HOW TO DECIDE
GUIDE
2022-23 STUDY ABROAD
This guide is designed for undergraduate students who are due to, or are considering applying to study abroad as part of their degree in 2022-23.

Whether you are a student who will be spending a compulsory year abroad next year, or your degree programme offers an optional route to study abroad, we hope that this guide will help you to make an informed and confident decision about where to apply.

To get the most out of your time abroad, it's really important to start thinking as early as possible about your academic and personal goals and the countries and universities that will be a good match for these. We encourage you to think outside of the box and consider universities that you may not be so familiar with- all of our partner universities offer unique academic, social and cultural experiences.

UCL's Go Abroad Week is taking place between 15-19 November 2021 and it's not too late to sign up to attend! The full schedule of events and sign-up links can be found on the Study Abroad website.

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Am I eligible to study abroad?

Your eligibility for study abroad will depend on your academic department, your programme and your individual academic standing. If you are unsure about whether or not you are eligible to study abroad in 2022-23, you should check this with your department before proceeding.

If studying abroad is an option for you, UCL requires that you fulfil the following minimum requirements in order to participate in the programme:

- You must be of good academic standing (usually maintaining a minimum 2:1 average before departure, although some additional departmental requirements may apply)

- You must be enrolled on a degree programme in which a placement abroad in 2022-23 is either a compulsory requirement or is an optional route on the programme

- You must apply for a placement on time via the correct application route

- You must ensure that you are selecting universities that are open to your department

- Before applying, you should ensure that you are aware of the financial undertakings of the year abroad and that you have researched and budgeted accordingly

- Follow advice and guidance from your Study Abroad Tutor(s) regarding the most suitable study abroad options for you

- Attend the Go Abroad Week events either live or as recordings

Participation in the study Abroad programme is contingent upon the allocation of a study abroad placement (by the Study Abroad Team or your department), your progression into the academic year in which you will go abroad and your allocated host university offering exchange in 2022-23 in light of COVID-19.
Where could I go?

Before you begin researching destinations, you must first identify which opportunities are available to you. Most departments offer a range of European and International universities. Our online Options Guide (published on Monday 15th November) confirms the universities that you are able to consider. It is only possible to apply for universities that are listed for your department.

With the exception of students in SELCS and BASc, who have the option of undertaking a work placement, your placement abroad will be completed at a partner university overseas, where you will enrol and study as an exchange or visiting student.

**Study Placements**

You will enrol at your host university (typically as an exchange or visiting student), enrolling on modules and completing a full course load and assessment there. There are two types of study placement for UCL students – those in Europe, which are covered under the Erasmus+ framework and those outside of Europe, which we refer to as 'International' exchanges.

Erasmus exchanges take place between participating EU universities, funded by the European Commission. Erasmus exchanges tend to be open to students from within a specific department. Following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union, 2022-23 will be the final year that European placements will fall under the Erasmus+ framework. Students eligible for Erasmus+ funding in 2022-23 will only receive funding up until the end of May 2023 or earlier if their placement finishes earlier. This is because UCL's Erasmus project ends in May 2023.

International exchanges are typically negotiated at faculty or university level; as a result, spaces at these universities are typically open to students from a number of departments and can therefore be more competitive.

**Work Placements**

The option to work abroad is only available to students on certain language programmes in SELCS and students in BASc. We encourage students interested in working abroad to discuss this in further detail with their Study Abroad Tutor. Work placements can be a great way for students to enhance their employability, build professional networks and stand out to future employers.
Setting Your Priorities

You may already have some idea of the region or country that you would like to study abroad in. If your programme has a language component, your host country may already be determined based on your target language.

There are many factors to consider when thinking about your choice of host university. Though you may think that this decision should be purely academic, neglecting your personal and wellbeing needs could lead to a less enjoyable and productive experience overall. We’ve included some key themes and questions below to help you establish your main priorities. Perhaps also rank these according to importance to help guide your research.

LOCATION

• Are you looking for a quintessential campus experience abroad or will you thrive in a busy city centre?
• To what extent has COVID impacted travel to and from the country?
• How might the culture/attitudes of the country—e.g., socially and politically—impact on my experience?
• Are you better suited to moderate or tropical climate (weather can have a real influence on mood and productivity!)

ACADEMIC

• Which universities rank the highest for your discipline—well-known universities in popular cities may not necessarily offer courses that interest you the most.
• Are you competent in the language of instruction? Can you attend any additional language classes to boost your level when you arrive?
• What is the level of demand at UCL for the universities that you are interested in?

