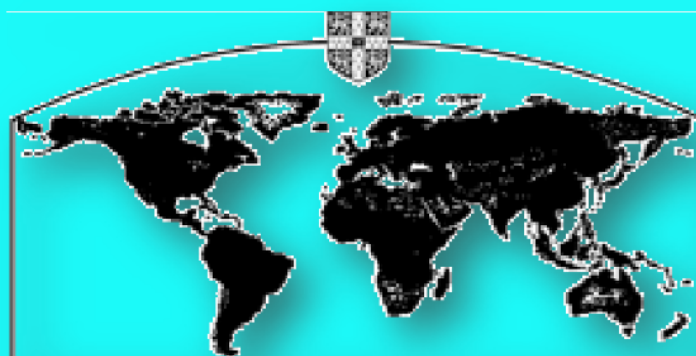


FACULTY OF MODERN & MEDIEVAL LANGUAGES



THE YEAR ABROAD

2021/2022

Year Abroad Office
Faculty of
Modern & Medieval Languages & Linguistics
Sidgwick Avenue
Cambridge CB3 9DA

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

This booklet contains important information – please read it carefully *now* and make sure you take it abroad with you

www.mml.cam.ac.uk/ya

INTRODUCTION

Your Year Abroad is an integral part of your Cambridge Modern Languages course. It is in other words an *academic* year, which will be assessed academically and should be planned with academic goals foremost in mind. The key to success on your Year Abroad is immersion in your foreign language(s) and environment(s). Most students find their Year Abroad invigorating, horizon-expanding and an invaluable source of life experience and wisdom, as well as enormous fun. But it is not a belated gap year, or a career-development year (except indirectly, insofar as it will improve your result in Tripos), and should not be approached as such. Instead the fundamental question you need to ask yourself when planning your Year Abroad is: how much closer will this experience bring me to the language and culture that I study for my degree?

You should be prepared to devote some time and effort to planning your Year Abroad during your second year. As a general rule, the more thorough your preparation the more successful your year will be. That said, it is important to be realistic about your expectations of the Year Abroad, especially in the age of Brexit and Covid-19. Be careful not to allow the quest for a perfect year to become a source of anxiety or stress. Many students now on their Year Abroad are having a successful time despite the current difficulties, and despite (in some cases) not having landed their first-choice placement.

In making your plans you should bear the following in mind:

- How will my Year Abroad contribute to my Part II course, especially to my Year Abroad Project and the Part II oral and to the development of my written foreign language skills?
- How can I best gain practical experience of the foreign language and culture?
- Which of the options would be best suited to me? Studying, teaching, or a work placement?

The information in this booklet applies equally to MMLL and HML students.

The Faculty Year Abroad administrators are here to help, so please do not hesitate to consult our records and ask for advice. We want the year to be a positive and rewarding experience for you all.

Dr Timothy Chesters
Director of the Year Abroad
October 2020

WHO DOES WHAT?

Broadly speaking, the Faculty Year Abroad administrators offer *clerical support* (forms, etc.) to students either on or planning their Year Abroad, whereas your Director of Studies offers *pastoral support* and *practical advice*. Your Director of Studies should always be your first port of call if anything (non-administrative) goes wrong.

COLLEGE

FACULTY

Director of Studies or Tutor

Year Abroad Administrators

- gives preliminary advice on Year Abroad plans
- confirms to the Year Abroad Office that they support your plans
- gives ongoing pastoral and practical support
- keeps students' personal files
- deals with Local Education Authority and Student Loan Company
- can supply you with personal references for applications

- gives advice on specifically administrative matters (forms, funding, what is allowable under Faculty rules)
- administers formal University permission and Risk Assessment
- processes student claims and reimburses foreign university fees
- keeps records of all Year Abroad experiences and maintains databases of students and employers
- operates an email list for quick dissemination of up-to-date information on the Year Abroad, especially as regards employment
- maintains a web page containing essential information, advice and useful links
- has a small reference section of travel guides and guides to living and working abroad
- can supply you with general letters of recommendation, proof of study and *conventions de stage* (see Employment) in the appropriate language

Please note: the Faculty does not make travel arrangements or find jobs or accommodation!

