

**SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES, LITERATURES AND CULTURES**

**Year Abroad**

**HANDBOOK**

**For students going abroad in**

**2019-20**

Please note that the information in this handbook is correct at the time of publication. Information on university links, partnerships and mobility funding may be subject to change at short notice depending on the outcome of UK-EU negotiations and other unexpected circumstances.

**Your Year Abroad HANDBOOK**

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**INTRODUCTION:**

**YOUR Year Abroad**

The Year Abroad (YA) is a fully integral part of BA French/ Italian/ German/ Spanish (Single, Major, Joint), BA Multilingual Studies, BA Modern Languages degrees (Single, Major, Joint), BA Translation Studies (with a Year Abroad), BA European Studies and BA Liberal Arts with a Language Year Abroad. The Year Abroad is a period of cultural immersion linked to the language component of your degree (French /German/ Italian/ Spanish); it is not a formal part of your minor or joint subject.

The options open to you are the following:

* **University Placement** in one or two different institutions of the same or different target languages.
* **Independent Work Placement** in one or two different companies or organizations of the same or different target languages.
* **British Council Teaching Assistantship**.

You may combine up to two of the above options subject to availability and date compatibility. You should spend a minimum of 9 months abroad.

If you are studying two languages, you should generally split their time between two language areas.

If you are studying three languages, you are advised to spend time in each of the target language areas but will only be assessed formally in two languages.

The experience of living abroad is of immense value in terms of your broader intellectual, professional as well as personal development. During your Year Abroad you should speak as much of the language(s) as you can by integrating as fully as possible into the environment(s) in which you find yourself. This is not always easy, especially in the first month or two, but it does produce dramatic results in the quality and enjoyment of your international experience. Practising your written language is equally important. One factor which distinguishes the excellent student and has a direct impact upon degree class as well as professional prospects is the ability to recognise and use language skills in the appropriate register according to circumstance; this applies equally to the written and the spoken language.

However hackneyed it may be to say so, it is true that the more you put into it, the more you will get out of it.

**SUPPORT**

In the course of your second year, you will attend a number of guidance and preparation sessions that will equip you to make informed choices for your Year Abroad. You are required to attend a specific Health and Safety meeting before your departure; this session will help you to make safe choices as you are responsible for your personal well-being and safety while abroad.

The Year Abroad tutors will offer you practical and academic guidance as well as pastoral support before your departure and whilst abroad but you must take responsibility for the organisation of your placements, their chronological compatibility (if you are combining two) and the completion of all necessary paperwork within set deadlines.

**Below is a summary of the resources available to you before your Year Abroad:**

1. A Year Abroad Administrator;
2. a team of Year Abroad Tutors;
3. SMLLC briefing sessions on placement options available (assistantships, university places, work placements) and application procedures;
4. SMLLC briefing sessions with returning students on the practicalities of settling in and living abroad;
5. language-specific briefings;
6. help and advice on the application procedures for assistantships;
7. advice on the suitability of work placements;
8. academic and character references;
9. general help with application letters and CVs for work placements;
10. advice and preparation for interviews.

**While abroad you continue to benefit from:**

1. the ongoing support of your Personal Tutor; meetings may be arranged through skype or similar platforms;
2. the ongoing support of the Year Abroad Administrator and the Year Abroad Tutors;
3. Royal Holloway’s Library’s collections (including digital), databases and related web-based tools;
4. Royal Holloway’s Wellbeing Services;
5. Royal Holloway’s Careers Service;

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

1. **ROYAL HOLLOWAY FEES**

You will be required to pay a percentage of your usual Royal Holloway tuition fee while on your Year Abroad. **Students should contact Student Finance about their own fee requirements for their Year Abroad 2019-20.**

For details on Fees – Home/EU and Overseas see<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/finance/feesandfunding.aspx>and/or contact [student enquiries@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:student%20enquiries@rhul.ac.uk) at the Student Administration Centre.

# ERASMUS+ MOBILITY GRANT

Eligible students are entitled to an ERASMUS+ mobility grant if they are studying (for a minimum of 3 months) at one of Royal Holloway’s ERASMUS+ partners *and*/*or* undertaking an ERASMUS+ work placement (for a minimum of 3 months) in one of the participating countries (subject to the UK’s programme membership status). For the purposes of your integral Year Abroad, placements are available in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Switzerland. For more information on the programme and to check your eligibility, see: <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/>.

