Health and Safety Information for
Exchange Students
Introduction

There is a growing awareness of health, safety and security issues amongst students involved in exchange programmes abroad and, often more so, amongst their family and friends. This guide is intended to provide a guide to the key issues of which students should be aware, and advice on how to deal with these issues should they arise.

It is the intention of the University of Stirling to help its students on exchange live and study in as safe and secure an environment as is possible and to provide advisory material on as wide a range of issues as we can.

You are expected to give careful consideration to these issues and to behave and act in a responsible and safety-conscious manner at all times whilst representing the University abroad. Our exchange students remain subject to University of Stirling rules and regulations at all times whilst on an exchange programme, including the requirements with regards to health and safety and to discipline.

It is always a problem with this kind of guide that it may make for unsettling reading, making the world appear threatening and increasing nervousness about studying abroad. Please understand that this is not the intention here. The aim of this guide is to help you think seriously about your health and welfare away from Stirling and to remain safe, healthy and secure at all times. At the end of the day, it is important to us that your experience whilst on exchange is a positive one, and the hope is that this booklet will offer advice and guidance to ensure that.

Our office remains in contact with our colleagues at our exchange partner universities on a regular basis and, where an issue arises which may affect our students abroad, we will take steps to contact you at the earliest opportunity. You and your family should all be aware that all of our partner universities are internationally reputable, with well-developed safety policies and professional support services.

Although the University of Stirling and your host university will keep you briefed about the issues that may affect you, and may issue guidance from time to time, you have a clear responsibility to monitor information on health and safety matters abroad. You are the only person who can make the final decision about whether to go on exchange or, if a serious issue arises abroad, to return.

The University may, however, in an emergency situation, choose to recall some or all of its students from an exchange programme which is no longer able to provide a safe or healthy environment.

Ultimately, common sense is key!

International Exchanges Manager
May 2016
### Study Abroad Travel Checklist

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Ensure that you carry all pages of any visa documentation with your passport. **Do not pack in your case!**

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Carry emergency card with you at all times, take all policy documents with you. Remember your EHIC card if you’re travelling to Europe.

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**Phone number of office at exchange university.** Try not to arrive on campus at night. If unavoidable, ensure that you get advice on how to access your accommodation.

**Student support at Stirling**

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- Take any medication you need with you, with a doctor letter if appropriate.
- Leave details with family/friends of where you are travelling to. When you are abroad let your friends know if you are leaving campus to travel and where you are going.
- If you are looking for off-campus housing:
  - Find out if the area is safe
  - Check it out during the day and ensure that the area is well-lit and near public transport links.
  - Meet all new flatmates before you sign the agreements.
- Find the number of a **reliable local taxi company** near the university (check with the exchange university).
- Don’t leave baggage unattended and keep valuables on your person. Be aware of pickpockets who operate in crowded areas.
- Be aware that laws regarding alcohol vary from each country or US state.
- Be friendly when out but stay alert to strangers.
  - Plan your way home beforehand. **When is the last train/bus?**
- Don’t hitchhike!
Resources

You are advised to prepare yourself for your exchange year or semester by researching health and safety issues in your host country.

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is the primary source of information which you should consult and you should refer to this site whenever there is a new emergency issue arising such as a health alert. The FCO website provides specific country guidance as well as general alerts for travellers. We strongly recommend that students read the section related to their destination prior to departure:

Foreign Travel Advice
Foreign Travel Guide
Foreign Travel Checklist

You can also connect with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice and follow updates on Facebook.

Not all exchange students, of course, are UK nationals. If this is the case then we advise you to check the website of your own country’s equivalent of the FCO as well as the UK site.

Other resources

It is well worth finding out about safety and security, crime, medical facilities, traffic safety and disaster preparedness in your host country and in each country you intend to visit along the way. Campus-specific information to this effect will be provided to you by your host university either in advance of your arrival or as part of your orientation once you arrive. If you have any concerns, you should contact the Study Abroad or ERASMUS+ Office at your host university. Contact details for all of these are provided in the What You Need To Know guide for your programme. www.stir.ac.uk/exchange/essential-documents/
Commercial guides

Guidebooks provide excellent information, especially for the student traveller. The guides below are very helpful to refer to and are available both online and in book format:

Third Year Abroad [http://www.thirdyearabroad.com](http://www.thirdyearabroad.com)

Lonely Planet [http://www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)

Let's Go [http://www.letsgo.com](http://www.letsgo.com) (these are written mainly by students and are therefore very student-centric but not necessarily comprehensive)

Rough Guides [http://www.roughguides.com](http://www.roughguides.com)
General Safety Notes

Although our students tend to study abroad in countries which are thought of as being ‘safe’, this is not a reason for you to assume that nothing can go wrong. Take our students who were out in Japan during the earthquake in 2011, for example, or our students who were studying in France during the Paris attacks in 2015. You should not be complacent and assume that you know everything that you need to know about your host country and its potential challenges to you in terms of health, welfare and safety.

