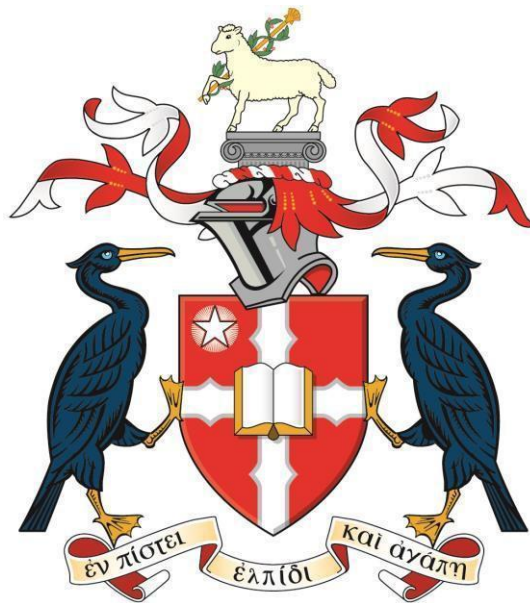


# Liverpool Hope University



## **Academic Quality Handbook 9 (QH9):** International Exchange, Study Abroad & Maymester Procedures

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Liverpool Hope University is concerned 'both with knowledge and competence in academic disciplines, and also with the formation and, indeed, the transformation of its students into graduates prepared for making a difference for good in the world' ([University Corporate Plan](#), p1).

Specific actions and goals within the Corporate Plan and associated strategies (such as the [Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy](#) (June 2019) and the Enhancing Student Employability Strategy) support our ambitions in this regard. In particular, the University aims to develop its 'collaborations with institutions... across the world [thereby] fostering opportunity for... exchange at faculty and student level (Corporate Plan, p.2); provide a 'transformational experience for students' (Corporate Plan, p.4) and 'support student's personal development and employability prospects' (Corporate Plan, p.4). We also aim to 'provide opportunities so that at least 50% of undergraduate students will have spent time abroad or volunteered or undertaken a work placement' (p.4) and proactively seek to extend the number and take-up of exchange opportunities for students and staff. The opportunities for incoming and outgoing students covered by this handbook are part of the International Strategy, 2021.

Normally, undergraduate students who wish to study abroad via an exchange agreement at one of our partner institutions do so for one or more semesters in their second year (Level 1/5). Opportunities for postgraduate taught and research students vary according to their programme of study and partnership agreements. For exchange, bilateral agreements are signed which allows for a set number of students to be exchanged each way from across the whole institution. Tuition fees in both instances are paid to the home institution and students are responsible for the cost of their accommodation and subsistence. The University has sought Turing funding on behalf of Hope students. Some of the Erasmus+ agreements will be maintained for 2021/22 where there is demand from Hope students; a maintenance grant will be made directly to these students.

## 1.2 Definitions

**Exchanges:** An exchange refers to a period of study spent in a partner university where there is an exchange agreement between the two institutions. Exchange programmes are managed with a view to balance the numbers of inbound and outbound exchange students. Normally, a student continues to pay fees at his / her home institution and will get academic credit for the period abroad. However, if a student takes part in a year-long Exchange programme they will be charged only the amount they obtain from the Student Loans Company to the home institution. Outgoing Exchanges from Liverpool Hope can be within Europe or outside Europe.

**Study Abroad student:** An incoming student who applies to spend a semester or academic year at Liverpool Hope through the International Study Abroad Programme. A student may apply independently or through one of the University's partner institutions and providers.

**Maymester student:** An incoming student who applies to spend 2 or 3 weeks at Liverpool Hope through the International Maymester Programme. A student may apply independently or

through one of the University's partner institutions and providers. (This programme will be piloted in May 2022.)

### **1.3 Partnerships**

The University currently has exchange agreements with a number of Universities and Colleges across the world, allowing Liverpool Hope students to study at another institution for part of their degree and enabling students from partner Universities to study at Hope. Study Abroad and Maymester agreements are held with partners around the world, predominantly in the USA, which enable students from those institutions to study at Hope but which are not reciprocal.