This mobility grant is intended to allay some of the additional expenses incurred on the Year Abroad but is **not a living or subsistence allowance**. Your financial planning in advance of the Year Abroad needs to take the nature and the possible variations of the amount of the grant into account as well as the possible need for accommodation deposits and the eventuality of delays in payments. In other words, **it will be of help you but must not rely on it to live.** Please note that Erasmus+ mobility grants are provided by the European Union and not Royal Holloway. The amounts paid to students depend on destination area and vary from year to year; they are strictly linked to the length of your **documented** study or employment abroad.

# The grant will be paid in instalments by ERASMUS+ (the initial instalment of 70% of your first or full year placement is around November with further instalments paid following the completion of the appropriate forms and language assessments and the remaining payment in the following Summer) but please note that the final payments will not be made until your full set of ERASMUS+ administration forms is signed off by the relevant institution has been received.

# CeDAS will send out these payments which are paid directly into the UK bank account details that you provide on Campus Connect and on the Student Mobility Grant form.

Grants are calculated at a monthly rate; **the term/work placement dates that you put on the forms must match with submited documentation and be your actual time spent studying or working abroad.**

**2.1. ERASMUS+ GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS**

**ALL** ERASMUS+ participants must read the programme’s charter (available in Moodle), complete the forms indicated below and do the required online OLS language assessments:

1. Address Abroad Form
2. Certificate of Arrival to confirm the dates of your enrolment at the host institution; this must be signed by the host institution.
3. Mobility Grant Agreement Form; this must contain your UK Bank account details and be signed and dated BEFORE the start of your mobility.
4. Student Report Form/EU Survey on your Erasmus experience.

Students taking up a **STUDY** abroad placement must ALSO complete the following:

1. Learning Agreement for Studies; this is a three-part form with sections that must be completed BEFORE, DURING and AFTER your studies.

Students taking up a **WORK** placement must ALSO complete the following:

1. Letter of Appointment from the Employer (not for the British Council Assistantship scheme).
2. Learning Agreement for Studies; this is a three-part form with sections that must be completed BEFORE, DURING and AFTER your studies.

**It is essential that you comply fully with the above requirements. Students who do not produce all of the required forms, as above, will not receive their second grant payment and will also be liable to repay their first payment. These students will be debtors to Royal Holloway until full repayment has been made; please remember that it is not possible to graduate if you have debts with the College.**

**Please double-check that the registered dates are correct and let** [**YearAbroad@rhul.ac.uk**](mailto:YearAbroad@rhul.ac.uk) **know immediately if there are any changes to the start or end of your placement(s). If you return before the end of your placement, you will have to repay part your grant.**

**3.LATIN AMERICA FUND**

Royal Holloway provides extra financial assistance to Year Abroad students in Latin America. If the Registry is provided with a receipt of payment to an institution abroad then the student will be reimbursed by up to £300. Please forward your receipts to the Year Abroad administrator *at* [YearAbroad@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:YearAbroad@rhul.ac.uk) *at the end* of your placement.