This is why it is a compulsory part of the programme that you take part in our pre-departure orientation meetings and, even more importantly, the arrival orientation / induction programme provided by your host university. **You must go to all orientation meetings!**

We ask all students to think carefully about what it means to be safe. Amongst the issues that you need to be aware of are appropriate immunisations and vaccinations (US and Japanese universities in particular have a number of such requirements), the safety of water whilst travelling, alcohol-related injuries and assaults, car accidents on both public or private transport, local infectious diseases, safe sex, drug issues and even common occurrences such as insect bites.

In the countries of our partner universities, just as here in the UK, just about the biggest cause of death and serious injury is from traffic accidents rather than those dangers that make their way into the media headlines. So it is essential that you remain aware of your surroundings, your actions, and the actions of others.

Some of the exchanges are located in major international cities such as Paris, Tokyo, Toronto and Sydney. At these locations, students can expect to encounter, albeit marginally, the problems associated with dense urban living, including increased crime, pollution, and the stresses of higher population density and its associated lack of privacy. Students used to Stirling, or who come from smaller towns and cities, should anticipate that there will be more tensions and some adjustments to be made to fit into their new environment. It is almost always true that cities like these, glamorous though they appear, present a different face when someone has to live in them for a few months rather than...
just a few days. Most Stirling exchanges take place in smaller communities than these big cities, mainly in medium-sized towns and small cities, and the pace of life in these is more akin to Stirling although it will still likely take a bit of time to settle in.

Flexibility and preparation will be very important in overcoming these potential problems. You will no doubt find a sense of perspective – you are only there for a short time in the great scheme of things – and a sense of humour invaluable while you make your adjustments.

Although very few past exchange students have been victims of crime, after your arrival you will be on unfamiliar ground both physically and culturally. Images familiar through TV and film should not be regarded as accurate or as a guide to the host country and its way of doing things.

Once on site, you will have orientation sessions and you should take it upon yourself to learn which areas of the city or locality are safe, to become familiar with the best means of transportation and well-travelled routes, and to achieve total independence regarding money, access to transport, housing etc. The Study Abroad or ERASMUS+ Office at your host university will be a great resource to you in these early stages as you are figuring things out. It’s part of their job, so don’t ever be afraid or embarrassed about asking!

Insurance

All students taking part in a study abroad programme must have fully comprehensive travel insurance cover.

Essential insurance requirements must include the following:

- Emergency Medical Expenses including the cost of medical treatment and repatriation costs (ie returning you to your country of residence or the nearest available medical facility in the event of injury/illness and bringing back the remains in the event of death).

- Personal injury – lump sum payments in the event of death or permanent disabling injuries.

- Personal liability

- Personal belongings / Money / Bank Card and Passport replacement

- Cancellation / Delay / Missed Departure

- Dental injury

- Legal Expenses
You are responsible for your own personal property. You can safeguard your possessions from damage or theft by locking your rooms and securing money, travellers’ cheques, jewellery, passport and other possessions. As thefts can happen most readily whilst travelling, it is doubly important to lock cases, keep bags in sight and to keep passports, money, credit cards (and so on) in a very secure place.

✓ The University of Stirling does not insure your possessions or provide health insurance coverage for you. It is therefore imperative that you take out a fully comprehensive insurance policy which provides travel, health and possessions insurance for the duration of your time abroad.

Such policies will cover you for any accident, emergency or health problem from the moment you leave home until the time you return. Although some of our exchange partner universities require that you purchase their own health insurance coverage, not all of these are fully comprehensive (i.e. dental care will likely be excluded), nor do they cover your possessions, nor do they come into effect until you actually register. For this reason, it is important not just to rely on these policies, but to take out the fully comprehensive policy suggested, even though this is an additional expense. What you will be buying is peace of mind.

Companies such as Endsleigh Insurance, which specialises in student insurance, are a good option for this kind of policy. Other popular options include Trailfinders and STA Travel, or COE connections which also have good policies for study abroad travel. The usual high street and well known insurance companies tend not to have particularly good policies and these may be more expensive. It is also worth checking if your parent(s), if appropriate, have an insurance policy which might cover you or be extended to cover your needs for the period when away.

