



# College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad: Terms of Reference

THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

## Purpose of Policy

The Terms of Reference provide information to ensure consistent and effective operation of the College Progression Boards considering the credit obtained by students who have optional periods of study abroad.

## Overview

The Terms of Reference provide information on the remit, composition and responsibilities of the Progression Boards in Colleges which make progression decisions for University of Edinburgh students who undertake optional study abroad during their degree programmes.

## Scope: Mandatory Policy

The Terms of Reference apply to all students who study abroad during their degree programmes and to the members of the College Progression Boards which consider their academic achievements for progression purposes. The Terms of Reference do not apply to students studying for a Modern Language (single or joint honours), whose progression decisions for their study abroad are made by the relevant Board of Examiners.

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## Document control

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Approved:</b> 19.3.15	<b>Starts:</b> 1.8.15	<b>Equality impact assessment:</b> 23.3.15	<b>Amendments:</b> 13.06.24	<b>Next Review:</b> 2024/25
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**Approving authority** Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

**Consultation undertaken** Policy reviewed in 2021 in consultation with College Offices.

**Section responsible for policy maintenance & review** Academic Services

**Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations** The policy is subsidiary to the Taught Assessment Regulations. [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf)  
It is part of a suite of policies and guidance that support the Board of Examiners process:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners)

**Policies superseded by this policy** The 2017/18 version of this document

**Alternative format** If you require this document in an alternative format please email [Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk) or telephone 0131 650 2138.

**Keywords** Study abroad, progression board, college progression board, credit for study abroad



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1. **Purpose and Remit**
  - 1.1 The University offers periods of study abroad within its teaching and the learning experience. The College Progression Board for Study Abroad is responsible for ensuring that consistent progression decisions are taken for students who have a period of optional study abroad. The College Progression Board confirms the award of credit for this study abroad. The College Progression Board does not consider students studying for a Modern Language (single or joint honours), or students who are studying on degree programmes whose title contains "...with a Year Abroad", whose progression decisions for their study abroad are made by the relevant Board of Examiners. The College Progression Board also recommends appropriate courses of action following its progression decisions. Progression Boards operate within the University's Taught Assessment Regulations and Degree Regulations and are consistent with the UK Quality Code.  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf)  
<http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/>
  - 1.2 The remit of College Progression Boards for Study Abroad is:
    - 1.2.1 to make decisions on the award of credit for students returning from periods of study abroad, including the award of credit on aggregate where appropriate;
    - 1.2.2 to make progression decisions for these students; and
    - 1.2.3 where students have insufficient credits for progression, to consider appropriate action and to make recommendations for any concessions required from the Taught Assessment Regulations to be considered as appropriate by the relevant College or, if required, by the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC).
  - 1.3 In reaching its decisions, the College Progression Board ensures that:
    - 1.3.1 credit conversions are academically appropriate and supported by evidence and documentation;
    - 1.3.2 decisions align with relevant criteria and requirements in the University's Curriculum Framework; the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study and Degree Programme Tables; the Taught Assessment Regulations; and the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework;
    - 1.3.3 its decisions are consistent and, where appropriate, take account of any relevant exceptional circumstances, in line with the [Exceptional Circumstances Policy](#).
  - 1.4 The College Progression Board operates in accordance with the University's models of degree classification (Appendix 1 below).
  - 1.5 The College Progression Board for Study Abroad operates as a Progression Board, in accordance with the Undergraduate Progression Board Policy, unless specified otherwise in these Terms of Reference. [www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug\\_progression\\_boards.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf)



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1.5 The University has two College Progression Boards for Study Abroad: one for the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and one which covers the Colleges of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine<sup>1</sup> and Science and Engineering.

### 2. Composition

2.1 The Head of the relevant College<sup>2</sup> appoints a Convener for the College Progression Board. The Convener is eligible for appointment for a period of three years and may be re-appointed. In the absence of the Convener at any meeting, the College Progression Board is chaired by a Deputy Convener appointed by the Head of the relevant College. The Convener of the meeting shall have both a deliberative and a casting vote.