**STUDY PLACEMENTS**

1. **DESTINATIONS**

You can choose to study in **up to two** different academic institutions abroad. The tables below illustrate the current range of partners and informal links within and outside of the Erasmus+ scheme but places available at most institutions are limited and some are subject to local entry requirements. While we will be making every effort to accommodate your preferences, the SMLLC cannot guarantee an ERASMUS+ or Latin American placement to every student nor the destination of first choice. Where placements are oversubscribed, there are unexpected changes to institutional agreements or any other unforeseeable circumstances, students may need to take up their second and even third preference.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ERASMUS+ PARTNER PLACEMENTS** | | |
| **FRANCE** | | **34 placements in total** |
| Aix-Marseille | | 4 places of 10 months each |
| Dijon | | 2 places of 10 months each |
| Louvain-La-Neuve | | 1 place of 10 months each |
| Université Lumière - Lyon Ii | | 6 places of 9 months each |
| Montpellier | | 4 places of 10 months each |
| Paris IV – Sorbonne | | 5 places of 10 months each |
| Paris 7 – Diderot | | 3 places of 10 months each |
| Perpignan | | 4 places of 10 months each |
| La Réunion | | 2 places of 9 months each |
| STRASBOURG (European Studies Link) | | 3 places of 9 months each |
|  |  | |
| **GERMANY** | **9 placements in total** | |
| Vienna | 2 places of 9 months | |
| Göttingen | 1 place of 10 months | |
| Heidelberg | 2 places of 10 months | |
| Konstanz | 1 place of 10 months | |
| Munich | 1 place of 10 months | |
| Regensburg | 1 place of 9 months | |
| Würzburg | 1 place of 10 months | |
| **ITALY** | **14 placements in total** | |
| Firenze | 2 places of 10 months each | |
| Lecce | 2 places of 9 months each | |
| Padova | 1 place of 9 months each | |
| Palermo | 1 place of 9 months each | |
| Pisa | 2 places of 10 months each | |
| Roma 3 | 2 places of 9 months each | |
| Siena | 2 places of 9 months each | |
| Torino | 2 places of 9 months each | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SPAIN** | **26 placements in total** |
| Alcalá (Madrid) | 2 places of 9 months each |
| Almería | 1 place of 10 months each |
| Cádiz | 3 places of 9 months each |
| Córdoba | 2 places of 10 months each |
| Gran Canaria | 1 place of 9 months |
| Autónoma (Madrid) | 3 places of 10 months each |
| Complutense (Madrid) | 3 places of 9 months each |
| Málaga | 1 places of 9 months each |
| Murcia | 1 places of 10 months each |
| Salamanca | 2 places of 9 months each |
| Sevilla – Pablo de Olavide | 2 places of 10 months each |
| Sevilla – (3 People only) | 2 places of 10 months each |
| Valencia | 1 place of 9 months each |
| Zaragoza | 2 places of 10 months each |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **NON-ERASMUS+ PARTNERS AND INFORMAL LINK PLACEMENTS** | |
| **SWITZERLAND** | **2 placements in total** |
| Freibourg | 2 places of 10 months each |
| **LATIN AMERICA** |  |
| Buenos Aires (Universidad de Buenos Aires) | Informal link – unrestricted placements |
| Santiago (Universidad de Chile) | Informal link – unrestricted placements |
| La Habana | Informal link – unrestricted placements |
| Puebla (Universidad de las Américas) | Exchange link |
| Montevideo (Universidad de la República del Uruguay) | Informal link – unrestricted placements |

**Oversubscription**: please note that if demand for a particular institution exceeds the number of places available, allocation will normally be based on the following criteria:

1. Punctual submission and accurate completion of the “Year Abroad Choices” form.
2. Special needs (DDS students).
3. First Year Study Record.
4. **STUDY REQUIREMENTS and SUBJECT CHOICES**

As a visiting student, you will be required to take courses at your host institution and marks for these modules will be converted into the RHUL system at the end of your period of study abroad. The range of courses available varies substantially from institution to institution and it is your responsibility to research the options in advance of requesting your placements. Please note that, as your Year Abroad **is an integral part of the language element of your degree programme** at Royal Holloway, most of the modules available to you will be in the areas of language, literature and culture. Universities run their own course choice policies but, as a general rule, please do not expect to be able to register for subjects outside the language, literature and culture element of your RHUL course (e.g. there is no guarantee that a BA Modern Languages (Spanish) and/with Music/History/Drama/etc will be allowed to take modules in their joint or minor subject).

* 1. **ERASMUS+ STUDY PLACEMENTS**
* A **Learning Agreement** detailing the courses you intend to take should be submitted to [YearAbroad@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:YearAbroad@rhul.ac.uk) as soon as possible. Courses will need to fulfil the criteria set out in the points below and will need to be approved by the relevant Year Abroad Tutor at the start of your academic stay.
* You will need to take 24 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System credits) **per term** of study. If you are spending the whole year at university (either at one or at two institutions) you should note that ECTS loads have to be spread equally over the full year: if you fail to earn a minimum of 24 credits in Term 1, you cannot take additional credits in Term 2 to make up for the shortfall.
* Please note that whilst the minimum is 24 credits per term, given that this is less than the average workload at Royal Holloway and that shortfalls cannot be compensated for, you are strongly advised to take courses in addition to the minimum requirement.
* You are encouraged to take a range of appropriately challenging courses. These must be taught and examined in the target language; bibliographies should also be mainly in the target language.
* Courses typically can be chosen from fields such as culture, literature, history, linguistics, translation, art history, politics, etc., and generally related to the target culture. Options will vary from institution to institution and RHUL cannot challenge local policies. Please remember that you are studying abroad as part of the language component of your Royal Holloway degree programme and institutions will expect your choices to reflect this.
* The minimum requirement of 24 credits per term may include **up to 8 credits from language courses which are part of a degree programme** at the appropriate academic level in languages relevant to the student’s programme of study at RHUL. Any credits taken for language course above this number will **not** be converted into RHUL credits. Please note that target language courses run for Erasmus+/visiting students cannot be taken into consideration for the purposes of grade conversion even if they are given an ECTS load by the host institution.

