

Study Abroad and Exchange FAQs



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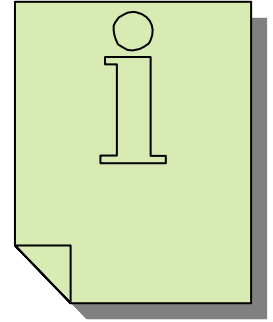
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GENERAL QUESTIONS



1. Q. Why should I study abroad?

A. In the words of prospective and former study abroad students:

“I want to broaden my educational experience by studying overseas. Even though I will be taking courses that are also offered here at home, I will be learning in a completely different environment. I want to study abroad to gain a better understanding of a different culture, take that international experience home with me and be able to use it in the future— nothing beats experience.”

“Simply put, study abroad is the experience of a lifetime! You’re attending Georgia Southern University to earn an education, broaden your cultural horizons, and prepare yourself for a promising future (all while having a good time). Study abroad fulfills all of these goals.. Destinations and durations vary so everyone can find a program that suits their goals and interests.”

“Get the absolute most out of their experience here at Georgia Southern! There is no more memorable college experience than studying abroad. This is an opportunity you will never have again. You can see the world, learn about other people and places, earn course credit, all while having more fun than you’ve ever imagined.”

“As the future leaders of the United States, we must all embrace the responsibility we have to be global, not just national, citizens. We must learn about other people and places and at the same time teach our international friends about us too, I like to call it “Diplomacy through Exchange”. As study abroad students it is our duty to break down stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings. We must learn to see things not solely out of a United States of American lens, but from a global and cross-cultural perspective.”

And remember study abroad programs are safe, fun, challenging, affordable, and the course credits can apply directly to your Georgia Southern degree. International experience, global awareness, cross-cultural communication, and foreign language proficiency are attributes of successful employers in

every field. No matter you're your major is there's no excuse not to look into studying abroad.

2. Q. What exactly is a study abroad program?

A. Study Abroad programs may differ year to year but are generally offered in the summer and range in duration from two to six weeks. Occasionally programs may be offered over spring break or during Maymester.

Some of the most popular summer study abroad destinations include Costa Rica, England, Italy, and the Czech Republic. In any given year, upwards of 15 different summer study abroad programs are offered. Students will pay tuition and register for courses at Georgia Southern on all GSU-sponsored programs. Students who participate on other University System of Georgia Study Abroad programs are able to transfer those credits back to Georgia Southern.

3. Q. What exactly is an exchange program?

A. Students participating on exchange programs will pay tuition and register for courses at Georgia Southern and receive full student privileges at their host university. Most exchange courses are in English though a variety of opportunities are available for students wishing to pursue second language studies.

Georgia Southern has exchange agreements with partner institutions in China, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Denmark, and Germany. Placements are competitive and advanced planning is required.

The International Student Exchange Program (ISEP) offers an even larger network of universities. The ISEP network gives GSU students the opportunity to study in one of 35 different countries. Like other exchange students, ISEP students will pay tuition and register for courses at GSU. Unlike other exchange students, ISEP students will pay for on-campus housing and for a 19 meal/week plan at GSU and will receive the equal provisions abroad through ISEP.

4. Q. What is the European Council?

A. The European Council (EC) is a committee of international education representatives from the institutions of the University System of Georgia. The EC offers summer study abroad programs to London, Paris, Madrid,

Southern Germany, and St. Petersburg, and affiliated programs to Italy and Greece. Students who apply for EC programs will pay tuition and register for courses at Georgia Southern.

Georgia Southern University has two active members on the European Council - Dr. Charlie Crouch and Mr. Jeffrey Palis.

5. Q. Is it safe? Won't my parents worry?

A. Of course safety and security are very important issues when considering a studying abroad program. Georgia Southern University takes special care to take all safety precautions possible including issuing study abroad insurance to all students, following the Department of State Travel Warnings and guidelines, and registering students with the US Embassy in the host country of study. Participants will be given emergency contact information and study abroad insurance information at their orientation sessions prior to departure.

