



WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

School of Comparative American Studies (CAS)
(part of the Department of History)

Undergraduate Year Abroad Handbook
**(for students in the third year of the “History, Literature
and Cultures of the Americas” degree course)**

2015-2016

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Introduction

The Department endeavours to ensure that the information in this handbook is as accurate and up-to-date as possible. Statements of departmental policy are made in good faith and are an honest attempt to describe current practices. However, the final arbiter of policy and procedure is the University Regulations as laid down in the University Calendar, which can be found on the University Governance webpages (www.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/). Any significant changes to the practices and procedures detailed in this handbook will be notified to students by email and the electronic copy of the handbook available from the CAS website will be updated accordingly.

This handbook is intended to provide you with a guide to the requirements of the year abroad, together with some suggestions about the preparations and arrangements you should make to ensure that your experience of study in the Americas yields its full potential. You must read this handbook carefully and keep it for reference. It is particularly important that you understand the academic requirements of the year abroad. If you have problems during your year abroad (or questions that cannot be answered from this document) please contact CAS or the International Office.

Please make sure that you are confident about your exchange destination before you go. Any student with doubts about their ability to fend for themselves during the year abroad should talk to their personal tutor or to the CAS Director well before their departure, as we do not condone premature returns to the UK except in the most exceptional and extenuating circumstances.

For most of you, this will be your first prolonged stay in another country. Students generally find our exchange universities to be very different from life at Warwick. You will have to deal with unfamiliar systems of teaching and appraisal. Be ready to adapt to this.

Those going to Latin America or the Caribbean should remember that, though Latin American and Caribbean countries vary considerably, this is a developing area, and you may need more self-reliance and resourcefulness than you usually require at Warwick and in the UK generally. Even in the US and Canada you will find differences from what you are used to, and you will need to be flexible. Being self-reliant is, of course, an important element of the year abroad and will help make your experience interesting and rewarding.

Please note that the value of this handbook to students in subsequent years will depend in part on your transmitting your experience to us, so that we can pass it on. If during your year abroad you think of any corrections and additions which you think might be useful to students in future, please let us know.

We have found in the past that it is helpful to give out student names and destinations along with Warwick email addresses, of third year and fourth year students, to current second years to help them make the decision on where to spend their year abroad. We may put this information on the CAS website (access to this information will be restricted to university staff and students) and would appreciate it if you could let the CAS office know if you have any objections to your contact information being used in this way. If you do not raise any objection it will be assumed that we have your permission.

1. Support, Advice, and Requirements

1.1 Contacts

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1.2 Objectives of the Year Abroad

1. To attend courses at a university in the Americas as an integral and obligatory part of your studies in Warwick.
2. To improve your understanding of the social and cultural environment in the country where you undertake your studies.
3. To refine your use and appreciation of the Spanish language. If you are spending your year abroad in Latin America, improving your Spanish is a fundamental aim.

1.3 Requirements of the Year Abroad

1. You must pursue the objectives set out above.
2. You must remain at the university in which you are enrolled for a complete academic year. You must remain in residence abroad for a minimum of thirty weeks (excluding the vacation periods). You may return during holiday periods, such as Christmas, but you must observe the academic calendar of the institution in which you are enrolled as a student. You must remain in residence abroad for at least thirty weeks, calculates cumulatively excluding the vacation periods. Failure to remain abroad any result in your de-registration. You may of course remain abroad for a longer period, provided you return to Warwick in time to begin your final year of study. Please ensure that your VISA covers you for any extended stay and that you return in time to start your final year.
3. You must keep the Year Abroad Co-Ordinator informed of your address and telephone number while you are abroad. You should complete the online form as soon as possible after arrival at your destination, available at:
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/cas/undergraduate/yearabroad/contactdetails/>.
4. You must inform year Abroad Co-Ordinator of the courses you are taking during your year abroad. This information should be sent to the CAS office at the start of each semester. An online form is available at:
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/cas/undergraduate/yearabroad/notificationofcourses/>.
If at all possible, you should choose your first semester courses before you leave the UK. **Should you require any advice regarding your module selections or the end of year dissertation please send these directly to Dr Ben Smith.**
5. You must select courses for your fourth year when requested to do so. You will receive information on fourth year modules in the Spring. You must complete the online selection process to notify CAS of your choices by the date requested. If you do not provide this information in time you may not be allocated your preferred option choices. You will also be required to register on the University eVision Module Registration (eMR) system as usual in the summer before you return for your final year.
6. All students on their year abroad will continue to have their engagement & attendance monitored at their chosen destination in the same way as they are at Warwick.

