



# Study Abroad Handbook XJTLU



Last updated March 2020

Congratulations on being chosen to study abroad at XJTLU! By participating in the University of Liverpool's Study Abroad programme, you are embarking on an amazing cultural, academic and personal journey.

We have created this handbook to help you make the most of your time abroad in China. It contains important information about preparing to study abroad, what to do when you arrive, useful contacts etc. Make sure that you take this handbook with you to XJTLU. If you have any questions about the information contained herein, or any suggestions, please drop the Study Abroad Team (SAT) an email at [goabroad@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:goabroad@liverpool.ac.uk).

Good luck and bon voyage!

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## **Section 1: Contacts and Keeping in Touch**

### 1.1: University of Liverpool contact details

Before, during and after your time abroad, it's important to keep in touch with many different people. You will need to maintain contact with, and will certainly be contacted by, the Study Abroad Team (SAT) and colleagues from XJTLU.

### 1.2: Study Abroad Team contact details

Your main contact within the SAT is Josh Evans, our Study Abroad Co-ordinator for Outbound Students.



Josh Evans – Study Abroad Co-ordinator (Outbound)

Josh can be contacted on:

**Telephone:** +44-(0)151-794-3039 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

**Email:** [goabroad@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:goabroad@liverpool.ac.uk)

**Postal Address:** Study Abroad Team  
Student Recruitment & Admissions Office  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Foundation Building  
Brownlow Hill  
Liverpool  
L69 7ZX  
United Kingdom

Depending on your query you may have contact with a number of other members of the Study Abroad Team. Meet the Study Abroad Team:



Sarah Husain – Head of Study Abroad



Rich Dunning – Deputy Head of Study Abroad



Rachel Ley – Study Abroad Assistant



Nia Evans – Study Abroad Manager (Outbound)

Throughout the handbook, we've included case studies from members of the Study Abroad Team about our own experiences as students abroad or in travels after graduation. We hope you find these useful, that they help you to contextualise some of the advice we're offering and encourage you to make the most of this amazing experience!

### 1.3 International Opportunities Advisors (IOA)

There is an academic contact (International Opportunities Advisors) in every department who are available to help students regarding Study Abroad matters. The contact details of your IOA can be found on the Study Abroad webpages [www.liverpool.ac.uk/goabroad](http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/goabroad) (click on Contact Us).

### 1.4 XJTLU contact details

XJTLU will be in contact with you regarding your period abroad. It is important to save the XJTLU email address in your favourites to ensure emails don't go straight to your junk/spam folder.

#### **XJTLU Global**

Email – for all application and academic queries: [studyabroad@xjtlu.edu.cn](mailto:studyabroad@xjtlu.edu.cn)

Email – for all accommodation, airport pick-up and welfare queries: [global@xjtlu.edu.cn](mailto:global@xjtlu.edu.cn)

Telephone: +86 512 8188 9156

Markus Davis (XJTLU Development Advisor contact [non-academic issues] for UoL students):

[Markus.Davis@xjtlu.edu.cn](mailto:Markus.Davis@xjtlu.edu.cn)

XJTLU Counsellor – Luke Lee: [Luke.Lee@xjtlu.edu.cn](mailto:Luke.Lee@xjtlu.edu.cn)

**The University of Liverpool will only contact you via your University email address. So it's important to check this regularly or make sure you set up an auto-forward to an appropriate address.** Remember, not checking your emails is not a valid excuse for missing important information

### 1.5: Other Important UoL Contact Details

- **Out-of-Hours (Emergencies only):** +44-(0)151-794-2222 (24hrs)
- Student Administration and Support: [studenteng@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:studenteng@liverpool.ac.uk) / +44-(0)151-794-6759
- Counselling Service: [counserv@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:counserv@liverpool.ac.uk) / +44-(0)151-794-3304
- Computer Services Helpdesk: [helpdesk@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:helpdesk@liverpool.ac.uk) / +44-(0)151-794-4567
- University Insurance Manager: [mark.neill@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:mark.neill@liverpool.ac.uk) / +44-(0)151-794-2138

### 1.6: Your Contact Details

**As soon as you have settled in your accommodation at XJTLU, you must log on to Liverpool Life and update your term time address.** To update your address:

1. Log into Liverpool Life through the UoL student homepage.
2. In the section "Personal Information" access Update Address(es) and Phone(s) and select Insert New Address.
3. For "Type of Address to Insert" you should select "Term Time Address".

Remember, these are the only details we have in order to contact you in the unlikely event of an emergency. If you do not update your address, you will not receive any grant monies.

### 1.7: Your Parents/Guardians

Important Reminder: Due to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), we can't discuss you or your exchange with anyone. That includes your parents/guardians. Make sure you keep in regular contact with them, because we won't be able to answer any worried phone calls if you haven't phoned home (and yes, this does happen every year)!

### 1.8: If you are having problems

If you experience any problems either before you leave or while you are abroad, whether they be personal or academic, please do not hesitate to contact the SAT. The SAT are here to help and the sooner you inform us of any issues the sooner we can take action and help. If we don't hear from you we assume that everything is OK, so please get in touch if you experience any difficulties.

## CASE STUDIES

### **Making the most of your time abroad**

**Luisa Lovering, International Relations Development Manager**

*I spent a year abroad studying Biology at the University of Salamanca. I was both nervous and excited to be leaving Liverpool but soon forgot my nerves when I arrived. Study Abroad is a great opportunity and moving to a new city gave me so much to explore and see, people to meet and new friends to make.*

*I was welcomed to the city and university by the Erasmus society where I met all the other international students from across the world. The common language was English so as well as taking Spanish classes together we arranged nights out, cultural exchanges (such as Italian Bolognese and Tiramisu night and English Afternoon Tea I baked the scones!) and trips as far away as Portugal and Seville.*

*There was one other student from the University of Liverpool in Salamanca with me and we were both studying biology so we had a lot in common, although the modules we chose were completely different. The Spanish students in class were really welcoming and loved the opportunity to talk to me and practice their English. My Academic advisors at Salamanca and here at Liverpool were really helpful in guiding my module choices before I arrived and helping me change modules when I realised organic chemistry wasn't for me after only one lecture! In Spain all degree courses are 5 years long so I didn't have the background in Chemistry I needed for the module. I took Environmental Chemistry instead and the skills that I learnt giving a presentation to the whole class have stayed with me to this day.*

*I lived in student accommodation which was great for socialising, events, dinners and parties. I was expecting to share a room with another student but I wasn't expecting to make a friend for life and be introduced to so many other people I would never have met if it hadn't been for her.*

*I had never heard of Salamanca before I applied for Study Abroad and didn't have a clue where it was until I had to arrange my travel but now it is definitely one of my favourite cities. It holds many happy memories and I still go back to visit the friends I made during my Study Abroad period.*

## **Section 2: Your Application**

### **2.1: Pre-application briefing**

Before you complete your application to XJTLU, you will be required to attend a compulsory pre-application briefing organised by the SAT. This briefing will outline the application process, choosing your modules and actions you will need to take before you leave for China.

### **2.2: Nomination to XJTLU**

SAT will nominate you to study at XJTLU (i.e. tell XJTLU that you will be studying there). You should not do this yourself. Once you have been nominated, XJTLU will contact you with application information via email. It is therefore very important that you check your UoL emails on a regular basis including your spam/junk folder.

### **2.3: Submitting your XJTLU application**

XJTLU will send you a link to complete and submit your application online. **The deadline for submitting your application is 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020.** You will be required to submit the following supporting documents with your application:

- Passport information page
- Transcript – SAT will send this to XJTLU on your behalf
- Digital passport photo (to be attached online) – this photo is required for your visa therefore it must be suitable for official documents.
- Chinese Placement Test (if applicable – you will be required to complete this test if you have previously studied Chinese)

### **2.4: Planning for your visa**

**Ensuring that you have the correct visa is always the responsibility of the student.**

You will need to have a visa to study in China. You are required to apply for a visa in the UK before leaving for China. This involves making an appointment at a Chinese Consulate (there are Consulates in London, Manchester, Edinburgh and Belfast). Detailed information on how to apply for a visa and to make a Consulate appointment can be found here: [www.visaforchina.org](http://www.visaforchina.org). XJTLU will also provide documents required and detailed information on applying for your visa.

The student visa is called an X type visa. There are two types of X type visas which relates to the duration of your study programme:

- X1 visa is for long term study (over 180 days) which also requires you to obtain a Residence Permit after arrival in China. If you obtain an X1 visa you must not plan any travel (including internally in China) for at least six weeks after your arrival in China as your passport is a requirement of your Residence Permit application.
- X2 visa is for short term study (less than 180 days) which does not require you to obtain a Residence Permit.

