

Student Exchange Agreements Policy and Procedures

Last Modified	August 2019
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Approval Authority	Executive Director, Student Services and Communications
Contact Officer	International Mobility Co-ordinator, International Relationships Office – Student Services and Communications

Introduction

The University has a number of agreements with overseas universities, some specifically to facilitate exchange, others including exchange as part of a wider Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

This document explains how to go about establishing

- an exchange agreement,
- the way in which the University's exchanges will be monitored and managed, and
- financial and insurance provisions for individual participating students.

Definitions

Hibernating exchanges – alerting the partner university that the University of Canterbury is unable to accept further students until sufficient UC students have participated to restore the reciprocal balance.

Reciprocal exchange – an exchange of students between the University and a partner university. Such exchanges occur under an inter-institutional student exchange agreement which specifies the maximum number of students who can go each way per year, and commits the University to reciprocity in the arrangement over a specified period.

Senior Management Team (SMT) – the University committee that advises the Vice-Chancellor on the strategic direction, management and operation of the University.

Student exchange award/exchange travel grant – a monetary or travel award given to assist an outgoing exchange student.

Policy Statement

Student exchange is an accepted and established part of university programmes worldwide, and the University regularly receives internal and external requests to establish new exchanges.

As one of its internationalisation strategies, the University encourages students to consider the opportunity of studying abroad at one of its partner universities as part of their degree study.

Each exchange agreement requires academic sponsorship, approval by a college or the International Relationships Office (IRO) and sign-off by the Vice-Chancellor.

The Senior Management Team for International (SMTi) will conduct a regular and timely review of the University's portfolio of exchange agreements, and after consideration of the operation of a particular exchange and in consultation with the IRO and academic sponsors, has the right to decide that it will be terminated.

The University's reciprocal exchange programme, including the provision of student exchange awards or travel grants where appropriate, will be managed by the IRO. Granting of credit for students participating in an exchange shall be the responsibility of the appropriate college, with advice and assistance from the IRO.

There is a limit to the number of exchange agreements that the University has the capacity to operate at any one time. The principles below shall be used to guide the approval and administration of agreements:

Assessing Proposals for Exchange Agreements

Proponents of new exchange agreements must supply certain information in support of their proposal (see [Appendix 1](#)). In assessing new proposals for exchanges, SMTi shall take account of the following:

1. Academic and Research Standing of Partner Institution

Exchanges should be entered into only with institutions of quality. Points to consider include whether:

- The institution has recognised strengths in research and teaching;
- There are special advantages to the exchange, such as close compatibility of courses or the possibility of peer auditing of courses or unique course offerings;
- The University would be happy to accept graduates of that institution into Honours, Masters' or PhD programmes; and

The University would give credit to individual courses on transfer.

2. Enhanced Relations

SMTi will take into consideration whether the proposed exchange agreement would build on existing relations with the partner institution in research or teaching. It is also pertinent whether the proposed exchange agreement would have the potential for expansion into other areas such as staff exchanges and collaborative research.

Consideration will also be given to how the proposed agreement will impact on wider international strategic objectives including student recruitment, Study Abroad and other international partnerships.

3. Ability to Service

The following must be available in order for a proposed exchange agreement to be viable:

- An academic staff member, or other approved College representative (who will liaise with academic staff) to act as Academic Coordinator, designated to manage each approved exchange relationship with the partner university in conjunction with the IRO staff. The primary academic liaison role in an exchange relationship should lie with this academic staff member, who needs to be competent and willing to advise students on academic decisions relating to exchanges. There must also be a contact academic to fulfil this role at the partner university.
- A reasonable expectation that this academic support will continue.
- One or more IRO staff member/s with the capacity to handle the workload associated with the portfolio of student exchanges existing at any one time, and with administering new exchange agreements.

4. Requirement for a University-to-University Agreement

Exchange agreements are to be established by contractual agreements, preferably at the University-to-University level.

