Student Mobility Policy

Scope
All undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes at City, University of London

Date approved/re-approved
October 2017

Date for review
To be reviewed on a periodic basis, with allowance for minor annual updates of roles and responsibilities by Education and Student Committee, as required

To be read in conjunction
- Programme Approval Policy in Section 3 of the Quality Manual
Student Mobility Policy

The University recognises the value that an international experience can add to the student experience and it is committed to providing high quality opportunities for student mobility that enhance the value of its awards.

1. Scope

The Student Mobility policy covers all activity where students to undertake a period of learning (of at least one term and up to an academic year) at an approved institution overseas. Student mobility schemes can be a mandatory part of the degree, with specific learning outcomes that are an integral part of the award and where credit achieved at the Host will count towards the University award. They can also be optional, where successful the period of study is typically taken in addition to the normal programme of study at City and where a student’s achievement in assessment does not contribute to a student’s overall mark for a City award.

Student mobility provision which forms part of a research degree programme will involve research study undertaken at an approved institution abroad which is an integral part of a City, University of London research degree.

For the avoidance of doubt, schemes that involve only incoming students from other institutions (known as Study Abroad schemes at City) fall outside the scope of this policy as these schemes do not lead to a City, University of London award.

2. Definition of terms

The following terms are used:

Student mobility covers all activity where students undertake a period of study at an approved institution abroad. Such schemes might often be called ‘exchanges’.

The Home Institution is City, University of London. Students remain fully registered with the University (as the Home Institution) for the duration of their period of study overseas.

The Host Institution is the academic institution accepting the outgoing student for a period of study.
3. **General Principles**

Students expect the University to operate robust processes to ensure the quality of its programmes and the educational experience. The responsibility of the University for its students and its awards cannot be delegated even when learning opportunities are managed through a third party. Therefore, the Student Mobility policy has three key objectives to:

- Preserve the University’s duty of care for students who undertaking a period of study overseas.
- Safeguard institutional oversight and the integrity of academic standards for all City awards.
- Provide a transparent and consistent framework for the operation of student mobility that will facilitate parity in the experience of students who benefit from these schemes.

4. **Institutional Approval of a Host Institution**

Student mobility schemes can only be established through partnership with an approved Host Institution. The decision to approve agreements to enter into partnership with institutions overseas must be separate from the academic approval of a specific mobility scheme.

The President, advised by the Executive Committee, has ultimate responsibility for the strategic direction of student mobility provision. Authority for the institutional approval of Host Institutions for student mobility schemes has been jointly delegated to the Deputy President and the Vice President (International).

Proposals to establish a partnership with a new Host Institution must demonstrate careful consideration of: the strategic fit of the Host, its educational standing and reputation, educational rationale for the scheme and equivalence of facilities for student learning and support.

Proposals should be submitted on the Approval of a Host Institution for Student and Staff Mobility Scheme form to ensure that all relevant information is captured to support decision-making.

Once approved, Host Institutions must be added to the University’s Visa Compliance Team.

The partnership with a Host Institution will be reviewed periodically and will be considered for re-approval within five years of approval/last re-approval.

5. **Responsibilities of City, University of London and Host Institution**

All approved student mobility learning will be underpinned by a formal Student Mobility Agreement which will clearly identify the University’s and the Host Institution’s
responsibilities and obligations. The Student Mobility Agreement will set out provisions for termination of the agreement and the University will make arrangements to safeguard the best interest of students during any termination period.

6. Approval of Student Mobility Schemes

Student mobility schemes must be an approved part of a programme. Proposals to incorporate these opportunities can be considered either through the University’s Stage 1 and Stage 2 approval procedures (for new provision) or through School-level procedures (for amendments to existing programmes of study). Opportunities to participate in such schemes must be clearly indicated on Programme Specifications.

Schemes that facilitate the replacement of a period of study at City with a period of study at an institution abroad (either a term or a year) are subject to an additional level of approval via the Replacement Module Mapping and Grade Conversion form. This process ensures that the replaced credit is of the appropriate and equivalent academic standard. Each mobility scheme is subject to approval by School Programme Approval and Review Committees (PARCs) or a nominated alternative sub-committee. Proposals will be considered in line with all the requirements of this policy. In order to approve a proposal, the School PARC must be satisfied that:

- The programme structure, learning outcomes, assessment and other requirements are clearly defined. Modules should be of the appropriate level and volume for the period of study to be substituted.
- The approved mechanism for credit transfer (and grade transfer, where applicable) is appropriate.
- The impact of failure or non-completion of a student mobility scheme within the overall programme is clear for the student.
- The guidance, support and information that will be provided to students during their time overseas is appropriate.
- The impact of the student mobility provision on any PSRB requirements is clear.