In order to achieve a balance of exchange numbers, Department/Schools, in collaboration with the International Hub, need to select exchange partners with care ensuring that the partner institution offers appropriate and sufficient modules (taught in English) which enable students to:

- (i) achieve sufficient credit during their time abroad (mapped to the credits they would be expected to achieve were they to remain on their home programme);
- (ii) continue their programme at Hope on their return without any disadvantage as a result of their study abroad.
- (iii) meet the requirements of Professional Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

It is expected that all partnerships will be subject to appropriate due diligence and be formally approved in line with the guidance set out in paragraph 5.

## **2. Outgoing Student Exchange**

Liverpool Hope undergraduate students wishing to undertake a period of study abroad will normally be encouraged to select the period in the second year (Level 1/5) of their course which least disrupts their programme of study. Given the configuration of Hope's undergraduate programmes it is expected that this will typically be Term 2 and Term 3, although exchange may be requested for other periods dependent upon the design of the home programme and the corresponding programme of study to be followed at the partner institution.

### **2.1 Student Eligibility**

To be eligible for the International Exchange programme, undergraduate students must successfully pass their first year at Liverpool Hope and should normally apply to go abroad during their second year. Students are not normally eligible for the programme in their third year. The specific eligibility criteria which must be met are detailed below:

#### **(a) Academic criteria**

To be considered for international exchange, students must:

- Be of good academic standing and on target to pass the first year of study with A, B or C grades and attendance of at least 70%;
- Demonstrate serious academic and professional goals for their exchange;

- Be engaged in their studies, active participation in the Hope community;
- Be prepared to abide by the rules and regulations of Liverpool Hope University and the host University.

If the student fails the first year of study or does not meet the criteria above he/she will be withdrawn from the exchange programme. The Associate Dean (International) is responsible for confirming the student's marks and eligibility criteria before the student's exchange commences. The student's final published results are usually not available before the due date for the application so provisional marks are sent to the host institution and confirmed once the final results have been released.

### **(b) Personal qualities**

The University expects its international exchange students to act as ambassadors of the University and therefore expects students to be able to demonstrate:

- Maturity;
- An ability to exhibit appropriate behaviour in a variety of situations;
- Sensitivity to different social and cultural issues;
- Flexibility to adjust to different cultures, lifestyles and living conditions;
- An ability to cope with overseas study and to maintain a high academic standard;
- The willingness and capacity to act as an ambassador of Liverpool Hope University.

Please note: students whose behaviour has been considered by the Proctor, or a discipline panel, will not normally be approved for the programme.

### **(c) Financial requirements**

Students should have no outstanding debt to the University at the time of application or departure and should have the ability to meet all financial requirements as required by the programme. These include:

- Travel expenses;
- Accommodation costs;
- Living expenses;
- Any course costs, such as field trips.

Postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students must meet similar criteria and be achieving a good pass / on progress with their programme.

Students will be expected to make their application before:

- the end of March of their first year for exchanges to the USA in their second year (although applications for exchanges to be undertaken in the second term will be accepted until mid-October).
- the end of April for exchanges within Europe (although applications for term 2 exchanges will be normally accepted until mid-October).

## **2.2 Student Selection**

All applications should be reviewed by the International Hub and the relevant School/Department to ensure that the candidate meets all necessary academic and personal criteria. If there are more student applications than places, then places will normally be allocated on academic standing.

Applications are made in consultation with the School International Coordinator, Level I Tutors and the Programme Lead. This will involve approval of the intended study programme for the international exchange period, as set out a Learning Agreement indicating the modules to be taken whilst abroad and their credit value.

In reality, it is not always possible to find an exact match academically and students are often required to complete some distance learning work for Hope via Moodle, particularly where students are required to take a full programme of study for visa purposes. Every effort, therefore, should be made wherever possible to ensure a broad equivalence between the planned exchange study programme and the Liverpool Hope approved provision. Where this is not possible careful consideration will be needed to advise the student on the possible options and implications, in particular, relating to the requirement of Professional, Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). If the School/Department, or the Study Abroad Coordinator and/or the Associate Dean (International) have concerns as to the suitability of the proposed programme, approval will not be granted.

