Pre-Departure Guide
for Go Abroad Programmes students

WORLD CHANGERS WELCOME
Welcome

Congratulations – your international adventure is now just around the corner. The opportunity to go and live abroad is one to be grasped with both hands. Before you head off, we thought it important to provide you with this handy booklet containing advice on how to prepare and what to expect during your time abroad. Remember our partner pages are also a great source of information about your destination glasgow.ac.uk/myglasgow/students/goabroad/exchangedestinations.

This guide is divided into three sections covering pre-departure advice, academic advice and adjusting to your new surroundings and culture. Take the time to read through this prior to departure. Contact us using the details below if you have questions that are not covered in this guide.

Stay safe and enjoy yourself!

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1. VISAS

Remember to check whether an entry visa is required for your destination country and what the requirements for obtaining this are.

Normally, any non-EU students and students going on exchange outside Europe will require a visa to enter the country of destination before they can proceed with their exchange/placement.

**IMPORTANT:** If you are a non-EU or non-UK student studying at Glasgow with a Tier 4 visa it is your responsibility to check what visa requirements you have to maintain your Tier 4 sponsorship while you are abroad. You must advise the GoAbroad team at Glasgow of your Tier 4 status in advance as there is a check-in process which must be adhered to.

You need to apply to the appropriate Embassy or High Commission to obtain a student visa. To obtain the visa you will normally need the following:

a) A formal letter of admission from the exchange university
b) Financial evidence that you can support yourself for the required period of time
c) Passport photographs are usually required (in many cases the actual passport) and in some cases a medical certificate or examination

Please note that for any visa application there will always be a non-refundable fee.

**TIP!** Keep an electronic copy of your passport photo page and visa in your email. This will come in handy if you lose your passport.

Visa regulations often state that passports must be valid for a period of at least six months beyond the proposed dates of travel. There should also be sufficient space for visas and stamps in your passport.

Apply Early! Read the instructions very carefully and apply for a visa well in advance of your departure; many Embassies quote six weeks as the minimum processing time, but it could take considerably longer.

Students who apply late often find it very difficult to obtain a visa in time to begin their course. Apart from the option of Belfast for the USA, all Embassies are in London – visas are not handled by the Consulates in Scotland. Overseas students can, of course, apply through the Embassy in their home country.
Part one
Practical pre-departure advice

2. EMPLOYMENT

It may be possible to take on additional work outside your official programme of Study Exchange/Erasmus Work Placement if your entry conditions/visa allow. However, this should not impact on your exchange programme which must be prioritised.

EUROPE: If you are an EU National you should be able to work in another EU country. Employment opportunities can vary greatly from one country to another. Sometimes jobs are available on campus. You may want to check if there is an equivalent to the Jobcentre in the UK or if there is a Careers Service at the partner institution. If you require a visa check the working restrictions carefully.

INTERNATIONAL: With a student visa it may be possible to work, but unfortunately this is not the case in all countries and you should not rely on income by these means. Jobs on campus are the only legal option in some countries, but these can be difficult to come by and there may be a waiting list. It is often not possible to arrange a job in advance. You should discuss any employment opportunities with the International Office at the institution concerned after you arrive there, as they will have up-to-date details of the immigration regulations.

3. TRAVELLING

International Student Identity Card (ISIC)
It is worth investing in an ISIC card, which is internationally recognised, to guarantee you cheap fares wherever you are. These can be useful to gain travel concessions and cheap entry to museums, cinemas etc. They cost £12.00 and you need proof of full-time student status and a passport photograph – see website: www.myisic.co.uk

Duty and customs
Generally, you may take personal computers, cameras, small electronic devices, radios and other similar items duty free, provided that they accompany you and that you declare them at the time of entry.

Electrical appliances
Find out the voltage and the electrical outlet prong combinations used in your destination country. You may need to buy a transformer and adaptor plugs in advance to be able to use your own appliances in another country. Travel irons, shavers, blow dryers, and many laptop computers are available with built-in adaptors for all electrical currents.

Your method of travel will obviously depend on your destination.

AIR
There is a wide range of prices for airline tickets, so shop around. It is sometimes even cheaper to spend Christmas back home (two Apex return flights of not more than six months may not be more expensive than two one-way tickets booked for August of one year and June of the next).* Some airlines offer much cheaper one-way fares from London than those on offer by the regular carriers. Follow instructions/advice from your host institution on your mode of transport from the airport: in some regions, it may be safer to take a taxi rather than public transport, or vice versa.

