

Why should your son or daughter study abroad?

You may be asking yourself this question. After all, study abroad was never as popular a choice nor as accessible an opportunity as it is now. Still, it's a complicated decision for students and their parents, involving a myriad of considerations including (among many others) finances, academic and career plans, and the timing of a semester abroad. Though we try to make it as affordable as we can, we understand that going on a global education program represents an enormous investment in time and effort for the family.

One of the Center for Global Education's (CGE) prime missions, of course, is to help students make the most of the opportunities afforded by study abroad. We want them to go abroad fully aware of the enormous opportunity they have, and the potential this experience has for their personal and professional growth. We work to send them abroad with all the necessary tools to reap these benefits.

Our short answer to the question above is that we believe that students need to be engaged with the world. This is reflected in our Mission Statement:

The mission of the Center for Global Education is to provide students with academically challenging study abroad experiences that foster an in-depth understanding of another culture, with the aim of encouraging them to embrace the concept of global citizenship. Being a responsible, effective citizen of the world involves assuming an active role in one's own community and in the larger world; it requires an understanding of the relationship between actions made locally and globally and a commitment to the betterment of people's lives everywhere. Through our study abroad programs, the Center for Global Education strives to provide students with a transformative learning experience that inspires them to live lives of consequence.

When we talk to students, we present three specific reasons why all students should think about global education:

1. A global education program can be the single most transformative experience of their college education. Your son or daughter will develop an ever greater sense of independence, self-reliance and a deeper understanding of themselves, their country, and the rest of the world. Their professors tell us that students who return from abroad tend to have sharpened their academic goals and have a more developed sense of their career goals. Students' GPAs also tend to improve after a study abroad experience.
2. Living abroad as a student, and traveling abroad as a tourist, are two qualitatively different things. The experience of living immersed in a different culture may never come again. Students who have studied abroad, with little variation, refer to their experiences as being the best of their lives...so all students should try to seize this chance while they are able.
3. Nation-wide, about 1% of U.S. college students participate in study abroad programs. Having this experience on their resume will set them apart from 99% of their peers (and their competition) in the global marketplace. One of the realities of "globalization" is that employees increasingly work in cross-cultural environments where a knowledge of the

rest of the world - and specifically how people of different cultures communicate - is more necessary than ever. Employers and professional and graduate schools have recognized this reality and have started emphasizing a set of skills called "global competency": the ability to operate successfully across cultures.

HWS Study Abroad Facts

1. HWS offers study abroad programs that will enhance or complement any major or minor. For more information about specific programs, please see our [webpage](#).
2. An HWS global education program functions in many ways just like an on-campus semester: grades and credits for the courses students take will appear on their transcripts and their performance will factor into their GPA. (But while students' credits and grades work just like they do on campus, their off-campus experience will be anything but typical.)
3. Junior year is a popular time for many students to participate in a global education program. That being said, however, every year sophomores and seniors participate in our programs - even Seniors in their spring semester!
4. The costs of an HWS study abroad program are similar to what students would pay for an on-campus semester. In almost all cases, students pay standard HWS tuition. The room and board fee varies from program to program, depending on the structure of the board plan and the housing type. There is a \$550 administrative fee for all global education programs and students must cover their airfare. However, students abroad generally spend less on books and are not charged the "student activities fee" while they are abroad.
5. All financial aid applies to the student's HWS global education program tuition and fees with the exception of work study.
6. We strongly encourage all students (and parents) concerned that finances may make study abroad an out-of-reach opportunity to speak directly with the CGE. In this short space we cannot provide all the information that might be relevant to each person's unique situation.

What Every First Year Student Should Do

1. Start planning now! HWS global education program applications are due one year before the programs depart. If a student wants to participate in a program in the fall of their Junior year, he or she would have to apply in the fall of their Sophomore year.
2. Visit the Center for Global Education. We are located on the third floor of Trinity Hall. Students can visit us any weekday from 9-5, talk to someone about our global education programs, pick up information and application materials, and make an appointment to meet one-on-one with one of our staff members to discuss their options. While there, students can wander around the Global Visions Gallery - a photography and art gallery made up of student work accomplished while abroad.
3. Talk to their advisers about how a global education program fits into their academic and career goals.
4. Talk to their peers who have been abroad.
5. Keep their grades up. Participation in a global education program is a privilege (just look at the national statistic!) and not a right. These programs have minimum GPA

requirements and are competitive; students should hit the books and start planning how they will integrate their experience into their overarching academic plans. Keep in mind that students must be in good social, as well as academic, standing.