7. You must retain all course materials from your year abroad. On your return to Warwick, you must submit to CAS all course work, marked and graded by the host institution, by Monday week 2 of the autumn term. If you were in Latin America, you must bring a certificate of enrolment and attendance at courses. If you were in the US, Canada or the Caribbean you must bring an official transcript.
8. You must be available for a visit by a member of Warwick staff. You may be visited by a member of Warwick academic staff during your stay abroad. You will be informed of the timing of visits in advance; these are likely to occur in the sixth week of Warwick's first or second terms, but they may be scheduled for another period. Availability for these visits is a strict requirement of the course. For this reason it is particularly important that you keep CAS informed of your address and telephone number.
9. You must make adequate financial arrangements for your year abroad, and be adequately insured. CAS and the University of Warwick are no more responsible for your finances while you are abroad than they are while you are in the UK.
10. Please ensure that you frequently check your Warwick e-mail address as this is the **ONLY** e-mail address that we will use to contact you. This will ensure you remain aware of any important information regarding your stay and to prepare you for your return.
11. You must fulfil the academic requirements listed below.

1.4 Academic Requirements for CAS Students in North America or the Caribbean

You must meet the academic requirements of both your host university and of CAS. CAS requirements may mean that you need to undertake more work than the host institution demands. You must do any extra work needed to fulfil CAS requirements, which are listed below.

1. Your Year Abroad is organised to offer a rough equivalence to the academic workload of a third year student at Warwick, where you would complete four units of coursework [four modules] over the academic year. In Warwick and other UK universities, students do courses that stretch over the year. In North America, the academic year is organised differently: it is divided into two semesters or, in most California campuses, three terms known as quarters, and courses are shorter. Toronto and Queens in Canada are exceptions: there, students may take courses of one semester's duration, or courses that stretch over one year.
2. If you are in the US, at Connecticut, Columbia, South Carolina, Wisconsin, or Berkeley, CAS requires that you take four taught courses per semester; if you are in California, [except Berkeley] you must take three courses per quarter. Over the academic year as a whole, In Canada, you may find that it is possible to take full year courses as well as semester courses. If you wish, you may take four full-year courses, or combine full-year courses and half-year courses [e.g. 2 full-year courses and 4 semester courses]. Be careful not to overload yourself when making such combinations in Canada: take local advice and advice from CAS students with previous experience of Canada.

3. Students are reminded that it is unacceptable to take less than the required number of courses. CAS will not normally excuse students who return with less than the required amount of written work, supervised and marked by tutors at the host institution. Remember that you are responsible for ensuring that all your written work is returned to Warwick with an American grade on it. You should obtain and submit to Warwick an official academic transcript if this is not supplied directly to us by the host institution. It is also advisable to inform us of grades (via e-mail) as you receive them, and to keep your own record of them. You should not enrol in any course [including language courses] on an ungraded ("Pass/Fail") basis, unless it is additional to the normal workload. When you return to Warwick you will be required to demonstrate that you have completed the minimum number of courses. For this reason you must retain copies of all essays, exams, and other course materials, together with their marks. These must be submitted to CAS on your return to Warwick.
4. When choosing courses, you must attain levels equivalent to those for a third year student. US universities have different ways of ranking courses. Some use numerical rankings [e.g. 100 to 700 ranges from first year to postgraduate]; you may take 200 level courses but should make every effort to get into 300 level courses. The University of California differentiates between Upper and Lower Division: in this case make sure that you register for Upper Level courses only; you will find Lower Division courses are often survey courses which contain large numbers of students and can sometimes be rather rudimentary and tedious. You should aim for more specialised courses: these will have fewer students and hence more personal attention; they will also tend to be more challenging and interesting, and thus provide a more fertile field for generating written material [especially 4,500 word essays] that will get good marks at Warwick. Do try to take advantage of all the US university can offer, and remember that you have to make sure that your academic performance is on a par with a Warwick third year. If you feel confident, try some of the seminar and graduate courses. But don't overdo it; the workload can be heavy. All but one of these courses must be on some aspect of the history, literature, culture or politics of the Western Hemisphere. At the discretion of the Year Abroad Coordinator, you may select one course on any other topic of your choice.
5. You will have to indicate your choice of courses for the first semester or quarter in your application. Universities have different systems of course registration and it is your responsibility to master their rules and regulations. This you can do by consulting their course programmes and websites. It is quite a sensible idea to register for an extra course in each semester or quarter and then to drop one when you have sounded out the work load, material and teaching of all the courses you have chosen. This is a common and quite acceptable practice, though there will be a deadline beyond which dropping courses is not permitted. Please make sure you adhere to these deadlines, and that you ensure that the university is informed about courses that you have dropped. If you do not make it clear that you have dropped a course, it will appear as a failed course on your transcript of marks, and thus be an unfortunate blot on your academic record.
6. Remember that attendance at lectures and other classes is usually compulsory and failure to attend regularly will lower your course grades and perhaps produce a fail. Build up a pattern of work, and work on your studies frequently and regularly. Be prompt in submitting essays; American instructors are rarely indulgent about late work and may dock marks or even refuse to grade overdue essays.

7. You must write a year abroad project: The year abroad dissertation is an 8,000-word essay, excluding footnotes and bibliography on some aspect of the history, literature, culture or politics of the Americas. The latter option is open only to students in the US, Canada and the Caribbean. This written work can arise from one or more courses at your host university, or it may consist of entirely new work. Advice on choosing a topic for your project is given below. Note that your year abroad will count for two units in your final degree. One unit will consist of course work from your host university. The second unit will consist of your year abroad project.