2.2 Each College Progression Boards consists of at least one internal examiner from each School in the College which sends students on study abroad. Where appropriate, these internal examiners may be the School's Exchange Coordinator.

2.3 Each College Progression Board has at least one member from the other College Progression Board within the University; and at least one member from the International Office.

2.4 Each College Progression Board is the responsibility of at least one External Examiner, who has oversight of the process. This oversight may be done remotely; the External Examiner does not need to be physically present.

2.5 The Head of College has the right to appoint an ex officio College member to the College Progression Board.

2.6 The College Progression Board is supported by an administrator appointed on behalf of the relevant College and by a regulations expert.

2.7 The College Progression Board is quorate if at least two internal examiners, the College Progression Board Convener, a member from the other College Progression Board and a member from the Study and Work Away Team of Edinburgh Global are present.

### 3. Governance

3.1 The College Progression Boards shall report decisions via Schools using the usual progression board decision reporting route.

3.2 In addition, for the first three years of their operation, College Progression Boards report at least annually, following conclusion of their decision-making process for the year, to the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee. These reports will provide some statistics on the students considered by the College Progression Board, including the numbers in each of the different categories considered (see paragraph 4.4); whether there were any issues regarding receipt of transcripts; and other relevant issues in relation to study abroad.

3.3 The College Progression Boards liaise with College and University concession processes when necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> Only students in the School of Biomedical Sciences undertake optional study abroad.

<sup>2</sup> The Convener of the CSE/CMVM Progression Board needs to be agreed by the Heads of both Colleges.



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### 4. Operation

- 4.1 At the beginning of each academic year the relevant Colleges produce an agreed list of the members of the College Progression Board for Study Abroad.
- 4.2 Each College Progression Board must meet at least once in each academic year at the appropriate time, and prior to the start of the following academic year..
- 4.3 College Progression Boards shall hold such meetings as the Convener may call, including electronic or virtual meetings.
- 4.4 Responsibilities for the College Progression Boards are as follows (see definition of categories below):

#### **The Study and Work Away Team** will:

- liaise with Student Systems and provide each College Office with an accurate list of candidates for the board to consider, highlighting any potential category 3 cases;
- liaise with Partner Institutions and students to gather in academic transcripts;
- forward transcripts to the relevant College Offices as they are received; and
- provide guidance on partner grading and credit conventions.

#### **The College Offices** will:

- categorise each transcript as it is received;
- forward copies of transcripts to the relevant School Exchange Coordinator for confirmation of the category;
- liaise with the relevant School to gather further documentation for category 3 cases, for example on exceptional circumstances;
- prepare all required documentation, summaries and statistics for the exam board;
- following the Board meeting, provide Student Systems with a list of the students who were on optional study abroad and their confirmed credit allocations for their period abroad; and
- send each School the relevant progression decision for students in the School who were on optional study abroad so the School can upload and publish the progression decisions in EUCLID.

The following classifications shall be used for processing transcripts.

**Category 1:** This comprises students who have undertaken a normal load of study (equivalent to 120 SCQF credits, as agreed in the Exchange Learning Agreement); who appear to have taken all courses at an appropriate level, and who have successfully passed all courses.

**Category 2:** This comprises students who appear to have taken fewer courses than expected; or who have taken courses at a lower level; or who have failed elements of their programme abroad but still met the requirements of the University's Taught Assessment Regulations for the award of credit on aggregate or for the provision of a further assessment opportunity.



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**Category 3:** This comprises students who appear to have failed badly or for whom there are other problems with the transcript. For all such cases, the relevant Personal Tutor/Exchange Co-ordinator is asked to comment on the student's performance and is offered the opportunity of recommending how to proceed.

