

# Student Learning Abroad Procedures

## Section 1 - Purpose and Context

(1) These procedures define the process for the management and approval of student participation in student learning abroad programs. These procedures apply to all student learning abroad programs. They do not apply to student placements within Australia undertaken as a requirement of a subject or program of study. Some elements may be used for placements undertaken overseas as a requirement of a subject or program of study. Refer to the [Placement Policy](#) for more information on student placements.

(2) University staff, students and International Partner Provider (IPP) staff must manage student learning abroad programs in accordance with these procedures.

(3) These Procedures must be read in conjunction with the [Student Learning Abroad Policy](#), [Credit for Prior Learning Policy](#), [Critical Incident Guidelines](#), [Graduation Policy](#), [Placement Policy](#), [Progression Policy](#), [Student Code of Conduct](#), [Student Misconduct Rule](#) and the [Travel Policy](#).

## Section 2 - Definitions

(4) For the purposes of these procedures, definitions that apply can be found in the Policy DDS Glossary in addition to the following:

- a. Academic Unit means a School, Research Institute (Institute) or unit such as The Academy, Scholarships and Partnerships at Western Sydney University.
- b. Credit for Prior Learning (Credit) means the same as is defined in the [Credit for Prior Learning Policy](#). Also known as Academic Credit or Recognition of Prior Learning.
- c. Exchange Learning Abroad means overseas study undertaken for one or two terms, completed under an exchange agreement between the University and another educational institution.
- d. Go Global Portal means the University's web-based application platform, which records student learning abroad programs and travel information.
- e. Host Institution means the overseas institution where a student is accepted for a program of study.
- f. International Partner Provider means an organisation that offers global study programs, including colleges, universities, not for profit organisations, for-profit businesses and consortia.
- g. Non-Exchange Learning Abroad means overseas study or other academic activity undertaken with an IPP that is not subject to an exchange agreement with the University.
- h. OS-HELP Loan means an Australian Government loan scheme to assist students enrolled in a Commonwealth supported place who wish to undertake an overseas experience that counts towards their degree.
- i. Research Learning Abroad means overseas research fieldwork undertaken for a current Higher Degree Research (HDR) project, including under arrangements with an IPP.
- j. Short-Term Exchange Learning Abroad means exchange learning abroad undertaken in breaks between teaching terms or over a period of less than one term completed under an exchange agreement between the University and another educational institution.

# Section 3 - Eligibility, Application and Selection

## Part A - Eligibility

### General

(5) Domestic students are eligible to undertake learning abroad of any type to a country of which they are, or have been, a citizen or permanent resident, provided that this is permitted by the host institution or organisation.

(6) A student enrolled at the University as an international student is eligible to undertake global mobility of any type including to a country of which they are, or have been, a citizen or permanent resident, provided that this is permitted by the host institution or organisation, and the student's visa conditions continue to be met with the following:

- a. the study or training is an approved assessable part of the student's full-time program in Australia
- b. the study or training is no more than 12 months in duration
- c. family members who accompanied the student on their visa to Australia travel with the student or return to their country of origin if the exchange is for more than six months.

### Exchange Learning Abroad

(7) To be eligible to undertake exchange learning abroad, a student must:

- a. maintain full-time enrolment:
  - i. at the University, as specified by the teaching terms for their program and
  - ii. at the host institution, or an equivalent load and
- b. be enrolled in an award program during the period of the exchange learning abroad and
- c. at the time of application:
  - i. have a minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.5 or above, or as otherwise approved by Western Sydney International
  - ii. have completed, or be on track to completing, a minimum of 30 credit points of study prior to departure, excluding credit transferred from an external institution
  - iii. be meeting progression requirements of the relevant program
  - iv. not be the subject of any current disciplinary proceedings under the Western Sydney University [Student Misconduct Rule](#) and
- d. meet any further requirements imposed by the host institution, including but not limited to requirements on: grades, language ability, subject pre-requisites, program progression, field of study, portfolios of work or auditions.