1.5 Academic Requirements for CAS Students in Latin America

1. You must attend all the Spanish language courses provided by your host institution. If you find the level of Spanish is not appropriate to your needs, you must consult with the teacher or other relevant authority in order to ensure that you get adequate tuition. This may mean transferring to a different course.
2. After initial language teaching, you should look to relevant courses in history, the social sciences or literature at your host university. You may at first understand only a small percentage of the lectures, but do not be discouraged. Attending such courses is an invaluable way of improving your Spanish, and of integrating into the Spanish-speaking university milieu.
3. You must write four short essays by the deadlines listed below. You must write four essays of 2,000 to 2,500 words each during the course of your year. Two of these essays must be written in Spanish. These essays may arise out of course work undertaken at your host university, or they may be on topics of your own invention. Advice on writing your short essays is given below.
4. You must write a year abroad dissertation. The year abroad dissertation is an 8,000-word essay, excluding footnotes and bibliography (in English) on some aspect of the history, literature, culture or politics of the Americas. This written work can arise from one or more courses at your host university, or it may consist of entirely new work. If you wish, you may use an independent study or university course as a basis for your dissertation: the latter is a good way of getting supervision and advice. Advice on choosing a topic for your project is given below. Your year abroad will count for two units in your final degree. One unit will consist of the four short essays. The second unit will consist of your year abroad dissertation.

1.6 Monitoring Student Attendance & Engagement during your Year Abroad (All Students)

All departments are required by the University to monitor your academic engagement and progress using a number of monitoring points. This gives the Department an opportunity to identify those students who are not engaging with their studies and to work with them to address whatever issues they may be facing.

This process will continue during your year abroad and you will be e-mail with the final details before the beginning of the Warwick Autumn term.

Non-attendance at any of the monitoring points is a signal to the Department that you are not fully engaging with your degree.

Should you have any difficulties that prevent you from fulfilling these requirements you must advise the Erasmus/Year Abroad Co-Ordinator or the Undergraduate Office as soon as possible.

Please be aware that you will be contacted should we become concerned about your missed Monitoring Points.

At the end of each term the Department will report all students who have missed monitoring points to the University Academic Office who will then contact you via e-mail.

A. Where three Monitoring Points are missed we will contact you to investigate whether you are having any problems that are preventing you from fully engaging with your course.

B. After four Monitoring Points are missed we may refer you to the relevant professional within the University welfare system who could help you, such as the Senior Tutor or the Counselling Service, as appropriate.

C. After five Monitoring Points are missed you will be contacted to make you aware that you are at risk of being recommended for termination of your registration at the University.

D. After six Monitoring Points are missed the Department is able to invoke Regulation 36 (see below link to the University Calendar) to begin termination of registration proceedings and your case is handed over to the Academic Office.

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/reg36registrationattendanceprocess/>

International students should be particularly aware of the consequences of missing Monitoring Points: the Academic Office is obliged to report to the UK Borders Agency if any students have been found not to be engaging with and attending their degree course.

1.7 Advice on the Year Abroad Dissertation

1.7.1 Purpose

The purpose of the dissertation is to enable students to undertake research into areas that interest them, and to provide one or two large and substantial pieces of work that will reflect the year abroad. In the case of those who go to Latin America, the project should also help students to practise, extend and display their ability to use the Spanish language. The dissertation should be based on substantial research and thought, and it should be well-written. It must be an 8,000 word essay. The word limit is excluding footnotes and bibliography.

1.7.2 Topic

You are free to choose the subject of your dissertation (although you must clear your title with the Academic Advisor: Dr Ben Smith). It is important that you choose a subject which you will enjoy researching and writing about at length. Although it is by no means compulsory, quality dissertations often emerge from a) interesting work experience b) engagement with some of the non-Spanish courses offered at the Latin American Universities. Remember, too, that in Canadian and US universities, you can often use "directed reading" courses as a basis for structuring and working on a dissertation. You can, of course, also build on knowledge and expertise which you have acquired from your second year courses at Warwick, or from your regular courses at your host university. You should not, however, choose a topic that simply repeats material covered in your first and second year courses. Dissertations derived from material which has already been submitted at Warwick will be penalised.

