An Academic Advisor’s Guide to Study Abroad

Topics Include:

- Academic Advising for Study Abroad
- Course Approval
- Registration
- Grades
- Resources

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Foreword

You are an important part of your student’s study abroad team! Your primary role is at the start of the planning process when you discuss degree requirements with your student. Specifically, determine the courses s/he has yet to take at Purdue and decide which of these could be replaced by appropriate overseas equivalents. This way, the student and the Study Abroad Advisor can make an informed decision about the most suitable study abroad program.

The Study Abroad Office staff and an equally dedicated group of Study Abroad Liaisons will take over and make sure your student has a productive and life-changing experience while still making progress toward his or her academic program.

You may find it rewarding to strategize with your student to use the time overseas as a springboard for future academic or career plans. Additionally, you can discuss what your student can do to further enrich his or her academic interests during their time abroad.

This guide outlines the typical study abroad process and your expected role. Because programs vary in their admission requirements, students vary in their abilities, personal situation, and objectives, and local and international events also impact even the best laid plans, one student’s path will be different from another’s. Just the same, here’s how you can handle the moment when your advisee says, ‘I want to study abroad.’

Academic Advising for Study Abroad

When a student initially consults a Study Abroad Advisor, the Study Abroad Advisor will always inquire if the student has already spoken with you. In particular, the Study Abroad Advisor wants to know if (a) you are aware that the student is interested in studying abroad, and (b) if you have given the student any instructions or information that will affect his or her choice of program.

Purdue offers over 400 study abroad programs in about 50 countries. There are summer, semester, academic year, and short-term departmental programs. With that, you can see why a Study Abroad Advisor has to have an idea of what the students can or should take abroad in order to help them narrow their options. Thus, we ask students to discuss study abroad plans with you first so we can recommend programs that will meet their academic objectives.

The study abroad discussion you have with your student typically involves the following:

- Assess his or her academic progress: how many credits does the student have under his or her belt, when does the student expect to graduate, and what are the remaining requirements on his or her plan of study?

- Determine which of these remaining courses can be taken abroad, i.e., you could generate a list of specific courses or categories of courses which can be replaced by courses from an overseas program.

- Discuss academic or departmental matters that may affect study abroad plans. Knowing these constraints and relevant factors will help the student and the Study Abroad Advisor when considering program options.

  - Does your student’s academic program have any restrictions?
    
    For example, does the academic program involve sequential courses which make a semester study abroad program in the junior or senior year challenging? If this is the case, then suggesting your student study abroad in his or her sophomore year or during the summer is ideal.

  - Is there an opportune time to study abroad?
    
    For example, are your majors required to take courses that are only offered at the beginning of their junior year? Will your students need to be on campus when they begin developing their senior projects? If so, then come up with a plan of study in which studying abroad should be completed no later than the spring term of the sophomore year.

  - Does your department recommend or have a preferred list of programs?
    
    If your department has a list of Preferred Study Abroad Programs, then by all means, share this with the student.
Academic Advising for Study Abroad (cont’d)

- Are there departmental programs that you should be promoting among students?

_In all likelihood, you know about your department’s faculty-led programs but the students may not._

In addition to assisting a student with his or her plan of study, there are other ways you can encourage your students to ensure a successful experience abroad:

- Encourage your student to take courses that are culture- or location-specific so he or she can have a better understanding and appreciation of their host country.
- Suggest that your student take courses not available at Purdue, but which are pertinent to his or her degree program.
- Discuss courses that will help with graduate school plans or courses that will give the student a greater degree of expertise in his or her chosen field and impress potential future employers.
- You and your student can also plot a strategy for how the upcoming international experience will pay off when the student starts interviewing for jobs or applying to graduate school.

**STUDY ABROAD FAIR**

Encourage your students to attend the annual Study Abroad Fair held in the first weeks of the fall semester. They can get information on all available programs as well as speak with leaders of departmental programs, program provider representatives, exchange students, and Purdue students who have gone on study abroad programs in previous terms.

Studying abroad and your involvement in your student’s plan can leave a lasting impact on his or her life. Long after your student has graduated from Purdue, you will be most likely remembered not only as the academic advisor but also as the person who steered him or her to success for life after Purdue.

**Course Approval**

Applying to study abroad is a two-step process. Once your student has selected a program, he or she must first apply to that program and submit supporting documents (via the Purdue Study Abroad website).

If the student is approved to participate by the Purdue Study Abroad Office, s/he apply formally to the host institution with the assistance of their Study Abroad Advisor. While waiting for acceptance by the host institution, the student completes mandatory pre-departure tasks like attending the orientation program, completing required forms, and securing course approvals.