**2.2. LATIN AMERICA STUDY PLACEMENTS**

The SMLLC has one exchange partner (Universidad de las Américas Puebla) and a number of informal links with Latin American institutions, all of which fall outside of the Erasmus+ scheme and for which there is **no mobility grant available**. Please note that those choosing to apply for a placement in an ‘informal link’ institution will do so as ‘**independent students’** and will have to pay local fees in addition to the corresponding Year Abroad Royal Holloway fee: the SMLLC does **not** have bilateral or exchange contracts with these institutions but we recognise their qualifications as suitable for the purposes of the Year Abroad.

* A **Learning Agreement** detailing the courses you intend to take should be submitted to [YearAbroad@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:YearAbroad@rhul.ac.uk) as soon as possible. This will need to be approved by the relevant YA Tutor at the start of your academic stay.
* You will need to document attendance to at least 10 hours of classes per week throughout the term of your stay. It is your responsibility to obtain confirmation of this from your host institution.
* You are encouraged to take a range of appropriately challenging courses. These must be taught and examined in the target language; bibliographies should also be mainly in the target language.

**WORK PLACEMENTS**

You may spend the whole or half of your Year Abroad in a work placement in a geographical area relevant to your target language(s). It is possible to take up to two different placements in one or two language areas in the course of your Year Abroad.

Please remember that you must research and arrange your work placements independently. The School has no work placement links and does not endorse or recommend any companies or specific job opportunities. We may pass on information that is forwarded to us and which may be of interest to you but this should not be interpreted as an endorsement. We do not carry out any checks on private companies or ventures.

1. **ERASMUS+ WORK PLACEMENTS**

You should research your options independently; the Careers Service international job databases and the list of past Year Abroad employers available through Moodle should help you to get a sense of the types of opportunities that are available in your language area. Please note that:

* Placements should be discussed at an early stage with the relevant Year Abroad Tutor.
* Placements must be in posts appropriate for a future graduate of the University of London and involve intensive linguistic and cultural immersion.
* Placements should normally be equivalent to full-time work in the host country.
* Placements should comply with Health and Safety requirements.
* A **Learning Agreement for Traineeships** formshould be submitted to [YearAbroad@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:YearAbroad@rhul.ac.uk) before the start of the placement.
* Placements must be approved by the Year Abroad Tutor and agreed by Royal Holloway in order to qualify for the mobility grant. Please note that approval can only be given on the basis of a formal **letter of appointment** from the company/institution confirming the location and period of the placement, and a job description detailing the tasks to be undertaken such that they demonstrably fulfil the requirements of suitability, linguistic and cultural immersion.

The following types of organisations or activities are not accepted for work placements:

* European institutions (such as the European Commission).
* Organisations managing EU programmes (such as National Agencies)
* National diplomatic representation (embassy/consulate) of the student in the host country (e.g. it is accepted if a British student works in the Mexican Embassy in Madrid for example, but not for a British student to work in a British Embassy).
* Working as an au pair, holiday representative, in a bar or restaurant.

1. **NON-ERASMUS+ WORK PLACEMENTS**

You may wish to find your own work placement outside the Erasmus+ scheme. This is possible but please bear in mind the following:

* You will not be able to apply for Erasmus+ funding or other sources of support from the SMLLC.
* Your placement should be discussed at an early stage with the relevant Year Abroad Tutor.
* A **Learning Agreement for Traineeships** formshould be submitted to [YearAbroad@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:YearAbroad@rhul.ac.uk) before or at the start of the placement.
* Placements must be approved by the Year Abroad Tutor. Please note that approval can only be given on the basis of a formal **letter of appointment** from the company/institution confirming the location and period of the placement, and a job description detailing the tasks to be undertaken such that they demonstrably fulfil the requirements of suitability, linguistic and cultural immersion.
* Placements must be in posts appropriate for a future graduate of the University of London and involve intensive linguistic and cultural immersion.
* Should normally be equivalent to full-time work in the host country.
* Employers should be able to demonstrate compliance with Health and Safety requirements by supplying:

1. A copy of the employer’s risk assessment
2. A copy of the employer's liability insurance. provider's insurance: covers liability for injury or illness suffered by the students attributable to their work with the provider.
3. A copy of the employer’s Health and Safety Policy.
4. Have a system of recording and investigating accidents and incidents; report to the School of Modern Languages RHUL all recorded accidents involving placement students.
5. Provide the student with an induction in the workplace health and safety arrangements, including fire precautions, specific hazards and health and safety precautions.
6. Provide supervision and training for the student in the performance of their duties.
7. **BRITISH COUNCIL LANGUAGE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

The British Council runs an international programme of Language Assistantships. Eligible candidates are able to apply for positions in Austria, Italy, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada as well as various locations in Spanish-speaking Latin America. Please note that assistantships vary in length depending on country. Comprehensive and up-to-date information, including eligibility criteria and application information, can be found here: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/study-work-abroad/outside-uk/english-language-assistants>

* Please ensure that you submit your application in time. **In 2019-20, the deadline for internal submission is 25th January 2019.** You will need to ask your Personal Tutor for a reference well in advance of this date.
* If you are taking up a British Council Assistantship you do not need to submit a letter of appointment for approval by the relevant YA Tutor but must respond as directed by the British Council and their school(s) within published deadlines.
* You must complete and return a **Learning Agreement for Traineeships** at the start of your placement; this will have to be completed and signed by your host school, the Year Abroad Tutor and you.

**YEAR ABROAD ASSESSMENT**

Your Year Abroad is an assessed part of your degree programme; you will obtain marks for **two full units in total (60 credits**). The marks for these two units, informally called the **13th and 14th units**, are incorporated into your Stage Two average (Year 2 plus Year Abroad) and count towards your final degree classification.

**13th UNIT**

* Students in study placements will be assessed by converting host university grades into Royal Holloway percentage grades.
* Students in work placements will be assessed by a **Work Placement Report** and/or a **Cultural Report** written in the target language

The **Learning Outcomes** of the 13th unit are as follows (FULL and HALF):

* The acquisition of new perspectives on the subject area within the framework of the target language (TL) institution and culture.
* The acquisition of new skills relating (a) to the subject area and (b) to the language of tuition, learning and communication.
* The ability to evaluate critically alternative approaches to the subject **and** differences in educational process and organisation.
* An understanding of intercultural issues in relation to aspects of adaptation to life in a foreign culture, (such as attitudes, behaviour and cultural expectations).

**13th UNIT for STUDY PLACEMENTS**

The content of the 13th unit is the combination of courses from the host institution chosen by you in consultation with the Year Abroad tutor and the person responsible for Royal Holloway students in the host institution.

Your study programme should be constructed according to the indications set in the Study Requirements and Course Choices section of this handbook. It should contribute directly to the language component of your course of study at Royal Holloway and to that programme’s stated outcomes. Courses will be delivered and assessed through whatever means is deemed appropriate by the host institution in the relevant country. At the end of your study programme, the host university will provide you and Royal Holloway with a transcript confirming that the agreed modules have been undertaken and listing the results of assessments and any examinations taken. On the strength of this transcript, Royal Holloway will credit any student registered for FR/GM/SN/IT 2402 with a half unit, or FR/GM/SN/IT 2401 with a full unit, as long as the student has gained assessment marks for the equivalent of 24 or 48 ECTS respectively.

Because of the variety of practice in the differing countries (and, indeed, across institutions in the same country), it is impossible to state how the course will be delivered for every student, or how many hours of contact/independent study will be required. The ECTS allocates credits to courses on the principle that one year of full-time study is equivalent to 60 credits and offers an acceptable degree of equivalence.

**13th UNIT for WORK PLACEMENTS**

If you are working for all or part of your Year Abroad (including as a British Council Assistant), your 13th unit will be assessed by a **Work Placement Report** and/or a **Cultural Report.**

* Students on a full-year placement write a WPR **AND** a CR.
* Students on a half-year placement write a WPR **OR** a CR.
* Students on two separate half-year placements write one WPR **AND** oneCR.