Successful dissertations can be written on a wide variety of topics, including history, literature, sociology, political science and anthropology. Ideally, the topic should reflect your location in some way, but this is not a requirement. Here are a few examples from the wide range of areas in which successful projects have in the past been written:

- Multiculturalism in Toronto
- The massacre of Tlateloco in 1968
- Discrimination and native rights in Canada
- Jesuit missions in California
- Tango in Argentina
- Cricket in the Caribbean
- The Roosevelt administration
- Huichol Indians in Guadalajara
- Recent Chilean Cinema
- Chicano identity
- Mass Incarceration
- The Death Penalty
- The Cristero Revolt
- Maya myths and Zapatista ideology
- Fathers in the novels of Juan Rulfo
- Armenian Immigration in the US
- The Dirty War in Argentina
- The Jim Crow era of segregation
- Latina writers
- Youth violence in Latin America
- Argentina's 2009 DNA law
- The Growth of the US Gaming Industry

Whatever subject you choose, you must clear your title with the Academic Advisor. You **MUST** also submit a rough outline of your dissertation via Tabula by the deadline given below. Should you require advice on formulating a research topic, and are unable to find assistance locally, you should contact Academic Advisor, or any relevant CAS tutor who is not on leave. This year Roger Fagge, Tim Lockley & Rebecca Earle are on leave.

1.7.3 Sources

Online resources at the Warwick Library should be your first port of call. You can approach your subject solely through books and articles in libraries, but you might also consider topics that are more broadly based. You might, for example, use primary sources such as newspapers and other media (television, radio, the internet), interviews with individuals, illustrations or works of art (prints, photographs, paintings, murals, advertisements), historical archives, architectural monuments, and so on. The dissertation provides an opportunity to use your imagination and to experiment, should you wish to do so. Try to be imaginative in your choice of sources. If you are in Latin America, your sources should include some material in Spanish.

Students in any of the Year Abroad destinations are encouraged to use sources available to them at their destination. The Year Abroad Handbook does not direct you to use the Warwick Library - except in its online offerings for journal articles and access to databases. This means that students are not directed to consult books in the Warwick Library.

The department does not rule that you should not use Warwick resources but encourages using resources available at your destination to take full advantage of the year abroad and all the facilities and opportunities. You can use the libraries at your host university, the internet, Warwick's online access to web resources, etc.

The plan outlining title, outline and sources submitted in May is provisional and it is possible to change things at a later date but you must always get approval from the Academic Advisor for any changes.

1.7.4 Style

Your dissertation must be written in clear, elegant English. It should be typed or word-processed, double-spaced and single sided. It should be preceded by a front sheet giving your name and the dissertation title. A bibliography should be appended at the end giving a list of books, articles and other sources used or referred to in the text.

Bibliographical references for books and other printed sources should include the name of the author, the title of the publication and, in parentheses, the place and date of publication. (e.g. for books: Guy P.C. Thomson, *Puebla de los Angeles. Industry and Society in a Mexican City, 1700-1850* (Boulder, Colorado, 1989). For articles in journals: Guy P.C. Thomson, "Bulwarks of Patriotic Liberalism: The National Guard, Philharmonic Corps and Patriotic Juntas in Mexico, 1847-88," *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol.22, 1990, pp.31-68. For chapters in essays collections: Guy P.C. Thomson, "Francisco Agustín Dieguillo: un liberal cuetzalteco decimonónico (1861-1894)", in Jane-Dale Lloyd and Laura Pérez Rosales (eds.), *Paisajes rebeldes: Una larga noche de rebelión indígena* (Mexico, 1995), pp.77-148.). If you use material from the World Wide Web, you should identify the source, the name of the website, the website address (URL) and the date you consulted it. If you are using non-printed sources such as interviews, radio broadcasts, etc., then you should identify the source by name (if possible) and by date and location. (e.g. Personal interview with Martha Smith, San Diego, 12 May 1999, or Episode of 'Friends', 16 March 1999, ABC television.) Do not be deterred from using such sources by the need to employ unfamiliar forms of referencing

1.7.5 Content

In spite of the greater freedom regarding topic, research methods and source materials, the dissertation in its execution should still conform to normal academic and scholarly standards. The dissertation examiners – who may well not be experts in the particular area covered in the project – will be alert to the following qualities in their marking of dissertations:

- a. Subject/title of dissertation: this should be phrased in a way to arouse the “scientific” curiosity of the reader. Hence, better than “Huichol Textile Design”, would be: “The effects of Tourism (and/or of the ingestion of Peote cactus) on Huichol Textile Design”. Better than “The Tango in Argentina”, would be “African and European influences upon the Argentine Tango”. Better than “Recent Chilean Cinema”, would be “Sexual Taboo in the New Chilean Cinema”. Also, there is no reason why you should not choose a conventional question (for instance “Why did the Tango emerge in Buenos Aires?”), around which it may be easier to construct an argument, or to develop an analysis.
- b. Aims and objectives: because of the length, idiosyncrasy and originality of the dissertation, it is important to include, early on, a clear and brief statement of the aims and objectives. This might be a revision of your original dissertation outline (sent to the CAS office on 1 May).
- c. Research questions: with short and long essay work, the theoretical approach to be followed is often implicit or explicit in the title of the essay, and does not require separate elucidation. With an 8,000 word dissertation, you need to include a preliminary discussion of “research questions”; the theoretical and historiographical questions which informed the research and the way you write it up. These “research questions” should also be returned to in the conclusion. “Theory” and “Historiography” should not be seen as grandiose or portentous concepts; merely sets of ideas, assumptions and existing interpretations which will provide a useful platform for your own research and analysis. Without them, it is hard for the reader (or for the author) to judge the significance and the originality of the analysis.
- d. Methods: you have space in a dissertation to include a paragraph on the methods used in your research. This is particularly important if the dissertation is to be based upon unconventional sources (that is, sources that differ from those normally used on courses that CAS students take). “Unconventional sources” might include: analysis of the media, the press, street and political broadsheets; direct observation of urban or rural landscapes, monuments, buildings and works of art; recorded or informal interviews; etc.. Beware of creating “hostages to fortune” in your methodology section. For instance, if you claim in your section on methodology that the dissertation is based on recorded or informal interviews, material from these interviews should become the core of the analysis throughout the dissertation, rather than an adornment tacked on at the end, or in an appendix.
- e. Facts, Narrative and Analysis: the dissertation does allow you more space for description, telling stories, recording research findings. But you must ensure that factual material is always integrated within and subjected to your overarching analysis. The analytical density of a dissertation should not be any lighter or less central than in a short essay or a long essay. However original and imaginative in conception, or fascinating in content, the dissertation should not be simply descriptive or narrative in its final form. The quality of the analysis is just as important as the originality or interest of the subject matter.

