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STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM SELECTION, FINANCES & APPLICATION

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. 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 designed to walk you through selecting the best study abroad program that will meet your needs, cover finances, logistics and the overall application process. This handbook will require you to meet with offices throughout your campus. If at any time you cannot find the best contact to meet with in the required office, please email or call the OIE. Additionally, we encourage you to visit International Services Manager Drew Gephart to discuss how we can assist you with your program search, financial aid or application. He can be contacted at the Office of International Education at (510) 587-7834 or dgephart@peralta.edu.



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

CHOOSING A STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

The richness of your experience abroad depends on picking the program that is right for you. Taking the time to identify your reasons for studying abroad and articulating what you hope to gain from the experience will not only help you choose a program, it will also keep you focused on a set of priorities while abroad.

Identify your Study Abroad Goals

Why do you want to study abroad? Some students explore a particular academic field in more depth; others work toward proficiency in a foreign language. What do you hope to achieve while abroad?

Here are some common reasons why students go abroad:

- Take courses not available at PCCD
- Take courses toward my degree at PCCD
- Improve my professional skill set
- Experience a different educational system
- Learn a new language
- Gain a new perspective on world affairs
- Immerse myself in another culture
- Pursue an international internship
- Participate in service learning
- Gain independence/confidence
- Gain cultural skills



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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.

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.

RESEARCH STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

Along with the broader goals you've identified above, consider some of the more practical issues that might influence your program selection.



Location and Size: *What are your academic or personal preferences about where you want to study? What are your preferences in location (e.g. urban or rural setting? How immersed do you want to be in the local community?).*



Duration: How long will you be able to study abroad? Summer? Winter? Semester? Year?



Program Type: *Various program models are available, including direct enrollment in a foreign university, taking courses only with other study abroad students, programs with other PCCD students and faculty, language immersion or a combination of these. Which learning style most interests you?*



Academic Offerings: *How will the coursework align with your academic career path? How many credits do you need to achieve my academic goals?*



Language of Instruction: *Are you interested in courses taught in English, in a foreign language, or a combination of the two?*



Housing: *Which do you prefer to live- in a student residence hall, with a host family, or independently? What type of roommates would you prefer, from the U.S. or local students?*





Budget: *Study abroad program tuition and additional expenses can be more or less than what you would spend at PCCD. Consider what is feasible for you financially and create a budget.*



Personal Identity Concerns: *Are you concerned with how your racial, ethnic, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation will be perceived in a different culture?*



Special Needs: *What, if any, are your special needs such as a medical condition, learning disability, mental health condition or dietary restriction that may need accommodation or specialized resources while abroad?*



Requirements: *What are the minimum eligibility requirements for education abroad and the admission requirements for your selected education abroad program?*

AVAILABLE PROGRAMS

PCCD Faculty-Led Programs:

peralta.edu/international/study-abroad

UC Berkeley Summer Abroad:

<http://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/summerabroad>

Go Overseas: www.gooverseas.com

Northern California Study Abroad Consortium:

<http://www.aifspartnerships.com/ncsac/#>

API Study Abroad: <https://www.apistudyabroad.com>

California Colleges for International Education:

<http://ccieworld.org/saprograms.php>

ACCENT International: <https://accentintl.com>

IES Abroad: <https://www.iesabroad.org/>

CIEE Study Abroad: <https://www.ciee.org/study-abroad/>

CEA Study Abroad: <http://www.ceastudyabroad.com>



PROGRAM COMPARISON

After you have considered all the important elements that will influence your decision, the next step is to conduct a program comparison.

HOW TO COMPARE PROGRAMS



Print out the charts on page 9 & 10. Keep these handy for steps 2-4.



Research available study abroad programs. Use the following resources to research programs:

- Available Programs (page 7)
- Peralta.edu/international/study-abroad
- The OIE Study Abroad Fair
- Web Search

Select the top 3 programs that meet your needs.

Tip: Begin answering some questions found on the chart during the research stage



Contact the Program Advisor at each of the three programs to ask any questions not found on their website.



Compare the notes on your chart and select the program that best suits your professional, academic, and personal needs.

