

STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES: STATEMENT OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. INTRODUCTION

Aberystwyth University and its academic departments operate a number of international exchange agreements which allow AU students to spend one or two semesters at a European Union, North American or other overseas university, and for students from overseas to spend a similar period at Aberystwyth. The University places a high value on these programmes, which offer a number of benefits:

- they offer students a valuable experience of another culture
- they allow students to develop and enhance their interpersonal skills and transferable skills
- in some cases, they enable students to develop their language skills
- they enhance the attractiveness of AU's degree schemes to potential students by providing the possibility of participating in an exchange
- they build links between departments and staff at participating institutions, which can lead to collaborative research and teaching ventures
- they enhance AU's international profile
- they can bear fruit in the long term in attracting students to AU – exchange students can decide to complete their initial degree here, or return later to study for a higher degree

Alongside these opportunities, however, must frankly be recognised the potential difficulties which can complicate overseas exchange programmes, both for incoming and outgoing students. These difficulties include timing, module choice, assessment conversion, and a number of practical considerations. Foresight and hard work on the part of staff involved in the programmes can minimise problems, but students should be made aware of the pros and cons of taking part in an exchange programme and must accept responsibility for their learning and educational programmes.

This document is intended to provide guidance for staff involved in managing exchange programmes. It seeks to highlight the issues which staff will need to confront, to detail the responsibilities of staff and students and to clarify what information students need to receive. In so doing, it draws on the experience of staff across the Institution and seeks to identify and spread good practice. The intention is that staff undertaking the organisation of exchange programmes, particularly if they are doing so for the first time, will know what they need to do and can learn from the experience of their colleagues.

2. OUTGOING STUDENTS

It is essential to remember that AU students participating in international exchange agreements continue to pay fees at AU and that **AU departments retain responsibility for outgoing students while they are on exchange**. As such, departments must ensure that adequate supervision and contact with students is maintained, and systems put in place to enable the exchange to run as smoothly as possible.

2.1 Timing of Exchanges

Exchanges obviously cannot take place in the first year, and Part One students must have successfully completed the year if they are to be allowed to go on exchange, in the same way that they cannot go on to Part Two at AU until successful in Part One. Students should be warned that going on exchange is conditional upon satisfactory completion of their current studies. The requirement to resit modules may prevent them from going on exchange.

2.1.1 Final Year Exchanges

Some departments run exchange programmes in the final year of study, and even the final semester. These are normally well-established programmes which often allow students to undertake final year projects in specialist institutions. Where these arrangements operate effectively they are quite acceptable. However, exchange programmes should only operate in the final year, and certainly the final semester, of the degree where there is a very good academic reason and where practical arrangements can be made to ensure that marks are returned from abroad in time for the final examination boards and graduation. Long delays in obtaining marks have led to students being unable to graduate until well after the rest of their cohort.

2.1.2 Second Year Exchanges

Other than students studying a European Language, who may undertake an exchange programme in the third (intercalary) year of their four year degree, the norm will be for students to undertake exchanges during the second year of a three year scheme. (Note that Intercalary Year students must pass year two to be allowed to go on exchange.)

As most AU students are taking three year Honours degree schemes, one session spent on exchange represents one third of the degree and half of the credits counting to the final degree classification. Departments and students will need to consider carefully whether an exchange should be for one semester or both. This may be affected by the structure of the academic session of the partner institution, and by the modules on offer at AU and the exchange institution in each semester: there may be key modules which students would be well advised take at AU. Staff and students should keep in mind that single semester exchanges limit the impact of the exchange on the degree programme. An exchange undertaken in semester four of a three year degree allows the student to experience Part Two at AU before going on exchange and perhaps to take core AU modules as preparation. Students struggling at that level could decide not to go ahead with the exchange visit. A single semester exchange will, however, also limit the student's exposure to the other culture, and may not give sufficient time to acclimatise.

2.1.3 Single Semester Exchange Issues

Students spending one semester on exchange may encounter problems of timing, as semesters may begin and end earlier or later than at AU. This has implications for the assessment process (see Point 3.3). Where possible students should take the normal assessments at the exchange institution. If problems are caused by overlapping

semesters, then students may have to take different assessments overseas, or to take AU examinations in August, or different assessments. Any such special arrangements will need appropriate approval. In particular students should be advised to ensure that all relevant departments are informed if they will miss semester one examinations because they are on exchange in the second semester.