- f. Structure, layout and style: due to their length, readers of dissertations can be greatly helped by sectioning, even by the use of chapters. At the very least, you should to pay more attention in an 8,000 dissertation to literary devices that aid the flow of argument, the movement from one subject to another, etc. Consult a style and writing guide for this. There are many on the web. A good one is the Webster guide: webster.commnet.edu/mla.htm.
- g. Illustrations and graphic material: you are encouraged to use illustrations and other graphic or visual material in projects, especially whenever they can enhance the presentation of (that is, the reader's understanding of) the discussion. But you should distinguish between visual material that is purely illustrative or decorative and visual material that forms an integral part of the dissertation. No marks are awarded the former, but marks can be given for thoughtful and effective use of illustrative material.

1.7.5 Key Dates

March-April – Start thinking about dissertation project. If necessary contact Academic Advisor.

Tuesday 3rd May 2016 – Submit your Dissertation outline & proposal (via Tabula)

Monday 16th May 2016 – Academic Advisor will allocate a member of CAS whom you can contact about the dissertation.

Monday 10th October 2016: Submit dissertation (Please upload one copy to tabula and hand in a hard copy to the CAS secretary).

1.8 Advice on the Short Essays for CAS Students in Latin America

1.8.1 Choosing a topic.

There are several dimensions to the selection of a topic:

- a. Make sure there are sufficient resources available for your topic. For example, if you wish to write on a topic that requires substantial library resources, make sure the local library can meet these requirements. DO NOT use lack of books as an excuse to write your essays next July when you are back in the UK. If your local library cannot meet the needs of a particular topic, CHANGE YOUR TOPIC!
- b. Try to choose a topic which relates in some way to your location. If you are in Mexico, it would, for example, be sensible to write an essay on a Mexican topic or theme. You are not absolutely prohibited from writing on 'non-local' topics, but if possible let your essay reflect your location.
- c. Do not re-use a topic on which you have already written an essay in your first or second year.
- d. Do not write a travelogue or an account of your holidays!

1.8.2 Researching Your Essay

You do not have to write an essay based solely on books and scholarly articles. You may use many other sources of information, such as newspapers or television programmes. You may base your essay around interviews with local people. You may study urban architecture or archaeological remains. If you chose to write an essay about shopping habits in Santiago you could conduct research in a local market place or in a supermarket. Be innovative! Also be realistic. Ensure that you have the theoretical knowledge needed for, say, a sociological project if you intend to do one.

1.8.3 Writing Your Essay.

Try to type or word-process your essay, but do not fret if this proves impossible. It is far better to submit a hand-written essay on time than to submit a typed essay that is submitted late [and which may therefore lose you marks]. Absence of computers is not an excuse to leave for delay in writing your essays..

1.8.4 Sending Your Essays to Warwick

You will submit 4 essays to the CAS department during your year abroad. You should submit your essays online at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/cas/undergraduate/yearabroad/submission/>. Do not put your name on the essay, put a front sheet showing your Warwick ID number along with the essay title and word count. You should complete the submission cover sheet which will be online above the submission links and email this separately to valerie.melling@warwick.ac.uk.

1.8.5 Spanish-Language Essays

Two of your essays must be in Spanish. Try to use Spanish-language sources for these essays. Part of the purpose in writing these essays is to use your Spanish-language skills in both writing and researching your essay. Make sure that you proof-read these essays very carefully. Use the dictionary or ask a native speaker if you are unsure about a word. We do not mark according to the beauty of the Spanish BUT we do take into account the quality and accuracy of the Spanish when marking these essays. Remember, for example, accents are important. While we will not deduct marks for the odd missing accent, we will deduct a few marks for persistent mistakes. Similarly, we will not deduct marks for the odd missing subjunctive but we will deduct marks for persistent misuse. As a result, it makes sense to use Spanish spellcheck AND ask a Spanish speaker to read through an essay to pick up on major errors of grammar.

