A smile abroad is often a scowl at home.
Alfred Tennyson
Introductions

Margaux Bruno

My name is Margaux and I come from France. I did a bachelor’s degree of Applied Languages (English German and Italian) in France during which I had the chance to spend a semester in Italy. Studying abroad has been a great experience and I would definitely recommend it to anyone who is looking for discovering new languages, new cultures and who loves challenge.

I am now finishing my master’s degree and I wanted to go abroad once again. That is how I ended up doing a work placement during the summer at Brookes Exchanges and Study Abroad office. This magazine has been one of the tasks that I was assigned to but it didn’t feel like it was work when I was writing it. I hope that you will enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed myself writing it!

I am now back at Oxford Brookes University as a maternity cover for the International Exchanges Administrator for 9 months. This is my first job since my graduation and I am very happy and proud to be part of Oxford Brookes University again.

Lottie Marshall

I am currently a student in the sixth form of the Cherwell School in Oxford and during a week of work experience with Oxford Brookes International I have been involved with exploring ideas for this magazine.

Travelling throughout Europe, as well as studying both German and French, has been a leading factor in my initial interest in the exchange programmes. The fact that there are a great number of different universities abroad that are part of the programme lend a hand to so many new and exciting opportunities. Also, seeing where other students have taken part in exchanges has made me want to do something similar as a student in the future and going to a partner university would be an ideal insight into the city. Having done various exchanges with school in the past has definitely increased my knowledge of many aspects of each country, including trying snails (I would recommend a lot of garlic sauce) and making Spätzle (a traditional German noodle or dumpling).

For me, visiting international cities, and trying to pick up some of the language, is a huge part of experiencing a brilliant range of cultures and hopefully in the future I will be able to make the most of my languages to spend more time overseas.
Top ten festivals in the world

1. Norway - World Beard and Moustache Championships

Date: End of May

This is a unique festival that takes place in Trondheim, Norway usually in May. It is a moustache and beard contest where men from all over the world compete in different categories to represent their country. Partial beard, natural beard, natural moustache, and freestyle are just some of the many categories that are judged.

2. Poland - Drowning of Marzanna

Date: Fourth Sunday of Lent

Originally, Drowning of Marzanna was a pagan festival to celebrate the end of winter. Marzanna represents winter or death, and the Sunday on which the Marzanna celebrations take place is sometimes called Death Sunday. On this day a straw or rag effigy of Marzanna (also known as Morena or Death) is constructed, sometimes by school children. The effigy is imbued with the negative qualities of the long, cold winter.

3. Hong Kong - International Dragon Boat Race

Date: Beginning of July

This event started in 1976 when a group of boats of Hong Kong fisherman and a Japanese team raced one another off Shau Kei Wan. Little did they know that this small event would grow into a world renowned three day event of dragon boat racing as other countries interest in the sport grew. Now, thousands of athletes take part against the iconic skyline of Hong Kong’s Victoria Harbour.
4. Mexico - La Morisma

Date: Last weekend of August

La Morisma commemorates the triumph of the Christians over the Muslims in old Spain. Usually, a parade takes place on the morning and then, a mock battle is performed in the city of Zacatecas. The participants are also accompanied by some musicians.

5. Japan - Soma-Nomaoi

Date: Last weekend of July

The Koshiki Kacchu Keiba is one of the main events which consists of twelve Samurai horsemen carrying Katana swords who race over 1,000 metres whilst fully clad in armour and helmets. The second very exciting event is the Shinki Sodatsusen in which 40 shrine flags are shot into the air and are competed for by several hundred Samurai horsemen.

6. Denmark - Skagen Winter Swimming Festival

Date: End of January

Taking place on the Sønderstrand in Skagen on the north tip of Jutland, it is unofficially the world’s smallest swimming festival and only those with nerves of steel are brave enough to enter the freezing January waters of the Baltic sea. Just north of the beach, you can also swim where the North and Baltic Seas meet creating a criss-cross of overlapping waves.

