Study Abroad Business Processes

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to describe the main processes and procedures associated with the delivery of key services and activities of the Study Abroad section of UL (University of Limerick) Global.

The primary aim of Study Abroad is to recruit international students for one-semester, full-year and short-term Summer School Study Abroad programmes at the University of Limerick on a fee-paying basis. In addition, the Study Abroad team are responsible for progressing student applications from initial enquiry to enrolment, and to provide support to students for the duration of their time at the University up until the point where they return to their home country. The primary procedures associated with the delivery of this service are included below.

This wide variety of duties is handled by the Study Abroad team in a professional manner with an emphasis on customer focus. These duties are delivered in collaboration and consultation with other sections within UL Global, colleagues from both administrative and academic departments throughout UL, and international partners, universities, and agents.

PROCEDURE

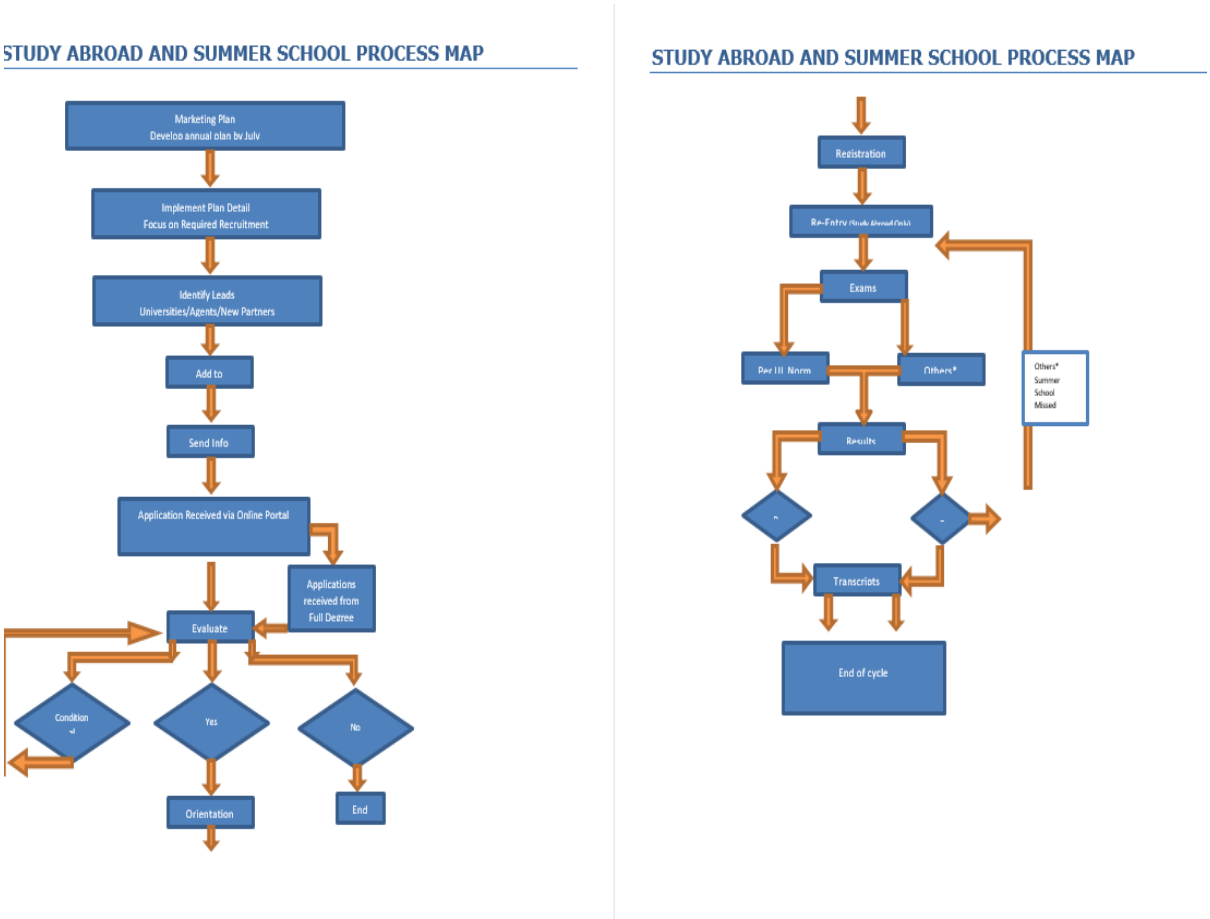

Figure 1.1 Study Abroad Process Map

PROCESSES

1 Study Abroad Planning & Marketing

The Study Abroad Manager plans and develops an Annual Plan for Study Abroad by June of each year. This is the first step in developing a market strategy for Study Abroad for the coming academic year. The Study Abroad Manager then implements the annual plan detail to focus on required recruitment in both traditional and non-traditional Study Abroad markets. Scheduled recruitment travel to these markets for the Study Abroad Manager is noted and arranged. Travel for Study Abroad Executive Administrator and Study Abroad Senior Administrator for the coming academic year is noted.

2 Study Abroad Partner Development

During the recruitment phase, the Study Abroad team identify opportunities for student recruitment with new partners, universities, and agents. Details of new contacts are added to a shared database on the UL Global's SharePoint system and information on the Study Abroad programme is then forwarded to the relevant partner, University, or agent.