Within a given agreement it shall be made clear whether there is any intent to confine exchanges to certain faculties or departments/schools. Agreements shall preferably permit exchange students to propose courses across the whole range of each university's offerings; however within such a general offering preference may be given to students from the sponsoring department or college on request.

Note: The course selections of individual students are subject to the approval of both the home and the host universities (see below).

5. Geographical Spread

In order to maximise the range of exchange opportunities available to students and to limit the overall administrative load, it is preferable not to enter into too many exchange agreements within one country or geographic region.

6. Language Accessibility

Points to consider regarding language accessibility include:

- Does the proposed partner university teach in English?
- Is it appropriate for the outgoing exchange student to be studying at an institution that teaches in a language other than English? (Can the student be reasonably expected to undertake study in the alternative language?)
- Can the incoming exchange student to the University be reasonably expected to undertake their studies in English?

Note: The incoming students must apply for entry to the University in the normal way, and satisfy the normal language test requirements for their level of study in order to gain entry.

7. Probable Numbers and Reciprocity

An assessment should be made as to whether students are likely to be interested in taking part in an exchange with the proposed partner institution.

For an exchange to proceed, it should be judged probable that the numbers of outgoing and incoming exchange students will be balanced over the period specified in the agreement. This is a legislative requirement. If this balance is not achieved, it must be possible to bias the movement in one direction until balance is restored.

Granted that the other factors listed above are considered to be satisfactory, the determining principle in approving a new exchange will be the probable attractiveness of the destination (for academic or general reasons) to the student, and therefore the University being confident in its ability to fulfil its side of a reciprocal agreement, as mandated by the Ministry of Education.

8. Logistical factors

An assessment should be made as to whether the semester dates and the timing of course offerings are viable with the University's calendar.

Procedures

Approval of New Student Exchange Proposals

1. Prior to commencing the proposal development process, staff proposing an academic exchange should contact the International Mobility Team (within the IRO) to determine whether or not an overarching Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other agreement already exists with the proposed partner institution. If one does exist then this is the starting point for development of a student exchange proposal.
2. Proposals, whether initiated by a representative of the University or received from another institution will normally be sponsored at departmental/school or college level. New student exchange partnerships may also be proposed by the IRO.

The staff member/s sponsoring the proposal shall seek the guidance of the IRO in preparing a proposal document (see [Appendix 1.](#)). The proposal will then be considered by the appropriate college and, if approved, signed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC).

3. Following approval and sign-off at college level, the IRO will assist the college to draft a MOU and a student exchange agreement.

Where the proposed partner institution has already provided draft documents or has requested amendments to UC Student Exchange Agreement (see [Appendix 2](#)), the IRO will work to ensure that all of the University's requirements are met and refer it to the Registrar's Office where applicable. This may involve several iterations of drafts being passed between the University and the proposed partner institution.

4. Once the documents have been finalised and reached a satisfactory stage, the IRO will send them alongside the original proposal document and an MOU background document to SMTi to assess in the light of the University's overall strategic direction and policy.
5. Once the detailed wording is agreed and the documents are approved by STMi, the Vice-Chancellor will sign two copies of the agreement. Both copies will then go to the partner institution which will return one signed copy for lodging with the IRO.

Operating Student Exchanges

1. In conjunction with the sponsoring academic departments/schools and staff, the IRO will be responsible for publicising exchanges and processing applications to participate.
2. Students wishing to participate in an exchange must submit an application to the IRO by the specified deadlines. Students are normally required to have a minimum GPA of 5.0 to be considered for an exchange. Students applying with a marginally lower GPA are considered on a case-by-case basis.

The International Mobility Coordinator (in conjunction with the Academic Coordinator for the exchange where appropriate) will select nominees for each host institution, on the basis of available nomination places. Where there are more applicants than nomination places for a particular partner university, selection will normally be on the basis of academic merit and the applicant's suitability for the programme offered at the partner university. The Academic Manager or Dean of the appropriate college will approve or decline the student's nomination.

