

Education Abroad Workshop Transcript

Slide 1: UVA Education Abroad

Welcome to the Education Abroad Workshop for UVA students. Please use the links provided throughout the workshop to familiarize yourself with tools that will help you as you move forward.

If you're a non-UVA student interested in participating in a UVA study abroad program, we encourage you to review the non-UVA student webpage instead.

Slide 2: What is Education Abroad?

"Education Abroad" is defined as an educational experience, whether traditional or experiential, that occurs outside the borders of the US. Education abroad encompasses study abroad programs that offer academic coursework for credit; academic internships that provide insight into a host country's workplace culture; service-learning opportunities that combine experiential and academic learning; and international research utilizing resources unique to the host country.

UVA students who study abroad achieve a broad range of educational goals and add value to their degrees. They learn with world-renowned experts in their fields, like political scientists and economists studying the European Union at Oxford University or the London School of Economics. They conduct hands-on research that would be difficult to pursue on Grounds, such as polar biology in Denmark and Norway or peacebuilding in Rwanda. And they enhance their career preparedness by pursuing internships in fields like quantum optics in São Paulo, Brazil, or commercial real estate in Singapore.

Slide 3: Overview

This presentation will provide an overview of the steps involved in preparing to study abroad. We will review resources for planning and researching programs, and discuss the application process. Finally, we will highlight important additional information to be aware of as you prepare to go abroad.

Be mindful that the steps discussed in this presentation may not always be linear. They should be part of an ongoing conversation between you, your academic advisor, your education abroad advisor, and your family.

Slide 4: Plan for Your Experience

Taking time to reflect on the type of experience you wish to have is important, so that you can make an intentional decision about which program will best fit your needs and goals.

Slide 5: Assess Your Academic Needs

The first question to ask yourself is: what are your academic goals? How will studying abroad assist you in achieving them? Do you want to study within your major or minor, or branch out into a new discipline? (If you haven't already declared your major, that's okay!)

Do you want to learn a new language or pursue a particular project? What do you want to be able to do, understand, and know more about after your experience abroad?

It's equally important to envision yourself in your new educational setting. Do you picture yourself in a traditional program where you'll be in a classroom attending lectures, or an experiential environment where you'll learn by doing? Do you want to be able to pursue field work or an internship? How will the learning environment contribute to achieving your goals?

You should also think about the role a second language will play. Do you want to go abroad to improve your proficiency in a language, or would you like to learn a new language? Remember that it is also possible to take courses in English even in countries where English is not the first language.

Another factor to consider is the duration of the program, which will affect the level of cultural immersion you'll be able to experience. UVA offers programs with lengths varying from a semester or academic year, to several weeks in the January and summer terms. UVA students are encouraged to study abroad for a full semester or year.

Slide 6: Discuss plans with your academic advisor.

While in the planning phase, we encourage you to speak with your academic advisor. If you have already declared a major or minor, make sure you understand departmental requirements and policies regarding study abroad, including any restrictions related to transfer credit. Your academic advisor can assist you in identifying courses to take abroad that will complement your UVA coursework.

The International Studies Office has worked with many departments to develop major advising resources. This is a great place for you to begin exploring which programs may be the right academic fit. Not every major has major-specific information yet, so you should also use the Education Abroad program search to find programs in your field of study. To review information for specific majors, use the link on the homepage of the Education Abroad website.

If you plan to conduct research abroad, contact the Institutional Review Board (also known as the IRB) to ensure that your research complies with University and federal regulations for ethical research with human subjects.

Slide 7: Types of Credit

All approved study abroad programs award credit toward your UVA degree, although the type of credit varies. Direct credit courses are those that are "owned" by and accredited through UVA and are listed in the SIS course catalog. Transfer credits are accredited through another institution and can also be used to satisfy UVA requirements.

Slide 8: Understanding Academic Requirements

Both direct and transfer credits count toward graduation, and can count toward major, minor, elective and language requirements.

While direct credit courses factor into your UVA GPA, transfer credit will not affect your GPA. Please refer to your school or department's specific policy regarding transfer credit and speak with your academic advisor to ensure that you are on track to meet all requirements. Students in the College of Arts and Sciences should be aware that transfer credits cannot be counted toward area requirements for the College.

To find out what type of credit you will be awarded for a specific program, refer to the informational fact sheet on the program's page on our website. You are required to obtain pre-approval for any courses you will take on a transfer credit program. We will discuss the transfer credit approval process in more detail later in the workshop.