(8) Students enrolled on a part-time basis may be eligible, provided they meet the standard criteria and can maintain full-time enrolment while on exchange, to offset a student enrolling full-time at Western Sydney University from the host institution.

(9) Where the number of eligible applicants for exchange at a partner institution exceeds the number of places available, students will be selected based on further selection criteria, comprising:

- a. academic merit, based on cumulative program GPA
- b. whether the student has sufficient time left in their program to defer the exchange
- c. whether the student has previously accessed an exchange place
- d. other criteria of relevance to particular host institutions (such as language proficiency, where the language of

instruction is not English).

(10) HDR students undertaking exchange learning abroad must maintain the agreed load of their program of research and attend the University agreed consultation with their Supervisor.

(11) Unless approved by the relevant Deputy Dean (following advice from Western Sydney International and the Office of Student and University Planning), a student undertaking exchange learning abroad is not permitted to register in University subjects in excess of the credit points necessary to complete their award program.

## **Non-Exchange Learning Abroad**

(12) To be eligible to undertake non-exchange learning abroad for which Credit may be granted, a student must:

- a. at the time of application:
  - i. have completed, or be on track to completing, a minimum of 30 credit points of study prior to departure, excluding Credit transferred from an external institution
  - ii. be meeting progression requirements of the relevant program
  - iii. not be the subject of any current disciplinary proceedings under the [Student Misconduct Rule](#)
- b. meet any further requirements imposed by the host institution, including but not limited to requirements on grades, language ability, subject pre-requisites, program progression, field of study, portfolios of work, or auditions.

(13) A student applying to undertake non-exchange learning abroad without the award of Credit, must meet the requirements of the host institution or organisation, including but not limited to requirements on grades, language ability, subject pre-requisites, program progression, field of study, portfolios of work, or auditions.

## **Research Learning Abroad**

(14) To be eligible to undertake research learning abroad for which credit may be granted, a student must:

- a. except in exceptional circumstances as approved by the supervisor and Associate Dean or equivalent, be enrolled as an HDR student and, have completed their confirmation of candidature
- b. in the case of fieldwork, have relevant ethics approval, standard operating protocols and field work risk assessment, and have met appropriate ethics training
- c. be meeting candidature milestones
- d. have signed permission from their supervisory panel and Associate Dean, Research and HDR or equivalent before leaving.

## **Part B - Application**

### **Exchange Learning Abroad**

(15) To participate in exchange learning abroad a student must:

- a. lodge an exchange program application through the Western Sydney International Go Global Portal by the due date and be nominated for a host institution
- b. complete an Overseas Academic Approval Form to confirm academic approval for the intended overseas program of study and submit to the Admissions and Enrolments teams within the Office of Student and University Planning
- c. submit an application to the nominated exchange partner university by the partner university's deadline.

(16) Western Sydney International must:

- a. assess the student's eligibility according to the selection criteria
- b. if there are more than one applicant, rank the students based on the selection criteria
- c. assess any visa implications for International student applicants.

(17) The Academic Program Advisor (APA), Director, Academic Program (DAP) or Associate Dean, Research and HDR or equivalent must:

- a. assess the application for overseas academic credit, checking that the student will be able to continue to meet applicable degree progression requirements, if they undertake the proposed learning abroad program
- b. determine whether or not to grant overseas academic approval.

(18) The Admissions and Enrolments Teams must, if overseas academic approval is granted, enrol the student in an exchange holding program for the duration of the exchange study.

### **Non-Exchange Learning Abroad**

(19) For non-exchange learning abroad where a student registers in a Western Sydney University subject which involves an overseas component, the student must follow the enrolment/registration procedures specified by the relevant academic unit.

(20) For non-exchange learning abroad where the student wishes to obtain credit, a student must consider the compatibility of the subjects offered at the designated host institution to their Western Sydney University degree program, and seek approval to register in those subjects from their APA, DAP or equivalent.