2.2 Module Choice

When AU students go on exchange for a semester or two semesters, there is a difficult balance to strike between allowing them to experience the teaching and assessment of other educational cultures, as well as the language and culture of another country - which is of course the aim of the exercise - and ensuring that the modules which they study are as close a match as possible to those which they would have taken at AU and equip them as well as possible for their next year of study.

Programme specifications describe in detail the aims, learning outcomes and skills of all programmes. Degree scheme coordinators will need to discuss with their counterparts in exchange institutions, and with students going on exchange, which modules/courses fit best with AU's own schemes and programme specifications. However, all concerned need to be aware that while exchange schemes offer a wealth of opportunities for students' development of skills and learning, they will not be able to deliver precisely the mix of skills and content offered at AU and detailed in the programme specifications. Students must enter into exchanges in that spirit. In the case of degree programmes which involve a compulsory year abroad, of course, programme specifications will be constructed to show how this year fits into the programme, its outcomes and skills development.

In order to minimise difficulties and ensure that students fully understand the programme specifications, it may be worth drawing up a "Learning Agreement", such as that relating to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation Scheme (see <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/doc/example2.pdf> for an example). Learning Agreements detail the courses to be undertaken by the student during the exchange, and help to ensure that students are clear on what they are required to study. The detail involved in the learning agreement and the incorporation of credit conversion, would be at the discretion of the outgoing student's department. However, a detailed learning agreement would help to avoid confusion and problems for students on their return to AU.

2.3 Credit Conversion

A key issue once students return from exchange is how to incorporate the courses taken abroad in the AU modular system. It is essential for staff to ensure, before students go on exchange, that the marks and credits students return with from exchange can be accommodated within the cascade degree classification system without any undue distortion. This too needs to be discussed with students before they embark on the programme to avoid any misunderstanding about how the courses undertaken will be converted into marks and credits to go into the cascade. On a three year degree scheme, with a two year Part 2, a semester's exchange counts for one quarter of the marks which determine the degree class, and a full year's exchange for one half. Great care must be taken to represent students' achievements accurately in the conversion process.

2.3.1 Levels

This is not straightforward. The first issue is the level at which to designate modules taken on exchange. In most cases exchange students will be in their second year of study. Many AU departments offer only level 2 modules in year two and level 3 in year three and so have treated exchange modules as level two. Some departments have chosen to treat exchange modules as level 2 so that they assume less importance in the cascade than the level 3 modules taken at AU in the final year, over which staff have direct control of marks and standards. Other departments have treated exchange modules as level 3 in the belief that the modules taken of some exchange institutions are at a higher academic level than equivalent modules at AU. This has resulted in inconsistencies about which external examiners have expressed concern.

The solution decided by the Academic Affairs Committee is that all modules taken by second year students on exchange should be treated as level 2 modules. Although in some cases this may not accurately reflect the level of the module, it has two significant merits. It will lead to consistent treatment of all students on exchange programmes and it will reduce the influence on the cascade of non-AU modules. While modules taken abroad may be excellently taught and assessed and pitched at a very high level, AU cannot directly control them. In the past staff have often felt that exchange marks have unfairly distorted students' marks, once they have seen the final year performance. It is preferable to treat exchange modules as level two to reduce any distortion. In choosing modules, staff and students should bear this in mind, and look for level two modules or equivalent. A case may still be made for conversion at another level in exceptional circumstances.

2.3.2 Credit Conversion

In converting credits, staff will be guided by the ECTS system, their knowledge of partner institutions' courses, and the need for exchange credits to fit into the 120 credits per session at AU. Where students spend only one semester on exchange, the credit values of the modules taken need to be married up to the credits to be taken at AU to give 120.

2.4 Marks Conversion

Obtaining and then converting marks to AU's marking scale has occasionally been a contentious issue with the following problems arising:

- appeals from students who claim that they were not made aware of the way marks would be converted and therefore assumed they would be credited with better marks than was the case. Students will not know the marks until the start of semester two of the following session, so if they have over-estimated the marks they have little time left to obtain higher AU marks to compensate.
- difficulties in obtaining marks from partner institutions in time to present to the appropriate examination boards, in some extreme cases leading to delays in graduation.
- the feeling that marks received from abroad are unduly generous or mean. One problem here is that staff do not always know what to expect from students as they have only their Part One experience to base judgements on. Once final year marks are available it may seem that the exchange marks are out of line with the student's performance at AU.
- difficulties of relating marks and grades from quite different systems in different institutions and countries with AU systems.

