Placements Abroad Handbook

A practical guide for students planning a placement abroad, including Erasmus+, during the academic year 2019 / 2020 as either

- an element of their degree programme (UG/PG)
- or as an extra-ECTS UG placement

Produced by the Registry: Version 2 (August 2019)
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 from previous versions will be highlighted in yellow.
The important information and actions highlighted in green and bold are not necessarily relevant in all placement situations nor are they meant to be exhaustive.

(#{#) this handbook is NOT intended to support the following activities abroad:
- MSc/MA Global Innovation Design study placements abroad (administered by the Royal College of Art)
- final year undergraduate medicine clinical [placement] electives (contact the Faculty of Medicine Education Office)
- Split PhDs
- vacation internships which are not part of a degree nor assigned extra-ECTS credit (i.e. not placements)
  - activities undertaken during an interruption of studies

The following are not regarded as a "placement" but might form part of a longer study-based or work-based placement: a field trip; research in the field; a site visit
Placements Abroad Handbook: Contents

INTRODUCTION

ARRANGING A PLACEMENT (PART 1)

Section 1: Placement scenarios & options
   Includes a brief description of the Erasmus scheme and PhD study leave
   5-9
Section 2: Planning your placement
   First steps; Who approves a placement & approval of a placement provider; The Placement Provider: hosting arrangements; academic recognition; study and/or work/training plan (see also section on ECTS); some other issues to consider
   Also includes information on supervision, assessment, projects, adapting to a different environment, mental health awareness (also covered in On Your Placement), orientation/training, maintaining contact with your home dept, feedback.
   10-19
Section 3: Information for students with a disability
   20
Section 4: Students with children/dependents
   21
Section 5: Information for LGBT students
   21
Section 6: ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) Includes Learning Agreements
   22-25
Section 7: Language preparation (Undergraduate Year Abroad only)
   26-27

ARRANGING A PLACEMENT (PART 2)

Logistics

Section 1: Visas for the host country
   28-32
Section 2: Registration procedures (various); ISI Card; ESN Card
   33-34
Section 3: Housing
   35-42
Section 4: Insurance Includes the College’s overseas travel insurance
   43-50
Section 5: Health & safety at your Placement Provider referencing the Off-site working policy
   50-52
Section 6: Health care in the host country (including health insurance)
   53-55
   IMPORTANT: Imperial College health clearance before travel
   53
Medical care in the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland
   54-55
Medical care outside the European Economic Area
   55

ARRANGING A PLACEMENT (PART 3)

Financial aspects to be considered when undertaking a placement abroad

Section 1: Planning your budget
   56-57
Section 2: Providing evidence of financial resources (where required)
   57-58
Section 3: Tuition fees payable to a host university/college
   58
Section 4: Other non-tuition charges levied by a host university/college
   58-59
Section 5: Tuition fees payable to Imperial College for the UG year abroad
   59
Section 6: Tuition fees payable to Imperial College for the UG year in industry
   59
Section 7: Tuition fees payable to Imperial College for all other placements abroad
   59
Section 8: UK Government funding & Imperial College Bursaries (Home students only)
   60-61
Section 9: UK Government funding (EU students only)
   61
Section 10: Experiencing financial difficulties?
   61
Section 11: Managing and accessing money whilst abroad
   62-64
Section 12: Erasmus grants for “studies” and for “traineeships”/work placements
   64-66
Sections 13/14: Language courses in host country (Erasmus Programme Countries only)
   66-67
Section 15: Departmental support
   67
Section 16: Other awards (e.g. Swiss mobility grants; DUO-Singapore Award)
   68
Section 17: Miscellaneous financial information
   69

ON YOUR PLACEMENT

Section 1: Keeping in contact with your dept at Imperial; Maintaining your study plan
   71-72
Section 2: Dealing with emergencies
   73
Section 3: Your well-being
   Includes visits from College, considering your own well-being, returning to Imperial.
   74-75
Section 4: Arranging accommodation for the next academic year (if relevant)
   75-76
Section 5: Thinking beyond the placement
   76
   Includes graduate and vacation job hunting and future study.

AT THE END OF YOUR PLACEMENT

SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL (OVERSEAS) STUDENTS

APPENDIX: IMPERIAL COLLEGE PLACEMENT LEARNING POLICY

Full Resource Via: HTTP://WWW.IMPERIAL.AC.UK/PLACEMENTS/INFORMATION-FOR-IMPERIAL-COLLEGE-STUDENTS/

CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS

84
PLACEMENTS ABROAD HANDBOOK

This handbook is compiled annually by the Registry, Imperial College London.

INTRODUCTION

The College’s definition of a placement is where the College transfers direct supervision of a student, as part of their degree programme, to a third-party organisation for a period of 2 weeks or more.

The student’s home academic department is responsible for the management of a placement.

Departments are assisted in their management of placements by the College’s Placement Learning Policy (see pages 80-83): and students 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/ & https://www.imperial.ac.uk/placements/information-for-imperial-college-staff/ (staff login required)

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

Rest assured that most placements are completed without serious problems and that most students rate highly the experience. It really is an exciting opportunity.

Green Highlights and text in bold = Important Information & Actions

The information and actions which are highlighted do not imply that they are relevant in all placement situations nor are they meant to be exhaustive.

There is also a suggestive ‘checklist’ on the last page.

Overseas students (by tuition fee status) are asked to read the handbook as normal but to also consult the section entitled ‘Specific Information for International (Overseas) Students’ on pages 78-79.

You can address questions and queries to: Adrian Hawksworth, Assistant Registrar (Placements), Registry, Student Hub, Level 3 Sherfield Building, South Kensington Campus: student.placement@imperial.ac.uk.

As a student who is considering whether to pursue a placement or, perhaps, is one step further forward and is preparing to undertake a placement (indeed, maybe already be on placement and looking for guidance), we suggest that 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.
The aim of the handbook is essentially threefold.

Firstly, to assist any student (UG/PGT/PGR), for whom a placement abroad is a compulsory or optional part of their degree programme at Imperial College (or in the case of undergraduates where 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.

Secondly, to provide information on logistical matters: for example, acquiring accommodation, considering insurance cover and assessing financial issues. However, the purpose of this Handbook is not to act as an A-Z guide to all issues but rather to emphasise those issues which the College considers most important and about which most queries are received.

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 and students who have undertaken a placement at the same placement provider.

Exceptions: This handbook is not meant to be read by:
(1) an undergraduate medicine student planning a final year clinical elective abroad. Specific guidance and support for such students can be obtained from the Faculty Education Office.
(2) a postgraduate student on the MSc/MA Global Innovation Design (Imperial College and the Royal College of Art) for which the compulsory study placements abroad – which form an integral part of this degree programme - are administered by the Royal College of Art.

Furthermore, this handbook is not intended to cover the following activities abroad:
field trips; research in the field and site visits. These activities are not considered to fit the definition of a placement, however they may form an element of a placement.

This publication is intended for internal use only and is updated annually.
It is re-issued during the year when significant revisions are necessary.

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

It is available in other formats as required. Please contact student.placement@imperial.ac.uk

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

Imperial College London is not responsible for the content of the external websites which are referred to in this publication.
ARRANGING A PLACEMENT (Part 1)

Section 1: Placement Scenarios

Broadly speaking placements fall into two types:

- Study-based, including those which may be wholly or partly research focused
- Work-based, including those which may 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 pre-agreed assessments, which are undertaken as part of the placement.

**Scenario 2**: Undergraduate students who undertake a vacation internship for extra-ECTS (applicable to students of participating departments: eligibility criteria apply.) More detail on page 9.

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 (i.e. to whom the College transfers day-to-day supervision of the student for the duration of the placement).

A placement provider must have been approved by the home academic department (see page 12).

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Before we move on allow us to introduce the European Union’s Erasmus+ scheme which facilitates mobility for study and work placements within Europe.

Should the UK exit the EU during 2019-20 the UK’s, and therefore Imperial’s, involvement in the Erasmus+ scheme may be affected. A Brexit update is available.

**Erasmus+**

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 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. The current Erasmus+ programme for lifelong learning (2014-2020) has absorbed these mobility schemes for study and work. 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 64-66 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 1988 (and indeed prior to that via the Joint Study Programmes).

Erasmus mobility must take place to an Erasmus+ Key Action 1.03 “programme” country, which are currently the other 27 member states of the EU; plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein as members of the wider European Economic Area; and Turkey and North Macedonia.

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

Please note that the College (1) has opted not to participate in Erasmus+ Key Action 1.03 graduate internships and (2) has not yet established any Erasmus+ partnerships with universities in non-programme countries, what are termed as “partner” countries for international credit mobility (Erasmus+ Key Action 1.07).
Placement Options

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

Options applicable to Scenario 1

(A) Undergraduate Year Abroad: The Faculty of Engineering (all departments except the School of Design Engineering and the Dept of Materials) and the Faculty of Natural Sciences operate year abroad degree programmes. The relevant degree programmes have a range of suffixes: Year Abroad; Research Abroad; International Programme of Study; Language for Science.

Admission to a year abroad degree programme is either in Year 1 (UCAS) or by an on-course transfer, with 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 university/college.
- Participation requires a minimum 2:1 academic performance by the end of the year prior to the year abroad. Some academic departments set higher performance targets.
- Such placements are compulsory and ordinarily operate as part of a student exchange with a partner university/college. Therefore, suggesting alternative locations is not possible.
- 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 or research placement managed by the host university/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 study placements to France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium & Austria and study placements to Swiss student exchange partners.
- 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/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/placements/student-exchanges/undergraduate-year-abroad/) (see also the table on page 7 for non-European year abroad exchange links)

For further information about the undergraduate year abroad option, contact your department’s Exchange Programme Co-ordinator (table correct as of May 2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aeronautics</td>
<td>Dr Siti Ros Shamsuddin (supported by the UG Office)</td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Dr Nicolas Cinosi (supported by the UG Students Office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bioengineering</td>
<td>Dr Firat Guder (with the UG Students Office)</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Dr Silvia Diez-Gonzalez (supported by Sarah Johnson, UG Office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
<td>Dr Andreas Kogelbauer</td>
<td>Life Sciences: Biochemistry</td>
<td>Dr Dave Hartley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil &amp; Environmental Engineering</td>
<td>Dr Christian Onof (supported by Tina Mikelides, UG Office)</td>
<td>Life Sciences: Biological Sciences</td>
<td>Dr Dave Hartley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing</td>
<td>Dr Sergio Maffeis (supported by Rituparna Saha, Teaching Support Manager)</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Dr Robert Nurnberg for European exchanges. Dr Sheehan Olver for MIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth Science &amp; Engineering</td>
<td>Dr Sam Krevor</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>Professor Gavin Davies (supported by the UG Office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical &amp; Electronic Eng</td>
<td>Professor Alessandro Astolfi (supported by the UG Students Office)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The table below lists Undergraduate Year Abroad exchanges beyond Europe
(valid for 2019-20: correct as of May 2019)
If you are an undergraduate of the Dept of Earth Science and Engineering you should read the # note.
All Year Abroad links except *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Depts at Imperial involved in the link</th>
</tr>
</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><strong>College-Wide</strong> <em>(active subject areas: Chemical Engineering, EEE, Mechanical Engineering, Bioengineering, Aeronautics)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>University of Melbourne</td>
<td><strong>Faculty of Engineering</strong> <em>(current active subject areas: Bioengineering, Chemical Engineering, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Mechanical Engineering)</em>; <strong>Faculty of Natural Sciences</strong> <em>(current active subject areas: Chemistry and Life Sciences)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering; Mechanical Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering; Civil and Environmental Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australian National University</td>
<td>Earth Science and Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Carnegie Mellon University</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of California: all campuses via their Education Abroad Program</td>
<td><strong>Faculty of Engineering</strong> <em>(all engineering departments participate in a faculty-level selection of students except the School of Design Engineering and Materials)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emory University</td>
<td>Chemistry (not active every year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgia Institute of Technology</td>
<td>Chemistry (not active every year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>University of British Columbia</td>
<td>Earth Science and Engineering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# excludes non-reciprocal links with some campuses of the University of California (Dept of Earth Science & Engineering & the Dept of Life Sciences) which have been approved for the purposes of sending undergraduates for a year abroad.

(B) Undergraduates, depending on their degree programme, may be able to access work-based placement options at a non-UK placement provider, e.g. **Year in Industry degree or a placement lasting 3-6 months**.

