



International Exchange: Outgoing Student Handbook

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Overview of Exchange programmes in DCU

Many DCU students who study abroad do so as an integral part of their undergraduate degree programme.

Programmes with a compulsory period abroad¹:

- Bachelor of Arts in Global Business (two years)
- Bachelor of Business International (one year)
- Applied Languages & Translation Studies (one year)

Programmes with an optional period abroad:

- Bachelor in Business Studies
- BA in Civil Law (Law & Society) (one year)
- BA Economics, Politics and Law (one year)
- BA in Social Sciences and Cultural Innovation (one year)
- BA International Relations (one year)
- BA in Joint Honours (one year)
- Computer Applications (one year or one semester)
- Bachelor of Education (one semester optional)
- Bachelor Early Childhood Education (one semester)
- Bachelor of Religious Education (one semester I)
- Engineering (one year or one semester)
- International Science (one semester)
- MINT

Schools offering an optional period abroad on some programmes:

- School of Chemical Sciences
- School of Biotechnology
- School of Computing
- School of Electronic Engineering
- School of Mechanical Engineering
- Business School
- Nursing

Erasmus+ Programme:

The **Erasmus+ Programme** is an EU-funded exchange programme to enable students to study in another country for a year or a semester and gain full academic recognition for their studies. DCU has participated in the Erasmus programme since its inception in 1987 and currently has over 200 Bilateral Agreements which facilitate the mobility of around 300 students each way each year. The Erasmus+ programme is based on the idea that studying abroad is the best way to learn about other countries, ideas, languages and cultures. Also that the experience is an important element in academic, personal and professional development. There is [research from Universities UK](#) which

¹ Students on programmes with a compulsory period abroad who feel that study abroad will be problematic, or who find themselves unable to travel to or stay in their chosen country need to consult with the Chairperson.

presents evidence that students who have studied abroad out-perform their non-mobile peers in the classroom and the job market.

You are required to read [the Erasmus+ Student Charter](#).

Full academic recognition means that the agreed study programme for the period abroad (including examinations or other forms of assessment) replaces a comparable period of study at DCU (including examinations or other forms of assessment), though the modules and syllabus may differ.

The Erasmus+ programme is available in all member countries of the European Union, the EEA countries of Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein, and Switzerland. The universities at which you can study at are those with a Bilateral Erasmus+ Agreement with DCU.

Other non-EU partners:

DCU also has exchange agreements with universities outside the Erasmus programme – in the USA, Mexico, China, Korea, Japan, the UK, Turkey, and Australia.

ECTS - European Credit Transfer System:

The recognition of studies and diplomas is a prerequisite for the creation of an Open European area of education and training where students and teachers can move without obstacles. ECTS provides a means to interpret national systems of higher education and an instrument by which institutions can recognise the learning achievements of students in different countries through commonly understood measurements - credits and grades. The ECTS system is based on three core elements: **information** on study programmes and student achievement, **mutual agreement** between the partner institutions and the student, and the use of **ECTS credits** to indicate student workload. The Academic Exchange Coordinator for your DCU program will confirm the modules you are required to complete while abroad and this will be noted on the Learning Agreement.

Under ECTS, students are required to complete course load of 60 ECTS credits for a full year (with a maximum of 30 credits in each semester) or 30 ECTS credits for a Semester. However you are advised to confirm specific requirements for your program with your Academic Exchange Coordinator.

Academic Progression

All our European partners participate in the ECTS system and will provide you with a **transcript** at the end of your stay that should indicate the number of ECTS credits you have completed. This helps to facilitate the process of academic recognition between universities. Your Academic Exchange Coordinator at DCU will interpret your results from this transcript. If your School is satisfied that you have completed a satisfactory number of credits at an appropriate level, your result for the period will be entered as "pass" and you will progress to your final year.

For detailed information on DCU's partners, see the [International Office website](#).

Thinking about Study Abroad?

November / December International Office Study Abroad Roadshow

These online meetings give general information on the range of countries and partner universities you can study at, and also the opportunity to speak to Exchange students from partner universities currently studying in DCU.

Researching Host Universities:

The most current and up-to-date information is available on the relevant university websites. It is advisable to study these carefully and note important dates such as Academic Calendars, Orientation periods, intensive language courses (if available) etc.