Again, students must be given clear information on how marks will be converted before they embark on an exchange. In the same way that they should be given assessment criteria and feedback on AU modules, so that they know in advance how marks will be arrived at and understand afterwards the basis on which marks have been allocated, so they need to know in advance how exchange marks will be converted and to understand afterwards how the conversion process worked. This information may affect the decision whether to undertake the exchange. In the worst case scenario, where a student complains about marks gained on exchange, the university needs to be able to respond that full information was issued to the student before they went on the exchange programme. A learning agreement, as suggested in 2.2 above, signed by a representative of the department and the student would help minimise such difficulties.

Given the range of subjects, universities and countries involved in exchanges, it is not possible for the University to lay down iron rules on the conversion of marks. This is an area, as with the presentation of all marks by departments to Faculty, where the Faculty Examination Boards rely on the academic judgement of departments. Departments know their disciplines and their partner institutions and are best placed to make judgements about how marks from exchange universities equate to their own marks. In making these judgements, departments will take account of:

- all assessment criteria published by partner universities, in comparison with their own, and other module information
- where the pass mark is set by partners institutions and how this compares with AU's.
- where different marking scales are set e.g. Alpha, Beta etc.
- their previous experience of how marks returned by partner institutions compare with AU marks for their own students.
- additional information from the exchange institution on the student's performance, e.g. analyses of marks showing where the student stood in relation to the cohort, references on the student's performance. These may help in 'fine tuning' marks conversion.

Departments have to bear in mind that, as with all marks, they will need to be able to justify how converted marks were arrived at, and they should ensure that conversion is done consistently and that documentation is available to demonstrate how the marks were calculated. This will be vital in any appeal.

Information is available from the Study Abroad Office on marks conversion with regard to North American universities. This provides rough guidance on how to translate grades into AU marks, but departments will want to refine the model in the light of their own experience with particular institutions.

2.5. Performance Abroad

With regard to outgoing students, however carefully exchange programmes are developed, problems will arise, and students will not have access to the same support systems as at AU. They will not be able to contact AU staff as easily as when they are in Aberystwyth, and AU staff will not be able to identify problems such as non-attendance as quickly as with students in Aberystwyth. **It is essential that students understand that time spent on exchange is an integral part of their degree and that it is their responsibility to**

bring any problems to the attention of staff in the host university and at AU. If they return from an exchange programme with no marks they jeopardise their degrees and cannot simply ignore the exchange and begin Part Two again with a clean slate. Departments selecting students to go on exchange programmes will wish to ensure that the students are well-equipped to cope with the demands of living abroad.

Departments need to ensure that students have contact names and numbers through which they can obtain advice swiftly. **In particular, students on all exchanges including the North American programme should be given the name of a designated individual member of staff in their department who will be able to offer advice.** They should also be proactive in contacting students regularly to check that everything is going well. Systems need to be established to ensure staff act consistently and students do not slip through the net. It is also good practice to check with academic colleagues at the host university on the progress of students. Particular care is needed where new exchange partnerships are concerned and there is no experience of the courses and support systems available, or where experience shows that courses can be very challenging or support systems limited.

Where students perform poorly due to their own failure to attend classes or submit assignments, or their own deficiencies, they must live with the consequences. Where students run into problems not of their own making, however, every effort must be made to resolve the problem or minimise its effects on performance as quickly as possible. If the student is struggling because courses are too advanced, for example, can they transfer to more appropriate ones? Where students on an exchange for the whole session are failing to cope in semester one, they can return to take the second semester at AU if they have obtained enough credits to make up 120 for the session. If students are not able to continue with their studies, they should return and complete the normal withdrawal process. If there are genuine reasons for withdrawal and no assessment has been completed, the student may be allowed by the Dean to restart Part Two at AU the following session.