**14th UNIT**

All students who spend a Year Abroad will be assessed by an **oral examination/s** (FR/GM/IT/SN2501: full year and FR/GM/It/SN2502: half year) to test **linguistic skills and intercultural awareness** in the relevant language(s). These assessment procedures will be run by the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures. Timetables will be distributed in late summer so please check your RHUL emails regularly. The oral exams will take place at the end of the Year Abroad (September preceding entry into the Final Year).

**FULL UNIT: FR/GM/IT/SN2501**

If you have spent both terms of the Year Abroad in ONE language area, regardless of placement type, you must take this module. The oral examination is conducted in the target language of the area in which the Year Abroad was spent.

**Learning Outcomes**

* The acquisition and application of new skills relating to the language of communication in the country/countries of the Year Abroad, especially with respect to:
  + 1. specialist vocabulary relating to the academic or professional context in which the Year Abroad was spent
    2. a range of spoken registers in the relevant language
    3. authenticity of expression, including pronunciation and fluency
    4. advanced comprehension of the spoken language
* An understanding of intercultural issues in relation to aspects of self (such as attitudes, behaviour and cultural expectations) on adaptation to life, and especially study or work, in a foreign culture, and an ability to articulate these in the target language.
* An awareness and understanding of the key social and/or political issues prevalent in the country/countries of the Year Abroad.

**HALF UNIT: FR2502/GM250/IT2502/SN2502**

If you have spent your Year Abroad in TWO language areas, regardless of placement type, you must take this module **in each of your target languages**.

**Learning Outcomes**

* The acquisition and application of new skills relating to the language of communication in the country/countries of the Year Abroad, especially with respect to:
  + 1. specialist vocabulary relating to the academic or professional context in which the Year Abroad was spent
    2. a range of spoken registers in the relevant language
    3. authenticity of expression, including pronunciation and fluency
    4. advanced comprehension of the spoken language
* An understanding of intercultural issues in relation to aspects of self (such as attitudes, behaviour and cultural expectations) on adaptation to life, and especially study or work, in a foreign culture, and an ability to articulate these in the target language.
* An awareness and understanding of the key social and/or political issues prevalent in the country/countries of the Year Abroad.

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

The College wants to ensure that you are as safe as possible during your time abroad and to that end, the following information with regards to health and safety has been compiled for you. You will also attend a compulsory Health and Safety briefing at Royal Holloway before you go abroad. Please note that accommodation, insurance and medical arrangements are your personal responsibility and we cannot provide advice on contracts, policies or medical care.

Before you travel, please ensure you read the country-specific advice provided by the UK Foreign Office. The following sites offer up-to-date recommendations on travelling and staying safe abroad:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-checklist>

**ACCOMMODATION**

* Make sure that you fully understand the terms of any contract relating to accommodation before you enter into a formal arrangement. Ensure that you know what kinds of financial and identity documentation are required to rent property in the country you are visiting and equip yourself with originals and copies. Research the costs typically associated with setting up a rental agreement and deposit amounts well before departure and plan accordingly. If you intend to find accommodation once you have arrived in the country, make sure that you have booked temporary interim accommodation – do not arrive with nowhere to stay.
* Make sure your accommodation is in a safe area (ask the locals and/or do research in advance). You are encouraged to contact students who are already overseas, or who have returned, to get information and advice.
* If you are going to share accommodation, choose your flatmates carefully; if they make you uncomfortable when you first meet, do not move in with them.

**INSURANCE**

* It is your responsibility to make sure that you are fully and adequately insured whilst abroad. You are strongly advised to take out comprehensive insurance to cover you for the following:

1. travel
2. all loss of personal belongings;
3. all medical and dental expenses;
4. compensation for injury or loss of limbs, etc;
5. theft or damage to personal property;
6. repatriation/emergency evacuation;
7. an adequate element of third-party liability;
8. any activities/sports that you might take part in whilst abroad, e.g. skiing.

* If you are going abroad on a work placement, you must ensure that your insurance provides full cover while working in the relevant country. Travel insurance designed for holidaymakers is not appropriate.
* If you are going to study and your host university insists that you purchase their insurance, make sure that you check the policy carefully. Such policies will sometimes not cover you for 100% of your costs and this could prove expensive if you need medical treatment.