Academic Exchange Coordinators in DCU: Each School, and in some cases, specific programmes has a designated Academic Exchange Coordinator. This person is responsible for identifying the modules which DCU students could take at the host university, selecting the students who will participate, etc. Your academic coordinator will be the first point of contact for academic questions and queries in relation to your period of study abroad. They may also be able to provide first-hand information about the institution you have chosen as the coordinators regularly visit partner universities.

DCU students who are currently on their year abroad will provide many useful tips and insider information which may save you time when you arrive at your host institution. This could include recommended courses, local discounts for students, suitable areas for accommodation, transport services etc. Academic Exchange Coordinators will be able to put you in touch with these students.

Exchange students at DCU: DCU hosts students from partner universities who can give you lots of useful information particularly on what to expect in terms of ways of teaching, differences in assessment, accommodation, and transportation. Contact them through the [Erasmus Student Network at DCU](#).

Erasmus Student Network: the [biggest student association](#) in Europe. It is run by students, for students and they are present in more than 1000 institutions in 39 countries. They have, at any time, approx. 13,000 active members supported by “buddies” whose main aim is to take care of international students. Joining [the ESN at DCU](#) can allow you to continue your participation, and avail of the supports they offer, when you are studying abroad within Europe.

February / March School and Faculty Meetings

These crucial sessions provide specific details on your year abroad and the relevant academic regulations. They also provide information about the administrative aspects of your period abroad, financial supports available and practical information on living abroad. Details of this meeting will be forwarded to your DCU e-mail account when you have been nominated.

First Steps

Choose your host institution

- Universities that have partnership agreements with DCU can be found [here](#)
- Contact the [Academic Exchange Coordinator](#) for your program to identify which partner might be best suited to you and to request that you be nominated.
- Research the student support services available at the proposed host institution and ensure that a support you rely on at DCU is a

Apply to your chosen institution

- You will be nominated for an exchange period by your academic exchange coordinator.
- The International Office forwards your nomination to the host university.
- That host university or the DCU International Office will send details directly to you on how to complete their application and what documents are required.
- Complete and return the application attaching any documentation required before the deadline.

Attend an International Office Information Session

- All students who have been nominated will receive an email invitation to attend an information session hosted by the International Office.

Complete the International Office form

- Nominated students will receive the link via email from the MoveOn tool. The information collected on this form will be used by the International Office to estimate your Erasmus grant funding and create a **Grant Agreement**. You will need to provide details of your **Repatriation Insurance** on this form

Choose your modules

You must achieve 60 [ECTS credits](#) for a full year abroad, and 30 [ECTS credits](#) for one semester abroad.

- Module information should be available from all partner institutions well in advance. Your DCU Academic Exchange Coordinator can advise you on what specifically is required in terms of choice of courses, attendance requirements, submission of written or practical work, projects and passing of exams. Bear in mind that methods of teaching, learning and examining may differ from those you are familiar with. In some cases, academic regulations' booklets have been produced by the relevant Faculty, School, or programme.
- Contact your Host University to request a list of available modules. Discuss your choices with your DCU Academic coordinator.
- All students are required to initiate a [learning agreement](#) before departure.

Complete a pre-Mobility Learning Agreement (Table A and B)

[A Learning Agreement](#) is a legally binding document agreed to by you, your DCU academic coordinator and your host academic coordinator that confirms what you will study and the credits that you will be awarded. The European Commission requires that each student is in possession of a complete Learning Agreement prior to

departure for their study period abroad. This was introduced to support students and **is one of your rights to be issued with it as an Erasmus+ student. It is also your responsibility to complete it fully prior to your departure.**

- Students studying at an EU partner institution will be required to complete the Learning Agreement.
 1. In table A list the modules you would like to take at your host university.
 2. In table B list the DCU modules you would take if you were to stay and study at DCU.
 3. Fill in your DCU academic coordinator's contact details and your host university contact details.
 4. Send to exchange@dcu.ie.

The Learning Agreement is a living document and will be revised throughout your stay. You will complete and return Table A2 when you arrive at your host university either to confirm that you are making no changes to your chosen modules OR to agree any changes that you make at that time.

When all three parties have signed return a scanned copy of the full document to exchange@dcu.ie. You will revise the document by completing Table A2 when you arrive at your host university either to confirm that you are making no changes to your chosen modules OR to agree any changes that you make at that time.

