

# PARENTS' GUIDE

## TO STUDY ABROAD



CENTER FOR  
GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

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# Introduction

So, your student is considering studying abroad--or, maybe they have already submitted their application. You likely have a lot of questions, which is understandable! As you read this guide, keep in mind that your student's health and safety are our top priorities. Studying abroad can be one of the defining moments of a student's undergraduate career, during which they learn skills that will help them in their personal, professional, and academic lives. At RMU, we strive to make studying abroad more affordable than you likely think it is, while still helping students graduate on time.





# Faculty-Led Education Abroad Programs (FLEAPs)

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FLEAPs are short-term programs abroad designed just for RMU students. Over 100 students typically take advantage of this opportunity in any given year.

## Who goes on a FLEAP?

FLEAPs are open to RMU students of all majors and of all class standings who have at least a 2.5 cumulative GPA. At least two RMU faculty and/or staff members accompany the students on the program, including the instructor of the course. Additional RMU faculty/staff members are added to FLEAPs as the number of students on the program increases, in order to support student safety and other program logistics.

To ensure students have a positive experience while studying abroad, students must also adhere to the RMU Code of Student Conduct, both before and during their experience abroad. CGE reviews all applications from students with sanctions on their record resulting from a violation of the Code of Student Conduct; in some cases, violations and/or sanctions may impact a student's ability to participate in a program.



## **Where do FLEAPs go?**

The RMU FLEAP offerings vary year to year, based on which faculty members wish to teach which courses in which countries. In recent years, FLEAPs have gone to every continent except Antarctica. The location of a particular FLEAP is decided by the faculty member based on the connections between course content and site visits possible in the host country.

## **When do students go abroad on a FLEAP?**

The majority of FLEAPs run during the spring semester. The course may be during the first half of the spring semester, during the second half of the spring semester, or during the entire spring semester. The abroad component takes place either during spring break or after finals week in May. The RMU nursing program to Ecuador often runs additionally in August and November.

## **How long is a FLEAP?**

FLEAPs range in length from 10-14 days.

## **How much does a FLEAP cost?**

RMU's model for short-term, faculty-led programs is significantly more affordable than many other universities' programs. At RMU, the 3-credit FLEAP course (or, in some cases, two 3-credit FLEAP courses) is one of their regular spring semester courses, which means that program tuition is captured in their regular spring flat-rate tuition charge. RMU students pay the same tuition for anywhere from 12-18 credits during a single semester, and the 3 credits (or, in some cases, 6 credits) count toward their 12-18 credit spring course load.

Aside from tuition, students are responsible for:

- FLEAP program fee (see next page): typically \$3,000-\$4,000, depending on program location and length
- Some meals while abroad
- Costs for free-time activities, such as museum tickets
- Souvenirs
- A valid passport that expires at least 6 months after the last date of the FLEAP (\$145 + \$15 for photos)
  - How to apply for a passport: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/need-passport/apply-in-person.html>
- In rare cases, a visa (typically for international students)



The \$3,000-\$4,000 program fee includes:

- Round-trip airfare with the group from Pittsburgh International Airport
- Accommodations abroad
- Transportation to/from official program activities while abroad (e.g. train, bus, taxi)
- Some meals while abroad
- International insurance
- Entrance fees and tickets that are part of the program

### **What is the refund policy if my student chooses not to go?**

The first \$250 of the program fee is non-refundable should your student choose not to participate. As we get closer to the start date of the program, less and less money is refundable, as we make purchases in advance on your student's behalf. We will do our best to refund as much as possible, but in many cases, we are unable to recover money that has already been paid out to airlines, hotels, museums, and other organizations.

### **Are there any scholarships my student can apply to?**

Yes! The CGE offers small scholarships through a competitive application process. Students can find more information on the **FLEAP page of our website**. Scholarship applications are due in December for Spring programs, and students are informed of their scholarship status prior to the final payment deadline.

WLMP students are able to apply their WLMP study abroad scholarship to a FLEAP, but must make the \$500 deposit using their own funds.

