

WVU Honors College

Study Abroad Policies and Procedures

The Honors College at West Virginia University enthusiastically encourages students to pursue study abroad options over the course of their career. The global engagement skills that students can hone during study abroad experiences help them:

- Develop general skills in adaptability and flexibility;
- Work more effectively in a range of international or intercultural settings;
- Attune themselves to the currents of global changes and the political, cultural and economic issues that arise;
- Navigate global organizations and business activities under a wider range of contexts and cultural norms;
- Appeal to future employers seeking out competencies in a global business environment;
- Communicate more effectively in a broader range of settings and in more diverse settings.

Therefore, the Honors College offers honors credit for academic study abroad experiences, and sanctions the development of thesis credits in conjunction with significant, immersive study abroad experiences of a full semester or more.

In order to take advantage of these opportunities, students must use the following forms to petition for honors credit, or establish coordination with the honors thesis experience **in advance of the student's departure for the study abroad experience.**

Please follow the following steps:

1. Consult with your academic advisor to develop a course of study appropriate to your academic goals.
2. Contact the WVU Office of International Programs (336 Stansbury Hall, 304-293-6955, <http://internationalprograms.wvu.edu/>) to learn more specific details. **You must coordinate with OIP to earn WVU credit for study abroad experience.** They will help you:
 - Apply to and arrange your payment for study at the University or college in which the study abroad will occur.
 - Organize logistical matters such as passport, visas, medical insurance, travel insurance, etc. (N.B. OIP does not complete this paperwork on your behalf).
3. Coordinate transportation to and from your place of study.
4. For semester exchanges, apply for transient credit/credit transfer through the WVU departments whose courses match with those you will take while abroad. (OIP will help you begin this process).
5. Apply for honors credit using the attached forms.

Study Abroad and the Honors College:

Students should be aware that the Honors College will ensure that the appropriate notation is made on the student's record in the Honors Office for Honors credit for the semester(s) of study abroad and will assist *as possible* in seeing that credit for study abroad is appropriately recorded on the student's official record in the Office of the University Registrar (OUR). In addition and when needed, the Honors College will certify to the institution of study abroad that the transcript of grades earned at WVU is accurate as submitted – if such submission occurs through the Honors Office.

Honors Credit for Study Abroad Experiences

You can earn honors credit for any WVU sanctioned study abroad experience, whether full-semester or full-year exchanges, faculty-led programs, international research, or international internships.

- Programs up to one semester long (including faculty-led programs with travel from 1-6 weeks) can earn up to 3 credits toward the completion of Honors College Requirements.
- Programs that extend an entire academic year are eligible for up to a maximum of 6 credits toward the completion of Honors College Requirements.
- Programs that involve immersion in the host culture for one semester long (including 6-week summer sessions) or longer can form the basis for the honors thesis.

In order to receive honors credit, students must complete the following work:

- A daily (or near-daily) journal or blog that documents your experiences abroad in an intellectual context. See further guidelines below.
- An extended reflective paper (8-10 pages) or an innovative and substantive equivalent (subject to Honors College approval), above and beyond the work already required for the course of study. The reflective project should in some significant way put your cultural experience abroad into conversation with a cultural, professional, or intellectual issue current in your field of study. See further guidelines below. **Typically this project is due within one month of your return to the U.S.**

In order to use the study abroad experience as the honors thesis requirement, students must complete the following work:

- A daily (or near-daily) journal or blog that documents your experiences abroad in an intellectual context. See further guidelines below.
- Complete an extended reflective paper (8-10 pages) or an innovative and substantive equivalent (subject to Honors College approval), above and beyond the work already required for the course of study. The reflective project should in some significant way put your cultural experience abroad into conversation with a cultural, professional, or intellectual issue current in your field of study. See further guidelines below. **Typically this project is due within one month of your return to the U.S.**
- Submit a *significant* piece of academic work from your credit-bearing activities abroad. The project might be a paper or project submitted for a class, an internship project, or some other evidence of your academic work abroad. *You should be able to make a case in the application for how this course is crucial to either your course of study or your long-term goals, or alternatively, propose how a less-central study-abroad experience (e.g. language immersion) might be consolidated with additional relevant coursework at WVU.* **Typically this project is due within one month of your return to the U.S.**

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Study Abroad Journal and Reflective Project Guidelines

Journal Requirement:

“A daily (or near-daily) journal or blog that documents your experiences abroad in an intellectual context.”

- Daily or near-daily: entries should be regular and substantive. Credit cannot be granted for journals that skip entire weeks, average significantly less than three entries per week, or feature a preponderance of excessively brief entries.
- The form of the journal can appear in many ways: a traditional handwritten journal or diary, a typed series of entries in Word, a blog, or even a vlog. Subject to **prior** approval, the Honors College will consider other options for recording your impressions.
- “Documents your experiences abroad in an intellectual context”: While you should absolutely keep track of the great meals you have, the great friends you make, and the amazing scenes you take in, don’t forget to keep track of your academic work you are doing as well. And whenever possible, use your journal to try to make sense of your experience: how do you account for experiences that seem strange to you, expand your sense of cultural norms, or give you a broader sense of the global nature of your experience?

Reflective Project Requirement:

“The reflective project should in some significant way put your cultural experience abroad into conversation with a cultural, professional, or intellectual issue current in your field of study.”

More specifically, the reflective project should:

- Go well beyond summary of thoughts recorded in the journal.
- Avoid broad generalizations about the people of an individual culture, make an earnest effort to understand cultural differences in a way that does not make comparative evaluative judgments between cultures (e.g. “we are nice, they are mean”; “Their culture is bad at X”).
- Reveal in some way an engagement with both the cultural differences observed and the student’s academic work, although it need not be written from the disciplinary standpoint of a specific discipline: e.g. if the student is an engineer, the paper need not be about engineering issues in India, though it certainly *may be*.
- Consider (directly or indirectly) how the study abroad experience met the objectives for global engagement listed on page 1 of this application.
- Fill roughly 8-10 pages (roughly 2500-3500 words).
- Typically, follow the conventions of an academic essay, including organization, grammar, syntax, and citation. However, alternative formats may be proposed in the Honors College Application for Study Abroad Credit.