INTRODUCTION

The key to a successful study away experience is careful planning. This guidebook provides you with key information you need to plan your study abroad experience.

WHY STUDY ABROAD?

- IMPRESS YOUR FUTURE EMPLOYER – with your problem-solving, flexibility, maturity, confidence, independence, and ability to work well with others.
- EXPERIENCE YOUR CLASSES IN A NEW WAY - learn in a new way.
- IMPROVE YOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS
- CHALLENGE YOURSELF – Step out of your comfort zone
- LEARN ABOUT THE WORLD AND YOURSELF – Ask yourself what you want to do and seek it out.

STUDY ABROAD PLANNING TIMELINE

1. Explore your options

| The year before you study abroad. (or more!) | 1. Attend an OIE Study Abroad Information Session and/or meet with the Office of Intl. Education.  
2. Discuss your abroad plans and course requirements with your Faculty Adviser. |
| Check program application deadline:  
Late Sept. for Spring abroad  
Mid-March for Fall & summer abroad | 1. Make sure you have the required GPA  
2. ID a faculty member to do your recommendation  
3. If a transfer student, order your transcript from your previous school |

2. General Steps for Going Abroad

| Prepare & Submit Your Application!  
5-6 months before program start date | 1. Get courses approved by dept. chairperson  
2. Give study abroad adviser form and faculty recommendations to appropriate people  
3. Order your FSU transcript-pick up form in OIE |
| When Accepted | 1. Sign up for ABRD 101 (so you stay enrolled at FSU)  
2. If living on campus: Petition Res Life to withdraw from housing  
3. Meet with Financial Aid office  
4. Submit approved courses to Registrar  
5. Submit “Confirmation/Emergency” form to OIE |

| Apply for your student visa | Make Consulate appointment when accepted |
CHOOSING A PROGRAM

Consider the following points before you decide upon a specific program:

1. **Select the time and duration you would like to study abroad.**
   Consider your major requirements, campus commitments, family requirements, and the program options available.

2. **Consider the programs that best fit your academic requirements to find challenging and rewarding programs.**
   You should discuss your options with your adviser and with other faculty who have expertise in your academic area and/or knowledge of your programs of interest. The Office of International Education can also help you with your research.

3. **Focus on your personal priorities, preferences, and goals.**
   Consider cost of living in the countries you’re considering, your health situation (consider any pre-existing health conditions), specific courses available in your major, dates (it is important to note program dates for conflicts with US semester calendar or personal events), etc.

4. **Determine language requirements.**
   Will you need to study and converse mostly or entirely in English or are you able to do so in another language? Having background in the language of your host country will make your time abroad more rewarding and will help with your integration into the culture.

5. **Decide on the location in which you wish to study.**
   Is there a type of area you want to be in – like a major city or in a rural area or small town? Large metropolitan areas generally have a higher cost of living than smaller cities or towns. Large cities tend to have a higher concentration of international people and tourists, lending to more spoken English in non-English speaking countries.

6. **Consider the various types of programs available.**
   Do you want a full immersion experience, studying with foreign students in regular university classes? Do you prefer to study on a group program with other US students? The Office of International Education can help guide you in choosing a program type.

7. **Think about your housing preferences.**
   Consider carefully the types(s) of accommodations offered by a particular program or institution: housing in apartments or residence halls with students from your host country, housing in apartments or residence halls with other international students, or homestays with families.

8. **Consider the Visa requirements for your program of choice.**
   For most countries, you will be required to apply for a study visa in order to remain in the country for the duration of your program. Visas may take up to 10 weeks to secure.

**CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO A STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM**

1. You must meet all prerequisites that the program has for admission. For example, a minimum GPA, a minimum language-level, or minimum semesters of credit. Consider GPA requirements non-negotiable!
2. You must be in **good academic and social standing**, (i.e. **NOT on ACADEMIC PROBATION**) both when you apply, and upon completion of your semester prior to leaving. The Office will ask the Dean of Students to confirm your eligibility.

3. Complete your application as early as possible and adhere to deadlines. Many study away programs accept students on a rolling admissions basis, and some may fill before the application deadline.