1.9 Submission Deadlines

All of the deadlines for the submission of year abroad work are available on the CAS website at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/cas/undergraduate/assessment/submission/>. If you think that you will not be able to meet any of these deadlines it is essential that you contact the Year Abroad Coordinator as soon as possible. Retroactive extensions will not normally be given.

1.10 Word Limits

You should observe the word limits for assessed essays and avoid exceeding them. Any essay that exceeds the word limit by more than ten percent will be penalised as follows:

- 9000 word dissertation: 1 mark off for each 100 words (or part thereof) over 9000
- 8000 word essay: 1 mark off for each 100 words (or part thereof) over 8000
- 4500 word essay: 1 mark off for each 50 words (or part thereof) over 4500

You should include a word count with your essay (your word processing package will do the count for you); titles, footnotes and bibliography are not included in the count.

1.11 Financing Your Year Abroad

The year abroad is an obligatory part of the CAS course. You must therefore ensure that you have adequate finances for it. You are responsible for your own travel and living expenses, just as you would be in the UK. You are eligible for student loans, LEA help with travel expenses and other forms of student funding just as you would be if you remained in the UK. Costs vary widely, ranging from California (expensive) to Mexico (relatively cheap).

Travel and Maintenance Grants

Your Local Educational Authority (LEA) is obliged to pay its contribution to your tuition fees for the full academic period that you will be abroad. Beyond this, the practice of LEAs varies widely. Some LEAs will pay more travel expenses than others: some refuse to pay for any air fare; others generously agree to pay for two return trips. Some LEAs reimburse students for travel to London to obtain visas, and other necessary expenses. Others show no such consideration.

The Warwick International Office will supply your LEA with a letter to say that you will be studying abroad for a full academic year, but beyond this it is your responsibility to negotiate with your own LEA. You must enquire and negotiate on your own behalf. Do so politely; most LEAs will do their best to help you if you deal with them tactfully.

Health Insurance

You must be adequately insured to participate in the year abroad. Some universities (such as those in Puerto Rico and Canada) may require students to purchase further insurance. In the case of health insurance, it is usual for the LEA to pay only that part of the total premium which covers medical costs, although some authorities will pay the full amount. It is vital that you obtain sufficient health coverage for your particular medical needs.

University Fees

If you pay the full UK/EU tuition fee, during the year abroad you will in most cases pay 50% of the fee. If you are in Latin America, you may have to pay fees for specific courses. In such cases, CAS will reimburse you, provided that you first obtain permission from CAS to enrol, and that you submit to the CAS office a receipt detailing the precise nature of the fees. These claims must be received by 1 June, at the latest. Later claims will not normally be paid.

Personal Financial Arrangements

You will want to make your own financial arrangements, and should take advice from your bank about student loans, etc. There are, however, some points which you might bear in mind. We suggest that you take US dollars and/or US dollar traveller cheques sufficient to meet your immediate needs during the first couple of weeks following your arrival. If you take traveller cheques, make sure that you also carry the Purchase Agreement with you, with the list of cheque numbers, and make sure that you keep this updated and separate from the cheques themselves. This will facilitate replacement in case of loss. Do not take pounds sterling to Latin America: they are always more difficult to change than US dollars. For Latin America, American Express travellers' cheques (available at Lloyds Bank) are recommended over Thomas Cook cheques, which are less well known in Latin America. Lost American Express cheques can usually be replaced within hours (provided you are close to an American Express Office).

There are a number of ways of receiving money from the UK while you are away. It may be helpful or even necessary to open a local bank account, which will give you access to local checking facilities, and in some cases to a local ATM card. It is worthwhile shopping around for bank accounts, as fees and bank charges may vary. In North America some university campuses may have a local credit union, which may offer attractively low charges, although their facilities may be somewhat limited. You may also be able to access your UK funds during your stay abroad through a cash machine. To do this you will need an ATM (cash-point) card and PIN number. You should ask your UK bank whether their ATM cards function in your host country, and before departure you should ensure that your card and number actually function. We also recommend that you acquire a credit card of some kind. Credit cards (Mastercard or Visa) are invaluable as a means of payment, in both North America and Latin America. Remember that if you use a British credit card, your bills will be in pounds sterling, regardless of the currency in which you made the actual purchase. American Express cards (with an overseas PIN number) are also very useful for drawing cash from a British bank account. Make sure that you always keep a receipt for your withdrawals from cash machines and make regular checks between your withdrawal receipts and bank statements to ensure against banking errors.

If you choose to retain your UK bank account you should make the necessary arrangements with your bank well before your departure. Request that statements be sent to you while you are abroad, and furnish your bank with your new address as soon as possible after your arrival.