International students (i.e. non-UK nationals) must meet with the UoL International Advice and Guidance Team to discuss any implications of studying abroad on their UK visa.

## 2.5: Passport

You will need a valid passport to travel anywhere! More importantly, for visa purposes, will require a passport that is valid until at least 6 months **after** the end of your exchange. So check the expiry date now, and if necessary, get a new one! It can take up to 6 weeks to get a new passport, so it's essential that you apply early.

If you apply for a new passport after you submit your application to XJTLU, it can cause significant problems, as you will need to change the information held about you. This is not always possible, and will require you to buy a new visa, which can be expensive and time consuming. So, check your passport expiry date carefully. If you need to renew your passport, make sure you do this **before** submitting your XJTLU application.

### Section 3: Academic Matters

#### 3.1.1: Choosing your modules – Year in China

If you are participating in the Year in China you will have a range of modules to choose from. Please see the table below for an outline of what you are able to take during the year.

Semester 1	Semester 2
Required	Required
One <b>China Studies Module</b> (5 XJTLU credits)  AND  One <b>Chinese Language module</b> , which is worth EITHER  5 XJTLU credits (usually CLT 031 Practical Chinese for Everyday Life 1 or CLT001 Chinese Language Stage 1)  OR  10 XJTLU credits (usually CLT 021 Intensive Chinese Stage 1 & 2)	One <b>China Studies Module</b> (5 XJTLU credits) at XJTLU Level 1 or Level 2
Optional	Optional
For students taking CLT 031/CLT001, 10 XJTLU credits selected from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>China Studies Modules</b> (5 XJTLU credits per module) at XJTLU Level 1 or 2</li> <li>• One <b>'subject related' module</b> related to your degree programme chosen from the pre-approved list of modules (5 XJTLU credits per module)</li> </ul>	15 XJTLU credits selected from EITHER: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Chinese Language modules</b> usually EITHER CLT 032 Practical Chinese for Everyday Life 2 / CLT002 Chinese Language Stage2 (5 XJTLU credits) OR CLT023 - Intensive Chinese Stage 3 and 4 (10 XJTLU credits)</li> <li>• <b>China Studies Modules</b> (5 XJTLU credits per module) at XJTLU Level 1 or 2</li> <li>• One <b>'subject related' module</b> related to your degree programme chosen from the pre-approved list of modules (5 XJTLU credits per module)</li> </ul>

#### 3.1.2: Chinese Language modules – Year in China

If you are participating in the Year in China, you must take at least one Chinese language module during Semester 1. You have a choice of modules you wish to take. There are three levels of Chinese language modules you can choose from:

1. **CLT031 Practical Chinese for Everyday Life 1** (5 XJTLU credits):

- ✓ **Recommend module**
- ✓ 2 seminars and 1 tutorial per week
- ✓ Most suitable for beginners
- ✓ Focus on speaking, listening and reading some characters
- ✓ Assessment = speaking coursework (50%) and integrated exams (50%)
- ✓ Pinyin are offered in assessments
- ✓ Suitable for students who just would like to experience Chinese and have no pursuit of high-level Chinese

2. **CLT001 Chinese Stage 1** (5 XJTLU credits):

- ✓ 2 seminars and 1 tutorial per week
- ✓ Writing characters are required
- ✓ Assessments include writing and speaking coursework, quiz and integrated exam
- ✓ Pinyin are not offered in assessments
- ✓ Suitable for students who would like to have a solid foundation of Chinese and keep learning Chinese in the future

3. **CLT021 Intensive Chinese Stage 1 and 2** (10 XJTLU credits):

- ✓ 4 seminars and 2 tutorials per weeks
- ✓ Focus on speaking, listening, reading and writing
- ✓ Writing characters are required
- ✓ Assessments include writing and speaking coursework, Quiz and Integrated exam
- ✓ Pinyin are NOT offered in the assessment
- ✓ Suitable for students who want to immerse themselves in Chinese learning and like to pursue a high level of Chinese in the future
- ✓ Challenging module which requires a significant amount of self-study

3.1.3: Registering for modules – Year in China

After your pre-application briefing, you will be provided with a pre-approved list of modules you are able to study at XJTLU as part of your Year in China programme. You will also be given instructions on how to register for the modules you wish to study using the XJTLU E-bridge system. You must follow the guidelines carefully and only choose modules which are included on the list provided. If you register for a module not included on the list provided you will automatically fail the Year in China. All modules will be approved and signed-off by the Study Abroad Team (not XJTLU) who will consult with academic departments if required.

You must respect the E-bridge deadlines and carry out all actions within the allocated time frame. If you do not respect the deadline, you will be allocated a module and you will not be able to make any changes to your timetable.

3.2: Pre-departure briefing

Before you go abroad you must attend a compulsory pre-departure briefing in May organised by the SAT which will prepare you for the practical side of studying abroad.

### 3.3: China 101: Chinese Culture pre-departure course (Year in China students only)

In order to help you prepare for life in China you will be provided with a Chinese culture pre-departure course led by the Confucius Institute. This course is compulsory and will help you to get to know Chinese culture, language and settle in to life in Suzhou. In order to remain eligible for the Year in China programme you must attend both sessions of the course.

### 3.4: Final approval

Your exchange is still subject to final approval from UoL (i.e. maintaining the prescribed grade average in your Semester 2 exams) until your second semester exam results are released and until you have been formally accepted by XJTLU. The Study Abroad Team's advice is that you should not purchase flights or visas until you have received final approval from both UoL and XJTLU. If you decide to make non-refundable financial commitments it is at your own risk.

### 3.5: Documents

Many of your study abroad documents will be accessed via your Study Abroad Mobility Online account (the system you used to apply for Study Abroad). If you have any queries about your forms please contact [goabroad@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:goabroad@liverpool.ac.uk).

### 3.6: Changing your modules

You will have up until two weeks after the start of the semester at XJTLU to make any changes to your modules. **Any changes must be agreed by XJTLU and the UoL Study Abroad Team.** Please remember that changing modules on arrival can be a lengthy and complicated process, and you should only change when academically necessary. If you wish to change modules, you should follow this process:

- If you wish to change modules in week 0 (induction week), you can do so via your E-bridge account
- If you wish to change modules in weeks 1 or 2 you must email your request to change to [goabroad@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:goabroad@liverpool.ac.uk) **before** the end of week two
- Once you have gained approval from SAT to switch modules, you can submit your modules change request to XJTLU Registry [timetables@xjtlu.edu.cn](mailto:timetables@xjtlu.edu.cn)

### 3.7: Recognition of modules

#### Year in China

Year in China is assessed on a pass/fail basis. If you pass the Year in China your degree title will be changed to '*BA Subject with a Year in China*'. The modules you take at XJTLU and the grades you are awarded will appear on your official University of Liverpool transcript. You will also receive a 'Diploma of China Studies' from XJTLU. If you fail the Year in China, your degree title will remain the same i.e. '*BA Subject*', however, all modules and grades award (including any fails) will appear on your official University of Liverpool degree transcript.

### 3.8: If you are having academic problems

If you are having problems at all regarding academic matters such as difficulty with courses, you should contact the SAT. It is important that you inform the SAT straight-away so we can try to help, if you leave it too late to notify the Team we will be limited in what we can do to help solve the issue. It is especially important to get in touch before any mid-term assessments take place.

### 3.9: If you have to withdraw

If for any reason you have to withdraw from your exchange, you must contact SAT immediately. If you withdraw within 2 weeks of the Liverpool term starting, you may be able to continue your current year of study as normal at Liverpool. However, after 2 weeks, you will have missed too many lectures to be able to do this. So it's important to discuss your options with the SAT and your IOA as soon as possible.

If you decide to leave XJTLU early for any reason you will be required to complete a withdrawal form. This form can be obtained from XJTLU Global or Academic Registry. XJTLU Global will provide you with instructions on how to complete the form.

### 3.10: Failing (Year in China)

- a) If you fail a subject specific module or Chinese language module, you will take the XJTLU re-sit paper at the University of Liverpool during the XJTLU re-sit period
- b) If you fail one or more China Studies modules, you will be required to submit a reflective essay / essays on China Studies.

### 3.11: Registering at Liverpool following your period abroad

If you have successfully progressed from your period abroad, your registration record for your following year of study back in Liverpool will automatically be created. To complete the registration process, students returning for the new session are required to confirm their attendance by logging in to Liverpool Life from a campus PC (or by using personal equipment in a University wireless zone).