**FACULTY ADVISING**

It is critical that you discuss your plans to study abroad with your faculty adviser. If you have not yet declared a major, speak with a faculty member in your prospective major(s), as well as your adviser.

Students with majors in all departments have studied abroad and have earned transfer credit toward their degrees, taking major courses, general education requirements, and electives.

You should tentatively plan your course schedule for the semester after your return.

**GRADUATE SCHOOL AND CAREER ADVISING**

Before you go, meet with the appropriate faculty about your graduate school plans. Consider how your study abroad might complement your career or graduate school plans.

**COST AND FINANCIAL AID**

Here’s what you need to know!

**Plan Ahead**

- Be aware of payment deadlines for your program – read the fine print!
- **You will need to pay certain expenses before financial aid is disbursed**, i.e. application fees, program/housing deposits, airfare, passport, visa, etc.
- In order to apply for financial assistance, all applicants must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This application can be completed online at [http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/).

**Payment**

**You are responsible for paying program bills directly to the program.** The bills for programs are sent to you; they should not be sent to Framingham State University. Make sure you understand your program’s billing procedure. If you are on a FSU Exchange program, you may be paying tuition and fees to FSU rather than the host university, so check with the International Office for details.

**Before you leave: Steps for using your Financial Aid while Studying Abroad**
Option A: Paying the bill on your own and receiving financial aid as a reimbursement later.

1. Sign up for e-refund at my.framingham, so your funds can be deposited directly into your bank account.

2. No additional steps are required for financial aid. The financial aid that was already awarded to you (minus any tuition waivers) will be disbursed directly to your bank account at the same time as other FSU students (approximately mid semester).

Option B: Using Financial Aid to help pay the abroad bill

1. Sign up for e-refund at my.framingham, so your funds can be deposited directly into your bank account.

2. Get a copy of your consortium agreement from the International Education Office. This needs to be filled out by either the International Office or your study abroad institution.

3. Contact your study abroad institution to see if they have a form, usually called a Financial Aid Verification Form (FAVF) or Financial Aid Deferral Form (FADF), to delay payment of your bill with proof of expected aid. If they do not have a FAVF form, you should ask if payment can be delayed beyond the due date. In most cases, financial aid will NOT be available by the date the bill is due, so this is a very important step.

4. Set up an appointment with Sue Lanzillo in the financial aid office at slanzillo@framingham.edu and bring your consortium agreement and FAVF with you. Sue will complete the forms and go over expected disbursement dates with you.

FAQ's

Can my scholarships that are not affiliated with Framingham State be used abroad?
Students find that most of the time these scholarships will. To be sure, you should check with the organization that provides you with the scholarship. You can also check with Susan Lanzillo if you have a question.

How much of my study abroad cost will financial aid cover?
Most of the financial aid you were awarded to attend FSU for the upcoming semester will be disbursed, as outlined above. When you meet with Susan Lanzillo, she can tell you what, if any, is not eligible to be disbursed, such as waivers.

Can I get additional money?
Be sure to apply for the Office of International Education Scholarships and also any scholarships offered by your program.

If you need additional funds, you may review the Financial Aid website for:
• Parent PLUS Loans - https://studentloans.gov/myDirectLoan/index.action
Many students find that a weak U.S. dollar makes their personal expenses greater than they expected, so knowing the currency conversion rate of your country of interest could help you calculate additional costs. Travel during breaks, eating out, and other entertainment are often mentioned as adding substantially to the overall cost.

**Working while studying:** Most countries prohibit you from working in their country.

**Power of Attorney Form**
Someone at your permanent U.S. address (parent, guardian, sibling other), should be designated to handle your Framingham State University financial affairs while you are abroad. Make sure they have legal access to your account if they are going to pay bills for you. Talk to your bank!

**TRANSFER OF CREDIT**

**IMPORTANT:** In order to receive credit for classes taken while abroad, you must complete the Off-Campus Course Approval Forms and submit them to the Registrar's Office before you leave for your program.

