



Durham
University

Non-European Exchange Application Guide October 2025



Non-European Exchange Application Guide

Welcome! We are delighted that you are considering spending a year abroad studying with a partner university. This guide is for **Non-European Exchange** – Durham’s full-year exchange programme at non-European partner universities. If you are interested in studying in Europe or working abroad, please visit the Global Opportunities homepage for more information: [Global Opportunities](#).

Please note: MLaC Chinese and Japanese studies students please liaise directly with the School of Modern Languages and Cultures Year Abroad team to whom you submit your application.

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1.0 General Information about non-European Exchange

The non-European Exchange Programme is for exchanges with our non-European partners. These partners range from the University of British Columbia in Canada to Chulalongkorn University in Thailand. All of Durham's partner universities can be found here: [GO Study Abroad: Where](#). Places at these universities are awarded using a competitive allocation process, described below.

The purpose of this document is to guide you through the application process and allocation process. Note you will first apply for a place through Durham University and, should you be successfully allocated, you will subsequently apply to your host institution.

1.1 Am I eligible to apply?

The non-European Exchange programme is open to students from to all degrees. Applicants must, however:

- be in their second year;
 - Physics and Computer Science are an exception to this. Physics students have the flexibility to apply for the year abroad in any application period after their first year. Computer Science students are able to apply in their second or third year. Students should speak to their [Departmental Exchange Coordinator](#) if unsure.
- have a first year average of 55% or above*.

Please note:

- the programme can be very competitive, therefore, you are not guaranteed a place;
- some partners may set their grade entry requirements of a higher percentage than 55%. A non-European exchange place is contingent on meeting the partner's entry requirements.
 - *Owing to partner entry requirements, Law requires a first year average of 60% or above
- a small number of places have language requirements. Please check their programmes to ensure that you have the language qualifications to participate.

1.2 When will I go abroad?

The exchange process works as follows:

- Apply during your second year;
- Study abroad during your third year;
- Return to Durham University for your fourth year.

Please note: exchanges are for the full academic year. **With the exception of MLaC Hispanic studies students, single semester exchanges are not permitted.**

1.3 Additional Year or Replacement Year?

Students can do one of two options, depending on their course:

Additional Year	Replacement year
Go abroad in year three, which will add a year in to your programme. Mostly this extends the length of your degree from three to four years (though for some integrated Masters this is from four to five years).	Go abroad in year three, with the year abroad replacing a year in Durham. This is only offered by a limited number of four-year degree courses in the Science Faculty. Please check with your Departmental Exchange Coordinator for details before applying. Not an option for students on a 3-year course.
This is a pass/fail year and the grades do not affect your final degree classification.	Grades count towards final Durham degree mark.
The final degree programme will be <i>[your degree title (BA, MA etc)] XXXX with Year Abroad</i> and you will receive a transcript from your host university to prove what you did abroad.	The final degree programme will be <i>[your degree title (e.g. MSc)] XXXX with Year Abroad</i> and you will receive a transcript from your host university to prove what you did abroad.
90+% of exchanges are additional year	Less than 10% of exchanges are replacement year.

1.4 Approximate timeline

The following timeline shows the approximate process for applying for an exchange. Please note the exact timeline may vary according to the academic calendar of the host university abroad.

Mid-late October	Promotion events for exchanges, e.g. the Global Opportunities Fair
Late October	Applications open
Mid-late November	Applications close
Late November – early December	Applications sent to Departments for approval of the proposed learning agreement.
Late November – early December	Peer marking by students
Late December	Offers of exchange places made
Late January	Deadline for students to accept an offer of a place.
January – June	Durham nominate students to partners
	Students complete applications to partner universities*
	Apply for host accommodation (if applicable)
	Apply for a visa (if applicable)
	Book travel
	Attend pre-departure briefings
	Complete pre-departure process, including health declaration process, Viator travel cover application etc.
June to October	Depart for your year abroad
Within a month of arrival	Submit any paperwork if receiving funding such as Turing.

* Please note the difference between applications. In order to apply to a partner university, students must have first successfully applied for a place on the non-European Exchange scheme. If you miss the

internal application process, you will not be able to apply for a place with a partner. Therefore, you need to:

1. Apply internally to Durham's exchange programme.
2. If successful, you will be nominated to the partner by Durham University.
3. After nomination, the partner will invite you to complete an external application to their university on the exchange programme.

1.5 What are my chances of success?

There are only limited places at each partner and the success rate is approx. 40%.