Program locations are selected based on safety, amenities, and suitability for academic programming. Each of our summer and semester programs have a program director or an onsite advisement center responsible for day-to-day activities and crisis management. Students will not be alone!!

Parents are welcome to attend a Study Abroad Breakout Session at SOAR and after a program is selected parents are also invited to attend the pre-departure program orientation. Parents may contact the Center for International Studies and/or the specific program director for more safety and security information.



THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. Q. Is there a “best” time to study abroad?

A. Because of the flexibility in your course schedule (and all of those core requirements!) the summers following your freshman and sophomore years are ideal times in your collegiate career to study abroad. However, you may study abroad your junior and or senior year as well; there are many programs that offer upper division credits. Semester and academic year abroad students most often go abroad during their junior year.

2. Q. What are the academic eligibility requirements to study abroad?

A. Students interested in summer study abroad programs must be in good academic standing with the university. Program acceptance is given on a space-available basis. Some programs also require a letter of recommendation and an academic intent essay. Freshmen are eligible to apply for summer study abroad programs.

Please note that some language immersion programs do require previous coursework in the target language. Many of these programs are designed for students taking foreign language courses at the intermediate or advanced level.

Exchange students must have completed 45 credit hours with a GPA of 2.5 or higher prior to departure. A 2.75 GPA is required for all scholarships.

3. Q. Do I have to speak a foreign language to study abroad?

A. No! The majority of study abroad and exchange programs offer both core and advanced level classes taught in English. Prior language study is not a prerequisite for these programs.

Students wishing to study a foreign language can find a program tailored to their interests and skill-level. Opportunities are available for beginning level language study but most foreign language programs are designed enhance more advanced skills; courses are usually at the 3000 level and beyond.

If you are serious about learning a foreign language, select a study abroad language program that will offer total immersion in language and culture. These programs should include intensive language instruction, home-stays with local families, and a cultural immersion program. Language immersion study abroad programs truly do help you become a competent and confident speaker of the local language.

4. Q. How many credits can I earn from a study abroad program?

A. Typically summer abroad programs last five weeks and offer 6 credit hours of coursework. Some are shorter and only offer 3 credits and some are longer and offer up to 9 credits. All students participating on semester/year abroad programs must take at least 12 hours.

5. Q. What classes are offered on study abroad programs?

A. The classes offered vary by program. Some programs are discipline specific (i.e. courses are in one academic area like Spanish, Business Administration, or Hotel and Restaurant Management) and some programs a variety of lower division and upper division courses across many majors. All study abroad courses are designed to integrate the in-class learning experience with the out-of-class environment in the host country. Students and faculty agree that the study abroad experience is a learning experience unlike any other.

6. Q. I want to study abroad. Where do I start?

A. You can select a study abroad program based on three main criterias: 1) Where you want to go, 2) When and for how long do you want to go, and 3) Which classes you'd like to take.

Your first step in the study abroad process is looking at the Center for International Studies webpage to narrow down your choice of programs:

<http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/international/study abroad/>

There is also an information table located in the main hallway in front of the Center for International Studies in the Forest Drive Building.

After getting an idea about the various programs we offer, you should then schedule an appointment to meet with the campus study abroad coordinator to really discuss your options. Planning should be done ahead of time; up to a year in advance of program departure is recommended.

Appointments to see Jeff Palis, the study abroad and exchange coordinator, can be made by contacting Ms. Janice Hendrix in the Center for International Studies at 912.681.0332. Students may also drop in during Jeff's office hours which are posted on the study abroad website. His office is located in the Forest Drive Building, Room 1323.

TRAVEL AND ACCOMODATIONS INFORMATION



1. Q. What types of documents do I need for my trip?

A. All students will need a valid passport to travel abroad (even to Mexico and Canada). For more information about passports, please see <http://travel.state.gov/passport>. Students participating in exchange programs will likely need a temporary student visa. This information will be covered in your exchange program orientation.

2. Q. How do I make travel arrangements?

A. On summer study abroad programs, travel arrangements are usually made by the program director. Students are required to make their own travel arrangements for exchange programs. The Center for International Studies can assist with finding cheap fares and arranging onsite airport pick-up.

