Study Abroad

GETTING STARTED GUIDE

International Education
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About this handbook

We are excited to work with you as you plan your time abroad. We have created this handbook to guide you through the “maze” of preparing to study abroad.

Topics covered in this guide:

- Why study abroad?
- RC Sponsored study abroad programs
- Study abroad credits
- Financial information
- Passports and visas
- Study abroad participation guidelines
- Application process & deadlines

The first step is to come meet with us!

Attend STUDY ABROAD 101 to learn about the study abroad process

Offered each Tuesday & Thursday: 12:00-12:30

Contact Carmen Boggs-Parker for more information.

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So, you are thinking about study abroad? What do you want to get out of a study abroad experience? Do you want to improve your language skills? Do you want to build your resume? Do you want to meet new people?

Here are some other reasons for studying abroad that you may not have considered:

- Gain a greater understanding of different cultures
- Get a different perspective of American culture
- Learn about your ethnic heritage and/or religion
- Broaden your knowledge of specific geographical and cultural areas
- Further develop your interpersonal skills and ability to adapt
- Increase intellectual stimulation and development
- Conduct personal research
- Take courses not offered at Roanoke
- Prepare for graduate school
- Take advantage of the opportunity to travel
As you are considering programs for your study abroad experience, make sure that you investigate the courses that are generally offered at the program. Are these courses relevant to your academic plan? Are you allowed to take any courses that the host university offers, or must you select courses from a pre-approved list? There are many things to consider as you are making your choice. Please talk with the Assistant Director of International Education to help you through this process.

During the semester before you go abroad, you must meet with your advisor to discuss course choices for your study abroad program. You will provide course descriptions, and often syllabi of the courses you want to take. Your course selections must be approved by your advisor, the chair of each relevant department, and the Registrar. These approvals are documented on the “Authorization for Study Abroad Transfer Credit" form. That form, with all required signatures, must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by November 15 for spring study abroad and April 15 for Fall study abroad.

Once you arrive, you may find that one or more of the courses you have selected and gotten approved has been cancelled or is scheduled at a time when you have another course. If you need to make changes to your approved course list, you must contact the Assistant Director of International Education, your advisor, and department chair immediately. Please include these individuals on ALL correspondence. Your advisor will help ascertain if your substitute course choices can be approved for the type of credit you want.

You must be assigned letter or number grades for all of your courses by program or host institution faculty. No pass/fail grades will be accepted. All courses for which you receive an equivalent grade of C- or better will be credited on your Roanoke College transcript as transfer credit. While the grades assigned by your program or host institution faculty will not appear on your RC transcript, they will appear on your program or host institution transcript. Your Roanoke College GPA will not be affected by the grades you receive abroad. If you later apply to graduate or professional school or for some government or other employment, the graded program or host institution transcript may be required.

You MUST be enrolled in the equivalent of full-time study for the country in which you are studying. If you are unsure of the number of credits in which you should be enrolled, please contact the Assistant Director of International Education. As long as you are enrolled as a full time student abroad and receive a passing grade in ALL of your courses you should receive the equivalent of a full semester of units at Roanoke College.

Study abroad credit is transfer credit unless you enroll in the Leipzig, Yucatan, or Virginia Oxford Summer program. These programs are considered RC campus courses, so they are credited with RC credit like your normal courses. These courses will be figured into your GPA.
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

How much is this going to cost?
The Office of International Educations works with each student individually to ensure the most cost effective manner for the student to participate in an international experience.

Study abroad fee
A $350 study abroad fee is applied to all students, regardless of program type. This fee exists to offset the costs incurred through foreign transcript evaluation, credit transfer, processing of federal and/or state financial aid for disbursement to the student, and other administrative expenses. Students who enroll in the Leipzig or Yucatan programs do not pay this fee.

RC Extension Campuses
Students participating in the Leipzig or Yucatan programs will pay a program fee in addition to their normal semester charges for tuition, fees, room and board. This program fee covers the group flight, excursions, and most other expenses involved in the program.