3 Study Abroad Query Management

The relevant Study Abroad staff member responds to partner, agent and students queries promptly. Queries are logged in the Study Abroad inbox – study.abroad@ul.ie

4 Study Abroad Applications

UL launched a new application form in October 2020 through the UL wide OLAF (Online application form) project, managed by Clarion Consulting, further automating the application process.
The Study Abroad application process begins with the submission of a Study Abroad application form by an applicant or agent.

The submission of applications is through an online application system on the Study Abroad website.

The relevant Study Abroad staff member transfers applications to the SI (STUDENT INFORMATION) system.

Applications are evaluated to ensure that applicants meet the GPA and, where applicable, English Language requirements required for entry to the Study Abroad programme are reviewed.

There are three outcomes from the evaluation process:

1. Applicants deemed successful receive a place on the relevant Study Abroad programme and receive an offer letter.

2. Applicants receive a conditional offer[1]

[1] A conditional offer is made when an applicant is required to submit further documentation to support their application.

3. In rare circumstances, applicants who do not meet the entry requirements will not accepted to the Study Abroad programme. Applicants are notified of the outcome of their application via email.

However, some applications (namely the 3+1+1 & 3+2) are received from the Full Degree programme within UL Global; these applications are incorporated into the Study Abroad programme. Once indoctrinated, the 3+1+1 & 3+2 programme follow the same application guidelines and processes as all other Study Abroad applications.

5 Study Abroad Student Welcome

Before international students' arrival at the University, the Student Support Officer in consultation with Study Abroad, Erasmus, and Full Degree sections draws up a schedule of orientation activities. The orientation programme allows our Study Abroad students to transition to life in the University and in Ireland. Orientation activities for international students take place over a one-week period, before Week 1 of each semester. The orientation of students is mainly in person but includes some virtual sessions.

Orientation co-ordination includes several live presentations & events, to include: Enrolment, issuing of student ID cards, campus tours, general information and timetable sessions, on-campus events, evening entertainment, virtual engagement, online platforms, IT issues.

Once Study Abroad students have proceeded through the orientation process, they have a two-week period to attend modules of their preference before deciding which modules they would like to be enrolled in for the semester.

6 Study Abroad Module Registration

The Study Abroad team register the students for modules by manually adding their choices to the SI system. At this point, incoming Study Abroad students enter the mainstream University process with the rest of the study body.

7 Study Abroad Student Support

The Study Abroad office maintains support of the student in pastoral care and with any academic or personal issues, the student may encounter during their time at the University. Any issues semester students may be experiencing are discussed at the fortnightly Study Abroad team meeting.

Student Withdrawal

Each semester, the Study Abroad team will deal with student withdrawals. Students can withdraw in the early to late stages of the application process, which is a straightforward process of updating their status on the SI system. However, the situation may arise where a Study Abroad student may withdraw from the Study Abroad programme after they have arrived at the University or later in the semester when students are registered for their modules. If a student expresses a wish to withdraw from the programme, the Study Abroad office supports the student by ensuring that all their needs are met in the first instance.

Pastoral Care

Students are helped in any area they require – changing modules, joining clubs or societies,

meeting other students, etc. – or offered support and counselling from University services such as Chaplaincy, Teach Fáilte or the University's Student Counselling Service. If the student still wishes to return home, the Study Abroad office supports the student by contacting their home university and making any necessary arrangements.

Academic Support

If a student fails an exam, the Study Abroad office supports the student by organising an extra assignment for the student so they can make up the fail grade or organising for them to repeat the exam at their home university. On rare occasions, the student must return to the University to sit the exam during the relevant semester's repeat exam time. This is organised with the support of the Study Abroad office.

8 Study Abroad Student Pre-Departure Session

Towards the end of their term at the University, the Study Abroad office support students in preparing for exams, departure to their home countries and re-entry to academic life at their home university. Each semester, Study Abroad hold a compulsory re-entry meeting for all Study Abroad students. Topics discussed include issues such as reverse culture shock, what to do if a student fails an exam, the process of repeating an exam and the issue of academic transcripts.

9 Study Abroad Student Transcripts

Once transcripts have been issued to each Study Abroad student, this brings an end to the student's Study Abroad experience and an end to the cycle.

Academic transcripts are issued digitally by the Study Abroad office following each semester's exam period once exam results have been issued to students.

RECORDS

All records are stored on SharePoint for the time required by the process. ULG operates in accordance with the University's Records Management and Retention Policy. Any personal data that is used as part of this process is processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) / Data Protection Acts 1988-2018, the University of Limerick Data Protection Policy and privacy notices.

PROCESS EFFECTIVENESS

At a minimum, the process is monitored for effectiveness and improvement by taking input from internal and external audits/reviews, and staff input at any time.

Revision No.	Date	Approved by:	Details of Change	Process Owner
1	16/06/15	Deputy Director	Initial release	Elaine Mullane
2	05/07/15	Deputy Director	Changes to application procedure	Katherine Martin
3	08/05/18	Deputy Director	Update Revision History; gaps and process owner	Katherine Martin
4	06/04/21	Deputy Director	Update Rev history, unit name-change, Covid impact on procedures	Katherine Martin
5	30/11/21	Deputy Director	Updated the web links as they linked to the old UL Global website	Katherine Martin

6	16/02/24	Deputy Director	Hyperlinks to policies updated in the records paragraph	Katherine Martin
7	04/03/25	Deputy Director	Update on student support, transcript process, broken hyperlinks removed, and deletion of text related to Covid-19 global pandemic	Katherine Martin

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