

# A GUIDE FOR **FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS ABROAD**

Being the first in your family to attend college, you may feel that you've already taken a big enough step toward success. Studying abroad does not take away from your ability to succeed in college, rather it can enhance it. Participating in a study abroad program can help you develop new perspectives on academic subjects and real-world issues, achieve proficiency in a foreign language, and enhance cross-cultural understanding. Studying abroad can also teach you more than just another country or another culture; the experience of studying abroad is often cited as a major factor in a student's personal development, in truly coming to know oneself. Students who study abroad tend to graduate at higher rates, have higher overall GPAs and are better problem solvers - all qualities that are sought-after by employers after graduation.

## **RESEARCH OUR PROGRAM OPTIONS**

### **INDEPENDENT OR FACULTY-LED PROGRAMS**

If you choose an Independent program, you would live for a semester or year abroad in another country and take classes at the host university. If you choose a Faculty Led program, you would take a class at BW and travel as a cohort with two faculty leaders to a country for 2-3 weeks at the end of the semester.

### **VISIT OUR OFFICE**

When you're ready and prepared to discuss the topic of studying abroad, come and talk to the Study Abroad office. Our team will be able to give you information on the basics of studying abroad, the breadth of programs available to you, transferability of academic credits, location-specific information and travel advice. Take in all of the information, review the opportunities that fit your academic goals, and discuss possibilities with family, friends and maybe even some other first-generation students you know who have studied abroad too.

## **THINK ABOUT**

### **GOALS**

Define and articulate your reasons and goals for studying abroad. Consider how a program will benefit you academically, professionally, and personally.

### **SUPPORT**

Once abroad, it's important to identify one or two individuals who you can share your experience with. The individuals can be on your program or locals that you meet onsite.

# THINK ABOUT (CONTINUED)

## FINANCES

Make sure you know the costs and expenses associated with your program. For full semester programs, you pay BW tuition, room and board. Summer and faculty-led programs incur additional charges. However, if this is your first time studying abroad through BW and you receive need-based financial aid, you will automatically be considered for a Study Abroad Grant for programs which incur additional charges above BW tuition. Additionally, you are responsible for paying for flights and spending money, so familiarize yourself with the living expenses in the city in which you are planning to study.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Discuss plans with your family. Study abroad may be a novel idea to your family, so make sure you can articulate the academic, personal, and professional benefits of the experience. Talk to your family early on and let them know that they can speak with a Study Abroad Advisor or faculty liaison if they have any questions.
- Speak with other first-generation students to learn about their experiences abroad.
- How long do I want to be abroad?
  - There are programs available for different lengths of time: semester, academic year, and summer. Short-term faculty-led programs are also available.
- How will my study abroad experience fit into my academic plan at BW?
  - Use your Planning Tool to figure out the best time to study abroad. There are programs that will help fulfill major, minor, and core requirements so you can still graduate at your scheduled time. Study Abroad also completes the Experiential Learning and International Studies core requirements.
- How will I make studying abroad affordable?
  - BW offers Study Abroad Grants and Scholarships to qualified students. Many external study abroad scholarships are available, some of which are specifically available to first-generation students.

## EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- IFSA-Butler offers personal stories from first-generation study abroad students (<https://www.ifsa-butler.org/see-yourself-abroad/#section-2>)
- Read a blog about a study abroad experience as a first-generation student (<http://blog.eap.ucop.edu/my-study-abroad-experience-first-generation-student/>)
- Go Abroad free E-book: The First Generation Students Study Abroad Guide (<http://www.goabroad.com/articles/study-abroad/first-generation-students-study-abroad-guide>)

Adapted from Case Western Reserve University, Georgetown University, NAFA: Association of International Educators, Princeton University, and Yale University.



## QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!

**EXPLORE@BW.EDU | 440.826.2231 | 2ND FLOOR STUDENT UNION**