6. Many global education programs have prerequisites that need to be completed before students depart for the program. Students should plan accordingly!
7. Consider studying a foreign language. Language proficiency is a valuable skill in the global marketplace that opens up greater academic and career opportunities. Some of our programs have language prerequisites.

THE GLOBAL EDUCATION PROCESS

Parents, as well as students, should understand the process of finding out about, applying for, and participating in a global education program. This section breaks this process down into four parts: recruitment and application, before students go, while they are away, and when they return.

Recruitment and application process

In the first week of each semester, the Center for Global Education begins to publicize its programs to students. Again, the process is a year long - students will need to apply *one year in advance* of the semester they wish to be abroad. Please note that all programs do not necessarily run every semester. We send letters to all Sophomores inviting them to the General Information Session (see below). We put up posters around campus, post an announcement on the HWS Daily Update web page, and send out emails to students who have previously expressed interest in a global education program. We also table in the student center so students can pick up program information and ask any questions they may have "face to face".

The General Information Session is usually held in the third or fourth week of each semester. At this meeting, students learn about the application process and the programs we are recruiting for. After this portion of the meeting, faculty directors and other program representatives meet with small groups interested in particular programs. Students receive a copy of the *CGE Programs Passport*, application forms and informational brochures about each of the available programs.

Students must apply for their programs before the application deadline, which falls in October for the Fall and March for the Spring. More information about the application process can be found in the *CGE Programs Passport*. Applications received after the published deadline will only be considered on a space-available basis.

Decisions are announced as soon as possible after the application deadline on a program-by-program basis. The office tries to have as many decisions done in time for registration for the following semester as is possible. Please see the *CGE Programs Passport* for more details outlining the criteria on which admission decisions are based. Students will either be accepted, waitlisted or denied for a program. Students who are accepted to a program must submit a non-refundable deposit to the Business Office to secure their place in the program. (If students do not confirm their participation by the date specified in their acceptance letter and there is a wait list, the student will forfeit his or her place.) Students who have been accepted must contact the

Registrar's office for information on how to complete the registration process for their global education program. If a student is waitlisted, there is a reasonable possibility that s/he will receive an offer in time to participate in a particular program, but, of course, this cannot be guaranteed.

Before Students Go

Preparation

The time between acceptance into a program and actually boarding the plane is filled with physical, intellectual, emotional and financial preparation. The semester following admittance to a program is often used to take any necessary course prerequisites. The Center for Global Education will also conduct mandatory *Passport to Success* orientation sessions that will help prepare students for studying and living abroad. The orientation will go over issues such as academics, finances, health and safety, setting goals for the semester abroad and adjusting to a new culture.

Before their departure, students will also receive a handbook covering these and other topics in more detail. The handbooks are program-specific and provide detailed information for the country they are visiting such as finances, flights, housing arrangements, courses, packing, etc. Copies of previous handbooks are available to download on our [webpage](#). **Handbooks for your child's program will be available towards the end of the semester before they depart, when we have all the details finalized. If you child has provided us with your email address, we will also email a copy of the handbook to you.** We encourage all parents to read the handbook, as it explains many aspects of the experience your student will have abroad. For some affiliated programs (i.e. exchanges and those run by our partners abroad in China, India, Japan and Russia) we don't prepare our own handbooks but refer students directly to the detailed guide provided by the partner institution.

The Faculty Director of the program (for faculty-led programs) and staff from the Center for Global Education will meet with students during the semester before they depart. These meetings will be used to make the necessary travel arrangements and health and safety preparations, as well as to explain the application process for entry visas needed for certain programs. Students will also learn about some of the challenges they will face that are particular to the culture of the country they are visiting. It is very important that students attend all of these mandatory meetings.