3. Providing suitable courses are available at the host institution, students may, with the approval of the relevant Head of Department/School (HOD/S)/Academic Manager/Dean, take final year or majoring requirements at the host institution. However, applications will not be approved from candidates wishing to complete an entire University of Canterbury qualification (e.g. one year degrees or diplomas) at the host institution.

It is not possible for students enrolled in a Master's or PhD programme to undertake research on exchange; exchange is available for course work only. Candidates completing an undergraduate degree and wishing to undertake course work at postgraduate level on the exchange may be nominated provisionally but the nominations will be subject to their completing the undergraduate qualification at a satisfactory level.

4. Successful applicants will be advised by the IRO that they have been nominated and that they must apply to the host institution for admission. The final decision on the outgoing student's admission rests with the host institution.
5. It is the responsibility of the outgoing exchange student to negotiate an appropriate course of study with the relevant department(s), College(s), the host University and apply formally to the University for approval of the course of study prior to the exchange. If the proposed course subsequently changes, the student must apply to the University for formal approval of the variation.
6. Students are required to submit a course approval application for courses they wish to take on exchange with course descriptions to the IRO. Students are advised to apply for back-up courses, as the partner universities are not able to guarantee availability of specific courses.

The IRO will process the course approval application and provide information such as credit conversion ratio between the University and the partner universities and course descriptions to designated staff at departments/schools and colleges. Departments/schools are then responsible for assessing the course of study at the partner University for credit towards a University of Canterbury degree, which needs to be signed off by the Dean or the appropriate staff at the College.

Departments/schools and Colleges will be responsible for approving or declining credit for each course to be taken at the partner university.

The College will send the final decision on courses to the IRO, who will then enter the decision on UCSMS and send it to the student. Students are required to submit a new course approval application to the IRO if they need to take new courses at the partner university that have not been assessed for credit through the process described.

7. On completion of the course, a formal transcript from the partner university must be submitted to the IRO for confirmation of credit. Provided that the student has passed the courses, which have also been approved for credit as described above, the IRO will confirm the credit and inform the student of this confirmation.
8. Outgoing exchange students must have medical and travel insurance. The IRO will provide students with recommended guidelines for medical and travel insurance. It is the student's responsibility to purchase insurance that meet University requirements and to provide proof of purchase to the IRO prior to departure.
9. Incoming exchange students from the partner university must apply for admission to a Certificate of Proficiency, using the admission application form for incoming

exchange students. The incoming exchange student is responsible for gaining approval for credit at their home university for their chosen courses at the University.

While every effort to assist will be given with course selection, the University is not responsible for the incoming exchange student's ability to gain credit. Incoming exchange students must comply with normal enrolment procedures, including providing evidence of insurance that meets the requirements of the Ministry of Education's [Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students \(NZQA Providers & Partners website\)](#).

10. The University of Canterbury will provide the same level for pastoral care to incoming exchange students as that available to other International students at the University of Canterbury.

Review and Renewal of Student Exchange Agreements

1. Where the IRO or the department has identified an exchange as no longer strategically or practically viable, an International Mobility Coordinator will assess its continued viability and report to SMTi on the performance of the identified exchange. Amendments to individual agreements may be suggested if applicable. Where an exchange is 'owned' by a particular University department/school or college, the appropriate HOD/S or Dean will be contacted for their comments and recommendation as to whether the exchange should continue.
2. On the basis of the International Mobility Coordinator's report, SMTi will review the identified exchange in the light of the University's international strategy. Decisions regarding renewal or discontinuation of the particular exchange will be communicated to the IRO.
3. Where an exchange is due for regular renewal, the International Mobility Coordinator will liaise with the relevant College or department to confirm their continued support. The International Mobility Coordinator will then liaise the partner university regarding any necessary changes to the agreement and prepare documentation for SMTi approval, followed by signature by the Vice-Chancellor.
4. The IRO is currently delegated authority to 'hibernate' exchanges which are out of balance until the balance is rectified.

