



## Pre-departure 2021/22 - Exchange FAQs

Here you can find a list of your most frequently asked pre-departure questions. For more specific 'Travel FAQs' please check the following page on our website: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/go-abroad/travel-updates-and-guidance/travel-faqs>

### Correspondence from Your Host Institution:

FAQs	
<b>I haven't received my acceptance from my host institution, it seems a long time?</b>	Each institution has their own schedule and processing time-frame, they are also aware of the visa processing times for their country (if you require a visa) and the dates by which you must arrive on campus. Most applications take 8-10 weeks to process from the partner's official deadline but some host institutions are currently experiencing delays as a result of COVID19.
<b>Could there be a problem with my application?</b>	If you have completed all components of your application then it is unlikely delays are due to problems with your application. Host institutions usually contact us to inform us of any issues with applications at which point we would be in touch with you in order to request new documents or notify you of revisions. On other occasions you would be contacted directly by your host institution. Please keep a close eye on your emails (junk/clutter) and your online portal for your partner institution if there is one.
<b>When should I be concerned about not hearing from my host institution?</b>	<p>If you have reason to think that there may have been an issue with your application or other students have heard more than 2 weeks ago and you still haven't received contact from your host institution do let us know and we can look into this for you.</p> <p>If you have not yet received application information from your host institution and are concerned that you should have started this process please contact your relevant exchanges team:</p> <p>International Exchange – <a href="mailto:international.outgoing@ed.ac.uk">international.outgoing@ed.ac.uk</a></p> <p>European Exchange – <a href="mailto:europe.outgoing@ed.ac.uk">europe.outgoing@ed.ac.uk</a></p>



## Applying For Your Visa:

FAQs	
<b>Do I need to organise my visa myself?</b>	Yes, if a visa is required for your exchange you are expected to organise this independently. This will involve completing a visa application and in some instances attending an embassy/consulate for a visa appointment/interview.
<b>Can SWAY help me with my visa questions and application? What are the processing times for a visa?</b>	SWAY isn't able to offer advice or support for visa applications. We deal with too many countries each with different processes and are not trained to offer immigration advice. We can support you with informal non-official guidance and help you liaise with your host institution for further information.
<b>Who can help me with my visa questions?</b>	Once you are officially accepted by your host institution you are one of their students and can begin contacting them for support. In many instances your host institution understands that incoming exchange students will require their help in terms of visa related enquiries and have a designated section of their websites with visa information. In the first instance you should research the requirements on your own using their website (you may be able to find their visa page through Partner Guidance Notes if you are going to one of our University-wide partners: <a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/exchanges/where/partner-guidance">https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/exchanges/where/partner-guidance</a> ). Students often receive information on the visa application included with the acceptance.
<b>What if I have specific visa questions or concerns regarding the visa application?</b>	It is a good idea to contact the embassy or consulate processing your visa directly. You can check their website or contact them via telephone or email. In most instances they will be best placed to offer you accurate and informed guidance.
<b>Do UoE or SWAY cover the costs of my visa?</b>	Unfortunately we are not able to offer financial support for visa costs. Any costs associated with your visa need to be covered by you.



**Do I need permission from SWAY to apply for my visa?**

No, if you have received an acceptance from your host institution and the documentation you require to apply for your visa you can proceed to do so. However, where possible we advise that if you are able to wait until your review date (if applicable) and your travel has been approved by SWAY then it may be best to do so.

**What if my review date leaves it too late for my visa application?**

If it is not possible to delay the application for your visa by a short time then it is important if you intend to travel on exchange that you continue to apply for your visa and complete the necessary paperwork. This ensures that should you then be able to proceed with travel you are able to do so and will avoid any delays in you receiving your visa. This however comes at some risk in terms of costs involved should your exchange then be cancelled. Depending on the circumstances reimbursements may not be possible. For more specific information please contact your exchanges team.

**Where should I apply for my Visa?**

This is up to you and you will need to reach a decision based on your individual circumstances. In many instances students can find it easier to apply for their visa in their home country where embassies/consulates are more familiar with processing your documentation. But you can also apply from the UK. If applying from the UK you may need to travel to a visa processing centre or embassy – it is worth checking the websites or contacting the centres to enquire into processing times and current waits for appointments.



## FAQs

**Should I make financial commitments and if I do will these be reimbursed?**

Usually we advise students to avoid making financial commitments until you have an approved visa in place. This year with regard to the uncertainty of travel being able to proceed, we advise where possible to avoid making any financial commitments until your travel has been approved by SWAY.