BASIC RULES

You will normally spend your Year Abroad in one of the following ways:

- As a teaching assistant or lector
- Studying
- In employment

You must remain abroad in an approved activity for **not less than 8 months** in total and **not less than 3 months in any one country**, unless you spend time consecutively in another country speaking the same language. The approved period of residence abroad shall normally coincide with the academic year in Cambridge, and must begin no later than October. You must inform us if your approved Year Abroad activity has not started by November, so that we can advise on alternatives.

You will be sent a link to register your YA plan at the end of Michaelmas term. If you wish to apply for a study place in Europe, or are planning to be an assistant with the British Council, the deadline for the submission of the YA Plan form is **5pm on Friday 22 January 2021**. At that point the Year Abroad Administrators will begin the first-round allocation of study placements based on your Part IA result (submission after this deadline can only be processed if there are remaining study places for the second round of allocation.).

Please note that neither study placements nor British Council assistantships are to be used as back-ups while you search for an alternative (e.g. an internship). The Faculty will not approve the alternative arrangement in such circumstances.

For all other students, the deadline for submission of your YA plan is **Friday 26 February 2021**.

After this date, please keep the Year Abroad Office informed of any changes. **It is a University requirement that all your plans are approved by the Faculty Board before you begin your Year Abroad.**

Please note that if you are planning to change Tripos after Part IB you will not normally take a year abroad under MMLL regulations, since you will not be a candidate for Part II of the MMLL Tripos. You should speak to your College Tutor or Director of Studies if there is any possibility of your changing subject. If you do decide to change Tripos, please make sure you inform the Year Abroad Office.

OPTIONS

i) Assistant/Lector

ii) Studying

iii) Employment

Your Director of Studies knows you and your academic abilities and preferences, and will be best-suited to advise you in the first instance on which option to follow. The Year Abroad administrators keep extensive records of all our students' experiences, and consultation of these should be a high priority. The Faculty also keeps a blacklist of unsuitable employers based on negative feedback received over previous years. The Faculty will no longer advertise these roles, but you may hear of them from other sources; please make sure that you check this blacklist before contacting potential employers.

Splitting the Year Abroad

It is possible to split the Year Abroad between two countries (see 'Basic Rules' above), though you should consider carefully the benefits of doing so against the extra planning it will require, as well as the inevitable disruption involved in setting yourself up in a new environment mid-way through the year. You can normally register for a university course halfway through the year. Internships or *stages* (see 'Employment' below) can run for a variable length of time, so you can arrange one internship in one country and one in another.

If you apply for one semester only (first or second), make sure that the dates fit in with the rest of your Year Abroad plans, particularly if you are studying in two different countries. Semester dates are not the same everywhere and you must fulfil your attendance dates at each institution. For example, if you wish to study in a partner university in Germany, then you will not be able to study in almost any other countries for the second semester as the semester dates in Germany are later.

Some European universities will only allow study for the whole year.

i) Assistant/Lector

This will normally be arranged by the British Council. Application is made online through the British Council website, and you will receive full details about this from the Year Abroad Office during Michaelmas Term.

Becoming an assistant is an excellent way to improve your foreign language skills and genuinely integrate into a new environment. Assistantships are comparatively well paid without being too demanding in terms of hours: you will have time to make friends, visit the region, and engage in other immersive activities. Host schools are generally well set up to receive you, and can sometimes help with securing nearby

accommodation (often passed on year on year from assistant to assistant). Even if you do not intend eventually to go into teaching, assistantships provide excellent work experience and everything that goes with it: dealing with employers, operating in a team, managing your schedule, taking responsibility etc. These transferable skills will make you attractive to employers in a wide range of professions.

The British Council normally offers a place to everyone who applies, except in those places where demand exceeds supply (for example Italy and Latin America). Remember when making your application that the British Council itself is primarily interested in the contribution you will make as a teacher rather than the experience you will gain by being in a foreign environment.