Unfortunately, most external study abroad scholarships require a longer program length than the 10-14 days of a FLEAP. On the rare occasion we hear of a scholarship that students are eligible for, we pass the information along to them as we learn about it.





## **When is everything due?**

Here is a typical spring semester FLEAP application and payment timeline:

September: Spring FLEAPs announced

End of October: applications are due

Mid-November: notification of acceptance to program

Late November: \$500 deposit and Health Form are due

Mid-December: first payment is due (ranges from \$500-\$1,500, depending on program)

Late January: final payment is due

Payments can be made online by credit card at [rmu.edu/cgepayment](http://rmu.edu/cgepayment).

## **What will my student learn?**

Each FLEAP is attached to an RMU course. FLEAP courses cover a variety of disciplines and vary year to year. Some students choose to take a course in their major or minor, while other students take a course that fulfills an RMU core course requirement (like Humanities or Literature) or an open elective.

The content of a FLEAP course is geared toward the country or countries of the study abroad component. Students also learn intercultural communication skills and other skills that employers value, like problem solving, decision making, adaptability, independence, and a tolerance for ambiguity.

## **My student isn't ready to go abroad. How will you help them prepare?**

Students prepare for their FLEAP in several ways.

Since the FLEAP is part of a spring semester course, they meet their professor and their fellow FLEAP participants in the weeks leading up to the study abroad program. During this time, their professor will provide them with information like travel logistics, behavior expectations, and cultural considerations.

All FLEAP participants are also required to attend a pre-departure orientation shortly before they leave on their study abroad program. This orientation goes over important health and safety information, with an emphasis on situational awareness and the importance of the buddy system.



## How can I get a copy of my student's itinerary abroad?

Program details are developed by the faculty leader, CGE, and partner organizations in the months prior to the departure date. The faculty leader will share a day-to-day itinerary with participating students once all details are finalized; this is typically 1-2 weeks prior to departure. If you wish to see a copy of the itinerary, you should ask your student to share it with you once they have received it.





# Semester Abroad Programs

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A semester abroad is a surprisingly affordable way for an RMU student to immerse themselves in a different culture while making progress toward their RMU degree. Between 20-30 RMU students participate in a semester abroad program each year.

## **Who goes on a semester abroad program?**

RMU students must have a 2.5+ GPA and at least 45 credits completed at RMU prior to studying abroad for a semester, and in most cases, they cannot study abroad during their final semester prior to graduation. A petition process is in place for students who do not meet these requirements, such as transfer students who wish to study abroad before having 45 credits completed at RMU or students who wish to study abroad during their final semester. Most majors can study abroad for a semester if the student begins to plan their semester abroad early enough. However, some majors (Nursing and Education in particular) are more challenging to plan an entire semester abroad due to the sequential nature of courses at RMU and the need to complete certain courses at RMU (like clinical rotations for Nursing majors). We are happy to meet with students in all majors, but we may recommend a summer program or a FLEAP instead, depending on the student's major.



To ensure students have a positive experience while studying abroad, students must also adhere to the RMU Code of Student Conduct, both before and during their experience abroad. CGE reviews all applications from students with sanctions on their record resulting from a violation of the Code of Student Conduct; in some cases, violations and/or sanctions may impact a student's ability to participate in a program.

### **Where can a student spend a semester abroad?**

RMU has an approved list of semester abroad programs in two dozen countries around the world on 6 continents. These programs have been evaluated for academic fit with RMU's majors, cost, and student safety. For the full list of approved programs, see our **Semester Abroad page here**.

Regardless of which country an RMU student studies abroad in, all of their courses will be conducted in English, unless they choose to take an introductory foreign language course or want to take a content course taught in the local language.

### **When do students go abroad for a semester?**

Since students are not eligible to study abroad until after they have completed 45 credits at RMU, the earliest they are typically able to go abroad is spring of sophomore year. Students are then able to go abroad from sophomore spring through senior fall.

Some semester abroad programs have similar semester dates to RMU. Other programs' dates are significantly different from RMU, particularly in the southern hemisphere and in German-speaking Europe. Some late-start spring programs and early-start fall programs run into the summer and can affect summer internship plans.