Once your Stage 1 Risk Assessment is approved, you will be covered by insurance. Prior to that, unfortunately you may not be covered by the University's travel insurance. All costs therefore need to be taken at your own risk as reimbursement prior to approved RA stage 1 are not guaranteed.

You can find out more here

- <https://www.edweb.ed.ac.uk/global/go-abroad/travel-updates-and-guidance/accommodation>

**What if financial costs are unavoidable e.g. I must apply for my visa now and pay deposits for accommodation?**

Some costs will be unavoidable and therefore if you do incur them at this stage they will need to be done so at your own risk. Expenses incurred before your risk assessment has been approved may not be covered by the University's travel insurance.

<https://www.edweb.ed.ac.uk/global/go-abroad/travel-updates-and-guidance/accommodation>

We recommend checking with the accommodation provider at your host to see if they will allow you to cancel the contract and/or receive a reimbursement of your deposit within a certain time-frame. You can also check with the host university to find out if they will cover any costs if they cancel the exchange. You may also wish to consider taking out your own travel insurance (in addition to the UoE's insurance which is a requirement).

**Will SWAY pay for quarantine costs if my host country requires it?**

Unfortunately we are not able to provide financial support for quarantine costs for your host destination. This would need to be accounted for in your own budgeting for exchange and will need to be covered independently.



**What about costs incurred after I am approved for travel, will these be covered under UoE insurance?**

If your host institution cancels your exchange or travel restrictions change after you have been approved for travel and completed your Stage 1 Risk Assessment then reimbursements through the university's insurance may be possible. We would recommend contacting your relevant exchanges team for more information on your individual situation.

## Insurance Coverage

### FAQs

**Does the university's insurance policy cover pre-existing conditions or do we need to arrange our own cover for those?**

You can find detailed information on the insurance on MyJourney. A brief summary of UoE insurance cover can be found here on the Insurance website:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/finance/about/sections/insurance/travel-insurance/what-does-the-policy-cover>

There are no restrictions under the Policy for persons travelling with a pre-existing condition to the cover, provided that the person undertaking the travel is fit and able to travel, is not travelling against the advice of their GP and if they are on medication, ensure that they have a sufficient supply for the duration of the trip. The policy does not cover the cost of repeat prescriptions. The condition must be 'managed and controlled' as there is no cover for monitoring, screening, continuing physio, etc. However some conditions may need to be referred to the Insurers for confirmation that cover is in place. For further advice, please contact the Insurance Office ([finance.helpline@ed.ac.uk](mailto:finance.helpline@ed.ac.uk) )

**Will the UoE Insurance cover me for non-SWAY programmes?**

If your travel is arranged and approved through the university then this should be covered under the university insurance policy. Please check with the department/school organising your overseas activity for further information as you will be required to complete another Risk Assessment for this travel and details of your activity will need to be passed on to the university insurance team by the organiser to ensure you are covered for travel.



**Do the exchanges teams provide a list of institutions that accept UoE insurance to waiver their own?**

Some partner institutions, in particular non-European ones, will require students to sign up for their own university insurance plan. Unfortunately we do not have a list of institutions that would allow you to substitute their own insurance plan with our UoE policy. In some instances the partner university insurance plan will be mandatory and you will be required to take out their policy in addition to the UoE travel insurance. If you want to enquire into whether your host institution allows waivers to their plan then we advise you to contact them directly.

**I have specific concerns relating to an existing health condition, who can I speak to?**

If you have specific concerns regarding the insurance coverage please contact your relevant exchanges teams at:

International Exchange – [international.outgoing@ed.ac.uk](mailto:international.outgoing@ed.ac.uk)

European Exchange – [europe.outgoing@ed.ac.uk](mailto:europe.outgoing@ed.ac.uk)

You can also contact insurance at [finance.helpline@ed.ac.uk](mailto:finance.helpline@ed.ac.uk).



## Academic Requirements for Exchange/Failing Courses

### FAQs

**What if I think I have failed an exam?**

It is best to wait and see if this is the case. If you are concerned but have not yet received an official result then you could contact your school and Exchange Coordinator who can help you explore the impact of failing specific exams on your degree programme.

**Can I still go abroad if I have failed a course/received a null sit?**

UoE policy requires that all students are in receipt of 240 UoE credits before departure for exchange. All exams must be passed at first sitting to qualify for exchange. However, each individual case is taken on a case-by-case basis so if you know you have failed an exam it is important to notify your relevant exchanges team as soon as possible so we can look into the impact this may have on your ability to proceed with your exchange.