- 4.5 The College Progression Board will decide the process for dealing with transcripts that are received out of cycle, for example, for category 1 and straightforward category 2 cases the decision could be covered under Convener's Action.
- 4.6 Each College Progression Board will consider exceptional circumstances in line with the University's [Exceptional Circumstances Policy](#).
- 4.7 Progression decisions are sent by the Board to the relevant Schools, so the School can upload and publish the progression decisions in EUCLID for their students who were on optional study abroad. Progression decisions are reported using EUCLID Student View. The College Board liaises with Schools to ensure that the School can meet its responsibility to support students under regulations governing the publication of results (Taught Assessment Regulations – Publication of Results)  
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf>

**13 June 2024**



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### Appendix 1

#### Credit for Study Abroad Classification Models

The models below use degree classification information from the Taught Assessment Regulations.  
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf>

Model A: Degree programme, except for modern languages, with two honours years with an **obligatory** period of residence/study abroad:  
Credit for study abroad awarded at the level attained for the courses, usually SCQF level 9 or 10 equivalent  
Classification based on both honours year equally weighted

Model B: Modern language degree programmes, with two honours years with an **obligatory** period of residence/study abroad:  
Credit for study abroad awarded at the level attained whether by study or language acquisition, usually SCQF level 9 or 10 equivalent  
Classification based on both honours years, with the credit points for language acquisition through residence abroad aggregated with final year language learning credit in the calculation

Model C: Degree programme with two honours years with an **optional** period of residence/study abroad:  
Credit for study abroad awarded at the level attained for the courses, usually SCQF level 9 or 10 equivalent  
Classification is based on the final year only

Model D: Integrated masters degree programmes with three honours years with an **obligatory** period of residence/study abroad (MChem and MChemPhys “with Industrial Experience” and “with a Year Abroad” and MPhys “with a Year Abroad”):  
Credit for study abroad awarded at the level attained for the courses, usually SCQF level 9, 10 or 11 equivalent  
Classification is based on all three honours years, weighted 20,20,60

Model E: Integrated masters degree programmes with three honours years with an **optional** period of residence/study abroad:  
Credit for study abroad awarded at the level attained for the courses, usually SCQF level 9, 10 or 11 equivalent  
Classification is based on the other two honours years only have the following weighting:  
students studying abroad in year 3: 0,50,50 (i.e. years 4 and 5 equally weighted);  
students studying abroad in year 4: 33.3, 0, 66.6 (i.e. years 3 to 5 in the ratio 1:2)

#### Rationale

The University's practice is consistent with the QAA Quality Code. :

The University adopts the above models of degree classification for students who have studied abroad for the following reasons.



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1. Where students' degree programmes include an obligatory period of study abroad this requires the attainment of both credit and grades for the study abroad.
2. A primary learning outcome for modern language students is language acquisition, especially in the year abroad. This can be attained via study or work and in all cases through immersion in the target language and culture. The model recognises the importance of this by weighting the language learning with the final year language learning. By awarding credits but not grades for the year abroad this increases the flexibility of students to blend study, work and residence abroad arrangements.
3. Where the study abroad is optional then students need to attain credit. These students are on degree programmes where most of the cohort studies only within Edinburgh. The University therefore classifies these degrees solely on the grades from Edinburgh for consistency and robustness.
4. Integrated masters spending their three honours years at the University of Edinburgh have them weighted 20,40,40. The integrated masters with an obligatory year abroad are weighted 20,20,60. As study abroad is not taken in the final year this means the study abroad year is weighted 20%, regardless of whether taken in third or fourth year. This is consistent for the cohort taking those degree programmes.
5. Integrated Masters students spending their three Honours years at the University of Edinburgh have them weighted 20, 40, 40. For those who have an optional year abroad in years 3 or 4, the rationale for the weighting is that the ratio of the years at the University of Edinburgh should be in the same proportion as for students spending their three Honours years at University of Edinburgh.

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