### **Research Learning Abroad**

(21) A current HDR candidate must:

- a. lodge a written request with their supervisor, as required by the published procedures
- b. ensure the written request includes the research outcomes to be achieved at the exchange institution or as part of the fieldwork and benefits of completing this part of their research project at the alternate institution
- c. obtain written agreement of the alternate institution and confirmation of the facilities available
- d. provide details of the specific location, resources, facilities and timeframe for the research learning abroad
- e. suggest arrangements for the ongoing supervision of their HDR project work.

(22) The HDR supervisor must:

- a. assess the benefits of the overseas research learning abroad application and
- b. provide written agreement if approved, noting that the approval relates to the application including specific details of the location/itinerary. Any proposed changes that occur following commencement of the research learning abroad must be submitted to the Supervisor for consideration and approval before the change occurs and
- c. if approved, confirm the method of communication and ongoing supervision sessions between candidate and principal supervisor and
- d. establish a system of assessment of the candidate's progress during the research learning abroad and
- e. establish and agree supervision requirements with the nominated overseas co-supervisor, if applicable and
- f. obtain approval from the Associate Dean, Research and HDR or equivalent.

## Part C - Credit for Prior Learning

(23) The procedure for a review of decisions on approval of overseas academic credit is in accordance with the [Credit for Prior Learning Policy](#).

(24) A student who obtains overseas academic approval in accordance with the Student Learning Abroad Procedures before departure, and successfully completes a student learning abroad program, will be awarded the credit specified, by applying for Credit for Prior Learning (Credit) on their return, consistent with the [Credit for Prior Learning Policy](#).

(25) A student who successfully completes a student learning abroad program without having obtained overseas academic approval before departure, may apply for Credit on their return but is not assured of Credit being granted.

(26) In making decisions about whether or not to approve overseas academic credit, the APA and/or DAP must take the following matters into consideration:

- a. the requirements of the applicable program
- b. the requirements of any statutory, regulatory or professional body applicable to the relevant program
- c. the learning outcomes of the subjects or other activities to be undertaken
- d. the academic standards of the study or other activities to be undertaken
- e. the academic standard and rigour of the exchange subject or activity should be consistent with the student's current level of study and
- f. the volume of learning of the subjects, or other activities to be undertaken, as a proportion of the load normally undertaken by a full-time student.

(27) If a student proposes to make changes to their planned student learning abroad program after obtaining overseas Credit approval, the student must again apply for and obtain approval, including overseas Credit approval, for the varied program.

(28) The grades achieved from a student learning abroad program are not included in the calculation of a student's Grade Point Average (GPA) and are awarded in accordance with the [Credit for Prior Learning Policy](#).

(29) Review of decisions on approval of Credit for previous overseas study is undertaken in accordance with the [Credit for Prior Learning Policy](#).

## Part D - Withdrawal, Deferral and Cancellation

(30) A student who has received an offer of exchange learning abroad for a particular term may apply to defer their offer for up to one year, on the grounds of unforeseen or compassionate circumstances, by applying in writing to the Manager, Learning Abroad Semester Programs, who will seek advice and permission from the relevant DAP or Associate Dean, Research and HDR or equivalent and host institution.

(31) A student who wishes to withdraw from exchange learning abroad must provide written notice as soon as possible to:

- a. Western Sydney International and
- b. the relevant host institution if the student has commenced study there.

(32) A student who wishes to withdraw from non-exchange learning abroad, must provide written notice as soon as possible to:

- a. Western Sydney International, if the opportunity is managed by Western Sydney International Go Global

- b. the relevant academic unit if the opportunity is managed by an academic unit or
- c. the relevant host institution or organisation, if the opportunity is not managed by Western Sydney International or an academic unit.

(33) If a student who withdraws from a student learning abroad program also withdraws from a related Western Sydney University subject, the University academic calendar will apply for the purposes of determining relevant deadlines and time limits, including those relating to fees and grades.

(34) When a student fails to provide information relevant to their student learning abroad program application, as requested by the University, or whilst they are participating in a student learning abroad program, their application, or participation in the program, may be cancelled.

(35) Students participating in a student learning abroad program, whose behaviour is alleged to be inappropriate, as described in University policy, including but not limited to the [Student Code of Conduct](#), will be managed according to the provisions of the [Student Misconduct Rule](#).

