Northern Illinois University
Study Abroad Office

Steps to Study Abroad

Semester
Year
Summer
Short-term
Internships

United States of America
PASSPORT
Welcome to the NIU Study Abroad Office

Study Abroad is one of the most rewarding experiences in a college education. With careful planning you can reach your goal of studying abroad.

We have created this checklist to help guide you through the process.

Tip: When you find a program, write the departure date below and use it as a reference in this booklet.

Estimated Date of Departure:
12-6 Months Before Departure

☐ Meet with your Academic Advisor to discuss graduation requirements for your degree program.

☐ Review an Advising Sheet from the Study Abroad Office to determine program countries available in your major/minor area of study.

☐ Based on the advising sheet, pick a region in the world you are interested in studying and research the culture and major cities to familiarize yourself with the area.

☐ Meet with a Study Abroad Advisor to discuss specific programs available in the country/ies that meet your academic requirements.

☐ Complete a FAFSA form for the appropriate academic year, if you have not done so already. (The summer semester is part of the current academic year, not the following year. Ex. Summer 2014 is part of 2013-2014 academic year).

Tip: Even if you do not start your study abroad search a year in advance use this tool as a guide for completing the study abroad process.
9-7 Months Before Departure

- Review program requirements and eligibility. If you don’t make the minimum requirements, now is the time to start working on them.

- Estimate your real financial need for study abroad by comparing the cost of study abroad with the cost of attending NIU. (Visit: http://www.niu.edu/fa/costs/index.shtml for a full breakdown of cost for a semester at NIU)

- Meet with a counselor in the Financial Aid Office as well as the Business Manager in the Study Abroad Office to discuss funding options.

- Start applying for scholarships. Check in the Study Abroad Office for the next “How To Find Money for Study Abroad” presentation. (October & February)

Tip: You can start applying for scholarships before you are accepted into a Study Abroad Program.

Student Financial Aid Office
Swen Parson 245
815.753.1395
finaid@niu.edu
www.niu.edu/fa

9 Months before Departure:
Tip: To find the program that is a best fit for you, it is important to think about what you want out of your study abroad experience and what your goals are.

7 Months before Departure:

- Contact a peer advisor who went on a similar program or studied in the country of interest to you.
- Choose the best program for you and begin the application process on-line with NIU and your study abroad provider. Faculty-directed programs only have 1 application.
- Pay the application fee and complete all application materials. (Note: your application will not be considered without the application fee)
- Make sure you apply well in advance of the deadline because some programs will fill up quickly.

The online application for all programs can be found here:
http://niu.studioabroad.com/
3 Months Before Departure

☐ If you do not already have a passport, visa and other necessary travel documents, make sure you are in the process of getting them.

☐ Research the culture and things to do in your host city and country.

☐ Finish all acceptance paper work for NIU and the Study Abroad Provider.

☐ If you are interested in blogging, now is a good time to set it up and talk about the study abroad experience, from start to finish.

Tip: Allow yourself time to apply for funding, get a passport, and other pre-departure tasks.

U.S. Department of State Country Fact Sheets has great background information about countries. http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/
1 Month Before Departure

☐ Call your bank and credit card companies and notify them of your travel dates and countries you will be traveling in.

☐ Gather funds for essential costs not included in your program.

☐ Make a packing list.

☐ Attend Pre-departure Orientation at NIU.

☐ Spend time with family and friends.

Tip: Search for your program on facebook and join any groups made to connect with other students.
While Abroad

☐ Call your family to let them know you arrived safely.

☐ Financial aid disburses according to the NIU Calendar; there is no special schedule for study abroad students. This means you may receive financial aid after your program begins.

☐ If you are on a study abroad provider program, confirm your courses with the Study Abroad Office registrar.

☐ Make sure you register for the following term’s classes.

Tip: While it is important to keep in touch with your loved ones while abroad, consider spending less time on social media and more time interacting with your host culture.
When you Return

☐ Grades can take up to 6 weeks to be received and processed.

☐ Attend a workshop on how to use your study abroad experience during the job search and interview process.

☐ Volunteer to be a peer advisor to share your experiences with perspective students.

☐ Submit photos to the Study Abroad Office Photo Contest.

Tip: Getting involved is one of the best ways to keep reliving your study abroad experience while helping you adjust back to life in the United States. Keep those experiences alive by sharing them with others.
Steps to Study Abroad

Contact Us:
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