Students have all received paperwork to fill out for their program (behavior agreement, liability waiver, flight form and medical form), including a comprehensive to-do list with due dates. Students on some programs are also given applications required by the institutions abroad. They were also told to apply for a passport if they do not have a valid one. Students on the larger programs will receive group flight information when it is available. Though the particulars vary from program to program, in general each student will need to do the following things:

- Apply for their passport - students should do this as early as possible!

- Students may want to purchase an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) card, which offers student discounts at various local spots as well as supplemental insurance. This is optional but the insurance coverage that comes with the card includes replacement of passport, emergency evacuation, repatriation benefits, etc. If a student's medical insurance coverage does not include emergency evacuation and repatriation (policies purchased through HWS DO include this coverage), this card is an inexpensive way to get this very important coverage. The students receive a brochure with a list of all the insurance coverage when they purchase the card, which they can do at [ISIC's Web site](#).
- Register for classes for the semester they will be abroad during normal HWS registration.
- Co-sign for HWS housing for their return (Fall programs) or leave preferences with Residential Education (Spring programs).
- Book their flight. On some programs we are able to arrange a group flight and we will let students know if this is the case. However, even in the case of group flights, students or parents must contact the HWS travel agent themselves to make the flight reservation and purchase the ticket.
- Complete and return the following documents by the due dates given to them:
 - Signed Behavior Standards Agreement
 - Completed Medical Report Form
 - Completed Waiver of Liability form with **both your child's and both parents' notarized signatures.**
 - Completed Confirmation of Flight Arrangements form
 - 2 Copies of the student's passport
 - Visa application for countries where we apply for the visa on the student's behalf (We will let these students know if they need to fill out a visa application)
 - Internal and/or housing application (if applicable)
- Spain students and Denmark students on the Child Development program only need to request letter of good conduct from Geneva Police Department.
- Consider the immunizations recommended for each program and decide if it makes sense for your child to have these before departure. Consult the [CDC website](#) for more info. Your home doctor may be able to administer these or you may need to consult a [local travel medicine clinic](#). You can also contact one of the Passport Health offices in Canandaigua, Rochester or Syracuse who provide travel immunizations. Their contact number is: (585) 275-8884. Immunizations are recommended for our programs in Brazil, Central Europe, China, Dominican Republic, India, Ecuador/Peru, Russia, Senegal, S. Africa and Vietnam.
- Apply for a visa or residence permit (per instructions from us) where one is required (Argentina, Bath [optional], Brazil, Brussels, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, France, Galway, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Jordan, Korea, London, Maastricht, New Zealand, Perth, Rome, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Taiwan, Vietnam

and Wales.) We (or the host institution) provide instructions on how to do this so students should wait until they receive instructions. We apply on the student's behalf for Dominican Republic, Rome, New Zealand, Senegal, Switzerland and Vietnam. Note that there may be different requirements for non-U.S. citizens.

- REMINDER: Students abroad in the spring will be off campus when Financial Aid forms are due. All offers of financial aid are for one year only. In order to renew the offer, all required forms must be in the Office of Financial Aid by April 15 - without exception. You or your child must submit all financial aid paperwork by the deadline in order to get full consideration. **Please speak to your son or daughter about this before they leave if they intend to apply for financial aid.** You can consult the [Financial Aid Office's Web site](#) for forms and further information. When you get to this page, click on Renewal Application Process.
- Check with their bank to be sure they have a pin number valid for overseas ATMs. Be sure that they know of any transaction fees. They should also let their bank know they will be abroad so that they do not "freeze" the card when they see transactions outside the U.S.
- Set a spending budget. It's easy for students to overspend if they aren't clear what their budget will be. To help your child set a budget, go to our [website](#). **Click on your child's program and scroll down to the section entitled "Going Abroad with the CGE". This gives specific information about housing, meal costs and spending money recommendations.** Be aware that the fluctuating rate of the dollar may mean that costs have increased by the time your child arrives at the abroad site.
- Check the international luggage size/weight restrictions with your airline. We strongly urge students to be sure that their bags are under these limits. Students should try to carry their bags at least one block before going to the airport!
- If students haven't had a medical exam in the past 12 months, they must have one. Their home doctor needs to fill out the last page of the Medical Form indicating that he/she knows about the planned program/itinerary and feels this is appropriate for your son or daughter. If your child has had a recent physical, the doctor may be willing to sign the form based on that visit. If your child has not had a physical within the last 12 months, they will need to make an appointment with their home doctor and have him or her sign off on the form. If any new medical developments arise after your child has completed your Medical Report form, they must contact us to update their information. We also recommend that students have a dental exam if they have not had one within the last 12 months.
- Obtain a four-month supply of any prescription drugs your son or daughter requires that will cover them for the entire program. Sending medication through the mail is not recommended due to customs regulations and delays, and in some cases, is prohibited. If the pharmacy will not dispense more than a 30 or 60 day supply, you should ask their doctor to write a note requesting the extra amount due to the fact that your son or daughter