In some cases, students can study abroad for two semesters, particularly if they have space for several open electives in their checksheets. These can be two consecutive semesters (such as an entire junior year abroad) or two non-connected semesters. Additionally, students can spend both semesters in one location or in two different locations, depending on interest and academic options. Occasionally, a program will be able to offer an internship course during the second semester if a student spends two semesters in a row in the same location.

## How much does a semester abroad cost?

While a semester is the longest option for RMU students to study abroad, it is surprisingly affordable. The cost of a semester abroad varies by location, but typically, costs end up being similar to the cost of a semester living on campus at RMU. Some programs offer housing that is so affordable due to the low cost of living there that students can end up saving a bit of money over a semester living on campus at RMU, though we work with students to make sure that their study abroad program is a good financial and academic fit for them.

For a semester abroad, an RMU student pays:

- RMU tuition and fees, with their financial aid package typically applying just like they're on campus\*
- Housing abroad (\$1,200-\$5,500, depending on the program)
- Meals abroad (costs vary widely, depending on cost of living and student preference for cooking, cafeteria, and restaurants)
- International insurance (\$80-\$400, depending on the program)
- Flight (\$500-\$2,000)
- Passport, if they don't already have one (\$150)
- Visa, if necessary (\$0-\$500)
- Books and supplies
- Local transportation
- Personal expenses and independent travel

*\*All students should speak to their **RMU financial aid counselor** to understand how their financial aid package applies to a semester abroad.*

## Are there any scholarships my student can apply to?

Yes! The CGE and the **Office of Scholar Development** help students to identify and apply to various scholarships to help fund their semester abroad experiences. Students can find more information on the Scholarships page of our website. In particular, there are scholarships for students with high financial need (Pell Grant recipients) and students who wish to study certain foreign languages abroad, though scholarships are not limited to these students. There are sometimes additional scholarship and grant opportunities available directly through a student's study abroad provider.

WLMP students are able to apply their WLMP study abroad scholarship to a semester abroad.



## **What is the application process like, and when is everything due?**

There are two applications involved in a semester abroad: the RMU application and the study abroad program application.

Students should meet with an RMU study abroad advisor no later than the start of the semester prior to their desired study abroad program, though they are welcome to have their first meeting as early as fall of their freshman year. The earlier your student starts to plan to study abroad, the more options they will have. Their study abroad advisor will explain the application process to them when they meet, and you can read more about the application requirements on our [Semester Abroad webpage here](#).

The study abroad program application is typically filled out online and can usually be found on the study abroad provider's website. In some cases, however, the study abroad provider or the RMU study abroad advisor may send the application link directly to the student via email when it is time to fill it out.

RMU applications are due by the end of September for a Spring Abroad program and by the end of March for a Fall Abroad program. Program applications are typically due in October and April, but dates vary by program.



## What will my student learn?

RMU students are responsible for discussing their study abroad plans with their academic advisor to make sure that they are taking the courses they need to stay on track for graduation. The CGE recommends that students plan to take a combination of major courses, RMU core courses, and open electives while abroad, just like they often do on campus.

Students are required to get approval from the appropriate RMU department head for each of the courses they plan to take as part of the application process. They also get additional courses approved to allow them flexibility when it comes time to register for classes, which often happens after they are already abroad. Just like at RMU, students abroad sometimes have to adjust their course schedules because a course they want is full, canceled for underenrollment, or conflicts in the timetable with another class they want to take. They can seek approval for additional courses once abroad, if necessary.

While we hope that students are able to gain a new perspective into their major while studying abroad for a semester, taking elective courses abroad is a great way to explore topics that aren't taught at RMU. Some of the elective courses that have been approved for RMU students in the past\* include:

- Foreign language courses, including Afrikaans, Arabic, French, German, Irish Gaelic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Thai
- Food, Culture, and Lifestyle under the Tuscan Sky
- Games of Thrones: Gender, Power and Identity, Ireland and the Wider World
- The History and Culture of Japanese Martial Arts
- Innovation Management in European Context
- Introduction to Second Language Acquisition
- Introduction to Vertical Dance and Wall Running
- Post-War British Pop Culture
- Queer Studies and LGBTQ Life in London
- Sculpture in Clay
- Sicily Against the Mafia
- Travel Writing
- Women in Africa

*\*Note that these are not pre-approved courses for RMU students. Each student must get approval for all of their courses for their semester abroad program.*



**My student isn't ready to go abroad. How will you help them prepare?**

Students prepare for their semester abroad in several ways.