7. Greece - Flour Throwing Festival

Date: Beginning of Lent

Traditional folklore states that it began in the 19th century when carnivals were forbidden during the Ottoman Empire rule and so locals protested against the government by dancing in the street and tossing coloured flour. This mad but hugely entertaining festival involves 1.5 tons of coloured flour which is thrown onto both the locals and tourists.
8. Thailand - Loy Krathong (Lights Ceremony)

Date: 12th Lunar month

Loy Krathong is to thank the water spirits and cleanse the people’s sins. Thai people decorate lotus flowers with incense sticks, candles and coins and launch them into the sea.

9. Canada - Calgary Stampede

Date: Beginning of July

Each year the Calgary Stampede celebrates the roots of Canadian cowboy culture. The festival lasts a week and entails a daily rodeo of bucking broncos, bull riding, steer wrestling, wagon racing – each involving big prize money for the winners. As the Calgary Stampede is so renowned, the winners are held in extremely high esteem.

10. Germany - Oktoberfest

Date: End of September

The first Oktoberfest was held in 1810 to honour the marriage of the Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig to Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen. These festivities were almost a week long and ended with a horse race. The celebrations have continued each year since then and have been moved forward to September. There are parades with traditional dress and music including brass concerts and beer tents full of people wearing Lederhosen. Amongst all the beer drinking there is also a traditional religious Oktoberfest mass. In 2014, 6.3 million people visited the festival and consumed vast amounts: 112 oxen, 48 calves and 6.4 million litres of beer.
Student voices

One’s destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things

Henry Miller
Having the opportunity to go abroad as part of my course was one of the reasons why I chose Oxford Brookes. I must say, it’s quite a feeling to ‘have the world at your feet’, so to speak; with over 100 agreements with partner universities worldwide, the opportunities to choose from are endless!

So I chose Australia and France as my destinations. It was tough at first, but looking back I now realise that persevering through that initial stage of ‘cultural shock’ is what matured me the most. Being out of my comfort zone in a different culture opened my eyes to many things. I became more aware of myself and of the world around me. Living abroad is a great way to break stereotypes and learn to leave prejudices aside. You get to build a new life from scratch, and realize how many things you actually took for granted before. You get to test your own limits, and discover that you are capable of doing more than what you think. What an empowering thing to do!

In Australia, I got to travel and see how beautiful our planet is. I met and became friends with wonderful people that I wouldn’t have otherwise known. I gained valuable academic insights and discovered the Australian perspectives on world affairs. All while learning the Aussie lingo, of course, hanging around with cute koalas and attempting to surf - emphasis on attempting!

In France I got to improve my French language skills, experience the famous French cuisine and walk down famous Parisian streets. I was taking law classes at a local university, and was also volunteering at a local school teaching English to French students. It was a lot of fun. More than words can say!

One of the highlights of my exchange was participating at SydMUN, the biggest diplomacy conference for students in the Asian-Pacific region. It was a fun way of putting into practice what I learnt at Oxford Brookes, and it enabled me to further develop my professional networking contacts abroad. I am now considering organising a similar Model United Nations conference when I return to Brookes, as I believe our students also deserve to experience what I have.

If you are a student considering undertaking a mobility programme as part of your course, I cannot stress enough how lucky you are for having this possibility. Go for it, make friends, create life-long memories, develop skills, and immerse yourself in the local culture. Going abroad is one of the best decisions I have ever made for myself, and I believe that would be true for you, too!
Making lifelong friends from all over the world

Milly Howard, studied Business and Management in Thailand and Denmark during the 2014-2015 academic year

Stepping off the plane a few days before Christmas in cold and windy Manchester I had to finally accept that my study abroad in Thailand was over.

No longer would I be walking to university in flip-flops, buying fresh pineapple from a fruit seller for my breakfast and sitting in a class full of international students from all over the world. I had to accept that every weekend now wouldn't consist of a 10 hour cramped bus journey to the nearest beach or national park and I wouldn't be going to Uni in a school uniform everyday. I wouldn't be partying down the Khao San Road with new Thai and international friends on a Wednesday and I certainly would never have a 'watergator' (a small type of alligator-like creature) as an excuse for being late to classes again.

