Study Abroad Myths Your Advisees May Believe

**MYTH: Study abroad is not academically rigorous.**

**TRUTH:** Studying in other educational systems offers students opportunities to develop academic skills and intellectual capacities that are not emphasized in the U.S. This exposure helps them become stronger learners who are better equipped to accomplish their individual goals. Pairing newly acquired abilities with the foundation “K” provides positions our students for success within more than one approach to education.

**MYTH: There are study abroad programs specific to each major**

**TRUTH:** Most programs will work for students from various disciplines. Actually, only a few programs are linked to specific academic departments. Students should carefully investigate the requirements and courses offered for each program.

**MYTH: Grades earned on study abroad do not count.**

**TRUTH:** Grades from study abroad are recorded on transcripts but are not calculated into the GPA. Graduate and professional schools as well as the campus chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, however, often recalculate GPA. For this reason we always urge students to take their classes seriously.

**MYTH: Study abroad cannot support students’ majors, minors or concentrations.**

**TRUTH:** Most majors, minors and concentrations will accept at least one K unit from courses taken abroad. Students must work closely with the appropriate academic departments in order to apply credit from overseas to their selected fields.

Credit distributions for other college graduation requirements are determined by the Registrar and CIP. Close contact with faculty and the Registrar during study abroad is always highly recommended.

**MYTH: Any course taken abroad will transfer back to K.**

**TRUTH:** Courses that are in the Liberal Arts tradition are the only courses that transfer credit back to “K”.

**MYTH: It is too expensive to study abroad.**

**TRUTH:** Study abroad is a very serious financial undertaking, so the College is working to maintain and improve wide access to study abroad. For decades financial aid has been applied to most programs abroad. More recently subsides have been established to assist eligible students with the cost of international round-trip air fare and immunizations, for example. Other than the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), there are no special applications for this type of support.
The CIP website lists a number of need and merit-based scholarships and grants to which students can apply ([https://reason.kzoo.edu/cip/student_resources/aid/](https://reason.kzoo.edu/cip/student_resources/aid/)). There are also a few Kalamazoo Partner programs that offer scholarships.

Last, but not least, the Center for International Programs offers financial support to eligible sophomores to cover passport application fees.

In many cases, a combination of financial aid resources helps to make study abroad financially accessible.

MYTH:  All financial aid will be applied to any study abroad program.

TRUTH:  Most programs on the list of study abroad programs are approved for the transfer of federal, state and College grants and scholarships. It is also true that some scholarships and tuition programs may only be applied to specific study abroad costs.

There are just a few study abroad sites to which College-based scholarships and grants cannot be applied. The CIP makes sure students are aware of this prior to application.

MYTH: Students can go anywhere they’d like during any quarter.

TRUTH:  The College and the CIP have assembled a list of study abroad programs pre-approved for transfer of credit. Sophomores may study abroad short-term during winter or spring quarter. Juniors study abroad long-term, extended-term, or short-term (details are posted at [https://reason.kzoo.edu/cip/student_resources/study_abroad/](https://reason.kzoo.edu/cip/student_resources/study_abroad/)).

Most academic departments prefer students in their majors, minors and concentrations to be on campus the spring of their junior year to prepare for the senior year. Long term programs are designed to accommodate this preference.

MYTH: Researching several different study abroad sites is unnecessary.

TRUTH: The best plan is to identify at least two programs that will meet each student’s goals for study abroad before applying. Students may not realize there is a very wide range of program options and they may not be aware of the requirements for program sites. They can learn about the requirements and other details by reading the list of programs and program brochures on Hornet Passport ([https://kalamazoo.studioabroad.com/index.cfm?FuseAction=Programs.SimpleSearch](https://kalamazoo.studioabroad.com/index.cfm?FuseAction=Programs.SimpleSearch)). Peer Advisors (PAs) and Program Managers are also available to help and we look forward to talking with students in person. Our walk-in hours and contact information are posted at [https://reason.kzoo.edu/cip/staff/](https://reason.kzoo.edu/cip/staff/) and [https://reason.kzoo.edu/cip/staff/PAs/](https://reason.kzoo.edu/cip/staff/PAs/).

MYTH: Travel to several countries is not an appropriate goal for study abroad.

TRUTH:  Extensive travel is often an early goal for many students and can be a significant motivator. At the same time, as part of the application, students must articulate how their program choice compliments their academic goals or majors, minors or concentrations. During pre-departure orientation the CIP emphasizes the importance of balancing travel with activities with host families and friends from local communities.