



University of
St Andrews

Credits and grade conversions for study abroad

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Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.4	Clarifications around module selection, funding, eligibility criteria; updates to links, and updates to role titles.	Approved	Academic Policy Officer (Digital & Student Experience)	July 2025

POLICY ON CREDITS AND GRADE CONVERSIONS FOR STUDY ABROAD

1. Introduction

This Policy sets out procedures relating to the acquisition and conversion of credits and grades at institutions other than St Andrews, while completing a St Andrews Degree programme. It does not take account of Degree programmes 'With Integrated Year Abroad' (WIYA), for which students complete assessments for St Andrews credits, graded by staff in St Andrews.

The Policy sets out a common basis for those parts of the Grade Conversion process that can be standardised, in the interests of clarity, high standards and equal treatment of all students undertaking Study Abroad.

It is expected that individual Schools will give further detailed advice to their own students, and that particular study abroad arrangements may have specific additional requirements and deadlines. All staff and students involved in Study Abroad should be aware of this Policy.

It is recognised that the conversion of grades and credits from one reporting scale to another requires a clear understanding of the scales and their relationships as well as regard for academic standards and respect for the principles of partnership. Conversions should be objective, transparent, valid and reliable. The Dean of Learning & Teaching, Provost, and their delegates the Associate Deans/ Provost (Education) have an active role in overseeing the conversion of Study Abroad grades and can be consulted at any time about difficult cases.¹

Schools should use the Policy and its regular application as a benchmark for the continual academic evaluation of their partnership arrangements. Any urgent issues with credit and grade conversion, or indeed any other aspect of the partnership, should be reported immediately to the Global Office who can escalate to the Associate Deans/ Provost (Education) as appropriate. Any non-urgent issues should be reported during the annual review of exchange agreements, co-ordinated by the Global Office. Termination of the agreement should be considered and discussed with the Director of the Global Office, in any case where a School consistently experiences difficulties with a particular partner.

Feedback about the robustness of University-level arrangements with overseas partners is welcome and should be directed in the first instance to the Dean of Learning & Teaching and the Provost.

2. Study Abroad in the Degree Programme

Study abroad for credit is only permitted on existing University approved programmes. No informal arrangements should be made for students to undertake academic programmes abroad which involve credit towards our degrees. For information on all existing exchange and study abroad programmes, and how to propose a new University exchange, please see the [Global Office webpages](#). Full details regarding eligibility criteria and application procedures can also be found [online](#). Students who have not had their study abroad programme officially agreed in full by the School(s) in which they are studying at St Andrews will not be permitted to claim credit for study

¹ Responsibilities assigned to the Dean of Learning & Teaching and the Provost in this policy may be delegated in practice to the appropriate Associate Dean/Provost (Education).

abroad and will be required to complete the full complement of Degree programme credits on their return. Such official agreement includes both permission to study abroad before departure and approval of the Learning Agreement during the study abroad period.

The normal expectation is that undergraduate students study abroad during their junior honours year. Honours entry is a minimum requirement for study abroad, and it is therefore not possible for Sub-Honours students to undertake study abroad. Some postgraduate programmes permit students to participate in study abroad. Where a student spends their final semester abroad, the School must ensure that the student is fully aware that they will not be eligible to graduate until the following academic year (due to the grade conversion process).

3. Contact and Communication

Each School must have a designated Study Abroad Adviser, who may also be an Adviser of Studies. A role description for Study Abroad Advisers is available at <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/studentadmin/study-abroad/>. Study Abroad Advisers and Advisers of Studies must work closely together to establish a suitable study programme for each student.

Every student preparing and undertaking Study Abroad should be clearly informed of the name of the Study Abroad Adviser in their School(s) and must undertake to maintain contact with that person throughout the Study Abroad period, normally by email.

Students should be carefully briefed by the School before departure, particularly in relation to academic procedures and, in the case of School exchanges, host institution/country information. Students also have a responsibility to familiarise themselves fully with all documentation and requirements signalled to them by the University, School and partner institution.