If you are invited to take part in a further assessment stage, it would be wise to have informed yourself in advance about teaching English as a foreign language and about the country for which you have applied (especially in Latin America). If you have been allocated a study place, you may not also apply for the British Council.

Assistantships in French schools which run for 7 months are acceptable to the Faculty Board as the equivalent of 8 months. You should also make sure the start and end dates of the assistantship fit in the rest of your YA plan as each country has its fixed length and terms.

A British Council assistantship is not to be used as a backup, and the Faculty will not approve any last-minute attempt to switch to another Year Abroad activity. If serious extenuating circumstances make it necessary to withdraw your application at any stage, please be courteous in your dealings with the British Council: the Faculty relies on their goodwill and support. Please also keep the Year Abroad Administrators informed.

ii) Studying

Many students consider studying abroad. If you are planning to be in a European country and you wish to study, you must take up a study place at one of our partner universities. **Please note: the Faculty will not under any circumstances approve applications to study at non-partner institutions.** If you are planning to spend all or part of your YA in Latin America or Russia, or some other non-European destination, you must choose from a list of institutions approved by the Faculty Board. Fees for approved courses outside Europe will be paid in full by the Faculty. Please read carefully the finance section.

Studying at a foreign university can be wonderfully enriching: you will experience different intellectual traditions and teaching styles, all in the target language. If you put the effort in, you may establish lifelong friendships with foreign students of your age. It does come with some risks. Only rarely will you be the only anglophone student in

that environment, and when far from home it can be tempting to fall back on anglophone company, defeating the whole purpose of the Year Abroad. Also bear in mind that universities in other countries are not as protective as British universities and do not go out of their way to ease the admissions process, so your experience of gaining access will not be at all like applying through UCAS here. Be patient and prepared for a certain amount of red tape! Please consult university websites for information about courses and application procedures. It can be a good idea to enlist the help of fourth-year students or students who are currently abroad studying – the Year Abroad Administrators can put you in touch.

The Faculty will approve courses in a wide range of subjects, provided the medium of instruction is the foreign language. You should take steps to find out about suitable courses **as early as possible**. Please note that some of our partner universities place restrictions on the choice of subject.

Studying at a partner university in Europe

A list of institutions which Cambridge has exchange links is provided on our website. The Faculty does not require you to study Modern Languages, but you should check with the foreign university what courses you may take. Most of the exchange arrangements are with faculties of language and literature; there are, however, some exchanges with faculties of history in France, Germany, Spain and Austria.

Students applying for a European study place for a full academic year must accumulate not fewer than 30 ECTS points (at least 15 ECTS points per semester) to prove that they have attended courses and taken relevant exams. ECTS points are credits awarded by European universities in respect of the courses that they offer. Students who study for one semester only, or who split the year between two universities, must also achieve at least 15 ECTS points per semester.

The Faculty relies on good working relationships with its partner institutions, and trusts its students to act in good faith when dealing with them. For this reason, as with the British Council Assistantship Scheme, we do not permit the use of study placements as back-up plans, to be dropped at the last minute in favour of, say, an internship. This is not fair on our partner institutions; it also denies another student (either at this or another UK university) a valuable opportunity to study. For this reason the Faculty will not approve alternative arrangements in these circumstances.

iii) Employment

It is your responsibility to organise employment. The Faculty does not operate placement schemes, though it has established relations with certain employers. If you are interested in this option, you should start looking for a job **as soon as possible**. You

must work a minimum of 25 hours per week and your job must not take you outside of the town / city in which it is based. At least 50% of the language spoken in the office must be in the foreign language (though, given the aims of the Year Abroad, you should really be aiming for as high a proportion as possible).

The Year Abroad Administrators maintain records of previous employers who have either employed, or offered to employ, our students. You will be given more information about how to access this information during Michaelmas Term. Firms interested in employing Year Abroad students usually make their first contact with the Year Abroad Administrators and we disseminate information via our email list – they often ask for applications to be submitted at very short notice and during University vacations, so it is worth checking your email regularly. The Year Abroad administrators also keep a blacklist of unsuitable employers, which you are urged to check carefully when applying for placements not advertised through the Faculty.