We are proud of the calibre of Durham students, but this means that we also receive a large number of good applications. Our application process is set up to encourage you to write a personal statement with a narrative of where you want to go, and the benefit that that location will have for you. In considering likelihood of success, you may wish to look at the numbers available at the host universities for which you are applying. **Partners in Anglophone countries are exceptionally popular. E.g. Otago, Boston College and UWA often have only one place available each, which results exceptionally stiff competition between excellent applications.** However, the only guarantee of not getting a place is not applying.

We deliberately run our non-European recruitment prior to Christmas so that unsuccessful applicants can apply for European places in the New Year.

2.0 How to apply

There are two stages to the application process:

- Part 1: Apply via the online form.
- Part 2: Peer mark five of your peers' anonymised personal statements.

More information on each stage is outlined further on in this guide. **Please note that your application will only be considered if you complete all stages by the stated deadlines.**

2.1 Application Procedure Part One

We will only accept online applications via the online form. The form will be accessible from Friday 24th October 12:00 (noon). The form will be available from [Non European Exchange Application - Durham University](#).

You need to use a device that is linked to your Durham account. You may have to open a browser and enter the DU Hub (<https://durhamuniversity.sharepoint.com/teams/Hub>) which may ask you for your Durham login.

The deadline for submission online is:

Friday 21st November 2025, 12:00 (noon UK).

Please give yourself plenty of time to apply in case you experience technical difficulties – we strongly recommend not waiting until just before the deadline to submit your application. Late applications will not be accepted (please see the ‘Late applications’ section below for potential exceptions to this rule).

The online application portal is a MS Form similar to this. You must apply using your Durham University credentials.



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The non-European Exchange Programme is for non-European Study Abroad places only.

Students may also talk to their exchange coordinator in your department before applying for an exchange. Please be clear about how an exchange fits into your degree programme and if there are any requirements set by your department for a year abroad. Once you have submitted your application online, it will be sent to the departmental coordinator, who will need to endorse the application. A list of coordinators is available online here: <https://www.durham.ac.uk/global-durham/global-opportunities/go-study-abroad/departmental-exchange-coordinators/>

There are seven parts to the application:

- Part 1 - Student Details
- Part 2 - University Choices
- Part 3 - Module Choices
- Part 4 - Host University Research
- Part 5 - Personal Statement
- Part 6 - Upload: Statement of previous year's marks
- Part 7 - Declaration

2.1.1 Information required on the online form

Personal Information	
Student ID	This information is required so that we can: a) Check your eligibility b) Nominate you (if successful) to the partner university.
Family Name:	
First Name:	
Durham Email Address:	
Permanent Address:	
Telephone/Mobile:	
Nationality	
College	
Year of study	
Disability declared?	This information does not form part of the scoring of applications. It ensures any eligible support / funding can be allocated in a timely manner.
Widening Participation	
Department	This information is required to check that your module choices and academic course abroad are approved by your department. <u>Please list all of your departments if joint honours.</u>
Full Degree Title:	
Additional or Replacement Year?	
Joint honours: 'leading department' for exchange?	Joint honours students will have to select a primary sending department from which at least 50% of modules abroad are selected.
Placement Choices	
Choice(s) of host university.	Up to three may be selected
Reserve list	Whether you wish to be on a reserve list if unsuccessful
Proposed learning agreement	

This is required to ensure that there are sufficient modules in your subject for a full-year workload at your choice of universities. You must fill out module choices for each university you choose and not just your first choice.	
Module choices for a full course load for each university	A full course load will depend on your proposed host university and how many modules they expect students to take either per semester or per year. Some partners, who have two semesters per year may ask for 5 modules per semester (e.g. 10 per year). Please check their programme information on their website for modules. You will need to list all of your proposed module choices for a full course load*. You must enter the choices in the following format: [Module / Course Code (if known)]: [Module/Course Title]: [Number of host Credits]. E.g. Pol 007: Introduction to the politics of James Bond: 10 credits Econ 007: The Economics of Moneypenney: 20 credits Phy 007: The gravity of Skyfall: 20 credits.
Host University Research Table	
What accommodation is available?	This is required to demonstrate that you have considered how partner universities you choose suit your degree programme, lifestyle and budget. You must do some research before applying. The questions are a starting point for your overall research. You must do this for each university you choose. No units have been specified e.g. it is acceptable to give costs per week, month or year.
What will accommodation cost?	
Will I need to pay for a meal plan?	
What are the term dates?	
What is the name of the closest city?	
To which airport would I fly?	
Do I need a visa? If so, what does this cost?	
Can I work with my visa?	
Personal Statement*	
*The personal statement will be covered in greater depth, at the end of this document	
Part A	Please describe in no more than 500 words how the proposed study placement(s) will benefit you academically, personally and professionally, how you will maximise the benefits of your placement, and how it will enhance your long-term career goals (75%)
Part B	Please outline in no more than 200 words what qualities, skills and experience you can bring to the proposed placement(s) and how you would act as an ambassador for Durham University (25%)
Statement of Previous Year's Marks	
Upload document of your previous years marks	You can obtain your statement of marks Banner Self-Service, which is available from the <i>Useful Links</i> section at the bottom of any University webpage. Please save as: SurnameForename.pdf (e.g. BloggsJoe.pdf)