Where it is necessary for a Host to change, remove or adjust aspect of its provision for a replacement term or year, these changes must be re-approved by City.

Subsequently, student applications for approved schemes are submitted to Exchange Coordinators via the Pre-departure Student Exchange Agreement form which, together with the Student Learning Agreement, provide a definitive record of the student’s programme for the year. The Pre-departure Student Exchange Agreement is signed by both the student and the academic responsible for the programme. The department responsible for coordinating the mobility scheme must ensure that a student risk assessment (included within the Pre-departure Agreement) has been completed and required actions are being progressed.

For student mobility schemes where the period of learning is recognised (on the transcript and/or the degree certificate), but it is not credit-bearing (Sandwich
terms/years, for example), the template of the Pre-departure Student Exchange Agreement form should be followed to ensure that the programme for the year is defined and that other relevant factors are considered. However, a detailed mapping of the modules, credits and grades is not required.

7. Approval of Student Mobility Schemes for Research Programmes

Doctoral students may also be eligible to apply to undertake a student mobility scheme. The approval of a mobility scheme for a Research Degree will need to consider the appropriateness of supervision and assessment arrangements.¹

8. Transfer of Credit from the Host Institution

The University retains careful oversight of the academic standard of all of its awards where credit is transferred.

The initial stage of such oversight is undertaken through the process for the Approval of a Host Institution which considers academic standing of proposed Host Institutions.

For each Programme that permits student mobility schemes the Replacement Module Mapping and Grade Conversion Approval form must be completed and approved by the PARC, or other nominated person. This ensures that students undertaking a period of study abroad are able to meet all necessary programme requirements such as the volume and level of credit and other essential content (learning outcomes for core modules, for example).

Where credit is imported as a pass/fail, it is necessary to ensure proper alignment at the pass mark only. If a Programme proposes the transfer of grades from the Host Institution a full alignment of marking schemes must be undertaken as part of the approval. Where replacement modules are at a higher or lower academic level than the equivalent City module, the University can only award credit and not the marks. Modules for which only credit is awarded will normally be zero-weighted when calculating the overall degree mark used to determine degree classification. If another weighting is to be adopted then the weighting of City module marks used to calculate the overall degree mark must be specified, approved and communicated to students in advance of the mobility opportunity being undertaken.

City Regulations should apply to all resit assessment. Students should only be given one resit opportunity for a failed assessment at the Host Institution. Resits should be capped at the module pass mark.

In the interests of transparency, high academic standards and equal treatment of all students, the following principles provide a common approach for the management of all credit transfer.

¹ Procedure tailored to research programmes to be developed
• All of the learning outcomes for the year (and for any core modules) are met through the replacement modules, or a valid alternative must be proposed.
• Replacement modules must be demonstrated to be at the appropriate academic level for the year of study being replaced.
• Mapping must confirm that the volume of credit is equal to the study that will be substituted.
• Module content must not duplicate learning that has already been credited and must fulfil any prerequisites for study in subsequent years.
• For some programmes, PSRBs may require that modules are an exact match.
• Substituted modules must provide a coherent programme of study and prepare students for progression to the next stage of their programme.
• The process of mapping learning outcomes and credit is an academic responsibility and it requires an understanding of the assessment systems in place at partner institutions.
• Whilst taking steps to ensure the learning experience of its students, the University will demonstrate respect for the academic standards and quality of assurance arrangements of its partners.
• Any changes to the approved module diet must also be approved.
• Consideration must be given to appropriate arrangements for resit assessment if any aspect of the year (or term) is failed.

9. Student Information, Support and Guidance

Whilst on a mobility scheme students remain fully registered with City, University of London. The University will provide support to students through clear, comprehensive information and academic guidance before, during and after periods of student mobility are undertaken. Information may be provided via handbooks, pre-departure briefings or a combination of both. Briefing processes must include opportunities for students to discuss any aspect of their mobility scheme.

The Programme or School must nominate staff roles that will be responsible for maintaining contact with the student during the period of study overseas. Key contacts for each student mobility scheme will be nominated and detailed in the Pre-departure Student Exchange Agreement.

In all cases, students will be informed about:

• Application procedures and deadlines.
• Expectations of them and the roles and responsibilities of others involved in the mobility scheme.
• Academic requirements, content, assessment criteria, intended learning outcomes and how credit obtained during their student mobility scheme will contribute to their overall degree classification.
• Support available at the Host Institution as well as support available from the University.
• Relevant policies and procedures, including the complaints and extenuating circumstances that apply in the event of any issues arising during the period of mobility.
• The academic consequences of failure or non-completion of their student mobility scheme and opportunities for reassessment.
• Appropriate induction to the Host Institution.
• Reorientation to reintegrate them effectively on their return to the University and assist them in reflecting on their experiences abroad.
• Provided with relevant health and safety guidance and insurance information.

