



**BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Rinker Center for Global Affairs

STUDENT GUIDE TO **STUDY ABROAD**



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Why Study Abroad?

Curious why studying abroad matters? It's about more than taking classes in a different place. It's a chance to stretch your boundaries, grow as a person, and stand out to future employers. Navigating new streets, tasting unfamiliar foods, and making friends from around the world—it's the kind of experience that builds adaptability, resilience, and a global outlook. Studying abroad is one of those immersive experiences where learning is woven into the fabric of new places and perspectives. It's not just about travel; it's about transformation. Ready to challenge yourself and grab hold of what the world has to offer?

"Studying abroad gave me greater confidence in myself and allowed me to make friends with people I otherwise wouldn't have been able to meet. It's an opportunity that I think every student should take!"

— Danielle Henson
(Kilis Greece Summer 2022)



Types of Programs

When you think about studying abroad, location is probably the first thing that comes to mind. Another important consideration is program type. We offer several types of programs, each with different advantages and considerations. You can have an incredible experience with any of our programs, but choosing the right one is key.

Provider, Consortium, and Direct Enroll

These Ball State-approved programs are created for U.S. students and managed by an outside entity. Ball State works with several partners, including the Kentucky Institute for International Studies (KIIS), the American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS), and other foreign universities that offer study abroad as a direct enroll.

Advantages

- Options for semester, year, Summer or Winter Break
- Offer an extensive list of locations all over the world
- Excursions and cultural activities are typically included

Challenges

- Can be costly
- Course equivalencies must be arranged before departure

Faculty-Led

These are programs directed and led by Ball State faculty, with Ball State students taking Ball State courses. Typically, these programs offer a detailed itinerary, with coursework and cultural experiences built right in. Program locations and topics vary from year to year based on faculty offerings. Program length also varies. Some faculty-led programs are the length of a Summer session or a semester, and many are short-term, perhaps over Spring or Winter Break.

Advantages

- Accommodations, excursions, and flights are all pre-arranged
- No need to get approvals for foreign course equivalencies, no transfers
- Ball State academic alignment is built right into the program
- A defined group of Ball State students and faculty can be comforting

Challenges

- Contact with local students can be limited
- Limited course options

BSU-in

Ball State students. Ball State faculty. Ball State classes. Ball State tuition. Ball State semester abroad.

BSU-in is a signature program of the Study Abroad Office. While the location changes (Mexico! Spain! South Korea! Where next?), the concept remains the same—a culturally immersive semester abroad with Ball State coursework to help you stay on track toward graduation. The best part? It doesn't cost extra. The program price for **BSU-in** is comparable to the cost of an on-campus semester in Muncie.

Exchanges

Participating in an exchange involves studying at a university abroad as a guest student for a semester or year. These programs are partnerships that Ball State has with foreign universities where they send students to us, and we send our students to them. Students enroll in foreign universities and earn credit toward their Ball State degree. We even have domestic (inside the U.S.) exchange options through the National Student Exchange. Exchanges are designed for students comfortable with being more independent and needing less academic and social support. Exchange programs are great for students with a more flexible study plan since they are longer programs. Ball State partners with many universities in a variety of countries, including England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, China, and Australia.

Advantages

- Independent and intercultural learning opportunities
- Entire course catalog of foreign universities is available
- Very cost-effective (typically, you pay Ball State tuition and host school room/board/fees)
- Immersed in the culture of the host location

Challenges

- You must be nominated by Ball State University, and placement may not be possible for every student
- Language proficiency may be required
- Housing, meal plans, and grading systems may differ from what you're used to
- Course equivalencies must be arranged before departure

Internships

These are independent programs that involve unpaid credit-bearing work that takes place abroad. Ball State partners with several international internship providers, such as AIFS, Connect 1-2-3, and Academic Internship Experts (EUSA). These programs are recommended to rising seniors and typically happen during a Summer semester. An internship advisor in their department arranges credits.

