from his/her academic department which should include, as far as is practicable, a visit or visits from a member of academic staff of their home department.
  - To receive specialist advice and guidance if they have additional support needs.
  - To provide formal feedback to the Placement Manager, and wherever possible discuss this with them.
- To ensure that the College monitors the attendance of all students on a placement, with particular reference to those who the College has sponsored for a TIER 4 student visa.
- To ensure that adequate provision is provided for the development of academic and administrative staff involved in placement learning.
- To ensure that appropriate internal review mechanisms (at all levels and involving all parties) are in place to monitor and evaluate placement learning opportunities.

The College has introduced a framework of Good Practice for External curriculum-based placements to help support and deliver on its responsibilities.
2. Rights and Responsibilities of the Imperial College student

- Each student of Imperial College who undertakes a placement should expect:
  - to have access to appropriate and relevant information and support with which to plan, organise and execute their placement;
  - to receive effective supervision;
  - to be placed in a safe environment;
  - to be treated in accordance with applicable legislation of the host country (statutory workplace legislation or statutory legislation applicable to a safe university learning environment);
  - the results of the placement to be assessed within a timeframe laid down by the home academic department.

- The College itself expects each participant:
  - to abide by the requirements of their home academic department and continue to observe the College’s Student Regulations;
  - to act with increased self-responsibility whilst preparing for and undertaking their placement, especially when they are being physically hosted by the Placement Provider; to be mindful of their role as a representative of Imperial College;
  - to attend advertised briefing sessions/meetings and to have accessed all information which has been brought to their attention;
  - to inform the College of any personal factors (e.g. health, disability, linguistic or cultural) that may affect the level of risk associated with undertaking the placement or may require adjustment on the part of the Placement Provider; to inform the Placement Provider of any access or support needs that may require adjustments;
  - to complete the Student Placements Pre-departure Checklist and Emergency Contacts Form prior to departure, to retain it throughout their placement and to be familiar with the procedure to be followed when confronted by an emergency; to alert relevant parties to “problems” as soon as is practical;
  - to follow with due care all requirements made of them by the Placement Provider, especially with reference to health and safety;
  - to maintain good and prompt communication with their home academic department by responding promptly to emails/letters, completing all reports and other requests for information etc and by maintaining regular contact with their home department and the host supervisor;
  - to consult with their home academic department prior to seeking any changes in the terms and duration of the placement;
  - to provide access to all records maintained during the placement to their host supervisor. Access should also be provided to the Imperial Placement Manager or Tutor except where there is an issue of commercial secrecy or national security;
  - To report all accidents they are involved in using the appropriate College procedure, and to provide feedback on any health and safety concerns that are not addressed by their Placement Provider;
  - To complete at least one piece of formal feedback.
3. **What is expected of the Placement Provider**

- It is assumed that a Placement Provider will assess the suitability of any student who is nominated by Imperial College or puts themselves forward for consideration.

- A Placement Provider reserves the right to refuse to appoint or admit any student.

- It is assumed that the Placement Provider is prepared to enter into any relevant correspondence related to the planning and undertaking of a placement by a student of Imperial College, including completion of the College’s Placement Provider form where appropriate.

- When agreeing to host a student of Imperial College the Placement Provider will be confirming that:
  - It can offer an appropriate study/work programme or project and will nominate a placement supervisor who will be responsible for making arrangements for day-to-day supervision of the student;
  - It is able to contribute as requested by the student’s home department to the assessment of the work/study undertaken by the student and that it will indicate in advance of the placement commencing whether the agreed means of assessment might be affected by, for example, confidentiality issues;
  - It has the means to enter into correspondence with an individual student in order to formalise the hosting arrangements and to consider questions the student may have in advance of arrival. In the context of this interaction that it will also indicate to the student what, if any, financial support (or that given in kind) is available to the student, and how this is administered;
  - It allows visit(s) by a designated member of staff from the student’s home dept;
  - It has discussed a.) insurance arrangements and b.) health & safety arrangements with Imperial College, with specific reference to the following:
    - It has provided contact details for a person with responsibility for health/safety;
    - It can provide health and safety guidance & training upon the student’s arrival (preferably on the first day) and throughout the placement (e.g. fire precautions and emergency evacuation arrangements, instruction about any potential hazards and how to report accidents, incidents and unsafe conditions).
    - In cases of a.) serious accidents or incidents involving the student or b.) breaches of discipline by the student that it will advise and consult the home academic department.
    - Should it be made aware by the home academic department or the student of any personal factors which may impact on the placement that it will observe relevant national legislation (statutory legal requirements) when discussing any reasonable adjustment to the working environment and/or any relevant hazards.