Please note that for safety reasons you should always contact employers via email only, and avoid sharing personal data or contact details unconnected to the advertised role. Any attempts by employers to establish contact via other channels (e.g. WhatsApp groups, social media accounts) should be regarded with suspicion, and the Year Abroad Administrators notified before proceeding further.

We exchange information with the University Careers Service, who will also be able to offer you general advice, and of course they have information on all manner of general employment possibilities.

You must submit to the Year Abroad Office proof from your prospective employer that you have a firm offer of employment before your application can be finally approved (this can be some time **after** the submission of your YA Plan). You must also provide us with brief details and the exact dates of your employment. The Faculty will approve a wide range of employments, provided that (a) you will be working principally within the medium of the foreign language and (b) there is some intellectual challenge or professional skill involved. Please note that the Faculty does not normally consider nannying, *au pair* work or waiting tables as a suitable employment for the Year Abroad.

For employment in France, the Year Abroad Office can supply you with an approved form of contract, known as a *convention de stage*, and the Director of the Year Abroad acts as the University representative for the purposes of this contract.

APPROVAL OF YEAR ABROAD PLANS

You must register your initial plans for approval by the Faculty Board by **5pm on Friday 22 January 2021** for a study placement in Europe and for British Council assistantships, and by **Friday 26 February 2021** for all other placements. You will be asked to register your YA plan online, and you will be given more details on how to access this during Michaelmas Term. **We are aware that not all plans may have been finalised by this stage, but it is essential that you keep the Faculty Board (through the Director of the Year Abroad) and your Director of Studies informed of any change of plans.**

FORMS & DOCUMENTS

All other necessary MMLL forms are on the Year Abroad website and on Moodle. The forms include:

- The [Email Permission Form \(YA.EMAIL\)](#) giving agreement for your email address to be disclosed to fellow students for the exchange of YA advice, and to allow your YA reports to be made available on intranet (Moodle) to future students.
- All students must submit an online **Risk Assessment** form for each approved placement via Moodle. Risk Assessment forms for all approved placements are due by Friday 14 June 2021. Risk Assessment forms for any placements that are approved following 14 June 2021 must be submitted by the end of the calendar month in which approval was granted. *Failure to submit a thoroughly completed Risk Assessment form by the designated deadline may result in the placement not counting towards your Year Abroad, and invalidate your University insurance.* See page 13.
- An [Address Form \(YA.ADD\)](#). This should give BOTH the address of the employer, university or school AND your private address while abroad. This should be returned as soon as you have moved into your new accommodation abroad. **You must also ensure that your contact details on CamSIS are kept up to date throughout the year.**
- An [Attendance Form \(YA.ATT\)](#) to be signed and stamped by your university, employer or school at the end of your year abroad and to be returned by the **second Friday of the full Michaelmas Term 2022.**
- A **Report Form** ([YA.ASST](#), [YA.STUDY](#) or [YA.WORK](#)) to be submitted immediately after each placement during your Year Abroad, according to your activity. It will be made available (unless you request that it be confidential) for consultation by those going abroad in the future.
- [A Final Report Form \(YA.REP\)](#) giving a short evaluation of your Year Abroad, and your advice for future students.
- [Refund Application Form](#) for those studying outside of Europe. See page 10. (Claims for reimbursement will not be considered after 30 April 2022.)

The submission of these forms is a formal course requirement, but more importantly they help us to help you: please return them promptly.

FINANCE

All students will remain personally responsible for all travel and living expenses during their Year Abroad, regardless of whether they are studying, volunteering or undertaking work placements.

University Fees

Year Abroad students pay 15% of the University Composition Fee via their College. (This policy is determined by central government and is beyond the control of the University.) Overseas MMLL students are required to pay fees at 50% of the overseas rate during their Year Abroad.