Table: Departmental Curriculum-based Industrial Placement Contacts (May 2019):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year in Industry</th>
<th>Shorter work or work-based Placements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aeronautics</td>
<td>Dr Aaron Knoll</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bioengineering</td>
<td>Robert Ferguson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Sarah Johnson (UG Office)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences: Biochemistry</td>
<td>Dr Dave Hartley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences: Biology/Biological Sciences</td>
<td>Dr Laurence Bugeon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Dr Jonathan Jeffers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(C) • **Undergraduates in the Dept of Aeronautics** can undertake their MEng final year project abroad in an industrial or university setting: contact the final year project co-ordinator for options;

• **Undergraduates in the Dept of Computing** can undertake two terms of study in Year 3 (autumn/spring) at the University of California as an option within registration for the MEng Computing (International Programme of Study). Such students apply via their department and are considered alongside students from other engineering departments who are on a whole year abroad option. The option is not available every year. A student who participates from the Dept of Computing would move straight onto the MEng Year 3 industrial placement from April. *To note that the whole year abroad option in the Dept of Computing undertaken in Year 4 as part of MEng Computing (International Programme of Study), does not have the University of California as an option.*

• **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 research internship at MIT immediately beforehand.

(D) • **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. These are subject to specific guidance from the Faculty of Medicine Education Office.

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

  o Depending on the degree programme, a student may be able to undertake part of or an 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.

  o **Business School:** Global study opportunities typically lasting 2-6 weeks are available. Contact: Sarah Wilsey.

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

  o A list of student exchange agreements which support some of this type of activity can be found here: [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/placements/student-exchanges/other-student-exchanges/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/placements/student-exchanges/other-student-exchanges/)

*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 in principal consider spending part of their registration abroad.
  o They should discuss the idea first with their principal supervisor, and it is their principal supervisor who has to provisionally agree before any planning should be undertaken (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).
  o PhD students connected to Centres of Doctoral Training may be scheduled as part of their training to spend time abroad on a placement. Administrative support is normally available through the CDT administration.
  o To note that this Handbook is not designed to assist students on split-PhDs.

### 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/](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.

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**Options applicable to Scenario 2: extra-ECTS for eligible undergraduate vacation internships**

An undergraduate student may plan to undertake a vacation internship for extra ECTS credit, subject to it being eligible to be considered as such. 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 2019 the following departments are involved:**


- 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 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/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/placements/information-for-imperial-college-students/)

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**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 Royal College of Art)
- **Field Trips, Research in the Field and Site Visits:** unless they form part of a longer study-based or work-based placement.
- **Vacation Internships abroad for which extra-ECTS credit has not been approved**
- **“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 – advice and support may be available from the designated departmental contact.
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 and ordinarily wish to contribute to the planning and organisation of their placement.

First steps
Before you do anything please review the College’s Placement Learning Policy Statement reproduced on pages 80-83 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 6-9).

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 Work/Training Plan, including dealing with changes in circumstances during a placement
- Other issues:
  - Supervision
  - Projects
  - Orientation/training
  - Your well-being
  - Assessment
  - Adapting to a different environment
  - Maintaining contact with your home dept
  - Feedback/Debriefing

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 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 this will be 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:
   o 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.
   o 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).
   o The placement provider would ordinarily have the final decision on whether to host you.

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.

Caution: when searching on-line for companies, please be warned that fraudulent websites do exist, and be cautious around emails you may receive which purport to come from companies seeking students to take up placements.
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 admitted 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 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 issues which may impact assessment).
   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 an element of your placement - are within your ability (*identifying necessary adjustments, training and orientation*).

(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 50-52)

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 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 ensure that you have completed the host university’s student registration/enrolment procedures. **Ensure you have applied in the appropriate manner to the host university, in order to be hosted as a student and have 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 Imperial 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 Adrian Hawksworth (a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk) as necessary.

**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.

**Use of previous feedback** (where available) to inform the process: Placements undertaken regularly by students of your department (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/undertaking of a placement. On the other hand, where there is little or no feedback or history of students undertaking a placement at a particular organisation, the routine may not be as slick.
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 p50-52 (Health & Safety at a 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 from Imperial for a placement as part of your degree programme, you may be unsure how this is organised.

- **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). A full academic year’s credit is 60 ECTS.
  - (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.

- **MSc/MRes students** should map out how their placement supports delivery of their master degree.

- **Doctoral level students** should refer to the procedures for “study leave” (page 9).

A reminder to PhD students to consult the study leave guidance (page 9).

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.

Study Plan or Work Placement (Training) Plan

Your department (i.e. your Placement Manager) is responsible for formalising the learning content of the placement, with the assistance or otherwise of any separate Placement Tutor.

- The learning content should realise both learning outcomes (these would be informal for PhD students, if required at all) 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 work/training plan. It is appropriate that you should have as much input into this process as possible. A study or work/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 work/training plan may include one or more people, 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. curriculum; course syllabus).
• If another student has recently undertaken a similar placement at your chosen placement provider, then their final study or work/training plan may be relevant.

A note about study plans for UG Study Abroad

Study plans of previous participants and insight into how students found content of courses, assessment formats etc, will be available to the Dept Exchange Co-ordinator (Placement Manager). Insight into what level of courses suited or did not suit an Imperial College student is likely to be of value. Also, remember that a study plan (this will depend on the department at Imperial) may include one or both of the following: (1) technical (degree discipline) project work (undertaken at the host), which may end up taking place in the form of an internship (the management of such internships would be a matter for the partner university, and will normally involve a separate training agreement) and which may be assessed partly or wholly by your department at Imperial; (2) other project work (language/cultural) normally assessed wholly by your dept at Imperial. Continued language tuition (as necessary) does not always contribute towards the study plan.

See pages 22-25 regarding curriculum resources which ought to be available and concerning learning agreements (a study plan document, which is compulsory for a study abroad placement).

Dealing with changes in circumstances during a placement

While most placements will take place as planned, a student might be faced with changes in circumstances ranging from the trivial to the very significant.

• Changes to the formal study or work placement plan:
  o Minor changes may be discussed in passing with the Placement Manager or Tutor and may not require documenting. Caution: what you consider “minor” may be considered “major” by your academic advisors/supervisors.
  o However, significant changes would require discussion between your Placement Manager and the placement provider before being approved. The changes you are seeking may change the structure of the placement in a way, which means that you would be unable to complete the placement as required, i.e. academic recognition could not be guaranteed. An example (in this case a study placement at a university) would be a student trying to change one or more courses for which approval had already been received from home and host to sit the examinations/assessments. Assuming the level (and credit value) of the “new” course or courses is appropriate, is the request being pursued at the right time? Such as before the “new” course commences and in time for exam registering procedures for the new course at the host university to be completed.
  o Therefore, act in good time and be prepared not to have changes approved.

• Students may suffer from serious and unforeseen circumstances during their studies that adversely affect their ability to complete an assessment task and/or their performance in a piece of assessment. Such instances might occur before, during or indeed after a placement. Your dept may or may not be aware of these circumstances and therefore because it is in a student’s interest to keep College informed please also read the section entitled “maintaining contact with your home dept” on page 19.
  o A student should be familiar with Imperial College’s Mitigating Circumstances policy and procedure, but to note that if you are undertaking a study placement at another university/college a student would ordinarily be also under the rules/regulations of that other university/college which might also be relevant depending on the circumstances so discussion with your home department is imperative.
Circumstances might arise which means a student them self may decide to terminate a placement (e.g. health reasons) and again the consequences would need to be discussed with the Placement Manager or if the student is indisposed, the Placement Manager would need to make a judgement on the way forward.

While rare, a placement may be subject to termination by the placement provider (e.g. a company may go into administration; a company or research group might change the work being pursued) or be terminated due to unforeseen events (natural disasters; security incidents; loss of facilities due to fire etc). Your Placement Manager would need to identify a solution.

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 you are used to at Imperial College, you need to be ready for a change in the study environment.

Please also read the section entitled “maintaining contact with your home dept” on page 19

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:
  o Will you be required to conduct any formal assessments in the host language?
  o What method will be used to transfer grades/marks for any pre-agreed assessments back to Imperial College?
  o 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 what they would expect of you if you were in situ at Imperial.
  o While evidence shows that students on an UG year abroad (where that year is a replacement year for a year at Imperial) perform better than they would, if they had remained at Imperial, the effect a below-par academic performance has on the overall degree performance is an issue which UG students mention fairly regularly, so we would advise UG students who are concerned about this to discuss this with their department.

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.
- Where a project forms only part of your study or training plan, your Placement Manager and/or the placement provider may require you to choose the specific project after arrival.
  o You may need to do this soon after arriving.
Remember that where the placement provider is a university/college, you may find yourself in competition with local students for internal and external projects. Therefore, the search for a suitable project, which may be 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 the Health and Safety at your placement provider section (pages 50-52).*

**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 (whether socially or academically). 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 26-27.)*
  - 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/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. *See next mini section on “your own well-being”.*

- 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 Imperial learning resources (speak to your department).
  - Do not hesitate to speak to relevant staff at Imperial about how such resources, especially the library & the careers service, can be accessed while abroad.
  - *See “maintaining contact with your home department” below.*

**Your own well-being: Emotional & Mental Health**

Undertaking a placement abroad can be a stressful experience and known, or new, emotional and mental health problems can *(re-)*surface. If in planning your placement you experience any worries about the emotional challenges involved with your placement, please discuss them with your home department *(try not to dwell on them; discuss them)* or contact the **Imperial College Student Counselling and Mental Health Advice Service** for advice.

*Please also read the suggestions around managing your own well-being while on your placement, such as managing culture-shock and homesickness. ‘On Your Placement’ (pages 70-76).*

**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 50-52 concerning Health and Safety at a Placement Provider.*
Maintaining contact with your home department
- This is probably the most important aspect of your placement and is connected quite naturally to the previous notes on supervision.
- 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 Postgraduate Tutor in your department or contact your Faculty Senior Tutor. It is very important that your home dept are aware of issues which might require some remedial action, active intervention or which might impact on academic performance.
- 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. College Good Practice is a minimum of one Skype interaction per month between you and your home dept.
- 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 (but please note that it is not a compulsory action on the part of your department). 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.

If your department does not have an equivalent form or procedure, please complete the Pre-departure Checklist and Emergency Contacts Form available at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/placement-learning/

Ensure you retain a copy on you at all times, and hand a copy to your departmental Placement Manager and to your supervisor/co-ordinator at the Placement Provider.
Please also see the section entitled ‘On Your Placement’ (pages 70-76).

Ensure you know what feedback will be required of you by your home department
- Your dept 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 students as a group or individually or they may simply request that you complete a report form.
  o Doctoral level students in particular, are encouraged to submit a report to their supervisor and the departmental Director of Postgraduate Studies/Postgraduate Tutor.
  o Undergraduate Students in particular, are encouraged to provide feedback on individual courses/modules taken as part of a year abroad.
  o College Good Practice is that your Dept should require one piece of written feedback from you at the completion of your placement.
- The info you provide is useful to students who may undertake that placement in the future (see previous sections about how such feedback will hopefully be available to you!!) Positive feedback can help foster mobility. Indeed, please (if requested) make yourself available to students whilst you are on placement to answer questions and to help them prepare to follow you.

See also ‘At the End of Your Placement’ on page 77.
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 many 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: Students with children / dependants

If you are considering a placement and have significant family responsibilities, you are welcome to contact Adrian Hawksworth to discuss further: a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

When reading the section on the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance please note that spouses/partners/dependants travelling with students are currently covered.

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Section 5: Information for LGBT Students

(with acknowledgement to Stonewall)

This section aims to recognise that, depending on the country which is to be visited, a student may need as part of their preparation to reflect on the situation faced by the LGBT community in that country, to consider the resources available in order to enable that reflection and to seek further guidance as they think necessary. The College wishes to safeguard its students by empowering them through knowledge and understanding.

LGBT communities around the world experience differing levels of discrimination and sometimes plain persecution. Stonewall, a UK organisation with a history of campaigning and lobbying on behalf of the LGBT community both in the UK and globally, work with the UK higher education sector to improve the support available for LGBT students (whether their home country is the UK or elsewhere) who wish to consider undertaking a placement abroad or have already made that decision.

In work aimed at supporting employers (and their employees who are mobile or who are looking to be mobile abroad in pursuing jobs and careers) Stonewall have developed a suite of country-specific resources (Global Workplace Briefings) which are in many respects of equal use to students (and have been promoted as such by Stonewall) in understanding the legal and non-legal factors at play in other countries and how those factors can impact on safety, achievement and experience in the host country. Currently Stonewall have produced “briefings” for the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and the USA.

Students are invited to contact Adrian Hawksworth (Assistant Registrar and author of this document) if they wish to discuss any issue (including anything flagged up in the "briefings") or to seek further signposting especially where a "briefing" does not yet exist for a particular country.