Usually students with an upheld Special Circumstances claim will be able to continue with their exchange given that resits will count as first sitting.

\*There is no guarantee you can proceed with an exchange if you fail any exams so please do reach out to us to discuss your specific situation.



## Credit Requirements/Choosing Courses

### FAQs

#### **How do we select courses at the host university?**

You would need to explore the websites and course catalogues of your host institution. Sometimes these can be found through the Partner Guidance Notes for University-wide exchange programmes:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/exchanges/where/partner-guidance>

You may have also received some information on choosing courses from your host institution so make sure to follow their guidance too.

The most important thing is to look at suitable courses and once you have seen some you are interested in you must speak with your Exchange Coordinator. You can find your Exchange Coordinator here:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/exchanges/contacts-support/exchange-coordinators>

They will be best placed to inform you of your requirements and any compulsory courses you have for which you may need to find equivalents at your host institution.



<b>What if my host hasn't released the course catalogues for the 21/22 academic year yet?</b>	<p>This is fine and it is normal that your host will not have released the new courses for next year yet. In this instance we recommend you to look at their course catalogues from the previous academic year and make an educated guess on the courses you intend to take.</p> <p>You will then be able to alter these should any not be available in the new academic year. Ensure to choose some back-up courses in case some are not available.</p>
<b>How do I know how many credits or courses I need to take whilst at my host institution?</b>	<p>For International Exchanges you can find a guide of credit/course load requirements at each institution here:</p> <p><a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/exchanges/before-you-go/academic-matters">https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/exchanges/before-you-go/academic-matters</a></p> <p>You will be able to see that if your host institution doesn't have a semester system but rather quarters, how many credits you should take per term/quarter.</p> <p>Most European institutions use the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), awarding credit which is comparable and equivalent throughout Europe. A standard annual course load at most institutions is 60 ECTS credits - this equates to 120 Edinburgh credits.</p>
<b>How do I know the academic level of the courses I am selecting is appropriate for me?</b>	<p>In most instances you should be looking at selecting the equivalent of 3<sup>rd</sup> year courses, these may be classed as 2<sup>nd</sup> year at your host institution. To know whether the level is appropriate for you, you should consult your Exchange Coordinator who will be able to advise.</p>
<b>If I am joint honours how do I know how to split my weighting of courses?</b>	<p>If you are joint honours you will have 2 exchange coordinators. Please contact them to enquire into how your school/degree programme would like you to split your courses whilst on exchange.</p>



## Learning Agreements and Risk Assessments:

FAQs	
<b>Where can I find the Learning Agreement (LA)?</b>	<p>Learning agreements are found on your Mobility Online workflow and are completed there. This will be made available to you in due course if it is not already showing.</p> <p>Learning agreements for International Exchange and European Exchanges are different, your relevant exchanges team will provide information and guidance to you depending on the Learning Agreement you are completing.</p>
<b>Can I do my LA before I have enrolled in courses?</b>	<p>Yes. You do not need to be enrolled in the courses in order to display them on your LA. Your LA can be changed later. However, you have until one month before your exchange start date to complete and upload your LA so in some instances it can be best to wait.</p>
<b>What if I need to leave Edinburgh or I am currently in my home country and want my LA done before I go?</b>	<p>Your LA can be completed electronically and sent to your coordinator remotely. Everything else can be done online on your Mobility Online account and via My Journey.</p>
<b>When is the deadline for us to submit a Learning Agreement to SWAY?</b>	<p>You will need to upload a fully signed LA at least one month before your exchange starts.</p>
<b>Do we need to submit a Learning Agreement now if our Semester 1 Exchange is cancelled?</b>	<p>Although there is a chance that your exchange may not go ahead as planned (either due to FCDO travel advice or partner cancellations), we would still encourage you to familiarise yourself with your host institution's course catalogue and prepare yourself to upload a fully signed LA at least one month before your exchange starts.</p>
<b>Where can I find the Risk Assessment?</b>	<p>The risk assessment form will be made available to you on your Mobility Online pipeline if you are eligible to submit one.</p>



## Funding/Applying for Student Finance

### FAQs

**Is there funding for International Exchanges?**

Unfortunately we do not usually have funding available for International Exchange so living costs, flights and all exchange related costs would need to be paid for independently.

You will however continue to be eligible for your usual Student Finance support through your student funding body and any bursaries or scholarships you currently receive through UoE.

