

**Study Abroad Guide for Academic Advisors
Global Engagement Office (GEO)**

A. What types of study abroad programs are available to students?

For our traditional semester abroad programs, students have 250+ College-approved options across 60+ countries. Students have even more options if they decide to pursue a summer abroad program. Although the Director of Global Engagement can help to guide students, they will need to take initiative when exploring programs that are going to fit their needs.

There are two types of programs available to students who wish to study abroad:
Exchange Programs vs. Direct/Direct-Enroll Programs.

- In an **Exchange Program**, our students exchange spots with international students whose institutions are a part of the exchange network (ISEP, short for International Student Exchange Program).
 - The student pays their regular College tuition, standard room rate, and meal plan (they are essentially paying for the spot for an incoming exchange student). In addition, there is an ISEP exchange fee that can vary from \$500-1,000 depending on the program location.
 - Because all exchange students are paying for a spot at their home institutions (tuition, housing, meals), students will receive some form of housing and meal benefits at their host institution.
 - For more details, please see the [ISEP Exchange Overview Handout](#)
 - Besides an annual membership to the ISEP exchange network, exchange programs do not cost the College money to have students participate on an exchange program.
 - We must maintain a balance of exchange students. For instance, if we send 15 of our students on exchange, the College needs to accept 15 incoming exchange students.
 - For this reason, there is a limit on how many students can participate on an exchange program per semester.
- In a **Direct/Direct-Enroll Program**, our students directly enroll into a study abroad program.
 - The student pays their regular College tuition, but other costs to the student can vary depending on the program and if housing and/or meals are included. The billable cost outside of tuition can vary from \$2,500-8,000.
 - These programs come with their own tuition cost, but instead of having the student pay LFC tuition AND the program's tuition, the College covers the program tuition. These program tuition costs can vary from \$5,000-\$20,000.
 - We can only send a limited number of students on Direct/Direct-Enroll programs and the number depends on GEO's budget that year and the demand by students.

With both Exchange and Direct/Direct-Enroll Programs, there are a variety of programs that offer internships, research opportunities, service learning. These opportunities are far more commonly found with Direct/Direct-Enroll programs.

Summer programs abroad are also available. There are both 'study abroad' and 'intern abroad' programs available for summer, and most programs range from 3-6 weeks. For most intern abroad programs, students have the option to earn academic credit for the internship.

- Summer programs are mainly Direct/Direct-Enroll programs, and there are only 2 exchange summer options (one to Mexico and one to Finland).
- The program cost can vary from \$3,000 - \$7,000+, with the average cost being around \$5,000.
 - This cost covers tuition, housing, international health insurance, and on-site support staff. Most programs also have excursions built into these costs as well.
 - Most summer programs do not include meals. The main exception being that if the housing is a homestay and then students receive at least partial meals (10-15 meals per week).

Not all study abroad opportunities are College-approved. All of our approved partner programs is listed on [our website](#).

- If a student is interested in a program that is not a College-approved program (e.g., Semester at Sea), then the student must withdraw from the College for the term they will be abroad and then re-apply to the College in order to return the following term.

B. How do I advise my students about study abroad?

As soon as a student expresses interest, the academic advisor should:

- explain any department limitations for courses abroad.
- determine whether the student needs any specific courses while abroad to stay on track to graduate.
- discuss whether there are certain semesters that work better for the student's academic progress (e.g., so they wouldn't miss any core courses).
- ask the student to think about what they want from a program in addition to academics (e.g., level of support offered, volunteer opportunities, internship, etc.).
- point the student to [GEO's 'selecting a program' page](#)
- require the student to meet with the Director of Global Engagement to learn more about the program offerings and procedures.
- reinforce that they read and respond to emails from the Director of Global Engagement and to ask questions in a timely manner.

Please keep in mind that studying abroad satisfies the **FFC Experiential Learning (FFC-EL)** requirement (FFC-EL), provided the program is College-approved and has a duration of at least 3 weeks. Upon their return from abroad, students will submit their written reflection to the

Director of Global Engagement, which is the final component needed to satisfy the FFC-EL requirement.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they enroll in the appropriate credits/courses. To assist in this process, GEO and the Registrar's Office provide a Credit Guide [linked on Faculty page of GEO website] and a Course Form (see below) help the students and advisors with planning. Keep in mind:

- There are multiple different credit systems (Standard US, ECTS, UK, etc.)
- With a few exceptions, programs tend to not offer the exact same courses every semester and many programs do not post the intended semester courses until a month or two before the semester starts
 - Students are encouraged to look at previous semester course lists for their program. If students have difficulty locating these lists, they should notify the Global Engagement Office.
- The LFC Course Form [linked on Faculty page of GEO website]
 - This form provides the Registrar's Office with information about how to classify the abroad courses what requirements they satisfy when transferred back to the College.
 - Students are encouraged to list courses they are interested and include at least 3-5 backup courses, which might require completing multiple sheets of the LFC Course Form.
 - We require students and advisors to submit this form before students register so they know beforehand how these courses will count when transferred back to the College.
- Early planning and flexibility are keys to success.

For DACA students, we have programs in Puerto Rico (Exchange and Direct/Direct-Enroll), as well as Washington D.C. (similar to our In the Loop program, but in D.C.) and the Semester in Environmental Science (in Massachusetts).

- [Advance Parole](#) may be an option for the student, but it depends on student's comfort level with the risk.