Students travelling to non-EU destinations

- Download the hard-copy learning agreement from [here](#).
- Fill in your personal details and the information relevant to your study period.
- In consultation with your Academic Exchange Coordinator complete the list of agreed modules.
- When signed by you and your Academic Exchange Coordinator send a scanned copy to exchange@dcu.ie
- Bring the original to your host.

Before you Go

In June/July prior to your period of study abroad you may receive an official information pack or an information email from your host University. This will include important information such as the procedure for arranging accommodation, the orientation schedule, semester dates. This information will be sent to your DCU e-mail account. Please ensure that the information on your portal pages is correct at all times and that you up-date any details such as change of address. The institution only sends one pack per student and it is the responsibility of the student to fill out all forms and return by the stipulated deadline dates.

If you require assistance, please contact your Academic Coordinator at DCU and/or the International Office. The Institutional Exchange Coordinator in DCU can be contacted by email: exchange@dcu.ie or by telephone: 01-700 8693

It is important that you have identified the following information before booking flights and before departure:

- Semester start and end dates
- Exam and holiday periods
- Dates of the Orientation Programme, if provided
- Dates of preparatory Language programme (if applicable) and cost (if applicable)
- Procedures and information regarding registration and booking accommodation

You may need to correspond with your host university a number of times before you go abroad. You should ensure that you have all of the information you need as early as possible and before the end of July at the very latest as many university offices close for the month of August.

Complete a Grant Agreement (EU destinations only)

- Students travelling to EU destinations will receive a Grant Agreement by email from the DCU International Office.
 - The Grant Agreement is a legal document that has all your information, provisional dates of study (provisional term dates provided by the Host university), the amount of funding you will receive based on these provisional dates, the study destination, and the terms and conditions of the grant funding.
 - You must read the full terms, print the document, sign the last page and **submit the full document to the** International Office.
-
- Update your DCU student page to ensure the correct Bank Account details are listed. This is the bank account your grant will be paid into.

Register at DCU

You **must** register with DCU prior to your year/semester abroad, and pay the usual fee. Register by the DCU Registry deadline to avoid late registration charges. Results will be withheld if you fail to register. For any queries on this, please email registry@dcu.ie

While students are not required to pay tuition fees at the host university, there may be administrative fees for student services.

Letters confirming your student status:

If you need a letter confirming your student status in DCU contact registry@DCU.ie.

Health Insurance

If you are an EU/EEA national travelling to the the EU, European Economic Area (EEA), the UK or Switzerland, you are entitled to receive emergency medical care should you become ill or have an accident. You should have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) that is valid for the duration of your stay. Detailed information can be found at: www.ehic.ie.

EHIC only covers emergency medical care so students are strongly advised to take out a private health and travel insurance policy for their studies abroad.

Private Cover

If you are travelling abroad for your studies, it is *highly* recommended that you are covered by a comprehensive health insurance policy. Some partners require that students provide evidence of adequate health and travel insurance. Some partners provide insurance packages tailored for exchange students. Ask about this at application stage and ensure that Repatriation cover is included!

If you are covered by your parents' healthcare plan you should confirm the actual level of cover you will have while abroad. This can be done quite reviewing the policy documents or phoning the provider directly. Keep a record of the policy number and any emergency numbers you will need while abroad. Know what documents will be required if you need to make a claim.

Repatriation Insurance

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) insists that all students have Repatriation cover before travelling abroad. Repatriation insurance covers the costs of transferring remains home in the event of a fatality abroad. These insurance details must be provided to the International Office before travelling.

Check whether your health, travel or other insurance provides Repatriation cover. If not one provider suggested by DCU Finance is <http://www.chubbinsure.ie/travel/willistowerswatson>.

Accommodation

Exchange students are required to find accommodation independently. Students who live at home while attending DCU may find this part of the stay abroad the most daunting. However, with careful and early planning students generally do not have any major problems.