Graduate students interested in pursuing an opportunity abroad should speak with their advisor to discuss academic requirements. Regulations and processes for awarding transfer credit may vary.

Slide 9: Assess Your Personal Needs

When choosing a program, it's important to consider your personal needs and goals, knowing that they will intersect with the achievement of your academic goals.

For example, think about the level of immersion and independence you would like to experience while abroad. Immersion is the level of interaction that you will have with host nationals and the local culture. Do you want to take courses with other American students studying abroad, or do you want to study alongside locals? Would you prefer to explore the new culture on your own, or would you rather have a program that will provide you with structured guidance?

Consider your housing preferences. There are many options, including: living with a host family, living in a university residence hall, or living in a shared apartment. If you want to improve your language proficiency, consider living with a host family or in a residence hall with host country nationals.

Don't forget about your own personal goals and interests. How do you see your education abroad experience fitting into other personal and career goals that you have set for yourself? Talk to the UVA Career Center about how the skills you hope to develop abroad correlate with your career planning.

And of course, cost is a very important factor. We will touch on finances a little later.

Slide 10: Identity and Access Abroad

Identity is a critical part of the conversation when you are assessing your options for study abroad. As you consider how your identity informs the pathways that you're interested in, review the Your Identity section of our website for advice and additional resources to keep in mind.

Students with disabilities, or who receive accommodations at UVA, can and do study abroad! Refer to the *Access Abroad and Students with Disabilities* section of the Identity Abroad webpage for detailed information on how to get started. Speak with both the Student Disability Access Center and an Education Abroad Advisor in order to learn what services are available and to request accommodations.

Slide 11: UVA Eligibility

As you begin to plan, consider eligibility requirements both from UVA and the program that you hope to apply to. UVA requires that students are cleared by Student Affairs, that they are not on academic probation, and that they are enrolled full-time. UVA students studying abroad must have a minimum GPA of 2.5. Students who wish to study abroad during their fourth year, other than on a J-Term program, must also receive special permission.

If you do not meet these eligibility criteria, study abroad may still be possible! You will need to petition your Association Dean in the College, or the appropriate individual in your School, for permission to study abroad. Contact your Association Dean or School for more information on the petition process. These approvals can take time, so start your petition as soon as you begin your application.

Slide 12: Program Eligibility

Be aware that individual programs may have different eligibility requirements from UVA. Review the online brochure to determine a specific program's eligibility criteria. GPA requirements may be higher, and there may also be language, class status, and pre-requisite course requirements. Some, but not all, programs are open to graduate students.

On this example from UVA in Valencia, you can see that it's open to all years of students; that it has a 1000-level language prerequisite; and that the minimum GPA requirement is a 2.5.

Slide 13: Program Options

UVA programs are developed and directed by UVA faculty. The level of immersion on a UVA program can vary widely: from taking courses exclusively with other UVA students, to taking courses at a partner university with local students. While participants are predominantly from UVA, students from other colleges and universities may also apply. UVA programs are offered during the semester, academic year, January, and summer terms. Some UVA programs focus on a specific subject, such as UVA in Sweden: Global Sustainability Consulting. Others have broader academic offerings, like UVA in Lyon or UVA in Valencia.

UVA partners with other institutions to offer additional options. These programs are administered by the partner organization and include students from a variety of universities. UVA provides input on the academic curriculum and coordinates applications for UVA students. They can be identified in our program listing by their names, such as UVA in Italy: Siena (in affiliation with CET).

UVA currently has exchange agreements with over 50 universities around the world. Participating in an exchange allows you to enroll at one of our partner universities alongside local students, offering a high level of immersion and independence. Exchange students continue to pay regular tuition and fees to UVA. If you're interested in an exchange program, research the host university thoroughly, especially the coursework they offer, and schedule an advising appointment early. Examples of exchanges include the National University of Singapore and the University of Queensland.

Outside programs are sponsored by other universities or private companies specializing in education abroad. This category encompasses a wide range of programs, including those that facilitate direct enrollment at a host institution; those where you take classes exclusively with other visiting students; and experiential programs allowing you to do internships, field study, or research. The level of immersion and accommodation options vary widely on these programs, so it's important that you do your research and understand what the experience will look like. Examples of outside programs include the Danish Institute for Study Abroad or DIS, and the School for International Training or SIT.