An RMU study abroad advisor meets with all semester abroad students one-on-one (unless students choose to attend a meeting with a friend going on the same program).

Prior to the first meeting with an advisor, students fill out a pre-advising form, which includes a section where they indicate their comfort level with various program aspects such as accommodation style and whether they prefer classes with local students or with other study abroad students. This opens up the conversation with the advisor about the types of programs that might be a good fit for the student, both academically and in terms of the kind of experience they are ready for.

All semester abroad students are also required to attend a pre-departure orientation during the semester before they leave on their study abroad program. This orientation goes over important health and safety information, with an emphasis on situational awareness and the importance of the buddy system. Students are also encouraged to do their own research on the culture of the country they will be going to, with resources we show them how to access.

Finally, when a student arrives abroad, they also participate in an on-site orientation. In some cases, this is an extension of an online pre-departure orientation done by their program provider before they left the US. On-site orientations vary by program but almost always include health and safety information specific to the program location.





# Summer Abroad Programs

Summer abroad programs are popular with RMU students, especially those who don't want to miss out on an entire semester on campus for various reasons, such as academic requirements, leadership roles, or athletic seasons.

## Who goes on a summer abroad program?

RMU students must have a 2.5+ GPA and at least 45 credits completed at RMU prior to studying abroad over the summer. A petition process is in place for students who do not meet these requirements, such as transfer students who wish to study abroad before having 45 credits completed at RMU. **All** majors can study abroad over the summer! Summer study abroad programs are a great option for:

- Students who have majors with a strict sequence of courses that make a semester abroad difficult to plan (such as Nursing and Education)
- Student athletes who cannot go abroad during the fall or spring semester
- Students with other commitments on campus during the fall and spring semester, such as Residence Life Community Advisors (CAs) or students with leadership positions in various student organizations
- Female sophomores and juniors with at least a 3.0 GPA who have never been out of the U.S. or Canada--encourage your student to talk to us about this \$5,000+ scholarship opportunity!



To ensure students have a positive experience while studying abroad, students must also adhere to the RMU Code of Student Conduct, both before and during their experience abroad. CGE reviews all applications from students with sanctions on their record resulting from a violation of the Code of Student Conduct; in some cases, violations and/or sanctions may impact a student's ability to participate in a program.

### **Where can a student spend a summer abroad?**

For a summer abroad program, the options are wide open. Students can choose to study abroad in any country with a Level 1 or 2 Advisory through the Department of State. (RMU does not permit study abroad in countries with a Level 3 or 4 Advisory.) Of course, your student's study abroad advisor will help them narrow down their options to find a program that is a good academic and financial fit.

### **When can students go abroad for the summer?**

Since students are not eligible to study abroad until after they have completed 45 credits at RMU, the earliest they are typically able to go abroad is spring of sophomore year. Students are then able to go abroad from sophomore spring through senior fall, including the summers before junior and senior year.

Occasionally, students want to study abroad during the summer after their senior year. These students will not be eligible for as many scholarships and grants as students who have not yet graduated, but many summer study abroad programs are open to recent graduates, and RMU can help support students as they apply for this option.



## How much does a summer abroad cost?

When an RMU student studies abroad over the summer, they are responsible for the full cost of the study abroad program. This money is paid directly to the study abroad provider, and students pay no money to RMU.

