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# **Study Abroad at IUPUI: A White Paper**

**Prepared by the IUPUI Study Abroad Advisory Committee**

**Excerpt prepared by the IUPUI Office of International Affairs**

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**IUPUI**

**STUDY ABROAD**

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**OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

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## Study Abroad at IUPUI: A White Paper

*This version is an excerpted document – the complete paper is available at  
<http://international.iupui.edu/partnerships-initiatives/planning.html>*

# Executive Summary

## *Full executive summary*

This white paper is intended for all levels of administration, faculty, staff, and alumni at IUPUI and Indiana University who have a stake in the comprehensive academic, professional, and personal development of IUPUI students. Its purpose is to increase awareness of factors influencing study abroad program development as well as faculty, staff, and student involvement in study abroad and provide recommendations to IUPUI decision-makers pertaining to IUPUI's study abroad strategy. This paper is drafted at a time in which IUPUI experiences growth in study abroad student participation, the institution's Strategic Plan articulates a commitment to providing each student with an international experience, and increased deliberation of study abroad development is taking place by a campus-wide advisory committee of study abroad program leaders. The authors recognize senior administration's support of study abroad at IUPUI and offer this paper in the spirit of continuing this support and growth.

The paper describes key components of a successful institutional level study abroad operation, which include programs, curriculum integration, faculty engagement, student funding, student awareness, and data collection and use. It informs the reader of the current state of those components at IUPUI, details strategies and promising practices from the literature and other institutions that are related to those components, and makes recommendations for how IUPUI can enhance those components on its own campus.

## Study Abroad and IUPUI's Commitment to Indiana and Beyond

Study abroad is of critical importance to the IUPUI strategy for comprehensive [campus internationalization](#). It is recognized in the campus strategic plan, [Our Commitment to Indiana and Beyond](#), and represents a central pillar of the [IU Bicentennial Strategic Plan](#).

IUPUI's commitment to “**improve the quality of life in communities worldwide**” lays out strategic actions including steps to:

“**Continue to expand study abroad**, international service learning, and international internship opportunities for IUPUI students, especially underrepresented students.”

Study abroad is one of the most important strategies in our vision **to make it possible for all IUPUI students to have “at least one meaningful international experience.”**

The argument in support of study abroad is compelling and pressing. Participants:

- Learn how to interact with people from other countries and cultures, which is essential preparation for future leaders in all sectors as they address urgent, transnational issues such as disease, energy, hunger, sustainable development, terrorism, etc.
- Acquire the skills to compete effectively in a global job market through acquisition of international experience, language capabilities and cross-cultural communication skills necessary to succeed in the global economy.
- Develop an appreciation of difference and diversity leading to an ability to transcend stereotypes as a result of experiencing another culture, language, environment, and education system.

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Despite these widely agreed upon reasons, only about 10% of U.S. undergraduates participate in study abroad. **IUPUI participation is lower than the national average, with just over 6% of graduates studying abroad.**

### Recommendations for Growth

The Study Abroad Advisory Committee offers a number of recommendations detailed in the Recommendations section. These strategies seek to increase IUPUI student participation rates in study abroad, calling for:

- Supporting the development of a **more robust portfolio of study abroad offerings**
- Establishing a **direct relationship between study abroad programs and a student's degree**;
- Creating programs that are **affordable** for the IUPUI student, including provision of **new funds to subsidize costs for students who need it**;
- Designing **sophisticated communication strategies** that make students aware of not only the study abroad programs themselves, but the academic, professional, and personal benefits of program participation;
- Emphasizing that **faculty professional development, support, and recognition** are essential to program quality and quantity; and
- Collecting on a routine basis **useful data on faculty, staff, and student study abroad involvement** in order to enhance overall IUPUI study abroad operations and their impact on student learning.

