



International  
Education  
Center

Academic Advising Manual for  
Education Abroad

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# Letter from the Staff

Greetings from the RU International Education Center!

Education Abroad – study, intern, work, volunteer, and service – is a collaborative process. The RU IEC works together with a wide variety of partners to make opportunities available to RU students overseas. Academic advisors comprise an important part of the team needed to connect our students with appropriate academic programs abroad, and the IEC values its partnership with all faculty and professional advisors at RU.

This manual provides academic advisors with a survey of the Education Abroad field, hints to help students integrate study abroad into their RU programs of study, and campus resources that may be used to find out more information about overseas options and sources of financial aid. We present a number of illustrations of how students can incorporate Education Abroad, but these illustrations are just the proverbial tip of the iceberg. Please consider this document a “first step,” rather than the “end-all, be-all” of RU International Education.

This manual has been designed to be a “living document,” and we value input from users that might lead to enhancements and helpful additions. Please feel free to e-mail the IEC at [iec@radford.edu](mailto:iec@radford.edu) with your feedback and suggestions.

Thank you for your continuing collaboration. We look forward to working with you as we prepare students to become global citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Sincerely,

Jon Stauff, PhD  
Director

Teresa Dalton King  
Assistant Director/Immigration Counselor

Mechelle Hypes  
Administrative Assistant



# The Benefits of Education Abroad

As more research in international education becomes available, we find a mountain of evidence to support the benefits of *good* education abroad programs. In a [2004 study published in \*Transitions Abroad\*](#), Mary Dwyer and Courtney Peters from IES found that their program alumni reported the following:

- 97% felt that their study abroad experience had “served as a catalyst for increased maturity”
- 87% stated that their study abroad semester had “influenced subsequent educational experiences”
- 98% said that their time overseas “helped [them] better understand [their] own cultural values and biases”
- 76% “acquired skill sets that influenced career path”

Albert Bandura’s research in social learning theory emphasizes the value of observation and modeling in developing behavioral strategies at work and in life in general –hence the value of “experience” in our everyday lives. As Phil Gardner, Linda Gross, and Inge Steglitz state in [a 2008 research brief](#), “Study abroad programs are inherently experiential....Studying abroad intensifies learning in context as students must adapt to new cultural realities, implicitly or explicitly.” Education abroad programs have the potential to reinforce many of the learning outcomes upon which our faculty place value on the RU campus.

What are some of the benefits of education abroad?

- **Increased self-confidence** – Going abroad allows students to gain more confidence in themselves. They will improve and refine decision-making and problem solving skills.
- **Learn about a different culture** – Being abroad will allow students to immerse themselves in a culture that is different from their own. They will learn about new foods, new holidays, new customs and new ways of life.
- **Learn about their own culture** – Not only will they learn about a different culture, but they will also learn more about their own culture. By studying abroad they are able to hear what other people think about their own culture and acquire a basis of comparison for future consideration.

# The Benefits of Education Abroad

- **Learn a language or increase their language skills** – Going abroad is a great way to learn a language or perfect their language skills. Students will be immersed in a language that is not their own. Knowing a second language can be a great benefit when applying for jobs.
- **Set themselves apart from other job seekers** – During their final year of college students will begin looking for a job. Having experience overseas can put study abroad students ahead of other candidates, especially as study abroad often provides students with unique stories from their overseas adventures.
- **Create lifelong friendships** – During their time abroad, students will meet many new people from that country, other universities and even from their own university. This can lead to having friends around the world as well as an international network of future colleagues that could yield career benefits in future years.
- **See a different part of the world** – There are universities around the world where students can study. Radford has several exchange programs and has affiliations with several education abroad providers. With these there are many opportunities to see a part of the world that students have only read about in a book.

For more information about Education Abroad:

- [NAFSA—Association of International Educators](#)
- [Forum on Education Abroad](#)
- [Institute of International Education](#)
- [Council on International Educational Exchange](#)
- [International Student Exchange Program](#)
- [NACADA—Links for Study Abroad Information](#)

Please feel to contact the staff at the [RU International Education Center](#), 105 Cook Hall, at 540-831-6200 or [iec@radford.edu](mailto:iec@radford.edu) for more information.

# Education Abroad Terms

## General Terms:

**Study Abroad** – Is when a student goes outside the geographical United States to study and obtains university credit from their home institution. Studying abroad can consist of class room study, research, inter- or externships, and service learning. Increasingly one finds the term “education abroad” used as a more comprehensive classification.

**Program Providers** – Organizations who help students find study abroad programs outside of their home institutions. The program providers that the Radford University International Education Center works with are ISEP, CIEE, and IIE. There are several more providers that students can explore on their own. (A list of program providers can be found on page 7)

## Types of Programs:

**Semester Exchanges** – Exchange programs allow RU students to pay regular semester tuition and fees (and sometimes room and board fees as well) and study overseas at one of RU's partner institutions in another country. Exchange programs are competitive - there are limited spaces in each program - so advanced planning is important.