If you wish to participate in an outside program, you must obtain UVA's approval for participation. You must *both* complete the online UVA application *and* apply directly to the outside program, keeping in mind that the deadlines may be different.

UVA has approved well-established outside programs in diverse geographic locations offering solid academic coursework, strong student services, and cultural experiences.

If you are unable to find an approved program that fits your goals, you may petition to participate in another outside program. Petitions are approved on a case-by-case basis, and are evaluated on criteria such as academic rigor, faculty credentials, student support services, health and safety concerns, and fit for student goals.

Slide 14: Researching Programs

The Education Abroad website is a great place to start researching programs, since it lists all approved programs. You can search by country, region, language of instruction, field of study, and more, and then save programs of interest for further review.

As previously mentioned, the Major Advising Page is a helpful resource as you're exploring programs in your field of study. Remember, though, that they only reflect a sampling of programs! There are likely more options available in your field of study.

The International Studies Office hosts a Study Abroad Fair each semester. The Fair is an ideal occasion to learn more about the various programs offered to UVA students.

To get a student's perspective, talk with the Education Abroad Interns. Our interns have studied, interned, or conducted research abroad. They offer peer advising hours and staff information tables around grounds. Additionally, if you're interested in a specific program or location, use the Returnee Contact List on the home page of the Education Abroad website to find students who studied on the same program or in the same country.

If you're interested in conducting an internship while abroad, make sure to speak with the Global Internships team.

Finally, the websites iiepassport.org and goabroad.com are other places to research outside programs.

Once you've researched your options and identified several programs that meet your goals and interests—or alternatively, you're totally stuck and you could use some help!—you're encouraged to meet with an Education Abroad Advisor. We will go over how to schedule an appointment later in the presentation.

Before we move on, pause the presentation, and take a few minutes to try out some of the research tools mentioned on this slide. Check to see if there is major advising information for your field, and do a test search with our program search tool. You will need a program or two to keep in mind as we move forward to discuss finances.

Slide 15: Cost of Attendance

To find a program that fits your budget, you will first need to compare costs. You can use the Cost Comparison Worksheet on our website to identify and compare costs. Research and collect estimates for expenses that are not included in your program's fees. Remember that when you are abroad, you will likely want to take advantage of cultural activities, excursions, and travel opportunities.

Make sure you include the appropriate UVA fees into your budget.

For UVA programs, costs are posted on the Costs and Finances link on the online program brochure. Outside program costs can be found on the program provider or host institution's website. Exchange programs charge regular UVA tuition

and mandatory fees, and information about other related costs (like housing) is typically available on the host university's website.

Slide 16: UVA Administrative Fees

There are two UVA administrative fees associated with education abroad.

The first is the non-refundable application fee, which is paid as part of your application. Your application will not be considered until this payment is received. Pell Grant recipients are eligible for an application fee waiver. Submit a study abroad application fee waiver form in lieu of the fee.

The second fee is the university's Study Abroad Administrative Fee, which applies to students participating in outside programs. This fee covers services such as advising, pre-departure preparation, transfer credit evaluation, and the repackaging of financial aid. This fee is billed to your Student Account in SIS.

Note that fees are subject to increase per annual review by the Board of Visitors.

Consult the Fact Sheet on your program's page on our website to determine which fees apply. In this example, a student would be responsible for paying the administrative fee as well as the application fee.

Slide 17: Cost Comparison

Now that we've reviewed some of the costs associated with education abroad, you are encouraged to pause this presentation. Open the Cost Comparison Worksheet—found on Slide 15—and refer to the programs you identified during the research exercise. Jot down preliminary cost information for those programs, making sure to note how they would compare to your cost of attendance for the same term here at UVA.

Slide 18: Existing Financial Resources

Determine which of your existing financial resources are available each term. Consider how participating in education abroad in different terms may affect what financial resources you have available. Studying abroad for a semester *replaces* the cost of a semester on Grounds, while going abroad for a summer or January program may add an additional term of costs. So while shorter programs may have a lower sticker price, semester programs can end up being more economical.

The Financial Aid page of the Education Abroad website describes the steps you need to take to use financial aid abroad. The Financial Aid Availability Chart at the right of your screen illustrates the portability of existing financial aid (including loans) for credit-bearing education abroad, and can also be accessed on our website.

If you use a pre-paid tuition plan, such as the Virginia 529, or receive non-UVA Scholarships, consult the plan or scholarship administrator to determine if and how you can use these funds to pay for your chosen program.