These recommendations require the **direct support of IUPUI senior leadership, whether in the form of advocacy or funding.**

The Study Abroad Advisory Committee also recommends that a **campus wide taskforce be convened to address and implement the specific actions suggested** as an essential strategy for enhancing the impact of Study Abroad at IUPUI,

The findings of the White Paper represent an opportunity to build on a history of campus commitment to study abroad programs by identifying ways to design high quality programs that meet IUPUI student needs, resulting in greater numbers of our students participating in such uniquely valuable 21<sup>st</sup> century higher education learning opportunities.

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### **I. Introduction**

Study abroad is a key element of IUPUI's mission to prepare students to engage in an interconnected world with skill and wisdom in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is recognized in the campus strategic plan, *Our Commitment to Indiana and Beyond*, and represents a central pillar of the *IU Bicentennial Strategic Plan*.

At IUPUI, 6.4% of 2015 graduates had studied abroad. According to the Institute for International Education's Open Doors report, nationally, about 10% of American undergraduate students participate in study abroad.

While the number of IUPUI students going abroad has doubled since 2001-02, going from 210 students to a record number of 432 students in 2013-14, more progress can and should be made.

Study abroad reinforces a broad range of IUPUI's institutional goals, including:

- Promoting undergraduate student learning and success
- Increasing capacity for graduate education
- Leveraging our strengths in health and life sciences
- Accelerating innovation and discovery through research and creative activity
- Deepening our commitment to community engagement
- Promoting an inclusive campus climate
- Developing our faculty and staff

### **II. Purpose and Background**

The purpose of this White Paper is to provide recommendations to IUPUI decision-makers pertaining to IUPUI's study abroad strategy. This excerpt describes key components of how study abroad operates successfully in academic organizations, the current state of those components at IUPUI, and gives recommendations that draw from the current literature and promising practices at other institutions.

### **III. Study Abroad Participation at IUPUI**

The number of students studying abroad has increased each year since 2011. The top three study abroad destinations for IUPUI students are China, United Kingdom, and France. More than 50 percent of students (218 in 2013-14) study abroad during the summer for at least two weeks.

The top three sending disciplines on campus are health sciences, social sciences, and business/management. Together, they are responsible for 42% of IUPUI students studying abroad.

According to IUPUI's 2013 survey of full-time new beginning students, 55% reported there was a "very good chance" (22%) or some chance (33%) of studying abroad, showing a large gap in student interest and actual participation.

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# **IV. Key Components of a Successful Study Abroad Strategy**

The components necessary for a successful study abroad strategy at IUPUI include: (1) program offerings (2) integration of those programs into the curriculum (3) student funding; (4) a plan to develop student awareness; (5) faculty engagement; and (6) data collection and use. Recommendations associated with these six components are provided in Section V.

## **Programs**

### **Current State of Program Development at IUPUI**

The majority of IUPUI study abroad programs are short-term programs developed and led by IUPUI faculty.

Developing faculty-led programs has a number of advantages: costs to students are minimized; study abroad courses can be aligned with the learning outcomes of IUPUI degree programs; developing a study abroad program can serve as an effective means of professional development for the faculty member, and student recruitment is facilitated since faculty members who have obtained the trust and respect of potential applicants through classroom interactions can share information directly with students. However, developing and leading study abroad experiences takes a great deal of time and energy, which is unevenly rewarded or counted between academic units, and receives limited acknowledgement in the university's promotion and tenure process. Sustaining a program often depends on the availability and energy of one or more faculty/staff members in order to guard against inconsistent availability of such study opportunities.

### **Short Term Programs at IUPUI**

A relatively small number of IUPUI students study abroad for a full year or a semester. Short-term programs typically cost less and are easier for students to balance with their other commitments within and beyond the university. The majority of IUPUI faculty-led programs are one to four weeks long.

Specifically, there has been a significant increase in spring break participation in recent years. In 2015 a record number of 125 students participated in credit bearing study abroad programming over spring break, a 270% increase from 2013.

Continuing to develop short term programs appears to be the best way to increase the number of students who experience international travel as part of their IUPUI education.