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Section 6: ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) for 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 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. Exchange partners understand the role that a learning agreement contributes to the good management of a study period abroad, including credit transfer from host to home university.

ECTS assists all parties to deliver a programme of study which carries an appropriate workload and allows the level and amount of academic credit awarded to be 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 (of the Host Institution)
- The Student Application Form (to the Host Institution)
- The Learning Agreement (which may also form part of the application pack to the Host)
- The Transcript of Records (from the Host Institution)

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. However, such web resources are not always kept up-to-date and aspects such as pre-requisites can often be found to be inaccurate once you are on campus, so a little caution is warranted.
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 2019-20. 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 longer 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.

**Short Style Learning Agreement**
- This version is preferred for all **non**-Erasmus study periods (includes Switzerland).
- A template ‘short style’ Learning Agreement can be obtained 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)
- 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.

**Longer Style (Erasmus-labelled) Learning Agreement for Studies**
- This version is preferred for all **Erasmus** study periods.
- The preferred template (with notes for guidance) can be obtained 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 first part of the document allows the three parties to be identified.
- It then has 3 sections 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:
  - The **Before the Mobility** section: for you to insert your proposed study plan.
    - *Table A* is where you list your study plan.
    - *In theory, the table (B) 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 you should insert something along the lines of “the recognised component of studies at the home university is a ‘mobility window’.”.
  - The **During the Mobility** section for subsequent modifications.
  - The **After the Mobility** section: assisting academic recognition of your study period.
    - *In theory the table (C) to be completed by the host university should act as the “transcript”, although it is unlikely that a university would utilise it as such, i.e. it ought not to be used as a replacement for a properly authenticated transcript document of the type a student ought to be 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 (if they do at all).*
    - *In theory, the table (D) 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 and host universities were responsible for marking) your home academic department are again able to write something along the lines of “the recognised component of studies at the home university is a ‘mobility window’”.

Hopefully, you now understand the format of these Learning Agreements and their purpose.

You can probably draw the conclusion that (1) it is the “before” and “during” sections of the long-style Erasmus learning agreement which are the most important (and most practical) to complete, and (2) the short-style learning agreement for non-Erasmus partners is straight forward to use.

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

Your dept will obviously need to advise you as to what is acceptable to write in Part A (short-style non-Erasmus) or the Before Section (long-style Erasmus) of the relevant 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 provided by the host university/college); 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 fewer 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 (new-style Erasmus learning agreement only): 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. Do not worry if it proves difficult to achieve this part of the learning agreement.

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 (Erasmus): 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 by the College’s Student Financial Support Team from Erasmus co-ordinating office at your host university/college.
Transcript: If you undertake formal assessments at the host institution, the host institution should issue you with a Transcript of Records as a formal record of your achievement (check the host institution’s orientation information for guidance on the issuing of transcripts).

- Before your study period commences, your department at Imperial should inform you as to how any credit and grades earned at the host university will be transferred back to your degree at Imperial. Consult your student handbooks; consult your departmental exchange programme co-ordinator if you are unsure.
- 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 only marked (in entirety) by your home department at Imperial.

Remember: sometimes project work undertaken at the host university/college is subject to complete formal assessment by the host university/college and either the home department at Imperial will transfer the grade as they would for courses, or they will take it into account when making an independent mark of your project. Where the host university/college does not formally assess a project (i.e. it has been agreed to leave it entirely down to Imperial College) the home department at Imperial would normally still rely on a contribution from the host supervisor to help inform their own marking.

- 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.
- A “transcript” may be known by another name/title at your university.

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 7: Language preparation (Undergraduate Year Abroad only)

Advice and information mainly for undergraduate “Year Abroad” students who are planning their year abroad in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and have not been recorded by their department as a fluent speaker in the relevant language.

Some of the guidance around language courses in the host country will also be applicable to students going to the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark.

The role which language proficiency contributes to the successful completion of a study placement abroad (the studying; the living) should not be underestimated.

- The volume of language training you need to undertake in order to achieve the level of attainment (proficiency) set by your department will depend on your starting point.
- Please note that the higher your proficiency the easier it should be for you to adapt to residence abroad.

The way in which language training is aligned with your degree programme depends on the approach of your academic dept but should conform to one of the following three scenarios:

1. **Degree Credit**: Language tuition provided by the Imperial Horizons Programme in one or more years prior to the Year Abroad as part of your degree programme. In any one academic year this amounts to tuition across the autumn and spring term amounting to 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 (CLCC).

2. **Extra Credit**: Language tuition available through the Imperial Horizons Programme in one or more years prior to the Year Abroad as advised by your department. In any one academic year this amounts to tuition across the autumn and spring term amounting to 2 hours per week as part of Horizons with an additional one hour per week tuition provided – normally at lunchtime - by CLCC.

3. Where degree credit is not available, a dept might allow a student to obtain the necessary language tuition via an external provider although the cost of such tuition would fall on the student to pay (no ECTS credit would be available) and the dept’s exchange co-ordinator would liaise with CLCC to check that the language level of attainment has been achieved.

The **minimum recommended level of attainment** (proficiency) for where courses to be followed at a host institution are taught and assessed in Italian/French/Spanish/German is B1/B2 (CEFR1), equivalent to levels 3 and 4 of the Horizons Programme.

However, your dept can set a different level of attainment if the language of instruction at the host uni/college allows for it; the admission requirements at the host university/college demand it; the location of the year abroad and/or the type of study plan you will follow allows for it.

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1 Common European Framework for Languages: [https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/Individuals/Compare%20Qualifications/CEFR%20Levels.aspx](https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/Individuals/Compare%20Qualifications/CEFR%20Levels.aspx)
Therefore:

- Ensure you know the (language) level (CLCC level of course; CEFR equivalent) you are aiming for.

- Find out what procedure is applied by your home department for assessing whether you have reached an acceptable level of proficiency. **Your department will make the decision, in consultation with CLCC as necessary.**

- **In addition to your exchange programme co-ordinator you can consult:**
  - the relevant CLCC Language Coordinator if you have any questions about language preparation and proficiency required. Students on “language for science” degrees will maintain formal contact with their CLCC language co-ordinator throughout, as might all “year abroad” students on an informal basis: [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/languages/contact-us/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/languages/contact-us/)
  - The CLCC website for details on how language tuition is delivered: [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/languages/year-in-europe/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/languages/year-in-europe/)

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**Important:** Subject to the caveat around the College’s participation in Erasmus during 2019-20, **all undergraduate year abroad participants going to France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden or the Netherlands through the Erasmus programme in 2019-20** and who will undertake part or all of their study plan in the official language of the host country (**while themselves not being a native or near-native speaker of said language**) will be required to undertake an on-line language assessment (**managed by Imperial Registry in co-operation with the EU Commission**) prior to the start of their study period and also upon completion of the period abroad. Information on this requirement will be provided alongside information concerning Erasmus+ mobility grants (**see pages 64-66**). 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](mailto:a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk)

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**Further points to consider:**

- The Centre for Languages, Communication and Culture operates a **Language Pairs scheme.** This is an informal scheme, intended to improve the spoken language, and is not a substitute for language classes, rather a supporting exercise. If you would like to find out more please go to: [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/languages/language-pairs/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/languages/language-pairs/)

- **Language courses at the host university/college** immediately prior to or at the start of the study period or during the study period are **often free of charge but can sometimes incur a charge.** If you are going to France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden or the Netherlands through the Erasmus programme then see pages 66-67 for news on possible additional financial support.

- Find out about other funding for language courses from organisations such as DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst), or the Austrian AAS (Anglo-Austrian Society).

- Perhaps for the more confident amongst you is to consider working in the host country in the summer prior to your placement. If you are concerned about how you initially tackle everyday use of the language and want to be as well prepared for understanding teaching and university life in general this might help. It would though be a personal decision which a student would need to plan and bear all financial responsibility for.
ARRANGING A PLACEMENT (Part 2)

Logistics

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1</th>
<th>Visas for the host country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(includes signposting for TIER 4 students with regards to their UK visa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>Registration procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(at Imperial; in the host country; International Student Identity Card; ESN Card)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3</td>
<td>Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4</td>
<td>Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(includes reference to the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 5</td>
<td>Health and safety at your placement provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(includes reference to the College Policy on Off-Site Working)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 6</td>
<td>Health care in the host country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(including health insurance)</td>
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</tbody>
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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.

While we have your attention!
Imperial College students who are in attendance in the UK on a TIER 4 visa should also remember to refer to pages 78-79.
Section 1: Visas for the Host Country

Do you require Entry Clearance (typically a Visa, but perhaps some other device) to enter the Host Country for the purpose of undertaking your particular placement?

Part A
Nationals 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, it is wise to double-check whether your passport or ID card requires to be valid for a certain duration after your arrival in the host country) plus it is always a good idea to possess a letter from your host organisation confirming the particulars of your placement.

ALERT for UK Nationals: if the UK leaves the EU during 2019-20 without a “deal” in place [with the EU], i.e. a no-deal Brexit, an update concerning any travel restrictions will be provided by the College here (Imperial College logon and password required). This will be helpful whether a.) you have started but not completed a placement in the EU or b.) are planning to start such a placement.

Part B
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:**
   - If you must apply for a visa before departure to the host country it will depend on where you apply for that visa as to the exact process you need to follow.
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.

Ensure your passport is valid before starting to apply for a visa: Do you need to have it valid for a specific length of time when applying for the visa? Does the host country require your passport to be valid for a certain length of time after your placement is due to finish?

Think about travel plans for the period leading up to the placement. Any application for a visa in advance of departure for the host country normally requires you to relinquish possession of your passport for a period of time.

The time required to process a visa application varies widely from country to country.

- Peak periods may exist when many people are applying, and if a consulate/embassy does not input resource into processing visas then the knock on effect is that you may be waiting a long time…..so apply at the very earliest opportunity.
- Your nationality may have a bearing on how long it takes for a visa to be processed.

Does the type of visa you are advised to obtain tally the expectation of the placement provider? Investigate now. 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 study 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. In some countries it may be possible where there are good grounds to do so for you to change the type of visa you hold when already on your placement, perhaps even to extend the visa if for some good academic reason your placement is extended. Keep these issues in mind.

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?

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.

There is usually a cost involved in applying for a visa plus a specific way of making payment. Note: for entry to the USA there is also an immigration fee (SEVIS) payable alongside (in addition to) the fee for visa application.

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 (College) travel insurance purposes. A very limited number of countries require approval and this ought to be flagged up by a student’s dept during the planning of a placement. For full details on insurance, including the free cover provided by the College (travel insurance), see pages 43-50. The Travel Certificate – which you can download – may satisfy any visa requirement for proof of insurance cover.
In some instances visa agencies/embassies need to know that you will be covered by health insurance, and may be very clear as to the product you need to purchase and for that to be embedded in the visa process. Read also the section in this Handbook on health insurance (pages 53-55). The College’s Overseas Travel Insurance while containing cover for emergency medical expenses is not in itself health insurance.

Some visa applications may require you to undertake a medical.

Further points to consider:

- **You are personally responsible for obtaining and maintaining your immigration status in the host country during the year abroad.**
- **All students should think about if their passport is due to expire soon or during the placement or shortly afterwards, regardless of whether or not they require a visa to the host country.** 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.
- **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). In such circumstances, also contact the College’s Insurance Manager to re-register your trip to ensure continued coverage under the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance (see page 43).

Further information for selected countries: **This list is not exhaustive.**

**Australia**

If you are undertaking a placement in Australia consult the [https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-finder/study plus](https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-finder/study 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.

If you are undergraduate attending a university for a year abroad then the host university will lead you through the visa application routine. There will be a mandatory health insurance to pay through the host university, and then an on-line visa application (which can on occasion yield very quick results!) including a visa fee which in 2019 is 575 AUS$. As always exchange rate fluctuations can increase or decrease these costs depending on your home currency.

**United States of America:**

Your placement provider 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. Normally used for an undergraduate planning their year abroad.
• “Students” leading to an F-1 Visa (very rare).
• Visas for placements at organisations who are unable to “sponsor” your visa directly (i.e. are unable to provide the necessary documentation demanded by the relevant visa application procedure):
  o BUNAC operate a range of “Work” programmes (e.g. Work America) 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/)
  o 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 would 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 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; 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)

**Netherlands**: 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. Host universities may be obliged to manage the submission of your visa application.

