

STUDY ABROAD: FAMILY GUIDE



STUDY ARBOAD: WHAT FAMILIES NEED TO KNOW

This guide is intended for parents, guardians, and family members of Kutztown University students, and who want to learn about the process of studying abroad, while also addressing questions and concerns about studying abroad. While each student is responsible to complete the application requirements, family support, together with support from the Office of International Education and Global Engagement (International Office) can make a more successful study abroad experience.

Whether your student's goals for studying abroad are academic, personal, cultural, service learning, or professional, the impact of study abroad will last a lifetime. For many students, studying abroad can be an experience that is truly life changing.

THE VALUE OF STUDY ABROAD -----

"Although we live in a highly connected world, we sometimes forget that there are other ways to live life and other perspectives. Introduce yourself to the world and really branch out." Kenny – studied abroad in Chile.

Studying abroad has been proven to support students' personal, academic, and professional development. Positive impacts include:

- Develop intercultural competence.
- Introduction to the increasingly important global economy
- A new academic environment to learn new listening and communication skills and styles, as well as to potentially learn a new language.
- Real world experience in travel and leadership skills, including dealing with ambiguity, pivoting when plans change, troubleshooting when necessary, communicating in a foreign environment and handling situations that require teamwork
- Promoting personal development by fostering independence, maturity, self-confidence, and flexibility
- Improve academics, career and professional development, and graduate school options
- Encounter new ways of thinking about the world and problem solving.
- Develop meaningful relationships from various parts of the world.
- Increase the appreciation of home, family, and friends.
- Create networks to explore a global career.

Studying abroad pushes students out of their "comfort zone," this increases adaptability to new environments, problem-solving skills, and self-confidence, all skills needed for their future careers.

THE STUDY ABROAD JOURNEY-----



Advising



Application



Pre-Departure



While Abroad



Re-Entry

Advising: At this stage, students meet with International Office staff to learn about the study abroad journey, program options that fit with their goals, financial resources. They meet with a Study Abroad Advisor to talk about their program's classes, financing, housing, insurance, and more! For most programs, students complete a Study Abroad Advising Checklist to ensure they have all the important information about their selected program.

Note: If students are only interested in participating on a KU-Led program, they get advising directly from the Program Leader and are not required to complete a Study Abroad Advising Checklist.

Application: Students complete an application to study abroad on MyGlobalKU. Students must apply to and get approved by KU before applying directly to an external program.

Pre-departure: Students prepare all logistics for their program and travel such as secure housing, classes, purchase flight tickets, secure visa (if applicable), attend Pre-Departure Meetings, and more. Students meet regularly with the International Office to complete pre-departure paperwork.

- **Communication with other Kutztown offices:** The International Office facilitates communication between students and the Housing Office, the Registrar's Office, Student Accounts, and the Financial Aid Office on behalf of accepted participants accepted for study abroad.
- **Ongoing Support:** Kutztown students are supported throughout their study abroad journey. Students have access to the 24/7 Emergency Number, as well as ongoing check-in meetings.

While Abroad: Students confirm their arrival, finalize classes, provide the International Office with their in-contact information and other items. Staff will meet with the student through zoom to check on the student's overall well-being and adjustment to a new country.

Re-Entry: Study abroad transcripts and transfer credits are processed. Students are given additional resources for reflecting on their study abroad experience and can also learn about opportunities after graduation abroad!

RESOURCES-----

[MyGlobalKU](#) is a great resource for students and family members as it provides publicly available information on the following:

- Programs (Academics, Costs, Dates, Student Life, etc.)
- Study Abroad Advising Resources
 - Study Abroad Advising Workbook
 - Study Abroad Advising Handbook (Policies, eligibility, etc.)
- Financial Resources
 - Advising Budget Worksheet (Used to breakdown and compare costs)
 - Basic Financial Aid Information
 - Budgeting Resources
 - External Scholarship List
- Health and Safety Resources
 - Health and Safety Handbook (Insurance, preparation tips, logistics tips, emergency protocols and contact information)

HEALTH & SAFETY-----

The absolute safety of any individual traveler can never be guaranteed, however the International Office has established protocols to help minimize risks and respond to concerns.

The Office of International Education and Global Engagement...