Related Documents and Information

UC Policy Library

- [International Links Policy \(PDF, 227KB\)](#)
- [Memoranda of Understanding Policy \(PDF, 439KB\)](#)

UC Website and Intranet

- [International Students \(University International Students website\)](#)

External

- [Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students \(NZQA Providers & Partners website\)](#)

Appendices

- [Appendix 1](#): Application to establish a Reciprocal Student Exchange Agreement
- [Appendix 2](#): Sample Student Exchange Agreement

Document History and Version Control Table			
Version	Action	Approval Authority	Action Date
<i>For document history and versioning prior to 2013 contact ucpolicy@canterbury.ac.nz</i>			
1.00	Major review of document and conversion onto new template.	Director, Student Services and Communications	Oct 2013
1.01	Review date pushed out.	Policy Unit	Sep 2014
2.00	Scheduled review.	Director, Student Services and Communications	Mar 2016
2.01	'Faculty' references changed to 'College' to reflect College-Faculty merger.	Policy Unit	Jun 2016
3.00	Scheduled review by Contact Officer, minor changes	Executive Director, Student Services and Communications	August 2019

This policy remains in force until it is updated.

Appendix 1

Application to Establish a Reciprocal Student Exchange

International Relationships Office

Application to establish a Reciprocal Student Exchange

The following application is designed to assess the viability of the proposed student exchange. Please answer the questions below in as much detail as possible (you may attach additional supporting documentation if you wish).

Please note that student exchanges are based on the principle of reciprocity – over a specified period Canterbury must send as many students out on exchange as we receive from the partner institution. Many of our current exchanges do not attract sufficient outgoing Canterbury students to maintain reciprocity. It is therefore imperative that departments proposing student exchange programmes are committed to sending students as well as receiving them. Particular attention should therefore be paid to addressing Question #4.

Name of proposed exchange Partner University:

1. Please state the case for establishing this exchange and outline why you believe this exchange would be beneficial for the academic outcome of University of Canterbury students.

Note: the following three questions should be considered in terms of policy, i.e. that the University of Canterbury should be aligning itself with appropriate institutions.

2. Is the reputation of the proposed institution such that the University of Canterbury gains by the association?
3. If a university, list its most recent placements in the following surveys:
 - QS (www.topuniversities.com)
 - Times (THES) (www.timeshighereducation.co.uk)

- Shanghai Jiaotong (www.arwu.org)
 - Any other surveys or rankings considered to be important or relevant, such as specific departments/colleges, areas of research or innovation, etc?
4. Does the proposed partner institution have a strong record in teaching and research?
5. Please give reasons for your confidence that Canterbury students will be attracted to participate.
6. Is the level of interest at both universities such that reciprocity of students exchanged is likely to be achieved?
7. Has a discussion been undertaken with the IRO and the prospective exchange considered in light of wider strategic objectives, including student recruitment, Study Abroad and other international partnerships? (Please elaborate.)
8. Is there an academic co-ordinator within the Canterbury sponsoring department willing to give students academic advice on the exchange and promote the exchange? How will this promotion be carried out?
9. Is the language of instruction English? If it is not English are there a) a substantial number of courses offered in English across a variety of disciplines and/ or b) a language institute offering language courses for non-native speakers which Canterbury students may attend? Would participating students be able to credit language courses back into their Canterbury degree?
10. If English is not the language of instruction, are students from the partner university likely to be sufficiently advanced in English to meet the University of Canterbury's English language entry

requirements for international students? Is your department or College able to support students whose first language is not English?

11. Is the exchange specific to a single discipline or College or might it also be of general interest? What sort of students will the exchange target e.g undergraduate/graduate, language students etc?