Finally, consider your personal and family resources. Are you able to save any money for your time abroad? Is your family able or willing to contribute?

Slide 19: Additional Sources of Funding

You can research and apply for scholarships on the education abroad website. In the Finances section, you will find a page listing scholarships offered by both our office and external groups, as well as search tools to help you further explore potential funding sources. Students who receive federal Pell Grants are strongly encouraged to apply for the Benjamin Gilman Scholarship, which is included in our list of National and International scholarships. Pell Grant recipients are also eligible for a grant from the International Studies Office to cover the cost of a passport application.

You can also discuss financial options with Student Financial Services, who may be able to offer additional funding options, including private loans and Parent Plus Loans.

You are encouraged to work closely with Student Financial Services and your Education Abroad Advisor as you explore additional funding options.

Slide 20: Discuss your plans with your Education Abroad Advisor.

Once you've started to explore your options, you are encouraged to meet with an Education Abroad Advisor. We're always available to answer questions or provide guidance.

Follow the link on the Education Abroad homepage to make an appointment. Find the advisor who specializes in the program or geographic area you're interested in, and click the "request an appointment" link.

On the next page, select "request an appointment" again. Sign in with your Netbadge ID.

Choose "Click to Select an Appointment Time" to see available advising appointments. Schedules may fill up, so plan ahead. If you don't pick a time to meet in this step, you do *not* have an appointment!

Once you've selected a date and time that works, provide your advisor with your year, field of study, goals for study abroad, where you're interested in going, and any other information that you'd like to share about your plans. This information will help us prepare for your appointment.

Click "send" to set your appointment. You'll receive a confirmation email from UVA Education Abroad. Double-check that it includes a date and time. If it doesn't, you will need to go back in to request a time to meet. We look forward to meeting you!

Slide 21: Apply to Study Abroad

Once you have decided on the program that best suits your needs, it's time to apply!

Slide 22: Apply Online

All students who study abroad need to complete an online application on the Education Abroad website. If you plan to apply to an outside program, don't forget that you must also apply through the program provider. Students applying to an exchange program will need to apply to their host university as instructed by their advisor. Be sure to carefully read all application instructions, as you may have additional steps to complete depending on the program.

You can log into the Education Abroad application system using your NetBadge ID and password. Even if you aren't ready to start an application, you can save programs of interest. On your applicant homepage, you will be able to view your applications and the documents you have submitted, and your Education Abroad Advisor will be able to track your progress. You can apply to a maximum of two programs per term.

Application requirements vary by program. Generally, expect to enter basic information about yourself; sign policy documents covering things like financial commitment and conditions of participation; provide short written responses; and submit a completed Transfer Credit Approval Form if you'll be earning transfer credit. You will be able to submit most requirements yourself, but some will need to be uploaded and reviewed, or submitted to the International Studies Office to be checked off.

Application deadlines depend on the program. Most will be the semester before you plan to study abroad. For example, if you hope to study abroad in the spring of your third year, your application deadline will likely be in the fall of your third year. However, a handful of programs have earlier deadlines, some even a year in advance.

Slide 23: Transfer Credit Approval

If you participate in a program for which you will receive transfer credit, you need to secure pre-approval for the courses you plan to take. You will complete the transfer credit approval process as part of your UVA application.

You can download the transfer credit approval form, which includes step-by-step instructions, directly from your application. Once completed, submit it to the International Studies Office.

Visit the Academic Considerations page on the Education Abroad website to learn more about transfer credit.

Although the grades you receive for transfer credit will not appear on your UVA transcript, you must earn a minimum grade for the credits to transfer. Your study abroad transcript is part of your permanent academic record, and may be required for any future graduate school applications.

Once you've completed your program, bear in mind that it can take up to three months—or even longer—for your transfer credit to appear on your UVA record.

Slide 24: Getting Accepted

When you have completed your UVA study abroad application, your Education Abroad Advisor will review your materials and ensure that you meet UVA's eligibility requirements.

Once your application has been reviewed, you will receive an email stating that your status has changed. Log into your application to view your status. Your application may be accepted, approved, waitlisted, or not accepted. Read the instructions in your application carefully—they will explain your next steps.

Remember, if you are applying to an exchange or an outside program, you will also need to apply to the provider or host university. Their deadlines may be different from UVA's.

Slide 25: Commit to Participating

If you have been accepted or approved to participate in an education abroad program, you will need to decide whether you want to participate. When you log on to your application, you will have two options: decline or commit.