For a summer abroad, an RMU student pays:

- Study abroad program fee, which usually includes housing abroad (\$3,000+, depending on location, length of program, and number of credits)
- Meals abroad (costs vary widely, depending on cost of living and student preference for cooking, cafeteria, and restaurants)
- International insurance (\$80-\$400, depending on the program)
- Flight (\$500-\$2,000)
- Passport, if they don't already have one (\$150)
- Visa, if necessary (\$0-\$500)
- Books and supplies
- Local transportation
- Personal expenses and independent travel

## Are there any scholarships my student can apply to?

Yes! The CGE and the **Office of Scholar Development** help students to identify and apply to various scholarships to help fund their summer abroad experiences. Students can find more information on the Scholarships page of our website. In particular, there are scholarships for students with high financial need (Pell Grant recipients) and students who wish to study certain foreign languages abroad, though scholarships are not limited to these students. There are sometimes additional scholarship and grant opportunities available directly through a student's study abroad provider.

WLMP students are able to apply their WLMP study abroad scholarship to a summer abroad.

RMU participates in the **Vira I. Heinz Program for Women in Global Leadership**. Each year, up to 3 RMU women receive this scholarship for a minimum of \$5,000 for summer study abroad program at least one month in length.



## **What is the application process like, and when is everything due?**

There are two applications involved in a summer abroad: the RMU application and the study abroad program application.

Students should meet with an RMU study abroad advisor no later than the January prior to their desired summer abroad program, though they are welcome to have their first meeting as early as fall of their freshman year. The earlier your student starts to plan to study abroad, the more options they will have. Their study abroad advisor will explain the application process to them when they meet, and you can read more about the application requirements on our **Summer Abroad webpage here**.

The study abroad program application is typically filled out online and can usually be found on the study abroad provider's website. In some cases, however, the study abroad provider or the RMU study abroad advisor may send the application link directly to the student via email when it is time to fill it out.

RMU applications are due by the end of February for a summer abroad program. Program applications are typically due in March or April, but dates vary by program. In rare cases (usually, but not always, for intern abroad programs), a program application may be due in January or February, prior to the due date for the RMU application. Students are responsible for making sure all of their application materials are in on time.

## **What will my student learn?**

RMU students are responsible for discussing their study abroad plans with their academic advisor to make sure that they are taking the courses they need to stay on track for graduation. The CGE recommends that students plan to take one or more courses that fit into their RMU checksheets during a summer abroad program, though they are not required to take courses that fulfil degree requirements. Summer programs abroad are great options for coursework in foreign languages, RMU Core courses (general education requirements), and even internships.

Students are required to get approval from the appropriate RMU department head for each of the courses they plan to take as part of the application process.



## **My student isn't ready to go abroad. How will you help them prepare?**

Students prepare for their summer abroad in several ways.

An RMU study abroad advisor meets with all summer abroad students one-on-one (unless students choose to attend a meeting with a friend going on the same program). Prior to the first meeting with an advisor, students fill out a pre-advising form, which includes a section where they indicate their comfort level with various program aspects such as accommodation style and whether they prefer classes with local students or with other study abroad students. This opens up the conversation with the advisor about the types of programs that might be a good fit for the student, both academically and in terms of the kind of experience they are ready for.

All summer abroad students are also required to attend a pre-departure orientation during the spring semester. This orientation goes over important health and safety information, with an emphasis on situational awareness and the importance of the buddy system. Students are also encouraged to do their own research on the culture of the country they will be going to, with resources we show them how to access.

When a student arrives abroad, they also participate in an on-site orientation, and in some cases, this is an extension of an online pre-departure orientation done by their program provider before they left the US. On-site orientations vary by program but almost always include health and safety information specific to the program location.





# Health and Safety

Health and safety are our top priorities for our students at all times, but especially while they are abroad.

## Health

All students who study abroad are required to have international insurance to cover medical emergencies, medical evacuation, and repatriation. For **FLEAPs**, this insurance is included in the program fee. For **semester and summer abroad programs**, this is an additional cost, billed to the student either by the program provider or through the CGE, depending on the program. This cost ranges from \$80 to approximately \$500, depending on the location, and is due during the semester prior to studying abroad.

Your student should speak with their primary care physician about prescriptions and vaccines. They should make sure that their prescription medications are legal in their host country and that they have a large enough supply to last them the entire length of their stay abroad. Medication should always be transported in its original container and in carry-on luggage. Vaccine requirements and recommendations vary from country to country, and your student's doctor will work with them to make sure they meet legal requirements while being cognizant of any health issues your student may have.