### **Academic Disciplines and Program Participation**

A student's academic discipline is a significant factor in influencing whether he or she will study abroad.

### **Service Learning as Program Pedagogy**

A challenge facing very short programs is the possibility that student participants will have more of a tourist experience than an academic one. IUPUI has identified service learning as a key strategy to help students connect to and engage with the host community. In 2015, about 30% of IUPUI study abroad programs included the pedagogy of international service learning.

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### **IU Office of Overseas Study Programs**

In addition to the approximately 80 IUPUI programs, students are also able to participate in programs offered by other IU campuses. This broad range of programs gives IUPUI students many choices that are directly connected to IU and award IU credit.

### **Non-IU Programs**

IUPUI also provides opportunities for student participation in study abroad programming offered by non-IU institutions. Students can prearrange transfer credit and access financial aid for external study abroad programs.

### **IU Program Approval**

All programs operated by Indiana University have been [approved](#) by the Overseas Study Advisory Council (OSAC) which reviews the program's academic, logistical, safety and cultural integration plans.

### **Financing Program Development**

IUPUI schools vary greatly in the mechanisms they have established to support study abroad programs, in terms of both funding and administrative assistance. Leading a study abroad program takes more time than teaching a course on campus and even with their regular salary, faculty may not be adequately compensated for their work.

An October 2015 survey of IUPUI program leaders revealed that

- 22% of program leaders reported that they receive no compensation for running their study abroad program.
- Almost 40% of program leaders indicated that the challenges associated with leading a program have made them consider not offering their programs in the future.

This information shows a study abroad program at IUPUI that is fragile and dependent on the commitment and generosity of a few faculty members.

## **Curriculum Integration**

Curriculum integration is an effort to integrate study abroad into the undergraduate curriculum through collaboration between the international programs office and academic departments (Oregon State University definition), and includes communicating the role/value of a study abroad program in the student's degree plan. In order to implement such integration effectively, academic program degree maps need to identify courses that include a study abroad experience.

### **Current State of Curriculum Integration**

The IUPUI Office of International Affairs director of curriculum internationalization position is charged with promoting a campus-wide approach for curriculum integration of study abroad.

The curriculum integration process also requires faculty effort engaged in developing programs and making connections between discipline content and overseas study.

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International learning is one of the four designated elements of the IUPUI [RISE](#) program, but is not a requirement in most programs. As is the case with the Kelley School of Business's international requirement, the RISE international experience component could be fulfilled in a variety of different ways, not only through study abroad.

The IUPUI General Education Core is required in all undergraduate degrees. Currently, the only approved general education courses involving study abroad are a few world language course offerings in French and Chinese.

While the OSAC study abroad program proposal review criteria require information about how the coursework associated with the program will apply towards a student's degree, this information is not readily available to students. In most cases, students have to rely upon their advisors to determine the applicability of coursework in a study abroad program to the student's degree plan and degree requirements.

## **Student Funding**

Limited funding is a key deterrent for students who want to study abroad. If institutions wish to increase their study abroad participation, both a philosophy and strategy for supporting student funding is needed.

### **Current State of Student Funding at IUPUI**

For IUPUI students, program cost is one of the most important barriers (or perceived barriers) to study abroad participation. Students are often intimidated by the costs of study abroad and do not know what questions to ask or how to find funding to study abroad.

A survey of 2014-15 IUPUI study abroad participants (with 100 respondents) revealed that:

- 78% relied on their personal savings to cover all or part of their program costs, rather than family or scholarship support.
- 50% received no scholarship support.
- 8% indicated that family resources covered 50% or more of their program costs.

IUPUI students can access financial assistance in various forms, but there is a significant need for increased scholarships to make study abroad possible for students with significant unmet financial need.

The IUPUI Study Abroad Office administers the International Experience Scholarship fund, which distributes \$70,000 per year, primarily to undergraduate students, with awards starting at \$1,000 per recipient.