**European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) for Academic and Work Purposes\***

If you are going to study or work in the European Union, you are required to apply for an EHIC to ensure you have basic health insurance. This is **in addition** to personal insurance. Please note that you need to apply for a **special EHIC** that covers you for year abroad placements. This is a different card from the standard EHIC you use for travel/tourism purposes.

* All students who are normally eligible for the EHIC and who are taking part in a period of study or work abroad as part of their UK degree must apply for a new EHIC to cover them for the period abroad using a paper form as instructed below:

<https://contactcentreservices.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/selfnhsukokb/AskUs_EHIC/template.do?name=I+am+leaving+the+UK+for+academic+or+work+related+study+%28internship%29+in+another+EEA+country%2C+how+do+I+apply+for+an+EHIC%3F&id=16502>

Please note that the card gives access to state-provided medical treatment only and that any treatment is given on the same basis as an eligible person in the particular country. However, this state provision might not cover all the NHS treatment that you would get and it may be that you have to make a payment towards your care.

\*Please note that the EHIC may no longer be available to UK citizens after March 2019.

**HEALTH AND MEDICATION**

* Discuss any health conditions, including allergies, and how these may be managed overseas with your doctor as soon as possible.
* Ensure that any regular prescription medicines are easily obtainable abroad or, if this is not the case, that you can travel with sufficient supplies to cover your stay.
* Check to make sure that the medicine you are taking is legal in your destination.
* You are advised to have all the necessary and recommended vaccinations ahead of travel.
* Make sure you have translations of any important health documents that you may need to take with you.

**MONEY**

* Explore the options available to you: you may wish to use one or more methods to access funds while abroad. If you plan to open a bank account (which may not always be possible, particularly for short-term stays), ensure that you know what kinds of financial and identity documentation are required in the country you are visiting and equip yourself with originals and copies. You are advised to look into internet banking and check with your home bank how much they will charge for making ATM withdrawals overseas.
* Remember that you may need to pay a deposit of at least a month’s rent for some accommodation (but it may be more in some cases).
* Ensure that you have some emergency cash on arrival.
* You are advised to take various sources of money: cash, debit card, credit card, etc.
* Do not carry large amounts of cash with you, particularly in places frequented by tourists, but ensure that you have enough to cover any small emergencies.
* Keep your money safe: always have some change in your pocket for small purchases like bus tickets, etc.

**ARRIVING AT YOUR DESTINATION**

* Do not joke or argue with immigration officials.
* Plan how you will get to your accommodation from the airport, station or port.
* If possible, arrange to be met when you arrive – if you are going to study overseas, check to see if your host university provides a pick-up service from the nearest airport. If it is not possible for you to be met, plan your journey carefully and consider using a licensed taxi.

**GETTING AROUND / GOING OUT**

* Trust your instincts, if you feel uncomfortable in a particular situation then do what you can to get away.
* Just as you would be careful about your personal belongings and your own safety when out and about in Egham, Birmingham or London, the same goes for Paris or Palermo. If you ever have any doubts about the safety or advisedness of a course of action, be sensible and avoid unnecessary risks. If you are warned about certain areas of a town or city, heed these warnings and act accordingly.
* If you are meeting new people, make sure you do so in a group or in public spaces (restaurant, coffee shop etc.).
* Plan your journeys ahead: how are going to get home after a night out?
* If you take a taxi, make sure that it is licensed and sit in the back.
* Do not hitch-hike nor accept lifts from people you do not know.
* Keep your mobile charged and save the local emergency number. Store the phone numbers of friends who live in the area and might be able to help if you are in a difficult situation.
* Do not stay in dark and deserted areas when waiting for a taxi or friends.
* In bars, coffee shops, etc., keep your drink in sight and do not accept a drink if its origins are unknown to you.

**CULTURAL AWARENESS**

* Be aware of local customs and adhere to them (even if you do not agree with them). Give some consideration to how your behaviour might be interpreted in the local cultural context.
* Say a firm “No, thank you” to unwanted advances and respect a firm “No, thank you” to your unwanted advances.
* Dress appropriately for the culture in which you are living.
* Make sure you know the country’s laws regarding drinking, driving, drugs, carrying ID, registering with the police, etc. Not knowing is not an excuse.
* Remember that during your period overseas, you are performing an ambassadorial role for Royal Holloway and must not do anything which will bring the College into disrepute.

