

Financial aid for a study abroad student

Financial Aid Services

The amount of financial aid you get for your term abroad depends on:

- The amount of financial aid you qualify for at your home campus.
- The price tag on the study abroad program.
- How committed your college is to promoting study abroad opportunities.
- Whether or not the program you are interested in is approved by your college and will advance you in your degree.
- If you are taking at least a half-time course load.

If you already receive financial aid and have already completed your FAFSA form for the academic year in which you intend to study abroad, **you won't need to submit another one.** However, if you've never submitted a FAFSA form before, use the steps below to apply.

Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa. Enter Valencia's School Code (006750) as a school who will receive the results of your FAFSA and allow at least 2 weeks for your form to be processed. Review the [FAFSA Tutorial](#) provided by the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB)



When it comes to federal aid, your school **can't deny you aid** just because you're participating in a study abroad program.

But in order for those funds to transfer, you have to meet certain requirements.

Your study abroad program must be approved for credit by your school, you must take courses that advance you toward a degree, you must study at least half-time, and you must meet the usual eligibility restrictions for federal aid.

If you are interested in a program that costs more than your usual tuition, you may be able to receive an increase in your Federal Pell Grant.

Generally, for financial aid to be "portable" to a study abroad program, the student must carry at least a half-time load at the foreign institution and receive credit for the program toward his or her degree.

The study abroad program must advance the student toward a degree and not merely be providing an enriching experience.

There may also be other eligibility restrictions, depending on the financial aid program. But as a general rule, many students will be able to take their Title IV funding (Pell, Federal Direct Loan and Direct Parent PLUS Loan) overseas with them.



STUDY ABROAD

If the study abroad program is approved for credit by the school, and the student meets the usual eligibility requirements for federal aid, the school is not allowed to deny financial aid to the student just because he or she is participating in a program of study abroad. Institutional aid, however, is subject to the school's own policies.

- Students who participate in study-abroad programs that cost more than the usual cost of attendance for their school may be able to get an increase in their Federal Pell Grant to help cover those costs.



Some Myths and Facts About Study Abroad Financial Aid:

Myth: My financial aid office and counselor don't understand study abroad.

Reality:

In fact, financial aid specialists don't necessarily need to understand study abroad, just study abroad budgets. It is just a matter of presenting as detailed a budget for your program as possible, and the financial aid specialist should be able to answer your questions.

Don't try to ask the financial aid specialist study abroad questions—that's what your study abroad advisor is there for—but do ask finance questions.

Myth: I can't afford to study abroad because I'll lose my financial aid for the time I'm abroad.

Reality: Universities and colleges are required by federal law to continue to disburse funds to eligible students participating in approved programs.

As in all regulations, there are some areas left open to interpretation, but the basic idea is that you should be able to use your federal aid.

Be sure to ask your aid counselor about the rules and procedures of using your aid to study abroad, and be sure to clearly explain what type of program you will be participating in.

Myth: I'll automatically get my regular aid for study abroad. I won't need to do any additional paperwork to receive my aid for study abroad, especially if it's a program sponsored by my own campus.

**Reality: There is always more paperwork!
Make sure you understand two things:**

- a) Which part of the additional paperwork you are responsible for completing, and
- b) How much of the paperwork (if any) your study abroad advisor and financial aid counselor will do on your behalf.

Pay attention to deadlines.



Myth: I'll get all of my aid ahead of time so I can pay the deposits before I leave, and pay other fees as soon as I start my study abroad program.

Reality: Federal laws will not allow loan monies to be released more than about 10 days before the academic program begins.

Most universities use their own semester start dates, even if a student is studying abroad. For example, this means that for a summer program, you will not have your summer loan money in March or April to pay for program deposits and such.

Your funds will most likely be disbursed to you near the beginning of your home university's summer term.

Myth: Loans I expect to take out will cover all my costs.

Reality: Federal loans have limits on how much a student can borrow per year. For example, the maximum Federal Direct loan a student can borrow is \$5,500. This amount may fall well short of the cost of your study abroad program costs. Even private bank loans may restrict the amount you are able to borrow, depending on your credit history and other factors (such as whether or not you have a cosigner). If you decide to use loans to finance your study abroad program, you need to carefully consider how the additional debt will affect your future plans.

You should also keep in mind that you will need a certain amount of money for “start-up costs” and other expenses not covered by loans, such as application fees, deposits, and personal travel.

The End.

Please see a financial aid specialist if you have any further questions.