

## **Integrating International Study and Honors Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How can I fit Study Abroad into my Honors Program Experience?**

The flexibility that is the hallmark of the on-campus Honors Program experience may also be extended to a study abroad program. With some planning and advising help, it is usually possible for honors students to accommodate a study abroad experience within a four-year college program. As you look at your options for academic enrichment activities while at CSU, keep in mind the following academic requirements that you might fulfill through study abroad:

- University General Education requirements
- Major and college requirements

Planning ahead so that your coursework abroad will satisfy requirements at CSU will make it easier for you to fit the Study Abroad experience into your program.

Honors students who spend a semester abroad will NOT be required to complete a Universal Honors Experience course during that semester.

### **“I don’t have time for study abroad; my class schedule is too demanding.”**

- If you’re in a pre-professional major or science discipline where the prerequisites are particularly tightly scheduled, international study can be a challenge. However there are several solutions:
  - ❖ Study abroad can be accomplished during summer sessions or over winter vacations. We have 4 weeks between the fall and spring terms.
  - ❖ Enrolling in a study abroad program that offers courses that will transfer into your major is another way to tackle the requirements overload. Obviously, taking this route involves a good amount of conversation between you, your Honors advisor, your major adviser and the staff of the Center for International Services and Programs, but it is certainly worth pursuing. Previously for science students this was a particular challenge, but now there are a number of international programs of study in the sciences and engineering.
  - ❖ Pre-medicine students in particular should be sure to participate in programs that provide an American transcript for the courses that are taken abroad. This is so the Medical School Admissions Committee can evaluate any work done to fulfill core pre-medicine requirements.

### **How can I use my Honors Program Scholarship with study abroad?**

If you are on a tuition-based scholarship coordinated by the Honors Program, be aware that those funds can usually be applied to study abroad tuition only with the following programs:

- ❖ CSU faculty-led short term study abroad
- ❖ Direct one-to-one exchange with an international partner university for fall, spring or both semesters
- ❖ National Student Exchange when tuition payment Plan A is selected

- Room, board, travel and living expenses are not covered by your Honors scholarship. Likewise, if you select an “independent” study abroad program (not from the list of program types above), tuition charges also become your responsibility.
- Do keep in mind that studying abroad may use one or two semesters of eligibility within the 4-year Honors program.

### **How can I finance my study abroad experience?**

- Choose a program which allows you to use your Honors scholarship
- Apply for financial aid by submitting a FAFSA by the established annual deadlines
- There are many scholarship opportunities in addition to your Honors tuition scholarship. See the [Office of Study Abroad Scholarship](#) page for ideas and links to other possibilities.
- Consider taking out private Educational Loans accessed through Campus 411
- Apply for a study abroad scholarship. The Center for International Services and Programs offers a scholarship specifically for students who study abroad as does the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. In addition to these local CSU scholarships, there are also several state and national study abroad scholarship competitions.

### **Doesn't traveling hurt the environment?**

- There are many non-profit organizations that offer students the chance to off-set the carbon emissions generated by their international travel. By purchasing carbon offsets, students will reduce the impact of their travel by funding a special project-like a wind farm in Texas or a reforestation project in Nicaragua-that will balance out the emissions they cannot reduce. Some of the organizations which offer this are: carbonfund.org
- You should consider if your travel will benefit the communities in which you plan to study. To what extent can you becoming a student abroad and not merely a tourist? To what extent will you contribute to the host country?
- Upon examination of these questions, you may find that formal study abroad isn't for you. If you still want an international experience maybe you should think about international volunteering or teaching English abroad. Students also have the option of a program such as Living Routes in which the course of study focuses on ecological sustainability, perm culture, and work on community service projects. Credits are given by the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and there are programs in India, Scotland, Senegal, Brazil, Mexico, and Peru.

### **Will study abroad hurt my GPA?**

- Grades in study abroad programs will not affect your CSU GPA and will not be factored into your cumulative GPA.
- All courses taken abroad must be taken for a letter grade and as long as you earn at least the equivalent of a D or greater, you will receive the credit and a mark of satisfactory.
- Do keep in mind that your study abroad transcript will be requested from any graduate school to which you apply. The graduate school admissions offices will require you to request and

send an official study abroad transcript directly from your program or institution.

**What can I expect in a foreign classroom setting? In what ways will it be different from my classes here?**

- There is no doubt that international study is different. As an example, in Britain courses are called modules, lectures are generally once per week, with a seminar every fortnight (another British term), and one's grade is determined by a paper and a final examination. The assigned readings are in the library (no textbook buying as in U.S. universities), and students are expected to do their own independent studying without the spur of continual assessment.
- Generally the same skills of time management and efficient studying that have led to your success here will transfer to your university abroad. However, you may be rewarded for different skills than are normally measured here. For example: memorization may be prized in some cultures, others value independent thought, and there may be a basic factual or cultural foundation which you cannot be expected to know. But problems can be avoided by communicating directly with your local instructors and program directors.
- Remember: if you aren't feeling uncomfortable or unfamiliar with a situation or a concept, it is likely you aren't learning anything and aren't integrating into the new system

**Why should I go to the trouble of studying abroad?**

- Evidence of international study will make your application to a graduate program more competitive, and admissions committees take into account the added challenges of international studies when assessing a student's scholastic record.
- If your international program involves language study, increased fluency in that language can be a tremendous asset to potential employers, as well as the increased maturity and flexibility of mind that often results from international study. The latter benefit is particularly important for a more introverted student.
- Your education is about more than the sum of your grades. Travel is experiential and leads to intentional and transformative learning. Take the risk of being actively thoughtful and of stretching yourself by trying something new and experiencing cultural and academic differences in a new environment.