Some universities provide transport from the airport with prior notification; you may have to contact the International Office at your host university for this service. Be aware of baggage restrictions when travelling. Don’t over pack – clothes, toiletries and household items may be cheaper and better suited to the climate at your destination.

*Please note that for some visas you must be in possession of a return ticket.
RAIL
STA Travel can advise you on the best way to get to your destination by train and can issue you with discounted tickets. Rail Europe specialise in European train travel and offer student fares. Ticket prices can be cheaper than flying but considerably higher than travelling by coach.

COACH
Travelling by coach can be an inexpensive way to reach your destination. Eurolines for example offer regular departures to all major cities in Europe.

ROAD
Make sure you find out about the laws and restrictions in the country you will be visiting. If you do not respect its highway code, you may be heavily penalised, so don’t be tempted to rely on British regulations.

Checklist
• International Motor Insurance Card
• Valid national driving licence for EU students or valid international licence for others
• Valid road tax
• Valid MOT
• Valid insurance
• A GB sticker on the front and back of the vehicle (if non euro-plates)
• Travel emergency kit

Travelling - Some useful web sites
www.statravel.co.uk
www.cheapflights.co.uk
www.expedia.co.uk
www.ryanair.com
www.easyjet.com
www.opodo.co.uk
www.eurorailways.com
www.eurolines.co.uk
www.nationalexpress.com
www.eurostar.com
www.roughguides.com
www.lonelyplanet.com
4. HEALTHCARE

The healthcare system of your destination country will be different from what you are used to in the UK. Ensure that you are aware of the health insurance issues and requirements of your host, and make the necessary arrangements to ensure compliance with those requirements.

We strongly advise you to take out comprehensive private insurance cover for healthcare.

It may be best to obtain necessary dental treatment in the UK before you depart, as this is often not covered under Health Insurance Schemes.

Prescriptions
If you have a medical condition, or have a prescribed medication regime to follow, discuss this in advance with your GP. The particular medication you use may not be available overseas, or might be issued under a different name. It can also be expensive, and you may wish to investigate the feasibility of taking sufficient supplies with you to cover the full period you will be away. Request a letter from your GP to take with you which explains any medication that you might require while abroad.

Immunisations
Check which immunisations are required for the country that you are travelling to at least six weeks before travel. You should make sure that you have taken all the necessary vaccinations for the country you will be studying in but also for any other countries that you may plan to travel to. Some vaccinations require to be given over a number of weeks so ensure that you have sufficient time to complete the full series before departure. Some countries require that you take vaccination certificates with you when entering/departing.

The following websites provide excellent information on travel immunisations and general advice to stay healthy whilst overseas.

www.nathnac.org
www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

5. HEALTH INSURANCE SPECIFICS

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE: You will be given details of the required insurance schemes by the partner university. Please note that in most cases, it is compulsory to pay for insurance cover, and policies may be quite expensive.

In Australia, you cannot apply for a visa until you have paid for insurance and healthcare cover.

Be aware that accidents or injuries sustained whilst under the influence of alcohol can void health and medical insurance and that dental cover and winter sports (amongst others) may not be covered.

Note! Your travel insurance may be invalid if you have not taken the appropriate immunisations before travel.
6. PERSONAL INSURANCE

The University offers free personal cover to all students going abroad. Simply register before you go at glasgow.ac.uk/services/finance/staffsections/insuranceandrisk/travelinsurance/travelinsurance-students.

Ensure that the policy covers all your requirements. If this is not the case, we recommend that you take out additional cover (e.g. valuable possessions; extreme sports; dental etc). Locally, STA Travel and Endsleigh Insurance have options for long-term travel insurance cover; you can also check COE Connections (www.coeconnections.co.uk), who specialise in policies for students studying or working abroad. Other insurance providers are also available and you should research this carefully.