2. A to Z Directory of Advice

ACCOMMODATION

In Latin America you must make arrangements to find and pay for your own accommodation. The international office of your host university will assist you with this. You may either rent your own apartment, or find a family with whom to live. We encourage students to live with families, at least for the first few months. The sacrifices you may have to make in living with a family will probably be compensated by the advantages: contact with people who know the locality, and an immediate chance to improve your Spanish. The University of Guadalajara at CEPE has a guest house which will provide for the first days after your arrival: students recommend it. Otherwise you may have to spend the first days after your arrival in a hotel. It is a very good idea to contact current and returned CAS students for advice about housing. You may find that you can take over rented accommodation from students abroad the previous year.

At some US, Canadian and Caribbean universities, you will be offered university accommodation. Note that this may be in a shared room. You can usually arrange this before your departure; Chris Sharp in the Warwick International Office will assist you with this. Some universities have a meal plan as well. Other host universities either do not offer university accommodation, or allow you the opportunity to rent your own housing. The international office at your host university will offer you advice and assistance. However, it is also an excellent idea to contact current and returned CAS students in order to get their advice about housing.

COMMUNICATION

It is vital that you send us your postal and residential address in Latin America as soon as you have a stable place of abode. You should also provide us with telephone, e-mail and fax numbers if possible. Supply this information on the form printed at the end of this Guide. Get an e-mail account and please check it regularly. E-mail is our preferred method for contacting you. Contact the IT Advisory Service to ensure that your university emails are forwarded to any private e-mail account you might have.

If sending important letters or documents by post, take some precautions, such as registering the mail and keeping copies. Parcels of books can be sent at reduced rates from most local post-offices. In Latin America, if they are declared and labelled "libros escolares", they will not be subject to normal customs procedures. In North America, you can also send books and other printed material at special reduced rates. Postage to and from Latin America is usually reliable, though often slow.

Your place of residence may or may not have a telephone. You can usually have a telephone line installed; ask locally for details. The cost of ringing the UK varies across the Americas. American telephone rates tend to be very much lower than British rates, but, due to heavy taxes, it is usually very expensive to ring the UK from Latin America. If you are in Latin America, you should therefore encourage your friends in the UK to ring you, rather than the reverse.

DOCUMENTS

In Latin America you are advised to carry some form of identification on you at all times. But wherever you are you should take very great care of your identity documents, since getting a new visa is even more difficult than obtaining the original one. We suggest that you keep a note of your passport number, travellers' cheque numbers and any other documents you acquire separately from those documents, so that in case of loss or theft you can without delay give the correct details to the appropriate authorities. It is a good idea to make some photocopies of your passport, visa, insurance etc. If you travel for any distance, take your passport with you. If in the US, please ensure that you carry a copy of your visa if you leave the US at, say, Christmas. It is essential for re-entry.

DRINKING AND CAVORTING

Remember to respect the laws of the country in which you are living. In many parts of North America drinking ages are higher than in the UK, and you will be required to prove your age with an ID. In part because of this, campus social life may differ from that at Warwick; universities may also have strict rules against underage drinking, enforced by heavy fines. Public drunkenness is generally frowned upon. Drinking in public or ostentatiously carrying alcohol can be an offence (in Mexico, it is a federal offence, punishable by a term in prison). Public drunkenness is thus extremely inadvisable, as is any situation which could lead the police to charge you with "public indecency".

DRUGS

You should, needless to say, stay away from narcotics and other illegal substances. Penalties for being found in possession of drugs are extremely severe, and British consular officials are often unsympathetic to people suspected of involvement with drugs. The recent conflicts over drug trafficking have also made drug use particularly dangerous.

HEALTH

It is a wise precaution to have both a medical and a dental check-up before you leave for your destination. Discuss your impending year abroad with your health providers, and enquire whether you will need any vaccines. For example, if you are going to Latin America, and especially if you plan to travel in rural areas, you may need typhoid, tetanus and hepatitis injections. Doctors differ as to whether cholera and yellow fever injections are equally necessary, but as they are painless and usually provided free you might well consider having them. Malaria tablets are recommended for those who intend to spend time in tropical rural areas. Such precautions are probably unnecessary for the USA and Canada. We advise you to consult your GP, some of whom will provide injections free of charge. Be sure to have a thorough dental check-up early in the summer to give you time to obtain a clean bill of dental health before you go. Insurance does not usually cover dental fees, other than emergency treatment, and such fees are generally very high in both North America and Latin America. If you wear spectacles or contact lenses, it is a good idea to take a spare pair or a prescription with you. If you take any medicines, oral contraceptives, etc., make sure you have a sufficient supply for your year abroad.

Remember that the health environment in Latin America differs from that of the UK, particularly in tropical areas, so take elementary precautions at all times. It is generally unwise, though often tempting, to eat from stalls in the street, and you must always be careful about the water you drink. In Mexico, you will probably get some stomach bug at some point during your stay. For the first line of medication, go to a local chemist; this is generally effective; if not, consult a doctor. During your year abroad, information about doctors and dentists can be obtained from the international office of your host university.

The risk of contracting AIDS is present, especially from injecting drugs, and by sexual contact. Please behave responsibly. Moreover, do not be tempted to sell your blood to private blood banks.