## **2.3 Confirmation of Programme of Study**

Confirmation of the student's intended programme of study should be provided to the host institution by Liverpool Hope University. This must be signed by all three parties (the student, home and host institutions). Any subsequent variance from this must be agreed in writing.

## **2.4 Supporting Students with Additional Needs**

Any Liverpool Hope student can apply to undertake a period of study abroad (subject to meeting the eligibility criteria in 2.1). Student Support and Well-being, working closely with the International Hub and our exchange partners, will endeavour to ensure that appropriate support arrangements are in place at the host institution for students with a Learning Support Plan wishing to undertake an exchange. Under the terms of the Exchange Agreement, any Hope student studying at a partner institution is eligible to receive support in line with that available to the partner institution's own students. It is important however, for both the student and for Liverpool Hope to be confident in the local support arrangements available.

## **2.5 Assessment and Reporting of Marks**

Any Liverpool Hope student undertaking a period of study abroad will require a bespoke assessment pattern for the year in which their exchange takes place. Results / credit achieved during the exchange period are summarised in a transcript after the study period has been completed. The transcript must be sent to the International Hub at Liverpool Hope University so that the results can be recorded in line with the University's assessment scheme. A process for entering marks from overseas institutions for students who have spent a period abroad has been

agreed at the Standing Sub Committee on Assessment (with any further amendments or revision by the Registrar's Operational Group) and is undertaken at School/Departmental level on the basis of the information received from the host institution.

## **2.6 Risk Assessment**

To support student's well-being, health and safety whilst on an exchange, the International Hub will complete a risk assessment profile based on information provided by the host institution, in line with the University's [Student Placement Health and Safety Code of Practice](#). A member of the International Hub will brief students in line with the Risk Assessment prior to travelling to the host institution, details of which will be held on the student's file in the International Hub.

## **2.7 Insurance**

All students who undertake an international exchange as part of their degree programme are covered by the University's Insurance policy for the duration of their study period. This coverage is for legitimate academic activity only; for non-academic activity the student is expected to obtain extra additional insurance. Students are expected to have their own health insurance, which includes a repatriation clause and must confirm details of such insurance to the University prior to travel.

For students studying in Europe, a new health scheme, the Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC), has been launched as part of the UK / EU post-Brexit deal. The Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) will gradually replace existing European Health Insurance Cards (EHIC).

# **3. Incoming Student Exchange, Study Abroad (Paid Semester or Year Abroad) and Maymester**

## **3.1 Study Abroad Courses**

Each subject area should identify the provision it wishes to make available for incoming exchange/study abroad students no later than the January in advance of the academic year in which the course is to be offered. This will form the Catalogue of Courses for International Exchange and Study Abroad. Given the nature of Hope's undergraduate programmes whereby Liverpool Hope undergraduate students study two, 60 credit blocks per year, Departments / Schools are expected to offer smaller 15 credit learning units derived from already approved undergraduate provision, with a small number of 30 credit courses. The curriculum and associated assessment/s will need to be approved in line with the University process, typically, a 15 credit course offered to incoming students would have 1 assessment, a 30 credit course would require two. Liverpool Hope's current portfolio of Masters (Level 7) provision is already approved as smaller credit-rated modules and does not therefore require separate approval. In light of the new 8 week teaching blocks at Hope, Study Abroad and Incoming Exchange students will complete 8 weeks of teaching as part of a 12 week programme in Term 1 or Term 2. Students will be encouraged to take four 15 credit courses and only take a 30 credit courses in exceptional

circumstances.