Some universities have on-campus accommodation for exchange students. Where available, accommodation on-campus may consist of a basic single room in a hall of residence and allocation is on a first-come first-served basis. If you need to complete application forms in advance and / or pay a deposit you should do so as quickly as possible. Confirm dates of arrival with host institution/accommodation office to ensure you can access your accommodation upon arrival

Know what to expect before you go: you may find that cooking utensils and bed linen are not provided, and that a number of people share bathrooms and cooking areas. The advantages are that it can usually be booked in advance, it is a good place to make new friends with other students, the location is likely to be close to the university, you will pay only for the duration of your study period, and it is usually cheaper than alternative types of accommodation.

If you wish to request accommodation near or with a friend you should communicate this to the host university accommodation booking office. Information and forms are usually included in the information packs from the host university.

You should expect to pay a month's deposit on your accommodation as well as a month's rent in advance. In some countries you may be entitled to some local financial assistance towards the cost of your rent. For example, in France you may be able to get a substantial rent rebate. Your host university will have details on the procedure for applying for this.

If you are not pre-booking campus accommodation be sure to have something arranged for the first few nights of your stay. Most universities have an Accommodation Office or an International Office that can advise or assist you.

Remember to speak to DCU students who are currently studying at your host university and exchange students at DCU from that university for advice on accommodation.

When you Arrive

Register at host university

You will not be required to pay tuition fees, although some universities require that you contribute to student services that may include – for example - subsidised meals at a student canteen or administrative semester/registration fees. This is common in German universities and the costs vary from institution to institution. Costs for language courses (if charged) cannot be reimbursed.

Return Certificate of Attendance - Start

- Once enrolled in your host university have your [Certificate of Attendance form](#) (Top section) signed and stamped. Return by email to exchange@dcu.ie within 3 weeks of start. This confirms your arrival date and revises your anticipated departure date. These determine more accurately the level of Erasmus+ funding you will receive and is required before the first [Erasmus+ Grant](#) payment can be released (details below).

Learning Agreement – Table A2

For study abroad in an EU partner institution

- You must update your learning agreement when you arrive. This is required before the first [Erasmus+ Grant](#) payment can be released (details below).
- If you are NOT making changes to your module choices confirm that there is no change.
- If you need to make changes to your module choices please liaise closely with your Academic Exchange Coordinators both at your host institution and back in DCU to ensure your choices meet your DCU course requirements. Please make all amendments as necessary and sign, and request your academic co-ordinators to sign also.

For study abroad in a non-EU partner institution

- If you are not making any changes to your module list on the Learning Agreement, please get this signed by the Tutor/Academic Coordinator allocated to you at the host university. This must be returned by to exchange@dcu.ie within 3 weeks of arriving.
- If you need to make changes to your module choices, please liaise closely with your Academic Exchange Coordinators at the host university **AND** DCU, to ensure your choices meet with your DCU course requirements. When agreed, please ensure you and the Academic Coordinator at the host university sign, then return to exchange@dcu.ie.

Register for Online Language Support (OLS):

Students studying through French, German or Spanish are required to conduct an Online Language Assessment at the beginning and end of your period abroad. This facility also provides on-line language tutorials throughout your study period. Information will be sent by email. This does not affect your grades or credits but is a tool to support you in your language learning and provide aggregate information to the EC on language development through Erasmus+.

Visits by DCU staff

You may be visited by DCU academic staff during your year. These visits are an important part of your academic year and you will receive advice on projects or course work you are doing. You are obliged to be available to meet with DCU staff during these visits.

Prior to Return

Return Certificate of Attendance - End

- Use the original Certificate of Attendance Start form that you had signed & stamped at the start of your exchange period. This is required before the last [Erasmus+ Grant](#) payment can be released (details below).
- Get the bottom section signed & stamped by your Host with your actual end of studies date (i.e. date of your last exam or assignment submission that requires you to be physically in attendance at the host institute). **Please note the forms are only acceptable when the signature and stamp are dated not more than 3 working days before the completion date.**

Final Report

- The European Commission will email you directly inviting you to complete a Final Report online. This is required before the last [Erasmus+ Grant](#) payment can be released (details below).

Transcript of Results

It is the responsibility of the student to prove that they have successfully achieved the required number of ECTS credits at their host institution. Some institutions forward transcripts to DCU, others do not. Please ensure that you are clear about the procedure at your host institution before you return to Ireland. If you are required to get the Transcript of Results yourself collect an official signed & stamped copy from the host institution and return this by email to exchange@dcu.ie. If this is not provided to the International Office in time for the Programme Awards Board you will not advance to the next year of studies in DCU.