If you decline, you are indicating to the International Studies Office that you will not participate in the program. For outside programs, you will also need to notify your program. Remember that the application fee is non-refundable and that you may, of course, decide to study abroad later!

The other option is to commit to the program. It is very important that you understand what this means. Committing means that you will participate in the program, and that you will be held financially responsible for program costs. Prior to committing, review the Education Abroad Withdrawal, Cancellation, and Refund Policy that is part of your application and contact your Education Abroad Advisor if you have questions. If applying to an outside program, ensure that you understand the program provider or host institution's withdrawal and refund policy as well. Commitment deadlines vary, and are listed in the instructions you will see after being accepted or approved.

After registration, a bill will be generated on your Student Account. You will be held financially responsible for the associated program costs. Of course, committing also means that you will participate in the program!

Slide 26: Prepare to study abroad.

Finally, we will review important additional information to be aware of as you plan for your experience abroad. In this section, we will give you an overview of the resources that UVA offers to help make sure that you are healthy, safe, and successful during your program.

Slide 27: Travel Logistics

A passport is an official travel document issued by your country of citizenship which permits you to leave and re-enter your country of origin. If you do not already have a passport, apply for one as soon as you decide to go abroad. If you already have a passport, make sure that it's valid for at least 6 months after your expected return to the United States. Note that if you applied for your US passport before the age of 16, your passport is only valid for 5 years. You can find full details on the State Department's website. It can take a few months for passport applications to be processed, so plan accordingly.

A visa is a conditional authorization given by the authority of a country for you to enter and remain there for a certain period. A visa is usually placed on a page in your passport and will be checked when you enter the country. It is your responsibility to research visa requirements for your destination and apply for a visa if needed. We recommend starting to review visa requirements with the embassy website of your host country; your education abroad advisor can also provide guidance.

International students should pay special attention when researching visa requirements, because they may be different or require more processing time than those for US citizens. International students must also ensure that they have proper documentation to re-enter the United States and should consult an International Student and Scholar Advisor in the International Studies Office.

The University of Virginia Policy on Student International Travel requires students who travel outside the U.S. for University-related purposes, including education abroad, to enroll in the UVA international health and emergency assistance insurance plan through CISI. See the insurance page on our website for more information, including costs.

We recommend that you also consider trip insurance in case your travel to or from your program is interrupted.

Slide 28: Preparation

Participating in an education abroad program requires cultural, academic, and logistical preparation. The International Studies Office has a mandatory pre-departure orientation process that will address these subjects.

You can also access information and resources about cultural adjustment in the Education Abroad Handbook.

Talking to study abroad returnees and international students who are currently here at UVA can provide you with invaluable information. After all – they’ve been there!

We have information on sustainable travel on our website, so that you can begin reflecting on how to respect and support your host country, host community, and planet while you are studying abroad.

Finally, there is no replacement for conducting your own research!

Slide 29: Maintaining your UVA Student Status

While you’re abroad, it’s important to remember that you’re still considered a UVA student, and that you will maintain your enrollment status.

All students who study abroad are registered in a course with the ZFOR mnemonic. This allows for appropriate billing and for your financial aid to be processed. It will also indicate international study on your UVA transcript.

You should continue to check your UVA email on a regular basis while you’re abroad. You’ll still have access to other UVA resources and tools, such as “Just Report It,” library resources, and resources offered by the International Studies Office, the Office of the Dean of Students, Counseling and Psychological Services, and the Student Disability Access Center.

Slide 30: Life After Study Abroad

Your experience doesn’t end just because you’ve returned from abroad. UVA and the International Studies Office offer many opportunities for you to continue expanding on and learning from your international experience. Participating in these events and programs will allow you to stay connected to your experience abroad, and engage with global issues and activities.

You will hear much more about specific opportunities prior to your return to Grounds, but if you’d like more information now, check out the Life After Education Abroad section on our website.

Slide 31: Next Steps

Now that you have reviewed the Education Abroad Workshop, you should have a solid foundation as you take your first steps towards making study abroad a reality!

Review the Post Workshop Checklist, which outlines your next steps in more detail. You will find links to helpful resources from the workshop.

Whether you’re just beginning to explore your options and want assistance with long-term planning, or you’re ready to begin a program application and have specific questions, you are welcome to schedule an appointment with an Education Abroad Advisor. If you’re not sure who to contact, we are always available at studyabroad@virginia.edu.

We look forward to working with you!