	This is required as many partners require us to submit this as part of your nomination to them.
Declaration and Submission	
This section ensures that you agree to the terms of the programme.	

2.1.2 Late applications

Applications have a set deadline and we have to be fair to applicants who submit within time limits. We strongly encourage you to submit your application early in case you experience technical difficulties and save a doc draft of your personal statement prior to the deadline. If you miss the official application deadline, the online application link will no longer work, and you will not be able to apply. Exceptions can only be made for late applications if you can **provide evidence** of either of the following:

- That you tried to apply before the official application deadline and were not able to do so for technical reasons, OR;
- That you were unable to apply due to exceptional unforeseen circumstances (for example, hospitalisation).

In such cases, please inform the Global Opportunities Team (exchanges.studyabroad@durham.ac.uk) immediately. We will only be able to grant you an extension if you meet ALL of the following criteria:

- 1) You have contacted the Global Opportunities Team no later than 12 hours after the application deadline has passed. After this time, your application can no longer be considered.
- 2) You have provided us with details about the unforeseen circumstances which prevented you from applying by the advertised deadline and are able to back up your claim with third party evidence
 - a. This evidence could include, for example: a medical certificate; a screenshot showing the issue at the point of failed submission, including the exact date and time; a draft doc version of your personal statement emailed to the Global Opportunities Team in which in the > File > Info > Related Dates > Last modified date and time is on or before the deadline.
 - b. You may be required to back your claim up with multiple pieces of evidence. E.g.
 - A screenshot showing the internet is down will need to be backed up with the Word document timestamp (which can be saved on your local drive without the internet). This is to demonstrate that no advantage can be gained by post-deadline editing.
 - A Word document timestamp will need to be backed up with a screenshot showing the internet is down at or before the submission deadline. This demonstrates that an applicant has not simply neglected to submit in time.
- 3) You have sent a doc copy of your personal statement by email to the Global Opportunities Team within 12 hours of the application deadline.

If you are granted an extension, we will get in touch with you to instruct you on the next steps. You will need to make sure you submit your application during the allocated time slot. Failure to submit your application during the allocated time slot will result in your application not being accepted.

2.1.3 Departmental Approval

Once your application has been submitted, it will be sent to your [Departmental Exchange Coordinator](#) for approval. This is to ensure that there are sufficient modules in your subject for a full-year workload

at your choice of universities. **It is your responsibility, via your own research, to ensure the partner university is able to deliver appropriate modules for your degree subject that meet the full course load requirement.**

Since academic approval is a requirement, we strongly recommend that you speak to your Departmental Exchange Coordinator prior to making an application. Indeed, for Replacement Year students this is a requirement to ensure grades can be transferred.

2.2 Application Procedure Part Two

The second part of the application process is peer-to-peer scoring

**Deadline for completing peer-to-peer scoring:
Monday 8th December 2025 12:00 (noon)**

2.2.1 Peer to Peer scoring process

You will be allocated five anonymous, randomly-assigned personal statements, which will be emailed to your Durham email address by Monday 1st December 2025. If you have not received the documents by that time, please contact the Global Opportunities Team (exchanges.studyabroad@durham.ac.uk)

You will then have until Monday 8th December 2025, 12:00 (noon) to read and mark these statements.

You will be asked to give two scores, one for part A and one for B of the personal statement, for each of your five allocated personal statements:

- A numerical scale will be used to grade statements. Excellent statements should be awarded high scores, statements that do not address the questions in parts A and B should receive low scores.
- Scores will be submitted through an online form.
- Part 6 (below) indicates the things that may be considered when scoring. Further scoring guidance will be given when you receive the statements to be marked.
- We will provide examples of a high-scoring and low-scoring statement.