will be abroad and will be unable to obtain the medication there. Students must transport the drugs ONLY in the labeled bottles in which they were dispensed. With certain medications (including psychotropic drugs such as Ritalin or Prozac) students should bring a letter from their physician on letterhead stating that they are required to take this medication and stating the dose they have been prescribed. They should carry this letter with them in case they are required to show it. If you will be visiting them and bringing them extra medication, you should carry a letter with you from their doctor explaining why this drug is required, what the dosage is and mentioning that you will be transporting it because they were unable to get a prescription for their entire time away. Students should consider bringing an extra pair of eyeglasses and their eyeglass prescription. Hearing impaired students should bring an ample supply of hearing aid batteries and accessories.

- Check the website or blackboard website established by their Faculty Director if they have one.
- Consider purchasing a money belt or pouch for your child to carry passport, ATM/credit cards, and traveler's checks. Pick-pocketing is a problem in virtually every airport and tourist center in the world.
- **Make copies of passport/visa/ISIC card. Have your child leave copies of all of these with you in case they lose their passports or ISIC card and place other copies in different parts of their luggage.**
- Contact your insurance company to find out the extent of your child's health insurance while abroad as well as the coverage provided by your homeowner's policies for personal possessions. Students may purchase an optional policy through HWS provided by Gallagher Koster if your health policy does not cover them while they are abroad. They must keep all receipts for medical treatment and submit them upon their return (see section below on medical coverage).

Workshops

The time leading up to a program is an exciting time for students. They will attend our orientation meeting to help them prepare for their semester abroad as well as be able to participate in workshops to sharpen their skills in preparation for their global education program. Past workshops have included travel photography and travel journaling.

Safety

Safety is an issue at the forefront of many parents' minds when they think of their student studying abroad. The Center for Global Education has developed a comprehensive safety and emergency response plan and monitors State Department safety bulletins daily. In addition, all HWS programs have local staff, or our own Faculty Directors, on site with the students. In a true emergency, the CGE and HWS reserve the right to cancel or bring back a program in progress.

In the unlikely event this should happen, HWS will make all reasonable accommodations to ensure that students will receive academic credit.

While students are abroad

Communication

For the first time, you may feel like your son or daughter is a little further away than a phone call, email or instant message can reach. **Although many students have email access, it is usually much more limited than they are used to on campus.** They may not be able to instant message at all. And their use of the phone may also be limited by host families to pre-arranged calls or phone cards that they purchase and use at local payphones. You should expect to be able to reach your son or daughter, but you should also expect that this will not be as easy as it is now. While some students abroad are either issued or may choose to purchase cell phones, this is by no means the rule.

Tip: Make sure you have a calendar of your student's program at hand. These are published in the handbook they are given for their program before they leave campus. One of the reasons there might be a lapse in normal communications is that s/he is on a scheduled field excursion or is traveling on break.

Medical coverage while students are abroad

If students require medical treatment while abroad, your health insurance policy may cover them. If this is not the case, and you have purchased either the year-long or study abroad only Gallagher Koster policy through HWS, then they will be covered abroad on this policy. **The student needs to bring their insurance ID card with them.** Normally, students will have to pay for each non-emergency office visit and obtain an official receipt of the treatment they have received with the date of treatment. Then they must present that receipt to the insurance company for reimbursement upon their return. In cases of severe emergency, they will be treated first and billed later. Every attempt will be made to contact parents/emergency contacts if hospitalization or surgery is necessary.

