

November 12, 1998

Undergraduate Study Abroad Through Washington University *The Report of the Study Abroad Task Force*

Mission Statement

As international travel and global interaction, education and communication play an ever greater role in everyday life, our students need to acquire the broad cultural knowledge, the languages, and the practical skills to enable them to participate fully in a global society. To assist in reaching this goal, all qualified Washington University undergraduate students should have the opportunity to study abroad in an academically demanding program to complement courses and experiences provided on the Washington University campus.

Guiding Principles

In order to realize the goal of providing undergraduate study abroad experiences equal in academic quality to work done on campus, the following new regulations are designed to:

1. Require that students plan in advance for the study abroad experience, including consideration of the credits to be earned and how they relate to major and minor programs already selected;
2. Require that the study abroad experience become integrated with the student's overall program of study;
3. Require that students and faculty alike take responsibility for ensuring academic excellence for all study abroad for which Washington University academic credit is being sought.

The ongoing involvement of faculty from every department that allows study abroad is absolutely essential if we are to require that academic activities while abroad must be equal to or more demanding than those offered here on campus. Only if our standards are relatively uniform both here and abroad may Washington University justifiably assign grades for work done elsewhere and assess tuition and fees that are equivalent to on-campus charges.

Basic Guidelines

To implement these principles, we recommend the following:

1. Students may earn full academic credit for study abroad only if they participate in Washington University programs; a complete list of these programs is available from the Overseas Programs office. Students may participate in non-Washington University programs,

but normally such study will not earn Washington University credit. For especially compelling reasons or under extraordinary circumstances, students may seek approval for non-Washington University study programs from the Study Abroad Advisory Board (see below).

It is our goal to be able to award Washington University grades, not just credit, for all programs of study abroad. Departments are encouraged to provide the level of consistent oversight of the relevant overseas programs that will justify and facilitate the award of appropriate grades for study abroad.

2. Normally, students will study abroad during their junior year. In rare circumstances, sophomores or first-semester seniors may be granted permission to study abroad; no student may study abroad during the final semester of a degree program.

3. Students must declare a major before going abroad. Each student who wishes to study abroad must consult both their own academic advisor and the Study Abroad Advisor (defined below) of the appropriate department. These discussions must take place well in advance of the planned semester or year of study abroad, in accordance with application deadlines established by the Overseas Programs Office. (This restriction does not apply to summer study abroad.)

4. As part of the application procedure, students wishing to study abroad must submit a plan of study during that time. This must involve:

- a. Identifying a project and submitting a formal proposal during the semester preceding departure;
- b. Providing a list of courses or projects to be undertaken while abroad.

5. Students must communicate regularly with their advisors while abroad and report to them upon returning, providing their advisors with supporting materials to indicate their success in the designated projects.

6. After returning to Washington University, by the first day of classes of the next semester, each student must submit a project or portfolio of work completed while abroad to the departmental study abroad advisor.

Guidelines for summer study abroad are not so stringent. Summer study must conform to the first item above (full credit only for Washington University approved programs); prior consultation with their academic and departmental Study Abroad Advisors is required if students wish to receive credit from Washington University for the summer work.

Portfolios and Projects

Projects will vary in accordance with the student's interests and with the opportunities for academic achievement afforded by the particular study abroad program. Possibilities include:

1. An individual project developed in consultation with the departmental Study Abroad Advisor that may include a study journal, presentation of an internship project, laboratory notes, or other work that emerged from their study abroad experience.

2. A research project, similar in length of an on-campus term paper, written in the language of the overseas program, if appropriate. Research for the project must have been completed while abroad; substantial papers written for courses abroad may be submitted for this purpose. In some cases, this research may form a part of a student's senior honors thesis.

3. A substantial portfolio of academic work (examinations, essays), or in special cases creative work, completed for courses taken abroad, together with the student's reflections on differences in pedagogy and scholarly methods between Washington University and the institution abroad.

As a way to assist departments in developing their own guidelines for projects to be completed by students during study abroad, the Study Abroad Advisory Board will collect and make available to faculty and students copies of successful examples.

Study Abroad Advisors and the Advisory Board

Each department must designate a Study Abroad Advisor. This faculty person, in consultation with the appropriate other departmental faculty, will develop policies and guidelines for study abroad relevant to their field and discipline. Specifically, this Advisor will designate appropriate course work or other study options and oversee the assignment of faculty who will assist the students in the development and completion of their study plan while abroad.

A Study Abroad Advisory Board will be appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to guide and assist the Overseas Programs Office. Members will be drawn primarily from the Arts and Sciences faculty. Their functions will be:

1. To review the quality of existing Washington University programs on a regular basis;
2. To review requests from departments to initiate new programs or to eliminate or substantially modify existing programs;
3. To review student requests to attend non-Washington University programs in other countries for Washington University credit;
4. To review and approve departmental plans for study abroad projects for majors;
5. To make recommendations to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences about all matters concerning study abroad.

Financial Reforms

The current complex pricing structure for study abroad programs will be revised to a single standard rate after this plan goes into effect. This will allow improvement in administrative efficiency as well as the recovery of administrative and faculty costs required to provide students both here and abroad with equally excellent service. Uniform tuition will provide income to support travel for faculty liaisons; regular, active faculty engagement is

essential if we are to ensure consistently rigorous study abroad academic programs. Tuition all [semester-based] study abroad programs will be equivalent to Washington University on-campus tuition.

Implementation

These policies will apply to freshmen entering in the fall semester of 1999. The modified fee schedule will be applied to programs beginning with the Fall semester of 2001. Departments must designate Study Abroad Advisors by academic year of 1999-00. Departments are urged to develop departmental guidelines and to implement the advising components of this policy as soon as possible. We strongly recommend that advisors encourage students to choose Washington University approved programs and to integrate the study abroad experience with their on-campus academic work, even before it becomes a requirement to do so in order to receive credit.