Students with disabilities should be aware that SENDA legislation will not necessarily be applicable in partner institutions and should therefore take particular care to initiate a discussion of their circumstances with the Study Abroad Adviser before applying.

Students should be aware of the contents of this Policy and should note in particular the sections relating to the number and level of credits and the Learning Agreement, and the desirability of bringing back copies of all work submitted for assessment in the partner institution, together with grades and tutors' comments where possible.

All students intending to undertake Study Abroad for credit must attend the compulsory pre-departure meeting organised by the University.

4. Number of Credits

Students undertaking study abroad as part of a degree programme are expected to register for the equivalent of 120 St Andrews credits for one academic year, and 60 credits for one semester. No more and no fewer credits may normally be transferred back to St Andrews. This usually means taking the credit load considered by the host institution to be normal for the year or semester for a full-time home student, excluding summer schools and with the total credits spread equally over all semesters of study leading to a degree.

For students studying in Europe, the European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS) is equivalent to 120 St Andrews credits per year (60 ECTS per year) or 60 St Andrews credits per semester (30 ECTS per semester). It is expected that most St Andrews students will take 60 ECTS credits during their

study year abroad. With the agreement of the relevant School, a St Andrews student may take fewer credits, however, they must take a minimum of 48 ECTS credits per year (or 24 ECTS credits per semester). Where students have been given permission to take fewer than 60 ECTS credits per year, the Dean of Learning and Teaching and the Provost may ask the School to justify the decision.

For students studying outside Europe, a breakdown of expected credit loads can be found on the [Global Office](#) webpages.

All approved modules which are taken during a period of study abroad will normally be converted to St Andrews grades and recorded on the transcript. Exceptions may include culture modules as outlined in Section 5 below.

Credits for modules listed in the Learning Agreement cannot be retroactively discounted.

Students who take between 48-60 ECTS credits per year and 24-30 ECTS credits per semester will have this converted to 120 and 60 St Andrews credits respectively.

Students who enrol for more credits than the expected norm will *not* have the demands of a heavier workload considered when their grades are converted.

5. Choice of Modules and Levels

Modules taken while abroad should provide students with adequate preparation for the next stage of their studies on return to St Andrews and these modules, as far as possible, should be the equivalent level to the student's Honours or Integrated Masters modules at St Andrews. Students must take subjects that are recognised as qualifying towards their degree programme - details of which can be found in the Senate Regulations.

In many instances, this will mean that a St Andrews student visiting an exchange partner institution will be taking a different course of study from that followed by a home student in that institution.

Where a partner institution offers an internship for credit, students may include this in their overall credit load only when approved by the St Andrews Adviser. Where an Adviser judges that an internship does not provide adequate academic progression, they may authorise the student's selection of the internship as an extra activity, with any associated credits not counting towards the overall total.

Students should be advised on the level and choice of modules by St Andrews Study Abroad advisers before their departure and by the local co-ordinator while at the host institution. Students should ensure they also receive further advice as necessary from St Andrews Study Abroad Advisers via email during their period of residence abroad.

Students should enrol for modules at a level higher or lower level than their own only:

- when a particular course component is essential, and no other alternative exists; and
- when they have the explicit permission of their St Andrews Study Abroad Adviser.

Only exceptionally, and only with the recommendation of the School to the Dean of Learning & Teaching and Provost or their delegate can a higher level of difficulty be considered when grades are converted. Students who enrol in modules which have not been approved by their School may

be denied St Andrews credits in those modules.

Students must not register for modules that cover essentially the same material at the same level in the two institutions. Advisers must ensure that no student is registered for modules with a substantial academic overlap.

Students may attend language or culture modules that have been created for international students (non-native speakers), during either the pre-sessional or termtime periods. While highly recommended, such modules do not normally count towards the number of credits the student may transfer to St Andrews. The same rule applies to other equivalent modules, e.g. study skills or basic computer skills acquisition or similar. Exceptions will be made for students from the School of Modern Languages who may normally take up to 6 ECTS credits in such modules in each semester.