**Germany**: If you are planning an internship (not a study period) then see:
[https://uk.diplo.de/uk-en/02/visa/7working-in-germany](https://uk.diplo.de/uk-en/02/visa/7working-in-germany)
[https://uk.diplo.de/uk-en/02/visa/7working-in-germany/placementinternship](https://uk.diplo.de/uk-en/02/visa/7working-in-germany/placementinternship)

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

Imperial College students who are in attendance in the UK on a TIER 4 visa should also refer to pages 78-79

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

**When should a student start booking travel?** The College advises that if you book travel tickets before any visa – where relevant – has been issued to you that you are at the very least conversant with the cancellation policy. Ideally you should await the receipt of your visa, but we understand that the cost of travel especially to long-haul destinations can rocket upwards in the meantime if one does this. At the end of the day the student is responsible for when they book their travel and the cost. The cancellation cover in the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance policy (see next section) would not apply where the student has failed to get their visa, although you can contact the College’s Insurance Manager to check.
Section 2: Registration procedures at Imperial and in the host country

Plus, a prompt about the International Student Identity Card and the Erasmus Student Network Card

Registering at Imperial College London

You remain a registered student of Imperial College throughout 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), until you are informed otherwise, 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 universities do. 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. 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 may need some or all of the following:

- Passport (or national identity cards, if you possess one, may prove an acceptable alternative);
- Proof of acceptance at your host university/college;
- Some passport-size colour photos (8-10 would be advisable);
- Health insurance documents: Student European Health Insurance Card (if travelling to a placement in the EEA/Switzerland), private health insurance if you have it and, importantly, the College Overseas Travel Insurance travel certificate about which see the Insurance section on pages 43-50 and health care on pages 53-55.
- 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, these days it is more likely to be 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 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: Student European Health Insurance Card *(if travelling to a placement in the EEA/Switzerland)*; College Overseas Travel Insurance Travel Certificate and policy; private health insurance policy if you have it. *See Insurance section pages 43-50 and health care on pages 53-55.*

- If you are **not** a national of the host country you may be required to formally declare your departure at the end of your stay. Read the guidance notes from the host organisation carefully. A failure to do so can impact on accessing the country in the future.

**Translations:** While these 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. **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 53-55 on health care in the host country.*

**ISIC:** [International Student Identity Card](https://www.isic.org/) Another good idea if you do not already have one is to purchase an International Student Identity Card, 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 2019).

**ESN Card (Erasmus Student Network Card):** If a host European university/college has an Erasmus Society/Club affiliated to the Erasmus Student Network *(like ours at Imperial)*, you might consider obtaining for a small fee an ESN card from them. Not only is ESN a great place to meet students but the ESN card offers access to ESN activities and international, national and local discounts. Discounts: amongst others AirBnB, Hostelling International, Interrail, Brussels Airlines and The Economist. Information can be found at [http://esncard.org/](http://esncard.org/)
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 place to live.

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.

While for university-based placements halls of residence or student-flats might offer the best solution, all students may wish to consider private sector options.

For country/city specific information we recommend that you 1.) speak to students who have previously undertaken placements in the same location or to students/staff who are familiar with the place you are going to, and 2.) review the guidance and/or assistance provided by the host placement provider.

CAUTION: Always be wary of websites which purport to provide accommodation options. There are many organisations, companies, start-ups run by ex-students in particular as well as commercial set-ups targeting students generally and mobile students in particular so be cautious about engaging with on-line sites offering accommodation options (they maybe too good to be true; or run by people who are not necessarily experts in housing).

Finally, as an introduction you may also need to consider how to handle any housing you have in London while you are on your placement.

ERASMUS STUDENT NETWORK: If you are planning to be mobile within the Erasmus scheme, the pan-European Erasmus Student Network (ESN) provides a portal for asking accommodation questions of ESN Ambassadors. It also introduces two, in their words, “reliable” platforms for searching for suitable private sector accommodation. Always consider the information and guidance which such platforms offer alongside the guidance provided by your placement provider (university/college for study placements; companies/organisations for work-based placements).

The ICU Erasmus Society is affiliated to ESN.

Perhaps you are one of a group of Imperial students going to the same destination. If so, perhaps you can 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 whether we have someone there currently) email 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 three parts to this section:

- Part A: accommodation provided or facilitated by a university/college (pages 36-40).
- Part B: finding private sector accommodation (pages 40-42).
- Part C (page 42): retaining/off-loading London accommodation (if applicable).

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 the local 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 accommodation options 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, take note of the following and do not necessarily feel constrained by this one option. Research the options as thoroughly as possible.

Here is a summary of what you need to do:

- 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?
- 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.
- 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, payment of deposits or fees and any additional or subsequent paperwork. Increasingly the housing market for university-managed accommodation in some cities is becoming more difficult and our partner universities/colleges are setting earlier deadlines for housing applications and fee payments. Missing deadlines can now mean no way back in terms of accessing university-managed accommodation (i.e. Imperial will find it very difficult to intervene on your behalf). The answer: Don’t miss deadlines. If you have a problem with making a required payment contact Adrian Hawksworth (a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk) to discuss further and don’t leave it until the last minute.
- 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 for doing so and/or a financial penalty.
• Keep copies or electronic records of everything you send.
• 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 (because you need to be very wary about securing housing via the internet), you cannot secure such accommodation from here in the UK.
• Are you linguistically prepared for the questions you may need to ask when securing any type of accommodation, especially if you want to wait until you arrive in the host town/city?

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, or you have a better option (perhaps an option which improves your integration). Normally this is possible but only if you or the accommodation service you are dealing with 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; shared 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).

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? In Australia, and also in some instances in the USA, specific “college” systems exist where the cost is much higher but of course you are paying for a higher level of service/experience.
• 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)?
• Do you want to live with other exchange students?; How easy is it to arrange to live alongside local students in halls (quite difficult in many cases). Does the university/college make it difficult to live alongside anyone but other international students (which can be difficult for using a new language).
• 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)? Would previous Imperial students have some insight?

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. Some thoughts to ponder:

• First of all remember that the study application (which may have already been submitted before a student starts thinking in more detail about where they will live) may have doubled as an accommodation application. It is usually obvious that this is the case but do check.
• Do you have the right deadline if it is a separate application routine for housing? Accommodation application deadlines are often aligned to semester entry points but housing should be also available for a full academic year if you require it.
• Has an accommodation application deadline been set by the exchange office at the host uni as part of an integrated procedure for exchange students or are you required to react to a separate deadline set and managed by the host university’s accommodation services? Does one routine discuss the other to a sufficient degree for you to know what is happening/when?
• Is the deadline an accommodation application form deadline or is it a deadline for the receipt of a housing fee in order to be considered for housing? Perhaps there are multiple deadlines you have to meet in order to retain the ability to be considered for university-facilitated accommodation. Universities/colleges with limited accommodation for exchange students may use such tactics to rule out students who do not keep up with deadlines.
• Are you being asked to express one or more accommodation preferences? You might just be offered accommodation without being given any preferences. Are the preferences generic types of housing or are they specific halls of residence?
• Are you able to locate information about the available residences? Imperial’s hall information on the web is very good, however, do not necessarily expect the same for the university/college you are applying to (it may be better; it may be rather more limited).
• Does the accommodation application form also refer to private sector options? If so, will they send you information about private sector accommodation regardless? Some universities do not provide the wealth of housing info which Imperial does, indeed, sometimes it is very limited, and you need to know who to contact for any semblance of detail.
• Does the university/college indicate what will happen if demand for rooms in university-managed housing outstrips availability? Again, some universities/colleges in certain locations may struggle to house everyone and there will be varying levels of service when it comes to private sector options. This is particularly an issue in the Netherlands.
• In some towns/cities, especially in France, a lot of university accommodation is pooled and handled on behalf of two or more institutions by an agent. Check the information provided by the host university/college. For example, in France the main agent is CROUS:

| Paris: | http://www.crous-paris.fr/ |
| Toulouse: | http://www.crous-toulouse.fr/ |
| Lyon: | http://www.crous-lyon.fr/en/ |
| Strasbourg: | http://www.crous-strasbourg.fr/ |
| Lorraine: | http://www.crous-lorraine.fr/ |
| Montpellier: | http://www.crous-montpellier.fr/ |
• Make sure you keep a record of who you have sent the accommodation application form to. Is it the host university/college 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.
• How are you going to chase the application, 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 university/college or an agent of theirs, what should you do next? After giving a sigh of relief, think about:
• What type of accommodation have you been offered a room in? Is it your first, second, third choice? Is it none of your choices? Did you have a choice!
• 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 are undecided about taking the accommodation offered to you by the host university/college at the time confirmation is required (especially if you will be contractually held to it if you accept) 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? Hopefully you will receive an email or on-line induction for when you arrive.

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, come the date of departure, you have applied for a room in a hall of residence but 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.

Ensure you have access to your accommodation correspondence and be prepared to argue your case if when you arrive 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 local contact, 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. Some universities will provide buddies/mentors to help.

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 or that you want in the end to take it up. 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 feedback sheets in your own department provided by previous students to the same placement provider** (if there are any).
- Students undertaking work (industrial) placements might be assisted in obtaining company or private sector accommodation.
- Every town/city will have its own favoured means by which private-apartments/flat-shares/lodgings are advertised. While agencies will exist, you may be drawn towards the universally popular methods of free/local newspapers, notice boards on campus or around town, the increasing availability of web-listings (remember that you might be viewing these from home) & word of mouth. *AirBnb and equivalents for short-term rental is covered further down.*
- **However, it is best to work through an agency** (remain cautious) rather than with landlords directly: preferably an agent who has experience of dealing with students, especially international students, and perhaps is endorsed by the placement provider.
- **Sign a contract** (a proper one which upholds your rights as much as the landlords…perhaps easier in some countries than others.)
- **Don’t view flats on your own. Go with someone you know or an agent.**
- If you do deal with landlords directly be cautious of people who might well not be the landlord, rather a tenant seeking to sub-let, who might not be following local rental rules/laws as they should.

**CAUTION:** Always be wary of websites which purport to provide accommodation options, and - as you should be aware from looking for private accommodation in London - be aware of the signs of fraud. For example, be very wary of the following website: erasmusu.com. It is just a social network/on-line community which is not related in any way to the EU.

Here are a few pointers. This does not claim to cover everything, rather its intention is to raise your awareness (perhaps remind you) 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 have time to look properly for a permanent solution? Perhaps you need to consider arriving in advance of that language/cultural/orientation course. **Going on an Erasmus placement?**: see page 67.
• (University/College based placements) Perhaps, if you are starting at the beginning of a regular academic year or semester/trimester 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. Are they going to start overlapping?
• **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 listings – whatever their provenance – may struggle to remain up-to-date if demand is high).
• As with London a high proportion of room/flats etc in a university town/city, especially for longer term rental will be snapped up before you arrive, perhaps not available to foreign students and not be of a particularly high standard.
• **AirBnb or equivalents may be an option for shorter stays** (depending on cost of course) since there may be limits on a length of stay stipulated by a host or, like with London, city-wide restrictions on length of stay. Tenant regulations and local council-tax like taxes would kick-in at some stage so regardless of what a “host” says on AirBnb or equivalents be sure that you are meeting local laws/regulations.
• Make sure you know what to say when you phone to ask to see a property. As we have suggested it is best to work through an established high street agency or other “agent” suggested by the placement provider.
• Make sure when you view a room/property to check things you would take for granted here in London, for example electric sockets in your room, accessibility to basic facilities, restrictions on use of facilities.
• Is it being let furnished or not? If it is furnished will you need to buy anything? If it is shared do you need to purchase anything because perhaps items in the flat belong 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:
  o If you are dealing with the landlord directly then s/he 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). However, if the rent is considerably cheaper than in London for similar accommodation you may think it a risk worth taking. Your risk. Another reason for working through an established agency.
• 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 it is far preferable if you have the chance to think it over overnight. **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 (first impressions can sometimes mask the merits of the place, esp the location).
• **If you wish to accept**, how does the landlord/agent wish you to secure the property/room?
  o If this is by cash, you will need to have it on you although frankly you may wish to walk away at that point. Cash, in the modern age, should trigger alarm bells.
Is the landlord requesting a deposit plus one or two months’ rent? Again, alarm bells.
If you do hand over cash how is the landlord going to confirm receipt.
As always it is best to work through an agency which is more likely to be following local rental rules/laws (while remaining cautious).
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 (crucial, as in London)? Can you get out of it (is there a cooling off period?) 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? There is more chance of an agent helping you understand the process.
Is the landlord/agent asking for a guarantor? The best course of action here may be to obtain a guarantor’s letter from a parent/guardian/bank.
What if you are not asked to sign a contract? The answer we hope is obvious!

