

IMMERSION PERIOD ABROAD POLICY FOR “LEHRAMTSBEZOGENEN BACHELORSTUDIENGANG ENGLISCH” STUDENTS

SECTION 1: DESCRIPTION & GUIDELINES

What is the ImPA?

All students studying to be teachers of English within the BA programme (LAB) are required to undertake a period abroad¹. This Immersion Period Abroad (ImPA) constitutes a period of no less than three months and is undertaken on students’ own initiative. Fulfilment of the ImPA is compulsory and necessary for successful completion of the LAB programme. Guidance for the selection of activities appropriate for fulfilling the ImPA is provided below in the Guidelines.

When should the ImPA be undertaken?

Students may choose to undertake their three month or longer ImPA at any time after completing the second semester courses within the LAB programme and before receiving their diploma, i.e. IN-PROGRAMME or POST-PROGRAMME². Further information can be found in Section 2, 1:1.

Students may also offer for consideration a stay abroad that has been undertaken before they enrolled on the LAB programme, i.e. PRE-PROGRAMME. The conditions under which such a stay abroad will be accepted are described in Section 2, 1:2

ImPA Administration

The LAB Student Advisor and the Student Mobility Co-ordinator (English Department) are responsible for the ImPA administration.

LAB Student Advisor: Dr Thomas Griffig
SM Co-ordinator: Caroline Zurhelle-Waser, M.A.

¹ Students of English and another foreign language are only required to do one period abroad. See Section 2, 1.4 for further information.

² POST-PROGRAMME means after all courses are finished. The diploma will be awarded once all course requirements are fulfilled and the ImPA has been completed.

GUIDELINES FOR FULFILLING THE ImPA

The minimum requirement is that students spend three months in an English-speaking country³. The English department preference is for a stay of six months to a year in order to bring about the desired impact on students' cultural competence and proficiency in English.

Students are free to decide upon an activity of their choice whilst abroad. It should, however, be a task-orientated immersion activity promoting interaction and communication with native speakers and competent non-native speakers of English, on a regular and frequent basis. Sight-seeing holidays and road trips will not be recognised for validation.

Examples of recognised activity types are listed below.

INTERNSHIPS

- teaching (national schools, international schools)
- business
- industry
- public administration (libraries, church communities, universities, institutions)

STUDY

- university, college of further education, trade school, language school

WORK (paid or voluntary, full-time or part-time)

NB All cases will be considered on their own merits.

On Completing the ImPA...

Students will apply for validation of their English Department period abroad by completing an "Application for Recognition of a Period Abroad" (ARPA) and presenting it for signature to the SM Co-ordinator.

Students are required to provide proof of participation in a recognised activity.

Validation of the ImPA will be recorded on the Transcript of Records.

SECTION 2:

FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE ORGANISATION OF THE ImPA

1:1 Students hoping to re-organise their courses to accommodate a three month immersion period within the six semesters of the LAB programme, i.e. without extension of the study period, should be aware that the possibilities to do so are limited. The LAB Student Advisor can be contacted for further information.

³ Section 4:4 of the "Prüfungsordnung" stipulates three months abroad in a country where the language is appropriate to the foreign language in question. For the purposes of the English Department ImPA, this means any country where an official language is English.

1:2 Students applying to the English Department for recognition of a PRE-PROGRAMME stay abroad must complete an “Application for Recognition of a Period Abroad” (ARPA) to be signed by the SM Co-ordinator. They are required to provide proof of participation in an extended immersion activity undertaken in the stay abroad. The stay abroad must be of no less than three months and must have been undertaken within the five year period prior to entering the LAB programme.

Examples of recognised activity types are listed below.

- junior year of High School abroad
- au-pair or other work abroad (volunteer or otherwise - no less than three months)
- international secondary school education abroad (no less than three months)
- English-medium university study period abroad (no less than one semester)
- language school abroad (no less than three months)

NB All cases will be considered on their own merits.

1:3 In general, the English Department does not consider children to be a reason not to go abroad. The English Department and RWTH Aachen University offer various ways of going abroad with children. In specific cases, i.e. if children need special care or medical treatment a request (“Antrag auf Erlass des Auslandsaufenthaltes”) documenting the specific reasons may be sent to the faculty examination board (Prüfungsausschuss Lehramt) for consideration.

Splitting the ImPA

1:4 An improvement in language proficiency is more likely to be achieved when students immerse themselves in English speaking culture for a longer period of time. The English Department therefore recommends spending three months or one semester abroad. If students wish to split their ImPA into two periods of six weeks they will need to submit a written application to the student mobility coordinator (Caroline Zurhelle-Waser) for approval. It is not possible to split the ImPA in any other form.

1:5 Students of English and another foreign language may split their period abroad between the two languages. Proof of completion of an ImPA in both languages must be provided when applying for recognition of this type of split ImPA.