Language modules that do not count towards the number of credits the student may transfer to St Andrews but that have been successfully completed abroad may be recognised in the student's HEAR transcript as an additional achievement, at the request of the School.

Students must follow the guidance given to them about the completion of the Learning Agreement, available at <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/study-abroad/academic/agreement/>. The Learning Agreement records the student's study choices for the period of study abroad. **Students should finalise their choice of modules and have them approved using the Learning Agreement by the end of their first four weeks at the host institution.** The Learning Agreement, and any subsequent changes to it, must be signed by the host institution and by the Study Abroad Adviser in consultation with the Adviser of Studies. Joint Honours students must have the Learning Agreement signed by both Schools/Departments. **Learning Agreements are official documents required by national agencies for audit purposes: failure to follow the correct procedure will have serious consequences for the student, School and University.**

Students and advisers must check the student record and Schools should ensure that the Academic Advising Database tool and Data Warehouse show the appropriate Study Abroad indicators (shell module) by the end of the Advising period. Any problems with student record information should be reported to Registry immediately.

6. Conversion of Grades to St Andrews Reporting Scale

Overall Procedure

The grade conversion procedure is outlined below:

It is expected that the Study Abroad Adviser will inform the student about the grade conversion process prior to departure, with a clear focus on evidence, and remind them of the details of grade conversion upon return. The School Study Abroad Adviser calculates the conversion of all grades obtained by students for whom they have responsibility and selects the appropriate corresponding St Andrews modules (see information about [selecting St Andrews modules](#)). The Study Abroad Adviser is the first point of contact for students who have any questions or concerns about the conversion process. Any movement in the proposed grade from the base level covered in the Conversion Tables should be based on clear evidence and academic judgement.

For Joint Honours students, the Study Abroad Adviser reaches agreement concerning the converted grades with the Adviser(s) in the other subject(s). The advisers must ensure that they have used the exact same conversion procedures, that they agree with each other's grades, and that they agree

on the distribution of credits.

If the School has a Study Abroad committee, proposed grade conversions should be approved at this stage by the committee, with the Director of Teaching; if there is no such committee, the Study Abroad Adviser should agree the grade conversions with the Director of Teaching before submitting them to the Associate Deans/ Provost (Education).

Grades are submitted for scrutiny to the Associate Deans/ Provost (Education). **Note that the Associate Deans/ Provost (Education) will conduct checks of Schools' arithmetic, and the appropriateness of specific grades.** The purpose of this stage is to ensure that all Schools involved in similar exchanges have observed the same procedures and used the same methodology for grade conversion. Any conversions for which the process adopted is unclear or not in accordance with this Policy will be questioned by the Associate Deans/ Provost (Education).

Once grades are approved by the Associate Deans/ Provost (Education), Registry will liaise with Schools to add the credits and grades to the student's record. **Note that if a student is informed of a converted grade in advance of final reporting, it must be made clear that the grade is a provisional recommendation only and may change.**

Technical Process

Conversion tables

The principle of Study Abroad and the integrity of the grading process at partner institutions should be respected. Grades obtained at partner institutions are accepted in principle as valid, just as St Andrews grades are accepted in partner institutions across the world.

Grades obtained at partner institutions are normally converted to the St Andrews scale in accordance with the approved Conversion Table.

Approved conversion tables are available at: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/study-abroad/academic/credit-conversion/> New or revised tables will be added here only when they have received decanal approval. Schools should note that, where appropriate, the creation and approval of a new Conversion Table is an integral part of the exchange approval process - no student will be permitted to take part in a new exchange until a Conversion Table has been approved by the Associate Deans/ Provost (Education). Where appropriate, Schools may propose revisions to existing Conversion Tables using the template provided by the Global Office. New or revised conversion tables will be made available to students by the date of the pre-departure meeting held each year in St Andrews.

The Conversion Table follows the principle of equivalence established between the St Andrews grade scale and the grade scales adopted in the countries of partner Universities.