**Obtaining Course Approval**

By the time a student applies and is accepted to a study abroad program, s/he should have a pretty good idea of the courses that are available at the study site, the courses he or she will/can/wants to enroll in, and the degree requirements these courses fulfill (major, minor, elective, general education).

Shortly after a student is accepted to the Purdue study abroad program, s/he has to start finalizing a plan of study. Your student will most likely consult you about a tentative study plan.

You and the student can tentatively select overseas courses that seem to be suitable replacements for the Purdue courses on his or her list.

While the student will consult you about his or her plans to study abroad and will work out a tentative list of study abroad courses with you, it is the responsibility of the Study Abroad Liaison to designate Purdue course equivalencies for overseas coursework.
Study Abroad Liaisons cannot approve courses outside of their area of expertise. Thus, a Management major who wants to take an Accounting or a Business course abroad will consult the KRAN Study Abroad Liaison. The latter however, cannot approve the History or Literature course the student also wants to take. For these subjects, the student will have to see the CLA Study Abroad Liaison.

If the student has already determined the courses he or she wishes to take, or if the program in which the student is participating offers a finite set of mandatory courses, then the Study Abroad Liaison will simply designate the appropriate Purdue equivalents for the courses. In many cases, the Study Abroad Liaison’s primary task is to help the student finalize the study plan by recommending courses that are suitable replacements for his or her Purdue degree requirements. If the study abroad program has an extensive list of course offerings, it is not unusual for Study Abroad Liaisons to recommend two or even three courses as suitable substitutes for one Purdue course.

Before meeting with their Study Abroad Liaison, students should be ready to discuss their study abroad program, the Purdue requirements they hope to complete abroad, and the courses offered by the study abroad program. We recommend that students bring copies of the course descriptions/syllabi for the courses they wish to take or bring their laptop to the meeting so they can easily access the course list from the program website.

AS OF SPRING 2017, students simply upload their completed, signed Course Approval forms to their My Study Abroad page.

**Changes to Course Approval While Abroad**

In some cases, students discover that a few of the approved courses on their list have been cancelled forcing them to seek approval for additional courses. More commonly, a student finds courses they think are more interesting or useful once they arrive onsite.

If your student finds themselves in this situation, know that he or she can obtain course approval while abroad. The student must do the following:

- Your student must seek written permission from you, as the Academic Advisor, that the course is a suitable alternative.
- After you give the green light, the student contacts the appropriate Study Abroad Liaison to request course approval.
  - Remind your student to copy you and his or her Study Abroad Advisor on the message so everyone is in the loop.
  - Your student should include the title of the course and the course description in the email message. It is even better if a syllabus is available.
  - The student is responsible for uploading their updated Course Approval Form to their My Study Abroad page.

**Pass/ Not Pass**

A Purdue student accepted into a Purdue-approved exchange, cosponsored, or direct enroll study abroad program may choose the P/N option for courses approved for direct credit that are completed overseas. If a student chooses to take one or more courses P/N, s/he must first discuss the matter and secure approval from her/his Academic Advisor. The procedures for this are found on the students My Study Abroad Page. The deadline for submitting the P/ NP form is no later than the 8th week of the study abroad semester or, for shorter programs, prior to 50% of the program’s duration. AS OF SPRING 2017, students simply upload their completed, signed P/NP forms to their My Study Abroad page.

Once the Pass/Not-Pass Approval Form is signed and submitted to the Study Abroad Office, a P/N grade will be recorded on the Purdue transcript for the applicable coursework, and no student will be permitted to reverse this.

**WHAT IS A STUDY ABROAD LIAISON?**

Study Abroad Liaisons are faculty members or advisors who help students determine the Purdue equivalents to the courses they wish to take abroad within their academic area. Please note, in many cases, the Academic Advisor is also the Study Abroad Liaison for the area in which the student wishes to take courses.
Registration

Registering for Study Abroad

A student remains enrolled at Purdue for the duration of the time he or she is studying abroad. This ensures that students will receive Purdue credits for courses taken at the host institution and that they can apply financial aid to their study abroad program. It is imperative that students know the procedure for registration to avoid any problems.

Study abroad registration involves the following steps:

- Before his or her scheduled time ticket, the student receives the PIN from his or her Academic Advisor.
- Students receive an email reminder from the Study Abroad Office when it is time to register. At this time, the student accesses his or her My Purdue page and proceeds with the normal registration procedure. From the drop-down Subject menu, the student chooses “Study Abroad.” Under “Course Number,” the student types in the dedicated SA number for his or her study abroad program.
- If there are multiple listings under the SA number for the program, each with a different CRN number, the student should check each program date. The student selects the listing with the dates that correspond to the program in which s/he is participating. The student then completes the rest of the registration procedure.
- This SA number is simply a holding number and will remain on the student’s Purdue academic record until his or her study abroad grades are posted.
- The SA number and the grade of ‘S’ on the academic record will be replaced by specific Purdue course equivalents, credits, and grades after the Study Abroad Office receives the official transcript from the host institution at the end of the student’s program.
- The student confirms his or her Purdue registration. After registering, a tuition invoice from the Purdue Bursar will be posted on the student’s My Purdue page.