For more information about the student medical insurance plan, visit the Gallagher Koster website at: www.gallagherkoster.com/HWS

Visiting

Your student will be experiencing things completely new to them and many students report back to us that their study abroad experience is the most significant and powerful of their undergraduate education. So it is natural that your student may want you to visit, and vice versa. This can be a great opportunity for you to get an idea of what they are experiencing first hand - something that will help later on when your student returns from abroad.

Tip: Please do not plan to visit your son or daughter when class is in session; they will not be excused from their classes to be with you. Some programs also have required fieldtrips, so you need to plan your visit around these. A good time to visit is during a semester break if they have one (not all programs do), or when the program finishes.

Relating to their experience

The best way for you to think about what your child will experience abroad is to consider the analogous situation of when they first went away to college. Many of the emotions, fears, rewards and challenges are similar. When we do the *General Cultural* orientation with students, we draw this comparison. When they came to HWS, they needed to learn how to navigate an entirely new culture. They had to learn a language (what is "Saga"?, what is a "registration pin number"?, etc), obtain new skills (how to do their laundry, how to access their meal plans) and meet new people. Your student will have to go through all of this again abroad, but with the additional challenge of different social norms and customs (and sometimes a foreign language on top of it.) The process is exciting but also challenging. It can be difficult at times. To best understand what your student will experience, you might like to read the [Getting Ready](#) section of our website.

Some time in the first couple of weeks, you may get a disturbing communication from your child. They may say that they hate it. They may complain about their host family or their living space. They may feel homesick and alienated. Again, you may have received a similar phone call early in your student's first semester at HWS. Often what is needed from you is support and reinforcement. Many students go through periods like this early on in what they later will call the best experience of their college years, if not their lives.

One of the reasons why study abroad can be so challenging is that many students, despite our best efforts to prepare them for the reality of their experience, still go abroad with too many preconceived notions or unrealistic expectations. We try to address the most significant of these at our orientation session. The two areas where students experience the most frustration are email access and housing. As we noted above, people in many countries do not enjoy the level of internet access that HWS students do. That's a reality that we cannot change, though we do our best to make sure that some access is available either at their local host institution or in internet cafes.

In regard to housing, it is difficult to prepare students for the significant changes they will experience in terms of living space, privacy and location. The CGE strives to provide clean and safe housing that is appropriate to the local context. In London or Rome, this means a lot less space than many students enjoy here at HWS. In host family situations especially, students may experience a loss of privacy and creature comforts that they did not expect. They may be sharing a room with a host sister or brother, their access to the phone may be restricted, and they may be asked to take much shorter showers than they are used to. All of these differences are based on economic realities and differences in culture. In general, even in other highly-developed countries, phones, hot water and electricity are much more expensive than they are here. Housing is also more expensive and scarcer, and many families live their entire lives in apartments. Our student housing abroad is safe, clean and comfortable, but students should not expect that it will

be as spacious or as centrally-located as it is at HWS. If there is a genuine safety issue with housing, the Center for Global Education will address the issue. Short of this, however, we tell all students going abroad "Don't expect, accept." Part of the experience of study abroad is understanding the differences in local realities.

Tip: Life goes on while your student is abroad, and they may feel an urge to "catch up" when they return, and may feel guilty that they missed important family events. Keep a record of what happens in your family during the time that your son or daughter is abroad. Though they may be gone the same amount of time that they are normally absent while at HWS, the mental/emotional distance can feel much greater, especially given the potentially fewer opportunities to communicate.

When students return

Reverse culture shock

Students often return to the U.S., their home campus and their families excited to be back and bursting with stories, photos and experiences to talk about. But they may also quickly run into difficulties readjusting to their daily routines, to U.S. culture and even possibly to their families. Though they may not be aware of it, a lot of this "reverse culture shock" has to do with the fact that, while away, they have matured and changed a great deal. Not only do students abroad develop a greater sense of self-reliance, independence and more refined educational, career or life goals, they also return with new ideas and perspectives. They may have developed new values or priorities while abroad, and are not yet sure how to integrate these new modes into their "old lives". The "reentry" process has its rewards; not only do students often tell us that their study abroad experience was the most profound of their lives, they also claim that these experiences have significantly changed the way they live, giving them new direction and purpose. This period of transition takes time and patience from both children and parents, and there are things you can do to help your student along the process.