- Provides a regularly updated Study Abroad Handbook which details out all health and safety information, emergency procedures, insurance information (benefits, claims, etc.), tips for preparation before travel as well as tips for while abroad travel, general logistics considerations (money, phone/electronics, packing, etc.), and many other topics.
- Provides a Study Abroad Orientation program. The Orientation Health & Safety content summarizes key health and safety information from the Study Abroad Handbook. During pre-Departure meetings, students review final program logistics information, are briefed on cultural awareness, and focus on their personal, academic, or professional goals.
- Supports students in pre-travel preparation regarding their physical and mental health. Students are requested to disclose all potential health concerns prior to travel on their application. This allows the International Office to help determine medications are allowed in-country, that necessary health services are provided at the host location, and so the participant feels comfortable traveling.
- Evaluates third-party providers and university partners for on-site emergency protocols and availability of health services and reviews them with students.
- Provides a comprehensive international health insurance plan. The preferred international health insurance vendor may change from year to year but will always have a minimum level of coverage and benefits. More details can be found in the Study

Abroad Handbook and on MyGlobalKU. **Note:** Unlike *health* insurance, international *travel* insurance beyond what is offered on the KU plan, is not required for international travelers. Students may wish to look into if the KU plan has the type and amount of travel insurance coverage that is comfortable for them.

- Helps students create individual emergency communication plans during the study abroad application process for high-risk locations and for those interested in preparing one. Topics covered include how to handle disruptions to WiFi and/or telephone service while abroad, what to do in case of lost or stolen money and/or important documents, the importance of notifying and seeking help from local, on-site contacts, and the importance of letting a designated person know about travel and return plans if leaving the host location. Students are advised to prepare an emergency kit and set aside some emergency cash to allow self-sufficiency for 72 hours.
- Monitors a 24/7 emergency support line through the Study Abroad Emergency Phone (01-484-610-8080). This phone line accepts calls, texts, as well as WhatsApp messages/calls at any hour of the day. Students may leave a message, report an emergency, and/or request assistance from the staff. **Note:** Families/friends are also requested to let the International Office staff know as soon as possible if they become aware of a student health or safety concern or have a student health update to convey.
 - The International Office maintains emergency contacts for each student abroad.
 - An emergency communication plan and International Crisis Management Team is in place at KU for health and safety incidents that occur while students are abroad. KU conducts emergency response drills with Program Leaders and Kutztown campus stakeholders to plan for incidents.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT-----

As parents, guardians, family members, spouses, and/or friends have a front row pass to all the excitement, tribulations, worries and successes that are part of the student's college education. For many students, studying abroad can be the most rewarding and memorable experience in college. Embarking on the study abroad experience requires thought, planning, attention to detail and decision-making skills. Having a student leave home to study abroad can be scary, but knowing they will learn so much about themselves, in a completely new place, is encouraging for their personal and professional development. Your steady support and encouragement can make all the difference in helping a student make study abroad a reality and create a successful education abroad experience.

You can support the study abroad participant by:

- Allowing your student to take charge of planning and preparing for the experience of study abroad as much as possible. Since they will need to be able to navigate issues abroad, allowing them to handle the 'easy' preparation part while in the U.S. with our staff, can build their confidence. Prompt them with questions but allow them to take the lead.

- Encouraging the students to ask a lot of questions or clarify any concerns they have. We cannot fully support the participant if we don't understand the full picture of concerns or worries.
- Helping students understand the financial aspects. This may be the first time they manage their own budget (especially for longer programs) or even the first time they use a credit-card.
- Not *over*-communicating while they are abroad. If you are video calling on a daily basis, that is taking time away from the participant engaging with the host culture, locals, other program participants, and the host location! We encourage that communication occur about once-a-week unless there are other personal or logistical reasons for additional communication.
- Appreciating the value of study abroad. Encourage them to reflect throughout the planning, preparation, and after returning. The Re-Entry events the International Office hosts are just as important as the Advising meetings!
- Practicing patience when they return from their program. Students will be very excited to talk about all the things they did or explored while abroad and it can get tiring after a while. Reflection is such an important process of study abroad re-entry. We want to encourage each participant to be able to articulate the skills and experiences they had, so they need practice telling their stories.

SUMMARY-----

Whether you plan to visit your student while they are abroad or plan to cheer them on from home, the International Office wants to provide you with information so that you can best support them. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns:

Office of International Education and Global Engagement (International Office)
Old Main 24 (E-Wing)
15200 Kutztown Road
Kutztown, PA, USA 19530

General Business Hours: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Main Office Phone Number: 610-683-4939

Study Abroad Email: studyabroad@kutztown.edu

Emergency Line: (USA Code: +001 or +01 or +1) **484-661-8080**

Emergency App: **WhatsApp – Kutztown International**