Contact the International Office at exchange@dcu.ie if you require assistance.

Financial Aspects:

Tuition fees

Students on exchange pay the usual fees to DCU. Students are not required to pay tuition fees at the host university, although there may be an administrative fee for registration or the semester, or student services charges.

Cost of living

The *average* cost of living in most countries of the EU is fairly standard but will vary between and within countries: some countries, regions and cities are more expensive than others. If you are currently living at home, accommodation will be a significant cost and you should expect to pay a month's deposit on your accommodation as well as a month's rent in advance. In some countries you may be entitled to some local financial assistance towards the cost of your rent. For example, in France you may be able to get a substantial rent rebate. Your host university will have details on the procedure for applying for this.

In many European countries, student restaurants/canteens are subsidised and provide good meals at excellent value. Shopping at food markets is good value and helps you to practise the language. Your Student Discount Card (ISIC card) may entitle you to discounts in shops.

Calculate how much money you will need and plan for higher costs at the beginning as you may need to purchase extra household items if those supplied are insufficient. Extra money is also likely to be needed for a travel pass, for other deposits, student discount cards, etc.

Erasmus+ grants

Erasmus+ grants are awarded through the HEA for eligible activities abroad of at least 3 months' duration but not more than 12 months, which take place between 1 July 2022 and 30 September 2023. A second grant may not be awarded to any student.

These grants are not intended to cover the full costs of study abroad but are intended to offset the additional costs of mobility, i.e. travel costs, foreign language preparation where necessary and a higher cost of living in the host country.

Indicative funding levels from 2022-2023:

10 month stay in France, Austria, Nordic country - €3500

10 month stay in Spain, Belgium, Holland - €3000

4-month stay in France, Austria, Nordic country - €1400

4- month stay in Spain, Belgium, Holland - €1200

The HEA determines the maximum grant levels. These are estimated at the beginning of the academic year/semester (if you are going out in semester 2 only) and confirmed when you provide exact arrival and departure dates. The maximum grant level for each country is determined by the HEA and your award is calculated by the number of days confirmed on your certificate of attendance.

DCU students taking part in an exchange within Europe at one of the University's official partner institutions are eligible to apply for an Erasmus+ Grant if the following criteria are met:

- DCU must have an active Erasmus+ bilateral agreement with the host institution (a list of all partner institutions is available on our Student Mobility Website - N.B. this includes Erasmus+ and non-Erasmus partners, most of our EU partnership would be covered under the Erasmus+ programme)
- Students must engage in eligible activities. Eligible activities abroad are (exclusively):
Full-time undergraduate or postgraduate studies, including thesis preparation (but excluding research activities not specifically forming part of a course of studies) at the host institution leading to a recognised diploma or degree at the home institution;
Industrial placements, provided that the placement is combined with a minimum period of study abroad of three months and that it is recognised as an integral part of the student's programme by the home institution, and that it is not wholly supported by the Erasmus+ programme or by any other European Community programme. Details on placement grants can be obtained by the INTRA Office at DCU
- Students must be fully registered on a course of studies leading to a degree or diploma up to and including doctoral level at DCU;
- Students must have successfully completed at least one year of university study and be registered on a full-time programme in DCU.

Applying for an ERASMUS+ Grant

Once you have been nominated by your Academic Exchange Coordinator you will be invited to complete a form to apply for Erasmus+ Grant funding. The level of funding is determined by the country of study and is calculated on a daily rate. To calculate your funding correctly and avoid over or underpayment it is important that you provide the actual start and end of study dates. You will be required to return any overpayment to the HEA.

Receiving an ERASMUS+ Grant

- Register for your programme at DCU and pay relevant fees to DCU
 - Check that the banking details on your Student Portal Page are correct
 - Payment is by instalments and is dependent on you returning documentation in good time
- **Full Year** students receive 3 payment instalments, providing all documents have been submitted correctly & on time:
 - First payment of €1,000 paid on receipt of signed Grant Agreement, signed & stamped Certificate of Attendance Start, revised estimate of end date, revised Learning Agreement - November.
 - Second Payment 80% of the remaining funds based on the revised estimate of end of study date February.
 - Final payment remainder of funds will be paid on receipt of signed & stamped Certificate of Attendance – end and completion of final report on-line.
 - **Semester 1** students receive 2 payment instalments, providing all documents have been submitted correctly & on time:
 - First payment of €500 paid on receipt of signed Grant Agreement, signed & stamped Certificate of Attendance Start, revised estimate of end date, revised Learning Agreement – November.
 - Final payment remainder of funds will be paid on receipt of signed & stamped Certificate of Attendance – end and completion of on-line final report.