2.6. Other Practical Considerations

In addition to the academic issues raised above, there are a number of practical considerations which may cause difficulties for students participating in international exchange schemes. The following are issues on which departments are advised to offer guidance:

- Accommodation: partner institutions may not offer student accommodation, or may only have limited places, particularly for students on exchange only for the second semester. It is important to establish what accommodation provision there is for students, and what assistance is available to help students find alternatives if there is no provision.
- Contacts: as outlined above, it is essential for students to have some point of contact at the partner institution. In some cases, partner institutions may have a well-established international exchange office or officer which will deal with most of the practicalities of the exchange. Where this is not the case, students should be given the name of an individual who will be able to offer advice on both practical and academic matters. (It is also a good idea for students to establish that their contact will be open/at the university when they arrive, or that alternative measures are put in place in case students are arriving late at night/at weekends etc.)
- Travel Insurance and Health Insurance: Students **must** be made aware of the need for them to take out travel and health insurance for the duration of the exchange as

not doing so may be expensive and problematic (the Foreign Office website estimates that the cost of treating a broken leg in America is £10,000). For EU exchanges, students should obtain the European Health Insurance Card (forms available from Post Offices), but must also purchase health and travel insurance. For other countries, students should be directed to the Foreign and Commonwealth Website for details of precautions to be taken. If possible, contacts in partner institutions could provide students with lists of local doctors, hospitals etc upon arrival.

- Visas and Passports: Visa requirements will vary with the country of exchange. However, students should be advised to contact the embassy of their destination country as early as possible to enquire about visa requirements. Students should also be reminded to check their passport expiry date, and that they will require a passport or photo driving licence to travel within the EU. It should also be noted that in some cases students will have to register as a resident with the local police station/council etc.
- Bank and financial issues: Students should be made aware of the need to make practical financial arrangements. Where students are going on exchange for a full year, it may be worthwhile opening a bank account after arriving to avoid expensive transaction costs every time they need to withdraw money. This may not always be a straightforward procedure, however, and students should ensure that they will be able to access sufficient funds (for example through a credit card) for a period after arrival. Students going for one semester only should be advised to talk to their bank about the most practical (and cheapest) arrangements for accessing and dealing with funds.

These are some of the practical issues which should be taken into account when advising students on exchange programmes, but by no means the only problematic issues. In order to identify other problem areas (particularly those specific to an individual institution), departments may wish to consider arranging interviews/questionnaires with students who have participated in exchanges. Additionally, outgoing students may find it particularly valuable for departments to arrange for them to meet with previous participants for discussions and advice. Students should also be pointed to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website, which has some extremely useful and relevant travel advice. Furthermore, departments may wish to consider contacting staff in departments who have extensive experience of organising exchange schemes for advice and guidance.

3. INCOMING STUDENTS

The basic principle applying ERASMUS exchange programmes, and which can be extended to all other exchanges, is that students are coming to Aberystwyth to experience the same educational provision as UK students. The normal expectation would be therefore that they will register in the same way as all other candidates. They will need to complete registration forms to register formally and any changes in registration must be effected by completing the change of module registration form to ensure that any documentation produced by the university reflects the modules actually taken.

3.1 Module Registration – Credit Values

Exchange students should normally register for the same number of credits as other students. They should therefore normally take 120 credits if studying over a full session or between 50 and 70 in any one semester. In practice, however, what determines the credits taken by students is what their home institution requires them to return with to count

towards their degree programme. Staff registering these students will need to check that they understand how AU credits are converted under the ECTS system, and that their home university has made clear to them how many AU credits they need to take and to pass. This may depend on their performance in previous years and how many failures they are carrying. Responsibility rests with students themselves and their home universities to be clear about this before students register at AU. Staff should stress in their dealings with the students and colleagues in the exchange partner institution the need for students to register initially for the required number of credits.

3.2 Module Choice

AU staff will obviously be able to advise students on the content and level of modules available at AU and to help them to select the most appropriate modules. Again, however, responsibility lies with the students and their home institutions to be clear on what content and skills the students need to bring home to fit into their own degree programmes. AU staff should stress this in advance and direct the students and exchange partners to the module database and any other relevant sources of information on modules so that students are able as far as possible to select appropriate modules before arriving at AU, and to ensure that partner institutions are satisfied that AU provision covers the subjects required by their own degree programmes.

3.3 Assessment

Incoming exchange students should take AU modules and assessment in the same ways as home students. Module aims, learning outcomes and assessment methods have been approved by Faculty and **any variation in assessment needs the approval of the Dean**. However, for a number of reasons, it often proves problematic for students from overseas institutions to take the normal assessments:

- students attending AU for semester one only may have to return at Christmas to their home institution to begin semester two in January and so cannot attend AU examinations.
- even where semester one exchange students could take the normal examinations, this often involves staying in Aberystwyth for 4-6 weeks after the end of teaching, including the Christmas period, to take one or two examinations; or returning to Aberystwyth for a short time after Christmas for exams. Students often wish to avoid this due to the expense and disruption involved.
- in some cases the English language skills of exchange students are poor and departments ask permission to set them coursework rather than examinations as they are likely to perform very poorly in the latter. This is problematic: students coming on exchange should possess appropriate language skills, and assessment methods should not be varied for this reason. However, where students have been accepted on the advice of home institutions that they are equipped to cope, it may be necessary to ensure that they are not significantly disadvantaged if their skills are not as promised. In such cases departments will wish to review their arrangements with the institution in question.
- some countries do not recognise UK modules and marks as equivalent to their own and do not incorporate marks gained by ERASMUS exchange students in their own systems. In the case of other exchange programmes also, overseas institutions may regard their students' time in Aberystwyth as a developmental introduction to the language and subjects which does not require formal assessment or the acquisition of credit. Such students may attend classes but only take some assessment.

In determining how to assess exchange students, the principle that all students taking AU modules should take the module and assessment as approved, in fairness to all, therefore often conflicts with the requirements of the exchange students and their home institutions in attendance and in accumulating credit. Some compromise is usually necessary and the key point is to ensure that students and their home institutions know before the exchange begins AU's timetable for assessment and the expectation that wherever feasible exchange students will be treated the same as home students. Everyone involved should understand that variations in assessment do result in differential treatment and can complicate the assessment of learning outcomes. Home institutions should be aware of changed assessment when using marks and credits gained in their own degrees.

Where changed assessment is desired, the Dean's or Faculty's approval should be sought as early as possible, either for an individual student or students or, as some departments have done, for a module or modules regularly taken by exchange students. The Dean will need an explanation of:

- why approval for different assessment methods is being requested.
- how the proposed assessment is still consonant with the module learning outcomes.
- how the proposed assessment meets departmental norms for assessment of modules with that credit rating.

It is important to keep in mind that there may well be other overseas students taking the same module(s) as exchange students, but as full-time candidates. They and indeed other home students may prefer to avoid examinations and the need to be in Aberystwyth during the January examination period. Exchange students do also on occasion decide to transfer as full-time candidates to complete their degrees at AU. Departments should therefore be wary of setting assessments which could confer some advantage on certain students and lead to demands from others for equal treatment. On the other hand, where students are not completing a AU qualification, some leeway is possible.

Additionally, it is important to be aware that incoming students may not be accustomed to the style of assessment at UK universities. It is therefore important that the expectations of examiners are made clear to them, and that the help available at the Language and Learning Centre for both native and non-native English speakers is pointed out to them.

3.4 Results and Resits

Once more, marks for exchange students should be processed at departmental and Faculty level in the same way as for all other candidates. Results lists for each Faculty Exam Board include lists of all exchange students registered for modules, with marks entered by departments, and resit indicators recommended by them. Once confirmed by Faculty Boards these marks and indicators will be released by the Academic Office on official transcripts. Before that, they should not be released to exchange students or their home institutions. This has led to various problems in the past:

- some institutions demand marks before AU semester two exam boards have met because they take decisions about the progress of these students earlier than our boards and need exchange marks for that purpose.
- exchange students sometimes wish to 'take home' certain credits but not others they have studied, as they do not need the full 120. A transcript showing them to

have failed credits they took only for interest and did not submit assessments will cause a problem for them.

- resit indicators, especially 'N', may likewise suggest students failed to submit work they should have when they never intended to take assessments.

3.4.1 Liaising with partner universities

It is important that students and their home institutions understand before exchanges begin that results will not be issued before the Faculty Exam Boards, and know the approximate times of the Boards, particularly in semester two. AU does not even attempt to obtain marks from its students on an exchange year to present to the semester two or even supplementary exam boards in the session during which the exchange takes place: it would simply not be possible to gather enough marks to make the exercise worthwhile, and so the policy is to wait until semester one of the following session. Other institutions should be advised of our marking schedules and should be asked not to press us for early release of marks.

3.4.2 Approval of Marks

Departments should process all marks in their own Examination Boards and forward marks and recommended resit indicators to Faculty Boards in the normal way, and should understand that once confirmed these are the official record for issuing to students and their institutions. Note that if marks are not processed by the Faculty Examination Boards then AU cannot issue them to students. If students were supposed to take assessments and did not, 'N's are appropriate. If they were ill or had other extenuating circumstances, 'H' or 'M's may be recorded. If students, with the agreement of their own institutions, did not need to take assessments then zero marks or 'A' may be returned. Students and home institutions will need to be informed of the meaning of resit indicators.