Other [funding through IUPUI](#) is dependent upon the school in which the student is enrolled. SPEA and IUPUI Honors College students receive an "automatic" study abroad stipend, assuming the student meets certain conditions. The Schools of Art and Design, Business, Liberal Arts, Engineering and Technology,

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Nursing, Physical Education and Tourism Management, and Science offer competitive study abroad scholarship programs.

The IU Foundation has allocated \$1 million to match the income from endowments that create scholarships for IU undergraduate students to participate in IU overseas experiences. To date, only the Herron School of Art has participated in this opportunity. The threshold donation level of \$50,000 to qualify for these matching funds is a challenge for most IUPUI schools.

Students participating in IU's Office of Overseas Study programs are able to apply for [scholarships](#) through that office.

IUPUI students are encouraged to apply for various awards available nationally on a competitive basis.

Students are able to access federal and state aid for study abroad; however, most IUPUI students with financial need use all available aid to support their regular fall and spring expenses. As a result, they are not able to access funding study abroad in summer because their annual allotment has already been used. State and federal aid is more helpful for students studying abroad on a fall, spring or academic year program.

The IUPUI Office of Student Financial Services has identified a liaison for study abroad to serve as a resource to students and to the Study Abroad Office. The Study Abroad Office advises students on [program costs](#) and variables.

## **Student Awareness**

Outreach to students is essential to study abroad at both the program and institutional levels. Effective marketing can showcase the value and benefits of study abroad, and dispel the myths that deter students from participating. Cultivating students' knowledge about available programs, how those programs fit into their academic and professional goals, and how to finance their participation is key to the successful enrollment of students.

### **Current State of Student Awareness at IUPUI**

A May 2015 survey of 106 IUPUI faculty (41) and staff (65) revealed that:

- 48% were "somewhat informed" about study abroad opportunities.
- About 30% indicated they were "not very well informed" and that more marketing and promotional resources are needed to support participation in study abroad.

Conversations with students reveal that they are often not aware of the advantages of study abroad and its relation to future job opportunities and careers.

The Study Abroad Office employs multiple methods of promoting study abroad to the campus community, with the involvement of current and returned study abroad students, faculty, and staff. Outreach includes online and print media; visual portraits supplied by study abroad program participants; tabling in campus common areas; and outreach in classes.

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### **Faculty Engagement**

Faculty play an essential role in study abroad development. Students can be more inclined to enroll in a study abroad program if they have a good relationship with the faculty member leading the program. Faculty are also the most logical individuals for ensuring that study abroad programs are linked to overall curricular goals. It is essential to engage interested faculty members and to support and recognize them for incorporating such a complex and high-impact practice into their work.

Faculty program leaders need accessible information and resources including information about funding, program development education, pre-travel orientation, and release time to create high quality programs. The Study Abroad Office provides guidance to faculty program leaders, however, capacity is limited due to the small professional staff currently in place.

### **Current State of Faculty Engagement at IUPUI**

Generally, most faculty and staff who engage with study abroad are those who understand the educational importance of international experiences. They align their teaching, research, and service practices to afford students opportunities for deeper learning experiences where students will challenge their beliefs about the world, their home country, themselves and their responsibilities.

Results from the May 2015 survey of IUPUI faculty and staff reflect that:

- Study abroad is a labor of love for most; while there are institutional frameworks in place that promote high impact practices, the institutional incentives are not always clear.
- Support within the units across IUPUI for leading study abroad programs is varied.
- It is unclear how teaching a study abroad course fits into a faculty member's promotion and tenure review.
- Faculty program leaders with international research agendas or with an international background (born in or studied in another country) are more likely to respond to efforts to encourage their involvement in study abroad programming.
- Faculty-led programs in large part operate on the generosity and commitment of individual faculty members. It is not uncommon for faculty to cover their own travel and living costs abroad.
- Program leaders struggle with real and perceived financial management challenges when running study abroad programs. Adhering to university financial policies and procedures is complex and daunting for many program leaders, especially in countries where norms for financial transactions are different from the U.S., such as cash-based economies.