In addition, Schools are encouraged to make use of personal development planning tools, educational technologies and social media, where appropriate, to facilitate student reflection on their Student Mobility experiences and assist with communication.

Visits to partner universities are not mandatory, but are encouraged wherever possible.

10. Health, Safety and Welfare

The University has a legal responsibility to ensure, so far as it is reasonably practical, that students are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. Specific details are set out in the University’s Health and Safety Policy (SP27 – Overseas Travel). The Student Mobility Policy and its associated pro formas ensure that the University meets its obligations in the operation of this activity. The University must make reasonable enquiries about arrangements for health and safety before a student undertakes a mobility scheme. The policies and procedures that a Host Institution has in place to safeguard the health and safety of students are considered during the approval of a Host Institution.

Students are additionally supported to undertake a student-led risk assessment before their scheme is approved.

11. Insurance

Students undertaking mobility schemes are required to organise their own travel and other necessary insurance(s) for the duration of the period abroad. The Exchange Coordinator will provide advice on what insurance is necessary for each potential location.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

Schools must operate a process to ensure that they can monitor the location of all of their students. A register of approved student mobility arrangements should be maintained by the Board of Studies; it should include the date of the approval of each Host Institution and the details of students who are studying at that Institution. Boards of Studies should consider the scope of their activity annually.

Schools must have arrangements in place for students to provide feedback on their experience both during the mobility scheme and on their return to the University. Feedback from the Host Institution should also be obtained periodically. Issues that arise through feedback must be considered at SSLCs and/or Programme Committees and addressed. Actions should be incorporated in Programme Action Plans. The re-
Approval of a Host Institution requires specific consideration of student feedback received during the period of approval.

Student mobility provision is subject to evaluation and review through the University’s procedures for Annual Programme Evaluation and Periodic Review. Appropriate reflection should be captured in all cases and the number of students involved in mobility schemes should be captured.

Student mobility arrangements can be reviewed by the University at any time for strategic viability in relation to the University’s Strategic Plan or any other relevant developments.

13. Requirements for Tier 4 Students
Where students are studying under a Tier 4 visa, the Home Office regulations require student attendance to be monitored at all times including, including when on placement. Schools must inform the University’s Visa Compliance Team of planned off campus activity before it begins. Any changes to a student’s off campus activity must be reported to the Vis Compliance Team. Detailed procedures, including the Off Campus Activity Reporting Form, are detailed in the University’s procedures for Off Campus Attendance Monitoring. Host Institutions should be briefed by Exchange Coordinators on any requirements to monitor attendance in line with this guidance. Host Institutions must inform the Exchange Coordinator if a student is unexpectedly absent from their placement for more than 48 hours without authorisation, or if they have any other concerns about the student’s attendance.

14. Interruption of Studies/Special Schemes of Study

If, for any medical or personal reason, a student needs to interrupt or terminate their overseas placement the Interruption of Studies Policy should be followed. Students should be informed that it may not be possible for them to resume their studies at the approved Host Institution when they return to their programme.

Special Schemes of Study policy may be used appropriately to provide a means of flexibility in adjusting programmes of study to meet individual students’ special and exceptional needs.

15. Equality and Diversity

It is the University’s intention to deliver opportunities that are open to all students. It is the responsibility of the student to declare at an early stage if they have any specific support or learning needs so that these can be considered and the ability of the Host Institution to support those needs appropriately can be assessed. Arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis and any agreed reasonable adjustments must not compromise the achievement of learning outcomes or other requirements for educational standards or professional competencies that are required by PSRBs. Decisions on reasonable adjustments for placement students must be made with
reference to other available guidance and information and in liaison with the Disability Support Team, as appropriate.

Any adjustments that are agreed must be captured in the Pre-departure Exchange Agreement.

Exchange Coordinators must seek permission from students before disclosing information on disabilities or other protected characteristics to a Host Institution.

16. Programme Costs

The University will provide students with clear information on the cost of student mobility opportunities. The following expenses will be the responsibility of the student:

- Tuition fees (paid to the University) and other fees (required by the Host Institution).
- International and domestic travel, accommodation, food, medical insurance and/or medical expenses, insurances covering personal possessions, travel and personal liabilities incurred while not on the university campus, books (including text books), stationery, clothing, food and all other personal costs, as well as passport and visa costs and all debts incurred during the course of the exchange.
- Accommodation

Schools will endeavour to inform students of other costs that are specific to the institution and/or country that the student will be travelling to. This information should be sought from the Host Institution.

17. Student Complaints and Appeals

The Student Mobility Agreement will set out the approved arrangements for managing a student complaint or an appeal that might arise when a student is studying at a Host Institution.

October 2017

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2 Note an institutional policy on reasonable adjustments is under development (June 2017).