ERASMUS+ students – it is not enough to rely on your EHIC card (although you need to get one of these!). An EHIC card is not an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs, such as being flown back to the UK in the case of a serious medical issue. You must have a valid comprehensive insurance policy in addition to the EHIC card.

Useful advice to remember

This may seem obvious, but it’s still worth emphasizing:

- Avoid carrying valuables, wearing obviously expensive clothing or jewellery, and going to questionable parts of the town or city, especially at night or when alone.
- Be cautious about inviting casual acquaintances home or accompanying someone you don’t know well, especially if you may be suffering from slightly impaired judgement.

- In the dark, especially late at night, it’s best to avoid walking in less well known areas, take a taxi instead. Even in areas you know, at night it is still best to have company with you when walking around.

- At airports and rail and bus stations, be extremely careful about where you put your bags and cases; keep valuables out of sight and in inaccessible places (e.g. zipped into a coat pocket).

- When waiting in line at airport security checks etc., do not place possessions on the belts until it is your turn and keep an eye on them as they go through the checkpoints so that only you pick them up again.

- Beware of scams, especially those where you are offered a generous payment but only after you put forth some money in ‘good faith’.

- If staying in a hotel, do not leave your door open at any time.

Drugs and alcohol

Please remember that in the US, only those over the age of 21 may buy or consume alcohol. Expect to be asked for ID, even if you are over 21 and feel that you look it 😊! Underage drinking is heavily penalised. In some states, it is not uncommon for plainclothes police officers to visit bottle shops where it is illegal for under-21s to even be in the store. In other countries, those under 21 may buy and consume alcohol but laws can vary from state to state and from country to country so be sure to find out.

As at home, you should never feel pressured into drinking or drinking more than you wish to (or engaging in any other potentially dangerous, illegal, or unhealthy personal behaviour against your will).

Using or buying illegal drugs is an activity which may result in prosecution or worse. Illegal drugs will, at one level or another, be sold by the least scrupulous members of society. Their interests will rarely coincide with yours. If you are found to be in possession of illegal drugs abroad, you will be prosecuted. You will not be assisted either by your host university or by the University of Stirling. The British Consulate, or the consulate of your home country if you are not British, will not be encouraging, or leap to your aid. If caught, you may well be expelled from the country at the very least, as well as heavily fined or even imprisoned.
Road safety

You may want to rent a car when overseas, and it is important to learn the traffic laws of your host country before going abroad if you plan on driving. For example, Canadians and Americans drive on the right hand side of the road. (good tip!) Check out the driver’s license requirements for the host country – some recommend that you should apply for an International Driving Permit (available from the AA [http://www.theaa.com/getaway/idp/]); others will simply require that you have your full UK license.

Weather conditions are more extreme and driving distances often far greater in countries like Australia, Canada and the US. Find out the prevailing weather conditions before embarking on a long journey, e.g. in the mountains and in isolated areas where the increased likelihood of snowfall, or in dry desert areas where you may need extra water and petrol stations may be few and far between.

A few other things to keep in mind:

- Speed limits and drink driving limits in your host country may be lower than in the UK.
- When renting a car, check that the insurance cover with the rental company covers the occupants of your vehicle and any third party claims including personal injury.
- If you are under 25, it will be more expensive to rent a car.

Natural disasters

A few areas where you may be while on exchange are prone to major natural forces which can create emergency situations. In California, the danger of earthquakes is well known, especially in the Los Angeles and San Francisco areas, but they can also occur elsewhere. In North Carolina, September sees the tail end of hurricane season and a major hurricane can, and has, gone through the Carolinas at this time. In the US Midwest, weather can be extreme in terms of temperature (there can be a swing of 100 degrees Fahrenheit between the height of summer and the coldest winters), there can be tornadoes and storms, or periods of prolonged rainfall can create major problems. In Canada, winters inland can be extreme, though less so at the Coast. In Alaska, the coldest days of winter may see temperatures of 40 degrees Fahrenheit below zero, with very little daylight. In Australia, droughts can cause major forest fires, which have in recent years threatened outlying parts of cities such as Sydney. In Hong Kong, there is a chance of tropical storm hits between April and October. In Japan, the
typhoon season reaches its peak in September, and the northern part of the country sees very low temperatures in the winter months. Tokyo in particular experiences frequent earth tremors.