Make sure that you are covered by health insurance for the whole period you are away, and read your insurance policy carefully. Make sure you understand what is and is not covered. If you require additional personal insurance, shop around, and stress that you are a student.

IMMIGRATION

Most countries require visiting students to register with immigration shortly after arrival. In Mexico, failure to do so within thirty days of arrival can lead to the confiscation of your passport. You will have to pay a hefty fine in order to recover it.

MACHISMO

Latin American cultures have a "macho" side to them. Unaccompanied women may not be welcome in bars; short clothes may produce unwelcome attention. Make sure that you are aware of local cultural norms, even if you don't like them.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

It is your responsibility to have a valid passport which will cover the time of your stay abroad, to acquire the necessary visa, and to have it in time for your departure. Visa requirements vary by country, and may change from year to year. You must make sure that you obtain the correct visa from the embassy of your host country. The International Office will provide you with some guidance on getting visas.

POLITICS

Keep out of student demonstrations or direct involvement in national politics. This does not mean that you should have no interest in politics, but it should be kept at an academic level (or as a distant foreign observer). In times of student or national unrest, foreign students come under scrutiny. For example, in Mexico, innocent visits to study the problems of Indian communities in the rebel zones of Chiapas and Guerrero are to be avoided. Furthermore, students should make sure that they are aware of the shifting conflict zones of the war on drugs. To do so they should check advice on the US and UK embassy websites. At present, visits to the northern states of Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Coahuila and Tamaulipas in Mexico are not advised.

THEFT

If you want to keep your possessions, guard them when travelling. There is much petty theft in most Latin American countries, where it is often a professional occupation among the poor and uneducated. You must therefore be alert, particularly in bus stations and other busy places. Bag snatching and pick-pocketing are common forms of robbery, especially on crowded buses, trains and the metro, and thieves will use blades to cut bag/camera straps, or to slit open the pockets of the unwary. Keep money and other valuables in well-concealed pockets, or somewhere close to the body (such as a money belt) when you are travelling through such places. Avoid wearing expensive jewellery, watches and so on when in public places. Don't argue if seriously threatened.

TICKETS AND TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Make sure you book a flight in good time. Good places to look for cheap flights are: newspapers, the internet (try www.skyscanner.com), and STA Travel on the Warwick campus. The CAS office possesses a good collection of up-to-date travel guides which you may borrow. If more than one student is going to a particular place, it can be good idea to travel together. Previous students suggest that a bit of moral support can be useful on the outward journey and, at the very least, it saves on taxi fares.

Information about travel arrangements once you have arrived in your host country can be obtained from the international office of your host university, from CAS fourth years, from CAS third years currently on their year abroad, from your travel agent, and from travel guides.

TRAVELLING AROUND

Feel free to travel while abroad; it is obviously a good idea to take advantage of your time in another country. Remember, however, that you are a student. Extensive travel may be undertaken only during official vacation periods. Do not neglect your academic work. CAS will take a dim view of those who do not behave responsibly with regard to academic work. Carelessness with deadlines, procrastination, over-eagerness to travel at the expense of study, will all lead to low grades. Try to integrate your academic work and daily experience of life in another country. Make sure that you read newspapers and gather information on themes and events which interest you. When travelling, you might keep a travel diary.

WHAT TO TAKE

Make a check list of what you will take. This must obviously include vital papers: your passport, visas, traveller's cheques, some local currency, air tickets, vaccination certificates (where applicable), this guide, any personal medical supplies you need, an address book, etc. For the rest, you should take account of the experience of earlier exchange students and you should contact those CAS students currently in the Americas on their year abroad. You can also consult a travel guide (such as the Rough Guide or the Lonely Planet series), and your host university. For example, if you will be staying in a university hall of residence you should enquire whether you will need to provide your own bedding. If you are going to Latin America, you should take a good Spanish-English dictionary.

WORK HABITS

If you are in the US, Canada or the Caribbean, remember that attendance in class is often compulsory, and will usually affect your course mark. If you are in Latin America, try not to be seduced by the slower pace of life into doing no work at all. Build up a pattern of work, and make sure that you actively polish your Spanish. Formal conversation classes can lead to long-term friendships. You should also work on your essays and project frequently and regularly. Wherever you are, try to be well organised and active, and enjoy your time in the Americas.

3. Check-List of What To Do

1. Complete the online declaration.
2. Complete the contact details and notification of courses online forms at the start of each semester.
3. Meet all Warwick/CAS deadlines and requirements of the year abroad as well as those of your host university.
4. Check your Warwick email regularly and keep in contact.
5. Be available for the CAS staff visit.
6. Choose your final year modules when requested to do so in the spring.
7. Register your modules, once approved, on the University eVision Module Registration (eMR) system during the summer before you return for the final year or in the first few weeks of your final year in October.
8. Register with Warwick as usual to confirm your status as a current student and also for your year abroad modules on the eVision Module Registration (eMR) system as usual.