#### 3.11.1: First semester placements/Full Year

For those students attending an authorised placement beginning in the first semester of the new academic year, the registration process will be completed on your behalf and your details will be passed to the Student Loan Company in the usual way for loan and grant payment purposes.

#### 3.11.2: Second semester placements

Students attending an authorised placement in the second semester of the new session must complete the registration process at the start of the academic year. Failure to do so will result in details not being passed to the Student Loan Company which will result in loans and/or grants not being paid to you. In the case of returning international students (i.e. those who require a visa to study in the UK), this may result in the University withdrawing its immigration sponsorship and informing the UKVI accordingly.

### 3.12: Extending your stay

All request to extend your stay abroad will be refused by the Study Abroad Team.

### 3.13: A new learning environment

Remember that you'll be studying in a new environment, which may or may not be similar to Liverpool in terms of academic expectations. Some things that you should consider are:

- **Attendance:** You are expected to attend all your lectures/seminars
- **Methods of Assessment:** The way you're assessed for your modules may differ at XJTLU. For example, there may be more frequent tests that count towards your grade
- **Methods of Marking/Grading:** The way your assessments are marked/graded may also differ at XJTLU
- **Attitudes to studying:** Typically Chinese students work very hard and can be competitive with one another
- **Language barrier:** The language of instruction at XJTLU is English however some Chinese students may feel shy and lack confidence when speaking English
- **Reading:** For some modules, you may be required to do reading before every lecture/seminar

It's important to familiarise yourself with the differences at XJTLU. This will not only help you with your studies, but will also help you to settle in (see section 12).

### 3.14: Attendance

You are expected to attend all your lectures/seminars at XJTLU. Due to government and visa regulations in China, your attendance will be monitored by XJTLU. If your attendance drops below 80% you run the risk of being deported from China. XJTLU will share data regarding your attendance with the SAT.

### 3.15: Your transcript

When you leave XJTLU a copy of your transcript will be sent to the SAT. **If you owe any debts to XJTLU (i.e. library fines), they won't release your transcript, which means you will not be able to graduate from your Liverpool degree.** Make sure you've paid everything off!

### 3.16: Students with a disability

Disabled students, i.e. those with a medical condition, mental health condition, learning difficulty or a physical disability who haven't informed SAT should do so immediately. We'll need you to sign a Consent Form that allows us to share information with the Disability Advice and Guidance Team at UoL, as well as with your host university. This means that we can arrange appropriate support to assist you during your time at XJTLU as necessary. SAT will send your support plan to XJTLU. It is then your responsibility to follow-up with your host university to ensure that you receive the necessary support. If you have any issues or questions, contact the SAT as soon as possible.

### 3.17: Complaints

#### Complaints about non-academic issues

Complaints about non-academic issues should be raised with XJTLU. Examples of complaints about non-academic matters could include issues with facilities or services offered by your host.

Where possible, you should follow XJTLU's complaints procedure. You should be able to request a copy of the relevant procedure from XJTLU Global. Your complaint should be addressed to the person responsible for the issue of concern in the first instance.

As complaints about non-academic issues fall outside our direct control, the University of Liverpool would not normally be involved in handling your complaint, although we will do our best to support you in raising it with the host university. However, if you feel that your complaint may require an academic remedy (for example, a re-sit opportunity); you may escalate your complaint to the University of Liverpool through Stage 1 of our Student Complaints Procedure. Complaints should be sent to the University of Liverpool Study Abroad Team, and would be considered as outlined in the Procedure.

#### Complaints about academic issues

Complaints about academic issues should also be raised with XJTLU in the first instance. Examples of complaints about academic matters could include issues with teaching, or with teaching material provided by your host.

Where possible, you should follow XJTLU complaints procedure. You should be able to request a copy of the relevant procedure from XJTLU Global. Your complaint should be addressed to the person responsible for the issue of concern in the first instance.

As your awarding body, the University of Liverpool is responsible for the academic quality and standard of your award. You are therefore able to escalate any complaint about an academic issue to the University of Liverpool through Stage 1 of our Student Complaints Procedure. Complaints should be sent to the Study Abroad Team, and would be considered as outlined in the Procedure.

#### Complaints about Partnership Agreements, partner approval and monitoring

If you have any complaints about our partner approval or monitoring processes, or our Partnership Agreements, you should raise your complaint with the University of Liverpool using our Student Complaints Procedure.

### 3.18: Appeals

If you have not yet completed your programme of study and you wish to appeal against a module mark (or an assessment mark in non-modular programmes), please follow Section 1 of the University of Liverpool's Assessment Appeals Procedure.

### 3.19: Extenuating circumstances (known as Mitigating Circumstances at XJTLU)

You should apply for extenuating circumstances at XJTLU. You can download a mitigating circumstances request form from E-Bridge under the 'Policies and Regulations' section, make sure you submit your request by the necessary deadline. You can contact XJTLU Global for guidance on how to make an application.

XJTLU does not have a procedure for appeal against decisions of the Mitigating Circumstances Committee. If you wish to appeal against a decision by the XJTLU Mitigating Circumstances Committee, you should consult Section 13 of the University of Liverpool [Code of Practice on Assessment](#) and follow the procedures outlined within.

### 3.20: Queries regarding all study abroad programmes at XJTLU

The Year in China programme specification is created and approved by the University of Liverpool **not** XJTLU. As such, any academic queries/considerations or issues regarding these programmes **must** be referred to the University of Liverpool for consideration, clarification and final approval.

## **Section 4: Completing the Year in China after your final year at UoL**

If you are participating in the Year in China after your final year of study at UoL, all of the information in this handbook is relevant to you. However, the information in this section is specific to you and should be read carefully.

### **4.1: Withdrawing from the Year in China – Before arrival**

If you accept your offer to participate in the Year in China but then subsequently withdraw or fail to meet the academic requirements (achieve an academic average of at least 40% and attend the China 101 Culture Pre-Departure course) you will be able to graduate the summer after completing your studies as long as you inform the University by **1st July**. If you do not inform the University by 1<sup>st</sup> July, you will graduate at the winter graduation ceremony in December.

### **4.2: Withdrawing from the Year in China – After arrival**

If you commence the Year in China but decide to withdraw, you must complete a transfer request to revert back to your original degree programme. In order to graduate in the December of that year, you must inform the University by **1st October** to be included in the December graduation ceremony. If you do not inform the University by 1<sup>st</sup> October, you will graduate the following Summer. The time you spent in China and your reason for withdrawing from the programme will be noted on your Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR).

### **4.3: Graduation after completing the Year in China**

Final XJTLU academic grades are released later than UoL academic grades. As a result, students taking the Year in China after their final year of study, are not able to graduate in the summer. You will therefore graduate from the University of Liverpool at the winter graduation ceremony in December.

Your final degree classification will be determined at the re-assessment examination boards in the summer. More information regarding degree classification can be found in the [Code of Practice on Assessment](#).

You will be provided with a letter as proof of your completion of studies which can be presented to potential employers in lieu of your degree certificate.

## CASE STUDIES

### **The highs and lows of a new academic system**

**Sarah Husain, Head of Study Abroad**

*I had already studied abroad as part of my undergraduate degree, where I spent a semester studying in Portugal and a year working in Austria. I was so inspired by my experiences abroad that I decided to study for my Master's degree on a two-site programme where I spent 9 months studying in Germany and submitted my Master's dissertation at the Humboldt University in Berlin.*

*My transition to the German academic system did involve some challenges. In Germany, it is entirely normal for academic staff to publicly critic a student's work – coming from a British context, I found this quite difficult to adapt to at first. It was also a much more discursive style of teaching – we were taught how to think but never told what to think. Having experienced two academic systems previously to this, it took me a while to settle into the new learning environment.*

*In the long term, though, I gained so much more from my studies above and beyond the award of the Master's degree: a new way of thinking, a deeper appreciation for new cultures and a new perspective on the world! Eventually I came to realise that being challenged on, and having to defend, your original ideas provides excellent training for working life.*

*There are so many more resources available to you now than when I was planning to study abroad, so it is important to do your research and speak to students who have studied in the universities and countries that you are thinking of visiting. And it's always important to remember that the benefits of Study Abroad are so much wider than each individual mark (although these are important to!); it's about how it shapes you as person and the decisions and directions you'll take during and once you leave university – sometimes you won't see these benefits until sometime after you've got back to the UK.*

## **Section 5: Finance**

You are responsible for funding your time abroad, and you should take the time to research the costs carefully and calculate a budget for your stay. Typically, students report that cost of living in China is much lower than in the UK. However, it should be noted that many students report spending slightly more money abroad compared to their average expenditure in Liverpool, mainly due to the fact that they are experiencing a new and exciting culture and want to take advantage of unique opportunities. You should take this into account when budgeting for your time abroad.