(36) The Pro Vice-Chancellor, International reserves the right to cancel a student's participation in a student learning abroad program, where activities include travel to areas that are considered unsafe, or where students are required to be evacuated from a location.

(37) If Western Sydney International, an academic unit or IPP cancels a publicised student learning abroad program, students will be refunded according to the relevant program refund agreement.

## **Part E - Risk Management**

(38) Students participating in any approved travel including any student learning abroad program must, prior to travel, ensure their travel plans are recorded into the University Travel and Expense Management System (TEMS) and linked to the University's travel tracker system, managed by the University's contracted provider of medical assistance, international health care and security services. For student travel booked:

- a. through the University contracted travel agent, travel plans are automatically registered in the TEMS system, when booked on a student's behalf, by the relevant academic unit
- b. independently of the University contracted travel agent, students must submit their travel plans to Western Sydney International, by way of the Go Global Portal, to register their travel on TEMS.

(39) All students participating in student learning abroad programs must ensure:

- a. their travel is registered with the University TEMS system and/or any required Travel Tracker system and the Western Sydney International Go Global Portal
- b. they have been provided with an official student learning abroad confirmation letter or research learning abroad approval letter from the University
- c. they register their travel with the [DFAT Smartraveller](#)
- d. they have considered applying for a Student Learning Abroad Travel Grant or International Exchange Scholarship, if eligible.

## **Pre-Departure for Staff and Students**

(40) Students participating in student learning abroad programs (except for Research Learning Abroad) must participate in a compulsory pre-departure briefing/tutorial provided by Western Sydney International.

(41) Where a student learning abroad program (except for Research Learning Abroad) is offered and managed by an academic unit, the person responsible for organising the group travel must:

- a. arrange for students to participate in a pre-departure briefing/tutorial offered by Western Sydney International
- b. arrange for students to attend a pre-departure briefing/tutorial offered by the relevant academic unit
- c. undertake measures to assess and plan for any likely health and safety risks associated with the travel and location, this includes ensuring that the planned activities have been approved by the Dean or Director
- d. maintain an updated list of all participants on the program and advise Western Sydney International
- e. advise Western Sydney International of the planned program activities, intended local transport, accommodation, communication networks and procedures for managing emergency situations and any other relevant planning and risk identification and assessment documentation, as required by the University.

(42) Staff managing and leading student learning abroad programs are required to undertake Trip Leader Training provided by Western Sydney International prior to departure.

## Section 4 - Roles and Responsibilities

(43) Western Sydney International must:

- a. publicise opportunities for learning abroad to students
- b. assess, and approve if appropriate, all prospective exchange partner agreements
- c. receive and process applications for exchange learning abroad and some applications for non-exchange learning abroad
- d. nominate students for exchange learning abroad to host institutions, under the terms of the University's institutional exchange agreements
- e. receive and process student applications for student learning abroad funding from:
  - i. Australian Government Mobility Scholarships and Grants
  - ii. Western Sydney University Learning Abroad Scholarships and Travel grants
  - iii. foreign governments
  - iv. partner/host universities
  - v. corporates and
  - vi. philanthropic donations
- f. provide pre-departure materials and briefings for students undertaking student learning abroad programs and staff managing and leading learning abroad programs
- g. receive and screen applications from IPPs and process University agreements for providers who are approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, International;
- h. assess and screen all proposed student learning abroad programs across the University, including study tours, placements, work experience, practicums, conferences, and student exchange
- i. conduct an annual data audit of all student learning abroad experiences across the University including; study tours, placements, work experience, practicums, research, conferences, and student exchange.

(44) The Office of Student and University Planning must:

- a. receive and process applications for overseas academic credit approval
- b. register students in exchange holding subjects
- c. process Credit for Prior Learning applications and record the Credit following a student learning abroad program
- d. receive and process applications for OS-HELP Loans.