Student Loans

Depending on personal circumstances, Year Abroad students are normally eligible for a Student Loan and it may also be possible to apply for an additional loan. Eligible students can apply for funding support from Student Finance <https://www.gov.uk/apply-online-for-student-finance>. Remember to keep all your Year Abroad receipts in case you are eligible to apply for a Student Finance Travel Grant.

Important: Erasmus Mobility Grant

The Erasmus Mobility Grant is funded by the European Commission. Unfortunately, following Britain's exit from the European Union students working and studying during their year abroad in Europe may no longer have access to these funds from 2021/22. The Department of Education has advised on the possibility of a UK replacement scheme to support student mobility abroad but no plans have been confirmed at this time. While discussions on the UK's post-Brexit relationship with the EU continue and the government clarifies its position, the University is considering ways to mitigate the effects of the current uncertainty with Erasmus funding support. If alternative funding can be made available, priority is likely to be given to those pursuing study placements (rather than paid internships) in Europe and students in positions of financial hardship. However, any alternative arrangements are yet to be confirmed. Please check back here for further updates, as well the website of the University's International Student Office: <https://www.iso.admin.cam.ac.uk/information-current-cambridge-students-1>

Reimbursement of University Fees Abroad

Students are not expected to meet the foreign tuition fees that arise from approved educational arrangements outside Europe during their study abroad. This means that

students who study outside of the EU will be able to claim reimbursement of full tuition costs incurred during the Year Abroad.

Students may have to pay their host university for matriculation and incidentals, and these items are not refundable by the Year Abroad Office.

Students affected will primarily be students of Russian and students of Portuguese and Spanish who undertake a Year Abroad outside Europe. Students who study outside Europe must choose from the list of approved educational institutions distributed by the Faculty. Students who undertake a Year Abroad within Europe and who wish to study must do so at one of the Faculty's partner universities.

The Faculty expects students who study outside of the EU to follow a full-time university course designed for home students, and the level of reimbursement reflects this.

Grants

Vacation courses will not be funded (a vacation course is defined as a course which takes place outside the minimum 8-month Year Abroad residence period); students wishing to undertake a vacation course at the end of their second year or before the beginning of their fourth year should apply to their Tutor or Director of Studies.

Using the YA.FEE refund application form

Please read the instructions on the [YA.FEE refund application form](#) carefully. You must pay all fees **in advance** and then claim reimbursement, by sending a completed claim form to the Year Abroad Office accompanied by a copy of the **receipted invoice(s)**. The refund form must show the exact date of payment. Claims will not be considered without a copy of the invoices.

You may submit more than one claim form (e.g. if you are paying for a university course on a termly basis). Payments can be made to either you or a nominee (e.g. a parent).

Reimbursement will be made at the exchange rate current on the date fees were paid, regardless of when the claim form is submitted to the Year Abroad Office.

Claims arising from the Year Abroad 2021-22 will not be considered after 30 April 2022.

The Faculty cannot help with normal travelling expenses or living expenses. You may be able to claim an extra loan in respect of travel and living expenses if you spend your Year Abroad outside Europe.

Please remember that in case of emergency or dire need while you are abroad you should contact the Year Abroad Office straight away. We will be able to advise you and may be able to assist in such circumstances.

HEALTH AND SAFETY, and INSURANCE

All students must follow British Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice (and additionally the advice of your own government if you are not a British citizen).

www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Install any recommended apps (such as SAIP for students in France) to your phone to ensure you have up to date information regarding security.

All students must complete an online Risk Assessment for each approved placement by **Friday, 14 June 2021**. Risk Assessment forms for placements that are approved following 14 June 2021 must be submitted by the end of the calendar month in which approval was granted. *The completion of this form is a formal requirement; failure to submit a sufficiently detailed Risk Assessment form by the designated deadline may result in the placement not counting towards your Year Abroad.* Students are also required to reply promptly to requests for contact from the Year Abroad Office (the Office will routinely contact you in the case of any major risk-related event in the country you are visiting and will expect you to reply immediately).