Of course the trip had its up and downs - missed flights, a couple of hospital trips and some shocking sunburn after a weekend in paradise but how could I dwell on these when I was studying in BANGKOK! The university here reflected the cities vibrant and fun atmosphere and so it was impossible not to smile and focus on the great bits!

Thankfully, coming home didn't seem all that bad, because within three weeks I was departing for my second semester abroad in Copenhagen, Denmark.

My second exchange has a very different feeling. To start with, it's not 32 degrees and sunny everyday, but the people here are so warm and welcoming that the snow and rain doesn't matter to me very much. It's a beautiful city and the university facilities here are second to none. Everyone here speaks English (which makes life 100 times easier) and I've never used a bike more in my life! The exchange programme here is second to none with social events happening almost weekly you never feel alone and unlike at home there is no time to get bored!

If I could give one piece of advice to anybody studying at university it would be to go on exchange. It opens your eyes to completely new experiences, makes you a braver person and now I have lifelong friends from all over the world!
## Tips from returning exchange students

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<th><strong>DO</strong></th>
<th><strong>DON’T</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• Make the most of every single week on exchange.</td>
<td>• Settle for one group of friends, a few favourite places in the city, or stay in your comfort zone.</td>
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<td>• Throw yourself in the deep end and you will benefit more than you can imagine. You’ll regret getting to the end of the year and having not made the improvements you thought you’d have made.</td>
<td>• Live with other English speakers or with friends from back home. It’s difficult speaking in the foreign language all the time at first, but a lot of fun once you get more fluent.</td>
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<td>• If going to Europe, make a 4 or 5 day trip out in June or July to sort out a flat for September. This will give you some time to see the city as a tourist, and give you time to find a flat, rather than worrying about where to live in August or September when there will be less available to choose from.</td>
<td>• Do things that you can do in England. Just get out there and try some weird and wacky activities!</td>
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<td>• If you have time, find a job teaching English or being an au Pair. There are hundreds advertised for English speakers every week and a lot of easy pocket money to be made from just conversation classes!</td>
<td>• Forget to sign up for the buddy programme! <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/isat/social/global-buddies/">www.brookes.ac.uk/students/isat/social/global-buddies/</a></td>
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<td>• Despite the fact that the grades don’t count, try to take some engaging classes rather than the easier ones. You never know when a class could change your life, or at least your future plans.</td>
<td>• Forget to join clubs and meet as many new people as you can.</td>
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University Spotlight

Travel makes one modest, you see what a tiny place you occupy in the world

Gustave Flaubert
EDHEC Business School
France

Who can go the EDHEC Business School in France?

Where is it situated?

The University has two main campuses.

One of them is situated in Lille, in the north of France, and has a capacity of 4,000 students, 1/3 of whom are international students. The campus offers high tech equipment, for example a digital library.

The second campus is situated in Nice in the south east of France. The buildings have been refurbished and the campus now offers halls of residence, a restaurant, a library, computer rooms and a new lecture theatre.

Both campuses offer a large range of student clubs. Find more about this here: http://www.groupe-edhec.fr/campus/associations-etudiantes/les-associations-etudiantes-65240.kjsp?RH=inst07
Work Placement students in the Exchanges Office: Their Stories
I did my internship at the Oxford Brookes International in the autumn 2011. Before applying I had worked at the International Office of my home university, University of Tampere (UTA), and undertaken an exchange at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, in Belgium. The internship at Brookes gave a great opportunity to work in a different cultural environment and to gain a new perspective on how exchanges and work placements are handled at another university. Everyone at Brookes treated me as part of their team and I very much enjoyed the responsibility given to me. My tasks included for example writing the first ever Exchanges Handbook for students.

After the internship, I worked almost three years at UTA, both at the International Office and the Admissions Office. I moved to Belgium in 2014 after having travelled eight years back and forth for studies, work and boyfriend. I currently work at the Research and Innovation Unit of the European University Association in Brussels and study for a master’s degree at UTA.

My internship at Brookes gave me valuable work experience, confidence and courage to try new things, step out of my comfort zone and benefit from all the great opportunities there are. Even if it sometimes meant living in an attic room with single glazed windows and 11 degrees inside, I wouldn’t change a thing!