Advantages

- Guaranteed placements—If you're accepted, they'll find you an internship
- Access to employers and internships that would not be available in Muncie
- Housing & orientation arranged by the provider organization
- Placements are possible for most majors/industries

Challenges

- Language proficiency may be required
- Can be cost-prohibitive; international internships are typically unpaid



Where Can I Go?

Argentina	Fiji	Poland
Australia	France	Portugal
Austria	Germany	Puerto Rico
Barbados	Ghana	Scotland
Belgium	Greece	South Africa
Belize	Guam	South Korea
Bosnia	Hungary	Spain
Botswana	Iceland	Sweden
Brazil	India	Taiwan
Canada	Ireland	Tanzania
Chile	Italy	Thailand
China	Japan	Turkey
Costa Rica	Malta	United Arab Emirates
Czech Republic	Mexico	United Kingdom
Denmark	Morocco	USA
Ecuador	Netherlands	U.S. Virgin Islands
Egypt	New Zealand	Vietnam
England	Northern Ireland	Wales
Estonia	Norway	

Application Deadlines

While specific programs may have deadlines outside of these cycles, most programs will use the following dates:

	Applications Open	Applications & Scholarships Due	Commitment Deadline
Fall/Academic Year	January 15	March 15	April 1
Winter Break	June 15	September 15	October 1
Spring	June 15	September 15	October 1
Spring Break	September 1	December 1	December 15
Summer	November 1	February 1	February 15

Application Process

- 1. Get information.** You can research programs by searching by program type, term, or location. You can also attend a Study Abroad 101 presentation, one-on-one advising appointment, or one of our other information sessions to learn more.
- 2. Choose your study abroad adventure.**
- 3. Apply to your program.** Click the apply button on your program’s information page. Make sure you’re logged in with your Ball State credentials, select your term, and you’ll see a checklist of what you need to do to complete your application. Study abroad advising may be a required part of this process, depending on the program.
- 4. Commit to your decision.** After you’ve been officially accepted, take a little time to think about it. You might still have some questions for financial aid, your academic advisor, or your family. Have the conversations you need to, and when you’re ready, click the commit button.
- 5. Get ready to go!** Your application will guide you through post-decision tasks like choosing courses, arranging equivalent credits in your department, and flight itineraries. You’ll also have a pre-departure orientation to attend.



Myths About Study Abroad

Studying abroad is too expensive.

There are all different kinds of programs, and many are much more affordable than you might think. Some of our programs cost the same or less than a semester at Ball State, and you can narrow your search to programs we’ve tagged as ‘low cost.’ Keep in mind that there are ways to fund study abroad—scholarships are available, and you may even be able to use your existing financial aid.

If I study abroad, I won’t be able to graduate on time.

By planning ahead, you can study abroad while staying on track to graduate. Our programs have a wide variety of courses that allow you to satisfy core, major, and minor credit courses. We will help you find a program and term that works toward your on-time degree completion.

I don’t speak another language, so I can only study in English-speaking countries.

Most of our programs offer coursework in English, regardless of location. With some programs, there is even a built-in course to learn the basics of the local language. Some programs have a language requirement because you’ll be taking classes in that language. Studying abroad is an excellent step to improve your language proficiency.

I can only study abroad as a junior.

You can study abroad at any time. Some programs require at least a sophomore standing, but not all. Studying abroad early may be the way to go, depending on how jam-packed your four-year plan is.



We can find a program that offers courses that apply to your core curriculum requirements or a program that focuses on introductory courses in your major. If it works for you, you can also study abroad during your senior year, but we recommend meeting with us to talk about it.

I don’t want to be away from home for several months, so I can’t study abroad.

We offer a variety of programs that have different lengths. You could study for as long as an academic year or as short as a Spring or Winter Break. These condensed experiences still provide valuable insights into new cultures, perspectives, and personal growth. You can choose a program that aligns with your comfort level and academic goals, making studying abroad a feasible and enriching opportunity, regardless of duration.