Although GEO and the Registrar's Office are always willing to help students and advisors, please understand that our capacity is limited, especially when requests are made at the last minute. Advance planning and early communication are appreciated.

C. When are students able to go abroad and when should they apply?

For our traditional semester abroad programs, the **earliest semester** that students can study abroad is their **2nd semester of their sophomore year**. Most students, however, study abroad in their junior or senior years.

- In rare cases, 1st-semester sophomore status is eligible, but not without GEO approval.

- For transfer students, students have to be on campus at least one semester before their intended off-campus program.
- The **latest semester** that students can complete a semester abroad is **their final semester prior to commencement**, and this option requires approval from AAB.
 - The student's degree will be conferred at a later date. Most students who study abroad during their final spring will have their degree conferred the following summer, but there is a chance that their degree could be delayed until the following fall.
 - Conferral date depends on the specific program and how quickly they can send the student's transcript to Lake Forest College.
 - A few programs send transcripts only once per year, regardless of when the program occurred (e.g., Nottingham Trent University).
 - Some spring programs go late into the summer and would not send transcript until September/October, such as most institutions in Germany.
 - Other programs, such as the American College in Greece, are great about sending transcripts in a timely manner.

For summer abroad programs, the **earliest summer** that students can study abroad is **the summer following their first year**.

- We allow this early abroad experience because summer programs are able to offer more support and structure than semester programs.
- The **latest summer** that students can participate in a study abroad program is **the summer following their senior spring**.
 - If a student has already satisfied their major/minor requirements, AAB approval is not needed for summer, but the student's graduation will be delayed.

D. How many off-campus experiences are allowed?

Students are able to participate in a total of 3 semester-length off-campus programs, as long as at least one of the semester-length programs is the In the Loop program (e.g., 2 Loop + 1 Abroad, 2 Abroad + 1 Loop). Without the In the Loop program, the semester-length limit is 2 off-campus programs. There is no limit on summer programs.

- Students can complete two non-consecutive semesters abroad on different programs, but one of them must be an Exchange Program.
- Students can complete two consecutive semesters abroad **ONLY** if it is on the same Exchange program.

E. What are the application deadlines?

The College's **semester** study abroad application is **due about one year in advance** of the intended semester the student plans to go abroad. The summer application is more flexible and

is due the spring directly before the intended summer. Specifically, the deadlines for GEO Application (i.e., the College's internal application) are:

- Fall/Full Academic Year Deadline – Dec 1 of year prior
- Spring Deadline – April 1 of year prior
- Summer – March 1 of same year, but can be flexible

F. What is involved in the application process?

The application process begins with the College's internal application (i.e., [the GEO Application](#)).

- Students are asked to indicate their top program of interest and backup programs. Due to program capacities and budget limitations, student might not get approved for their top choice.
- Once the student submits their GEO Application, the office reaches out to advisors for their approval of the student going abroad.

If the student's GEO application is approved, the Director of Global Engagement sends a 'GEO Decision Email' that details which program(s) from the student's list are approved for the next step (i.e., the Program-Specific Application stage), as well as other important information for the student to keep in mind (passport, visa, etc.).

Once the student decides on which of their approved programs to pursue, they complete a GEO Program Confirmation Form. Then, they can proceed to the Program-Specific Application Stage. In this stage, students must complete the application forms for their specific programs of interest.

- **ISEP Exchange:** Students fill out **one** application in which they rank up to 10 institutions
- **Direct:** Each partner has their own unique application process

G. What must international students know about the study abroad process?

International students need to keep the following in mind:

- F-1 students = full-degree seeking international student (i.e., seeking LFC degree).
 - The Office of Intercultural Relations (OIR) oversees F-1 international students.
 - These students should connect with OIR for visa-related questions (about their U.S. visa, not their study abroad visa) and should keep the following in mind:
 - Make sure their F-1 visa (and passport) will be valid for re-entry to the U.S.
 - U.S. citizens may not need visas for certain programs, but F-1 students may need one based on their country of citizenship, or vice-versa.
 - F-1 students can study "abroad" in their home country, but it must be on an exchange program.
- J-1 students = international exchange student (i.e., temporarily at LFC).
 - The Global Engagement Office oversees these J-1 international students.

- These students should first connect with GEO with any questions about off-campus opportunities.

G. What should students know about the financial side of study abroad?

Students need to review both the [Financials page on GEO's website](#), as well as [Financial Aid's information on Off-Campus Programs](#).

Scholarships

The Global Engagement Office can provide guidance on applying to scholarships, but it is the student's responsibility to research and complete application process.

- **Program Scholarships:** Most programs have their own scholarships, both for Semester & Summer programs
- **External Scholarships:** These are mostly only available for US citizens or US permanent residents, such as the [Gilman Scholarship](#), the [Boren Scholarship](#), and the [Fund for Education Abroad](#); however, there are also some available to all students.
- **LFC Donor Scholarships:** Thanks to some very generous donors, the College has multiple study abroad scholarship it can award for semester programs.
 - Students do not have to apply for these scholarships.
 - Almost all have the requirement to be awarded to high financial need students.
 - Decisions of awards disbursement are made between the Office of Financial Aid & GEO.

Financial Aid

Financial aid can apply for semester programs but not for summer programs. The Global Engagement Office cannot provide students with financial aid guidance.

- If student have questions about their aid, they need to connect with [financial aid office](#).

Working abroad

Most students are not legally able to work abroad. Even if they are able to work legally in host country, job opportunities are limited and not guaranteed.