If you fail to mark all five of your allocated statements by 12:00 (noon) on Monday 8th December 2025, your own exchange application will be considered incomplete and will be withdrawn.

2.2.2 Late Peer Scoring

The same principle applies as for late applications (see above).

3.0 Peer Marking Moderation

The peer marking results will be **heavily moderated** by the Global Opportunities Team, to ensure fairness and consistency. Moderation will take the following forms:

- Senior academics will score a randomly-selected set of personal statements, and check that the scores being allocated by them broadly match those being allocated by students.
- All scores given to each personal statement will be compared for consistency, with any anomalous marks being investigated. Where marks are found to be anomalous, they will be excluded from the overall total for that personal statement.
- Anyone who has one or more of the marks they awarded disallowed will have all of the marks they awarded investigated. If it is felt that they may not have engaged fully with the peer marking process, for instance giving all statements very low marks, they will be asked to provide written justification of their marks. If suitable justification is not provided, their application will be withdrawn.
- The moderated scores will be combined into a mean average score.

4.0 Final Ranking and Allocation

Exchange applications are ranked using scores from two key criteria: your first year academic performance (25%) and the mean average scores you receive from your peers for your personal statement (75%).

Personal Statement (Part 1 (75%) and Part 2 (25%))	Academic performance	Combined score
75%	25%	Score out of 100

4.1. Academic Performance

Academic scores are taken from your first year performance relative to your class-peers for each module taken. The score for each module is then combined to produce an average ranking relative to your peers.

- This removes any bias towards departments who may have marked exams more generously but subsequently moderated with high grade boundaries for degree classification.
- The ranking takes into account module credit size.
- The ranking excludes marks where concession have been raised.

The data for scores is taken from the Academic Office records. The Global Opportunities Team can only accept the scores provided by them.

4.2 Allocation of places

Prior to allocation, any applications that were not approved by [Departmental Exchange Coordinators](#) will be withdrawn. The Global Opportunities Team rank students based on the compiled final scores out of 100. Places are allocated based on the following principals and procedures:

- Any compulsory year abroad slots at language partners (e.g. Chinese Studies specific partners) will be filled.
- Exchange places will then be allocated based on the highest **overall** score (made up of both the academic and personal statement score) in rank order. E.g. the top ranked candidate will be allocated their first choice (e.g. Merkel below).
- Since places at each partner are not unlimited, if an applicant's first choice has already been filled, their second choice will be considered. (e.g. Ardern and Kishida below).
- If the second choice is also filled the third choice will be considered.

E.g: if Boston, Calgary, McGill and UBC all have one place available, the allocation in order would be:

Applicant	Score	1. Choice	2. Choice	3. Choice	Allocation
Angela Merkel	96	Boston	UBC	Calgary	Boston
Jacinda Ardern	95	Boston	Calgary	UBC	Calgary
Joe Biden	94.5	Calgary	Boston	None	None
Fumio Kishida	94	Calgary	UBC	Boston	UBC
Sahle-Work Zewde	90	McGill	Calgary	UBC	McGill

- Where an applicant's choices are full (e.g. Biden above), if the applicant has indicated they wish to be on the reserve list, they will put on it.
- Once you have been made an offer for one of your destination choices, you will not be considered for any other places. E.g. Merkel above would not be offered UBC or Calgary, even if they reconsider their preferences.
- There is a link between where you apply and the offers made. E.g. Sahle-Work Zewde specified McGill as a choice, wrote an application accordingly, and received an offer. Joe Biden did not apply to McGill and thus did not receive an offer.
- If you are offered a place at one of your destination choices and choose to reject it, your application will be withdrawn and you will not be offered the chance to go back into the applicant pool. If you withdraw, you may however, apply for a European place (which opens in the new year).
- **All students have until Friday 9th January 2025 to accept or decline their offer.**
- If you have not accepted your offer by the stated deadline, your place is automatically forfeited.
- Successful applicants may not accept a non-European Exchange place and then apply for a European exchange. If you wish to apply for a European place, you must decline your non-European Exchange place. This regulation is in place as slots at partners are limited and we have fixed nomination timelines with partners. Students occupying two slots take opportunities away from other students.

4.3 Reserve List

The Global Opportunities Team will contact students whose applications were approved but who were not initially allocated a place, informing that they will remain in the reserve applicant pool. These students will be considered for a place as part of the reallocation process.

- The Global Opportunities Team will inform reserve list candidates of any unfilled places. Students will be given a deadline to indicate preferences for alternative (hitherto unfilled) places.