Exchange, affiliated, and unaffiliated programs
An exchange is essentially a trade of places. A student in a foreign country pays his or her tuition, room, board, and fees. A Roanoke College student pays RC tuition and fees, room and board. The students then trade places and receive the benefits of what the other student has paid for at his or her home institution.

An affiliated program does not involve an exchange of students, but rather allows Roanoke College to directly enroll a student in a foreign institution or program. Roanoke College will charge students for tuition and fees. Depending on the program, students may be charged for housing and/or meals as well. A student is never charged twice for the same service. For instance, if a student pays for housing here, they will not be charged for housing abroad.

An unaffiliated program is not connected to Roanoke College through a contractual agreement. In order to participate on an unaffiliated program, the student must withdraw from Roanoke College. The student is not billed by Roanoke College, but also cannot receive the Roanoke College institutional or federal financial aid. The student would pay out of pocket for the program. There are limitations on what courses transfer in this situation. No assistance from the Office of International Education will be given to students who enroll in unaffiliated programs.

What additional expenses should we expect?
- Passport and visa fees
- Travel costs: airfare, transportation, and personal travel expenses
- Textbooks
- Sometimes students must pay a refundable housing deposit
- Insurance (if participating in an ISEP program)
PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passport

If you don’t have a passport, apply for one as early as possible. It generally takes four to six weeks to get a passport and can take longer depending on demand. If you already have a passport, be sure it will be valid for at least six months beyond the date you will return to the U.S.

http://usps.whitepages.com/passport/VA/Roanoke
http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html

Visa

You will need a visa to study in most countries. We will assist you in understanding the visa process, but the consular website and your host university’s international office are the best sources of information. They should indicate in your acceptance letter if you will need a visa and may give you or tell you where to find information and application forms, but you are responsible for obtaining your own student visa, which can take six weeks or more. In most cases you will need several passport-sized photos, your acceptance letter from the host university, and evidence of financial aid or personal funds sufficient to support yourself while studying abroad. Evidence of financial support typically refers to recent bank statements, either yours or your parents, reflecting an adequate balance for several months of a specific amount indicated by the visa application instructions. While in most cases it is not possible to apply for a visa more than 90 days before departure, you should start the visa application process as early as possible.
Study abroad is one of the experiential learning experiences that Roanoke College is committed to providing our students. We believe in the value of real-world learning which comes out of these experiential opportunities. Time spent abroad in another culture helps students to broaden their perspective, step out of their comfort zone, develop a greater sense of independence and confidence, and increase their intercultural competency: all of these skills enhance student development which reflects Roanoke College’s mission of preparing students for responsible lives of learning, service and leadership in what has now become a truly global context.

Beyond encouraging students to simply have a study abroad experience, it is equally important that we assess student learning that results from the experience and support this learning through opportunities for students to process, reflect upon, and articulate the meaning of the experience. Therefore, we have instituted participation guidelines for all students who study abroad as follows:

**REQUIRED PARTICIPATION**

**Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Assessment**

All students who study abroad are required to take the IDI assessment, which is a two-part process. There is an online questionnaire that must be completed BEFORE departure. Results from this questionnaire are reviewed in the pre-departure orientation. AFTER returning from studying abroad, students must retake the online questionnaire and complete a second short reflection essay. **Students who study abroad will have a hold on their student record until BOTH PARTS of the IDI assessment are complete.** This hold does not impede housing selection or registration, but you will not be able to transfer back any credits from your study abroad program until you have completed the two-part assessment and the hold has been removed.

