Frequently asked questions

University-wide allocation process

How competitive is the University-wide programme?
The University-wide programme is open to students from across the University of Nottingham and it is a competitive programme. There is a finite number of places available at each of our partner universities in any given year. However, this should not put you off applying – each year around 60% of applicants are accepted onto the programme.

What are the application criteria?
1. Minimum average grade of 60% (2:1) to date
   (If you are applying to study abroad during your second year, your combined average to date, including your first year marks, will be used. Students who have attained an average grade of less than 60% without any valid extenuating circumstances will not be considered for the programme.)
2. An academic reference
3. Personal statement (as part of the online application)

How are places allocated?
Your application will be assessed using the three criteria above, your application will be scored and then ranked. If you did not meet the minimum 60% average your application will be rejected unless you have extenuating circumstances (officially recorded with your school/department). If places are available at your chosen universities you will be allocated to one of them, in accordance with the number of places available.

Should I choose an alternative destination/s?
Yes if there are other partners outside of your first three choices that you wish to go to, then you can choose up to another three choices. Please think carefully about which partners you choose, it is very unlikely the most popular universities will have any places that become available as alternative destinations. There are no added points for listing alternative destinations so only put universities that you would actually like to go on exchange to. If there are no places available at any of your first three choices then you will be considered for any alternative destinations you have listed, where places become available, that are appropriate for your school/department.

Exactly how many places are available at each partner university?
In general our partner universities offer from 2 to 20 semester places each year, although it is possible for there to be no places at all available for a particular partner in any given year. The numbers of places offered is decided by the partner university and depends on the balance of incoming and outgoing students through our reciprocal exchange agreement. Where possible we will indicate the application success rate for each partner based on the number of places and applications received in the previous year.

How likely am I to be allocated to my first choice?
It is very difficult to answer this question as it always depends on the number of students who apply to the programme in any given year, which partner universities prove to be popular that year, and which partner university you have listed as your first choice.

I have a very strong preference for my first choice; can my second and third choices hinder my chances of getting my first choice?
Your second and third choices of partner university will not hinder your chances of being allocated to your first choice. However you should be aware that there is no guarantee you will be allocated to your first choice.
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Can I just select one partner university on my application?
Yes, if you genuinely only want to study abroad at one destination. However you should be aware that if you select less than three partner universities on your application, and are not allocated to your first or second choices, you will not be considered for any other choices.

If another student withdraws, is their place offered to other students?
Yes, although this is an unlikely scenario, as the partner university application deadlines mainly fall in February and March and the number of students who choose to withdraw prior to this date is very small. If this were to happen, you would be contacted by a member of staff from the International Office. We only offer withdrawn places to students who have not yet been placed, there is no option to “swop”.

What if I have extenuating circumstances?
If you have extenuating circumstances which you wish to be considered by the Selection Committee, then you must have followed the extenuating circumstances procedure for your school/department, and spoken to your academic advisor prior to the application deadline in order for your extenuating circumstances to be considered by the selection committee.

When will I be notified of the outcome of my application?
By email by 5pm Wednesday 28 February 2018.

Selecting your universities and study abroad period

How many universities can I apply for?
Up to three and then three alternative destinations.

How should I select which universities to apply for?
Firstly, check which universities are offered by your home school/department on the factsheet for your school/department: www.nottingham.ac.uk/studyabroad/factsheets Then you should carefully consider the available modules; the type of teaching, learning and assessment; the climate; the costs involved (flights, visa, insurance, cost of living); and your own personality and interests, both academic and non-academic.

I’m studying a Joint Honours degree; how does that work?
Normally you can only apply to universities which are offered by both of your schools/departments. It is imperative that you work with both of your academic advisers to ensure that you are meeting the academic requirements for both parts of your degree programme. Normally you would need to take half of your modules from one school/department and half from the other whilst you are abroad.

Why does my school/department have a limited number of partner university choices? Is it possible to apply for universities that are not on the list?
The choice of partner universities is determined by each participating school/department based on compatible modules at the partner universities. Not all partner universities are suitable destinations for your school/department. If you feel a particular partner university offers interesting and compatible modules but is not on the list for your school/department, then please discuss this directly with your academic advisor.

I am not in the correct year to apply. What should I do?
Your home school/department selects the most appropriate period of time for their students to study abroad, taking into consideration the structure and requirements of the degree programme. It is therefore unlikely that you will be able to study abroad at any other point during your degree.

