

Be a Study Abroad Advocate

Why is it important for academic advisors and the study abroad office to work together?

Study abroad has far-reaching benefits, including personal, academic, and professional development. But, in order for study abroad to be a reality for many students, they often need the support and assistance of faculty and academic advisors to help them build time and course opportunities into degree plans.

Berkeley Study Abroad views advisors as crucial advocates in helping students to be properly informed about the opportunity to study abroad and successfully integrate that experience into their course of study. How can you help make this happen?

We ask for your support in doing the following:

- Encourage the exploration
- Encourage the conversation
- Identify potential courses
- Address the myths
- Develop and lead a faculty-led study abroad program
- Connect with us

Encourage the Exploration

Advisors play a key role in encouraging study abroad. Early planning is essential for helping a student integrate an international experience into their academic plan. During advising sessions:

- Help students make a course plan which will best meet their curricular needs.
- Discuss specific semester or academic terms that may be best suited for study abroad (i.e. Engineering or Pre-Med requirements, completion of specific courses before studying abroad, etc).
- Discuss courses that may only be offered during a specific semester on campus, which would interfere with study abroad during that semester.
- Encourage your students to stop by the Berkeley Study Abroad office in Stephens or to make an appointment to talk to a study abroad advisor. We will follow up and help them find a program that fits most student needs, with advanced planning.

Encourage the Conversation

- Do your students discuss international subject matter in their classes or have to fulfill an international studies breadth requirement? Remind students that they can get a first-hand glimpse of these subjects by living and studying abroad.
- If you have had academic or personal experiences abroad, share your own story of how the international experience has impacted your academic endeavors, personal goals, and perspective.

Identify potential courses

- Course pre-approval is another critical aspect to alleviate potential barriers to students exploring study abroad. Students may ask you for advice about what classes they can or cannot take abroad and what requirements they need to fulfill. Your guidance is necessary to help students plan for coursework to enroll in while abroad.
- Each department has the authority to pre-approve courses that could be applied to satisfy student core or elective requirements. You can assist students through this process by helping them complete the required paperwork to obtain approval for their proposed study abroad coursework prior to beginning their program.
- If department chairs require additional information (e.g. course syllabi, contact hours, recommended credit conversion, etc.) or guidance to approve course equivalencies, please contact our office.

Address the myths

- An important step in promoting study abroad is making them aware of their options. Many students don't know that they can study abroad, don't think they can do it with their major, or assume it's too expensive for them. If we help students get the facts about studying abroad, they may discover that they can study abroad.

Develop and lead a faculty-led study abroad program

- We value the partnerships with academic departments in promoting study abroad opportunities. Each summer over 400 students participate in Summer Abroad programs directed by UC Berkeley faculty. If your department is interested in developing a Summer Abroad program please send an email to Tracy Weber, Assistant Director of Program Development & Operations at tweber@berkeley.edu.

Connect with us

We invite all academic advisors to learn about study abroad and the importance of this experience for UC Berkeley students. The more you know, the more you can share with your students. We encourage you to review the information on the Berkeley Study Abroad [website](#) and provided in this packet and share it with your students.

Please don't hesitate to contact our office or stop by the study abroad office to talk to a study abroad advisor and pick up materials to share with your students.

Berkeley Study Abroad "Best Practices" Examples of Successful Collaborations

Later in the toolkit we have included a section on Berkeley Study Abroad's collaborations within the Berkeley campus community. We encourage you to view the examples of how other departments have served as advocates for study abroad.