To receive credit for courses to be taken at other regionally accredited institutions after matriculation, students must obtain approval in advance from appropriate department chairs. **EXCEPTION:** If the course is to fulfill a Gen Ed Domain, the Registrar's Office will approve the course. **Retroactive approval will not be given.**

Off-campus course approval forms are available online or in the Registrar’s Office. Applications for approval of a course should be accompanied by the appropriate catalog description from that institution.

All approved courses transferred into Framingham State University after matriculation will be awarded Framingham course credit in an amount equal to the cumulative total number of semester hour credits transferred divided by four and rounded to the nearest whole number. **For example, if students take four 3-credit courses, they will be awarded three Framingham State University course credits. 15 credits ÷ 4 = 4 FSU course credits.** See the registrar or Office of International Education for assistance with this credit formula.

If you have other transfer credits from previous institutions, the total transfer credit you will have will be taken into account to determine the resulting FSU course credits awarded.

**Requirements for credit transfer:** Transfer credit is given only for courses in which the student received a grade of C- or better. Courses must extend for at least a three-week period and meet a minimum of forty-five hours. Although credit is awarded for all approved transfer courses, the grades will not be recorded on the student's Framingham State University transcripts nor be counted in computing the quality point average.

**It is essential to have alternate courses approved prior to leaving in case there are changes in course offerings or scheduling conflicts.**
PHYSICAL OR LEARNING CHALLENGES AND HEALTH ISSUES
If you have a disability or a health concern, it is essential that you notify the program to which you are applying. This will enable the program provider to be prepared to meet your needs and to assist you in planning a successful study abroad experience. Contact the Office of International Education if you have specific questions or concerns.

SENIORS – PLEASE NOTE
If you study abroad during the first semester of your senior year, be aware that your study abroad transcript may not be available until quite late in the second semester of your final year.

Planning to study abroad during the second semester of the senior year needs to be carefully planned with your post-college goals due to the timing of commencement. Foreign grades will NOT arrive in time to certify you for graduation in May. Additionally, you may still be in classes abroad during the FSU commencement.

RETURNING TO FRAMINGHAM STATE UNIVERSITY
We ask all returning students to complete a study abroad evaluation. Please complete it so that others can benefit from your experiences.
Checklist of Steps to Complete for Study Abroad

Keep this handy to check off as you complete items to stay on track!

1 ( ) Meet with an advisor in the Office of International Education

2 ( ) Obtain or renew your passport. Passport must be valid 6 months after the end date of your program, so check the expiration date. Don't wait to apply!

3 ( ) Meet with your academic adviser to discuss course options to take abroad, but your Departmental Chair will have final approval of your courses

4 ( ) Complete the application for your selected study abroad program by the program deadline. Apply for financial aid through your program

5 ( ) Complete an "Off Campus Course Approval Form" for EACH course you plan to take abroad - and alternative course options as appropriate - and submit to the registrar's office BEFORE you leave for the semester

6 ( ) Inform the Office of International Education AS SOON AS you have accepted a place on a specific program by submitting the "Confirmation/Emergency Contact" form

7 ( ) Get a course override form approved for ABRD 101 from the OIE if you are studying abroad for a semester, and then register for the placeholder class through drop/add.

8 ( ) Pick up a financial aid Consortium Agreement from the OIE. Then schedule a meeting with Financial Aid to discuss your aid disbursement.

9 ( ) Stop by the Office of Residence Life to pick up a petition to withdraw from housing (for spring semester abroad) and/or arrange for housing once returned - if living on campus and abroad for a semester.

10 ( ) Complete required health forms and obtain necessary immunizations. If you need a physical, schedule well in advance with your health care provider.

11 ( ) Familiarize yourself with necessary insurance requirements of your program or country and confirm that you have adequate health, repatriation and evacuation insurance for the time you are abroad. You may need to purchase additional insurance

12 ( ) Apply for your VISA or study permit, if applicable, as soon as you are able and receive the paperwork required by your program country's consulate. **VISAS take significant** time to process.

13 ( ) Attend the required pre-departure meeting to familiarize yourself with cultural information, safety information, travel tips, and ask questions!

Complete the **Framingham study abroad evaluation upon your return** and send OIE pictures while you’re and once you’ve returned! We want to hear from you 😊