### **Data Collection and Use**

Data collection and analysis is essential to support strategic decision-making, assess learning, and develop a research agenda. Building campus capacity for strategic decision making and nurturing a climate for scholarly practice is important for a study abroad course to be meaningful and effective, and for study abroad to be integrated into the curriculum.

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### Current State of Data Collection and Use at IUPUI

IUPUI has laid the groundwork for building institutional mechanisms that can support evaluative thinking related to study abroad. The creation of “experiential learning” designations can be used to monitor a range of study abroad experiences. At the [undergraduate](#) level, these designations are folded into the RISE Challenge. Experiential designations are also available at the [graduate](#) level. However, these attributes are assigned by individuals in each school and therefore are not applied consistently.

The Study Abroad Office assigns one of two Student Group Codes to the SIS student record for each IUPUI study abroad participant to track short-term (VSAS) versus long-term (VSAL) study abroad experiences. These codes are the best available source of identifying students who have actually studied abroad.

The Study Abroad Office uses the IU system-wide database, iAbroad, for tracking international programs and student participation. The system links with IU’s SIS so that biographic and demographic information is linked to participation records. While much data is housed within the iAbroad data management system, the reporting capabilities are weak.

Drawing on national work such as the AAC&U’s LEAP VALUE Rubric for Intercultural Learning, [IUPUI International Learning Guidelines](#) and an associated draft rubric have been developed (Anton & Whitehead 2014). Campus teams have presented externally to showcase ongoing work. These efforts represent the University’s commitment to international learning but, at the same time, highlight that significant work remains.

## V. Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forth by the Study Abroad Advisory Committee and the Office of International Affairs. **The complete paper available online includes specific actions related to each recommendation and, where necessary, a funding request.**

As an essential strategy for raising Study Abroad at IUPUI to a higher level, the Study Abroad Advisory Committee also recommends that a **campus wide taskforce be convened to address and implement the specific actions suggested.**

### Programs

1. Strengthen the Study Abroad Office’s capacity to support the development of a more robust portfolio of study abroad offerings.
2. Promote the education of faculty and staff regarding study abroad program development
3. Strengthen faculty leadership and support mechanisms in order to facilitate program development.
4. Provide faculty with incentives to develop programs and reward the work of those who follow through.

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5. Identify staff and resources that can assist faculty with program logistics.

### **Curriculum Integration**

1. Foster cooperative dialogue among administration, schools, departments, and faculty to realize the full potential and benefits of curriculum integration.
2. Emphasize importance of departmental participation in curriculum integration projects.
3. Support the Study Abroad Office in efforts to help faculty better advise students on how to link study abroad with academic programs.
4. Encourage efforts across campus to better align study abroad with degree programs.
5. Support the development of new resources and strategies to facilitate curriculum integration of study abroad.

### **Student Funding**

Increase scholarship funding and support efforts such as developing a study abroad planning scholarship for underrepresented students, supporting philanthropic giving efforts, and exploring new resource streams.

### **Student Awareness**

Facilitate enhanced communication and outreach to students through a peer advisor program, expanded staff capacity for curriculum integration, and new communication materials and tools that promote the value of study abroad.

### **Faculty Engagement**

1. Endorse systematic methods of cultivating faculty capacity for study abroad development.
2. Cultivate stronger support mechanisms for faculty who develop and lead study abroad programs.
3. Encourage meaningful recognition of faculty who devote time to the development and implementation of study abroad programs.

### **Data Collection and Use**

1. Encourage campus units to use study abroad data strategically.
2. Encourage collaboration across units in the collection of student, school, and campus level study abroad data.
3. Capitalize on and strengthen existing infrastructure for monitoring and assessment.
4. Encourage and reward study abroad assessment, scholarly practice, and inquiry.