



Office for International Study

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Top 10 Study Abroad Questions, Answered

1. WHEN CAN I GO ABROAD?

Most students study abroad at some point during their Junior year, but students are allowed to study abroad in their Senior year as well.

2. HOW WILL I PAY FOR MY SEMESTER ABROAD?

Students studying abroad generally pay the same comprehensive fee they would pay as if they were on campus. The student is billed the Smith comprehensive fee (tuition plus room and board), and Smith will cover tuition and some costs associated with your program. This is true regardless of whether the study abroad program charges are more or less than the Smith comprehensive fee. Whether you regularly pay \$0 or the full tuition to attend Smith, that remains the same for your time abroad. If your financial aid package includes a campus work award (i.e. work study), it will be removed for the semester(s) that you are studying abroad. Additional loan funding may be available through SFS to replace your cancelled campus work award. Please contact loanhelp@smith.edu for more details.

Personal costs incurred while studying abroad are your own responsibility, but in many cases, there are stipends or grants available to help students; for example, food, housing, or commuting stipends may be available to students whose programs don't cover these costs. Students with financial aid may also be eligible for an airfare stipend.

Read more about [costs and tuition](#) here.

3. HOW SHOULD I PICK MY PROGRAM?

Great question! There are several [Smith Programs Abroad](#) and over 100 [Smith-Approved Programs](#) that students can choose from. Students can browse available programs, read descriptions, and find program-specific information [in SITES](#).

We know there's a lot to choose from, and it can feel overwhelming. But just remember: there are no wrong questions in studying abroad. Your experience is what you make of it! And if you feel overwhelmed, have any questions, or just want to talk it through with someone, we're always here to help you. You can reach out to us at studyabroad@smith.edu or schedule an appointment with the [Study Abroad Peer Advisor](#).

4. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SMITH PROGRAM ABROAD AND A SMITH-APPROVED PROGRAM?

The Smith Programs Abroad are run and hosted by Smith College, with a Smith-like curriculum. These programs all have a language requirement and credits earned at these programs are not considered transfer credit (a great option for transfer students and Ada Comstock Scholars). Smith-Approved Programs are study abroad programs run and hosted by other Universities (American or international) or by a study abroad program provider. Smith has pre-approved over 100 programs for students to choose from- these can range from hiking in the rainforest in Cambodia with 15 other students to enrolling in a London university for the semester. Program requirements and experiences will vary widely.

5. HOW DO I APPLY FOR SMITH APPROVAL?

You can apply for approval online [in SITES](#). Applications for a Smith Program Abroad are due on the **first Monday of February**, and applications for all other Smith-approved programs are due on the **third Monday of February**. Students apply during their sophomore year, and may apply for Smith approval for up to two programs. Find [more information about applying for Smith approval here](#), and [more about eligibility requirements here](#).

Please note that this is how to apply for Smith approval to study abroad, not for program-specific applications. Applying to go abroad is a two-step process, with one component being the application for Smith approval. Students also need to complete a separate application for admission into their specific program; however, students don't need to wait for Smith approval to begin this process.

6. HOW LONG CAN I GO ABROAD FOR?

Many students go for a semester, but you can study abroad for a full academic year!

7. WHAT'S A PETITION, AND DO I NEED ONE?

If you'd like to study at two separate programs over the course of the year, if you don't meet the 3.0 GPA requirement for Smith approval, or if you want to study at a non-Smith approved program, you need to submit a petition along with your application. Students who hope to petition should plan to meet with the Dean or Assistant Dean of the Office for International Study by December of their sophomore year. [Read more about the petition process here.](#)

8. DO I NEED TO STUDY A LANGUAGE BEFORE I GO ABROAD?

A lot of the time, yes! In most cases, Smith requires you to be "proficient" in the local language of your host country- especially if that language is taught on campus. If Smith does not offer courses in the language of your country, you are required to study that language while abroad. There are a few exceptions, though- [check out our website for more information on how many semesters you should plan to study your language.](#)

9. DO I NEED TO DECLARE MY MAJOR?

Yes! Students are required to have declared their major before applying for Smith approval (in the February of their sophomore year). Students will need the support of their Major Advisor in creating a plan that will outline how they will complete graduation requirements (including major requirements, outside of major requirements, and credits).

However, students should not feel that they need to take courses for their major during their time abroad. Many students will take a mix of major and non-major courses while abroad, similar to what they might do at Smith.

10. CAN I STUDY ABROAD OVER THE SUMMER OR DURING J-TERM?

Yes! Students are welcome to study abroad during their breaks. You don't need Smith approval to go, and you don't need to pick one of the Smith-approved programs. However, there is no guarantee that your credits will transfer. If you're relying on your credits transferring, make sure you give yourself plenty of time to apply for credit approval.

Students are responsible for all costs associated with summer or interterm travel, but there are scholarships available. [Check out our website for more information on scholarships, transferring credits, and more!](#)