7. FINANCE

Banking - Before you go
Let your UK bank know you are leaving the country and for how long. If possible, make an appointment with them before you go abroad and inform them of your plans, the timing of events, and your individual needs. Ask them the following questions:

- Does your bank have a branch or an affiliation with another bank in your partner country?
- What is the most convenient bank to use in the partner country for transferring funds?
- How much does it cost to wire money to transfer funds?
- If you plan to set up a bank account abroad, should you transfer money between your UK and account abroad in pounds sterling, or is it better/cheaper to exchange the money into another currency in the UK before transferring it?
- What are the terms for cash advances on your credit card?
- How do you replace debit or credit cards whilst away?
- What is the best way to communicate with your bank whilst away?
- How much will it cost to use your debit/credit card abroad?
You may consider internet banking as a good way to control your money from anywhere in the world. Your bank will be able to advise on how to set this up.

Remember that it can take several weeks for funds to be transferred from the UK and you should ensure that you have enough money with you to cover initial expenditure. You are advised to take a small amount of local currency with you, and perhaps a supply of Travellers Cheques/Pre-paid travel card.

Credit/debit cards
If you do not already have one, we recommend that you get a credit card before you go to use in case of emergency.

Check the expiry date on your credit/debit cards and make a separate note of their numbers. Be cautious when using your credit/debit card and destroy your slips before disposing of them. Inform your credit card company/bank of your travel plans and be sure to get their contact information for the country you’ll be living in.

Banking – On Arrival
To open a bank account on arrival you are likely to need your passport, student card, proof of residence, money to deposit, and perhaps a UK bank statement. Advice on this is usually offered in documentation from the partner institution or during their orientation programme.

It is often useful to find out what previous students to your partner destination would recommend. Not all banks will accept you as a customer, and you are unlikely to have overdraft facilities on a foreign account. Ask your bank at home to provide a letter of introduction if you are considering opening an account abroad.

This is a standard letter and may be helpful in enabling you to open an account in your partner country.

Please note that in some countries it is an offence to be overdrawn.

Other costs
You are responsible for all costs during your year abroad and should budget for the following:
• Room and board
• Books and supplies
• Insurance costs
• Travel to and from the partner country
• Local transportation
• All personal expenses

ERASMUS: Remember your Erasmus grant will be paid into your UK bank account. Please make sure that your account details are correctly entered into MyCampus.

IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING DEBTS AT YOUR PARTNER INSTITUTION
Ensure you make any outstanding payments to your partner institution before departure. Your transcript of results may not be released if you have any outstanding debts.
8. STUDENT LOANS

If you are eligible for student loans, you must apply to the appropriate funding body/Student Loans Office in the normal way, and clearly indicate that you will be abroad during the next academic year.

Conditions of funding by SAAS or your national funding agency may differ depending on the type of placement abroad (study vs work) and the duration of your placement abroad (full year vs a single semester). Check how these conditions will affect your funding.

State clearly that you are International Exchange or Erasmus Exchange or Erasmus Work Placement as appropriate.

They may require confirmation of the fact that the period of study at a university/ work placement elsewhere will count towards your normal graduating curriculum at the University of Glasgow. The relevant Exchange Coordinator can produce a letter to this effect.

There may be financial implications for students who decide to return early and you should ask your funding body about this. Usually, early returns due to unpredictable or unexpected circumstances are reviewed on a case by case basis.

9. SCHOLARSHIPS

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE: Some scholarships are available to help you fund your year abroad. They are normally institution- or country-specific and are advertised directly to Exchange students by email and via Moodle.

Scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic performance to date and the strength of the application.

Successful candidates usually receive their award in November.

All funding bodies now have a policy of dealing only with the awardees, so if an error occurs it can be difficult to resolve at a distance, and they will not accept any representation on your behalf from either a relative or the University. However, if you do get into difficulty, please let the Exchange Coordinator know to see if there is anything that can be done to help.

If you normally live in:

- Scotland
  apply to Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS)
- England
  apply to Student Finance England
- Wales
  apply to Student Finance Wales
- Northern Ireland
  apply to Student Finance NI

Remember scholarships will be paid into your UK bank account. Make sure that your account details are correctly entered into MyCampus.
**10. ACCOMMODATION**

Your host institution will provide advice on accommodation. Halls of Residence, particularly at universities in the USA and Canada, tend to be considerably larger than those at British universities, and students often have to share a room. Bedding may not be supplied by the dormitory so you can chose to bring your own or buy it from the dormitory. Refer to the documentation sent by the partner university and find out before you go.

Please check with the partner university to see what furnishings are provided in your accommodation. In some instances students will need to provide duvet covers and sheets etc.

