Overview

Do you know you want to study abroad but don’t know how to get started? We created this timeline to guide you through the steps of the study abroad process. This is merely an example of the ideal application process and may vary by program location. Students are often able to apply closer to their program start date and, in some cases, after the application deadline.

Getting Started

Exploring your program options: (approx. 8-12 months before your program starts)
- Contemplate and reflect on goals for studying abroad (academic, career, and personal)
- Explore programs on the USAC website and/or in the USAC catalog
- Research countries and cities of interest
- Meet with academic and study abroad advisors to discuss your plans to study abroad
- Talk with USAC Peer and Program Advisors about programs that interest you
- Speak with program alumni about their experiences
- Apply/renew your passport, if necessary (your passport should be valid 6 months after your intended return date). See US Department of State website: http://travel.state.gov/passport

Choosing and applying for a program: (approx. 6-10 months before your program starts)
- Review application procedures and make certain you meet eligibility requirements
- Apply online at: http://usac.unr.edu or through your home university’s application process, if different (paper applications are also available in the catalogs)
- Submit supplemental application materials (i.e. deposit, transcript)
- Start a financial plan: research scholarships, encourage family/friends to give monetary gifts for birthday and holidays, meet with your financial aid advisor
- Work with USAC Scholarship Advisor to apply for scholarships you might be eligible for; refer to USAC Financial Aid and Scholarships document
- Request faculty recommendations for scholarship applications, if needed
- Meet with academic advisor to confirm study abroad plans and discuss course selection
- Ensure required paperwork is submitted to your home university study abroad office

Preparing for your Study Abroad Experience

After acceptance: (approx. 4-6 months before your program starts)
- Review information on your USAC Student Gateway account and submit required documents to your USAC Program Advisor
- Begin the visa application process, if applicable (refer to instructions and deadlines provided by your USAC Program Advisor)
- Set a reminder for payment deadlines and finalize your budget (see USAC Budget Sheet for estimated costs); start tracking exchange rates that may impact your budget
- Complete all home university study abroad requirements and paperwork
- Research flight options and costs (group flight option available on most programs)
Continued research and preparation: (approx. 1-3 months before your program starts)

- Continue to research country and city where you will be living and follow relevant news online; purchase or borrow a guidebook for additional information/recommendations
- Research climate at your program site and make a packing list, including culturally appropriate clothing and any household items you may need
- Purchase airline tickets, if you haven’t already done so
- Use the participant list from your USAC Student Gateway account to start contacting your fellow classmates
- Review information for your country on US Department of State (http://www.state.gov/travel/) and CDC (http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/) websites
- Visit your physician, optometrist, and dentist to discuss any medical issues, obtain required immunizations, and fill any required prescription medications, if needed
- Attend pre-departure orientation, if offered at your home university
- Ensure you have a credit and/or debit card that can be used overseas and inform banks and credit card companies of your travel plans
- Register for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) through the US Department of State: https://travelregistration.state.gov (and get the app too!)
- Become familiar with the US Embassy closest to your program site

Final arrangements: (week of your departure)

- Get cash in the currency of your program site for immediate arrival needs
- Copy all important documents and credit cards to leave one copy at home and take one with you abroad (i.e. passport, other photo ID, credit cards, etc).
- Prepare travel file to hold important documents (i.e. passport, plane tickets, Arrival Update); share information with a key contact person at home, such as a parent
- Re-confirm airline and arrival transportation arrangements
- Compile a list of emergency, program, and friend contacts (phone numbers, email, mailing address)
- Say your goodbyes and get ready for the experience of a lifetime!

Maximizing Your Experience Abroad

While abroad:

- Keep a journal and/or blog to document and share your experiences
- Take pictures and label them as you go
- Stay in touch with your academic and study abroad advisors

After returning home:

- Refer to the alumni resources section of the USAC website: http://usac.unr.edu/information/alumni/default.aspx
- Complete the appropriate program evaluations, if not done on-site
- Submit a review of your study abroad program on www.studybroad101.com and www.gooverseas.com
- Ensure transcripts are sent to your home university, complete the Transcript Request Form, if necessary
- Attend re-entry programs, if available, to reflect and share your experiences with others
- Consider being a Peer Advisor or volunteering to be a resource to prospective students; see if your university has a USAC Ambassador program
- Add your study abroad experience to your resume
- Ready to go abroad again? USAC offers returning student discounts on select programs in addition to Legacy Scholarships for family members of alumni.