- **Semester 2** students receive 2 payment instalments, providing all documents have been submitted correctly & on time:
 - First payment of €500 paid on receipt of signed Grant Agreement, signed & stamped Certificate of Attendance Start, revised estimate of end date, revised Learning Agreement – February.
 - Final payment remainder of funds will be paid on receipt of signed & stamped Certificate of Attendance – end and completion of on-line final report.

Once everything has been completed and your last payment has been made, the International Office will send a Grant Acknowledgement Form by email. You must sign and return the signed copy to exchange@dcu.ie.

Local Authority Maintenance Grants

Students in receipt of a Higher Education Grant (SUSI) or a VEC Scholarship will continue to receive this while studying abroad. If you are participating in Erasmus or a period of study abroad that does not exceed 1 year you will continue to receive your grant.

If the Erasmus/ study abroad is **not compulsory**, and you are in receipt of a maintenance grant, you will continue to receive the same rate of grant that was previously awarded (i.e. adjacent or non-adjacent rate).

If the Erasmus /study abroad is **compulsory**, and you were previously in receipt of an adjacent rate of maintenance grant, you may be eligible for the higher, non-adjacent rate whilst studying abroad. SUSI may request confirmation from your college that the period of study abroad is compulsory.

General Financial Advice

Open a Bank Account if possible. It is wise to compare bank charges before deciding where to open your account. You may need to present a letter to the bank from your host university.

- Many bank accounts allow you to withdraw money from ATMs abroad. Enquire about this and any associated costs before going abroad and use your bank's Internet banking facility to access your Irish bank account details while abroad.
- Take care not to rely exclusively on pass cards or Euro-cards, as you may encounter difficulties in withdrawing money from ATMs in the event of computer failure.
- Credit Cards are very convenient and usually economical in comparison with alternatives provided that the balance is paid off each month.
- Bank drafts and electronic transfers can be used to transfer money from Ireland to your bank account abroad. A bank draft should be drawn in the foreign currency and can take up to 10 days for the funds to be cleared by the bank abroad. Electronic transfer is a faster but more expensive way of sending money abroad. The speediest way and most expensive way of transferring funds is by Moneygram. You should enquire from your bank at home about International Banking Charges. You can minimise bank charges by reducing the number of international transactions.
- Prepaid cards are a very secure way of carrying some foreign currency (at least enough to cover trains, buses, taxis, emergency overnight cost, meals, etc.) that may be useful in the first few days).
- Do not have cash sent to you in the post as the postal service will not guarantee its safe delivery.

Student Financial Assistance Fund:

This [SAF fund](#), managed by Student Support & Development, is available to students who find themselves in financial difficulty while abroad.

Health, Safety & Support While Abroad**Embassy Support**

Irish citizens travelling or living overseas are encouraged to register their contact details with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Registration means that the nearest Irish Embassy or Consulate to you can include you in contingency planning in the event of a crisis or an emergency situation. Registration is voluntary and is particularly useful if you are travelling to a remote or high risk destination.

You can register online at: <https://www.dfa.ie/travel/citizens-registration/>

Student Support Services:

Students on programmes with a compulsory period abroad who feel that study abroad will be problematic, or who find themselves unable to travel to or stay in their chosen country need to consult with the Chairperson.

The level and type of student support services provided at third level institutions worldwide can vary greatly. If you use or rely on specific services at DCU (e.g. disability support, counselling, health services, academic skills support etc.) be sure this is also available at your host institution. If you have a particular contact within SS&D, you should speak to him/her directly about your pending year abroad and what support you may require.

As a registered DCU student, you still have access to all of the Student Support & Development services while studying abroad – but the level of support that can be offered remotely may be limited and not as effective as face-to-face.

Student Advisors are available in the Student Advice Centre and by email at student.support@dcu.ie.