Information Sessions

The Rinker Center hosts Study Abroad 101 information sessions. These sessions are led by our peer ambassadors and are a great way to start your journey to studying abroad. Our peer ambassadors go over the program types, how to apply, and a general timeline, as well as connect you with any resources you might need throughout the process.

One-on-One Advising

Schedule an advising appointment with our peer ambassadors to discuss the study abroad process. Peer ambassadors have experience with Ball State study abroad programs—they've already studied abroad and have come back to tell us about it. They're prepared to assist you in exploring your options in a peer-to-peer environment.

In these individual appointments, we discuss things like:

- How to get started
- Considerations for selecting a program
- How to search for a program on our website
- How to get a program cost estimate
- Scholarship opportunities and deadlines
- How to apply

When you sign up, we'll ask about your major, year, and where and when you'd like to go abroad. Meetings are available both in-person and virtual.



◀ Book an info session or advising appointment

Benefits and Skills Gained From Studying Abroad

Cultural Sensitivity: Developing a heightened awareness of cultural differences and respecting diverse viewpoints

Adaptability: Learning to navigate unfamiliar environments and embracing change with confidence

Communication Agility: Enhancing communication skills across language barriers, leading to effective cross-cultural interactions

Empathy: Understanding and appreciating the experiences and perspectives of people from different backgrounds

Tolerance for Ambiguity: Becoming comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity in different cultural contexts

Flexibility: Adapting to different ways of thinking, problem-solving, and working

Conflict Resolution: Learning to manage conflicts that may arise from cultural misunderstandings and finding common ground

Collaboration: Working effectively in diverse teams, leveraging different strengths and experiences

International Awareness: Gaining insights into global issues and understanding the interconnectedness of the world

Cultural Competence: Developing the ability to navigate and thrive in a multicultural society

Historical Context: Gaining a deeper understanding of historical events and their impact on different cultures

Identity Exploration: Reflecting on one's own identity and values in a global context

Critical Thinking: Analyzing situations from multiple cultural perspectives, fostering a broader mindset

Global Citizenship: Recognizing the responsibility to contribute positively to the global community

Appreciation of Diversity: Celebrating differences and recognizing the beauty in various cultural expressions

Language Acquisition: Acquiring language skills that open doors to authentic communication and deeper cultural understanding



FAQs

How do I know what will transfer?

Course equivalencies are arranged with Ball State academic department faculty and advisors after you commit to your program. As a part of the post-decision process, we'll help you seek approval for the classes you plan to take. If you're taking courses in multiple departments, getting each course approved by the corresponding Ball State approver can take time. All course approvals will be decided before your program begins.

Where will I live?

Housing will vary depending on which program you choose. For some programs, you will stay in hotels, while others may provide hostels or homestays. Longer programs, like exchanges, could place you in an apartment or a residence hall.

What if I don't have a passport?

If you're leaning toward traveling abroad, you will need a passport. You must apply in person for first-time passports at an official acceptance facility. Appointments at our local acceptance facility in Muncie can be made online. We'll take your passport pictures in the Study Abroad Office and can assist in ensuring your application is filled out correctly with all the documents you need. The current cost of a U.S. Passport is \$165 for routine service.

Is studying abroad safe?

We understand that safety is a top priority for you and your family. Rest assured, at Ball State, your well-being is our utmost concern. We take proactive

steps to ensure your safety throughout your study abroad journey. Our programs are carefully selected in collaboration with trusted partners and institutions that maintain high safety standards. Before you depart, we provide comprehensive pre-departure orientations that cover safety protocols, cultural awareness, and local customs. We can guide you through any concerns you may have before, during, and after your time abroad. In addition, most of our programs offer on-site support teams to assist you in your host country. Your safety is our commitment, and we're here to ensure that your study abroad journey is as enriching as it is secure.

What should I do if I want to study abroad but am worried about fitting it into my plan?

