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
(KISS 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

**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

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**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.
Where Can I Go?

Argentina  Australia  Austria  Barbados  Belgium  Belize  Bosnia  Botswana  Brazil  Canada  Chile  China  Costa Rica  Czech Republic  Denmark  Ecuador  Egypt  England  Estonia

Fiji  France  Germany  Ghana  Greece  Guam  Hungary  Iceland  India  Ireland  Italy  Japan  Malta  Mexico  Morocco  Netherlands  New Zealand  Northern Ireland  Norway  Poland  Portugal  Puerto Rico  Scotland  South Africa  South Korea  Spain  Sweden  Taiwan  Tanzania  Thailand  Turkey  United Arab Emirates  United Kingdom  USA  U.S. Virgin Islands  Vietnam  Wales

Programs vary by semester or year. The countries represented here have all been offered in the present, recent past, or are currently in development.
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.
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

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
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.

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.
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.