

# THINKING OF STUDY ABROAD?



Office of Study Abroad

[www.utoledo.edu/utlc/studyabroad](http://www.utoledo.edu/utlc/studyabroad)

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**THINKING OF STUDY ABROAD?** The staff in the Office of Study Abroad will assist you in making that decision and in locating an overseas study program that is most appropriate for you.

In the following pages, we have tried to anticipate many of your questions and to suggest ways in which you can begin preparing yourself for the experience. Here is a checklist to guide you in your search:

- 1) **MEET** with your faculty/major adviser(s) in order to be sure that your ideas and plans related to an off-campus study experience and its timing will complement your on-campus program, especially in your major(s).
- 2) **DECIDE** when you would like to study abroad, which is your first-choice program, whether there are any viable alternatives, and what you intend to study.
- 3) **CONSULT** the Office of Study Abroad. There are various program catalogs and other useful handouts in the Study Abroad Office.
- 4) **SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW** with the Director of Study Abroad Dr. Ron Pirog. You may phone (419.530.8550) or email ([studyabroad@utoledo.edu](mailto:studyabroad@utoledo.edu)) to schedule an interview.
- 5) **PLAN FOR YOUR INTERVIEW**; identify topics you'd like to discuss in your interview such as diversity issues, special needs/accommodations, specific course requirements, mental-health issues, medical conditions, or disabilities in order to determine whether those needs or accommodations can be met overseas.
- 6) **PLAN YOUR FINANCES** carefully. If you are using UT financial aid, loans, or scholarships, make an appointment with Lisa Hasselschwert (419.530.5818) in the Rocket Solutions Central Office in order to discuss your financial-aid package as part of your study abroad plans.
- 7) **APPLY**. Students planning to study abroad:
  - \* Fall semester or full year - apply in March or April at the latest
  - \* Spring semester - applications should be submitted in September or October at the latestBe aware of deadlines: Some programs have rolling admissions; thus, it is to your advantage to apply early.

## STUDY ABROAD - BRIEF ANSWERS TO THE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1) **WHERE CAN I STUDY?** UT presently has programs in 23 countries in the United Kingdom, Central Europe, Latin America, Asia, Oceania, and various other sites. Where you study depends a great deal on what you want to study, and when.

2) **WHAT CAN I STUDY?** Students from every UT major have studied abroad. In general, students in the humanities and social sciences can more readily integrate their programs of study at UT with a study-abroad program. Majors in the natural sciences and engineering are more limited in their choice of programs; however study abroad can usually be arranged for every qualified student with careful advance planning. Internships or field experience study abroad are also attractive for many students.

3) **WHEN?** Most programs require that you have at least sophomore standing. Junior year is generally preferred, as it is the time after a student has declared a major, begun work in it, and completed the majority of the core requirements. The student then returns to campus as a senior to finish the major and tie the four-year education together in a meaningful way. The senior year is often better for those students who have not chosen a major until the junior year, have changed majors, or have developed a new academic interest after the sophomore year.

4) **WHICH PROGRAM?** Study abroad programs at UT take a number of different forms. The four (4) basic types are as follows:

a) **Short-term, faculty-led programs:** UT sponsors various short-term, faculty-led programs that take place during the spring break or in the summer. Some of these are an extension of coursework carried out in the classroom. Past faculty-led programs included the following: ESTO Spanish Program to Toledo (Spain), the Japan Study Tour, the Tropical Ecology Field-Study Program to Atenas (Costa Rica), the Art History Program to Italy and France, the European Business Experience (to various locations in Central Europe), the Asian Business Program to Malaysia and Singapore or to Japan and Korea, and the London Theatre Program in England.

b) **Direct-exchange programs:** UT has three (3) active direct-exchange programs; two are in England and the third is in Germany. One advantage of the direct-exchange programs is that UT students pay tuition and fees to their home institution. The exchanges also provide an opportunity for students from the host institutions to study at UT.

- The Saiford-Exchange Program in England primarily attracts pre-med students, and can accommodate students in other fields of study as well.
- The University of Hertfordshire in England has usually attracted students majoring in the Environmental Sciences--this program, too, can support students in other fields of study.
- The Tübingen Program in Germany, students need an advanced level of German because, just as with the other exchanges, students directly enroll in classes with the host-country students.

c) **University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC) Programs:** UT is a key-member institution of USAC, a consortium made up of thirty (30) institutions from around the United States. The consortium sponsors 31 programs in 23 countries around the world. There are two types of programs:

1) **Specialty Programs** located in countries where English is not the official language. In these programs, students enroll in language courses at the appropriate level while also taking courses in other related areas---either in English or in the target language.