How you can help

The first thing you can do is learn about reentry and reverse culture shock in greater depth. Read the student resource section on our webpage entitled [*Back from Abroad*](#). In general, you should encourage your son or daughter to:

1. Share and talk about their experiences. They may compare their host country to the U.S. quite often, and the comparison may not seem to paint the U.S. in the best light. This is normal for students returning from abroad. Just as when they are abroad they may often compare ways of doing things with the seemingly more efficient or logical "American way", the process works in reverse when the student is back. A common reaction many students have during reentry is surprise at the overwhelming abundance of different kinds of products available at local grocery stores or malls. This reality hasn't changed while students were away; rather, students have grown accustomed to far fewer choices and are sensitized for the first time to the fact that Americans have so much choice. Many American families eat on the go as they try to juggle busy schedules and separate

obligations for each family member. In your son/daughter's home stay, however, s/he may become used to a sacred meal hour and may find this experience very rewarding (and the lack of it in the U.S. maddening!)

Other common "complaints" students make returning back to the U.S. include how little walking they do or the lack of public transportation. This is a result of their reliance on foot power and public transport to get themselves around their host city. You should encourage your student to explore these differences and the reasons for them, and should try not to be offended by criticism that sometimes seems overly harsh. This is a function of the reentry process and your son or daughter is trying to rectify conflicting ideas in their heads. Try to learn from your son or daughter and understand their reactions. When they are back on campus, they may find their friends are not so willing to listen to endless stories about their abroad experiences, so the more you can listen to them, look at their pictures and talk about their reactions to the U.S., the better.

2. Encourage them to apply their experiences. The worst thing that can happen to a student returning from abroad is that they feel there is no connection between the experience they just concluded and the rest of their lives. The time abroad can start to seem like an unreal dream, a "bubble" that has no bearing on their current and future reality. You can encourage your son or daughter to continue taking classes where they can apply their experiences, be it further language study or history, literature, politics or art classes that touch upon the cultures they experienced. If they miss the food of their host country, encourage them to try to recreate some of this cuisine. There is an abundance of international recipes on the internet. Also encourage them to think about ways to integrate travel to their host country (or travel in general) into their career plans. All of us at the CGE are motivated in part by own experiences abroad, and similarly for many students, study abroad begins a life-long relationship with the rest of the world.
3. Encourage your student to take advantage of some of the reentry programs the CGE offers students returning from abroad. A description of these programs is available in the [Back from Abroad](#) section of our website.

While students are still abroad, we email them a re-entry handbook, which addresses some of the issues they may soon be facing (reverse culture shock, missing the country where they studied, fitting in again at HWS, etc.) and lets them know about the re-entry activities we have available. When students return to HWS, they'll find a "Welcome Back Letter" waiting for them in their mailboxes. The letter will invite them to a Welcome Back lunch held early in the semester. It will also tell them about some of the programs we offer that will help them apply their study abroad experience, including:

- The opportunity to submit their photographs, art and writing to The Aleph: A Journal of Global Perspectives
- a weekly writer's group for students who went abroad and who want to use writing to further explore the experience
- the Global Visions Gallery, which hosts shows of student study abroad photos and art

- the chance to serve the CGE as a Programming Assistant - a paid position
 - the Global Ambassadors program where students can help to keep their own international experience alive by assisting international students at HWS and by helping out with programming aimed at students who are considering studying abroad
 - a career workshop held by the CGE and Career Services for those thinking about making travel a part of their professional life
4. Finally don't be surprised if your student's experiences lead him or her to a brand new career path or a life-long interest in travel. This is often a direct result of the highly satisfying experience abroad and normally opens many new doors to your student.

Resources

[The CGE Web page](#)

We hope this has been a useful guide and has given you greater insight into the study abroad experience.

If you have any questions or would like to talk to a staff member at the Center for Global Education, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

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