## Safety

All students who study abroad through RMU attend a mandatory pre-departure orientation. During this orientation, students learn about how to keep themselves safe while studying abroad. We emphasize the buddy system, the dangers of alcohol abuse, and making sure important contact information (accommodations, host university, RMU faculty leader, and local version of 911) is easily accessible on their phones and in their wallets.

We also register all students in the **U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** for their study abroad location. STEP is a free service to allow U.S. citizens and nationals traveling and living abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. By doing so, students receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in their destination country; it helps the U.S. Embassy contact your student in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency; and it helps family and friends (like you!) get in touch with them in an emergency. **FLEAP** participants are registered for all locations they will be traveling, and **semester and summer abroad students** are registered for the location of their study abroad program. During pre-departure orientation, we talk about STEP and how to register yourself for any travel the student does away from their study abroad host city.







# Parent and Student Roles

The RMU Center for Global Engagement is a student-focused office. The experience of studying abroad provides countless opportunities for student learning and development, not only while students are abroad, but during the time leading up to the study abroad experience as well. Student learning and development are at the heart of what we do.

## **Your Student's Role**

To put it simply, your student is the star of this show. Studying abroad is about so much more than traveling to another country; it's about learning and growing academically, professionally, and personally. By communicating with our office directly, your student takes control of their educational plans and develops skills like independence and problem solving that they will have for the rest of their lives.

Nevitt Sanford's Theory of Challenge and Support\* is one explanation for how students grow, learn, and develop during their time at college. This theory states that challenges students experience during college must be met with supports (from university faculty and staff) that can sufficiently tolerate the stress of the challenge itself.

We know that studying abroad provides many challenges and stressors to RMU students. We also know that each student may experience unique challenges before, during, and after their experiences abroad. We work with each student to provide the appropriate level of support to help them learn and grow from the experience. This often means encouraging them to do research about a particular topic on their own, providing resources to them as appropriate, and being available for questions if they need additional support.

*\*Forney, D. S., Evans, N. J., Renn, K. A., Quaye, S. J., Patton, L. D., Guido, F. M. (2016). Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice. United Kingdom: Wiley.*