Where a partner institution alters its grading structure, St Andrews will consult with the partner and amend the relevant Conversion Table accordingly. In most cases these changes will be made before departure, but on rare occasions where a partner institution makes changes later in the academic year, students will be notified via email should a Conversion Table be revised after the April pre-departure meeting. In such cases, it will be particularly important for students to bring back copies of work and any other evidence (see [Converting Grades](#)) to support the grade conversion process. Where a Conversion Table is revised to allow for changes to the partner institution's grading and/or marking structure, comparison of converted grades against the previous Conversion

Table for that partner will not be considered by the Associate Deans/ Provost (Education).

Selecting St Andrews modules

St Andrews 'shell' modules for Study Abroad grades exist in values of 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 15, 20, 24, 30, 40, 45 and 60 credits, at 3000, 4000 and 5000 level. Modules should be selected whose credit value reflects the work done by the student as closely as possible. For example, four equally weighted modules taken in one semester abroad should be translated into four 15-credit modules; three equally-weighted modules into three 20-credit modules, and so on. 12 and 24 credit modules should be used with care to ensure appropriate credit loads, e.g. 12 credit modules should be used to convert five equally weighted modules abroad into 60 credits at St Andrews.

Advisers of Studies and Study Abroad Advisers must be attentive to the need for Honours students to obtain at least 90 credits at 4000 level before the end of senior honours and should use shell module codes accordingly.

Only in exceptional circumstances can two or more overseas results be aggregated to make them fit into the credit-values available in St Andrews. Schools should use their judgement and knowledge of the partner institution to find the most appropriate combination, which must never be of detriment to the student. If the School/Department identifies that the credit structure above does not allow for a logical conversion, the School must recommend and justify an alternative conversion approach to the Associate Deans/ Provost (Education) for approval.

As far as possible, Schools should seek to convert credit for a full year abroad into 60 credits per semester at St Andrews (i.e. to balance 120 credits equally across both semesters). Only in exceptional circumstances and with appropriate approval prior to the study abroad period beginning, may an exception be made to this.

Converting Grades

For assessments completed in St Andrews, the full 20-point reporting scale should be used for conversions.

Where a range of foreign grades map to a single St Andrews grade, St Andrews grades may be reported to one decimal point (e.g. where 73-76 is converted to 14 on the Canada-St Andrews scale, a grade of 74 might be converted as 14.3). Similarly, where a single foreign grade maps to a single St Andrews grade, St Andrews grades may be reported to one decimal point where appropriate for differentiation (e.g. a French grade of 12.4 may be converted to a 14.4 on the St Andrews scale).

Where one foreign grade maps to a range of St Andrews grades, the default position will be the lowest integer in the St Andrews band. Schools may propose a higher conversion within the St Andrews band if appropriate. Where an uplifting of grade is recommended, clear academic supporting evidence must be submitted with grade conversions to Registry.

Factors such as the following may be considered in positioning the single foreign grade *within the published St Andrews band*:

- level of the student's achievement as evidenced by copies of coursework brought back from the host institution;
- level and ambition of the course followed;

- written comments of the tutors concerned;
- the mean and/or median grade for the class and the position within the class;
- any academic prizes obtained at partner institutions.

Note that students who are unable to provide copies of coursework and tutors' comments will be unable to benefit from some of the types of consideration allowed by the above rubric. Students must submit any supporting evidence to their Study Abroad Adviser by the end of Week 2 of the semester immediately following the Study Abroad period(s). Evidence submitted after Week 2 may not be considered in the conversion process.

Where a School has evidence for recommending, exceptionally, a grade belonging to a band other than that indicated by the Conversion Table, or any other non-standard result such as a deferred assessment or the discounting of a particular module or elements of it, a reasoned argument for the recommended grade must be made to the Dean of Learning & Teaching and the Provost or their delegate. For Joint Honours students, the case should be agreed by both Schools. It should be understood, however, that departure from the Policy is rarely permitted. **Note that no argument will be accepted that is based simply on a student adjusting to life abroad.**

Where a student wishes formally to contest a grade obtained during Study Abroad, the matter should be taken up immediately under local rules at the partner institution before the student leaves. The partner institution's rules will apply. A student cannot appeal the grades awarded by the partner institution via the St Andrews' appeal process.