Finally, (where relevant) 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.**

**Part C: What to do with your London accommodation during a placement (if applicable)**

In preparation for your placement you will naturally conclude as to whether you are able to retain your London accommodation or whether you need to off-load it, either permanently or temporarily. If you are currently in private accommodation in London then you may also have other responsibilities and liabilities such as Council Tax. Therefore, it is important to make sure your assets and responsibilities are covered back in the UK during your period abroad. If you wish to rent your room while you are abroad, speak to your landlord or read your contract about your options. There will be incoming Erasmus students who will be looking for accommodation for their period of study at Imperial so contact the Student Hub about advertising room availability (subject to your own housing contract).

**When should a student start booking travel?** The College advises that if you book travel tickets before any visa – where relevant – has been issued to you that you are at the very least conversant with the cancellation policy. Ideally you should await the receipt of your visa, but we understand that the cost of travel especially to long-haul destinations can rocket upwards in the meantime if one does this. At the end of the day the student is responsible for when they book their travel and the cost. The cancellation cover in the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance policy (*see next section*) would not apply where the student has failed to get their visa, although it is worth contacting the College’s Insurance Manager to check.
Section 4: **Insurance** (minor updates in yellow)

For any trip abroad it is essential that you have sufficient insurance to cover you and your possessions for the duration of your stay. Consider the information provided here set against your personal circumstances and placement location and ask yourself whether all possible circumstances will be covered by one form of insurance or another?

**Take note:** Imperial College makes provision for its own students to benefit from insurance policies (subject to some actions on the part of the student; subject to policy wordings) which cover Travel (including Personal Liability), Personal Accident and Public Liability.

This section covers:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Imperial College’s Overseas Travel Insurance Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Imperial College’s Personal Accident Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Imperial College’s Public Liability Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Contact sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Housing insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Industrial placements: insurance in the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Health (refers the reader to pages 53-55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Separate cover</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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).

Subject to your travel arrangements being registered with the College’s Insurance Manager (see below for action points on your behalf) as a student of Imperial College you are insured under a travel insurance 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-ECTS credit. However, all students should take note of the exceptions listed later in this section, including if you are travelling to undertake a placement in your country of domicile or plan to be away for more than 12 months or plan to undertake weekend/holiday trips to other countries within your placement period. 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 cover for emergency medical expenses it is not a replacement for a health insurance (see later sections). Also, if you are a national of the country you are undertaking your placement in (or you will travel through your home country enroute to and from the placement) please ensure you read the “key exclusion” information on page 47.

A summary of travel benefits afforded to you by the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance are provided on the Imperial College intranet: [https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/FKB/Overseas+travel](https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/FKB/Overseas+travel). To access this page you will need to log in using your Imperial College log-in/password. A summary and a commentary of the travel benefits of the current provision is also provided below.
IMPORTANT before you read on: The College reviews its Travel Insurance provision annually and the turnover date is 1 August.

What you need to do: THREE Key Actions
whether you travel from the UK or your country of domicile to your placement

Important Stuff!!!! 3 Key Actions

1. ACTION: Register your trip by completing the on-line travel registration form available via: https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/FKB/Overseas+Travel.
   - You need only do this once for your whole trip (i.e. if you travel to the UK or to your home country during your placement there is no need to register those specific journeys), 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, and where your placement requires attendance in one or more countries.
   - Always remember to register your travel/trip as close to your intended departure date as possible so that you obtain the most up-to-date guidance (including travel certificate).
   - Failure to register your trip may result in you not being covered by the College’s overseas travel insurance policy.
   - Holiday type visits made during your trip to other countries (other than stopovers within the travel element to/from the UK or your country of domicile) are NOT covered by this insurance.
   - 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 on-line travel registration form answer the questions as a student as the current 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 academic dept to undertake & you should assume for the purpose of registering your travel that they have.

2. ACTION: DOWNLOAD the RSA/Helix Travel Oracle app from Google Play or the Apple Store to give you a wealth of information about the country you are visiting as well as immediate access to the insurers 24/7 help line.

3. ACTION: It is advisable to also print the Travel Certificate as a pdf file: https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/FKB/Overseas+Travel. Add your name, destination and the whole period of travel (but please note the advice below about period of travel beyond 12 months, and where your placement requires attendance in countries other than the principal/host country).
   - It explains what you or someone acting on your behalf should do in a real emergency (the same helpline available using the app is referenced).
   - You should consider carrying the Travel Certificate with you at all times, and have a spare copy available where it might be found in case of your own incapacity.

Make yourself familiar with: College’s own Emergency Procedure for Placements (page 73).
Summary of Benefits; Important Points; Exclusions and How to Claim afforded to you by the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance as they apply until 31 July 2020*

* The College’s Overseas Travel Insurance is renewed annually from 1 August so always check the aforementioned webpage for the most up-to-date information and travel certificate. Register your travel as close to the intended departure date as possible. This Handbook will be updated as necessary on 1 August each year to reflect any changes to insurance cover for the subsequent 12 months.

Imperial College’s Travel Insurance Policy is provided by Royal & Sun Alliance (RSA). It is broadly in line with package travel insurances generally available. The broker is Arthur J Gallagher. The complete policy wording can be downloaded from here.

Summary of Benefits
The 2019-20 Travel Insurance Policy is applicable for travel undertaken 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020. It might normally be expected to be available from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021 under largely the same terms.

• **Medical and other Emergency Travel 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. **Cover**: Unlimited, subject to policy wording.

• **Assistance Services** (medical and security). Healix and Drum Cussac are the third party service providers for RSA (see the RSA/Healix Travel Oracle app). The services can be accessed by telephone +44 (0) 208 608 4100 or email: rsa@healix.com

• **Travel cancellation, curtailment, travel disruption, replacement and delay** due to circumstances outside the direct control of the College or the insured person. **Cover**: £10,000. Subject to £50 per claim excess.

• **Political and Natural Evacuation**: Cover: £50,000.

• **Legal Expenses**: **Cover**: £50,000.

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

• **Lost Personal Baggage** (read the relevant guidance document in the ‘summary of cover’ table at https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/FKB/Overseas+Travel): **Cover**: £2,500 (limited to £1,250 per item). Subject to £50 per claim excess.

• **Money and Tickets** (read the relevant guidance document in the ‘summary of cover’ table at https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/FKB/Overseas+Travel): **Cover £150.** Subject to £50 per claim excess.

Commentary on Important Points
(afterwards read the guidance on “key exclusions” to the policy on page 47).

• **You have a duty of care regarding personal possessions** (i.e. to take reasonable precautions).

• 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. **See also Page 42 regarding “when should a student start to book travel”**.

• **Loss of Personal Possessions/Money**: In the event of losses for which you wish to claim you MUST notify the police (or perhaps the transport carrier if enroute) immediately and obtain an official written report (perhaps a crime number).
• (where applicable) **Carry a valid European Health Insurance Card ("EHIC"):** 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 53-55.* The College expects students travelling to the EEA/Switzerland and who are eligible for the relevant EHIC to carry it. **However, a no-deal Brexit may interfere with these arrangements in 2019-20.** See pages 53-55 for how to apply for an EHIC.

• **Travel to Remote Regions:** For a placement involving travel to remote regions the College Insurance Manager must have been consulted by a student’s home department prior to a placement being approved (i.e. well before a student travels). If problems were to arise in a remote region then search and rescue operations may become necessary and may prove difficult or extremely expensive to arrange. This could be a reason why a placement is not approved.

• **Travel to Disturbed Areas:** (this list may change) Departments considering organising a placement in or via Colombia, Iraq, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia, Venezuela or Yemen should contact insurance@imperial.ac.uk for details. This could be grounds for a placement not to be approved.

• **Travel to Sanctioned Countries:** Checks should be made in respect of placements to sanctioned countries such as Ukraine (Crimea and Sevastopol), Russia, Iran, Syria, North Korea, Cuba or Sudan see https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/FKB/Overseas+Travel . These may be grounds for a placement not to be approved.

For general advice on travel to other countries PLUS further info on travel warnings to certain countries and sanctioned countries check out: https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

• **Travelling with dependents:** Any partner/spouse/dependent-child accompanying a student who is travelling on College business is also covered under the travel insurance policy.

• **Where a single placement is undertaken in more than one country, other than the UK.** Contact the College’s Insurance Manager to ensure you register appropriately (with College) the travel involved.

• **Holiday travel:** See a sliding scale of insured private days: https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/FKB/Overseas+Travel (click on “table of private days”). A (maximum) allowance of up to 28 days holiday travel insurance cover is available:
  
  o providing such travel is incidental to College business and that the holiday takes place in the same country as the placement or en route within the first outward and final homeward journey *(i.e. the allowance and therefore the insurance cover cannot be used for incidental holidaying to other countries during the placement period, other than travel to and from the UK or your country of domicile).*
  
  o If your placement lasts more than 365 days is has to have been pre-approved by the Insurance Manager. See Key Exclusions below.
  
  o To reaffirm that a student is not covered by the College's Overseas Travel Insurance if they take a visit or a holiday to another country during the placement, unless they are travelling back directly to the UK or their normal country of domicile (it is to be expected that a student will not necessarily remain in the placement country throughout the whole placement and will have cause to return to the UK or their country of domicile).

• Always check whether you possess 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 in the EEA/Switzerland or perhaps parental household insurance for expensive personal belongings.

• Check whether your host placement provider has a mandatory requirement for a student to purchase health insurance from them or an approved provider. For example, 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 overseas travel insurance policy for costs not met by that mandatory health insurance policy.

- Check whether you have to pay additional housing insurance for the accommodation you occupy and what is the cover provided.

For key exclusions see: [https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/FKB/Overseas+Travel].

What follows is a commentary on some of the key exclusions under the policy (review the full policy wording available on the finance website):

- You are not covered by the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance for medical expenses, repatriation and political evacuation should you be a national of or are normally domiciled in the country in which the situation occurs. 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 relevant country.

- Travel exceeding one year in duration – contact the Insurance Manager to make arrangements. This may affect some undergraduate students on “year abroad” (especially if a pre-sessional language course in the host country is part of the approved placement) 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. The additional holiday time might not apply. After discussion with the Insurance Manager a student must be prepared in such circumstances to obtain private travel insurance for their whole placement.

- 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.

- Default (insolvency) of any provider of transport or accommodation.

- Suicide, intentional self-injury or use of non-prescribed drugs.

- Dental or optical expenses (other than in exceptional circumstances).

- Travel to “disturbed areas” or those with “sanctions”: see above note and for fuller guidance see: [https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice] and (mandatory) contact the Imperial College’s Insurance Manager (insurance@imperial.ac.uk);

- 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.

HOW TO CLAIM (using the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance)

For all Medical claims contact +44 (0) 208 608 4100 quoting policy number RTT 306251.

OR

For all non-Medical Claims Complete the claim form at: [https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/FKB/Overseas+Travel]

Scroll down to “During or Post Travel”

Send to insurance@imperial.ac.uk (Telephone Number: Tel: +44 (0)20 7594 8666)

Read the claim form before completing it. Remember when submitting to attach all supporting documentation (e.g. police incident report form, receipts, proof of refund). Guidance is provided at: [https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/FKB/Travel+insurance+claims+guidance]. Students on placements within EEA/Switzerland, should first claim medical expenses using their applicable European Health Insurance Card. Do not claim twice for the same costs.
B: Imperial College’s Personal Accident 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.

- Sitting alongside the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance is cover for Personal Accidents. 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 participating in official activities organised by College, including abroad. Incidentally, there is similar cover provided by College when a student is on or off campus in the UK.
- 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.
- Please note that there is no document to download.

C: Imperial College’s Public Liability Cover

- The personal liability benefit included within the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance 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) but does not extend to the student’s attendance at the placement provider. However, the College’s Liability Insurance (a pre-requisite for trading) does extend the College’s public liability cover to successful claims brought by a student for circumstances at their placement provider, with the strict exception that it does NOT include cover motorised vehicle liabilities.
- Some countries and individual placement providers may require you to provide evidence of the insurance cover you enjoy for public liability. This evidence can be obtained from https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/FKB/Public+liability+insurance and queries can be addressed to the Insurance Manager (insurance@imperial.ac.uk).
- While you know that insurance cover is in place for you, 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 held to be criminally responsible.

In France: all students, including visiting Exchange/Erasmus students, are required under French law to have public liability insurance cover (civile responsibilité) whilst attending a higher education institution or a company and would normally need to provide such evidence on arrival. The College’s Liability Insurance currently covers a student for this purpose to the extent described above. You ought not to have to pay for additional cover, however, if the cover suggested by the placement provider is of low cost you might think that it is more convenient to purchase their recommended policy rather than attempting to explain the cover provided by Imperial.

D: Contact Sports

The College’s Overseas Travel Insurance does cover you for sports (e.g. skiing) subject to the policy wording but that may not be sufficient in some circumstances. If you play certain contact sports your host university/college may request you to take out additional, mandatory compulsory insurance. The cost of this additional insurance may not amount to much.

