

## Supporting students undertaking the Year Abroad

This document outlines the role and responsibilities of both Faculties/Departments and Colleges in supporting and communicating with students who are undertaking a year abroad as part of their course.

### **Year Abroad at Cambridge**

Undergraduate students in FAMES and MMLL must complete a mandatory year abroad during which they undertake a period of study and/or work experience in a country where the languages they are studying are spoken. This year abroad may take many forms and students have a reasonable amount of flexibility in their plans.

The Faculty of Law offers an optional year abroad opportunity for up to 20 undergraduate students to study at partner institutions in their third year (after completing Part IB), returning to Cambridge for a fourth year to complete Part II of the Law Tripos.

The Department of Engineering has exchange arrangements with two institutions which support a small number of students choosing to spend their third year overseas, returning to complete Part III.

### **Preparing for the Year Abroad and Risk Assessment**

Each Faculty/Department will provide support and expertise to students in preparing for their year abroad. Whilst this varies depending on the nature of the year abroad, this will usually be in the form of meetings, lectures and talks, as well as circulation of detailed information and tailored advice on a one-to-one basis by either academic or administrative staff.

For the mandatory year abroad, students will need to submit their plans to their Faculty for approval. Students and their DoSes/Tutors should be aware that failure to submit plans and the associated risk assessment will mean that year abroad activities may be unapproved and therefore not fulfil the requirements laid out in regulations.

In Law and Engineering, students apply for the year abroad opportunity in their second year. This application is accompanied by references/a supporting statement from their Director of Studies in College.

**Risk associated with the year abroad is owned by the relevant Faculty/Department who will approve risk assessments. Risk assessment forms will ask students to consult FCDO advice about the countries they are visiting and assess the risks they will face on that basis. This will include confirmation that students will have any vaccinations necessary. The University provides travel insurance during the year abroad and students are given instructions by their Faculty/Department on how to register their trip in order to be covered.**

It is often the case that Colleges have much closer relationships with their students than Faculties/Departments. Colleges are also responsible for pastoral care and DoSes and/or Tutors can provide valuable input into the approval process. College staff (Tutors or Directors of Studies) may be party to information that should be passed on to the Faculty/Department for consideration when approving activity for the year abroad and risk assessments.

For the mandatory year abroad, Colleges will be asked for confirmation that the plans submitted by students do not raise any issues or concerns that need to be addressed. Students will be asked explicitly for their consent to the sharing of sensitive information on the forms for their year abroad plans. Where

either the Faculty or the College has concerns about an individual student's plans, a discussion should be held at an early stage to ensure that these are addressed. The Senior Tutor should be included in any such discussion. Colleges will be consulted at the initial phase of planning. Colleges will be sent details of their students' plans and the DoS/Tutor will be asked to inform the Faculty whether there are any issues for concern.

Each Faculty will share a report detailing approved plans for their students before they embark on the year abroad.

In Law and Engineering, the College will have the opportunity to provide any relevant information when the student is applying to participate in a year abroad. Further discussion would take place between the Faculty/Department and College if any concerns or potential issues are raised to determine the appropriate course of action.

### **Changes during the year abroad**

In MMLL and FAMES, plans made during students' second year may change before or during the year abroad. This is usually discussed and approved by email exchange between the student and the relevant officer/administrator in the Faculty. Students are required to submit an updated risk assessment for each approved change or new plan. Details of these will be communicated to Colleges regularly throughout the year. This may be either by direct email to a named contact in each College or by circulation of a monthly report. Should the Faculty feel discussion with the College is necessary before approving new or changed plans, they will contact the relevant member of staff.

It is recommended that Colleges designate a specific member of staff to ensure a Tutor or Director of Studies, as deemed appropriate, is keeping in contact with the student whilst they are away.

Whilst it is not common, significant changes of circumstances may mean a student in Law or Engineering cannot continue their year abroad. When such circumstances arise, the Faculty/Department and College would liaise as appropriate.