**Private Accommodation**

If you are looking for private accommodation, seek advice from the accommodation office at the partner university on where to look. They will be able to advise on useful local accommodation agencies or websites. You should take the usual precautions when looking for private accommodation and do not:

- Visit potential lodgings alone
- Advertise your telephone number in public places
- Sign any contract with an agency without finding out if there are any fees to pay
- Sign a contract that does not include a notice period should you wish to change accommodation during the year

If you can’t find something immediately, don’t panic. The time it takes to find a suitable place to live varies from place to place.

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**11. WHAT TO PACK**

Think carefully about what you need to pack according to where you are going.

Climatic extremes in some parts of the world can be much greater than here in Glasgow. For examples, in Eastern Canada the temperature can easily drop to minus 30°, and in Australia the heat can sometimes be excessive. Clothing and footwear for use in wintertime are probably best purchased once you get there and are generally far more suitable for use there. They will usually be no more expensive than those purchased in Britain.

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**12. ALCOHOL (USA/Canada)**

Exchange students in the USA have sometimes found it difficult to adjust to the more stringent rules on alcohol consumption. Please note that it is illegal for anyone under 21 to buy or consume alcoholic beverages in the USA, and this law is applied rigidly. In most regions you will be asked to produce photo identification to prove that you are above the legal drinking age.

In Canada, there is no federally defined drinking age. Each Province and Territory sets its own limits. Check with the partner institution to confirm the legal drinking age.

Be aware that accidents or injuries sustained whilst under the influence of alcohol can void health and medical insurance.
TOP TRAVEL TIPS AND ADVICE

- Be responsible for your own decisions and actions
- Be respectful of laws and customs and respect the rights and wellbeing of others
- Take heed of health and safety advice offered by the partner institution
- Don’t take risks – adopt a common sense approach to your health and safety
- Avoid excessive consumption of alcohol and the use of illegal drugs
- Report any problems to your host, and relevant Exchange coordinator at the University of Glasgow

Although you are probably used to assessing a particular situation or location instinctively, remember that when you are abroad you will initially be less familiar with the social habits and less able to judge the safety of particular areas or patterns of behaviour. Always err on the side of caution and try to anticipate any trouble.

Equality & Diversity

Remember the same laws and customs do not necessarily exist when overseas. This includes protections relating to the Equality Act 2010. Therefore if you identify with a protected characteristic group we would advise you research the local laws, customs and support provision for minority groups. This includes if you have a disability, are LGBT or from a minority faith or ethnicity in your destination country.

We would also recommend you read information on the FCO pages at [www.gov.uk/topic/help-british-nationals-overseas/advice-all-countries](http://www.gov.uk/topic/help-british-nationals-overseas/advice-all-countries)

General Advice

Take photocopies of all your important documents before you depart (e.g. passport, birth certificate, insurance policy) and always keep them in a separate place from the originals. Keep an electronic copy of your documents that can easily be accessed (e.g. in your emails). Consider leaving a copy of your documents with a relative or a friend.

Keep details of all important contacts in-country. For example, lost or stolen credit cards, the British Embassy or Consulate, local emergency services and travel insurance contacts. In addition to having paper/electronic records of these we recommend that you pre-programme these contacts into your mobile phone before departure.

Don’t carry your passport around as a means of identification while you are overseas, excluding entering or exiting a country. Use an alternative photographic identification, such as a valid driving licence, on a day-to-day basis. If your passport is lost or stolen, contact the police and your country’s embassy immediately.
EMERGENCY SITUATIONS
Unfortunately, accidents can happen and things may go wrong. In such circumstances, keep a cool head and follow the relevant steps below as appropriate:

1. Contact local police/ relevant emergency services
   Ensure you know how to call the emergency services in the country you are going to.

2. It may be appropriate to report to your nearest Embassy or Consular Office or make contact with them for advice.
   You will find full details through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice. Make sure you have these contact details with you at all times when abroad.

3. Inform your contact at the International Office at the partner university/ work placement.
   Make contact as soon as possible with your nominated contact at your host. The partner coordinator often has the local knowledge and “know how” to advise and support you.

4. Inform your Exchange Coordinator in Glasgow.
   During normal office hours you should contact your appropriate Exchange Coordinator (see contact details on page 1).

5. In case of an emergency situation, (which may include serious accidents, natural disasters or political unrest) call the University of Glasgow Emergency line +44 (0)141 357 6868
   This line is staffed by our Emergency Response Team (24 hours), who then follow established emergency procedures to activate the necessary assistance. It may be reassuring to your family to know that this service exists: let them know about it.