If a student’s registration is cancelled, he or she will need to pay a late fee before being reinstated.

NOTE: This section describes Purdue’s registration system only. The host university or study abroad program will have its own registration process. The student will receive registration instructions in the acceptance materials from the host institution. The student must be registered at both Purdue and the overseas program.

Grades

Assessments

Students are required to take all examinations and complete all course requirements at the host university. Under no circumstances may students shorten the length of their program by making special arrangements with overseas professors or program coordinators — unless the host university has a policy of accommodating students who need to return to their home university before the official end of the semester. Otherwise, only illness or a dire family emergency, with accompanying evidence of a health official, is considered a legitimate excuse for missing a final examination. No incompletes are permitted for overseas courses. Students must make every effort to fulfill all course requirements before they leave the host institution.
Grading

Grades and credits for all courses that appear on the host university or co-sponsored program transcript will be posted to the student’s Purdue academic record.

Grades earned overseas are converted to Purdue letter grades using nationally-recognized scales provided by WES (World Education Services). These scales are not a mere adaptation to the U.S. grading system but are designed to match the spirit of the host country grading system in comparison to the U.S. system. The same variation that occurs between the differing demands of professors at Purdue University is likely to occur with professors abroad. Purdue Study Abroad does not make adjustments to grades from overseas transcripts.

Students enrolled in courses that have not been approved by the corresponding Purdue college, school, or department will receive P/NP for their overseas coursework.

Students who fail to submit a completed Course Approval form prior to their program will need to do so in order to receive credit for their overseas coursework. Failing to submit a Course Approval form or P/NP form greatly delays grade posting to their Purdue transcript.

Resources

Link to Study Abroad Liaison List

Pass/Not Pass Form
Course Approval Form

Programs for Study Abroad Course Approval Form

Steps to Securing Course Approval

Step 1: Examine the courses offered by your study abroad program to determine if they meet your academic needs. Obtain course descriptions or the syllabus if these are available on the program’s website. Check the semester availability and suitability of courses as appropriate substitutes for your Purdue requirements.

Step 2: Discuss your study abroad plans with your Academic Advisor. Make a list of specific courses (SPAN 214: Spanish Literature or MGMT 201: Accounting) or categories of courses (gender studies, technical electives, international electives, professional electives, etc.) that you can or should take abroad.

Questions to ask your Academic Advisor:

- What degree requirements do I have left to complete?
- What particular courses at Purdue do you recommend to take abroad?
- Do I have majors that I should take abroad?
- I am participating in a research program, in any field or topic, is there anything that I should do to prepare for this in my coursework list, what else do you recommend?
- I have left to finish my major electives, what course do you recommend taking abroad?

Step 3: On or around your academic advisor’s recommendation of specific courses, seem to match your degree requirements.

Step 4: Schedule an appointment with Study Abroad Liaison to discuss your course selections and obtain approval. Bring the list of course courses you intend to take abroad, the descriptions or syllabus of the overseas courses, and your Course Approval Form. This form can be downloaded from your My Study Abroad page

NOTE: Do Step 4 as early as possible since liaisons’ schedules sometimes fill several weeks in advance.

Questions to ask the study abroad academic liaison:

- I have copies of course descriptions for courses I am considering taking abroad. Do these courses meet any of the degree requirements my academic advisor and I listed?
- What should I do if I get abroad and can’t take these classes? What are some backup course options? May I email you for guidance in making alternate choices?
- Do I need to do follow up with you when I return from studying abroad? Should I bring anything back with me?

Step 5: You are responsible for returning the completed and signed form to the Study Abroad Office. The form should be uploaded to your My Study Abroad page. Keep dated copies of all correspondence with the Study Abroad Liaison and your Academic Advisor, as well as copies of the completed forms.

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<th>STUDY ABROAD COURSE</th>
<th>EQUIVALENT PURDUE COURSE</th>
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I acknowledge that I have examined the course content of the overseas courses(s); the student wishes to take abroad and have approved the appropriate Purdue course equivalent(s) listed above.

Study Abroad Liaison (Name in Print)  Date  Academic Advisor (Name in Print)  Date

Study Abroad Liaison (Signature)  Academic Advisor (Signature)

Notes to Study Abroad Office:

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