

BENEFITS OF STUDY ABROAD FOR PERALTA STUDENTS



A HANDBOOK ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
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A Message from the Office of International Education

At Peralta Community College District our mission is to promote student success, provide our diverse community with educational opportunities, and to transform lives. We strive to educate students that become active community members and global citizens. One way to achieve this goal is to encourage our students to seek study abroad opportunities. Each year over 300,000 U.S. students study abroad. And with an increasingly interconnected globalized world, international education has never been more important than it is now. The Office of International Education has designed this Study Abroad Handbook to assist its students in achieving an international education that will result in the knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare them for personal, professional and academic success.

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is intended to give you an introduction to study abroad and its value. It starts with a brief introduction to study abroad, highlights some of the significant benefits you can receive by participating on programs, and finally provides a brief financial overview. Please read through this entire introductory handbook before continuing to the next handbook, *Deciding if Study Abroad is Right for You*. We invite you to visit International Services Manager Drew Gephart to discuss all things Study Abroad. He can be contacted at the Office of International Education at (510) 587-7834 or dgephart@peralta.edu.



Visit Our Website: <http://web.peralta.edu/international/study-abroad>

STUDY ABROAD OVERVIEW

So, what exactly is *study abroad*?

Study abroad is the act of a student pursuing educational opportunities in a country other than their own.

Courses are typically credit-bearing and students are enrolled from a duration starting from 1 week all the way to 1 year. Study abroad is a division found under the umbrella term Education Abroad . Education Abroad describes any international experience designed to help you gain valuable knowledge, develop new skills and make progress toward your degree requirements, or prepare you for your future. A large portion of education abroad is made up of study abroad, but the term also encompasses work, internship, volunteer and research opportunities. For the purposes of this handbook, we will focus on study abroad

STUDY ABROAD TERMINOLOGY

Faculty-Led Program

A study abroad program directed by a faculty member (or members) from the home campus who accompanies students abroad.

Program Provider

An organization that sponsors instructional programs abroad that are open to students from colleges & universities.

Direct Enrollment Programs

Students apply directly to the international institution & live, learn & share with local students.

Language Program

A study abroad program whose primary purpose is language instruction.

FOR MORE STUDY
ABROAD TERMINOLOGY,
PLEASE VISIT THE
APPENDIX AT THE END OF
THIS HANDBOOK

STUDY ABROAD TERMINOLOGY

Cross-Cultural Learning

The process of adaptation to a new environment & its requirements through obtaining necessary knowledge, skills, & attitudes.

Cultural Immersion

To engage wholly or deeply in all aspects of another culture including but not limited to language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music & arts.

Intercultural Knowledge & Competence

A set of cognitive, affective, & behavioral skills & characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts.



MACHU PICCHU, PERU. PHOTO BY KRISTEN GRAY 2014

BENEFITS OF STUDY ABROAD

An important question surrounding study abroad is "why go"? Apart from cultural immersion, what value can study abroad bring to your life that you couldn't receive at PCCD? After all, for many students, living daily life in America is already a cultural experience. The initial excitement of study abroad may stem from possibilities like *"trekking through South America"* or *"embarking on a European Trip"* and visiting the amazing places you've studied in class. But study abroad is **much more** than an international tour with some academic work.

An international education has real tangible benefits than can impact all sectors of your life: professional, academic and personal.

PROFESSIONAL BENEFITS

Today's globalized world presents a great demand for employees with global experience and study abroad is a fantastic opportunity to achieve an international, competitive edge. It allows you to build extensive international networks, and provides you with different perspectives on an industry or business. Furthermore, effective study abroad can achieve growth of the three most important job skills as reported by many employers: cognitive skills, social skills and personal traits. Cognitive skills like problem-solving, decision making, and knowing how to learn are highly prized generic skills. Social skills are described as the ability to work effectively in group settings, particularly with diverse populations. Personal traits mentioned frequently included flexibility, adaptability, and the capacity to be innovative. By participating in international education and conducting ample personal reflection on your experiences, you will learn how to demonstrate:

- Strong problem solving skills and keen analytic ability
- Tolerance for ambiguity and ability to adapt in new environments
- Interpersonal communications skills
- Cross-cultural competencies (could include language skills and ability to work well in different cultural settings)
- Personal traits such as character, self-reliance, and dependability



Professional Benefits of Study Abroad

Cognitive Skills: Problem-solving ability, decision making, and knowing how to learn.

Social Skills: Ability to work effectively in group settings, particularly with diverse populations.

Personal Skills: Flexibility, adaptability and the capacity to be innovative.

ACADEMIC BENEFITS

Academic Benefits of Study Abroad

Transfer Preparation: Skills learned on study abroad can make you more marketable to the target transfer University.

Degree Progress: Studies show that study abroad is correlated with timely graduation paths.

