# Study Abroad Programme & Erasmus+ Early Returners – Guidelines for Departments

## Introduction

The majority of students who participate in either the Study Abroad Programme or Erasmus+ have a rewarding time abroad and stay in the host country up to the planned end date. However, a small number of students occasionally have to return to Sheffield - for a variety of reasons - earlier than intended. This is only possible in exceptional circumstances and should not be regarded as a generally available option.

For students to be able to make an informed decision before they commit to leaving the host country, they need to be made aware of the potential impact. Below are some points for academic departments to consider when advising students who wish to return early from their period abroad.

### Academic Implications

- Depending on timing, the student may/may not be able to continue his/her studies in Sheffield for the remainder of the academic year
- The department will need to assess whether the student has gained enough credits during the time abroad to be able to progress to the next academic session
- The department will need to decide how the grades already received (if any) will be converted and counted within the current academic session
- It may be necessary to offer an alternative assessment to make up for a shortfall in credits
- A Leave of Absence may be necessary if none of the above can be arranged
- The department will need to decide if the early return would change the student’s degree title
- The department will need to decide on what it considers to be a suitable length of time spent abroad to satisfy the period abroad requirements

### Financial Implications

- If continuing his/her studies in Sheffield within the same academic year, the student’s tuition fee charges to Sheffield will normally be increased
- If the student has received an Erasmus+ grant or Study Abroad scholarship for the time spent abroad, s/he is likely to be asked to repay either some or all of the funds, as determined by Global Opportunities & Exchanges
- The student may have entered into contractual agreements in the host country that cannot be broken without charge (e.g. a tenancy agreement)
- The student may have to find money quickly to secure accommodation in Sheffield (e.g. a housing deposit)
- The student may incur increased travel costs (e.g. last-minute flight bookings/flight changes)
- Students may apply to the Financial Support Team ([financialhelp@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:financialhelp@sheffield.ac.uk)) for emergency/hardship funds on the grounds of unforeseen circumstances but this is assessed on a case-by-case basis and cannot be guaranteed
- The student may look to the department or the period abroad scheme to compensate him/her for lost funds as a result of the early return – it is important not to suggest that this is a possibility, especially where students are leaving the host country by choice

### Visa Implications

- Student Services must inform UKVI if any students holding a UK Tier 4 visa have returned from their period abroad prior to the expected end date – this is due to attendance monitoring obligations
- Please inform the Taught Programmes Office of the early return via the Period Abroad Google Sheet (contact Jackie Parkin if you do not have access) so that they can update the student’s University record and report to colleagues within the Immigration Team – this is also important in case of potential emergency situations in the host country (e.g. natural disasters, terror attacks)
- Please also email Global Opportunities & Exchanges to inform us of the student’s circumstances and revised end date