There is almost always a way to balance your major with studying abroad. Discuss any concerns with your academic advisor to identify the best timing and program options. Short-term, relevant programs can align with your major's demands. If studying abroad is a priority for you, let's find a way to make it work without delaying graduation.

What if I'm going alone and don't know anyone?

It's always possible to apply with a friend. If not, going with a group could be a great option. Ball State has several group programs. We have faculty-led programs, which are groups of Ball State students with Ball State faculty, and provider programs, which are groups of students from many different universities around the U.S. that meet up in locations abroad. Even if you choose a program like an exchange or direct enroll—without a designated study abroad group—you almost certainly wouldn't be the only international student on campus. You might find that your new campus abroad has the fastest friends you've ever made.



Funding and Scholarships

Cost considerations are an important part of your decision to study abroad. Each program's digital brochure has a built-in cost sheet. Once a program is selected, we want you to pursue scholarships. The Rinker Center administers 13 different scholarship funds. Some are need-based, others are merit-based, and eligibility varies. We have a streamlined application process so that applying for one of our scholarships puts you in the pool for all eligible scholarships. Award values typically range from \$500 to \$1,000, and the type, length, or cost of a program and the strength of your application may impact the amounts of each award. There are also national scholarships and grants you may be eligible for. We'll connect you with the resources to help you. Scholarships might also be available from other sources, including your academic department or program provider.

Sources of Funding

- **Rinker Center scholarships:** Use the Common App in your study abroad application.
- **National & competitive scholarships:** Ball State students are very successful in winning these!
- **Program-specific scholarships:** Scholarships through Kentucky Institute for International Studies (KIIS) or American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS) are examples.
- **Departmental/college scholarships:** Within your academic major area, there might be a scholarship that is specifically for study abroad.
- **Financial aid:** Cardinal Central can help you understand if—and how much of—your aid can be applied to study abroad costs.



Interview with a Ball State Study Abroad Alumnus

Jaryd Wright, '23, participated in a Ball State faculty-led program in Communication + Culture in Cuenca, Ecuador, in Summer 2022.

Why did you study abroad?

I was super nervous before going—not just about travel, but other aspects of my life too. I know it's good for me to throw myself into situations I'll learn from, even if I have some hesitancy. A lot was going through my head. The flying, the being away from home for six weeks, a whole new country, a lot of other underlying things, I'm sure too, but at some point, with this internal battle, I just decided to go for it, knowing it was going to be good for me.

How did studying abroad benefit you?

I learned a ton about myself. I wouldn't have thought about this being a benefit of studying abroad, but I think I understand myself, what I need to function, and how my environment impacts me. But also, there's the cultural appreciation piece. I was a communication studies major, so I had already taken intercultural communication before I went. However, this was my first time traveling outside the country, and my Midwest culture is a huge part of me. I like to say I'm a very open person, but you don't know until you're in that situation.

What did you enjoy about your study abroad experience?

I loved everything about it. I studied for six weeks in Ecuador, and it was just this insane adventure, even on paper. I'm a huge nature person, so being able to live in the Andes mountains for a month and then see the coast and the jungle was extremely cool. The best part for me was probably being there with my group. It was all Ball State students and faculty, and it was this amazing feeling—growing together and forming that bond. By the end of it, we were just so sad to leave. I genuinely feel like I could call every single one of those people my friends because we had that shared experience. And then I loved the experience itself. The culture, all the people I connected with in Cuenca, where we lived. I loved going to class because it gave us space to discuss what we were living in the context of what we were learning, and I just felt very aware of how I was changing and growing even while I was doing it.

Any advice for Ball State students thinking about studying abroad?

I would say that if you have the opportunity, don't let it pass by. Genuinely look into it and then make it happen. Also, take advantage of the scholarship and funding opportunities. I was able to get scholarships from several different sources, including the Rinker Center and my department. I applied for every scholarship I could find, and I got most of the cost of my program paid for just because I threw my hat in the ring for scholarships.





bsu.edu/studyabroad



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