### **5.1: Tuition Fees**

You'll be paying your tuition fees directly to the University of Liverpool and won't be expected to pay any tuition fees to XJTLU. However, you may have to pay some additional costs. You'll be responsible for meeting these costs, so it's important to budget for them.

Students studying at XJTLU for the full academic year will pay reduced tuition fees. The Study Abroad Team will confirm the fee for you. During the 2019/20 academic year the fee was £1,385 for UK/home students and 50% of the regular tuition fees for international students.

### **5.2: XJTLU Service Charge**

You will not be required to pay tuition fees to XJTLU, however, you are required to pay a 'Service Charge' fee at the beginning of each semester at XJTLU. This fee covers student ID cards, airport pick-up service, health check shuttle bus, induction week services and is approximately 300 RMB per semester.

### **5.3: Opportunities for funding**

Student Finance may be able to provide you with additional funding for your time abroad (for example towards flights) in the form of a Travel Grant. It is your responsibility to check whether this is the case and note that any additional funding is usually means-tested. SAT and Student Administration and Support will forward your study abroad details on to Student Finance automatically, before the start of your period in China. If the Student Finance require a letter from the University confirming your exchange, please email SAT to request this.

The regulations regarding Student Finance and Study Abroad depend on your home country and can differ between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. You should receive your normal rate of loan, and may be eligible for a higher rate of loan, as well as contributions towards the costs of flights. Make sure that you mark on your Student Loan form that you will be spending time abroad.

**It is recommended that you apply for your Student Finance as early as possible and include information regarding your anticipated semester or year abroad.**

**This is particularly important if you are taking the Year in China following the end of your studies at Liverpool as Student Finance would automatically be expecting you to finish your course, so you need to ensure you start your Student Finance application as soon as possible. As the University needs to update your record with the Student Loans Company to extend by a year, please wait for notification that we have done this before starting your application to Student Finance.**

It is important to start thinking about how you will budget for your exchange now, rather than later.

#### 5.4: Grants and Scholarships

There are a number of funding opportunities available to you, both from The University and outside agencies:

##### Liverpool Go Abroad Grant

All students participating in a non-Erasmus+ Study Abroad programme are entitled to a Liverpool Go Abroad Grant. The amount you receive is dependent on your programme, household income and Widening Participation (WP) status.

For the Year in China:

- Students with a household income of £25,000 and under who also meet the University's WP Flag criteria will receive: **£1,000**
- Students with a household income of £25,000 and under who don't meet the University's WP Flag criteria will receive: **£750**
- Students with a household income of between £25,001 and £35,000 will receive: **£500**
- All other students will receive: **£250**

For Summer Abroad:

- All students will receive: **£250**
- Students in receipt of any of the scholarships/bursaries listed below will also receive an extra: **£250**
  - Liverpool Bursary
  - Care Leavers' Opportunity Bursary
  - Liverpool Scholars' Award
  - Realising Opportunities Award
  - North Liverpool Academy Scholarship
  - Liverpool Life Sciences University Technical College Scholarship
  - City of Liverpool College Scholarship
  - Mature Students' Bursary
  - Estranged Students' Bursary
  - Young Adult Carers' Bursary

N.B: students can participate in more than one Study Abroad programme however you are only entitled to receive **one** Go Abroad grant.

##### Scholarships

Thanks to the generosity of Santander and Ede and Ravenscroft, students participating in the Year in China can apply for a £500 scholarship

- 40 x £500 Santander scholarship available. Students with a household income of under £35,000 will be prioritised for these scholarships
- 20 x £500 Ede and Ravenscroft scholarships

Scholarship applications are made at the same time as applications for a study abroad programme.

### 5.5: Important information for current UoL scholarship/bursary holders

If you receive a scholarship or bursary from your department, you need to check with the department which pays the bursary what will happen whilst you study abroad. With some you will be entitled to the full amount whilst abroad, with others you may receive a reduced amount. Make sure you check before you go. Bursaries that are administered centrally by The University will be paid at the regular full amount.

### 5.6: Accessing money abroad

Before you go abroad, make sure that you can access your money easily. It can be useful to sign up for internet banking in case you need to move money around. It is also worthwhile checking any charges that your bank may levy for withdrawing cash abroad. You also need to know what you would do in case you need emergency money, for example, is it worthwhile applying for an emergency credit card?

#### 5.6.1: Your UK bank

Tell your UK bank that you are going away, to prevent them from blocking your card. You should also make sure that you replace any cards that are near their expiry dates, as this is easier to do from home.

#### 5.6.2: Initial expenditures (be sure to budget!)

During your first few weeks in Suzhou, you are likely to need large amounts of money, for example for deposits for accommodation. Don't forget that the academic year at XJTLU starts earlier than at UoL so you will not receive your student loan for a few weeks after the start of your course in Suzhou. Also, all grants and scholarships are paid to you after your arrive in China so don't rely on this money for your initial expenditures. Make sure you plan accordingly.

#### 5.6.3: Opening a bank account in China

If you are staying in China for the full academic year, XJTLU recommends setting up a Chinese bank account. XJTLU can provide information and assistance in setting up a bank account. It is a relatively simple process and you will need the following:

- Passport
- Chinese SIM card number
- Tax payer code (UK national insurance number)
- Minimum deposit of around 10-50 RMB

## **Section 6: University of Liverpool Travel Grant information**

Eligible students who go on an exchange to China will receive a one-off Liverpool Travel Award Grant. In order to receive the grant, you'll need to action a number of actions.

### **6.1: Grant documents**

Document	When should it be completed?	Who needs to sign it/fill it in?	Who should I send it to?	Tick the box once it's done
Bank Details Form	At the Pre-Departure Briefing (PDB)	Student	Complete the online form	
Online Insurance Form	After the pre-departure briefing	Student	Complete online	
Study Abroad Contract	At the PDB	Student and University of Liverpool	Complete and return to SAT at the PDB	
Confirmation of Arrival	After arrival	XJTLU	XJTLU will confirm your arrival to the SAT	N/A
Update Liverpool Life Record with term time address details (see 1.3)	After Arrival	Student	N/A	
Student Evaluation Report	Upon completion of placement	Student	Submitted online	

### **6.2: How do I return the documents?**

After you leave Liverpool, all of your documents will be available for download from your Mobility Online account and must be uploaded to Mobility Online once complete. Please make sure that your forms are signed and stamped before uploading to Mobility Online. Remember to upload all pages of the relevant documents and make sure all of the information is clearly visible.

### **6.3: How is my travel grant paid?**

Your grant will be paid in one-lump sum into your bank account upon receipt of your Confirmation of Arrival.

### **6.4: Getting the travel grant**

In order to receive your Travel Grant, you need to return all the documents listed in 6.1. In fact, the Study Abroad Contract that you sign states that you will return all the documents requested. If you fail to return any of the documents listed above, you will have to pay back the entire amount paid to you. So it's important to respect the deadlines set by SAT. If at any point you experience difficulties in getting any documents signed by your host university, you MUST contact SAT immediately.

### **6.5: Leaving XJTLU early**

If you decide to leave your study abroad placement early, you may be required to pay back some or all of your travel grant. Decisions are made on a case-by-case at the discretion of a panel of senior University staff.

## **Section 7: Accommodation**

Where you'll be living during your time abroad is often an important issue for students. Remember, ultimately, accommodation is your responsibility and the University cannot be held liable for any problems you may have. However, when we can, we will do our best to help you, should you experience any difficulties.

### **7.1: Accommodation at XJTLU**

There are various accommodation options close to the XJTLU campus which are allocated on a first come first served basis.

In order to apply for accommodation you must follow the instructions given to you by XJTLU and complete all the necessary actions by the deadline. You are unable request to live with other UoL students and you will not be able to change accommodation blocks upon arrival.

Please note that XJTLU does not own the accommodation. Whilst XJTLU staff will endeavour to assist you with any accommodation-related issues, ultimately the accommodation provider is a completely separate legal entity to XJTLU.