Safety

You are advised to consider carefully their own personal safety. In particular, female students are advised to be aware that cultural differences can be misinterpreted in a foreign country, and should also be careful about being out alone at night. A personal alarm may be a good idea. This advice is not limited to females - all students should be aware of the occurrence of violence and theft. Incidents such as these occur in all countries and cities. If you are aware of your environment you are less likely to encounter difficulties. Stay in groups and speak to your peers and staff at your host institution regarding areas which are 'best avoided' in your city/town.

Practical Matters

General Communication

Please note that DCU communicates with students via their DCU email address only.

Year Abroad address

Update your term address and contact telephone number on your student portal page. Any subsequent changes of address must also be notified immediately. DCU may have to communicate with you regarding your project, visits by academic staff during the year, or your grant or fee status.

Next of Kin

Please ensure that your next-of-kin is up to date on your Portal Page, in case we need to contact a family member in an emergency.

Passport

It is advisable to have a passport for travel to all countries. This is both a travel document, a universally accepted confirmation of identity, and verification of your nationality which may be required to access government services in your host country. It is good practice to ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6-months after your expected return date.

Details on passport applications and on-line renewal is available at <https://www.dfa.ie/passports-citizenship/>

Visas

If you are an EU citizen you will not require a visa if you travel to another EU member state. However, you may be required to register as a resident with the local authorities. Please enquire upon arrival in your host country.

EU students going to countries that are not member states of the EU must obtain a visa prior to departure. Please ensure that you commence your visa application process in good time.

N.B: Some countries require evidence that you can fund your study abroad period from your own means when applying for a visa. Students planning to study for the full academic year may be requested to submit bank statements (or similar documentation) which show evidence of the following amounts:

US – ‘Funds sufficient to cover all expenses including tuition while in the United States’ approx \$20,000 for the full academic year, \$10,000 for a semester

Japan – ‘proof of financial viability’ approx €10,000 for the full academic year

China – approx. €8,000/ 60,000 CNY for the full academic year

Switzerland - deems financial means to be adequate if they exceed the Swiss welfare entitlement threshold. The determination of adequate financial means would then depend on the length of stay.

If you are a non-EU citizen it is likely you will need a visa to study at the European host university. Please consult the host country’s embassy website for details on visa application. Visa applications require documentation, including an offer letter from the host university (which you will be sent as

part of your offer pack) and a confirmation letter of attendance from DCU (this can be provided by the International Office in DCU).

Bureaucracy, Integration, Communication, etc

Overseas authorities may follow different or more strict bureaucratic procedures which can be frustrating because they are different. Go prepared with photocopies of all necessary documents (useful documents include your Passport, birth certificate, student ID, USIT card and driving licence) and a generous supply of passport-sized photographs.

Should you encounter any administrative problems while abroad, please contact the International Office at DCU or Student Support & Development directly student.support@dcu.ie. Do not delay as the sooner we are aware of a problem the better our chances of dealing with it effectively.

It is important to integrate as quickly as possible into university life at your host university. If you stay with other Irish students your language skills will not improve and you will not reap the true benefits of immersion in another culture. Join as many clubs and societies as you can and make as many new friends as possible.

You are a registered DCU student for the duration of your period abroad and as a representative of DCU you are obliged to abide by the University's Code of Conduct. You are also a registered student of your host institution and bound also by its rules and regulations.

Your experience abroad should be beneficial to you personally, professionally, and academically. If you encounter anything which prevents you from completing your work, if you feel you are being isolated as an international student, or if you feel you are not benefiting from your period abroad, PLEASE contact your academic exchange coordinators at the host institution and at DCU.

Please call home on arrival - someone may be worried until they receive confirmation that you have arrived safely. Be sure also to keep in touch throughout the year. To telephone Ireland while abroad:

- 1) dial the international dialling code (either the '+' sign on your mobile phone, or 00)
- 2) then dial 353 to indicate you are calling Ireland
- 3) dial your local area code but drop the 0 (so '01' for Dublin becomes '1', for example, or '085' becomes '85')
- 4) dial the local number

So for example, to call DCU on (01) 700 5000, dial

+ 353 1 700 5000 or 00 353 1 700 5000

Or to call an Irish mobile phone from your Irish phone abroad, eg 085 111 1111

+353 85 111 111