12. Is there a high degree of compatibility of courses so that transfer of credits may easily be carried out? If it is envisaged that the exchange will include Engineering or other highly structured professional degrees, is the degree and course structure of the partner university such that it will match closely with a given semester of the UC degree and provide the necessary course equivalences?

13. Please briefly comment on the credit system used by the proposed partner university.

14. Are there courses offered at the partner university which might be of special interest for Canterbury students?

15. Are the semester dates and timing of course offerings at the proposed exchange partner university viable with UC's calendar?

(Note: This may determine whether the proposed exchange will be feasible and attractive. Ideally, UC students should be able to undertake an exchange at the proposed partner university that will allow them to return to UC in time for both Semester 1 and Semester 2.)

16. Please describe the support services including academic support and pastoral care available at the proposed partner university?

17. Is the cost of living in the destination country higher or lower than the cost of living in New Zealand?

18. Is suitable accommodation being offered by the exchange partner?

(Please note that the University of Canterbury will not engage in a reciprocal accommodation provision arrangement. Incoming exchange students will be responsible for paying for their own accommodation at Canterbury)

19. Downstream benefits: is the existence of the exchange likely to lead to staff exchanges and/or collaborative research?

Departmental Declaration of support

_____ (Name of Department/ School proposing exchange) supports the establishment of this exchange and undertakes to promote the exchange to ensure that the exchange is successful and reciprocity is maintained.

Name (please print): _____

Title: _____

Signature and date: _____

College Approval (to be signed by College Pro-Vice Chancellor)

The proposed exchange is supported by the College of _____

Name of PVC: _____

Signature and date: _____

Please return the completed and signed form, together with any supporting documentation, to the International Relationships Office.

Appendix 2

Note: This is not a definitive document and each agreement is likely to need some specific wording.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

for the

EXCHANGE OF STUDENTS

between

THE UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

and

THE UNIVERSITY OF XXX

1. PURPOSE

The University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, and Xxx, being desirous of establishing teaching and research links, and enhancing international understanding between their respective academic communities, have made this Agreement, whose purpose is to establish a student exchange programme between the two institutions, commencing in the year <year>.

2. DEFINITIONS

In this agreement, unless the context will otherwise imply, "exchange" shall mean a one-for-one exchange of students from each university, "exchange students" shall mean students participating in the exchange implemented herein, "home institution" shall mean the university at which the student intends to graduate, and "host institution" shall mean the university that has agreed to receive exchange students from the home university.

3. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

- 3.1 Normally up to either four undergraduate students or two undergraduate whole year students will be exchanged each year for the duration of this Agreement, unless this number is varied by mutual agreement.
- 3.2 It is understood that two students for one semester of study or the equivalent intensive course, are equivalent to one student for an entire academic year.
- 3.3 Both institutions will review the programme annually for any imbalances in the number of exchange students and will adjust the number of students, as necessary, to maintain a reasonable balance in the exchange.
- 3.4 The exchange of students will be based on the principle of reciprocity over a period of three years.

4. PERIOD OF ENROLMENT

- 4.1 The duration of the exchange shall normally be for one year or one semester.
- 4.2 The academic year at the University of Canterbury extends from February to November, with first semester studies commencing in February and second semester studies commencing in July. The academic year at Xxx extends from <month> to <month>, with first semester studies commencing in <month>, and second semester studies commencing in <month>.
- 4.3 The normal period of enrolment will conform to these dates, and participating students will enrol at the host institution for one semester or one academic year. Variation to these patterns of enrolment may only occur upon the agreement of both institutions.

5. SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

- 5.1 The home institution will select applicants from its university for the exchange at least three and preferably four months before the start of the academic year. Each institution will send to the other the applications for as many exchange students as there have been places allocated.
- 5.2 The host institution will reserve the right of making final judgement on the admission of each student nominated for the exchange.
- 5.3 The following guidelines apply to all exchange students:
 - a. Exchange students must satisfy all admission requirements, including the language proficiency requirement of the host institution.
 - b. Exchange students must be registered for a full-time degree programme at their home institution and must have completed at least one year of continuous study at the home institution before the exchange year.