### **7.2: Accommodation at XJTLU Payment**

Upon arrival you will be required to pay for the following approximate costs upfront in RMB cash:

- Deposit approx. 3000 RMB
- Advance rent of 3 months (68RMB per day for a contract less than 365 days or 55RMB for longer than 365 days)
- Advance utility charge 500 RMB
- Total costs = approximately 10,000 RMB

Rent is paid every quarter. Payment dates do not fall in line with your student loan, therefore you must ensure you have sufficient funds to pay bills by the deadline. Late payments will result in losing access to utilities and/or your room. There is also a compulsory utilities charge during the winter period of approximately 500 RMB.

**When paying for anything in cash regarding your accommodation, it is important to ensure that you get a receipt and keep it safe as proof of payment.**

### **7.3: Accommodation on returning to Liverpool**

If you are spending the full academic year in China, when you return to Liverpool for your final year you will have the following options

- Rent a house with friends you met on your Year Abroad
- Apply for University of Liverpool accommodation (there are halls of residence available for non-first-years)
- Rent a room in private halls of residence

## **Section 8: Insurance**

Hopefully you won't need to use any insurance policies during your exchange. However, things can go wrong. So it is very important that you have adequate cover for your period of study abroad.

### **8.1: University of Liverpool Travel Insurance**

Hopefully you won't need to use any insurance policies during your exchange. However, things can go wrong. So, it is very important that you have adequate cover for your period of study abroad.

#### **8.1.1: University of Liverpool Travel Insurance**

The University offers a world-wide travel insurance policy (free of charge) for undergraduates on study abroad exchanges.

The University travel policy will cover you for:

- Travel for two weeks before the start of your course
- Travel for the during the term dates of your course
- Travel for two weeks after the end of your course

The University travel policy **will not** cover you for:

- Travel outside of the times listed above
- Pre-existing conditions (except in an emergency situation e.g. a severe asthma attack)
- Routine prescriptions or check-ups

To apply for the University travel insurance cover, you must complete the online form via your Liverpool Life account. The University is not obliged to provide students with travel insurance however we do so to ensure your safety whilst studying overseas. Any suspected fraudulent claims will be investigated, could result in disciplinary action and may prevent us from insuring future study abroad students – please think carefully before you claim.

Students should carry the emergency contact numbers provided by the insurer in case you are injured and need local medical cover. Annex 4 of this handbook includes information for filing an insurance claim.

### **8.3: Health care in China**

Healthcare varies from country to country and can be very different to the NHS in the UK. For example, in China hospital patients are not provided with food and meals and there is no nursing service in hospitals. You should prepare and research the healthcare norms in your host country so are aware of what to expect in the case of an emergency. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Travel Advice website offers useful guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>.

Healthcare in China is usually provided on the basis that you have to pay upfront at the time you attend the appointment and then reclaim the cost from your insurance company by filling in a claim form and attaching the receipts. This can be very expensive.

If you need healthcare whilst in China, you should call the UoL travel insurance emergency helpline number (details below in 8.3.1). You are also strongly advised to contact the Student One-stop Centre at Central Building - 115E or email them on [global@xjtu.edu.cn](mailto:global@xjtu.edu.cn) for assistance. **Please make sure you tell them you are a Liverpool student when you contact them.**

Students going to XJTLU are provided with two types of insurance cover and it is important to understand the difference between the two policies:

#### 8.3.1: The University of Liverpool travel insurance policy

**BEFORE seeking medical attention it is essential that you contact the UoL Travel Insurance Emergency helpline number.** The University's insurance company will then be able to provide you with details of where to seek medical attention depending on your needs and will organise a payment process so you do not have to pay up-front for any necessary medical care.

#### **UoL Travel Insurance details:**

**Provider: Chubb**

**Emergency helpline: +44 (0) 203 538 7228**

**Policy number: UKBBBO45726**

**Chubb can usually arrange for the healthcare provider to send the bill directly to Chubb, rather than you having to pay upfront and then claim the cost back from the insurers.** The UoL travel insurance will usually cover medical expenses incurred at approved hospitals and private clinics.

#### 8.3.2: Medical insurance provided by XJTLU to all inbound exchange students

Although XJTLU provides medical insurance, **you should always use UoL's insurance coverage.**

The medical insurance provided by XJTLU only covers treatment in public hospitals, where there is likely to be little English spoken and there is a complex administrative system. If you use XJTLU's insurance, you will need to pay upfront and claim back your expenses against the XJTLU medical insurance. You should note that when you are claiming back the costs, the medical insurance provided by XJTLU may only cover up to 50% of the actual cost of treatment. You will need to collect all receipts and paperwork associated with your visit to the hospital in order to claim back your expenses. Please note that when you go to XJTLU's One Stop Shop, in addition to their general advice about accessing healthcare, they may tell you to use the Chinese insurance, since most international students do not have access to the type of insurance provided by the University of Liverpool. **You must tell them that you are a Liverpool student.**

## **Section 9: Staying Safe**

The University of Liverpool wants you to have an exciting period abroad. It should be a cultural, personal and academic adventure. So in order for you to enjoy it fully, you need to stay safe. This next section may appear a bit long, but it's important to us and to you that you read it. Remember, ultimately, as an adult, your personal safety is your responsibility.

### **9.1: Before you leave**

#### **9.1.1: Check in with your GP and Medications**

If you have an on-going medical condition or are visiting your doctor regularly, please discuss your travel plans with your GP. You will need to consider with your doctor or specialist team your plans for support whilst away.

If you are taking medication on a regular basis please discuss the medication you will require for your trip and how you will access it with your doctor. It is usually possible to give extended prescriptions (2-3 months) depending on medication and stability of condition - this can be discussed with your doctor. In certain countries medications are available with or without prescription but brands/drugs may be different and have different effects. Make sure you double check if China imposes any restrictions/limits on certain medication.

Ensure you seek advice at least 8 weeks before travel preferably about travel health and vaccinations. This advice is available at the Student Health Centre on campus.

#### **9.1.2: Vaccinations**

A number of vaccinations are strongly recommended before travelling to China. You should consult your doctor well in-advance (at least two months) before leaving for China as some vaccinations require booster doses (sometimes up to six months later). Most vaccinations will be free of charge (or heavily reduced) through your GP if you consult them well in advance. Leaving vaccinations to the last minute at a private clinic will be very costly.

#### **9.1.3: Dental and opticians check**

Have a dental and opticians check before leaving the UK, as these may not be covered by insurance policies. The UoL travel insurance has limited cover for dental work, please see the policy for further details. Carry with you a copy of your lens prescription if appropriate.

#### **9.1.4: Review the UoL Travel Insurance Policy**

Your University of Liverpool Travel Insurance Policy will be emailed to you before you depart, you should familiarise yourself with the coverage. You can also find the Policy details on the Study Abroad Website, on the Forms and Handbooks page.

#### 9.1.5: Risk assessments

Risk assessments have been created for all Study Abroad destinations and are available on the Online Tool-Kit. You must read the risk assessment for China and disclose to us any personal factors that may affect the level of risk or may require adjustments including health-related issues, disability, linguistic or cultural competencies

#### 9.1.6: Check the FCO and sign up for FCO and Red 24 travel updates

You should consult the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website ([www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)) for information regarding the country you are travelling to. You should sign up to regular travel advice updates on your host country as well as any other countries you may visit. You can also follow the FCO on Twitter (@fcotravel) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com/fcotravel](http://www.facebook.com/fcotravel)). It is also a good idea to follow the nearest British Consulate or Embassy on Twitter and/or Facebook.

Red 24 is another useful resource for travel advice and updates: <https://www.red24.com/affiliates/marsh>. You can sign-up for alerts using the code 7228.

#### 9.1.7: Copies of documents

We recommend that you leave copies of all your documents (passport, insurance policy, credit cards etc) with a relative or close friend. Make sure you leave emergency numbers (e.g. for cancelling credit/debit cards). Check Annex 1 at the end of this handbook for a list of documents that you should take with you. Make sure that you leave these copies in a safe, accessible place whilst overseas.

#### 9.1.8: Finding out about China

Finding out about China is essential in understanding cultural differences, staying safe and settling in. So make sure you buy a good guide book, such as Lonely Planet or Rough Guides, use the internet and speak to returning students. If you email SAT, we can pass your student email address on to returned students so that they can contact you.

#### 9.1.9: Language

It is a good idea to learn the most common words in Chinese, as using these words are often a useful way of receiving a more friendly response or diffusing a difficult situation. It's also advisable to buy a phrase book and/or bilingual dictionary, so that you can show people what you want to say, if you are unable to do so out-loud. Learning some of the local language can also help with settling in.