3.4.3 Diploma Awards

In some cases, exchange students study for Diplomas of Higher Education. Departments must ensure that such students are appropriately registered, as the norm is to register exchange students as non-qualification candidates, not expected to receive an award, and make recommendations for the award of Diplomas to the appropriate Faculty Examination Board.

3.4.4 Resit Opportunities

Resit opportunities will very rarely be taken up by students who will normally have returned to their own institutions by the end of the semester or session. However, there is no reason in principle for them not to take advantage of resit opportunities, which might involve only the resubmission of written work rather than attending supplementary examinations. Normal AU rules and regulations governing resits will apply. Where it is essential for students to pass AU modules in order to qualify for their degrees, special resits may be allowed with the approval of the Pro Vice-Chancellor during the August resit period rather than the following session.

3.4.5 Information to students and partner universities

A final point about assessment is that both students and their home institutions should be made aware of AU's marking scales and of the assessment criteria operated by departments for particular modules or modes of assessment, to assist them in converting marks and credits into their own systems. Particular care is needed as students on

exchanges are usually new to AU and UK systems, languages, customs and culture. Exchanges can be marred by misunderstandings about the standards students have achieved and this obviously is to be avoided if possible.

3.5 Pastoral Care and Problem Solving

Incoming students will have access to AU's welfare and support services during their time here and should be treated in the same way as all AU students. Departments should also ensure that they are able to contact staff at the home institution in emergencies. It is also important to be aware that although the practical considerations outlined above for outgoing students should have been explained to students by their home universities, some students may be unprepared for the practicalities of living in the UK. It may therefore be worthwhile for departmental exchange co-ordinators to hold a discussion with incoming students pointing out health service arrangements and other services available to incoming exchange students.

3.5.1 Accommodation

Incoming students coming for only one semester should understand that their contract with residential and hospitality services is a legally binding document, and is separate from any academic arrangements. Students on exchange during the first semester who are not returning to Aberystwyth in January will be liable for accommodation fees. If they know in advance that they will not be returning to Aberystwyth after the Christmas holidays *for good academic or other reasons* (i.e. teaching at their home institution begins in early January), an arrangement may be made with Residential and Hospitality Services concerning accommodation fees. However, this is at the discretion of Residential and Hospitality Services.

4. GUIDELINES FOR ENTERING INTO AN ERASMUS BILATERAL AGREEMENT

Staff who are developing exchange agreements with other universities should liaise with the Study Abroad Office, and take note of the points above. In particular they should be aware of the following.

- The quality and reputation of the partner institution and department should be considered carefully, and agreements made only where these deemed acceptable. As well as academic standing, issues such as equal opportunities and health and safety should be kept in mind. Other factors such as the location of the partner, its attractiveness to students, and the costs to the students should be considered.
- Erasmus Bilateral Agreements can be drawn up by either partner. At AU the initial agreement should be signed by the Vice-Chancellor. Renewal agreements may be signed by the academic department or Erasmus Institutional Coordinator (after confirmation by the department). Agreements should make clear the responsibilities of the different parties. Consideration should be given to who will review the agreement.
- The proposed exchange of students should be reciprocal. Agreements should not be made where only an incoming flow of students is anticipated. Consideration should be given to who will promote the exchange programme.
- Incoming students may want to study in partner departments at AU which should be consulted.
- If there is to be an exchange of teachers, can an incoming teacher be fitted into the curriculum?

- Who will determine whether the proposed study programme of outgoing students is acceptable? In particular, will students have sufficient language ability or are the courses taught through English?
- Who will monitor the progress of the outgoing and the incoming students? Who will advise on academic issues and provide academic support? What general student support, pastoral support, accommodation etc will be available?
- Are there any resource implications to consider? Note that funding to AU is based on outgoing student numbers, not incoming numbers. Outgoing numbers are invariably lower than incoming.
- Clear arrangements for transmission and translation of grades and credits will be required, to ensure that marks are received for AU students for presentation to the appropriate examining boards at the appropriate time. For incoming students, it is important to be aware of the timing of AU exam boards which will govern when marks will be available to partner institutions. The use of ECTS should be considered.

5. EXTERNAL REFERENCE POINTS

As in all other matters, external guidance on good practice for universities is available from the Quality Assurance Agency, and in particular its Code of Practice. Section 9 on Placement Learning is relevant to exchange programmes and staff involved in exchanges should be familiar with the basic precepts, which AU must engage with. The code is available at:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/default.asp>

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