E: Housing Insurance

Does your housing contract (host country) require you to obtain separate housing insurance?
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 13: the Placement Provider Information Form asks the pertinent questions.
- If the placement provider does not have the equivalent of UK Employers’ Liability Insurance or indicates that they will not apply (in your case) the equivalent of UK Employers’ Liability Insurance then the home academic department should as part of their [placement] approval process be satisfied that the placement provider is demonstrating an intention to fulfil its health, safety and training responsibilities. If this is sufficiently 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. See section C above.

**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 (for your free-time away from your “placement”) and the College’s Liability Insurance (for your time at the placement provider.) See section C above.
- The College maintains a template 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).
- Depts can email a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk to access the template training agreement.

- **Needless to say,** you are expected to act responsibly at all times and therefore 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.

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

- Where a placement is organised by the hosting university/college as part of the study plan (learning agreement) the hosting university/college assumes responsibility for ensuring you have adequate insurance cover so ensure you follow their guidance/instructions.

Any queries: contact the Assistant Registrar (Placements) in the first instance on a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

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G: **Health Insurance:** See pages 53-55 including College Health Clearance.

H: **Separate Cover:** Of course, you could take out a policy which covers you for everything regardless of that cover provided by the means described above.
Section 5: Health and Safety at your Placement Provider

All placements (whether study-based or work-based) undertaken external to the College are subject to the Off-site Working Policy. The Good Practice for Placements - which academic departments should be taking into accounted in the way they manage a placement - dovetails with the Off-Site Working Policy (see also pages 13 and 80-83).

The Good Practice for Placements is available on the Placements website: 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/

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. They should do this as necessary with their designated Safety Officer.

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.

Therefore, your home department is advised to consider the following before approving a placement (and 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 (to the student’s home academic department) and considered any limitations. It should be assumed that in case of universities with whom the College has official student exchange agreements that the insurance issue has been resolved. See Approval of a Placement Provider on page 13 & importantly Insurance in the Workplace on page 49.

• 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). A department should have a routine in place for assessing risk, whether a placement involves undergraduate or postgraduate students. This might be based around the tools on offer as part of the good practice for placement management and/or it might be based on well-founded arrangements using the tools on offer for good health and safety management provided by the Safety Dept. Either way a proportional and efficient means of assessing risk should be in place within all departments.

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 placement provider (e.g. a host university offers an internship at an external company; a company relocates you to another office for a period of time). It is very important that the process undertaken by the placement provider 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 host university/college will act responsibly.

While other persons are very important in organising and confirming your placement (the Placement Manager; Dept Safety Officer), 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.
• This is especially important if:
  o You are the first student (Imperial or perhaps any student) to be seeking a placement at a particular placement provider.
  o You are the first foreign student to be hosted by a particular placement provider.
There may have been a gap since a student (of Imperial; any student) was last hosted by a particular placement provider and knowledge of that particular placement provider is not up-to-date.

the onus is on you to find an industrial placement or where you prefer to find your own industrial placement (under departmental guidance/guidelines).

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).

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.

In preparation for your placement (or a particular element of your placement) and/or at the beginning of your placement (or at the beginning of a particular element of your placement)

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 (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/]
- 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/]
Section 6: Health Care in the Host Country

This section covers:

| A. Imperial College Health Clearance     |
| B. Medical care in the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland |
| C. Medical care outside the European Economic Area and Switzerland |

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 be advised by their home academic department to seek approval to travel (‘fitness to travel’) from the College’s Occupational Health Service.

For more information²: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/occupational-health/travel/

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 email³ (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.

This is an important routine as you may not be aware until advised otherwise that there are remedial actions you need to take in order to visit a particular country, and we are thinking here most obviously of vaccinations but it can also include preventative measures to reduce the risk of exposure to illness. Take it seriously, especially if you are travelling beyond western Europe.

Host organisations and universities may also require a student to complete a health questionnaire as part of their admission process (often aligned with immigration/visa requirements), to provide proof that a student has valid vaccinations for certain diseases, to have a medical (again often part of a country’s visa process) including an X-ray and blood tests; to purchase mandatory health insurance that meets with the requirements of the host country. Again, and we can’t say it often enough, read any information you are sent by a placement provider; check out visa processes etc.

² 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
³ 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.
B. Medical care in the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland

IMPORTANT: A no-deal Brexit may interfere with these arrangements in 2019-20.
For now the advice that follows is based on the UK continuing to be a member state of the EU.

Consult the separate Guidance on European Health Insurance Cards and in particular the Student-EHIC should you be undertaking your placement (study and work) lasting more than 6 weeks as part of your degree at Imperial at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/placements/information-for-imperial-college-students/
(content of said guidance: where and when to apply for EHICs; i.e. in which country; and when applying for a Student-EHIC issued by the UK-National Health Service for a study or work placement lasting more than 6 weeks how to go about it; making a claim on a UK-issued Student-EHIC)

If you plan, as we advise you, to register your trip with the College (see pages 43-48) to ensure you are covered by the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance, then being in receipt of a valid and appropriate EHIC is a pre-requisite. If the UK leaves the EU without a deal (no-deal Brexit) before your departure date or during your placement then, even if you need to explore obtaining a new health insurance (further guidance will be provided at the time), the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance will continue to be valid (to the extent applicable in your individual circumstances: read pages 43-50).

To reiterate that a travel insurance is not in itself health insurance

Once you have the appropriate EHIC (whether issued in the UK or not):
- Retain your EHIC (as well as other insurances: College/private) on your person. Always keep a copy somewhere off your person (know how to obtain a replacement should you lose it).
- UK residents can refer to https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/ (UK Government website) for country specific information.
- Refer to information from the placement provider: 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 an EHIC as only treatment provided under the relevant state scheme is covered. E.G. in Germany a student with a EHIC would normally present it at a local sickness insurance office where they would discover what local health services they were entitled to and could use.
- Caution: Access to dentists may be limited & may involve a non-fundable payment.
- Caution: In some countries, e.g. Switzerland, you may find upfront costs (prior to a claim) expensive.
- 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 an EHIC you should do so whilst you are still in the host country, although there are countries where this is not possible. Make sure you know what you cannot claim on the EHIC and ensure that you therefore 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 (for full guidance on the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance see pages 43-48).
- Pre-existing Conditions: If you are in need of treatment, regular medication, injections or blood tests for pre-existing conditions while abroad, a EHIC normally covers you in the relevant countries. In the case of medications it will be necessary to check that the medicines you require are available in the host country. Consider taking supplies with you, but 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 supplies with you, again if this allowed. Are you being prescribed special foodstuffs by your GP, if so how will this continue?
- 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.

DOWNLOAD the RSA Travel Oracle app from Google Play or the Apple Store (see pages 43-48) to give you a wealth of information about the country you are visiting as well as immediate access to College Overseas Travel Insurance 24/7 help line
Work Placements: Working for a Foreign Employer

If you 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 your EHIC may not be important for accessing health care in the host country. However, still obtain an appropriate EHIC (as above) to be covered by the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance.

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, travel insurance is not health insurance. Students are advised to check whether travel insurance satisfies the host country’s health insurance requirements for visitors (often linked to visa requirements where those are applicable).

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

- As a starting point, **UK residents** should consult the Dept of Health’s HealthCare Abroad web-site [http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx) and any information provided by the placement provider.
- While, **non-UK residents** should consult their own government health web-site as well as any information provided by the placement provider.

Some guidance for students planning to undertake university-based study placements in:

*(Home UK students should check out with UK Student Finance if financial support for insurance costs is available)*

- **Australia**: If you require a student visa in order to enter Australia you will be required to purchase compulsory health insurance (Overseas Health Cover: OSHC) from the host university as part of / alongside the visa application. This will provide easy access to health service providers. UK nationals can access A&E services for free. Get vaccinations (if you have eye to travelling in south-east Asia) in the UK as they are expensive in Australia.
- **Singapore**: a student attending a university would pay on arrival a health insurance policy from the host university as part of a admin services fee. This amounts to c.150GBP for a full year.
- **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 very expensive (c1-3K US$) 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 also check when you would need to pay for it (**is payment by instalment 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](http://www.gallagherstudent.com/UKiss)

Pre-existing Conditions: If you are in need of treatment, regular medication, injections or blood tests for pre-existing conditions while abroad ensure your health insurance provides adequate cover. In the case of medications it will be necessary to check that the medicines you require are available in the host country. Consider taking supplies with you, but 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 supplies with you, again if this allowed. Are you being prescribed special foodstuffs by your GP, if so how will this continue?
ARRANGING A PLACEMENT (Part 3)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1: Planning your Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 2: Providing evidence of financial resources (when a visa is required for the host country)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3: Tuition Fees payable to a host university/college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4: Other non-tuition charges levied by a host university/college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 5: Tuition Fees (payable to Imperial College in 2019-20) by Undergraduate Year Abroad students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 6: Tuition fees (payable to Imperial College in 2019-20) by Undergraduate Year in Industry students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 7: Tuition Fees (payable to Imperial College in 2019-20) for any other UG or PG work/study placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 8: UK Government Financial Support and Imperial Bursaries (Home undergraduate students only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 9: UK Government Financial Support (EU undergraduate students only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 10: Experiencing Financial Difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 11: Managing and accessing (Banking) money whilst Abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 12: Erasmus Mobility Grants (“study” &amp; “traineeship/placement”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 13: Tuition Fee costs for Language Courses undertaken in Erasmus Programme Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 14: Subsistence costs for Language Courses undertaken in Erasmus Programme Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 15: Departmental support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 16: Other awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 17: Miscellaneous Financial Information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

* Students may find this external website of use: [http://www.taxguideforstudents.org.uk/](http://www.taxguideforstudents.org.uk/)
Section 1: Planning your Budget

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.

You would continue to be responsible, for example:
- for all accommodation and living expenses (e.g. meals, clothing, personal needs),
- all travel and other transportation costs, including visa and visa-related costs,
- in the context of a study placement at a university/college for covering the cost of any textbooks and other course materials which are not made available as part of tuition and any non-academic and non-obligatory charges for facilities, services or activities which are not made available as part of tuition.

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).

A Key aim will be 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 sections below on UK government financial support are only relevant to Home and EU students as referenced. 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 while there are exceptions accommodation elsewhere will often be less than that paid in London.
4. What additional costs you expect to incur while undertaking your placement; e.g., travel & visa costs, or perhaps new accommodation costs due to having to continue to pay for existing accom in London.
5. Whether there are any new sources of funding which may be applicable to your placement.
6. While you can’t take control of exchange rates, try and be prepared should some costs (accommodation perhaps) increase unexpectedly. For example, are you able to move accommodation to something cheaper should the need arise (the answers to these questions may be easier to fathom once you are there rather than beforehand).

Section 2: Providing evidence of financial resources (when a visa is required for the host country)

For most visa applications, applicants must provide proof of financial support.

This will either be:
- requested at the time of your application for enrolment to a host university/college (especially the case in the USA and Australia) or during contractual discussions with a company/organisation (with the end product normally being a document issued by the placement provider for adding to a visa application); OR
- as part of the visa application itself.
The amount of financial support which you are required to prove you have access to will vary country to country. Should you know you require a visa read the information from the placement provider to find out what the visa/immigration process is; what documents are acceptable (and what are not) as proof of your financial resources (e.g. bank statements; letters of guarantor; sponsorship letters); whether translations are required; whether amounts have to be documented in the currency of the host country. These are crucial processes to get right so if you need to discuss it feel free to contact a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk. You would also not be expected to spend money from the sources/accounts you have evidenced your financial resources with, just in case you were wondering (it is just an evidencing process).

However, the amount that you must prove is NOT necessarily the amount of money you will end up spending. You may spend more or less, depending on your personal lifestyle of shopping, travel, going out, etc.

**Section 3: 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**, except for further language training where a fee is required as governed by the rules of the host institution and where the language course is not accepted by the host institution as part of the study plan.

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

**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 and Department of Life Sciences given the opportunity by their home department to apply to other approved institutions (**but with whom no bi-lateral student exchange agreement exists**) may also need to pay a fee to the receiving university/college. Such students should check with the Year Abroad Co-ordinator in their home department whether a fee is applicable.

**Section 4: Other non-tuition charges levied by a host university/college (exchange students)**

- No exchange student should be charged to use library, computer and laboratory facilities.
- If you are an Erasmus student (Europe) then you should not be charged anything termed a tuition or application fee. If you are then you should contact a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk
- Depending on the study plan a student pursues at the host university/college, there may be specific non-tuition charges for participating in additional language training or courses, specific modules/courses:
  - The most obvious one is field trips where a payment is required to cover travel and accommodation and other pertinent costs.
  - Other modules/courses may have miscellaneous (non-tuition) fees associated with them so always check all the information provided by the host university/college. If in doubt, please contact Adrian Hawksworth (a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk) who can check the
agreement with the university/college and ask questions on a student’s behalf if required.

