

**LTC17D165**

**Title:** *Role Descriptor for the Study Abroad Academic Coordinator (SAACs)*  
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**Circulation:** 20 June 2018  
**Agenda:** LTC17A006  
**Version:** Final  
**Status:** Open

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**Issue**

As part of the University wide review of study abroad led by John Tully in 2017 the need for a clearly articulated description of academic responsibilities related to courses with a study abroad element and UEA students studying abroad and visiting students coming to study at UEA.

The attached role descriptor was devised by a group led by Katrien Verbruggen from the Study Abroad team comprising academic staff from Schools with study abroad elements. As noted in the descriptor not all elements apply to all Schools. It does, however, formalise key elements of the role which are already being carried out by SAACs.

The descriptor was sent to Faculty Learning Teaching and Quality Committees for endorsement in April 2018.

**Recommendation**

Recipients are invited to endorse the role descriptor.

**Resource Implications**

Each School that has an element of study abroad within its portfolio of courses is required to have an academic role holder with expertise in the area. This is currently the case and so no additional resource outlay for Schools is envisaged.

**Risk Implications**

Each School with a study abroad element currently has a role holder who performs a significant element of the duties outlined in the role descriptor. Each School needs at least one academic member of staff who is knowledgeable about their School's partnership arrangements and can advise staff and students on aspects related to study abroad. The risks of such a post not being in place could be a poor student experience or poor relationships with academic  
[This section is designed to highlight how the proposal will impact the overall level of risk facing the University. Proposals should contain an analysis of the risks facing the proposal and any mitigating factors that can be put in place. A broad assessment of the risk should be included e.g. low, medium, or high. If not applicable this should be stated.]

**Equality and Diversity**

The role is key to ensuring that the experience of students undertaking study abroad and students coming from abroad to study at UEA have the same experience as UEA students studying at UEA for the duration of their degree. Otherwise, there are no specific E&D elements that need to be considered.

**Further Information**

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# **ROLE OF STUDY ABROAD ACADEMIC COORDINATOR (SAAC)**

**Working in conjunction with administrators from Study Abroad Office  
(SAO) /  
Schools / the Learning and Teaching Service (LTS)**

The Study Abroad Academic Coordinator (SAAC) is a designated academic member of staff within each School responsible for coordinating matters relating to students' study abroad. The SAAC is principally involved in exchange students at undergraduate level and has a specific responsibility for the academic matters arising for exchange students.

SAAC work closely together with the team in the Study Abroad Office (SAO) who are responsible for administering exchanges and managing exchange Partner relations.

Indicative duties (these will vary from School to School):

## **Incoming Exchange and Visiting Students**

- 1) Deal with School specific queries from the SAO and partner universities about modules on offer to incoming visiting students.
- 2) Approve applications of incoming students when Grade Point Average (GPA) is below the threshold or when incoming student needs to meet UEA prerequisites on modules. *Note:* This is based upon transcripts and additional information received by SAO during the application process. The partner institution is jointly responsible for sending students of good academic standing to UEA.
- 3) Work with academic and professional service colleagues to ensure incoming students within the School receive the same level of support and guidance as home students.
- 4) Liaise with visiting students' Advisers and SAO in case of attendance and/or academic problems.

*Note:* SAO monitors attendance of all incoming visiting students.

- 5) Handle School-specific/academic queries from the SAO and from partner universities about modules on offer to incoming visiting students.

*Note:* incoming exchange and visiting students are appointed an adviser in the School at UEA where they take the majority of their modules. The SAAC is not necessarily the adviser of each incoming exchange or visiting student.

## **Outgoing UEA Exchange Students**

- 1) Advise students about their academic suitability for study placements they are considering.