Apply Knowledge and Skills: Apply the skills learned in the classroom in a more hands on, experiential situation.

Expand Knowledge and Skills: Broaden your perspective on areas of study, gain proficiency in a new area or second language, or open up other avenues of research and explanation

COSTA RICA. PHOTO BY MERRITT MICROSCOPY PROGRAM, 2015

Participating study abroad adds value for PCCD students on all academic paths. For students looking to transfer, it is a great experience to demonstrate how well-rounded of a student you are, which makes you more marketable to 4-year universities. When articulated well, skills learned on study abroad can be used to emphasize likely contributions to the intellectual and cultural vitality of your target university

Studies show that study abroad is correlated with higher graduation paths, a clear benefit for students on a degree path at PCCD. It is also shown that studying abroad earlier in your academic career correlates with higher retention and earlier graduation rates.

For those attending PCCD for career or life-enhancing academia, study abroad creates a unique avenue to earn credit toward a major, minor, or general education requirements. Certain programs will allow you to apply the skills learned in the classroom in a more hands on experiential situation. It can broaden your perspective on areas of study, help you gain proficiency in a new area or second language, or open up other avenues of research and exploration. It forges a path to help you gain a deeper passion for various areas of work.

PERSONAL BENEFITS

Study abroad is about stepping out of your comfort zone and experiencing a world that is different and new. At first, it may seem uncomfortable. But this discomfort sets the stage for deep personal exploration, reflection and knowledge. Participating in an international experience will help develop a sense of maturity, flexibility, and self-confidence as you learn to function and thrive in a new environment. Being on your own will push you to strengthen your time management and organization skills, and will give you an added level of independence. Interacting with local students and participating in the local community helps to improve interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills. But perhaps most importantly, study abroad will provide you the opportunity to better understand your own cultural values, beliefs and identity in a new context.

Personal Benefits of Study Abroad

Personal Growth:

Develop a sense of maturity, flexibility, self-confidence and independence as you learn to function and thrive in a new environment.

Time Management & Organizational Skills:

Being on your own away from familiar resources will push you to strengthen your time management and organization skills.

Cross-Cultural:

Interacting with and participating in the local community or students, helps to improve interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills.

Understanding Yourself:

An opportunity to better understand your own cultural values, beliefs and self-identity in a new context.

COSTA RICA. PHOTO BY MERRITT MICROSCOPY PROGRAM, 2015

A Note About Finances

In a survey conducted at Berkeley City College, finances were the number one concern students had about studying abroad. It's true: studying abroad is not free or cheap. However, finances **SHOULD NOT** stop you from studying abroad! There are plenty of funding opportunities available for you to take advantage of! Each semester, PCCD students receive financial assistance that allows them to achieve their study abroad goals.

Next Steps

Thank you for reading this handbook. At this point you should be familiar with study abroad, but may be having doubts if it is the right choice for you. If you are in this boat, the next step is to read our handbook: *Deciding if Study Abroad is Right For You*. We also encourage you to visit the Office of International Education and your campus Financial Aid Office for more information. They will be more than happy to assist you!



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Appendix A

This appendix contains terminology that is relevant to study abroad. Please reference this list for any definitions needed.

General

Cross-Cultural Learning: The process of adaptation to a new environment and its requirements through obtaining necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Cultural Immersion: To engage wholly or deeply in all aspects of another culture including but not limited to language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts.

Education Abroad: Education that occurs outside the participant's home country. Besides study abroad, examples include such international experiences as work, volunteering, non-credit internships, and directed travel, as long as these programs are driven to a significant degree by learning goals.

Host Country: The country outside of the U.S. where you are participating in study abroad. Ex) If you are studying in a program in Rome, your host country is Italy.

Intercultural Knowledge and Competence: A set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts.

Program Provider: An organization that sponsors instructional programs abroad that are open to students from colleges and universities.

Program Site: The geographical location at which an education abroad program takes place. Most commonly, a site is identified by the name of the host city or town, but it may sometimes be named for a different unit; for example, a region, a rural community, or an archaeological site.

Program Types

Branch Campus: Some U.S. -based colleges and universities have their own campuses abroad, which may or may not offer courses and/or degrees to students from the host country as well as to study abroad students.

Direct Enrollment & Exchange Programs: Both of these integrate study abroad students into classes alongside local students.

With direct enrollment programs, students apply directly to the international institution for one or two terms, using the application process reserved for international students. The student is enrolled in the international institution and is required to pay tuition to that institutions

With exchange programs, students from different institutions swap places for a semester or a full year. Ex) an American student goes to a French institution and the French student comes to the institution in the U.S. Each student remains enrolled in his/her home institution and pays the tuition fees to the home institution. These exchanges are made feasible through exchange agreements or partnerships between the two institutions.