Minna Peltola, from Finland,
first ever Placement Student in the Exchanges Office, Semester 1 2011/12
Since I left Oxford, I have finished my Communication Sciences degree and started working as a Marketing Assistant. A few months later, I figured out that I was having too much free time just working 9h/day so I decided to start a Marketing Management master’s degree - which means that, right now, I’m juggling between my full time work, my master thesis and extreme lack of sleep. The funniest thing is, I’ve never felt so accomplished!

During my experience at Brookes I created great memories, multicultural experiences and met friends that I will cherish for life. I'm actually about to go on vacation with the closest friends that I made there - we often reunite and remember our 'Oxford days'!

I truly miss my time in Oxford, and not even the warmest and sunniest days in Portugal will stop me from wanting to go back. And I will!!

Sílvia Santos, Placement Student from Portugal, Semester 2 2011/12

After gaining a great experience and important new skills at Oxford Brookes, and going back to my home university I tackled my MA thesis on English philology.

The exciting experiences I've had in the UK and elsewhere drove me to seek new opportunities abroad, and indeed I found a job in Latvia just before graduation. I didn't need to think twice before packing my bags and going! After learning how to be a professional translator I decided to start doing the job as a freelancer, free to travel the world as I please.

Not only did my internship at Brookes teach me a great deal about international affairs at universities - a field I am bound to pursue later on in my career - but also about different cultures, fruitful cooperation as well as my own weaknesses and strengths. Priceless!

Hanna Aarniluoma, Placement Student from Finland, Summer 2012
Since November 2014, I am the Non EU Exchanges and Study Abroad Assistant for the Study Abroad and Exchanges Team at the University of Southampton. My job is to process applications of incoming and outgoing exchange/study abroad (fee paying) students to/from outside of Europe. I also provide advise and guidance to these students about many aspects related to studying abroad. Part of my workload is managing the social media and maintaining the team’s website up to date.

So far, what I have found the most useful has been having to liaise with partners from outside of Europe, as in my previous jobs I was more involved with European exchanges; now I am having the opportunity to learn more about many overseas institutions, their different ways of administering exchanges and study abroad opportunities as well as about their educational systems.

Isabel Benitez, Placement Student from Spain, Semester 1 2012/2013

I spent a bit more than four wonderful months in Oxford getting to know new people, the British culture, and of course the very different educational and university systems.

My placement at the Oxford Brookes was, just like all internships, a very useful experience. In addition to learning new practical skills, it gave me some perspective in order to navigate my way and find my place in the labour market; what kind of things I want to do in the future.

From Oxford I continued my travel to Vienna, Austria to work first for the Permanent Mission of Finland to the OSCE and then the United Nations. After graduating with my Master’s I started working as a Public Affairs Officer for the Finnish Defence Forces. Now I have truly found the right career path and the topics I enjoy working with.

Even though my placement at the Exchanges Office was very different from what I ended up choosing, I am very grateful that I had the chance to do it. And naturally, if I had to, I’d do it again anytime!

Riikka Hietajärvi, Placement Student from Finland, Semester 2 2012/2013
After my work placement at Oxford Brookes University in summer 2013, I went back to Italy and earned my BA in Languages and Translation. I have been teaching English to young students, as well as providing different translation services ever since. I am now planning to go back to the UK to enhance my education. However, I can't imagine how anything could possibly come close to topping my unforgettable Brookes experience!

Bruno de Leo, Placement Student from Italy, Summer 2013

I live currently in Muurame, central Finland. I studied International Business (BBA) in JAMK University of Applied Sciences and as part of my studies I had to do an exchange. Because I had already done all of my courses, I wanted to do a work placement and Brookes University offered me that.

I did 3,5 months training in Oxford at the Exchanges Office as an administrator and got excellent working experience and was able to improve my English as well. I enjoyed my time in Oxford and gained lots of good friends there. But what made my trip there even more valuable, was the fact that because of this internship I got a permanent job in Finland before I had even finished the training at Brookes. The improved language skills and work experience from the UK were important factors in the process of getting my current job.

Only because of this training and all the support I got from my team in the Exchanges Office at Brookes, I was able to return home and the following day start with my current job. I would not have been able to hope for any better ending for my work placement!

