



Study Abroad Policies

Eligibility

- You must have a formally declared major.
- You may not be on academic or social probation during the semester in which you apply for study abroad.
- You must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.
- You must meet the minimum requirements of the proposed program.
- Your IWU account must not be in arrears.

General Policies

- All students seeking to study abroad must meet with the director of the International Office. Neither credit nor financial aid will be granted if you skip the IWU application and attempt to enroll directly in a study abroad program.
- If your program of choice is not affiliated with IWU, you must submit a petition to the International Office outlining compelling academic reasons for selecting the program. Letters of support from your advisor and department chair must also be submitted. See the International Office for petition guidelines. This rule applies to any study abroad program taken for IWU credit, including summer programs.
- You may not study abroad in any location under a U.S. State Department Travel Warning. For a current listing, visit www.travel.state.gov.
- You must participate in the IWU predeparture orientation program. If you miss orientation, approval to study off-campus will be rescinded.
- IWU will award credit for a maximum of two semesters of study abroad plus a summer program. Transfer students may be limited to earning fewer credits abroad.
- IWU financial aid may be applied to one semester of study abroad (with some exceptions).
- Students on F-1 and J-1 visas are restricted from studying abroad in their home country.

Registration & Academic Issues

Courses and Course Load

As part of the application process, you are required to complete a Course Approval Form, which pre-approves your course selections for IWU credit. When approval is granted for your study abroad courses, the approval is for the *specific* course of study listed on your Course Approval Form. This means that once you are abroad, ***you are expected to take the course of study outlined in your proposal.*** If you must change courses for valid academic reasons (e.g., scheduling conflicts or course availability issues), you must contact the International Office immediately; they will help you request the necessary IWU approval of those changes.

You are required to carry a full-time load of coursework (i.e., no less than 3 course units or 12–18 semester hours) on your off-campus study program. If you are eligible to receive an Illinois State Monetary Award, you must enroll for no less than 4 course units of credit to receive the maximum award. Participation in an off-campus study program precludes simultaneous registration for IWU coursework (e.g., independent study, internships, etc.).

Examinations

If you are enrolled at a foreign university, *you must sit at the regularly scheduled times for all examinations that are required of you*, including those given at the end of individual academic terms and, if you are on an academic year program, any comprehensive exams that are given at the end of the academic year. Failure to do so may result in a failing grade.

Credits and Grades

IWU does not allow students to take their study abroad coursework on a credit/no credit basis. For programs with standing affiliation agreements with IWU, all coursework from a semester or academic year off-campus study program will be reflected as IWU credit on your IWU transcript, including failed courses. *All grades are factored into your IWU cumulative grade point average.* Your off-campus study program must report all credit earned.

Credit from programs that do not have standing affiliations with IWU will not be awarded unless you successfully petition to study abroad on a non-affiliated program during the semester prior to your proposed term of study. Once permission is granted, credit will be awarded and *the grades will be factored into your IWU cumulative grade point average.*

Upper- and lower-division credit is determined by the teaching institution. (Courses taken at a British or Australian institution are usually upper-division if they are classified as second or third year classes; first year classes constitute lower-division course work.) The International Office determines whether upper-division credit will be awarded and records this on your Course Approval Form.

The amount of credit awarded is determined by the teaching institution. A course unit at IWU is defined as the equivalent of 4 semester hours. Therefore, a course awarded 3 semester hours of credit by the teaching institution or the credit-granting institution earns the equivalent of 0.75 IWU course units.

A common course load in study abroad is 15 semester hours, which will transfer back as 3.75 IWU units (as opposed to the 4.0 units you would normally earn on campus). *You are responsible to keeping track of the credits you earn abroad* and for ensuring you have the required number of courses and units to graduate.

Applying Credit to Degree Requirements

Credit earned through off-campus study is degree credit for graduation, but this does *not* guarantee that it may be applied towards General Education, major, or minor requirements. As part of the course approval process, you are required to consult with the appropriate department chair/program director or the director of General Education to determine how your off-campus study credit will apply towards your degree program. You must complete the Course Approval Form, obtain the signatures of relevant department chairs and/or the director of the General Education program, and return it to the International Office by the published deadline.

It is the prerogative of each department or program at IWU to determine whether or not to apply credit from off-campus study toward its requirements. Not all coursework is necessarily approved in advance; departments may require evaluation of certain courses upon your return from the program. It is always a good idea to return to IWU with copies of all course syllabi, reading lists, papers, and exams from off-campus study.

A course must carry at least 3 semester hours/0.75 units of credit to fulfill a major, minor, or General Education requirement.

Transfer students

If you entered IWU as a second-semester sophomore, you may receive a maximum of 4 course units for off-campus study. If you entered as a first-semester junior, you may only earn credit for approved May Term or summer study abroad. Appeals may be submitted to the International Office only with compelling evidence of academic necessity.

Cost & Billing

The actual cost of studying abroad will depend on the location and on the program with which you study. There are some fixed costs, however, that you can readily compare. Foremost among these will be the costs for *tuition, room, and board*.

IWU has a home-school tuition policy, which means that study abroad students pay IWU tuition or the program tuition, whichever is higher. Study abroad students do not, however, pay IWU room and board; instead, students are responsible for the room and board costs of the program and will receive a separate bill from the program for those charges. Exceptions to this policy are the IWU London and IWU Madrid programs, which are billed entirely by IWU.

Program sponsors and/or the International Office can help you estimate costs when you are comparing off-campus study programs. It is your responsibility to monitor any potential cost differential between on-campus and off-campus study and to select a program appropriate to your budgetary constraints.

Financial Aid

According to the Higher Education Act of 1965, federal financial aid can be applied to study abroad if you are registered as a full-time student and if you will receive course credit for your study abroad. Both federal and state sources may be applied to up to a year of study abroad.

IWU financial aid, with the exception of work-study jobs, may be applied to one semester abroad through an approved study abroad program. Exceptions to the policy are granted for study abroad programs that do not offer a semester option (e.g., the London School of

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Financial Aid (continued)

Economics or the Pembroke Program) and for participants in the IWU London and IWU Madrid programs. Students on these programs may use their institutional aid to study abroad for a second semester.

Additional aid is available for study abroad. All IWU students, as part of the study abroad application process, are required to submit a Study Abroad Financial Aid form to the Financial Aid Office. That office will then evaluate your financial need as compared with the estimated cost of your study abroad program and you may then become eligible for additional loans or a study abroad grant. In addition, study abroad scholarships are available from our affiliated study abroad programs and other external sources.

If a student wishes to receive financial aid for additional study abroad experiences beyond the exceptions outlined above, he or she may submit an appeal. This appeal must outline compelling academic reasons for participation in a second semester abroad. The appeal must be submitted to the director of the International Office, who will forward it to the appropriate committee.

Once a student initiates an appeal for an additional experience, any University grant or scholarship money the student is receiving will be suspended for the semester in question until a decision is made regarding the appeal. If the appeal is approved, the grant money will be restored for that semester, and if the appeal is denied, no change will be necessary. Additionally, if the student's appeal is denied and the student decides not to study abroad, the grant or scholarship money will be restored.

Important Dates and Deadlines

IWU Study Abroad and Program applications are due to the International Office by the following dates:

October 1 — For Spring study abroad

March 1 — For Fall, Academic Year, and Summer study abroad

NOTE: The IWU London, IWU Madrid, and Pembroke programs and some affiliated programs have earlier deadlines.

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