#### 9.2: Your flight

If you are travelling long-haul (flight of more than 4 hours) then there is an increased risk of developing deep vein thrombosis (DVT). To minimise the risk ensure you do not get dehydrated and exercise your legs regularly during the flight. You can also buy flight socks or compression stockings.

### 9.3: When in China

#### 9.3.1: Healthcare Facilities and Emergency Numbers

Make sure that you are aware of the location of the local healthcare facilities, and save the number in your phone. You are strongly advised to carry a medical kit.

You should read the Department of Health booklet entitled 'Health Advice for Travellers', which you can download from:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_4135858.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_4135858.pdf)

The emergency numbers for China:

- Ambulance: 120
- Fire: 119
- Police: 110

Healthcare in China is very different to the NHS in the UK. For example, English is only spoken in international hospitals, there is no nursing service in public hospitals and patients aren't provided with food and water. You should prepare and research the healthcare norms in China so are aware of what to expect in the case of an emergency. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Travel Advise website offers useful guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>.

#### 9.3.2: In the case of an emergency

In the case of an emergency you should:

- Get to a safe place if possible.
- Call the appropriate local emergency number.
- If you require healthcare in China you should call the travel insurance emergency helpline number as outlined in section 8 before you seek medical attention.
- In an emergency you can also contact the University of Liverpool on **out-of-Hours (emergencies only)**: +44-(0)151-794-2222 (24hrs). Please note that the UoL 24 hour security number is a call back service. You will be able to report your issue and an appropriate number of staff will contact you to offer any required assistance.

#### 9.3.3: Health checks

Students studying at XJTLU must undertake a health check as part of their visa requirements. XJTLU will arrange for you to be taken to a local health clinic with all other students and undergo a brief health check, this will include: an echocardiogram, urine sample, blood test and x-ray.

Health checks will take place a day or so after your arrival and will involve an early morning start so be prepared for this!

It is important that you arrive at XJTLU on time and during the designated arrival period. If you arrive later than the arrival period, you will have to make your own arrangements to have the required health checks. This will involve making appointments at health care facilities and arranging your own transport.

#### 9.3.4: Local consulate/embassy

Make sure you know the location of and number of your nearest Consulate/Embassy. You can find out this information from [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk). You may want to save the number in your phone. You must write it down in safe place. You should use this number in case of emergency, such as loss of passport. If you are arrested for a serious offence, you must insist on the British Consulate being informed.

#### 9.3.5: Safety in your host city/town

When out and about in your host city/town, take the same precautions as you would in the UK. Don't walk by yourself at night (take a safe and appropriate form of transport for your area), don't have valuables (such as phones and cameras) on display, and don't carry large amounts of cash with you. Talk to local students/residents to ask about local trouble areas and any important local customs. Many people's sensible personal safety habits can become lax whilst abroad. This is the easiest way to get into trouble, so don't let it happen to you.

#### 9.3.6: Fire

Learn the local instructions on action to be taken in the event of a fire, especially the fire evacuation route for your accommodation. Also take note of the emergency numbers given above.

#### 9.3.7: Eating and drinking

We want you to have an exciting gastronomical experience whilst abroad, so be adventurous, but be sensible. Try to avoid food that has been made in clearly unsanitary conditions. And if you're not used to a certain ingredient (e.g. spicy food), it's a good idea to taste it gradually! Tap water is not drinkable in China therefore you will need to buy bottled water.

#### 9.3.8: Climates

China can be both hot and cold depending on the season. It's important to take sensible precautions such as wearing layer, staying hydrated and using a high factor sun lotion.

#### 9.3.9: Driving

If you drive whilst abroad, make sure you are properly insured, that the car you have hired is safe and you are familiar with all the controls before driving off, and that you are fully aware of all the rules and regulations about driving in the country you are in. You may not be used to driving in the weather conditions of the country you are staying in. You should drive even more carefully than you would at home and never pick up hitch-hikers.

#### 9.3.10: Mental/emotional health

Whilst usually a great experience, studying abroad can, on occasions, affect your mental/emotional health. Should you feel that your mental/emotional health is being affected by your time abroad, make sure that you speak to XJTLU about this.

XJTLU have an excellent and easily accessible Counselling Service and you are encouraged to get in touch with the team and make an appointment to speak with a counsellor: [counsellingservice@xjtlu.edu.cn](mailto:counsellingservice@xjtlu.edu.cn).

It's also a good idea to speak to SAT and the Disability Advice and Guidance Team. If you feel that want to speak to a professional, remember that you can use the University of Liverpool Counselling Service, who can be emailed on [counserv@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:counserv@liverpool.ac.uk) or rung on 0044-(0)151-794-3304.

University of Liverpool students going through a tough time can access free online support from anywhere in the world with **Big White Wall**. Whether you're feeling homesick, feeling low, stressed or not coping, Big White Wall can help you get support, take control and feel better. The service provides 24/7 online peer and professional support, with trained counsellors. Big White Wall provides a safe space online to get things off your chest, explore your feelings and learn how to improve and self-manage your mental health and wellbeing. Big White Wall is totally anonymous, so no one will know you've chosen to use it. To join Big White Wall's supportive online community, simply go to [bigwhitewall.com](http://bigwhitewall.com) and sign up with your university email address. You then choose an anonymous username for your time on Big White Wall.

#### 9.3.11: Sexual Health

There is a link between going abroad and an increased risk in contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Remember that the incidence of STIs such as HIV/Aids can sometimes be higher than in the UK. Condoms provide significant protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. You may wish to take EU kite marked condoms with you.

#### 9.3.12: Local laws

Make sure you are aware of local laws and the regulations of XJTLU and China. Remember, ignorance is not an excuse! One notable law is that all foreigners must carry their passport when travelling within China.

#### 9.3.13: Special note on drugs laws in China

There are extremely severe penalties for drugs offences in China, including the death penalty. The Suzhou authorities are strictly enforcing Chinese drug laws and random drug tests regularly take place in clubs and bars in Suzhou (this includes on-the-spot urine sampling). When out in bars and clubs in Suzhou do not leave any drinks unattended and do not accept any drinks from strangers.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advice also indicates that random drug tests may take place on entry to China.

For further information and guidance please read the risk assessment for China (available on the Study Abroad Online Tool-Kit) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/china>.

## **Section 10: Travel Practicalities**

The points in this chapter are a just a few for you to consider, to help make your travel to your host country as smooth as possible.

### 10.1: Flights

**Remember it is your decision as to whether or not you wish to purchase flights before the release of the Semester 2 exam results (as per the guidance in section 3.4).** This is because final permission for the exchange is usually dependent on you maintaining the average set by your department. Rather more obviously, you also need to wait until your acceptance is confirmed by your host university.

Consider the following when buying flights:

- Shop around! Compare prices online and from travel agents (STA Travel are student orientated travel agents). For the cheapest tickets, avoid travelling at weekends and book as far in advance as possible (bearing in mind the need to wait for exam results/acceptance from the host university)
- For long-haul flights, make sure you take jet-lag into consideration when choosing arrival times/dates. Allow some time to settle in and get accustomed
- For people who like to take everything plus the kitchen sink, make sure you're aware of baggage limits on any airline you fly with, including hand luggage. Excess baggage charges can be very expensive

### 10.2: Visa

The same rules apply to the purchasing of a visa (where necessary) as in 8.1 above. Visas may take some time to be issued. Therefore be aware that if you buy flights, and then your visa is not issued in time, you will lose the money spent. Conversely, should you wait to buy flights until your visa is issued, then the cost of the flights may increase. Unfortunately, there is no easy solution to this, and therefore, the order in which you purchase your visas and flights is a decision you must make yourself.

### 10.3: ISIC Card

It can be worth investing in an International Student Identity Card (ISIC). This is the most widely recognised form of student identification in the world. It will help you get discounts on a range of things from travel to entry fees. See [www.isic.org](http://www.isic.org) for more information.

### 10.4: Mobile Phone

Check whether your mobile phone will work abroad. If you wish to buy a local sim card you might need to unlock your phone in order for it to work. You could also consider buying a cheap pay-as-you-go phone on arrival in your host country. China Mobile, China Telecom and China Unicom are the three major telecommunication providers in China.

### 10.5: Chinese Firewall

Certain websites and social media providers are not accessible in China due to the firewall. You will not be able to access Facebook, Google, WhatsApp and many other common websites in China. For keeping in touch with people at home and new friends in China WeChat is the best app to use.