### **3.2 Exchange and Study Abroad Applications**

Incoming Study Abroad and Exchange students should be nominated by their home University and, following contact by Liverpool Hope, apply in line with the applications process<sup>1</sup>. As incoming students are not registering for Liverpool Hope awards, acceptance will be streamlined and will be based on the production of evidence that they are performing at or above a stated level (GPA (Grade Point Average) of normally 3/Grade B), have the necessary English language skills to cope with the requested level of study, and have a positive supporting reference from their home institution.

The Deadline for Applications from **Incoming students** is:

- For study in the Fall Semester (Term 1), normally the end of May of the preceding academic year.
- For study in the Spring Semester (Terms 2 & 3), normally the 1<sup>st</sup> of November of the same academic year as the study is to take place.

Applications will be reviewed by the International Hub and an offer made in accordance with the home institution's own processes.

Students follow the agreed programme of study whilst at Liverpool Hope and an official transcript is sent to the student's home institution showing credit and grades achieved on completion. (Note that students have access to information about their credits/grades via the student records management system, but the formal confirmation is provided by Liverpool Hope to the student's home institution).

To support students wishing to attend Liverpool Hope as part of their programme, Study Abroad students whose application is successful and who apply in advance of the deadline/s will be guaranteed accommodation in halls at one of Liverpool Hope's campuses, normally Aigburth Park Student Village. Unfortunately, we are unable to guarantee accommodation for Exchange students.

### **3.3 Maymester Courses and Applications**

Each school is expected to offer a 2 and 3-week Maymester course which will appeal to International students, particularly from the USA. The course will normally be equivalent to 15 credits. Students participating for 2 weeks will not be assessed; those participating for 3 weeks will be assessed in the final week in order to gain credits. Each School should confirm the provision it wishes to make available for Maymester students no later than the September in advance of the May in which the course is to be offered.

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<sup>1</sup> [Study Abroad and Exchange Guide](#)

Maymester applications will follow a similar process to those for Study Abroad but will be streamlined. Students whose application is successful and who apply in advance of the deadline/s will normally be guaranteed accommodation in halls at one of Liverpool Hope's campuses. An official transcript will be sent to the student's home institution showing credit and grades achieved on completion of the Maymester.

#### **4. Review of Exchange / Study Abroad**

The International Hub will submit an Annual Review to Partnerships and Accreditations Committee (normally for the first meeting of the academic year) which should include:

- numbers of students travelling out to each partner, by Liverpool Hope programme;
- numbers of in-coming students, where applicable, from each partner, by Hope subject area;
- evidence of the student experience at each partner visited;
- the academic success of the students concerned (out-going and in-coming);
- any issues around the experience of in-coming students;
- information about the management of each 'live' partnership including the ease with which contact is maintained and the institution's responsiveness to addressing queries or problems;
- any other issues raised by students or School/Department staff;
- recommendations for termination of any agreements where the numbers are insufficient and/or the student experience or operational management are inadequate;
- recommendations for the termination or renewal of any agreements which are coming to an end within the next 12 months.

An update on Exchange activity will be provided to PAC termly, in line with Turing requirements.

#### **5. Approval of an Exchange / Study Abroad / Maymester Partner**

The International Hub, working closely with the Legal Services Office is responsible for managing the signing of a suitable agreement with the host (Exchange) or home (Study Abroad / Maymester) institution. The nature and detail of the agreement may vary depending on whether it is part of a wider exchange network. It is intended that the quality procedures evidenced will provide sufficient assurance of the suitability of the institution. Should such information not be available, approval will not be given.

- The University will sign a detailed agreement with each new partner subject to proportionate due diligence.
- All exchange partnerships must be articulated via a signed agreement.
- Any agreement which establishes a partnership for the purposes of student exchange should be signed by the Chair of Senate.



- An institution will normally be approved if it is a recognised provider of higher education and is subject to a national quality / standards framework.

**Review of Exchange providers**

Approval will normally be for a maximum of 5 years<sup>2</sup> at the end of which documentation must be gathered to renew the agreement if the participating Schools/Departments wish to continue with the arrangement. The International Hub is responsible for initiating this.

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<sup>2</sup> It is recognised that some agreements may be subject to more frequent review and associated conditions.