

Faculty Advisor Information on Education Abroad

International Studies Office

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The third priority of the University of Virginia's strategy to meet the needs of the 21st century calls for a focus on global education. From the Commission on the Future of the University: "In this new global century, regional and national aspirations are insufficient. The inter-connectedness of nations and economies demands that we prepare students for work, life, and leadership on a global scale."

Education abroad can provide powerful learning experiences, which are crucial in preparing students for the realities of an inter-connected world. The University has identified intended learning outcomes of education abroad, which are used to inform best practices in program development and administration. Education abroad contextualizes intellectual discourse by creating dynamic interactions between the learners and the learning environment and exposing students to different peoples, their cultural values, and their perspectives. Students gain an international perspective on their chosen academic field and develop important life skills, such as critical thinking, independence, flexibility, resilience, and the ability to communicate across differences.

Education abroad programs include a variety of academic environments and may be comprised of classroom-based instruction, internships, practicum, research, and/or field work. Learning opportunities stretch beyond academics as students navigate differences in communication, values, attitudes, and basic daily habits, thus making access to and integration with local communities a vital component of the education abroad experience. A program's academic setting, choice of accommodation, and co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities contribute to students' level of immersion.

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES OFFICE and EDUCATION ABROAD

The [International Studies Office](#) is charged with providing opportunities for UVA students to engage with the world through meaningful academic pursuits and helping students apply their newly gained global perspective to future endeavors. The ISO collaborates with schools and faculty to offer academically rigorous and culturally enriching programs. Advisors offer expertise in educational systems around the world, education abroad programs for U.S. students, and international living. Education Abroad staff advise students through goal setting and appropriate program selection, guide them through logistical arrangements, prepare them for cultural and educational adjustment, and maintain records of student participation.

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Stacey Hansen	Senior Education Abroad Advisor and Operations Coordinator
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Education Abroad Advisors

Ryan Hathaway	Asia; McIntire programs
Abby Leake	Russia and NIS, Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, Continental Western Europe (EXCEPT Spain, Portugal, and Francophone countries); SEAS programs
Kathleen McLaren-Hawking	United Kingdom, Ireland, Semester at Sea; Batten programs
Martha Sadler	Francophone Europe (France, Belgium, Switzerland), Canada, Central and South America, Mexico, Caribbean, Multi-Country; Curry programs
Margaret Walter	Africa, the Middle East (including Turkey), Australia, New Zealand; SARC programs
Liz Wellbeloved-Stone	Spain, Portugal; SON programs

ACADEMIC ADVISING and EDUCATION ABROAD

ENCOURAGE: Academic advisors can significantly impact students' intentions to study abroad. During their first year, ask your advisees about their plans—not if, but rather when and how—to incorporate an international experience into the degree. Discuss the benefits of international experience for the discipline in which he or she is interested. Direct your advisees to events such as the Study Abroad Fair to whet their appetites, and resources including the [Education Abroad Workshop](#) and the [Education Abroad website](#) to learn more. The ISO is also happy to visit your classes or hold information sessions about education abroad.

PLANNING: Academic advisors play a key role in helping students plan their education abroad. Developed in close collaboration with the department, a [Major Advising Sheet](#)* is a useful tool for advisors and students as it serves as a starting point for students to find programs with strong curricular matches with the majors through course equivalencies and/or by providing courses that are not offered on Grounds. Discuss degree requirements, academic policies, and course offerings to determine which program and courses would be of particular benefit to the student. The ISO encourages students to plan **early** and meet with their academic advisor to make informed decisions. Please also encourage students to meet with an Education Abroad Advisor if they have not already done so.

*If there is not yet one listed for your department and you are interested in working with the ISO to create one, please contact studyabroad@virginia.edu.

WHILE ABROAD: Students **should not** enroll in classes on-Grounds for the semester(s) they plan to be abroad; students may self-enroll in Summer Session on-Grounds if the course dates do not conflict with their program. Students may reach out to you regarding changes to his or her course selection while abroad, or academic advising for the following term on-Grounds.

UPON RETURN: When advising students who have returned from abroad, discuss ways to incorporate what they learned into on-Grounds coursework; draw connections between their experiences abroad and their academic and future career endeavors. Additionally, many students experience challenges readjusting to the U.S. and UVA when returning from abroad, particularly after a semester or year away. In more severe cases, students should be directed to CAPS. Whether or not students are having difficulties upon return, encourage them to contact the ISO Education Abroad Team, attend reentry programs, and take advantage of opportunities to share their experience with others. For example, students can take part in [C.O.R.E \(Cultural Orientation, Reflection, and Engagement\)](#) seminars for returnees, attend a [Lessons From Abroad Returnee Conference](#) and apply to be an [Intern](#) in the ISO.

Common student concerns about going abroad

While the benefits of international experience abound, student also have concerns. Should any concern arise with your advisees, please direct them to the following resources and encourage them to meet with an [Education Abroad Advisor](#).

- **Finances.** We generally find semester study abroad to be more affordable than shorter term opportunities. The [cost of education abroad](#) depends on the program, its location, the currency exchange rate, and the timing/term of study abroad. [Financial aid](#) can be used for study abroad and [additional financial resources](#) are available.
- **Graduating on-time.** All courses taken abroad must be pre-approved; students know how their courses from abroad will apply to degree requirements before committing to participating. Use the [Major Advising Sheet](#) to identify programs and plan early.
- **Language skills.** Opportunities are available for students at any level of language. There are numerous programs that allow students to take coursework in English, even in non-English speaking countries, while learning the local language at a beginner level.
- **Missing out on life at UVA** Encourage students to think about what they may gain by engaging with people, places, and knowledge outside of Charlottesville. To be *more* than a tourist in another country is priceless.

STUDENT STEPS for EDUCATION ABROAD

Successful education abroad experiences begin with early planning. In order to participate in education abroad, students should:

- Complete the [online Education Abroad Workshop](#) and quiz
- Define goals based on academic and personal needs
- Apply for or renew their passport
- [Research programs](#) online
- Identify their budget and financial resources
- Discuss intended plans and the department's education abroad policy with an Academic Advisor
- Consider the program's or institution's course offerings and how they might integrate with the student's degree requirements
- Meet with an [Education Abroad Advisor](#) to discuss academic and personal goals for their sojourn and identify a program that best supports these goals
- Discuss program choice with parents, Academic Advisor/Dean, and Financial Aid Advisor
- Complete the UVA Education Abroad Application on the ISO website by the appropriate deadline. Some programs may have additional application requirements and procedures.
- Attend/participate in preparatory activities (orientation).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The UVA Education Abroad Learning Outcomes Assessment identified five over-arching learning outcomes of education abroad, which the ISO uses to inform best practices in program development and administration.

- Students apply their knowledge to create a global frame of reference in their response to situations and events.
- Students understand, respect, and appreciate cultural differences.
- Students demonstrate understanding of themselves and their ability to cope and adapt.
- Students apply their knowledge of intercultural communication to adapt to a different culture and to interact effectively with those from a different culture or cultural background.
- Students seek out opportunities for engagement.