- 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.
  - 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 (see page 55), housing insurance or sports insurance, local transport concessions, printing costs, perhaps local taxes levied by universities (e.g. stamp tax in Italy).

If in doubt, please contact Adrian Hawksworth (a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk) who can check the agreement with the university/college and ask questions on a student’s behalf if required.

**Section 5: Tuition Fees (payable to Imperial College in 2019-20) 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/undergraduate-tuition-fees/2019-20](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/undergraduate-tuition-fees/2019-20)

If you are applying for a UK Student Finance loan to cover your tuition fees then remember to apply for a reduced amount.

**Section 6: Tuition Fees (payable to Imperial College in 2019-20) by Undergraduate Year in Industry students**

All students will benefit from a tuition fee reduction.
Go to: [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/undergraduate-tuition-fees/2019-20](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/undergraduate-tuition-fees/2019-20)

If you are applying for a UK Student Finance loan to cover your tuition fees then remember to apply for a reduced amount.

**Section 7: Tuition Fees (payable to Imperial College in 2019-20) 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 9) might be eligible for a tuition fee remission (reduction) at the discretion of the home department.
Section 8: 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 2019-20 remain eligible to be assessed for the following sources of student support:

- **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 Abroad 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.

- **UK Government Financial Support** A “home” student can apply as usual for 2019-20 UK government financial support using their student finance account: https://www.gov.uk/student-finance/continuing-fulltime-students
  - The application for funding will ask a student planning to be on a placement to provide details of when and where they plan to study or work abroad. **IMPORTANT**: Your Student Finance Authority may subsequently seek verification from Imperial College of those details in which case contact a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk for assistance in completing a Student Finance Authority (whether England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland) issued Course Abroad Form or provision of a letter confirming the details.
  - If you are entitled to a tuition fee reduction for the year in which a Year Abroad or Year in Industry takes place (see sections 5 and 6 above) you will need to request a smaller tuition fee loan or grant from your Student Finance Authority.
  - Be aware that the maximum level of maintenance loans differs depending on when a student commenced their degree.
  - Be aware that the maximum level of maintenance loans available for a year abroad are classified as when “you spend a year of a UK course studying abroad” and are lower than the maximum loan levels available when you are in London.
  - Be aware that the maximum level of maintenance loans available for a year abroad are lower if the year abroad takes place in the final year of a degree.
  - If you are planning on undertaking a year abroad (of study) which commences in July or August (e.g. in Australia or at MIT in the USA) then apply to renew your financial support at the very earliest opportunity. Contact a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk for further advice.
  - Unless you ask the College to request changes to your loan schedule (number of instalments/date of first instalment) any loans you are scheduled to receive will be disbursed as normal as if you were at Imperial throughout the year. Year Abroad students planning to be in Australia (from July), Singapore (from August) and Berkeley (from mid-August) in particular may wish to think about this and to contact a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk to request assistance with informing their Student Finance Authority. However, please note that start dates during late August and throughout Sept will not normally bring about changes to the first disbursement date.
  - If you are planning on taking a placement (study or work) but will be at Imperial for most of the relevant academic year then there is no special provision made.
Means-tested financial support for travel, insurance, visas is normally also available to Home students for study-placements abroad:

- **Student Finance England**: [https://www.gov.uk/travel-grants-students-england](https://www.gov.uk/travel-grants-students-england) (also covers Erasmus work-placements)
- **Student Finance Wales**: [https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/undergraduate-students/continuing-students/what-financial-support-is-available/travel-grant.aspx](https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/undergraduate-students/continuing-students/what-financial-support-is-available/travel-grant.aspx)
- **Student Finance Northern Ireland**: [https://www.studentfinanceni.co.uk/types-of-finance/undergraduate/full-time/northern-ireland-student/extra-help/travel-grant/what-is-it/](https://www.studentfinanceni.co.uk/types-of-finance/undergraduate/full-time/northern-ireland-student/extra-help/travel-grant/what-is-it/)
- **Scotland does not appear to provide additional support.**

A Course Abroad Form is usually sent to the student to hand to Imperial to have completed: contact [a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk)

A student is able to receive, where eligible, an Erasmus Grant with no impact on their access to UK student financial support.

Please note that Undergraduate Year Abroad students who plan to be away from College in 2020-21 should refer for up-to-date information to the Year Abroad Hand-out (which is issued in late January 2020 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 Wales: [www.studentfinancewales.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk)
- Students Finance Northern Ireland: [www.studentfinanceni.co.uk](http://www.studentfinanceni.co.uk)
- Student Awards Agency for Scotland: [www.saas.gov.uk](http://www.saas.gov.uk)

**Section 9: UK Government Financial Support**

(Information for **EU undergraduate** students only: work & study-based placements abroad)

“EU” undergraduate students who will be spending a year or part of a year away from College in 2019-20 **remain eligible to be assessed for UK Government Financial Support for tuition fees.** An “EU” student can apply as usual for 2019-20 UK government financial support using their student finance account: [https://www.gov.uk/student-finance/eu-students](https://www.gov.uk/student-finance/eu-students)

**Section 10: 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.

For Home students, see previous references to UK Student Finance (England, Wales, Northern Ireland) and possible access to means-tested financial support for travel, insurance, visas costs when undertaking a study placement abroad (and in England when on an Erasmus labelled work-placement).
Section 11: Managing and accessing money (Banking) whilst abroad

This section was updated a couple of years ago 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.)

Please note the information here is open to change so do not rule out the need to seek up-to-date guidance from your own bank.

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.
3. Consider opening an account in the host country. Will you benefit? How easy is it? See page 64.

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.
• **Prepaid Currency Cards**: It can be an option to obtain a prepaid currency card or cash passport. The card can be pre-loaded by purchasing currency online and then used in the same way as a debit card in shops and at cash machines. You can manage the card online and see your balance. The card is also separate to your bank account which can reduce the risk of identity theft. Cards are available from a number of companies such as Travelex, Thomas Cook, the Post Office and the AA. A useful source of further information is [http://www.which.co.uk/money/credit-cards-and-loans/guides/prepaid-cards/](http://www.which.co.uk/money/credit-cards-and-loans/guides/prepaid-cards/)

• **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.
  
  o 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.
  
  o Credit cards can also be used to obtain money from ATMs but 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 on a credit card 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 important if you plan on using your credit card to make regular cash withdrawals, as you could end up incurring fees/interest charges every transaction.
  
  o **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, increase your interest free/reduced rate overdraft rather than paying the 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.

• **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, 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 about £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 & 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 frowned upon and not normally available to students. 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 (2019) use the Euro: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Ireland, Austria, Slovakia, Estonia, Slovenia, Malta, Cyprus and Finland.

An explanation about the Erasmus+ Scheme is on page 5, including eligible host countries.

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

The content of sections 12, 13 and 14 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. Erasmus funding is managed nationally by the UK Erasmus National Agency (currently the British Council) and managed locally by Imperial College London.

The UK’s expected departure from the EU may impact on the availability of financial support via the EU’s Erasmus+ scheme. A Brexit update is available.
Section 12: **Erasmus Mobility 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\(^5\) 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 any additional costs of undertaking a period abroad (such as 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\(^6\). Students who have low household incomes (criteria apply) and/or who have a disability may qualify for extra support.
- **Erasmus Grant for a “traineeship”**\(^7\): For work/research/project periods of 2 – 12 months. Students who have low household incomes (criteria apply) and/or 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.\(^8\)

[Student] Recipients of an Erasmus grant sign up to the Erasmus Student Charter: [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/) (click on placement learning and scroll down to “other resources”). The Charter is an important statement of intent on the part of the European Commission, participating universities and the student. It governs the standards (rights and responsibilities) by which it is expected an Erasmus period will be managed.

How do you find out more?
[Brexit dependent] Imperial College students should refer to either:
(UG) [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/undergraduate-funding/bursaries-and-grants/funding-for-placements](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/undergraduate-funding/bursaries-and-grants/funding-for-placements)
or (PG) [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/postgraduate-funding/bursaries-and-grants/funding-for-placements](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/postgraduate-funding/bursaries-and-grants/funding-for-placements)
for information on how the Erasmus grant systems will operate in the current academic year, including eligibility criteria, grant rates and how to apply for a grant. Please note that this information has now been updated for the following year. UG Year Abroad participants for 2019-20 have been emailed to prompt them. The grant rates applicable to a country, e.g. France, can change (up or down) from year to year.

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\(^5\) 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.

\(^6\) 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.

\(^7\) Your learning agreement for a traineeship will be integral to the grant process.

\(^8\) 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.
Important: In 2019-20 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 language 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 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 courses for students mobile under Erasmus:

- A student who is officially mobile under Erasmus and will take part of all of their study plan in the host language and is in receipt of an Erasmus Grant can 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. If they pass the language assessment (described above) with A1, A2 or B1 they will automatically be sent a licence to access the relevant on-line tuition. They will be reminded of this when they apply for a grant.
- 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. A student should email a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk.

Important: Students going to either ETH Zurich or EPF Lausanne in Switzerland for their UG Year Abroad should read section 16 since Switzerland is not a programme country within Erasmus.

Section 13: Tuition Fee costs for Language Courses in undertaken in 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 14: 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 15: 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 16: 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 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 **380 CHF** per month of registered attendance (approximately 300-350 €). The funds are kindly provided by the Swiss Government and the host university.
    - **To confirm:** a student mobile under such arrangements is **not 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](mailto:a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk)

- **A scholarship opportunity for UG Year Abroad students undertaking a study placement as part of an exchange programme at ETH Zurich or EPF Lausanne**
  - The Foundation’s objective is to support students who would not able to afford such studies without financial assistance

- **DUO-Singapore Exchange Fellowship Award:**
  - This is relevant to UG students spending a full academic year at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU). Successful candidates will receive a maximum of €4000.
    - **NUS:** The application window for the DUO Awards at NUS is **normally February to March**. Students for whom this is relevant can be expected to be reminded about the process
    - **NTU** do not have an application routine, rather they would consider offering such an award at their disposal to Imperial if Imperial is hosting from NTU in the same academic year, and Imperial would seek to identify a candidate following guidance issued by NTU.
Section 17: 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 to this tax. An external website which has insight is: [http://www.frenchpropertylinks.com/essential/taxe-fonciere.html](http://www.frenchpropertylinks.com/essential/taxe-fonciere.html)
ON YOUR PLACEMENT

See also previous sections: including ‘planning your placement’ on pages 10-19 and the health and safety section on pages 50-52.

| Section 1: Keeping in contact with your dept at Imperial and Maintaining your Study Plan |
| Section 2: Dealing with Emergencies |
| Section 3: Consider yourself: a few thoughts around your own well-being |
| Section 4: Arranging accommodation for the next academic year (if relevant) |
| Section 5: Thinking beyond the placement – planning your career |

Your home academic department is responsible for managing your placement:

- for informing you prior to your placement (and keeping you informed during the placement) as to what the academic requirements are for successful completion.
- what deadlines exist for reporting progress on and for the submission of academic work.
- how contact will be maintained and whether you will be visited.
- and where relevant, for explaining the arrangements for transferring marks and credit for academic work undertaken at a host university/college (and for handling any problems you may encounter in relation to achieving your study plan).

If you are on an exchange at a university/college then you are subject to their rules and regulations as well as Imperial College’s. Likewise, if you are being hosted by a company or other type of organisation. You remain registered with Imperial College London throughout and are also therefore subject to the College’s student regulations.

Reminder:

Before departing on your placement you ought to 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/ (scroll down to “forms”). This is a NEW version of the template form (June 2019)

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, before you depart on your placement, about how your host institution/company functions 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 contact with your dept at Imperial and Maintaining your Study Plan

**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 78-79.

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

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Please remember that the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance does **not** cover incidental weekend/holiday trips/visits made to countries other than your host country (for the purpose of undertaking your placement), other than any travel to and from the UK or your normal country of domicile. **Be prepared to purchase, on an independent basis, additional travel insurance for such incidental weekend/holiday trips/visits.**

Organise yourself:

- Before you arrive at your placement provider, ensure you have an appointment to see your supervisor/contact at the placement provider (or at the very least know what the welcome routine is, in terms of an office to report to).
• 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.

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 10-19 and 22-25 (Learning/Training Agreements)

(Study Placements) Failing courses/modules abroad
(those courses modules which are wholly assessed by the host university/college)
You should immediately notify your home academic department if you fail any modules/courses during the study period.