- c. Exchange students may apply for any academic programme offered at the host institution for which they meet the pre-requisites, as full time, non-degree status students (or unclassified students or visiting students) at a level determined by the host institution. The exchange programme is for course work only. The host institution reserves the right to exclude exchange students from restricted enrolment programmes.
- d. Upon completion of the semester or year at the host institution, exchange students must return to their home institution unless an extension of stay has been approved by both participating universities.
- e. To be eligible for an exchange, prospective participants must have maintained a B average level of attainment at the University of Canterbury and xx average level of attainment at Xxx in their studies to date.
- f. Exchange students must abide by all the rules and regulations of the host university. They will also be required to sit the same examinations for the courses in which they are enrolled as students of the host institution.

5.4 The exchange of graduate students will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

5.5 An exchange student shall not change his/her status to that of a degree student or to that of a candidate for a diploma or other formal qualifications of the host institution during the exchange.

6. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Responsibilities of the Host Institution

The host institution will be responsible for the following:

- a. Providing the necessary documents (such as formal letters of admission) to enable the exchange students to obtain visas.
- b. Enrolling exchange students from the home institution as full-time, non-degree students for the one or two regular semesters of the academic year.
- c. Waiving the tuition fee of incoming exchange students.
- d. Assisting incoming exchange students to find housing in residence halls or other student accommodation.
- e. Providing the same level of student services and facilities to exchange students as would be expected by other students of the host university.
- f. Providing appropriate orientation and assistance to exchange students of the home institution.
- g. Sending an official transcript of credits for each exchange student to the home institution after the exchange.

Emergency Response. In the event of an emergency situation (being any situation that puts a student at risk including, but not limited to, incidents of civil unrest, violent incidents or natural disasters) each Host Institution shall provide the same

services and assistance to all exchange students attending the Host Institution as it provides to all other students attending the Host Institution. UC will work with the exchange partner university to support UC students on exchange as necessary.

6.2 Responsibilities of the Home Institution

- a. Any academic credit earned at the host institution may be transferred back to the home institution in accordance with procedures determined by the home institution.

6.3 Responsibilities of Exchange Participants

Exchange students will be responsible for the following:

- a. Pay tuition and other required fees at the home institution.
- b. Any monetary security deposit (if required by either host university) and other incidental expenses (e.g. field trips) as may be required by the study programme.
- c. Transportation to and from the host institution.
- d. Room and board expenses (including an application fee for accommodation, where appropriate).
- e. All exchange students must have medical and travel insurance acceptable to the host institution.
- f. Guild fees/Students' Union fees, if applicable.
- g. Textbooks, clothing and personal expenses.
- h. Passport and visa costs.
- i. All other debts incurred during the course of the year.

Exchange students will be expected to abide by the laws and customs of the host country, including the laws and regulations governing immigration and by the policies and regulations of the host institution.

7. OTHER

- 7.1 The obligations of the parties under this agreement extend only to the exchange participants and do not include spouses, partners or dependants.

8. TERMS OF THIS EXCHANGE AGREEMENT

- 8.1 Subject to the provision in 8.2, this Agreement shall remain in force for a period of five years from the date of the last signature, on the understanding that subject to review and mutual agreement it will be renewed for another period of five years upon each expiry. However, it may also be terminated by either party giving six months' prior notice to the other party in writing.

- 8.2 The Agreement shall be reviewed after its first two years of operation. Should the Agreement not be operating to the satisfaction of either party to the Agreement at this point, it may be terminated.
- 8.3 This agreement may be amended at any time by written mutual consent through an exchange of letters.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the parties hereto have offered their signatures:

For the University of Canterbury

For Xxx

Professor Cheryl de la Rey Vice-Chancellor

**Vice-Chancellor
Xxx**

Date _____
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Date _____
—