School or Organization:			
Program Name:			
Location:			
Duration:			
Course Offerings:			
Credit or Non-Credit: <i>If credit is offered, how many? Will it transfer to PCCD? What is the credit transfer process?</i>			
Campus Information: <i>What other students will be taking classes with me? What is the class size? Can you campus accommodate my needs the same as my home campus (if applicable).</i>			
Cost: <i>What is included in the program fee? What are the additional anticipated student expenses are not in the fee?</i>			
Financial Aid: <i>What financial aid is accepted? Are any scholarships available? If yes, where can I find more information?</i>			

Housing: <i>Is housing set up by organization? Is it a homestay, apartment, dorm? Will there be roommates? How far away is it from campus?</i>			
Application Process: <i>What are the eligibility requirements? Are references needed? Is there an application fee? When are the deadlines?</i>			
Program Eligibility: <i>What are the detailed program eligibility requirements? ex) class level, completed coursework, minimum GPA, language proficiency. Do I meet them?</i>			
Government Documents: <i>What government documents are needed-Visa? Passport?</i>			
Transportation: <i>What is the main mode of transportation and costs associated?</i>			
Culture: <i>What is the culture like? Are people more direct or indirect? What is the pace of life? Are they group oriented or individualistic?</i>			
Health: <i>Are there any CDC Travel Advisories? Are there any on-site staff to assist in medical emergencies? What local health concerns should I be aware of?</i>			
Safety: <i>Has the U.S. State Department issued Travel Advisories? Are there any safety concerns in relation to my identity?</i>			
Local Laws: <i>Are there any major differences in local laws vs. U.S. laws?</i>			

Now What?

Once you complete the chart with information from your top three choices, we highly recommend meeting with the following offices on your campus to develop an academic and financial plan. Follow these three steps to keep on track.

STEP

1

Meet with an Academic Advisor and/or the Registrar Office

Speak with both of these offices to:

- Ensure the credits will transfer smoothly
- Discover how this study abroad trip will affect your academic program
- Figure out what you need to do in order to transfer your credits

Visit The Office of International Education

Meet with the International Services Manager to discuss your plans and ask any remaining questions.

STEP

2

NEED HELP? WE GOT IT.

- You should never hesitate to ask for assistance at any stage of your study abroad journey. Staff and Faculty throughout campus are here to help! Reach out to:

The Office of International Education (OIE)

Academic Counselor

Financial Aid Officers

Faculty in the field of your desired program

Faculty who have led study-abroad programs

Past study abroad participants at PCCD (the OIE can assist with connecting you to alumni)

STEP

3

Schedule an appointment with your Financial Aid Office

Finances are the most **crucial** aspect of study abroad. When you meet with your financial aid office, you want to be sure you ask the most relevant questions and receive the most in depth information possible so you can create a comprehensive financial plan.

The financial considerations of study abroad include but are not limited to:

- Tuition
- Room
- Board
- Program or home institution administrative fees
- Transportation
- Passport
- Required Visas
- Immunizations if needed
- Books & supplies
- Cell phone
- Other personal expenses

With these considerations in mind, work with your financial aid advisor to ensure your financial aid can be applied to your study abroad program. Ask important questions such as:

Will going on this study abroad program mean I will be considered absent from campus?

If so, how does this affect my financial aid?

Will the financial aid distribution date align with my program start date?

If for some reason there is an early withdrawal from the program, how will it affect my financial aid?

Be sure to write down your financial aid information with your financial aid officer so you can share it with others who may need to see it (e.g. parents, partners, program advisors, etc.)

Financial Aid Quick Facts

Federal law states that students can receive federal financial aid for study abroad that is approved by the home college or university. The two types of aid available are Federal Aid and State Aid. To use that aid, eligible students must:

- Maintain their enrollment in a degree/certificate program at a school that is eligible to participate in Title IV aid programs
- Enroll in courses approved by the home school
- Be enrolled at least half-time while abroad
- Make satisfactory academic progress by earning passing grades

Students studying abroad are also eligible for the same types of grants and scholarships as on campus students.