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.

Give careful thought about your return to College at the end of your placement
(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: brief reference on page 15.
Section 2: Dealing with Emergencies

Emergencies

What individuals (and family and friends) consider as emergencies can differ, but when you or family/friends decide it is an emergency (i.e. something has happened to you; you are caught up in an incident), please note the following:

When in the EU: It is important to note that the phone number 112 is the single emergency telephone number for the European Union. Persons in distress situations should call 112 and they will get through to the emergency services in all Member States of the European Union.

Other countries: check what the emergency number is.

V IMPORTANT: Read the sections on the College’s Overseas Travel Insurance. DOWNLOAD the RSA/Helix Travel Oracle app from Google Play or the Apple Store to give you a wealth of information about the country you are visiting, as well as immediate access to the insurers 24/7 help line.

At some stage, someone (yourself or family/friends) may wish to notify College of said emergency. We will seek to help you all we can. Therefore, note that the telephone number of the College’s Security Office is +44 (0)20 7589 1000. Make sure your family has this, especially in case of an out of office hours emergency.

Of course, some “emergencies” can wait until “the morning” so to speak, in which case you might just prefer to contact your department to inform them and seek guidance.

Some emergencies may be related to “news”, and if the College becomes aware of such situations (for example, a natural disaster, a security incident), it will consider what steps it ought to take to support students (and it is the same for College staff who are abroad too) who are caught up in the event.

Make yourself familiar with Imperial College’s own emergency 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/
Section 3: Your own well-being

We all want your placement to be a success. Alongside all the practical detail that comes with planning anything and the expectations you are probably experiencing that a great time is to be had (albeit a challenging time as well), you might also be experiencing a few moments of trepidation. Therefore, in advance of your placement (as referenced earlier in the Handbook) and throughout your placement, do give yourself a few moments to reflect on your own well-being so that you are best prepared for handling any moments when you might be doubting things. Here are a few pointers, reminders and suggestions that might help you cope with any moments of doubt.

Sources: Thank you to the University of East Anglia for their considered comments in their study abroad handbooks for informing the following, and on the subject of home sickness and culture shock to www.studentsabroad.com

Your Emotional & Mental Well-being: undertaking a placement abroad can be a stressful experience for some and known, or new, emotional and mental health problems can (re-)surface (including international students at Imperial for whom a placement abroad may be just yet another globe-trotting experience). Whenever they might arise (before or during your placement), if you experience any worries about the emotional challenges involved with your placement, please discuss them with family, friends and your home department and/or your host placement provider (try not to dwell on them; discuss them). Staying in regular contact with family/friends and with your home dept is part and parcel of this approach. Don’t go off radar!

and/or

(since, of course, you remain registered at Imperial throughout your placement) you are free to contact the Imperial College Student Counselling and Mental Health Advice Service for advice (they also provide a resources and useful links page here). If your placement is at a university then familiarise yourself with the services they provide.

Homesickness can happen to anyone, even the most resilient and well-travelled of people (including international students at Imperial), so it is normal that you may on occasion (regardless of the length of the placement) feel a bit under the weather and miss your friends and family back home.

Here are a few tips to help you cope with any feelings of homesickness you may have:

• Be patient with yourself as you adjust to the unexpected realities of being in the host country, and how abroad is not always like home. See also some insight into “culture shock” below.

• Try your best to make friends with locals (students or staff: depends on your placement) and invite them to spend time with you. Creating such a support network can really help to alleviate any homesickness while creating lasting friendships. Yes, you might be a shy person, but heck you’ve organised a placement so you can do anything!! Hopefully, others (perhaps other students in the same situation as you) will reach out to you.

• Get involved in stuff: by seeking out opportunities that keep you busy and occupied so that you won’t think about home. You could try to work locally, volunteer, or travel within your host country. Alternatively, how about joining a sports team, club, gym, etc. Think about what you do now and seek to do likewise. Equally, it’s an opportunity to do different stuff.

• OK, you will think of home occasionally – that’s natural - so as well as keeping in contact with family and friends by way of all those social media formats, remember to bring a few reminders of home along with you. Each to their own, but perhaps a photo of family/friends or that great book you’ve had laying by your bed for months (it’s going to get read!); a family recipe to cook while abroad. Keeping in contact with home is a good thing, not a bad thing (there may be people missing you at the other end so do keep in contact). If you are feeling homesick and getting home for a short visit is practical then discuss it with family/friends first, since you will obviously need to get back to your placement.
• If you get homesick and it starts to get to you, don’t wait for it to go away by itself. Confront your feelings by talking to someone (a counsellor, family member, roommate, or another student, etc.)

**Culture Shock:** Find out as much as you can about the country or countries that you are visiting. Read the orientation information provided by the host uni/org (don’t assume you know it all!) Research the cultural, religious and political beliefs to avoid misunderstandings and potentially causing offence. Naturally, ensure language is not going to be a barrier or at least minimise the potential for it to be so *(your dept should have considered this where relevant in agreeing to the placement)*. Talk to returning students to find out how they coped with difference and difficulties. We think that most students will be happy to share their experiences with you!

Here are a couple of quotes from [www.studentsabroad.com](http://www.studentsabroad.com) to help articulate culture shock in the host country, but also for you to think about coming back to your home country and/or the UK afterwards (reverse culture shock). It will depend to some extent, on what country you are visiting; your knowledge of it beforehand; the duration of your stay and the extent to which you immersed yourself in the culture of the host country. Something to get you thinking so that you might recognise situations as perhaps they occur to you.

• “**Riding the roller coaster of culture shock, a student actually follows a natural pattern of hitting peaks and valleys. The high points of excitement and interest are [often, but not always] succeeded by lower points of depression, disorientation, or frustration. Each student will experience these ups and downs in different degrees of intensity and for different lengths of time. The process is necessary in order to make the transition from one culture to another; it helps a student or traveller to balance out and adjust.**”

• “**As a student becomes integrated to the ways of the [host country's] culture, the more difficult it may be to re–adapt to the [home country] upon return home. The [home country] just won't look the same way it did before leaving; a student may see home with new eyes and may also be more critical of [home country] cultural traditions once thought to be "normal". This is called reverse culture shock. Fear of experiencing reverse culture shock should not deter students from trying to integrate as fully as possible while in the [host] country. No matter how integrated a student becomes while abroad, he or she will probably still be "shocked" by differences noted at home after so much time spent in the country of your choice and the other countries to which you will be traveling. However, over time, a student will learn to re–adapt and reintegrate into his or her home culture.**”

There is a useful student blog provided by the UK based charity **Student Minds** for study abroad at [http://studentmindsorg.blogspot.com/search/label/Year%20Abroad](http://studentmindsorg.blogspot.com/search/label/Year%20Abroad)

**Section 4: Arranging accommodation for the next academic year (if relevant)**

If you expect to remain a registered student of Imperial College at the conclusion of your placement then some or all of the reminders below may be important to you.

**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 Hub (**accommodation@imperial.ac.uk**).

**Private Accommodation (Undergraduates and Postgraduates)**
• If you need assistance with finding suitable private accommodation, maybe your friends who are staying in London can help you while you are away.
• Imperial College’s Student Hub: 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.

• Key weblink to emphasise: Imperial Home Solutions: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/campus-life/accommodation/private-accommodation/imperial-home-solutions/

Imperial Home Solutions is a property searching website exclusive to Imperial students. It's a one-stop-shop for finding the perfect place to live and allows you to:

• Search for properties advertised by private landlords and other students
• **Post messages about the kind of room (or roommate) you’re looking for**
• Create your own property shortlist
• Search travel times
• Find advice on private housing - and lots more!

To view Imperial Home Solutions click here www.imperialhomesolutions.co.uk

*(note: if you are due to graduate at the end of your placement but still want to view the Home Solutions Tool, please note that at some stage your login may cease to work)*

Other useful tools are:

• **Online contract checking guide:** http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/campus-life/accommodation/private-accommodation/contract/

• **Lettings Agents:** http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/campus-life/accommodation/private-accommodation/letting-agents/tips/

• **Private Halls:** http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/campus-life/accommodation/private-accommodation/private-halls/

Section 5: Thinking beyond the placement – planning your career

Being away from College on Placement does not mean you need to be isolated or miss out on career opportunities and support. Whether you are considering your Graduate Career options, or thinking about how to make the most of your vacations while you’re still studying, the Careers Service is available to help you make career decisions at every stage. Getting support and guidance now will give you a head start on your career planning, and you can access many services while away from College on Placement.

The Careers Service provides a range of advice and support on exploring your options, finding opportunities, and making applications.

Appointments are available (face-to-face, over the phone, or via skype) to see Careers Consultants, Placement & Internship Advisers, and CV Checkers. Appointments are bookable via JobsLive (http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/services/jobslive), which is also the platform that the Careers Service uses to advertise opportunities with a range of organisations and employers. Make sure to set up email alerts for JobsLive, to ensure you don’t miss any relevant opportunities.

Visit the Careers Service website (www.imperial.ac.uk/careers) for further information, and you can contact careers@imperial.ac.uk with any queries you may have.

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.
**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). *Ensure you submit it to your home academic department as soon as possible but normally no later than 1 September.* Grades not considered in July alongside the normal cohort are normally handled in a similar fashion during early September. If you are in your final year, every effort is made by your home academic department to finalise your degree in order for you to attend the October graduation ceremony (if in doubt speak to your home UG Office).

- Have you completed/returned all “grant” paperwork (as necessary) 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 page 19.* 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 the department and future students undertaking that placement. *Please provide a report even if for some reason you are not asked.* A generic template feedback sheet is available [here](#).

- If you are back in your department the following year (especially undergraduates): a.) please volunteer to speak to students who may be planning to undertake the same placement or a similar placement in the future and b.) volunteer for the Erasmus Club as it cannot survive without your input.

- If you are due to graduate immediately after the end of your placement, PLEASE leave a contact email address with your department (specifically, the academic in charge of the placement opportunity) to indicate a willingness to be contacted by students who might pursue such a placement in the future. 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 2019-20.
- those who are nationals of countries outside the European Union and need to consider healthcare arrangements

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 during the placement and 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 29-32.

Tuition Fees Payable to Imperial College (2019-20)

Please refer to information on page 59.

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 53-55).
- 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 (for full details review the guidance on the insurance cover provided by Imperial College: pages 43-48).
- 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: student.placement@imperial.ac.uk
Appendix

Imperial College’s Placement Learning Policy (pages 80-83)

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 work-place 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

When your placement is 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. **Note**: If the UK should definitely leave the European Union during the 2019-20 academic year then be sure to check [here](#) for updates.

Before you depart on your placement **(a non-exhaustive checklist) have you**

(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 a final or provisional (study or work/training) **placement plan** with your Placement Manager?
- Understood fully how the placement fits into your degree (or how – for undergraduates - extra ECTS credit is perhaps being allocated for vacation activity) and specifically, how any assessments and (if appropriate for a study placement at a university) any subsequent credit transfer are to be undertaken, and when this has to be completed by?
- Noted any deadlines (academic assessments and others) which apply to you (before, during, after the placement) and who is responsible for setting/monitoring them (home or host)?
- Discussed with your Placement Manger 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 70. **NEW FORM JUNE 2019.**
- 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 53)

**Registered your trip on the College’s Finance (Intranet) website (having read the relevant section of this Handbook carefully beforehand), downloaded the RSA/Helix Travel Oracle App and printed off 2 copies of the correct **Imperial College Overseas Travel Insurance Certificate** (dependent on your travel date, and you may need to do this again if your travel over the 1 August) from the College intranet (added your name)? Retain access to this [link](#) for updates to the Handbook during the year (e.g. insurance). Brexit Travel Updates IC Students [here](#).

- Checked if you need any additional travel/medical/housing insurance to that provided by the College or (as applicable) a European Health Insurance Card? Brexit may impact EHIC provision.
- **Considered money 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 info 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:**

- Do you require a visa for entry to the host country? Obtained a visa if you do?
- **If you are already on your placement at the start of Imperial College’s academic year remember to register with the Imperial College by the usual method (you will be prompted).**
- 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 (i.e. has responsibility for it)?
- **Home and EU students only:** Ensured you know (if applicable) what UK student financial support remains accessible to 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?
- **If you are planning incidental weekend/holiday trips to countries other than the country hosting the placement you will require separate travel insurance.**
- Penultimate Year Undergraduate Students: Have you thought about final year course/module 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?
- **Considered your own well-being while abroad.** Consult the passages of this Handbook as a starting point.

**Finally: Are there any issues which still concern you?** Have you spoken to your Placement Manager about any issues you are unsure about? Can the Assistant Registrar (Placements) assist?