- Once the deadline has passed, the Global Opportunities Team will use the same ranked based allocation process.
- Reserve offers will be made with the requirement that students will need to agree a new learning agreement with their Departmental Exchange Coordinator – if this is not possible, the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

5.0 What Happens Next?

5.1 If successful

You will be nominated by Durham to the host university. Thereafter, you will have to apply to the host university (so they can register you) and complete Durham's pre-departure process.

Students who have received an offer of a [non-European exchange](#) place must contact the Global Opportunities Team to formally withdraw from the non-European programme before making an European application. Students who fail to do this will be considered ineligible for the European exchange programme and will not be offered a place. This is to ensure that students do not hold two offers of year abroad places at the expense of others who cannot receive an offer owing to limited places.

5.2 If unsuccessful

You will have the opportunity to apply for a European exchange. Further, you may wish to consider other work or volunteering Global Opportunities.

6.0 Info on Personal Statements

The best person to describe what you can gain from a Year Abroad and what you can contribute while there, is you! The best personal statements are personal to you, rather than a list of why a year abroad is generally a good thing.

6.1 The use of AI

Writing aids are commonplace and cross a broad spectrum: from simple spell checkers in MS Word to generative AI. While the exact line between what may (such as spell checkers) and may not be appropriate (generative AI) may be moot, the overriding principle is that your personal statement should be indeed yours. Thus, we do not recommend the use generative AI to write your personal statements. There are two key reasons:

First, to quote comedian Tom Lehrer: 'Life is like a sewer. What you get out of it, depends on what you put into it.' AI does not know you; it does not know your ambitions; it does not know what modules you may wish to study; and does not know all that you have done in the past. Asking generative AI to produce a personal statement without feeding it in-depth information about you and your planned exchange, will only produce extremely generalised statements. Such (im)personal statements always score badly.

Second, any of your five peer-scorers can easily cut-and-paste your personal statement into an online AI detector. A scorer may award lower marks if they find that your personal statement is written largely or entirely by something other than you.

6.2 Advice on writing a personal statement

Remember that you are applying to specific places, therefore, the best applications are able to weave a thread about these places through their application. As an example:

- You could justify applying for three universities in a single country (e.g. Canada) by highlighting your interest and proposed dissertation in indigenous relations. Part A (see below) could highlight some courses you wish to attend and ideas for a dissertation and (Part B) could highlight your role on the Canadian Society.
- You could justify applying for three universities across countries in a region (e.g. Australia and New Zealand) owing to their cricket excellence centres at which you wish to coach at (which intersects with your role of XXX in Durham's Cricket society and your career ambitions for Y).
- You could justify a spread of universities in different countries and regions as they are tech hubs, which intersect with your academic course and career ambitions.

This approach that weaves a justification or theme throughout also means that you can give your first choice slightly greater focus, while still alluding to and justifying your second and third choices.

You do not need to show previous experience of travel/studying abroad (so we don't disadvantage students who have not had access to such experiences in the past and ensure these opportunities are available to students from all backgrounds).

The Personal Statement is in two parts:

Section A: Please describe in no more than 500 words how the proposed study placement(s) will benefit you academically personally and professionally, how you will maximise the benefits of your placement, and how it will enhance your long term career goals (75% weighting)

You are, therefore, encouraged to consider the following points:

- How does the proposed placement fit with and could potentially enhance your programme of study at Durham?
- Can you provide adequate academic justifications for the year abroad at each host?
- How does the placement support your future career aspirations?
- What benefits would the exchange placement bring to your final year back at Durham? This may be academically or otherwise.
- What personal benefits do you envisage you can gain through the exchange placement? For example, intercultural skills, language skills.

Section B: Please outline in no more than 200 words what qualities, skills and experience you can bring to the proposed placement(s) and how you would act as an ambassador for Durham University (25% weighting)

You are, therefore, encouraged to consider:

- On placement you will be an ambassador for Durham University abroad. Can you show how the year abroad is part of your track record of activities (e.g. through extra-curricular activities)?
- Have you researched and shown a commitment to maximising the opportunities available through the placement and therefore representing Durham in a positive way?
- Can you articulate what you can bring to the placement?

The same considerations for parts 1 and 2 apply both to writing the application and to scoring that of others.

None of the above is a prescriptive magic formula! It is just a guide to help you to consider how to articulate your motivations for studying abroad and your qualities, skills and experience more generally, so that you can show what you can bring to the placement and act as a representative of Durham at the partner institution.

Finally, well done for reading this far and good luck!