2) **Partner Programs** are arranged in countries where English may or not be the primary language of instruction, however there are usually a multitude of courses taught in English. Similar to direct-exchange programs, students are enrolled in classes along with the host-country students. Many of these programs attract a number of international students from countries around the world.

d) **OIC Pooled-Access Programs:** UT is a member institution of the Ohio International Consortium (OIC) whose members are from the 13 public institutions in the United States. All the member institutions have agreed to grant access to students from other institutions in those programs that usually have additional spaces available. Access to these programs is quite similar to participating in UT's own programs.

**NOTE:** Also available to UT students are programs sponsored by so-called third-party providers or sponsored by institutions not connected with UT. These programs tend to be more expensive than those customarily made available to UT students. Some of these programs offer scholarship opportunities, which can be discussed during an interview session. Some of these programs also provide opportunities to study at a site that would otherwise not be available.

## 5. MUST I BE FLUENT IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE?

a. **YES** - If you plan to study in a foreign university, you must know the language of the host country well enough to follow lectures, do reading and research, and take examinations; thus you must be highly proficient in the language.

b. **NO** - Enrollment in many U.S. college-sponsored programs is not based on demonstrated proficiency in the language of the host country. However, be prepared and willing to learn the language while you are there through intensive language courses and daily contact with the people. If at all possible, begin the study of the language before you leave and familiarize yourself with the customs and culture of the target country.

**Note:** The importance of knowing the language of the country is encouraged. Academic, social, and personal integration into the host country are dependent on the ability to communicate and will add to your experience of studying abroad.

6. **SHOULD I GO FOR ONE SEMESTER OR A FULL ACADEMIC YEAR?** Obviously the answer depends on your academic goals, the ability to integrate your study-abroad program with your academic program at UT, and many other factors. However, the majority of students find that a full year (or a combination of summer and fall, or spring and summer) is more beneficial academically, socially, and personally than a shorter period. Consider carefully the advantages of a full year, particularly if your goals include more than a minimum of cultural immersion.

**7. WHERE WILL I LIVE ABROAD?** Programs differ in the types of housing available, but generally, students are accommodated in home stays, student residences, or apartments. Students enrolled in a foreign-language program usually opt to stay with a family in order to achieve maximum cultural integration.

**8. WILL I GET CREDIT FROM UT FOR MY COURSES ABROAD?** Yes, assuming you have carefully planned your program of study and have obtained all necessary approvals.

NOTE: UT will not approve your enrollment in a program for which it will not give credit.

**9. HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?** On average, a year abroad, including round-trip transportation, costs no more than a year at UT, sometimes less. A lot depends on in which country you choose to study, your personal spending habits, and the amount of traveling you do while abroad.

**10. CAN I TAKE MY FINANCIAL AID WITH ME ABROAD?** Full UT financial aid monies may be used on UT-sponsored programs. (See Lisa Hasselschwert in Financial Aid for details.) The Office of Study Abroad offers a Travel Grant and disperses USAC scholarships to eligible students. Other scholarships or types of funding are occasionally available depending on the country or part of the world in which you plan to study or on the length of the program.

NOTE: "Working one's way through college" is not common overseas. Indeed, labor laws in most countries prohibit foreigners from remunerative employment, even on a part-time basis. Do not count on finding a job to help out with your expenses.

**11. WHAT OTHER QUESTIONS SHOULD I BE ASKING MYSELF?** Here are some suggestions that may clarify your thoughts on the kind of study-abroad experience you want; answer the following questions in your head or on a separate sheet or in the space provided:

### **General Consideration Questions**

Why do you want to participate in a study-abroad program? Are you motivated and excited by the prospect of studying in a cross-cultural situation, or are you primarily motivated by the idea of travel away from the UT campus? How carefully have you thought out and sought approval for your plans?

Which aspect of being abroad is most important to you (e.g., type of courses, locale, cultural experience, timing)?

## **Academic Considerations**

What do you want to get out of your experience academically?

Which courses or subjects would you like to study? How do they relate to your major(s) or your UT education in general? What does your academic advisor think of your plans? Do you want to take classes in English or in the local language, or a combination of each?

Do you have specific major/degree requirements or core requirements that must be fulfilled while you are abroad?

Have you taken courses already that have introduced you to the politics, history, and/or culture of the country in which you hope to study?

Do you hope to do an internship or participate in a field-study option while you are abroad – if so, in which area? Have you discussed your plans with your adviser(s)?

Which semester would be best in order to enroll in a study-abroad program? Would it be possible to study for an entire year? Do you only have the opportunity to study in the summer because your major has a rigid structure or because your major requires certification of all courses completed?