Despite this catalogue of disasters, there is no reason to become overstressed by this. The host universities are well aware of what problems might arise and have excellent emergency procedures in place. You will learn of these in the pre-arrival information sent to you, or during the orientation programmes once you arrive. Listen to what is said and read what is provided.

Should a weather emergency occur, you should keep in touch with us in the study abroad office so that we know what is happening, especially if you are evacuated from your usual residence. If communications are temporarily cut by a storm or any other emergency, please re-establish contact with us at the earliest possible opportunity. And, of course, at all times keep in touch with your family and reassure them that you are safe. If you don’t call them, they’ll call us!

In the event of an earthquake or other emergency, it is important to remain calm in order to deal effectively with what the situation presents. We would also expect you to take precautions beforehand – forewarned is forearmed!

No tornado selfies!

In any emergency

You should know that if we are made aware of any emergency affecting our students abroad, our first priority will be to ensure your safety. No matter what time of day or day of the week, we will be straight into the office to try and get in touch with you. For this reason, you must **must must** provide us with your current contact details. Although we use your University of Stirling email address as the main contact, we ask all students to provide a secondary email address which we will only use when trying to contact you in case of an emergency.

It is impossible to assess or anticipate every potential disaster – be it natural or manmade. But here are some rules that you should follow in case of any emergency situation during your semester abroad:
1. Go to your on-site orientation. I know that this has been mentioned more than once. But this is key to knowing who you need to contact or check in with or go to for help should anything occur at your host university.

2. Contact is key, as I’ve said above. You must keep us up to date with your contact details. You can update your semester address on the Portal once you know where this is going to be. If you purchase an in-country mobile phone then please also update the Portal with this number. We must be able to get in contact with you in case of an emergency.

3. Let us know that you’re safe. All it takes is a quick email to erasmus@stir.ac.uk or studentexchange@stir.ac.uk. Self, family, Stirling 😊

Please also remember that we will monitor and assess situations abroad should they arise and may choose to recall students to Stirling if we are concerned about their safety.
Health

It is very important that all students who go on exchange are healthy enough to do so. It is therefore recommended that students check in with their own doctor prior to going on exchange so that any potential problems can be identified and precautions taken. The University of Stirling does not require disclosure of medical information by students, but cannot take any responsibility should a medical emergency occur whilst abroad which could have been predicted or prevented.

Students with additional support needs

Students with any specific medical condition, special needs or disabilities are very welcome to take part in the exchange programme but are asked to discuss their special needs with the study abroad staff so that support for them can be arranged both prior to and after departure. All of our partner institutions have support services for students with disabilities or special needs, but these can only be accessed when a student discloses his or her condition and gives authority for this information to be passed to the necessary support staff.

It is often sadly the case that students with mental health support needs do not disclose these during the application and pre-departure stages of their exchange. I can completely understand the reluctance to share this information, but would say that making us aware of your particular needs can be very helpful in case you need additional support whilst abroad. Here are our recommendations, based on experience:

- Engage with the University of Stirling student support service before your study abroad period. Sessions with university counsellors can be continued using scheduled Skype or telephone sessions during the semester abroad. It is easier to establish this important connection whilst you’re still on campus.

- Do disclose your needs to the exchange partner university. They are best placed to advise you about the support networks in place for students on their campus.
Inoculations / vaccinations

Some countries have specific immunisation and other requirements that must be fulfilled before departure. Students should inform their doctor of any plans to travel to other countries in addition to the host country so that all necessary immunisations can be received prior to departure.

**NOTE:** Some vaccinations require a period of six months for the completion of the course, or for full protection. It is therefore important to determine the requirements of the host university and then consult your doctor at an early stage.

👍 All of the above are recommendations only and students should consult their own doctor for advice.

Prescriptions, vitamins and other medicines

Students who regularly take any medication should take an adequate supply of it to last for the entire period abroad (providing it is not perishable). Students should label all medications and keep them in containers which clearly show the prescription details on the label - this facilitates Customs clearance in and out of countries. Students who need to obtain their regular medication while abroad should take with them a letter from their own GP which states the nature of the condition to be treated and the recommended medication. This should be taken to the host university’s medical service when registering for or receiving treatment.

While many prescription medicines can be purchased over the counter and at less cost overseas, students should be cautious. It cannot be guaranteed that the same pharmaceutical standards have been used in preparation. Poor storage in high heat and / or humidity, for example, could negatively impact the effectiveness of some drugs.

Students who wear glasses or contact lenses should take spare pairs and a copy of their prescription.

