

Considering Study Abroad



Questions & Answers

International Services Office
Slippery Rock University

**Whether contemplating or already planning,
this handout provides the basic information
you'll need to get started.**



Is study abroad for me?

Overseas study is often the opportunity of a lifetime, and the highlight of a university career. All types of students take advantage of SRU's International Services programs, and for a variety of reasons. There isn't a stereotypical study abroad student...they come from all backgrounds, with different interests, goals, and expectations.

The staff in the International Services Office, 114 Carruth-Rizza Hall, is here to help you at each step along the way!



What can study abroad do for me?

Students who return from overseas experiences cite many benefits. These typically include:

- ◆ Increased self-confidence and independence
- ◆ Appreciation for cultural and personal differences
- ◆ New perspectives on both the U.S. and the host country
- ◆ Heightened sense of a global community
- ◆ Improved communication skills
- ◆ Enriched academic studies
- ◆ Open-mindedness and tolerance
- ◆ Sense of humor
- ◆ Ability to distinguish themselves for prospective employers





What types of programs are there?

Although we use the term "study-abroad," not all programs involve traditional classroom study. Program options include:

- ◆ **University Based Study:** Traditional semester or year long abroad programs that usually involve classroom study in a variety of disciplines on a university campus.
- ◆ **Language Institute Programs:** Designed for students seeking to develop fluency in a foreign language, total cultural immersion.
- ◆ **Summer Programs:** Month long, international opportunities for students to earn class credits under the direction of SRU faculty.
- ◆ **Spring Break Seminars:** Combine SRU campus study with short-term class experience in an international setting.
- ◆ **Student Teaching**
- ◆ **Internships**
- ◆ **Practicum and Service Learning Programs**

Note also that in some programs, you will study with host-country students, much like an international student at SRU. At the opposite end of the continuum, other programs combine students from all over the world with few native students or with SRU students only.

In addition, programs can last from 10 days to a full year. Most students will go for a semester, but on occasion, some will choose to stay longer! No matter what your interests or limitations, any time spent abroad will still afford you many benefits.



When can I study abroad?

The traditional concept of "junior year abroad" is a thing of the past. Freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and even graduate students study abroad. However, most students choose to go abroad during their second or third year.



Where can I study?

SRU has selected its study abroad offerings to compliment its own academic programs. Spring break and summer programs change every year, check the website for the current opportunities. Semester and/or year long programs are available in:

Australia	Germany	Italy	Slovakia
China	Hungary	Japan	South Korea
England	India	Netherlands	Spain
France	Ireland	Poland	Wales
		Scotland	





Are there foreign language requirements?

Nope! However, some are geared to help you learn a new language and others may have limited offerings in English.

How do I pick a study abroad program?

With so many different options, picking one can be daunting. Here are some things to consider:



- ◆ **Location** isn't everything, but it's a good start! Do you prefer a large city, small town, or rural area? Are you interested in a more developed or less developed country? Is Europe for you? How about Asia or Latin America?
- ◆ **Courses offered** must be considered. Do you need to complete major requirements while away? General electives? Got enough free electives so that it doesn't matter? Are you trying to concentrate on language skills and culture?
- ◆ **Program focus** such as traditional instruction, internship and student teaching are all distinct and separate options.
- ◆ **Degree of integration** is important but often overlooked until it's too late. Do you want a program where you're the only SRU and possibly the only American students? Would you prefer to be with all Americans? Something in between?
- ◆ **Housing choices** vary between and within programs. Possibilities include residence halls, apartments, and host families. Do you want to live with other Americans, host country students, international students, or on your own? Does it matter if your meals are provided, or would you prefer to purchase or prepare your own?
- ◆ **Cost** is often a deciding factor. The costs of our programs are carefully selected to be within reason of the typical SRU student. Still, consider what is included in program costs and what is extra (depending upon the program, these could be transportation, room, meals, insurance, etc.)
- ◆ **Additional travel** is usually an opportunity that students don't want to pass up. Some programs include extra-curricular activities and field trips. Other programs leave it to students to plan on their own. Remember, too, that it's perfectly acceptable to limit your additional travels when abroad and instead set deeper roots into the community in which you live.

Can I afford to study overseas?

All of the programs offered here at SRU have been carefully selected to fit within the budget of a typical SRU student. Most programs are offered at the same or similar cost to studies and living on our campus. Although travel is an additional cost, travel grants are provided to all degree-seeking SRU students participating in SRU study abroad programs.

In addition, with appropriate planning, financial aid that you receive to study on campus may travel with you and can sometimes be increased for study abroad. Contact the Financial Aid Office in Maltby Center for further information. Be sure to ask them about the need for Power of Attorney if your financial aid disbursement will occur after you've left campus.





Will I receive credit for courses taken abroad?

For most semester programs, you'll earn 12-18 credits. Full year programs should be double. As part of the application for study abroad, you must also complete SRU's Transient Clearance Form which includes the approval of your academic advisor or faculty program leader to ensure that your overseas coursework will transfer back to SRU. Summer and seminar programs all vary in terms of credits.

Coursework and grades from overseas are part of your permanent SRU record and appear on your transcript. Grades, however, are not calculated into your cumulative GPA. Please note that if you receive financial aid at SRU, your work overseas will be included in consideration for academic progress and GPA requirements.



Am I eligible to apply?

Most programs require a cumulative GPA of 2.5. A few, including student teaching and internship programs, require a higher average. Seminars and summer programs can often accommodate students with cumulative GPA's between 2.0 and 2.5.



When do I apply?

It's never too early to think about overseas study or to begin planning. Always double check for your specific program but when you're ready to apply, remember these general deadlines:

- ◆ For the fall semester, full year, and summer programs, applications are due by March 15.
- ◆ For the spring semester and seminars, applications are due by October 15.



How do I apply?

Application materials are available in the International Services Office, 114 Carruth-Rizza Hall. All programs require:

- ◆ Completion of the Study Abroad Application
- ◆ Approval and signature of your academic advisor
- ◆ Program deposit of \$130.



Are there other program requirements?

Almost everything you'll need to study abroad can be taken care of in our office, but there are some additional items you'll need to get:

- ◆ Passports are required for all programs and can be obtained from the Slippery Rock Post Office on Main Street.
- ◆ Visa requirements vary by program and sometimes length of stay. Check to see if a visa is required for your program.
- ◆ The International Student ID Card is required for all students participating in SRU study abroad programs. This ID card offers student discounts as well as limited medical insurance and medical evacuation/repatriation benefits. Application forms are available in the International Services Office. For all programs except student teaching, the cost for the card is included in your deposit.





Is there anything else?

Although you haven't even left yet, plan for your return home by meeting with your academic advisor to select courses for your first semester back and to make arrangements for class registration while you're away. Also be sure to make housing arrangements for your return.

Realize that most students studying abroad, you included, will experience a variety of emotions such as excitement, uncertainty, fear, ignorance, culture shock, etc. All of these emotions are natural and will come and go at various stages in your planning as well as your traveling.

And finally, as additional questions come up, please contact us!

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