June 2014
**Student Check List:** A few important reminders before departure

In having your placement approved it is assumed that your department have ensured that the College’s Policy on Placement Learning has been referred to during the choice and approval of placement location and provider, construction and approval of your study or work/work-based placement plan and other arrangements.

**Before you depart on your placement have you** (in reading this non-exhaustive checklist it is recognised that you might have a Placement Tutor in addition to the compulsory Placement Manager):

- Completed all administrative arrangements with your placement provider? **Read, understood and acted upon information sent to you by your placement provider?**
- Agreed either a final or provisional **placement plan** with your Placement Manager?
- Understood fully how the placement fits into your degree (or how – for undergraduates - extra ECTS credit will be allocated) and specifically, how any assessments and (if appropriate) subsequent credit transfer are to be undertaken, and when this has to be completed by? Are you clear about any deadlines which apply to you, who will be setting them and when they are?
- Discussed with your Placement Manager the **supervision** you will receive whilst on placement, including how contact will be maintained and whether someone will visit you?
- Completed the **Pre-departure Checklist & Emergency Contacts Form** (or dept equivalent) and handed a completed copy to your Placement Manager? See page 62.
- A plan for securing **accommodation** upon arrival if you have not already organised it?
- Reviewed the UK Department for Health "Health Care Abroad" website? Have you obtained an appropriate **European Health Insurance Card (if applicable)** or ensured other insurances are adequate for access to everyday (as opposed to emergency) health care in the host country?
- (if relevant) obtained **health clearance from the College’s Occupational Health Service** (page 45)
- Registered your trip on the College’s **Finance website** and **Printed off 2 copies of the Imperial College Overseas Travel Insurance Certificate** from the College intranet (added your name)? Retain access to this [link](#) for updates to the Handbook during the year (e.g. insurance).
- Checked if you need any additional travel/medical/housing insurance to that provided by the College or (as applicable) a European Health Insurance Card?
- Considered banking matters for while you are away? Talked to your bank about managing your finance (e.g. transferring money, accessing cash, using your cards, overdraft etc) while abroad?
- All necessary information is easily at hand for when you first arrive? (e.g. necessary documentation for entering the host country, accessing health care and registering with the local authorities).

**Other points which may be relevant:**

- Have you checked if you require a visa for entry to the host country?
- **Will you be already on your placement at the start of Imperial College’s academic year?** If so, remember to register with the Imperial College on Student e-Service in advance of the beginning of the academic year.
- If you are a **PhD student** have you completed study leave formalities?
- If you are undertaking a study placement does it include a further industrial placement? If so, who is organising it and what is the routine you need to follow in order to have such a placement approved?
- Home students only: Have you ensured you know (if applicable) what the UK student financial support system provides for you while abroad and acted accordingly before your departure?
- Have you understood the level of tuition fee you will be required to pay Imperial College for the year in which your placement takes place?
- Penultimate Year Undergraduate Students: Have you thought about final year options and do you know what you need to do and by when?
- Have you considered how the Careers Service might assist you whilst you are abroad?

**Finally…..**

- **Are there any issues which still concern you?** Have you spoken to Assistant Registrar (Placements) or your Placement Manager about any issues you are unsure about?