6. You are advised to inform your parents/next of kin about your location and safety, provide them with up to date contact details and keep in contact on a regular basis.
   It is a good idea for a relative or a guardian to have a valid passport, in case it becomes necessary to travel overseas in an emergency.

Your priority is to keep yourself safe at all times.
In an emergency situation such as a natural disaster or political upheaval keep well away from problem areas and heed any instructions from local authorities for example obeying curfew restrictions. Monitor the emergency situation as best you can via any available media channels and maintain regular contact with family and partner/home institutions. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office monitors emergency situations in countries abroad maintains an excellent website with practical information and advice. Check this website regularly www.fco.gov.uk.

All students are advised to check their University of Glasgow email account on a regular basis as this will remain the main channel for official communication even whilst overseas.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Data protection regulations

Unless you give the GoAbroad Team team direct instructions, we are not allowed to speak to any third party about a student without their consent. If a parent/guardian or next of kin contacts the office on your behalf, we will not be able to discuss your situation with them. However, we will contact you directly to follow up on any issues raised.
14. USEFUL INFORMATION

Preparation and Research
Find out as much as possible about your destination before you travel.

Consider and prepare yourself in advance for the risks that you may encounter at your destination as well as the legal, environmental, political, cultural and religious conditions that exist in your host country.

Talk to returned students, read travel guides, familiarise yourself with any information sent by the partner institution and check FCO guidelines.

Take advantage of any other resources such as Facebook or Twitter sites that may be available from the partner institution or for international students. They may also have International Student groups, buddy programmes or the like to help you as you learn your way around.

Important websites are:

**The Foreign & Commonwealth Office**
(advice for travellers)

**NHS Travel Advice**
[www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)

Check the following websites for insider information, tips and advice about living in the country:

- [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)
- [www.roughguides.com](http://www.roughguides.com)
- [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)
- [www.justlanded.com](http://www.justlanded.com) (information on living in the country - for expats worldwide)
- [globalgraduates.com](http://globalgraduates.com) (written for and by UK students studying abroad)

FINALLY
Remember that the staff of the International/Study Abroad Office at the university you are attending have a lot of experience in dealing with difficulties which arise for overseas students, both academic and personal, and are always ready to offer advice or assistance.

For work placements, your supervisor or mentor is expected to provide support and local advice.

Please do not struggle with problems when a solution might easily be found by reference to either the International Office overseas or the GoAbroad Team at Glasgow.

If you have any questions or encounter any difficulties, please contact the Exchange Coordinator for your programme (contact details on p1).
INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

Progression to Honours
You must have secured an Honours place or equivalent (if in 1st year) to progress overseas. Make sure that you follow School procedures to apply for and confirm progression to secure your Honours place. We recommend that you keep a copy of this confirmation.

Course load approval
The overseas course load you must study at the partner institution will be decided at Subject and/or School level and all students should discuss this with and secure approval from their Subject Coordinator(s). Keep a copy of this confirmation.

Your partner university will advise what course load is required to maintain your student visa status. Please be aware that this may be less than what Glasgow have asked you to study, but you must fulfil the requirements set by the University of Glasgow.

Changes to your initial course selection
If you have to alter your overseas curriculum in any way you must communicate these changes and seek approval from your Subject Coordinator(s) in Glasgow immediately.

It is your responsibility to get overseas curriculum approval from the Glasgow Subject Coordinator(s) at the start of each overseas semester. An Overseas Course Approval form can be found on Moodle to document this approval and any subsequent changes.

Assessment
Continuous assessment is quite common, and North American institutions in particular will require a greater amount of assigned work than you are accustomed to, even if the intellectual demands of such work may not be over-taxing. You will have to buy some of the textbooks nominated for each course. You will be expected to produce the work set on time; work submitted late will normally not be marked. You may also be required to show completed work on your return to Glasgow (ask your subject co-ordinators if this is required) and are therefore strongly advised to bring all your written work back if possible.

Ensure that the Course Evaluation Forms (found on website & Moodle) are completed and returned; this information is vital to assist your subjects here once you return to Glasgow.

COURSE AVAILABILITY AND SUITABILITY

Always remember that your time overseas forms part of your Glasgow degree and must satisfy the degree requirements as stipulated by the University of Glasgow.