How much and which type of academic credit do you hope to earn?

## **Personal Considerations**

Would you prefer living and studying with other Americans, with students of the host country, or with a combination of each?

Have you lived in a big city before? If not, would you feel comfortable living in a big city--- especially overseas?

Do you enjoy working and investigating things through on your own, or do you prefer having someone helping you with frustrating details and complications?

How well do you adjust to new situations? How flexible and adaptable are you? (Base your judgments on past experiences.)

Have you considered your financial situation and whether you could support yourself for a time overseas?

**NOTE:** Your answers to the above questions will help Dr. Pirog to guide you in finding the best possible program for you. Be sure to schedule an appointment with him when you are ready to discuss studying abroad.

**12. WHAT WILL A STUDY-ABROAD EXPERIENCE BE LIKE?** Probably like nothing else you have ever experienced! It is a highly individualized experience, and you will get out of it as much as you are willing to put into it. So, it is really up to you. However, here are a few things that you might encounter:

- You will be expected to be highly motivated in your studies. Intense "academic pressure" is not as common in other pedagogical systems as it is in the U.S.; there will probably be less supervision of your academic work than you are used to here. You will have to learn to become independent, well organized, and self-disciplined in order to do well.
- On the one hand, courses taken abroad are often different from courses here; they are more specialized, and, few, if any, are "survey" courses. There will perhaps be no quizzes, midterms, or term papers, with success in the courses depending on a final paper or a final exam. In a foreign university, you may well be in a lecture hall with 50 to 100 other students. On the other hand, in many U.S. college-sponsored programs, courses will be much like those here at UT.
- In the U.S., we generally take students out of society for four years and place them in what we call a campus. Everything you need is available on campus, and there is no real reason ever to leave it. While abroad, students are usually an integral part of society. In many foreign universities, there is often little of what we call "campus life". Usually the university buildings are in the heart of a city, but scattered over a considerable area and separated from each other by residences, stores, and factories. You may live in one part of the city, attend classes in another part, work in the library somewhere else, and eat your meals in the student dining hall or in a restaurant on the opposite side of the city, or you may opt to cook for yourself in a shared kitchen. Consequently, you will be needed to actively participate in the rigor of everyday city life: public transportation, impersonal attitudes, tourists, etc. So, depending on the program, you should generally expect much less "campus life," fewer clubs, fewer social affairs, fewer organized sports than in the U.S.
- Because the students you encounter abroad are generally products of a more specialized system of education, you will probably find them older and better prepared to meet the academic demands of university life. Most likely they will have begun studying their major subjects earlier than their American counterparts, so, for the most part, expect them to have a much more extensive knowledge of the subject matter. You may also find them more reserved, even among their peers. Furthermore, you will be surprised at how politically knowledgeable the students are about the U.S.

NOTE: It is always a good idea to bone up on your knowledge of current events, especially the (political) issues of the U.S. and those of the host country, before you go abroad.

- Contacts in many societies, particularly in Europe, are not as facile as American social acceptance. For example, the concept of a "friend" is distinct from the concept of an "acquaintance". It often takes many months to make a "friend," but once a friendship is formed, it often lasts a lifetime. If you are "living with a host family," do not expect to be immediately welcomed to the heart of the family like another son or daughter. More typically, your relationship will start off as that between boarder and landlord/landlady. Therein lies the challenge: to make the relationship grow into something more than the formal, distant relationship it will be initially. Especially helpful is the task of learning the "rules of the house" as soon as possible.

- Be prepared to experience some type of cultural adjustment during the first few weeks (or months) of your stay. A typical scenario may be as follows:

You will start out with a great deal of excitement about everything you encounter in your program of study. You will be riding high with enthusiasm. After a while, the novelty will wear off, and you may feel somewhat lonely, frustrated, disappointed, or even homesick. You may begin to complain about everything and everyone; you might rash you had not decided to go overseas and long to be back at UT. [NOTE: Early feelings of inadaptation are perfectly normal and will gradually pass with time.] Slowly, but surely, things will get better; the petty frustrations will tend to disappear, and you will finally figure out who you are, where you are, and why you are there. As you complete your adjustment cycle, you will come to accept differences and then enjoy everything, including the academics, food, drinks, habits, and customs of the host country. When it is time to go home, you may not want to leave, and you will try to figure out how to get back there as soon as possible. You will look back on this time of your life and see how this enrichment experience has .

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR PLANNING.

FOR ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CONTACT STUDY ABROAD DIRECTOR DR. RON PIROG OR THE OFFICE STAFF.  
WE WILL BE HAPPY TO ASSIST YOU!!

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*Working to Support and Enhance Your Academic Journey*