For these programs, the study abroad and local students typically live, learn and share with one another and thus establish a high level of immersion and cross-cultural learning.

Appendix A-continued

Faculty-Led Program (or Faculty-Directed Program): A study abroad program directed by a faculty member (or members) from the home campus who accompanies students abroad. Many faculty-led programs center on a specific topic or subject that is examined in-depth in an international context. Faculty often facilitate the students' connections with the host culture by collaborating with local universities, inviting guest speakers, or partnering with local agencies for service-learning projects, research programs, or internships. Faculty-led programs are often a good fit for students who may be traveling for the first time or those who prefer more structured programming. Usually, though not always, these programs will be brief in duration.

Field study or field-based program: This type of program includes extensive hands-on learning and practical application pedagogy- such as field-based research, service learning, internships or volunteer work, or field-based science or environmental programs. This often appeals to a more independent student looking for a different type of learning environment than the typical U.S. system.

Hybrid Program (or Mixed Program): A program that combines two or more of the program types to a significant degree. For example, a study abroad center might emphasize courses just for study abroad participants but also permit students to enroll in host university courses and to do a credit-bearing internship.

Immersion Program: An informal term for a program that integrates students into the host culture to a substantial degree. Includes integrated university study programs and some varieties of field study programs.

Island Program: This type of program typically keeps the study abroad students together as a group for coursework and/or housing and extracurricular activities. As such, the cultural integration on an island program is less than with some program types.

Language Program – A study abroad program whose primary purpose is language instruction. This includes such variants as language institutes, language-focused programs for foreigners at host universities, and language-focused programs run by U.S. universities. You usually have more hours of instruction per week than you would at your home institution. Many programs will provide host family placements or connect you with local students to help you foster friendships and cultural connections as well as to provide social settings where you can practice local language.

Study Abroad Center: Many U.S. universities and education abroad organizations manage study centers that are located overseas and designed for U.S. students. These programs are often closely align with the U.S. campus requirements, thereby reducing the inherent challenges of learning and syncing with diverse international academic systems. Instruction may be in English or in the language of the host country yet designed for an audience of non-native speakers. Courses are usually taught within the traditional classroom setting but include some added cultural excursions.

With these study centers, classes usually consist of other U.S. students studying abroad. Integration with the host culture may instead come from your host family placement, programs that pair you with a local student, and partnerships that allow you to take some classes at the local universities. Some study centers offer internships, volunteer placements, or research projects to develop cross-cultural understanding and provide different models of learning and development.

Study Tour: Study tours are typically short-term programs, sometimes of academic coursework offered by a home campus. This type of program may have a thematic focus and likely includes travel to multiple locations.

Appendix A-continued

Service-Learning Program: A subtype of field study program in which the pedagogical focus is a placement in an activity that serves the needs of a community.

Duration/length

Quarter:Corresponding in length roughly to a term on a U.S. quarter calendar (generally about nine to 11 weeks).

Semester: Lasting roughly the length of a term on a U.S. semester calendar (generally about 12 to 17 weeks).

Short-Term: Lasting eight weeks or less; may include summer, January, or other terms of eight weeks or less.

Summer: Lasting 1week-3 months.

Year: Lasting at least as long as a typical academic year of two semesters or three quarters. Generally between about 26 and 45 weeks of actual coursework (excluding vacations).

Lodging

Apartment (or Flat): A self-contained residential unit that occupies only part of a building. Apartments for education abroad participants are usually furnished, and students share cleaning and cooking responsibilities with their apartment mates. Apartment mates may be other study abroad students or may be host nationals.

Homestay: Private housing hosted by a local family that often includes a private or shared bedroom, meals, and laundry. Homestay experiences usually provide the greatest immersion in the host language and culture, giving students firsthand experience with family life in the host culture and the opportunity to use the host language in an informal setting. In many cases, the host family welcomes the student as a member of the family and provides a support network.

Hostel (or Youth Hostel): A short-term accommodation facility for travelers, often combined with promotion of outdoor activities and cultural exchange. In a hostel, students generally rent a bed in barracks-style bedrooms and share a common bathroom, kitchen and lounge area. The main benefits of a hostel for students are low cost, informality, and an environment where they can meet other travelers from all over the world. They are generally less formal and expensive than hotels.

Independent Housing: Housing arranged by a participant outside of the accommodation provided by the education abroad program. In some cases, students who opt for independent housing may be eligible for a housing allocation deduction from the program fee.

Residence Hall (or Dormitory or Dorm): A building used to house students. The building may range in size from just a few rooms to hundreds, and rooms may be single or multiple occupancy. Most often, residents of a group of rooms share bathrooms with shower, toilet, and sink facilities. There may also be shared kitchen facilities. Major factors students consider when choosing to live in a residence hall include convenience to classrooms, cost, and the opportunity to live with local students.