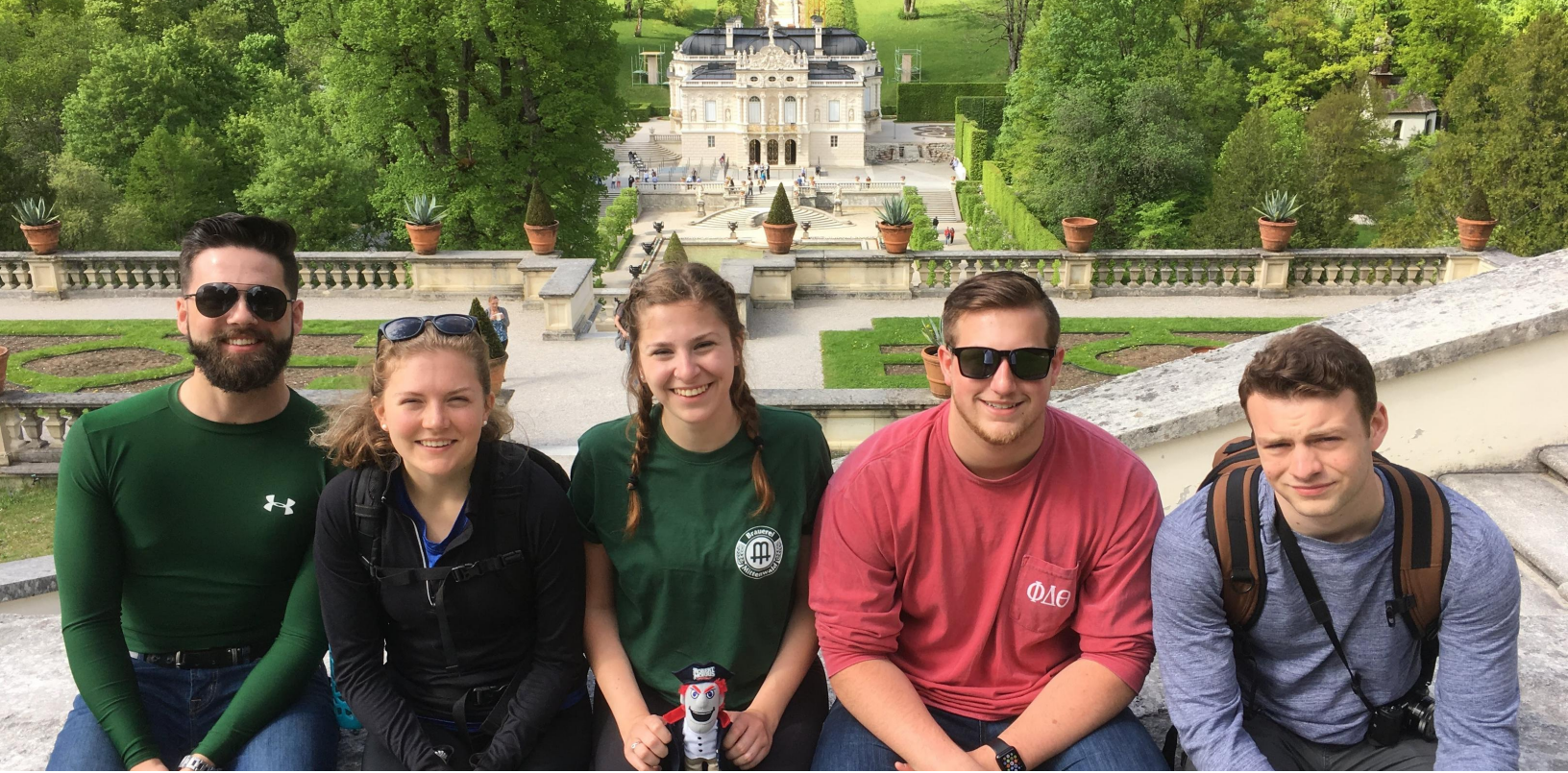
## **Your Role as a Parent of an RMU Study Abroad Student**

While our approach to study abroad is student-centered, you as the parent still play an important role in your student's success as they navigate the challenges of this exciting new experience. Not only do many parents support their students financially in their endeavors to spend a few weeks, a month, or an entire semester in a different country, but your emotional support is invaluable as your student embarks on their journey.

We encourage you to empower your student to take the lead on planning their study abroad experience. On the next pages, you will find a list of questions and discussion topics for you to go over with your student, as well as some questions to ask yourself. We provide your student with all of the information they need before, during, and after studying abroad. Something they might not find important to mention to you might be exactly the sort of information you're looking for, and you can explain to them why that is important for you to know. If you have questions your student doesn't know the answer to, encourage them to talk to their study abroad advisor to find out the answer. By making them responsible for finding the answer, you're teaching them how to evaluate what information is important to know, as well as helping them build communication skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

While we are happy to speak to you directly and answer any questions you may have, you should note that, due to federal regulations regarding the privacy of student records (see **FERPA**), we are not be able to provide you with detailed information about your student's study abroad plans if your student has not given us permission to share that information with you.





# Questions for Parents and Students

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## Questions to Ask Your Student

In order to help students better help themselves, use the following questions to guide your student as they prepare for their time abroad.

### Prior to deciding on a study abroad program:

- Have you checked your passport to make sure it's up to date?
- Have you determined a budget for the semester/summer/year?
- How will you negotiate living in a non-English speaking country?
- Have you met with an advisor in the CGE to discuss your options?
- Have you met with your academic advisor to talk about your study abroad plans?
- Do you plan to meet with the Financial Aid Office to discuss your aid and/or scholarships?