- 2) Assist students in choosing suitable destination institutions from an academic perspective, including consideration of a student's language preparedness where appropriate.
- 3) Approve allocations of students to partner institutions in December (full year abroad) and in March (single semester abroad) each year.
- 4) Check and sign the Risk Assessment form, completed by each student going abroad on a study or a work placement through the Study Abroad Office.
- 5) Advise students about modules they should or will be allowed to take at their host institution, in accordance with the academic requirements abroad set by the School.
- 6) Check and approve academic requirements abroad set by the School and published in the Year and Semester Abroad Guides available through the SAO.
- 7) Check, approve and sign students' provisional (if applicable) and final Learning Agreement of the modules they take abroad.  
*Note:* SAO follows up students who have not submitted their Learning Agreement and passes Learning Agreements on to SAAC.
- 8) Ensure that students are aware of the impact of any assessment abroad on their degree at UEA, such as failing the semester or year abroad, and translation of grades and impact on degree classification (for Integrated Masters only). Bachelors and Integrated Masters Award (BIM) regulations are on the UEA Portal in the [Academic Calendar](#).
- 9) For Integrated Masters only: translate grades received to a UEA grade.
- 10) Be aware of the regulations relating to students going abroad – to be found on Study Abroad resources repository on the UEA Portal:
  - ✓ progression marks & concessions;
  - ✓ reassessment regulations if one or more modules is failed abroad;
  - ✓ course transfer off and transfer on regulations;
  - ✓ credits needed to pass the semester or year abroad
  - ✓ compulsory modules to be taken at UEA if spending a single semester abroad
- 11) For the Year Abroad: promote UEA's exchange programme within the School when spaces are available for additional students to transfer onto the degrees with a Year Abroad.  
*Note:* The availability of spaces will be communicated by the SAO. Students can only transfer onto the degrees with a Year Abroad with the involvement of the SAO.
- 12) Notify SAO if aware of any concerns with outgoing students while at UEA or while they are abroad.
- 13) Assist SAO in monitoring / encouraging assigned School Advisers to remain in touch with their advisees when they are abroad. Advisers need to (<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching/staff/advising>):
  - ✓ be in regular (e-mail/phone/skype) contact with the student so as to be aware of any academic concerns at the earliest stage.

Note: this should be in line with the number of appointments a student would have with their advisor during a normal year of study at UEA;

- ✓ keep a record of these contacts using the Adviser task on eVision;
- ✓ inform SAO if aware of any student expected to go on a placement abroad has, in fact, not left the UK, come back to UEA, withdrawn from UEA or appears not to be engaging as expected at the host university;
- ✓ be in contact with SAO about any problems or changes in students' circumstances (e.g. academic or assessment issues);
- ✓ if and when possible, arrange to meet students in country to check that they are well.

### **Partner universities and Agreements**

- 1) Develop knowledge about UEA's partner universities, with a view to:
  - ✓ gaining insight in courses/modules on offer which are suitable for the School's outgoing students;
  - ✓ recognise any special academic requirements for outgoing students (e.g. Business students to California need to have studied Calculus at UEA);
  - ✓ be aware of teaching language(s) of institution/department/course/module;
  - ✓ vet partner universities for School's future use; gauging whether partner universities' module offerings, method of teaching, location and setting as well as extra-curricular offerings will be attractive to outgoing UEA students.
  - ✓ if applicable, include selection of those institutions whose modules/programmes meet professional body requirements for a student's academic programme at UEA.
- 2) Liaise with the Academic Coordinator at partner universities to discuss curricula, students' academic performance, academic requirements etc. where necessary.
- 3) Liaise with academic colleagues at UEA about study abroad placements and vetting of existing partner universities and potential new universities.
- 4) Discuss required changes or additions to any existing university or faculty wide partnership agreement with the SAO who will liaise with the Partner Institution.
- 5) Liaise with SAO about joining existing university wide agreements.
- 6) Participate in yearly slotting meeting to allocate spaces at partner institutions with which UEA has university-wide agreements.
- 7) Liaise with International Partnerships Manager or with Erasmus Officer (European Exchanges) about opening new agreements.

*Note:* New agreement proposals require a comprehensive proposal form completed by SAAC or another academic of the same School.

- 8) Liaise with the International Partnerships Manager or with Erasmus Officer (European Exchanges) for agreement negotiations and agreement text.
- 9) Advise Erasmus Officer about School decisions relating to renewals, amendments, cancellations of existing agreements with European Partners. Erasmus Officer initiates bilateral review process when this is due.

### **Other duties**

- 1) Participate in yearly Round Table for SAAC and other events with relevance to Study Abroad.
- 2) Erasmus Staff Mobility: coordinate any incoming teaching staff requests with relevant colleagues in school or school local support.
- 3) Propose travel to partner universities to either visit current outgoing students on placement or to discuss organisation of mobility matters with the partners if mobility issues exist.
- 4) Inform the SAO of any changes to programmes within the School which may impact on the number of places required for Study Abroad (new course proposals, cancellation of existing courses with a year abroad, etc.).
- 5) Liaise with SAO during the UEA admissions process if aware of a significant change in student numbers applying for the courses with a Year Abroad prior to the students starting their studies at UEA.

### Notes:

- Erasmus potential funding support from the SAO for one visit/country trip per year in Europe if Erasmus OS funding available. Proposals should be sent to Erasmus Officer by October of the relevant academic year.
- It is a School responsibility to organise School led events that enable first and second year students to learn from the experiences of students who have returned from their year abroad.
- It is a School decision to establish a number of study abroad students per SAAC – SAO recommends not more than 20 students per SAAC (and 15 for MSci courses).