Do I need to speak a foreign language fluently?
No, all of our partners have a range of modules taught in English; the only exception is PUC Chile where modules are all taught in Spanish. Teaching and Learning is available in English even in countries where English is not the first language, including Japan, Sweden, Mexico and South Korea. Language classes in the relevant language are available to exchange students at these partner universities.
What are the semester dates for universities in the Southern Hemisphere?
The semester dates for universities in the Southern Hemisphere are different those in the Northern Hemisphere. The semesters typically run as follows in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa:

Semester 1: February – June
Semester 2: July – November

This means that:

- Students who are accepted to study abroad for the equivalent of the University of Nottingham Autumn Semester would finish their Nottingham exams in June and start their study abroad period in July.
- Students who are accepted to study abroad for the equivalent of the University of Nottingham Spring Semester would finish their exams in January and start their study abroad period in February/March, the beginning of the academic year.
- Students who are accepted to study abroad for the equivalent of the University of Nottingham full academic year will take Semester 2 followed by Semester 1 at the host university in the Southern Hemisphere. This may cause some issues with modules, especially if modules are linked across semesters, but generally these can be resolved.

If I have the option to study abroad for either the autumn or spring semester, can I apply to study abroad for both options, and then select the semester when I will study abroad if I am accepted?

No, you should make the decision at application stage.

If I have the option to study abroad for either the autumn or spring semester, which semester would you recommend?

There are a number of factors to consider that may influence your choice:

- If you are applying to study abroad in Canada, the USA, Hong Kong or Singapore for the equivalent of the Nottingham Spring Semester, then you will miss the January exam period in Nottingham and will either submit alternative assessment prior to departure from Nottingham, or take your Nottingham exams at the host university in January. Accepted students in this situation will work together with their academic adviser, the Exams Office and the International Office to arrange overseas exams or submit alternative assessment prior to departure.
- In the Southern Hemisphere, the seasons are the complete opposite to those in the UK: the summer runs from the start of November to the middle of January. Students who study abroad for the equivalent of the University of Nottingham Spring Semester will miss the hottest summer months of December and January.
- Most schools/departments at Nottingham offer study abroad for the Autumn Semester or Full Academic Year only. This means that you if you study abroad during the Spring Semester and wish to rent out a room in a shared house, it should be more likely that you would find someone to take your room.

Provisional study plan and academic reference

Who is my academic adviser?

Each school/department has a member of academic staff who is responsible for working with and supporting students who wish to study abroad with regards to the academic side of studying abroad, whom we refer to as your academic adviser. The name of the academic adviser is listed on the Study Abroad Opportunities flyer for your school/department: www.nottingham.ac.uk/studyabroad/factsheets In many schools/departments there is also an administrative member of staff to assist students who choose to study abroad.

Whom should I ask for an academic reference?

Normally your personal tutor. However any academic member of staff can provide an academic reference. If you’re not sure whom to ask, then you should contact your academic adviser.

Do I need to submit my academic reference myself?

No. Your academic reference is confidential. It should be submitted by your referee to your academic adviser who then submits it to the Office of Global Engagement. It should not be given to you personally and you should not submit it personally.

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How should I select modules?
1. Identify the core modules that you will be missing whilst you are abroad. This information should be available through your school/departmental office or through your academic adviser. If you won’t be missing any core modules, then you are free to choose your modules within the scope of your degree programme and with the agreement of your academic advisor.
2. Find modules at the host university which match the same core competencies covered in your Nottingham core modules. Refer to the websites listed at the end of this document.
3. Consider optional modules which may be specific to your allocated partner university or host country or region.
   Your academic adviser can provide information on selecting modules and any specific requirements.

Where can I find information on the modules offered by the host universities?
Module information is available on the partner university web pages, where possible links are listed on the partner university information on our country pages. Sometimes this information is not easy to find and this research may take time. You should also be aware that in other countries, modules have a different name, such as “units” or “courses”. Furthermore, the names of the schools/departments/degrees may not be the same as at Nottingham. When looking for modules, it’s advisable to look under different schools/departments/faculties of your host university website.

How do I know what level the modules are?
The indicators used to describe the level of a module will vary depending on the partner university. You should be able to find an explanation on the partner university website, which may be national. For example in the USA, years are referred to as follows: 1st year = Freshman, 2nd year = Sophomore, 3rd year = Junior and 4th year = Senior. You should normally aim to take modules which are at the same level that you would normally take if you were studying in Nottingham. However in some instances it is appropriate to take a higher or lower level module, depending on the content of the module, your previous experience and whether the module in question is optional. You may need to provide evidence that you have met pre-requisites in order to take a particular module. If you have any questions about this, then you should speak to your academic adviser.

Can I choose modules at partner universities that are outside of my home school/department in Nottingham?
One of the best things about studying abroad is the possibility to take modules that are not available at the University of Nottingham. If approved by your academic adviser, we encourage students to consider modules which are specifically relevant to the area or country in which they are studying, which may include field trips or internships. As the universities we work with are world-leading universities, you may get the opportunity to take a module taught by a world-renowned academic.

There is only space to enter 6 modules on the online form – what should I do if I will take more than 6 modules?
We understand that it’s possible that you will take more than 6 modules at your selected partner universities. However it’s likely that you have 6 or fewer core modules to match. You should complete the first 6 modules and discuss any additional modules with your academic adviser.