What to do if the courses you intended to take are already full?

• Take any email or correspondence with you, that can confirm your acceptance on the course.
• Contact the professor who teaches the course and explain why the course is essential to your curriculum.
• If this is not successful, contact your student Adviser at the host institution to ascertain the most suitable course still available.

What to do if the course you selected is too easy/difficult?

• Discuss this with your student adviser at the host institution. They will be able to advise whether you can change for a more appropriate course and take a course at a different level.
• Any changes that you make to your original course selection must be approved by your adviser at the University of Glasgow so ensure that you let them know about the changes. Get their approval in writing and keep it with your important documents.
If you are on a work or research placement, you are expected to adhere to the plan of activity, working hours, and monitoring arrangements that were agreed with your coordinator or supervisor and your host organisation.

Under the Erasmus regulations, you must study or work full time during your mobility.

The standard credit course load is 60 ECTS per year (=120 Glasgow credits), 30 ECTS per semester (=60 Glasgow credits), or 20 ECTS (=40 Glasgow credits) per term. Only Joint Honours JYA language students and Education students have a term abroad. Erasmus study mobility students are expected to enrol in and sit exams for the full 60/30/20 ECTS. Any exceptions to this must come to the Study Abroad and Exchange team in writing from your academic Erasmus coordinator and include details of the actual credits you will be required to complete in order to transfer to the 120 or 60 credits at the University of Glasgow.

If you study abroad you are expected to participate fully in classes, including sitting any exams. It is your responsibility to check the partner university calendar including exams and ensure that possible overlaps with your studies at Glasgow can be accommodated.

If you are on a work or research placement, you are expected to adhere to the plan of activity, working hours, and monitoring arrangements that were agreed with your coordinator or supervisor and your host organisation.

You must have a formal learning/training agreement document signed and approved by your subject coordinator at Glasgow before you start.

In order to receive your Erasmus funding ensure you forward all of the required documents, fully and correctly completed, to the GoAbroad Team.

Documents and forms will be provided to you by the GoAbroad Team prior to departure.

Don’t forget to fully register and enrol at the University of Glasgow to ensure your Erasmus Grant can be paid to you.

Your Erasmus Grant can only be paid to your UK bank account so check that your UK bank details are up to date in mycampus.
Adapting to a different culture

Part three
Adapting to a different culture

Living and experiencing Life in a Foreign Culture
Living in a foreign culture is an experience you will be looking forward to with excitement and enthusiasm. However sometimes, the reality can be a little different and some students will find themselves experiencing some form of ‘Culture Shock’. This often happens when people encounter unfamiliar surroundings and conditions. You may experience a range of emotions from excitement and interest to frustration and fear of the unknown. Remember that you’re not alone and that many other people will be going through the same experiences too.

There are many different tried and tested ways to help you make the most of your experience and to minimise the effects of Culture Shock – the following are a few suggestions:

• Make contact with other international students at your host university.
• Recognise that you might feel homesick – but that it will pass. Keep in touch with family and friends back home regularly.
• Write a blog/travel journal which will help create a lasting memory, will keep friends and family updated and will also give you a creative outlet to document any challenges you might face.
• Attend Orientation and/or induction activities and events at the host university.
• Join clubs or societies – even think of picking up a new hobby.
• Look to create a new network of like-minded friends in your new location.
• Focus on maintaining a sense of humour, flexibility, tolerance, and a non-judgemental attitude.
• Remind yourself why you have chosen to go abroad: your expectations, your values, your goals (e.g. learning a new language, personal growth, etc).

Adapting to your new Environment
Most host universities will have an International Office similar to that at the University of Glasgow. They will usually hold a welcome event/Orientation programme for new arrivals – make sure you arrive in time to participate in this. This is a key event to orient you to your new surroundings, introduce you to other International students and learn important information about your new host university, including what facilities and services they provide.

Further contacts and Resources
If you experience any difficulties during your stay overseas, there are usually a variety of sources and resources you can tap into. In the first instance, it is often best to speak to someone in the International Office at your host university. They will be very used to dealing with International students and will be able to offer a wealth of advice and support. They may in turn refer you to another office at the host university, such as accommodation, welfare or counselling.

If you are unable to resolve problems at the host university, contact the GoAbroad Team at the University of Glasgow and we will do whatever we can to help.