WELLBEING

• Moving to a new country can present unexpected challenges. Have you thought about the coping mechanisms and support network that you will draw on if needed?
• If you have a pre-existing health condition, have you considered the availability of prescription medication and any specialist treatment that you may require?
• How close to your support network at home would you like to be and will time difference impact the contact that you will have with those at home?

FINANCIAL

• What can you reasonably afford on your year abroad, considering the general cost of living in that country?
• What will your sources of funding be?
• How much will travel to and from your host country and visas cost?
• Will you be required to provide evidence of funds at the point of applying for your Visa (see page 6 for further details!)
Practical Considerations

Your Finances
It is vital that you consider your financial situation as early as possible in the application process. It is also important to note that some study abroad options will open up more opportunities for funding, so it is worthwhile taking some time to research. There are three main areas to consider when considering your year abroad finances:

- **Tuition fees**: information on tuition fee rates paid to UCL during study abroad placements can be found on our website.

- **Travel and arrival costs**: you are responsible for your travel, accommodation and living costs whilst abroad.

- **Sources of financial support**: Think about your primary and secondary sources of income for your placement:
  - Primary sources include Student Finance England funding, a UCL Bursary (if eligible), personal funds and family support, or support from a government or educational sponsor.
  - Secondary sources may include SFE Travel Grants, Part-time work whilst abroad, Erasmus+ funding* and Turing funding, which may be available for placements outside Europe, but this will not be known until after placement allocations have been made.

*Erasmus+ funding is available until May 31 2023. Students will not receive Erasmus funding after this date, even if their semester runs later. Likewise, if students are conducting a separate study placement in semester 2, please be aware that they may not be eligible for Erasmus funding for this placement if the placement hasn't lasted at least 3 months prior to 31 May 2023 (due to Erasmus+ minimum duration requirements).

Providing evidence of funds for visa applications
It is worth noting that certain countries require evidence of personal funds as part of the visa application process.

Although not an exhaustive list, this is generally a requirement for placements in the USA, Japan and some other Asian countries. This requires you to provide evidence of sufficient personal funds documented through a combination of bank statements and payment confirmation letters from financial sponsors of Student Finance England.

For the USA in particular, students are often required to provide evidence of access to funds above $20,000 USD (around £14,000). If you are thinking about applying for a space at one of our American partners, please take the time to consider your personal circumstances to ensure that you would be able to provide this evidence if allocated a space.

It may also be necessary to show financial support for visas in Europe, though the funds necessary are less than what is requested for the USA. In 2021-2022, students experienced serious delays in obtaining visas for European countries. It will be necessary to start the visa request process as soon as possible in order to avoid a late arrival for your placement.
Practical Considerations

Language of Instruction
Our online Options Guide indicates the language of instruction at our partner universities and if you are allocated a space at a university teaching in a language other than English, you will likely be required to provide evidence of your proficiency as part of your application. Should you be proficient in a language other than English and there is an option for you to attend a university that teaches in the language, you are encouraged to include this option as one of your preferred universities.

The majority of our partners require an intermediate proficiency in the target language.

Health and wellbeing
Being away from home means being away from your primary health care provider. If you have any ongoing health issues for which you are receiving treatment, or have received treatment for recently, it is important to discuss this with your health practitioner before deciding to go abroad.

If you are taking any prescription medicine long-term, it is also important to seek advice about availability of these medicines overseas and ways you can manage this abroad, as this may affect your choice of country or university.

Moving to another country and adjusting to a new culture and academic system can be disorientating and can present unexpected challenges at times. Before deciding to go abroad, it is important to ask yourself frankly whether you think you will be able to deal with the effects of moving overseas.

Support systems overseas also vary. If you are allocated a place at one of our North American or Australian partners for example, you may find yourself in a campus environment with a highly developed support network for exchange students. Closer to home within Europe, you may be expected to manage your affairs as independently as a local student. There is a wealth of support available to UCL students abroad and you can find information on this here.

You can also discuss these issues in confidence with your Study Abroad tutor or the Study Abroad Team.

Students with disabilities
The UCL Study Abroad Team is committed to ensuring that Study Abroad opportunities are accessible to all. If you have a disability and anticipate that you will need specific support whilst abroad, we encourage you to reach out to us, the Study Abroad Team or the UCL Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing Team as early as possible in the process to discuss this further.