Personal statement

What makes a great personal statement?
- evidence of your academic commitment and the academic reasons for choosing your three universities
- an honest presentation of who you are as a person, make it personal to you
- an informal style with genuine enthusiasm for studying abroad
- an excellent understanding of what will be expected of you whilst studying abroad, including the academic, practical, social and personal implications
- evidence that you have researched the three partner universities and host countries thoroughly
- examples to show that you are the kind of person who can work to deadlines, follow detailed instructions, keep in regular contact, cope in new situations and adapt to new social environments

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Should I specifically mention my choices of partner university in my personal statement?
Yes. The personal statement should be specific to all three of the partner universities you are applying to, but with emphasis on your first choice. Try to think about what you will gain from studying abroad at that university.

Is there a word limit for the personal statement?
Yes there is word limit of 400 words for each question of the personal statement.

Should I mention the relative costs of studying at the different universities I am applying to study abroad at on my personal statement?
No. There is a separate section on the online application where you should enter your estimated costs for your first choice of university. The aim of this is encourage you to think through the costs involved and consider your choices of university appropriately.

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**After acceptance**

What if I am accepted on to the programme but do not perform well in the end of year exams?
Your nomination to study abroad is always dependent on your continued successful academic progression at Nottingham. Your academic adviser reserves the right to cancel your exchange before you depart if they are concerned about your academic performance and progression.

What if I change my mind about studying abroad after I have submitted my application?
If you choose to submit an application, you must be committed to the concept of studying abroad and have thought through the implications carefully in advance. It is unfair on other students if you apply and are successful but then withdraw later when it is too late for the place to be offered to someone else. However if you are no longer able to study abroad due to a significant change in your circumstances beyond your control, please inform the Office of Global Engagement as soon as possible.

Do I have to apply to the host university after being accepted on to the programme?
Yes, once you have been accepted internally by the University of Nottingham, you will be required to submit an application to your allocated partner university. This application process is required in order to be formally registered at the partner university and to meet immigration requirements. You will be provided with information by the Office of Global Engagement regarding how to apply to your allocated partner university.

Is there a chance of being rejected by the host university even if I am accepted on to the programme by the University of Nottingham?
It is very rare that you will be rejected by your allocated partner university. The only possible reasons for a partner university to reject your application would be if your average grade fell a long way below 60% or it is not possible to find suitable modules. However your study abroad period is always dependent on your continued successful academic progression at the University of Nottingham and your academic adviser reserves the right to cancel your study abroad period if they are concerned about your academic performance and progression.

How are my marks transferred back to Nottingham? What if my host university marks on a different scale to Nottingham?
For the vast majority of students, the marks you gain overseas will count towards your University of Nottingham degree and will be communicated back to the University of Nottingham at the end of your study abroad period. All of our partner universities use a different grading scale to the UK. Your academic adviser is responsible for converting the grades gained into Nottingham grades, so if you have any questions please speak to your academic advisor prior to departure.

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How do I find accommodation abroad?
Accommodation options depend on your allocated partner university. It is your responsibility to secure accommodation abroad, but you will be provided with information regarding the different options, associated costs and how to apply. Students who are accepted on to the programme will be able to access advice and recommendations from previous students.

How much does accommodation cost whilst studying abroad?
Available accommodation and associated costs varies depending on your allocated partner university or country. In many destinations the cost of accommodation can differ greatly depending on the kind of accommodation you wish to live in.
For estimated information on costs please refer to the partner university factsheets here
www.nottingham.ac.uk/studyabroad/factsheets

If I am studying abroad for only one semester, what are my options for accommodation in Nottingham for the other semester?
Students who apply to study abroad are officially advised to wait until they know the outcome of their study abroad application prior to making firm accommodation arrangements for the following year. You will be informed of the outcome of your application to the University-wide programme by 5pm Monday 26 February 2017, which should leave you sufficient time to make accommodation arrangements for 2018/19.

There is one semester accommodation available in university-allocated accommodation in Nottingham. Alternatively if you have already secured private sector accommodation for the full year, you can advertise your room through Unipol unipol.org.uk/nottingham/ or through the Facebook accommodation page. All incoming and outgoing exchange students are directed to these resources so hopefully you will find someone to take your room. Further information will be provided at the pre-departure conference in March 2018.

I am an international student on a Tier 4 visa will my visa be affected by studying abroad?
If you are a Tier 4 visa holder and you are applying for an optional study abroad period that means your degree length will increase then you will need to apply for a visa extension and, under current Tier 4 policy, this process cannot be done from within the UK but instead must be done from overseas, from your country of residence. Details on the process of applying for your visa overseas and any other visa related questions can be directed to our Visa and Immigration Team: immigration-support@nottingham.ac.uk