**Semester Programs** – Students work with program providers to find programs around the world that best fits their needs. These programs can last for a semester up to a full academic year.

**Summer and Maymester Programs** – These are shorter programs than the Semester Exchanges or Semester Programs. Often times these programs are affiliated with Radford University and are taught by Radford faculty. Summer Programs can last up to 5 weeks; where as the Maymester Programs are usually 2 to 3 weeks long.

## Other Terms:

**Culture Shock and Reverse Culture Shock** – Culture shock is the psychological discomfort of adjusting to a new culture. Feelings may include helplessness, hopelessness, loneliness, homesickness, slight depression, irritability, and boredom. Reverse culture shock is the same as culture shock except it is the adjustment of coming back into your own culture after being away.

**Island Programs** – Programs where the students home institute establishes a center abroad.

**Direct Programs** – Programs where students are directly enrolled into the an international University.

# Program Providers

Here is a list of affiliated education abroad “program providers” which RU uses on a regular basis:

- **AIFS**
- **AIU**
- **AsiaLearn**
- **AustraLearn**
- **Central College Abroad**
- **CIEE**
- **Estudio Sampere**
- **EuroLearn**
- **International Studies Abroad**
- **International Student Exchange Program**
- **Salzburg College, Austria**
- **Semester at Sea**
- **Study Abroad Italy**
- **Universidad Internacional, Mexico**

Here are other reputable program providers:

- **Abroadco**
- **Academic Programs International (API)**
- **Arcadia University**
- **CAPA**
- **CIS - Center for International Studies**
- **Denmark’s International Study Program**
- **HECUA**
- **Institute for the Int’l Education of Students (IES)**
- **IFSA-Butler University**
- **School for Field Studies (SFS)**
- **School for Int’l Training (SIT)**
- **The Education Network Abroad (TEAN)**
- **University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC)**

The International Education Center maintains a Study Abroad Resource Library in Cook 108 for students to use. This facility has print and online information about many study abroad programs not on this list. Please feel free to visit Cook 108 and refer students to these resources.

We are able to work with students and faculty to identify appropriate study abroad programs for students with particular needs. Using the IEC Course Approval forms, students can pursue a wide variety of study abroad programs that meet the academic standards of the University. The IEC enjoys this collaborative process and seeks to work together with advising centers and faculty to help our students achieve their study abroad goals!

# Working With Students Who Want to Go Abroad

Here are a few tips that may help you along the way when working with a student ready to start an overseas adventure.

- **“Developmental advising” = “study abroad advising!”** The IEC staff spends a lot of time talking to students who express an interest in studying abroad or interning abroad. We need to determine whether the student has the academic background to succeed abroad, but we also need to measure the student’s emotional maturity level and general fitness for international study. This takes a great deal of patience, and there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach in study abroad advising. It is important to listen and steer the student in the right direction based upon what we hear. Advising checklists are important, but they really play a secondary role in the study abroad advising process.
- **Mention education abroad early and often!** During the first advising appointment, even during first-year student orientation, we encourage you to mention education abroad. Please mention the possibilities and the benefits that education abroad offers students. You might have resources around the office that the student can look at while waiting for his/her advising appointment. Please consider working with the International Education Center to set up programs that can inform your advisees of the opportunities to go abroad.
- **Don’t feel like you need to know everything.** The International Education Center (IEC) is here to help you. The IEC keeps current on all the programs and application processes that students will need to know when wanting to go abroad. The IEC has a resource library (108 Cook Hall) in which students can come and research different programs that might interest them. If there is ever a question that you do not know, refer the student to the IEC which is located in 105 Cook Hall. The staff there will be able to assist the students in finding the answer to their question.
- **Help students begin the planning process.** As an academic advisor, you are one of the first people that a student might begin talking to about going abroad. One of the first steps in planning, is to ask the question “why”. Why does this student want to go abroad? Is it to experience other cultures or get a different view of the education center? Have their friends studied overseas? These are all great questions to ask. It is important to remember that it is never a good reason to go abroad to escape from personal problems. Whether the student is having problems at home or with other students, going abroad will not take care of these issues. Those problems will be waiting for them when they return. Please encourage students to discuss their plans with parents, family or significant others. These groups of people are going to be the strongest support a student can have when making this decision. It is important to get them involved in the process. These are both ways to help start the planning process with a student who wants to go abroad.
- **Use this manual.** This manual was designed with you, the advisor, in mind. We have included information that we feel will help you advise students who are thinking about education abroad. However, this manual does not contain everything. When in doubt call the IEC or send the student over to obtain the unknown information