Where a student wishes to request an S-code for a Study Abroad module or modules, they should consult the Study Abroad Adviser as early as possible and follow the normal procedures within the School for making such a request. The decision on whether to apply the S-code is made within the School, but the School may seek advice from the Associate Deans/ Provost (Students) if necessary.

Where a student wishes to contest a grade obtained by grade conversion upon their return to St Andrews, the student should first contact the Study Abroad Adviser. The usual St Andrews' Appeal procedures apply, and [Student Academic Appeals Policy](#) should be consulted. It should be noted that student appeals against study abroad grade conversions in St Andrews should be lodged with the relevant Head of School within **five working days** of the results being posted on Data Warehouse by Registry.

7. Reassessments

In the event of failed modules, a student may request review of the result(s) in St Andrews by providing copies of work submitted, course documentation, examination papers, etc. Where the result is not confirmed as a Fail, the School/Department may suggest a grade on the St Andrews reporting scale based on the material reviewed and assessed by the School. Where the Fail grade is confirmed, or insufficient material is available for review, options for re-assessment include the following:

- reassessment by the host university where available, whether in the host university or (by special arrangement, where possible) in St Andrews;
- reassessment in St Andrews based on the original syllabus, in a form to be determined by the School/Department;
- no reassessment of the failed module, but a reported Fail grade and credits to be made up in the following year. Students and Advisers should however be aware of the risks attached to the taking of extra credits in a student's Senior Honours year.

Where assessment (including reassessment) is completed fully at the partner institution, St Andrews will accept their procedure and grade. Where a partner institution does not allow re-assessment, the fail grade will remain. If re-assessment is offered at St Andrews, this will be governed by St Andrews regulations regarding re-assessment, including the capping of Honours grades at 7.0.

The reassessment procedures outlined above may also apply as a failsafe mechanism in exceptional cases, for example cases of missing assessments or faulty transmission of results. In such cases the result of the St Andrews reassessment replaces the faulty or missing grade from abroad. Any such operations are to be declared and justified to the External Examiner and to the School examinations committee of the subject(s) involved, as well as to the Associate Deans/Provost (Education). Before these operations are implemented, a written confirmation of agreement must be obtained from the relevant External Examiner. A new grade arising out of the re-assessments of this nature will go through approval by the External Examiner in accordance with normal processes via a module board.

If a student in receipt of Turing funding is granted permission to discount the study abroad year and to repeat the academic year in St Andrews, it is likely that they will have to repay any Turing grant money received. The student and the School/Department must inform the Global Office immediately if this situation arises.

8. Timetable for Establishing Grade Conversion and Credit Transfer

Grade conversion and credit transfer are normally carried out in the first semester following the student's return from the period abroad.

Students should be aware that results reporting from the partner institutions might not take place until relatively late in the year.

For students who have spent all year or semester 2 abroad, the grade conversion and credit transfer process should be completed no later than the results of first semester modules of the following year.

For students who have spent only semester 1 abroad, results should be reported no later than the results of second semester modules in that year.

Full procedural details and deadlines are available at: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/studentadmin/study-abroad/>.

9. Grade Conversion Tables

See the [Credit and grade conversion webpage](#).

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date

1	Changes to titles/contact details to reflect decanal restructuring	Approved	-	Feb 2021
1.1	Change permitting students in the School of Modern Languages to take language/culture modules for non-native speakers	Approved	Administrative Officer, Proctor's Office	Dec 2021
1.2	Change to Section 4, clarifying that not all modules taken during a period of study abroad will count towards the student's final degree classification.	Approved	Academic Policy Officer (Taught Degrees)	June 2022
1.3	Minor change to Section 5 to reflect changes to Senate Regulations.	Approved	Academic Policy Officer (Taught Degrees)	July 2023
1.4	Clarifications around module selection, funding, eligibility criteria; updates to links, and updates to role titles.	Approved	Academic Policy Officer (Digital & Student Experience)	July 2025