



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

International
Exchanges
Unit.

December Finish at the University of Sheffield

December Finish Option

The University of Sheffield does not have a universal policy on students finishing in December. This process is done on an individual academic department basis and departments are not always in a position to agree to December finish. It is, therefore, not an automatic option for students

Semester dates

Intro Week/Teaching

22 September – 19 December 2014

Christmas Vacation

20 December – 18 January 2015

Mandatory Exam Period

19 January - 07 February 2015

Choosing December Finish

Students should only request December finish if it is on academic grounds (i.e. the semester at the home University starts before our semester ends). Students wishing to return home for personal reasons should not request December finish.

All students should consider applying for either a full academic year or our Spring Semester (February – June) instead of December Finish.

If students have to return to their home institutions for academic reasons, they must follow the following process **BEFORE submitting a formal application** to Sheffield. See below.

Making December finish enquiries to Sheffield

Before submitting a nomination or application to Sheffield, students/universities should follow the process below;

1. Students must liaise with their home academic departments and put together a very clear Study Plan of the modules they must study at Sheffield. Please refer to our website for clear instructions on how to do this: www.shef.ac.uk/studyabroad/overseas/prospective/choosing
2. Students should pay particular attention to the information provided on the Directory of Modules regarding the type of assessment for each module. If a module is essay based, then this is easier to get approved. If it is exam based, then this is more difficult to be approved.
3. Students should email their proposed Study Plan and up to date transcript to the International Exchanges Unit (IEU), clearly explaining that they wish to explore the December Finish option at Sheffield.
4. IEU will then forward the Study Plan and transcript to the appropriate academic colleagues. The academic department will assess whether the student is qualified to take the particular module and then decide if and if options are available in terms of alternative assessment
5. IEU will then email the student and the home university with the decisions from the academic departments. If they agree, then you will be allowed to submit a formal application to Sheffield.

Assessment Methods for December finish students

The decisions about assessment options are made by the academic departments at Sheffield. The following options are not guaranteed or approved, they are just meant as a guide.

Essay based assessment

If the course is essay based, then the department may agree for students to take one of the following options;

- Hand in work prior to departure. This could be an earlier deadline than other students are working towards. The deadline must be adhered to
- The student is allowed to email or post work back to Sheffield after departure (deadline will be given)

Exam assessment

- The Sheffield academic department may approve that the exam can be taken at the students home University. The home University will then need to liaise with the Sheffield academic department to come up with a suitable plan/process for proctoring the exams in their University. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that this plan is in place as soon as they arrive in September and double checked before departure.

The International Exchanges Unit does not play a part in organising for exam papers to be mailed between Sheffield and the home institution. It is the responsibility of the student's home University and the Sheffield academic department to agree and organise this.

Housing Contracts

There are only two types of contracts for Study Abroad Programme students. Either a semester or a full year contract. Accommodation and Campus Services do not automatically offer short term contracts (i.e. less than a semester) and if they do, it will need to be pre-negotiated by the IEU.

If they do offer a shorter contract, normally "December Finish" students are housed together as it is easier to manage the contracts this way and reduce the cost for the student. The contract maybe for a self-catered property and probably will not be located at The Edge. A previous example has been a Victorian house based very close to the University.

If Accommodation and Campus Services cannot offer a short term contract, students need to apply for and accept a semester contract and pay for the extra weeks. This cannot be waived. Alternatively, students can try and find accommodation in the private sector.

What happens if students do not declare December Finish until they arrive or very late in the process?

Declaring December finish **prior to application** is essential and mandatory. Otherwise the following could happen;

- Departments do not allow exams to be taken back home – students either have to stay and miss home university work, fail to receive credits or leave Sheffield shortly after arrival causing further complications.
- Accommodation and Campus Services reject a request for a short term contract – students have to pay for extra weeks they had not budgeted for.
- The student does not have a good case to present to departments by not pre-organising this and therefore, the department may not accommodate this late request. It also causes unnecessary, additional work for the department and does not make for good relationship building between the universities.

What if students choose different courses upon arrival, which have not been pre-approved for December Finish

Once you have been told by IEU which modules have been approved for December Finish (from your initial enquiries above), you must not change these. If you do, then it is up to you to negotiate December Finish on arrival with appropriate Study Abroad Advisers. You then run the risk of not gaining approval as departments are not required to approve this option.

Additional Information

It is recommended that you make your personal tutor (if you have one in the department) aware that you are a December finish student.

Overview

The International Exchanges Unit works hard with both students and Universities to ensure that a Study Abroad period at Sheffield is well organised and meets all the required criteria. If planned in advance, we will try our very best to accommodate December Finish. Questions? please email ieu@sheffield.ac.uk