The UCL Study Abroad Team can also be contacted for advice on destinations and additional funding support available to students with specific educational or physical needs.
Practical Considerations

Cultural attitudes to difference
London is a vibrant, liberal, multi-cultural city. As a community, UCL works to safeguard the rights of all students and staff through a series of comprehensive Equality and Diversity policies.

However, attitudes to disability, gender, religious beliefs, sexual, ethnic or social identity can be different in other parts of the world and you should take this into account when making decisions about where to study abroad. It is important to research carefully and seek advice if this is a concern for you, as experiencing direct or indirect prejudice or discrimination can cause emotional distress for many people.

We encourage you to reach out to the UCLU Student Networks and use the resources below. You are always welcome to reach out to us, the Study Abroad Team to discuss matters relating to cultural difference and your own personal circumstances.

- UCLU Student Networks
- The Diversity Guide to Study Abroad provides useful information and guidance to students from all backgrounds
- The Global Graduates website is a fantastic resource of student-led articles on all study abroad topics, including attitudes to difference

Semester Structure
Whilst at UCL, the school year typically runs from September to June, our partners in the Southern Hemisphere operate a January to December academic year structure. If you’re hoping to study abroad at one of our partners in Australia, New Zealand or South America, your year abroad would look something like this:

- Placement begins in July at the start of your host university’s second semester, finishing in November
- Long break from November to March (approx)- this is your host university’s Summer vacation
- Return in March to complete your second term, finishing in July

You can find academic calendars for all of our partner universities via their websites.

Your Summer plans before and after your year abroad
If you are hoping to undertake an internship or work placement during the Summer before or after a year abroad, the dates of any such opportunity cannot clash with the term or examination dates at your allocated host university. Our partner universities are not able to accommodate late arrivals as a result of clashes with other commitments and if allocated a study abroad placement, we expect you to prioritise this.
How to apply

How do I apply?
The process to apply for your placement depends upon your department. Our How To Apply webpages outline the application route for each department. It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the relevant process for you and ensure that you have left sufficient time to research your options and apply. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

Understanding level of demand for spaces
Demand for spaces on non-Erasmus exchanges is usually very high. If you'll be applying through the central Portico route, you will be asked to rank your choices as 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th preference. It is important that you research all of these choices as thoroughly as your first choice, and that you are equally prepared to accept an allocation at any one of your chosen universities.

We have included an indicative ‘Level of Demand’ to give you an idea of the average number of applications received for every one space at each university.

You are strongly advised to only include one High Demand or Very High Demand placement in your choices where possible in order to avoid disappointment. Approach your choices with a flexible and open mind and diversify the institutions you list on your application.

Should your department offer European options, you are encouraged to select at least a European institution for at least one of your options

If you are applying through your department, please follow their guidance around the level of demand for each placement.

Students who were enrolled onto a ‘with Study Abroad’ degree programme (or equivalent i.e. ‘International Programme’ or 4-year languages programme) at point of entry (i.e. at UCAS stage) will be allocated placements in the first instance. Students enrolled on a degree programme with the option to study abroad or transfer onto a study abroad route upon allocation of a placement are welcome (and encouraged) to make an application.

COVID-19 and Study Abroad
While the opportunities advertised for 2022-23 Study Abroad are expected to run in-person, please be aware that the continuing global situation may result in some programmes being cancelled or offered only in a virtual capacity.

If placements are cancelled before the start of term, every effort will be made to offer affected students an alternative option.
Join us for Go Abroad Week!
If you haven’t yet signed up to attend one of our many virtual and in-person sessions running throughout Go Abroad Week (Monday 15th to Friday 19th November), you can find the full event schedule here. Recordings of all sessions will be published online afterwards.

Familiarise yourself with the correct application route
Our How To Apply webpages outline the application process for each department. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted so it’s really important to ensure that you know how and when to apply.

Find out which universities are available for you to consider
Our online Options Guide provides information on the universities open to students in each department.

Spend time fully researching your preferred universities
Whether applying to us centrally or to your department, you will be asked to demonstrate your motivation to study abroad and the research that you have undertaken into your choices. Make sure that you have discussed these with your departmental Study Abroad Tutor before you begin your application.

Apply for your placement!
Whether you are applying centrally through Portico or directly to your department, we wish you the best of luck with your application and are here to help with any questions you might have along the way; contact us via AskUCL.

The Study Abroad Team
Website | Instagram | Twitter
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