Additional online resources you might find useful include:

Stay in touch with the GoAbroad Team through Moodle and each other:

International Exchange
• http://moodle2.gla.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=103011

European Exchange
http://moodle2.gla.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=10302

Go Abroad online resources:
Check Student reports, read blogs from our student ambassadors during their year abroad and get in touch with them directly, etc via our website: gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/students/goabroad

Other useful websites:
• globalgraduates.com
• www.cie.uci.edu/prepare/shock.shtml

TOP TIP
Join the Erasmus Student Network (IESN) here at Glasgow before you go and get in contact with the IESN section at your host institution or in the city where you work. Find out more at facebook.com/esn.uofg
Disability Service
Discuss your needs and requirements with your Exchange coordinator and Disability services as early as possible so that we can ensure you have the correct provision of support during your time abroad. glasgow.ac.uk/services/disability

Thinking of coming home early?
If at any stage you wish to withdraw from your partner institution you should immediately advise the GoAbroad Team of your intentions and seek advice about how this will impact on your studies. This may have consequences on your funding too so get in touch as soon as possible to discuss your options.

If the University decides that it wishes to recall any students from an institution or a country the GoAbroad Team will communicate this decision directly to you and will provide support and information about how to proceed.

Check your University of Glasgow email account on a regular basis as this will remain the main channel for official communication even whilst overseas.
### Top Ten Tips for making the most of your time abroad

**From The Guardian**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Tip</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Try to find out as much as possible about the area you are going to before you leave, including where you may want to live and how to get around.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Get in touch with the students who have gone to the same place to find out about their experiences. This will put you at ease and help with your expectations.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Make an effort when you arrive to get involved with anything that’s going on. Be open-minded and don’t pass up an opportunity to add to your experience of a different culture.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Remember that people are just as interested in finding out about you as you are about them – you are a bridge between two communities and cultures.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Try local food rather than having what you would normally eat at home.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Keep up hobbies such as sports or music by getting involved with local groups. Or try something completely different.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>If a problem does arise, try to find a solution yourself. This will build up your self-confidence and make it easier the next time.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Be honest with yourself if you are finding things difficult – severe culture shock in the first few weeks is not uncommon – and don’t be afraid to turn to friends, family and colleagues for help, advice and support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Go and explore new places while you are there.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>After your time abroad you may be inspired to do something bigger, better and more adventurous – bring on the next challenge!</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Checklist

BEFORE YOU GO

Make sure you prepare well in advance to ensure that you have the following ready for your trip:

Accommodation
- Contact the host university about University accommodation
- Find out about private accommodation

Healthcare
- Check for any vaccinations you may need
- Check for any prescription medication you may need
- Check what local healthcare provision is available
- Check what healthcare insurance is required

Ask a student
- Contact current students abroad before you go (see Facebook, Go Abroad Blog, etc.)
- Read returned student reports (International Exchange), Student Ambassadors' blogs
- Join the Go Abroad Facebook group
- Get in touch with the IESN section in UofG

Contact details
- Take addresses, emails, telephone numbers of key contacts at Glasgow University and Overseas (for arrival and in case of emergency)
- Update contact details in MyCampus with overseas address and contact details as soon as known
- Sign up to programme Moodle page
- Find out contact details for your nearest embassy or consulate

University Calendar
- Register for the Orientation programme
- Check when classes start
- Check exams dates

VISA*
- Apply for your visa well in advance. Remember that embassies quote 4-6 weeks as the minimum processing time.
  * For International Exchanges-Beyond Europe or non-EU students participating in Erasmus

REMEMBER TO PACK THE FOLLOWING

Official Documents (and leave a copy of each at home)
- Passport – make sure it is valid
- Passport photographs
- Driving Licence (necessary for car hire)
- Insurance Policy Documents
- All visa documentation*
- ISIC Card
- European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)
- Your Host Institution acceptance letter (and confirmation of enrolment if appropriate)
- Any important correspondence from the University/ work placement provider
- Your grant letter and Student Loan number (in case of problems)
- Letter explaining any medication required

Money Matters
- Debit/credit card, travellers cheques, etc. – Keeping a copy of your card numbers at home is useful in case of loss/theft
- Foreign currency
- Bank account access and international support information
- Provide SAAS/Student Finance/SLC with abroad placement details

Academic
- Copy of end of year transcript (available from Student Services after May exam diet published)
- Relevant documents (will vary with programme, subject and partner institution)