Students who must regularly inject insulin, or allergy or other medication, should pack a good supply of syringes; not all sizes are readily available abroad. It is well worth contacting the medical service at the host university if possible to enquire about obtaining supplies whilst overseas.
All students are advised to take a personal first aid kit and include an antiseptic cream for minor cuts and abrasions, sticking plasters of all sizes, basic painkillers, an anti-diarrhoeal, wet wipes and rehydration sachets.

Other issues that you will want to consider include any special dietary requirements, food and other supplements and the availability of certain health care products. In the US, Canada and Australia, most of the types of products available in the UK and Europe are also available, though brands may vary. However, when travelling, these may be harder to source.

Information about university health services, or alternative medical care, will be provided in pre-arrival information or soon after arrival. Students should make sure they know how the medical system works at their host campus and in their host country.

Health problems/precautions

When travelling, we advise you to keep current on possible health problems in each new country. You should refer to the websites mentioned previously in this booklet.

Gastrointestinal disorders, sore throats and colds – These occur more frequently in a foreign country than at home, particularly soon after arrival. This is a result of the change in climate, environment, diet, water and personal habits. You may wish to obtain professional advice before you leave and take along familiar medications.

Contraceptives – Contraception should be no more difficult to obtain in exchange partner countries than in the UK. If you expect to need some form of contraception while abroad you should take supplies with you. If you are currently on the Pill, bear in mind that this is not supplied free of charge whilst abroad so you should speak to your doctor about getting sufficient supplies to last you while you are overseas. After arrival, you may also want to check with the local medical service on your host campus about further support.

Sexually-Transmitted Diseases (STDs) – Many countries overseas have been unsuccessful at adequately controlling a gamut of sexually-transmitted diseases, including syphilis, gonorrhoea and herpes. Lack of adequate precaution in situations where a student risks contracting a sexually-transmitted disease could lead to serious complications. If you suspect that you have an STD then you should see a doctor immediately.
Again – use common sense! If you really must get that piercing or tattoo, make sure that you research the conditions of the establishment before handing over your cash!

**NOTE** – If you have concerns, be sure to discuss travel plans with your doctor, and inform him or her about any physical or psychological condition that could put you at risk. This is of particular importance if you have any pre-existing conditions. Pre-existing conditions should also be disclosed and discussed with your health insurance provider as this may affect your coverage.

As always, the safety of students is the highest priority. Your host institution will, as will the study abroad office here at Stirling, provide advice, guidelines and precautions directly to students in any affected areas. However, you still have the ultimate responsibility to educate yourself about health issues that might affect you as an exchange student, and to take the appropriate precautions.
Cultural Expectations

Many of the problems encountered by students on exchange arise from cultural differences. Although we may expect the English-speaking countries of the US, Canada and Australia to share many of the same values, you need to realise that these countries are actually incredibly diverse and some groups may have more conservative attitudes (for example) than may be expected. Cultural differences, even in these countries, can extend to body language, eye contact, a familiar way with strangers, a hairstyle, posture, clothing, the distance between people talking – all can have profoundly different interpretations from culture to culture.

As exchange students, you may encounter these issues with other students from other countries than perhaps with locals, but it is important to be aware of how you are perceived and how you perceive others at all times. Students are their own best resource in preparing to face a range of possible situations, from sexual comments or harassment, to the rare extreme of a physically threatening situation.

❖ Remember, you are likely to encounter differences in sense of humour when abroad and it is worth noting that you should NOT make flippant remarks about bombs or terrorism, especially when passing through airports.

Other precautions

Precautions also apply socially. Most likely, you will find the people you meet to be interesting and interested in you. However, you cannot make judgements regarding your safety based on another person’s appearance or financial status. The following tips may help you when faced with an uncomfortable situation:

1. Turn the conversation around by asking some questions. Be in control by initiating rather than reacting. Bring up other subjects, such as local politics (where appropriate) or history.

2. If this fails to deter, then tell the other person very directly to stop whatever is disturbing you. Be specific. A calm and serious tone is usually the best.
Body language should match what is said. A giggle, smile or apology will undermine the message.

3. Develop the skills necessary for assertive behaviour.

4. Firmly say no to any unwanted invitation, and give address information only to people who can be trusted. Be cautious until familiar with local customs and values. Respecting the local social rules will facilitate relationships with host nationals.

5. Don’t go to a secluded area (or even be alone in a room) with someone who you do not know well.

6. In an extreme situation, appeal for help from others or local authorities.

Only you can determine how best to handle a situation. However, preparation before you leave will create more options for dealing with new situations.