3. Q. What is an ISIC card and why do I need one?

A. The International Student Identification Card doubles as a discount card and ID card for your time abroad. The ISIC card is most beneficial to students participating on European programs and is included in many of the summer study abroad program fees.

4. Q. What is a typical study abroad schedule like?

A. The summer study abroad model usually requires students to attend class on Mondays and Wednesdays and participate on field trips Tuesdays and Thursdays. All classes and all field trips are mandatory. Students should plan on not missing any classes during their study abroad program. Fridays and weekends are free, so students can travel in small or large groups or with faculty members.

Exchange programs run on a semester schedule similar, but not exactly like ours in the United States. Often you'll notice that overseas universities have Fall/Winter Semesters that last from roughly September through January and Spring/Summer Semesters which last from February or March through July. Students interested in spending only one semester abroad are advised to plan on studying during the Spring/Summer semester thereby permitting themselves to return to Georgia Southern for Fall semester classes. Students studying abroad for only the Fall/Winter semester may find it difficult to return in time to begin their Spring semester coursework at Georgia Southern.

5. Q. What is a Eurail Pass?

A. A Eurail Pass gives students 8 or 10 days of unlimited train travel to be used during their program. Rail passes differ between programs but are usually regional in scope. Some passes may include travel to several countries, some may be good for domestic travel only. Students typically use the rail passes for weekend travel though some train travel should be reserved for class field trips.

6. Q. How should I pack?

A. The best packing advice is to pack your suitcase, empty it out, and repack it with only half of the things you packed the first time. Airlines prohibit passengers from checking more than two bags — so pack wisely!! Be sure to leave room for souvenirs and clothing you may purchase while abroad. It's always smart to pack a versatile fleece, comfortable walking shoes, and one outfit for formal occasions. More packing tips will be covered in your program orientation.

7. Q. Where will I be staying?

A. Accommodations differ by program, but can include dormitory style residence facilities, hotels, apartments, and home stays with local families on language/cultural immersion programs. Some programs have single, some have double room accommodations. Students are welcome to request a specific roommate.



FINANCING STUDY ABROAD

1. Q. How much do the programs cost, and what is included in that cost?

A. Summer Study Abroad programs can cost between \$2000 and \$4500. The program costs typically include: roundtrip airfare, accommodations, meals, excursions, local ground transportation, insurance, onsite advisement, ISIC card and sometimes even a railpass. Tuition and fees are to be paid separate; HOPE can be used to cover study abroad tuition and fees. Program fees differ based on the duration and location of the program (i.e. four-weeks in the Czech Republic is much cheaper than five-weeks in London).

Exchange programs are different in that they do not carry a program fee. Students will pay for tuition and fees at GSU, but will pay for housing and meals via the host institution abroad. Students will also be on their own to book flights though the Center for International Studies will assist as much as possible. Airport pick-up is arranged by the host institution.

2. Q. With whom do I need to speak with about financing my trip and financial aid?

A. You will want to speak with Mrs. Margaret Pigatt-Lanier in the Financial Aid Office about financial aid. Please plan ahead!

Contact Information:

mplanier@georgiasouthern.edu

912.681.0981

3. Q. Are scholarships available? Who do I need to speak to about scholarship information?

A. For scholarship information, you will need to contact Jeff Palis. Some applications are available online at:

http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/international/study_abroad/

Scholarships are offered for all programs though more lucrative awards are reserved for semester and academic year abroad students. Students should have at a minimum a 2.75 GPA to apply for scholarships. Considerations of program costs, financial need, program location, scholarship essay, and letter of recommendation (if required) are given during the selection process.

4. Q. What types of expenses outside of my program fees should I anticipate, and how much money should I bring?

A. Students should budget additional money for miscellaneous meals, shopping, nightly “entertainment,” and special weekend trips. Since some destinations are more expensive than others there is no exact science for budgeting additional expenses on a study abroad trip. Students are advised to eat the meals included in the program fee and limit frivolous spending on food and drink. The European Council suggests students should budget \$200/week on most Western European programs. Students will need less spending money in Eastern Europe and in Latin America but may find that they need more money in Asia, especially in Japan. Ask your program director for more specific advice.