Anne Lukkarinen, Placement Student from Finland, Semester 1 2013/2014
I really enjoyed my time working as a work placement student for the Exchanges Team at Oxford Brookes University. They made me feel part of the team as soon as I arrived. They were always very helpful and friendly, and I learnt a lot working with them.

Currently, I work as an Admissions Officer for the Health and Life Sciences Faculty. I am a very happy Brookes staff member. I love the friendliness of this University and how approachable everyone is.

Oxford is an amazing city to live in and Oxford Brookes University is an excellent place to work at!

Jennifer Suleiman Andrés, Placement Student from Spain, Semester 2 2013/14

Since my placement in the Oxford Brookes University Exchanges Office I have conducted research for a school of engineering in Portugal, finished my master’s in Political Science and International Relations, and volunteered in Macedonia for six months. During all of this I’ll still often think back to my time in Oxford Brookes. It was a great experience that I only came to truly appreciate after leaving. My experience there was quite valuable as I got to learn a lot and develop valuable skills.

I feel that my time there was particularly good due to the town of Oxford and the people I worked with. Oxford is a beautiful city with a rich history, great locations and abundance of green spaces (though it is a very expensive city). I also had the pleasure of meeting great people there that made my time there much more enjoyable than it would otherwise have been. The people I worked with were also important as they made my work day much nicer than it would otherwise have been; they were always helpful and kind to me. It was my pleasure to be at Oxford Brookes University and I think that I will keep thinking back to it even when developing new stages of my life.

Tomás Ramalhete, Placement Student from Portugal, Summer 2014
I was a work placement student at the Oxford Brookes International Exchanges Office from August to December of 2014. Now, months later, I am a Student Services Co-ordinator for International Studies Abroad and am working every day in London with study abroad students from the US. It is a very dynamic and active job and I have loved every bit of it!

I know that my time at Brookes was essential to gaining this position as it was valuable experience and I was able to learn a multitude of skills and gain expertise about the field that I still use everyday. Laura and Sally gave me such a supportive environment to learn and take initiative and I am so grateful to them for the experience and thrilled that it was a stepping stone to my current job, which I love! I would encourage anyone to complete a work placement in the close-knit environment at Brookes as it is truly an amazing experience in a gorgeous city that will be invaluable in future career endeavours.

Kristen Gartside, Placement Student from the USA, Semester 1 2014/2015

After my internship at Oxford Brookes, I went back to my home university and graduated thanks to the Oxford Brookes Exchanges Team who gave me the opportunity to write my dissertation with them. When I got my diploma, I rolled straight into my next adventure.

While writing this, I'm on a bartender course in Barcelona, shaking cocktails and discovering the pretty sights of the city. You can easily say that while working for Oxford Brookes I started to get the travel and work abroad virus as I was in contact with a lot of students coming from every part of the world. I heard so many stories about other countries, that it made me really motivated to keep exploring after my amazing time in Oxford. And that's why I'm already trying to figure out what my next adventure will be!

Lynn Zomer, Placement Student from The Netherlands, Semester 2 2014/2015
Erasmus Student Network (ESN)

Who are they?
The ESN is a non-profit international student organisation run by volunteers and is the biggest student association in Europe.
There are branches all over the UK including the one at Oxford Brookes which currently has over 220 members.

ESN in numbers…
- 12,000 volunteers
- 441 local sections
- 36 countries
- offer services to over 160,000 students

What do they do?
Their mission is to represent international students and in doing so provide opportunities using the basis of students helping students. First and foremost they work with foreign and local students wanting to have an international experience and aim to ensure that everybody has a great time meeting new people whilst being immersed in other cultures.

One of the main features of the ESN is that they organise regular events for everyone to take part in. For example these might entail punting, themed movies nights, a take on come dine with me, as well as trips to hundreds of different places including Brighton, London and even Amsterdam.

ESN contacts...
Email address: info@esnuk-brookes.org
Facebook page: ESN Oxford Brookes
Direct contact: http://www.esnuk-brookes.org/contact
CONTACT THE EXCHANGES OFFICE

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studyabroad@brookes.ac.uk

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