(45) Academic units must:

- a. make decisions on applications for overseas academic credit
- b. provide information about overseas academic credit decisions via the Credit for Prior Learning process
- c. report all academic unit led student learning abroad projects and activities to Western Sydney International, at least six months prior to departure and providing a list of all participating students at least three months prior to departure
- d. complete a proposal and receive approval from Western Sydney International for all new academic unit led student learning abroad projects and activities including engagement with prospective partner institutions and IPPs;
- e. complete a risk assessment for all proposed academic unit led student learning abroad activities
- f. register student travel details on TEMS, linked to the University's Travel Tracker system for all academic unit led student learning abroad projects
- g. comply with the processes and requirements specified by Western Sydney International for all student learning abroad and scholarship programs
- h. ensure all requirements of the Placement Policy are met with regard to offshore placements
- i. confirm liability insurance coverage with Finance Office prior to approving offshore placements, in countries where there may be jurisdictional limitations to insurance policies, such as the USA and Canada.

(46) Students must:

- a. submit applications for student learning abroad programs and provide all necessary, associated information;
- b. comply with the:
  - i. [Student Code of Conduct](#)
  - ii. codes of conduct and other requirements of the host institution or organisation
  - iii. laws and regulations of countries visited during student learning abroad programs, including but not limited to visa requirements.
- c. acknowledge, by completing a learning abroad application through the Go Global Portal that:
  - i. their decision to travel to a particular country or region is a personal one and that Western Sydney University does not warrant it free from harm
  - ii. there are potential risks and liabilities associated with living and studying in a foreign country and they freely accept and fully assume all such risks
  - iii. they will be covered by the University corporate travel insurance policy for the official University component of their trip and not for any additional personal travel.
- d. pay all required fees and participation costs for their student learning abroad program
- e. inform Western Sydney International and if required, their academic unit, the Graduate Research School and the Office of Student and University Planning of any changes to their proposed student learning abroad program
- f. disclose to the Disability Service any disability or health condition that may affect their student learning abroad program and, develop an Academic Reasonable Adjustment Plan (ARAP) in partnership with the Disability Service
- g. meet the requirements of their program
- h. attend any required pre-departure or orientation sessions associated with their student learning abroad program
- i. register their travel details on TEMS, linked to the University's Travel Tracker system
- j. comply with advice provided by their Academic Unit in relation to approved overseas academic credit
- k. follow the [Credit for Prior Learning Policy](#) if they are seeking credit for their student learning abroad program study or activity
- l. attend any required debrief sessions on their return and any in-tour required checks.



(47) Associate Dean, Research and HDR or equivalent must:

- a. make decisions on HDR candidates' applications to conduct research work overseas that is relevant to their thesis topic
- b. record details about approved overseas research work in the HDR student's record and in Progress Reports
- c. report, to Western Sydney International, all higher degree research learning abroad projects and activities for groups of HDR students including providing a list of all participating students, at least three months prior to departure
- d. complete a risk assessment for all proposed higher degree research learning abroad activities
- e. comply with the applicable processes and requirements specified by Western Sydney International for all student learning abroad and scholarship programs.

## Section 5 - Guidelines and Resources

(48) [Western Sydney International Go Global webpage](#)

(49) Finance Office [Overseas Travel Insurance webpage](#)

(50) [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#)

(51) [Smartraveller](#)

(52) Western Sydney University Student Disability Principles and Procedures

(53) [Student Code of Conduct](#)

(54) [Student Misconduct Rule](#)

(55) [Health Safety and Wellbeing Procedures - Alcohol and Drug Control](#)

(56) [Bullying Prevention Policy](#)

(57) [Discrimination, Harassment, Vilification and Victimisation Prevention Policy](#)

(58) [World Travel Protection Corporate Program](#)

## Status and Details

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<b>Effective Date</b>	20th November 2023
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## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Student Learning Abroad"** - (Learning Abroad) means the study or other academic activity undertaken overseas for a limited time at another institution. Student Learning Abroad Programs at the University include Exchange Learning Abroad, Short-Term Exchange Learning Abroad, Non-Exchange Learning Abroad and Research Learning Abroad