Student Finance also usually offer an additional Travel Grant which is subject to eligibility criteria. Please enquire with them whether you are able to receive this additional funding.

**Is there funding available from the new Turing Scheme exchanges? What are the conditions?**

The University of Edinburgh has submitted a bid to receive Turing funding to support international activities for academic year 21/22 but we do not yet know if we have been successful or not - we will find out the result later this summer. If we do receive funding and this has implications for you then we will be in touch to notify you.

**When should I tell Student Finance that I will be abroad if the FCDO has not confirmed that the exchange can go ahead?**

Some student funding bodies have deadlines by which you may need to apply for funding. We recommend you to contact your student funding body to ask them what you should do in this specific situation. They may ask you to submit your application as if you are going abroad and this could be then changed at a later date.

**If you're studying for half and working for half, is it possible to get the Erasmus + funding and also the Erasmus Traineeship funding respectively?**

If you are undertaking an Erasmus+ exchange in one semester and an Erasmus+ traineeship in the other semester and you meet the eligibility criteria for both, it may be possible for you to receive funding for both activities. Students nominated for an Erasmus+ exchange will be emailed directly about the Erasmus+ grant; students planning to undertake a traineeship can find information about applying for the Erasmus grant [here](#).



## Semester 1 Cancellations/UoE Accommodation

FAQs	
<b>Can I go abroad in Semester 2 if my Semester 1 is cancelled?</b>	<p>This depends on your degree programme and therefore is subject to approval from your School. If your semester 1 exchange is cancelled SWAY will be exploring this option for you with your School and will be in touch with further information and confirmation.</p> <p>Semester 2 exchanges would not be guaranteed until we receive approval from your school, your host institution and travel would continue to be subject to the completion of the SWAY Risk Assessment process and FCDO guidance.</p>
<b>If my Semester 1 is cancelled can I study remotely with my host institution?</b>	<p>If you are a mandatory exchange student and your semester 1 in-person study is cancelled then this may be an option for you. Please consult your relevant exchanges team and school for more information.</p> <p>Optional exchange students are not able to study remotely with their host institution in semester 1. You instead must enrol in semester 1 UoE courses.</p>
<b>Can I continue to study with UoE if my Semester 1 is cancelled?</b>	<p>Yes, if you are an optional exchange student you would then study with UoE in semester 1 and enrol in appropriate courses. Please contact your school to do this.</p>
<b>If I study with UoE in Semester 1 and then my host institution in Semester 2, does the first semester count toward my UoE degree classification?</b>	<p>In most cases yes, if you study semester 1 with UoE this semester of 60 credits will count toward your final average for your degree classification. This would mean your degree classification would be averaged from 180 UoE credits instead of the final year 120 credits if undertaking a yearlong exchange. This may differ depending on individual degree programme so please consult your school/exchange team for further information.</p>
<b>Are there accommodation options provided by</b>	<p>We will keep our website updated with any new information we receive regarding support with accommodation at UoE should your exchange not be able to go ahead:</p>



**the university if we cannot go abroad?**

[www.ed.ac.uk/global/go-abroad/travel-updates-and-guidance/cancellations](http://www.ed.ac.uk/global/go-abroad/travel-updates-and-guidance/cancellations)

You may also find it helpful to contact Accommodation directly at:

[www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/student-life/accommodation](http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/student-life/accommodation)

Or to seek guidance from The Advice Place:

[www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/adviceplace](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/adviceplace)

**What if I do not feel comfortable or safe to travel in Semester 1 can I move to Semester 2 only?**

We understand that some students may not feel comfortable or able to travel in semester 1 and may wish to cancel their exchange or only go in semester 2. This is not guaranteed and we would need to look at whether semester 2 only exchange is an option for you. Please contact your relevant exchanges team for more information on this in relation to your specific situation.

You can find more travel updates and guidance on our website:

[www.edweb.ed.ac.uk/global/go-abroad/travel-updates-and-guidance](http://www.edweb.ed.ac.uk/global/go-abroad/travel-updates-and-guidance)

Please remember if you have specific questions related to your exchange please contact us at [international.outgoing@ed.ac.uk](mailto:international.outgoing@ed.ac.uk) and [europe.outgoing@ed.ac.uk](mailto:europe.outgoing@ed.ac.uk).

For further ways of contacting SWAY:

[www.ed.ac.uk/global/exchanges/contacts-support/contacts](http://www.ed.ac.uk/global/exchanges/contacts-support/contacts)