

STUDENT / STAFF MOBILITY EXCHANGES

Guidance notes

(Version: December 2016)

Aston University provides undergraduate students with the opportunity to undertake a fully integrated and supported placement year. During the year, the students can opt to undertake

- A work placement in the UK, Europe or outside of Europe
- A study exchange placement with a partner university in Europe (under the Erasmus programme) or outside of Europe
- A split between work and study placement – with 6 months doing both.

The Placement Year is an integral part of the University's 2020 strategy and is embedded within strategies across the University, supporting the Schools, partnerships and business engagement, international networks, teaching etc.

The Placement Year is supported by the Placements Team in Careers and Employability. All non-UK work placements and all student exchanges are managed by the International Placements Team (IPT).

European work placements and study exchanges are supported by European Commission funding through the Erasmus+ Programme, which provides grants to the students to help offset additional expenses which they may incur while the student is studying or working abroad.

Please note that Erasmus does not allow students to receive funding in different years, i.e. there must be no gap in between the mobilities. Students are also eligible for funding up to a maximum of 12 months.

The University is committed to supporting staff mobility to facilitate the building of links between partner universities which support the School / University collaborative and international strategies.

For staff mobility within Europe, funding is available through funding from the European Commission through the Erasmus+ Programme; this is managed by Jessica Neumann in the International Office. Please note that Erasmus staff mobility can only be supported if a mobility agreement is in place.

The underlying principle behind student / staff mobility is that it is an exchange. As such, this means that no fees are exchanged between the two institutions and their students/staff. Whilst it would be unrealistic to expect a perfectly balanced exchange each year, there must be a recognition that the numbers should broadly balance over the life of the agreement, with dialogue between the two institutions to manage the mobility numbers, which may mean reducing mobility numbers for one partner until an acceptable equilibrium has been reached .

It is important to ensure that all partnerships have been discussed, agreed and aligned with the School / University collaborative and international strategies.

You are advised to have discussions with your School ADI, the International Office, and for student mobility, the International Placements Team.

1. Due Diligence

Please note that for auditing purposes, due diligence must be carried out on prospective partners and at the point when the agreement is renewed.

There are 2 Due Diligence Proformas on the Quality and Standards webpage:

<http://www1.aston.ac.uk/quality/a-z/collaborativeprovision/>

- For new student exchange agreements
- For renewing student exchange agreements

Please make sure the correct one is completed.

The due diligence form must be checked and approved by the School Associate Dean International to confirm that the proposal fits with the School's internationalisation / collaborative strategy.

The approved form should be sent to Wendy Yip, International Office.
The paperwork will then be checked and considered by

- Wendy Yip
- Lesley Price, Institutional Quality Lead for Collaborative Provision,
- before it is passed to Dr Fiona Lacey, Associate PVC International, for final approval.

Once approved, the Quality team will send a copy of the approved form to:

- the originating School
- the International Office
- Legal Services.

2. Agreements

Once you have received the approved Due Diligence from the Quality team, you can then start drafting the mobility agreement. The Legal Services webpage provides the template agreements:

<http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/legal-services/template-agreements/>

Note that there will be TWO separate agreements drawn up for Erasmus university partners:

- The University exchange agreement
- The Erasmus+ agreement

It was agreed at CPSG (29 January 2014) that the Erasmus+ agreement should be supplemented by an overarching University exchange agreement to provide information on credit, academic appeals, data protection and equal opportunities, which are not found on the Erasmus+ agreement.

Both of these agreements must be signed by both Aston University and the Erasmus+ university partners.

For non-Erasmus+ partners, there is only one agreement required - the University exchange agreement.

You are required to send a copy of the draft agreements to Legal Services to ensure that the agreement is valid. Once Legal Services have confirmed this, you will need to get the agreements signed.

3. Signatories

Once Legal Services have approved the draft agreement(s), you will need to get them signed by all parties.

Original signatures must be requested on each copy of the agreement(s), or the agreement can be executed in counterparts, each of which when executed and delivered, will be an original, and all the counterparts together will constitute the final agreement. For guidance on executing in counterparts please refer to the following link: <http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/legal-services/guidance-notes/>

Two signatories are required to sign on behalf of Aston University as follows:

For all University level (i.e. more than 1 School) exchange agreements:

Dr Fiona Lacey, Associate PVC International
Wendy Yip, Director, International Development

For all single School level exchange agreements:

Dr Fiona Lacey, Associate PVC International
School Executive Dean

4. Storage of final signed agreements

Once the agreement(s) have been finalised and signed by all parties, please ensure that the original signed paperwork is passed onto the relevant named contact in each School:

- ABS: Selena Teeling
- EAS: Claire Wallis
- LHS: Bhavisha Patel
- LSS: Claire Robinson
- For University wide agreements: Jessica Neumann in the International Office

It will be their responsibility that

- the partner institution is sent their copy of the agreement(s);
- scan of the agreement(s) are uploaded to the relevant folder on the International Partnership Shared Drive (your School ADI or partnership/exchange coordinator will have access);
- the International Office is notified, who will update the University's Aston University Collaborations list;
- the original set of Aston agreement(s) are sent to Legal Services for safe keeping.

5. Confirmation of new agreement

The International Office will notify

- The Quality team
- Inform the International Placements Team

*Wendy Yip
Director, International Development
December 2016*