Encountering intolerance abroad

Exchange students going from one country to another may have concerns about how they will be viewed and received in other societies. The range of concerns encompasses ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, and physical disabilities as well as reactions abroad to UK government policies and widely-held stereotypes about Britain or the other countries from which Stirling’s exchange students are drawn.

In general, residents of our partner countries are very welcoming although their knowledge of the UK may not always be as good as they think! Stereotypes taken from TV and film and their knowledge of Scotland can sometimes seem to stop at Braveheart and the Loch Ness Monster. Whisky, tartan and haggis will always get a mention. Their interest, however, is almost always well-meaning and friendly. (sidebar: you might want to examine your own pre-conceptions before taking offence...)

However, bear in mind that the host universities, like Stirling itself, will have students from all over the world studying there. Also remember that most of the host regions / cities / states etc will have very much more diverse population than either Stirling or even Scotland so you, as well as they, may have stereotypes and preconceived ideas to overcome.

Other societies do not necessarily share prevailing British or European approaches to the issues mentioned above or, indeed, to your own values or opinions. Encounters with prejudice in particular can be distressing for students who feel very strongly that their views are correct and that the prevailing views in the host society are wrong.

As exchange students, you are guests in the universities and residence halls of other countries. It is crucial that you give serious thought before you go on exchange to
the question of how to respond to attitudes and behaviours that you maybe consider unacceptable or objectionable.

You should try and not take these things personally, or to feel hurt or angry. Be analytical about it wherever possible unless your own rights are being affected adversely. You should seek some intellectual understanding of the behaviour, and merely observe it, even though you may strongly disagree. Please note, however, that anti-discrimination laws are at least as strong for the most part in our partner countries as they are in the UK and the host universities will also have strong equal rights and anti-discrimination policies. Do not break these rules yourself. You should not expect others to do so either. Should they do so, familiarise yourself with the host institution’s policies and seek advice from the relevant staff.

Another strategy is simply to remove yourself from the course of the offensive behaviour and to discuss it later with other members of the host society whom you trust.

Many actions or words that you may interpret in a negative light may be more understandable in a different host country context. Societies are, after all, highly complex, interactive, and continuously evolving systems that elude simplistic explanations. Indeed, it is precisely when simplistic, stereotypic explanations hold sway in a society (for example “all our problems are the fault of _____”) that the greatest intolerance occurs.

Like violent crime in the US, extremist views and resulting actions are disturbing developments that the world community is watching very closely. Nevertheless, students should not be deterred from going about their lives and their business in a normal fashion. Facing such matters thoughtfully, with personal resolve and with compassion for any victim of prejudice is a far more constructive response than fear, anger and withdrawal.

You should take it upon yourself to read about social and political issues abroad, and you should think about and discuss these issues before departure. You should resolve to practice personal tolerance, and to be mature and realistic in your expectations. However, it is appropriate for you to report serious or repeated instances of verbal or physical aggression to your host institution’s Study Abroad or ERASMUS+ Office (or other appropriate representative) as soon as they occur.
Sexual harassment

Knowing how to identify sexual harassment whether it is between two students, between a professor or teaching assistant and a student, a dorm authority and a student, etc – and where to report an incident can help to maintain a safe, harassment-free environment.

Sexual harassment may include:

1. Derogatory remarks made about one’s clothing, body, or sexual activities based on gender or sexuality.

2. Disparaging remarks, jokes and teasing based on gender or sexuality.

3. Visual materials or pictures which unnecessarily sexualise the environment, or which students find offensive.

4. Subtle pressure for sexual activity and / or dates.

5. Unnecessary and unwanted touching, patting or pinching.

6. Demanding sexual favours accompanied by overt threats concerning such things as one’s job, grades, letters of recommendation, etc.

7. Verbal harassment or abuse.

8. Email and / or any electronic communications which include any of the above.


A fair rule of thumb is to assume that sexual harassment consists of any unwanted sexual advances and / or behaviour of a verbal, visual, written, or physical nature in living arrangements and educational or work environment.

You should trust your judgement and intuition. If a situation makes you uncomfortable, it needs to be addressed. You should seek help from the Study Abroad or ERASMUS+ Office at your host university, or from a counsellor who can advise and act on your behalf to remedy a problem.

DISCLAIMER: Every effort has been taken to ensure that the information and guidance provided in this booklet is both accurate and up to date. However, the University of Stirling disclaims responsibility for any errors, inaccuracies and omissions or changes in information which may occur from time to time.

May 2016