**Pre-Departure Orientation**

All students who will be studying abroad are required to attend pre-departure orientation training, which includes important information about travel, health, and safety, culture shock and adjustment strategies, intercultural competency skills and review of the IDI assessment. The pre-departure orientation is offered towards the end of each semester. **Students must attend the training.**

**Re-Entry Programming**

Study abroad students continually report that their time abroad was a transformative experience. For many students it can be challenging to reconcile their experiences with their daily routine back here in the States. Re-entry programming is offered to help ease your transition back home. **Students are required to participate in the Welcome Back Re-entry Reception.**
ROA218/219: Digital Storytelling for Global Learning I/II

This is a 1 unit course designed for students who will study abroad. The course begins the semester before you study abroad with class meetings that lay the foundation for thinking about culture, identity, and narration of experience. It continues the semester you are studying abroad with reading and writing assignments that support your experience, and a project that encourages deeper interaction with the local culture. It ends the semester you return back to campus with class meetings to help you reflect on your experience abroad and articulate its meaning through the production of a digital story. Once you have been approved for a study abroad program, you will be contacted with enrollment details. Although this is not a required course, students who study abroad are expected to enroll.

Re-entry Programming

We offer a series of additional events and resources for study abroad returnees designed to help you reflect on your time abroad and to translate this experience into academic, personal, and career growth. Events offered include: Digital Storytelling Workshops, Reflection Sessions, and a Resume Workshop.

Showcase Event

This event organized by the Office of Experiential Learning happens every fall semester during Family Weekend. The Showcase is an opportunity for students to share their experiential learning with the rest of campus. Students who have studied abroad are expected to participate by presenting a poster board that describes their experience and expresses what they have learned from studying abroad. Returnees from study abroad will be contacted about participation in this event.

Study Abroad Fair

This is an opportunity to give back to the college and your peers by sharing information about your study abroad program and encouraging other students to study abroad. The fair occurs every September. Study abroad returnees will be contacted about participation; they are expected to represent their program at this event.
International Education Week (IEW)

Programming for IEW occurs every November. IEW’s mission is to raise awareness about international education and encourage exchange of ideas across cultures. Students who have studied abroad are encouraged to participate by presenting on their experiences.

International Festival

The Spring Festival is a wonderful celebration of world cultures on our campus. This event provides an opportunity for international students and study abroad returnees to come together with food, music, dance, arts, and games that express the dynamic and vibrant cultures around the world.

Peer Partner Program

This program is designed to facilitate friendship and social interaction between new international students and American students. It is a great opportunity for study abroad returnees to stay culturally connected by getting to know the international students on the Roanoke campus. The program offers meetings and outings so students can get to know each other.

Global Village Residence Hall

The global residence hall is themed housing designed for international students and American students to live together to cultivate a community of globally-minded citizens. Often touted as the “mini U.N” on campus with a strong sense of community, this is a great housing option for study abroad returnees to stay culturally connected.

Student Global Council

Student Global Council members are returned study abroad students who volunteer for outreach activities and serve as returnee contacts for their program. Council members aid IE staff in the development of effective study abroad policies and procedures as well as promote study abroad and serve as resources for their fellow students who will participate in international experiences.
APPLICATION PROCESS

There are multiple levels of application in the study abroad process. First, students must apply to study abroad through our office, the Office of International Education.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Minimum GPA of 2.5
- Good academic standing
- No record of serious or persistent conduct or academic integrity violations

APPLICATION MATERIALS:

- Study Abroad Application
- Study Abroad Degree Progress Form and major/minor/concentration checksheets
- Intercultural Learning Survey
- Study Abroad fee of $350
- Copy of most recent transcripts
- Copy of passport identification page

DEADLINES:

Study abroad in fall of the following semester: December 1
study abroad in spring of the following semester: May 1st

NEXT STEPS:

Students will then apply for the program that they want to attend. Each program will have different requirements and deadlines. Generally, students should be prepared to submit the following:

- A letter of recommendation from a faculty member
- A personal statement describing why you want to study abroad
- Language proficiency reports if you will be attending a program where the courses are taught in a language other than English.

Carmen Boggs-Parker assists students with this process
Where will you go?