Scholarship Resources

Boren Awards for International Study:
www.borenawards.org/

Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship:
www.iie.org/gilman

Rainbow Scholarship: www.rainbowsig.org

Diversity Abroad Scholarships:
www.diversityabroad.com/scholarships

IIE Passport Study Abroad Funding:
www.studyabroadfunding.org/

Peralta Colleges Foundation:
<http://web.peralta.edu/foundation/scholarships-and-grants>

API Study Abroad:
www.apistudyabroad.com/students/financial-information/scholarships

Fund for Education Abroad:
<http://www.fundforeducationabroad.org>

Go Overseas:
www.gooverseas.com/scholarships

Study Abroad.com :
www.studyabroad.com/scholarships

Berkeley Scholarships:
<http://scholarships.berkeley.edu/scholarships/type>



Creative Funding

Get creative when thinking of alternate funding opportunities! Think about your talents and way you can turn that into a fundraising event.

E.g. The PCCD Cosmetology department held a fundraiser photoshoot. They charged \$30 per session, which included a 10 minute professional shoot with hair and makeup done by students and alumni.

Look into starting a campaign to solicit support from family, friends and community members. By creating a crowdfunding campaign on GoEnnounce, GoFundMe, Kickstarter or a similar site, your supporters can put money towards helping you achieve your study abroad goals. Do your research before picking a site - most charge a percentage per donation so you'll want to use the one that works best with your campaign but also has reasonable fees.

Consider this: Crowdfunding is a popular used method by students to launch projects. Often supporters will want to know how your project will impact you and what you plan to do with your experience. It is a good idea to write a clear objective statement and also include some way of demonstrating its impact upon your return. This can take the form of a blog, social media posts, scrapbook, slideshow or community service project.

Financial Aid Eligibility:

In order to be eligible for aid, PCCD students must:

1. Complete the FAFSA on time
2. Meet income requirements
3. Meet SAP requirements
4. Have a valid major
5. Be enrolled in courses towards their major

APPLICATION

At this point, you are ready to begin the application process. All programs have different application requirements, but all applications serve two main functions: (1) they help program committees identify acceptable candidates, and (2) they provide administrators with the details needed to regulate class registration, immigration and other program logistics. The program you're applying to may receive hundreds of applications, so it's important to take this time seriously, complete forms as required and adhere to all deadlines. Common elements that can be found in an application are:

- 
1. Application Form
 2. Transcripts
 3. Essay or Statement of Purpose
 4. Recommendations
- 

1. Application Form: This form will likely request your personal information, degree information, emergency contacts and some form of self-assessment.

2. Transcripts: If a transcript is required, you can obtain one by submitting an order online or in person with the Admissions and Records office. These can take up to three weeks to process. The first two transcripts at PCCD are free and all following requests have costs associated.

3. Essay or Statement of Purpose: In this essay, you should describe your academic, professional and personal reasons for seeking an international experience. Outline your preparatory coursework for studying abroad and illustrate how the program complements or aligns with your overall goals. Explain the reasons behind your program choice, including factors such as the institution, the location or program's duration, and the overall learning objectives. Be as detailed as possible to establish realistic and measurable outcomes. Essay length requirements are usually specified; do not go over the allotted page or word count. Be clear and direct in your language so that your message doesn't get lost among the other essays. Maintain a positive and personal tone throughout your essay and allow your true identity to shine through. Your essay should explain how the program would benefit you, but more importantly, what diverse and unique perspectives you can bring to the program. Before submitting, you should also ask at least one other person to proofread your essay. The Office of International Education would be more than happy to assist you with this!

4. Recommendations: Education abroad programs often request recommendation letters in order to gain an outside perspective on your preparation, character, motivations, and other traits. Programs may require recommendations from tenured professors, mentors, employers, coaches etc. When approaching someone for a recommendations, it is a good practice to have prepared the program details, your resume, personal statement and/or reasons you feel you'd be successful on this program. Providing this information along with ample time, to your recommender will ease the process for them.

NEXT STEPS



We wish you the **best of luck with your application process!**

As always, please visit our office for any assistance. The next step is to read our Pre-Departure handbook after you have been accepted into the program.

Keep in Mind: Don't stop applying for scholarships! Even if you haven't heard back from your program, continue to apply for as many scholarships as possible. It will prove to be very beneficial if you are accepted.

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