## **Section 11: Cultural differences**

One of the most exciting things about studying abroad is the fantastic opportunity to explore and understand a new culture. As you'll be in China for an extended period of time, you'll have a unique opportunity to truly try and integrate into this new culture. But you need to be aware that the UK is fairly liberal in its attitudes. Also remember that in more rural communities, attitudes may differ from big cities.

However, it is important to remember that cultural sensitivity does not mean that you have to tolerate behaviour that makes you feel unsafe or encroaches upon your personal boundaries.

In order to be as prepared as possible for your time abroad, it's a good idea to familiarise yourself with the cultural and societal differences of your host country, for example, attitudes towards gender and race. You should consider the challenges these differences might pose, understand how to deal with potentially difficult situations and know where to go for help and support should you need it.

A good way to understand the culture of China is to research its recent history – this might give an indication of what attitudes may be like towards some of the topics discussed below.

### **11.1: Alcohol**

The legal drinking age in China is 18. Attitudes to drinking in China are different from the UK, for example: drinking to get drunk (even by young people) is not usually the norm and may be frowned upon.

Whilst abroad you should take the same sensible precautions as you would in Liverpool. For example: do not drink to excess and ensure you stay with a group of friends when drinking socially.

Drink spiking does occur in Suzhou, particularly in bars where international students frequent. As such, you should take reasonable precautions when out and about, don't leave drinks unattended and don't accept drinks from strangers.

### **11.2: Smoking**

Smoking is prevalent in China however it is illegal to smoke in public places including universities' campuses.

### **11.3: Race**

Remember that by the very nature of being a foreigner, you are a minority in China. This is likely to attract the attention of the local residents, and will predominately be a reflection of friendly and good-natured interest. You may even experience people wishing to take photos of you. However, it is important to remember that attitudes towards race vary from country to country and culture to culture. These attitudes may not be what you are used to in the UK. It is best to steer clear of any confrontational situations.

### **11.4: Gender**

Take into account local attitudes towards dress and behaviour, perhaps particularly so if you are female. Be sensible and realistic about whether you should walk anywhere alone at night, or how it could be perceived if you wear a short skirt or have bare arms or exposed shoulders.

### 11.5: Sexuality

Although homosexuality is not prohibited by law, public attitudes are less tolerant than in the UK and public displays of affection may attract negative attention. There's no provision under Chinese legislation guaranteeing freedom from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

The FCO has advice and links for LGBT travellers (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-foreign-travel-advice>), as well as female travellers.

### 11.6: Special considerations

When travelling in and around your host country or even further afield, there may be special times of year when you need to think carefully about travel plans. For example, in China, during Chinese New Year, hotels, hostels and all travel options will fill up quickly and well in advance. In Muslim countries (or predominately Muslim areas of a country), during Ramadan the population will be fasting between sunrise and sunset and many locals will appreciate sensitivity towards this. Make sure that you are aware of any local/national festivals or holidays, so that you can plan suitable travel.

## CASE STUDIES

### **Is it me or is it racist?**

**John Green, Study Abroad Officer (University of Liverpool Management School)**

*“Coming from a mixed background of British and Indian and having brown skin; people often assume that I am from the country that I am visiting and so are very friendly and welcoming, before being totally surprised at my Mancunian accent.*

*Over the last decade both in the UK and abroad, I have found it difficult at times going through airports and immigration and at times even walking down the street can be a challenge, especially when I am with my wife who is white. People are often taken back when the John Green they were expecting turns out to be a brown man.*

*The key to a happy experience is research and preparation. Look at the country, the city, the town that you will be going to and read about the local landscape in terms of recent history, politics and views on immigration. Is the place you are going to liberal or conservative in its views? What are the main concerns that could affect you? This isn't to say that you shouldn't study abroad or visit wherever you'd like, but it's important to be prepared for the type of experiences you may encounter, positive or negative.*

*I also make sure that I'm prepared before every flight. I ensure all of my documents are up to date and I have multiple copies of everything and I keep one on me, one in my bag and one in my luggage. I always arrive in plenty of time at the airport so I don't need to run and so I don't appear stressed whilst queuing in security as this helps avoid any unnecessary attention. Equally, I never have anything in my pockets or wear any jewellery and I always make eye contact with the security guards and come across as friendly and polite. I have found that, for example, when travelling to the USA, if I look slightly more dishevelled than your average person, I will often be stopped and searched, which can be quite invasive and unnerving. Whilst racial profiling isn't always the cause of searches, you have to be aware of it and take the attitude that, irrespective of the reasons for the search, someone, somewhere is being safety conscious.*

*Whilst abroad, it can be difficult if you're a confident and outspoken person to keep your emotions in check when instances of racism occur, especially if you have had alcohol. In my experience, you can challenge without confrontation; but at the end of the day, this is not your problem, it is theirs and the best thing to do is to remain calm and accept that whilst it shouldn't happen, sometimes the best course of action is to remove yourself from the situation.*

*Racism or unwelcome attitudes toward race shouldn't stop you travelling or enjoying your time abroad and I would say the vast majority of my travel has gone perfectly fine with no incidents. But not all places are the same, and cities and regions can vary within the country itself, so going forewarned is going forearmed.*

*I studied abroad in the U.S.A and studying abroad is the greatest thing I have ever done. Without study abroad, I would not be in the career I am now and I would not have met my wife. So don't let anything stop you, whether you're Black, White, Asian, green or purple, nothing should stop you from having a fantastic experience!”*

## CASE STUDIES

### **Travelling abroad as part of a Minority Group** **Rich Dunning, Deputy Head of Study Abroad**

*“As a gay man, I have always been mindful of the culture of the country that I’m visiting. Whilst it makes me sad that some countries and cultures aren’t as liberal as the UK, I wouldn’t want a lack of research or understanding on my part to put me in harm’s way.*

*On my Year Abroad in Brazil, I was acutely aware that, despite perceptions as a liberal country with regards to LGBTQ+ rights, there was (in 2007/8) still a high level of homophobia (and to this day Brazil has a very high level of transphobia). In fact the theme of Rio Pride 2007 was “Homofobia – criminalização já!” – LGBTQ+ people weren’t (and still aren’t) legally protected, at a federal level, against discrimination by law (although they do have many rights, such as marriage and family, and discrimination due to sexuality has been illegal in many states for a number of years). This meant I was always cautious as to who I gave my contact details to, as well as where and when I might meet up with people (and this was well before the days of apps!). I also made sure to research local bars, clubs and cafés that were gay-friendly so that I could meet likeminded people.*

*Today, when I travel with my husband, we always make sure to research attitudes and law towards the LGBTQ+ community in the country or countries we’re visiting. If we’re ever unsure or worried about the prevailing attitudes, we either don’t visit that country or we take practical steps, like booking twin rooms instead of double beds. We use resources like guide books (most good guide books have a section for LGBTQ+ travellers) and the FCO website (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-foreign-travel-advice>). It’s always good to get a guide book for the city or region you’ll be living in too, as attitudes can be vary widely between different areas of the same country (something my husband and I have discovered when travelling around the USA!). A good resource that I’ve discovered since working at the University are the Stonewall Global Workplace briefings (<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/global-workplace-briefings>). Whilst these are primarily geared towards people looking to work abroad, you can read some really valuable information on the legal status of LGBTQ+ individuals, as well as insights into cultural attitudes towards our community.*

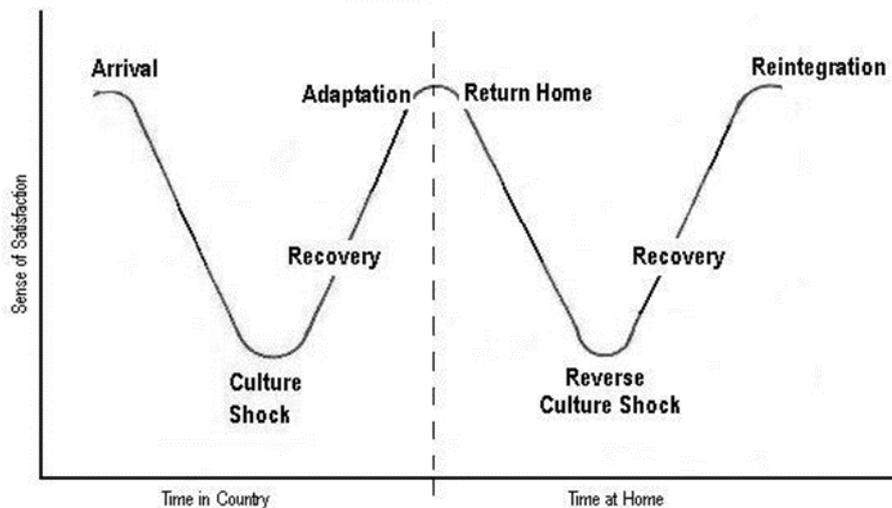
*I’d obviously rather I didn’t have to worry at all about this, but it would be naïve of me to pretend otherwise. But it also doesn’t put me off travelling and I hope that it doesn’t put you off Study Abroad either, Study Abroad was the best thing that I did during my degree and still plays a huge role in my life today. Instead I make informed choices about where I spend my time and have realistic expectations as to what my experiences abroad may be like.”*

## **Section 12: Settling in**

Arriving in a new country and getting to grips with all the differences can be an exciting, but sometimes challenging experience. However, by following a few simple tips and considering your own thoughts and feelings, you can make this transition as smooth as possible.