All students must take out personal health and other insurance cover for their Year Abroad. Free insurance is now offered by the University of Cambridge. Further details can be found at <https://www.insurance.admin.cam.ac.uk/insurance-guidance/travel-insurance/travel-insurance-undergraduate-year-abroad>. It is your own personal responsibility to ensure that you have the cover that you need for your Year Abroad.

You are advised to check well in advance any visa requirements for the country or countries you will be visiting, and whether a residency permit is required. It is likely that these requirements will include Europe following the end of the Brexit transition period on 31 December 2020.

You are advised to take a photocopy of your passport and keep a separate note of your passport/visa number. Enter two ICE (in case of emergency) numbers on your phone: one for a family member back home, the other for a local contact such as your landlord/landlady, flatmate or work mentor. Also take with you the emergency number to report loss of credit or debit cards.

For advice on all aspects of the Year Abroad, please go to:
www.mml.cam.ac.uk/ya

COMMUNICATING WITH THE YEAR ABROAD ADMINISTRATORS

While you are in Cambridge

The Year Abroad Administrators are currently working from home due to COVID-19, hence are unable to receive calls or posts. Office hours are posted on our website (www.mml.cam.ac.uk/ya). We send out circulars and other information by email, and we encourage you to communicate with us by email as well (yearabroad@mml.cam.ac.uk).

While you are away

Year Abroad students are still members of the University of Cambridge and therefore should bear in mind that their actions can have repercussions for the University and for future students going on their Year Abroad

Don't forget that while you are abroad we are still available to help in case of need or difficulty. Keep in regular contact with your DoS or Tutor throughout your time abroad. Be sure to save this file with you as it contains all our contact details, which are as follows:

Telephone: +44 (0) 1223 335008 or 335048

Faculty Office: 335000

(You should enter these numbers on your phone).

Email: yearabroad@mml.cam.ac.uk

You can also access our web pages, which are updated regularly:

Home page: www.mml.cam.ac.uk/ya

You can still use your Cambridge email account while abroad – all you have to do is connect to webmail.hermes.cam.ac.uk.

Please check your email regularly during your Year Abroad – we will always use your Cambridge email address to keep in touch with you. The Faculty will send you information relating to your Year Abroad Project and your paper choices for Part II by email during the year.

KEY DEADLINES FOR YEAR ABROAD 2021-22

YA Meetings

- First meeting (Information for planning your year abroad): 3 pm, 26 October 2020
- Second meeting (Information for safety, YAP and library resources): 3pm, 10 March 2021

Friday, 22 January 2021 (First Friday of Lent Term)

- Deadline for applying for a study place at a partner university in Europe.
- Deadline for applying for a British Council Language Assistantship (both within and outside Europe)

Friday, 26 February 2021

- Deadline for submitting Year Abroad Plan (For all non British Council work placements and study placements outside Europe)

Friday, 14 June 2021

- Deadline for fixing details (the number of months you wish to study/work)
- Deadline for submitting Risk Assessment Form

2021-2022 YA Plan Registration Deadline at a glance (Registration link will be sent out in December 2020)

Placement type	Deadline of submitting YA plan to YAO
Study placements within Europe	22 January 2021
British Council Assistantship	22 January 2021
Work placements	26 February
Study placements outside of Europe	26 February

Helpful Sources of Ideas

1. Year Abroad Office: <https://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/ya>
2. British Council: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/study-work-abroad/english-language-assistants>
3. International Student Office: <https://www.iso.admin.cam.ac.uk/erasmus-plus/current-cambridge-students/mml>
4. Career Services: <http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk>
5. Global Graduates: <https://globalgraduates.com>
6. Your Language Section website/moodle pages
7. Year abroad section advisors
 - French [Dr Hugues Azérad](#)
 - German and Dutch [Prof Jo Whaley](#)
 - Spanish & Portuguese [Dr Ioanna Sitaridou](#)
 - Italian [Dr Claudia Domenici](#)
 - Slavonic Studies [Dr Elena Filimonova](#) / [Dr Ksenia Zanon](#)