**EMERGENCIES**

You can contact the SMLLC office at Royal Holloway during office hours: +44 1784 443244

Royal Holloway’s emergency phone number is available 24/7: +44 1784 443888.

* You are advised to have a list of local emergency numbers (e.g. doctor, police, university, your embassy/consulate) with you at all times both in your mobile and in print.
* Make sure that you have a list of emergency phone numbers in the UK (e.g. your bank, in case your credit card is stolen).
* Ensure that your family, friends and the SMLLC have accurate contact details for you.
* You are advised to register with your local embassy or consulate.
* Remember to make photocopies of your passport and other important documents, leave a set of copies with a reliable person in the UK, and have a set of copies separately. Emailing yourself scanned copies of important documents is a useful tactic.
* If you are studying, make sure you visit your local Erasmus/International office as soon as possible after your arrival to find out about the help and advice available to you.

**APPENDICES**

**WAIVERS**

As the Year Abroad is an integral part of your degree programme, only in documented exceptional circumstances will you be granted a Year Abroad waiver. Requests for a waiver should be discussed in the first instance with your Personal Tutor as soon as possible in the first term of your second year. If you decide to request a waiver, you will need to write to the Head of Department with copy to your Personal Tutor, stating the reasons for your application and including relevant documentation by the last day of term 1 in your second year.

For more details go to:

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/mllc/informationforcurrentstudents/year-abroad/exemptionfromtheyearabroad.aspx>

**EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

If your Year Abroad is or has been affected by any serious administrative problem or extenuating circumstances that may impede the completion of your stay abroad and/or prejudice your marks for the 13th and/or 14th units, you should bring this to the attention of your Personal Tutor and the relevant Year Abroad Tutor as soon as possible.

All extenuating circumstances should be fully documented as per College policy and evidence submitted to the Year Abroad Administrator ([YearAbroad@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:YearAbroad@rhul.ac.uk)) by the annual deadline, which will be close to the beginning of the first term of your final year and communicated to you by e-mail. You can find out more about what constitutes extenuating circumstances here: <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/documents/pdf/exams/extenuatingcircumstances-guidanceforstudents.pdf>

**WORK AND CULTURAL REPORT EXTENSIONS**

You may apply for an extension for your work and cultural reports in accordance with College policy: <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/exams/preparation/applying-for-an-extension.aspx>

**EUROPEAN STUDIES STUDENTS**

The Year Abroad part of your degree programme relates to the linguistic and cultural elements of your course. Please bear in mind that most courses available at partner universities reflect this fact and you will be expected to take modules from a range of linguistic, literary and cultural options.

The Year Abroad is run by the SMLLC but it is important that you keep in touch and inform both SMLLC and PIR of any events affecting your stay abroad. European Studies students who experience disruptions during their Year Abroad which they wish to be considered as extenuating circumstances when marks are received are advised that they must supply copies of all documentation relating to such circumstances both to the SMLLC office and to European Studies*.*

**DISABILITY AND SPECIAL NEEDS ABROAD**

**Studying abroad:** If you are registered with Royal Holloway’s DDS, you need to bear in mind that support available here for disabilities and/ or specific learning difficulties **may not** be available to you at institutions abroad. Compensation for lack of provision or different support cannot be made when credits gained abroad are converted into RHUL equivalents. It is your responsibility to research support available at the host institution and to discuss any concerns with your Personal Tutor at the SMLLC and Royal Holloway’s Disability and Dyslexia Services as soon as possible in Year 2.

**Working abroad**: You are strongly advised to discuss any support needs with your employer as soon as possible. Please remember that you may not be able to request the same type or even extent of adjustments as in the UK.

**Funding support:**  Students with severe disability or exceptional special needs who choose to study at an Erasmus partner university or find a job placement within the Erasmus scheme may be able apply for additional Erasmus+ mobility funding. You can find more information here: <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/additional-support>

**FORMS**

Year Abroad forms can be downloaded from <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/mllc/informationforcurrentstudents/smllconlineforms.aspx>

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

You can find further information about the Year Abroad, including country and area-specific information in the relevant Moodle pages. Further documentation is also available here:   
<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/mllc/informationforcurrentstudents/year-abroad/home.aspx>