### **During the application process:**

- What are your travel plans?
- Do you know how and when to make the flight arrangements? (FLEAP and JUSP participants do not purchase their own flights!)
- Have you read your acceptance materials and turned in the appropriate forms to the CGE?
- Do you know how to get your study abroad courses approved to count toward your checksheet at RMU?
- Have you disclosed any of your needs for either physical disabilities or learning disabilities to your study abroad advisor and/or your study abroad program?
- Do you know your health insurance requirements?
- Do you understand the policies that follow you on your study abroad program, such as withdrawals and cancellations?
- Are there any scholarships or grants you can apply for? When are those deadlines?

### **After acceptance into the program, prior to departure:**

- Do you need to get a visa?
- How are you carrying your money?
- How will you communicate with me upon arrival and throughout your time abroad? How often will we communicate?
- What plans will you have in place for emergencies?
- Do you have a list of family phone numbers with access codes for international dialing?
- Have you made plans to get medical prescriptions?
- Have you communicated any medical needs or concerns to the CGE and/or your study abroad program?
- Do you know your study abroad program's emergency phone numbers? What about the local version of 911 in your host country?

### **Questions for Parents to Ask Themselves**

On the next page, you'll find a list of questions that parents and families of students preparing to study abroad can discuss and consider. These questions consider elements of emerging adulthood theory and offer considerations for helping students and families negotiate and plan for cultural shifts and transitions effectively.



1. What do you hope your student gains from their study abroad experience?
2. Reflect on an experience where something was new for your student and how they figured out/found help to make the adjustment (e.g. moving, starting a new school, etc.). How did it turn out? What were the lessons learned? What was your role in this process?
3. What do you anticipate might be the biggest challenge for your student while they are abroad? How can you help support them to navigate the challenges they might experience abroad? What challenges do you consider to be “normal” as part of the process of studying abroad?
4. Describe a time when your student faced a difficult decision. Who do they turn to for assistance? Do you trust your student’s decision-making skills? Why/Why not? How can you best support and coach your student to make good decisions for themselves?
5. How does your student seek help when needed? Who can they utilize (in addition to you) to help address challenges they might experience abroad? How can you support them to navigate normal challenges they will inevitably encounter abroad (homesickness, frustration, feeling overwhelmed, etc.)?
6. How will study abroad help your student learn key skills such as independence, good decision-making, and adaptability while they are abroad? What is your role in this process?
7. How often do you plan to communicate with your student while they are abroad? Is this similar or different to your communication patterns today? Have you discussed this with them to set expectations?
8. When your student returns from their study abroad experience, how can you best support them? How might your relationship with them evolve and expand to accommodate their new found growth, independence and interests?





# Study Abroad Vocabulary

Below are some common terms used when talking about study abroad programs. If there are any additional terms used on this page or elsewhere that you are unsure of, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us so we can explain and get it added to this list.

- **Exchange partner university**

A university in another country with which RMU has an agreement in place for RMU students to study there for a semester and for their students to study at RMU for a semester

- **Faculty leader**

The instructor of the FLEAP course, who goes with the students for the abroad component and is their primary contact while abroad

- **FLEAP**

Faculty-Led Education Abroad Program; an RMU course with RMU students which includes a travel component, typically during spring break or in May

- **Home country/university**

The location of a student's degree program; in this case Robert Morris University in the USA

- **Host country/university**

The location of a student's study abroad program



- **Passport**

An identity document issued by the national government of a person's citizenship

- **Study abroad provider**

An organization that offers study abroad programs in one or more locations around the world, with or without sending students to RMU as well. RMU has agreements in place with some universities abroad, as well as with four study abroad providers: CAPA, CIEE, CIS Abroad, and ISA. Not all semester programs at these providers are approved for RMU students; see the list of approved programs on the Semester Abroad webpage.

- **Study abroad program**

The complete package of what your student is doing abroad--it may be a FLEAP or a semester- or summer-long program, including coursework, housing, and cultural activities. A program can be hosted by RMU in the case of a FLEAP, by an exchange partner university, or by a study abroad provider.

- **Visa**

Permission given by a foreign government to enter their country. Many countries allow US citizens to enter as a tourist without applying for a visa, but rules vary from country to country. If a student visa is required, it is often a sticker that is placed into the student's passport, so the passport must be applied for and received before a visa can be issued.