### **Students with specific needs or disabilities**

To help facilitate arrangements for the year abroad for students with specific needs or disabilities, the College, the Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre, and the relevant Faculty/Department will work closely together to determine what practical support students could be afforded whilst they are on their year abroad.

### **During the Year Abroad**

Where reasonably possible, students should expect to experience a similar level of pastoral support during their year abroad as they receive at their home institution. Students continue to have access to services such as the University Counselling Service whilst they are away from Cambridge.

Whilst the Faculty/Department keeps in touch with students whilst they are away, mostly via their @cam email addresses, communication can often be procedural. The Faculty/Department very much value the input of Colleges in maintaining a live communication link with students. As agreed by the Standing Committee on Student Welfare and Finance, Colleges are expected to maintain regular contact with their students during the year abroad, either via their Tutor or their Director of Studies, depending on which is more appropriate for an individual College and the subject area. Colleges may want to consider a variety of different methods of making this contact, either by telephone, email or video-conferencing. The purpose of the discussion should be to check that the student's year abroad is

progressing well. In particular, if an MMLL or FAMES student has started the year abroad with only a portion of the year planned, detailed discussion of plans for future placements should be had. Students should be encouraged to discuss their plans with the relevant Faculty at as early a stage as possible.

Students must inform their College and Faculty of their contact details, and update these if they change during the year. Students should be instructed to update their details on CamSIS.

### **What to do when problems arise**

If Colleges have concerns about a student's health or welfare before or whilst they are on their year abroad, this should be brought to the attention of the Faculty/Department as soon as possible (details at the end of this document). Similarly, staff in the Faculty/Department will contact Colleges if and when they become aware of issues relating to students. The relevant staff can then meet (either in person or hold a discussion by telephone, email or Teams) to agree the best way to deal with each individual situation.

Students are asked by their Faculty/Department to provide details of who to contact in the event of an emergency or in the event of us not being able to contact them. They will be asked to give explicit consent for us to make this contact. Where appropriate, and in agreement with all parties involved, next of kin will be contacted. If serious concerns are raised, the matter will be escalated to the Safety Office.

### **Security incidents/Natural Disasters**

The relevant Faculty/Department has a protocol in place for when there is a known security incident or natural disaster in areas where students are located. As a principle, the relevant Department/Faculty will contact all students as currently recorded as being in the relevant city. On a case-by-case basis it may also be appropriate to contact students located in the country or in nearby countries. When students do not respond to the initial email, decisions on how to proceed will be taken on a case-by-case basis and will involve discussion with the student's Director of Studies and CollegeTutor.

### **Intermission/Exemption from the Year Abroad in MMLL and FAMES**

Where it is clear before the Year Abroad that a student's health will prevent them from completing the Year Abroad it is possible to receive permission from the relevant Faculty Board for a student to be exempted from the Year Abroad in its entirety, or to have permission to complete a shorter period abroad. In these cases, Colleges can contact the relevant administrator in the first instance.

If a student falls ill during the Year Abroad, the following courses of action are available:

1. Apply for intermission (via [the EAMC](#)) and complete the Year Abroad the following year.
2. Apply to the relevant Faculty Board for permission for the requirement for the Year Abroad to be waived or shortened and proceed directly into Part II.

### **Contact email addresses**

#### **FAMES**

Email: [ugpa@ames.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ugpa@ames.cam.ac.uk)

#### **MMLL**

Year Abroad Office: [yearabroad@mml.cam.ac.uk](mailto:yearabroad@mml.cam.ac.uk)

#### **Law Faculty**

Email: [yearabroad@law.cam.ac.uk](mailto:yearabroad@law.cam.ac.uk)

#### **Department of Engineering**

Email: [clie-enquiries@eng.cam.ac.uk](mailto:clie-enquiries@eng.cam.ac.uk) and [teaching-office@eng.cam.ac.uk](mailto:teaching-office@eng.cam.ac.uk)