# RU IEC Website

# intlprog.asp.radford.edu

<http://intlprog.asp.radford.edu/>

Websites are always a “work-in-progress,” but we have redesigned the IEC website to increase functionality and access to information. The best place for students to get started would be:

**How to Study Abroad:** <http://intlprog.asp.radford.edu/faq.htm>

We have divided this page into four sections:

- [Getting Started](#)
- [Application Process](#)
- [After Acceptance into Study Abroad Program](#)
- [Pre-Departure Program and Cultural Re-Entry](#)

**Getting Started:** Students searching for available study abroad programs can consult four different links: an country-by-country index, a list of all Maymester/Summer/Spring Break programs led by RU faculty, a list of semester-long programs—both exchanges and affiliated programs, and a list of summer programs provided by affiliates and other study abroad program providers. Students looking *only* for Maymester/Summer programs led by RU faculty can get a specific listing, while those student exploring all options will find the country-by-country index most useful.

**Application Process:** This section directs students to the [online RU study abroad application](#), GPA requirements, and information about deadlines.

**After Acceptance into Study Abroad Program:** We have provided information about deposits and payments as well as information about RU financial aid. Students using other study abroad programs will need to follow the instructions of their individual programs, and our staff is available to help students through this process. Course approval forms are needed for students not participating in RU-sponsored programs, so it is important for advisors to work with students to make sure their academic experiences abroad meet their degree requirements!

**Pre-Departure and Cultural Re-Entry:** The RU IEC requires that students participate in a pre-departure program to prepare them for the rigors of study abroad and life in a different country. We also have information here about how to prepare to “re-enter” American society!

We have also provided information about [scholarships and financial aid resources](#), [international internships and service opportunities](#), and [testimonials](#) from former students.

Information for RU Faculty/Staff may be found on the [Faculty](#) page. This includes procedure for developing new faculty-led programs, establishing exchanges, and finding funding sources for program development or individual faculty research.

If you or your advisees have any questions, please feel free to contact the RU IEC at 540-831-6200 or [iec@radford.edu](mailto:iec@radford.edu), Cook 105.

# Radford University

## Exchange Programs

<http://intlprog.asp.radford.edu/exchanges.htm>

The International Education Center and Radford University work closely with several institutions around the world to provide exchange opportunities for Radford students. An exchange program allows RU students to pay regular semester tuition and fees (and sometimes room and board fees as well) and study overseas at one of RU's partner institutions in another country. Exchange programs are competitive - there are limited spaces in each program - so advanced planning is important. Each program's website has information about possible courses for students to take. For more information on any of the programs listed below please visit the International Education Center website or stop by 105 Cook Hall.

**International Student Exchange Program**—ISEP offers RU students exchange opportunities at 140+ universities in 40 countries. There is truly something for everyone in ISEP, where most students pay RU tuition, room, and board, then buy an airline ticket and fly to their study abroad destinations. RU welcomes students from ISEP institutions in exchange. Many programs feature English-language coursework. For more information: <http://intlprog.asp.radford.edu/isep.htm>—this is a detailed page with step-by-step information to guide people through the process, including a search engine for courses that students should find useful.

**Middlesex University**—Middlesex University is a multi-campus university in London, England, with over 25,000 taking a wide variety of courses toward undergraduate and graduate degrees. Middlesex may sound like a big university, but its campuses are about the size of RU, so RU students feel at home there. To find out more about the Middlesex Exchange please visit <http://intlprog.asp.radford.edu/middlesex.htm>.

**University of Blaise Pascal**—the University of Blaise Pascal, located in Clermont-Ferrand and Vichy, France, enrolls over 14,000 in over 250 different programs. Students interested in French as a Foreign Language may take French courses there at six different levels, and students fluent in French have the entire curriculum available to them. To find out more about the University of Blaise Pascal exchange please visit <http://intlprog.asp.radford.edu/blaisepascal.htm>

**University of Kassel**—RU's exchange program with the University of Kassel in Kassel, Germany, is an opportunity that is great for German majors...but not only for Germany majors! Almost 17,000 students call Kassel (pop. 200,000) home, and the city is a great jumping-off point to many places in Germany and all of Europe. There are some course taught in English and you may also have the opportunity to combined your studies with an internship. If you are interested in learning more about this experience please visit <http://intlprog.asp.radford.edu/kassel.htm>

(Continued on next page)

# Exchange Programs

## Continued

**Kansai Gaidai University**—Kansai Gaidai University, located in the Osaka suburb of Hirakata, offers RU students the opportunity to study abroad in Japan without having any Japanese language knowledge. RU students pay RU tuition/room/board changes and travel to Japan, while KGU sends a student to RU in his or her place. For more information please visit <http://intlprog.asp.radford.edu/kansai-gaidai.htm>