### **12.1: Culture Shock**

Culture Shock is the term used to describe the range of feelings that someone can experience when arriving and settling into a new country. The graph below shows the W-Curve, displaying the patterns of highs and lows associated with culture shock:



### **12.2: Dealing with culture shock and homesickness**

The more research you have done on China, and the more familiar you will be with the procedures at your host university and the less shocking culture shock is likely to be. Getting involved with local culture (e.g. attending local festivals) and university student life (e.g. joining student clubs) are excellent ways of reducing culture shock. Learning some words from the local language, so that you can raise a smile (remember, even if you say something wrong, the effort is appreciated) will help you fit in. And remember, you are not alone! Lots of students who study abroad experience culture shock or homesickness at various times in their experience and talking to someone about how you feel can be the first step towards settling in. If you're having a difficult time, then you can always contact SAT using the contact details given at the beginning of this guide.

## CASE STUDIES

### **What not to do if you are having a rubbish time abroad** **Nia Evans, Study Abroad Manager (Outbound)**

*“Studying abroad is an amazing opportunity to see the world, immerse yourself into a new culture and make memories to last a lifetime. That being said, sometimes your expectations of what studying abroad will be like can be very different to reality.*

*It’s fair to say that my semester abroad in Italy was a total rollercoaster of many ups and downs. Some of my not-so-good experiences were simply down to bad luck but there were many things which I could have done to have made the whole experience much more positive.*

*After the first few weeks of excitement, I very quickly became really homesick and found it difficult to settle into life in my new country. The main mistake I made was that I didn’t ask for help either from my host university or my home university. I buried my head in the sand and thought “I’m only here for a few months, I’ll just stick it out and then I can go home”. Looking back now, I wish I had shared how I was feeling with someone. But, seeing all my course-mates’ amazing pictures on social media of their experiences abroad made me feel like I was a failure. However, after returning home I found out that most of my friends also had ups and downs during their time away!*

*I did have some great times in Italy and visited some amazing places but my experience could have been so much better if I’d done a few things differently. Here some things that I wish that I had done at the time:*

- *Been more realistic about my expectations*
- *Talked to someone and shared how I was feeling*
- *Joined a club or a society*
- *Changed accommodation – I wasn’t living with the right people for me*
- *Pushed myself to get involved with things, even when I didn’t fancy it – just to give something a go and meet new people*

*Although I stuck it out it’s important to remember that if things really aren’t going well, it’s OK for you to come home, lots of students worry that this will make them feel like they’ve ‘failed’ but actually the important thing is that they’ve tried.*

*The other important thing for you to know (maybe when you are feeling low or your marks aren’t as high as you’d hoped) is that it was only until a year or so after being abroad that I really saw the benefits of my time away and how much I had learnt and achieved. I now feel that having got through my semester in Italy I am far more resilient, assertive and independent than before. The thing I am most proud of though is that I gave it a go.*

*You might be surprised to know after reading about my experience, that even though it wasn’t always the happiest time for me I still think studying abroad is the best thing I have ever done”.*

### **Section 13: Preparing to Return Home**

If you've left reading this section until you are actually leaving to come home, then we hope you've had a great time on your exchange! Although returning should be relatively easy, there are a few things to consider.

#### **13.1: Paying off any debts**

If you have any outstanding debts to XJTLU, you *must* pay these off before you leave. If you return to Liverpool with outstanding debts, XJTLU will not release your transcript, which means that you won't receive any marks and could subsequently lead to you failing the year. Furthermore, students leaving unpaid debts damage the reputation of UoL and can negatively impact the opportunities for future UoL students to go on exchange.

#### **13.2: Registering for your final year**

Ensure you are aware of the procedures for registering for your final year at UoL. Your School Student Experience Team will be able to tell you about the relevant procedures.

#### **13.3: Transferring off the Year in China programme**

If for any reason you wish to transfer off the Year in China programme, you should contact the Study Abroad Team as soon as possible.

## **Section 14: Welcome Home!**

Congratulations! You have just completed a major milestone in your UoL career! Nationally, less than 7% of all UK university students study abroad so your time abroad will set you apart from your peers. When you return to campus we encourage you to talk with the Careers & Employability Service about how to represent your time abroad on your CV and how to highlight your gained skills in future job or graduate school interviews. The Study Abroad Team loves to hear from returned students and we hope that you will share some of your experience with us too.

### **14.1: Reverse culture shock**

Upon returning home, some students experience reverse culture shock, whereby they feel a bit disillusioned with the UK after all the excitement of the exchange abroad. Following the tips in Chapter 10, when back here in Liverpool can help you to 're-settle' in at home. Also, try maintaining links with China, perhaps by taking language classes at the Confucius Institute or reading about China specific news. Don't forget that UoL is home to thousands of students from XJTLU so why not get involved with some of the China related societies on campus? The SAT may also ask you to help us promote exchanges to the next cohort of outbound students, which is a great way of reliving your experiences.

### **14.2: Helping the Study Abroad Team**

UoL is hoping to provide 15% of students with an international experience by 2026, and for that we need your help. You can help SAT by sending us blogs, vlogs and photos. We also recruit Study Abroad Ambassadors every year to help us at events such as the Study Abroad Fair. These are paid positions and you'll receive information on how to apply in the summer, so keep checking your UoL email account. Alternatively, we might ask you to come and represent your host university at the Study Abroad Fair or speak at Pre-Departure Briefings. You are the best source of advice and knowledge for future study abroad students, so please get involved!

**Annex 1: List of documents you should take with you**

<u>Document</u>	<u>Have you copied them as well? (tick when done)</u>
Passport	
EU Health Insurance Card	
Driving Licence	
Insurance Policy	
Birth Certificate (copy only)	
Copies of Grant Letters	n/a
Student Loan details	
Cheque book, cards, travellers cheques, foreign currency	
Passport photographs	n/a
ISIC Card	
Transcript	
Offer Letter	

## **Annex 2: Glossary of Terms**

**Home university** – The University of Liverpool

**Host university** – The university at which you spend your study abroad period

**Mobility Online (MO)** – The online system which you use to apply for study abroad and where you can access, download and upload all necessary documentation

**International Opportunities Advisor (IOA)** – The academic member of staff in your department at UoL who you should contact regarding any academic queries about your study abroad period

**Student Experience Team (SET)** – The team in your School at UoL who can assist with queries regarding registering for modules at UoL, registering for your final year at UoL, applying for extenuating circumstances

**Annex 3****OVERSEAS MEDICAL ASSISTANCE  
IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY****TELEPHONE: Chubb Assistance****+44 (0) 203 538 7228****And quote reference: Policy No. UKBBBO45726**

This is operated through a UK telephone number to provide you with direct access for advice and assistance from anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day.

In the event of a medical emergency whilst overseas you should contact the above number to obtain assistance with:

**a) Medical**

- i) Medical advice, referral or treatment.
- ii) Emergency repatriation.
- iii) Local payment of hospital bills.
- iv) Replacement of essential maintenance medication or drugs.

**b) Personal**

- i) Replacement of lost or stolen passport, tickets, or other travel documents.
- ii) Cancellation of lost or stolen credit, charge or bankers cards or travellers cheques.
- iii) The tracking of lost luggage.
- iv) Forwarding essential business documents and urgent messages all charges for which will be the sole responsibility of the Insured or Insured Person.
- v) Legal advice.
- vi) The provision of interpreters at business meetings or the translation of documents all charges for which will be the sole responsibility of the Insured or Insured Person.

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A card giving the Emergency Helpline number can be collected from Foundation Building Reception, though this is also stated on your certificate of insurance.

Please note that a £100 excess applies to each section of the Policy except Medical Expenses

The insurers require an application form to be completed in advance of each visit. Please allow 5 working days if a certificate is required.