Communication to students regarding the conversion of study abroad marks

I am writing to advise you that the June 2015 meeting of the University Teaching and Learning Committee (UTLC) approved the scales for the conversion of study abroad marks, effective from the study abroad year 2016/17. The scales have been revised following a review of equivalence to the UK HE sector and following consultation within the University with appropriate members of academic and professional services staff, between December 2014 to June 2015. Appendix 1 provides details of what was agreed at University Teaching and Learning Committee.

Students graduating in Summer 2015

The revised scales have been applied to study abroad marks prior to 2016/17 on a 'no-detriment' basis. This means that the marks for a study abroad year/term have been reviewed for all students graduating this summer. The study abroad mark has been changed where a higher mark resulted from the 2016/17 conversion scale. Marks have not been changed if a lower mark would have been achieved.

Students graduating in Summer 2016 and 2017

'No detriment' will be applied in the same way as for students graduating in Summer 2015. Therefore, marks will be reviewed for students on a study abroad year/term during 2014/15 and 2015/16.

The Progression and Award Board (PAB) will also be advised to consider 'no detriment' in relation to the weighting towards classification of a voluntary study abroad year that was taken in 2014/15. This means that a review will be undertaken prior to graduation to ensure that students on a course including a voluntary study abroad year taken during 2014/15 are not disadvantaged. This may result in the PAB awarding the higher class where this would be achieved by including the voluntary study abroad year mark in the weighting for classification. (This does not apply to students on a course with an integrated study abroad year, for example, four year courses with American Studies or a language which is part of the validated course structure.)

From 2015/16 a voluntary study abroad year will not contribute to classification on any course.

The new conversion scale will be applied to study abroad marks achieved during a study abroad year/term in 2016/17.

Any queries regarding the study abroad year should be sent by email to: sussexabroad@sussex.ac.uk. If you have a query regarding your academic performance in general you should contact a member of faculty via your School Office.

Professor Clare Mackie
Pro Vice-Chancellor
University of Sussex

June 2015
Appendix 1

University Teaching and Learning Committee agreed the following:

(a) The approved conversion scales for study abroad marks are based on the following:

- Where a 0-100 continuous scale aligned with the UK is used, the marks are directly imported without conversion
- Where a 0-100 continuous scale not aligned with the UK and/or a categorical scale is used, the marks are converted based on a 5 or 12 point scale, mapped to the fail and distinction boundaries adopted by the sector

(b) The following principles apply to study abroad marks to ensure transparency and equity:

- the University publishes conversion scales to students in advance of a period of study abroad;
- students are advised that the practice of converting marks across the UK HE sector varies between institutions;
- a single conversion scale has been agreed for each partner country/institution, regardless of discipline;
- non-linear conversion has been reduced, where possible;
- School PABs may refer cases via the Absurd Outcome regulation where conversion of the study abroad mark introduces inflation/deflation which has a significant impact on an individual student.
- The scales will be reviewed every three years.