**The National Taiwan Normal University**—Students interested in perfecting their Mandarin should consider participating in the RU-National Taiwan Normal University semester exchange program. NTNU, with over 10,000 students, is located in Taipei, the capital of Taiwan, so students will have all of the trappings of urban life available to them at NTNU. More than 1,000 international students on campus gives NTNU an global flair. NTNU has provided a few perks to RU students willing to study there for a semester or a summer. To find out more please visit <http://intlprog.asp.radford.edu/ntnu.htm>

**University Catholique de l'Ouest**—RU has maintained an exchange program with the Universite Catholique de l'Ouest in Angers, France, for almost two decades. Students who have studied French through the intermediate level may be considered to participate in this exchange program, which brings UCO students to RU in the fall and sends RU students to France in the spring. Students need to have studied French previously and should be juniors. <http://intlprog.asp.radford.edu/angers.htm> provides more information about UCO.

**University of Glasgow**—RU and the University of Glasgow have an exchange relationship that allows RU students to pay RU tuition and study in Scotland. The relationship was founded in the Department of Music, where Prof. Bruce Mahin's program in Music Technology works closely with both music and engineering faculty at Glasgow to provide RU students with fascinating study opportunities in their junior year. Students in other majors may also be considered for the Glasgow exchange. Generally students apply by March 1 for the following Fall semester. Should exchange places still be available in the spring semester, students will be given the option to apply by October 15. Please consult <http://intlprog.asp.radford.edu/glasgow.htm> for more information.

If you did not see an exchange program that interested your advisee, please consult the affiliated and other study abroad program providers that the RU IEC has listed on its website and in this booklet.

# Working with Program Providers

“Program providers” are useful in extending a wide variety of academic opportunities to RU students overseas, without the need for RU to invest in the overhead of establishing such programs.

Each program provider has its own website with access to all of the important information our students need. Many have detailed course syllabi and schedules for each program, while others direct students to the host university’s website to consult schedules and course listings.

Advising these students might become exasperating, as each website has its own intrinsic logic! We really recommend that “patience is a virtue” in dealing with these sites—there is no other way around it.

At the end of the day, the students should be able to provide you with the following information for potential overseas courses:

- Course title and description
- Course outline or syllabus
- Number of hours the course meets
- Credit hours assigned to the course

With this information, you and your faculty colleagues should be able to help students determine how well such courses fit into the students’ degree programs. Should this information not be adequate, each program provider should be able to connect you to more information.

Once you have enough information to make a determination of the RU equivalent, please help the IEC by filling this information into the Course Approval Form that the student will provide you. Once this form is completed and signed by you, the IEC will register the student for INST 489, and the student will be billed appropriately for the selected study abroad program.

# Registration

**Semester Program Students:** Students studying abroad for a semester or a year need to submit a Course Approval Form provided to students by the IEC to the Registrar in order to register for INST 489, the registration marker for study abroad students. This form has five pieces and requires the signatures of the IEC director, the academic advisor, the student, and a representative of the Financial Aid office (for those students who receive financial aid). We also ask students to have department chairs sign off on the RU course equivalencies.

Students accepted into semester study abroad programs will receive this form from the IEC as part of a second stage of bureaucracy. We send the students to their academic advisors at this stage to work out their schedules, as study abroad program providers often require students to submit a list of courses to be taken abroad as part of their official acceptance of the admissions offer.

We advise students to seek approval for up to six courses offered abroad, as schedule changes do happen overseas, and students are often panicked by the thought that the new class they are adding will not be accepted as transfer credit at home.

The student will submit the form to the Registrar's office, and the student will be registered for INST 489. INST 489 allows the student to maintain full-time student status at RU while overseas, and financial aid will continue to flow to the student's account as a result. Upon the student's completion of the study abroad program, the IEC will receive a transcript and send that to the Registrar with any necessary supporting materials to help the Registrar interpret the document. (Some schools have a A-B-C-D-E-F grading scale where a "D" is "satisfactory," or the equivalent of a "C" in the USA.)

At times we do need to deal with situations where the student is already on the ground at the overseas campus and needs a ruling on new course. We try to handle that via e-mail (and sometimes Facebook, in the Web 2.0 era in which we live!), and most of the time this is not a major problem.

Students overseas sometime comment that they struggle to find RU academic assistance while they are abroad. This is particularly the case when students are registering for the next semester's coursework at home. Now, we encourage all students to maintain an open line of communication with their academic advisers at RU, but we also understand how advising centers are swamped during registration season. At times the IEC may send a gentle reminder to advising centers about the needs of a certain student, and we encourage academic advisers to work together with the IEC to determine the best way to serve these students who are studying abroad for the semester.

**Maymester/Summer program students:** Most RU-sponsored faculty-led program students will be registered by the department leading the program. Students in non-RU programs will follow the same course of action as the semester programs students.

Question? 540-831-6200 or [iec@radford.edu](mailto:iec@radford.edu)